

Grassy Narrows Clan Mothers Notice

October 6, 2010

Re: Road work on our territory.

To whom it may concern:

Our community is repairing washouts and beaver damage to nearby back-roads to facilitate our ongoing use and enjoyment of our traditional territory. The back roads are used by Grassy Narrows members to access hunting, trapping, wild rice and berry picking areas, medicine gathering and ceremonial site access, and for access to the Ball Lake fishing lodge. For generations the lodge has been a key source of employment for our community, but since the mercury poisoning of the English-Wabigoon River System the lodge has had minimal economic development benefits for us.

We the grandmothers, mothers, and clan mothers of the Anishinabek will be at the Slant Lake blockade site to make sure there is safe passage for the road workers to enter into our natural territories and to make sure there is no harassment of any kind from any person or organization so the workers can complete their work as instructed by our people.

We the indigenous peoples of this land sanction the work of these road repair people in any shape or form. Any question on work activities will be directed directly to us at the blockade site and no form of communication or harassment will be handled by the workers.

As our community stated in our moratorium call on January 17, 2007:

From time immemorial we, the Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishnaabek (Grasy Narrows Ojibway) have occupied, cherished, and gained sustenance from, our traditional territory. This land is integral to our identity and existence as Anishnaabe people. As the Indigenous people of this area, we retain our language, our culture, our land, our governance, and our spirituality. On this basis we assert our innate sovereignty and our inalienable right to self determination on our traditional lands. Our land and these inherent rights are given by the Creator and only the Creator can take them away.

In addition to these inherent rights we also have rights recognized in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, other international and national law, in our treaty, and in Supreme Court of Canada rulings.

We the Anishinabek have never given up jurisdiction on our natural territories. We agreed to share the lands with the newcomers, but we will never give up our inherent right to use and protect the land, water and the forests.

We never agreed to be subject to Provincial permitting processes that restrict our access and use of our own territory. Even the Canadian courts have recognized this right. Our people have fought and won on

the question of using our territory without permits (in constructing cabins) in Sundown, and Meshake, and the Crown recognized this fact by dropping charges in Red Lake against Keesick.

In spite of this Ontario again claims that we need a permit and threatens to stop our road repairs. Ontario claims that the permits are for the safety of people and the environment. The same province that permitted Reed Paper to dump 20,000 pounds of mercury into our river, decimated our fishing livelihood and culture, and still refuses to acknowledge our mercury poisoning, claims to be stopping minor road repairs for our safety and for the fisheries act? The same government that permitted the industrial clearcut logging of the forests we depend on, the aerial spraying with herbicides, and who still refuses to respect our right to say no, claims to be protecting our environment?

This hypocrisy is so flagrant it is shameful. It is an attempt to rob us of our livelihood, our health, and our culture.

We have had enough of your permits. They serve only to protect the profits of the corporations, they have never protected us or the environment.

We will never cease fulfilling the duty given to us by the Creator to use and protect our land, air, and water.

The road repairs are part of a process of reclamation and revival for Grassy Narrows where our people are using the land on our territory to empower ourselves, to sustain our families, revive our culture and heal our community. We are rebuilding what has been taken away from us by decades of provincial permits.

We demand that the government immediately take responsibility for the mercury poisoning of our people and correct this injustice once and for all. We demand that industrial logging cease on our territory. Enough harm has been done to our people, we will take of our territory and determine our own future.

The MNR attempt to stop maintenance of the roads is an attack on our community's self sufficiency. It is another attempt by the Province to assert unilateral control over the Territory in violation of our inherent and treaty rights.

We will not allow it.

The Clan Mothers of Grassy Narrows