
International Boreal Conservation Science Panel

December 1, 2011

To the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation:


As scientists who have contributed to advancing conservation issues and opportunities around the world, we would like to acknowledge the outstanding global value of Pimachiowin Aki's boreal ecosystem, traditional Anishinaabe land use and customary governance.

Pimachiowin Aki is an internationally significant representation of a large, unfragmented boreal forest block and its rich ecological community of boreal birds, mammals, freshwater fish, plants and many other species. Pimachiowin Aki's vastness, diverse landforms and hydrology in turn support a complete wildfire regime, a key determinant of a resilient and continuously renewed boreal forest.

We especially commend the five First Nations and the two provincial government partners of Pimachiowin Aki for creating the largest protected area network in the North American boreal shield. This pluralist, collaborative approach provides an international example for conserving biodiversity through networked, contiguous protected areas. It also exemplifies the critically important contributions that Indigenous and community conserved areas can play in advancing the objectives of the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, as well as the *UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The Indigenous Anishinaabe living cultural landscape has been a continuously adaptive and integral part of Pimachiowin Aki for over 6000 years.

The proposed Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site encompasses two established provincial parks, a designated provincial conservation reserve and traditional lands of the partner First Nations. We understand that the proposed site reflects careful, mutual agreement among all the partners, as well as cultural respect for Indigenous traditional lands lying beyond the nominated area. Moreover, the recent legislative initiatives of both Ontario and Manitoba formally recognize and support First Nations community land use planning, providing a strong basis for cooperative and compatible approaches to natural resources management in the immediate region bordering Pimachiowin Aki. This bodes well future collaboration with Indigenous communities neighbouring Pimachiowin Aki.

Based upon our understanding of the globally significant ecological and cultural values of Pimachiowin Aki, of its rich human and biological history, of the participating First Nations' desire to share these values with the world, we support the proposed Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site.



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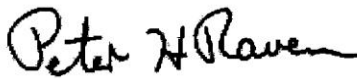
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