

Grassy Narrows First Nation

RELEASE

Thursday Nov. 7, 2013

Minister makes false statement on logging in Grassy Narrows **Will Wynne force clearcuts on Grassy Narrows knowing that they release mercury poison?**

Grassy Narrows - Today Grassy Narrows Chief Fobister is calling out Minister Oraziotti for false statements made yesterday about planned logging in Grassy Narrows Territory.

In a written statement sent to news media the Minister of Natural Resources said:

"Under this Plan, there are no planned harvest blocks located within the Grassy Narrows' self-identified Traditional Land Use Area."

http://www.kenoraonline.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=6982&Itemid=160

"The minister's statement is false, and completely misrepresents Ontario's plans for another decade of clearcut logging on our territory against our will," said Grassy Narrows Chief Simon Fobister. "It is time for the Minister to clear up the confusion that he has cause with his false statement and to answer once and for all: Will the Wynne government force logging on our community against our will, knowing that logging would release more mercury into our food chain?"

The MNR cutblock map from the Draft Whiskey Jack Forest Management Plan 2012-2022 clearly shows that the Minister's statement is false. The map shows large clearcuts scheduled to start in April of 2014 throughout Grassy Narrows Territory. Some of the planned clearcuts are within one kilometer of the reserve boundary and within a stone's throw of the English River. This map was recently removed from the Ministry of Natural Resources website, but a saved version is available by emailing riverrun2010@gmail.com.

The plan text indicates that there are 142 clearcuts in the first 5 years of the plan, 34 of them are larger than twice the size of High Park (260 ha.), most are on Grassy Narrows Territory. The largest clearcut planned is 79 square km, nearly the size of pre amalgamation Toronto (97 sq km).

Last Thursday Grassy Narrows Chief and Council sent an open letter to Premier Wynne rejecting the plan. The Forest Management plan for the Whiskey Jack Forest 2012-2022 is in the final stage of approval with a decision scheduled for December, 23rd. Approximately 2,000 people commented in opposition to the plan before the public comment period closed on Nov. 31st.

The plan sets out a schedule to clear-cut much of what little mature forest remains on Grassy Narrows Territory after decades of large scale industrial logging. This will further erode the Aboriginal, Treaty Rights and the ability of the community to sustain their families and to practice their culture through fishing, hunting, trapping, medicine harvesting, ceremony and healing for all generations.

"Premier Wynne, it is within your power to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated at the expense of another generation of Grassy Narrows children," said Grassy Narrows Chief Simon Fobister. "I call on you to ensure that never again will Ontario attempt to force decisions on our people and our lands."

Premier Wynne, visited Grassy Narrows in the summer of 2012 as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, saying that she wanted to rebuild Ontario's relationship with Grassy Narrows to "get it right." Instead Ontario has unilaterally pursued this clear-cut logging plan against the will of the community without consent

Contact

Chief Simon Fobister: 807-407-0170

Joseph Fobister: 807-407-2745

FACTS from the Whiskey Jack Forest Management Plan 2012-2022

- % of planned logging using clearcuts - 100%
- # of trees planned for logging each year: 1.43 million (572,000 m³)
- Largest clearcut planned: 7,905 ha --> 79 km² (1,947 ha in first 5 yr term)
- 2nd largest 4,110 ha --> 41 km² (2,946 first 5 yr term) - pre-megacity Toronto: 97 km²
- % of merchantable hardwoods committed to Weyerhaeuser Corp: 99.4%
- Area planned for aerial spraying of herbicides in 10 yr plan: 4,726 ha
- Annual area available for harvest 2012-2022: 5,483 ha./ yr. --> 55 km² / yr.
- High Park: 161 ha (1.61 sq km) - pre-megacity Toronto: 97 km²
- Area available for harvest over 10 years --> 550 km².
- Killarney Provincial Park: 485 km² - Mega city Toronto: 630 km²
- % of the Whiskey Jack forest that is protected: 4%
- # of clearcuts in first 5 years 142
- # of clearcuts in first 5 years larger than 320 football fields (260 ha.) 34
- High Park: 322 football fields.
- % of planned total wood supply allocated to joint ventures that include First Nations: 2.5%
- Unemployment rate in Grassy Narrows: 80%
- Unemployment rate in Grassy Narrows in 1969, before fishing was banned due to mercury poison: 10%