



## PIMACHIOWIN AKI

WORLD HERITAGE PROJECT

*The Land that Gives Life*

### **What is Pimachiowin Aki? What is *The Land that Gives Life*?**

Pimachiowin Aki, pronounced 'Pim –MATCH–cho–win Ahh–KEY' means *The Land that Gives Life*. This name is also shared by a non-profit corporation comprised of five First Nations and the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba working to achieve World Heritage inscription. Pimachiowin Aki covers 33,400 square kilometers. The nominated area is a rich cultural landscape; home to Anishinaabe people living in Poplar River, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi, Pikangikum and Bloodvein First Nations. Atikaki Provincial Park (Manitoba) as well as Woodland Caribou Provincial Park and Eagle-Snowshoe Conservation Reserve (Ontario) complete the area. For First Nations, the land and the people are one. It is a heritage they want to share with world.

### **What is the basic argument for why this area deserves to be a World Heritage Site?**

Pimachiowin Aki is an exceptional example of a landscape within the North American Subarctic geo-cultural area that provides testimony to the cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan (Keeping the Land)*. Pimachiowin Aki is also an outstanding example of the ecological and biological diversity of the global boreal biome.



### **Who are the Anishinaabe?**

The Anishinaabe or Anishinaabeg are the indigenous peoples (First Nations) of the central North American boreal forest. Anishinaabeg are also known as Ojibwe. Anishinaabeg speak Anishinaabemowin, the Ojibwe language. In Pimachiowin Aki, this ancient language is in vibrant everyday use. Anishinaabeg engage in activities and livelihoods that are continuously evolving and adapting, but which are rooted in traditional cultural values and relationships with the land and other beings. Anishinaabe traditional knowledge, language, spirituality and customary governance are central to sustaining the living cultural landscape known as Pimachiowin Aki and fulfilling a sacred duty to protect this land.

### **What is the boreal forest?**

Named after Boreas, the Greek god of the north wind, the term boreal forest (or biome) is a circumpolar band of needle-leaf-dominated forest that stretches across Scandinavia, Russia, Alaska and Canada covering an estimated 1.7 billion hectares. The boreal forest stores more freshwater in wetlands and lakes and more carbon in trees, soil and peat than any other terrestrial ecosystem on Earth. One-third of the planet's boreal forest is found within Canada.

### **When did the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage nomination process begin?**

In 2002, the five Pimachiowin Aki First Nations signed the Protected Areas and First Nations Resource Stewardship: A Cooperative Relationship Accord (the Accord). Through the Accord the First Nations agreed to work together to propose lands within their traditional territories as a World Heritage Site. The governments of Ontario and Manitoba joined with the First Nations to develop a submission that led to Pimachiowin Aki's inclusion on Canada's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites in May 2004. The First Nation and provincial government partners established the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation in 2006. A detailed nomination package was completed and submitted to the World Heritage Centre by the government of Canada on behalf of the Pimachiowin Aki partners in January 2012.



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### **Why was the 2012 nomination of Pimachiowin Aki deferred by the World Heritage Committee?**

The World Heritage Committee deferred examination of the Pimachiowin Aki nomination and recommended that Canada invite a joint Advisory Mission to address ways to strengthen the nomination. It was explained that although the World Heritage Convention is the sole international convention that relates to both cultural and natural heritage, the Convention does not adequately recognize “the indissoluble bonds that exist in some places between culture and nature”. This circumstance was a factor in the decision to defer. A new nomination was developed and submitted in 2015.

### **What’s different about the 2015 nomination?**

The 2015 nomination retained the principle that Pimachiowin Aki is an outstanding example of an aboriginal cultural landscape and a boreal ecosystem. Much of the new work was to deepen and strengthen the bid with more evidence. The new nomination was proposed under different cultural criteria. The nomination focuses on the Anishinaabe cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* “keeping the land”. How Anishinaabe people have always taken care of the water, wildlife, and plant life as part of their cultural tradition for millennia is explained in more detail.

### **Has the Pimachiowin Aki project influenced World Heritage Practices?**

Pimachiowin Aki has been a catalyst for change in World Heritage evaluation processes. Pimachiowin Aki’s role in changing evaluation processes was discussed at the July 2015 World Heritage Committee session in Bonn, Germany, leading to expectations for enhanced collaboration, communications, joint reporting and recommendations by the World Heritage Advisory Bodies in evaluations of mixed (cultural/natural) nominations. The enhanced evaluations were evident during a joint evaluation mission to Pimachiowin Aki conducted by the Advisory Bodies in August 2015.

### **What is the World Heritage Committee?**

Composed of 21 members from among the 191 State Parties to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the Committee meets once a year to make decisions about the World Heritage program, including the addition of new sites to the World Heritage List.

### **What is the role of the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee?**

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), based in Paris, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), based in Gland, evaluate properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage list and present evaluation reports to the World Heritage Committee.