



PIMACHIOWIN AKI
WORLD HERITAGE PROJECT

The Land that Gives Life

Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO project submits new nomination

Questions and Answers

WINNIPEG—January 22, 2015

Was the entire Pimachiowin Aki submission totally rewritten?

No. The nomination retains the fundamental principal that Pimachiowin Aki is an outstanding example of an aboriginal cultural landscape and a boreal ecosystem. Much of the new work has been to deepen and strengthen the bid with more evidence.

What's different about it?

World Heritage sites can be inscribed on the World Heritage List under several criteria. This new nomination is submitted under different cultural criteria than the 2012 nomination. This year the submission focuses on the Anishinaabe cultural tradition of “keeping the land”. The submission explains how our Anishinaabe people have been taking care of the water, wildlife and plant life, as part of our cultural tradition, for thousands of years. For example William Young of Bloodvein River First Nation and Pimachiowin Aki spokesperson describes how, as a young man, he grew up seeing Elders practice sustainability when they purposefully set and managed fires in the marsh every spring near his community. They knew that the fire would help promote the growth of medicinal plants and create habitat for birds and animals they hunted.

Why did the World Heritage Committee (WHC) defer a decision in 2013?

The nomination was returned to Canada for further work on explaining the cultural value of the land, and in particular the relationship between culture and nature. The Committee also encouraged us to invite international experts (who travelled here on an Advisory Mission) to meet with our Pimachiowin Aki members to help guide the work of preparing a revised nomination.

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

Pimachiowin Aki is an exceptional example of what experts call “living indigenous cultural tradition” or what our Elders describe as “keeping the land”. Anishinaabe culture is rooted in the belief that it is our duty to care for the land as taught to us through stories handed down from generation to generation. Pimachiowin Aki is a living example of how Anishinaabeg responsibility and connection to the land is inseparable from nature. One relies on the other.

The nomination also presents Pimachiowin Aki as an exceptional example of the biodiversity and ecological processes of the entire North American boreal shield, an ecozone that covers almost 20 per cent of Canada.

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How much of it the report is new material?

In order to present a stronger Anishinaabe voice, this nomination contains more quotes and stories from our communities. There are more maps that show cultural sites (ancient rock paintings, cabins and campsites, travel routes, traplines, etc.). There are also more maps illustrating natural features (rivers and wetlands, caribou habitat and large-area ecosystems, etc).

The document has also been updated to reflect activities since the 2012 submission. For example, our First Nations and provincial government teams are now implementing First Nation land use plans and starting tourism training initiatives.

A completely revised cultural comparative analysis was required as a result of using different cultural criteria. The natural cultural comparative analysis was updated as well. In addition, the Management Plan for the nominated area was updated.

What physically gets sent to Paris?

The revised 260-page nomination document and all of the supporting documentation that was included with the 2012 nomination package, including background studies, published works, display maps and photographic materials. The complete nomination package is about 4000 pages.

Can I get a copy of it?

The nomination will be available on-line at www.pimachiowinaki.org in early March once the World Heritage Center confirms the nomination has been accepted.

Who worked on this submission?

The Pimachiowin Aki Corporation led the development of this revised proposal. The members of the Corporation are:

- The Anishinaabe First Nations of Poplar River, Pikangikum, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi and Bloodvein River;
- The province of Manitoba (Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship)
- The province of Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry)

A team of specialists from across Canada with expertise in cultural anthropology, archaeology, ecology, community planning, editing and cartography were key participants in developing the nomination.

Parks Canada, the federal agency responsible for leading Canada's implementation of the World Heritage Convention, provided close advice and guidance in preparing this nomination.

We also sought advice from:

- the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
- the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS);
- and recognized Canadian experts in World Heritage.

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What's different this time in the way this will be considered by the WHC?

The evaluation of the revised nomination will follow the established process used in 2012-13. The World Heritage Committee's decision to defer the Pimachiowin Aki nomination in 2012 generated significant international attention about representing indigenous cultural landscapes on the World Heritage List. We expect the World Heritage Committee to be particularly receptive and interested in the new nomination, now.

The World Heritage Committee recognized that our First Nations and government partnership made "exemplary efforts" in developing the nomination. The World Parks Congress - the most influential gathering of conservation leaders in the world - showcased the Pimachiowin Aki initiative (in 2014) as a proud example of collaboration in achieving conservation gains.

If inscribed, Pimachiowin Aki would be one of only a few large scale indigenous cultural landscapes on the World Heritage List.

How much did it cost to prepare the new bid?

It cost about \$320,000 to develop the new nomination, including the cost of hosting the UNESCO Advisory Mission in 2013. The Pimachiowin Aki Corporation's financial statements are included in annual reports posted a www.pimachiowinaki.org

For more information see www.pimachiowinaki.org or contact:

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