



February 9, 2007

Honourable Gary Doer
Premier of Manitoba

Manitoba Government Cabinet Ministers:

Honourable Steve Ashton, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Honourable David Walter Chomiak, Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Honourable Oscar Lathlin, Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs
Honourable Rosann Wowchuk, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
Honourable Gord Mackintosh, Minister of Family Services and Housing
Honourable Eric Robinson, Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism
Honourable Diane McGifford, Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy
Honourable Ron Lemieux, Minister of Infrastructure & Transportation
Honourable Gregory F. Selinger, Minister of Finance
Honourable Scott Smith, Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade
Honourable Stan Struthers, Minister of Conservation
Honourable Nancy Allan, Minister of Labour and Immigration
Honourable Jim Rondeau, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines
Honourable Peter Bjornson, Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth
Honourable Christine Melnick, Minister of Water Stewardship
Honourable Theresa Oswald, Minister of Health
Honourable Kerri Irvin-Ross, Minister responsible for Healthy Living

Dear Premier Doer, Manitoba Cabinet Ministers;

Re: *Parks Act* Regulation for Permanent Protection of the Poplar-Nanowin Rivers Protected Area

We would like to ask for your support for a very important issue that will be brought forward for consideration by Cabinet soon: a regulation under the *Parks Act* for permanent protection of the Poplar-Nanowin Rivers Protected Area. We ask that you honour the Poplar River First Nation's request for the permanent protection of this area under the *Parks Act*.

The Poplar-Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve has been protected on an interim basis since 1999. Your government renewed that interim protection in 2004 – to allow completion of the lands management plan. Poplar River and four other First Nations are signatory to 2002 Accord that commits them to support one another and work together in a shared vision of protecting and conserving the ancestral lands and resources of their respective First Nations. Poplar River is the first of the Accord First Nations in Manitoba to complete a lands management plan and we honour their accomplishment. Their plan represents years of dedication, hard work and an unwavering commitment to the vision of Poplar River's Elders.



Permanent protection of the Poplar River's Park Reserve is critical for implementation of their lands plan, as well as achieving inscription for the proposed Protected Area World Heritage Site (which encompasses Poplar River First Nation lands). The Manitoba Government has repeatedly and publicly articulated its support for the proposed World Heritage Site and at least three Manitoba Cabinet Ministers have made the traditional lands commitment to the Poplar River First Nation community that your government will act to permanently protect their traditional lands as requested as part of their lands plan.

Over a year has elapsed since Poplar River released the *Asatiwisipe Aki Lands Management Plan* and informed your government that the community was ready to move forward with the final steps to secure permanent protection for their lands. We appreciate the steps already taken by the Government of Manitoba in support of Poplar River's goals and we are confident your government will honour its commitment to Poplar River. This will be an important day for members of Poplar River, and for all Manitobans. Your government will be demonstrating respect for a First Nation's commitment to manage and steward traditional lands as part of a comprehensive land use plan. You will also signal to the global community that Manitobans value their boreal forests and the ecological goods and services they provide.

Our time on the land and in the community with Poplar River First Nation leaves us both certain that you will be taking a step that is of international importance. This First Nation has been on this path, moved by their vision for the future of the boreal forest, for twenty years. We urge you to act soon.

Manitoba Cabinet action to sign this regulation will show that the Government of Manitoba keeps its promises to First Nations and will result in the long-awaited permanent protection of the Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Protected Area.

We look forward to celebrating this momentous occasion with Poplar River First Nation and the Province of Manitoba!

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