

## **WABANONG NAKAYGUM OKIMAWIN (WNO)**

- The WNO is made up of 16 First Nations on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and five other members representing the Métis and general public. It is developing traditional land-use plans and broad area plan for the east side.
- The WNO Council of Chiefs was established to address issues specific to First Nations on the east side.
- WNO Inc. is made up of representatives from the Council of Chiefs and was established by the WNO Council of Chiefs to oversee funds used for traditional land-use planning.

### **Genesis of WNO**

- In 2000, the Government of Manitoba announced its acceptance of the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation Report. The report recommended the implementation of sustainable development include the creation of broad area plans across the province.
- Broad area plans ensure future land, resource and development decisions address the environmental, social, health, cultural and economic needs of the public, local communities, First Nations and various stakeholders and interest groups. They ensure the best, most responsible and safe plan is put into place.
- The government selected the East Side of Lake Winnipeg as a pilot initiative for broad area planning. This region was chosen for two primary reasons.
  1. The east side of Lake Winnipeg is a unique region of the province containing a vast expanse of undeveloped, contiguous boreal forest. The northern and southern edges of the forest are currently threatened as a result of global warming.
  2. It is a region with communities that do not have access to the transportation networks and economic opportunities that most Manitobans take for granted. In many of these communities, people pay as much as three times more for basic food items. Many of these communities rely on winter roads, roads also threatened by global warming.

### **Landmark Dates**

- In 2000, the province launched the East Side Planning Initiative (EPSI) to bring together local communities, First Nations, industry and environmental organizations to develop a vision for land and resource use in the area. The vision would reflect both the value and sustainability of the boreal forest and surrounding ecosystem and the needs of local communities. It was expected the east side process would result in an overall blueprint for the area that will address the boreal forest, protected areas, traditional activities, transportation needs and economic development.

- In 2004, a status report entitled *Promises to Keep* was submitted to government with over 100 recommendations including recommendations for boreal protection and community development. Work continued of broad area plan.
- In 2005, the name of ESPI was changed to Wabanong Nakaygum Okimawin (WNO) to better reflect First Nations people on the east side of Lake Winnipeg who make up about 96 per cent of the population.
- In 2007, the province signed a transfer agreement with First Nations on the east side. First Nations on the east side will receive \$500,000 per year for five years for traditional land-use planning. An accord was also signed between the province and First Nations confirming a government-to-government relationship.
- Traditional land-use planning commenced.

### **East Side of Lake Winnipeg Facts**

- The area included in the east side of Lake Winnipeg, defined by the broad area plan, is in excess of 83,000 square kilometres.
- About 40 per cent of the east side is covered in boreal forest.
- About 96 per cent of the East Side Population are First Nation's people – on and off reserve:
  - There are 16 First Nation communities on the east side: Berens River First Nation, Bloodvein First Nation, Bunibonibee Cree Nation, Garden Hill First Nation, God's Lake First Nation, Hollow Water First Nation, Black River First Nation, Little Grand Rapids, Manto Sipi Cree Nation, Norway House Cree Nation, Pauingassi First Nation, Poplar River First Nation, Red Sucker Lake First Nation, Sagkeeng First Nation, St. Theresa Point First Nation and Wasagamack First Nation.
  - Non-First Nations communities include: Northern Association of Community Councils, Aghaming, Berens River, Bissett, Gods Lake Narrows, Island Lake C.C., Little Grand Rapids, Loon Straits, Manigotagan, Matheson Island, Norway House, Oxford House, Pine Dock, Princess Harbour, Red Sucker Lake, Seymourville, Manitoba Métis Federation, Thompson region, Red Sucker Lake, Norway House, Garden Hill, southeast region, Powerview, Manigotagan, Seymourville, Berens River, Interlake region and Matheson Island.