

## **ALGONQUINS OF ONTARIO CONTINUE EFFORTS**

The Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) expressed disappointment that KNL Developments, the City of Ottawa and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture failed to accommodate the recent request by the AOO to undertake an updated archaeological study prior to tree cutting operations on the KNL lands north of the Kanata Beaver Pond.

These lands are located within Algonquin Traditional Territory which is the subject of land claim negotiations between the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario and the Algonquins of Ontario.

Over the course of the last few months, the AOO have been increasingly concerned by the divergent opinions on the presence or absence of aboriginal artifacts within these lands.

In mid-January the Algonquins of Ontario engaged the services of Groupe de recherche archéologique de l'Outaouais (GRAO) to conduct an independent review of existing documentation and to provide recommendations for next steps, for the protection of any aboriginal artifacts that may exist on KNL lands.

Last Friday, the AOO received the report from Groupe de recherche archéologique de l'Outaouais (GRAO). Based on their review, GRAO advised that:

*"the rocky upland areas of the proposed development can no longer be ignored as of low archaeological potential. They should be considered to be of high potential for occupation by early postglacial populations"*

Robert Potts, Principal Negotiator for the AOO repeated today that "there is a high potential for the presence of pre-contact aboriginal occupation and therefore, an increased likelihood of locating artifacts on the KNL lands." Mr. Potts stated that the AOO respect the private property rights of KNL Developments, but underscored that "if aboriginal artifacts exist it is crucial that these resources be preserved and respected in a manner consistent with Algonquin traditions."

The AOO continue to reinforce their appeals to KNL Developments, the City, and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to revisit the archaeological study completed in August, 2003. Mr. Potts emphasized that the AOO are continuing to keep lines of communication open with all parties. In addition, GRAO is continuing their efforts on behalf of the AOO to examine existing information to refine the identification of specific areas for high potential of archaeological artifacts on KNL Lands.

Mr. Potts acknowledged the efforts of the many people who have gathered together in peaceful demonstration to protect the Beaver Pond Forest. However, Mr. Potts noted that within the framework of negotiations with the Government of Canada and Province of Ontario the AOO have agreed to respect private property interests. Mr. Potts added "but when aboriginal artifacts may be threatened on private lands the AOO have reserved the right to act appropriately to protect those artifacts."

The Algonquins of Ontario represent over 10,000 electors, plus dependents in 10 communities throughout the Traditional Territory. The mandate of the 16 elected Algonquin Negotiation Representatives (ANRs) includes developing and implementing the principles of an Algonquin Treaty that is being negotiated with the governments of Canada and Ontario.

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