



WILLIAMS TREATIES FIRST NATIONS

COMMUNIQUE

19th August 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WILD RICE - PIGEON LAKE, ON - TREATY 20 TERRITORY

The Williams Treaties First Nations have existing Aboriginal rights and interests to harvest for food, social and ceremonial purposes in the Treaty 20 area.

On August 18, 2015, members of the Alderville First Nation observed two mechanical harvesting machines on Pigeon Lake, ON. cutting and removing wild rice and beds from the Lake. The Pigeon Lake is within the Treaty 20 tract and traditional territories of First Nations party to the Williams Treaties.

Urgent notification was made to the Williams Treaties First Nations (WTFN) on the issue and communications between WTFN and the Trent Severn Waterway – Parks Canada (TSW) commenced immediately.

It has been confirmed that TSW issued a permit to ‘harvest’ under a ‘Pilot Project’ to landowner(s) on the lakefront. The WTFN argue that the constitutional nature of their rights imposes a duty to consult on the issuance of a permit and demanded cessation of activity and consultation.

TSW agreed to voluntarily cease ‘harvesting’ and remove the machines from the lake until a meeting to discuss the issue is held between the WTFN and the TSW on the matter.

The Chiefs of the WTFN will be meeting with the Director of TSW and Parks Canada representatives to discuss and resolve the matter. We will continue to provide updates to the community as developments arise.