

# **Update on Treaty #3 Veterinary Infrastructure Program**

## **Surplus Wild Deer Pilot Harvest Program Dog Control Program**

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# Treaty #3 Veterinary Infrastructure Program

Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3, Lac des Milles Lacs First Nation, Mr. Percy Bird, and Dr. Richard Herbert

## Background:

An understanding of veterinary infrastructure services, and how the lack of these services affect First Nations, was introduced to Treaty #3 by veterinarian, Dr. Richard Herbert, and Mr. Percy Bird. The root causes of out-of-control dog populations, public health issues related to dogs (rabies, biting, family violence, etc.), nuisance wildlife control problems, the lack of meat inspection structures to ensure disease-free traditional foods (wild meat and fish), and the root causes for the lack of negotiated protocols to enable Ontario First Nations to manage, harvest, and retail wildlife as a part of a sustainable community economic infrastructure were introduced. At the centre of each of these problems was the lack of one or more veterinary services. These missing services form the infrastructure (framework) from which solutions for these problems can be built; they form a veterinary infrastructure.

Through discussions, a pilot First Nation veterinary infrastructure initiative was developed. This pilot program included the development of a wild deer harvest/retail industry, a nuisance wildlife harvest/retail industry, and a dog control program. The pilot program was sponsored by the Lac Des Mille Lacs First Nation. Lac Des Mille Lacs realized that the economic development aspect of the veterinary infrastructure initiative was a Treaty #3 issue and presented the proposal to Grand Council Treaty #3. In October, 2005 Grand Council Treaty #3 resolved to support the development of a veterinary infrastructure within Treaty #3 (Resolution # CA0513). However, with Treaty #3 governance support came a new dimension to the First Nation veterinary infrastructure initiative. It could be used to pilot sustainable economic development for a Treaty #3 First Nation economy. It could pioneer the reestablishment of traditional trade and commerce.

Lac Des Mille Lacs First Nation now spearheads the development of a First Nation veterinary infrastructure program for the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 that itself is has been proposed for use in the development of an elder-guided, tribal-based, traditional trade and commerce infrastructure upon which an economy can be based. The management, harvest, and retail of wild deer meat and its by-product industries was the pilot program recognized as able to fuel culturally-defined tribal business development in Treaty #3. When developed, the proposed deer veterinary infrastructure can be reproduced with other species of surplus wildlife in virtually any region of Ontario and Canada. These wildlife harvest infrastructures plus other First Nation industries (banking, logging, inland fisheries, etc.) will function through a reestablished tribal business trade and commerce framework. Well-developed sustainable wild meat and fish industries alone will result in 100's to 1,000's of jobs and prosperity within Treaty #3.

## Update:

### 1/ Wild Deer Harvest Infrastructure:

The wild deer harvest infrastructure is at an early planning stage. Three funding proposals were submitted to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) by Lac Des Mille Lacs some time ago. These proposals are supported by Ogichidaa Arnold Gardner, the Grand Assembly of the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3, and Ontario Regional Chief Angus Toulouse of the Chiefs of Ontario. INAC is currently resisting funding the proposal as it not part of their economic planning priority. These proposals are under appeal. Unfortunately, there was a large delay in this process due to the Federal election.

The national consultation process was developed and a funding proposal submitted to the Northern

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Ontario Heritage Funding Corporation (NOHFC) in January, 2006. The consultation process purposed to obtain guidance from all authority levels within Treaty #3 for the development of wildlife-based traditional trade and commerce business system. The NOHFC is resisting the funding proposal for several reasons, including that they have never done it before. The proposal is under appeal.

A proposal was submitted for guidance from Shooniyaa-Wa Biitong in January, 2006. Unfortunately, Shooniyaa was unable to fund any aspect of the consultation process with its current mandate and the regional nature of the veterinary infrastructure development program.

The Bimose Tribal Council was approached and a presentation given on trade and commerce development and the role of the regional tribal council in April, 2006

The surplus wild deer pilot project gained the support of Ontario Regional Chief Angus Tolouse of the Chiefs of Ontario in February, 2006. We are lobbying National Chief Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of First Nations. We are also in the midst of preparing for presentation to lobby the Chiefs of the Political Confederacy later in May, 2006.

In March, 2006 we merged the wild deer pilot program from the First Nation veterinary infrastructure program with the reestablishment of trade and commerce needs in Treaty #3. We found and have expanded on the fact that the pilot wild deer program can fuel the reestablishment of trade and commerce in Treaty #3.

### 2/ Dog Control Veterinary Infrastructure:

The veterinary infrastructure's dog control program is less dependent on government funding and so has progressed at a quicker pace. There are four groups of infrastructure services needed for a complete Treaty #3 dog control infrastructure. They are; public education, bylaw regulation, bylaw enforcement, and veterinary infrastructure services. The dog control infrastructure has a number of new services available for Treaty #3 communities. In the public education infrastructure, three in-community training workshops on the importance of dog control are available: A half day rabies workshop, a full day dog public health workshop, and a two day dog control infrastructure workshop.

The dog control veterinary service infrastructure has available for its use a new veterinary hospital already providing emergency and surgical (spay/neuter) services. The hospital is located at the western edge of Fort Frances. Attached to the hospital is a mobile veterinary unit. This mobile unit has already commenced bringing dog and cat wellness services into some First Nation communities. These wellness services are currently focussed on dog-related public health issues, including; rabies prevention, parasite control, humane euthanasia, and more. **More work needs to be done so communities are aware that solutions are available for their dog control issues.**

Current development work in the dog control infrastructure program focuses on both the public health and the bylaw enforcement infrastructure services. A small degree of discussion has occurred with the Treaty #3 police and a paper outlining dog control strategies within Treaty #3 has been prepared.

Finally, a distance education program for human society/animal control officer training has been found and the United Native Friendship Centre has funded tuition/book costs for Dr. Herbert's staff person's enrollment into the two level 4-16 month distance education program. This educational training

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will begin preparation for the development of an animal control program to support Treaty #3 police and bylaw enforcement.

### 3/ Information and Accountability:

The Treaty #3 veterinary infrastructure program established a newsletter to both inform and be accountable to the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3. The first newsletter was dated January 9, 2006 and distributed to every community and major organization within Treaty #3.

We presented an update of the emerging trade and commerce aspect of the program at the March, 2006 Grand Council Meeting in Winnipeg.

A frequently asked questions and answers paper was prepared in April, 2006 to help our leaders to be accountable in an informed manner.

### **Issues:**

Settler governments never anticipated that hunting and fishing would become valuable international trading commodities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They appropriated lumber and minerals but clearly left us with our avocations of hunting and fishing. Both Federal and Provincial governments are very aware that we have a right to sell what we hunt and fish. They just never explained that we simply need to build our paperwork trail of protocols to harmonize with the global economy's regulation system. However, the sleeping giant has awakened and both Federal and Provincial governments have taken notice. In this regard, it is most likely **too late to back down from our pilot surplus deer harvest program without these governments discovering a way to close the door permanently.**

We have submitted funding initiatives to INAC and NOHFC for various aspects of the project. However, the bare minimum need initially is two individuals working together to develop technical and adaptive support for 2-3 years; one veterinarian (technical) and one citizen (adaptive). This would start the paper protocol pathway to harmonization with global markets. The rest can literally build off these two individuals using what we already have, as needs arise. It is possible that not either the Federal government or the Provincial government will fund any aspect of the early work on the deer pilot project. It may well be seen as a threat to their sovereignty. However, we must continue to hold them accountable by pursuing appeal processes and watchdog organizations. In this regard, we need written, vocal, and functional support from our leaders. Ultimately, these governments will need to capitulate with the funding or categorically deny our nations' prosperity. In either event, we would have valuable tools to work with.

Our Elders' teachings indicate that **everything we need to rebuild our nation is already here.** We should start with what we have; Elder guidance, Treaty rights, governance structures, communities, and citizens. Federal and Provincial governments have and will continue to bog us down, if we wait for them to rescue us with funds. So, we must also have enough finance somewhere to get this pilot project's technical and adaptive processes moving so we can reestablish our trade and commerce infrastructure. We can not let funding issues kill this opportunity to finance nationhood.

Our citizens our caught in a grip of poverty that we can release them from. We can not continue as we have been. We must start the process of change. Once started, it will finish. Left unstarted, it will never happen.