

Re-establishing Traditional Trade and Commerce

Proposed Surplus Wild Deer Pilot Harvest Program

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Preface:

Re-establishing Traditional Trade and Commerce: Proposed Surplus Wild Deer Pilot Harvest Program was written as a submission to the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 as an aid to explain the significance of traditional harvest lifestyles in sustainable economic development. The proposed pilot harvest program utilize a veterinary infrastructure to enable modern traditional harvest lifestyles.

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Submitted to:

- The Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3

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Re-establishing Traditional Trade and Commerce: Proposed Surplus Wild Deer Pilot Harvest Program
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Opening Statement

It is important we have a common understanding and vision when we speak the words, “re-establishing traditional trade and commerce”. Trade and commerce is economic development that has been completed. Trade and commerce functions on its own and self-sustains. In this regard, trade and commerce is sustainable economic development. If trade and commerce is a sustainable finished economic development, then trade and commerce must be the economy. When a nation’s economy is prosperous, then the nation is prosperous.

“Traditional” trade and commerce would be an economy based on traditional spiritual and moral teaching of the Elders. Ownership, ethics, motivations, goals, roles, and all other values that could underlie business performed in the traditional economy would not conflict with the teachings of the Elders. Traditional trade and commerce may or may not be based upon the harvested use of the land and its wildlife. Traditional trade and commerce could not be owned by a person or corporation. It would be owned by Nation communities and their members.

The “re-establishing” of traditional trade and commerce would then be the rebuilding of traditional trade and commerce. To rebuild to the point of re-establishing lost trade and commerce would suggest that the re-established traditional trade and commerce would form the foundation of the Nation’s economy and therefore its prosperity.

This paper has been developed to share our understanding on nation rebuilding through the traditional sustainable harvest and trade of surplus wild deer. However, all traditional wildlife-related roles can be embraced within a traditional trade and commerce infrastructure to provide for our national needs.

Fundamental to the international trade of meat, fish, and fur is a regulatory framework to ensure product quality and safety. Standards were developed and are now regulated for established industries, such as beef, chicken, lobster, and *etc.*, by veterinarians. A vast veterinary network exists locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally to ensure the global quality and safety of animal products. This network, its regulations and protocols, is the “veterinary infrastructure” involved in the retail of animal products. For our nations to trade with a traditional harvest of wildlife, they must develop their own wildlife veterinary infrastructure and harmonize it with the existing global veterinary infrastructure. Obviously, this type of “First Nation” veterinary infrastructure is not about dogs and cats. It is about the writing and enacting of wildlife management, harvest, dressing, handling, transport, packaging, retail, and shipping protocols, regulations, and agreements for the international trade of sustainably harvested wildlife. Much of the wildlife veterinary infrastructure needed already exists in one form or another. It simply needs to be “papered” together.

As you will see in this paper, the development of the proposed surplus wild deer harvest pilot project will drive the re-establishment of traditional trade and commerce.

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Introduction:

Traditional trade and commerce roles and industries in our nations have virtually been wiped out and replaced by looking to jobs for provision and prosperity. Life revolves around jobs and the wages they bring into the home and community. Remove the jobs and our nations, including the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3, are left without a national trade and commerce foundation to adapt their economy for the continued pursuit of prosperity and self-sufficiency. In fact, with the passing of time and the encroachment of settler nations upon our people, ways of life, and the management of our natural resources, there are no remnants left of our former trade and commerce structures and roles. We are left, by trade and commerce measurements, with the shell of our governance structures, rights, communities, and citizens.

Our Elders carry the knowledge we need to re-establish our traditional trade and commerce. We begin here because the Elders teachings indicate that everything we need to rebuild our Nation is already here¹. Social development agreements, federal and provincial transfer agreements, treasury boards, and other similar initiatives are part of our function as a nation. But our national agenda must be balanced with a deliberate effort to recover the basic societal foundational structures inherent in our traditional, citizen-owned, trade and commerce institutions, industries, customs, laws, practices, protocols, and every other mechanism and structure which define our nationhood and our ability to provide for our people and communities. We need to have direct input concerning our destiny. Roles are jobs “owned” by our people. We do not need jobs, we need roles. We believe this proposed surplus wild deer harvest pilot project provides a hands-on example that illustrates steps and processes to build a sustainable national economy on roles in place of jobs. We start with what we have; Elder guidance, rights, governance structures, communities, and citizens.

Preparation:

There are two streams of activity for a successful transition to Nation prosperity through re-establishing our trade and commerce infrastructure: One, the re-established infrastructure and its industries must be prepared and GIVEN to the Nation. The other, the Nation must be prepared for RECEIVING the infrastructure and its industries. Giving preparation will, for the most part, be technical support and need outside professionals to develop. Receiving preparation, for the most part, will be adaptive support and need nation guides and training to enable a revival of traditional roles. If we build a business and train Nation citizens to operate the different functions in the business, we will simply create another set of interim jobs and fail at transitioning to sustained economic prosperity. However, if we build businesses, roles in businesses, and roles in governance based on traditional values, we will prepare the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 to receive Nation-owned industries. In doing so, the Nation will once again be able to direct its own economy and destiny.

¹ Leon Jourdain (2000) Pazaga'owin - Reclaiming our Wings: Transition to Nationhood. Grand Chief Treaty #3. Kenora, Ontario, Canada. (807-548-4214).

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Consultation:

The traditional base upon which to build both the technical and adaptive support will be discovered through a national Elder consultation process in Treaty #3. The key to this process is to consult Elders and have their guidance brought in consultation format to each of the remaining four authority structures in the nation.

- the authority of the community and its members,
- the authority of specialized councils and nation organizations,
- the practical organizational authority of regional tribal areas
- the legislative authority of the grand council.

These consultations are absolutely fundamental for the development of a traditional Nation business base in Treaty #3. They will provide a template upon which successful adaptation of citizen, tribal business, regional tribal council industry, and Treaty #3 governance roles can be initiated. Consultation will also provide the guidance templates for successful technical preparations of the respectful harvest and use of the land and its wildlife for sustainable prosperity.

The Pilot Program:

Consultation will provide information for Anishinaabe-defined roles, businesses, and industries but to begin the process we need a pilot project. It is the pilot project that identifies a need for a role but it is the consultation that gives definition to that role. This will all happen as the pilot project works its way through the four levels of authority. The pilot project is the mechanism of change whose mandate is to restore the national foundation for roles, businesses, and industries. In this way, the proposed pilot project will pioneer the development of business structures and their industries. The business network that is re-established by the pioneer pilot project can be used to establish other new and vibrant economic activity streams within the Nation. Re-established business and marketing networks, structures and protocols will be linked to the Canadian business mainstream and global international markets. This re-established national trade and commerce engine will provide Treaty # 3 governances with the regulatory framework, structures, and the financial capital to effectively monitor and manage our economic prosperity and the destiny of a revived Nation.

The pilot project needs to meet certain requirements to have enough power to pioneer all that is in front of us. First, it needs to start with what we have. In this regard, we have rights to our avocations of hunting and fishing. The pilot project has to have the maximum economic development, revenue, multiple industry, and role potential possible. It should be something that no one else is currently doing so we are not fighting to take it from another group. Finally, it should have a very firm Nation cultural and historical foundation to make its development both technically and adaptively easier.

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Lac Des Mille Lac First Nation had introduced and spearheaded early development of a First Nation veterinary infrastructure project within Treaty #3. That project intersected with the Economic Development portfolio of Treaty #3. Surplus wild deer in Treaty # 3 had been presented as a natural sustainable resource for a harvest program within the veterinary infrastructure project. The derivative wild deer industry also represented a perfect pilot project to begin re-establishing traditional trade and commerce.

The surplus wild deer project promises strong economic development projections and is based on our rights. It is a new industry that no one else owns. Deer harvest has a firm Nation cultural and historical foundation, can support multiple industries (meat, tanning, and garment) with annual revenue potentials from \$20-60 million dollars, and will facilitate 400 to 1200 role positions. As a template project, it can potentially serve as a pilot project model for similar developments with our nations across Canada. Finally, there exists a huge surplus of deer within the Treaty #3 region (and Canada) that needs to be harvest managed; annually an additional 10-30,000 deer in Treaty # 3 alone. The Treaty # 3 wild deer project can pilot a major industry and pathway for the re-establishment of traditional trade and commerce in our nations across Canada.

Our right to hunt is grounded in our inherent, international, legislated, and treaty rights. Our inherent rights are based in traditional law and our physical presence on ancestral land. International rights are seated with the United Nations which recognizes the aboriginal right to harvest and internationally retail wildlife species that are not categorized as endangered. Legislated rights would primarily be found in the Canadian Constitution Act and the Indian Act. And finally, treaty rights which are fairly universal in their guarantee of hunting and fishing rights within a contractual format. The proposed deer pilot project is firmly rooted in our right to hunt; including existing treaty rights and the implementation of terms within the treaty. It is worth taking a few moments to reinforce some of these rights.

The harvest and retail of surplus deer is no different then exercising our trapping and fishing rights. These rights come from the same place in the treaty. During the signing of Treaty # 3, the Crown was intent on securing logging and mining rights. Wildlife was not seen as a marketable resource that could contribute substantially to an economy. Subsequently, aboriginal title to wildlife within Treaty # 3 was not contested as a Treaty issue on the part of the Canadian government.

“...Her Majesty further agrees with Her said Indians that they, the said Indians, shall have right to pursue their avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the tract of land surrendered as hereinbefore described...”

This “official” Treaty # 3 text outlines a right to our “avocations” of hunting and fishing. Avocations refers to *1) a person’s regular occupation; 2) a minor or occasional occupation or hobby*². Clearly, our avocations include hunting and fishing as part of the right to our traditional

² The Random House College Dictionary; Revised edition. (1975) Random House Inc.. New York, New York.

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way of life. The pursuit of these avocations include the harvest and trade of wild game (deer) and their by-products just as surely as it includes trapping and pelt retail.

The Indian Act also recognizes a First Nation role in the management of wildlife and the authority of the Treaty.

Section 81 of the Act: (1) The council of a band may make by-laws not inconsistent with this Act or with any other regulation made by the Governor in Council or the Minister, for any or all of the following purposes, namely,...
(O) the preservation, protection and management of fur-bearing animals, fish and other game on the reserve;

Section 88 of the Act: Subject to the terms of any treaty and any other Act of Parliament, all laws of general application from time to time in force in any province are applicable to and in respect of Indians in the province, except to the extent that those laws are inconsistent with this Act or any order, rule, regulation or by-law made thereunder, and except to the extent that those laws make provision for any matter for which provision is made by or under this Act.

Starting with our rights, the proposed surplus deer harvest pilot project is able to generate a large amount of economic development, revenue, industry, and roles. The proposed pilot project is founded on principles of creation, not competition, so there is no struggle to take something from another group. Most importantly, the proposed project is firmly rooted in our culture and heritage principles, teachings, and practice.

The proposed surplus wild deer harvest program from the Treaty #3 veterinary infrastructure development meets all the requirements of a pilot project capable of pioneering the re-establishment of traditional trade and commerce for the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3.

Expansion of Trade and Commerce:

The same traditional trade and commerce framework established with the surplus wild deer harvest pilot project, can be used for the future development of an inland fishery, to market lumber, harvest other surplus wildlife, and etc.. The economic and employment windfall of developing a culturally-defined, tribal-based, national trade and commerce infrastructure for sustainable economic development in Treaty #3 alone, is staggering; \$150-250,000,000. All newly developed veterinary, wildlife, and tribal business infrastructures can be adapted to share prosperity with the rest of our nations in Canada. Conservative estimates suggest a 39-65 billion dollar annual windfall across Canada.

Challenges of Change:

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The scope and magnitude of the change that will be introduced with the re-establishment of traditional trade and commerce, its revenue potential, and its ensuing economic prosperity is, at first glance, staggering. However, the re-establishment of traditional trade and commerce will be a process guided by the Elders of the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 and will result in tradition-based industries, businesses, roles, and profits that are owned by the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3. Citizens, communities, Chiefs and councils, regional tribal councils, and Treaty #3 governance will assume their roles in the process, the management, and the ownership of the prosperity it will bring.

It is important to note that existing structures and employment positions will not be displaced by this new development. No one need worry about their current role or the organization they work within. The developing traditional trade and commerce structures are not about re-defining existing roles, it is about re-establishing forgotten roles in trade and commerce, revenue generation streams, and economic prosperity.

Conclusion:

Traditional trade and commerce within Treaty #3 is virtually non-existent. Roles represented by our pre-contact economy were displaced by jobs over time. Unfortunately, these jobs have all but disappeared.

Jobs are formed within a business that someone else owns. While a region may have an industry, that industry is developed through businesses that use the region's resources. If businesses close, the region quickly loses jobs and the industry associated with those closing businesses. Roles, and the industries they support, cannot be lost because roles belong to a region. Non-native communities are beginning to feel job loss for the same reason; their regions do not own their industries, a business does. With a mill closure in Kenora, the region quickly learned it does not own the logging industry. The same pattern is happening all over Canada. Non-native communities are also beginning to look for a solution. The solution is traditional trade and commerce. Traditional trade and commerce replaces jobs with roles, corporate ownership with community ownership, INAC funding with trade and commerce revenue, and it replaces Federal dependency with independence, all within an Elder-guided traditional business system.

The tribal-owned, Elder guided business system that will evolve from the re-establishment of traditional trade and commerce within Treaty #3 will be of benefit to every citizen within Treaty #3. It also has the ability to act as a development guide for the re-establishment of trade and commerce for other nations across Canada. Our newly emerging traditional trade and commerce systems may even provide solutions to non-native communities seeking innovative citizen-owned, community-managed, economies in times of economic crises.