



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Robinson Huron Chiefs object to Treaty Territory Infringement**

**Tues., March 4, 2020 (Ottawa, ON)** – At a meeting of Chiefs from the Robinson Huron Treaty territory, the Robinson Huron Waawiindaamaagewin (RHW) issued letters of objection to the governments of Ontario and Canada regarding treaty territory infringement.

“Canada and Ontario know that our treaty-protected rights have been, and continue to be eroded by colonial settler governments stepping outside of the spirit and intent of our nation-to-nation, treaty relationship without a mandate,” said Chief Dean Sayers, spokesperson for the RHW. “The honour of the Crown and our sacred agreements must be upheld.”

There are a number of groups that are or have been in negotiations with Ontario and Canada that are infringing on RHT territory. There has been no consent/permission sought from RHT rights holders.

“We require that all colonial settler governments respect our unextinguished jurisdictions and further require that all colonial settler governments obtain our consent/permission. As the underlying title holders to our lands, our consent/permission has not been sought through any of these processes,” said Chief Sayers. “We assert our sovereignty and we cannot have Canada or Ontario negotiating with other groups that infringe on our rights in our territory.”

The RHW issued a resolution today to the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario on this issue. The full text of this resolution is attached to this press release.

In a separate process, following traditional protocols, RHW is approaching all neighbouring First Nations and treaty organizations to discuss any overlapping treaty boundary issues and access to shared harvesting territories. The RHW does not recognize Métis in the RH treaty territory as having any land rights.

--30--

**For Media Interviews:**

Chief Dean Sayers  
Email: [chiefdeansayers@batchewana.ca](mailto:chiefdeansayers@batchewana.ca)  
Phone: 705-257-1696

**For More Information:**

Earl Commanda, Executive Director, RHW  
Email: [earlc@mamaweswen.ca](mailto:earlc@mamaweswen.ca)  
Phone: 613-324-0768

Please see attached information sheet for more details on the Robinson Huron Waawiindaamaagewin and the Robinson Huron Treaty.



## Information Sheet

### **About Robinson Huron Waawiindaamaagewin**

Established in 2017, the Robinson Huron Waawiindaamaagewin (RHW) is an organization comprised of 21 Treaty Partners along the north and east shore of Lake Huron, the eastern shore of Lake Superior, and Manitoulin island.

RHW was created to exercise assertion of inherent rights and reclamation of governance to address, at minimum, but not limited to, collective relevant jurisdictional issues and concerns including overlapping territorial claims, protection of land and water in the treaty territory, and annuities.

RHW also conducts treaty-based research, facilitates community engagement in RHT communities on treaty-related matters, and develops treaty education tools including detailed GIS mapping of the treaty area. For more information on the RHW, please visit [www.rht.mamaweswen.com](http://www.rht.mamaweswen.com)

### **About the Robinson Huron Treaty**

This sacred treaty was signed in 1850 between 17 Gimaak (leaders) representing Anishinaabek along the northern shore of Lake Huron, eastern Lake Superior, and the British Crown.

This treaty outlines key roles and responsibilities for both treaty partners.

1. The treaty guarantees that each Anishinaabek community would continue to occupy the land in their territory and that it would be available for their exclusive use while sharing the land and allowing British settlement and some resource development.
2. The treaty guarantees traditional harvesting (hunting and fishing) rights and unrestricted access as well as acknowledging the full extent of the RHW reserved jurisdictions, title and inherent rights, including but not limited to lands, water, air, education, language and culture, jurisdiction, health, citizenship and justice.
3. Finally, to partially compensate for the sharing of land and resources with the British, the treaty promises an annual annuity (initially set at \$2 per person then raised to \$4 per person) as an ongoing payment to treaty annuitants. The amount of those annuities was tied to the productivity of the land that was the subject of the treaty. These annuities have never been increased.

In 2014, the treaty signatories filed a Statement of Claim against Canada and Ontario due to the longstanding breach of the Treaty in what is known as the Robinson Huron treaty annuities case. In 2018, Ontario superior court ruled in favour of the plaintiffs who represent RHT First Nations.

For more information on the Robinson Huron Treaty (including the full treaty text) and the annuities case, please visit [www.rht1850.ca](http://www.rht1850.ca)

## **Current Issues**

### ***Overlapping Claims/Boundary Issues***

RHW has informed the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario that it must respect the RHW's insistence on seeking consent. They cannot negotiate with any non-Robinson Huron Treaty Chiefs or organizations regarding any actions or decisions that may affect RHW rights or infringe on RHT territory.

There are several First Nations, treaty organizations and land claim negotiating teams that have included or are intending to include RHT territory in their negotiations/land claims. RHT Chiefs have informed other organizations that they are infringing on RHT territory. Following traditional protocols and processes, RHW is approaching these entities separately to address these concerns.

### ***Treaty Annuities Case***

21 First Nations communities in the RHT territory are involved in a landmark lawsuit with the government of Ontario. RHW insists that Canada and Ontario seek a mandate to settle the outstanding annuities case.

### ***Water Rights***

There are First Nations claiming water rights on Lake Huron, Lake Superior, Lake Nipissing and various other riverbed and lake beds that have never been surrendered by Robinson Huron Treaty Chiefs. Canada and Ontario must respect and acknowledge Robinson Huron Treaty jurisdiction and water rights.