

Lands and Resources

Ensuring access to natural resources



Beausoleil FN officials and guest dignitaries took part in the official First Nation Lands Management 'Signatory Ceremony' during Solidarity Day celebrations on Christian Island. From left, Midland Mayor Gordon McKay, Julie Pellerin, FN Lands Management Resource Centre, Bill McCue, board member, Lands Advisory Board for the First Nation Lands Management Regime, Chief Roly Monague, Jennifer Copegog, Beausoleil Land Management and Development, Leona Irons, National Aboriginal Lands Managers Association, Jane Copegog-Marsden, Beausoleil Land Management and Development, David Dusome, MP Bruce Stanton's Office, and Sophie Radecki, Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

Signs restrict fishing

By Tyler Kula
Sarnia Observer

AAMIJWNAANG FN – "No Trespassing" signs began popping up by piers along River Road this spring, restricting anyone but First Nation members from using the popular fishing area.

Some three piers along the First Nation reserve between Corunna and Sarnia are now staked with warning signs. The reason: the piers are so well used that band members have been crowded out, said Chief Chris Plain.

"And basically not leaving enough room for community members to exercise what is a constitutionally-protected treaty right: allowing us to hunt and fish within our communities," he said.

Visiting anglers often refused to move and let locals fish when asked, he said. Garbage was being left behind and lit bonfires were left unattended.

Aamijwnaang band council passed a motion last fall calling for "No Trespassing" signs to be erected on the riverfront. Similar signs already exist elsewhere on the reserve, Plain said, warning visitors against unauthorized hunting or using community dumpsters for garbage.

"We're not trying to create a problem with anybody outside the area, we're just trying to acknowledge or assert our jurisdiction," he said.

Council suspects some anglers travel to the reserve to fish without a licence.

Land code will help tourism plans

By Sharon Weatherall

BEAUSOLEIL FN – Citizens of this island First Nation celebrated National First Nations Solidarity Day June 21st by officially signing on to the First Nation Lands Management Regime (FNLMR).

BFN Lands Manager Jennifer Copegog spoke about the importance of the agreement for her community and what happens next in the two-year process.

"It will be most beneficial for us to create our own land laws which had always been a hindrance in the past for First Nations. It means we can go ahead with more projects using a quicker process and less red tape", she said, noting that community members will have to ratify the agreement and a community land code by May, 2014.

In Ottawa this spring Beausoleil became one of 18 new First Nations to enter the regime when Chief Roly Monague participated in the process which allows First Nations to opt out of the 34 land-related sections of the Indian Act and assume control over their reserve land and resources.

Chief Monague said a land code will facilitate the First Nation's plans to develop its tourism potential.

"This makes things so much easier now for us on the island to enhance economic development and create jobs and also for going ahead with tourism plans for the future of Hope and Beckwith Islands

for which we are now in the consulting stages."

The islands -- located a short distance from Christian Island -- are part of Beausoleil reserve lands and are basically uninhabited with the exception of some summer camping for boaters and rest stops for snowmobilers in winter. "Green" plans are being developed for both islands with a primary focus on environmental education.

"For Beckwith Island we have completed a letter of intent with consultants for an eco-tourism plan that involves building eco-lodges that will sit on piers off the ground to keep everything pristine with a lack of disturbance to the environment. This also involves the building of trails," said Chief Monague.

"They currently have eco-lodges throughout Canada which people from Europe and all over the world fly here to use. Beckwith Island will be among the first of them built in Ontario and the consultant we are using thinks it will be a great location."

"For Hope Island we have completed a business plan that includes the Light Station, a museum and building cabins for people to stay in. People can be a lighthouse keeper for one week. There will also be trails through the woods and an education component to teach people our traditional values. The Hope Island project was based on a survey which community voted on to move forward."



Solar-powered assisted living centre.

Solar power like planting 2,752 trees

PIKWAKANAGAN – When the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) unrolled the microFIT (Feed-in-Tariff) program back in 2010, it caught the attention of the Chief and Council of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation.

The First Nation, located at Golden Lake in eastern Ontario, realized that if they installed solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on their rooftops, not only would they be creating renewable energy jobs in their community, they would also be earning an above-market, risk-free return on their investment. Their returns would be guaranteed for 20 years by a legal contract with the OPA, which stipulates that any renewable energy generated would be purchased by Hydro One Public works manager Merv Sarazin was assigned responsibilities for the solar project, and, after some extensive research it was determined to carry out the installation in partnership

with JAZZ Solar Solutions – an Ottawa-based renewable energy company. JAZZ Solar also offered to hire local labour from the First Nation to supplement their own crew, and the community's building manager was trained to maintain and service the solar installation.

Pikwakanagan currently has a total of 44kW of solar PV on four building rooftops that are generating power and revenue for the community. At the completion of the contract – which will generate an estimated \$1 million profit – the community will continue to use the rooftop solar systems to generate its own useable electricity.

It is estimated that using solar power over the next 20 years is equivalent to planting 2752 trees and stopping the emission into the environment of over 200,000 kilograms of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

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MISSION

The mission of the Lands and Resources department is to foster a better quality of life by ensuring access to natural resources in support of the goals, principles and values of the Anishinabek Nation.

