

**PROTECTED AREAS  
AND  
FIRST NATION RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP:  
A COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP**

**ACCORD**

**BETWEEN:** Poplar River First Nation

**AND:** Pauingassi First Nation

**AND:** Little Grand Rapids First Nation

**AND:** Pikangikum First Nation

**PREAMBLE**

In this Accord, our First Nations are joining together in the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. We are joining together so that we may support each other and work together in our shared vision of protecting the ancestral lands and resources of our respective First Nations.

Our vision is based on an acknowledgement that the Creator, the maker of all, placed us on our ancestral lands where we have lived since time immemorial:

- The Creator made the lands on which we live and everything living and non-living on these lands. Nothing on the land can be sustained without the Creator;
- The Creator placed us on our land. We have been given the very life we possess as well as our First Nation way of life as a precious gift from the Creator;
- The Creator has given us the responsibility to protect and care for the lands on which we were placed. As First Nations people, we are to take care of our land and nurture everything that the Creator has given us as a trust and duty to future generations of our people;

Our shared vision also acknowledges that we are to protect and take care of the land and resources that the Creator has given us for our survival and well-being. Finally, our vision incorporates respect for the teachings and wisdom of our Elders who are able to guide us in taking care of the lands and resources that we have been given as a sacred trust from the Creator.

Our First Nations also share common goals regarding protected areas and resource stewardship issues in our respective territories. Each of our First Nations has proposed and developed initiatives designed to protect and care for our respective territories. Each of these initiatives incorporates the priority of cooperation and collaboration with other First Nations, other governments and the larger society.

Taken together, the respective initiatives of our First Nations to protect and care for our lands and resources represent a unique and internationally significant opportunity. This is an opportunity to address protected areas concerns of our First Nations and the larger society both in Canada in abroad. They also represent a unique and internationally significant opportunity to demonstrate the value of First Nation traditional knowledge in protecting and taking care of the land in the

spirit of cooperation and harmony with other First Nations, other governments and the larger society.

In our respective initiatives that we are pursuing to protect and care for our respective First Nation territories, we also share common principles. These include:

- Giving priority to the value and potential that local First Nation resource stewardship traditions, teachings and practices for the protection and care of our respective territories. These are traditions and practices which can assure the protection and care of our territories for those of us alive today and those generations still to be born;
- Giving priority to respecting and honouring the traditional knowledge of the land held by the Elders and members of our respective First Nations. This knowledge is held in each of our respective communities in relation to our respective territories and is unsurpassed in its richness and potential to contribute to the protection and care of our lands and resources for those of us alive today and those generations still to be born;
- Giving priority to respecting and honouring our traditional First Nation teachings and practices regarding the responsibility and authority of each our First Nations to protect and care for our respective territories and provide for the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of those of us alive today and those generations still to be born.

We share similar challenges in advancing our shared vision, and our common goals and principles.

In Manitoba the provincial government has developed the East Side of Lake Winnipeg Planning Initiative. It is designed to address the potential for industrial resource development in one of the largest remaining remote areas of the province.

In Ontario, the forestry industry and environmental groups signed the Ontario Forest Accord that includes provisions for opening up the far north of the province to industrial forestry. The provincial government has developed the Northern Boreal Initiative policy process. It is designed to respond to proposals from First Nations with regard to protected areas issues and community-based forestry.

The Government of Canada is encouraging industrial resource development throughout both of these regions. Canada is advocating for new road networks for our regions in Manitoba and Ontario to promote development.

In this context, our First Nations are advancing initiatives that build on the potential and value of giving priority to community-based resource stewardship in cooperation with the larger society:

- Poplar River First Nation developed the Poplar River Protected Area initiative and has achieved interim protection for the Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve. This includes a leadership community-based stewardship role for managing the protected area land base;
- Pauingassi First Nation has submitted a protected areas nomination to Manitoba Conservation that incorporates the First Nation taking a lead stewardship role;
- Little Grand Rapids First Nation has submitted a protected areas nomination to Manitoba Conservation that incorporates the First Nation taking a lead stewardship role;
- Pikangikum First Nation has established the Whitefeather Forest Initiative and is now in its third year of a five-year community-based planning process leading to the establishment of protected areas and community forestry (community-based forestry tenure) within the Whitefeather Forest Planning Area.

Our respective initiatives provide a unique and significant opportunity for cooperation and mutual support on protected areas issues in several key ways:

- They are of a complementary nature as all of them involve protected areas development and they all emphasize First Nation resource stewardship of our respective territories;
- They involve planning areas that meet each other in key geographic areas thus creating a unique opportunity to create a network of linked protected areas of a scale that would generate international attention;
- They involve First Nations – our First Nations – who share a common Anishinaabe/Ojibway culture and identity within the Treaty #5 territory and which are located in watersheds that flow into Lake Winnipeg;
- They involve territories that are home to: important animals including woodland caribou and wolverine; special fish including sturgeon and lake trout; beautiful and rare birds including sandhill cranes and loons; and, many special plants.

As our respective initiatives are each based on respect for First Nation knowledge traditions, and especially the knowledge of our Elders, they are also significant for the following reasons:

- Given the richness of our First Nation knowledge traditions including the knowledge and techniques for protecting and caring for the land that we possess, Article 8 of the International Convention on Biodiversity provides an incentive for non-aboriginal governments and organizations to support, cooperate and work with us to ensure that our traditional knowledge can continue to be applied to protecting our ancestral lands;
- Given the richness of our respective First Nation territories as cultural landscapes which reflect how our people have nurtured and cared for the land since time immemorial in various ways, such as planting Manomin/Maskoosimin (wild rice) fields by our ancestors to increase the abundance of wildlife, and given that our lands contain many ancient pictographs (rock paintings) and other archeological values which are of international interest, the World Natural and Cultural Heritage designations of the United Nations (sponsored by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) provides a unique opportunity for us to cooperate with Canada and the international community.

Our shared vision for protected areas in our respective territories is rooted in what was already envisioned by our ancestors long ago: we are to stand together and work with each other and all peoples for the well-being of life on Mother Earth both for the present and for the future. Given our shared vision, goals and principles with respect to protected areas and the unique opportunities that are available to us as set out above, our First Nations hereby agree to work together as follows:

### **TERMS OF AGREEMENT**

1. We hereby commit to cooperatively and collectively pursue the shared objective of creating an internationally recognized and designated network of linked protected areas on our ancestral lands. This network of linked protected areas will involve lands within our respective First Nation planning areas as identified on a map attached as Schedule A

- to this Accord. These planning areas incorporate lands from the traplines of our respective First Nation Traditional Territories.
2. We will seek support and recognition for our network of linked protected areas in the form of UNESCO World Cultural Heritage and World Natural Heritage designations.
  3. We recognize and affirm that each of our First Nations has established planning areas for our respective protected area proposals and initiatives. We have established the boundaries of our respective planning areas based on the traplines of the members of our respective First Nations.
  4. We affirm that each of our First Nations will exercise primary First Nation responsibilities for protected areas development and stewardship within our respective planning areas.
  5. We acknowledge and affirm that it is the Elders and members of each of our First Nations who hold the richest knowledge of our respective planning areas. We affirm that our traditional indigenous knowledge, and the customary resource stewardship through which it is expressed, is vital to the protection and care of our respective planning areas. We also affirm that our traditional indigenous knowledge will play a lead partnership role in the design and implementation of stewardship strategies for protected areas within our respective planning areas.
  6. We acknowledge and affirm that Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations members hold traplines within Ontario. We affirm that these traplines incorporate respective Traditional Territories of Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations in Ontario. We affirm that the First Nation authority and responsibility for land use decisions and direction, including for protected areas development, for these lands lies with Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations respectively. We affirm and support the proposals and positions of Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations to achieve protected area status for these territories. We further affirm that Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids First Nations will take the lead First Nation role regarding the protection and care of these territories consistent with the principles of community-based resource stewardship and primary livelihood benefits for their members. We affirm that Pikangikum First Nation is committed to working with and assisting Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations within Ontario in any way possible to achieve their goals as stated above.
  7. We acknowledge and support the Whitefeather Forest Initiative of Pikangikum First Nation as incorporating both protected areas and community forestry components. We endorse and support that, within the community forestry component of the Whitefeather Forest Initiative, Pikangikum First Nation is acquiring community-based forest management tenure in keeping with our shared vision and principles of local community-based resource stewardship. We also support the goal of Pikangikum First Nation to develop protected areas within the Whitefeather Forest Planning Area that are linked to the proposed and nominated protected areas within the planning areas of Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations in Ontario and Manitoba.

8. We shall seek cooperative arrangements with the provincial governments of Ontario and Manitoba to achieve protected area status for lands within our respective planning areas necessary to meet our respective protected areas goals and to create our network of linked protected areas. We shall also seek to have the trapline territories of our respective First Nations that lie within existing provincial parks in Ontario and Manitoba (Woodland Caribou Park in Ontario and Atikaki Provincial Park in Manitoba) incorporated into our respective planning areas initiatives in order to further support our shared purpose of developing our network of linked protected areas and First Nation stewardship.
9. We shall seek support from the Governments of Ontario, Manitoba and Canada to nominate and achieve UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage designations for our network of linked protected areas.
10. We agree to form a Working Group of representatives from each our First Nations to cooperate and work collectively in our shared vision of achieving our network of internationally designated linked protected areas as set out above.
11. Through our Working Group, we agree to share information on the respective planning strategies and processes that each of our First Nations are using to realize our respective protected areas goals. We also agree to work together through the Working Group to develop harmonized proposals for acquiring the fiscal resources required by each of our First Nations to carry out work to realize our network of linked protected areas. We will also utilize our Working Group to develop joint and/or cooperative research and documentation projects where we find this desirable in support of our vision of a network of internationally designated linked protected areas involving our First Nations.
12. Nothing in this Accord shall affect in any way the Treaty and aboriginal rights of the members of our First Nations or the Treaty and aboriginal rights of the members of any other First Nation. We respect the treaty relationship and will act without prejudice to our treaty and aboriginal rights. The treaty relationship is to last for as long as the sun shines, the rivers flow and the grass grows.
13. Nothing in this Accord shall affect in any way our respect for local First Nation autonomy.
14. Nothing in this Accord shall affect in any way our respect for traditional and customary First Nation teachings, values and customs.
15. We commit to pursuing our relationships with non-aboriginal governments in a respectful and cooperative manner that harmonizes First Nation, provincial and federal responsibilities required to facilitate the realization of our vision of a network of linked protected areas.
16. We agree that other First Nations in our area will be most welcome to join in our cooperative effort to develop our vision of a network of linked protected areas.

We solemnly seek continued gifts of good guidance and strength from the Creator in our efforts to work together on our shared vision of linked protected areas for our First Nations.

Signed this 18 day of March, 2002 at Poplar River First Nation  
For Poplar River First Nation

Wera Mitchell  
Chief

James Matthews  
Councillor

E. Jackson  
Councillor

Ernie Mason  
Councillor

Clifford Bruce  
Councillor

Fred Mitchell  
Councillor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor

Signed this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at Paungassi First Nation  
For Paungassi First Nation

Wass Ouellet  
Chief

Edward Sean  
Councillor

Louis Ouellet  
Councillor

Charlie Ouellet  
Councillor

Signed this 5 day of April at Poplar River First Nation  
~~For Poplar River First Nation~~ Little Grand Rapids.  
Little Grand Rapids.

[Signature]  
Chief

[Signature]  
Councillor

Nelson Tegu  
Councillor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor

[Signature]  
Councillor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor

Signed this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at Pikangikum First Nation  
For Pikangikum First Nation

Louise Quill  
Chief

[Signature]  
Deputy Chief

[Signature]  
Councillor

[Signature]  
Councillor

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Councillor

[Signature]  
Councillor

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Councillor

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Councillor

[Signature]  
Councillor

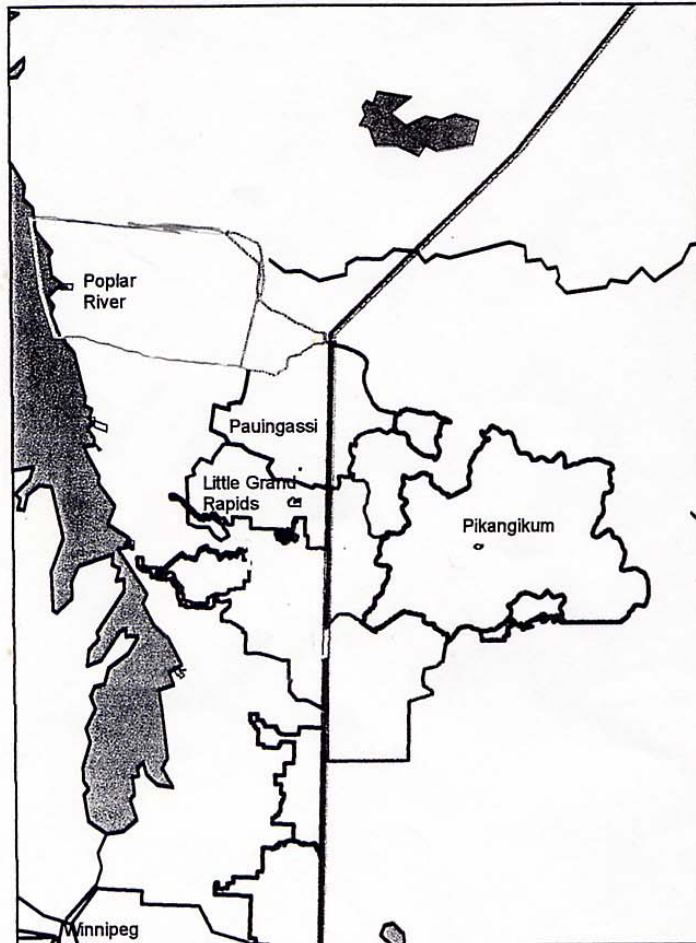
[Signature]  
Councillor

**SCHEDULE A**  
**The Whitefeather to Poplar/Nanowin Rivers**  
**Cooperative Protected Areas Network Initiative**

Poplar River First Nation  
 Pauingassi First Nation  
 Little Grand Rapids First Nation  
 Pikangikum First Nation

Conceptual Map of Linked  
 Planning Areas

Boundaries are Approximate



**Legend**

- Whitefeather Forest Planning Area - Pikangikum First Nation
- ..... Poplar River Planning Area
- Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve (Poplar River First Nation)
- Pauingassi First Nation Nominated Protected Area, Manitoba
- Pauingassi First Nation Proposed Protected Area - Ontario
- Little Grand Rapids First Nation Nominated Protected Area, Manitoba
- Little Grand Rapids First Nation Proposed Protected Area - Ontario
- Little Grand Rapids First Nation Planning Area - Atikaki Provincial Park
- Little Grand Rapids First Nation Planning Area - Manitoba
- Woodland Caribou Provincial Park
- Atikaki Provincial Park
- Nopiming Provincial Park