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**RE: Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation Submission on Protected Lands to ensure the continued Traditional Land Use of the Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation**

Dear Mr. Bartesko,

The Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation (CPDFN) has diligently gathered information to support this submission into the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP). Meaningful consideration of the First Nation's knowledge and Traditional Land Use (TLU) information is pivotal to the success of the land use plan in the Lower Athabasca Region and paramount to the cultural survival of the First Nation.

CPDFN requires a plan that seeks survival of our people and our land within the Traditional Territory. The First Nation has been trying to cooperate with all levels of Government in the past and has submitted several position papers with no incorporation of our ideas, our needs and our interests.

## **Importance of Traditional Land Use for the Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation**

We are a *Déné'suline* people, a sub-group of the larger Déné Nation. Our people have long occupied the northeastern boreal forest regions of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation traditional lands extend north of *Tzi' Gan Tue'* (McClelland Lake), east to *Ejar As' Tue' Aza'* (Peter Pond/Dillon Lake in Saskatchewan; south to *Tlu' Cho Tue'* (Cold Lake), and west to *Tha Na Eha Tue'* (Big Rock Lake/Wabasca). As Déné people, we have a sacred responsibility to care for and protect *our land*. We are obliged to speak for our people today and for those yet unborn. We are also obliged to speak for all the life forms sharing the land with us, for they cannot speak for themselves. The *land* and Déné people are one. We were here long before industry arrived and we intend on being here long after industry leaves (Appendix B).

The members of CPDFN still enjoy the luxuries of Traditional Land Use. Hunting, fishing, and trapping are not only held dearly as Paramount Rights that supersede that of any other activity, we also practice these Rights and consider these activities as vital to the survival of our Culture and Heritage in an area where Oil Sands activity has and will continue to shape our lands and affect the ways that the lands are used for generations to come.

### **Process of Information Gathering**

The Chipewyan Prairie Industry Relation Corporation and First Nation leadership held a community event to present the LARP process to the community as well as gather the pertinent information required to complete this submission. On March 17, 2010, more than 75 Chipewyan Prairie First Nation Elders and harvesters of all ages spent a full day exploring community needs and visions for conservation/protected areas and the requisites for sustained traditional use, with our TUS consultant of choice, FMA Heritage Inc. This submission documents the outcome of the workshop and summarizes key considerations for immediate inclusion in the LARP planning process (Appendix B).

In support of this submission, traditional land use and occupancy maps, which are part of our ongoing traditional land use and occupancy efforts, have been prepared and are appended to this submission. These traditional land use and occupancy maps are based on one hundred years or more of knowledge accrued in living memory, through continuous observation and respectful, gentle living with the Kai' Kos' Deseh/Christina watershed lands. (Appendix B).

The unanimous consensus at the community meetings was two- fold; first the community will not give up access to any of our Traditional Lands, and secondly our members realize the importance of a protected area, free of all developments, in which they can solely exercise their Aboriginal and Treaty Rights of Traditional Land Use.

In the interest of gathering relevant information to support our submission for LARP, CPDFN has also included specific quotes referring to the following sub-sections from CPDFN community members:

**CPDFN Quotes from LARP Workshop:**

*“This land has been speaking to us for a long time. Let us fight for our land. We used to live on the land very happily....Gas and oil companies stop the land use from us. We are fighting for our land. I remember clearly how we used to live. White men are making us poor. Our Right is our Land. Government doesn't want to assist us. I raised my children on this land, on the trapline. Once we start talking about this land, I get emotional. Now that the government does not work with us; we need to speak for ourselves. Whoever wants to say something should say it today. We need to do what we need to do to keep our land, so it is not taken by the government. We have to think about our children and their future” (CPDFN C49).*

*“My heart is crying because I heard they are taking our land away. I have grandkids. I want my grandkids to have their own land. I will do anything to save my land, even if I have to put road blocks with my people. So God help me to do the right thing and let's become partners” (CPDFN C63).*

*“Because we are old that doesn't mean we are not affected, because we have to worry about our children and grandchildren. Now the government is trying to take everything away from us. We as Elders, as a unit, must send the signatures and information to the Prime Minister. We need to partner with the leaders that are representing us and get together, to cover where we were born and raised, and try to protect it. The Premier has been giving away our land for years. The government has no reason why they should do this to us. The constitution should be in front of us. We must negotiate and come to an agreement. Our grandfathers have been teaching us in the ways to survive. Now we have no wild meat. We cannot think that this is over because God gave this land. Where can we go? We have nowhere to go. The whites are second class; we are First Nations. It's none of their business how we live or where we live. It's okay for the oil companies to do what they have to. But don't try to stop us from what we have to do to survive. It is bad enough that we have nothing to live on. They want the oil so bad, they take it, and leave. It's all our business. We are on this land. They are not going to take it away....The way of life of Indian people has been here for years. We live off that. We will not allow them to take away our way of life. What are our grandchildren going to do? What's going to be left for our grandchildren?” (CPDFN C2).*

*“Our community is not going anyplace. Animals are scarce. We need to protect our land. We are not going to allow the government to take our land. Our community people can't survive in urban cities; this is our land. Our land is rich with oil and gas. We need to protect our wildlife. We are losing a lot of our*

people. Our land used to be rich with wildlife, clean water; now we have none....This land we live on, this land, it is wonderful to live on. We need to protect the land because the land cannot speak for itself....We need to help the animals. If we don't say anything the government will say "yes" to industry. If someone can take my words, I hope you use it....The people that are here all have ideas. They need to speak about what they believe in" (CPDFN C7).

### **Quotes from Other CPDFN Traditional Land Use Studies:**

#### **Winefred Lake Abundance**

"In the spring at Christina Lake we'd also hunt the duck, the muskrat, geese, and beaver. Grandpa... was always trapping; he'd trap the beavers and the muskrat. He would sell the hide, but it was more for the meat. During the summer it would be moose, bear, deer, whatever was good to eat. We'd call moose at the creek right by Sawbones. Grandpa...always chose there [the area]. You didn't have to go very far back then, because there was very limited industry, so there were lots of animals. You'd see lots of bear; you'd see moose and deer. It wasn't hard at all. Even at Janvier, there was moose all over, bear all over. Our people didn't have to go far to hunt. They'd go on horseback for a couple hours and come back. Already, they'd shot something.... We'd catch lots of fish and feed a whole bunch of Elders, the sick, the single mothers. I was always taught to make sure the single mothers are fed, because they don't have a man to help them raise their children" (CPDFN A4).

Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation is very concerned about potential future developments in proximity to Winefred Lake. "This lake is our lifeline when you talk about our community. There's no other places left. Winefred is not a deep lake, maybe only 30 – 40 feet. There's not a whole lot of water there, and it wouldn't take much to affect this lake" (CPDFN A9).

"Out of necessity, or because we don't have the resources, there has been development on our lands, and we never had a real say in it. But the way that I know how to live for sure, without starving, is going to be destroyed. If I have to apply for a job, that's not for sure, right? But I know that if I can go to Winefred Lake with a piece of wire and a hook, I can live, I know I can eat well. Winefred Lake is the only place that can feed us like this now. Cowper Lake only produces skinny little fish. Bohn Lake has no more fish left in it. Winefred Lake is the only lake in our region that actually produces plentiful fish. I'm worried our livelihood use will be destroyed, totally destroyed. We've seen it north around Fort McMurray, the contaminated water. Those are the things that really disturb me" (CPDFN A16).

## **Landscape Fragmentation/Habitat Destruction**

*“Greedy people always say it’s okay. When they first put the plant up, they say “not a problem.” They scare all the animals away, there’s no animals anymore. Used to be lots of woodland caribou. And Native people always get the blame. But industry scares them away. Caribou don’t like to have young ones where’s there’s noise” (CPDFN A5).*

The effects of linear disturbances (created by exploration and extraction activities) and the resulting increased pressure on wildlife by predators, has also been noted. The deforestation of large tracts of land by Al-Pac is considered to be particularly destructive and detrimental to the ecology of the watershed region. *“The way we used to hunt is not the same. The animals aren’t there anymore.... Where we used to trap, the cutlines and seismic lines have gone through those areas. Where all the seismic and cutlines are, there used to be berries that don’t grow anymore because of the lines. The water levels are lower. Muskegs are drying up. Trees are dying. That’s how it’s changed” ” (CPDFN A14).*

## **Species Diversity and Health**

Changes in migratory bird patterns have also been noted. *“I’d hear them [geese] going through in the springtime and the fall time, but now I don’t hear anything... They’re not going way up north where they used to” (Interview 2).* *“The geese used to fly here and eat here [Winefred Lake] for two days, on their way to Fort Chipewyan. They don’t stop anymore” (CPDFN A7).* Study participants also expressed concern about the diminishing number of squirrels and song birds. *“There used to be robins around everywhere before, used to be lots... Now, even the chickadees, I don’t hear them anymore. Even whiskey jacks, you don’t see them... If you go camping and make a fire, before, 2, 3, 4 would come. That doesn’t happen anymore” (CPDFN A5).* *“Even this young generation [is seeing changes]. You know the swallows that make the mud nests, there’s not one now. They don’t come here anymore. Not on the bridge, not on this building [band administrative office].... This building used to be full of the birds with their nests” (Interview 2).*

## **Water Quantity, Quality, and Connectivity**

Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation Elders and harvesters all report a noticeable change in the quantity and quality of water within the *Kai Kos’ Deseh* (Christina River) watershed since the with industry’s arrival in the region. *“When I see the water dry out, I get a headache. Even Christina, I go through there, it’s shallow. I worry lots” (CPDFN A6).* Because water is critical for survival of all living things, the Nation’s members are very concerned that ongoing industrial developments are not taking adequate precautions to protect water sources. *“This development is so close to the lake [Winifred], and the river, and the other lakes. That’s where our food is. If something happens surrounding that lake, what’s going to happen to*

*Indian people? My grandchildren are going there already. If these leases pull out what they want for 40 years, the water could be polluted. What's going to happen then?" (CPDFN A2). "If we have no water, then everybody will die" (CPDFN A7).*

Specific concerns were raised by Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation study participants about the connectivity of surface and underground waters, muskegs and flowing streams within the *Kai' Kos' Deseh* (Christina River) watershed. These concerns are based on personal observations (e.g., the presence of fish in water bodies with no streams flowing in or out) and on stories which have been passed down. *"There's stories about how somewhere in the big muskeg, around Egg Lake, they used to do live fishing. There was a place where there was open water, in the winter. There was a hole in the ground where the fish would be running, and they would walk across the muskeg to scoop the fish out of there rather than going to do ice fishing. To me, that communicates that the water runs all over. There's all the water sources in the muskegs. All those little creeks come together to form the Christina River. All the water that comes to our Reserve feeds out of the muskeg" (CPDFN A16).*

### **Harvesting**

The CPDFN traplines and 'fridges' have never failed to provide a diverse abundance of foods with relative ease. The Winefred Lake fridge is situated within the *Deekoth Clan breadbasket*, which is now, by necessity, the breadbasket for the entire Nation. The anticipated and exacerbated effects of Oil Sands projects on the availability and quality of food are seen as specifically critical.

### **Health and Well Being**

*"... development is still kind of new to this area. But from our people that are in Fort McKay, Fort Chipewyan, you can look at those people and see that's what we're going to be like in the next ten years if this keeps going. Those people are sick. They are dying off from diseases like cancers" (CPDFN A12).*

*"So what is going to happen when the industries continue the way they are. What will it bring more of? More and more deaths, more diseases, traffic, nobody is going to die of old age. Not too many, and our people aren't going to be strong. It's another culture shock for us" (CPDFN A10).*

### **Denesuline Heritage and Identity**

*"It's important that I do something every day, whether it's hunting, fishing or trapping. I go out every day to look for meat. I trap in the winter when the season starts. I go fishing for a week, to week and a half. I still trap beaver, otter and muskrat. Sometimes I get beaver and I eat good. I hunt for moose and deer, I dry the meat myself to give out to family members. I catch jackfish, whitefish, sucker,*

*pickerel, and mariah. I used to dry the fish, but with my catch now, I freeze them. I share what I get... I also pick lots of berries – cranberries, blueberries, mooseberries [high bush cranberries], and raspberries” (CPDFN A6).*

### **Inequities**

*“When you go to Syncrude, take a look at the land. How healthy is that? Sure money is good. As Aboriginal people, I don’t see where we are benefiting from it. That group that came from Calgary, I offered to take them on a drive around our Reserve. Take a good look, I said, we are like the Third World. All this activity is around us, and we are supposed to sit on the fence and say nothing. I don’t think so; I don’t think that’s right” (CPDFN A10).*

*“We have Aboriginal rights; we have Treaty rights in the constitution. The government and industry are not practicing them. If they could share the big millions of dollars they are making with us, we would have something to live on after they leave. But if they just keep taking and go, then that’s it for us” (CPDFN A2).*

### **Cultural Survival/Future Generations**

*“For us as a Déné people, to identify ourselves as a Déné people, our language is very important. Our way of life, how we use the land, our connection to the land when that’s all taken away from us, you are taking a part of our culture, our being. You can’t call us a Déné people if that’s taken away. Nobody has a right to do that to us. In other part of the world it’s called cultural genocide. That’s basically what’s happening to us” (CPDFN A2).*

*“There’s got to be areas set aside, a sanctuary where there will be no activity whatsoever....Our way of life as the Déné people is under attack. We have to protect the land. We need the land set aside so we can practice our culture because if we have no trees and the land is destroyed, can we still call ourselves a Déné people? That’s how we identify ourselves, as a people of the land” (ICPDFN9/B/I). “You have to leave land for the Déné people, and it needs to be for the [wood] buffalo, and the caribou....They are disappearing” (CPDFNB18).*

### **Reclamation**

Reclamation efforts and policies, as they currently stand, do not provide the Nation with any measure of comfort that the end results will reflect the needs of all the diverse boreal forest species, belonging to these same lands. Nor will they reflect community needs and values. From the Nation’s perspective, reclamation practices only consider industry needs and industrial ‘growth’/marketplace values and do not even consider restoration.

*“The way they plant it [reclamation] is no good for the animals. It’s only good for cutting down again. It’s no good for us” (CPDFN A7).*

*“I can’t go there to our trapline. They [Al-Pac] are cutting trees. Now they’ve gone through already, way down far. And they are starting over again. The trees are about 8 feet high. They will cut down the trees again....” (CPDFN A6).*

*“Al-Pac took all the trees, where we used to hunt and where we used to trap, and where we used to gather everything else. It’s all gone, and the way it grows back there is not the way it grew a long time ago – that’s why all the animals are gone with it. So it’s important to us, but not to industry people. What they want, they get. When they take oil and gas, they’re not replacing it – when it’s gone it’s gone. It’s not the way Mother Earth built it. So the question is, ‘What is replacement for the Indian people?’ And what is ‘reclaim’ going to look like?” (CPDFN A2).*

### **Protected Areas: Traditional Land Use Area**

The First Nation would like to propose a solution that will work for the First Nation and the Government of Alberta. The First Nation would like to propose a facility, similar to the Elk Island National Park, in which the wildlife contained within a fenced in area of several townships is free of contamination and disturbance.

In Appendix A, Chipewyan Prairie Industrial Relations Corporation has contracted MSES Inc. to scientifically compile and verify a set of figures for the lands that the First Nation would like see protected. The figures produced are described below:

#### **Figure 1: Evidence of Moose Population Decline in the Alberta Oil Sands Region**

This figure is based on the data provided in Suncor’s Mine Dump 9 Application. It demonstrates that moose density is declining in the region. The declining population trend is not surprising given the increasing conversion of natural land surfaces to industrial development.

#### **Figure 2: Moose Habitat**

This map shows moose habitat before any major disturbances by industrial activities. It can be used to find potential candidate areas that could be protected from the standpoint of available moose habitat.

#### **Figure 3: Caribou Habitat**

Designating a protected area for caribou is challenging. This is in part because of the large seasonal movements of caribou (estimates of home-range size are from 500 km<sup>2</sup> to several thousand km<sup>2</sup>). This map shows the caribou habitat distribution within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and within the Kai’ Kos’Deseh/Christina River watershed, the Nation’s primary interest area within our traditional territory.

#### **Figure 4: Wildlife**

Discussions with members of CPDFN yielded qualitative information on the location of



key Woodland caribou habitat within the CPDFN traditional land use area. This map shows the areas of caribou habitat and including the white muskeg (Nil tale'ghi'a) birthing grounds that were roughly outlined on hardcopy Traditional Land Use mark up maps prepared by CPDFN Elders and Harvesters.

**Figure 5: Selected Traditional Knowledge Western Science Comparison**

This map shows the white muskeg (Nil tale'ghi'a), moose and caribou habitat distribution as well as migratory waterfowl within Kai' Kos' Deseh/Christina River Watershed.

**Figure 6: Environmental Changes and Cumulative Effects within Municipality of Wood Buffalo**

This figure shows progression of land cover disturbance in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo between 1992 and 2008. The map is based on an analysis of man-made (anthropogenic) disturbances seen on satellite images. The red areas are points that are on or within 250 metres of industrial disturbance. Numerical analyses indicate that, at the rate of disturbance experienced in the past 15 years, by the year 2020 to 2030 there will be no land left in the Municipality of Wood Buffalo south of Fort McMurray that is farther than 250 metres from an industrial feature.

**Figure 7: Caribou Density Decline**

Figure 7 shows that the woodland caribou is currently heavily declining. The caribou population in 2002 was only about 60% of its size in 1993. This map shows the cumulative change in population size for woodland caribou on both the East and West sides of the Athabasca River from 1993-2002.

**Figure 8: Suggested Protected Areas – Streams and Lakes**

Figure 8 shows the areas proposed for protection within this layer includes all level 1, 2, and 3 watercourses with a minimum 2 km buffer (1 km on either side of the watercourse) and all lakes with a 1 km buffer. The buffers are in part based on TLU information which reflects our members' mounting concerns about the safety of all waters within the Kai' Kos'Deseh/Christina River watershed indicates that, at a minimum, an area within 1000 m of water bodies need to be protected to safeguard the waters. Around Christina Lake and Winefred Lake a much larger buffer is required to allow for continued traditional resource use.

**Figure 9: Suggested Protected Areas – Ungulate Habitat**

The area proposed for protection within this layer includes moose, Woodland caribou, and wood bison habitat. In order to maintain the ungulate populations in the Lower Athabasca Region, remaining intact habitat needs to be protected. The layer of areas to be protected within the Kai' Kos'Deseh/Christina River watershed includes remaining large relatively intact tracts of habitats suitable for these ungulates. Figure 10 shows the townships within which large aggregations of habitats still exist.

**Figure 10: Suggested Protected Areas – Intact Landscapes**

This map shows the area proposed for protection within this layer includes intact landscapes (areas that are at least 500 km<sup>2</sup> in size without industrial disturbance. These

intact forest patches must be linked by a “corridor” with a width of at least 2km. For this submission, intact forest was identified as an area with no visible disturbance based on land satellite imagery within 30 m resolution.

**Figure 11: CPDFN Protected Areas Identified in Workshops plus Relevant Features**

This map shows the areas CPDFN wishes to protect that are important from an ecological point of view, including water bodies, intact landscapes, and ungulate habitat. To protect these and other culturally significant resources and cultural landscapes, CPDFN members indicate that the cultural survival area must include the entirety of the White muskeg (Nil tale'ghi'a), a 5 km wide corridor on either side of the Christina River, outside the source waters in the White muskeg (Nil tale'ghi'a), and landscapes encompassing core traditional land use areas (harvesting, ancestral occupancy, and sacred landscapes). In Figure 11, the First Nation presents a 'CPDFN Protected Areas Identified in Workshops plus Relevant Features' map that was compiled from traditional land use and occupancy information gathered from community members for project-specific Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA's). The area the First Nation wishes to propose as a 'CPDFN Protected (Cultural Survival) Area Identified in Workshops plus Relevant Features' runs along the Saskatchewan border, outside of the known 'bitumen' area. This same area is often referred to as 'the bread basket' or 'fridge' of the First Nation and has supplied the Nation's needs for more than 100 years in living memory. As the map depicts, we propose an area set aside as far north as the Clearwater River and as far south as the southern border outlining the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range.

**Figure 12: Suggested Protected Areas – All Aspects Combined**

Figure 12 shows the extent and locations of all lands which CPDFN proposes for protection. The LARP applies to 93,217 square kilometers of north-eastern Alberta, and together the areas proposed by CPDFN for protection totals 53,682 km<sup>2</sup> – about 57% of the LARP area. While this might be viewed as too large an area for protection, CPDFN reminds LARP planners that resource extraction projects (oil sands and forestry) have already greatly reduced/preclude our ability to exercise our treaty and aboriginal rights within our entire traditional territory (see Figure 3, Appendix A). Moreover, in large measure, the lands identified for protection are of importance to the overall health of the north eastern Alberta boreal environment in the face of massive industrial development and are of importance to all residents of Alberta/Canada.

The protected areas were selected with regards to the following criteria:

- Traditional importance including the continuity in ancestral use and occupancy (settlements and burial grounds), harvesting and sacred relationships
- Areas large enough to sustain current and future harvesting
- Proximity to reserve lands
- The protected areas must be connective for wildlife movement
- Areas of relatively high biodiversity
- Relatively undisturbed, unfragmented
- Clean waters, lakes, rivers and wetlands
- Areas not subjected to Oil Sands and Forestry extraction activities

## **CPDFN Expectations from LARP**

CPDFN expects that the LARP will reflect the protection of the Nation's constitution Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. The Nation also believes, through this submission, that we can offer a number of scenarios that work towards the overall success of LARP, as well as provide CPDFN with the required protected lands for cultural survival. Scenarios suggested through community workshops are found in Appendix A and B.

The solutions we are offering are obviously directed towards environmental protection (wildlife, air, water) because as a Déné people the land is inseparable from our heritage, identity and well being. However environmental protection is also the Government of Alberta's stated main priority - 'Oil Sands extraction while ensuring environmental protection'.

The LARP cannot be considered complete unless the First Nation Traditional knowledge is meaningfully integrated in the LARP planning process. Our having depended on these same lands for our survival, First Nation members have much to share regarding the regions natural ecosystems and the changes that are occurring.

## **Traditional Knowledge Supporting the Western Science**

Within the larger protected area, the First Nation submits the following conceptual plan which would support the wildlife in the region as well as the ability of the First Nation to exercise our rights to customary Traditional Land Use;

As the Government of Alberta is aware, highly fragmented forests, as those that will undoubtedly be created by the progression of Oil Sands activity, results in decreases in wildlife populations (Figure 6, Appendix A shows the rate of disturbance and fragmentation of the First Nation's traditional lands over the past 20 years). This is a result of increased predation created by favourable habitat for predators around right-of-way corridors, as well as a decrease in calving areas due to forest removal, as well as the noise of the increase in activity simply chasing wildlife out of the region. The First Nation harvesters can attest to the fact that they have to travel further and further from their regular hunting grounds to hunt the Moose needed to sustain our families. This decrease in Moose is a rather recent event, evident since the opening up of leases within the Kai' Kos'Deseh/Christina River watershed (ConocoPhillips Canada Surmont Project, the MEG Energy Christina Lake Projects, and the Cenovus Christina Lake Projects, as well as other conventional oil and gas and pipeline projects). ALPac forestry operations (clear cutting) are generally recognized by the Nation as being particularly destructive to animal populations within the lands remaining to us.

The solution being offered has several components. The First Nation would like to co-manage a large fenced-in area (Elk Island National Park model), within the larger protected areas proposed in (Figure 11). The First Nation would like to set up the necessary facilities on the Cowpar Lake Reserve lands, which we propose to adjoin the

protected areas. The First Nation will manage the fence and protect the area free of predation, to ensure yearling calves have the appropriate time in which to adequately escape predation.

The work completed by MSES compliments the Traditional knowledge shared by the First Nation. The Traditional Moose Hunting Areas, as outlined in (Figure 2, Appendix A) attached, fit well with western science comparisons. This information is crucial when determining not only what areas we need protected, but more importantly whether or not the areas are adequate to support a sustainable moose population for breeding as well as support the needs of the First Nation.

As described in (Appendix A) prepared by MSES, an area adequate enough to support a population of 200 Moose is approximately 500 to 600 square kilometers, or 5 or 6 townships. These 5 or 6 townships would be a fenced in area, within the larger protected area, predators would be removed, and habitat protected for reproduction. As well, and probably one of the most important points, the wildlife would be separated and protected from the potential contamination that can result from eating or drinking pollutants, and thus ensure a healthy food supply for our members.

Caribou (Protected under the Species at Risk Act, or SARA) is another species of Traditional importance, however the First Nation has basically voluntarily given up this food source as the population of the species has declined to the point of near eradication. The First Nation believes that the Caribou population can be brought back in the area, and would also like to pursue a solution with the Province of Alberta to bring this important species back to a healthy viable population.

Similar to Caribou, the First Nation utilized healthy Bison populations in the past to sustain families with food. If there is a desire by the Province to begin exploring avenues in which to bring back the Bison population, the First Nation would welcome the opportunity to explore avenues to do this as well.

### **A “Win-Win” Situation for Alberta and the First Nation**

A collaborative approach to environmental management in terms of promoting and protecting wildlife and natural areas would best achieve the goals of both LARP and CPDFN. A common goal between both the First Nation and the Government is environmental protection. The Government wants to realize the fiscal benefits of Oil Sands development and CPDFN wants to realize opportunities within these developments. At the same time the First Nation wants to ensure the protection of the Environment (our land). Purportedly, the province has the same interest and promises it will happen.

### **Community Submission**

The First Nation has used the capacity funding dollars provided by the Province of Alberta to contract a trusted third party (FMA Heritage Inc.) to facilitate a community

workshop and consolidate Traditional Use information gathered in the workshop and through other project-specific TK studies. The consolidated information is contained in Appendix B, 'Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation Planning Considerations for Lower Athabasca Regional Plan'.

The following maps were produced by FMA Heritage Resources in support of our LARP submission:

**Figure 1: Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation Traditional Territory.**

This map shows the extent of the First Nation's traditional lands, which extends as far east as Saskatchewan, as far south as the North Saskatchewan River, as far west as Wabasca Lake and as far north as Lake Athabasca.

**Figure 2: Kai Kos Dehseh/ Christina River Watershed.**

This map shows the Clan areas within the Christina River Watershed. These seven clans make up the majority of the population of the First Nation today. As is clearly evident, the Christina River watershed was highly utilized for subsistence hunting, trapping, and gathering.

**Figure 3: Selected Cultural/Sacred Landscape Features/Locales.**

This important map shows the more specific locales for travel, historical trapping, burial grounds and sacred places. Most of the historical movement and activities are within the Christina River watershed, with the majority of that activity along the Saskatchewan border (within the areas we are proposing for protection).

**Figure 4: Conglomerate Overview of Primary Harvesting Areas within Kai Kos Dehseh.**

This map shows the Traditional pattern of harvesting (hunting, berry, medicine, etc.). Most of the information gathered today shows that the majority of the activities continue to take place within the Christina River watershed, with several trails extending out from the watershed in several directions connecting to other longstanding settlements.

**Figure 5: LARP, Oil Sands and Other Regional Boundaries.**

This map is a general overview of the regional boundaries in the oil sands region. Take particular note on the Christina River watershed, and the 'white area' area that extends along the Saskatchewan border from the weapons range north to the Clearwater River. This area falls within the watershed, is outside of the Oil Sands Area, and happens to be a very important area for the First Nation. This is the area the First Nation is requesting for specific protection.

**Figure 6: Selected Developments within Kai Kos Dehseh (Christina River) Watershed.**

This map shows the lease holdings and subsequent projects that are applied for within the Christina River watershed. Note the area east of highway 881, it is void of oil sands projects as far as the Saskatchewan border, however several AI-Pac harvesting events have taken place. This is the area the First Nation is requesting for protection.

**Figure 7: Land Cover Disturbance within Kai Kos Dehseh/Christina River Watershed.**

This map shows the level of specific disturbance within the watershed (with a 250m zone of influence or 'buffer' around each development). Note the least disturbed area along the Saskatchewan border (extending north from the Weapons Range as far as Gordon Lake/Clearwater River)

**Figure 8: Areas for Protected Traditional Use within Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation Traditional Territory.**

This map shows the areas of the most intense Traditional use (within the black box which encloses the Christina River watershed). This area must be protected to ensure the First Nation's ability to exercise their Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and maintain our connections to our ancestral settlements and burial grounds.

**Figure 9: Areas of Cultural Significance for Protected Traditional Use within Kai' Kos' Deseh/Christina River Watershed**

This map was produced from the community meetings held to discuss the LARP. The map depicts areas with cultural significance and ecological importance for CPDFN.

### **Scientific Submission on Protected Areas**

The First Nation contracted MSES Inc. to link the western science and the Traditional Environmental Knowledge of the First Nation that was gathered by FMA Heritage TK study facilitators in the community workshop and in ongoing TK studies carried out for the Nation.

MSES Inc. is also considered a very trusted third party information resource for our Nation. The MSES document basically incorporates the Traditional Knowledge into a western science form to assist the Province of Alberta in understanding our concerns and interests from a western scientific point of view.

The MSES Inc. document discusses the consideration that must be given for establishing a protected area which would concentrate on establishing or repopulating wildlife into an area, with specific attention to the area CPDFN is proposing for protection, cultural survival and wildlife repopulation.

### **Planned Activities within the Protected Area**

The First Nation leadership wishes to work with the Federal Government of Canada as well as the Provincial Government of Alberta to set up an 'Elk Island National Park' concept protected area within the larger protected area as shown in Figure 11. The First Nation requires 5 or 6 townships (as identified by MSES Inc in their review) to be fenced in, with the predators trapped and removed from the fenced in area. Moose is the target species for the protected area, as the population is decreasing in numbers as the Oil Sands activity in the region increases.

This area can be viewed as a wildlife sanctuary and/or wildlife recharge zone. As the Oil

Sands producers progressively reclaim sites, wildlife from the 'protected area' can repopulate these reclaimed areas. Reclamation success, in the First Nation terms, does not only include monoculture forest blocks for timber removal. The First Nation expects wildlife habitats be returned to support wildlife in the region (specifically for moose, as it is the main staple for the First Nation).

### **Other Areas within the Traditional Lands, Outside of the Areas Marked for Protection**

CPDFN's position is that we will not give up 'access' to any of our Traditional Lands. At present, our members must travel through several Oil Sands plant sites to access their Traplines, their Traditional hunting areas, traditional berry picking areas, as well as the Winefred Lake Reserve lands. We will not give up access to any of these areas and insist that access issues be jointly resolved with the Nation, industries operating within our lands and the Alberta Government.

The First Nation members realize that they cannot hunt in an Oil Sands plant site or where there is a great deal of activity in the Boreal Forest within their Traditional lands, nor do we want to. The First Nation is interested in harvesting wildlife that is kept separate from the potential contaminants that can be associated with such developments. The main reason for requesting a 'fenced in area' within the 'protected area' is to ensure this separation, as well as decrease the number of animals removed through predation, (which also increases in proportion to industrialized disturbances within Boreal Forest landscapes).

### **Going Forward**

"The RAC has identified 14% of the region as recommended conservation areas, to bring the total conservation area in the region up to 20%. As per the terms of reference, an additional 12% of lands in the region are also recommended by RAC as proposed conservation areas" (LARAC 2010, p.26-27). In regards to Appendix A, figure 12 shows the extent and locations of all lands which CPDFN proposes for protection. All areas proposed for protection make up about 57% of the LARP area which is a more substantial number than the 32% previously stated.

*"I CPDFN C71, am 28 years old with 2 children. I love to hunt, like everyone else on our land. Oil companies want 80% [of the land] and 20% to everyone in our region. Us people actually get nothing which is not right for our traditional land that we use to live on. Once everyone is done with the 80%, our future is finished. Our kids and grandchildren will have nothing to live on. On the map it looks like they have about 50% of the land that was rightfully ours, which is not right. In the next 20 years we will have none of our First Nation rights left" (CPDFN C71)*

*"As people we need to voice our opinion so the government can understand. That land belongs to us. We all said NO, NO, NO, to 80%. We all want more land. NO again to your 80%. This is not right. All of us from Janvier Band live on this land and we need it.*

*If you guys take 80% what will we have? Nothing at all! No thanks again, NO, NO, NO. Thank you” ” (CPDFN C72)*

*“Our Native land has been here many years. Our ancestors have lived the life of our land and government is trying to destroy it by selling to oil companies Industry, leaving us with only 20%. No way. We want 80% of it for ourselves and give them 20%” (CPDFN C69).*

Chipewyan Prairie Déné First Nation is prepared to participate fully in a regional planning which seeks to create a meaningful balance between the environment, economics, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples’ needs and interests in the Lower Athabasca region. We are ready to work collaboratively in a process which recognizes and respects different worldviews, ethics and values and believe that better planning will be the outcome of such an exchange. (Appendix B)

With Respect, CPDFN advises the Land Use Secretariat that the capacity funding provided to First Nations does not adequately allow for full meaningful participation. We would like to ensure First Nations’ needs are addressed through the LARP process as well as the other regional plan stages as they arise. Meetings with Chief and Council and the Ministers from here forward will be crucial to the LARP process.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, traditional knowledge does not only relate to the past. Our detailed knowledge of our homeland (*No Ha’ Nene*) within the *Kai’ Kos’ Deseh/Christina River* watershed is relevant NOW. The time depth which comes from continuous generations of living in the same place will be even more relevant in the future, given the influx of newcomers to the province and government agencies managing lands and resources. In a planning process which must take many different interests and considerations into account, we have much to offer. Since we know our land and its characteristic patterns so well, we bring to the LARP planning table the advantage of being able to create and craft options which provide the foundations to meet multiple Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal objectives. (Appendix B)

The future well being and survival of our people and our boreal forest homeland is contingent upon the development of a robust and comprehensive regional land use plan and management framework. We have a vested interest in a successful process. We are prepared to provide additional information related to any or all matters which have been outlined in the foregoing as required. (Appendix B)



Sincerely,



Kyle Gladue  
Special Projects  
Chipewyan Prairie IRC

Letter from the Chief

-important that my people eat food that is safe from contamination, etc....

C.C. Chief Vern Janvier  
C.C. CPIRC Director, Shaun Janvier

Attached:

Appendix A: ECOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DESIGNATED AREAS FOR PROTECTION

Appendix B: CHIPEWYAN PRAIRIE DÉNÉ FIRST NATION PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOWER ATHABASCA REGIONAL PLAN (LARP)