



Media Release

Thunder Bay site of historic Gathering of Traditional and Christian First Nation and Métis Elders from across Ontario

Gathering to bring recommendations on Protecting Mother Earth through energy conservation to the Conserve the Light conference

(Fort William First Nation/Thunder Bay, ON, September 1, 2009) The Teepees, Sweat and Teaching lodges are now in place on Animiki wadjiw (Mount McKay). Each has been carefully erected in accordance with regional traditions, for the unprecedented gathering of over eighty First Nations and Métis Elders who will discuss how they can protect Mother Earth through energy conservation.

These Elders from across Ontario representing a cross section of experiences, backgrounds and home communities begin deliberations and ceremonies today on Animiki wadjiw (Mount McKay to the west of Thunder Bay). This is in preparation for the *Conserve the Light* conference (<http://www.conservethelight.ca>), beginning on September 3 until September 4, 2009.

For two days, First Nations Elders who follow both Christian and traditional teaching and Métis Elders will share music, ceremonies and traditions for the purpose of developing the opening message to the *Conserve the Light* conference. The Elders will make recommendations to the Leaders and delegates on what needs to be done to help preserve Mother Earth.

Charles Fox, who is overseeing the *Conserve the Light* conference called the Gathering historic. "Elders from across the Province are here together, intent on protecting Mother Earth through conservation. Their thoughts and recommendation will directly influence the broader conference. It is unprecedented to have Métis and First Nations Elders including those that follow the traditional ways, and others that follow Christian teachings coming together to learn and share."

Conserve the Light opened with the Elder's Presentation on Energy Conservation in First Nations and Métis Communities. Other sessions include: an Overview of The Energy Efficiency & Conservation Measures for Aboriginal Communities (EEMAC) Programs; Review of the Energy Efficiency Education Curriculum; Reports on Energy Kits and Energy Audit Retrofit Pilot Projects, the Green Energy Act and First Nations. Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, George Smitherman, senior officials of the Ontario Power Authority and many First Nation leaders will be among the keynote speakers.

To arrange interviews, secure digital images or to discuss logistics of media coverage of the Elder's Gathering, contact:

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For the most current conference agenda, visit <http://www.conservethelight.com>

The Energy Efficiency & Conservation Measures for Aboriginal Communities (EEMAC) program was developed by Charles Fox Consulting Inc. and funded by the Ontario Power Authority. The main goal of the program is to introduce and implement energy efficiency and conservation measures throughout all 134 First Nations communities in Ontario. This program consists of four main components: the Conserve the Light Gathering conference, Education and Awareness, Energy Conservation Kits, and the Energy Retrofit Pilot.

The Ontario Power Authority (OPA) is working directly with First Nation communities on a range of initiatives, including long-term systems planning, and is committed to ensuring that First Nation communities have access to the tools to participate in Ontario's growing culture of conservation, in a manner that complements First Nations values and heritages.