



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**State Party:** Canada

**Provinces:** Manitoba and Ontario

**Name of Property (Nominated Area):** Pimachiowin Aki

### **Geographical Co-ordinates to the Nearest Second:**

The geographic coordinates near the centre of the nominated area are:

95 deg 24 min 40 sec. 6W

51 deg 49 min 35 sec. 1N

### **Textual Description of the Boundaries of the Nominated Area**

Pimachiowin Aki encompasses 29,040 square kilometres of land and water in the North American boreal shield. The nominated area lies within two provincial jurisdictions, Manitoba and Ontario, and reflects an innovative partnership between four Anishinaabe First Nations—Bloodvein River, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi, Poplar River—and the provinces.

The nominated area is comprised of the protected areas established in First Nation planning areas, one provincial wilderness park in Manitoba, and one provincial wilderness park and a conservation reserve in Ontario. All lands in the nominated area are protected under law from commercial forestry, mining, and hydroelectric development.

### **BOUNDARIES**

The north and west boundaries of the nominated area follow the boundaries of the First Nation planning areas of Bloodvein River, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi, and Poplar River First Nations.

The southern boundaries of the nominated area correspond to those of Woodland Caribou Provincial Park and the Eagle-Snowshoe Conservation Reserve in Ontario, and Atikaki Provincial Park in Manitoba.

The eastern boundaries of the nominated area follow the eastern boundaries of the First Nation planning areas of Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi, as well as the eastern limit of Woodland Caribou Provincial Park.



Pimachiowin Aki Nominated Area

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## Pimachiowin Aki Nominated Area

### CRITERIA UNDER WHICH PROPERTY IS NOMINATED

Criteria (iii), (vi), and (ix).

Canada wishes Pimachiowin Aki to be considered a cultural landscape.

### DRAFT STATEMENT OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

#### *Brief Synthesis*

Pimachiowin Aki (the Land that Gives Life) is a 29,040-square-kilometre cultural landscape of Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe people). Through the cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land), Anishinaabeg have for millennia lived intimately with this special place in the heart of the North American boreal shield.

*Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* consists of the beliefs, values, knowledge, and practices that guide Anishinaabeg in their interaction with *aki* (the land and all its life) and with each other in ways that are respectful and express a reverence for all creation. The cultural tradition is given tangible manifestation in harvesting sites, habitation and processing sites, traplines, travel routes, named places, ceremonial sites, and sacred places such as pictographs associated with powerful spirit beings. These attributes are dispersed widely across a large landscape and concentrated along waterways, which are an essential source of livelihood resources and a means of transportation. Anishinaabe customary governance and oral traditions ensure continuity of the cultural tradition across generations.

Pimachiowin Aki is a vast area of healthy boreal forest and wetlands, exposed bedrock, myriad lakes, and long free-flowing rivers. Waterways provide ecological connectivity across the entire landscape. Wildfire, nutrient flow, species movements, and predator-prey relationships are key, naturally functioning ecological processes that maintain an impressive mosaic of ecosystems. The nominated area supports an outstanding diversity of boreal plants and animals, including iconic species such as wolf, moose, woodland caribou, and loon.

Pimachiowin Aki is the most complete and therefore exceptional example of a landscape within the North American Subarctic geo-cultural area that provides testimony to the cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan*. This could not be without Pimachiowin Aki being an exceptional example of a large, healthy and diverse mosaic of characteristic North American boreal shield ecosystems. Anishinaabeg are an integral part of the boreal ecosystems in Pimachiowin Aki, which is the foundation for their survival as a people. The beliefs, values, knowledge, and practices that reflect this intimate adaptation have preserved the boreal forest of Pimachiowin Aki. In this way, Pimachiowin Aki exemplifies the indissoluble bonds between culture and nature.

An innovative and collaborative, cross-cultural partnership has been formed between four Anishinaabe First Nations and two provincial governments with the shared vision of sustaining this living cultural landscape. The cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* will sustain this outstanding cultural landscape into the future.

#### *Criterion (iii)*

Pimachiowin Aki provides the most complete testimony to the ancient and continuing cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land). Through the beliefs, values, knowledge, and practices embodied in this cultural tradition, Anishinaabeg have lived for millennia with the boreal forest that sustains them. Ancient and contemporary harvesting sites, habitation and processing sites, travel routes, named places, traplines, and sacred and ceremonial sites provide tangible representation of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan*. These sites are found throughout Pimachiowin Aki and are especially evident along waterway travel routes, which provide connectivity throughout the landscape.





### *Criterion (vi)*

Pimachiowin Aki is directly and tangibly associated with the living cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* through which Anishinaabeg uphold a sacred trust to ensure *aki* (the land and all its life) is cared for and respected. Anishinaabe customary governance ensures collaborative use of the land, including between neighbouring and related communities. The cultural tradition is maintained across generations through a vibrant oral tradition that includes legends, stories, and songs. The deep and abiding connection between Anishinaabeg and the land through *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* is a compelling example of the inseparability of an indigenous culture and its local environment that can inspire people around the world.

### *Criterion (ix)*

Pimachiowin Aki is the most complete and largest example of the North American boreal shield, including its characteristic biodiversity and ecological processes. Pimachiowin Aki contains an exceptional diversity of terrestrial and freshwater aquatic ecosystems and fully supports wildfire, nutrient flow, species movements, and predator-prey relationships, essential ecological processes in the boreal forest. Predator-prey relationships are sustained among species such as wolf, and moose and caribou, and lynx and snowshoe hare. Sustainable hunting and trapping by Anishinaabeg are part of predator-prey interactions. Pimachiowin Aki's remarkable size, intactness, and ecosystem diversity support characteristic boreal species and species of conservation concern such as woodland caribou, wolverine, lake sturgeon, leopard frog, and Canada warbler.

### *Integrity*

Pimachiowin Aki contains all of the attributes that express the cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land) and all the elements necessary to ensure continuity of the key ecological processes of the boreal shield. The robust combination of First Nation and provincial protected areas forms the largest network of contiguous protected areas in the North American boreal shield. The vast size of the nominated area provides for the future livelihood and cultural needs of Anishinaabeg and for ecological resilience, especially in the context of climate change. Extensive buffer zones further contribute to integrity.

The cultural attributes and natural features of Pimachiowin Aki are remarkably free from the adverse effects of development and neglect. There is no commercial forestry, mining, or hydroelectric development in the nominated area. Waterways, the lifeblood of *aki*, are free of dams and diversions.

### *Authenticity*

The authenticity of Pimachiowin Aki is remarkable. Anishinaabe knowledge, ethical and spiritual teachings, and customary governance associated with *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* guide behaviour in relation to the nominated area today, as has been the case for millennia. Oral traditions in the Anishinaabe language continue to be central to the expression and intergenerational transmission of the cultural values of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan*. The nominated area illustrates more than 7,000 years of indigenous occupancy that is centred on the traditional land use areas of the four Pimachiowin Aki Anishinaabe First Nations. Archaeological evidence demonstrates contemporary cultural sites and travel routes have been used from ancient times through to the present.

### *Protection and Management Requirements*

First Nations have played the leading role in defining the approach to protection and management of Pimachiowin Aki. Protection and management of Pimachiowin Aki is achieved through Anishinaabe customary governance, grounded in *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan*, contemporary provincial government law and policy, and cooperation among the four First Nation and provincial government partners. Through First Nation-led planning and application of legislation, protection of the nominated area has been established. First Nation and provincial partners have created the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation and developed a consensual, participatory governance structure, financial capacity, and a management plan for the nominated area.





The Pimachiowin Aki Corporation enables the partners to work in an integrated manner across the nominated area to ensure the protection and conservation of all cultural attributes and natural features and processes. The management framework is designed to meet potential challenges in the protection and conservation of the nominated area, such as monitoring and mitigating the potential impacts of the construction of an all-season road over the next 20 to 40 years.

An accord signed by the Anishinaabeg of Pimachiowin Aki affirms a sacred trust to care for the land for future generations. A *Memorandum of Agreement* between the provincial governments provides assurances about protection and management of the nominated area. The Pimachiowin Aki partners share a commitment to work together to safeguard the potential Outstanding Universal Value of Pimachiowin Aki for present and future generations.

### **NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF OFFICIAL LOCAL INSTITUTION**

Organization Name: Pimachiowin Aki Corporation  
Address: 220 Rochester Avenue  
City: Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Postal Code: R3T 3W2

Tel: (204) 275-1564  
Fax: (204) 275-1572

Email: [whp@shaw.ca](mailto:whp@shaw.ca)  
Web Address: [www.pimachiowinaki.org](http://www.pimachiowinaki.org)

Pimachiowin Aki Corporation is the official local institution accountable to conserve, protect, and present the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of Pimachiowin Aki. The Corporation's Board of Directors provides strategic direction and ensures resourcing to fulfil the organization's Vision, Mission, and Goals, including implementation of the Pimachiowin Aki Management Plan prepared for the nominated area. Each of the four First Nation and two provincial governments are represented by one Board member and the Board is supported by a professionally staffed Secretariat.

Individual First Nation and park land management plans have been approved and adopted under provincial legislation to govern land use and decision-making for the constituent parts of the nominated area and to sustain Anishinaabe relationships with the land. Under this legislation, decisions about land and resource use in Pimachiowin Aki must be consistent with these management plans. While authority for decision-making under these plans will continue to rest with the relevant First Nations and provincial governments, in addition to guiding implementation of the Pimachiowin Aki Management Plan, the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation will participate in the implementation of these First Nation and park management plans to ensure decision-making supports the conservation and protection of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated area. Section 5 provides further detail about the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation and governance of the proposed World Heritage Site.