

Pimachiowin Aki (Canada) Response to the Request for Supplementary Information from ICOMOS and IUCN



PIMACHIOWIN AKI

WORLD HERITAGE PROJECT

The Land that Gives Life



Response to the ICOMOS and IUCN joint interim report and additional information request, Pimachiowin Aki, Canada 28 February, 2018

Canada received the joint ICOMOS/IUCN interim report for Pimachiowin Aki on January 22nd, 2018. In the interim report, the ICOMOS and IUCN Panels shared five topics for which they seek additional clarification. Canada, in cooperation with the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, welcomes the opportunity to respond to these points, as per paragraph 148 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. The response for each is provided below.

1. The interim report asked for confirmation that ***“there will be no change in the pressures for development in the areas that have been withdrawn from the nomination and are now part of the buffer zone, that would impact on the property.”***

There are no real or perceived pressures for development in the areas previously within the nominated area and now in the buffer zone that would impact Pimachiowin Aki. The Whitefeather Forest Cheecheemuhnuhcheecheekuhtaykeehn (dedicated protected areas), withdrawn from the nominated area in 2016, remain protected under the Ontario *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act*. Commercial forestry, mineral exploration, mining and commercial power generation development are not permitted, and road building, aggregate extraction, and peat harvesting are incompatible with the land use intent for the Cheecheemuhnuhcheecheekuhtaykeehn.

2. The interim report asked for details on the ***“scope to expand the nominated area through the future addition of appropriate lands under the care of First Nations, if those First Nations so desired.”***

Neighboring First Nations have expressed interest in and support for the Pimachiowin Aki nomination, including interest in joining the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation in the future. The Corporation has welcomed these preliminary discussions.

The provinces of Manitoba and Ontario are engaged in land use planning and management processes with several First Nations adjacent to the nominated area, including Berens River First Nation in Manitoba and Deer Lake First Nation in Ontario. Information about the Pimachiowin Aki nomination has been shared with all First Nations located adjacent to the nominated area throughout the nomination process or as interest in the project is expressed.

The Bylaw of the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation states: “Any person may apply for membership in the Corporation, and by a resolution passed unanimously by all the votes of the directors cast on that resolution, be admitted as a member” (Section 2.02, Admission of New Members). Similarly, the Protected Areas and First Nation Resource Stewardship: A Cooperative Relationship Accord states 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” (Paragraph 16).

In practical terms, Canada would seek advice from the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies on whether any addition of appropriate lands in the future could be considered as a boundary

modification or a serial nomination, pending inscription of the nominated area currently under consideration.

3. The interim report asked for details on the ***“opportunities for other First Nations to actively engage in the governance of the overall World Heritage property and its buffer zone in such a way as to integrate with the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation.”***

There are many opportunities for other First Nations to engage in dialogue with the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation on topics and areas of mutual interest. Goals of the Pimachiowin Aki partnership indicate that engagement in governance may be realized by other First Nations as opportunities arise. As identified in Section 5 of the nomination and the Corporation’s Strategic Plan, the Corporation’s goals include:

- effective outreach with neighbouring communities;
- support and advocacy for land management planning and land use decisions consistent with the proposed Outstanding Universal Value;
- partnerships that achieve mutual interests and benefits, and;
- openness to new members.

Opportunities are also identified through intercommunity dialogue and customary governance institutions. For example, Deer Lake First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation engage each other in planning and management processes within their respective communities’ shared areas.

Engagement of First Nations by provincial jurisdictions in land use planning and management processes provides opportunities to share information about the World Heritage nomination, strengthen links with the Corporation’s Board of Directors and communicate information on the governance of the nominated area.

4. The interim report identified concerns about the potential threat of hydroelectric power line development and asked for ***“a statement to indicate how protection of the property from the impacts of hydroelectric power lines will be assured”***.

Hydroelectric development (i.e. generation, transmission, water containment and control) is prohibited by law in the nominated area.

There is no plan to re-route high voltage power lines to pass within the nominated area. In 2016, the (then newly-elected) government of Manitoba commissioned a review of the previous government’s decision to construct a high voltage transmission line roughly 250 kilometres from the western boundary of the nominated area. The review is complete and justifies the western route. Construction of the transmission line on the west side of the province is nearing completion – with a July 2018 in-service date - and will satisfy the province’s requirements to provide system reliability and transmission capacity for delivery of existing and proposed hydroelectric generation. Any future high voltage transmission line development is not expected.

The nomination of Pimachiowin Aki clearly states a commitment to protect and present the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of Pimachiowin Aki and maintain the conditions of integrity and authenticity under long-term legislative, regulatory, institutional and/or traditional protection and management measures in ways that meet or exceed World Heritage standards.

5. The interim report invited Canada to ***“advise the Advisory Bodies on any areas of concern that they would wish the Advisory Bodies to be aware of”***, specifically concerning terminology and statements used in evaluation material and recommendations to the World Heritage Committee.

Canada welcomes the opportunity to contribute to discussion on the use of appropriate terminology and statements in the evaluation process, and will provide further comment in separate correspondence to follow. In particular reference to the Pimachiowin Aki nomination, Canada would like to bring to the attention of the Advisory Bodies two areas of concern in the 2016 recommendation concerning the previously submitted Pimachiowin Aki nomination (WHC/16/40.COM/8B.18):

1. *“The management plan needs strengthening to address the socioeconomic **problems** of the communities...”*

Canada suggests that it would be more positive and accurate to replace the word “problems” with “challenges and opportunities”.

2. *“Carefully monitor activities being carried out in the buffer zone to the East of the property and ensure that any future potential new developments, such as logging, are carried out in a sustainable way in line with procedures of the Operational Guidelines, and do not compromise the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.”*

Proposed forest management activities adjacent to the nominated area pose no threat to Pimachiowin Aki’s potential Outstanding Universal Value. Forest management in areas adjacent to the nominated area must meet, or exceed, requirements for sustainable forest management as prescribed under provincial legislation and policy in Ontario and Manitoba. Additionally, forest management in the Whitefeather Forest is guided by esteemed Elders, is rooted in Anishinaabe culture, is consistent with Pikangikum First Nation’s customary stewardship tradition and conforms to the strategic direction as provided in the approved community-based land use plan. Given these considerations, out of respect for those First Nations neighbouring Pimachiowin Aki, Canada requests that this statement not appear in any future draft decision.

In conjunction with the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, Canada hopes that this response addresses the points of concern and clarification raised by the Advisory Bodies in their interim report. Should further information be required to ensure this nomination is presented accurately and completely to the World Heritage Committee, Canada would be pleased to provide it in as prompt a manner as possible.

Canada looks forward to the consideration of the Pimachiowin Aki nomination at the World Heritage Committee’s 42nd session in Bahrain.