
Pimachiowin Aki (Canada) No 1415rev

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Pimachiowin Aki

Location

Manitoba and Ontario Provinces
Canada

Brief description

Pimachiowin Aki encompasses 2, 904,000 square kilometres of the Anishinaabe ancestral lands at the headwaters of the Berens, Bloodvein, Pigeon and Poplar rivers. This forest landscape dissected by free-flowing rivers, lakes and wetlands includes portions of the lands of four Anishinaabe First Nations: Bloodvein River First Nation, Little Grand Rapids First Nation, Pauingassi First Nation, and Poplar River First Nation.

The Anishinaabeg are a highly mobile indigenous hunting-gathering-fishing people, who say that they and their indigenous ancestors have made use of this and adjacent landscapes for over 7,000 years. The Anishinaabe cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land) involves honouring the Creator's gifts, observing respectful behaviour toward all life, and maintaining harmonious relations with other people.

Pimachiowin Aki expresses a testimony to the beliefs, values, knowledge, and practices that constitute Keeping the Land through a complex network of often impermanent interlinked sites, routes and areas. Specifically there are ancient and contemporary livelihood sites, habitations and processing sites, travel routes, named places, trap lines and sacred and ceremonial sites, most linked by waterways, and all tangible reflection of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land).

Today Anishinaabeg in the nominated property are based in four small permanent Anishinaabe communities and harvest animals, plants and fish, consistent with their traditional practices and Treaty rights. They still maintain their strong spiritual interactions with the natural landscape through the legendary beings and spirits who are seen to control the natural world.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*.

In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (12 July 2017), paragraph 47, it is also a *cultural landscape*.

[Note: the property is nominated as a mixed cultural and natural site. IUCN will assess the natural significances, while ICOMOS assesses the cultural significances.]

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List

1 October 2004

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre

24 January 2017

Background

This is referred nomination that follows a deferred nomination.

At its 37th meeting in Phnom Penh, in decision 37 COM 8B.19, the World Heritage Committee deferred the nomination of Pimachiowin Aki (Canada) to the World Heritage List.

Following the decision, an ICOMOS/IUCN advisory mission provided upstream assistance to the organizers of the nomination and residents through a series of workshops in October 2013. Subsequently further advice was provided to the State Party through Skype discussions and also through written advice on the Comparative Analysis. The revised nomination that was submitted in January 2015 provided much more details on cultural aspects; it also had different cultural criteria and a substantially revised comparative analysis.

At its 40th meeting, (Istanbul 2016), the World Heritage Committee examined the property and took the following decision 40 COM 8B.18

The World Heritage Committee,
[...]

6. *Recognizing recently identified issues regarding governance and relationships within the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, refers Pimachiowin Aki, Canada, back to the State Party to allow it to work with the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation to identify and implement appropriate actions to ensure effective governance and management of the nominated property;*
7. *Notes that the Advisory Bodies would be ready and willing to offer advice on the above, if requested;*
8. *Recommends the State Party to give consideration to continue the development of the management plan to address socio-economic challenges and to promote sustainable livelihoods, including through the development of sustainable tourism and other activities, and giving particular attention to the landscape and its spiritual associations.*

The State Party has submitted a revised nomination with a reduced overall area, which is the object of the current evaluation.

Consultations

ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes and several independent experts.

Technical Evaluation Mission

A joint ICOMOS/IUCN technical evaluation mission visited the property from 6 to 7 September 2017.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A joint IUCN/ ICOMOS Interim report was sent to the State Party on 22 January 2018 and the State Party provided additional information on the development in the areas that have been withdrawn from the nomination; the scope for expanding the nominated area; the opportunities for other First Nations to engage in the governance of the nominated area; the protection of the nominated area from the impacts of hydroelectric power lines. This has been incorporated into the relevant sections below.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

14 March 2018

2 The property

Description

The revised nomination differs from the earlier nominations in that it encompasses parts of the lands of four Anishinaabeg (First Nation) communities rather than five.

This change means a reduction in the spatial extent of the expression of the cultural tradition and a reduction of the total number of cultural attributes associated with places on the land including sacred and ceremonial, harvesting, and habitation and processing sites. Due to this modification, there is a reduction of inter-community linkages through waterway travel routes. The removal of one community from the nomination has also resulted in a slightly reduced scope for demonstrating the role of customary governance in regulating access to and use of land between different communities. The land that was formerly part of the nominated area is now included in the buffer zone.

The Anishinaabeg are an indigenous hunting-gathering-fishing people who are believed to have lived in the surrounding areas for at least 7,000 years, although as discussed below there have been many migrations in and around the nominated area by the Anishinaabeg and also by the Cree people.

In spite of being subject to significant social disturbances as a result of European colonization, such as being placed on Reserves and children being separated from their families by residential schooling, the Anishinaabeg have been able to retain their traditional culture including

knowledge of, and respect for, the landscape and the tangible and intangible natural resources it provides. The landscape has shaped the way of life of the people and in turn is embedded in their oral traditions and cosmology.

The nominated area includes portions of the ancestral lands of Bloodvein River First Nation, Little Grand Rapids First Nation, Pauingassi First Nation, and Poplar River First Nation. Today they number around 5,972 people.

Pimachiowin Aki can be translated as *the Land that Gives Life*. The Anishinaabeg view their land as a gift from the Creator to be shared for the benefit not only of Anishinaabeg, but also for visitors, and for all of humanity. The Anishinaabeg and all other beings, the animals, the trees and plants, the fish, the waters, are perceived as one living entity, part of an ancient, but continuous, and living cultural landscape.

The greatest ambition of Anishinaabeg is *mino-bimaadizi* (to lead a good life). The health and well-being associated with *bimaadiziwin* is seen to depend on maintaining respectful and harmonious relationships with all life on the land.

The nominated area provides a complete representation of how the living cultural tradition of Keeping the Land guides Anishinaabe perception and use of the Pimachiowin Aki cultural landscape. The tangible evidence of the Anishinaabe cultural tradition within Pimachiowin Aki includes resource harvesting places, cabin and seasonal camp sites, harvest processing sites, traditional travel routes, named places, sacred and ceremonial sites, pictographs and other sites of archaeological significance, and trap line areas.

The communities maintain their traditional world view and pass it on to new generations through oral history and rituals. Community Elders are respected, traditional values and teachings heeded, and culturally important sites memorised. A major part of the population speaks *Anishinaabemowin*, some as their only language. The four communities differ from one another culturally, socially and economically.

The nominated area is large and contains sufficient mature and diverse vegetation to allow the communities to sustain their traditional livelihoods.

The Pimachiowin Aki nomination has been led by the Anishinaabeg who wish to have recognition for their role in sustaining their community's relationship with the waterways and forests of the environment within which they live.

Within the landscape, the impact of the Anishinaabeg activities can be seen mostly along the rivers, near ancient routes (some still in use), in ceremonial sites and rock pictographs, at camps and cabin sites, both abandoned and actively-used, and in settlements.

The nominated area extends to some 29,040 square kilometres across the heart of the North American 'boreal shield' forest (that is forest of the northern temperate zone within the Canadian Shield of Precambrian rock), dissected by long free-flowing rivers, myriad lakes and wetlands. The North American Boreal shield is part of a global boreal biome that encircles the globe just south of the Arctic Circle. Thus there is a Eurasian boreal shield as well as one in North America.

The boundaries of the nominated area have been determined through a community-led land-use planning initiative between indigenous peoples and the Provincial authorities that had the aim of creating new livelihoods to help sustain aboriginal communities. The boundaries do not encompass all the Anishinaabeg ancestral lands; some lie outside the boundaries and of these some are in the buffer zone. The Anishinaabe / Ojibwe language is spoken in an extensive area on both sides of the border between Canada and the United States of America.

The people within the nominated area represent around less than a quarter of all those speaking *Anishinaabemowin* as their first language. The Anishinaabe cultural landscape, and beliefs and practices connected with it, thus continue beyond the boundaries of the nominated area. The communities moved prior to permanent settlement and there are references to culturally important sites outside the nominated area. However, the nominated area is where the Anishinaabe culture is seen to persist most strongly.

Their landscape is beginning to be opened up to tourists, with operators from outside the area developing fly fishing lodges and hunting camps (see below).

Hunting, trapping, fishing and harvesting wild produce
Hunting, trapping, fishing and harvesting are at the heart of the Anishinaabeg relationship with the land. The continued harvesting of plants, animals, and other forms of life is undertaken in a manner that ensures continuity of all life on the land.

Hunting, trapping and fishing is today carried out for briefer periods than in the past and from the basis of their permanent settlements. It is also regulated by provincial trapping regulation introduced in the 1940s.

The Anishinaabeg maintain a strong communal practice which means that resources are there to be shared. If someone kills a moose, its meat is distributed around the community.

Waterways and sled routes

The *gete bimishkaawin* (cultural waterways) that transect the forest form a network connecting the communities with one another and to the extensive harvesting areas. The traditional routes continue to be used, and although canoe paddles have been replaced by outboards and snowmobiles by dog-teams, survival still depends on an intimate knowledge of the land.

Mnemonic narratives connected with the travel routes have continued. Elders have begun to document these travel routes and associated traditions using cultural Geographic Information System mapping (GIS).

Pictographs

Over a hundred pictographs have been recorded at thirty locations. Some of the images correspond in form and material to other pictographs in the Lake of-the-Woods Style associated with the Archaic Period in North America. A few of the images could have been made as late as c 1,800 AD. They are seen by the Anishinaabeg to be related to sacred sites.

Settlements

Until a century ago, the Anishinaabeg mainly gathered in one place only in the summer months and dispersed across the whole of Pimachiowin Aki during the winter.

Within the nominated area, four of these traditional summer gathering sites have now become year-round settlements for the First Nation communities who have built modern houses. Each settlement is surrounded by its own reserve and located on one of the four main waterways.

Camps and cabin sites

Outside of the contemporary First Nation communities, temporary habitation and food processing sites are found throughout the nominated area, and especially along waterways.

Collaborative research between the community and archaeologists since 2003 has helped to document sites used within living memory for habitation and harvesting activities and more than 650 cabin and camp sites have been recorded to date. Some show remarkable continuity of evidence with many cabins located on or near-ancient campsites, some for instance being near fire pit sites that have been dated to the Middle Woodland period (2,200-1,300 ya) or Late Woodland period (1,300-300 ya), or near pictograph sites or early quartz quarry sites at which stone material was collected to make tools.

The forest

Some of the forest resources used by the communities such as medicinal plants are highly dispersed, and found in small and highly specific places. In order to sustain such plants, a sifting or rotational use of sites is practiced. The land-based knowledge of Anishinaabeg, known as *Akiwi-gikendamowining*, is especially important in locating these resources and understanding the changing distribution throughout the nominated area over time, particularly after wild fires.

A more widespread type of harvesting is of birch bark, peeled from paper birch trees along the rivers and used for making baskets, horns for calling moose in the autumn hunt, and historically, as a material for covering wigwams and for building canoes.

Controlled fires

In early spring when the lakes are still snow covered, the Anishinaabeg practise *bashkosigewining*, the controlled burning of shoreline wetlands. This promotes the growth of grasses that enhance foods and habitats for animals such as muskrats and ducks that are hunted for food.

Wild rice

Some harvesting sites in Pimachiowin Aki have been intentionally managed to increase their productivity. Archaeological evidence indicates that Anishinaabeg were cooking wild rice in pots at least 1,200 years ago.

Oral traditions

The Anishinaabeg world view of a symbiotic relationship between people and nature attributes animacy to objects in the natural world giving meaning to peoples' existence in this environment over time and through the seasons. The Creator, *Manitou*, has a central place. The Anishinaabeg believe that He has placed them on their ancestral lands. Two kinds of spirit beings are repeatedly referred to: the Thunderbirds or *Binesiwag* and the Little Rock People or *memegwesiwag*. The first represent a cultural tradition widely shared across continents. They are generally known and awed by the Anishinaabe communities, like many other First Nations, as powerful helpers and carers for the land. In the nomination they are said to nest in rock formations created at a time when plants still did not exist. Their nests are respected. They are believed to cause forest fires by lightning.

Elders and others with land-based knowledge (*akiwi-gikendamowining*) are especially esteemed for their role in guiding decision-making in personal, family and community matters related to use of the land. Knowledgeable elders are revered for their role in ensuring continuity of Keeping the Land.

History and development

Although human occupation in the Pimachiowin Aki area can be dated to Late Paleo-Indian Plano traditions around 10,000-8,000 years ago, and is associated with small isolated communities of hunters, the ancestors of the Anishinaabeg people appear to have begun to settle seasonally when the climate turned warmer between 7,000 to 2,200 years ago. This is when pictographs are believed to have first appeared. By 2,200 years ago a definite seasonal pattern of hunting appears to have been established.

The present-day Anishinaabe have their cultural roots in the Great Lakes area and were officially recognised as being in Pimachiowin Aki in the Treaty of 1875.

The nomination dossier asserts that Pimachiowin Aki demonstrates 'more than 7,000 years of indigenous occupancy' centred on the four Anishinaabe First Nations. Whether they have been living there for centuries if not millennia, or migrated into the area in the 18th century is still debated by historians. There are those who consider the Shield region was devoid of human habitation at the time of contact with Europeans

(although not denying evidence of earlier occupancy) with the Cree people moving later into the area, while others consider that the Shield region was occupied at the time of contact by the Cree people, but the Ojibwe moved into the area and displaced the pre-existing Cree population, and yet others assert that it was the term Ojibwe that gradually came to be associated with all the people living in the Shield region and thus the Crees and other northern residents did not move, they became Ojibwa. These aspects are considered further below under conclusions.

Pimachiowin Aki's geographic position in the centre of the continent, has led to techniques and ideas being introduced from all directions, such as in the 18th century AD through involvement with the international fur trade, and, in the 19th century, through the oil trade and the spread of Christianity.

Euro-Canadians who organised the fur trade bought pelts from animals trapped by the Anishinaabeg. By the 1820s when the initial intense fur trade had ended and the beaver population had been decimated, the Anishinaabeg communities returned to their traditional seasonal trapping activities. In the second half of the 19th century, a second commercial harvesting activity was developed around the export of oil from sturgeon in Lake Winnipeg organised by non-Anishinaabeg people. As with the fur trade, intense exploitation led to a rapid decline in resources. In the 1930s and 1940s smaller sturgeon fishing enterprises were set up in the nominated area but these were short lived.

Between the 1950s and 1970s, the growth in air traffic, and the support of the Federal Government, allowed the Anishinaabeg people to exploit other species of fish for trade. During these two decades, fishing took over from traditional trapping as the main source of income and brought increased material prosperity. By the 1970s, commercial fishing opportunities had declined dramatically in the face of rising costs, conservation concerns, and unstable markets. During the 1980s, international markets for fur also went into steep decline as a result of international anti-trapping campaigns.

From the 1940s changes were also brought about by an increase in the activities of government agencies, particularly in relation to education and health care. Both of these were centralised and this had the effect of pulling communities towards fixed settlements and a concomitant decline in seasonal hunting and fishing. At the same time, fur trapping became regularised and quotas were set under what is known as a trap line system.

The decline in opportunities for commercial fishing and trapping over the past fifty years has greatly diminished independent incomes amongst the Anishinaabeg. They are now strongly dependent on public subsidies. During the same time the population has significantly increased.

This loss of income combined with the pull of federal services and the push off the land has spurred cooperative relations between First Nations, and the provinces of Manitoba and Ontario.

In 2002, five First Nations of Pimachiowin Aki came together to develop a cooperative accord they titled Protected Areas and First Nation Resource Stewardship: A Cooperative Relationship Accord. This has since come to be known as the First Nations Accord. It aimed to strengthen mutual support. In 2016, one First Nation withdrew from this voluntary association. There are other Anishinaabe First Nations outside the Accord.

The Accord was subsequently extended to a partnership with the two Provincial governments of Ontario and Manitoba and became the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation. The Corporation promoted the nomination process and community based land-use planning that has been instrumental in determining the boundaries of the nominated area.

3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis in the revised nomination has been amended to reflect the change in boundaries. There are very few models for comparative analyses for properties of indigenous values especially in which there is not substantial tangible built evidence or landscape modification and where the landscape is considered 'natural'. The Pimachiowin Aki nomination has developed a framework for such comparative analyses which is helpful but has some limitations – especially in terms of the lack of cultural documentation in some sites selected for comparison.

The purpose of the comparative analysis is to show that the nominated property, as a place with potential Outstanding Universal Value, has no comparators on the World Heritage List, or on Tentative lists, or anywhere else. Thus comparisons need to be made between the property as a whole and other potentially comparable places to see if any of them has the same or a similar combination of Outstanding Universal Value and attributes that defines them as a place.

The comparative analysis that has been offered does not quite adopt this holistic approach. Instead it offers separate comparisons with discrete aspects of the property, called themes (harvesting sites, habitations and processing sites, sacred and ceremonial sites, water travel routes, widespread distribution and customary governance), whereas it is the combination of these themes that make up the idea of Keeping the Land.

Selection of sites for comparison, starts from the premise that places that most clearly exhibit cultural traditions most similar to the Anishinaabeg practice of Keeping the Land are found in the North American sub-

arctic area as this is where similar boreal forests and waterways are located and similar traditions of use by indigenous peoples. ICOMOS agrees that this geo-cultural area should provide the basis for the analysis.

Thirty-four sites were considered and seven immediately discarded as having only relict evidence. Of the remaining 27 sites, 17 are in Canada and 10 in the United States of America. All of these are designated historic sites. It is presumed that only protected sites were considered but this point is not made clear.

Analysis of these sites under the six themes concludes that some sites exhibit some themes but not others, while in many others the documentation is insufficient to allow a definitive answer, as there is no cultural inventory, or there is no mention in planning documents of customary governance. Perhaps the most common negative factors are the lack of, or weak evidence for, sacred and ceremonial sites, the lack of acknowledged customary governance, and insufficient size to allow widespread hunting and trapping and seasonal migration.

The analysis was only undertaken in relation to the current boundaries of the chosen sites even though the boundaries might have been drawn to protect natural assets (as is clear from some of the names that include Wildlife Refuge, and Biodiversity Reserves) rather than cultural assets. It thus appears to be sometime the case that these sites might have yielded more positive comparisons if further evidence had been available.

In summary, comparisons show that there are four sites in Canada that might be seen as comparable to Pimachiowin Aki in that they all exhibit the themes to varying degrees and overall can be said to reflect the relationship between indigenous culture and the environment. These sites are Old Crow Flats Special Management Area, Saoyú-?ehdacho National Historic site, Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish proposed Biodiversity Reserve, and Cat Lake – Slate Falls First Nations Protected Areas.

In making the case for why it is considered that there is room on the World Heritage List of Pimachiowin Aki, it is suggested that it has the most complete representation of the attributes and is thus an exceptional example and has the strongest claim to Outstanding Universal Value over and above the four others.

ICOMOS considers that what is clear from the work undertaken is that ideas similar to the Keeping the Land concept are common across the vast area of the American North Subarctic. However the detailed data to support understanding of precisely how communities relate to their environment and have done so over time remains patchy at best. What is not clear on the basis of the evidence provided is whether there are few social and cultural differences between the many communities and thus Pimachiowin Aki is the best place to represent this vast part of the globe on the World Heritage list, or

whether there are cultural differences related to specific aspects such as hunting traditions, governance, water management, and cultural history, and there could be an opportunity for more than one place to be put on the World Heritage List as a reflection of differing approaches to the idea of Keeping the Land in this region.

Clearly it would have been desirable for a more detailed thematic study to have been undertaken on this extremely important type of cultural landscape that could have shown more clearly the differences and similarities between communities and the way they have interacted with the land over many centuries. Such a study could also have thrown more light on the migrations of people around the area – this would not have diminished their connection with the land but could have amplified the way traditions have persisted over time even if people have moved from one area to another (this point is picked up in the Conclusions).

On the basis of the evidence put forward, ICOMOS considers that the analysis justifies consideration of Pimachiowin Aki for the World Heritage List, for its reflection of the water-based practices of the Anishinaabeg, but that it should not be considered as representing the cultural landscapes of the whole of the American sub-arctic region.

ICOMOS considers that further studies should be undertaken on the way landscape reflects the important cultural systems that characterise the many indigenous communities of the American sub-Arctic region, before any further sites are considered for nomination.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis has justified consideration of this property for the World Heritage List under cultural criteria.

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- a) 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* (Keeping the Land);
- *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* consists of the beliefs, values, knowledge, and practices that guide the 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;
- Anishinaabeg have for millennia lived intimately with this special place in the heart of the North American boreal shield forest;
- The Anishinaabeg cultural traditions are manifest in harvesting sites, habitation and processing sites, trap lines, 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 these cultural traditions across the generations.

ICOMOS considers that, as is discussed above, Pimachiowin Aki, on the basis of present knowledge cannot necessarily be seen to be the most complete example of a landscape that reflects Keeping the Land traditions. It is though an exceptional example of the way one group of communities manifest those traditions, in an extensive natural landscape of multi-layered forest, particularly through the use of waterways and through perpetuating their traditions of customary governance.

Nor can it be said that the Anishinaabeg have been the only communities to have lived for millennia in this particular part of the overall North American shield forest which many communities have shared. In ICOMOS's view this does not diminish the value of the special relationship between people and the land and the landscape that this has sustained.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The nominated area encompasses slightly less than a quarter of the lands occupied by Anishinaabeg peoples. The boundaries partly conform to historic trap line areas but do not include all the ancestral areas of the four communities – see boundaries below.

In spite of the reduction in area, it is of sufficient size to encompass all aspects of Anishinaabeg traditional livelihood activities, customary waterways, traditional knowledge of the landscape and seasonal rounds of travel, for hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering, and sacred sites, although some of these extends beyond the boundaries.

The key attributes are considered to be highly intact. The whole property is protected from commercial logging, mining, and hydroelectric development, and all its waterways are free of dams and diversions. Patterns of traditional use (fishing, gathering, hunting and trapping) and veneration of specific sites by the Anishinaabe First Nations have developed over millennia through adaptation to the dynamic ecological processes of the boreal forest, and appear to be ecologically sustainable.

The vastness of Pimachiowin Aki at 29,040 km² with only 5,972 residents and a buffer zone of an additional 35,926 km² provides a sufficiently large area to enable continuity of the living cultural tradition of Keeping the Land.

The very limited infrastructure includes some power lines, seasonally functional winter roads, and the all-season East Side Road (under construction). All of these are subject to numerous protections concerning development.

Authenticity

The ability of the landscape to reflect its value is not straightforward when, as is the case with Pimachiowin Aki, the links between people and place are often ephemeral and often intangible. Authenticity relates in this instance first all to the robustness of cultural traditions that underpin spiritual, social and economic interactions and their ability to function fully in relation to the adequacy of natural resources, and secondly to the necessary freedom of movement needed for communities to respond to changing seasons and environmental conditions.

Secondly authenticity also relates to how far the sites in the landscape (such as archaeological sites, sacred sites, waterways and hunting and harvesting sites) remain in use to a degree that the landscape reflects adequate interactions over time. And this in turn relates to the ability of the Anishinaabeg communities to maintain the resilience of their traditions across their vast landscape.

Although cultural traditions are pervasive across the landscape, through both personal and collective connections, within the four First Nation communities there are minor variations in relation to the particular ways of perceiving, practicing and maintaining the tradition of Keeping the Land. These variations seem to reflect centuries of interaction with people from outside of these communities such cross-cultural contact with Oji-Cree, Métis, northern European and other peoples within the Poplar River and Bloodvein River First Nations.

In order to sustain the resilience of traditions, maintaining authenticity will need to be an overt part of the management of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met, but authenticity will need to be actively sustained.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii) and (vi), (and natural criteria (ix)).

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Pimachiowin Aki provides an exceptional testimony to the continuing Anishinaabe cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the

Land). Keeping the Land guides relations between Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe people) and the land; it is the framework through which the cultural landscape of Pimachiowin Aki is formed, given meaning, and maintained across the generations.

Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan reflects the intimate interconnectedness between Anishinaabeg and their environment; a way of life in which nature and culture are inextricably intertwined and which has persisted over several millennia;

No other site in the North American Subarctic contains a comparable testimony to the complete suite of attributes that manifest Keeping the Land, and the distribution of these attributes across a wide landscape interconnected by waterway travel routes.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion can be justified but without it being said that this is the only place in the North American sub-arctic that might demonstrate the idea of Keeping the Land, as other landscapes of other communities might provide different but also exceptional responses to this key philosophy.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (vi): *be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Pimachiowin Aki is directly and tangibly associated with the living tradition and beliefs of Anishinaabeg, who understand they were placed on the land by the Creator and given all they need to survive.

Having received the gift of life that is Pimachiowin Aki, Anishinaabeg are bound by a sacred trust to “keep” the land; that is, to care for all life in a way that honours creation and enables Anishinaabeg to achieve health and prosperity, or *bimaadiziwin* (a good life). Anishinaabe uphold this sacred responsibility to care for the land through their cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land).

They involve ensuring harmonious relations with the other spirit beings with whom Anishinaabeg share the land and carry out the Creator’s plan for a healthy and productive life on the land, through offering sites such as grandfather stones and hollows in exposed bedrock where objects of value or tobacco are left for spirit beings; ceremonial sites used to communicate with and pay respect to other beings through drumming, dancing, and visions; and sacred places such as pictograph sites, Thunderbird nests, and places where *memegwesiwag* (little rock people) dwell.

The beliefs and values that make up *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* are carried down through the generations by means of a vibrant oral tradition in the Ojibwe

language. Oral traditions, including legends, stories, and songs, are central to the authentic intergenerational transmission of the cultural tradition. Oral traditions are tangibly associated with the nominated area through named places, which serve as mnemonic prompts for intimate knowledge of the land, including locations of resources, travel routes, and the history of Anishinaabe occupation and use.

These beliefs are sustained by systems of customary governance based on family structures and respect for the elders.

ICOMOS considers that although it cannot be said with certainty that the Anishinaabe have for millennia lived in Pimachiowin Aki, nor that Pimachiowin Aki is the only landscape in North America that manifest ideas of people having a sacred responsibility to keep the land, its size and the strength of its traditions make it an exceptional example of a belief of universal significance.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (vi) and that the conditions of authenticity and integrity have been met.

4 Factors affecting the property

New all-weather roads are being planned within the property in response, it is stated, to worsening climatic conditions, in order to try and address the high cost of staple foods being transported into the area, to provide jobs for locals and to promote tourism.

The main construction is a new all-season road that will run on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, for some 200 kilometres inside the nominated property. This East Side road will replace the existing winter road network which currently extends through and beyond the nominated area. The road will link the four Manitoba First Nation communities of Pimachiowin Aki, and the neighbouring First Nation community of Berens River, with the existing all-season road system to the south.

This is a long-term project. Work has already started and the road reached Bloodvein River, the southernmost First Nation in Pimachiowin Aki in 2012, and is scheduled to reach all other communities by 2040.

Although some road construction is necessary for the wellbeing of the communities, ICOMOS considers that its environmental impacts should be carefully assessed and checked by high-quality planning, fitting the road into landscape and minimising its disruptive effects to wildlife and traditional land uses. This might involve higher than normal costs.

The socio-cultural impacts of new roads should be also assessed, including the effects of increased accessibility on the communities and on the road corridors, and particularly on potential tourism development.

While commercial forestry is now prohibited within the nominated area, small scale community-based commercial forestry is allowed in limited areas of the buffer zone.

Forest management plans for the potential commercial forestry on parts of the buffer area have been developed by communities to protect both natural and cultural heritage.

There is no mining in the nominated area and mineral exploration and mining development are not allowed in the community land-use plans. However, in parts of the buffer zone there are pending mineral claims. Should these be revived, mining activity would have to be approved by the First Nation on whose traditional land it would take place, as well as by the provincial government.

Two small areas identified decades ago by the province for low-medium mineral potential in the eastern buffer zone are unlikely to be developed. This was confirmed by representatives at high levels in the Province of Manitoba which has full supported the nomination. Gold mining already occurs in Red Lake outside the buffer zone. It is not legally possible to ban mining in the adjacent areas. Stronger preventive measures to mitigate the environmental impacts of mining beyond the buffer zone are suggested in the nomination dossier, for instance a strict permit procedure involving control by First Nations.

For the segments of the all-season road within the nominated area, small gravel quarries related to road construction are designated through mandatory community-based processes along the road corridor.

Development within the nominated area is also associated with tourism activities such as canoeing and fishing. The building of lodges without negotiation or formal permission is still a cause for resentment by the First Nations, as well as the overuse of certain fish stocks by tourists. The current scale of development, however, remains modest with the number of visitors around 2,000 per year, but the all season road project is expected to facilitate more arrivals.

The First Nations express their willingness to develop sustainable tourism in a limited way, under their own control, through providing their own services and interpretation centres and by offering guiding to selected sites. Interviews by the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission with Anishinaabe and non-indigenous owners of fishing and hunting lodges indicated that guests' desire for more "authentic" experiences with First Nation people and traditions. The biggest tourism pressure is expected to be the Atikaki Provincial Park, the most accessible

part of the nominated area. Only Bloodvein River will welcome tourism to its entire reserve area.

Associated with the all-season road project, small scale, tourism oriented facilities are being built to accommodate visitors such as a boat launch and associated parking area and camping area in order to contain social and environmental impacts. Campsite systems are in place in Woodland Caribou and Atikaki provincial parks within the nominated area. In conjunction with the First Nation communities, the provincial parks have developed river warden and land warden programs that place local young people in areas frequented by tourists to build capacity and foster cultural engagement.

The potential threat of Hydro-electric power transmission lines has been added in the revised nomination dossier at the request of the recently elected government of Manitoba.

Any suggestion though that hydroelectric power lines may even be considered, appears to be contrary to statements that logging, mining, and hydroelectric development are prohibited in the nominated area by means of legislation. Large high voltage power lines would have an impact on the integrity of the landscape both in visual and associative terms.

Under integrity section of the nomination dossier, there is confirmation that the area is free from threats of hydroelectric development and that waterways, the lifeblood of *aki*, are free of dams and diversions. Although the nomination dossier stresses the fact that consultation would take place with first Nation communities, it is not clear why this is needed if hydro-electric development is not allowed in the nominated area. If however hydro-electric power lines are not considered to be part of hydro-electric development, this omission needs to be addressed.

Each of the four First Nations has their own distinct tradition, including their unique and thriving dialects. Some of the teachings and skills have been lost or weakened and are being re-learned. The extensive recording of oral history and its codifying into educational programmes and tourist interpretation is an important cultural process, and care needs to be exercised to protect the use of this knowledge, and also to avoid a situation in which a corpus of recorded and distributed 'frozen' tradition may partly substitute living tradition as the basis of Anishinaabe identity.

Threats may also come from the commercial heritage industry, 'disneyfication', or from substitution of genuine Anishinaabe traditions by a "pan-Indian" contemporary faith for therapeutic purposes (already occurring in some other areas).

The ability of the First Nations to sustain their culture is also under some threat from socioeconomic and health issues and by acculturation. The former include extremely high unemployment, and health problems.

Climate change may increase the likelihood of forest fires, an essential ecosystem process in the boreal forest. Provincial fire management regimes include cultural heritage and environmental factors such as endangered species into their response plans. The preferred option is to allow fires to fulfil their ecological role.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are possible hydro-electric power lines, the physical and indirect developmental impacts of roads, rapid expansion of tourism, the loss of traditional knowledge and increased acculturation.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The proposed boundaries encompass three provincial protected areas (Woodland Caribou and Atikaki Provincial Parks and Eagle-Snowshoe Conservation Reserve) as well as all the designated protected areas determined through community-led land use planning by the four Anishinaabe First Nations. The boundaries are not visually delineated on the ground due to the enormity of the proposed area and the similar and intact landscape of the surrounding buffer zone. For the inhabitants of the nominated area and those of the buffer area, the boundaries are apparent because they conform to trap lines. These boundaries are also mapped and recorded in law to designate the territory of the four Anishinaabe First Nations of Pimachiowin Aki.

The boundaries have been defined by each community in a slightly different way. Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi have included most of their planning areas, leaving smaller areas in adjacent management area buffers, whereas Poplar River and Bloodvein River have included all the lands in their planning areas within the nomination. While this reflects the relative autonomy of the First Nations, it leads to a certain inconsistencies for the property overall that could be reviewed further in the future.

The cultural landscapes of the partner communities stretch beyond the nomination boundary, and those of neighbouring non-partner First Nations partly overlap with those inside. Thus there are likely to be elements reflecting different values in the nominated area, and in the buffer zone – especially along the cultural waterways.

Exclusions to the nominated property include areas within those of neighbouring First Nations where land use planning is pending, limited areas with presumed low-medium mineral potential, areas with potential for commercial community-based forestry, and small shoreline settlements and offshore islands in Lake Winnipeg.

The boundaries are thus not complete in terms of encompassing the lands of all four First Nations. However given the large area concerned, and the information provided by the State Party concerning the process by which the boundaries were determined, the boundary is considered adequate.

The large buffer zone surrounding the property is covered by multiple, complementary regulatory regimes that buttress the community-based land management systems and is adequate.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are adequate.

Ownership

All the nominated area is government owned.

Protection

The only federal designations in the nominated area is the designation of the Bloodvein River as a Canadian Heritage River. Heritage protection for the nominated property takes place mainly under provincial rather than federal legislation. In addition there is supportive "enabling legislation" at federal and provincial levels relating to protecting species at risk, regulating resources and development, as well as to public consultation on proposed land-uses.

The vast majority (c. 99.98 %) of the nominated property is protected under provincial legislation that recognizes the designated protected areas identified in the First Nation land use plans and provincial parks legislation (provincial parks legislation applies to three provincial protected areas). The four First Nation settlements make up the remainder of the nominated area (c. 0.02 %) and are covered by Canada's Indian Act. Additional national and provincial legislation applies, for example, to Lake Winnipeg, several rivers and with regards to specific terrestrial and aquatic species.

The entire nominated area is protected from all commercial logging, mining, and the development of hydroelectric power, oil and natural gas. Similar protections cover the management areas of the buffer zone.

There does appear to be a possible loophole in the legislation in relation to hydro-electric power lines. The revised dossier mentions the possibility that if hydro-electric generation capacity expand in the future new transmission and conversion facilities may be required within the nominated area. In such an eventuality, it is

stated that regulatory approval would be needed under the Environment Act, and authorization needed for the use and occupancy of Crown land. This implies that hydro-electric power lines do not form part of hydro-electric development which is not allowed by law. Such a loophole needs to be closed as high voltage power lines would be inappropriate within the Pimachiowin Aki landscape and impact adversely on the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The four First Nation communities have strong traditional mechanisms of protection that draw from the cultural tradition of Keeping the Land. The commitment to these mechanisms and their expression led to the signing of the First Nations Accord in 2002, which created the impetus for developing the first nomination.

In most cases the protection is primarily for nature conservation but the park legislation allows cultural heritage to be taken into account.

Jurisdiction over public lands is in principle shared between the federal government, the provincial governments of Ontario and Manitoba and the four First Nations of the Accord. Aboriginal and Treaty rights are protected under section 35(1) of Canada's Constitution Act, 1982. Treaty rights of the Pimachiowin Aki First Nations are set out in Treaty 5 (1875). Federal or provincial legislation that affects the exercise of Aboriginal or Treaty rights will be valid only if it meets the test established by the Courts for justifying an interference with a right recognized and affirmed under s. 35(1).

As the nominated area is divided by the provincial border, ensuring the effectiveness of protection requires a common management policy for the two provincial governments. ICOMOS notes that plans are underway to form an interprovincial park out of Atikaki and Woodland Caribou parks, pointing the way to a cooperative management approach between the provinces.

ICOMOS considers that current levels of protection are effective against foreseeable negative development impacts, although procedures for solving eventual conflicts over land use and conservation remain untested. Such conflicts could arise over hunting regulations, licences for tourism development or distribution of benefits.

The buffer zone has some degree of protection and neighbouring First Nations participate in land use decision-making in its area.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is mainly adequate but needs to be strengthened to ensure hydro-electric power lines are not constructed across the property.

Conservation

The state of archaeological evidence is in general good. Typical archaeological sites along the watercourses are still easily identifiable in the landscape. Only a few of them have yet been excavated. Wear and tear from tourism or traditional land uses is minimal.

The pictographs, painted by red ochre with sturgeon oil as binding agent appear in some cases to be of prehistoric origin. The pictographs from different periods have been extensively documented and studied. They are mostly well preserved, considering that they are found in places beneath the high water mark. The state of preservation does however vary.

In terms of other structures (traps, smoking racks, marking poles etc.) modified landscapes (wild rice paddies, burned-over grassy shores), most are ephemeral and the buildings (cabins, campsites) of fairly recent origin. In the community settlements some intrusive buildings and structures, such as relay masts, airstrips, sewage treatment plants or gravel pits may be detected. However, due to the small size of the communities their impact remains limited.

Preservation of the natural environment allows for the continuation of hunting, trapping and fishing, and this is well protected.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is satisfactory.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

There are relatively few changes in the revised nomination to the way the nominated property will be managed. The legislative processes of both provinces support land management planning by the First Nations. The application of traditional stewardship approaches in planning and decision-making is facilitated by the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation (representing all four First Nations and both provincial governments).

Pimachiowin Aki and its traditional management continue to be interwoven and based on a commitment to the 2002 *Protected Areas and First Nation Resource Stewardship: A Cooperative Relationship Accord* founded on the principals and practice of Keeping the Land.

Individual Land Management Plans of each First Nation and provincial park partners inform the overall Pimachiowin Aki Management Plan.

This plan is now evolving into a Strategic Plan to guide the effective delivery of core programmes, practice excellent governance, and exercise financial sustainability. Core programmes include safeguarding cultural heritage; conserving and understanding

ecosystems and species; supporting sustainable economies; informing and educating the public; coordinating monitoring and reporting; and supporting community-based initiatives. Proposed objectives and actions enter a filtering process before becoming actions on an annual work plan. The Strategic Plan follows the Adaptive Management Framework and Cycle presented within the nomination.

In terms decision-making, a unified process occurs at the local level through traditional management processes, and by First Nations and the provincial governments through their respective land management and planning processes. The effectiveness of the consensus-based and cross-cultural process system continues to be tested with successful outcomes.

The current fixed 'trap line system' to control hunting was introduced in the 1940s by the provincial governments together with harvest quotas. It is based on traditional tenure of families or groups of families. Prior to the trap line system, harvesting was not strictly regulated, although harvesting areas were associated with particular groups. Now a permit from the officially registered head trapper is mandatory. The head trapper is a non-hereditary position although often it remains within certain families. At the community level the Elders have a decisive say in the control of traditional land use. Besides them, there are elected councils and chiefs as well as community planners.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

The property has an overall management plan that brings together key elements of the four First Nation land use plans and the park management plans of the three provincial protected areas. The management plan and series of legal protections uphold the practices associated with the traditional land management system embedded in Keeping the Land. The management plan is a high level plan and relates to more detailed planning for the designated protected areas including in the buffer zone for which those for the recently enlarged buffer zone area are still underway.

Since the first nomination, all of the community land use and management plans have been approved as follows: Poplar River 2011, Bloodvein River 2008, Little Grand Rapids 2012, Pauingassi 2012. Land use plans/strategies have been approved/last amended as follow: Little Grand Rapids 2011, Pauingassi 2011, and Bloodvein 2014. There is also a Woodland Caribou Signature Site Management Plan approved in 2007 and an Atikaki Provincial Park Management Plan approved in 2008.

To clarify the management system, as it relates to decision making, ICOMOS requested the State Party to develop a statement which outlines the protocol for decision making. This reflected the slightly reactive focus

of the overall management plan and acknowledged the need to make it more proactive.

The plan could also be strengthened to address socio-economic issues by promoting diversification and strengthening of economies, and through the development of action plans to address specific aspects such as visitor management, to ensure it is sustainable in terms of the landscape and its spiritual associations, is under the control of the communities, and offers benefits to them.

The effectiveness of the complex and integrated management system should be carefully monitored over time.

Financial support, independent of the operational budgets of the provincial parks and the supporting network of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and private local and regional businesses associated with Pimachiowin Aki, comes from annual grants from Manitoba and Ontario, substantial in-kind support from many of the partners, and a conservation trust fund. Additional funding from public and private sources is anticipated.

Involvement of the local communities

Involvement of the four First Nations totally underpins this nomination.

While the overall approach for the management of the property appears to be appropriate for the values of this area, so far the integration is at a general level and needs to be made more specific. In order to allow the possibility of consensus at different levels over land use planning and management, the management plan needs to harmonise zoning principles and concepts for land-use in the various component plans and to provide more defined action plans.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate but the overall management plan should be developed further to address specific overarching themes such as socio-economic development, visitor management, and interpretation, and to provide detailed action plans that harmonise zoning principles and concepts for land-use in the various component plans.

6 Monitoring

Research activity has extensively documented the Anishinaabe oral history and place-related traditions since the 1930s. More recently, place-related traditions have been collected in the context of First Nations land use planning into GIS databases.

While numerous examples of sacred and ceremonial sites, habitation and processing sites, harvesting sites, travel routes, and named places are well inventoried,

some additional tangible heritage assets are less well understood, inventoried, and represented in the nomination. The Pimachiowin Aki Corporation is undertaking further community based cultural research.

Key indicators are described in the nomination dossier with timelines and responsible authorities. The indicators are for fire regimes, hydrology, intactness, species diversity, community benefits (involvement in tourism), public understanding and appreciation of culture (educational programmes, media stories, web traffic, and info requests), governance / leadership (implementation of land use plans), culture (language use and retention), archaeological sites (integrity of sites) and traditional land use (level of trapping).

ICOMOS considers that the key indicators are satisfactory.

7 Conclusions

The nomination of Pimachiowin Aki has been driven by the First Nations in order to achieve recognition of their desire to sustain a living, working engagement with their all-encompassing natural and ancestral landscapes, and for their role in maintaining waterways and forests.

Since 2002, initially five First Nations of Pimachiowin Aki, and more recently four, have come together to develop a cooperative First Nations Accord that aims to strengthen mutual support. The Accord was subsequently extended to a partnership with provincial planning authorities that developed the nomination and aims to develop alternative sources of income for the communities.

The strength of the Pimachiowin Aki partnership has been demonstrated through the commitment and resolve of the elders to revise and resubmit the nomination after first deferral and then referral back decisions of the World Heritage Committee.

The main focus of the original nomination was to sustain the essential role that the Anishinaabeg play in sustaining the Boreal Biome. As natural criteria cannot acknowledge the cultural value of communities in supporting natural value, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to explore whether the spiritual relationship with nature that has persisted for generations between the Anishinaabe First Nations and Pimachiowin Aki, might be considered exceptional and could be seen to have the potential to satisfy one or more of the cultural criteria.

The second revised nomination did just that and put forward detailed descriptions and discussion of the specific cultural heritage practices of the Anishinaabeg, and how their profound respect for all living forms leads them to sustainable use of natural resources, and to deriving spiritual succour from them.

In the second nomination, the comparative analysis demonstrated that it is not only in Pimachiowin Aki that the cultural concept of Keeping the Land is still resilient as a guiding force for communities, but it did also showed how Pimachiowin Aki is an exceptional example of the way one group of communities manifest this practice, in an extensive natural landscape of multi-layered forest, particularly through the use of waterways and through perpetuating their traditions of customary governance. It also left open the possibility that other landscapes reflecting different nuanced approaches of Keeping the Land might be considered for the World Heritage list in the future.

ICOMOS considers that the third nomination has demonstrated that a reduction in area resulting from the withdrawal of one of the First Nations has impacted on the extent and scope of attributes, but that the pervasive tradition of Keeping the Land across each of the four First Nation communities is sufficiently strong to allow it still to be seen as an exceptional manifestation of this practice.

What has also become clear from the last two revised nominations is that the Anishinaabeg could be characterised as water people rather than forest people, as the waterways that cut through the forest are their lifeblood in allowing fishing, hunting, trapping and also some cultivation along the banks. The forest is the wider canvas of their activities, its resources used judiciously for medicine, for some hunting and nurtured through allowing wildfires that bring new plant life – all of which benefit the communities.

In terms of the long association of the Anishinaabeg with the landscape, the nominations have raised the issue as to whether there is evidence for the assertion that they have been associated with the Pimachiowin Aki landscapes for over 7,000 years, as is suggested in the nomination dossiers. On the basis of archaeological evidence, there has been habitation in the area from the end of the last Ice Age. Historical evidence is less clear cut though on whether the same people have been in the area or there has been migration of various peoples around the common Shield area over time (as discussed above under History).

ICOMOS considers that as the Cree and Ojibwe are very closely related, including linguistically, as both are part of the entire Shield common area, and as both have lived in the wider area over thousands of years, probably in an ever changing dynamic, with some groups living close to each other and some further apart, then Pimachiowin Aki could be said to be both Anishinaabe and Cree, with the Anishinaabeg being the current 'caretakers'. Pimachiowin Aki was an area previously shared by the Anishinaabeg and Cree, but, under the influence of the western ideas of land ownership, it came to be assigned to the Anishinaabeg.

8 Recommendations

ICOMOS recommends that the World Heritage Committee adopts the following draft decision, noting that this will be harmonised as appropriate with the recommendations of IUCN regarding their evaluation of this mixed site nomination under the natural criteria and included in the working document WHC/18/42.COM/8B.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Pimachiowin Aki, Canada, be inscribed on the World Heritage List as a cultural landscape on the basis of cultural **criteria (iii) and (vi)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Pimachiowin Aki, part of the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg people at the headwaters of the Berens, Bloodvein, Pigeon and Poplar rivers, is an exceptional example of cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land) that involves honouring the Creator's gifts, observing respectful interaction with *aki* (the land and all its life), and maintaining harmonious relations with other people.

The forest landscape, dissected by free-flowing rivers, lakes and wetlands, includes portions of the lands of four Anishinaabe First Nations: Bloodvein River, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi, and Poplar River First Nations and extends to 2,904,000 square kilometres. It encompasses slightly less than a quarter of the lands occupied by Anishinaabeg peoples.

The Anishinaabe world view of a symbiotic relationship between people and nature attributes animacy to objects in the natural world giving meaning to peoples' existence in this environment over time and through the seasons.

Today, within Pimachiowin Aki, Anishinaabeg are based in four small permanent Anishinaabe communities, and they are highly mobile and make use of waterways and a complex network of often impermanent interlinked sites, routes and areas in this extensive natural landscape of multi-layered forest, to harvest animals, plants and fish, consistent with their traditional practices and Treaty rights.

Ancient and contemporary livelihood sites, habitations and processing sites, travel routes, named places, trap lines, widely dispersed across the landscape reflect the way they and their Indigenous ancestors have made use of this and adjacent landscapes for over 7,000 years, while being sacred and ceremonial sites.

Pimachiowin Aki thus expresses an outstanding testimony to the beliefs, values, knowledge, and practices of the Anishinaabeg that constitute *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan*; the persistence of

Anishinaabe customary governance ensures continuity of these cultural traditions across the generations.

Criterion (iii): Pimachiowin Aki provides an exceptional testimony to the continuing Anishinaabe cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land). *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* guides relations between Anishinaabeg and the land; it is the framework through which the cultural landscape of Pimachiowin Aki is perceived, given meaning, used and sustained across the generations.

Widely dispersed across the landscape are ancient and contemporary livelihood sites, sacred sites and named places, most linked by waterways that are tangible reflections of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan*.

Criterion (vi): Pimachiowin Aki is directly and tangibly associated with the living tradition and beliefs of the Anishinaabeg, who understand they were placed on the land by the Creator and given all they need to survive. They are bound to the land and to caring for it through a sacred responsibility to maintain their cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land).

This involves ceremonies at specific sites to communicate with other beings, and respect for sacred places such as pictograph sites, Thunderbird nests, and places where *memegwesiwag* (little rock people) dwell, in order to ensure harmonious relations with the other spirit beings with whom Anishinaabeg share the land, and to maintain a productive life on the land.

The beliefs and values that make up *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* are sustained by systems of customary governance based on family structures and respect for elders, and through vibrant oral traditions that are tangibly associated with intimate knowledge of the land through named places that serve as mnemonic prompts, including locations of resources, travel routes, and the history of Anishinaabe occupation and use.

The size of Pimachiowin Aki and the strength of these traditions make it an exceptional example of a belief that can be seen to be of universal significance.

Integrity

Pimachiowin Aki is of sufficient size to encompass all aspects of Anishinaabe traditional livelihood activities, customary waterways, traditional knowledge of the landscape and seasonal rounds of travel, for hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering, and sacred sites, (although some of these extends beyond the boundaries), and includes sufficient attributes necessary to convey its value.

The key attributes are considered to be highly intact. The whole property is protected from commercial logging, mining, and hydroelectric development, and all its waterways are free of dams and diversions. Patterns of traditional use (fishing, gathering, hunting and trapping) and veneration of specific sites by the Anishinaabe First

Nations have developed over millennia through adaptation to the dynamic ecological processes of the boreal forest, and appear to be ecologically sustainable.

The vastness of Pimachiowin Aki and of its buffer zone provides a sufficiently large area to enable the continuity of the living cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan*.

The very limited infrastructure includes a few power lines, seasonally functional winter roads, and the all-season East Side Road (under construction). All of these are subject to numerous protections concerning development.

Authenticity

The ability of the landscape to reflect its value relates to the robustness of the cultural traditions that underpin spiritual, social and economic interactions and their ability to function fully in relation to the adequacy of natural resources, as well as to the necessary freedom of movement needed for communities to respond to changing seasons and environmental conditions.

Sites in the landscape (such as archaeological sites, sacred sites, waterways and hunting and harvesting sites) remain in use to a degree that the landscape reflects adequate interactions over time, and relates to the ability of the Anishinaabe communities to maintain their traditions across their vast landscape.

In order to maintain authenticity, sustaining the resilience of these traditions will need to be an overt part of the management of the property.

Protection and Management requirements

Heritage protection for the property takes place under provincial legislation. In addition there is supportive "enabling legislation" at federal and provincial levels relating to protecting species at risk, regulating resources and development, as well as to public consultation on proposed land-uses.

The vast majority (c. 99.98 %) of the property is protected under provincial legislation that recognizes the designated protected areas identified in the First Nation land use plans and provincial parks legislation (provincial parks legislation applies to three provincial protected areas). The four First Nation settlements make up the remainder of the World Heritage area (c. 0.02 %) and are covered by Canada's Indian Act. Additional national and provincial legislation applies, for example, to Lake Winnipeg, several rivers and with regards to specific terrestrial and aquatic species. In most cases the protection is primarily for nature conservation but the provincial park legislation allows cultural heritage to be taken into account.

The entire World Heritage area is protected from all commercial logging, mining, peat extraction, and the development of hydroelectric power, oil and natural gas. Similar protections cover the management areas of the buffer zone.

The four First Nation communities have strong traditional mechanisms of protection that draw from the cultural tradition of Keeping the Land as articulated in the First Nations Accord, 2002.

The legislative processes of both provinces support land management planning by the First Nations. The application of traditional stewardship approaches in planning and decision-making is facilitated by the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation (representing all four First Nations and both provincial governments).

The property has an overall management plan that brings together key elements of the four First Nation land use plans and the park management plans of the provincial protected areas. The management plan and series of legal protections uphold the practices associated with the traditional land management system embedded in *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan*. The management plan is a high level plan and it relates to more detailed management plans and land use strategies that are in place for the four First Nations' areas.

The plan could be made more proactive and strengthened to address socio-economic issues by promoting diversification and support for local economies, and through the development of action plans for specific aspects such as visitor management, to ensure it is sustainable in terms of the landscape and its spiritual associations, is under the control of the communities, and offers benefits to them.

The effectiveness of the complex and integrated management system should be carefully monitored over time.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

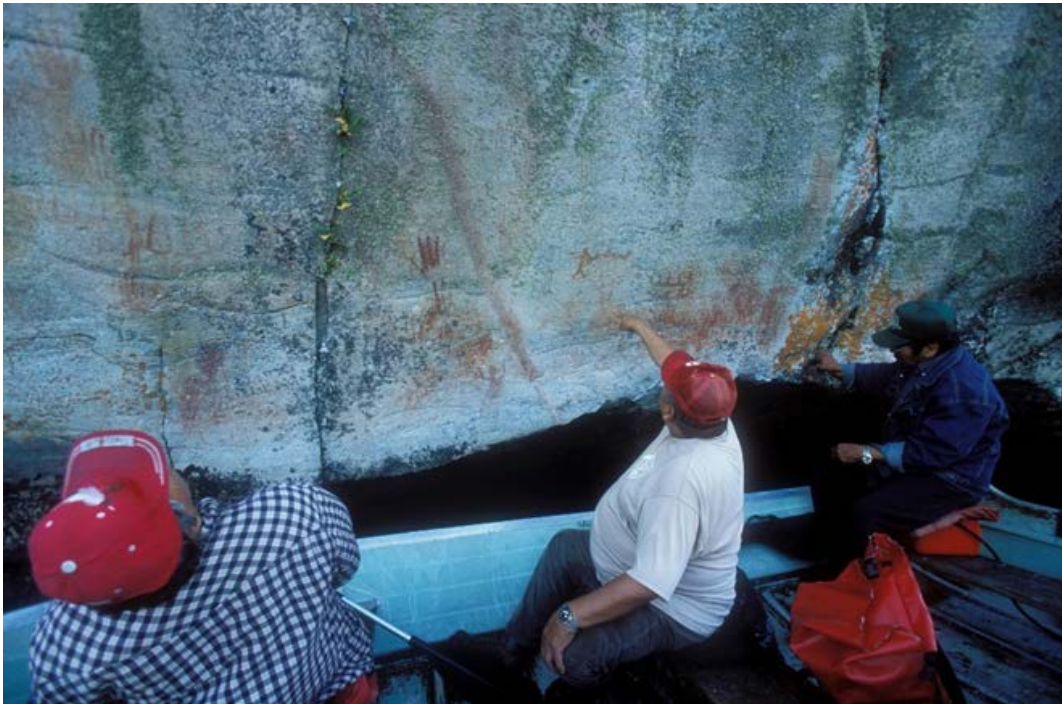
- a) Continue to strengthen the overall management plan, and make it more proactive by:
 - o Actively promoting and strengthening the partnerships between communities and provincial authorities,
 - o Addressing specific over-arching themes such as socio-economic development, diversification and support for local economies,
 - o Developing action plans for specific aspects such as visitor management, to ensure it is sustainable in terms of the landscape and its

spiritual associations, is under the control of the communities, and offers benefits to them,

- o Harmonising zoning principles for land-use in the various component plans,
- b) Ensure regular monitoring of the effectiveness of the management plan as a proactive tool for the benefit of communities,
- c) Strengthen legal protection to ensure that hydroelectric power-lines do not cross the property;



Lake and "tea kettles"



Rock art