



# NewsRelease

October 13, 2009

## PROVINCE ANNOUNCES TRUST FUND ESTABLISHED TO SUPPORT PIMACHIWIN AKI WORLD HERITAGE PROJECT

### **\$10 Million Investment in East Side Stewardship To Initiate International Fundraising Campaign**

Manitoba will contribute \$10 million to establish a trust fund expected to be worth a minimum of \$20 million in support of the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Project, Premier Gary Doer announced today.

“I commend our First Nations partners for their vision and leadership toward securing UNESCO World Heritage status for the unique place they call home east of Lake Winnipeg,” said Doer. “Today’s commitment will help ensure their efforts will result in a sustainable international attraction that benefits the people who live there.”

The Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage project is an initiative led by the Poplar River, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi and Pikangikum First Nations with support from the governments of Manitoba and Ontario. The group is currently preparing a bid to secure a UNESCO World Heritage designation for lands within a 40,000-square-kilometre area of pristine boreal forest in eastern Manitoba and western Ontario. The site is under tentative UNESCO consideration with a final bid presentation scheduled for submission in 2011.

The Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site Trust Fund will demonstrate to UNESCO that there is financial and public support for the site, will generate revenue for operation of the site and will create jobs and opportunities for First Nation communities by funding community-driven projects related to the site, said Doer.

“This is a great day for everyone who has and continues to work so hard to protect and promote our traditional territories through the UNESCO World Heritage process,” said Pimachiowin Aki spokesperson Sophia Rabliauskas. “Today’s announcement will strengthen our nomination document which must describe how the site will be managed including sources of funding. It means we are one step closer to international recognition of the lands and waters that sustained our ancestors and are so important to people all over the world today – a place we call Pimachiowin Aki in Anishinabe, or the land that gives life.”

In addition to funding the operation of the site through revenue earned by the trust fund, a portion of the fund will be dedicated to providing direct benefits to local communities by

supporting grassroots development projects. Projects such as heritage interpretive centres, cultural education and training programs, culturally appropriate social services including traditional healing centres, support programs for community artisans, eco-tourism initiatives and interpretive trails will all be given priority consideration. Participating First Nations will take the lead role in all project funding decisions.

The trust fund will be administered and managed by the Winnipeg Foundation.

“We are excited to be part of this ambitious and visionary initiative,” said Winnipeg Foundation CEO Rick Frost. “Building legacy funds for the future benefit of Manitoba is fundamental to our mission and we look forward to actively supporting the fund’s development during the coming years.”

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ATTACHED

**Backgrounder**

Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Project -

[http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset\\_library/en/newslinks/2009/october2009/UNESCOFund.PR.doc](http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/newslinks/2009/october2009/UNESCOFund.PR.doc)