



PIMACHIOWIN AKI

WORLD HERITAGE PROJECT

First Nations woman appointed spokesperson for Canadian boreal forest World Heritage Site project

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada - July 24, 2008 – Pimachiowin Aki, the organization working to designate part of the Canadian boreal forest a World Heritage Site, has appointed Sophia Rabliauskas, an internationally recognized First Nations woman, to be its spokesperson.

Rabliauskas (RA-BLOUS-KISS) won international acclaim last year when she was one of only eight people worldwide to win the Goldman Environmental Prize for her efforts to protect the boreal forest around her home in Poplar River First Nation, Manitoba. (goldmanprize.org/recipients/year). This month she received the Province of Manitoba's highest honour, inducted in the Manitoba Order for her work preserving the land in her Ojibwe community, 450 kilometres north of Winnipeg. (lg.gov.mb.ca/activities/news/2008/)

In her new role she will work with the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, a non-profit group, to create a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 40,000 square kms. of boreal forest, straddling the Manitoba-Ontario border (pimachiowinaki.org).

“This new role is a continuation of the work our elders have been telling us to do for years. They tell us that The Creator gave us the responsibility to care for the land, the land that sustains our life,” Rabliauskas said.

The work of the Pimachiowin Aki Corp. is led by First Nations through a Board of Directors that includes representatives from Pikangikum First Nation in Ontario; Pauingassi, Little Grand Rapids and Poplar River First Nations in Manitoba and the Manitoba and Ontario provincial governments. Its goal is “to safeguard the Anishinabe cultural landscape and the boreal forest as one living system to ensure the well being of the Anishinabe who live there and for the benefit and enjoyment of all humanity.”

If the Pimachiowin Aki nomination, which is being prepared over the next three years, is successful it will join recognized sites like the Pyramids of Giza, the Great Barrier Reef, Taj Mahal and the Grand Canyon on the UNESCO World Heritage list. (whc.unesco.org)

In one of her first roles as a spokesperson Rabliauskas spoke with youth from ACHIEVE – an Aboriginal youth summer program in Winnipeg today about why preserving the forest is important to them, too.

“It’s important for children not just living on reserves in the forest but for young people in the city to know that how we treat our land today will affect the health of the planet and the lives of many generations to come,” Rabliauskas said.

More information see: www.pimachiowinaki.org/.
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PIMACHIOWIN AKI
ASSEMBLY OF PARTNERS

PIKANGIKUM FIRST NATION

POPLAR RIVER FIRST NATION

PAUINGASSI FIRST NATION

LITTLE GRAND RAPIDS
FIRST NATION

MANITOBA CONSERVATION

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

The Land that Gives Life

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