

DR. WILLIAM COMMANDA, ALGONQUIN ELDER

www.circleofallnations.com

OPENING REMARKS

NATIONAL CLAIMS RESEARCH CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 7, 2006

I WOULD LIKE TO NOTE THAT IN 1532, FRANCISCUS DI VITTORIA, THE PRIMARY PROFESSOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA, GAVE TWO FAMOUS LECTURES : *DE INDIS* AND *DE JURE BELLI* (CLASSICS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW – E. ENYS. ED. OCEANA PUBLICATIONS New York, 1964.) IN 1933, THIS MAN WAS ACCLAIMED THE FOUNDER OF MODERN INTERNATIONAL LAW AT THE SEVENTH PAN AMERICAN CONGRESS.

HE ASSERTED TO THE KING OF SPAIN (WHO WAS ALSO THE KING OF JERUSALEM AND EMPEROR OF THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE) THAT THE INDIANS WERE THE TRUE OWNERS OF THE LAND, FROM BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE POINTS OF VIEW, HOLDING IT IN HONOUR OF THE CREATOR; AND HE

ADVISED THAT THE POPE HAD NO TEMPORAL POWER OVER INDIAN LANDS. OF COURSE THIS PLACES THE FAMOUS PAPAL BULLS OF 1493 AND 1537 IN THEIR PROPER LIGHT AS AN INSTRUMENTS OF EXPLOITATION AND GENOCIDE.

IT IS IN THE WORDS OF VITTORIA THAT THE THEORY OF ABORIGINAL RIGHT TAKES ITS ROOTS IN NORTH AMERICA. OTHERS HAD A RIGHT TO SHARE THE LAND SO LONG AS THE INDIANS WERE NOT HURT BY THEM. THE *PEARLS OF THE SEA* BELONGED TO THE INDIANS. (Courtesy Anne Pennington Mayer)

I CARRY THE SACRED THREE FIGURE WAMPUM BELT OF THE 1700S, WHEN OUR ANCESTORS AGREED TO SHARE THE GRAND NATURAL RESOURCES AND OUR LAND IN THREE EQUAL PARTS WITH THE NEWCOMERS, THEN THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH. THIS SACRED COMMITMENT WAS

REAFFIRMED IN THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION OF 1763, AND THE BRITISH PRESENTED US WITH A CHECKERED BELT TO CONFIRM THE STATUTE AS AN INDELIBLE LIVING STATUTE.

WE DO NOT YET OCCUPY OUR PROPER PLACE IN THE LAND OF OUR ANCESTORS, AND WITH THE ABSENCE OF OUR FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF BALANCE, RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY, OUR LAND HAS BEEN ABUSED ALMOST BEYOND REMEDY. IT IS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE THAT WE REGAIN OUR STRENGTH AND SERVE OUR LAND AS OUR ANCESTRAL CARETAKERS DID IN THE PAST.

I HAVE WORKED HARD FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS PEACE BUILDING CENTRE AT *ASINABKA*/VICTORIA ISLAND, WHERE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES FROM ACROSS TURTLE ISLAND CAN

MEET AND GROW STRONG TOGETHER AS IN THE PAST; IT IS ALSO A PLACE FOR RECONCILIATION WITH MOTHER EARTH AND THE WATERS. I NOW LEARN THAT MORE DEVELOPMENT IS PLANNED BY DOMTAR FOR THE SACRED CHAUDIERE FALLS – THIS A PRIMARY SACRED SITE OF OUR ANCESTORS; AND WE ARE NOT AT THE TABLE.

I AM ALMOST NINETY THREE YEARS OLD. I HAVE TO ENTRUST THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR UPHOLDING THE VALUES OF OUR ANCESTORS AND REAFFIRMING OUR SACRED TIES TO TURTLE ISLAND TO YOU. I PRAY YOU WILL FIND THE STRENGTH AND WISDOM FOR THE TASK IN THE DIFFICULT TIMES WE LIVE IN.

I HOPE THE INFORMATION I OFFER WILL SUPPORT YOUR DISCUSSIONS DURING THIS CONFERENCE.

Circulate Far & Wide

The “Call” of the Mighty Ottawa

Friends of the Ottawa’s “River Cleanup Day”

A project facilitated by the National Capital Peace Council (NCPC)

Description:

As good stewards in the Ottawa Valley we see the great Ottawa River, one of the 100 longest in the world, as requiring our attention. This single most dominant natural feature of our region calls out to us to take better care of it because we have been entrusted, by the Creator, with the protection and responsible development of our natural world.

Friends of the Ottawa, once a year, will mobilize, along both banks, groups large and small to clean up the shore line of man-made garbage. To honour & protect this fluid soul of the Ottawa Valley, June 10, 2007, Canada River Day, will be a day of respect for & solidarity with the Ottawa (or as it was called, Kitchissippi) River, an impressive conveyor of commerce, recreation and natural beauty as well as the host of a significant eco-system.

On that day, the NCPC, in cooperation with the Algonquin peoples and other interested groups and municipalities will clean up the banks of the Ottawa River. With our work gloves and garbage bags each group would take responsibility for a pre-determined stretch of the shore line.

At the end of the day we encourage participants to gather and celebrate their love and respect for the Ottawa. We hope groups will converge on Victoria Island, in Ottawa, to celebrate the event and plant a butternut and arrowwood tree to mark our efforts.

For centuries the butternut and arrowwood have been planted along the shores of this place to aid the First Nations. Prayer offerings will be made by representatives of various faiths. The event will conclude with a community meal with all our participants contributing.

This initiative was inspired by Grand Chief William Commanda's call, carried to the NCPC by Romola Trebilcock, to protect and care for the river, while nurturing his vision of a Circle of All Nations.

An Invitation:



We encourage everyone to join us. Please contact project facilitator Dr. Peter Stockdale 613-421-2273 peterstockdale@rogers.com. To let us know what part of the great Ottawa you want to care for that day.

Blessings,

Daniel Stringer

Chair

National Capital Peace Council

From: Romola <circleofallnations@sympatico.ca>
Subject: **American Eel Consultation**
Date: March 31, 2007 11:19:02 PM EDT (CA)
To: fwisar@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
Cc: Bill Allen <heritage1@magma.ca>, Larry Graham <lgraham@thedailyobserver.ca>, Meredith Brown <keeper@ottawariverkeeper.ca>, alan.latourelle@pc.gc.ca
 1 Attachment, 42.5 KB 

Dear Pooi-Leng Wong:

I wish to add my name to the list of people petitioning for the designation of the American Eel as a Species at Risk.

I am a 93 year old Algonquin of the Ottawa River Watershed, and I currently also serve as Honorary Chair on the Ottawa River Heritage Designation Committee. I have been deeply concerned with the devastating transformation of this watershed and areas beyond throughout the course of my lifetime, and I have been increasingly actively engaged in efforts to promote respect for Mother Earth and all that inhabit her, over the past twenty years. This effort was in part recognized by the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, when, in 2004, I was presented with the Bill Mason Conservation Award.

Over the past ten years, I have also been involved in developing an integrated vision for an international environmentally focussed healing and peace building centre at the sacred meeting place of my ancestors, *Asinabka*, site of the Chaudière Falls in Ottawa, a centre to advance respect for Mother Earth, Indigenous Peoples and all others, and in my mind, these are interrelated matters of grave concern for the world. Last November, I organized a Water Life Workshop, in part to advance this effort, but also to encourage better stewardship of the the Ottawa River. This led me to an effort to dissuade Domtar Inc. from expanding the Hydro Electric Plant at the Chaudière Falls. Amongst other concerns, I have been upset by evidence of the destructive impact of turbines on eels in some graphic photographs.

I believe it is crucial importance that we all reexamine our invasive and destructive relationship with Mother Earth and all her creatures, and many are beginning to hear this cry. Every day, it seems we hear of the desperate state of yet another species, and the current focus on sharks highlights the interrelated ramifications of the destruction of individual species.

At this point I am raising my voice concerning the plight of the American Eel. The eel has been of spiritual, nutritional and material importance to the Indigenous Peoples of the eastern seaboard, and to my ancestors of the Ottawa River Watershed, since time immemorial, has played a role in the Donald Marshall Junior struggle for the recognition of indigenous fishing rights, and I believe eel spirit is intrinsic to the sacred Seven Fire Prophecy Wampum Belt that I have carried for the people for over thirty six years. It is this prophecy that tells us that humanity is now at a cross roads, and that we need to regenerate our relationship with Mother Earth and each other, and it is a message I delivered at the December 2006 Minster's Round Table on Species at Risk; a short few months later, we all alert to the issues of global environmental and human crisis.

I am taking the liberty of attaching a paper prepared by Archeologist Bill Allen, who is currently undertaking studies in support of my effort to advance a vision for the Chaudière site, for a more specific review of critical concerns on this matter.

I look forward to being apprised of development on this file.

Sincerely,

William Commanda
Algonquin Elder
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PS I may be reached at this email address



[American Eel...oc \(42.5 KB\)](#)

The Ottawa Riverkeeper

River Healing Journey

Travel from Ottawa to Montreal in a Voyageur Canoe!

The River Healing Journey is a citizen-based, non-profit, volunteer paddling and camping project to:

- raise awareness of River issues;
- help promote exploring and enjoying our historic and majestic rivers in human-powered craft;
- to raise money for Ottawa Riverkeeper. For information on Ottawa Riverkeeper see www.ottawariverkeeper.ca; and
- provide "ordinary Canadians" an opportunity to travel from Ottawa to Montreal, in a replica "Montreal" voyageur canoe along the historic Ottawa River – the original Trans-Canada highway!



The River Healing Journey will travel from Ottawa to Montreal in two Voyageur canoes, guided by experienced outfitters. The pace will be moderate, to accommodate individuals of varying physical strength and fitness – we will all be paddling together to the best of our ability and within our comfort limits. And we will sing French Voyageur songs as we do it!

The detailed itinerary is still under development. The pace will be leisurely and will include visits "on foot" to national historic sites, including the Carillon Barracks and the Fur Trade Warehouse at Lachine. At this point, the proposed key stops along the way (subject to confirmation of campsites and planning/booking of the side trips) are:

- Day one (June 11, 2007), the River Healing Journey will depart Petrie Island (just outside of Ottawa) and paddle to a campsite near Montebello, Quebec.
- Day two (June 12, 2007), the River Healing Journey will travel from Montebello to Grenville, Quebec.
- Day three (June 13, 2007), the River Healing Journey will travel from Grenville, Quebec to St. Andre, Quebec.
- Day four (June 14, 2007) the River Healing Journey will travel from St. Andre, Quebec to St. Anne de Bellevue (for lunch on the shore) and then to our final destination—the historic fur trading headquarters in Montreal!

For additional details, see this website:



http://ottawariverkeeper.ca/events/river_healing_journey

OK: Google "River Healing Journey"
(pages from Canada)

3/30/2007

Ottawa River Watershed Issues

Over the past year alone, there have been many occurrences of significant environmental impact on the Ottawa River Watershed, and it is not clear who is monitoring this; I have learned that the Ottawa Riverkeepers do not keep a list.

In no particular order, they include things like:
the Sulphuric acid spill outside North Bay and implications for the Watershed;

the White Water Raft Issue in Ottawa

the problems with the water at Petrie Island last summer, after the millions they invested in creating a park - now they want a swimming pool;

the chemical contaminant expelled into the Ottawa River around Pembroke;

the dead fish near Arnprior;

the green algae last fall;

the Uranium mining plans for the Mississippi;

the dumps – at Carp and the plans for Kazabajou and Danford Lake