

For Immediate Release

April 30, 2008

More staking in the Boreal Forest as conflict reigns

Group calls for rules for development to protect ecologically sensitive ecosystems

Toronto – Today, CPAWS Wildlands League, a conservation group, is calling on the province to halt mineral exploration in the Boreal Forest so that the government can design and implement rules for development. The group issued the statement after learning about new staking being conducted by the same mineral exploration company that sued Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug for \$10 Billion. The company sought and won jail time for community leaders that opposed drilling. The KI Six, as the community leaders are known, have already served 7 weeks of their 6 months jail terms for refusing to allow a drilling project to proceed on their lands.

“We’re here for what we believe in,” said Chief Donny Morris to a rally of more than 400 supporters in Toronto. Chief Morris spoke from a payphone in the Thunder Bay Correctional Centre.

“While the KI Six are in prison, Platinex announced it has staked more claims covering over 29,000 ha (or 72,000 acres) in the Boreal Forest,” says Anna Baggio, Director of Conservation Land Use Planning, CPAWS Wildlands League. “It’s like rubbing salt in the wound of the KI community,” Ms. Baggio adds. The group supports the right of a First Nation community to say NO to mineral exploration and mining projects and calls on Premier McGuinty to reform the Mining Act.

“Our leaders, including a grandmother, are in jail because they peacefully fought to protect our waters and lands,” says Jacob Ostaman, acting spokesperson for Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug. Through a referendum, the community issued a resounding NO to the Platinex drilling project. “We call on the province to respect our right to say NO to this drilling project. Our leaders have made it clear that they will come home only when the underlying drilling issue has been resolved,” Mr. Ostaman added.

CPAWS Wildlands League is deeply troubled that the province has not yet implemented comprehensive land use planning prior to development in the Boreal Forest as it promised to do in 2003. “This whole conflict could have been avoided had they done so,” Ms. Baggio said.

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