

Press Release



October 6, 2011

Mikisew Cree rejoins CEMA

Fort McMurray, Alberta – The Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA) is pleased to welcome the Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) back as a full member. The Mikisew Cree membership received complete and total support from all CEMA Board members regarding their request to return to the Association. Chief and Council of MCFN have indicated that Melody Lepine will be their representative working with CEMA.

“The Mikisew Cree have great expectations about the new governance structure and operational mode of CEMA that resulted in the organization’s adoption of a sector based Management Board comprised of four caucuses: Aboriginal, Industry, Government and Non-Governmental Organizations. We are encouraged by the promise that the new balanced Board will guarantee equality for all interest groups in the decision making process of CEMA.” said Chief Steve Courtoreille. “We very much hope that the new governance structure and operational mode of CEMA will allow for meaningful input of our knowledge and expertise. One of the reasons we left CEMA was because our views, expertise and information were not being meaningfully considered and incorporated into the decision making process of CEMA. We look forward to working with CEMA and to observing for ourselves if our expectations of the changes are indeed meaningful and positive for the Mikisew Cree”

“All CEMA members and the staff welcome the Mikisew Cree back to the Association. Their representatives have been missed from our working groups and Aboriginal Coordination Committee. The experience and expertise that the Mikisew Cree bring to our multi-stakeholder table cannot be denied and we’re pleased to renew this partnership” stated Glen Semenchuk, CEMA Executive Director. “Since CEMA’s new structure and governance operations were adopted last year, CEMA has begun the process for reengaging local First Nations. This very important step is a reason for us to celebrate; we also recognize our responsibility to up hold our end of this relationship with the Mikisew Cree.”

In 2007 several First Nations, including the Mikisew Cree First Nations, withdrew their membership from CEMA. In response CEMA formed the Joint Review Committee (JRC) in June 2009, composed of CEMA members and federal and provincial government regulators. The JRC met several times in facilitated meetings to review background material, debate draft recommendations, and ultimately prepare a final report. The JRC used a process of presenting draft options to the CEMA Secretariat, CEMA Members and former CEMA Members for feedback to develop the final recommendations. The items for consideration were selected from key areas identified during CEMA's Revitalization Strategy and various independent reviews of CEMA. The Association's new goals, structure, and by-laws were adopted in June 2010 and have been fully implemented by the Secretariat.

The Mikisew Cree have resided in Northeastern Alberta since time immemorial. They have lived a traditional lifestyle that included close understanding of the natural environment. MCFN has the largest population of the five Athabasca Tribal Council Nations with their traditional lands ranging over much of the area where the Athabasca Oil Sands deposits have been found.

CEMA is a multi-stakeholder society that is a key advisor to the provincial and federal governments committed to respectful, inclusive dialogue to make recommendations to manage the cumulative environmental effects of regional development on air, land, water and biodiversity.

For more information please visit www.mikisew.org or www.cemaonline.ca

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