



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Encourages Ongoing Reclamation of First Nations Culture and Movement Towards Reconciliation on July 1, 2022

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is issuing the following statement ahead of July 1, recognized as Canada Day, as a reminder of the stark realities we should confront as we observe a national holiday.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee states:

“We are blessed to live in an incredibly beautiful country. Anyone who has had the chance to travel to various parts of Canada, or even within the Province of Manitoba, knows there are countless natural wonders around us. It makes perfect sense that people from all over the world want to visit and relocate to Canada.

While I acknowledge the deep love many of us have for the beautiful place we call home, I also plan to take the time to reflect on July 1 about the many issues where we must progress in order for Canada to become a truly great country for all of its inhabitants.

Too many times, First Nations people are treated as second class citizens on their very own lands. This is wrong. First Nations, and people, have been displaced and denied a role in overseeing and in managing our very own resources.

Our cultures and languages kept us strong for time immemorial. From our ancestors who came before us, we learned how to take care of the earth and water for the future generations.

Today, while many of us enjoy the richness of Canada’s resources, I ask everyone to continue to learn more about First Nations cultures. Seek out the traditional teachings we have for preserving and protecting Mother Earth. With the rapid advancement of climate change, time is of the essence when it comes to reclaiming our cultural practices.

It is our role as First Nations people to share our cultural teachings around how to best protect the land, water, and the people who live on these lands. Since we live in a society that often works to destroy the pristine beauty we find all around us for the sake of ‘economic development,’ this reality creates discomfort and inner conflict for many of us. I am grateful there is a growing conversation about the reality that Canada Day is experienced as a painful colonial holiday for many.

As we approach Canada Day, I share a reminder that it's essential for all Canadians to continue to advance the dialogue on reconciling with Canada's extremely dark past. It is only with a strong movement towards true reconciliation that we can come together to take significant steps for combatting climate change and ensuring the land and waters in Canada are able to sustain all of its citizens."

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