Nishnawbe Aski Nation
ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐢᑭ ᐃᔅᑯᓂᑲᓇᓐ ᐅᑭᒪᐧᐃᓐ
100 Back Street, Unit 200, Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L2
Tel: (807) 623-8228 Fax: (807) 623-7730 www.nan.on.ca

NEWS RELEASE

Thursday June 11, 2009 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN OBSERVES NATIONAL DAY OF RECONCILIATION

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy called for a new era of reconciliation during his opening remarks as First Nations and members of the Thunder Bay community observed National Day of Reconciliation at Mount McKay today.

"One year ago today First Nations received formal acknowledgement of injustice the wrong-doing suffered by our people through the residential school system," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy, who was in the House of Commons for the Prime Minister's historic apology to residential school Survivors on June 11, 2008. "The Prime Minister's apology was an important first step towards reconciliation between the Government of Canada and First Nations. Today we take the next step towards a new era of reconciliation."

National Day of Reconciliation is an Assembly of First Nations initiative to mark the first anniversary of the Government of Canada's apology for its treatment of children, parents and families as a result of the Indian Residential Schools system.

Beardy was joined by Fort William First Nation Chief Peter Collins, NAN First Nation Elders, church leaders and local dignitaries for a day of events on Mount McKay (Thunder Mountain or Animikii-wajiw), a prominent feature on the Thunder Bay landscape that is sacred to the Ojibwe. The day was marked with a traditional sunrise ceremony, moment of silence in memory of victims of residential schools, honour service for residential school Survivors, audio/visual displays highlighting the residential school experiences of NAN First Nation Survivors, and a live radio broadcast on Wawatay Radio.

"I encourage all Canadians – native and non-native – to observe National Day of Reconciliation as we continue to work towards reconciliation over this shameful chapter of Canadian history," said Beardy. "Many First Nations may never be able to get over the devastating legacy of this shameful chapter of Canadian history, but I hope that by coming together we can continue the healing process for Survivors and their families."

Approximately 5,000 NAN members attended residential schools. Since 2005, NAN has publicly urged for a formal apology by the Prime Minister of Canada and the continuation of programs focused on individual and community healing for the 90 per cent of NAN members who have been impacted by the residential school system.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty 5 – an area covering two thirds of the province of Ontario.

***

For more information please contact *Michael Heintzman, Media Relations Officer – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625 4906 or (807) 621 2790 mobile.*