Nishnawbe Aski Nation
ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐟᑭ 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

Wednesday June 10, 2009 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

NAN, WINDIGO BRING MOTION FOR RECOGNITION OF TWO RESIDENTIAL HIGH SCHOOLS AS "INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS"

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and Windigo First Nations Council (Windigo) have brought a motion before the Ontario Superior Court of Justice to add Stirland Lake and Cristal Lake Residential Schools to the list of recognized schools under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSS Agreement).

"This is the first motion in Canada seeking to compel the addition of further schools to the IRSS Agreement over the Government of Canada's objection," said Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Stan Beardy. "If successful, it will set a precedent for other similar motions to add residential schools from across the country."

The IRSS Agreement provides a process by which former students of an "Indian Residential School" not currently recognized under that Agreement as qualifying for compensation can challenge Canada's decision to exclude such schools.

In the spring of 2008, the Government of Canada rejected Windigo and NAN's submission to add Stirland Lake and Cristal Lake residential high schools as "Indian Residential Schools." The federal government claimed these schools were private Mennonite schools and were not run with direct involvement by the government.

"Windigo and NAN are challenging the government's decision, and we will be asking the Court to add these two schools to the IRSS Agreement," said Windigo CEO and Council Chair Frank McKay. "If we are successful, then all former students of Stirland Lake and Cristal Lake will be able to submit applications for the Common Experience Payment and under the Independent Assessment Process for those who suffered abuse or mistreatment."

Windigo and NAN have hired Susan Vella, of Toronto's Rochon Genova LLP, as their lawyer to advance this motion.

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.*