



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
ᐱᓄᓂᐱᓂᐱ ᐱᓂᐱ ᐱᓂᐱᓂᐱ

100 Back Street, Unit 200 Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L2
Tel: (807) 623-8228 Fax: (807) 623-7730

NEWS RELEASE

Friday August 16, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN, CHAPLEAU CREE AND COMMUNITY COMMEMORATE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL GRAVESITE

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler today joined Chapleau Cree First Nation Chief Keeter Corston and other First Nation and community leaders for a commemoration ceremony marking recently identified graves at the St. Johns Indian Residential School site in Chapleau, Ontario.

“It is critical that the unmarked burial sites of these and all Residential School children be found and the remains be put to rest in an appropriate and respectful manner,” said NAN Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who holds the justice portfolio at NAN. “The identification and acknowledgement of these and other unmarked gravesites are a sad but very important part of the healing process to help First Nations overcome the devastating legacy of the Indian Residential School system.”

Chapleau Cree First Nation located the abandoned and neglected graveyard of the St. Joseph’s Indian Residential School, which operated from 1920-1948. A preliminary reconnaissance survey by Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) archaeologists has identified an estimated 42 graves to date, but more field work will be required establish the gravesite boundaries and determine if unmarked burials are located outside the known grounds of the cemetery.

“On behalf of Chapleau Cree First Nation I would like to acknowledge the support we have received from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Nishnawbe Aski Nation and the Chapleau community for this project,” said Chapleau Cree First Nation Chief Keeter Corston. “Through our combined efforts we are now able to treat the final resting place of these former students with the dignity and respect they deserve.”

The site is being restored and protected through the TRC’s Missing Children residential school cemetery project. The site community has erected a monument commemorating the lost students, but the perimeter of the cemetery needs to be properly established and

secured. NAN has appealed for assistance to the Office of the Chief Coroner, which supports the work of the TRC's Missing Children project.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty No. 5 – an area covering two thirds of the province of Ontario in Canada.

For more information please contact: Michael Heintzman, Communications Coordinator – Nishnawbe Aski Nation (807) 625-4965 or cell (807) 621-2790 or by email mheintzman@nan.on.ca