

2015 Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum Guardian Program

We are directed by the Elders' Vision Chapleau Crown Game Preserve:

The Chapleau Crown Game Preserve is a leading example of First Nations and municipalities, industries and government working together to responsibly steward the land, waters, and their resources in a sustainable way that will protect values, promote biodiversity, support current and emerging economies, and provide access to the land for ceremony, teaching/learning, harvesting, and spiritual connection.

This Vision was confirmed and presented to MNRF and local and regional partners in March 2015, and guides the activities we're undertaking. There have been discussions and a desire to have a Guardian program for a number of years, but this is the first year we are piloting the program. This season, we are focused on getting Guardians and Elders out on the land to 'ground-truth' the 2014-2015 map analysis.

Why? This phase will provide actual employment (proof of possibility), increase the information available for business planning, build tangible skills, create protocols for operating on tenured land (including safety, transit, timing), and affirm the authority of the Elders in the CCGP for ecological health.

How? Our proposal is for a small and focused Guardian's Program Phase One – a few Elders and a few Guardians carefully selected to work with the Ecotrust Canada team to work in the CCGP during the summer of 2015 - groundtruthing the information sets created for the business feasibility studies. They will be taught the skills of working in field positions, and charged with helping the region to understand where economic alternative activities may be able to succeed.

Results Our intention is to get a small trained crew of field technicians. This forms the core of a Guardianship Program which can subsequently be deployed to achieve the requirements for Free, Prior and Informed Consent. We will use University of Toronto Forest Conservation students to supervise the crew in the field - leading to real skills, real information, and the first necessary piece of groundtruthing for the development of either/and birch syrup and remote tourism initiatives next year.

The map attached shows the priority areas for the Guardians to cover, though it's subject to change as we learn more from being out on the land. As the season progresses, and with an eye to the future, we would like to keep open communications to grow the program. We welcome ideas and offers on how to support the program - whether by sharing stories, offering job-shadowing, having joint training, or providing data & financial support. The MNR staff we've worked with in the past have been very supportive of our work, and we look forward to future collaboration.

Suitable Birch Stands for Birch Syrup Production

Total Suitable = 1352.0773 Ha
Total Accessible = 878.1285 Ha₂

