

## For Immediate Release:

UNESCO declares Pimachiowin Aki Canada's first "mixed" cultural and natural WHS

Unique First Nation/provincial government partnership wins new global status for "The Land That Gives Life"

**Manama, Bahrain: JULY 1, 2018**: The UNESCO World Heritage Committee today inscribed the Pimachiowin Aki boreal forest spanning the Manitoba—Ontario boundary as a World Heritage Site, recognizing the outstanding universal value of both its cultural and natural features.

The decision ends one journey for the four Anishinaabe First Nations who have worked through two previous nominations to achieve success, and the beginning of a new one for the Pimachiowin cultural landscape, home to Indigenous peoples for more than 7,000 years.

Pimachiowin Aki is Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe) for "the land that gives life." A partnership of four Anishinaabe First Nations - Bloodvein River, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi and Poplar River — and the Manitoba and Ontario governments has worked with the government of Canada for more than a decade to achieve World Heritage status for this 29,040-sq. km expanse of boreal forest.

"We always knew that Pimachiowin Aki was special and would become a World Heritage Site, and that the challenges that delayed our previous nominations would be overcome," said Sophia Rabliauskas, Pimachiowin Aki spokesperson, who was at the UNESCO meeting to hear the decision announced.

"But it was such a wonderful feeling to hear the words today and know that we can now devote all our efforts to preserving Pimachiowin Aki as a treasure for our peoples and the world, and I thank the governments and all the others who have supported us though every step,' said Ms. Rabliauskas.

William Young of Bloodvein First Nation, co-chair of the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation said: "The decision today allows us to move ahead with our vision for Pimachiowin Aki as a place celebrated for its cultural and natural values, to sustain and support our



heritage, and create benefits within and beyond our communities. We sincerely thank everyone who has supported this initiative.

"We will now work to ensure Pimachiowin Aki's long term financial sustainability by growing The Winnipeg Foundation's existing Pimachiowin Aki endowment fund, with the support of our current and future partners."

Key programmes are planned to: safeguard cultural heritage; conserve and understand ecosystems and species; support sustainable economies and community-based initiatives; and, provide for monitoring and public education.

An early priority is the establishment of an Indigenous Lands Guardian program for Pimachiowin Aki.

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## Pimachiowin Aki Fact Sheet:

http://pimachiowinaki.org/sites/default/files/PA%20FAQ%27s%20May%202018.pdf

Website: www.pimachiowinaki.org