



TEMAGAMI FIRST NATION/ TEME-AUGAMA ANISHNABAI

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PRESS RELEASE

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“LAST STRAW” GLYPHOSATE SPILL ON TEME-AUGAMA ANISHNABAI/TEMAGAMI FIRST NATION HOMELAND, N’DAKIMENAN, PROMPTS A DECLARATION TO BAN ALL AERIAL HERBICIDE SPRAYING ON THE TERRITORY

TEMAGAMI, ONTARIO — The Temagami First Nation (TFN) and the Teme-Augama Anishnabai (TAA) have banned the aerial spraying of herbicides within their homeland territory following the toxic spill of over 600 liters of GlySil concentrate on Eagle Lake Road on September 10, 2024.

For 33 years, the Temagami First Nation and the Teme-Augama Anishnabai have stated their opposition to the aerial spraying of toxic chemicals within N’dakimenan.

“We are exercising our inherent right and jurisdiction to protect our people, our lands, waters, and the diverse life that depends on our unique environment. We hold a sacred relationship with our land which extends beyond physical resources—it is the foundation of our culture, spirituality, and way of life,” said TFN Chief Shelly Moore-Frappier. “We are gravely concerned about both the immediate and long-term impacts this spill and this practice has had and will continue to have on our region. This practice must stop.”

Chief Moore-Frappier continued, “The practice of aerial spraying of herbicides in our homeland has caused great emotional and financial injury to us. Additionally, there are significant concerns regarding the health risks posed by potential exposure to contaminated water, plants, and wildlife. Our citizens rely on these resources for subsistence, and the consequences of consuming animals or plants exposed to such high concentrations of herbicides is frightening. We are already finding tumours in the livers of moose, noticeably lower rabbit and insect populations, and a disruption to natural cycles. N’dakimenan is at the highest elevation in Ontario and as source water, must be protected.”



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TAA Ogimaa (Chief) Michael Paul announced that the people have already been adversely affected by this recent spill: “The contamination of N’dakimenan not only jeopardizes the life of the land but also infringes upon our Aboriginal rights. The spiritual, cultural, and livelihood activities central to our community’s well-being, including our upcoming fall hunt camps, have been severely disrupted. These hunts play a critical role in ensuring our food sovereignty and security, and we’re now required to source other locations and at great inconvenience and financial cost to our community.”

The TFN and TAA leadership are dismayed at Ontario’s blatant disrespect for N’dakimenan and their people.

“This is a continuation of assaults and injustices committed against our people over the last 150 years. And here we are trying to develop a relationship with Ontario at the negotiation table for the future of our land and people. Ontario’s breaches of its fiduciary duty to consult with us, coupled with its obvious disdain for the natural environment, requires that we reestablish our stewardship and management of our homeland now and not later,” emphasized TAA Aanike-Ogimaa (2nd Chief) John Turner.

“We are tired of having to continually dodge and relocate our cultural activities to evade this unnatural scourge from the sky. Ontario has banned this chemical for use in the private lawns, gardens, parks and schoolyards of their own citizens because they ‘pose an unnecessary risk to human health, especially children’s health,’” continued TAA Aanike-Ogimaa (2nd Chief) Turner. “Yet, here the forest is and has always been, our garden, our park, our schoolyard, our medicine cabinet, our home—we too are concerned for the health of our children, but we understand that their health is inextricably linked to the health of the living environment that cultivates them.”

“This incident reinforces the urgent need for more Indigenous land guardians and environmental monitors, to ensure stewardship principles applied to our forests more wisely consider and respect the complex human and non-human lifeforms that thrive in a healthy and natural interdependent forest ecosystem. We are demanding the permanent cessation of aerial herbicide spraying within N’dakimenan, as we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to protecting our lands, waters, wildlife, and community,” TAA Ogimaa Michael Paul reiterated.

In response to this serious incident, the TAA and TFN have mobilized community guardians to monitor the situation closely, including conducting soil sampling and testing to assess the extent of the contamination. The TFN and TAA will also be engaging with the Temagami Forest Management Corporation (TFMC) to review their internal policies and procedures and to demand policy changes aimed at preventing future environmental threats to the lands and waters of N’dakimenan. Accountability and transparency are critical, and we are calling for immediate action to improve oversight of the industry operations within N’dakimenan.



“As we stand at the height of land, all waters flow out from our territory. The damage to N’dakimenan’s ecosystems and water sources is not just a local issue but has far-reaching consequences. This spill is a failure of the fiduciary duty to consult with us as stewards of this land, and we are asserting our jurisdiction to protect and defend it,” concluded Chief Shelly Moore-Frappier. “We will continue to seek meaningful remediation of this environmental and social harm, and we call on all stakeholders to support us in preventing such devastating incidents from occurring again.”

The Teme-Augama Anishnabai and Temagami First Nation represent the Original People of N’dakimenan (Our Land) [Unceded]. Our Creation Story tells us that 8000 years ago, the Creator placed us at Ishpatina Ridge, the highest point of land in what is now called Ontario. This timeline corresponds to the receding glaciers. Six thousand of those years have been corroborated by science, showing our continuous occupation.

N’dakimenan encompasses approximately 10,000 square kilometres of land, adjacent to what is now known as the Quebec border and approximately 400 kilometres north of the city of Toronto. Our boundary is not disputed by neighbouring Indigenous Peoples and First Nations. Further, the boundary of N’dakimenan was accepted by the Supreme Court of Canada in Ontario (Attorney General) v Bear Island Foundation, [1991] 2 SCR 570).

We have maintained a distinct territory, language, laws, governing authority, social organization, and culture since time immemorial.

For more information:

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