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Aboriginal Awareness Week 2011: Sharing our Stories

Aboriginal Affairs Fact Sheet

The Federal government defines “Aboriginal peoples” as “a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people: Indians (commonly referred to as First Nations), Métis and Inuit. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs”. Indian Northern Affairs Canada,(INAC) states that “Aboriginal communities are located in urban, rural and remote locations across Canada.

According to information from Statistic Canada there are a total of 1,172,790 people who identify as Aboriginal. Making up this 1,172,790 are 53% registered Indians, 30% Métis, 11% non-status Indians, and 4% Inuit. There are approximately 370 million indigenous people internationally.

Throughout Canada, the people who self identify as Aboriginal make up 4% of the Canadian population.

48% of Aboriginal people are less than 25 years old, as opposed to 31% for non-Aboriginals.

Eight out of 10 Aboriginal people currently reside in Ontario and the four Western provinces.

The city of Winnipeg has the highest Aboriginal percentage at 10% of the overall population.

According to information from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, there are 615 First Nations or Indian Bands in Canada.

According to the INAC web site, there are two types of Aboriginal claims in Canada – comprehensive claims and specific claims:

1. Comprehensive claims deal with the unfinished business of treaty-making in Canada. These claims arise in areas of Canada where Aboriginal land rights have not been dealt with by past treaties or through other legal means or where uncertainty lies with the historic treaty, such as in the Northwest Territories (Treaty 8 and treaty 11). In these areas, forward-looking modern treaties are negotiated between the Aboriginal group, Canada and the province or territory.
2. specific claims involve the assertion by treated First Nations that provisions of the treaty were breached by the Crown.

Parks Canada Agency works very closely with INAC when Comprehensive Land Claims are being settled. As a result a number of National Parks have been either created or played a significant role in the successful negotiations of land claims in Canada:

Inuvialuit Final Agreement (1984) – Western Arctic (NWT)

- Tukturnogait National Park
- Ivvavik National Park
- Aulavik National Park

Inuit of Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993) – Nunavut (NWT)

- Ukkusiksalik National Park

- Auyuittuq National Park
- Quttinirpaaq National Park
- Sirmilik National Park

Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (1995) – Yukon

- Kluane National Park and Reserve

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (1995) – Yukon

- Vuntut National Park

Kluane First Nation (2004) – Yukon

- Kluane National Park and Reserve

Sahtu Dene and Métis Agreement (1994) – Western Arctic (NWT) & Southwest NWT

- Tukturnogait National Park

Labrador Inuit Agreement (2005) – Newfoundland West & Labrador

- Torngat Mountains National Park

Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2006) – Québec

- Torngat Mountains National Park

Tsawwassen Final Agreement (2006)

- Gulf Island National Park Reserve

Maa-nulth Land Claims Agreement (2011)

- Pacific Rim National Park Reserve

National park reserve is an area managed as a national park but where the lands are subject to one or more claims by Aboriginal people that have been accepted for negotiation by the Government of Canada.

The Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (AAS) was created in 1999 to provide national leadership, direction and support within the Parks Canada Agency on matters relating to its continually evolving relationships with the Aboriginal peoples (First Nation, Inuit, and Metis).

Arising out of the 2001 Minister's Round Table was a proposal to create and work with an Aboriginal advisory structure in Parks Canada to help advance areas of mutual interest. The Aboriginal Consultative Committee (ACC) was established in 2002 and is chaired by the CEO, Parks Canada.

Federal Lands in Canada account for 40,448,681.0367 hectares. Of this Parks Canada Agency is responsible for 36,583,087.2003 hectares or roughly 90% of all federal Crown lands

Of the lands Parks Canada manages, 27,506,850 hectares, or roughly 68% of all federal Crown lands, are managed through either a formal or informal Aboriginal Cultural advisory relationship.

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