

Who are the Anishinaabe?

The Anishinaabe or Anishinaabeg are the indigenous peoples (First Nations) of the central North American boreal forest. Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) speak Anishinaabemowin, the Ojibwe language. In Pimachiowin Aki, this ancient language is in everyday use. The indigenous people of Pimachiowin Aki have maintained a strong relationship to the land for more than 7,000 years. Anishinaabeg engage in activities and livelihoods that are continuously evolving and adapting, but which are rooted in traditional cultural values and relationships with the land and other beings. Anishinaabe traditional knowledge, language, spirituality and customary governance are central to sustaining the living cultural landscape known as Pimachiowin Aki and fulfilling a sacred duty to protect this land.

What is the boreal forest?

Named after Boreas, the Greek god of the north wind, the boreal forest is a circumpolar band of needle-leaf-dominated forest that stretches across Scandinavia, Russia, Alaska and Canada covering an estimated 1.7 billion hectares. The boreal forest stores more freshwater in wetlands and lakes and more carbon in trees, soil and peat than any other terrestrial ecosystem on Earth. One-third of the planet's boreal forest is found within Canada.

Boreal forest ecological processes such as wild fire occur across vast landscapes. Similarly, boreal forest indigenous people such as the Anishinaabeg disperse widely on the landscape to make use of season specific resources. Large protected areas like Pimachiowin Aki are necessary to maintain ecological processes, and ecological integrity, and to maintain networks of sites supporting indigenous livelihoods and cultural traditions.

When did the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage nomination process begin?

In 2002, the Pimachiowin Aki First Nations signed the *Protected Areas and First Nations Resource Stewardship: A Cooperative Relationship Accord* (the Accord). Through the Accord the First Nations agreed to work together to propose lands within their traditional territories as a World Heritage Site.

The governments of Ontario and Manitoba joined with the First Nations to develop a submission that led to Pimachiowin Aki's inclusion on Canada's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites in May 2004.

The First Nation and provincial government partners established the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation and, in 2007, commenced background studies to facilitate the development of a UNESCO World Heritage nomination dossier, while First Nations pursued the preparation of management plans for their traditional lands. The partners targeted completion of the nomination dossier in 2012.

Has the Pimachiowin Aki project influenced World Heritage practices?

Pimachiowin Aki has advanced Indigenous peoples' interest and use of the *World Heritage Convention* by contributing to the recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples in the *Convention*, in 2015, and by influencing changes to World Heritage policies and procedures, particularly regarding the evaluation of mixed World Heritage sites. Pimachiowin Aki is a positive international example of Indigenous leadership in conserved areas.

Why is a Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site important?

Pimachiowin Aki aligns with international, national, provincial, and local goals and initiatives.

Pimachiowin Aki meets the intent of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, to protect and present places whose exceptional qualities are of Outstanding Universal Value.

Pimachiowin Aki is the most complete and therefore exceptional example of a landscape within the North American Subarctic geo-cultural area that provides testimony to the cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land). Pimachiowin Aki is an exceptional example of the global boreal biome and is the very best example of the ecological and biological diversity of the entire North American boreal shield ecozone covering almost 20% of Canada. Pimachiowin Aki's Outstanding Universal Value derives from these factors in combination with the site's ecological integrity and cultural authenticity, and the presence of an effective management system to safeguard the site's natural and cultural heritage.

Pimachiowin Aki contributes to goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity and to Canada's national targets under the Convention known as the "2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets".

Pimachiowin Aki aligns with and is a model for the government of Canada's current initiative to promote and support the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in the context of the 2020 biodiversity targets.

Pimachiowin Aki also aligns with the provincial protected area goals.

Pimachiowin Aki aligns with the federal government's program to support a network of Indigenous lands guardians in Canada.

Pimachiowin Aki is consistent with principles set out in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Pimachiowin Aki also aligns with the provincial reconciliation goals.

The Pimachiowin Aki fulfils the 2002 First Nations Accord to work cooperatively to create a network of protected lands worthy of being recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

What happens next for the partners who championed this World Heritage Site?

The Pimachiowin Aki partnership is committed to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the new World Heritage Site. The Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, a non-profit, charitable organization governed by a Board of Directors that represents the First Nations and provincial governments, will be an integral part of the management system for the Site. The organization's Mission is:

To acknowledge and support the Anishinaabe culture and safeguard the boreal forest; preserving a living cultural landscape to ensure the well-being of the Anishinaabe who live here and for the benefit and enjoyment of all people.

Our Vision is:

A place that is celebrated for its cultural and natural values and regarded as a model of sustainability; and an organization that is recognized as a cross-cultural, community based-leader in World Heritage management.

We are excited about implementing programs that address needs and priorities. Key programs include:

- Safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
- Conserving and understanding ecosystems and species;
- Supporting sustainable economies;
- Informing and educating the public;
- Coordinating monitoring and reporting; and
- Supporting community-based initiatives.

We are working on the establishment of a Pimachiowin Aki indigenous Land Guardians program as a top priority.

Is the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation solely responsible for management of the World Heritage Site?

The partners each have roles. Anishinaabe leadership, customary governance and stewardship are essential to the long-term protection and health of ecosystems and species, following the cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* (Keeping the Land). Manitoba and Ontario are responsible for the use and management of provincial Crown lands and resources and perform various management functions such as park management, wildlife surveys, and wildfire suppression. First Nations also play a role in these activities.

The government of Canada is accountable under the World Heritage Convention to monitor and report on the state of conservation of the Site.

The Pimachiowin Aki Corporation facilitates work and attention to the entire World Heritage Site to protect and monitor cultural and natural values, and to realize potential social, cultural and economic benefits.

Who will provide funding needed for the future?

Long term financial sustainability is a strategic priority of the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation. It is especially important to grow the Pimachiowin Aki Fund, a \$4.9 million endowment fund, managed by The Winnipeg Foundation. We expect that all levels of government, First Nation, Provincial and Federal, as well as the private and not-for profit sectors, will support the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site.

How many times has Pimachiowin Aki been nominated?

Three times. The initial 2012 nomination was deferred by the World Heritage Committee in 2013. The Committee recommended an Advisory Mission to address ways to strengthen the nomination to better fit with World Heritage guidelines. At the time, the Committee acknowledged that although the World Heritage Convention is the sole international convention that relates to both cultural and natural heritage, it does not adequately recognize “the indissoluble bonds that exist in some places between culture and nature”.

A second nomination, submitted in 2015, was recommended by the World Heritage Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS and IUCN) for inscription during the July 2016 World Heritage Committee meeting. This nomination focused on the cultural tradition of *Ji-ganawendamang Gidakiiminaan* “keeping the land”, explaining how Anishinaabeg people have always taken care of the water, wildlife, and plant life as part of their cultural tradition. The Advisory Bodies lauded this nomination as a watershed in representing the seamless links between culture and nature, and traditional management.

However, as a result of the decision by a former First Nation partner (Pikangikum First Nation), in June 2016, to withdraw from the project, this nomination could not proceed and was referred back to Canada to give the Pimachiowin Aki partners time to assess options.

A third nomination, submitted in 2017, was required due to the removal of Pikangikum’s traditional lands from the nominated area, which reduced the size of the area by 13%.

What is your current relationship with Pikangikum First Nation?

We correspond with Chief and Council to ensure they are up to date on the status of the nomination. Our intent is to maintain positive relationships with all neighbouring communities and land users, including Pikangikum First Nation.

How much money has been spent in this World Heritage project?

Over a period of 12 years the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation has spent approximately \$5.6 million on various projects and operations. Preparation of the three nomination dossiers and UNESCO evaluation and advisory processes have been the organization’s prime focus to date. Grants from Manitoba and Ontario have accounted for about 90% of the organization’s revenue. The provinces have also supported the project indirectly through other programs such as land management planning enabled under provincial laws. Detailed financial statements are included in the Corporation’s Annual Reports found at www.pimachiowinaki.org.

Can others join the Pimachiowin Aki partnership?

Neighboring First Nations have expressed interest in and support for the Pimachiowin Aki nomination, including interest in joining the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation in the future. The Corporation will invite First Nations who express interest to join in discussions.

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