

RHT Annuities Case Update



Robinson Huron Treaty First Nations take Canada and Ontario to court over treaty interpretation

In September 2017, 21 Anishinabek communities took the governments of Ontario and Canada to court over the Crown's failure to implement the terms of the Robinson Huron Treaty (RHT) of 1850. At issue is the interpretation of the annuities clause in the RHT of 1850.

The representatives of the 21 First Nations maintain that, in the RHT, the Crown recognizes their political and economical relationship with the RHT Anishinabek communities and intended to share any resource revenue derived from the lands involved in the treaty. The Crown was supposed to increase the amount of annuity comparable to financial profits it derived from the lands. The territory includes about 35,700 square miles of land on the northern shores of Lake Huron.

The Robinson Huron Treaty is one of many treaties created between First Nations and the Crown. These treaties are the foundation of this country. They are recognized and affirmed in the Canadian Constitution as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Anishinabek have always believed in the covenant made with the Crown to share the land and its resources.

The Court has heard and will continue to hear, evidence regarding Anishinaabe law, diplomacy, understanding and responsibility to the treaty relationship.

The Court also heard from Anishinaabe Elders and experts including: Wikwemikong Elder Rita Corbiere (Anishinaabemowin); Sagamok Elder Irene Makedebin (Anishinaabe oral

history); Batchewana Elder Irene Stevens (Anishinaabe oral history); Treaty 3 Elder Fred Kelly (Anishinaabe law and Anishinaabemowin); M'Chigeeng member Alan Corbiere (metaphors, symbols, ceremonies and mnemonic devices); Dr. Heidi Bohaker (Anishinabek political geometry, doodem identity and treaty relationships); and Dr. Heidi Stark (Anishinaabe laws and stories).

"This case is very important in this era of reconciliation. The Anishinabek communities are seeking justice. The Crown made promises to us and the Anishinabek signed the Treaty believing that our Peoples would also benefit. We've held up our end of the treaty; it is time that the Crown does the same," said Mike Restoule, Chair of the Robinson Huron Treaty Trust.

David Nahwegahbow, one of the lawyers representing the Robinson Huron Treaty plaintiffs, addresses Chiefs and community members at the sacred fire inside a teepee located outside the courtroom in Thunder Bay





The closing arguments for Phase 1 will occur from June 4-8, 13-15, and 18-22 in Sudbury.

The hearings are open to the public and supporters are encouraged to attend. A sacred fire is lit close to the court location for people to offer semaa (tobacco).

Hearing dates for Phase 2 are tentatively scheduled for Spring 2019.

Dates for Phase 3 have not yet been scheduled. Please check the RHT Facebook page and Twitter feed for updates.

The case is also being livestreamed and the archived videos are available at: <http://livestream.com/firsttel>. Please follow us on Facebook: (Robinson Huron Treaty Trust – Annuity Case), Twitter: (@1850RHTreaty) and check our website: rht1850.ca for updates.

*Atikameksheng Anishnawbek – Aundeck
Omni Kaning – Batchewana – Dokis –
Garden River – Henvey Inlet – Magnetawan
– M’Chigeeng – Mississauga #8 – Nipissing
– Sagamok Anishnawbek – Serpent River –
Shawanaga – Sheguiandah – Shesheganing
– Thessalon – Wahnapiatae – Wasauksing
– Whitefish River – Wikwemikong Unceded
Indian Reserve – Zhiibaahaasing. 🍀*

Source: Chiefs of Ont, Advocate Magazine
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