

# Guiding Principles of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation (AAFNA)

The Ardoch Algonquin First Nation (AAFNA) is a confederation of Algonquin families who have lived in the Ottawa River watershed since time immemorial and who are currently situated in the area described by the Mississippi, Madawaska, Rideau, and Tay watersheds. These families express a desire to preserve Algonquin language, culture and territorial jurisdiction by working together and maintaining an enduring sense of Algonquin community.

## **Purpose and Objectives**

The Algonquin people are a living, dynamic people who have occupied the Ottawa River valley and surrounding territory for at least the last 3000 years. Their roots are in the archaic traditions of Turtle Island (North America). Over time the Algonquin people have adapted to a wide range of conditions and have been influenced by many events. Today they remain a strong and distinct people. The Ardoch Algonquin First Nation (AAFNA) strives to maintain the Algonquin people and tradition by addressing the following objectives.

1. AAFNA will maintain a strong focus on preserving family and kinship through social, ceremonial, traditional and personal expression by supporting community gatherings and events.
2. AAFNA will assert its political presence in the Ottawa Valley and surrounding area to preserve Algonquin jurisdiction in land, economy, resource management, social relationships and in asserting Aboriginal rights and title.
3. AAFNA will engage in the protection of the environment both locally and globally in keeping with the sacred responsibility to the earth.
4. AAFNA will promote among all of its members the value of learning. In particular, AAFNA will facilitate the retention of the Algonquin language, manners, customs and worldview.
5. AAFNA will offer to each member the protection of the collective community and each member will offer protection to any other member and to the collective community.
6. AAFNA will promote the healthy well being of the community and of its members. AAFNA will engage in activities where the well being of all people can be addressed.
7. Ardoch will be recognised as the Centre of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation and shall always remain the Head Office.

## **Governance**

1. The Ardoch Algonquin First Nation is governed by the General Assembly of its members. A General Assembly can be held at any time of the year and questions in the form of referendum may be brought to the Assembly for ratification. The rules of "consensus" and "mutual respect and benefit" must be observed. Any member may speak: and be heard on any question at a General Assembly The General Assembly gives guidance to the Family Heads Council.
2. The regular business of AAFNA is conducted by the Family Heads Council, which is formed by representatives of Core AAFNA Families. Each Core Family shall appoint a spokesperson to represent them at the Family Heads Council.
3. AAFNA Family Heads Council may appoint or dismiss a Chief, spokespersons, negotiators, representatives, financial managers, resource managers, or messengers to conduct its business. All individuals representing AAFNA under these designations shall act as spokespersons only for Family Heads Council and shall represent all AAFNA members at all times.
4. The authority to make agreements or treaties, recognise, borrow or lend, pay or collect accounts, distribute assets, accept members, rests with the full consent (consensus) of the Family Heads Council.
5. Family Heads Council may consent for AAFNA to be represented in a collective of other Algonquin communities or communities of other Aboriginal people for the purposes of mutual respect and benefit in as much as such a coalition does not compromise or surrender Algonquin jurisdiction, rights, title or the fundamental principles upon which AAFNA is founded.

## **Membership**

1. A person will be recognised as a member of AAFNA and be entitled to the protection, rights and responsibilities of AAFNA when:

- a. The person is of Algonquin decent and a member of a recognised family and has by consensus been accepted by Family Heads Council.
- b. The person is a recognised spouse of an AAFNA member with consent of Family Heads Council.
- c. The person is a recognized adopted child of an AAFNA member with consent of Family Heads Council.
- d. The person is recognised by consent (consensus) of the Family Heads Council and the General Assembly of AAFNA in a community ceremony.

2. Membership may be terminated by mutual consent (consensus) of Family Heads Council when:

- a. An individual requests their membership to be terminated.
- b. An individual refuses by word or action to comply with policies, guiding principles and the spirit of mutual respect and benefit, which have been agreed upon by mutual consent (consensus) of Core Family Spokespersons at Family Heads Council.

## **Relationships**

AAFNA may enter into relationships with other communities, governments or nations for the purpose of mutual respect and benefit. Relationships include but are not exclusive to agreements, treaties and political coalitions. Relationships must be established by consensus of Family Heads Council. The following principles will guide AAFNA relationships.

1. Relations with Canada and its provinces should be understood to be adversarial. While historically Algonquins have offered the Crown an alliance of peace and friendship this offer has been consistently abused and undermined by the Crown's laws, policies and actions. It must be understood that Canada and its provinces are living on the bounty of Aboriginal land and resources with no real intention of making full restitution or return of our lands and resources.
2. Relations with other Algonquin Communities should recognise that Algonquins are a People first, and not a Nation State, and therefore relationships among themselves should be guided by the fundamental principles of Algonquin relations not by western notions of governance.
3. Relations with people, organizations, or groups other than the Crown or Algonquin communities should be entered into for the purposes of meeting AAFNA objectives. These relations shall not constitute membership or political affiliation in any form.
4. AAFNA membership, governance and guiding principles shall never be compromised to achieve or accommodate relationships with other Algonquin or non-Algonquin communities or governments.