



March 2, 2018

The Mikisew Cree First Nation welcomes the 2018 budget for its focus on environmental conservation and research, as well as reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The Mikisew Cree urges the federal government to utilize the unprecedented funding commitment in the 2018 budget for Canada's natural legacy to deliver robust protection and restoration measures for the Peace Athabasca Delta (PAD), a critical part of Canada's largest World Heritage Site.

Underinvestment in the protection of the PAD has damaged Canada's relationship with indigenous communities and tarnished Canada's international standing. The failing health of the PAD has received international scrutiny since the Mikisew Cree filed a [petition](#) to have Wood Buffalo National Park placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. In July 2017, the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations requested Canada create an Action Plan that addresses threats to the Park.

Tuesday's historic funding commitments to reconciliation and nature conservation is promising and creates tools needed to save Canada's most at-risk national park, together with indigenous peoples.

Mikisew Cree have proposed the creation of the Peace Athabasca Delta Institute, a community-driven research hub in Fort Chipewyan, as a centerpiece of Canada's response to the calls from groups across Canada to save the PAD. The Institute would empower community members with the necessary capacity and infrastructure to spearhead and support research and monitoring in the PAD. Moreover, this initiative can provide meaningful employment and education opportunities for Fort Chipewyan residents; build partnerships with non-governmental research programs; foster the transfer of knowledge and cultural practices by connecting elders and youth; and enrich school curriculums and local education.

Mikisew looks forward to working with Canada and others to turn the positive commitments in this budget into real measures to protect this incredible place and to do so in a way that advances reconciliation and brings benefits to Fort Chipewyan and all Canadians.

Additional information:

Based in northeastern Alberta, the Mikisew Cree First Nation is a signatory to Treaty No. 8. Mikisew's constitutionally protected treaty rights are inherently related to the environment in their lands, which include the Wood Buffalo National Park and the Peace Athabasca Delta.

The Peace-Athabasca Delta is at significant risk from upstream industrial development, namely hydroelectric damming along the Peace River in B.C. – including the planned Site C dam -- and oil sands exploitation in Alberta. The IUCN classified Wood Buffalo National Park as having the [worst conservation outlook](#) of all Canadian National Parks in 2017.

For interviews, please contact:

Melody Lepine, Mikisew Cree First Nation ((780) 792-8736 and melody.lepine@mcfngir.ca)