

**Remarks of Chief Bryan LaForme at monument dedication
Waterdown's Souharissen Natural Area
Thursday, August 21**

As Chief of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation

it is my honour to welcome everyone to our traditional

territory. I would like to extend a special welcome to

Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of

Ontario for attending this event marking the unveiling of

this plaque honouring our presence on these lands.

On behalf of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First

Nation I would like to extend a special thank-you to

Nathan Tidridge, Chair of the Souarissen Natural Area

Committee for all the hard work his committee has done to

unearth and document the archeological record of this

place and marking it with this monument.

The Treaty of Niagara Covenant Wampum Belt provided the inspiration for this monument. The Treaty of Niagara was the result of a wampum exchange between the British and over 2000 First Nations chiefs from 24 First Nations. May today mark the renewal of those pledges of peace and friendship made over 200 years ago.

I would also like to thank the committee for engaging with and consulting Elder Garry Sault of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. Your collaboration and respect is appreciated. Elder Sault lit a sacred fire this morning, the first such fire in this place in many generations. May this mark the beginning of a new partnership between the people of this region and our First Nation.

The Mississaugas have been in this area for hundreds of years. What is now Dundas Street would have been one of

the routes our people travelled and would have settled along. This is a route that is centuries old and allowed our ancestors overland travel when not moving by water. It also would have offered an escape route in times of invasion.

This is an important event for our Nation. The 104 archeological sites discovered here prove that at one time a flourishing Anishinabe culture existed all along the shores of these Great Lakes. These lakes and rivers fed and sustained us and provided vital transportation routes that allowed for trade. This truly is our homeland and returning home is always a good feeling. It must be remembered however that First Nation concepts of land differ from those of the modern world. We view ourselves not as individual owners but instead as collective caretakers. These lands belong to children yet unborn. Our

job is to preserve it for future generations. We invite you to be partners in this mission.

This is an exciting time for the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. All throughout our traditional territory events like these are taking place recognizing and affirming our connection with our traditional territory.

That connection was formally recognized when we signed a protocol naming us Host First Nation for the TORONTO2015 Pan Am Parapan Am Games. Our role as Host First Nation will allow us to share our unique story with the world. The unveiling of this monument is a step along that path.

This weekend the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation will hold its annual Three Fires Homecoming Pow

Wow. This is our communities' most important cultural gathering. I invite everyone to join us in celebration.

Thank-you