

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Waterdown's Souharissen Natural Area to be dedicated
by the Honourable David C. Onley, 28th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
and Chief Bryan Laforme and Council of the Mississaugas of the New Credit Nation
on August 21st, 2014

In the spirit of the 250th anniversary of the Treaty of Niagara:

On August 21st, 2014, the Souharissen Natural Area will be dedicated in Waterdown by the Honourable David C. Onley, 28th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and Chief Bryan Laforme and Council of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

A public event beginning at 10:00am near the corner of Dundas Street and Burke Street in Waterdown, the dedication ceremony will include a formal welcome by Elder Garry Sault, followed by remarks by the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Laforme.

Since 1695, a vast region of Southern Ontario - including Flamborough - has been the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This event will mark the formal return of the Mississaugas to Waterdown after over two centuries.

The Souharissen Natural Area covers 27 acres in the Village of Waterdown, and is the result of years of work following the discovery of 104 Aboriginal archeological sites in the Waterdown Bay Development Area in 2005. Councillor Judi Partridge has championed this project since its inception, providing unflagging support.

In May 2014, a formal committee was established to create a Natural Area in the Waterdown Bay Development Area (across the street from Connon Nurseries) that would restore the Aboriginal identity and heritage to the region. The Committee's members are Holly McCann (Researcher and Cartographer), Kekoa Reinebold (Brown Cabin Researcher), Ishkwegiizhig (Eugene Kahgee of the Saugeen First Nation #29), Councillor Judi Partridge (Ward 15 Flamborough) and Nathan Tidridge (Chair). Elder Garry Sault of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation consulted with the committee, providing invaluable teachings and support.

On May 30th, 2014, a report was issued to the City of Hamilton, and from that a formal report to City Council was presented on July 9th. The Souharissen Natural Area Committee, with the support of Elder Garry Sault, presented their plan and history of the area to the Chief and Council of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation on June 23rd, 2014, which was both endorsed and supported.

The approved history, as it will appear on the monument, is as follows:

The Waterdown-Flamborough region was home to the Chonnonton Nation (Called the "Neutral Nation" by the French and the "Attiuoindaron" by the surrounding Aboriginal Nations). The name Chonnonton means "the people who tend or manage deer," and they had a powerful leader with the hereditary name "Souharissen." Before the construction of the nearby survey, 104 Aboriginal sites were discovered revealing the lives of Chonnonton people ultimately destroyed by the Wendat-Haudenosaunee Wars of the mid-17th century.

Peace was established between the Haudenosaunee (also called the Naadwe) and Anishinaabe Peoples with the exchange of the "Dish With One Spoon" wampum in the late 17th century.

Around 1695 the Eagle was recognized as the leading dodem of the Mississauga/Anishinaabe People whose territory commenced "at Long Point on Lake Erie thence eastward along the shore of the Lake to the Niagara River. Then down the River to Lake Ontario, then northward along the shore of the Lake to the River Rouge east of Toronto then up that river to the dividing ridge between Lakes Ontario and Simcoe then along the dividing ridges to the head waters of the River Thames then southward to Long Point the place of the beginning" (Kahkewaquonaby, the Reverend Peter Jones, February 13, 1855).

These lands, including the City of Hamilton, remain the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

Along with the Aboriginal sites, the foundations of an early-19th century dwelling were uncovered in the area. This dwelling may have been used by the first European settlers of Waterdown, Alexander Brown and Merren Grierson. The Natural Area will include a plaque identifying this important landmark, as well as detailing the histories of Merren Grierson and Alexander Brown.

Following the dedication ceremony a private reception will be held at the Tidridge Residence in Waterdown.

More information can be found at www.tidridge.com

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