



Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Treaty and Aboriginal Rights in Law and Practice:

Understanding Treaty Rights in Today's Society presentation was well received Tuesday night by an attentive group of about 60 people at the Natural Classroom of the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority.

The speaker, Mr Fred Bellefeuille, Barrister and Solicitor, explained the historic and legal roots of modern constitutional decisions around aboriginal fishing, hunting and logging rights in an informative and engaging way. Afterwards he said, "People want to be better informed about treaty rights, in particular rights related to conflicts over land. I try to make it clear to people that Treaties were not simply real estate transactions involving the trade of land for money. Treaties are institutions that provided distinct nations with what they needed to survive and that they must be understood in this way today."

Attendees commented that the presentation was very worthwhile and offered in a fair-minded manner. One attendee, Mike Puccini, said that the impressive attendance shows the topic is of considerable interest for our area and the speaker was well chosen.

Ninety percent of attendees said they would be likely to attend another such event and a large majority indicated their knowledge of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights was improved by the presentation.

The workshop, sponsored by the Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council and the Ministry of Natural Resources, is intended to expand public awareness of the issues and help generate greater understanding between Native and non-Native people. John Thornton, Chair of the Stewardship Council commented, "The Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council is vitally concerned about the reasonable use of Canada's natural resources. To effectively manage those resources for sustainability, the Canadian people need to know and understand the demands that are being placed on them. Under the Constitution of Canada, aboriginals' rights to pursue their traditional utilization of our natural resources are guaranteed. We, as Canadians, need to understand and appreciate those rights so that we can together with First Nations people get on with the prudent management of our shared natural resources."

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