



# Anishinaabe Governance is... **ABOUT FIRST NATION AUTONOMY & ANISHINABEK UNITY**

**First Nation Autonomy** - First Nation autonomy while working together in unity as the Anishinabek, an Indigenous Nation of People, has always been the basis of both the proposed Governance Agreement and the ratified Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement. Autonomy and unity were stated often by approximately 4,000 First Nation citizens who participated each year in the Nation Building and Restoration of Jurisdiction consultation processes from 1995 to now. These processes were facilitated by the Union of Ontario Indians under the direction of the Anishinabek Grand Council. There have been many Grand Council Resolutions providing direction by First Nation Chiefs over the years on the education and governance initiatives.

**The Anishinabek Grand Council** – The Anishinabek Grand Council has its roots in the Ojibway (Chippewas), Odawa and Potawatomi Nations which formed the Confederacy of the Three Fires of peoples who shared similar languages and territories and who met together for military and political purposes. By the mid 1700s, the Council of Three Fires became the core of the Great Lakes Confederacy. The Hurons, Algonquins, Nipissing, Sauks, Foxes, and others joined the Great Lakes Confederacy. In 1870, after Canada's creation in 1867, the Confederacy transformed to the Grand General Indian Council of Ontario and Quebec. According to the minutes of the annual meetings, much of the Grand Council's time was spent on reviewing the *Indian Act*. Today the Anishinabek Grand Council represents 39 First Nations and approximately 65,000 First Nation citizens.

**The Union of Ontario Indians** - In 1949, the Union of Ontario Indians (UOI) was established to replace the Grand General Indian Council. In 1969, the UOI was reorganized to reflect the wider scope of Indian politics across the province. By 1972, three other Provincial Territorial Organizations were formed: The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and Grand Council Treaty 3. Today, the Union of Ontario Indians is the secretariat for the 39 member Anishinabek First Nations represented by the Anishinabek Grand Council that direct its secretariat, the Union of Ontario Indians, through Grand Council Resolutions.

**The Anishinabek Nation** – The Anishinabek Nation is the collective of 65,000 Anishinaabe people in 39 Anishinabek First Nations. In 1980, the Anishinabek Declaration was issued. It reads in part: “We are Nations. We have always been Nations.”

**The Anishinabek Nation Government** – The Anishinabek Nation Government exists by virtue of the Anishinaabe Ch-Naaknigewin, The Anishinabek Nation Constitution, that was ratified by the Anishinabek Grand Council on June 6, 2012. The Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin was developed through many years of consultation and was drafted by First Nation citizens during a two-day constitutional convention. It has yet to be implemented. The Anishinabek Nation Government does not depend on the Governance Agreement. The Governance Agreement is a tool to implement the Anishinabek Nation Government. Since not all 39 First Nations are ratifying the Governance Agreement at this time, the Anishinabek Nation Government referred to in the Governance Agreement will most likely be renamed by the First Nations that form the collective body referred to in the Agreement.

**Role of the Union of Ontario Indians** - The Union of Ontario Indians is not mentioned in the Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin and is mentioned only in the definitions of the Governance Agreement to identify the collective of 39 First Nations in the negotiation process. There is no role for the Union of Ontario Indians in the Anishinabek Education System or in the proposed Anishinabek Nation Government collective entity to be formed by the First Nations who ratify the Governance Agreement. There will be an on-going relationship but there is no funding or authority for the UOI under the Governance Agreement or under the Education Agreement.

**Niigaan Zhaamin-Forward Together**

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