



**Circle of All Nations**  
[circleofallnations@sympatico.ca](mailto:circleofallnations@sympatico.ca)

**July 7, 2016**

**Greetings to Algonquin Leadership,**

**Re: Chaudiere/Victoria Island, and William Commanda's Asinabka Vision for the Sacred Chaudiere Site**

We are writing provide a critical update on this file. PLEASE SHARE WIDELY. This message is directed at Algonquin Communities, but it is relevant for all.

We leave the first words to Elder William Commanda and young musicians inspired by him, Flying Down Thunder and Rise Ashen – One Nations:



[Miskojonia - Red Gold\\_01.mp3](#)

## **BACKGROUND**

Late Algonquin Elder William Commanda served his community as acclaimed chief for over nineteen years, actively developed the North American Indian Nations Government with Huron Activist Jules Sioui in the forties, fifties and sixties, and was its last Supreme Chief; it was the first voice of unified Indigenous activism in North America, and it was superseded by the federally endorsed Native Indian Brotherhood, later Assembly of First Nations. William Commanda was appointed Keeper of the Sacred Wampum Belts in 1970, and the Spiritual Heritage of the Ancestors of the American North East animated his local, national and international work over the last forty years of his life. He organized the first massive gathering of a *Circle of All Nations* in Eganville, Ontario, in 1967 (fifty years ago next year, the time of Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> 2017 "Birthday"). In the 2000s, he received honorary doctorate degrees from the Universities of Ottawa and Quebec Outaouais, and was appointed Officer of the Order of Canada; he was also Lifetime achiever of a National Aboriginal Achievement Award. He developed a Legacy Vision for the Sacred Chaudiere Site in the National Capital Region, the meeting place of Indigenous Peoples from across the continent, the territory of his direct familial ancestors, with Algonquins from throughout the Ottawa River Watershed.

***Please honour the tireless work and legacy vision of this unique Algonquin leader.***

**UPDATE on Appeal against Privatization and Rezoning of Public Lands at the Sacred Chaudiere Site AND URGENT REQUEST FOR SUPPORT AND ENDORSEMENT of the ASINABKA LEGACY VISION at the Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly**

Five appellants filed a motion for leave to appeal the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) decision to dismiss appeals (against the City of Ottawa and Windmill Development) regarding approval of rezoning to permit privatization and condo development at the Sacred Chaudiere Site, to the Ontario Superior Court, on March 9, 2016; See Attachment 1 for discussion on critical issues of concern. On May 26, 2016, Justice Hackland dismissed our motion for leave to appeal; and on June 10, 2016, appellants filed a motion to set aside or vary Justice Hackland's decision to the Ontario Superior Court.

**On June 28, 2016, Windmill Developers filed a claim for costs in the amount of \$31,137.13, and the City of Ottawa for \$27,963,** against us, and further they made a motion to strike our appeal, this to be heard on September 16, 2016. Thus appellants are now up against court costs of **\$59,100.13**, for the March 9, 2016 Court Hearing.

We understand that Algonquin First Nations in Quebec are exploring means to challenge land issues in their traditional territories/Ottawa River Watershed, inclusive of the Sacred Chaudiere Site; we also understand the Windmill/Zibi Developers are actively lobbying Algonquin communities to support their neo-colonial project of land appropriation and corporate development at this historically acknowledged sacred meeting grounds of Indigenous Peoples from across the continent. This is precisely what King George the Third provided protection against in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which was subsequently included in the Canadian Constitution. Algonquin interest lies in pursuing land title/claim over the vast ancestral territory; at this time, we are writing to request your URGENT SUPPORT TO PROTECT THIS TINY SPACE in the National Capital Region. There is much other "crown" land up for grabs and for "negotiations". The Sacred Chaudiere Site is special to Indigenous and should be to government and Canadians at large as well.

Appellants working in the public interest (in direct contrast to the private gains to developers from seizure of public lands) are obliged to sustain massive costs of \$60,000 for one court hearing, (for merely pursuing the right to be heard), and what happens here will impact all future land issues. Efforts since 2014 have been entirely pro bono, including on the part of Legal Council. September 16, 2016 is the critical date that might terminate this court challenge, and limit legal options. Note that we have not yet had an opportunity to present *our* case on this contentious file, as committed to William Commanda's senior family members and the other 100 Algonquins/*Circle of All Nations* colleagues at the October 2014 City of Ottawa Planning Committee hearing; we have been forced to deal solely with the City of Ottawa/Windmill Developers/Domtar's motion to dismiss our appeal. Our extensive documentation reveals a fundamental abuse of corporate power; and blatant untruths and misrepresentation about serious matters like land ownership, duty to consult, brownfields and remedial environmental work etc. remain and grow (see [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com) OMB documents).

*Please add your voice to the growing cry to affirm the true healing purpose of the Sacred Chaudiere Site, a site of incomparable geological, cultural, heritage, sacred and historical importance, let alone WATER POWER, in the centre of the country. Help with this historical challenge. THE WATER ITSELF WILL SUBSIDIZE WILLIAM COMMANDA's Global Peace and Environmental Project.*

**ASINABKA LEGACY VISION FOR THE SACRED CHAUDIERE SITE in the heart of the Traditional territory of the Algonquins of the Ottawa River Watershed, Indigenous meeting place from time immemorial**

William Commanda's comprehensive vision for the site, developed with Algonquin Elders, communities and countless others, was endorsed by the City of Ottawa in November 2010; all Algonquin First Nations engaged, and expressed support in writing. Attached please find a mini chronological photo note on some of this work, undertaken formally since 1998 (Attachment 2). William Commanda (and Douglas Cardinal) drove to each of the Algonquin communities to develop this vision in his eighties and nineties; he expressed the vision of all elders and the ancestors. Donald Marshall Junior, the pivotal voice on justice and Indigenous rights, was another key player in this work.

Please note the core elements of the vision in the attached brochures; its potential for development is huge and sustainable, inclusive, and is global in relevance; it is consistent with the Sacred Three Figures Welcoming and Sharing Wampum Belt; it places Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Metis) in the centre, with Algonquin Peoples serving as the Host Nation. It is a vision for all the world, and it will advance the position of all Indigenous Peoples on the global stage (Attachments 3 and 4 and [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com)). It is fully consistent with the prayer of the ancient people of this land: *Ginawadaganuc, We are all connected* – **it is a sacred vision.**

Please note that a Sacred Walk was held from Victoria Island to Parliament Hill on June 17, and between 500 – 700 people attended; this attests to the continued support of the community at large for William Commanda's vision and for Indigenous presence and centrality at the Sacred Chaudiere Site; by comparison, the City of Ottawa's opening of an Algonquin monument appeared to have been attended by a scant 50 odd people, mostly those aligned with the Windmill/Zibi developers, and government bodies in alignment with them (see OMB Appeal Documents at [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com)); this is not unlike the several other public relations campaigns launched in the National Capital Region by the same teams around the time of National Aboriginal Day, June 21. But Ottawa does know that William Commanda's annual pipe ceremonies at Victoria Island launched Aboriginal awareness in the capital and acknowledgement of the summer solstice (as guided by his own father Alonzo Commanda's knowledge that this is *the* celestially powerful time in the Earth's cycle for the continent); June 21 was identified in 1945 as Indian Day by Jules Sioui, the Huron/Metis activist who kickstarted the North American Indian Nations Government, the precursor of the Assembly of First Nations, (he served two prison terms and was broken by a 77 day hunger strike in the long journey to assert Indigenous rights – even though he was not found guilty of any “act of

treason”); and we also know that Evelyn Commanda Dewache launched the first official and memorable National Aboriginal Day celebration for Governor General Romeo Leblanc, when she organized all participants in a huge circle of peace, holding hands in the garden of Rideau Hall. Many seeds have been planted to heal the blood on our lands in Canada; and countless brave people, entirely unpaid, have been working constantly over the past three years to keep the fire of Grandfather Commanda’s work alive; frankly, it is proving unquenchable; and will not be obscured by any appropriation of the story of William Commanda’s ancestral leader and inspiration, the ancient activist chief Tessaout, as was just presented in the Gatineau paper. It is unfortunately clear that Ottawa’s newspapers, especially The Citizen, have obfuscated the real dynamics and issues pertaining to the Chaudiere contestation and upholding of Indigenous rights, consistent with the Canadian Constitution and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The alternative media reveals a portion of the real story. A true accounting of facts has yet to come.

We note that the Assembly of First Nations holds its Annual General Assembly on July 12 – 14; this presents as a tremendously timely opportunity to apprise the larger First Nations leadership of this critical project. With massive endorsement from First Peoples, federal government leadership can be encouraged to return to its pre-Sponsorship Scandal 2004 plans to support and advance the work at the Sacred Chaudiere Site – at that time \$85 million had been identified for the Indigenous Centre portion of the vision. William Commanda never believed that his people should have to beg for their own Sacred Space. In the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s work, the profile of the Murdered and Missing Women/Loved Ones history, the sharp rise in suicide, youth violence and murder and despair, the tragedies that are touching Algonquin communities, the deplorable environmental conditions in First Nations communities, the generally shameful plight of First Peoples across the country, and the expressed good will to see change happen, as stressed repeatedly by the Prime Minister, this is surely the time to secure First Peoples presence and leadership in the heart of the country; William Commanda and countless other leaders worked hard to *centre* Indigenous spirit and intent in the constitution governing their lands. He ignited the flame of reconciliation by inviting, not just Indigenous, but all who share this land we call Canada to engage in ceremony, peace building and respect for the web of life.

Leadership and decisive action for a larger vision that embraces *the* critical global issues of our time – environment and climate change, and peace and global citizenship – are desperately needed, by this country and others, and honourable Algonquin and First Peoples leadership is critical to this manifestation. As Evelyn Commanda Dewache notes, “It is critical for us to wake up to the voice of Mother Earth; our ancient prophecies told us that it would become essential for our Indigenous voices to be heard, to leave any legacy of hope for the health of all; mining, logging, industrial agriculture and farming (and irresponsible use of pesticides and fertilizers) and urbanization, and the domination of exploitative, non-sustainable environmental practices have devastated our lands, waters and wildlife; and scientific knowledge is proving inadequate to address the mounting crises; increasing people are realizing, as the Prime Minister affirmed in Paris, that First Peoples must take the lead in the healing journey. ”

The attached bilingual mini brochures capture the core elements of the vision – and constitute a visual expression of the potential of this work at the sacred site. It incorporates early conceptual designs of Douglas Cardinal, Canada’s most renowned architect, who since 1970, has fought strenuously to see this area protected for Indigenous presence into the future; he is now in his eighties, and over the past few years has been the central figure visible in the challenge of development and in the fight for the protection of the historical site for shared use by all: Algonquin, Indigenous, Canadians and the world at large.

**Please note also the attached two letters (one a photo narrative) sent to the Prime Minister on June 23, 2016, that challenge the recent actions at Victoria Island/Sacred Chaudiere Site to further oppress and exclude wounded Indigenous Peoples from their one sanctuary and remaining ceremonial and prayer place in the capital city** (apparently, we have learned, for the creation of bicycle paths). PLEASE understand what is happening in the National Capital Region – this is neo-colonial entrapment and control of Indigenous Peoples (Attachments 5 and 6).

Please raise the profile of this work at the Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly with First Nations across the country. Please safeguard the place where Indigenous peoples can find their own way back together to sacred *Council Fire*.

Please support the prayer that Algonquins welcome all others to the heart of the country, and not become “chore boys” in their own ancestral power place. “And, let us remember my father’s message of peace, love and hope”, says Evelyn Commanda Dewache.

***Please examine, formally endorse, support and promote the Asinabka Legacy Vision for the Sacred Chaudiere Site. HELP THE PRIME MINISTER do serious work – More than the honour of the Crown is at stake; the self respect and mental wellness of all Canadians is on the table; and the genuine healing and strengthening of First Peoples – THE YOUTH CANNOT CRY ANY LOUDER. Let us not steal any more hope from future generations; over the past eighteen years, Indigenous peoples and countless others from across the globe have developed and endorsed the William Commanda Legacy Vision for the Indigenous Healing and Peace Building Centre at the Sacred Chaudiere Site.***

Please note that all OMB appellants are delivering this message to you. Please note also that William Commanda’s daughter Evelyn Commanda Dewache and his niece Daisy Mary Commanda Jacko add their voices to this appeal for urgent attention to this most important work of our times; they have been a part of this work since October 2014.

For more information contact Romola at [circleofallnations@sympatico.ca](mailto:circleofallnations@sympatico.ca) or call 613-599-8385. Evelyn Commanda Dewache may be reached at 819-449-4674. Check out the William Commanda, William Commanda Legacy Asinabka and Circle of All Nations facebook pages and the websites listed below for more information:[www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com); [www.circleofallnation.ca](http://www.circleofallnation.ca)