

MEDIA RELEASE



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Date: September 26, 2024

Touchwood Agency Tribal Council Elders to Visit Historic Site kā-kī-māmawēpihk (Lake Midden) for the First Time

Regina, SK – September 27, 2024 – Elders from the Touchwood Agency Tribal Council (TATC) will visit the historic kā-kī-māmawēpihk, or Lake Midden, near Rowan's Ravine for the first time on Friday, September 27, 2024. Beginning at 10 a.m., this visit marks a significant moment as Elders reconnect with this culturally and historically important site. Referred to as "Where They Used to Gather" by TATC Elders, the site was once a winter village where their ancestors fished, hunted, and practiced traditional ways of life.

This gathering brings together Elders, archaeologists, and scholars for an exploration of the site's history and cultural significance. Participants will include Dr. Andrew Miller, Indigenous Studies professor at First Nations University of Canada, and archaeologist professors, Dr. Robert Losey (University of Alberta) and Dr. Tatiana Nomokonova (University of Saskatchewan). Since 2021, these scholars have worked together to integrate archaeological findings with Plains Cree and Saulteaux oral traditions. This collaboration has deepened the understanding of Lake Midden's importance and contributed to creating educational resources for future generations.

Lake Midden, which dates back to the 1500s, was once home to the Mortlach culture, the ancestors of the Nakoda and Plains Cree peoples. Beginning in the 1930s, archaeologists excavated tens of thousands of artifacts, including clay pots, gaming pieces, stone tools, and bison bones. These items were sent to museums across Canada, but no publications or further analysis resulted from the findings until recent efforts to revisit the site's legacy. Drs. Losey and Nomokonova aim to raise awareness of the site's significance through respectful engagement with TATC Elders, ensuring that both archaeological research and Indigenous oral traditions contribute to a fuller understanding of the history.

Elders recognize the site as a winter gathering place where their ancestors passed the long Saskatchewan winters by fishing, hunting buffalo, and engaging in social activities. The large number of gaming pieces found suggests that recreation and interactions with outsiders were common. Artifacts like elaborately decorated clay pots and hoes made from buffalo scapula also

suggest that corn consumption and possibly early forms of agriculture played a role in their lives.

Dr. Andrew Miller, who has facilitated this collaboration, emphasized the importance of conducting this work in a respectful manner. "Our goal has always been to engage in a meaningful partnership with the Elders," said Dr. Miller. "This is a critical moment, as Elders are finally able to visit a site, they've heard about from their own elders but have never seen. We want to ensure that this work honors their traditions and protocols."

Dr. Miller, who has worked with the community for nearly a decade, highlighted the importance of balancing academic research with cultural sensitivity. "This collaboration shows that academics can work alongside Indigenous communities in a way that respects both knowledge systems. By listening to Elders and following their guidance, we can learn a great deal and ensure this work benefits future generations."

This ongoing partnership between archaeologists and Elders is part of a broader effort to integrate archaeological research with Indigenous knowledge. The findings and oral histories gathered through this collaboration will be used to create educational resources that share the site's history with the public, ensuring that future generations understand the deep cultural significance of Lake Midden.

Interested in Joining?

We invite you to join us on this special visit to kā-kī-māmawēpihk (Lake Midden) on Friday, September 27th. Meeting at 10 a.m. near the site, we will explore this culturally significant location alongside Elders, archaeologists, and scholars. Directions are attached for your reference. We look forward to seeing you there.

INQUIRIES:

Dr. Andrew Miller

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Additional Resources for Dr. Miller: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/it-s-fascinating-touchwood-hills-book-aimed-to-preserve-sask-first-nations-history-1.5141917>

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About the Touchwood Agency Tribal Council

The Touchwood Agency Tribal Council (TATC) is a governance organization representing Cree and Saulteaux Nations, including Muskowekwan, Day Star, and Kawacatoose First Nations. The TATC works to preserve and promote the cultural, social, and economic development of its member Nations.

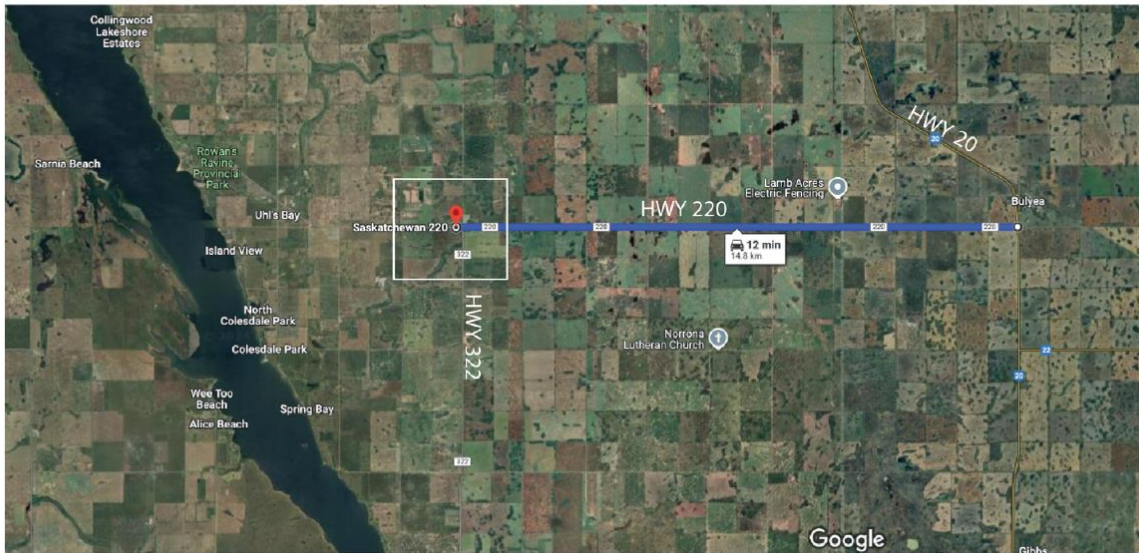
About First Nations University of Canada

Established in 1976, the First Nations University of Canada is Canada's only national First Nations-owned post-secondary institution. FNUniv is a unique place of higher learning that specializes in Indigenous Education for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of all cultural backgrounds. Our vision is to have a transformative impact by bridging our ceremonies, knowledge keepers, languages, and traditions with the delivery of high-quality post-secondary education. For more information, please visit www.fnuniv.ca.

Site Directions

Directions to Site for Sept. 27th.

1. Head west from Bulyea on highway 220 for 9 miles.
2. About 150 yards west of the intersection with Highway 322 is an abandoned farmhouse, located on the south side of Highway 220. Please park in the yard of this farmhouse.



Close-up map of the farmhouse area.

