



## **Treaties Recognition Week November 6 – 12, 2022**

In 1923, Hiawatha First Nation together with six other First Nations (Mississauga's of Alderville, Curve Lake, Scugog Island and the Chippewa's of Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama) treated with the Crown as represented by the Government of Canada in what are commonly referred to as the Williams Treaties.

It is called the Williams Treaties (plural) as there were two Treaties. The wording is the same in both Treaties, however one was signed by the Chippewa's on October 31, 1923 and the second one was signed by the Mississauga's on November 15, 1923.

Prior to confederation in 1867, ancestors of the individual Williams Treaties First Nations entered into what are commonly referred to as pre-Confederation Treaties (the Collins Treaty of 1785, the Crawford Purchase of 1784, the Gunshot Treaty of 1787-88, the Penetanguishene Treaty No.5 of 1798, Treaty No. 16 of 1815, Treaty No. 17 of 1816, Treaty No. 18 – Nottawasaga Treaty of 1818, Treaty No. 20 – Rice Lake Treaty of 1818, Treaty 27-27¼ of 1822). In these Treaties, the First Nations representatives reserved their harvesting rights over the lands surrendered.

Starting as early as 1847, the Williams Treaties First Nations petitioned the Crown about encroachment on their pre-Confederation Treaty harvesting areas and onto their northern hunting territories which had not been previously surrendered. In entering into the Williams Treaties, our First Nation representatives expected the Treaties to protect their pre-Confederation Treaty harvesting rights and to receive compensation for their northern hunting territories.

In contrast, the Crown interpreted the Williams Treaties as taking not only a surrender of all lands that were held in aboriginal title by the seven First Nations but also taking a surrender of all other rights in pre-Confederation treaties. As a result, our First Nation Citizens were the only First Nations peoples in Canada to be denied rights to harvesting (hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering). For nearly 100 years our people were persecuted and prosecuted for harvesting which was our natural and cultural way of life. From 1923 onward, our First Nations had tried through correspondence, meetings and peaceful demonstrations to get the governments of Canada and Ontario to agree with our Citizens' understandings.