



## Treaties Recognition Week November 6 – 12, 2022

The Williams Treaties First Nations worked on litigation and negotiation processes for 30+ years to settle the Williams Treaties claim.

In the 1980's, research led our First Nations to the conclusion that the Williams Treaties did not take away all of our rights. It also led us to conclude the Government of Canada, required to act in our best interest as a result of section 91(24) of the *British North America Act 1867* (Canada's first Constitution), did not properly compensate our First Nations for rights they claimed were taken as a result of the 1923 Williams Treaties.

That led the Williams Treaties First Nations through many years of trying to get Canada to a negotiated settlement - an often stated goal of the First Nations. In 1987 the First Nations filed a claim against Canada and, in 1991, against Ontario. In 1992, the First Nation filed a suit in the Federal Court. In 1993, Ontario agreed to negotiate and in 1994, Canada agreed to negotiate. In 2000, negotiations ceased because the Crown brought no mandate to the table allowing for negotiations on constitutionally recognized and protected harvesting rights. In 2008, negotiations restarted but again the Crown brought no mandate to negotiate the matter of harvesting rights so the Williams Treaties First Nations chose to go back to court. In 2009, court proceedings began. In 2016, negotiations resumed and in February 2018, the Williams Treaties First Nations received an offer to settle from the governments of Canada and Ontario.

The settlement for the seven Williams Treaties First Nations combined included:

- One billion, one hundred and ten million dollars (\$1,110,000,000.00) of which seventy million dollars (\$70,000,000.00) is to be directed to reconciliation projects identified jointly by the seven First Nations;
- Legal entitlement to 77,000 acres of land that may be set aside as reserves through the federal Additions to Reserve (ATR) policy;
- Constitutionally recognized and protected harvesting (hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering) rights for food, social and ceremonial purposes for the signatory First Nations in the pre-confederation treaty areas, and;
- A written and oral apology from both Canada and Ontario for having denied rights and appropriate compensation to our First Nations for nearly a century.