



Caldwell First Nation

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After an Historic 230 Year Battle, Caldwell First Nation Attains Reserve Status on Ancestral Territory

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Caldwell Traditional Territory, Leamington, Ontario

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

It has been 10 years since an historical land claim settlement of 2010 and more than 9 years in the Addition to Reserve Process for Caldwell First Nation, previously known as Chippewas of Point Pelee and Pelee Island and also known The People of the Lake. Today, Caldwell Council is proud to announce that, for the first time in the Nation's history, Reserve Status has finally been attained. This is not only an historic moment for Caldwell First Nation, it is a profound milestone in Canadian-Indigenous Truth & Reconciliation as Caldwell was one of only three First Nations in Canada without Reserve lands.

In May, 1790, a large tract of land on the North shore of Lake Erie was surrendered to the Crown. However, Caldwell First Nation was neither a signatory nor a beneficiary to this treaty on their traditional lands. This was the first of two claims Caldwell had to their land.

The second land claim stemmed from Caldwell's role as allies to the British in the War of 1812 fighting alongside of Captain William Caldwell where they became known as 'Caldwell's Band of Indians'-- which eventually became Caldwell First Nation. In recognition of its service to the Crown, Caldwell was promised the retention of their homes on land at Point Pelee but instead were burned out of their homes by the RCMP in the 1920s. After 230 years, the promise from the Crown has finally come to fruition.

The property that now has Reserve Status is a 200-acre lot at the corner of Bevel Line Road and Seacliff Drive in Leamington. The plans for the property include net-zero residential development, community facilities, and a new administrative building. The Nation hopes to not only have housing available for all Nation citizens who would like to move back but also, through following ambitious and progressive Community Comprehensive and Economic Development Plans, create job opportunities available on-Nation. Exciting and ambitious cultural and business developments are a large part of Caldwell's future plans for the Nation and local community. It is through this holistic approach to community development that Caldwell endeavours to be the global leader in economically and environmentally sustainable Reserve development. Attaining Reserve status was an important step in this process.

“The process was arduous and challenging,” stated Councillor Robyn Perkins, “not only was the legal battle significant, the paperwork and time this process took is a testament to the perseverance and resiliency of the Caldwell people.”

“This was no small feat,” added Councillor Steve Simpson, “Caldwell First Nation is proud of the hard work, dedication, patience, and perseverance that it took to get us to this milestone.”

Councillor James Peters reinforced, “The action taken in the battle for the land claim settlement, and the process of Addition to Reserve cannot be downplayed in its historic and monumental impact on Indigenous Reconciliation in Canada.”

In a final statement of solidarity, Councillor Stan Scott closed, “Caldwell would like to acknowledge previous Chiefs and Councils for their hard work on finalizing the land claim settlement, acquiring lands, and moving forward with the application for Reserve status. Because of Caldwell’s persistence in our convictions, the next Seven Generations finally have a place to come home to.”

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations stated, “Creating a land base for Caldwell First Nation is an important step in the history of Canada. Today we are able to right a historical wrong, advance reconciliation, and support the treaty relationship with Caldwell First Nation. These lands will benefit your citizens and help you realize your vision for housing and economic development.”

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Caldwell was unable to host a large community celebration but is planning an outdoor celebration to take place in 2021. The news was shared with the Caldwell community through social media in a live broadcast on November 23, 2020.

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