



April 19, 2007

Honourable Gary Doer  
Premier of Manitoba  
Room 204 Legislative Building  
450 Broadway  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 0V8

Dear Premier Doer:

**Re: Permanent Protection of the Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Protected Area**

I am writing to you in support of Poplar River First Nation's request for permanent protection for the Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Protected Area. With the release of the *Asatiwisiipe Aki Lands Management Plan* in 2005, Poplar River First Nation has accomplished something few other Aboriginal communities in Canada can claim – a plan for the future of its people and lands that is based on years of scientific research and traditional use studies. Poplar River's vision for the future, achieved through community consensus and participation, is worthy of recognition and celebration.

The Government of Manitoba's support for Poplar River's plan to protect, steward, and manage the boreal forests within its traditional territory is critical to the plan's success, not to mention its importance in achieving World Heritage Site status for the nomination (of which Poplar River First Nation lands are a part) that extends across the Ontario provincial boundary. The significance of protecting Poplar River's traditional lands within the protected area goes beyond representing an intact example of Manitoba's boreal ecosystem – an important outcome in itself. Permanent protection will be a step towards management of these lands according to the *Asatiwisiipe Aki Lands Management Plan*, a potential working model for other First Nations. Permanent protection also confers certainty that can assist in leveraging funds for further research and study of these lands to contribute to our understanding and ability to respond to global warming.

The University of Winnipeg is involved in significant research in this area through The Centre for Forestry Interdisciplinary Research (C-FIR), the pre-eminent forest research and teaching enterprise in central Canada. As you will know, C-FIR is active in all of the major forest and land use/climate change initiatives in Manitoba, including working closely with the Province of Manitoba, the forest industry, the Manitoba Model Forest, and the East Side Land Use Planning Process. Recent and ongoing projects include a

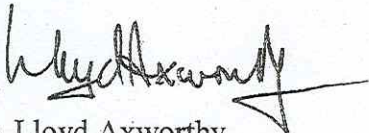
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study of the economic impacts of climate change on forestry-based prairie communities, as well as research into critical areas such as environmental ethics and forest management.

I know your government is strongly committed to the environment and has introduced significant green initiatives. I hope you will recognize the importance of protecting these lands for future study and future generations. I look forward to congratulating Poplar River First Nation and the Province of Manitoba on formally and permanently protecting the Poplar/Nanowin Rivers Protected Area in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lloyd Axworthy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right at the end.

Dr. Lloyd Axworthy  
President and Vice-Chancellor

LA/cp

Copy to: Poplar River First Nation