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Ontario government, First Nation agree on joint partnership at Springwater Park – Camp Nibi

News release from Camp Nibi



Springwater Provincial Park – renamed Camp Nibi by a group of First Nations women who have occupied it for nine months – is to be a partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Beausoleil First Nation.

Beausoleil First Nation and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources are in discussions which ensure the interest of Camp Nibi/Midewiwin Lodge for their continued traditional, cultural, spiritual education will continue to be provided for on these lands of Springwater Park, Elizabeth Brass Elson said today.

“The traditional territories of Beausoleil First Nation will be protected and our teachings and ceremony will continue. Camp Nibi and Three Fires Midewiwin Lodge will have a voice in the planning and development of the park lands for the continued use of all in the future,” she said.

An agreement between the Ministry and the First Nation is good news for all, Brass Elson said.

“We are satisfied that our vision for Camp Nibi has been recognized. Camp Nibi and the Eastern Doorway of The Three Fires Midewiwin Lodge will be working together with the First Nation to bring traditional spiritual teachings on the land of Springwater Park.”

The past nine months at Camp Nibi have been the scene of ceremonies, teachings, potluck suppers and – most important – connection with the land and the surrounding community.

It's been an important journey for Brass Elson, known to many in Simcoe County for her leadership role in the battle to stop Dump Site 41.

She turned her attention to Springwater Park – part of the traditional territory of Beausoleil First Nation – after the Ontario government declared it non-operational as of April 1, 2013.

“I found my true spiritual connection with the land here,” she said. People came from all over Ontario to camp with the women who were in the park through the high heat of summer and the recent bitter cold. Locals were generous with support and donations.

“Chi Miigwetch, a big thank you to all those who supported us, our friends and our allies,” Brass Elson said. “And special thanks to Beausoleil First Nation and Ontario Parks for recognizing our vision for these lands.”

Two women joined Brass Elson – an Anishinabek from Chimnissing (Beausoleil First Nation) – in a steadfast determination to ensure that the land remains protected in an area north of Barrie that's being subjected to intense development pressures.

They are Kimberly Rose Edwards, a Richmond Hill resident from the Mohawk community of Oka, and Sylvie Simard of Kapuskasing, a Mi'kmaq from New Brunswick.

"This has been my destiny," said Edwards. A seer, she found her native roots a decade ago and saw the Camp Nibi lands long before she arrived to support Brass Elson in April.

"I came to learn," said Simard. "My ancestors were calling."

<http://aware-simcoe.ca/2013/12/ontario-government-first-nation-agree-on-joint-partnership-at-springwater-park-camp-nibi/>

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