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Old Relationships or New Partnerships? Hydro Development on Aboriginal Lands in Manitoba and Quebec

WINNIPEG—"Old Relationships or New Partnerships? Hydro Development on Aboriginal Lands in Manitoba and Quebec" is the theme of a thought provoking, **free public forum** to be held at the University of Winnipeg, on **Monday, February 23, 2004**.

Registration (free): 8 a.m.
Day Program: 8:45 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Evening Panel Discussion: 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

"We are bringing this debate to the public with a diverse mix of featured speakers," said Don Sullivan of The Boreal Forest Network. "The Honourable Tim Sale, Minister responsible for hydro development, Grand Chief Ted Moses of the Grand Council of Crees, MMF President David Chartrand, a panel of Elders from several affected Manitoba First Nations, academics, and hydro officials are among the presenters who will be sharing their perspectives with the public. It's quite an opportunity."

Presented by The Boreal Forest Network and co-sponsored by The University of Winnipeg, The Manitoba Métis Federation, and the University of Manitoba, the forum will explore new agreements (signed or in progress) between First Nations and hydro corporations, in Manitoba and Quebec.

"The Métis People of Manitoba have made it clear that we want to be a part of the consultation process regarding any Hydro development in the province of Manitoba," stated MMF President David Chartrand. "Our goal is to ensure our concerns will be heard and this forum offers an opportunity for these concerns to be presented and discussed."

"Manitoba and Québec have a similar and long history of hydro-development," said University of Winnipeg Professor Thibault Martin. "Both provinces, also, postponed their hydro-projects in the 1990s, and resumed them in recent years in order to take advantage of the anticipated soaring demand for energy in the United States."

Hydro Quebec has recently signed agreements with the Grand Council of Crees and with Innu communities that have been characterized by some as a groundbreaking move toward a new kind of partnership with Aboriginal peoples. And, in October 2003, Manitoba Hydro signed a Summery of Understanding with the Nisichawayasihk Nation, which proposes to create a business partnership between them to develop the proposed Wuskwatim dam.

“The goal of this conference is to debate these new projects and agreements and to explore the notions of “fair deal,” “partnership,” and “nation to nation relationship,” said University of Manitoba, Professor Peter Kulchyski.

“This is everyone’s issue,” added Sullivan. “We encourage you all to come out.”

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Contact:

Susanne McCrea
Communications Director
The Boreal Forest Network
947-9772 office
292-2908 cell
susanne.mccrea@shawbiz.ca

Thibault Martin*
Department of Sociology
The University of Winnipeg
786.9187 or 774.4134 office
t.martin@uwinnipeg.ca

*PLEASE REFER FRENCH LANGUAGE REQUESTS TO: Thibault Martin