MMF finds concerning metal concentrations in Camp and Kississing Lakes

September 23, 2021

Winnipeg, MB, in the Métis Nation Homeland - The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) took samples of the water and sediment at both Camp Lake and Kississing Lake, which were then analyzed at ALS Laboratory in Winnipeg, one of the largest environmental laboratory networks in the world, providing the analysis of air, soil, sediment, water. The results of the analysis found high levels of metals that could affect the animals and people who rely on the lakes.

The contaminants are from a copper-zinc and sulphide ore mine near Sherridon, MB that shut down operations 70 years ago, and was cleaned according to the standards of the day. Since then, contaminants have devastated Camp Lake, turning the water orange. Now, as the MMF's recent tests have revealed, contaminants from Camp Lake have made their way into Kississing Lake.

"In spite of communicating our concerns to the province for years, Manitoba has been neglecting the need to manage and protect the surrounding bodies of water," said David Chartrand, President of the

MMF, "There was once a barrier between Camp Lake and Kississing Lake, but now water flows between the two. Though the province has been trying to assure the public that there is no problem with the concentration of metals in the lakes, we now have evidence that this is not the case."

"Sediment is a major factor in determining water quality. Metals in sediments can be absorbed and re-released into the water if they are not properly dealt with," said Bryanna Sherbo, Aquatic Biologist at the MMF. "If Manitoba truly believes there is no chance of pollution in the lakes, they have neglected to properly and fully perform the tests necessary to validate this conclusion."

The MMF will be reaching out to the federal and provincial governments to share the test results and initiate a critical discussion on how we can work to prevent a disaster that the MMF fears is imminent.

"Mitigation efforts to date have failed. We are now forced to call upon the governments of Canada and Manitoba to act before it is too late," said President Chartrand. "Abandoning the health of these two lakes also disregards the health and well-being of those whose families rely on the lake's wildlife."

Many Métis Citizens reside in Sherridon and Cold Lake, as well as nearby communities that use the lake, and many have relied on the surrounding wildlife to put food on their family's table for generations. The MMF, led by President David Chartrand, will be in Sherridon on Friday, September 24, 2021, to meet with community members and view the damage. This will be followed by a community discussion about the MMF's alarming scientific findings at Camp and Kississing Lakes.

"We will take all necessary reviews of where the last 70 years of neglect have left us. This mine was closed in 1951, and it looks like no one was protecting the Citizens or the lakes during this time. The MMF will be reviewing the full effects of this crisis, along with the health status of people in the area. If this has caused any harm to Citizens, we will take any political or legal action necessary to address it. If we do not act now, we may have a similar situation as what happened to the Grassy Narrows First Nation in Ontario, where industry polluted the surrounding water system with mercury, which eventually poisoned the population relying on that water," said President Chartrand "This contamination needs to be taken seriously and requires immediate remediation by all levels of government."

President Chartrand has made it clear that the North will never be forgotten by the MMF.

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The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) is the democratic government for the Manitoba Métis, also known as the Red River Métis, the origin and core of the Métis Nation. The Manitoba Métis are Canada's Negotiating Partners in Confederation and the Founders of the Province of Manitoba.

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