



Update on works planned by South Bruce Peninsula on Saugeen First Nation reserve land

SAUKIING ANISHNAABEKIING - On November 24, 2020, the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) Environment Office was informed of works proposed by the Town of South Bruce Peninsula along Lakeshore Blvd from Crowd Inn to Kinloss Lane in Sauble Beach, SON Territory. South Bruce Peninsula approved works to: cut back dune sand, install a concrete block retaining wall, contour the dune from wall to peak, and remove trees and vegetation along 469 m of Lakeshore Blvd. This work is intended by South Bruce Peninsula to address pedestrian safety due to parking congestion along this stretch of road in the summer months.

The area in question includes the waterfront from Lot 25 to the middle of Lot 31, and this location is, and always has been, part of Saugeen First Nation (SFN) #29. The town is well aware of this fact. The Government of Canada has previously advised project proponents that no activities can occur on this land unless you have obtained the consent of Saugeen First Nation to proceed. Any undertaking on this portion of Saugeen's reserve land without consent is unlawful and is trespassing. South Bruce Peninsula's claim that they hold title to this portion of Saugeen's reserve is subject to ongoing litigation filed against South Bruce Peninsula jointly by Saugeen First Nation and the Government of Canada. This matter is expected to proceed to trial next year.

Between November 24 and December 3, 2020, SFN and Environment Office representatives completed visits to the site, and SFN Leadership engaged in good faith discussions with South Bruce Peninsula representatives. SFN proposed a reasonable consultation process regarding the proposed works. At the time, South Bruce Peninsula agreed to stop work and consider a consultation proposal from SFN. However, four days later on December 7, the Town unanimously passed a motion to proceed with the proposed works as soon as possible, with no regard for the good faith discussions and verbal agreements they made with SFN just days earlier.

To add insult to injustice – Mayor Jackson announced on the morning of December 8 that the project would be suspended due to a court injunction from environmental law charity EcoJustice. While the temporary stop to the project is a win – the Mayor and the Town continue to outright deny their obligations to consult SFN and SON. We will continue to take actions to ensure consultation with SFN is completed and consent is established before the project proceeds.

“This is a matter of principle, respect and jurisdiction. The lands in question are part of Saugeen First Nation, and while that is not accepted by the South Bruce Peninsula Town Council, it is simply fact. Saugeen and the Government of Canada agree on this and will be taking the Town to court to settle,” said Saugeen First Nation Chief Lester Anoquot.

“We proposed a reasonable process to work towards consent on this project and, without even reviewing the consultation plan, the town has unanimously decided to go ahead without our consent, without any consultation and without an opportunity for our staff to analyze the information and make informed recommendations that would resolve the issues at hand (parking and safety) and minimize to the greatest extent possible, any impacts to the environment.”

At this point, the Town has made it clear it will not consult with SFN in regards to activities occurring within SFN #29 and have still not provided any formal notice or correspondence to SFN or the Environment Office.



Environment Office

Saugeen Ojibway
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