



Media Release

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Kenora, ON

For immediate release

Miisun-Miitigoog Directors Present at Annual SFI Forestry Conference in Vancouver, BC - May 14-18, 2023

The Board of Directors for Miisun-Miitigoog have just returned from an educational and business-packed week at the SFI Annual Forestry Conference, and this year was involved in a big way.

Miitigoog Forest Management Company, operating as Miisun Integrated Resource Management Company, is a 100% First Nations owned Natural Resource Management company.

The 2023 SFI Annual Forestry Conference in collaboration with PEFC Week offered a unique opportunity to network with local, national, binational, and global community members, including those in the SFI and PEFC networks, Indigenous representatives, government officials and more. The PEFC International is a leading global alliance of national and regional forest certification systems, among them the SFI system for Canada and the US.

The conference took place May 14-18, 2023 in beautiful Vancouver, Canada. This has been a conference our Board has had a chance to attend for the last few years, and this year for Miisun-Miitigoog was a historic moment.

The Board of Directors who were in attendance not only had the opportunity to sit and absorb the important information but also had the opportunity to present to the conference. The panel our Board in partnership with Weyerhaeuser sat on highlights forest-focused collaborations rooted in recognition and respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights, traditional knowledge, and self-determined aspirations for the future.

Another major focus of the panel discussion is Manito Aki Inakonigaawin which signifies the duty to respect and protect lands that may be affected from over-usage, degradation and unethical processes. This law was written within Treaty 3 in 1997, and has guided a lot of the work we do as we've moved forward in this sector.

"The SFI conference this year was a big moment for us, as this year they showcased our Indigenous Organization at the conference, which was Miisun and Miitigoog's partnership. The acknowledgment of Indigenous Peoples and Organizations within the Forestry sector, and having it be us was a huge accomplishment. The conference has continually proved to be a great space for not only relationship building but also gives us the space to share on an international level the importance of respect and recognition for Indigenous Peoples and their rights when it comes to forestry," said Chief Lorraine Cobiness, Miisun Board President.

"We have a lot of work to be proud of that we wanted to share, including holding the Enhanced Sustainable Forest License for the Kenora forest until 2038, which is a huge part of our success. We have to ensure we create the spaces where we not only really hear and listen to Indigenous communities, but share with our forestry sector partners about what makes our unique partnership work, and how we advance our own relationships. Indigenous voices bring an element to the table with the knowledge of the land and its significance that might not otherwise be there," added in Cobiness.

The conference allowed for continued work with Kathy Abusow the President and CEO at Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc and her team, who has maintained a true and trusting relationship with our organization.

510 9th St N,
Kenora, ON P9N 2S8

Phone Number: (807) 467-3351
Fax: (807) 467-3355



“We enjoy the opportunities we have to attend events like this, because our organization has a very unique approach to forestry work, and how we work with First Nations communities and respect autonomy. We not only get the chance to learn and take in so many different initiatives taking place in the forestry sector, but we are able to showcase First Nations taking the lead, and having a lead seat at the table in these industries”, said Erik Holmstrom Vice President of Miitigoog.

On behalf of our entire Board of Directors for Miisun which is comprised of 8 First Nation communities, we look forward to continuing to move forward in our work and investing in growing the relationships and partnerships we get out of these events. We would also like to say a big Miigwetch to all our staff, you all continually go above and beyond and work so hard to make opportunities and avenues for sharing like this possible.

Please see attached a spotlight video on the historic Miisun-Miitigoog showcase:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJ0NrnItHk0>

For media inquiries please contact Abbie Siroishka at abbie.siroishka@kenorachiefs.org