



PRESS RELEASE

Wahkohtowin Innovation Centre is opening its Doors to Communities in the Northeast Superior Region

Chapleau, ON (August 20, 2021) – In late 2019, Ecotrust Canada received a \$143,600 Capital grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) to help its partner, Wahkohtowin Development GPI, purchase a three-story building in Chapleau to house the Wahkohtowin Innovation Centre. The Wahkohtowin Innovation Centre is a gathering place where the communities of Northeast Superior can work collaboratively on economic development and cultural revitalization initiatives to address the significant socio-economic challenges facing the region.

“I was delighted to learn of the substantial support that Ecotrust Canada has received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Northern Ontario is burgeoning with people who possess incredible talents and skills as well as a love for this land,” said Michael Mantha, MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin. “Who better understands the incredible potential that this region has?”

Mantha went on to explain that his excitement stems from the fact that by teaming up Northerners’ love for our precious lands and resources with Ecotrust Canada’s commitment to building an economy that is devoted to respecting the environment, developing sustainable energy, food, housing and employment is, “A gold medal winning combination if ever I’ve seen one.”

Wahkohtowin Innovation Centre will serve up to 15 different First Nations communities and will further connect those communities with up to six area municipalities. Funds from the grant were used to make extensive renovations, including upgrading the electrical, heating and air conditioning, and plumbing systems as well as lighting, roof and wall repairs and more. The grant also purchased new kitchen appliances and office furniture.

Ecotrust Canada and the Wahkohtowin Development GPI would like to acknowledge the critical support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, which enabled them to complete renovations to create a meeting and administrative space, and accommodations to allow members from more distant communities to participate.

“It is extremely rewarding to see the completion of the renovation at such a critical time of our mandate at Wahkohtowin — there remains much to do related to Climate Change and Action, continuing the growth and richness of our Guardian Program, the Bioeconomy opportunities in our homelands and enhancing the collaborative relationships generated over the last five years,” said David Flood, General Manager, Wahkohtowin Development. “With sincere gratitude to OTF, Chi-Meegwetch (Big Thank you) for seeing the immediate and long-term value in this project.”

“We congratulate Wahkohtowin Development, and thank the Ontario Trillium Foundation, for establishing a permanent home base from which the creative energies of First Nation communities can be pulled together to implement community-led solutions for the region,” said Chuck Rumsey, CEO and President, Ecotrust Canada.

About Wahkohtowin Development: Wahkohtowin Development General Partnership Incorporated (WDGPI) was created in 2016 by the member communities of the Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs’ forum as a means of advancing regional strategic economic opportunities from a non-political, reconciliation-based approach. Initially headed by an operational vision of Full Participation in the Forest Sector consistent with its 2018-2024 Strategic Plan. www.wahkohtowin.com



About Ecotrust Canada: Ecotrust Canada works with rural, remote, and Indigenous communities toward building an economy that provides for a healthy and resilient natural environment; sustainable and abundant energy, food, and housing; prosperous and meaningful livelihoods; and vibrant cultures and inclusive societies. We call this approach, **building an economy that provides for life**. Our on-the-ground work and systems approach is entrepreneurial, partnership-based and relentlessly practical. ecotrust.ca

About the Ontario Trillium Foundation: The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. Last year, nearly \$112M was invested into 1,384 community projects and partnerships to build healthy and vibrant communities and strengthen the impact of Ontario's non-profit sector. In 2020/21, OTF supported Ontario's economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit otf.ca to learn more.

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For more information: David Flood – General Manager, Wahkohtowin Development
C: 705-622-9581 | wdgpi.gm@wahkohtowin.com