



DELAWARE NATION COUNCIL

Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit

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For Immediate Release

Historic Fairfield property to return to Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit

May 7, 2019 – Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit will mark a significant step toward reconciliation this week when it accepts the return of its original village at Fairfield from regional representatives of The United Church of Canada. Everyone is invited to a 10am signing ceremony, on Friday, May 10, 2019 at the Fairfield Museum grounds, located at 14878 Longwoods Roads. This event has historical significance as it is being held on the same week Fairfield was established 227 years ago.

“Our Nation has long dreamed of the return of our first home in these lands,” says Eelūnaapèewi Lahkéewiit Chief Denise Stonefish. “We thank the Antler River Watershed Regional Council of The United Church for their good faith, good will and leadership to help us make this dream a reality.” Chief Stonefish adds that Friday’s historic signing is a clear example of the spirit and intent of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action.

“Recognizing and honouring the connection that the people of Eelūnaapèewi Lahkéewiit have to this land, and ensuring its return to them, are essential to The United Church of Canada’s deep commitment to reconciliation,” says Nora Sanders, the General Secretary of the General Council of The United Church of Canada.

Fairfield is one of the region’s oldest settlements, having been established in on May 8, 1792 by Eelūnaapéewi Lahkéewiit ancestors and the Moravian missionaries who lived among them for generations. The village was a marvel for its time, boasting both a school and church. However, Fairfield was destroyed by retreating American soldiers at the close of the War of 1812, forcing the community to relocate to the south side of the Thames River. For the past 74 years, Fairfield has been operated as a historic park and museum by The United Church of Canada.

Chief Stonefish says the Fairfield transfer will provide opportunities for her Nation to create new spaces where they take the lead in sharing their own story, history and culture. “We are confident that we can work together to develop Fairfield into a historic and educational site that captures who we are, and better reflects our relationship, as neighbours, partners and allies.”

The Fairfield transfer will be completed in two stages, beginning with the cemetery and farm field north of Longwoods Road, followed by the museum and historic park parcel which will transfer once all legal documents are completed.

There will be an opportunity for interviews after Friday’s signing, followed by a luncheon at the Eelūnaapèewi Lahkéewiit Community Centre, located at 14811 School House Line. For more information, contact Eelūnaapèewi Lahkéewiit’s Chief, Denise Stonefish or Director of Operations, Bev Hills at 519-692-3936.