



Peguis First Nation

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Peat Mining in Peguis First Nation Traditional Territory and TLE Notification Area

Sunterra Peat Mine Expansion Proposal

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What is Peat?

Peat is a thick dry water-logged organic soil layer made up of dead and decaying plant material. Peat lands include moors, bogs, mires, peat swamp forests and permafrost tundra. Peat lands act as important water filters, reducing pollution that enters the lake. Peat lands are moose habitat and provided us with medicinal plants. Peat bogs also serve as important carbon sinks. Mining them releases carbon, Green house gas and methane into the atmosphere.

Why is Peat Mined?

Peat is used in agriculture where it is mixed into soil to improve its structure and helps retain moisture. It is also used in water filtration. Most of the peat mined in southern Manitoba goes to the USA market for gardens, greenhouses, orchards, etc.

Peat Mining in Manitoba

Globally, peat lands are the world's most important on land carbon sink, making them one of the best climate change tools available. Mining for peat releases this vast carbon store into the air and stops new carbon from forming. Mining for peat further affects local water quality, and removes a distinct ecosystem for many important species.

Industry claims that, once mined, peat bogs will be restored to their natural state. Unfortunately, this process will take hundreds, if not thousands, of years! Peat bogs are often turned into a type of wetland which is of lower ecological quality than the original bog. Restoration and reclamation of peat mined bog has not happened in MB.

Sunterra Horticulture Inc has applied for an Environment Act License to expand its current Peat mining operations in the Bullhead, Little Deer Lake and Ramsay Point Bogs, located 40 and 80/ km North of Riverton, Manitoba.

The proposed expansion will result in approximately 1324 hectares (ha) of land clearing, with 715 hectares being mined directly. Roads and ponds will be built. The proposed peat mine expansion is located within the Traditional Territories of Bloodvein River First Nation, Fisher River First Nation, and within both the Traditional Territory and Treaty Land Entitlement Notification Area of Peguis First Nation.

The expanded vacuum peat mining operation would impact Peguis First Nation's ability to exercise its rights, including for Treaty entitlement land selection. The Sunterra expansion would contribute to drying out the Washow Peninsula where two other new Peat licenses were recently approved.

Washow peninsula is a filter for Lake Winnipeg. Drying it out with peat mining makes no sense. Peguis First Nation members continue to use the peat bogs as our pharmacy.

Peguis First Nation has objected to renewal of Crown land peat leases, granting of any pending peat quarry leases, and the proposed peat mine expansion for Sunterra Horticulture Inc.

This mine would affect our rights, our lands and waters, while contradicting Crown's duty to consult in a meaningful manner by providing proper notice about leases, consulting and accommodating our First Nation. There has been no accommodation or compensation to our First Nation for peat leases or mines.

Peguis First Nation is preparing it's response to the Sunterra expansion.