

***POKAGON BAND
OF
POTAWATOMI INDIANS***



CLASSIFICATION OF TRIBAL LANDS

March , 2008

POKAGON BAND OF POTAWATOMI INDIANS

ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER

P.O. Box 180, Dowagiac, MI 49047

Telephone 269-782-8998 / FAX 269-782-6882

March 22, 2008

Dear Tribal Citizen,

Attached is a draft version of the Classification of Tribal Lands document. This document is being prepared to help support the decision-making process required for designating the Tribe's lands at each consolidation site into land-use classifications, as mandated by the Constitution of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians.

The draft document is divided into chapters which present information regarding the consolidation sites' relevant characteristics such as natural resources, environmental constraints, community character, area development, and land use. Other areas in the plan describe population, housing, and trends that may potentially influence land use or impact natural resources. It also presents community profiles for each of the consolidation sites, including key demographic characteristics and population projections.

This copy is being provided as an opportunity for your review and comment with regard to the general content of the information that will be considered to assign classifications to the tribal lands. We ask that you provide comments and suggestions on the current content of this draft. After all comments are gathered and considered, this draft will be amended as appropriate. As you read through the document you will note that the Tribal lands have not yet been classified. Public sessions for the Tribal citizenry will be held in the near future to gather input for classifications of the lands.

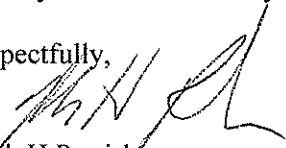
In the meantime, please submit your written comments by April 22, 2008 through regular post office mail to:

Mark Parrish
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians
Land Use Plan Comments
58620 Sink Road
Dowagiac, MI 49047

Additionally, you may respond by email if preferred: mark.parrish@pokagon.com
Please include your name, address, and Tribal enrollment number so we may authenticate your input.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,


Mark H Parrish
Environmental Coordinator
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians



CLASSIFICATION OF TRIBAL LANDS

Introduction

The intent of this document is to guide the designation of Tribal lands into land-use classifications, to provide rationale for these designations, and to identify the parcels and their classifications as adopted by Tribal Council resolution.

The Constitution of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians contains Article IV – Tribal Lands. Article IV includes Section 1 which states that all Tribal lands must be designated into three (3) land-use classifications: Commercial Lands, Non-Commercial Lands, and Land Preserves. Therefore, this document, Classification of Tribal Lands, has been prepared to comply with the mandate of the Constitution.

Unlike most tribes that engaged in treaty-making with the United States government during the 1800s, a reserved land base was never established for the Pokagon Band.

This document continues an orderly sequence of significant events since the 1970s dedicated to restoring a Tribal land base and advancing the Band's governance of its lands;

- The Band acquired Elders Hall in ____.
- Pokagon Band Federal Recognition was restored on September 21, 1994.
- A Land Survey was performed in 1995, which gathered Tribal citizens' input regarding desirable locations and land characteristics to guide land acquisitions.
- Lands were purchased circa 1998 to 2001 to assemble an initial land base using the advice and vision provided through the survey.
- The Constitution of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians was accepted by the Tribal citizenry through a vote on November 1, 2005.

The overall objective of the Constitution and its land-use classifications is to ensure the balanced use and preservation of tribal land for the benefit of the Pokagon Nation and its citizens, by providing for residential and economic growth in areas appropriate for development and restricting development to protect areas with vital natural resources. This community ethic is expressed in the Tribal Mission Statement.

Pokagon Band Tribal Mission Statement
Adopted by Resolution of Tribal Council, 1999

“The mission of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians is to respectfully promote and protect the culture, dignity, education, health, welfare, and self-sufficiency of our elders, our youth, our families, and our future generations while preserving Mother Earth. We will strive to give our people a better quality of life. The Band will also strive to be economically independent from federal and local governments allowing the Band to fully exercise its sovereignty.”

It is said that the traditional dance steps of our people represent the Neshnabek’s first contact with *Nokmes Kignan (Grandmother Earth)*. These first footsteps were landed very gently out of respect and an awareness of her fragility. Today, we are in effect, replanting the Pokagon Nation’s feet and re-connecting ourselves with *Nokmes Kignan* in order to help support the development of our Nation. Our planning and implementation of activities in accordance with this Classification document should emulate those first footsteps. Careful planning, understanding of the physical environment and how all its elements relate to and affect one another move us toward sustainable development, and are how we can demonstrate our respect for the earth.

Sustainable development is not a new idea. Rather, it is the latest expression of a long-standing ethic involving humankind’s relationship with the environment and resources, and the current generation’s responsibilities to future generations. It has become an important guide to many communities that have discovered that conventional approaches to planning and development are creating, rather than solving, societal and environmental problems. Where conventional approaches can lead to pollution, habitat destruction, and resource over consumption, sustainable development offers real, lasting solutions that will strengthen our future.

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The Classification Document is organized into a series of sections that encompass three (3) consolidation sites. Chapter I addresses the Hartford, Michigan properties, Chapter II addresses the Dowagiac, Michigan properties and Chapter III addresses the North Liberty, Indiana properties.

The New Buffalo consolidation site requires classification, also. Because of the scope of the gaming enterprise, its classification will be addressed by a process separate from the other three (3) community-focused consolidation sites.

Each chapter presents information regarding the consolidation sites’ relevant characteristics such as natural resources, environmental constraints, community character, area development, and land use. Other areas in the document describe population, housing, and trends that may potentially influence land use or impact natural resources. It also presents community profiles for each of the consolidation sites, including key demographic characteristics and population projections. The Band’s Geographic Information System (GIS) was updated for this project and used to create a series of maps contained throughout the document.

Public Involvement

In an effort to educate and involve the tribal public in the analysis process, a comment period was provided and a series of meetings were held. Initially, tribal citizens were provided draft copies of the classification document for review and were encouraged to provide comments regarding its subject matter. This provided an opportunity for input and to become familiar with the information that is typically utilized in the planning process. Following the review and comment period, public workshops were held on _____. After a brief presentation, the public was divided into a series of groups. The groups considered the land characteristics and other pertinent information, then provided individual preferences regarding assignment of parcels to the three (3) land-use classifications. The preferences were tallied and recommendations to the Tribal Council for final assignments were prepared for adoption by resolution.

Using the Classification Document

This document provides guidance to achieve the long-term vision regarding land use and community development at each consolidation site. The Band's desire expressed in the 1995 land survey for woods and water characteristics, and varied terrain is manifested in its land purchases. Its aspiration to protect these characteristics is articulated in the Mission Statement and reinforced by the Constitution's mandate that development be carried out in accordance with a logical, thought-out plan, and that some of the property be set aside solely for protection as Land Preserves. The mandate for planned development is guided by the ethic that protection of the natural environment, its waters, and its vegetation and wildlife will also lead to healthier living environments for the Tribal citizens residing on, and using, the Tribal properties.

Achieving the vision of the Constitution and these land classifications will be supported by Tribal laws and decisions that protect the land's environments and characteristics while promoting quality, dignified development. Thus, a Tribal Land-Use and Conservation Code that institutionalizes low impact development techniques and other innovative strategies to help achieve the sustainability of the Pokagon Band Nation's resources is encouraged.

The contents in this document and its land-use classifications also provide important data and concepts that should be considered in the development of the Long Term Land Acquisition and Development Plan mandated by the Constitution.

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