

*News Release*



*Communiqué*

## **Congress of Aboriginal Peoples Probe Métis Hunting Rights**

Ottawa, December 9, 2004

A Canada-wide project exploring the implementation of Métis hunting rights is being launched today by the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) to advance the Supreme Court of Canada Powley decision handed down in October of 2003.

“When our Métis constituency exercise the hunting rights recognized in the Powley decision, we want to ensure there is no need for the Burnt Church kinds of incidents that followed the Marshall decision in the Maritimes a few years ago,” Congress Chief Dwight A. Dorey, said.

In the Powley decision the Supreme Court ruled that Métis who are descendants of historic Métis communities anywhere in Canada whose populations hunted and harvested prior to European colonial control could not legally be bound by existing federal or provincial licensing provisions.

The CAP Powley Implementation Project, funded by the federal government, is being directed by the CAP Powley Committee, chaired by Vice-Chief, Patrick Brazeau.

“We welcome the affirmation in the Supreme Court decision,” he said, “and the recognition in the federal funding criteria for this project that Métis rights apply to many more Métis than just those represented by the Metis National Council.”

“There is a lot of confusion and unnecessary fear among the public, governments, and even our own constituents about how this is going to work,” he added, “We expect our project to come up with practical ideas for the resolution of those concerns and that, we hope, will bring federal and provincial governments to the table to negotiate with our affiliates.”

CAP affiliate organizations including the Labrador Métis Nation, the Native Alliance of Quebec and the Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association will undertake major community consultations over the next several months designed to explain the decision and to identify concerns and issues for resolution before they become confrontational. Affiliates in the Maritimes and British Columbia will poll their Métis constituents to identify their concerns around the issues.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (formerly the Native Council of Canada) has represented Métis interests since 1971 and successfully negotiated constitutional recognition of Métis as Aboriginal peoples in 1981.

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