

Submit the Brief

Prepared by the Association des francophones du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario, in collaboration with representatives of Greenstone member groups.

To be presented by Sylvie Payeur, Anne-Marie G lineault and Vincent Nadon at the municipal deputation on March 11, 2024.



Artistic montage of the Franco-Ontarian flag with photographs of Longlac, created by : Vincent Nadon, grade 12 student at  cole secondaire Ch teau-Jeunesse in Longlac.

A people's resilience

Gathered on the borders of this province
A community formed by the language of elders
Marked by a refusal to be assimilated
We're proud to have come, we're proud to have stayed

We show no weakness
For we are, and always will be here
To pass on the language to our youth
We fight the government
We're proud of our flag and our accents
622,000 together, in white and green

From Longlac to Windsor to Ottawa
From the big North to the South below,
The lily and the trillium represent us up there
Everywhere in Ontario
This providence of forest and ice
This province is OUR place.

This poem was translated from its original version. This poem was written last year by Vincent Nadon, a grade 12 student at École secondaire Château-Jeunesse in Longlac, who self-identifies as Francophone and Aboriginal. It was read at the Franco-Ontarian Day on September 25, 2023 in Longlac. We honor his work by also adding the French version.

Résilience d'un peuple

Rassemblée dans les bordures de cette province
Une communauté s'est formée par la langue des anciens
Marqués par le refus d'être assimilés
On est fiers d'être venus, on est fiers d'être restés

On ne démontre pas de faiblesse
Car nous sommes et nous serons toujours présents
Pour transmettre la langue à notre jeunesse
On se lutte contre le gouvernement
De notre drapeau et de nos accents, nous en sommes fiers
622 000 ensembles, sous le blanc et le vert

De Longlac, à Windsor, à Ottawa
Du Grand Nord jusqu'au sud en bas,
Le lys et le trille nous représentent là-haut
Partout en Ontario
Cette providence de forêts, et de glace
Cette province est NOTRE place.

Submit the Brief

To: Mayor and Councillors of Greenstone

From: L'Association des francophones du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario (AFNOO)

Subject: For your decision: Immediate and permanent reinstatement of the Franco-Ontarian flag as adopted by City Council in July 2015.

Date: March 11, 2024

Subject

Immediate and permanent reinstatement of the Franco-Ontarian flag as adopted by City Council in July 2015.

Facts

- The Francophone community is intersectional and equally represents people who are Aboriginal, French immigrants and Francophiles. The Franco-Ontarian flag represents all these members equally.
- In 1975, the Franco-Ontarian flag was created by three people including Dr. Donald Obonsawin who is of Abenaki birth and the first Aboriginal student to earn a B.A. at Laurentian. This demonstrates the link between the Francophonie and the Aboriginal people, who are represented under the same flag and work in collaboration.
- In the birchbark canoe at the entrance to Longlac, there's a native and a French-speaking traveler (*Voyageur*), demonstrating the unconditional ties between Francophones and First Nations, Métis and Inuit.
- The removal of one community's flag will not represent another community. If aboriginal peoples also want to be represented, it's up to them to choose how they want to be visibly represented, and to present their request to the municipality. For the Francophone community, it's a question of the permanent presence of its flag.
- There has been no consultation between the municipality of Greenstone and the First Nations community regarding the Franco-Ontarian flag. The Francophone community is seeking consultation with the First Nations to gain their support and thoughts in relation to changing the rules on flag raising.

- The Francophone community is against the division of communities and wants all three founding peoples - First Nations, Francophones and Anglophones - to be represented. The Francophone community wants visible representation with its flag flying in all public establishments.
- Longlac is also a French name, which highlights the involvement of Francophones in the history of the territory; proof that we are one of the founding nations of the area.
- The municipality talks about the inclusion of all communities, yet in its strategic plan, there is no mention of the francophone community. Nearly 22% of Greenstone's population speaks French as their first language. In Longlac, one of the municipality's three main towns (along with Nakina and Geraldton), the proportion is as high as 31%. We must do justice and represent the aboriginal community, but we must not divide communities, reducing one to elevate the other.
- There are three French-language Catholic elementary schools and one French-language high school in Greenstone. Numerous francophone organizations contribute to the vitality of the area and provide a social and cultural link.
- In July 2015, solicited by the entire Francophone community, AFNOO made a deputation to the municipality of Greenstone to receive a Francophone delegation to highlight several Franco-Ontarian initiatives.
- The proposals made to council in 2015 were all adopted unanimously. The Franco-Ontarian flag flew on September 25, 2015 for Franco-Ontarian Day, and throughout the year on the various municipal and tourist buildings in Greenstone's four neighbourhoods (Beardmore, Nakina, Longlac, Geraldton). In 2015, several events were organized to commemorate 400 years of French presence in Ontario.
- In 2020, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario (Queen's Park) amended the 2001 law that made the Franco-Ontarian flag not only the symbol of Franco-Ontarians, which it had already been since 2001, but also became the symbol of the province, on the same pedestal as the Ontario flag. Since September 2020, it now flies inside and outside Queen's Park.
- Resolution of February 12, 2024: with the adoption of the new flag policy, the Franco-Ontarian flag is permanently removed and will be raised only for 5 days, around September 25. The new flag policies are effective immediately.
- No survey or consultation was carried out with the French-speaking population to obtain its opinion on the decision to remove the flag.

- Since the removal of the flag, there has been a call to action in the community to form a citizen's movement and take a stand against the new flag policy. After just 4 days in circulation and as of March 4th more than 530 citizens of Greenstone signed our petition.

Context

- The Franco-Ontarian flag was created by Gaétan Gervais, Michel Dupuis, and Danold Obomsawin. Dr. Gervais was a history professor and Dr. Dupuis a political science student at Laurentian University in Sudbury. Dr. Obomsawin is of Abenaki birth and the first Aboriginal student to graduate with a B.A. from Laurentian. The flag was first raised on September 25, 1975, on the campus of the University of Sudbury. It is a very important emblem in the francophone community, demonstrating solidarity and 400 years of French presence in Ontario. Francophones had to fight Regulation 17, which prohibited the use of the French language in schools, but today there are 12 school boards that manage over 400 French-language schools, including 104 secondary schools in Ontario. Three French-language elementary schools and one French-language secondary school are located in Greenstone (Nakina, Geraldton, Longlac).
- 11 active francophone groups in Greenstone contribute to the vitality of Greenstone by offering services and activities in the areas of health, education, training, women, culture, economic development and community development.
- These institutions are: Association des enseignants et enseignantes franco-ontariens, Centr'elles- Centre des femmes du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario, Centre Culturel francophone de Geraldton, Centre de formation des adultes de Greenstone, Club canadien-français de Geraldton, Club des francophones de Longlac, Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales, Conseil scolaire du Grand Nord, La Joie de Vivre, L'accueil francophone, Société de développement économique de Greenstone.
- This year would have marked 9 years of celebrating the permanent establishment of the permanent Franco-Ontarian flag in Greenstone.
- " The presence of the flag in all regions across Ontario shows that Francophones are welcomed in these areas. It gives us the joy of being recognized as an important people and also lets French-speaking immigrants know that they can receive help in French" -Monique Perreault, Geraldton resident.

Analysis of the new flag policy

- Longlac and Geraldton merged in 2001. Until then, Longlac offered services in French and English, but after the two regions merged, Francophones began to notice the lack of French-language services.
- Now with the removal of the flag it gives the impression that the francophone community and its needs are no longer important and recognized for the municipality of Greenstone.
 - The Franco-Ontarian flag is a very important symbol for the Francophone population of Ontario.
- Francophones are inclusive with Aboriginal peoples and seek solutions where all three founding peoples are well represented.
- Removing a flag from one community is not equal to representing another community. It is recommended that all three founding peoples (First Nations, Francophones and Anglophones) be represented.
- Greenstone's Francophones are economically important, especially in the mining sector. Experts come from Quebec, so including Francophones is a long-term economic investment.
- Visible representation with the flag gives joy and a sense of belonging to Francophones, and thus serves as a concrete sign to Francophone immigrants that they can receive help in French.
- Francophone seniors have contributed economically to the development of the municipality of Greenstone.
- The following suggestions from Mr. Wright are good and progressive but not enough.
 - Signs at the entrance of the playground to be translated into 3 languages
 - Arena -highlighting the different First Nations sports bands including the Franco Ontarian flag.
- Most importantly, we want our flag flown permanently in public spaces for all to see that francophones live here and that we are an important part of the Greenstone community.

Impact on the Francophone community

- The adoption of the new flag policies has a strong impact on the Francophone community. Members of Greenstone's francophone community came together on

February 23, 2024 and March 1, 2024 via Google meet to express their feelings of displeasure with the municipality of Greenstone's decision.

- The reason shared by Mr. Wright for removing the flag was to do justice and make room for aboriginal communities. While justice must be done to Aboriginal communities, we must not adopt strategies that will cause division between communities. The Francophone community is inclusive and always seeks positive relations with First Nations.
- We have presented the municipality a petition signed by more than 10% of the population demanding the reversal of the February 12th, 2024 resolution and to reinstate the Franco-Ontarian flag.

Recommendation

That the new flag protocol policy be re-evaluated and that the Franco-Ontarian flag be reinstated in Greenstone immediately and permanently. The Francophone community is open to solutions that unite the three founding peoples, First Nations, Francophones and Anglophones. If you have any questions or good, progressive and inclusive ideas, the francophone community will support you, but for now, the will of the francophone community is the immediate and permanent reinstatement of the Franco-Ontarian flag in Greenstone as adopted by City Council in July, 2015.

Annex 1 - [Media coverage of Greenstone's February 12, 2024 decision](#)

Published articles

February 16, 2024

By: Éric Boutilier

Le Voyageur

Link: [Exclusive: Franco-Ontarian flag may no longer fly permanently in Greenstone - February 24, 2024](#)

February 17, 2024

By: Lila Mouch-Essers

ONFR

Link: [The Franco-Ontarian flag will no longer fly permanently at Greenstone - ONFR](#)

February 17, 2024

Radio-Canada

By: Orphée Moussongo

Link: [The Franco-Ontarian flag will no longer fly permanently at Greenstone | Radio-Canada](#)

February 21, 2024

Le Voyageur

By: Mehdi Meheni

Link: [The revisionist temptation - February 27, 2024](#)

February 21, 2024

Le Voyageur

By: Éric Boutilier

Link: [Franco-Ontarian flag loses permanent status: Greenstone's chilling slide - February 29, 2024](#)

February 26, 2024

Le Droit

By: Sébastien Pierroz

Link: [When the Franco-Ontarian flag is retired](#)

February 28, 2024

Le Devoir

By: Jean-François Lisée

Link: [Meanwhile, in Canada | Le Devoir](#)

February 28, 2024

Le Voyageur

By: Mehdi Meheni

Link: [Dignity in Greenstone - February 29, 2024](#)

February 29, 2024

La Presse

Link: [The Franco-Ontarian flag no longer flies in Greenstone | La Presse](#)

Article published by La presse in Québec (in English)

February 29, 2024

The Canadian news

By: Isabelle Bourgeault-Tassé

Link: [The Franco-Ontarian flag no longer flies at Greenstone](#)

Article published by Toronto Star, Ontario (In English)

March 1, 2024

Toronto Star

By: Isabelle Bourgeault-Tassé

Link: [Removing Franco-Ontario Flag tries to resolve one injustice with another](#)

Reaction and positioning of the Honourable Patty Hadju, MP Thunder Bay Superior North, Minister of Aboriginal Services and Fednor.

March 4, 2024

Twitter

By: Patty Hadju

Lien : <https://twitter.com/PattyHadju/status/1764444007264923866?s=20>

"We can move forward on the path of reconciliation AND be proud of our Francophone roots. We don't have to choose. I know that Greenstone's Francophones stand in solidarity with the First Nations. I hope we can find a way to celebrate both."

Annex 2 – Census profile, 2021 Census of Population

Knowledge of official languages	Greenstone*	Longlac**	Geraldton***
Total - Knowledge of official languages for total population excluding residents of institutional facilities - Full data (100%)	4270	1320	1740
English only	2940	750	1275
French only	75	30	30
French and English	155	535	430
Neither French nor English	0	0	0
First official language spoken	Greenstone*	Longlac**	Geraldton***
Total - First official language spoken for total population excluding residents of institutional facilities - Full data (100%)	4270	1320	1740
English only	3360	920	1440
French only	890	390	300
French and English	15	5	5
Neither French nor English	0	0	0

Source: Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population

* <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=F&SearchText=greenstone&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&DGUIDlist=2021A00053558075&HEADERlist=0>

**<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=F&SearchText=Longlac&DGUIDlist=2021S05100481&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

*** <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=F&SearchText=Longlac&DGUIDlist=2021S05100481&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

*** <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=F&SearchText=Longlac&DGUIDlist=2021S05100481&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

*** <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=F&SearchText=Longlac&DGUIDlist=2021S05100481&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

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July 22, 2015

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Sent via email

Dear Donald Pelletier:

The proclamation request provided to Council at the June 22, 2015 regular meeting of Council regarding "Franco – Ontarian Day" was approved at the July 20, 2015 regular meeting, I have attached the official proclamation. The Proclamation Notice will be posted on our website at www.greenstone.ca for the month of September 2015, and distributed to each Municipal Ward Office.

The request related to the permanent raising of the flag was discussed at the regular Council meeting of July 20, 2015 including the purchase of additional flag poles. After a lengthy discussion, I am happy to report that Council has authorized the raising of the Franco-Ontarian Flag on a permanent basis in locations where there are 3 flag poles. It was also agreed that as additional flag poles are purchased the Franco-Ontarian Flag will be displayed. The display will be as follows:

1. The Canadian Flag will occupy the centre position
2. The Provincial Flag will be to the left of the observer
3. The Municipality of Greenstone Flag, beneath will be the Franco-Ontarian Flag to the right of the observer

Currently there are 3 flag poles at the Geraldton Interpretive Centre, therefore we will require the Franco-Ontarian Flag in the following size to be consistent with the other flags (36"X 72") and further we would also request that you send a small stock of flags to have on hand as they are damaged or become weathered they will need to be replaced.

On behalf of Council, I thank you for expressing an interest in the Municipality of Greenstone.

Yours truly,

Gabrielle Lecuyer
Clerk
Cc: Mayor & Council

PROCLAMATION

JOUR DES FRANCO-ONTARIENS ET DES FRANCO-ONTARIENNES, 25 SEPTEMBRE 2015

ATTENDU QUE l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario a adopté la Loi de 2010 sur le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes proclamant le 25 septembre, le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes le 18 mai 2010;

ATTENDU QUE la Loi de 2010 sur le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes reconnaît que c'est le 25 septembre que de nombreux Franco-Ontariens célèbrent leur langue et leur patrimoine et affirment la fierté que leur inspirent leurs réalisations collectives. Ils commémorent ainsi le jour où, en 1975, le drapeau franco-ontarien fut dévoilé à Sudbury ; la Loi de 2001 sur l'emblème franco-ontarien reconnaît ce drapeau comme l'emblème de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario;

ATTENDU QU'EN proclamant le 25 septembre Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes, la présente loi reconnaît officiellement l'apport de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario à la vie sociale, économique et politique de la province de même que son importance dans la société ontarienne;

ATTENDU QUE le français est l'une des deux langues officielles du Canada ; que l'on parle français en Ontario depuis le 17^e siècle et que la province de l'Ontario célèbre en 2015 les « 400 ans de présence française en Ontario »;

POUR CES MOTIFS, moi, Renald Beaulieu, maire de la Municipalité de Greenstone proclame par la présente, le 25 septembre de cette année et celles à venir comme « le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes » dans la Municipalité de Greenstone.

**Renald Y Beaulieu,
Mayor**



PROCLAMATION

FRANCO-ONTARIAN DAY SEPTEMBER 25, 2015

WHEREAS in May 18th, 2010, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario enacted the Franco-Ontarian Day Act, 2010 proclaiming September 25 in each year as the Franco-Ontarian Day;

WHEREAS the Franco-Ontarian Day Act recognizes that Franco-Ontarians commemorate September 25 to celebrate their language and heritage and also take pride in their collective accomplishments. September 25 is the anniversary of the first unveiling of the Franco-Ontarian flag in Sudbury in 1975; the Franco-Ontarian Emblem Act, 2001 recognizes the flag as the emblem of the Francophone community of Ontario.

WHEREAS by proclaiming September 25th as Franco-Ontarian Day, this Act officially recognizes the contributions of the Francophone community of Ontario to the social, economic and political life of the Province and the community's importance in Ontario's society;

WHEREAS French is one of the two official languages of Canada; French language has been spoken in Ontario since the 17th century and Ontario province is also celebrating "the commemorations of 400 Years of the French Presence in Ontario" in 2015;

NOW THEREFORE I, Renald Beaulieu, Mayor of the Municipality of Greenstone, do hereby proclaim September 25, of this year and future years as "Franco-Ontarian Day" in the The Municipality of Greenstone.

**Renald Y Beaulieu,
Mayor**



