

David Suzuki visits Six Nations on Blue Dot tour

By Paula Hill

SIX NATIONS - The Confederacy Council meeting scheduled for Saturday, October 4 was cancelled due to a death, but a small crowd that included Confederacy Chiefs, Clan-mothers and community members gathered at the Onondaga longhouse that afternoon to welcome David Suzuki to the Six Nations community as he travels across Canada on his Blue Dot tour.

After the opening address, Dr. Suzuki explained the purpose of his tour. As Canada's most recognizable environmentalist, he acknowledged the contributions made by First Nations peoples in his own personal understanding of Mother Earth over the decades. The purpose of the Blue Dot tour is to encourage municipalities to create declarations to cit-



Environmentalist David Suzuki was at the Onondaga Longhouse on the weekend. PHOTO BY PAULA HILL

izens' rights to a healthy environment.

These municipalities will then work together to pressure provincial governments to create provincial bills of rights. If 7 out of 10 provinces representing more than

50% of the Canadian population are mobilized to make this change, they can amend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to include the legal right to a healthy environment.

Dr. Suzuki described

why he felt this initiative was needed. At any given time in Canada, there are about 1000 boil water advisories in effect, most of those occurring in First Nations communities. People have become further removed from the environment, and therefore feel less compelled to protect it.

Suzuki described the environmental challeng-

es he has fought for and won over the decades. However, he has come to realize that the real war is against an attitude of consumption, and a view that the economy is the top concern in political decision-making, while the environment is given no consideration and no protection. In his last years before retiring, Dr. Suzuki will strive to work

towards changing these mistaken beliefs and entrenching legal rights for a healthy environment within the Charter.

Ovide Mercredi, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, had encouraged Dr. Suzuki to attend each First Nations community across Canada to thank them for their guidance over the years, and to encourage their support of the Blue Dot tour and its mandate. Mr. Mercredi had attempted to make a similar amendment to the Constitution in the 1992 Charlottetown Accord.

Two delegates from the Confederacy will attend Dr. Suzuki's next stop, "An Evening with David Suzuki," on Monday, October 6 at 7pm at the Centre in the Square in Kitchener. Confederacy Secretary Jock Hill explained that further discussions will take place at the next Confederacy meeting regarding supporting Dr. Suzuki's efforts.