FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A group of women from the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians will be walking 12 miles this Friday, August 29, 2008, to honor the waters of the Dowagiac area. This group of women, supporters of the traditional teachings of the Potawatomi, is carrying out a responsibility for the Pokagon Band community to bless the waters of the area. Inspired by a group of Canadian Chippewa women who have conducted walks around all of the Great Lakes beginning in 2003, the Pokagon Band women are beginning their "Mother Earth Water Walk" at 3:00 PM Friday at the Pokagon Band's property at Gage Street northeast of Dowagiac. The group will finish at the Band's Rodgers Lake headquarters southwest of Dowagiac, where the Band will be hosting its annual Kee-Boon-Mein-Kaa Pow Wow this weekend.

The Dowagiac area, with the Dowagiac River and the surrounding lakes and streams, has long been a significant area for the Tribe. The Band's properties feature several bodies of water, which continue to play an important role in the life of the community. Water is considered a women's medicine among the Potawatomi because of its importance to all life, because of its role in birth and because of women's role as the life-givers. With Pokagon Band property being accepted into trust as sovereign reservation land by the United States Department of the Interior earlier this year, this group of traditional Pokagon Band women felt it was time for the Tribe to pay honor to the waters of its land and of this area.

The women will be accompanied on the Walk by men from the community and other supporters. The women carry a sacred copper vessel of water, saying prayers for every creek, river and lake they encounter.

The Water Walkers will be escorted on their path by Pokagon Band Tribal Police, with assistance from the City of Dowagiac Police.

For more information, contact Kevin Daugherty at 269-591-1230.