



# Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

## YOUR RED RIVER MÉTIS GOVERNMENT'S BI-WEEKLY NEWS.



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Over the past month, our Homeland has seen a wave of developments that touch at the heart of what it means to be Indigenous in Manitoba – our Section 35 harvesting rights, our relationship with the land, and our rightful place as a founding people of this province.

There can be no doubt that there is a storm brewing on our horizon. Several First Nations communities – including Bloodvein, Sagkeeng, Mispawistik, Pimicikamak, and Pine Creek – have

1982 – just as First Nations are. This has been recognized not only in law but in the history of this country. From R. v. Goodon, to the MMF v. Canada ruling, our Nation fought long and hard for this recognition of our place in Canada's Confederation and our rightful ability to harvest in our Homeland.

The rights of First Nations and Red River Métis to harvest are equal. There is no hierarchy in these rights. All Indigenous rights-holders must be treated equally. First Nations do not have the authority to limit or block Red River Métis Section 35 harvesting rights on unoccupied Crown land. We will not tolerate our harvesters being harassed, denied access, or made to feel unsafe while lawfully exercising their rights in accordance with the Métis Laws of the Harvest.

Yes, conservation is important. And yes, harvesting rights can and should be limited for valid reasons like conservation or public safety. But there is a process of consultation that must be followed. It is only through meaningful consultation with all Indigenous rights-holders, including the Red River Métis, that a wise path forward can be followed.

To date, Manitoba has not consulted with the MMF regarding the buffer zones being implemented or the conflicts arising from these new blockades and public statements by First Nations. For many years of my presidency, I have worked hard to build relationships with our First Nations relatives, to come together at a table and discuss conservation and a shared approach to preserving our rights while balancing what our traditional knowledge tells us about the well-being of the animals who also share this land with us. This has consistently proved challenging, in part because your Red River

Division is the approach of some actors in this situation. One of those actors is the Manitoba Wildlife Federation, which has recently called for a total ban on moose harvesting. While there are some members of the Wildlife Federation who are Indigenous – even Red River Métis – the Wildlife Federation itself does not represent rights-holders. It is a special interest group, which has a clear intent to try and control the actions and decisions of Section 35 rights-holders in Manitoba in their call for a ban, with an eye to preserving the moose population for their own use.

We cannot let the Wildlife Federation create tensions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who call this place home. We also cannot stand by and let First Nations individuals and groups try and deny us our rights. So today, I remind all Red River Métis harvesters to exercise your rights with respect, pride and knowledge of our Laws of the Harvest. Your Nation stands behind you. Do not let fear or misinformation stop you from practicing what is legally and constitutionally your right to practice. Together, we will continue to protect our rights, our way of life, and the legacy of our Ancestors.

Our Natural Resources Minister, Peter Fleming, has been actively engaged in speaking out about these threats to our harvesting rights, and his ability to clearly articulate our position and our concerns is of vital importance as we look to the coming storm. I know he will be at our Annual General Assembly, ready and able to speak knowledgeably on this matter with Citizens who wish to have deeper discussions about this important topic. I also look forward to seeing many of you at the Assembly, which is always such a tremendous experience of

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**– MMF PRESIDENT DAVID CHARTRAND**

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taken various and significant actions which they say are aimed at protecting declining moose populations. These measures have ranged from legal challenges and public awareness campaigns to blockades and no-trespassing signage in areas they claim as traditional territory. Some of these communities have acknowledged that the Red River Métis continue to have harvesting rights. Some have not.

While conservation is a concern that affects us all, we should also be deeply concerned about the increasing number of unilateral actions being taken, especially when they put at risk or disregard our own constitutionally protected Section 35 rights as Red River Métis.

Let me be clear: the Red River Métis are rights-holders under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*,

Métis Government is a National Government, and the First Nations representation and governmental structures represent smaller areas and smaller numbers of people.

However, we must also recognize that the actions of these First Nations communities point to deeper issues. There is no doubt that the moose population in certain regions is under pressure, which was not helped by the explosive wildfires that took away nearly 2 million hectares of habitat over the summer months. The province must do more to manage these resources in a way that respects Indigenous rights and ensures sustainability for future generations. In addition to respecting Indigenous rights, addressing declining moose populations requires leadership, collaboration, and transparency – not division.

community, with thousands upon thousands of us coming together to advance our Nation. Harvesting is one of many important topics we will cover together, and I look forward to hearing your will and guidance again this year, as in all years.

Until we meet, I offer my prayers to all our families, Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve. My heart is with the friends, family, and community of our lost loved ones. I ask my people to send prayers to our families and help those who are grieving. I will keep you all in my prayers, as always.

Meeqwetch,

*President David Chartrand, LL.D. hon. D.M. ∞*



# FEEDING THE NATION: LEARN ABOUT THE KETTLE HILLS BLUEBERRY PATCH

*Protecting the Red River Métis breadbasket for future generations*

The Kettle Hills Blueberry Patch gets its namesake from the abundance of blueberry bushes available to harvest – but its nickname, “Red River Métis breadbasket,” acknowledges how the area has fed the Red River Métis for generations.

“It’s very culturally significant to the Red River Métis. It’s an area where Citizens can come to harvest and come together and share knowledge. Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) are lands and waters where Indigenous governments have a key role in conservation through Indigenous laws, governance, and knowledge systems... It’s often co-developed between Indigenous Nations as well as provincial and federal governments... The goal of the Manitoba Métis Federation’s (MMF) protected and conserved area initiative is long-term conservation of lands and waters that are of significance to the Red River Métis,” said Peter Fleming, MMF Minister of Natural Resources.

The National Government of the Red River Métis has worked in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada, Nature United, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, and Community Collaborative. These partnerships are essential for moving forward with Indigenous-led conservation in the Kettle Hills Blueberry Patch.

“The MMF has two protected and conserved area proposals – the Thompson Region, supported by Parks Canada, that focuses on boreal, barren ground, and eastern migratory caribou,” said the Minister. “The other protected and conserved area initiative is the Kettle Hills Blueberry Patch, which is

located within the MMF’s Northwest and The Pas Regions on the west shore of Lake Winnipegosis.”

Since 2021, the MMF has been conducting monitoring activities under their Kettle Hills protected and conserved area initiative to assess a variety of environmental conditions.

“The MMF’s been doing lots of environmental monitoring, such as vegetation quadrat sampling to assess blueberry regeneration in post-burn sites... we’re also monitoring moose populations in the area, which is a highly significant species to the Red River Métis for harvesting,” said Colin Gisiger,

“IT’S REALLY IMPORTANT FOR RED RIVER MÉTIS CITIZENS TO HAVE PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADVANCING THEIR SECTION 35 RIGHTS. IT’S ALSO IMPORTANT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY. THE MMF HAS THE MÉTIS LAWS OF THE HARVEST THAT WE FOLLOW CLOSELY TO ENSURE THAT RED RIVER MÉTIS CITIZENS AREN’T JUST EXERCISING THEIR RIGHTS, BUT THEY’RE DOING IT IN A WAY THAT’S RESPONSIBLE TO CONSERVE THE ENVIRONMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.  
– PETER FLEMING, MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES



The Kettle Hills Blueberry Patch, located in the MMF’s Northwest and The Pas Regions on the west shore of Lake Winnipegosis, is one of two MMF proposed Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas.



Conservation Coordinator. “Another big area of monitoring that we do [is] migratory birds. We deploy autonomous recording units which capture audio data so that we can analyze migratory bird presence in the area... we’ve already detected six federally protected species at risk in the area.”

Gisiger is a Conservation Coordinator within the Manitoba Métis Federation’s (MMF) Energy, Infrastructure, and Resource Management (EIRM) Department overseeing conservation initiatives.

There are two vital goals the MMF aims to achieve with the Kettle Hill IPCA: protection of traditional

lands and waters and safeguarding Red River Métis Section 35 rights.

“It’s really important for Red River Métis Citizens to have protected and conserved areas for the purposes of advancing their Section 35 rights,” said Minister Fleming. “It’s also important for environmental sustainability. The MMF has the Métis Laws of the Harvest that we follow closely to ensure that Red River Métis Citizens aren’t just exercising their rights, but they’re doing it in a way that’s responsible to conserve the environment for future generations.”

For Red River Métis Citizens who want to harvest within the Kettle Hills, it’s best to connect with locals who know the area.

“A good start would be to go over the Métis Laws of the Harvest and get familiar with the MMF’s vision in terms of sustainable harvesting and then apply for [your] MMF Harvester card; you can do that through the MMF website. Contact any local knowledge holders in the area [and] get involved in that way,” said Minister Fleming. “The Kettle Hills Blueberry Patch is a very remote area to some degree... it’s a tough area to get back into and one can quickly become lost in there without a knowledge holder.”

Another great way to get involved is watching out for the Kettle Hills annual Citizen event, which usually lines up with the blueberry and saskatoon berry harvest.

“We hold one annual Red River Métis Citizen engagement event to get Citizens from all over the National Homeland of the Red River Métis to come in and experience the Kettle Hills... we’ll have Citizens come out to the Cowan area, which is half an hour east of Swan River (Manitoba). We’d set up there and get Citizens to [learn] about our monitoring programs [and] identify plants with them. That’s a good space for Citizens to share knowledge and for Youth to get involved,” said Gisiger. “It’s always fun for Citizens to come out and enjoy the outdoors and learn about the inner workings of the MMF’s vision for conservation.”

The National Government of the Red River Métis is committed to preservation of traditional lands and the protection of Red River Métis Section 35 right to harvest. If you’d like to learn more about MMF harvesting initiatives, you can read MMF Spotlight’s 5 MMF Harvesting Initiatives you should know about, or visit the EIRM’s Natural Resources page and Harvesters page.



**Kettle Hills is known as the Red River Métis breadbasket because of its reputation for bountiful harvest – from big game to blueberries, the area has it all.**

## LOVE DILL-ICIOUS PICKLES? DON’T MISS THE ANNUAL PICKLER CLASSIC!

Relish in the chance to join the fun in the 5th annual Red River Métis Pickler Classic, taking place at the 2025 Annual General Assembly.

40 Red River Métis Citizens will be stepping up to the challenge with their best jar of dill pickles, being judged on crunchiness, tanginess, aroma, visual appeal, and creativity – and only one pickle can come out on top.

**Location:** Assiniboia Downs, 3975 Portage Avenue

**Date:** October 19, 2025

Don’t miss the opportunity to sit back and watch the ultimate pickler be crowned. Visit [mmfaga.ca](http://mmfaga.ca) to learn more about AGA events – we’ll see you there!



## AGA SPECIAL TRIBUTE CONCERT IN MEMORY OF AL DESJARLAIS

Anyone who has attended an MMF event remembers the unforgettable music of Al Desjarlais. Join us at the 2025 Annual General Assembly for a special tribute concert honouring the beloved musician, whose dedication to music and community has touched the hearts of Citizens across the Red River Métis Homeland.

During the show, there will be kid’s activities and the annual cribbage and rummy tournament on the lower level.

**When:** Saturday, October 18, 2025

**Where:** Main Hall of Assiniboia Downs

**Time:** 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Dance, sing, and come together on Saturday night to celebrate the memory of Al Desjarlais.







Métis N4 Construction Inc. is a diversified Development & Project Management Corporation wholly owned and operated by the MMF Métis Economic Development Trust.

Métis N4 is proud to lead the development of the Red River Métis National Heritage Centre which will be a significant cultural landmark at Portage and Main in Winnipeg. N4 has worked on the 49-unit apartment building complex in Selkirk, MB which held its grand opening April 2025. Working with Energy and Infrastructure, Métis N4 is leading the development of the MMF Tree Nursery to produce millions of trees for reforestation and sale. We continue to establish significant contracts for construction and labour for the benefit of Métis Citizens.

