



Le Métis

President's Message



In our Nation, we have always worked collectively to protect our Elders and connect our Youth with our culture and identity. Our Youth have always been welcomed within the community and allowed to listen in and ask questions as early as they could sit still. This way, they are taught our culture, morals, and ways, first by their parents and older siblings, then by aunts, uncles, and older cousins, and finally by Elders and other knowledge keepers. This ensures that our Youth learn our values and traditions from Elders and gain respect and appreciation for their wisdom. In this way, our community circle is kept whole, with Elders teaching our Youth and Youth respecting and protecting our Elders.

COVID-19 has given us many opportunities to appreciate that this community circle is still thriving, even while we must remain apart. Your Métis Government has worked hard to help support the community circle, through delivering hampers to Elders, conducting wellness checks, and sharing harvested meat and fish. Youth in post-secondary school have been rewarded for their hard work protecting Elders and staying safe through \$1,500 in COVID-19 relief funding on top of the \$5,000 they receive annually for their education.

You may have also heard that the Minister of Sports and Youth, Richard Genaille, and I announced a \$1-million fund at our recent Annual General Assembly. Also supported by Minister John Fleury, the fund will promote Youth athletic development and give them a structured pathway to help them achieve their highest level of performance.

I want to share with you a bit more about what this means for the community.

After the pandemic: Why sports matter

While our Citizens have been showing their heart and resilience by maintaining social distance, there can be no question we, like other communities, are

hungry for the chance to be together in person. As Métis, our need to connect with our community runs deep in our bones. It's part of who we are as a Nation.

It probably seems like it is a long way off, but I know there will come a time when we can start getting together again, visiting with each other and having events in our communities. Once it is safe again, your Métis Government will be ready to support the reintroduction of Youth sports in our communities.

But how do sports help? It's simple – watching our children play sports on local fields and diamonds, in ice rinks or gymnasiums, gives us all the chance to gather, connect with each other, and share our pride in the accomplishments of our Youth.

Our vision is to bring that sense of pride back to all our communities, be they urban, rural, or remote. This means identifying and providing professional and structured support to talented Métis players in hockey, baseball, softball, soccer, golf, curling, and beyond.

Even though we only announced this program recently, we have received numerous calls to find out more about funding or to partner with us on developing or enhancing existing programming. I know the team here is excited to keep building this out, helping communities gather again at sports facilities and supporting our Youth as they achieve their sports dreams.

It truly will be a great day when we can drive into any region, visit any sports complex in the province, and know that our Youth are actively participating and reaching their full athletic potential in everyone. I look forward to seeing more Métis faces in professional sports. Faces like curler Kerri Einarson, who we were proud to sponsor on her road to victory in the 2021 Scotties Tournament of Hearts and the Mixed Doubles Nationals (where even Brad Gushue wore our brand).

I'd like to thank Minister John Fleury, Minister Richard Genaille, directors Tracey Como and Kerry Smith and their hard-working team for getting this initiative underway.

Speaking of busy members of your Métis Government Cabinet, I'd like to congratulate Minister Andrew Carrier for his appointment to the French Language portfolio, along with his other responsibilities as Vice-President of the Winnipeg Region and Minister of Michif Language, Residential Schools, Riel House, Pemmican Publications, and the Metis Community Liaison Department. The French language has deep, far-reaching roots within the Métis Nation. It was the Métis provisional government of 1870 who worked to enshrine the language and protect it in the *Manitoba Act*.

Combined with the Michif Language portfolio, I'm confident Minister Carrier will deliver on a vision that incorporates our Nation's French and multilingual perspectives and protects Michif, our own critically endangered language.

I'm also pleased to share that Associate Minister Dave Beaudin is now appointed Minister of Agriculture. The Métis have a long history of relying on the land to feed our families and build the foundations of our economy. Caring for this land is in our blood. That's why one of Minister Beaudin's first tasks is to connect with Métis ranchers and farmers whose livelihood has been affected by changes in legislation around the leasing of Crown Land. I know Minister Beaudin's energy and enthusiasm will help drive more positive outcomes for our Métis ranchers and farmers. More information to come on this important portfolio.

As the commercial fishing season wraps up, I want to extend an invitation to all our Métis fishers to keep connected with us about how the season went. We know that the pandemic has significantly impacted your season, due to restaurant closures and less demand for your Harvest. Active commercial fishers are eligible for programs that can help. The first is the Commercial Fisher Net Program, which helps reduce operating costs during these challenging times. To access this program, contact Jenny Ruml at **204-586-8474, ext. 269**.

The other program for active commercial fishers is the MMF COVID-19 Business Support Program, which offers assistance to keep our Métis entrepreneurs in business, including our commercial fishers. Fishers can contact the Louis Riel Capital Corporation at **1-800-387-6004** for more information.

Until we can be together again, I encourage everyone to stay safe at home. I offer my prayers to all our Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve.

President David Chartrand, LL.D. hon. Q.M. 

MMF lives Earth Day theme of “Restore Our Earth”



As climate change and other threats to our environment become more severe with each passing year, the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) is doing its part to preserve the planet.

With Earth Day approaching on April 22 with the global theme “Restore Our Earth”, the MMF is already embodying those values with several relevant initiatives.

Planting roots

Firstly, the MMF’s One Million Tree initiative is preparing to put its first roots in the ground this summer, working with both Locals and landowners to embark on the ambitious project, according to Tayler Fleming, Green Initiatives Coordinator for the MMF’s Energy, Infrastructure, and Resource Management Department. The aim is to zero in on locations that will bring the most benefit to Métis Citizens.

“For this year, we’re looking to focus on edible tree orchards, providing trees to our Locals to plant as an MMF Local legacy tree, and working with landowners to get some shelterbelts planted,” Fleming said. “It’s a work in progress, still. We have to find locations. We have to get the correct approvals. We have to set everything up before the tree can get in the ground.” Edible trees would likely come in the form of saskatoons, wild red raspberries, pin cherries, and chokecherries, for example.

Fleming added that the types of trees planted will vary based on region, as the goal is to sow native species while fostering biodiversity. Other benefits include serving as an early-season food source for pollinating species such as bees and butterflies, improving wildlife habitat, revegetating

riparian areas, increasing property values, and even boosting mental health. As well, where the trees will eventually shelter homes, they will serve as shade or insulation depending on the season, helping residents conserve energy.

The project is developing a tree nursery, which, when operational, will result in creating enough trees to help shift the workforce from volunteer-based to summer job opportunities.

Fleming added that the MMF is planning for the long run and will monitor the trees for 30 years after they are planted. Each tree will be tagged with a unique number and will link to a website to allow visitors to learn more about the project and the tree itself. For more information on the MMF’s One Million Tree initiative, to get involved, or to share location possibilities, please contact Tayler Fleming at tayler.fleming@mmf.mb.ca.

Water and wetlands

Shifting from land to water, Bryanna Sherbo, Aquatic Biologist for the Energy, Infrastructure, and Resource Management Department, is heading up three community environmental-monitoring projects through the MMF. The first is an ongoing water-monitoring initiative as part of the greater Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network, which the MMF joined in 2018 after receiving funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada’s Lake Winnipeg Basin Program. The funding has been regularly renewed since then.

The program currently involves 20 Citizen scientists collecting water biweekly during the open-water season and following large rain events, roughly from March to October. The samples are then tested for total phosphorus, dissolved phosphorus, and salinity. The data is then uploaded to the Lake Winnipeg DataStream (www.lakewinnipegdatastream.ca), which also pulls in reports from similar monitoring programs from as far away as Thunder Bay and Edmonton.

The data is used to keep policymakers apprised of phosphorus levels to address areas with high concentrations and prevent them from entering larger bodies of water, such as Lake Winnipeg, which is already suffering from significant algal blooms. Sherbo noted Citizens are monitoring sites along the Assiniboine, Souris, Seine, Pembina, and La Salle rivers as well as other smaller creeks.

She noted that sampling typically takes about 15 minutes, not including travel time, though locations are generally close to a volunteer’s home or part of that person’s commute. Sherbo said the sampler is lowered from a bridge down into the water column, so volunteers don’t need to get into a boat or wade into the stream.

“One of our Citizen scientists actually built a dock on the creek that they live on and takes it right from the dock on their property,” she said.

As much as possible, Sherbo said, the network tries to sample near sites with flow meters.

“Phosphorus tends to increase with rain or hydrological events, so this data goes hand in hand, showing that higher water flow from the landscape generally leads to higher phosphorus concentrations in the rivers and streams,” Sherbo said.

Chelsea Lobson, the Lake Winnipeg Foundation’s program director, noted the network started in late 2015 and said that the contributions of MMF Citizens have been welcomed due to the project’s vast scope.

“When we think about Lake Winnipeg’s watershed, it’s huge and that can make it seem insurmountable,” she said.

Having been active for more than five years now, the network is reaching the point where it has gathered enough data to identify trends, in turn determining phosphorus hotspots and allowing researchers to make targeted funding requests.

Lobson said though the network has added volunteers in recent months, more Citizen monitors along the Assiniboine River and its tributaries are always needed. Sherbo added the program is looking for more volunteers with an emphasis on rural areas, including on the Souris and Pembina rivers, as many Winnipeg-area sites are accounted for. To find out more, email bryanna.sherbo@mmf.mb.ca.

In a more recent initiative — a wetlands monitoring program — Sherbo explained that the MMF recently held four webinars for Citizens, with upwards of 50 attendees. Participants learned to identify and monitor wetlands using specific methods while being informed about native fish, invertebrates, birds, and amphibians, measuring aquatic health including how to take water samples, and identify aquatic invasive species.

Sherbo said the department has developed a smartphone app with funding from the Indigenous Climate-Based Community Monitoring Program. The app will be used for monitoring and recording sightings with release anticipated for later this spring. Sherbo also noted a recently developed partnership with the University of Manitoba’s Centre for Earth Observation Science (CEOS) to install weather stations in the Upper Manitoba Great Lakes. The stations will be located on Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Manitoba. They will broadcast data every 15 minutes to the CEOS CanWIN data portal (<https://lwbin.cc.umanitoba.ca/>), making reliable weather data available for those in the region.

The data will also help researchers model how nutrients enter Lake Winnipeg from lakes such as Waterhen Lake, Lake Manitoba, and Lake Winnipegosis, and how they ultimately affect the lake itself.

Sherbo said the goal is to have the stations installed this summer.

To protect and conserve

A third MMF initiative is the development of two Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), with input from Citizens being a main driver in how both will eventually come together.

One IPCA is the Kettle Hills Blueberry Patch, which is in the MMF's The Pas and Northwest Regions, while the other is the area between Caribou River Provincial Park and Wapusk National Park in the Thompson Region. The MMF is seeking responses from Citizens to determine the details of these areas, everything regarding conservation priorities to their very boundaries.

IPCA & Lands Management Project Officer, Nicole Lischynski, explained that while it has been difficult to solicit feedback because of the pandemic, the department is doing its best to adapt in order to give Métis Citizens a voice.

"We're trying to figure out what a protected area means to Métis Citizens, so whether that be certain conservation efforts, protecting certain species, protecting certain habitats, figuring out what activities they deem appropriate or important to occur in these areas, or whether they are in support of resource development in these areas – questions like that," Lischynski said.

Citizens can also have their say on what types of monitoring they'd like to see, including water and wildlife.

Both surveys are available at www.manitobametis.com/news/ipca-survey. In addition to the practical feedback the project will see because of the surveys, Lischynski stressed that the process itself is a key piece of Métis self-determination.

"We want Métis Citizens to be at the forefront of this project. We want them to guide it," Lischynski said. "We want the Citizens to be the creators of these protected areas."

Lischynski said there are numerous positive knock-on effects anticipated from the IPCAs' creation, including creating relationships between Elders and Youth, healing the land through conservation and

sustainability initiatives, as well as strengthening Métis relationships with the land.

"It will obviously put Métis harvesting rights at the forefront and also engage Métis Citizens in on-the-land monitoring and hopefully create capacity for either volunteering or employment opportunities," Lischynski said.

While the MMF applied for broad swaths of land to be considered, Lischynski said the goal is to narrow down each IPCA's precise boundaries within the next two years.

Conservation Coordinator, Riley Bartel, meanwhile, noted that the MMF has collaborated with Project Caribou for ongoing monitoring in the Caribou River Provincial Park to Wapusk National Park IPCA area. A crew went up to the area this winter, installing 30 trail cameras in core caribou wintering grounds. The group plans to return this summer to collect the data and review the footage.

The IPCA team also stated that there would be some additional online engagement going live on social media, so keep your eyes open for a chance to get your voice heard and get some swag in return.

Rooster Town commemorated at new library



When COVID-19 restrictions loosen and the shiny new Bill and Helen Norrie Library opens for browsing, readers will get the opportunity to learn more about Rooster Town, a Métis settlement in what is now the Grant Park area of Winnipeg.

Inside the library, which officially opened on March 29 for only pre-ordered pick-up of materials, there are a handful of Rooster Town elements. Facing Grant Avenue is a 10-by-43-foot mural of laser-cut metal panels, each with a graphic commemorating life in the neighbourhood (ranging from the importance of family to basics such as the water pump, as there was no running water). Inside, there are 10 panels delving into the history of the neighbourhood, which sprung up in the early 1900s and was later expropriated by the City of Winnipeg to help pave way for development, including the Grant Park Shopping

Centre and Grant Park High School. As well, there is a pictorial display incorporating family trees of some Rooster Town residents.

During a recent tour of the site, City of Winnipeg Heritage Officer Murray Peterson said the decision to recognize Rooster Town was made early in the library planning process and the City wanted to take the time to get the story right.

One individual that was eager to help was Manitoba Métis Citizen Darrell Sais, whose father, Frank, grew up in Rooster Town.

"I was excited because all through my life, my dad had told me about Rooster Town. He was proud of where he came from," Sais said. "The way they were treated by the papers and the City, how they made them look like they were vagrants, people that were dirty, it really bothered him.

"It was a very tight-knit Métis community that looked after each other. Everybody helps everybody and that's the story he wanted to be told — not the ones in the paper."

Sais, who said he's heard the story of Rooster Town recounted regularly throughout his life, said his family was greeted with the ugly surprise eviction when his father went to pay his taxes in 1960 and was told he didn't own the land, it was now the high school's property, and they had to leave.

"They ended up getting \$1,250 for their land and for their home. My dad always goes on about how, 'It wasn't worth that much anyway, so we were OK,' but no, it wasn't. That was (their) home. That was (their) land," Sais said.

Sais noted the family relocated to Winnipeg's North End, buying a house that had thousands of dollars in taxes owing. They lost the house the following year and never owned again.

Sais said that participation at the initial consultations was strong, but the early hope among former residents was that the library itself would be named for Rooster Town or its residents. Once the Norrie name was announced, numbers took a hit.

He's also hoping for an official apology from the City, which he said has been cooperative in arranging the reunion.

"Remember the history that's here and remember the wrong that's been done to these residents," he said. "You took away a community where they all had to scatter."

Peterson, meanwhile, noted that there is still space for additional panels and to incorporate other information about Rooster Town. Those interested in sharing their stories can email roostertown@winnipeg.ca.

MMF's \$1-million donation to the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation helps fund new Genome Lab



President Chartrand visits new Genome Lab, which was made possible by the MMF's \$1-million donation to the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation.

The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) is seeing the return on its generous 2019 donation of \$1 million to the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation. Last month, a new Genome Sequencing Laboratory opened at CancerCare Manitoba, operating in collaboration with Shared Health. The CancerCare Manitoba Foundation was a key funder of the lab, made possible by donor support from the MMF, as well as Barry and Carol McArton.

"The new Genome Lab will advance the use of precision medicine to conduct genetic testing in Manitoba," said CancerCare Manitoba Foundation President and CEO Patti Smith. "Precision medicine is treatment customized to a specific person's genes or features of their cancer. This helps (us) to choose the treatment that will work better for certain individuals and avoids the use of therapies which are less likely to be of benefit. This approach improves both survival and quality of life."

The MMF's donation has also supported the purchase of specialized, leading-edge equipment used by the scientists.

Dr. Shantanu Banerji, Director of Precision Medicine and Advanced Therapeutics at CancerCare Manitoba, said the new lab is capable of testing dozens of genes simultaneously in multiple tumour types.

"The lab will also continue to provide testing for many genes that contribute to inherited cancers like hereditary breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and Lynch syndrome. This investment reduces the waiting time

for test results — which is important for patients and their families not to have lengthy delays in their diagnosis — and allows more genomic tests to be performed as the costs are lower when the work is done locally. It also supports the research community in Manitoba who will use the sequencing platform to make important discoveries in other diseases beyond cancer."

MMF President David Chartrand said it was important to help support cancer research, noting that keeping the testing in Manitoba has the added benefit of saving the healthcare system millions of dollars.

"Cancer doesn't care, but the Métis Nation does. I don't think there's a Métis person in Manitoba who has not been affected by a cancer diagnosis, either for themselves or someone they love. We want to honour everyone who has had to battle against this terrible disease," he said.

The MMF has a long history of charitable donations, with a large focus on health care. The MMF gave \$150,000 to the St. Boniface Hospital Foundation in 2019, and in 2020 was again a sponsoring partner for the annual Radiothon in support of the St. Boniface Hospital Foundation.

"We have never forgotten our responsibility to the people who live in the province we founded. The Manitoba Metis Federation, as the government of the Métis people in Manitoba, celebrates and

Community Photo

Le Metis' new Community Photo section invites Métis Citizens to send in photos to be featured in our newsletter. If you have a photo that celebrates the Métis Nation, send it to communications@mmf.mb.ca and you may see it in print!



Feline like the Riel deal

honours our tradition of helping our neighbours, in this case through a donation to help people diagnosed with cancer," said President Chartrand.

"We know that the Métis people have worse health outcomes than other Manitobans, so investing in improving healthcare in our province is important to our people. If this donation is able to save even a single life or make a cancer journey less scary for an individual, that's a good investment."