



Effective September 29, 2021, your Métis government formally withdrew from the Métis National Council (MNC). It's important that all Citizens understand why we took this extraordinary step, what it means for us and where we'll go in the future.

## Events leading up to our withdrawal

In 1983, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) led the prairie provinces to form the MNC, in order ensure the national voice of the Métis Nation centred on and connected to the Red River Métis and was independent from pan-Indigenous organizations. In 2002, our independence and identity were strengthened by our national definition of Métis, which was agreed to and celebrated by the governing members from all provinces.

The definition in the MMF Constitution, which is critical to exercising our rights to self-determination and self-government, reads in part: "Métis" means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation. "Historic Métis Nation" means the Aboriginal people, then known as Métis or Half-breeds, **who resided in the Historic Métis Nation homeland.**

"Historic Métis Nation Homeland" means the area of land in west central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-breeds as they were then known. This was further clarified by a later MNC resolution that indicated west central North America is defined as the lands brought into Canada by Louis Riel and his provisional government's negotiations in 1870.

Since the formal adoption of the definition in 2002, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has begun

granting citizenship to individuals who do not meet the criteria within our definition of Métis. By their own admission in a recent report, nearly 80 per cent of their registry has no ancestral connection to the Red River or our Nation. They have changed our national definition and started using different words such as Powley Métis, Root Ancestry Métis, section 35 rights Métis, voyageur Métis, and at times, historic Métis.

In just one example of how the MNO is shifting definitions, their own harvesting policy states that harvesting rights are available to those who fit within the national definition, but then go on to redefine our territory. They do not reference the Homeland, but instead say that **"traditional territory" means the geographic area that a Métis community in Ontario has historically relied on and continues to rely on for the Métis harvest.**

Unfortunately, the other presidents have supported the Métis Nation of Ontario. The MMF spent significant time and energy trying to work with the other governing members, to help them realize what they put at risk by creating a pan-Indigenous organization that includes non-Métis Nation Citizens, outside our Homeland.

When we consulted with you at our 3,000 strong Annual General Assembly in 2019, you gave your Cabinet and me very clear direction that we must take all measures necessary to protect who we are. You told us that if the Métis Nation of Ontario was permitted to bring these Identity Thieves into our Nation, to endanger our place in Canada's Confederation and claim to be us, then we must withdraw from the MNC.

Your Métis government heard you loud and clear and took your message to heart. Your will has been turned into action and we have withdrawn from the pan-Indigenous organization that the MNC has become.

## Why it matters

It was only a short time ago that nobody wanted to be Métis in Eastern Canada. Only now, seeing the progress we've made in advancing our overall rights and our harvesting rights, the near-settlement of our land claim and our modern-day treaty development, along with the programs and services we can offer for education, housing, and culturally appropriate daycares – now, they are coming after something we fought to achieve for over 200 years.

The MMF has long been the protector of the definition of our identity, while others sought to find a way to take our place as their own. But these are people with no connection to us or our history. We will not let them take our identity or the resources

we've earned today, and we will not let these resources be stolen from the next generation – they belong to the Red River Métis.

This Identity Theft is threatening to take what our grandparents and great-grandparents fought so hard for; the perpetrators have little understanding of the struggles our Ancestors endured, and we endured, to get to this place. We were pushed off our land, attacked, assaulted and murdered, and our future was stolen.

This is part of our history, and it's why we have always been strong and united since the times of the buffalo hunts. It's not just because we share kinship, music, beadwork, dances, and other traditions – it's also because of what we've endured together as a people.

We know that Métis Nation Citizens throughout the Homeland do not agree with the positions being taken by the presidents. I have personally heard stories about Red River Métis experiencing exclusion, and I know others in my Cabinet and your government have heard them too. We feel compelled to protect and support those who derive their section 35 rights from the Red River Métis, also known as the Manitoba Métis – which is the origin, root, and core of the one, true Métis Nation.

## Where we'll go in the future

Thanks to your Métis government's strong leadership and vision for the future, on July 6 of this year, we signed the Canada – *MMF Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement*. Because of this, we, the Red River Métis – the Métis Nation – are the only Indigenous nation to have a nationwide recognition agreement for true self-government, without borders, with a modern-day treaty and a land settlement soon to come.

This agreement recognizes that the MMF has the authority to exclusively represent the rightful heirs and descendants of the Red River Métis – the true Métis Nation. For those who are ancestrally connected to our prairie flower beadwork, our National Flag, the Red River Jig, the Red River Cart, the poems, songs, and music of our artists, and our language, Michif, remember: nobody can strip this from you unless you allow it to happen.

## What you need to know as a Citizen

If you're a descendant of the Red River Métis, the MMF is your government no matter where you live. The MMF is the national voice and national government of the Red River Métis. We look forward to continuing to advance our place in Canada's Confederation and protect the rights and interests of our nation.

We will immediately begin negotiating with Canada to ensure we have the resources to support all Citizens with our programs and services, while exploring opportunities for all Red River Métis and protecting our unique identity, culture, and heritage. I will continue to keep you updated about our evolution as we walk down this pathway together.

Rest assured, we will take all the necessary steps to protect our achievements, identity, and the legacy of our Ancestors. Our goal is to ensure that the next generation can elaborate on our vision and pass on a rich tradition, culture, and heritage to future generations. We know it is no less than Louis Riel would have expected from us.

We are your government – the democratic government of the Red River Métis – the Manitoba Métis – the historical and modern-day Métis Nation. As your national government, we will always have your back.

Our time has come! Believe in yourself, believe in Red River Métis.

Meeqwetch,

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

## MMF tree planting programs aim to green the Homeland



Staff from the MMF's Energy, Infrastructure, and Resource Management Department hosted a Kettle Hills clean-up event last month to address litter in the Kettle Hills Blueberry Patch, clean up overgrowth of trail systems, collect a baseline of data for continued monitoring, share traditional knowledge of the area, and more.



Fleming, adding that historically and to this date, forests are cut down to make way for agriculture and other developments. “While that has a purpose and is of importance in respect to production and yields off of those fields, you’re also taking away critical wildlife habitat for populations that Métis Citizens truly rely on for harvesting.”

The fifth program, Riparian Area Revegetation, will focus on reestablishing the canopy cover in riparian areas – the area adjacent to waterways – within Manitoba, “in hopes of improving the filtration of rainwater off agricultural fields or off streets,” said Fleming, “to direct the excess water into the soil rather than the waterways.”

While the MMF’s tree planting commitment will see trees planted throughout the Red River Métis Homeland, Fleming said they will provide trees to all Métis Citizens who hold valid citizenship.

In addition to the above-mentioned programs, MMF technical staff will be launching a program called “The MMF Local Legacy Tree Project” very soon, which will involve planting a native tree in each of the 135 MMF Locals to foster community engagement, bring awareness to the importance of each MMF Local in their community, and commemorate the resiliency of the Métis Nation in that community.

Contact Tayler Fleming at [taylor.fleming@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:taylor.fleming@mmf.mb.ca) or 1-204-586-8474, ext. 2801, to learn more.

Plans for a greener Métis Nation Homeland are taking root with the Manitoba Métis Federation’s (MMF) tree planting commitment. Technical staff from the Energy, Infrastructure, and Resource Management Department will coordinate the planting of two million trees over the next few years through five different programs.

Tayler Fleming, MMF Green Initiatives Coordinator, said staff have been researching different tree planting programs, past and present, and gauging interest through various platforms to see what types of programs would bring the most benefit to Métis Citizens.

The first program, Citizen Yard Improvement, provides the opportunity for Métis Citizens to sign up and receive trees or shrubs for planting in their own yards.

“The (program) is focused for Citizens that would like a tree or shrub to improve the quality of their

yard, provide some shade, help with aesthetics and property value,” said Fleming.

Through the second program, Edible Forests, fruit and nut-bearing tree and shrub species will create a hub for fresh produce within communities.

Thirdly, the Shelterbelt program will see fast-growing tree species provide natural windbreaks and corridors for wildlife.

“The Shelterbelt program has a focus on increasing the amount of trees on farmland to break and stop the wind from taking away all of the soil. But shelterbelts also act as a pesticide break, and that’s really important to ensure the health of your family. You don’t want pesticides, which often contain carcinogenic ingredients, encroaching onto your property,” said Fleming.

Fourthly, “the Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Restoration program is focused on establishing wildlife corridors and improving wildlife habitat,” said

# Regional Meetings highlight growth of Métis Nation



Minister Denise Thomas, Southeast Region Vice-President, speaking at the Southeast Regional Meeting in Great Falls on September 11.



Minister Julyda Lagimodiere, Thompson Region Vice-President, speaking at the Thompson Regional Meeting on September 18.



The Pas Regional Meeting in Flin Flon on September 25 started off with remarks from Minister Judy Mayer, The Pas Region Vice-President.

This fall has already seen a number of Regional Meetings take place within the Métis Nation, with important updates on major changes and developments.

## Southeast Regional Meeting

The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) Southeast Regional Meeting took place in Great Falls on September 11. After Elder Oliver Boulet was accepted as Chair, Vice-President Denise Thomas offered opening remarks, with updates from Cabinet members Shawn Nault and Marielle Gauthier. Minister Thomas also reported on Citizenship, engagement and consultation meetings, and the Sixties Scoop. She announced that the land at Breezy Point will be used as a Sixties Scoop wellness centre, offering cultural programming and mental wellness supports.

“I want to take this time to thank the survivors,” said Minister Thomas. “For over 30 years, the MMF has remained committed to the reconciliation of our Métis Sixties Scoop survivors.”

Auditor Gary Julius presented the results of the 2019-2020 audit and financial review, and Jack Park, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure and Vice-Chair of the Louis Riel Capital Corporation (LRCC), provided an update on both of those files. Provincial Education Minister Joan Ledoux offered an update on her portfolio, including plans for a school for Métis people in the future. Richard Genaille, Minister of Sports & Youth, followed with a report on his portfolio, including the success of the Youth leadership camp and the Youth Entrepreneurship Program.

President David Chartrand also provided a report on the monumental changes coming to the Métis Nation, from the 13 child care centres being built across the province, to athletic professional development for Métis Youth, to the millions of dollars set aside to help small Métis businesses.

“The amount of change that’s taking place is something our past leaders only dreamt about,” said President Chartrand.

Infinity Women Secretariat (IWS) Southeast Board Member Brandi Vezina provided the IWS report, followed by Housing and Property Management Minister Will Goodon with an update on his portfolio. Finally, Frances Chartrand, Minister of Health and Early Learning Child Care, presented on her portfolios’ successes and plans, from the Métis boxes, to the child care feasibility studies being conducted in the Southeast Region.

## Thompson Regional Meeting

The Thompson Regional Meeting took place in Thompson on September 18, beginning with greetings from Minister Julyda Lagimodiere, Thompson Region Vice-President; Thompson Mayor Colleen Smook; and Thompson MLA Danielle Adams, as well as a virtual IWS update from Spokeswoman Anita Campbell. After the financial audit report, President Chartrand discussed how the MMF fights to protect harvesting rights, and emphasized the significance of the North, with plans to grow more infrastructure – such as casinos and an addictions centre.

“The populations of the North are low, but that doesn’t mean that your rights are any lesser,” he said.

After the Thompson Regional meeting, a Community Consultation meeting took place, with staff from Energy, Infrastructure, and Resource Management discussing the Indigenous Knowledge Policy Framework, the Lynn Lake Gold Project, and Métis Environmental Leaders of Tomorrow.

## The Pas Regional Meeting

The Pas Regional Meeting in Flin Flon on September 25 started off with remarks from Vice-President Judy Mayer, as well as a prayer from Minister Ledoux. Minister Campbell presented an update on IWS, announcing initiatives in the works such as women wellness packages, an internship program, growing domestic violence support programs, and more land-based training. Minister Genaille and Thomas Parenteau, MMF Provincial Sports & Rec Coordinator, updated Citizens on the Sports and Youth portfolio.

President Chartrand spoke about his trip to Cold Lake and what he experienced looking at the minerals in the water in Camp and Kississing Lakes, vowing to address this issue. He discussed Youth and Sports initiatives – emphasizing the need to support northern athletes pursuing sports careers – housing plans, and the importance of assisting broken families and children in care.

“We need to listen to our people’s issues,” said President Chartrand.

Associate Minister Darrel Ferland read the motions from last year’s Regional Meeting, Minister Mayer provided an update on the Region and 19 resolutions to the constitution, while Minister Chartrand reported on new child care centres opening and under construction, and gave an update on the health portfolio.

Provincial Education Associate Minister David Beaudin spoke on education, including the creative programs and supports the Louis Riel Institute has in place for post-secondary education, while Minister Goodon presented on the housing portfolio’s successes, including the First-time Home Purchase Program and the Home Enhancement Loan Program.

Lastly, Minister Park updated Citizens on COVID business support through LRCC, as well as work being done within the Energy and Infrastructure portfolio, including land-based training, and stressed the North as being no less important than every other Region.

# Fundraiser for St. Eustache Métis Local celebrates Métis resilience

Over 100 guests embraced a chilly Thursday evening in St. Eustache to celebrate Fallon Farinacci's birthday on September 16. It was an important milestone: Farinacci is the first person in her family to reach the age of 38. Her mother and father were murdered when she was nine years old, and her older brother died 11 years later.

To reclaim the occasion, Farinacci, a proud Métis woman who grew up in St. Eustache and now lives in St. Catharines, launched a GoFundMe campaign. Half of the proceeds are being distributed to the Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) St. Eustache Métis Local, where her father served as president. The other half will be directed to Abbey House, a transitional home for Indigenous women in crisis in the Niagara Region.

The event, which took place in front of the monument honouring Métis and local veterans, served as a way to celebrate Indigenous resilience, while also healing wounds that run deep in the community. St. Eustache Métis Local vice-chair Debbie Forgie served as emcee, while Elder Linda St. Cyr-Saric provided a prayer. MMF President David Chartrand and Minister Will Goodon provided remarks, along with Farinacci.

"The Red River Métis always take care of their own, and it's good to see no matter where they go, they don't forget home," said President Chartrand.

"It's great to see so many of you come out today to honour one of our daughters coming home to their community to say, 'I never forgot St. Eustache, and I'll be donating the money to this village for the Youth and for the community.'"

Farinacci started the Celebrate Indigenous Resilience – Thirty-Eight fundraiser three months ago, as a way to honour her late parents and brother, and raise awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Her fundraising goals were continuously surpassed, prompting her to raise the original goal of \$3,800, to \$38,000, to \$76,000, and finally to \$114,000. At the event, she presented a \$45,000 cheque to the Local.

On behalf of the Manitoba Métis Federation, President Chartrand also matched Farinacci's \$45,000, and donated \$1,000 to Abbey House.

"It just shows you: one person with ambition, and drive, can make a difference," he said.

"My hope is the funds from this fundraiser will empower Youth to reclaim and stay connected to their Métis identity and culture, and pave the way for the next generation of Métis leaders," Farinacci said.

She thanked the St. Eustache Métis Local for welcoming the fundraiser, and for organizing the gathering.

"You know how to make a girl feel at home. Or I should say, you know how to make a Métis girl feel like she's sitting around the kitchen table breaking bannock with loved ones."

For more information about the GoFundMe campaign, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/Celebrate-Indigenous-Resilience>.



Fallon Farinacci presented a \$45,000 cheque to the St. Eustache Métis Local. Left to right: Minister Will Goodon, Southwest Region; President David Chartrand; Fallon Farinacci; and Minister John Fleury, Southwest Region.

## 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](mailto:communications@mmf.mb.ca) and you may see it in print!



How am I supposed to fetch that?