



Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The season of harvesting is upon us – gardens are giving up their abundance, and those who practice the traditions of canning and preserving are well into the work of the season. It's also the time of year we begin planning the harvest of wild meat that was once a staple of our traditional diet.

I know many of us who grew up in families who harvest are getting excited about the taste of wild meat – a taste that brings us back to our childhood, when we'd gather as a family and have a big meal, straight from nature to the table. The way our mouths watered at the sight of the feast, the gratitude we felt eating all the harvested food, and the happiness and joy we felt as we sat together warm, safe, and full – these are memories to cherish.

This speaks to the reasons why so many of our seniors and Elders have fought fiercely to keep the tradition of harvesting from the land, passing their knowledge down to their children and grandchildren. They fought not only for the sustenance that is harvested, but they also fought for the right to share the bounty and provide for our families. Harvesting, at its heart, is about love of family and community, and about preserving a connection with our Homeland, history, and culture, and honouring the ways of our Ancestors.

One of the reasons we continue to battle against identity theft is that these people who claim our identity are also claiming territory that does not belong to us. They are creating distorted versions of our Homeland map that plainly encroach into territories where we do not have any claim or historic presence, and creating expectations that individuals claiming to be Métis in these areas will have rights to harvest.

To be clear, our harvesting rights within Manitoba and our broader Homeland are no different than our First Nations relatives – we share rights as we share territory. Individuals who trace their roots to the Red River Métis have a right to harvest in our Homeland, in the same way our Ancestors did. This should not be in question. We are putting a strategy in place to support our Citizens within the Homeland for harvesting rights, adhering to the Canadian constitution and respecting the law, and we hope the provinces will follow suit. While I have respect for provincial jurisdictions, I ask the Premiers to respect the boundaries of our traditional Homeland, and the rights of Red River Métis Citizens who live within them. Some governments may believe that lines drawn on a map are sacred when it comes to ownership of territory, but this colonial view is ending. Indigenous peoples were here on this land, using and preserving its resources, before those lines – whether international or provincial – were ever drawn. The Canadian legal system is finally recognizing and reconciling with this truth.

Two recent harvesting cases – *Desautel* in British Columbia and *Boyer/Poitras* in Saskatchewan – clearly reflect the changing tides in the courts, including growing awareness that colonial thinking cannot be easily applied to traditional Indigenous harvesting rights. They are recognizing that Indigenous people were highly mobile in the past, though still within clearly defined territories. Your Red River Métis Government had the foresight to take intervenor status on these cases, which prove the continued existence of our harvesting rights, consistent with section 35 rights of the Canadian Constitution.

Increasingly, we are seeing a loss of the Crown Land where our harvesting rights are protected. While this is a concern, we are planning for the future by buying land across our Homeland for Citizen use in

sustainable harvesting practices. It is important for us to take action now to preserve the land and to protect our traditional practices for the next generation of Red River Métis Citizens. We must be sure that we keep our harvesting activities to Crown Land or private land where we have received direct permission to harvest. This is particularly important if Citizens are harvesting near waterways for ducks and geese.

Remember, your Red River Métis Government will protect your right to harvest everywhere in Manitoba, from the east, west, and south of Winnipeg to the colonial borderlines, and as far north as Churchill.

As long as you have your MMF-issued Harvester Card and your Conservation Trust Fund Sticker for the current year, and are adhering to the *Métis Laws of the Harvest* as taught to us by our Elders, you can be confident that your rights will be protected. This includes ongoing moose harvesting in the Duck and Porcupine Mountains.

We will conduct a lottery-style draw for harvesting tags to a designated Captain of the Hunt and party. A lottery for elk hunting will be introduced on MMF-owned land. It is important that harvesting wild meat be done safely, with a constant eye to the long-term sustainability of the hunt. We have the responsibility to ensure that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren can continue to follow our ways.

We will share more details on the harvesting tag process through our regular channels of communication, so keep an eye on your email and on our social media pages.

I send my well wishes to Citizens who are honouring our traditions by harvesting in our Homeland to feed family and community. Stay safe and remember – your Red River Métis Government has your back.

Until we get together again, I offer my prayers to all our families, Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have cause to grieve.

Meeqwetch,

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

MMF TACKLING FOOD SECURITY ONE GREENHOUSE AT A TIME



The Manitoba Métis Federation is constructing a greenhouse in each of its seven regions to provide further food security and prolong the growing season of vegetables.

Chances are, if you've been to your local grocery store, you've noticed a steep price increase in your food bill compared to a few years ago.

That's why the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) is taking action to help Red River Métis Citizens garner access to healthy, cost-effective food. One of the ways the MMF hopes to achieve this is by constructing eight greenhouses, one in each MMF region, along with a greenhouse for the Infinity Women Secretariat, its affiliate.

MMF Food Security Officer Annie Firomski said the establishment of greenhouses will help the Red River Métis Government provide further food security to each region and prolong the growing season of vegetables.

"(With) a garden, we have winters, and you can only grow for so long," she said. "These greenhouses can provide vegetables into November, if possible, and that's going to be super beneficial when otherwise you would have to go to the grocery store to purchase things that might be out of season or unavailable."

She noted these greenhouses will be smaller than the average commercial greenhouses and won't run year-round.

"They can operate all year round, but the greenhouse consulting company we work with recommends closing them down for a few months, in the cold winter months, to kill off any pests," she said. "Because the last thing you want is for plants to be growing, and then all the plants die because pests will wipe them out."

MMF affiliate Métis N4 Construction is spearheading the work on the greenhouses.

"We have successfully built the first one in St. Laurent. It is going to be up and running very soon," Firomski said. "Following that, we will have another one up and constructed, and we're very excited to get the greenhouses moving."

She said it's great to collaborate with another branch of the MMF to make this project come to fruition.

"They've helped us along the way, helped us make sure we had items in place and kept it on track," she said. "We were able to have great contractors that are also Red River Métis, and they helped to get this up and running."

Firomski noted there is a possibility Métis N4 Construction will have half of the greenhouses erected before winter.

"We're still focusing on trying to get them all built," she said, "but, obviously, with snow coming soon, we can only do so much."

The greenhouses will yield an estimated 100,000 pounds of vegetables per year for Red River Métis Citizens.

"We are focusing on Red River Métis traditional fruits and vegetables such as lettuce, onions, radishes, and some herbs. We're also hoping to grow some fruits, strawberries, and maybe we can try some blueberries," said Firomski. "With these greenhouses, it'll be a bit of a test to see what we

can grow for Citizens, what they want us to grow, what they are excited about."

MMF Agriculture Minister David Beaudin believes the benefits of these greenhouses go way beyond giving Citizens fresh produce in rural areas.

"(It's) the impact of learning how to garden, the traditional knowledge of gardening, the intergenerational learning between Elders and Youth, and having everyone involved in a community," he said. "It's also about mental health, horticulture therapy, and being able to spend time with others. I think it's super important, but also having everyone coming together."

With the MMF rapidly expanding its Agriculture portfolio, there will be opportunities for Citizens to educate themselves on and volunteer at the greenhouses.

"There will be training for horticulture and even just learning how to plant from seed, how to seed tape, how to can and preserve vegetables," Firomski said. "(With the greenhouses), there are many opportunities for our Youth to flourish."

All in all, Minister Beaudin believes the greenhouses will hold a positive impact across the Red River Métis Homeland.

"These greenhouses are going to give the MMF the chance to provide sustainable food to Red River Métis Citizens, and we'll be able to educate Citizens about food security and help everyone get some vegetables at home and in the greenhouses."

WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?

Food security is working towards providing safe and healthy food to individuals who could otherwise not afford it or not be able to access healthy food.

The MMF is making sure Red River Métis Citizens have access to enough safe and healthy food, so they can stay active and healthy without worrying about hunger or malnutrition.

HOW THE MMF IS HELPING TACKLE FOOD SECURITY:

- ∞ The MMF and the Government of Canada invested over \$14.5 million into Red River Métis economic development, heritage preservation, food security, and agricultural sustainability.
 - \$500,000 allocated through the Local Food Infrastructure Fund to support the enhanced distribution of healthy food across MMF Regions.
 - Investing in a refrigerated trailer, grow domes, edible forests, and pollinator gardens.
- ∞ One greenhouse will be built in each MMF region and one for the IWS, yielding 100,000 pounds of vegetables per year for Citizens
- ∞ Building 1,000 garden boxes this winter for Citizens

RED RIVER MÉTIS COMMUNITY CRISIS WORKER GIVES BACK TO HER COMMUNITY



Red River Métis Citizen Marnie Vieira has dedicated her life to supporting vulnerable and marginalized individuals within the community.

Marnie Vieira has dedicated her life to supporting vulnerable and marginalized individuals throughout the city of Winnipeg.

As a community crisis worker, Vieira provides support for Winnipeg's diverse population. Her work is heavily influenced by her Red River Métis heritage, allowing her to incorporate Indigenous and anti-oppressive perspectives into her harm reduction approach. Her incorporation of Métis traditions has assisted her in forming even stronger connections with the community, making her outreach efforts even more impactful.

"Being Métis has given me the opportunity to explore my culture, attend ceremonies, and learn new teachings," said Vieira.

The Red River Métis Citizen began her journey of becoming a community crisis worker by volunteering in 2019.

"I started volunteering with North Point Douglas Women's Centre and joined the Mama Bear Clan, which developed my passion for volunteering and the community," she said.

Vieira's commitment to volunteering eventually led to her first outreach position at the North End Women's Centre, where she worked as their outreach and harm reduction coordinator.

"My first outreach job provided me with hands-on experience. Going into the encampments and building relationships was so important to me, listening and hearing the stories that people shared," she said. "We also supported specific encampments in their time of need by putting a team together that included a cultural component with drumming and song, and we had a counsellor on site."

Vieira now works for the City of Winnipeg as a community crisis worker, where she plays an integral role in supporting and guiding individuals facing challenges related to mental health and substance abuse. She also offers her assistance to the elderly embracing the responsibility of addressing their unique needs and concerns.

"It has been an incredible opportunity and I have met some wonderful people," she said. "This is what I am most passionate about, supporting the community."

The community crisis worker also mentioned that vulnerable populations already facing challenges may struggle to access necessary food resources.

"It was challenging to see the generational poverty," she said. "Meeting people where they are with non-judgment is crucial to my harm reduction approach."

Despite facing these challenges, Vieira finds fulfilment in the connections she has made within the community, particularly the deep bonds she cultivates with the children.

"The kids run out of their house to come and get snacks from us," she said. "It's so rewarding to see how happy they are to see us."

Vieira appreciates the numerous organizations that contribute to the protection of our vulnerable populations and encourages others to volunteer.

MÉTIS-SPECIFIC STRATEGY TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

Established in 2021, the MMF's Rapid Services program works with several other MMF departments to support Red River Métis Citizens experiencing homelessness or unforeseen hardship. This wraparound service works as a central access point, providing Citizens with access to mental health and addiction services, employment and training, cultural programming, and other supports offered by the Red River Métis Government.



Fre Maachi, which translates to "fresh beginnings" in Michif, is a 20-unit transitional Housing First program located at 670 Main Street. Part of the Rapid Services Program, Fre Maachi features four two-bedroom suites, as well as 16 studios, six of which are accessible. The facility also includes a spiritual room, access to computers, free Wi-Fi, fully furnished units, a welcome kit, ID clinic, free laundry, and more.

For more information on Fre Maachi, call the Rapid Services Intake Line at 204-589-1613 or email 550intake@mmf.mb.ca.

COMMUNITY PHOTO

A Red River Métis delegation visited Lewistown, Montana to take part in their Métis Celebration and Powwow from September 1-3. The festivities were a chance for participants to explore both Red River Métis culture and the rich history of the city itself.



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

Annual General Assembly sponsorship opportunities are now available!

Visit mmfaga.ca to view our sponsorship opportunities and to fill out our online form.

Annual General Assembly
October 13 - 15, 2023



USING YOUR
RED RIVER MÉTIS
VOICE

**PROVINCIAL
ELECTIONS
OCTOBER 3RD**

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&**



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