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MATHIAS COLOMB CREE NATION / PUKATAWAGAN: Community Freezer Project

Mathias Colomb Cree Nation (MCCN) has a history of helping hunters go out to feed their families with their shell giveaway. In 2016, the Pukatawagan Development Corporation began development of a community freezer program to store local wild foods for the community's residents.

The building blocks for the program, the sea-can, freezers and lumber, are now in Pukatawagan while the development of the community food centre is ongoing. We are currently trying to find a site for the centre where it can be connected to the needed electrical. While we are working on the conversion of the sea-can, hunters and fishermen continue to share meat the way they always have, by taking it to the Elders themselves. In 2015 we were able to build 5 new smoke houses in the community to make it easier to preserve wild meat and fish.

We are continuing to help hunters and fishermen go out. The MCCN annual shell giveaway happened again in 2016. The hunters really like the program because it makes it easier for them to go out and feed their family good food. One big thing that happened in 2016 was that we got insurance for the high-railers. They are used to take hunters out along the old train tracks towards Lynn Lake. The hunters didn't have much luck hunting around river and lakes close to the reserve this year but they had better luck up the tracks.

The local fishermen association is supportive of the program and wanted to provide fish but there wasn't much fish to share this year. The fall fishing season got cut short because of the early snowfall and fishermen were struggling to fill their quotas. The winter fishing season was also shortened by the warm weather.

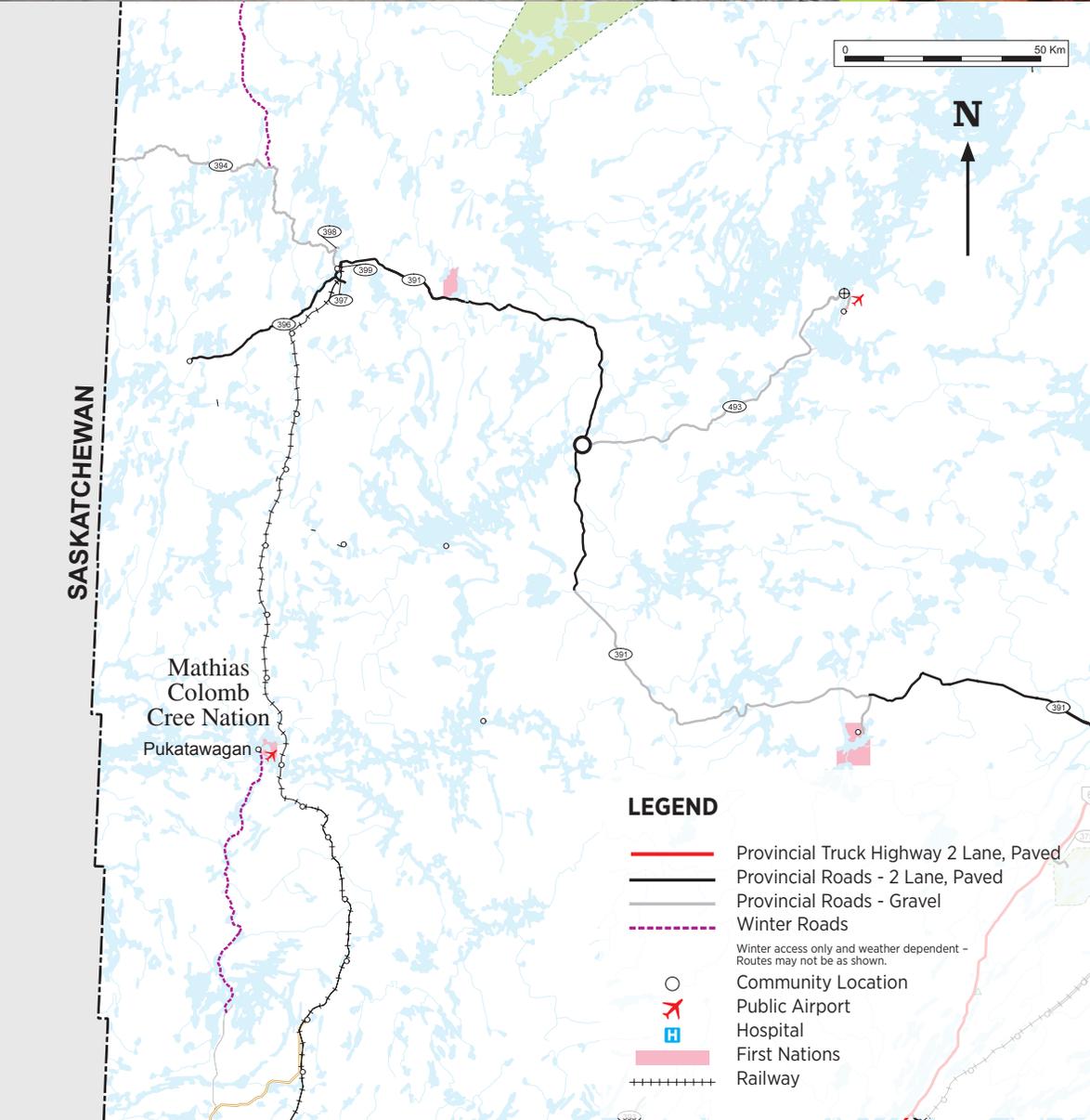
The Elders of the community are behind the program, happy to supply fishing equipment for the program and continuing to pass on knowledge that helps future generations. The Elders help with preparing fish, moose and other wild game. We also hope to bring back the technique of preparing moose hides as it has been some time since that has happened. If we do not pass this knowledge along, we fear it will be lost with the elders.

When the building is converted and the program is up and running, the local radio station and Facebook page will be used to share information with the community members of Pukatawagan. We are also trying to connect with the school to take students out on hunting and fishing trips, to get young people out on the land more as part of a new Summer Traditional Learning Program.





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**NFMCCC
funding**

- ☑ 2014
- ☑ 2016

> **OBJECTIVES**

To construct a community building where residents can store local wild food as well as equipment for hunting, fishing, and trapping. The building will have freezers and supplies for the storage, processing and distribution of traditional foods.

> **LOCATION**

Mathias Colomb Cree Nation (also known as Pukatawagan) is a remote northern Manitoba First Nation located 210 km north of The Pas and 819 km north of Winnipeg. The main community of Pukatawagan is accessible by plane with the aboriginal-owned Mississippi Airways or by train with the Keewatin Railway Company. A temporary winter road from Kissinging Lake is open for about 3 months of the year. The total population is 3,711 members registered with approximately 2800 people living on reserve.

> **PHOTO DETAILS**

[1] [2] Processing a moose kill. [3] Hi-railer used to transport hunters along the tracks. [4] Local women cutting up the moose meat. [5] Mural of former members of Chief and Council on the arena. [6] View of Pukatawagan from the plane.

