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## PEGUIS FIRST NATION:

# Peguis Agriculture Project

Founded in 2011, the Peguis Community Garden Project is now in its sixth year and has successfully maintained seven acres of land producing a variety of healthy foods for community members. The Community Garden Project was started with a committee of five people headed by Council member Darlene Bird, Carl McCorrister, and Elder Ernie Stranger. There were a variety of other people who helped and made our project possible. The project is pleased to have Northern Healthy Foods Initiative and the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture & Community Collaborative provide funding over the years. Four Arrows Health Authority has worked with us and continue to provide their expertise to our project. The Peguis Development Corporation has been the administration of our project with Mr. Patrick McKay of PDC being the Administrator. We have two or three Elders gatherings during the summer and rely on their input regarding our project and success. To date, our project has worked well and has continued to be respected and followed throughout the province by other communities who share the vision of food security.

Our people from St. Peter's were good farmers and would bring food into Winnipeg to make a living. Treaty Days at the old reservation would have 5,000 people coming to attend, buying food and products. We have a history of raising food for exchange with others and for market. Our work together has the following objectives:

We want to promote healthy eating, growing our own food, and to work cooperatively with all. We wish to bring together the human resources available and network with other organizations that share the vision of Food Security for the future. We aim to promote awareness of land use and our ability to produce our own healthy foods, assisting community members in gardening and share resources and knowledge. This will assist all in developing community pride, wellness, resources, and promote community building. We plan to establish a Farmers' Market and promote self-sufficiency in growing, promoting and selling our fresh produce to all. We strive to improve our lands with more agricultural endeavors for the future.

To date, we have measured our success based mainly on the result of our work and the feedback of our Elders. The garden produce we have grown has been exceptional and shared with all. We had two Elders Days at the garden site. We also have had many open days when we invited visitors along with youth and elders to come and visit the garden site. We also maintain a picture album that shows the stages of our garden work and demonstrates the success we had throughout the growing season.

Our produce has been given to our Elders who take part in the project. One Elder, Fast Eddy, comes about every third day to get a few potatoes, an onion, and a few peas and a cucumber for his dinner. We also provide produce to the Peguis Food Bank. We get

people coming to see us on the garden site and wanting fresh produce. We try to do this. However, the project is a stepping stone in community building and regaining our heritage of independence as per our history. We don't want to promote dependency; we must use our project as a teaching tool and show our people that they can grow much of their own food. In our community, many of our people raised, grew, and produced much of their own food up to the 1960s. At that time it was estimated that over 80% of food needs were met this way. Today, most of our food comes from the store.

Our project has become known throughout Manitoba by various organizations, having received awards such as the Golden Carrot in October 2014 for our successful work and garden. One area we are continuing to develop is growing traditional tobacco. We have successfully grown it here for traditional use and will continue to improve and expand our crop. We must overcome these colonial mindsets and look to the future together. There are many things we could accomplish if we worked together and shared our resources. The Peguis Community Garden is just a small step in rebuilding our heritage and culture; it is also a form of reconciliation that is so important in the decolonization process. It could also have an economic impact on our community with support for use of land, making resources available, working together, and taking pride in having food security for all.





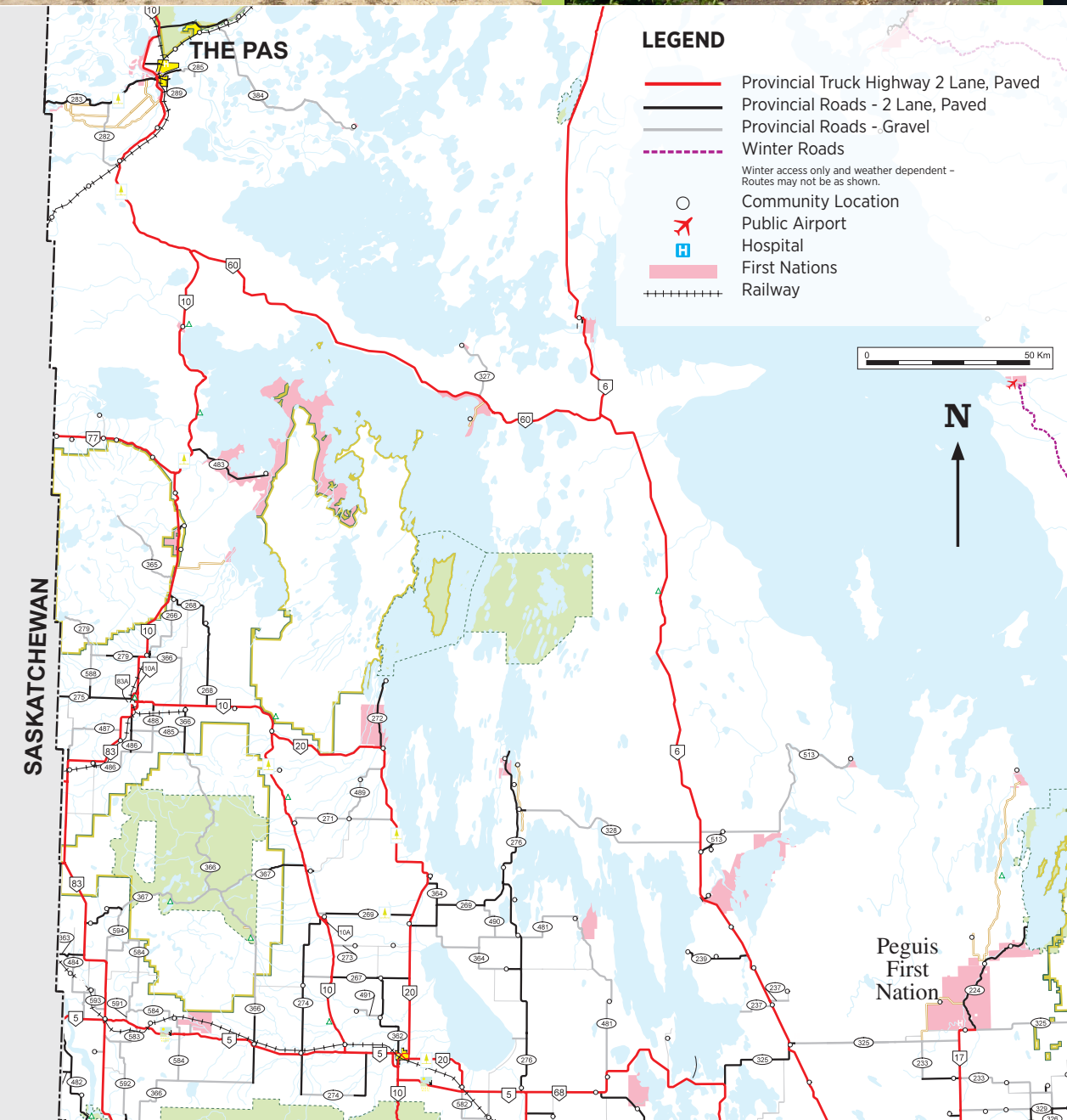
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#### LEGEND

- Provincial Truck Highway 2 Lane, Paved
- Provincial Roads - 2 Lane, Paved
- Provincial Roads - Gravel
- - - Winter Roads
- Winter access only and weather dependent - Routes may not be as shown.
- Community Location
- ✈ Public Airport
- H Hospital
- First Nations
- + + + + + Railway

#### NFMCCC funding

- ☒ 2014
- ☒ 2015
- ☒ 2016
- ☒ 2017

#### > OBJECTIVES

To regain and build our heritage and culture of agriculture that a majority of our people will regain the concept of growing their own healthy foods in the hope that their children will continue this cultural activity and provide food security for all.

#### > LOCATION

Peguis First Nation is located approximately 200km north of Winnipeg. It has year round road access. Peguis First Nation is the largest First Nation community in Manitoba, with a population of approximately 10,000 on the reserve.

#### > PHOTO DETAILS

[1] Workshop participants help with planting. [2] Mr. Bear rototills the garden. [3] Harvesting Potatoes. [4] Garden Arbor at the main garden. [5] Working at the Peguis Agricultural Project. [6] Customer at Farmers' Market. [7] Workshop participants harvesting rainbow swiss chard.

“...the people that were working and being involved it has helped them with the whole idea of food security. That idea has taken root here, I can talk with some of these people now and we are on the same wavelength. It's surprising that people come to me and talk about what we need to do of the future, their own ideas. It's good and this is something that we have come to this point after six years.”

- Carl McCorrister, Garden Supervisor