

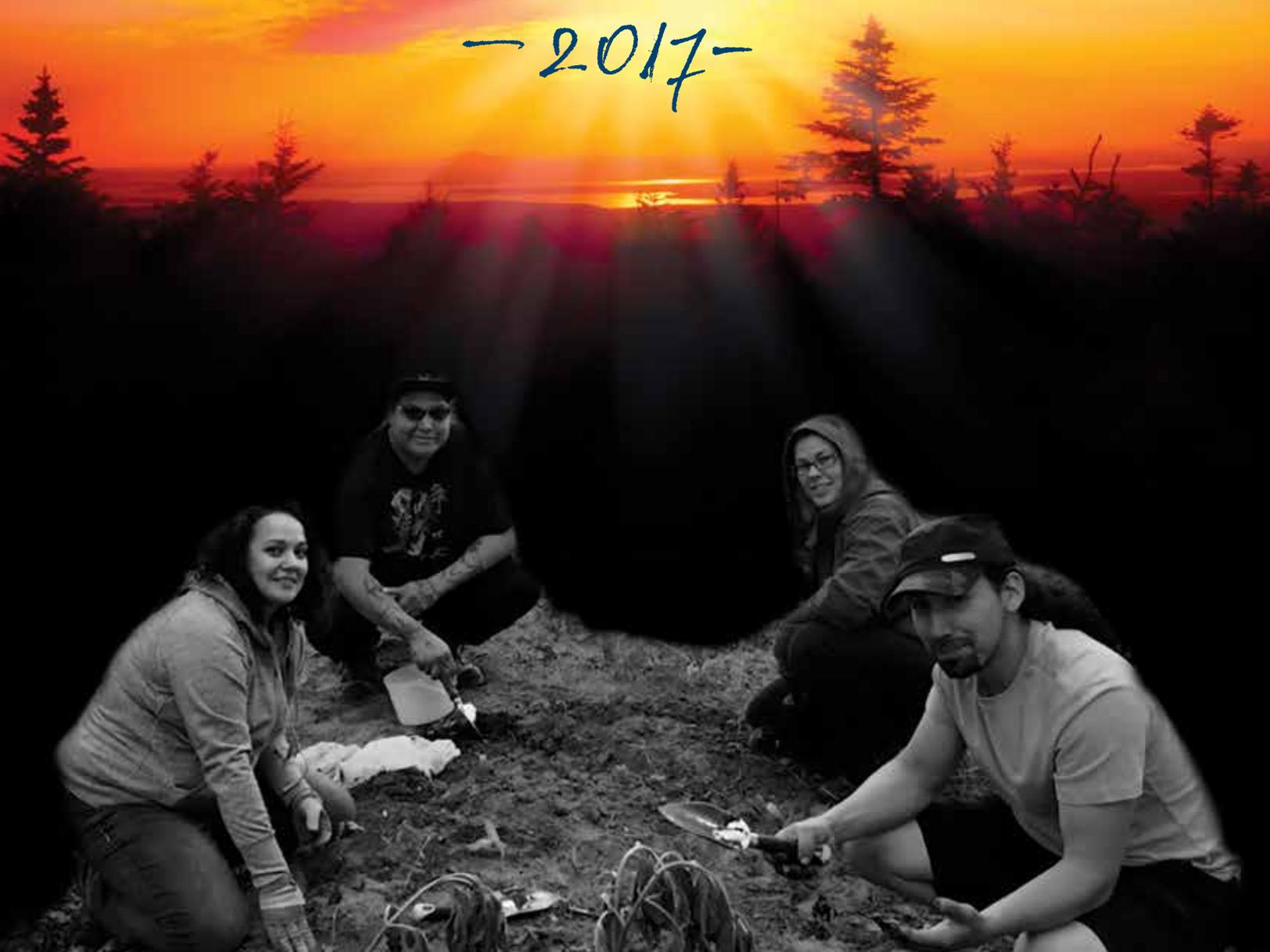


NMFCCC



community
STORIES

- 2017 -



Map

HUDSON
BAY



LEGEND

- Current Projects
- Previous Projects

COMMUNITY ACCESS

- ◆ All-season Road
- ◆ Train
- ◆ Fly-in
- ◆ Winter Road

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welcome & thank you

The Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, and Community Collaborative (NMFCCC) represents a group of people, communities, organizations, and governments. We are interconnected and part of a larger journey. The spirit of our work is collaborative, we work relationally, and we expect that our relationships will be mutually transformative. Because of this, it is necessary to start by acknowledging the group, our interconnectedness, and by saying Thank You.

First of all, we are thankful for our relationship with Dr. Becky Cook over the last two years, and appreciate learning from her, and with her. Becky's connections to land, culture, family, and community have enriched our understanding and pushed our group to continue to evolve our thinking and actions.

We have gratitude for the new funders and for those funders who made multi-year commitments to the NMFCCC and the journey. The many allies and partners support and elevate our collective work. Each partner brings skills, knowledge, and motivation to the group, and enriches the collective learning experience and our power to support communities.

We have deep gratitude for the Northern Advisors who provide guidance, share stories, and help us learn how to be better partners and allies to the communities we seek to support. Their patience and willingness to support our learning is indispensable to our role as allies.

And finally, a deep gratitude is felt to all of the communities that have partnered with the NMFCCC and welcome us into their journeys. Communities share their stories, their visions, teach us, and learn with us about making a stronger present and future for people in Northern Manitoba. We appreciate being able to take a small part in your journeys; we are all better for this experience.

All my Relations,

Julie Price, On behalf of all Collaborative members

We dedicate this booklet of stories to the memory of Elder Annie Spence, and to the Elders of O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation / South Indian Lake, who have contributed so much to their community, to the creation of their Ithinto Mechisowin Program, and to our collective learning.

This year the booklet is organized into groupings, based on different types of projects.

This includes horticulture projects, livestock and beekeeping projects, Northern traditional foods & teachings projects, and other projects. This is certainly not the only way to group the diverse work being undertaken; we want to acknowledge that projects are complex and contain many different actions, goals, approaches, and inspirations. The intention with the groupings is to celebrate connections and learning between communities, and to further share ideas. Even though each community and project is different, there is also a binding force of commitment to youth and the future, behind all these stories.

This inspiring collection of stories shows the power of communities taking action to reclaim food sovereignty, sharing skills and knowledge, connecting to local and traditional cultures, and empowering leaders across generations. Through these actions, communities build healthy local food solutions and develop relevant local economies that will sustain them into the future.

These stories illustrate how communities are healing and reconnecting after generations of negative impacts from colonialism. These impacts are ever-present in people's minds and bodies, in the systems that guide us, and on the landscapes across Canada. But by sharing the stories from each of these diverse communities in Northern Manitoba, and how they are learning and sharing together, we hope the strength and vision that exists to improve health and strengthen community wellness is clear.

Each of these stories was co-created by community project leaders and NMFCCC staff. Nothing appears in this booklet without permission, and project leaders have the final review of their content. Communities receive paper and electronic copies of this booklet for their own use and sharing. Please offer respect and ask permission from project leaders if you would like to use their stories in other publications.

Visit our website to read all the past Community Stories booklets:
www.nmfccc.ca/community-stories

We also dedicate this booklet to the memory of Adam Steinberg of the Silver Dollar Foundation. Adam was a silent but steadfast partner in the NMFCCC. His dedication to the work and commitment to human timelines for change were an inspiration and a demonstration of what is possible.



Back row: Sigrid, Andi, Jennell, Joan, Beth, Ervin, Jane, Tim, Moneca, Becky, Todd
Front Row: Sara, Rhonda, Daniel, Iris, Julie. Lying down: Steven

The NMFCCC started as a pilot in 2013, and became a fully realized collaborative in 2014. However it was not until 2017 that we, as a group, finalized a ‘Theory of Change’ (TOC). The TOC describes our collective efforts and the community-led vision for change. We are proud of our resulting description.

The process we used to create the TOC was important because it reflected our group values and a way of working that the Northern Advisors have shared. We worked slowly and ensured all voices were heard, we worked relationally and in the spirit of reciprocity, and with the intent of learning from and with each other.

A first draft of an NMFCCC TOC came together in 2015. After nearly two years of practice and learning, we were ready to officially describe our work together, and define our shared vision for the future. That first (now impossibly outdated) draft was intended to be a conversation starter. Edit, overhaul, or a complete sacking and do-over were all welcomed next steps in the process of understanding our work together.

Likely none of us anticipated the deep learning and necessary conversations that would come out of the process of creating our TOC! Here are interesting issues and discussion points revealed through our process:

- The Values were a great starting point to build our TOC on. NMFCCC members agreed with the values. The values described how we had been trying to work, and how we were being taught to develop relationships and build partnerships with communities.

- The twin outcomes of impacting community wellness through food projects and of impacting philanthropic/charitable practice and knowledge were not readily agreed upon. In fact, the latter seemed jarring to many around the circle. Since when did funders include their organizational or personal change/transformation in their granting? What did it mean to ‘decolonize philanthropy’? Was this what I signed up for!? Happily, the goal of supporting community change via food projects was an easy consensus. Much more conversation was required before we could understand, support and describe the collective change of the Collaborative. We currently name our own change by describing that our ‘partnerships are mutually transformative’.

- A typical TOC focuses on the problems and that was problematic! The Indigenous collaborators explained that the time of problems-focused approaches has passed. People are well aware of the problems and they want to focus on opportunities and solutions. We needed, as a group, to shift our hearts and language to a strengths-based approach.

- The draft TOC did not inspire community pride. The language was academic and paternalistic. People did not want to be the subject of a TOC or ‘do gooder’ actions. They want to be recognized as strong partners and visionary leaders of positive change.

- A linear TOC, as it was initially drafted, did not align with an Indigenous worldview. We needed to retrain our brains to think cyclically and create a TOC that embraces a non-linear worldview.

The NMFCCC welcomes and appreciates all feedback and questions about our TOC. We see this as a living document that will change based on our evolving understanding and evolving community needs.

our values

Relational

The nature of this collaborative is not transactional, but relational. We approach relationships in an interpersonal and interactive way and they are developed through conversations, community visits, and story sharing. Our relationships are not bound by project timelines or granting periods, and we build relationships for the long-term.

Slow

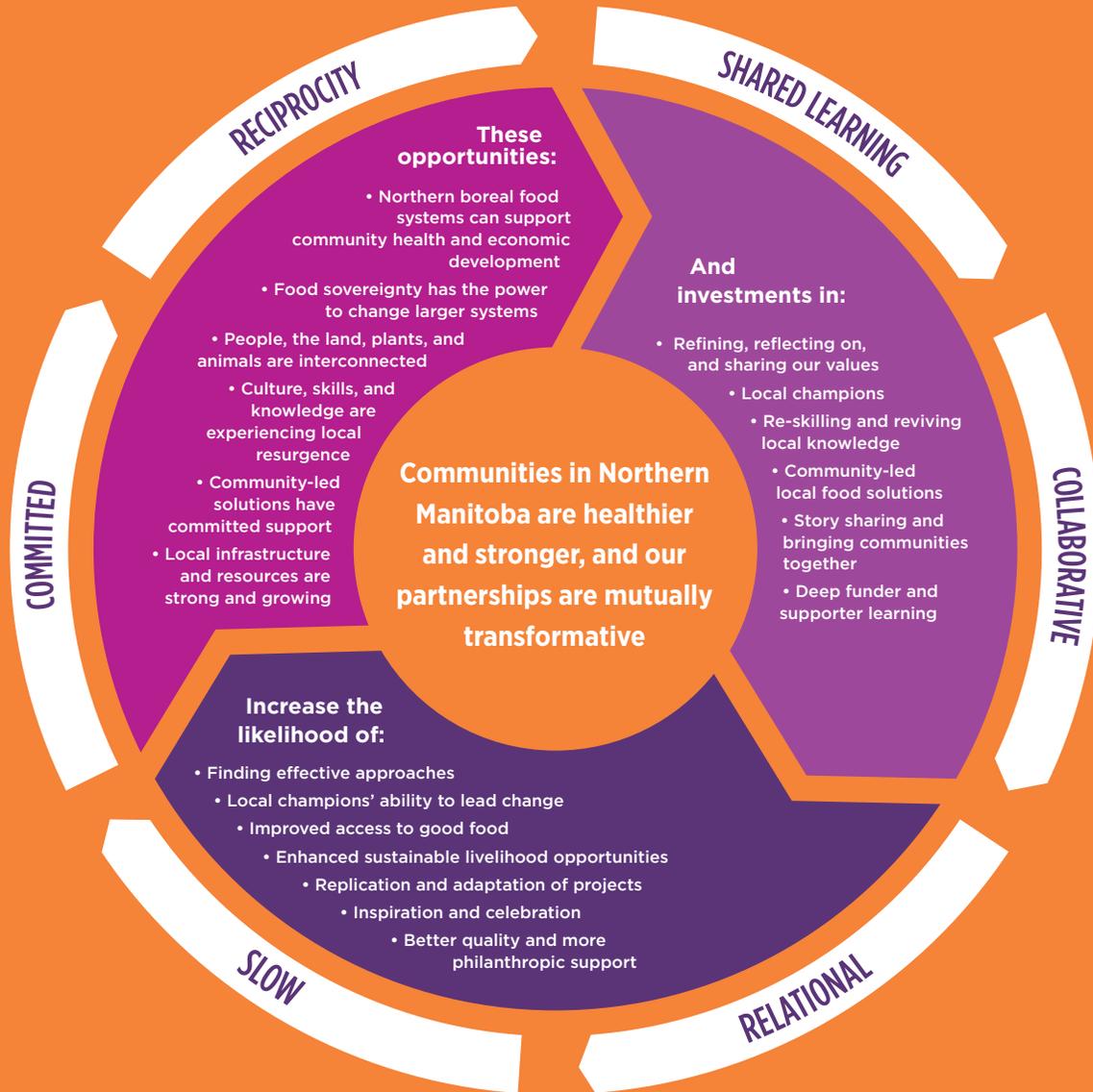
We recognize the impacts of history, and that healing and re-skilling will take a longer time horizon than most governments or funders typically consider. We recognize that slow but steady pacing will allow for communities and their local infrastructure to evolve in a sustainable and rooted way. Despite the urgency, fast may not be the best path, and may result in more damage than healing.

Committed

We seek to demonstrate to communities that we will extend support in a dependable and steadfast way as long as the partnership is sought. This could include grants, networking, problem solving, friendship, story sharing, and more. We value the commitments that community members make to each other and their work.

theory of change

The NMFCCC Theory of Change is rooted in our values, uses an opportunities-based lens, and embraces a circular worldview that aims to show our continuous growth and learning. It took nearly 4 years of practice and learning, and the involvement of community partners, Northern Advisors, and funders to create.



Reciprocity

Participants (funders, community people, Northern Advisors, support organizations) give in return to each other's efforts. This principle is rooted in a mutual respect for what each other has to give.

Shared Learning

We all have wisdom to give, and to work together we have to understand each other. We can all grow when we listen to each other and understand each other. No one person/group has all of the answers and our understanding can always become deeper.

Collaborative

We work in partnership by pooling and sharing resources, knowledge, networks, and ideas. Rooted in the belief that we are stronger and have more potential when we work together.

horticulture PROJECTS



Many communities in Northern Manitoba are growing fruit and vegetables as part of their efforts to strengthen their communities. Greenhouses, raised beds, large in-ground gardens and agricultural sites, fruit orchards and berry patches are some of many methods being used to increase the local production of produce.

Interestingly, when we ask ‘Why is this project important to your community?’, the first response is almost never ‘food production’. Rather, people talk about a whole range of important impacts of growing more food together that include cultural reclamation, youth development, intergenerational mentorship and bonding, physical and mental wellness, building positive community infrastructure and spaces, de-commodifying food, and reclaiming traditional plants and seed saving practices; it seems that good food production is simply implied as an obvious project outcome.

In 2017 people demonstrated their commitment to their food production spaces by staying behind during fire evacuations to care for the plants in Poplar River, and by convening at the farm spaces to celebrate return to the community and positive collective action as in the case of the Alex Keno Memorial Farm.

Horticultural projects can be an act of Cultural Reclamation. For Peguis First Nation and Opaskwayak Cree Nation, the act of growing food is reclamation of traditional practice. Both Nations were moved off fertile reserve land to areas less productive, with depleted soils, and that are significantly more flood-prone. Growing food is an act of remembering who they are as a people and reclaiming agriculture.

Youth skills and leadership opportunities are of primary importance to most communities. This can include summer job and skill-building opportunities, intergenerational mentorship, and helping youth to reclaim their traditional role of community helpers. Brochet Youth Garden and Grow North Boreal Horticultural Project are two examples that support the development of Northern youth, investing in skill development and supporting youth to be supportive local leaders.

Growing food can be a restorative act, leaving the earth stronger and healthier than before the food was produced. Part of the Meechim Project in Garden Hill First Nation is to build and strengthen the soil using local materials such as fish waste. At the Grow North project they are building soil using mosses, leaves, and any local materials available that feed the soil.

The impacts and outcomes of this collection of stories is much more than the amount of food produced or the number of acres under cultivation. And for most of the communities that have shared their stories, the work is continuing to evolve and expand to include new opportunities and benefits.

- 1 HBOIERC School Garden, aerial view
- 2 Peguis potato digger
- 3 Grow North staff & supporters in Leaf Rapids School
- 4 Peguis elder sorting through beans
- 5 Cabbage!
- 6 Peguis working together to sort potatoes
- 7 Julius Wassenas cleaning raspberry patch in OCN

“ I want to learn more about gardening after having this experience. I would be very interested to visit the Grow North project in Leaf Rapids to learn with them. ”

- Miranda Laponsee, Brochet Youth Garden



“ It was really neat to instruct people. I liked how they asked me questions and how I could sometimes answer them. ”

- Leon, Grow North staff reflecting on a workshop and his youth leadership role.



“ The Peguis Community Garden has... the vision of returning to the land and again growing our own food; our people have been known as agricultural for over two hundred years with food security for all. This concept of independence continued when relocation took place and when our people came here to Peguis in 1907. Through time and the factors of colonialism, we lost this; we now are on the road of regaining our heritage of growing our own food once again. It's part of Nationhood and will bring Food Security for all. ”

- Carl McCorrister, Peguis Community Garden

Charles Sinclair School Garden

FISHER RIVER CREE NATION / OCHEKWI-SIPI

HOST: Fisher River Cree Nation / PROJECT MANAGER: Charles Sinclair School

AS TOLD BY GERRY MASON, Land-based instructor, Charles Sinclair School

This year, 2017 was the first year that the Charles Sinclair School took on their own gardening project. Fisher River Cree Nation, like many other communities, depends on food being shipped into our local grocery store, which means that much of the community has to accept what is available. In the past, the community was very self-sufficient through hunting for their food, gathering their own supplies, and growing their own produce in their own gardens. From 1875 right up to the 1990s, our community had gardens; mostly every family had one or even two gardens, and there was even a community garden. As economics changed, so did the food source and with this people began depending on a different food diet. The alteration of the types of food sources, such as fast food also caused a change in the health of the community. With this in mind, we would like to get back to gardening with our students, staff and parents and to maybe make a move to our traditional roots of providing our own food source.

For the first year, the Charles Sinclair School students did an excellent job on the gardening project. We tested the soil in different locations that were available for us and we ended up placing the garden at our local Youth Cabin. The program included many grades in the gardening process, but most of the responsibility fell on the high school students involved with the Charles Sinclair School Land Based Program. Starting from scratch they planted pumpkins, onions, beets, tomatoes and potatoes. The elementary students also came to the garden and were taught how to do maintenance in the garden, such as pulling weeds, picking out rocks from the soil, and doing the watering. Once the students were out from school in June, as part of their commitment

to the project they continued to work and care for the garden throughout the summer. During this time the students talked about getting into box gardens at their own homes and getting into gardening for themselves.

The elders were instrumental in teaching us about how they would do their gardens a long time ago and mentored us throughout the whole process. An important philosophy and a value that the elders teach is that our community was dedicated to sharing. We had a community garden and the people who worked on it got the produce and anything left over, we shared. The student also used the produce for the heritage camp that they put on in October. At this fall camp we shared the garden produce at the meals for our visitors and elders for the week.

The only disappointment for the group, was that an animal got in the garden and dug up some vegetables. Our students got pretty emotional, since they had nurtured the plants and saw them grow. This was a teachable moment and it came from our elders, which was to live and learn. We are going to put up a fence next year. Another challenge was the water source - the garden is out by our cabin, where the water source was some distance, but we have plans for that already.

We'll keep the garden project going at the cabin next year, and we might also try a different location closer to the school. The other thing we are interested in is box gardening. We were talking about having the box gardens and then move them to the students' yard, so that they can look after them for the summer.

All in all, we are producing locally grown food and the students have learned so much from this project. We didn't have a lot and we are just starting, but the students want to continue the garden next year.

- 1 The Grade 11 students are tilling the plants at the Youth Cabin Garden
- 2 University of Winnipeg students come to visit and see our garden
- 3 Elders come to inspect the garden and give advice
- 4 Grade 11s preparing the garden
- 5 Students planting their seedlings
- 6 A student tilling the garden

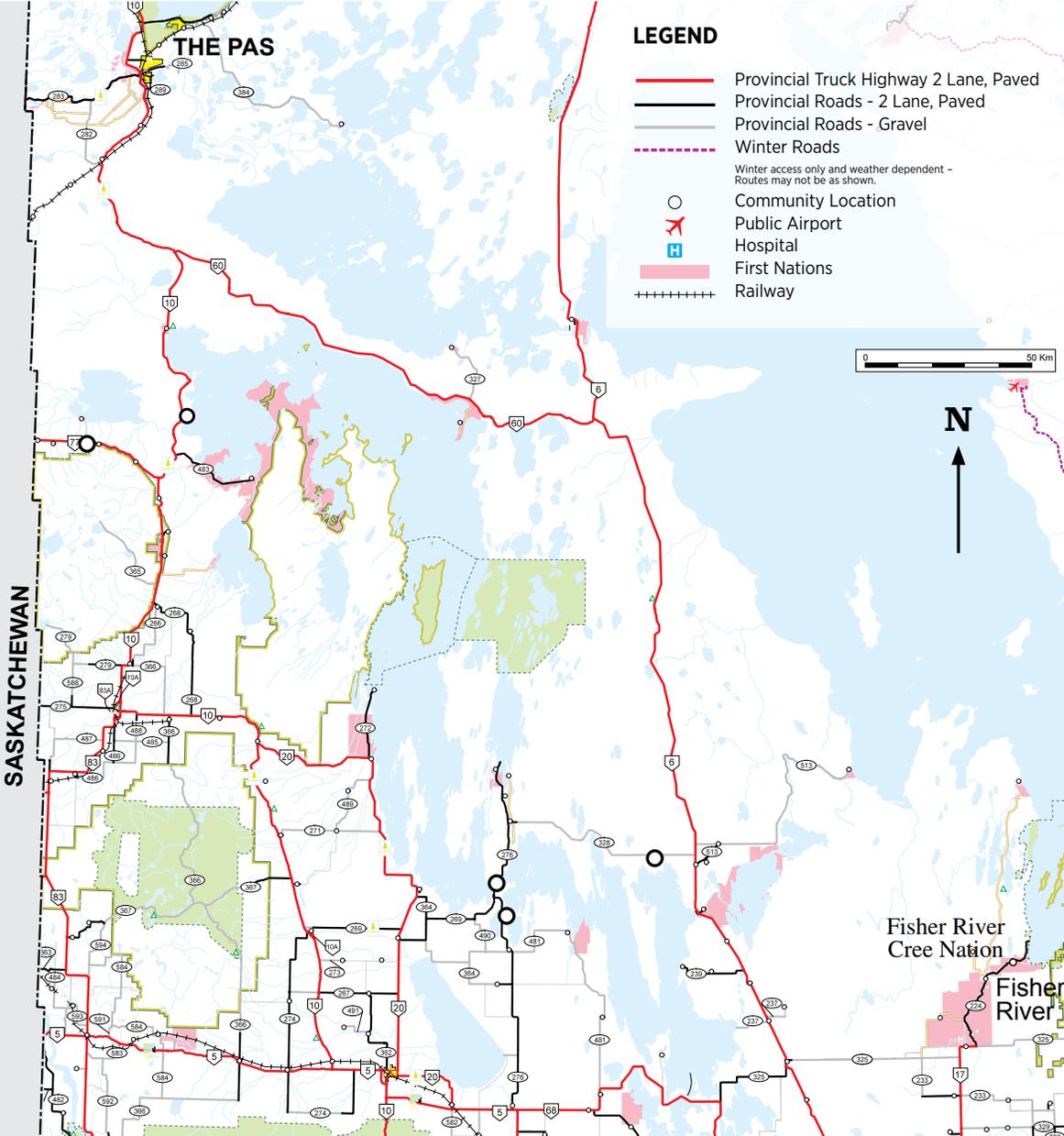




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NFMCCC
funding

- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Re-introduce gardening to all ages of the student population and community, and to bring back a part of our history and improve food access.

LOCATION

Fisher River Cree Nation is located approximately 193 km north of Winnipeg. It is composed of an on reserve population of 1945 and an off reserve population, making a total of 3879 band members as of June 2017.



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Grand Rapids School Garden Project

GRAND RAPIDS / MISIPAWISTIK CREE NATION

HOST: Frontier School Division / PROJECT MANAGER: Grand Rapids School

We have two grocery stores, one located on Misipawistik Cree Nation (MCN) and another in the Town of Grand Rapids. Healthy options such as fruits and vegetables are often prohibitively expensive, or of poor quality in the community.

Grand Rapids School has been involved in gardening for a number of years. In 2009, Chuck Stensgard from Leaf Rapids visited our school and talked to our students about vegetables and their healthy effect on our bodies. Chuck got our staff interested in gardening. Since then we have 30 student gardens. We have a grade 5 class that beautifies our elementary hallway with plant boxes. We have a high school horticultural class that beautifies our community. In cooperation with the Wood Tech class, we have made grow boxes on legs for students to plant either flowers or vegetables. We also make raised bed gardens. Students learn about growing, weeding, watering, building, having responsibility, and taking care of things; the plants have even helped calm students down.

With some of the success we've had, and with many discussions over the last 5 years, we felt that a local greenhouse could keep the gardening going for at least ¾ of the year, and increase the kinds of produce that could be grown on a yearly basis. A greenhouse in the community would provide gardeners the opportunity to shop locally when purchasing plants, seedlings, and shrubs without having to travel great distances to the Pas or Winnipeg. We would be able to start seeds in the greenhouse in early spring, and extend the short growing season. The greenhouse will also allow us to educate our students in science and skills training, and introduce locally

grown and nutritious vegetable snacks into our school breakfast program, which is offered to all 382 students at Grand Rapids School.

This year the greenhouse did not go up due to reduced staffing, but we will set up our greenhouse in 2018. We used grow boxes instead - the students in the woodshop class made the boxes for elders; they were raised up so the elders wouldn't have to bend down to do their gardening. The high school students in the landscaping class supplied some veggies for the boxes. There were some extra boxes so the students got to take them home, and we also kept a few for the school to use.

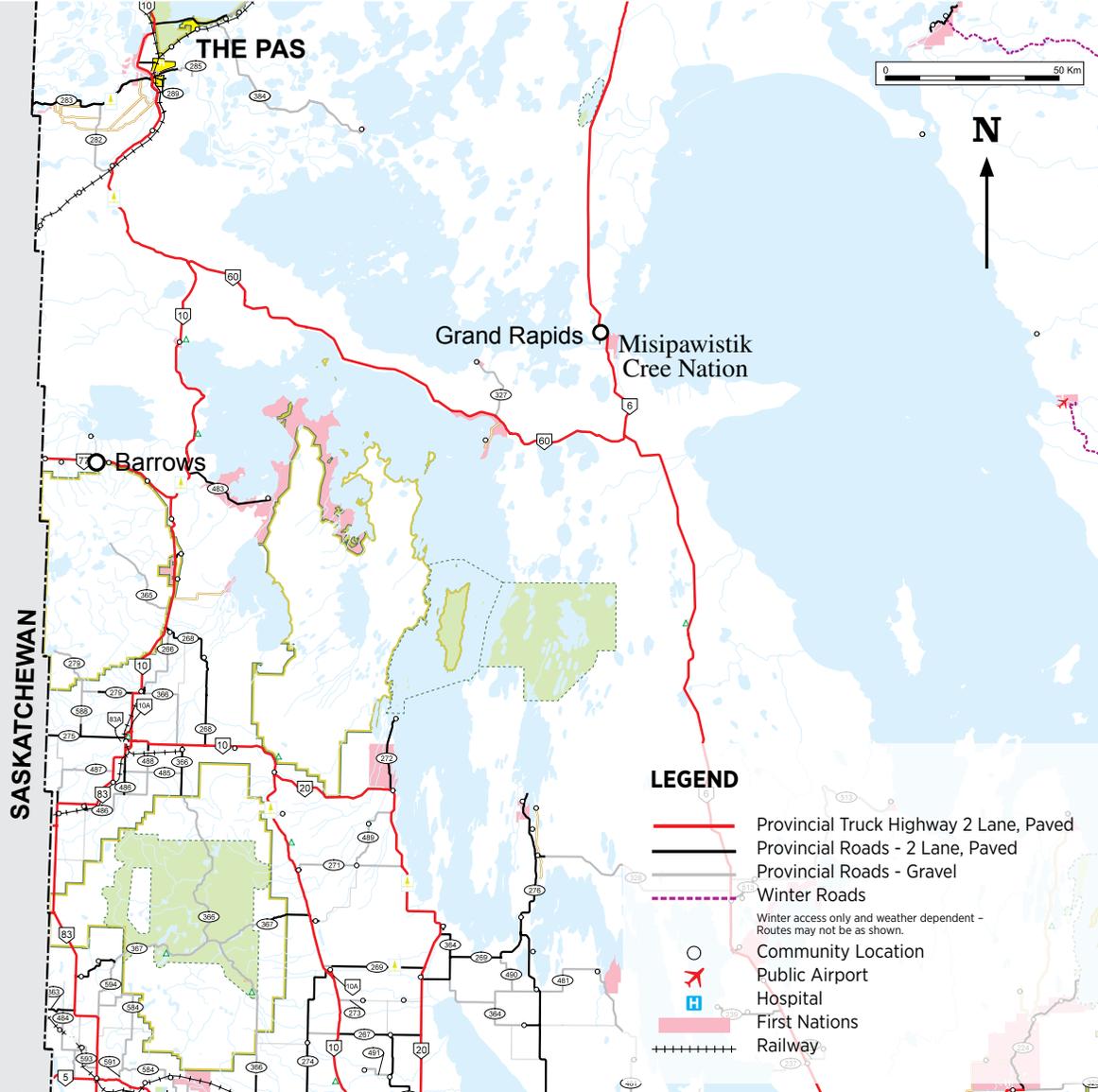
One of the biggest challenges we have is the soil in the community - we always have to truck in soil from the Pas. We tried putting fish guts in the soil one time, but it just burnt the plants. So, we will try making grow boxes again next year - we will put some in the greenhouse and some into the garden.

Some of the staff that have made a difference in our school are Mike Chopect, Sarah King, Brenda Stoneman, Kim Izzard, Lalaine Tugade, Tyler Lavallee and the late Charles Lahaie. Without staff who put in extra effort this program would not succeed.

- 1 Flower boxes on Grand Rapids School fence
- 2 Wood Tech class makes flower boxes for horticulture class
- 3 Mr. Chopect's class shows plants at Learning Fair
- 4 Horticulture class beautifies the community
- 5 Community mom's canning workshop
- 6 7 Students planting their flowers at Memorial Park

“ We hope to promote the vegetable as a healthy alternative to snacks or as part of a meal. We want our students to think sustainably and be proficient in fending for themselves. ”

- Annie Ballantyne, Grand Rapids School Principal



NFMCCC funding
 2017

OBJECTIVES

Establish a greenhouse to enhance the gardening projects and improve vegetable and fruit yields in the community.

LOCATION

Grand Rapids is located 420 km north of Winnipeg on Number 6 highway. The community is separated into 3 sections: Misipawistik Cree Nation with about 1,400 community members, the Town of Grand Rapids which has about 400 people, and Manitoba Hydro staff housing with about 200 residents.



Helen Betty Osborne Ininiw Education Resource Centre School Garden

NORWAY HOUSE COMMUNITY, NORWAY HOUSE CREE NATION / KINOSAO SIPI

HOST: Frontier School Division /
PROJECT MANAGER: Helen Betty Osborne Ininiw Education Resource Centre

At Norway House, the school community wanted to return to the teachings of their Elders and promote healthy living through gardening. Elders teach that the Earth is our Mother, that we are to show respect and love for our land. Ancestors grew vegetables for food, and gathered herbs for medicinal purposes. Vice-Principal, Russell Pierce shares that “A goal of our project is to revive gardening in our community.” With this project the community wanted to rekindle the fire of self-reliance and pride with the future mothers and fathers of their community.

In 2017, with incredible support from Norway House Cree Nation (NHCN), the school, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Frontier School Division, and NMFCCC, HBOIERC started a school garden. The goal was to plant 2,500 square feet, but then the school got access to NHCN’s tractor and tiller which allowed them to till 20,000 square feet! There was still a lot of work to do to prepare the soil since there is a lot of clay, but once it was ready, they planted over 10,000 square feet.

There was so much knowledge built about fertilizers, soil quality, growing a variety of vegetables, seeding, and all the different tools and machines that are available to help with gardening. There were approximately 50 volunteers involved, including support staff and teachers, and 4 classes of more than 50 students including grade 2s, 6s, 7s and 8s who helped a lot with the harvesting. “More people than we can handle!” says Russell.

The volunteers supplied fresh vegetables to the senior homes and to the school cafeteria. Additionally, vegetables were delivered to Elders and the Work Opportunities Program staff from Norway House Cree Nation, who were so helpful and supportive of the project.

Russell reflects, “The cafeteria ladies baked the potatoes and gave them to the students and staff. I was overwhelmed by the comments from adults and students about how good tasting the potatoes were. Two generations of people have never had garden fresh produce, they don’t remember their parents gardening, [and now] two generations of people eating garden fresh potatoes together at the same meal. The feedback lets me know that people are interested in growing fresh produce.”

This year, the school is expanding their work and building on their great momentum. They want to further revive gardening in Norway house by planting 15,000-20,000 square feet, both in their school garden and private and community gardens throughout the community. They are in the planning stages of using containers at the school to grow greens year round and more efficiently, saving the school \$7,000 on lettuce throughout the year. They would like to build a shed, fence and greenhouse, hire a summer student, and produce a lot of food for the community. There is also the potential to sell produce to stores or through a “farmers’ market type set-up.” Russell says, “As we grow and learn how to get the land to produce more food it will have a greater impact in this area.”

Russell shares, “Don’t know if you understand the impact of the support of NMFCCC on our work - Julie is incredible; she made connections for us.” Another connection of interest to the community is learning from the Dawson Bay and Pine Dock communities around their fish composting stations (pg 54). In Norway House, commercial fishing is a major industry, so fish waste compost stations could be a possibility.

“Everyone is inspired and motivated by what the school has done. There doesn’t go a day without someone talking about the garden.”

- Russell Pierce, Vice Principal,
HBOIERC

1 HBOIERC school garden (approx 150’x75’)

2 Melvin Mowat picking rock, getting ready to plant

3 From left to right: Colleen Bruce, Annabelle Pierce, Charmaine Condappa, Kimberley Pierce, Crystal Bodfish; planting onions

4 Aliana Bruce and Noel Bruce hilling potatoes

5 Annabelle Pierce transplanting a tomato plant

6 Robert Rideout, Crystal Bodfish and Colleen Bruce help plant the garden

7 Robert Rideout and Russell Pierce, harvesting potatoes



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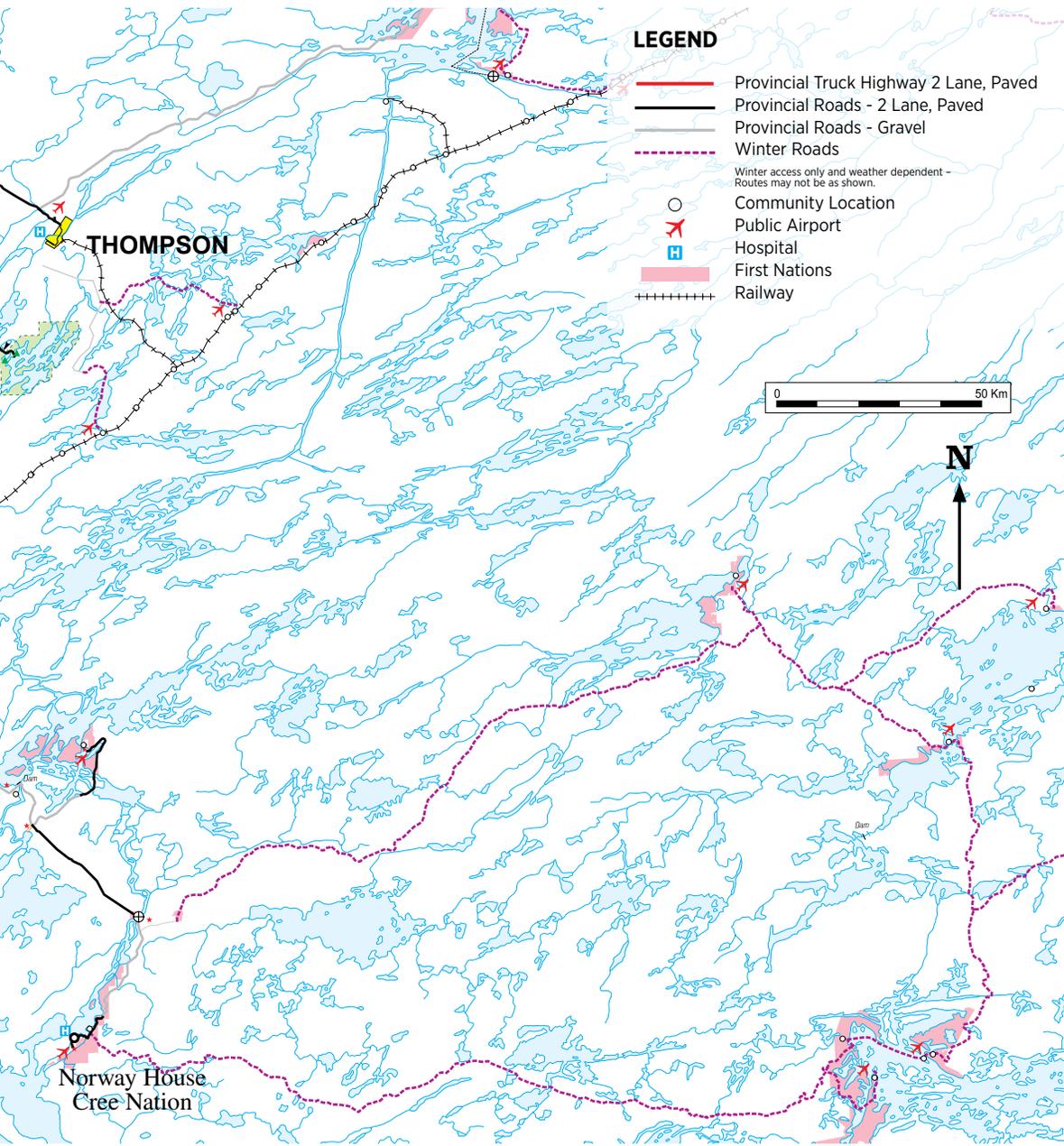
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NFMCCC funding

- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Establish knowledge of gardening and healthy living in Norway House.

LOCATION

Norway House is located about 30 km north of Lake Winnipeg, and accessible by all-season road. The two communities have a population of over 7,000 people, and have both a Chief and Council and a Mayor and Council.



6



7

Helping Hands 4-H Club Community Garden Sustainability Project

THE PAS

HOST: Manitoba 4-H Council / PROJECT MANAGER: Manitoba 4-H Council



1

The Pas Helping Hands started our community garden in 2014. Unsuccessful in the first year, the Opasquia Ag Society helped by offering us land to put our garden. Beginning with a small 25' x 25' plot, the garden is now four 25' x 25' plots! Several families have continued to be involved each year and have been inspired to build their own gardens.

This year, the garden was flooded - we had to walk through knee deep water and were unable to plant anything until late June. We did not get the excellent yield that we usually do. The beans, peas and cabbages were unable to grow, but we got some tomatoes and zucchinis, and it was a great year for pumpkins! We had a great pumpkin pie sale at the end of September!

We also purchased and planted fruit trees, which was excellent. Because of the late start, we thought of alternate ways we could reach our goals. We put a twist on the "fruit share program" that we learned about, and started a "4-H Garden Rescue" where we offered to help harvest peoples' gardens. We picked well over 100 lbs of produce, and shared it with the homeowners and the rest of the community. This was very successful and we will continue to do these projects and tie them in with the garden.

We also bought a hydrant and pump, built a rest area, and bought a rototiller, which will really help when we can get back into the garden.

Our 4-H club continues to participate in food sales at markets, street festivals, and on Facebook, which enables the youth to learn practical math

skills, basic business principles, and many other job and life skills. Things that don't sell fresh, we do workshops to utilize the food, including canning pickles and salsa, baking and make pies - the kids make sure that nothing goes to waste.

The garden has given the members a sense of community as well as ownership. It has brought many together, and has become a focal point for many; often visitors will stop by just to talk about gardening and offer suggestions and assistance. Our garden has allowed families to grow their own healthy food, spend more time outside, and exercise in the garden and surrounding area.

We have a relationship with the OCN Community Gardens (pg 24) - they invite us all the time to come out and learn about and help with their gardens, and we sometimes do cooking workshops together. We have also created partnerships with a group of seniors, who let us know if they want produce, and some who help with the gardening. We were also able to support the Homeless Shelter.

Even though it was a difficult year for growing and we did not get as many people out as we would have liked, we are hoping to get a decent garden in the ground next year. The 4-H garden has the goal of becoming fully sustainable by 2020. This will be accomplished through the sale of the garden's produce. The club will continue to plant, grow and harvest each year as well as offer community workshops and opportunities. In 2020 we hope to open plots to the general public.

“ I just got out of hospital. I couldn't plant my own garden, the first time, ever. I am so grateful for these offerings to me. Thank you, thank you. ”

- A senior woman who was taken a bag a fresh produce

- 1 Helping Hands 4-H Club garden
- 2 Quinn Young on the rototiller
- 3 Cheryl Antonio and her granddaughter Layla Antonio picking cranberries
- 4 Jayden Antonio (standing) Jade Morin displaying the pumpkin and squash harvest
- 5 Judy Sayese and her granddaughter Jade Morin cleaning out the garden



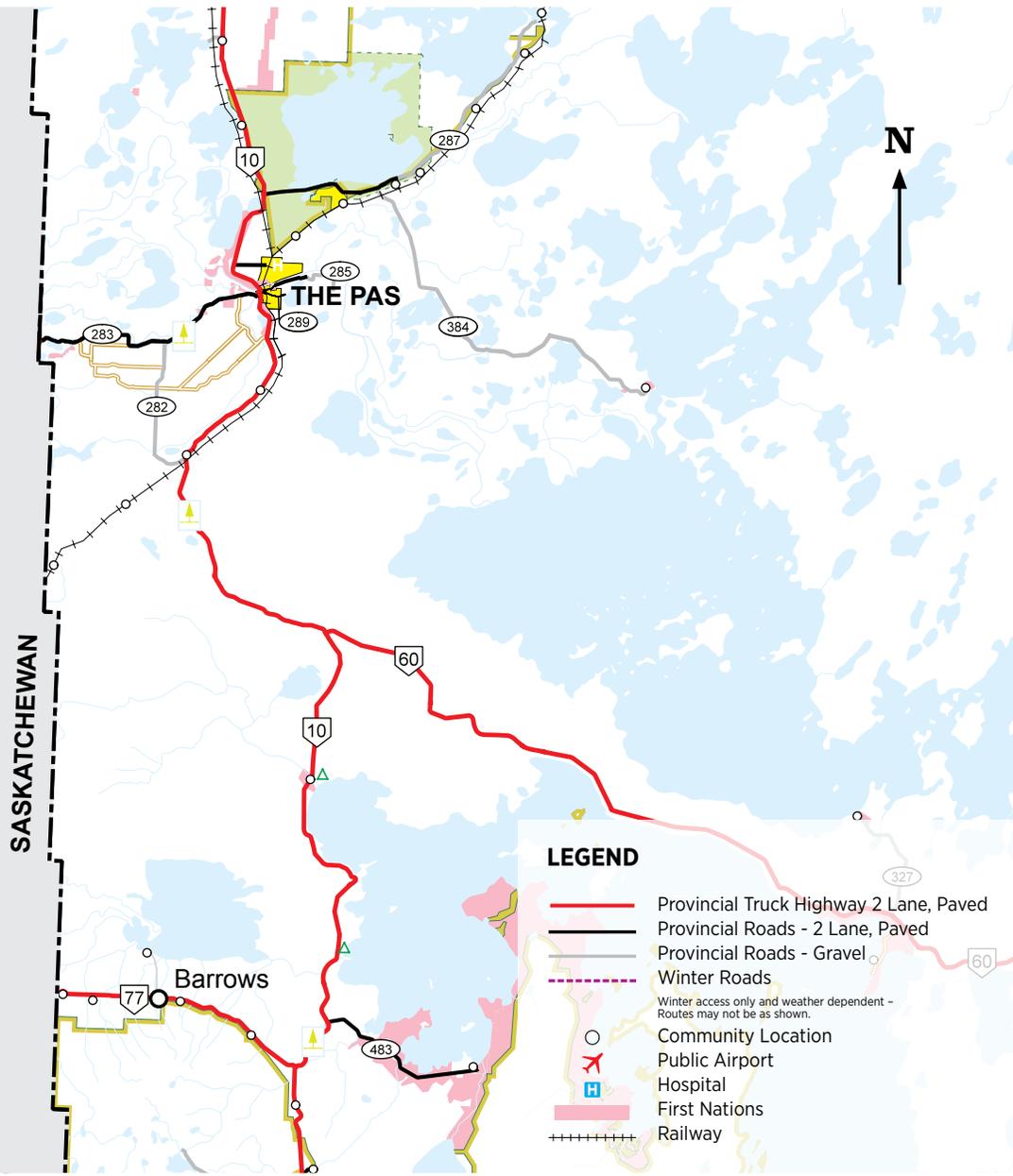
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NFMCCC funding

☑ 2017

OBJECTIVES

For our garden to be sustainable and available for educational purposes as well as food sharing.

LOCATION

The Pas is located at the confluence of the Pasquia River and the Saskatchewan River, about 630 km northwest of Winnipeg. It is a multi-industry town serving the surrounding region, known as the Tri-Area, and includes Opaskwayak Cree Nation and the Rural Municipality of Kelsey. The Pas has all-season road access, and a population of approximately 5,500 people.



5

“ I learned so many things I didn't know about gardening - about fruit and vegetables. We are going to plant our own garden, now! ”

- 4-H mom

Community Greenhouse

BARROWS

HOST: Barrows Community Council / PROJECT MANAGER: Barrows Community Council

The Barrows Community Greenhouse was established in 2013, and is now a permanent fixture in the community and recognized in the area. More plant varieties are being added each year, and more plants are being purchased as well. In 2017, the community grew flowers, shrubs, trees, and vegetables. Sherry Ferland, Community Administrative Officer shares, “Everyone has their own favourites, but seem willing to try some new varieties.”

Seedlings are started inside, and then moved to the greenhouse. By June, everything is sold out and people are planting their gardens. Sherry reflects, “A lot of people in the community come and buy from the greenhouse. Almost everyone takes advantage of being able to buy seeds or seedlings and vegetables that are so close. We bring in anything people want, apple trees, cherry trees, chokecherries. People in our community are going to be able to get a lot of fruit from those trees.” She adds, “Everything we bring in as far as money, is reinvested back into the greenhouse.”

Though there are a lot of volunteers from the community, including students and youth, in 2017 there was 1 full-time position, 2 part-time positions, and a recreation director who are involved with the greenhouse. Sherry shares, “[This is the] only employment for these folks; it is good experience for them. There are not a lot of jobs, so people stick with them ‘til the end.” In 2018, there are 3 part-time positions to suit the schedules of the staff.

In 2017, the community was able to pay a university student (with a grant through Service Canada) to help with a community garden, in a space that was out of town. 2018 will be the first year that the community garden will be right in town, and this will make a big difference for the community’s access to the garden.

With the success of the strawberries and raspberries that were grown in 2017, the community is also planning to start a “U-pick”, where community members can come to pick and purchase fresh fruit. Sherry shares, “[We are] talking to a guy who has equipment and who will plow the spot that we want to plant (right beside the U-pick!). Not everyone has access to berries right now; we have space for it, so will do it.”

There are some challenges with regulating the temperature of the greenhouse and the water supply, which the community is trying to address. Sherry also shares, “All the people who are doing it are continuing, but we have an aging population, which means that it is hard to get people involved.”

But overall, “Everyone enjoys the plants, fresh vegetables, and gardening benefits and we hope more people realize the benefits it provides. We are encouraging people to start more seed saving. I am looking into more heirloom vegetables for next year,” says Sherry. She adds, “We want to make improvements as time goes on. We hope the project keeps on going; this is a great project for our community.”

- 1 Building a greenhouse shed
- 2 Selena Cote (left) and Tammy Langan, Barrows Greenhouse Staff
- 3 Selena and Tammy seeding in the greenhouse
- 4 Greenhouse wrapped up for winter
- 4 Daniel Bennett in the greenhouse





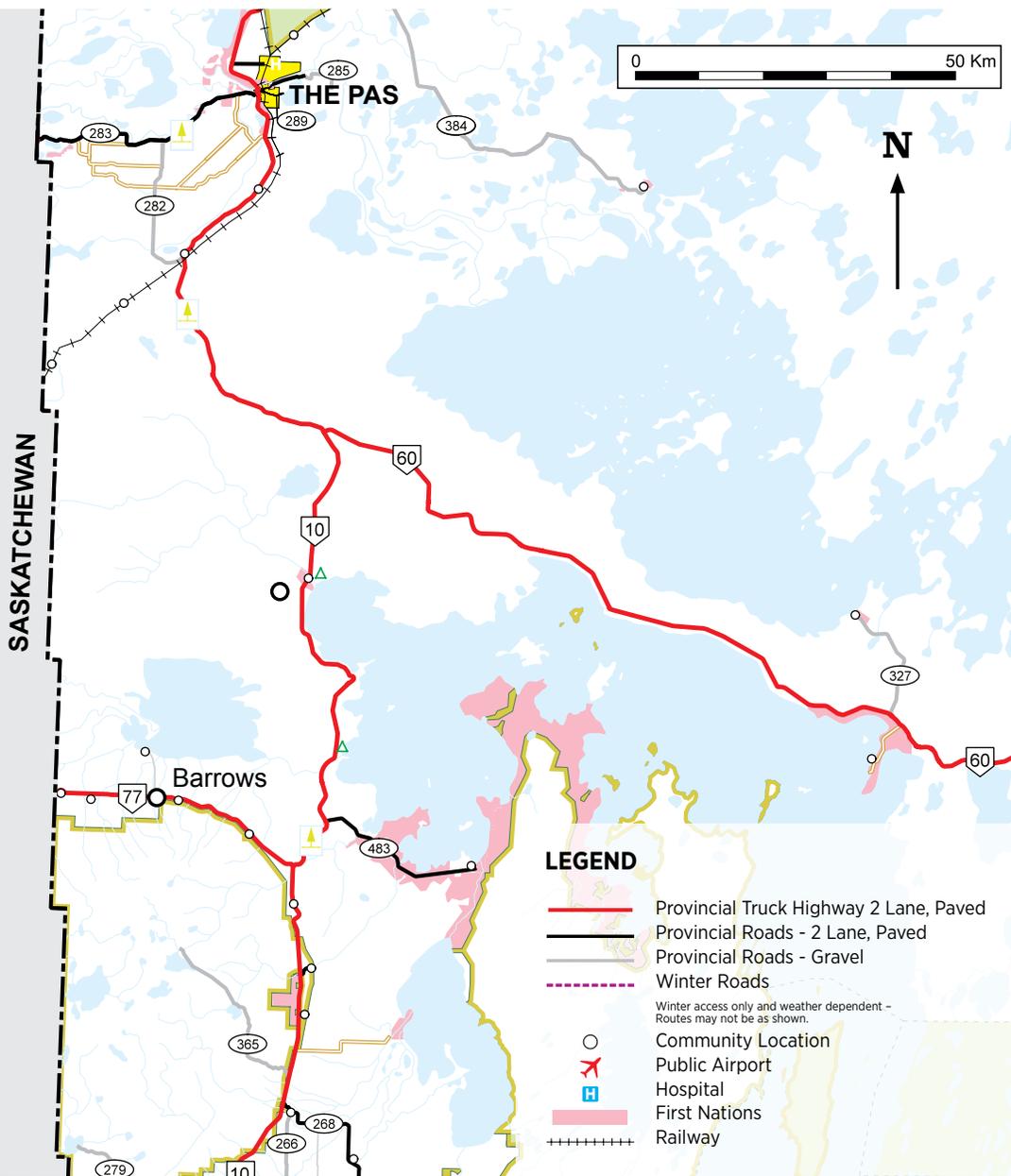
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NFMCCC funding

- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Bring people together, promote healthy eating habits, make training and planting opportunities available locally and provide community employment opportunities.

LOCATION

The community of Barrows is located near the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border, 90 minutes south of The Pas and an hour north of Swan River. The population is approximately 100 people. Barrows is the local service centre for many smaller communities.

“Everybody likes and is happy with the greenhouse. Everyone is waiting to see what kinds of plants we have; I think we have good quality plants.”

- Sherry Ferland, Community Administrative Officer



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Youth Community Garden Project

BARREN LANDS FIRST NATION / BROCHET

HOST: Food Matters Manitoba / PROJECT MANAGER: Barren Lands First Nation Health Centre

SUMMARY: The Brochet Youth Community Garden started in 2013, and has been growing every year. Beyond the learning and teaching that happens around gardening, this project is an important part of creating valuable community experiences and strong community relationships.

Nicole Lamy from Food Matters Manitoba notes, “There is a togetherness about this project - for example, this spring, when the seed starting workshops took place, those at the workshop were starting seeds for the community garden, not for their own gardens. Women and people of all different ages are brought together by this work.”

Youth are hired from the community to work in the garden and support community gardeners during the summer months. There are not enough positions for all youth who are interested in working in the garden. Even still, the youth take a big part in helping those in the community garden and home gardeners, and doing outreach. This coming year, the community aims to have 15 new people join, and will install raised beds, which are easier to learn from and manage.

A FAMILY TRADITION

Malcolm Disbrowe got involved in the Youth Community Garden after he was selected in 2014, at the age of 14, to go to a horticulture training in Leaf Rapids. Only after that, did he learn that his grandpa, dad and his koomashom (maternal grandfather) had all also gardened before him. He shares, “Growing my own garden is something I really love, and I found it really inspiring that I was following in their roots”.

Malcolm is now 17, mentoring other youth, helping gardeners across the community, and sharing his stories all across Manitoba (and beyond). He shares, “It’s been really great to see a small community come together and build something for the community.”

Malcolm adds, “My favourite part of going to other people’s gardens is seeing how well they are doing. Last summer I went to a woman’s garden which I helped take care of, and it was really beautiful and productive, and it was inspiring to see how self-sufficient she was.”

In February 2018, Malcolm spoke with a University of Manitoba class. He shared stories of his home community and his experiences in the Youth Garden Project, with the support of

1 Greenhouses under snow, to the left of church

2 Malcolm watering plants in the greenhouse

3 Brochet in late November

4 Youth doing a cooking class at Brochet School

5 After Malcolm’s University of Manitoba presentation. From left: Dr. Asfia Kamal, Malcolm Disbrowe, Nicole Lamy

6 Sign in Brochet School

7 Malcolm and a massive Brochet cabbage, 2015

Food Matters Manitoba. Dr. Asfia Kamal (long time supporter of Northern food projects and partner with the Ithinto Mechisowin Program in South Indian Lake, pg 48) teaches the class. Malcolm reflects, “It is great to have the chance to share my story and contribute to what Food Matters does. I love promoting food security in Manitoba - it’s great to help and inspire people.”

One of those people Malcolm has inspired is his sister, Alanna. Alanna shares, “I got involved because of Malcolm; I learned everything from him. He was really into the project; he was really excited about what he learned and he had all kinds of ideas.”

In 2017, Brochet had a late start to the gardening season, due to the slow spring, delayed funding, and subsequent delays in getting people hired and organized. Even still, the community built a second greenhouse to expand the project. Alanna recounts, “Malcolm was like a teacher for a lot of the people there.”

For summer 2018, both Malcolm and Alanna aim to be back in Brochet, helping with the project again. Alanna says, “It’s a really good opportunity for youth to be involved in, to make a bit of money. It’s hard work, but kind of fun.”



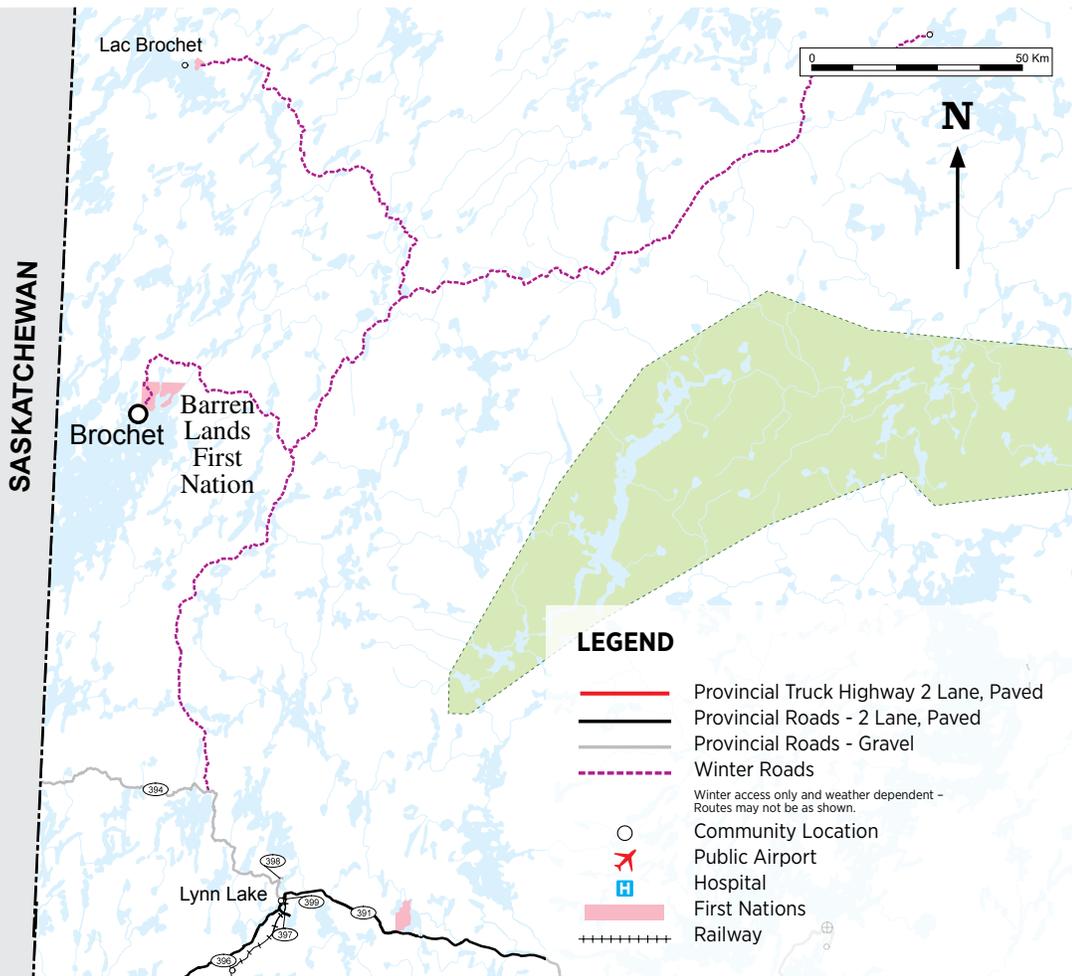
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NFMCCC funding

- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Create meaningful employment opportunities for young people in the community and to support more community members in starting their own gardens and greenhouses.

LOCATION

The Barren Lands First Nation and Brochet Community are two of the most northern communities in Manitoba, situated on the northern shore of Reindeer Lake. The community is 928 kilometers north of Winnipeg and 19 kilometers east of the Saskatchewan border, with a total population of 619 people.



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“What I really love about working in the garden is that we are not individuals, we are really a family, building connections and growing closer.”

- Malcolm Disbrowe,
Youth gardener and garden mentor

“There is a snowball effect, where new people are gardening who never thought they could grow anything.”

- Nicole Lamy,
Program Coordinator, Food Matters Manitoba

Grow North Boreal Horticulture Program

LEAF RAPIDS

HOST: Frontier School Division / PROJECT MANAGER: Grow North Boreal Horticulture Program

The Grow North Boreal Horticulture Program has been running for over a decade. What started with the Frontier School Division sending their Regional Gardening Coordinator out to communities with seeds, pots and soil, has now turned into the longest running and most comprehensive Northern boreal horticultural facility in Manitoba. With 2 greenhouses, 1.5 acres of in-ground growing beds, and indoor classroom spaces that include a seed room, growing room and laboratory, the Leaf Rapids facility and Grow North Program has solidified its identity as an important hub for training and research on Northern boreal food production and youth development.

In 2017, Grow North held 3 (spring, summer, and fall) multi-day trainings for participants from the community, guests from different communities, and students. These trainings include indoor and outdoor workshops, hands-on learning, and visits to all the different facilities. Workshops are set up according to the seasons and the research being undertaken. Chuck Stensgard, the Regional Gardening Coordinator, has been running such workshops for a long time and has visited 60 communities across the North. His philosophy is to get to know people and teach them what they want to learn, to take on apprentices, and focus on quality over quantity.

The highlight of the year for Brian Trewin, Grow North staff, was the people who came to Leaf Rapids to study horticulture and for the workshops. He reflects, "Getting to meet a variety of people [was the highlight for me]. When you do a certain thing, it attracts a certain group of people. Interacting with those different groups is a good experience." Similarly, Chuck reflects on the partnership with the University of Manitoba, "Having university students come to

town and work with the kids and community members tends to be very inspiring, especially to the youth, and reduces the isolation that the community feels."

Grow North continues to build a strong team and with strong supporters. In 2017, there were 4 main staff for the project. Brian had been involved with the gardens as a youth, and then on and off for many years. In 2017, he became a staff member and his official title was "greenhouse technician", but in reality he was a jack of all trades for the project. Chuck, a self-described artist, musician, teacher, self-taught man, and long-thinker, reflects on the team, "Just like a band - everyone notices and sees the lead singer, but it takes so many people to make a successful band; you need the whole team."

Leaf Rapids is not a traditional gardening area, "Most people around here did not grow up with gardens, they haven't seen it as regular practice," reflects Brian. He adds, "I think because of that, trying to get community momentum on our side will take a really long time." This year, the project wants to implement container/vertical growing in the greenhouse, which might encourage more youth to be involved.

Even so, Chuck enthuses, "We don't have a long growing season, but we have longer days of sunlight which we take advantage of." Grow North is also adapting seeds to the colder climate, and looks forward to working with partners to do more research and steward the knowledge and resources they have developed to find creative solutions for the North. The project does not feed the whole community right now, but Brian shares, "We all take a portion of the food grown home - this project definitely contributes to food security in my household."

1 Brian Trewin with heart potato

2 Chuck Stensgard shares his knowledge with Russell, Kelly and Alex at the Summer Workshop

3 Brian leading portion of Grow North Summer Workshop

4 Jordan Horodecki with honeyberries

5 From left to right: Brian Trewin, Alexandria Moodie and Julie Price planting during the Summer Workshop

6 Summer Workshop participants

7 Brian Trewin

“The process of food security is like planting a seed - everyone will become more concerned with food quality than food production, we will see a lot of change, and succession plans will become even more important.”

- Chuck Stensgard,
Regional Gardening Co-coordinator





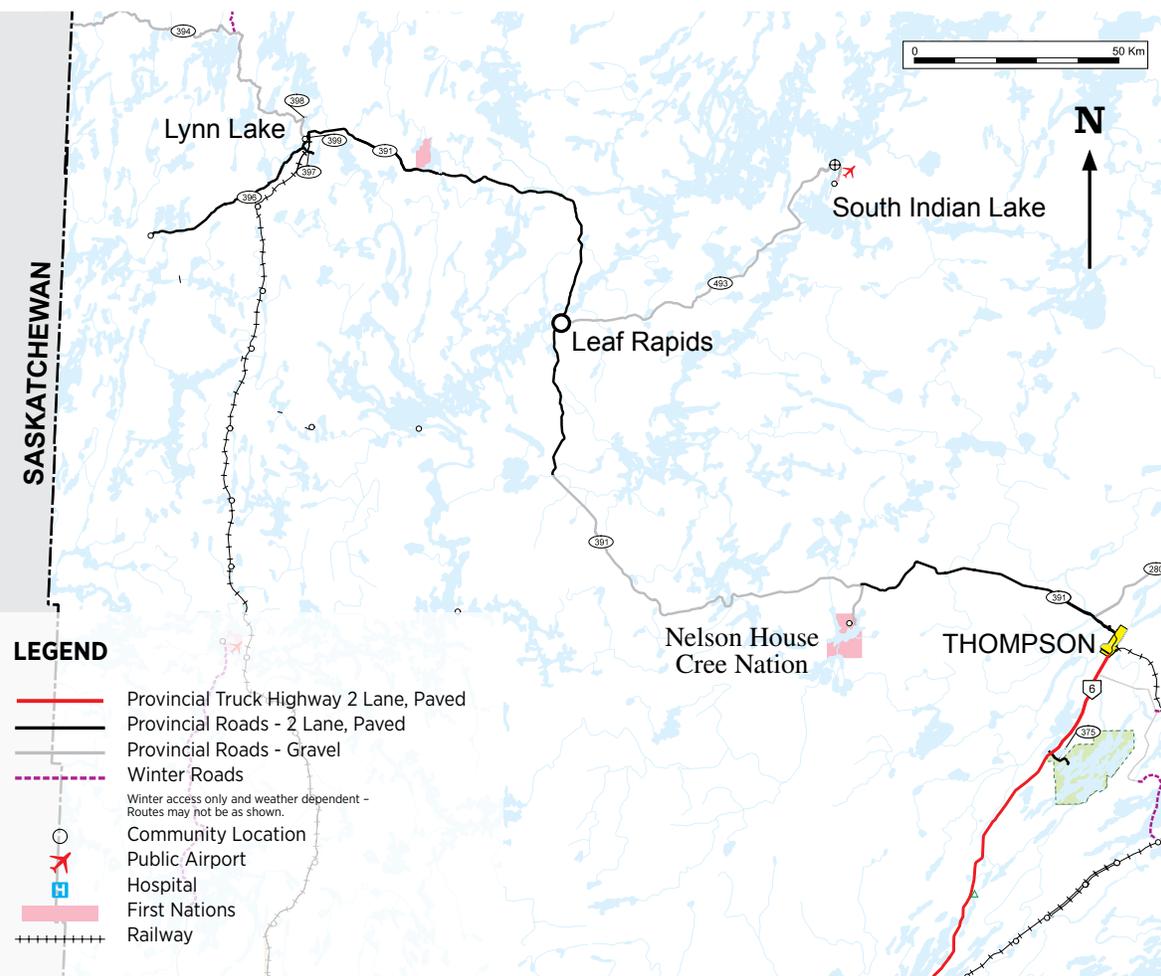
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NFMCCC funding

- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Empower youth and adults to live well and increase food security through gardening, and to be a hub of sharing and learning on gardening and greenhouse techniques for Northern boreal communities. Focused on practical research and sharing of knowledge, primarily to students, and also doing outreach support to other regional food-production projects.

LOCATION

Leaf Rapids has year-round road access and is located 1,000 km north of Winnipeg. It is a post-mining town that has transitioned from a population of 2,500 to about 500.

“What you practice will influence the way that you are. If you are practicing land-based cultivation then it will influence the person you are at that moment. It definitely cultivates a different mind - your thinking mind, your heart mind, your body mind, your spirit mind. The practices that you do will influence each of those minds.”

- Brian Trewin, Grow North staff



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Mino Pimatchiwin / Community Garden Project

OPASKWAYAK CREE NATION (OCN)

HOST: Christ Church / PROJECT MANAGER: Opaskwayak Culture & Healthy Living Initiatives

A major component of the Opaskwayak Culture and Healthy Living Initiatives for the past 4 years, has been the return to and promotion of healthy and sustainable food sources. Starting with 3 community gardens, there are now 5 big gardens, a summer kitchen, bee hives, a turtle mound herb garden, pumpkin patch, clay oven, and a new perennial flower and shrub garden. Families participate every year, and there are also many out of town guests who visit the garden, which creates and strengthens rich community learning and family connections.

In 2017, though there was a lot of rain, which delayed planting, yields were still good. In particular, the cherry trees yielded buckets of delicious fruit, which community members flocked to the garden to try out and take home to their families. The turtle herb garden was a big hit, with many people stopping by to pick herbs. The beekeeping, although a tremendous amount of work, was also popular. There were challenges with the clay oven and the wood cook stove, but there have been learnings and community building associated with those to continue moving forward.

Participants at the community gardens ranged from small children to Elders. There are also many students who help out and use the gardens as learning spaces. For example, the Land-Based Education Master's cohort students from the University of Saskatchewan spent time in the gardens during their field school experience; the OCN high school students helped with planting both the vegetables and perennial flower garden; teachers from the Pas have started to partner with OCN classes to use

the garden as part of the curriculum. The school garden club also partnered with a community health representative who showed the students how to make salads in the outdoor kitchen.

Jaime Moore, a school counselor and gardener, has been involved with the Community Garden Project from the beginning, and also leads a school gardening club. The highlight of the year for her was when her co-workers had the chance to see the community garden as part of their back-to-school orientation. She reflects, "It was fulfilling to go for a walk with co-workers and then be able to show them the different parts of the community garden, and to let them know that they were welcome to help themselves to things in the garden, or join if they wanted to. I heard many comments from them, such as, "Wow, what's this?" And, "This is so nice! I didn't know this was here.""

Jaime also notes, "The vegetables are free, and when they are ready they are harvested and distributed in the community. I hear people talking about trying new vegetables that they don't buy at the store and don't usually eat."

Peggy and Alex Wilson, mentors and organizers of the gardens, observe that, "The main change that has happened is a shift in attitude and increased experience. During the first year or two, many people were shy to come to the garden and felt insecure about their lack of gardening knowledge. Over the years, as people spend more time in the gardens, they are becoming more confident. Regular garden members have become the strongest advocates for food security and food sovereignty in our community."

1 Leon Simard, First Nations Food Security Coordinator (left) and Shawn Yaremko, Beatrice Wilson Health Centre (right)

2 3 sisters planted in mounds

3 Donated herbs for the herb garden

4 Peggy and Stan Wilson, Moses and Mable Bignell at the main garden

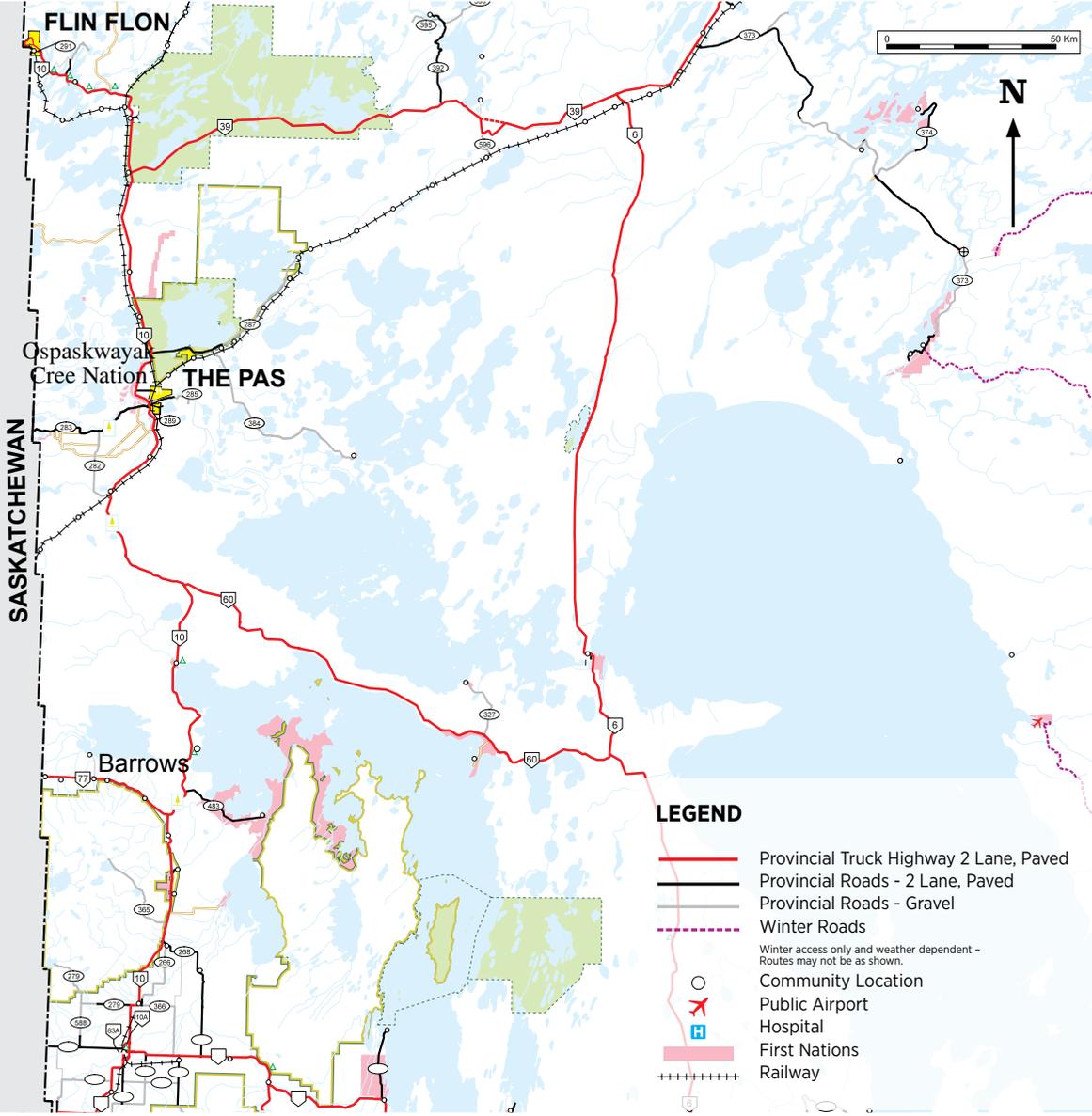
5 Margaret Ross and Jaime Moore transplanting

6 Margaret Ross planting mounds

7 Lyle Crane installing fencing at east side garden

8 Garden members





NFMCCC funding

- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Provide opportunities and spaces for residents of Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) to live healthy and active lifestyles.

LOCATION

OCN is adjacent to the Saskatchewan River and The Pas, in Treaty 5 territory. It has year round road access, and a population of about 3,200 on reserve.

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“ There is no doubt that the gardens have had huge social benefits to the community. As people become more familiar with gardening, we have seen an increase in consumption of garden vegetables, fruits and herbs. ”

- Peggy & Alex Wilson





Peguis Agricultural Project

PEGUIS FIRST NATION

HOST: Peguis Development Corporation / PROJECT MANAGER: Peguis Agricultural Project

AS TOLD BY CARL MCCORRISTER, Peguis Community Garden Supervisor

The Peguis Community Garden Project has been alive and well for the last 7 years. Our history has been that of agriculture when our people settled in a permanent settlement at the mouth of the Red River in the 1700s. Our community was known as St. Peter's Reserve and we remained there until 1907 when we were forced to surrender our reserve and move to our present community of Peguis First Nation.

The community garden has continued to grow in size, and with the number of people who have joined us in growing our own food. Each year, we continue to get requests to till for community members who want their own gardens. In 2017, we assisted 26 people who have gone back to the land to grow their own food. For 2018, we are already getting requests for tilling and also to help with box gardens.

Growing our own seed has proven successful and is critical in regaining our culture of having our own seed and growing our own food. We have been doing this for about four years now, and have had great success with growing tobacco. Tobacco is one of the sacred plants of our people, along with sage, sweetgrass and cedar.

It was used in ceremonies and offerings – grown and traded by our people for thousands of years throughout Turtle Island. Today, it has its own “Tobacco Act” controlled by the Federal Government; because of restrictions, our people now buy commercial

tobacco (loaded with chemicals) for their ceremony and offerings. However, we have now developed the process to grow our own tobacco, that works with our conditions. By collecting our own seed and growing our own tobacco, we have taken the steps to regain the heritage and culture around our traditional tobacco use.

Potatoes have also been important for our community. The Potato Seed Program started in 2017 with the help of the University of Manitoba Seed Program. We got a variety of potato seeds to breed here in our garden, including the purple, low starch potato, which is good for people with diabetes. It will take 3 years of planting and caring for these potatoes, where at the end, we will have our own potato developed here. Our seed from 2017 has been a great success; I just got them out of storage - they have buds all over and so will be great seed. We are also working with a couple of people (Don & Alice) with another set of seed we received this year; so, we will have two types of potatoes developed here in the next 3 years. We probably will name one set 'Peguis Potatoes'.

We hope to extend this to other communities in the future, as we have shared our seed with many people from other communities, and continue developing our own seed for other vegetables. We are looking forward to another successful year of growing our own food; the experience of the last seven years has given us much knowledge and we will take further steps in gaining our heritage and use of our land, and promoting community building.



1 Seneca root

2 Dennis Sinclair organizing the beet harvest

3 Students planting tree seedlings

4 Ervin Bighetty & Peguis Volunteer look at the growing garden

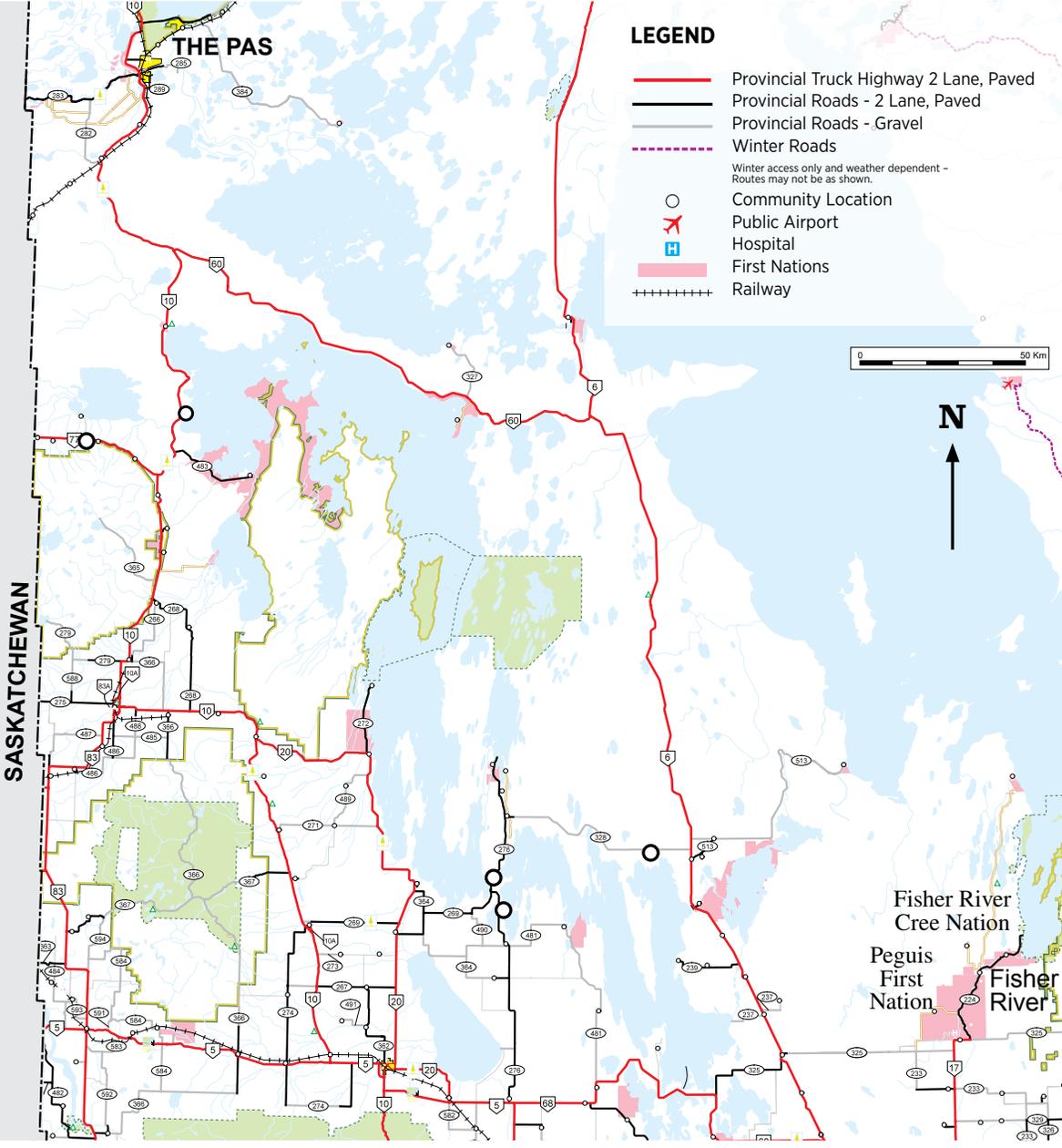
5 From left: Terri, Carl and Abbr during USC Canada visit

6 Russell Bear Rototilling

7 Carl McCorrister

8 USC Canada (member of NMFCC) staff visiting Peguis

9 Elders Day at the Community Garden



NFMCCC funding

- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Regain our heritage and culture of community agriculture by engaging community members to grow 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 200 km 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 5,000 on reserve, and 5,000 off reserve.





Negginan Food Producers Co-op

POPLAR RIVER FIRST NATION

HOST: Food Matters Manitoba / PROJECT MANAGER: Poplar River Health Centre

Since 2012, Poplar River community members and the Health Centre have been working to develop a garden and greenhouse. The grand opening of the Poplar River Greenhouse took place in the summer of 2016, with much fanfare. Its first year of operations came with lots of learning and lessons for the whole community.

Now in its second year, the greenhouse and gardens needed more dedicated staff. Kelly Hindmarch was hired as the only full-time staff, and reflects, “I came aboard the Poplar River greenhouse and gardens a little reluctantly. I am a small home gardener with a couple years experience in home gardening; I really didn’t know anything about greenhouse gardening and had no idea of how different it was from outdoor gardening.” He adds, “I used it as a practice year. This year I’m growing everything we had last year, but doubled, even tripled the numbers of all vegetables [we had].”

Reflecting on the challenges, Kelly remarks, “Last year was a rough year, we only had like 3-4 rainfalls all of last summer; it was a real hot one, the gardens had 2-3 inch wide cracks in them from it drying out.” There is a freshwater creek about 150 m away, but without a pump, all the watering had to be done by hand, which took hours.

Kelly recounts, “Then we got hit with a forest fire that caused the evacuation of the entire community, except for about 35 of us. I stayed behind to watch our greenhouse and gardens. The evacuation lasted right into the harvest time, so I ended up cooking up a couple feasts for the people left behind, using all usable veggies from the gardens and

greenhouse. I did manage to make about 30 home deliveries to people in the community before the evacuation with salad kits, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, lettuce, tomatoes, radishes, beets, and we did get a pretty good harvest of potatoes and carrots that I did deliver to people after the evacuation. Everyone was really grateful and quite surprised that it came from our gardens. So, last year was a good one for me; from my learning experience to seeing the smiles on people’s faces when I delivered fresh, free veggies.”

Kelly and his colleague, Russell Anderson attended a training in Leaf Rapids, at the Grow North Project (pg 22), in June. Kelly remembers, “That kinda opened the door for me to greenhouse gardening; I learnt a lot in the 3 days I was there.” Kelly shares that he learned about temperature control in greenhouses, bugs and pesticides, that almost all plants can be used in one way or another, and about the effects of the changing climate on gardening in the North.

For the coming year, besides trying fish compost fertilizer and putting a fence around the garden, Kelly shares, “We will be getting our school involved, as they are eager to learn. The plan is to stagger planting and have 2 farmers’ markets and sell the produce. All money we make will go back into the greenhouse, and if we make enough money we would like to hire more workers. I am hoping to get the Band involved, and at harvest time try to have a feast with all wild food and vegetables from the garden.”



- 1 Plants growing in greenhouse
- 2 Poplar River Greenhouse
- 3 Antonio Hindmarch, Kelly’s son
- 4 Elders enjoying the harvest
- 5 Harvest
- 6 Kelly at Grow North training
- 7 Poplar River Garden
- 8 Tina and Storm visiting the greenhouse



4



5



NFMCCC funding

- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

To increase access to affordable and locally grown organic food options, to use greenhouse technology to extend the growing season, and to recruit community members to be active in learning.

LOCATION

Poplar River First Nation is located on the east shores of Lake Winnipeg. It is a fly-in community with winter road access. Poplar River is home to approximately 1,700 people.

“ I’m committing myself to one of the hardest jobs around with ambition and motivation to prove I can make those gardens and greenhouse work to their full potential. The gardens are peaceful, a place to find yourself. To watch nature grow from seed to plant is pretty amazing, and even amazinger is you get to eat the plants or its fruits and veggies. ”

- Kelly Hindmarch, Poplar River greenhouse and gardens staff



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Alex Keno Memorial Farm / Meechim Farm

GARDEN HILL FIRST NATION

HOST: Community Ownership Solutions Inc. / PROJECT MANAGER: Aki Foods

The Alex Keno Memorial Farm (also known as Meechim Farm) started in 2015 in partnership between Garden Hill First Nation and Aki Foods, and is 14 acres in size. Currently 6-7 acres are being farmed, with 15-20 types of vegetables grown, a small apple orchard, a small greenhouse, 500 meat chickens, a dozen laying hens, and a few turkeys. 75% of eggs are sold directly from the farm, and 25% are donated to community events. Tomatoes, lettuce, and strawberries are grown in the greenhouse. The sale and delivery of healthy food boxes launched in December, and sales have been steadily increasing.

Aki Foods has established diverse partnerships inside and outside the community. The partnership with Garden Hill First Nation's (GHFN) Employment and Training started when the project began. 6 youth were hired and trained in 2017; in 2018, youth will have their own gardens to learn from, and will be garden advisors to community members that they recruit to join the gardens. This program will further build leadership, job, and life skills in youth, while also building community connections. Additionally, Aki Foods partners with the schools in GHFN, supports home gardeners, has welcomed many guests to the farm, and has done outreach and media with other communities, donors and organizations across the country.

Zack Flett has been involved with the project from the beginning, and was hired as the Community Coordinator in 2017. Zack is from Garden Hill First Nation, has a background in community development, and is also a part-time student at the University of Manitoba studying towards the Indigenous Governance Program. Zack describes that there are many instruments for change, "I am relearning this

process of going back to the land. We had a disconnect with what's happened, but we are going back to our lifestyles - one day at a time."

Zack reflects that Aki Foods recognized the strength in the community and the network, and the potential for healing. He emphasizes, "I've committed myself to be part of [Aki's] commitment [to GHFN], and be part of healthy living. I feel very fortunate to be involved in this community initiative. But I'm only one person amongst many people that want to make this place a better place to live. There is no 'I' in team." He adds, "Our Elders are there to guide us, at the same time we are making the effort to reconnect with the land, to our past, and to move into the present and future. GHFN Elder, Terry Little has been instrumental in our work, and been there every step of the way."

In 2017, there was a total evacuation of the community due to forest fires. When they returned back home, the leadership wanted us to get life going as before. Despite it being a little colder, the kids and their families came out [to the farm]. We had face painting, tractor rides, there were various games out in the farm, and kids and parents went out to the field to harvest potatoes. We loved the feeling of the community coming back together. It was an exciting day for us. Also, people that never thought of doing farming, individuals who never thought they could do it, thought it couldn't be done in our region, they saw something different."

"People come in and ask in the middle of winter, 'When are we getting started? When are the chickens coming back? What can I do now? What can I do to get ready? When can I get my garden going?'. Not only the workers, but also the community."



6

1 Main farm building (greenhouse, storage, processing spaces) in forefront and red bunkhouse in back

2 Chicken barn with storage unit in rear

3 Zach Flett. Photo by OCIC/ Allan Lissner; taken for the Transformations virtual exhibit

4 Broiler chickens

5 Rodney Contois, Aki Foods, and Sarah Stern, Maple Leaf Centre for Action on Food Security

6 Josephine and Lennord with their plants, June 2017

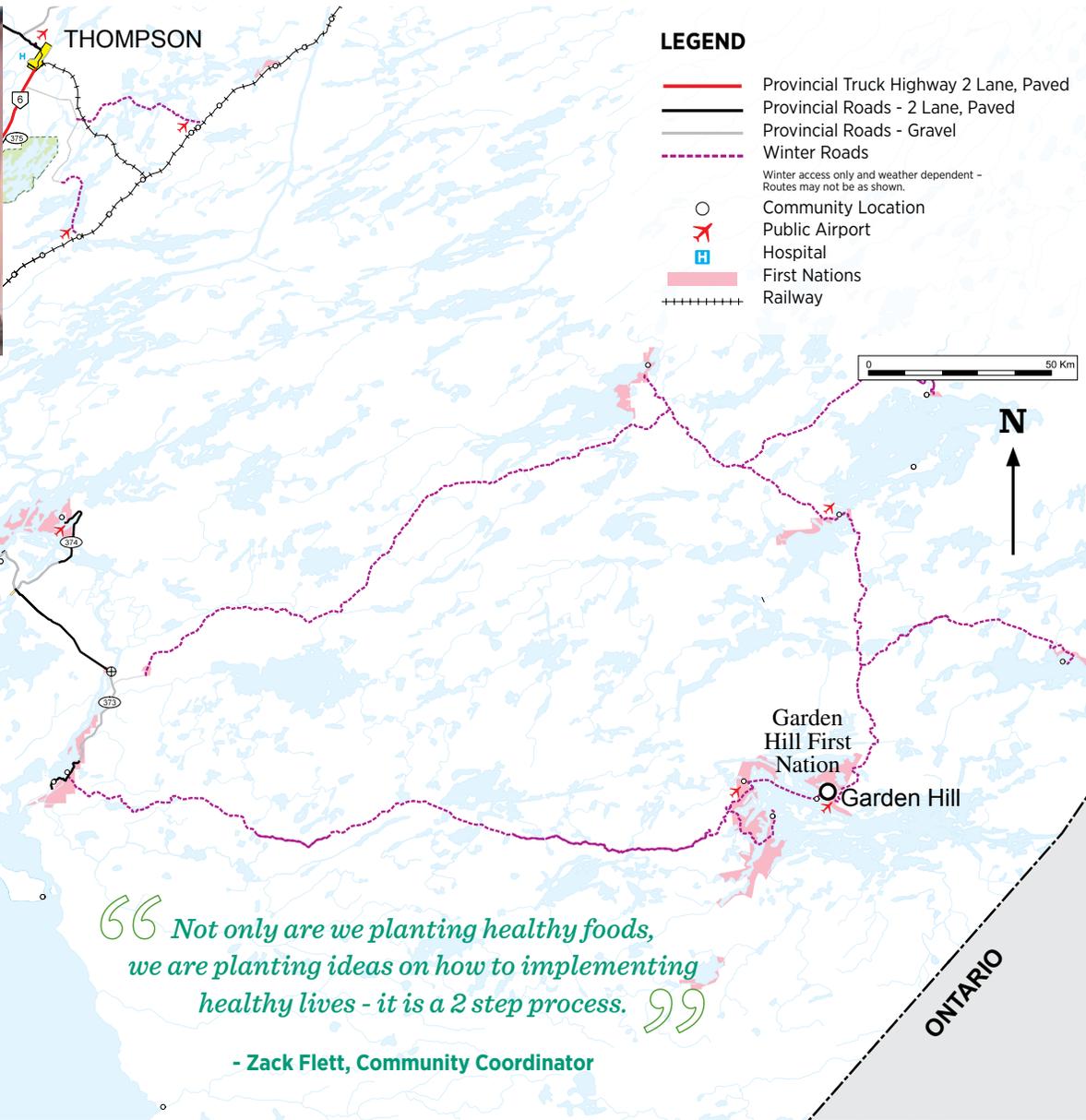
7 Terry Little. Photo by OCIC/ Allan Lissner; taken for the Transformations virtual exhibit

8 Geordie Wood and Robert Guilford digging the potato row

9 Winter Road Crew with Robert Guilford, delivering supplies for Meechim



7



**NFMCCC
funding**

- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Change the local food system to reduce dependency on southern food supplies and increase employment and training opportunities to create healthy, long-lasting impacts for the community.

LOCATION

Garden Hill First Nation is accessible by plane or winter road. With a population of 4,400 people, Garden Hill First Nation is the largest fly-in community in the province.



livestock & beekeeping PROJECTS



1

Raising animals and beekeeping are part of a strong local food system and the local economy. Animals provide protein, milk, fibre and eggs, and bees give their miracle of honey as well as wax. Caring for livestock can be calming and centering because you must consistently think of, and care for the animals.

Featured in this Story Sharing Booklet are: Alex Keno Memorial Farm where hundreds of chickens are raised annually; NACC and BRRT beekeeping projects that support local people to develop their own Northern apiaries (bee farms); and the Pukatawagan Chicken Project which is currently evolving into 'Dodge City Farm,' a larger and more diverse farming operation.

However, there are lots of other inspiring people and groups raising livestock that we want to mention. In the Island Lake region, supported by Four Arrows Regional Health Authority (www.fourarrowsrha.ca), there are many families raising backyard chicken flocks. In Shamattawa, people continue to build their poultry project (Community Stories 2016, pg 36) and involve more people. Sherridon (Community Stories 2016, pg 38) grows healthy birds for community

members and in Opaskwayak Cree Nation they are into their third year of beekeeping.

There are also Northern farming operations outside of Manitoba. A great example is the The Northern Farm Training Institute (NFTI, www.nftinwt.com) in Hay River, Northwest Territories. NFTI was established as a non-profit in 2013 on a 260-acre site. They grow crops and vegetables and raise livestock year-round. NFTI provides immersive farm training programs for Northerners (check their website for upcoming events!), and it is a local feed and equipment supplier to the region.

People and animals continue to demonstrate that anything is possible if you have commitment, creativity, and some decent shelter and feed for those long winter months.

- 1 Capturing a bee swarm
- 2 Northern Farm Training Institute Kim Rapiti and Sheep
- 3 Sherridon chickens
- 4 Northern Farm Training Institute sow and piglets
- 5 Sherridon chickens



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“ People were happy to see that it was possible to raise chicken in the community and continue to speak about it with pride. The coop became a place for young people to come visit and many of them helped out with feeding and watering. Along with youth other people helped out when the main chicken raisers were away, and some of them are looking to raise chickens for themselves, possibly taking over the maintenance of the current coops and sharing the workload. ”

- Shamattawa Chicken Project, 2016

“ ...we can build a sustainable food system where local people are employed with the raising and butchering of animals. Another big thing would be to start breeding the animals that do good in the North and we can potentially sell some to other Northern communities. ”

- Johnny Sinclair, Pukatawagan Chicken Project



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Pukatawagan Chicken Project

MATHIAS COLOMB CREE NATION / PUKATAWAGAN

HOST: Mathias Colomb Cree Nation / PROJECT MANAGER: Pukatawagan Chicken Project

Pukatawagan, like many remote Northern communities, has limited access to fresh foods, with only one store that is expensive and lacks fresh foods. Inspired by a past Chief, generations past when the community used to raise animals, and stories from neighbouring communities (like Sherridon) who have had success raising chickens, the Pukatawagan Chicken Project began in 2017.

Johnny Sinclair, Project Lead reflects, “Late Chief Pascal Bighetty had a really good vision 35 years ago for food security - a long-term vision to have livestock and raise animals.” He shares that people had tried raising animals, but back then there were challenges in planning, implementation and support, but that it was “a live-and-learn challenge for the community; real life experience.” He says that the work today is a continuation of this vision, “What really stuck with me was that we need to do this; I still had that drive, knowing that this was part of our recent history.”

In 2017, Johnny raised a variety of birds, including 60 chickens, 12 ducks, and 12 turkeys. He also raised 10 pigs. Johnny built a shelter for the birds, and a pig pen with a viewing area so that community members could see the animals. He shares that the animal feed is challenging to get because of the cost of grains.

The largest challenge however was the extremely cold winter and the lack of adequate shelter for the animals. Only 2 chickens, 5 ducks, 5 turkeys (1 tom and 4 hens), and 10 pigs survived; the hogs and turkeys were able to better manage the cold. Obtaining the materials for the shelters and undertaking the planning for

building better shelters is challenging, takes time, and will be a focus for 2018.

Johnny shares, “It’s been a lot of work, I’ll tell you that. I’m not discouraged by it, I just keep working. I’m learning a lot and gaining knowledge. Everything is shifting with how people see animals - this is one of the main reasons that I wanted to raise my own animals. The challenge was to take it upon myself to start raising these birds, so I would be the one caring for them, handling them, and looking at the end product; and what I will be eating and what my family eats. I will not go to the markets to buy my meat. I really have a concern with hormones, the antibiotics and different things that industrial farming uses on their animals.”

Though there were challenges, there were surprises as well. Johnny shares, “The turkeys were a big surprise - they were laying eggs all winter. The turkey eggs are different than chicken eggs - lot richer in every sense, a lot bigger, the yolk is a lot creamier. It’s a good thing. I would pick up to 4 eggs at a time, every 2-3 days.”

Johnny also plans to continue getting people involved. He shares, “This is not a one man operation. Thank goodness that people come and help. Local community members, friends, family, my children, everybody that is seeing what is happening will lend some help. I am working on getting people inspired and to see what is possible in our community. This is going to be a slow process and I think if I keep on going there will be lasting change in the community. I want to inspire others to think about raising their own food.”

1 Pukatawagan Chicken Project Coop

2 Muscovy duck

3 Turkey

4 Turkey eggs

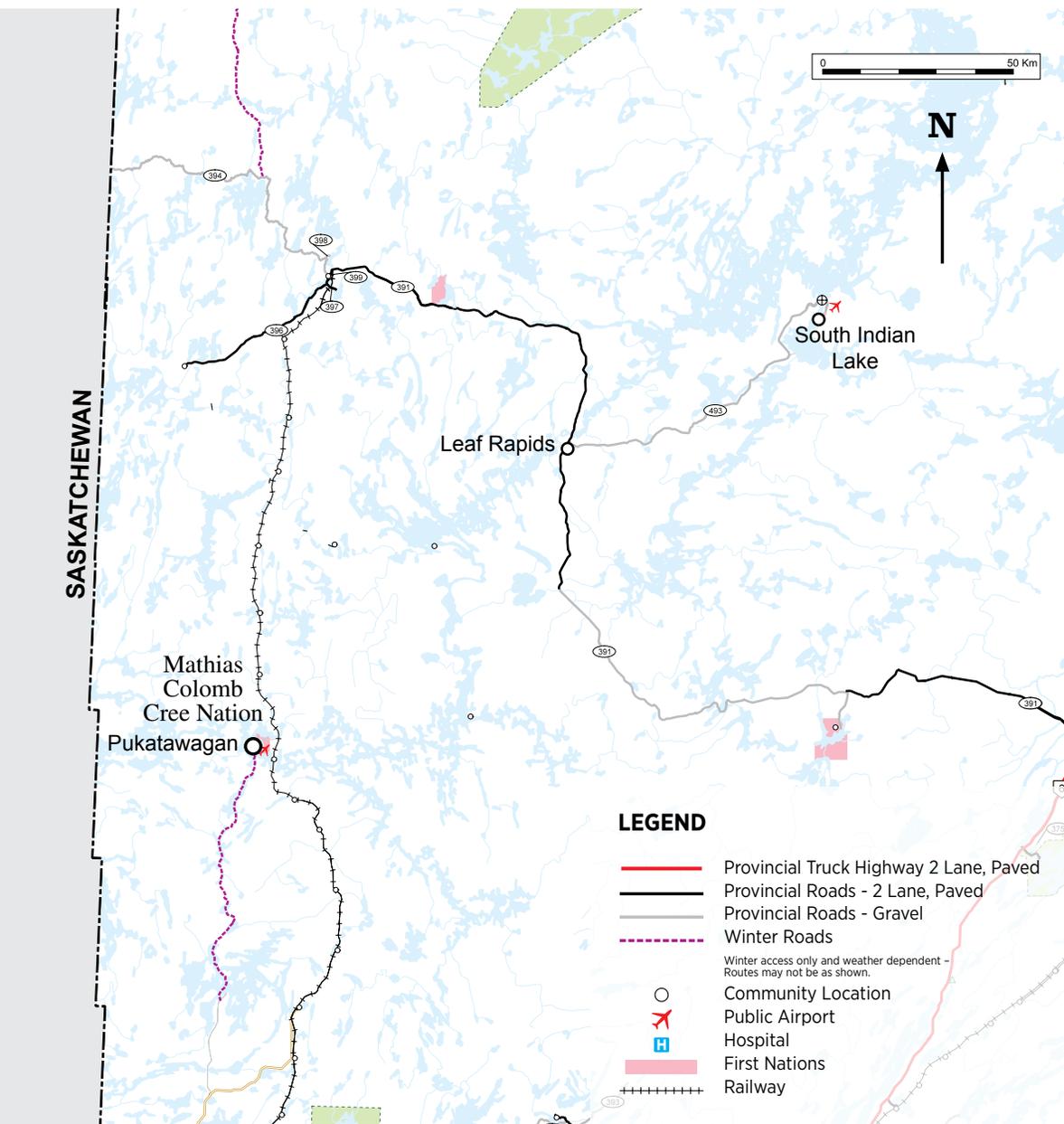
5 Pigs

6 Group photo of some of the Sinclair family



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NFMCCC funding

- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Raise chickens and generate interest in raising chickens with community members.

LOCATION

Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, also known as Pukatawagan, is located 210 km north of the Pas. The main community is accessible by plane or train. A temporary winter road is open for about 3 months of the year. The total population is just over 1,500 people, mostly Cree.

“ I think society as a whole is learning and shifting how they approach food; the struggle is real to maintain a healthy balance. ”
 - Johnny Sinclair, Project Lead



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Northern Beekeeping Project

WABOWDEN, NELSON HOUSE / NISICHAWAYASIKH CREE NATION,
THICKET PORTAGE, CORMORANT, OXFORD HOUSE, GOD'S LAKE NARROWS

HOST: Wabowden Community Council / PROJECT MANAGER: Bayline Regional Roundtable Inc.

After Food Champions from Thicket Portage, Nelson House, Cormorant and Wabowden attended beekeeping workshops facilitated by the NACC Beekeeping Project (pg 38), they saw the benefits and brought the interest and expertise back to their communities.

This project is important to our communities as a source of natural, organic honey for participants' families. Fresh and healthy foods are hard to access for our communities because they are only accessible by winter roads and the railway, where trains only run 3 days a week. In Nelson House and Cormorant there is a road, but it's still a long drive to a full service grocery store. Community members want to share honey, and create local market opportunities for honey and beeswax products, creating income for our communities.

Bayline Regional Roundtable staff did a workshop in Meadow Portage with the NACC beekeepers, so we could help each other and get hands-on experience with the bees. We purchased the bees, hives, and equipment, and got everyone set up. Each community got one set of bees, one hive, one extractor, a winter wrap for each hive, a cloth strainer, some containers, some pails, a bee suit and gloves, a honey scraper, a frame lifter, a feeding pail and a smoker.

Bees were given out for the first 3 years because we don't know if they are going to survive the winter. The beekeeper in Wabowden had one hive for her first two years,

and she got 37 lbs of honey in the first year and 50 lbs in the second year. This year she got 154 lbs out of 2 hives. That was really good; we had lots of flowers which really helped.

This is the first year we are wintering our bees so we are crossing our fingers that they survive. We are going to a workshop in Dauphin in 2018, so people can show us how to make our own queens so we can grow the number of hives. We have found that word of mouth is the best way to learn and teach people about keeping bees.

The main challenge is to get people educated that the bees are safe. People are scared that the bees will sting you. Once people see a workshop and understand that the bees don't sting you, people are a lot more interested in keeping bees. Another challenge is traveling to the workshops down bad roads. Having workshops is important, but it is a lot of travel to spread the word. We are hoping more people in our community get into it because we have a lot of open space. Getting people to do the work and commit can be tough.

We would like to learn all we can and get more people into it. So, we will continue to share our honey and give it away. We would like to teach the students and the kids to keep bees, and hope some of them would like to learn and make it into a business one day. Next year, we want to go into the schools and take kids to hands-on workshops. Eventually, those who become involved may become self-sustaining beekeepers.

1 Honey bees

2 Ross Fourre explaining how to remove frames from hive

3 A full frame of honey

4 Participants (Alexandria Moody, Myrtle Fourre, Brandon Hart and Carol Sanoffsky) getting ready to explore a field of beehives

5 Brandon Hart (Fred's grandson) showing us his first batch of a full frame of honey

6 Ross Fourre showing Fred Hart and Alexandria Moody how to extract honey

7 Alexandria Moody in her bee suit

8 Ross Fourre demonstrating honey extraction





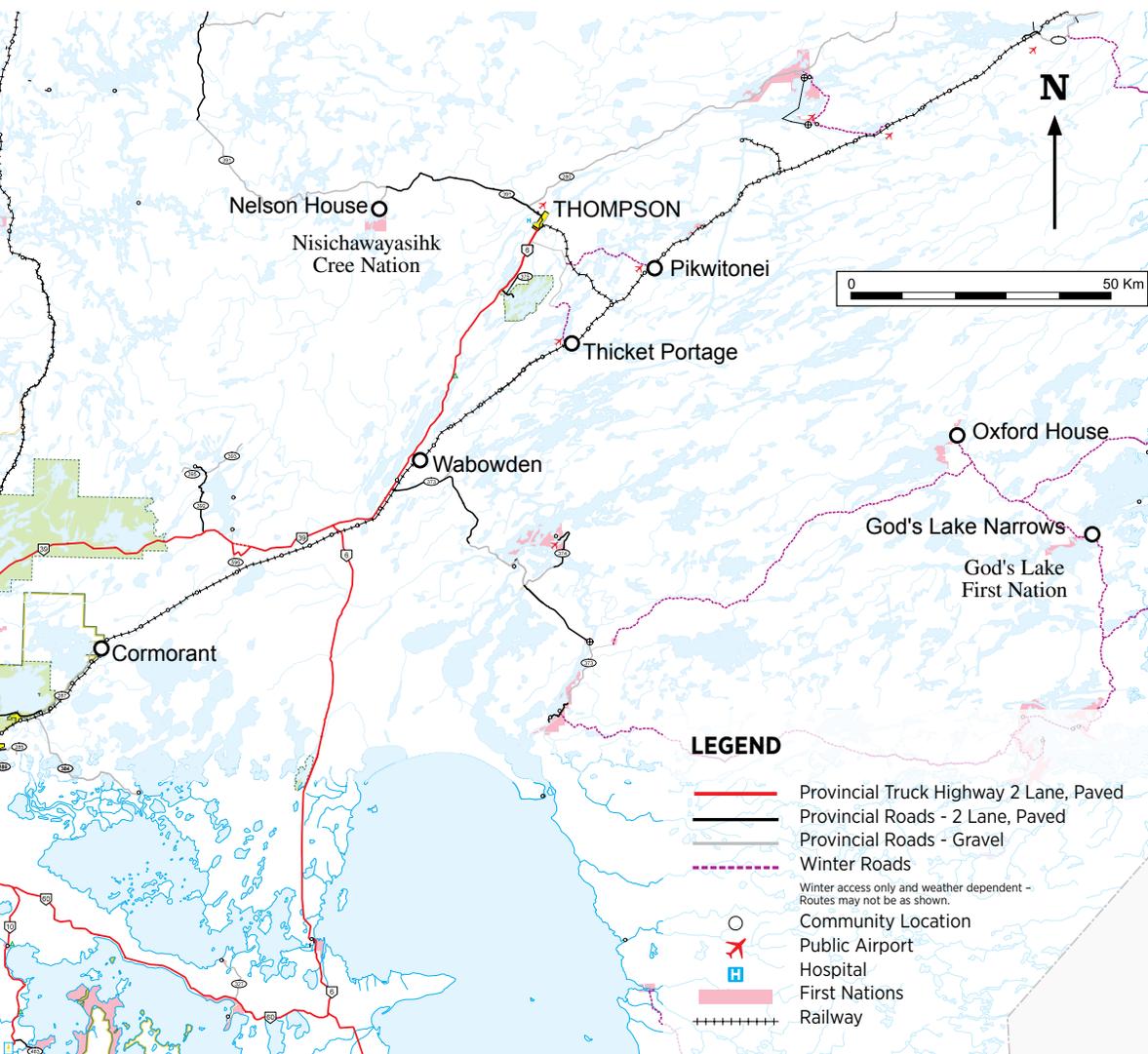
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NFMCCC funding

- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Contribute to safe and sustainable food systems, and local market opportunity, by expanding and developing northern beekeeping operations and organic honey production.

LOCATION

Cormorant, Wabowden, and Thicket Portage are located along Hudson's Bay Railway. An all-season road ends at Cormorant, 78 km northeast of the Pas; while Nelson House is also accessible by all-season road. Oxford House and God's Lake Narrows are fly-in communities.



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“ We are not getting sprayed by insecticides or pesticides, so our honey is the best. I am not bragging. ”
 - with laughs, Caroline Sanoffsky, BRR Administrator

“ We give the elders the honey and they all come back and ask if we have any more honey. ”
 - Myrtle Fourre, Elder



NACC Beekeeping Project

BARROWS, WATERHEN, CRANE RIVER, SPENCE LAKE, DAWSON BAY,
ST. MARTIN, HOMEBROOK, MEADOW PORTAGE

HOST: Wabowden Community Council / PROJECT MANAGER: The Northern Association of Community Councils

SUMMARY: This project began in 2013, and continues to grow and strengthen each year. The project started with 5 families, and by 2017 there have been 18 families involved.

The project is important to the communities involved as a source of natural, organic honey (a total of 3,143 lbs of honey were harvested this year), and because of the income that some participants gain by selling honey and beeswax products. Children and youth have begun to become more involved in this project with their family members, and the communities involved have expressed substantially better vegetable and fruit growth now that the bees have been pollinating the area.

A YOUNG BEEKEEPER:

Nikki Veurink from Meadow Portage, has been keeping bees for 4 years, starting when she was just 17 years old. She began with 12 hives, and has expanded to 75 hives. Nikki manages the growing apiary, and it has become a family business.

Even with drought in 2017, Nikki and her bees were still able to produce 2400 lbs of honey. Three years ago, she started by designing a label and marketing to a few people in the community, and now the business has grown into a small storefront on the farm. People come to buy honey at \$8.00/kg, which is less than store prices. The local customer list is growing, and Nikki also markets to the Bee Maid Honey Co-op, as well as delivering her sweet product to Dauphin on a regular basis.

For the Veurinks, a large family of 14, the bees save them hundreds of dollars in sugar and honey costs. They have also replaced most of the sugar in their baking with honey.

Nikki has increased her beekeeping skills to include raising queens and splitting hives. She sells 'splits' (new hives) to other Northern would-

be beekeepers. Last year she sold 22 hives.

Nikki mentors one of her younger siblings each year on beekeeping and the honey business operation. She also leads NACC beekeeping workshops, with the support of her mentor, Bruce McLean. In 2017, Nikki led 3 workshops for NACC communities, and one for the Bayline Regional Roundtable. The workshops take place at the Veurink farm, where Nikki and Bruce show the participants the hives and the queens, lead them through all the logistics of raising bees, and extracting and bottling honey.

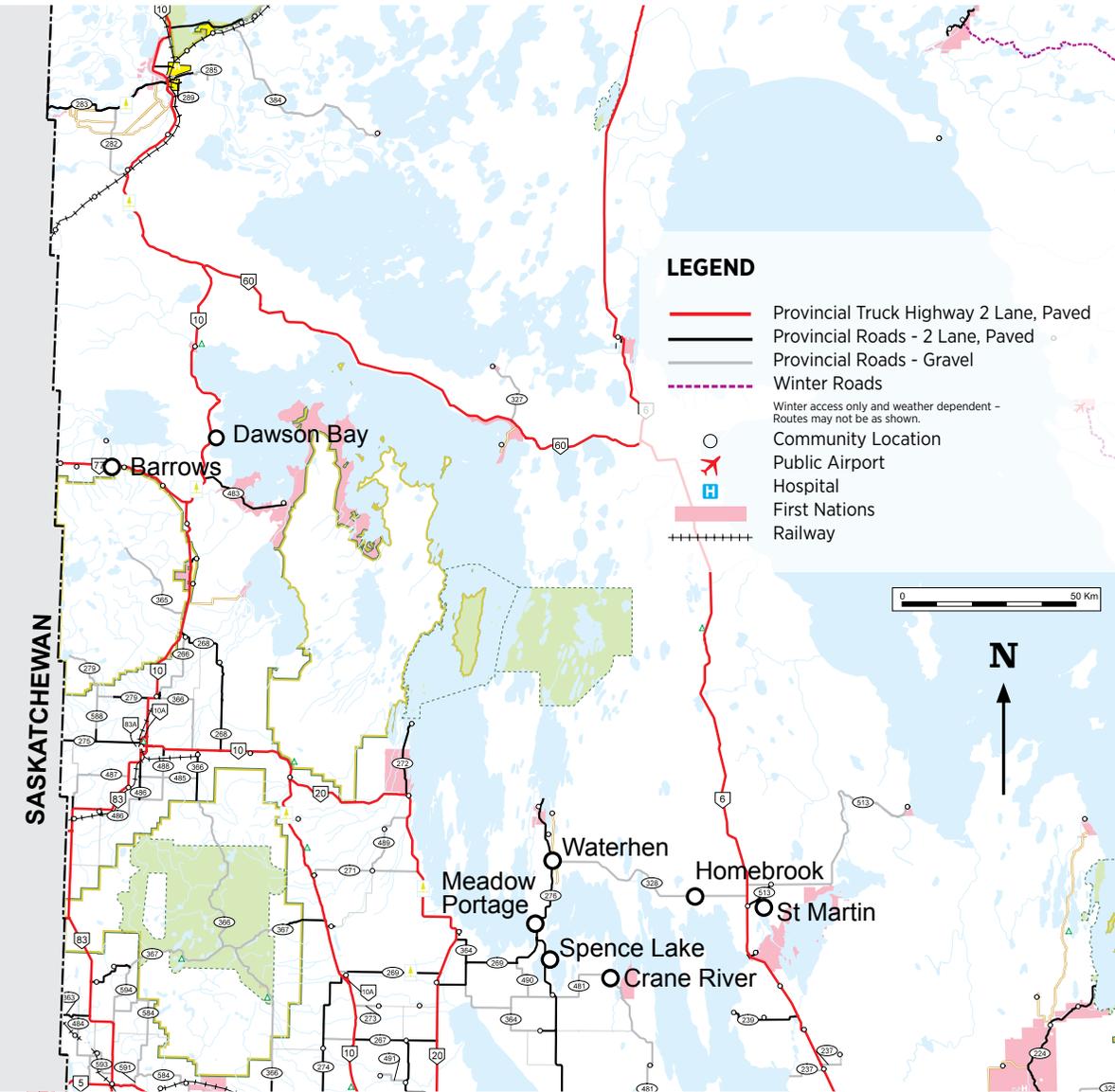
Over-wintering the bees is going really well. Nikki leaves the bees with a honey supply instead of sugar water, which keeps them healthier. The hives are blanketed with snow, so even on the coldest days there is bee activity in the hives. This coming year, Nikki and her family will maintain the same amount of hives. If all goes well, they will further expand their operations (which also includes growing fresh vegetables, and raising chicken, beef, lamb, goat and pork).

- 1 Gaudry family checking on hives
- 2 Nikki and Els Veurink in 2015
- 3 Family Fun: Jim Klassen, Leilani Dumas-Wiebe and Bonnie Dumas capture a swarm!
- 4 Beekeeping workshop led by Nikki Veurink and Bruce McLean
- 5 Olsen honey
- 6 Nikki Veurink and her dad, Dick Veurink, demonstrating how to start the smoker to calm the bees
- 7 Raw honeycomb
- 8 Winter hives with feeders on top



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NFMCCC funding

- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Contribute to safe and sustainable food systems by expanding localized beekeeping operations, organic honey production, and local market opportunities.

LOCATION

This project takes place in multiple communities throughout the Manitoba Parklands region, with populations mostly under 150 people per community. All communities are members of the Northern Association of Community Councils. (NACC) is an advocacy and support group focused on improving the quality of life in Northern Association communities.



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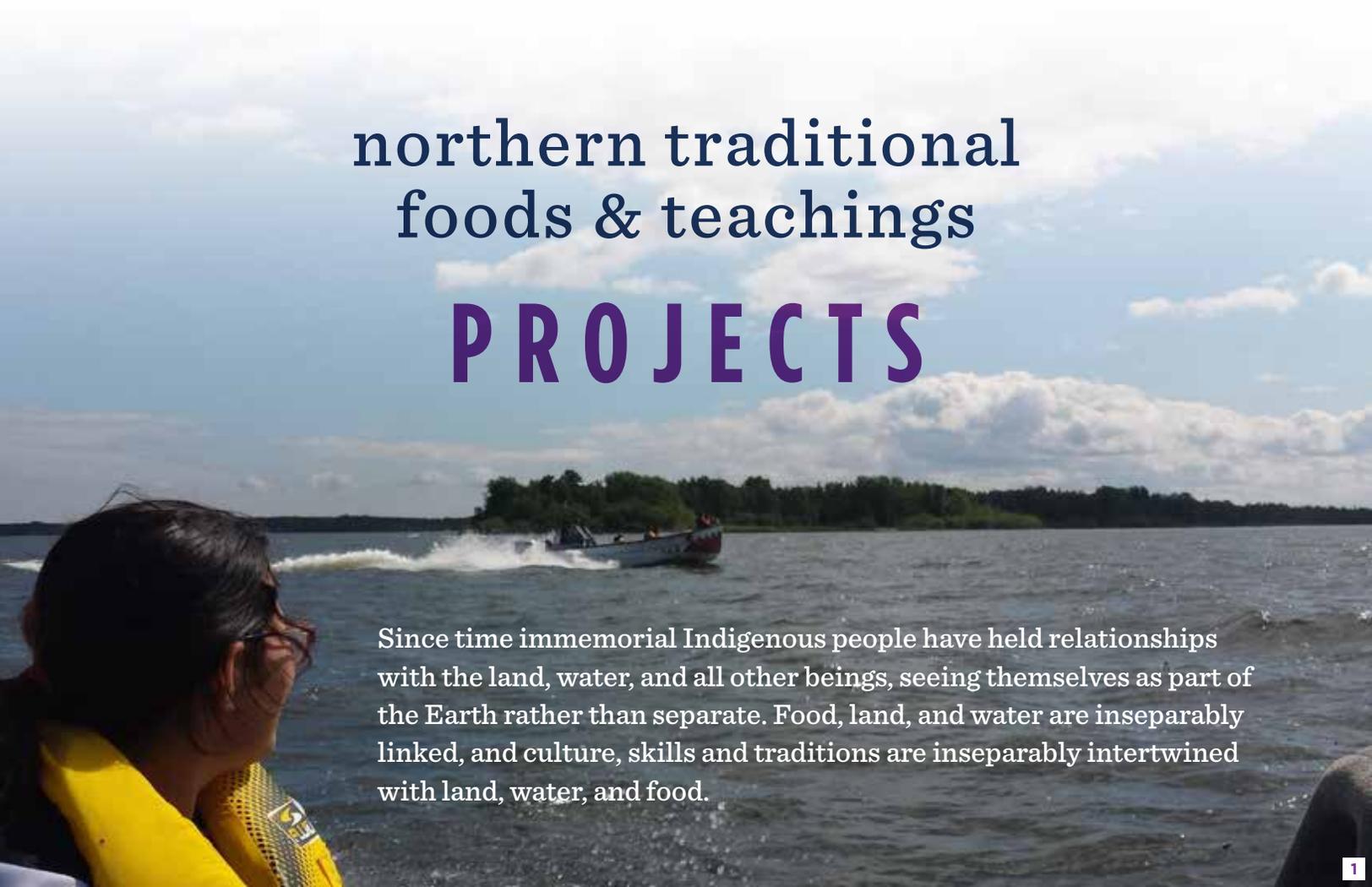
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“ For ourselves, we enjoy every part of beekeeping. The hardest part is waiting for the spring to come, and seeing how the bees did over the winter. ”

“ We have been really pleased with the way things are going. We keep expanding and it has become a family business. ”

- Nikki Veurink, NACC Beekeeper

northern traditional foods & teachings PROJECTS

A photograph of a person with dark hair and glasses, wearing a yellow life jacket, looking out over a large body of water. In the distance, a small boat is moving across the water, leaving a white wake. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Since time immemorial Indigenous people have held relationships with the land, water, and all other beings, seeing themselves as part of the Earth rather than separate. Food, land, and water are inseparably linked, and culture, skills and traditions are inseparably intertwined with land, water, and food.

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As supporters of Northern people and Northern food systems, the members of the NMFCCC have been learning from communities about how ‘country foods’ - food and medicines harvested from land and water - and traditional teachings, are vitally important to supporting healthy people, lands, waters and food systems. We are also only starting to understand how vital language and ceremony is in this complex and beautiful web of reciprocity and care.

The people involved in the Ithinto Mechisowin Program (IMP, meaning ‘food from the land’) have been some of our greatest teachers. Through dedicated community members, and Elders like Annie Spence, we have learned how traditional foods can bring people together to focus on a positive community-building program. IMP supports youth, elders and adults alike: everyone has a role. Youth involved in IMP are identifiable by people outside of the community for their outstanding land-based skills. IMP builds connections to the land and to each other, and has directly increased the health of many community members and the food security (or access) for approximately 400 of the 1,200 local residents each month. As John Bonner, former coordinator for IMP explained, “It [IMP] gives us back some of the dignity that we lost, and it also enhances our health... being able to access the wild food that we are accustomed to, that helps a great deal.”

Country Foods tend to bring people together. IMP members have generously shared their stories and have inspired other Northern communities to action. Most recently, Brochet

community members visited IMP to get tips and teachings for use in their own ‘Kisipekamak Food Plant’.

Reclaiming and revitalizing traditional teachings builds a pride in self and culture for youth. It also builds connections between generations, and to the lands and waters. NMFCCC has been happy to support youth-focused traditional teachings programs in Cross Lake (Mino Pimatiwin) and Pukatawagan (Traditional Summer Learning Program). Both programs operated in 2017 with NMFCCC support but were not able to share their stories in this booklet. Central to both programs was taking children and youth onto the land, teaching about plants, animals and the relationship humans have with them, and instilling the teaching of respect.

The Wabowden ‘Traditional Teachings’ program was piloted with enthusiasm.

“It was amazing to see the youth open up and voice their opinions and concerns. Some of these youth, it was their first time on the land or water, which they didn’t know could be so enjoyable, and to learn as well.” - Caroline Sanoffsky, Traditional Teachings Coordinator.

In 2018, we are happy to support the newly established Misipawistik Pimatisimēskanaw, which is an education program rooted deeply in land and culture. We look forward to learning more about the critical role of Country Foods and Traditional Teachings and how the NMFCCC can support these community-led initiatives.

“ *It’s my personal opinion, when we physically get involved, get our hands dirty, get on your knees, we can make that spiritual connection to the land. There is something in the air once you are on the land. We believe the answers are in the past and present...* ”

- Zack Flett, Community Coordinator,
Meechim Farm



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“ *We hope when the clouds break and our spirits come alive, that we can do and bring about an awareness that is fading here in the Northern Communities: a connection with the land and ourselves. So, in time we shall see and hope to reap the efforts that we sowed of yesterday’s gratitude and tomorrow’s hope in the everlasting present.* ”

- Brian Trewin, Grow North



- 1 Boating at Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective gathering
- 2 Asfia Kamal, Rene Linklater and Julie Price in front of the Ithinto Mechisowin Program office
- 3 John Bonner prepares meat
- 4 Fish filleting on camp at South Indian Lake
- 5 Grade 7 youth learning to butcher a moose at MCN Culture Camp



Kisipekamak Food Plant Planning

BARREN LANDS FIRST NATION / BROCHET

HOST: Food Matters Manitoba / PROJECT MANAGER: Barren Lands First Nation Health Centre

Barren Lands First Nation and the Brochet community are two of the most northern communities in Manitoba, located on the northern shore of Reindeer Lake. The only local food store in Brochet/Barren Lands is the Northern store, where the quantity of healthy foods is limited, expensive, and the quality is often low.

In 2017, the community undertook planning for a 'Food Plant' (envisioned as a centralized program with physical space) to address their access to healthy foods. Key planning questions included:

- Who is interested in a country foods program in the community?
- How would different community stakeholders want to be involved? (e.g. school, hunters/harvesters, health center, Band, Social Services)
- How could this program be most successful?
- What type of food would people want to have available?
- What skill or courses could we offer to the community to get people more involved?

In 2016, Cassandra Bighetty, the interim Community Health Representative visited South Indian Lake during a NMFCCC 'North to North Learning Exchange' (reference 2016 booklet, pg 44) to learn about the Ithinto Mechisowin Program (pg 48). The big takeaways from her experience were: that South Indian Lake was harvesting and growing food for themselves all year round, they do lots of food-focused workshops and training for youth, and the community had come together and formed a diverse organizing committee to make their country foods program a success.

In November, Cassandra took part in a visioning activity for the community, where Food Plant priorities and possibilities were discussed. Community members were excited about strengthening cultural practices, teaching youth, and bringing community members together. The name of the Food Plant was also decided - The "Kisipekamak Food Plant" was born. This all took place at the youth centre, where there is now a banner up for the Food Plant.

Sherry Bighetty is the Kisipekamak Food Plant Coordinator. She has taken a leadership role in setting up the Food Plant. She leads community meetings, gathers feedback and opinions from community members and Elders, and is doing what people want to see. She also led a dry meat workshop once the community got freezers, and hunters brought meat back in the winter. Meat packages were distributed to Elders and stored in the freezer.

"[The community is] still in the beginning stages [of this work], seeing what works and what doesn't," says Nicole Lamy, Northern & Indigenous Liaison with Food Matters Manitoba. In the coming year, the community is considering a whole host of activities, including: working with young adults, connecting Elders and youth, focusing on youth involvement through workshops and teaching youth about their culture; starting a chicken farm, year round greenhouse, and monthly pre-made meal package. Nicole shares, "Continuing to pass on community food practices is really important, including fishing trips."

1 Dry meat workshop in February 2018

2 3 Caribou harvest processing during community hunt for the Kisipekamak freezers

4 Visit to NCN Country Foods Program

5 Visit to Ithinto Mechisowin Program

6 Cut and wrapped Caribou meat

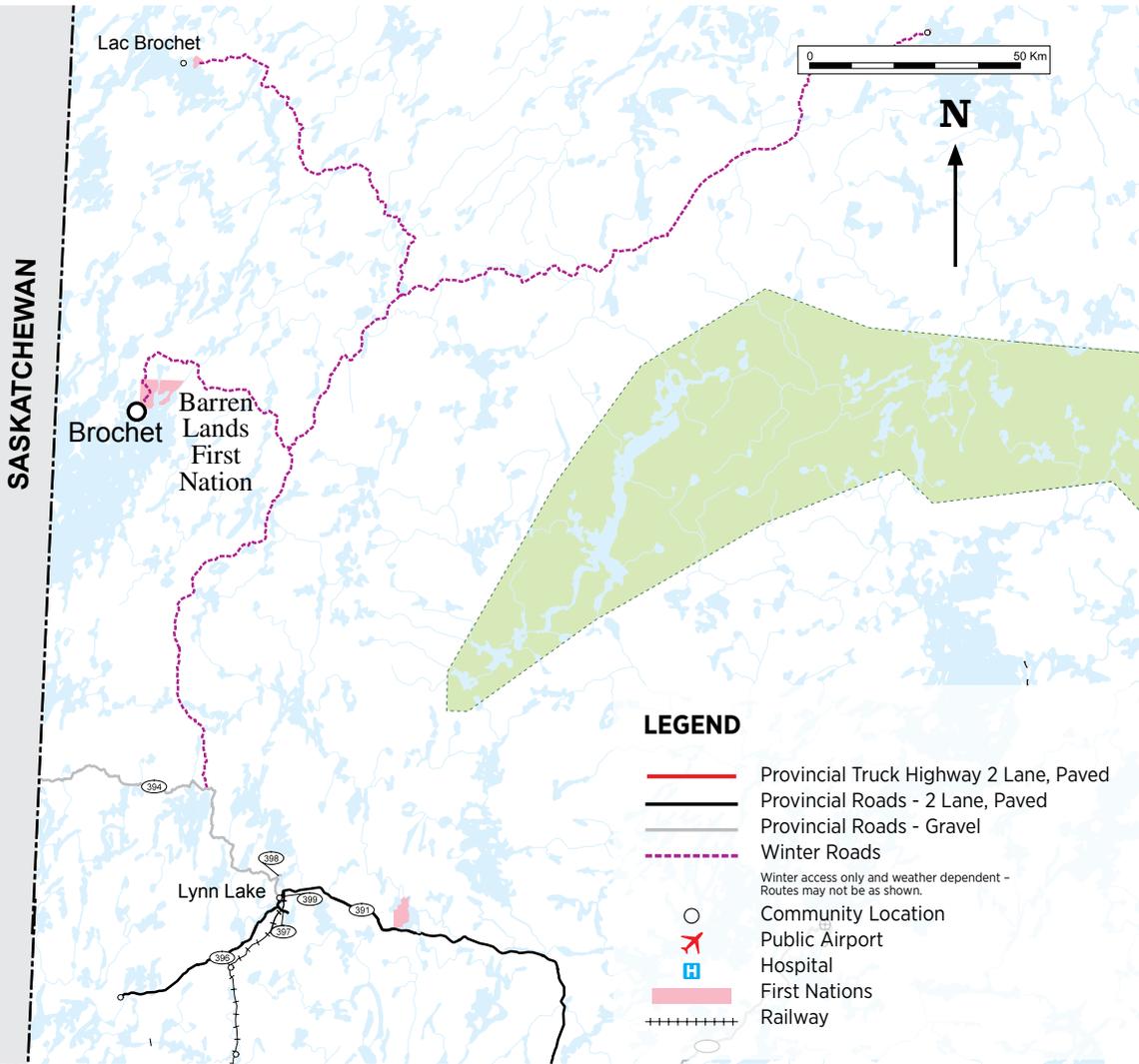
7 Kisipekamak Food Plant meeting





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NFMCCC funding

☑ 2017

Establish a program that oversees harvesting food from the land that is distributed to families in need and Elders in the community. In 2017, the focus was on planning and preparing for the Brochet Food Plant.

LOCATION

Barren Lands First Nation and Brochet are 928 km north of Winnipeg and 19 km east of the Saskatchewan border, with a population of 619 people. They are fly-in communities, with winter roads.



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Traditional Teachings Project

WABOWDEN

HOST: Wabowden Historical Museum / PROJECT MANAGER: Traditional Teachings Project

Our community of Wabowden is surrounded by 3 lakes: Bowden Lake, Rock Island Lake, and Setting Lake. We are part of the Grass River Corridor, which was at one time the most travelled river by the founders of the North. Though Wabowden has many home gardens and one community garden, poultry production, and two apiaries, the health of our community is greatly besieged by diabetes and heart conditions, due to the lack of healthy living.

Our community has an important need to re-communicate with the land, to re-evaluate the health conditions of our residents, and to bring our people together, by ways of sharing food, survival, physical activities and mental well-being.

As such, our goal with this project was to provide a variety of land-based learning opportunities to benefit our community members and encourage them to live a healthier lifestyle. We want to reignite the fire within our people. This will be done by discovering the plants and animals that are on our land that provide us with food, medicine, clothing and shelter.

This project was very well received in our community - youth and parents who participated want to see it continue. Participants became aware of the natural medicinal plants, how they grow, and the best times to harvest.

The elders went out on the land with the youth, mentored youth, and shared their knowledge. Food and medicines were gathered

and prepared on the land, food was eaten, and a lesson was taught on the uses of all the food gathered. There was no waste and respect was shown to the land. Trainings were also given on boating and preparing shelters with the least disruption to the environment.

It was a learning process for everyone. The land-based trainings helped establish a bond between the elders and youth in the community. It was amazing to see the youth open up and voice their opinions and concerns.

The weather was our main challenge. With this kind of program, weather conditions had to be considered, so our days of harvesting and preparing had to coincide with good weather.

At the completion of this project, a luncheon was held, where the youth invited parents, grandparents and influential people who assisted in making this project happen. The youth presented on their accomplishments, were praised by all invited guests, and were asked many questions. Youth specified that this kind of project should continue, and should include more youth and parents alike.

1 From left: Karen McIvor (parent participant) and Carol Sanoffsky

2 Boiling colt's foot plant to make cough syrup

3 Labrador leaf plant

4 From left: youth participants Jeff McIvor, Curtis Flett, and Jonathon Fourre preparing Wiges

5 Curtis Flett looking for medicine

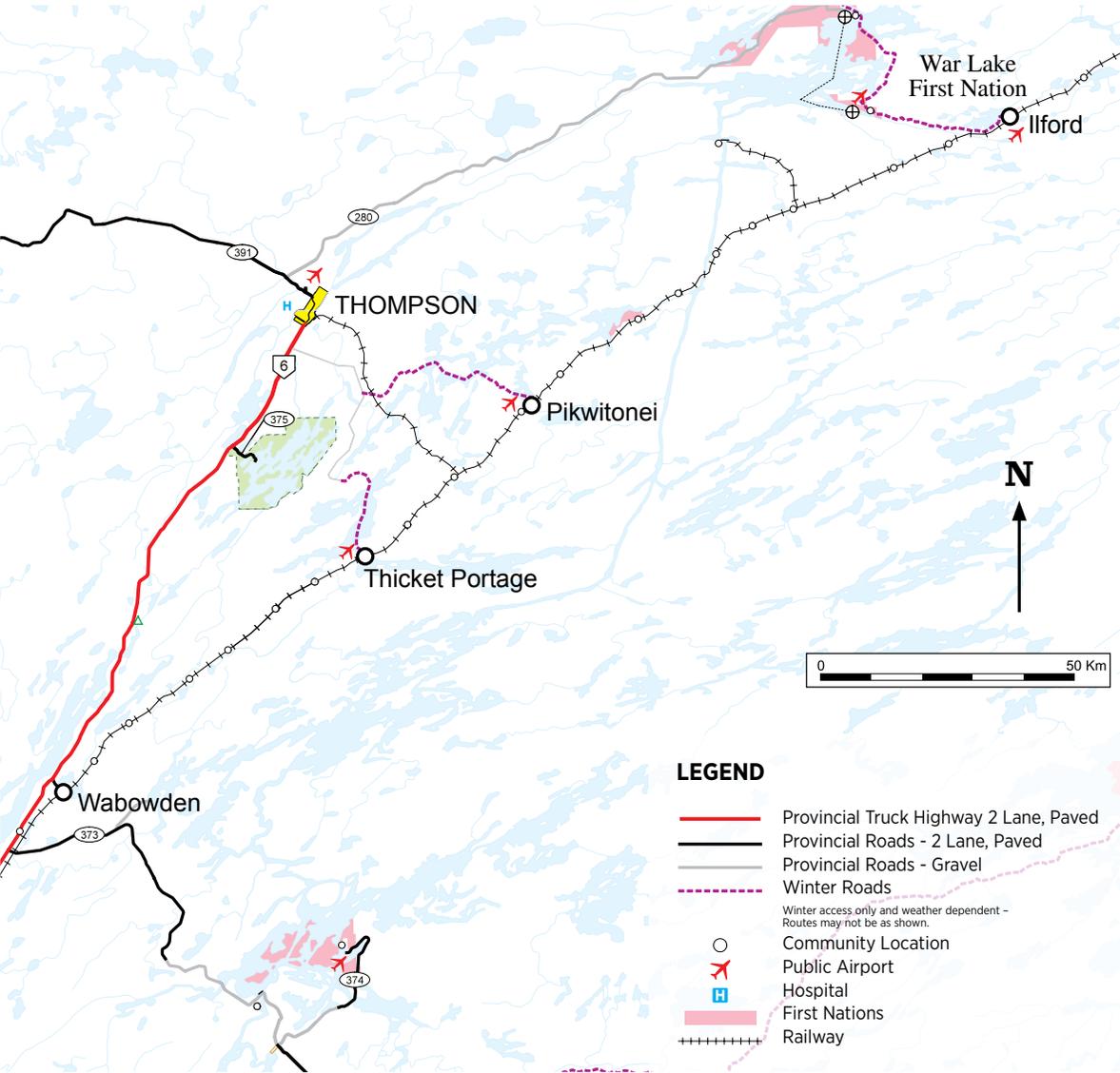
6 Weekay, photo by Ivan Harper

7 From left: Elder Myrtle Fourre, Jeff McIvor, Curtis Flett, and Traditional Instructor Carol Sanoffsky; back: Jonathon Fourre

8 Curtis Flett pouring boiled colt's foot syrup into jars for preservation

“ Some of these youth, it was their first time on the Land or Water, which they didn't know could be so enjoyable, and to learn as well. ”

- Carol Sanoffsky,
BRRT Administrator and Traditional Instructor



NFMCCC funding

- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Through land-based training, connect youth and their families to our culture and the land, strengthen the bond between the residents in our community, and increase healthy eating, exercise and healthy living.

LOCATION

Wabowden is on Highway 6, 11 km southwest of Thompson. The population is approximately 500 people.





Connecting Youth to Lake Winnipeg and Traditional Foods

BLACK RIVER FIRST NATION, POPLAR RIVER FIRST NATION, PINAYMOOTANG FIRST NATION, MISIPAWISTIK CREE NATION, BROKENHEAD OJIBWAY NATION, AND NORWAY HOUSE CREE NATION

HOST: Lake Winnipeg Foundation / PROJECT MANAGER: Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective

The First Nations around Lake Winnipeg have been living in close connection to the land and waters since time immemorial. Many rely on the lake not only for the social and economic benefits it provides, but also for their cultural and spiritual wellbeing. With deteriorating water quality in the lake over recent decades as a result of nutrient loading, climate change, resource extraction, hydropower development, and agriculture, the impacts being felt in First Nations are direct and profound.

The Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective (LWIC) works to ensure that sacred waters are healthy, traditional livelihoods are restored and Indigenous perspectives are influential in leading the protection and sustainability of Lake Winnipeg as a source of life for all future generations.

“We’re just at that stage now where the lake is really in trouble and we need to be the drivers of change... If we don’t start somewhere, I don’t know what we’re going to have left,” says Loretta Mowatt, LWIC North Basin representative.

The LWIC steering committee had been having conversations about reaching out to youth about the lake and its traditional relationship to Indigenous people for a couple of years. After holding an LWIC gathering at the Misipawistik culture camp on the west shore of the north basin, they recognized that this special place, with on-site tents, a teepee and a local community that valued water and fishing as core to their culture,

was the perfect location to bring youth together.

From there, LWIC and Misipawistik Cree Nation engaged in a successful partnership to plan the activities of the gathering, ensuring that local leaders were involved in the coordination and on-the-ground teaching.

For three nights in August 2017, twelve youth from Misipawistik Cree Nation (MCN) came together to learn from elders, fishermen and each other about the sacredness of water. Local youth heard from elders about the history of hydropower development in their territories, learned traditional teachings about the importance of water to all living things, and learned to set nets and dress fish. The gathering ended with youth creating signage for the community to help keep the shorelines free from litter.

This project engaged First Nation youth with the goals of preserving the culture and knowledge around fishing and traditional foods in First Nations surrounding Lake Winnipeg, and fostering the next generation of Indigenous water stewards. By educating youth through on-the-land experiences about impacts to the lake and the connections to traditional foods, they are empowered to ensure that the lake and the resources it provides remain of high importance into the future.

LWIC is now planning for a second year of its youth gathering with a goal of hosting youth from all the First Nations around Lake Winnipeg to share ideas and develop their own action items to help protect their sacred lake.

All photo credits are to Johanna Théroux.

- 1 Local fisherman show youth how they set their nets near the west shore of Lake Winnipeg
- 2 Fish haul
- 3 Local fisherman demonstrates how to fillet one of the fish caught by the youth
- 4 One of the youth participants, Darla tries her hand at dressing fish after a demonstration by a local fisherman
- 5 Participants on the waters of Lake Winnipeg
- 6 Setting nets
- 7 Participating youth create signs encouraging local community members to keep their shorelines clean and free of litter





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NFMCCC funding

- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Preserve culture and traditional knowledge around fishing in the communities surrounding Lake Winnipeg, while fostering the next generation of Indigenous water stewards.

LOCATION

The 6 First Nations who represent the LWIC are situated all around Lake Winnipeg. Poplar River, Misipawistik/ Grand Rapids, and Norway House are located in the north basin, while Pinaymootang, Black River, and Brokenhead are in the south basin. Black River, Misipawistik, Pinaymootang, Norway House and Brokenhead are accessible by provincial roads; Poplar River is a fly-in community with winter road.



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Ithinto Mechisowin Program

O-PIPON-NA-PIWIN CREE NATION / SOUTH INDIAN LAKE

HOST: Frontier School Division / PROJECT MANAGER: Ithinto Mechisowin Program

ELDER ANNIE SPENCE AND HER COMMITMENT TO LAND AND COMMUNITY:

This is a tale of a woman of great success. She is Elder Annie Spence from O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation (OPCN). The OPCN community suffered a severe flooding and displacement in early 70s caused by the construction of hydroelectric dam in Churchill River. Known as the Churchill River Diversion, the flooding caused massive resource depletion, including access to land-based food, for OPCN and many other communities in Northern Manitoba. Despite having minimum support, OPCN community members continued the practice of harvesting food from the land and teaching youth the traditional livelihood skills. As a community food champion, Annie inspired community members to move forward and to never give up trying.

Annie was born in April 20th, 1916 in the O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation, then known as the community of South Indian Lake. Annie Spence was the daughter of late Elder Annie Moose, a centurion (centenarian) from the community who shared 113 years of wisdom with us. She was also related to late Elder Vivian Moose, who was known for her spirit of community leadership and hard work. Annie was wise, strong and a happy spirit motivating many in the community to reconnect with land. She loved to knit, garden and camp. She loved eating white fish. She loved camping so much that every year she was the last person to leave the camp before the winter started. Annie breathed her last in August 7th, 2017. She was ill for several months and was physically unfit to go to the camp that usually starts in June every year. Annie's daughter Barb Spence said, "She decided to go because she knew she could not go to the land anymore." Annie survived plights of two world wars, residential school, flooding and displacement due

to hydro dams, and loss of many family members. Annie left this earth at the age of 101. Her life is truly inspiring because she overcame many difficulties and stood strong to bring positive changes in the community and her spirit and wisdom continues to be the glue that holds her family and the community together.

Annie was an active member of Ithinto Mechisowin Program (IMP). IMP was formed in 2012, literally with no funding, as a community platform to celebrate community health, youth spirit and create access to seasonal land-based food. Elder Annie Spence was very supportive of this program along with Elder Vivan Moose, Elder Josephine Dumas, Elder Louis Dumas, Elder William Dysart and Hilda Dysart and many of the community food champions and leaders. From June 2013, the program has been acknowledged, appreciated and funded by the Northern Manitoba Food Culture and Community Collaborative (NMFCCC). Besides training the youth, it is successfully distributing traditional food to Elders, diabetic patients and low-income families, and also archiving traditional knowledge as educational resources.

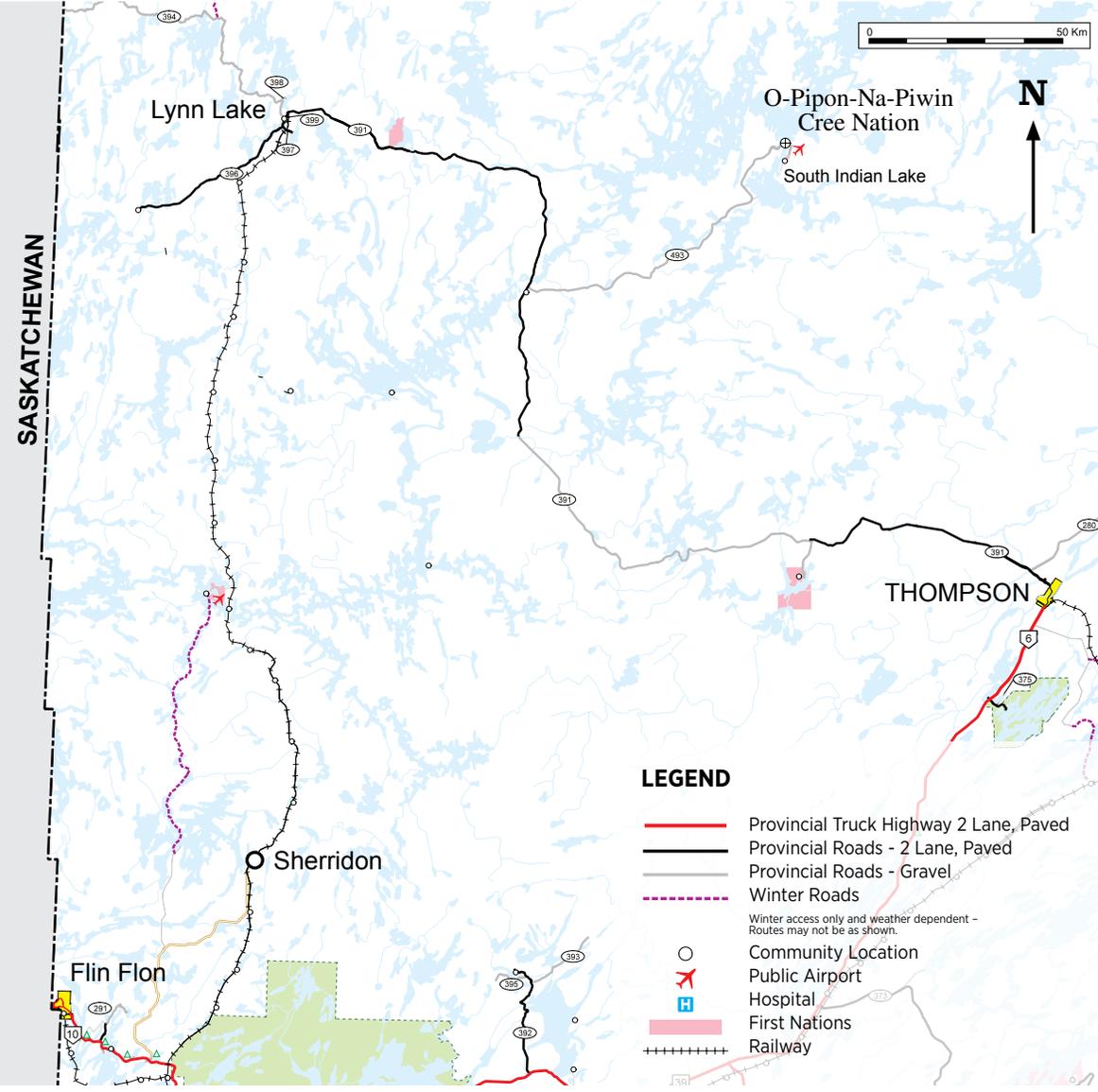
In summer of 2013 at the age of 98, Annie surprised the community by starting her own potato garden, box garden and camp garden. She continued her interest in gardening, and with the help of her daughter Barb Spence who is also a camp gardener, grew potatoes, lettuce and medicinal tea in her camp garden every year until 2016. Many youth, Elders and food champions started their own garden inspired by her action. NMFCCC proudly shares the story of Elder Annie's commitment towards community health and wellbeing and dedicates this year's book to her.

(Writing: Asfia Kamal and Barb Spence)

Photo credit: Asfia Kamal

- 1 Elder Annie on her way to the camp
- 2 Elder Annie Spence cutting moose meat during a workshop in the community health complex
- 3 Elder Annie Spence standing by her pot garden
- 4 Ithinto Mechisowin Program Coordinator John Bonner and volunteer Agnes Bonner cutting moose meat for community feast
- 5 South Indian Lake youth winter fishing
- 6 Elder Annie Spence during community summer gathering in Kivikapawetan
- 7 Elder Helen Moose teaching Oscar Blackburn School students how to make namesték





NFMCCC funding

- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Respond to the community's desire to return to traditional ways and improve community food security.

LOCATION

O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation (OPCN) is located on the southeast shores of Southern Indian Lake, about 130 km north of Thompson. It is home to approximately 1,500 people.



other PROJECTS



The NMFCCC has made a commitment to invest in community-led local food solutions; local champions; re-skilling and reviving local knowledge; story sharing; on-going reflection on and refinement of our values and understandings; and deep funder and supporter learning. We know that food sovereignty has the power to, in fact requires, the change of larger systems.

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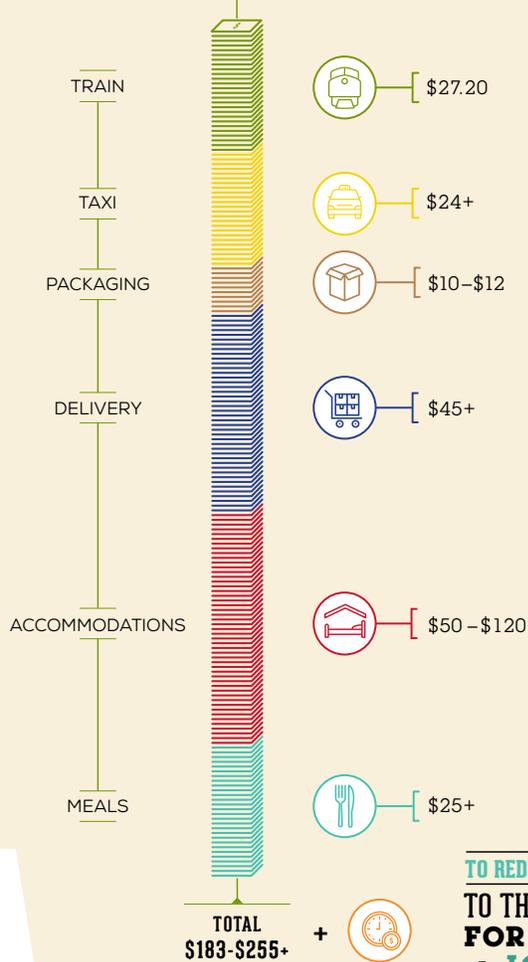
At times our commitment to support community-led solutions has meant providing resources for items or activities that we did not anticipate. Here are some examples:

- The Wabung Fishers of Garden Hill First Nation have challenged us to invest in Fish Packing Plant upgrades and management support.
- The Bayline Food Buying Cooperative (BFBC) has inspired us to forge partnerships with Via Rail and AFFIRM (Affordable Food in Remote Manitoba, a program of the Province of Manitoba) and to invest in systems to run the BFBC.
- The creative vision of people in Dawson Bay has led us to better understand the value and potential of fish waste. It can be transformed into a rich, locally-sourced fertilizer.
- The community of Wasagamack challenged us to consider supporting the construction of a Community Food Center.
- Recently one Northern community has again tested our imaginations as they requested support for a saw mill so they can develop farm buildings to support a growing farming program.

The NMFCCC does not have rigid rules for what we can support, rather we ask the question: “Will this support enable the project to move forward successfully?” If a community project has all of the pieces in place for success except for a coordinator, or a pump, or a learning trip to a neighbouring community, then we will support those items. Flexibility is essential to being good partners to Northern communities. If we place limitations on the ways that we can partner, then we are limiting our ability to be a good partner and limiting the potential for community success.

We look forward to more community-generated surprises and new ideas, and we value what we learn from those new ideas. Thank you to the communities for continuing to teach and inspire us with your visions and leadership.

ADDITIONAL COST of BUYING FOOD



**THE COST OF
GETTING TO
THOMPSON TO
GROCERY SHOP
ADDS UP!**



**TO REDUCE TRIPS
TO THOMPSON
FOR FOOD
JOIN**



“
When we [council] get talking about it [fish composting] we get very excited. I just think there are endless possibilities for this! We need some money to get going on the marketing end of things down the road.”

- Darlene Parker, Dawson Bay Mayor



- 1** Bayline Food Buying Co-op loading food in train
- 2** Cost of getting to Thompson from Bayline communities to buy groceries
- 3** Fish composter in Dawson Bay
- 4** Sherridon Fileting Shack (Community Stories 2015, pg 27)

Bayline Food Buying Co-op

WABOWDEN, THICKET PORTAGE, PIKWITONEI, ILFORD & WAR LAKE FIRST NATION

HOST: Wabowden Community Council / PROJECT MANAGER: Bayline Regional Roundtable Inc.

The Bayline Food Buying Co-op (BFBC) started as an idea in 2012. Residents place orders to the Program Coordinator in Wabowden, where food is sorted and packed, and then delivered to participants directly by train.

Residents of these communities otherwise travel to Thompson by winter road, skidoo, train or boat to shop for groceries which takes time, effort and is very expensive. A 2015 study shows that trips to Thompson cost residents from \$189 to more than \$250 per trip (pg 51). The Bayline Food Buying Co-op aims to eliminate the travel and extra costs, and intends to provide residents of these remote communities easier, and more convenient access to groceries.

Pauline Cordell, Pikwitonei Community Coordinator explains the cost of travel to Thompson, “When there is no winter road our people get to Thompson by train, which is a huge hassle itself. You can go to Thompson on Monday, but you cannot come home until Thursday. There is a Friday in and out, but that does not leave you with much time. So if you add up the cost of the train, plus cabs, hotels, delivery and boxes, it can get very expensive.”

In the last 6 years, the group has built many supportive partnerships, conducted a pre-feasibility study on the BFBC, held planning meetings and consultations with community members, established bank accounts for the project and a governance model, and launched the project. Each community has a ‘Community Coordinator’ that works with residents to place orders and ensure pick-up of the orders when the train arrives. In 2016, Donna Sanoffsky was hired as the Wabowden-based Program Coordinator to oversee the program and support Community Coordinators.

2017 was the first year orders were placed, organized and shipped. Community Coordinators in Pikwitonei and Thicket Portage spread the word about the Co-op and helped with orders. Customer orders come to Donna by fax, and she then places the overall order with the grocery supplier, the local

Lucky Dollar Foods. She then receives the food, packs the orders into individual customer bins that are colour-coded by community, and ships them on the train. Donna says, “I have an app that shows me where the train is so I don’t have to wait long; I know where the train is, cause it is always late.”

The inconsistent train schedule and frequent delays is a significant challenge to shipping food that is fresh and frozen. A food-packing system has been devised to keep items cool or frozen as needed. Thicket Portage Mayor, Maurice Clemens shares, “We only get one train a week, so if they cancel and it happens to be on a shipping day we won’t receive our orders. The train is everything here.”

There have been learnings around the best day of the month to hold orders, access to banks and other payment methods for community members, and also trust in the process. Pauline shares, “A lot of people don’t have cash, there are no banks here. The people with bank accounts who have direct deposit, their money is in Thompson.” Similarly, Sylvia Brightnose, Community Coordinator in Thicket Portage says, “When I do my orders it does not always work because people do not have [cash], it’s not on the paydays or family allowance day.” She suggests, “Having 2 shipments per month would work better so they line up with pay days.” The Co-op is considering offering multiple ordering dates to match up with pay days, and setting up e-transfer payments and helping residents set up chequing accounts.

Residents will take some time to get used to the Co-op and build trust in this new way of purchasing their groceries. The need for the Co-op grows in the spring and summer when the winter road is not an option, but the benefits are year-round. There is also the potential to sell community grown and raised products through the Co-op, such as honey, jams, and vegetables. People are also starting to imagine how the Co-op could be used to sell crafts and other locally produced goods in the future. The potential is high!

- 1 Bayline Food Buying Co-op logo
- 2 Rail line
- 3 BFBC members participating in a social enterprise workshop
- 4 Customer order ready for shipping
- 5 Customer orders being transported to the train
- 6 Loaded customer bins waiting for the train
- 7 Orders being loaded onto the train



1



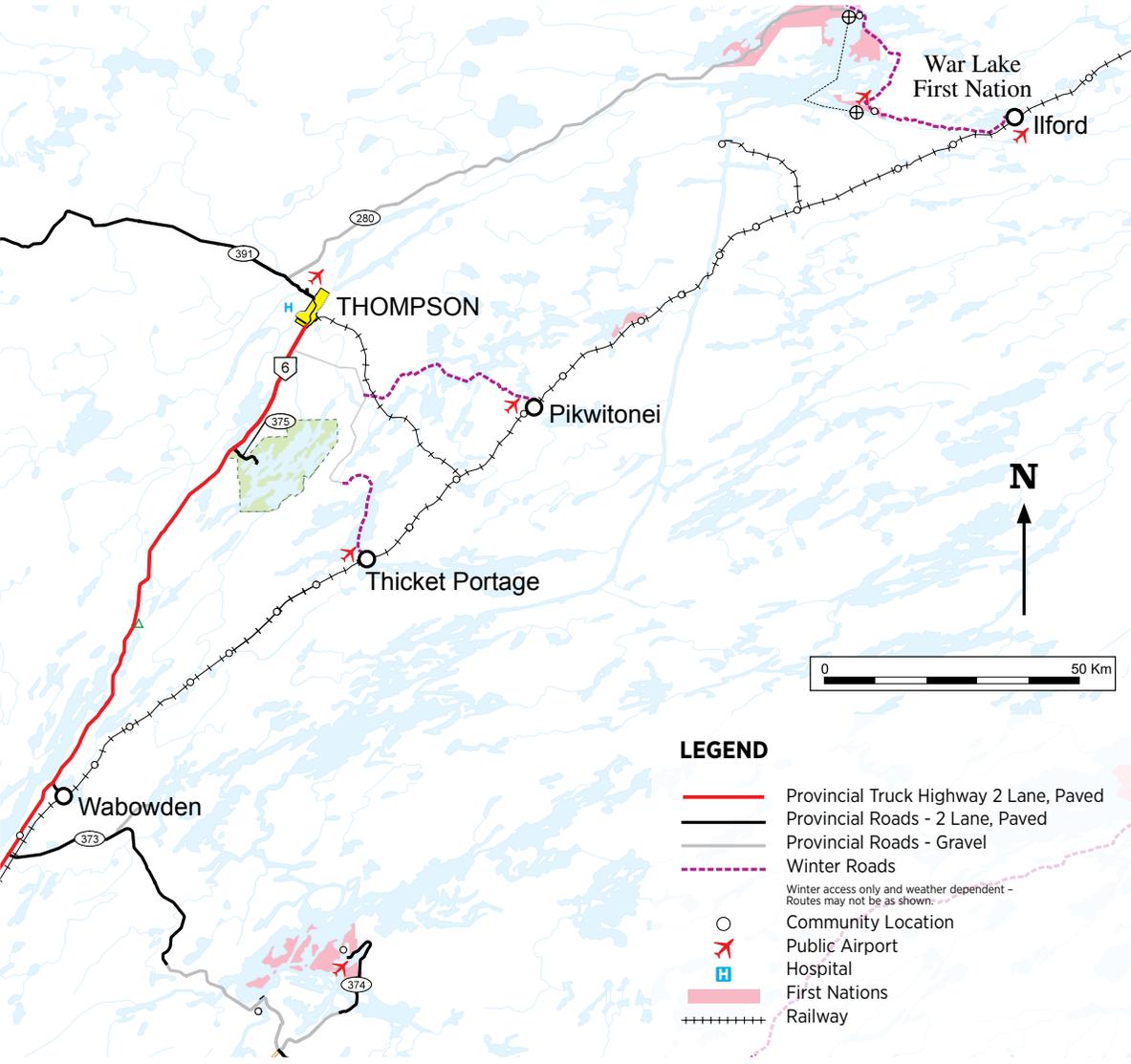
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NFMCCC funding

- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Organize an efficient food-buying cooperative to increase access of isolated communities to healthy foods, decrease the cost of getting food, and make the communities stronger.

LOCATION

The communities of Wabowden, Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei, Ilford and War Lake First Nation are located along the Bayline Railway. Wabowden is 111 km southwest of Thompson on Highway 6. Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei, Ilford and War Lake First Nation do not have all-season roads but are connected to Thompson by the railway.



6



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NACC Fish Composting Project

DAWSON BAY & PINE DOCK

HOST: Wabowden Community Council / **PROJECT MANAGER:** The Northern Association of Community Councils

SUMMARY: Since 2015, the Fish Composting Project has been collaboratively tested and evolved by the communities of Dawson Bay and Pine Dock, with support from the Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC), Overton Environmental Enterprises, Manitoba Composters Association, and various government departments.

The project creates an outlet for waste fish, and a useful and marketable product of high quality, local compost. The compost improves soil quality in community gardens and greenhouses, and fish waste is kept out of the lake water.

DAWSON BAY, AN INNOVATIVE TOWN

Dawson Bay is now the lead community in this Project. They have been taking a lead on exploring how readily-available fish waste can become an asset for their community. Darlene Parker, Mayor of Dawson Bay says, “The community is mostly taking a ‘wait and see what is going to happen’ reaction to the project. When we [council] get talking about it we get very excited. I just think there are endless possibilities for this project!”

Dawson Bay, with support from their partners, have recently undertaken a number of design upgrades to the compost bin including: reinforcement to increase weight bearing, lid modification to improve user friendliness, more interior wings were added to allow for better mixing, and a motor was added to make it easier for community residents to turn the compost.

Gerry Dube, project consultant, came to Dawson Bay to assist with figuring out the ratio of fish to dry material. He also provides training and support on managing the project. There have been many learnings along the way.

Darlene shares their experiences:

“This year we tried using a round whole fish, [which was more difficult to compost]. Last year we had used chopped frozen fish, which composted very quickly with little smell. During modifications this year, some of the air holes were welded over. The smell was really strong

this year, and unfortunately attracted a few bears. We are not sure if the smell was due to the raw whole fish, or lack of proper ventilation.”

“We discovered that the unit frame work is still not strong enough to handle the amount of fish waste we have available. [During training], the community had prepared enough fish waste and wood chips to fill the in-vessel drum three quarters full. We also learned the motor we had chosen was not strong enough to easily rotate the composter drum.”

“We are still trying to figure out how to bring the temperature to where it needs to be and hold it there. On advice from Gerry, we tried adding green grass clippings, and this seemed to help. We also pre-soak some of the wood chips, which seems to help avoid the compost getting too dry at the end of the composting process. Unfortunately, we were not able to maintain the temperatures needed to cure the compost, and had issues with mushrooms and mold due to the air flow problems.”

This is a learning process, and Dawson Bay will try with another batch next year. Additionally, completing the on-site training in Pine Dock in Spring 2018 is a priority of this project. Also, Dawson Bay will make a prototype for a flow through composter for the community garden.

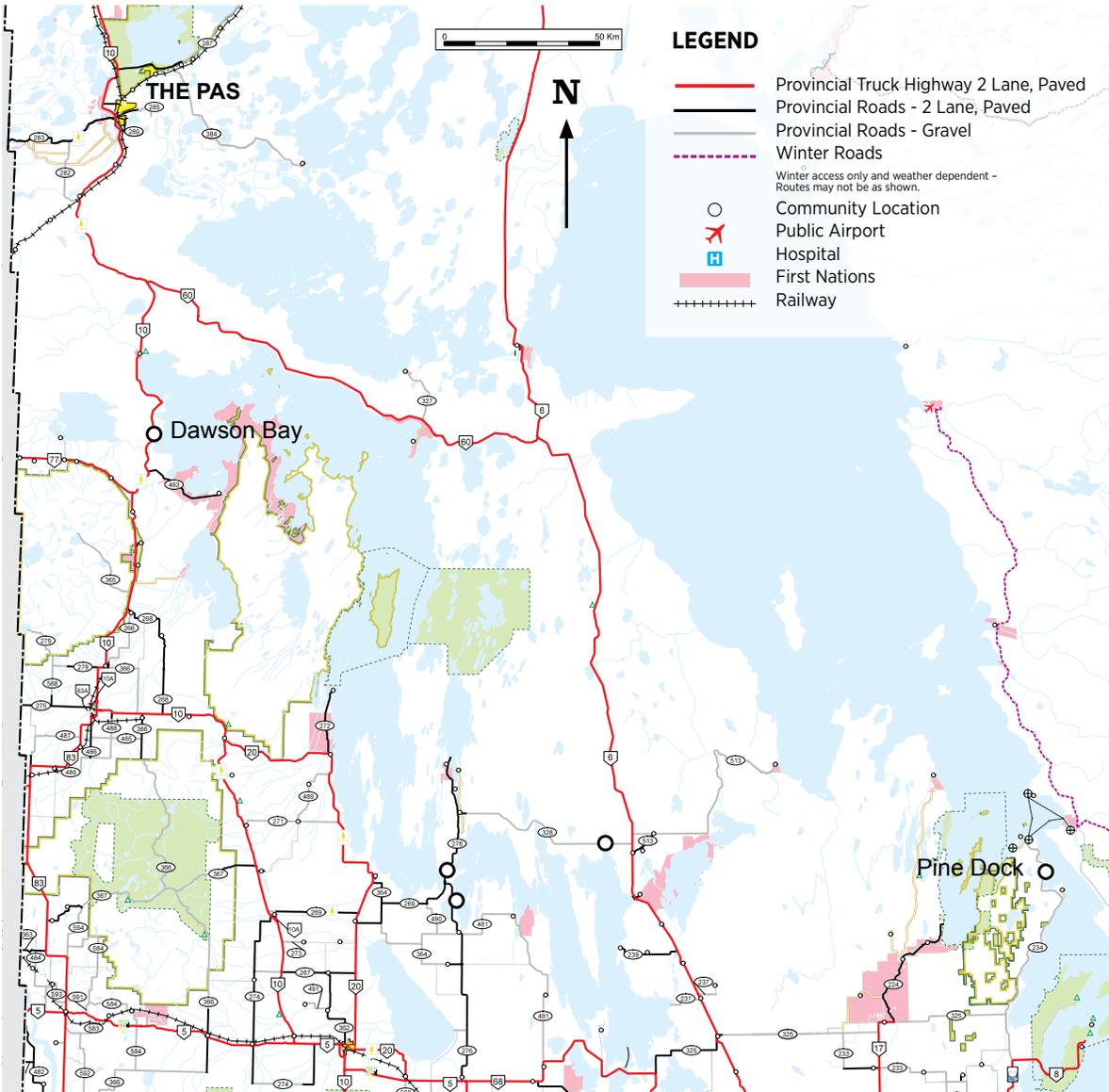
1 2 3 Fish composter

4 Raw compost materials ready for loading, Dawson Bay

5 Wood chips being mixed into composter

6 Fish waste used for composter

7 Fish composting training in Pine Dock



NFMCCC funding

- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018

OBJECTIVES

Create community infrastructure that turns waste product into valuable fertilizer, and provide a secure and productive location for community members to dispose of fish waste.

LOCATION

Dawson Bay is a small 40-person village located on the shore of Lake Winnipegosis; they have year-round road access. Pine Dock has a population of approximately 80 people and is located on Lake Winnipeg with year-round road access. Both communities rely heavily on fishing for their local economy.

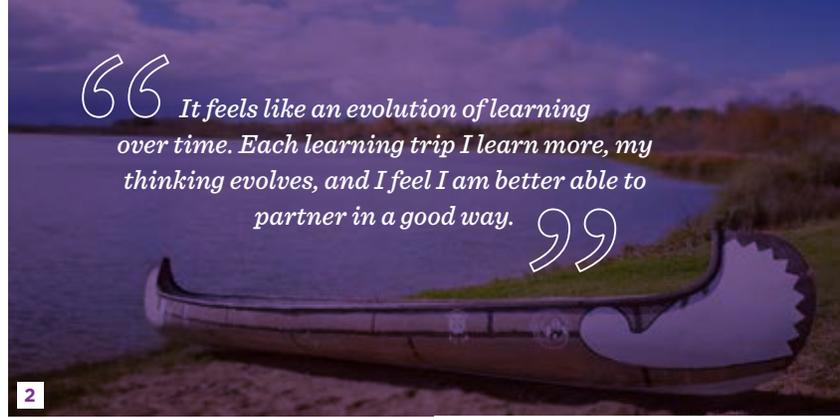
“ Hopefully once it takes off it (fish composting station) will supply a couple of jobs for community members. Help out the existing fishermen that are already here, would also be good and important. ”

- Mayor Darlene Parker, Dawson Bay





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“ It feels like an evolution of learning over time. Each learning trip I learn more, my thinking evolves, and I feel I am better able to partner in a good way. ”

2017 Learning Trip

Each year NMFCCC partners, including Northern Advisors and representatives from funding partners, visit the communities we partner with for a ‘learning trip.’ The trip provides an immersive experience for Collaborators and a chance to have focussed discussions aimed at strengthening our systems and capacity building.

In September 2017, 13 NMFCCC partners and 1 invited guest visited Misipawistik Cree Nation (MCN) / Grand Rapids, the home community of former NMFCCC staff Becky Cook. MCN is also the location of our partners Grand Rapids School Garden Project and MCN hosted the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective Youth Gathering at the Mino Aski Culture Camp in August 2017.

During this Learning Trip we had the chance to take part in many cultural activities including an opening Pipe Ceremony, Elders’

Tea, a Sweat, and spending time with the Grade 7 students at Mino Aski Culture Camp.

During this trip the NMFCCC had four focused conversations that were intended to strengthen our systems and build our capacity to be good partners with Northern and Indigenous communities. Those four conversations included:

- Celebrating and Living our Theory of Change
- Decolonization, Reconciliation, and Implementing TRC Calls
- Potential Impact of Collective Voice
- Revisiting Evaluation

We appreciate the leadership and effort that Becky put into this trip and we also are thankful to all of the local people who spent time and had conversations with us.

1 Fireside discussion, Jane, Andi, Iris and Karen

2 OCN Canoe

3 Preparing for the elders tea, Karen and Sarah

4 Andi and Becky

5 Back Row: Todd, Becky, Iris, Sarah, Karen, Sheldon, Sophia, Andi Front Row: Skipper, Lisa, Jane, Sophie

6 Walk by Lake Winnipeg

7 With youth at Culture Camp

8 Andi preparing elders tea and bannock

9 Jane learns from Ernie

10 Lake Winnipeg



3

“ It is a very important reality check. It made me think about governance models. The power relationship imbalance was mentioned several times... going in (to) the community is the only way to start to comprehend that and it is key to the work. ”

4

QUOTES FROM
Learning Trip

PARTICIPANTS:



5



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“ A history can be read but not fully absorbed - face-to-face relationships cannot be replicated or replaced by book learning. ”

7

“ The cultural activities we were invited to participate in - these are experiences I would never have had and we were welcomed with open arms. It was great learning about what these traditions involved, and the Elders did a wonderful job explaining their importance to us. ”



8



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“ I had told one person about our vision of food security... He stated that they had been fishermen, hunters and trappers for a long time. Their environment and resources provided for them, and that they continue to rely on the resources. I realized that our environment and its resources are so important to maintaining our livelihood and way of life. We must continue to protect our world around us. And be thankful. ”

2017 NORTH-TO-NORTH learning exchanges

The NMFCCC supports events in Northern Manitoba that bring people together to share their knowledge and build each others' skills and the Northern network of people working on food issues. In addition to our efforts, there were some great events convened in 2017 by our colleagues at Food Matters Manitoba, Bayline Regional Roundtable, Four Arrows Regional Health Authority, and Northern Association of Community Councils. These events also brought people together for skill building, idea sharing and movement building.

In June 2017 we were able to provide significant support to the Summer Grow North Horticultural Workshop in Leaf Rapids. It was attended by community members from Leaf Rapids, South Indian Lake, Nelson House Cree Nation, and Poplar River First Nation. Participants enjoyed the small group size and the 3-day length, feeling that it provided for deep learning and relationship building.

Other connections that we have been able to support are between project groups and communities such as Opaskwayak Mino Pimatciwin and The Pas 4-H Garden Club.

The Charles Sinclair School Garden in Fisher River is developing a relationship with their neighbours the Peguis Agricultural Project. The Pukatawagan Chicken Project was inspired by the nearby Sherridon Poultry Project (Community Stories 2014, pg 27). The BRRT Northern Beekeeping Project was directly inspired by the NACC Beekeeping project and in 2018 they have plans to jointly coordinate workshops and training events, and to support each other as they learn about beekeeping in Northern regions. Meechim Farm Project sent staff and supporters to visit the Northern Farm Training Institute in order to see how others are sharing and building knowledge about food production in Northern places.

We believe that more and deeper connections between community projects and people will strengthen this movement for strong local food systems that are community-led and for the benefit of the whole community. We believe this because community members have shared this idea with us and then demonstrated impact and inspiration through their work.





“ I liked that I could share my expertise with the group and share what I have been taught. ”

PARTICIPANTS QUOTES:

“ Our 4-H group was invited to come to the OCN Community Gardens during Indian Days celebrations and we attended the pancake breakfast. It was really interesting for our kids, as they walked through the gardens, to see what was going on and why with the OCN gardens. ”

3



“ I want to learn more so that I can be a better instructor and be more helpful the next time a workshop comes to Leaf Rapids. ”

4



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“ I liked having breakfast, lunch and dinner together. It built a lot of camaraderie with the group. ”

- 1 Alexandria Moodie
- 2 Workshop Group
- 3 Anthony shares with group
- 4 Greenhouse discussion
- 5 Russell watering

northern advisors



ERVIN BIGHETTY

Leaf Rapids

I have been a Northerner all my life. I've had my share of the struggle of living in remote communities and living day to day with little to no food. As time has passed and I matured, I saw that this way not only a problem in places that I lived but in many other communities. No food and health problems. I knew that I wanted to make a difference in the world, that I had to learn more about food and the care of plants and nature. In order for me to do more, I had to learn more, I wasn't going to be any help if I didn't know what I was doing. One of my greatest mentors and who is still helping me learn everyday, is my friend Chuck Stensgard. I've learned so much from him and his philosophy of life. I've gone a different path from what he taught, but his teachings are still there and are still greatly appreciated. I wouldn't have followed this path of food and learning if my friends didn't insist on me going to help with the place known as the Nursery today. I had helped with the early stages of that area and it was a lot of trial and error, as we didn't know much about plants and gardening, but there was a plan set in motion; our work was the first step into something so much bigger. The reason I took on the position of Northern Advisor is so that I could learn and help as much as I could. I never pass a learning opportunity, because one opportunity opens another and this cycle continues.

I never thought that I would be doing the things I do today. I work full-time at the Leaf Rapids Co-op, I am also a volunteer firefighter, and I get to go on trips to other communities to learn about how they managed to get by with the health problems in their community and what they've done to battle growing food costs. I get to share my thoughts, my feelings, my story and hopefully see their projects, community, and people grow and become healthier. This is what I want. I want the North to become healthy and strong like it used to be. Like the stories I heard from grandfather, how the men would hunt for their own food and grow their own food. Once I have done my part helping the North, I hope one day I have gathered enough knowledge to help change the world.

The Collaborative is made up of funder organizations, in-kind support organizations and Northern Advisors. Northern Advisors offer their local and cultural knowledge to provide critical insight about how best to partner with and develop relationships with Northern communities in the movement towards food sovereignty. They also participate in crafting the strategic direction of the Collaborative.

1



1 Sunset at 2017 Learning Trip

2 Weekay, photo by Ivan Harper



CARL MCCORRISTER

Peguis First Nation

I am focused on maintaining a vision of reconciliation, along with regaining our heritage of food security for all. I believe that getting back to the land is a way of following the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Recommendations. I taught high school for 25 years and loved coaching hockey, cross country running and baseball. I write human interest stories for the local paper, and besides growing my own garden I dig Seneca Roots in summer, and cut wood in winter for the fireplace. I have five children who are all grown up, and six grandchildren. My family roots are in Old St. Peter's Reserve (Selkirk) where people moved from in 1907, to Peguis First Nation. We are agricultural people who love the land and are striving to regain our culture and heritage. I am an adviser with the NMFCCC and Northern Healthy Foods Initiative. In Peguis, we continue to bring more people on board in our community to grow their own gardens, and promote community building and sharing.



HILDA DYSART

South Indian Lake

I am from South Indian Lake and have lived here all of my life. I have been involved with many community committees and am involved in all aspects of our community life. I have always lived off the land and for as long as I can remember my family has had gardens. I am one of the founding steering committee members of Ithinto Mechisowin Program, a food sovereignty program in our community. I enjoy working with youth and have worked at the school for 32 years as the school counselor.

I help out with the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture & Community Collaborative because I am really interested in having the traditional foods coming back to the community and finding ways to help them come back. I am grateful for all of the different organizations that have decided to work together to help out in my community and so many others in Northern Manitoba. It's better to work together.



MARLYN COOK

Misipawistik Cree Nation

Dr. Marlyn Cook is a proud member of the Misipawistik Cree Nation. The daughter of Dan and Angelique Cook, she is number thirteen of their fourteen children. Dr. Cook is also the mother of two beautiful children, James and Ashley.

Marlyn first graduated as a nurse in 1975. After working within the health care system as a nurse, Marlyn decided she wanted to become a stronger advocate for health care for First Nations people. Dr. Cook returned to school and in 1987, Dr. Cook graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba and completed her Family Practice Residency Program at the St. Boniface Hospital in 1989 becoming the first First Nation woman to graduate from Medicine in Manitoba.

Dr. Cook has practiced medicine in Cross Lake, Manitoba; Sioux Lookout, Ontario; Pikangikum, Ontario; Akwesasne, Ontario; Moose Factory, Ontario; her home community, Misipawistik Cree Nation; and other First Nations communities. Dr. Cook believes in Traditional Indian Medicine and incorporates this with Western practice. Her belief is that healing needs to be focused on all aspects of the person – spiritual, mental, physical and emotional. Marlyn is a sun dancer, a pipe carrier and a sweat lodge keeper. She also acts as a role model for young people and in this capacity she has traveled extensively throughout Manitoba and Canada encouraging young people to continue to pursue their dreams regardless of obstacles they face and promoting the importance of education.

Dr. Cook is very active in her community both in her capacity as a physician and as a member of the community. She has sat on many boards and committees including: the Advisory Board for the Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba, the Advisory Committee of the Mino' Ayoawin, Health and Well Being Project at the Native Women's Transition Centre, the Manitoba First Nations Child and Family Services Task Force, and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and very many more.



SOFIA RABLAUSKIAS

Poplar River

I was born and raised in Poplar River, Manitoba. I grew up with the teachings from my parents and grandfather, they taught me the importance of the land and life on that land that the creator has given to us. They taught me the importance of living off the land, from the animals, birds, plants and water, that sustain our health, and the importance of always showing respect for that life. This has led me to continue to work on the protection of the land and to pass on this knowledge to our future generations.

Currently I work for Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Project, which includes our traditional territory, that will provide, when approved, a strong protection for our land and our way of life.



JIM BEARDY

Thompson

I've been with Keewatin Tribal Council for close to 24 years. That's where my heart lies, with the Cree and Dene communities that we serve. I'm Cree myself from the York Factory First Nation. I help out with the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture & Community Fund because it's an opportunity to provide input, share knowledge and to learn from others that have similar interests. I know the work they are doing is important and will benefit the small, northern, and Aboriginal communities they target.

collaborative funders



We believe it is imperative that all Canadians work to bridge the divide between First Nations and Immigrant peoples. Many First Nations people, particularly those on the Reserves, are seeking ways to regain their strength and health, and to build stronger communities. The NMFCCC starts by listening to community members and working with them as they develop plans to improve their own lives. Making grant money and ongoing support available to Northern communities are critical contributions to a pathway towards a better way of life. The Blennerhassett Family Foundation is honoured to be able to help with this initiative.

Manitoba

The Northern Healthy Foods Initiative (NHFI) is a Provincial program whose vision is for people to define their own food systems to access healthy foods in Northern Manitoba. NHFI supports local and regional projects throughout the North that contribute to the development of culturally relevant, healthy food systems, while improving health and well-being. NHFI's role is to increase access to food by working with communities and coordinating efforts aligned with the program's goals and objectives.

The Province of Manitoba is grateful for the opportunity to participate as a Collaborative member. Our participation has enabled us to meet mutual goals of increasing access to healthy food and creating opportunities for community economic development. We are looking forward to continued learning from the communities and from the diverse group of individuals who also participate in this important work.



USC Canada is focused on food sovereignty, biodiversity, farmers' rights, and ecological agriculture and works in the field and on policy in 12 countries around the world. USC Canada is committed to respecting the leadership of the people heart of resilient food systems – women, Indigenous peoples and small- scale farmers. The team is excited to support the strong leadership of communities across Northern Manitoba to build healthy food systems. We are committed to listening and learning in order to be a good partner, standing in solidarity with the local leaders doing the important work on the ground.

"Being part of the NMFCCC has taught me how important it is to listen. I have learned that when you really try to listen, that's when you can begin to have relationships and begin to understand how to work together. I have been very lucky to visit with several communities in Northern Manitoba, who have all generously shared their stories, knowledge, and experiences. From this sharing, I learned about history, language, the land, growing food, community, challenges, hardships, and strengths. I am very grateful for being part the NMFCCC."
- Iris Vaisman, Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security (a project of USC Canada)

harbingerfoundation

We at Harbinger are so inspired with the determination of Northern peoples to be self-sufficient and to recover from years of damage due to colonization. Sometimes a little support from outside funders, at the right time, with the right leaders, enables positive change. We have learned as funders that it is not about the money - it is more about the relationships which involves listening and respect.

“If you want to go fast,
go alone. If you want to
go far, go together.”

African Proverb

The Foundation's purpose is to enhance Canada's ability to address complex social, environmental and economic challenges. We accomplish this by developing, testing, and applying innovative approaches and solutions; by strengthening the community sector; and by collaborating with partners in the community, private, and public sectors. We recognize that creating enduring change takes time, and involves more than granting. The Foundation's current areas of focus and emerging initiatives include, Social Finance and Impact Investing, Sustainable Food Systems, Indigenous-Focused Philanthropy, Cities for People, and RECODE—catalyzing social innovation and entrepreneurship in higher education.

THE
THOMAS SILL
FOUNDATION
INC

Mr. Thomas Sill, C.A. lived in Winnipeg and was an astute investor who built a fortune, and in his last will established the Foundation for charitable purpose which bears his name. The Thomas Sill Foundation provides grants throughout Manitoba in the areas of health, education, arts and culture, heritage and environment, and responses to the community.

The TSF is a member of this collaborative because everyone should have good food at reasonable cost. Nutritious food promotes health, but also contributes to happy families and peaceful communities. It results in better educational outcomes. We are also gratified when people learn the skills necessary to take care of themselves and reduce costs as a result of their own sweat equity. Good, affordable food tastes great and it comes with so many fringe benefits.



The Winnipeg Foundation's mission is to be a catalyst for strengthening community well-being, now and for future generations, by promoting philanthropy, creating partnerships and supporting diverse charitable organizations. The Foundation is part of a network of community foundations that support communities across Canada.

We've been pleased to partner in the Collaborative as a way to expand our understanding of food security in Northern communities. We've been inspired by the grassroots initiatives that are helping ensure all Manitobans have access to fresh, healthy food.

Tides Canada

The mission of Tides Canada is to provide uncommon solutions for the common good by helping Canadians secure a healthy environment in ways that promote social equity and economic prosperity.

Tides Canada is a member of the NMFCCC and the administrative host. We provide human resources and communications support, legal oversight, and fund development while linking and promoting this work through our networks and donor communities.

We participate in the NMFCCC because we believe in the power of collective action, the wisdom of communities and the need for reconciliation in Canada. It is a privilege to learn with the partner organizations, the Northern Advisors and the communities.



The Sprott Foundation is dedicated to addressing homelessness and hunger in Canada. We support initiatives that enable self-sufficiency and dignity for those in need. We're particularly interested in new, untested, innovative approaches to addressing homelessness and providing fresh, healthy food.

The Sprott Foundation is excited to support Northern Manitoba Food, Culture and Community Collaborative because testing innovative ideas to find solutions to food insecurity, and partnering with the local community fits perfectly with my family's philanthropic values.



feed opportunity

Maple Leaf Centre for Action on Food Security

The Maple Leaf Centre for Action on Food Security ("the Centre"), is a registered charity which collaborates with other organizations and individuals to advance food security. We are seeking to raise the profile of this pressing social issue, advocate for critical policies and invest in programs required to make sustainable improvements.

The Centre joined NMFCCC in 2017 to learn and work with remote communities on locally-driven initiatives which improve food security. We hope to learn about what projects work and why and then seek to share best practices, collaborate and adapt successful initiatives in additional communities. It was a privilege to spend time at the Meechim Farm in Garden Hill First Nation and also to participate with the Learning Visit to Mispawistik Cree Nation alongside other members of the Collaborative and the Northern Advisors.

The Lawson Foundation is a national family foundation that invests in and engages with ideas, people and organizations that contribute to the wellbeing of children and youth and their development as active and engaged members of society. We invest in three interrelated strategic areas that we believe will have a significant impact on the healthy, optimal development of children and youth: Early Child Development, Healthy Active Children and Youth, including diabetes prevention and management and food security and independence; and Youth and the Environment. The Foundation has three broad means of supporting the work of Canadian registered charities in our areas of interest: Providing grants to charities for a variety of activities including community action, knowledge mobilization, monitoring, leadership, public policy, knowledge development, capacity building, evaluation and learning; convening leaders and organizations to share knowledge and learn from one another; and utilizing our broader financial resources through impact investing to achieve both a social and a financial return, and to support initiatives in an innovative and complementary way. The Foundation has been able to support initiatives in Northern Indigenous communities to improve diabetes outcomes and increase food security and we are thrilled to broaden our support and our learning through participation in the NMFCCC.

Valerie Elia Fund

An Anonymous Donor with a vision of people in our communities being healthy, educated and economically self-sufficient.

“ We hope when the clouds break and our spirits come alive, that we can do and bring about an awareness that is fading here in the Northern Communities: a connection with the land and ourselves. So, in time we shall see and hope to reap the efforts that we sowed of yesterday's gratitude and tomorrow's hope in the everlasting present. ”

- Brian Trewin, Grow North staff



SUPPORTING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES IN
NORTHERN MANITOBA THROUGH GOOD
FOOD AND RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMIES

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