These relationships are so important and we all benefit from coming together and talking about the vision we all share. It is also a way of reconciliation where our people have come through so much in terms of colonization; this reconciling must be with all parts of our society to rebuild new relationships and develop a vision together.
WELCOME & THANK YOU

Tansi and welcome to the 5th edition of the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, and Community Collaborative (NMFCCC) Community Stories book! Wow, five years, that feels kind of amazing to write. We are proud to share the stories of positive, community-led change and we are humbled by the visions and dedication that communities have for leading the change.

As you may know, the NMFCCC is a group of humans who work together with the purpose of communities in Northern Manitoba being healthier and stronger, and so that we can be changed through the experience of our relationships. Call it reconciliation if you like, but we collectively understand it as the need to know each other better and to have a deep respect for each other, the land, and the water.

Some of the NMFCCC humans live in Northern Manitoba communities inspiring collective action, and some live in the south and work for governments and organizations across Canada. We each bring skills and resources to this collective effort, and we each take away new knowledge, friendships, ideas and inspiration. And because this work is joyful but also often very hard, sometimes we take away some of the sadness and the weight of fighting for a better world.

As one participant said after our fall 2018 gathering in Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, “Forging stronger bonds with the people who do this heart work is something I can rely on and use for the rest of my life. We’re all in this together.”

We use this space to express deep gratitude to the funders who commit to this work, to the Northern Advisors who provide guidance, and to the community members who do the deep work and lead the change. Chi Miigwetch, Ekosi, Thank you.

We also take this space to reflect on the journey that we are collectively taking. After five years of practice and learning, we can conclusively say that there is much more practice and learning to go! ‘Reconciliation’ is trendy in Canada right now, and that isn’t a bad thing, as long as we don’t side-step the hard work and heart work parts of it. It is safe to say that we have learned that trying to ‘do good work’ and ‘be good partners’ is not a one off kinda thing. It’s a commitment. Continual reflection, learning, experimenting and listening are required. Also required is being open to real change, getting uncomfortable, and authentic shifts in power. We are trying.

This is a good moment for us as a group to think about what has happened over the past half a decade and what needs to happen next. And we extend a sincere invitation to any readers of this book to contact us and tell us your thoughts on the work, on being good partners, on where to go next, and on how we can change the world together.

All our Relations,

Julie Price & Amanda Froese on behalf of the NMFCCC

A special dedication to Jennell Majeran, recently retired Manager of the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, Province of Manitoba.

Jennell, your passion and commitment to supporting northern food sovereignty, and openness to taking a new path forward, led to the birth of the NMFCCC. Our collective journey would never have started without you, and for that we will always be grateful.
The 2018-19 Community-Led Change book has some new features. The Community Project Impacts section features five amazing community partners that took part in a deeper dive into understanding the impacts and mechanisms of their work. You can explore and learn from them on pages 10-18.

This year, we have chosen to highlight new stories in the New Community Partnerships section. These partnerships formed in 2018 & 19 from Churchill to Misipawistik Cree Nation. The stories feature photos and notes about the inspiring things happening and community plans for the future. Don’t worry, many of the community projects that have been previously featured are still going strong. Please visit past Community Stories books or the NMFCCC website www.nmfccc.ca or facebook page for information.

The book also tries to capture some of the magic and sharing on pages 32-35 that takes place when people come together in their territory to share knowledge, skills, and ideas. In these gatherings, and in the projects themselves, there is a strong central theme of future generations. People are working hard to build a world that is a beautiful place for future generations to thrive. We remember our obligations to future generations who will call this planet home. Future generations include our human children and the plants and animals that we are in relationship with.

As always, each of these stories was co-created by community project leaders and NMFCCC staff. Nothing appears in the book without permission, and project leaders have the final review of their content. Communities receive paper and electronic copies of this book 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.
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.

COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN MANITOBA ARE HEALTHIER AND STRONGER, AND OUR PARTNERSHIPS ARE MUTUALLY TRANSFORMATIVE

THESE OPPORTUNITIES:
- Increased the likelihood of:
  - Investments in:
    - Reciprocity
    - Shared learning
- Northern boreal food systems can support community health and economic development
- Food sovereignty has the power to change larger systems
- People, the land, plants, and animals are interconnected
- Culture, skills, and knowledge are experiencing local resurgence
- Community-led solutions have committed support
- Local infrastructure and resources are strong and growing

& INVESTMENTS IN:
- Reciprocity
- Shared learning
- Collaborations
- Slow
- Committed

RECIPIROCITY
- Finding effective approaches
- Local champions’ ability to lead change
- Improved access to good food
- Enhanced sustainable livelihood opportunities
- Replication and adaptation of projects
- Inspiration and celebration
- Better quality and more philanthropic support

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.

RECIPIROCITY
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.

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.

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.

COMMEDITED
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.

COLLABORATION
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.
We are proud to stand with 34 projects across Northern Manitoba in 2018 and 2019. Projects vary from horticulture to raising livestock and bees to traditional teachings and food from the land. Some projects are in their first year of running while others are well established. Together, each community and their projects are building a network of people dedicated to supporting and creating community, increasing food sovereignty, and strengthening local economies.

### 2018/2019 PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wabung Fishers Producers Co-op</td>
<td>Garden Hill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanipegow Wild Rice Project</td>
<td>Wanipegow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACC Beekeeping</td>
<td>Spence Lake, Rorkton, Winnipegosis, Crane River, Mafeking, St. Martin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACC Fish Composting</td>
<td>Dawson Bay and Pine Dock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge City Farm</td>
<td>Pukatawagan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayline Regional Roundtable Beekeeping</td>
<td>Cormorant, Nelson House, Gods Lake Narrows, Thicket Portage, Wabowden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misipawistik Pimatisimeskanaw</td>
<td>Misipawistik Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berens River Greenhouse</td>
<td>Berens River First Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocket Greens Hydroponics &amp; Gardening Support</td>
<td>Churchill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Feast &amp; Celebration of the Snow Goose</td>
<td>Churchill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poplar River Greenhouse &amp; Garden</td>
<td>Poplar River First Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nisichawayasihk Food Production</td>
<td>Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northlands for Better Living</td>
<td>Northlands Denesuline First Nation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bunibonibee Traditional Foods</td>
<td>Bunibonibee Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting Youth to Lake Winnipeg and Traditional Foods</td>
<td>Black River First Nation, Poplar River First Nation, Pinaymootang First Nation, Misipawistik Cree Nation, Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, Norway House Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabowden Traditional Teachings</td>
<td>Wabowden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochet Youth Garden</td>
<td>Barren Lands First Nation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opaskwayak Culture &amp; Healthy Living Initiative</td>
<td>Opaskwayak Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wachusko Weesi Muskrat Hut Project</td>
<td>Opaskwayak Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peguis Agriculture Project</td>
<td>Peguis First Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrows Community Greenhouse</td>
<td>Barrows</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grow North: Northern Boreal Horticulture Program</td>
<td>Leaf Rapids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamattawa Chicken Project</td>
<td>Shamattawa First Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayline Food Buying Coop</td>
<td>Wabowden, Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HBOIERC Garden</td>
<td>Norway House Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mushroom Cultivation</td>
<td>Grand Rapids</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fisher River High School Gardening Project</td>
<td>Fisher River Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ithinto Mechisowin Program - O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation / South Indian Lake</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Meechim Project</td>
<td>Garden Hill First Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Youth Leadership Initiative</td>
<td>Black River First Nation, Poplar River First Nation, Pinaymootang First Nation, Misipawistik Cree Nation, Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, Norway House Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosakahiken Garden Project</td>
<td>Mosakahiken Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox Lake Land-based Learning</td>
<td>Fox Lake Cree Nation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocket Greens Hydroponics Workshop</td>
<td>Churchill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMUNITY PROJECT IMPACTS

Are we having a positive effect? Our group, the NMFCCC, wanted to learn about the impacts of community projects we partner with, and if we have contributed to those impacts. So, we dug into all of the information about 5 community partners: Grow North in Leaf Rapids, Ithinto Mechisowin in O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation/South Indian Lake, Opaskwayak Culture & Healthy Living Initiative in Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Peguis Agricultural Project in Peguis First Nation, and Bayline Food Buying Co-op which serves Wabowden, Thicket Portage, Pikwitonai, Ilford, and War Lake First Nation.

TO IDENTIFY IMPACTS AND LEARNINGS WE TRIED TO ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS:

1. What are the impacts of community projects on communities?
2. How have investments and activities of the Collaborative (NMFCCC) contributed to these impacts?

Community project leaders reviewed their summary page to make sure it was accurate, and then gave their approval to share the information in this book.

SUMMARY OF WHAT WE LEARNED

PROJECT APPROACHES

There are 8 common effective approaches that were used to implement local food solutions:

- Local food production
- Outreach and community engagement
- Resource, knowledge, story sharing; training and practice
- Youth-focused activities
- Collaboration, planning, and growth
- Research
- Food sharing and ordering
- Local Economic and livelihood opportunities

These approaches resulted in:

- Enhanced sustainable livelihood opportunities through employment/honoraria in all projects, and social enterprises in 3 projects
- Replication and adaptation taking place within each project, and across communities who learn and draw inspiration from their peers
- Celebrating successes and sharing learnings is practiced in each community

SUPPORT & RELATIONSHIPS

Project Operation and Relationship with NMFCCC

“I think that you [Julie] and your program is excellent and one of a kind in Canada...
I do believe in collaboration and seeking consensus within any working group, and from my experience working with you and your organization, this has been the success. I’m sure that many of the project leaders in each community feel this way; [I] hope that our future can be realized through this and [we can] share our vision with all. Keep up the great work, and thank you again.”

CARL MCCORRISTER,
PEGUIS FIRST NATION, JAN 2017
The NMFCCC became a partner early in the development and growth of 4 of the 5 projects. For all projects, the NMFCCC has played an important role in:

- Providing (relative) financial stability through grants, overcoming barriers to delivering philanthropic grants to communities
- Committed relationship building between communities, neighbouring or other communities, NMFCCC staff, and supporters
- Supporting self-determination by supporting communities and project leaders in ways that are most meaningful to them
- Facilitating and supporting story sharing, reciprocal and shared learning, and celebration of successes
- Facilitating and encouraging planning, economic development opportunities, and sustainable growth
- Bringing more supporters to the table, and broadening the scope of understanding for supporters of Northern realities

**IMPACTS ON COMMUNITIES**

**HOW ACCESS TO GOOD FOOD HAS IMPROVED:**

- production of healthy, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs
- Food sharing and delivery
- spaces for growing food
- harvesting of wild meat and traditional medicines
- production of preserves
- Locally adapted plants
- production of honey

**IMPACT OF COMMUNITY PROJECTS ON COMMUNITIES:**

- hope, motivation, excitement, pride and confidence
- skills and knowledge
- access to healthy, culturally appropriate food
- community engagement and positive relationships
- in positive options/activities
- Improved livelihood opportunities
- cost of accessing food
- feeling of connection to and reclaiming of the land and culture
- Healing and growth
- Improved physical and mental health

**NMFCCC ACTIVITIES AND INVESTMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013 (PILOT)</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANNUAL BUDGET</td>
<td>$49,458</td>
<td>$310,000</td>
<td>$378,000</td>
<td>$566,500</td>
<td>$696,957</td>
<td>$669,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Granting ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
- Administration ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
- Staff ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
- Northern staff ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
- Staff visits to communities 3 7 8 11 13 12
- Community networking calls 3 2 1
- North-to-North gatherings 1 2 3 12
- Funder learning trip ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
- Story sharing booklet ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
- Story sharing video ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

**Skills and knowledge being revived (# of projects engaged)**

**NMFCCC staff (Becky and Julie) have been very helpful to us in supporting our meetings, helping set up new contacts, and advocating on our behalf.”**

**DONNA SANOFFSKY**
**PROGRAM COORDINATOR**
**DEC 2017**
BAYLINE FOOD BUYING CO-OP

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

PROJECT SUMMARY & APPROACH

The Bayline Food Buying Co-op (BFBC) is a community-led response to the high costs and excessive time it takes to buy groceries for remote communities along the Bayline Railway. Since 2012 they have researched, planned, and launched their program across 3 communities. The NMFCCC began partnering with BFBC in 2015, and helped to get the Co-op up and running; with the first food deliveries June 2017.

ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY-LED FOOD SOLUTIONS: WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE? WHY IT WORKS LEARNINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities and Community-led Food Solutions</th>
<th>What Does It Include?</th>
<th>Why It Works</th>
<th>Learnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program planning, development, and implementation</td>
<td>Research, surveys, evaluation; creating governance; Business plan development; Documenting process</td>
<td>Consensus building; Capacity building</td>
<td>Yearly survey with communities for feedback; Continue meeting with participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration, learning, and sharing</td>
<td>Building partnerships; Learning from others; Participant feedback; Coordinator training</td>
<td>Being part of a good food system; Strong network of support; Allows for expansion and adaptation</td>
<td>Create resource pamphlet; Share stories from participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food ordering and delivery</td>
<td>Organizing and improving logistics; Diverse payment and banking system; Product selection opportunities</td>
<td>Strengthens options to get good food</td>
<td>Working with challenges of train; Food storage in communities; Payment options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach and community engagement</td>
<td>Community meetings and feasts; Community feedback and consultation; Posters and infographics; Individual outreach; Sharing information</td>
<td>Community-led process encourages empowerment and participatory learning; Community leadership</td>
<td>Encouraging local leadership; Creating trust and introducing idea of co-op; Get schools and organizations on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local economic opportunities</td>
<td>Hired coordinators; Local market opportunities</td>
<td>Promotes self-sufficiency, food security and sovereignty</td>
<td>Would like to incorporate local foods and support local people to share their products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some people are trying it out and they are impressed with it. We are spreading the word by mouth, explaining how it will help them financially, and how it will be more convenient. We only just started at the end of June, so we know this year we will get a lot more people involved.”

PAULINE CORDELL, PIKWITONEI COMMUNITY COORDINATOR, FEB 2018
**IMPACTS**

**KEY ACTIVITIES FOR START-UP**
- 39 community surveys conducted
- DOZENS of planning meetings
- COMMUNITY FEASTS
- TRAINING for staff and board

**IMPROVING ACCESS TO GOOD FOOD EACH YEAR**
- 7 extended families currently shipping food, expecting to have more each year.

**SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE BEING REVIVED**
- Research
- Strategic planning
- Partnership building and collaboration
- Program development and implementation
- Community mobilization and engagement
- Outreach and education
- Communications and marketing

**MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES AND LEARNINGS**
- Co-op is successfully underway!
- Community-led process
- Working with a good team
- Coordinators trained and running program
- Governance structure developed
- Consensus building
- Great support from local Council and agencies
- Partnership building and collaboration
- Learning from other communities
- Showing others what is possible

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**SUPPORT & RELATIONSHIPS**

The NMFCCC has played a very active and significant role in supporting the BFBC through research and planning, facilitation and organizing of meetings, developing materials, and partnership building. As the main funder of the project since 2015, NMFCCC has also helped with securing in-kind and financial support from the provincial government and Collaborative supporters. A 3-year funding partnership with BFBC was started in 2018 and we continue to support the profile raising of the project. We have also helped to connect BFBC with other communities from which the BFBC has drawn knowledge and experience.

The BFBC has developed strong partnerships with Community Councils, Public Works, and CAOs of each community involved. A key partnership with Via Rail helps with the delivery of foods. Local stores are involved and, in the future, it is hoped that the sale of local products will help support coordinator salaries. Partnerships have increased significantly as food deliveries have been made, and new opportunities await.

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**I have received word from each worker in the communities that people are getting excited and are starting to realize what a good impact this will have on each community member. That’s the most exciting part for me as a coordinator to know that this is working and that we are able to help out the people for a better and healthier life.”**

DONNA SANOFFSKY, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, JUL 2017

---

**“**

Right now, everybody is struggling to get to town to go and shop, the snow that we have had, whoa man, it has been difficult. We have to wait 3 or 4 days sometimes to get our roads plowed... People are very interested in the coop here, the train is everything here.”

MAYOR MAURICE CLEMENS, THICKET PORTAGE

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**FIGURE 3**

Local Champions Supported

- Community coordinators: 3
- Program coordinator: 1
- Board members: 8
PEGUIS AGRICULTURAL PROJECT

PEGUIS FIRST NATION

“One woman made 10x12 frames and she started doing the gardening herself and you wouldn’t believe what she produced this year... she was so proud of what she did, and her interacting with other people who are struggling. You can see that the interest is there. This lady really was something to show for other people, what you can do when you put some work into it.”

CARL MCCORRISTER, GARDEN SUPERVISOR, OCT 2015

1900s
- Community forcibly relocated due to growing pressures for farm land and by settler populations

2011-2013
- Peguis Community Garden Project begins

2014
- Successful local fundraising
- 7 acres of fertile land cultivated

2015
- NMFCCC becomes a supporting partner
- Continued project growth and community engagement
- Leadership recognized across the province

2016
- NMFCCC makes first 2-year funding partnership
- Dip in support from Chief and Council (CC)

2017
- Main community garden left to fallow
- Regained support from CC
- Local tobacco crop reclaimed

2018
- 3-year funding partnership with NMFCCC begins

2019
- 2nd year of NMFCCC multi-year funding partnership
- Renewed Support from Chief and Council

PROJECT SUMMARY & APPROACH

Peguis First Nation has a strong agricultural history that extends back centuries. Their community gardens started in 2011 to reclaim this tradition. The Peguis Agricultural Project has grown each year with plans of expansion, involving more community members, and of testing different seeds and crops. The project has benefited many in the community and has been recognized by many communities, governments, and the Collaborative as an example of agricultural sustainability, food sovereignty, and reconciliation.
**IMPECTS**

This section represents what impacts were observed, shared, and reported through a community-led process for the Peguis Agriculture project.

**SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE BEING REVIVED**

- Horticultural food production
- Plant breeding and seed saving
- Building infrastructure and landscaping
- Preserving foods
- Marketing and selling foods
- Education and facilitation
- Fundraising and networking

**AVERAGE ACTIVITY EACH YEAR**

- **8 ACRES CULTIVATED**
- **2 GARDENING WORKSHOPS**
- **2 ELDERS’ MARKETS**
- **1 END OF YEAR GATHERING**

**Local Champions Supported**

(Average each year)

- Elders: 55
- Steering Committee: 11
- Seasonal Employees: 4
- Local Contractors: 28
- Family Gardeners: 5

**IMPROVING ACCESS TO GOOD FOOD EACH YEAR:**

- Large amount and variety of crops harvested
- Food delivered to food bank once/week (in 2013, 400 lbs of potatoes a week, plus other vegetables)
- Food shared with Elders who participate
- Community members visit garden and pick vegetables
- Food donated to social service agencies for workshops and to community gatherings
- Workers take home food each day

**MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES AND LEARNINGS**

- Reclaiming agricultural heritage
- Growing and sharing crops
- Reviving skills and knowledge
- Encourages healthy eating
- Hosting guests, learning with others
- Sharing and selling food
- Supporting home gardens
- Demonstrating what is possible
- Building relationships
- Recognition from others
- Feedback and support from Elders
- Opportunities to talk about reconciliation

**IMPECTS ON PEOPLE INVOLVED**

- + food security and food quality
- + employment
- + knowledge and skills
- + community involvement and connections
- + awareness of healthy eating and food security
- + hope for what can be done
- Pride and dedication
- + gardens and gardeners
- + people proposing solutions
- Communities encouraged and inspired
- Invaluable to reconciliation process
- Positive relationship building

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS EACH YEAR**

- **90 ATTENDEES AT ELDERS DAYS**
- **31 ATTENDEES AT EACH WORKSHOP**
- **28 GARDENS SUPPORTED BY PROJECTS**

**SUPPORT & RELATIONSHIPS**

From the Peguis Development Corporation that hosts the project, to Elders who provide guidance and share knowledge, this project has strong community support and partnership. The local Food Bank and the Healing Centre are key partners who increase gardening spaces and sharing. Collaborations with universities help with research and developing locally adapted crops. Partnerships with schools and other agencies are important in providing learning and work experiences for students and the un/under-employed.

We have been a consistent and reliable financial supporter to this project. We have sponsored learning and networking opportunities for the project; and in turn Peguis Agriculture has hosted visitors, shared their knowledge and stories, and has been strong food sovereignty and Indigenous rights advocate. This project was the first multi-year funding partnership with us and the first partner who has had more than one multi-year agreement – this speaks to its strength and consistency.
GROW NORTH BOREAL HORTICULTURAL CENTRE

LEAF RAPIDS

ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY-LED FOOD SOLUTIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Does It Include?</th>
<th>Why It Works</th>
<th>Learnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horticultural learning, training, and practice</td>
<td>Hands-on work and learning; Broad range of tools and methods</td>
<td>Applying knowledge and skills; Increases sustainability of food systems; Supports cultural reclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth-focused programs and opportunities</td>
<td>School engagement; Training and education; Leadership and empowerment; Employment</td>
<td>Personal and professional growth; Develops skills and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach, knowledge/resource sharing, being part of a movement</td>
<td>Workshops and exchanges; Supporting people and communities; Sharing through different methods/media; Plant distribution</td>
<td>Spreads excitement, knowledge, and hope; Builds community through networking; Demonstrating what is possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Testing, experiments, and research on crops, seeds, and methods; Sharing knowledge</td>
<td>Improves growing technology and knowledge; Crops adapted to the North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy, planning, and growth</td>
<td>Managing and building resources and relationships; Developing and planning</td>
<td>Allows for expansion, adaptation, replication, and reflections; Grows and maintains momentum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grow North takes place in the post-mining town of Leaf Rapids. The project has a long history of gardening, with more structured support and programming starting in 2006. The NMFCCC has been supporting the project since 2013, including critical support when the project underwent re-visioning and strategic planning. The project has built and strengthened its capacity and is on its way to being an impactful Northern Boreal centre for horticultural practice, research, and knowledge sharing.

PROJECT SUMMARY & APPROACH

Grow North Visiting Brochet Youth Gardens

Churchill River Nursery

Grow North - Chris, Howie, Ervin & Anthony

1975-1981
- Grow North holds first workshop
- Programming develops
- More infrastructure built

2003-2005
- Coordinator hired
- Community outreach begins
- Youth clean trailer park and build nursery site

2006-2012
- NMFCCC provides grant, becomes partner
- Program has good support and expands
- Centre tests new management
- NMFCCC provides limited unrestricted financial resources

2013
- Centre re-designs program and re-organizes management
- NMFCCC Learning Trip to Leaf Rapids and OPCN

2014
- Centre maintains greenhouse and gardens with small capacity

2015
- Centre hires staff and builds capacity
- Hosts North-to-North learning exchange with many partners

2016
- Centre designs program and re-organizes management

2017
- Centre hires staff and builds capacity
- Hosts North-to-North learning exchange with many partners
- Strategic Planning for the future

2018
- Multi-year funding and strategic planning support from NMFCCC
- Increased staff capacity and staff transition

2019
- 2nd and final year for this NMFCCC multi-year funding agreement
- Rebuilding team and leadership transition

FIGURE 1

Theory of Change icons – see page 6

FIGURE 2

PROJECT IMPACTS
What Chuck has taught me is to be a boreal forester. This is something that I never thought I would do in my life. It is a great thing I can pass along to my kids and maybe they will do some of this stuff. Lots of people are really interested in what we are doing and I think it's awesome. I feel really good about it.”

LES LINKLATER, CASUAL STAFF, AUG 2016

Support & Relationships

Area 1 of the Frontier School Division has been a key supporter of Grow North as it hosts the project, provides space and equipment, and assists with administration. The Town of Leaf Rapids has also been an ongoing supporter. NMFCCC has been in partnership with Grow North since 2013. Over the years we have provided financial, strategic, and in-kind support as capacity builds, and collaboration increases.
The Opaskwayak Culture & Healthy Living Initiative (OCHLI) started in 2013 with the aim to provide opportunities and spaces where members of OCN can live healthy and active lifestyles. Since the beginning of NMFCCC’s partnership with OCHLI the project has built a summer kitchen, expanded vegetable and flower gardens, and established beehives with community involvement growing each year.

ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY-LED FOOD SOLUTIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?</th>
<th>WHY IT WORKS</th>
<th>LEARNINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spaces that encourage healthy and active lifestyles</td>
<td>Gardens that increase accessibility; Outdoor kitchen, wood stove, clay oven; wildflower bed</td>
<td>Venues for teaching, learning, socializing, and exercising; Beautiful and accessible areas attract people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community involvement and engagement</td>
<td>Volunteer leadership; Membership driven and supported; Family focus; Events and feasts; Organized communal working time</td>
<td>Encourages participation from all; Brings people together; Socializing as a key incentive; Builds capacity and ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local food production, preparation, and sharing</td>
<td>Food production, preparation, preservation, and cooking; Traditional medicines; Beekeeping; Food distribution</td>
<td>Promotion of healthy and sustainable food sources; Supports food sovereignty and cultural reclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Workshops and seminars; Learning spaces; Elders share stories and knowledge; Outreach and media</td>
<td>Intergenerational learning and teaching; Skill building is huge attraction; Increases visibility and interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration, planning, and growth</td>
<td>Diverse partnerships; Building infrastructure and programming; Fundraising and networking; Expansion of programs</td>
<td>Close partnerships allow for support and wide reach; Integration into schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning how to grow the vegetables gave me the confidence to know that I can do this. Now that I have a hand in gardening, I want to try more things and the fruit side, and see just how far we can go with this. It feels like we are getting started and can do much more.”

NOREEN SINGH, PRESIDENT, JAN 2016
SUPPORT & RELATIONSHIPS

OCHLI continues to get support and in-kind contributions from local organizations and businesses. OCN Recreation Department: Beautification Crew have helped garden members with landscaping and keeping the sites attractive each year. The project is community-driven and strongly volunteer-led with both the President, Noreen Singh, and the Secretary, Teressa DeHoop, volunteering their time for the past 3 years. Along with Vice-president Margaret Ross, it is community members that have helped OCHLI to grow, to adapt, and to have a positive impact on the community.

In 2016, the NMFCCC visited as part of our annual Learning Trip. This was a great way to end the season, to raise the profile of the garden, and to engage more of the community. In 2018, we worked with OCHLI to approve a multi-year funding partnership that will provide funding and support for the project to explore traditional foods programming.

IMPACTS

This section represents what impacts were observed, shared, and reported through a community-led process for the Opaskwayak Culture & Healthy Living Initiative.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE BEING REVIVED:

- Food production, preserving, and preparing
- Building infrastructure
- Traditional medicine harvesting and processing
- Beekeeping
- Intergenerational teaching and learning
- Fundraising and networking
- Planning and reflecting
- Community building

OCN INSPIRING OWNERSHIP AND CHANGE:

- Members pay annual fee to support program
- Executive and other volunteers fundraise, organize, and plan together
- Local people investing their own money into the gardens
- Local high school has their own greenhouse
- People gardening in their own yards

GARDEN ACTIVITIES

8 GARDENS

1 HR/WEEK

MINIMUM TIME FAMILIES SPEND IN THE GARDENS

IMPROVING ACCESS TO GOOD FOOD EACH YEAR:

The community never measures the amount of food – they believe it is more important that they use and share it.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO GOOD FOOD EACH YEAR:

- Gardens produce good quality of crops
- Fruit tree orchard flourishes
- Raspberry patches provide pails of harvest
- Jars of preserves are produced
- Honey extractions produce gallons of honey

GARDEN ACTIVITIES

8

COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Local Champions Supported (approximate each year)

- Elected Executive
- Garden Supervisor
- Paid Summer Student
- Families

The open evaluation process that NMFCCC encourages for this project has been invaluable. Pictures speak so much louder than words.

PEGGY WILSON, TREASURER AND MENTOR, DEC 2015

SUPPORT & RELATIONSHIPS

OCN MEMBERS CHECKING ON THE BEES
ITHINTO MECHISOWIN PROGRAM

ITHINTO MECHISOWIN, O-PIPON-NA-PIWIN CREE NATION

Theory of Change icons – see page 6

ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY-LED FOOD SOLUTIONS:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?</th>
<th>WHY IT WORKS</th>
<th>LEARNINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local food harvesting and production</td>
<td>Increases access to healthy, culturally appropriate, and sustainable food; Supports land sovereignty and cultural reclamation</td>
<td>Dealing with weather; Establishing up-to-code food processing area; Challenges with transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community participation and reciprocity</td>
<td>Community sustains the program; Builds relationships; Sharing food for sustenance, healing, inspires collective will; Redefining food as a whole and relational resource (wechihituin)</td>
<td>Support those that want to be involved, while balancing safety; Training for volunteers; Awareness raising on equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story, knowledge, and resource sharing</td>
<td>Promotes cultural revitalization; Supports food sovereignty and decolonization; Builds community and connections with others</td>
<td>A source of strength and hope; Partnerships to enhance sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth training and skill development</td>
<td>Decolonization through education and practice; Providing lived experience, knowledge, and skills</td>
<td>Ensure Elders and youth have appropriate gear for activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration, planning and program development</td>
<td>Supportive network invested in the work; Allows for expansion, adaptation and replication; Promotes improvement and reflection</td>
<td>Financial management support; Governance/charitable host structures; Challenges with access to resources and capacity; Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROJECT SUMMARY & APPROACH

The Ithinto Mechisowin Program (IMP), meaning food from the land, is a community-led response to the destruction and changes that hydroelectric flooding has had on the land, water, and community. The community’s engagement and commitment to this work is an example of Indigenous food sovereignty and decolonization through diverse livelihoods support, traditional practices, education, and restoring the relationship between people, health, and the land.

1970s
- Flooding by hydroelectric dam development
- Heightened efforts to train youth in traditional food skills

2012
- IMP starts
- Project planning and development
- University of Manitoba partnership begins

2013
- Infrastructure built
- NMFCCC provides grant, becomes partner

2014
- Focus on training, employment, and capacity building
- NMFCCC Learning Trip to OPCN and Leaf Rapids

2015
- Trainings strengthened, materials and resources developed
- Challenging year for community involvement

2016
- Program maintained
- OPCN hosts first Country Foods Learning exchange in partnership with NMFCCC

2017
- Staff turnover, loss of key Elder, and political unrest challenge the program
- Program persists with dedicated volunteers

2018
- Refinement and deepening of activities
- Focus on staff and committee capacity

2019
- Program continuing with resilience and support from volunteers
- Changes in staff and steering committee
- Continued NMFCCC support

The Ithinto Mechisowin Program (IMP), meaning food from the land, is a community-led response to the destruction and changes that hydroelectric flooding has had on the land, water, and community. The community’s engagement and commitment to this work is an example of Indigenous food sovereignty and decolonization through diverse livelihoods support, traditional practices, education, and restoring the relationship between people, health, and the land.
SUPPORT & RELATIONSHIPS

Local in-kind and financial support from the Tommy Thomas Memorial Health Complex, the Oscar Blackburn School, local hunters, fisher, trappers, and medicine pickers, and the IMP steering committee are key to the sustainability and success of IMP. Other relationships include working with the University of Manitoba, developing partnerships with government and non-profit organizations.

The NMFCCC and IMP partnership started in 2013. Over the years, we have strengthened our relationship, provided financial support, organized visits and learning opportunities for IMP participants and for others to come and visit IMP. We continue to honour these relationships that have been built while sharing learnings and best practices from this community-led project.

Hilda Dysart, one of the founding steering committee members and current chair of IMP and counsellor at Oscar Blackburn, is also a longtime Northern Advisor to the NMFCCC.

NMFCCC has been an ongoing and stable partner in our work and a huge supporter of what we do.”

RENE LINKLATER, STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR, APR 2018
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

One of the exciting things about the movement happening in Manitoba for stronger food systems and cultural reclamation is that there are always new things bubbling up. People are inspired by each other and moved to try their own ideas and take actions that are relevant to their community and context. Inspiring each other to see new possibilities is a powerful thing. We hope you enjoy these three new projects that are just getting started.

"When the youth plant and have these skills to do such, the pride alone will change the whole community.”

MARIE TSSEASSZE
NORTHLANDS GARDENER & PROJECT LEAD

NORTHLANDS FOR BETTER LIVING

Northlands Denesuline First Nation is a small fly in community that continues to practice many of their traditions including hunting, fishing, and trapping. Even with this connection to the land, eating fresh food can still be a challenge as produce and other foods have to be purchased at the only store at high prices.

Through the hiring of youth to help support gardening and greenhouse activities in the community, this project will empower youth by developing skills to live a healthier way of life and to also enrich the local youth development and employment. Not only will the youth gain leadership experience and build their skills, they will also be providing and cooking food for their community and elders.

There are already 12 families that garden and there is interest from others to start gardening, growing their own food, and eating fresh and local food.

WANIPIGOW WILD RICE PROJECT

The Anishinaabe people at Hollow Water First Nation have harvested Manoomin (wild rice) for thousands of years, but due to Hydro impacts, over harvesting and infringement on our territory, natural manoomin cycles have been disrupted and this requires restoration of these habitats.

Through the Wanipigow school, the Wild Rice Project has connected students to this traditional food source and deepened their understanding of its origins, health benefits, and connection to their culture.

Over the past year, students have been involved in going out onto manoomin producing lakes, learning about its habitat, planting wild rice seed, and getting ready for the wild rice camps in September where we will go out on the lakes to harvest manoomin, followed by the many steps it takes to process the wild rice. Once the manoomin has been processed the students will have been involved in and seen the full manoomin cycle from planting the seeds to eating the manoomin on their plate; increasing their connection to the food, the land and water, and their role in restoring manoomin habitats.
Wild rice is important to me because it is a part of my culture and I’m proud of that.

If wild rice vanished it would feel like a part of my culture just disappeared and I would have to find something new to eat with my food.”

This first-of-its-kind project, a collaboration between the Grand Rapids school and project volunteers, will provide high school students with the knowledge, skills, and experience required to produce a wide variety of mushrooms including oyster, shiitake, lion’s mane and medicinal mushrooms.

The past spring & summer of 2019 has been spent purchasing supplies, creating workshop plans and materials, and getting ready for the launching of the project when the new school year begins. As the mushrooms grow, students will have the opportunity to attend cooking classes, to cook and taste the many ways that mushrooms can be used in meals.

While the first year has and will continue to focus on skill and knowledge building, the project has the potential to expand, involve more students and community, branch out to individual’s houses, increase food security, and to be a model for other communities and schools.
NEW PROJECTS

2018 and 2019 saw many new NMFC CC project partnerships. Highlighted in the following pages are 9 new projects and the dedicated people that lead them.
The Wachusko weesti (Muskrat Hut) project is a community-led collaboration between an interdisciplinary team (including Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics, professionals and students working in Education, Natural Resources, and Design-Build Architecture) and First Nation leadership and community members that builds on the work of the One House Many Nations (OHMN) campaign, an Indigenous-led grassroots effort to address the housing, water, and general environmental crisis by supporting local, sustainable, off-grid housing. Part of the project was supported by a Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant to document effective ways that communities connect to solve housing and water issues.

Over the last two years, members of the group assembled for this project and Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) leaders and community members have collaborated in a community-led action research project to design and build a sustainable village for unhoused community members. Having designed and built a prototype house (now occupied by a previously unhoused community member who participated in the build), with a second house under construction, the community is now ready to start work on the village design and construction.

Wachusko weesti will be invaluable throughout the construction of OCN’s environmentally sustainable village and, ultimately, will be part of the core infrastructure for the village. The model may also be used in other communities to support housing development or cultural land-based activities, providing accessible, hygienic and private/safe washroom spaces that supports participation of all community members. The community kitchen aspect of the unit will enable wild game, fish and other food processing and cooking and the preparation of medicines and plants. Knowledge mobilization and the transmission of traditional Indigenous knowledge and language is a key aspect. The model will be open sourced and available free for other communities to replicate.

The name, Wachusko weesti, was chosen because wachusk (muskrat) are part of Cree creation/origin stories and a primary food source. They play a central role in our identity, spirituality and survival, and have been impacted by resource development and the fur quota system. In spite of this, they remain master architects of the watery environments they inhabit. They are a symbol of strength, persistence, innovation, and evolution.
The Launch Box has been a huge success with 50 subscribers in 2019. This means that 60% of the produce harvested goes directly to community members.

According to the Launch Box subscribers, their weekly eating habits have been changing. They are becoming accustomed to fresh leafy greens each week and are trying new recipes and incorporating the greens into foods they have always made (like soups and stews). The weekly pick-ups have become a bit of a social gathering with many subscribers lingering to chat and visit with each other.

2018 was mainly focused on learning how the system works, to better understanding hydroponic growing, and testing how much it can produce. We did experience some challenges including a pump malfunction which caused it to spill all its water out onto the ground over a weekend resulting in a big frozen puddle and a few lost plants, as well as a common plant root disease that sometimes happens in hydroponics that can be treated with the use of natural microbes and enzymes added to the water. While these challenges may have slowed things down for a moment, they have also been opportunities to learn and strengthen skills and understanding of hydroponic growing. By the end of November 2018, we had sold over 13,000 pieces of produce.

In response to many questions from communities who were interested in starting similar projects we hosted a North-to-North Rocket Greens Hydroponics workshop in March of 2019. Participants came from Norway House, Pukatawagan, Roseau River, Garden Hill, Wasagamack, and Winnipeg and we covered a variety of topics including planning, planting, maintenance, and marketing through hands-on activities and discussions. “This week was probably the highlight of my year.” It was a real pleasure to be able to share our experiences of containerized hydroponic growing with others.

So far, 2019 has been a year of growing produce, expanding our community reach through markets, school workshops and visits, and partnering with the health centre to host cooking classes. We have also established test plots to see the changes of growing root vegetables in different types of soil (store bought vs soil built from local resources), and are working with community members to support their gardens and helping to increase food security in Churchill.
The community of Bunibonibee Cree Nation has many hunters and fishermen of various ages. For years, traditional hunting and fishing has been passed on to our children and the number of those interested continue to increase. While fishing is common in our community, not everyone can go fishing and most people do not have their own freezer to store what they catch in.

The purpose of purchasing community freezers is to share wild and traditional food that is caught or harvested. Many people access the traditional foods including Elders. It is these elders who have helped to keep the traditions of fishing, hunting, and berry picking alive and who taught us to share what we have with others. This knowledge was almost lost not too long ago, but it is still here, and the younger generations are eager to learn and continue teaching future generations.

The freezer purchased in 2018 have been mostly used for fish caught by youth and other fishers, berries including blueberries, raspberries, strawberries and gooseberries, and vegetables grown in the community. The freezers have been a way of bringing community together. Hunters and fishers have a place to bring and share their surplus of game and fish. Community members who would not have a way of obtaining wild food can now access a meal or two as needed. It has also connected youth with hunters, fishers, and elders who share their knowledge with them.

“School knowledge is that when you’re talking to a youth or a child it goes a long way and has a bigger impact that lasts longer.”

During the summer of 2018, there were 6 youth camping trips supported by Bunibonibee Cree Nation health programs with 90 youth ages 10-17 attending. During these camps, Elders and knowledge holders showed the youth land-based practices, everyone spent time outdoors and enjoyed strawberry pancakes together.

This year, there has been even more interest from youth to attend camps, go fishing, prepare for a moose hunt, pick berries, and even getting involved in the gardening.
Belinda Sinclair, one of the Jordan’s Principle workers in Mosakahiken Cree Nation, also known as Moose Lake, remembers gardening with her grandfather when she was little. “He had a big garden and horses.” Now Belinda is working with her youth to get them into gardening.

To keep the horses away, as well as other uninvited guests, a small grant was applied for to build a fence in 2018. All the materials and supplies were organized, and a fence started to take shape.

**COMMUNITY GARDEN FENCE PROJECT**

Belinda Sinclair, one of the Jordan’s Principle workers in Mosakahiken Cree Nation, also known as Moose Lake, remembers gardening with her grandfather when she was little. “He had a big garden and horses.” Now Belinda is working with her youth to get them into gardening.

Once again, the horses were a problem. This time using the fence poles as scratching posts, tearing down the fence before the foundation could be secured. To solve this, during the spring of 2019, a jack hammer was rented from the Pas to dig deeper holes. The fence is now up, the raised beds are secure and planted with carrots, potatoes, and onions.

Belinda shared about the importance of gardening for youth as it provides them with access to fresh air, physical activity and movement, and fresh food. Each year, more youth and their families get involved with gardening. Just before the end of the school year, many people from the community came together to plant the raise beds at the school. There was a great turn out with kids staying after school hours and having fun in the dirt. “There was one kids who was trying to plant himself. He put his feet in, covered them, and waited to grow.”

Belinda and her youth will look after the gardens they planted as well as checking in with the beds at the school. Belinda also has her own, 13x31 foot, garden to tend to. Everyone is excited to see what will grow and can’t wait for the harvest.

**Theory of Change icons – see page 6**

**OBJECTIVES:** to build a fence around the raised bed gardens that Jordan’s Principal youth will use to grow plants and spend time outside.

Gardeners in Mosakahiken face a unique challenge: a herd of horse that roam the community. It is not uncommon for a garden of carrots or potatoes to be dug up and eaten by the horses.

The harvest is the best time. Kids don’t even wear shoes when they pull the potatoes.”
GREENHOUSE BUILD & FOOD PRODUCTION

Building off of historical and recent gardening and food production efforts in Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation and Nelson House, Alexandria Moodie of NCN Family and Community Wellness Centre supported the building of a greenhouse in late 2018 for programming use and to help get more people interested in gardening.

With the greenhouse in place, the 2019 growing season was able to get an earlier start with seeds and seedlings starting their journey inside the greenhouse. Being able to start growing early and extend the growing season is important because of the shorter and colder summers that impact northern growing seasons.

With significant in-kind support from the Country Foods Program, managed by Malcolm Hunter, 12 raised beds for community use were built this summer. There are plans to establish a larger in-ground garden for next year. With mentorship opportunities for youth and involving children in the gardening programs, interests in gardening are spreading. In the coming years the hope is to get more and more people involved in growing and producing their own food.

“Children learn from hands on and getting their hands dirty. Their willingness to learn will always be joyful for them especially if they know they’ve helped with planting food.”

ALEX MOODIE, NCN GARDENER & BEEKEEPER

Beekeeping in NCN continues with Fred Hart, a gardener and beekeeper with 60+ years of experience, sharing his knowledge, skills, and stories with new beekeepers. This summer some community members attended a beekeeping workshop in Wabowden to learn about bees and beekeeping. To their surprise, they returned to NCN with bees of their own.

There are plans for chicken raising in the next year as well as plans for the Country Foods Program to build a garden to be able to include fresh vegetables in their program. Chief and Council have shown interest in supporting the gardens and food production through in-kind and material support. Momentum and interest in growing and producing food for elders and the community continues to grow as more people get involved. Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation hosted our 2018 Learning Trip and Project Leader Gathering (see pages 34 & 35).
MISIPAWISTIK PIMATISIMĒSKANAW

Misipawistik Pimatisimēskanaw is an alternative, culturally relevant education program that we have been working on since January 2015. The first few years included the formation of a committee of local Elders and community members to guide the work, developing materials and workshops, and running a pilot teaching on Misipawistik History where 35 students attend at least one day of teachings.

2018 was the first year we had two teachings; one in the spring and one in the fall. Our goal is to continue with the program, adding one teaching a year until we have a full yearly-teaching schedule.

Students who attend learn how their ancestors lived, in balance with creation and how to respectfully harvest fish, wildlife and plants for food and medicine, and how to prepare traditional and other healthy meals.

Youth also build relationships with the land and water, with Elders and community members, and with other youth who attend the teachings.

Youth are becoming more active in protection of the land and ceremonies and all community members who participate in the camps gain cultural knowledge and learn about mino pimiatisiwin.

So far this year, we had our first teaching, a five week camp, in June. It was exciting to be working with younger youth and in partnership with the local school, a partnership we will look to build on in the future.

There is growing interest from the students and youth to participate in the teachings each year. Neighbouring communities have come to visit and there is often a visitor from somewhere at the camp as people learn about the program. As we refine our teaching materials, add teachings each year, and build partnerships with other communities and organizations we want to support other communities in building their own culturally relevant education program.

I want to learn more traditional things. To get my family interested in traditional ways of life. To learn more history of the treaties and the community’s past.”

YOUTH PARTICIPANT

HOST: Misipawistik Cree Nation
PROJECT MANAGER: Misipawistik Cree Nation Education

OBJECTIVES: to offer high school and mature students the opportunity to earn credits towards their high school diploma outside of the classroom setting.

1,138 2019 POPULATION

MISIPAWISTIK CREE NATION

434 KM NORTH OF WINNIPEG

ALL-SEASON ROADS

THEORY OF CHANGE ICONS – SEE PAGE 6
Wapusk National Park, near Churchill, Manitoba, sees an overabundance of the Lesser Snow Goose each year. This overabundance has had a negative impact on the land and water and has resulted in declines of other bird species.

In May 2018, Parks Canada collaborated with local Indigenous communities and park stakeholders to host a snow goose hunting pilot project in Wapusk National Park to determine if hunting in the park is feasible, to re-connect local people to the land, and to raise awareness of the snow goose issue. The hunt supported 6 local hunters and was a big success. Following the hunt, there was a community snow goose cook off to promote the culinary and nutritious value of snow geese.

In 2019, a partnership between Parks Canada, Subarctic Friendship Circle, the Churchill Health Centre, and community members supported and hosted their second Snow Goose Hunt, as well as a Community Feast and Celebration of the Snow Goose. Parks Canada took the lead on the hunt component and the Subarctic Friendship Circle took the lead on the Feast. Both worked well together and supported each component’s successes!

This year’s hunt was a mentored hunt involving 6 youth and 6 adults. Youth were taught how to be safe and responsible hunters, were certified in firearm and hunter safety, and learned about snow goose ecology. It was also an opportunity for youth to re-connect to the land, provide for their community and families, and to involved in snow goose management; during the hunt and in the future. The hunters harvested around 300 geese which they then had to process. The snow geese were shared with elders, some were given to the community feast, and some of the hunters share with friends and family. The youth also visited the Long-Term Care facility and had a goose lunch with the elders there.

The Community Feast and Celebration was also a success as the community came together to create snow goose recipes, to celebrate the hunters and their success, and to eat together. A total of 24 cooks from the community participated, all preparing different recipes, from traditional to more contemporary. Some of the preparations included chocolate chip cookies made from goose fat, pizza, pasta sauce, tacos, and much more! One of the cook-off winners was Stacie Heide who made Goose Bacon. Stacie, who had attended the Traditional Foods and Traditional Teachings Gathering (see pages 32 & 33) in War Lake First Nation the month before, was inspired by War Lake’s filing cabinet smokehouse. Stacie made her own smokehouse and used it to smoke the Goose Bacon that won first place in the Traditional category.

With another successful hunt and celebration, plans are already brewing for next year. There is talk of planning a women’s hunt, of more mentorship, and to bring in people from neighboring communities and First Nations.

A program like this is so important in the north because it helps to build traditional skills and it helps to build resiliency within the land that we all share.”

AMELIA GAMVRELIS, SUBARCTIC FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE
Hello everyone, my name is Farrah Semple from Berens River, MB.

I was hired back in May of this year to fulfill the Nutrition North Canada Program & Gardening position. I realized the first day I started my job that it was a little late in the season to get seeds started, but I’m so glad I did because our garden at the Health Centre is thriving. So yay!

Honestly, there is no place I’d rather be than to be available to offer help and assistance to people who want to learn about healthy foods and gardening and all the other wonderful benefits that go hand in hand. Speaking of hands, there’s no greater joy than having them deep in the dirt. Squeezing, mushing and playing with the warm, lush loamy soil you could ever feel... Okay, but for most of us in the north maybe not because we deal with a lot of clay, but you get my point, haha!

I’m so grateful for the volunteers who so generously gave their precious time to help me get the garden at the Health Centre tilled, marked out, planted and for their continuous support and hands on help. As far as I know there are 4 families that have been planting traditional (in-ground) gardens for years.

The most exciting news is that our community is in the process of purchasing a greenhouse and preparing for a future community garden site for the next growing season in 2020. I receive many calls, emails, messages via messenger and the occasional visit in my office from the community members regarding this new project. They are all so eager to come out, roll up their sleeves and help be apart of this wonderful venture.

I’m so grateful for the opportunity to be of service to the people of my beautiful community of Berens River. I’m sure that it would be no problem for me to continue sharing about the adventures I’ve had so far. There’s still is so much that I can say, but what I will say is this: Happy gardening and until next time... many blessings to you all.

Thank you.

COMMUNITY GARDEN AND GREENHOUSE PROJECT

Hello everyone, my name is Farrah Semple from Berens River, MB.

I was hired back in May of this year to fulfill the Nutrition North Canada Program & Gardening position. I realized the first day I started my job that it was a little late in the season to get seeds started, but I’m so glad I did because our garden at the Health Centre is thriving. So yay!

Honestly, there is no place I’d rather be than to be available to offer help and assistance to people who want to learn about healthy foods and gardening and all the other wonderful benefits that go hand in hand. Speaking of hands, there’s no greater joy than having them deep in the dirt. Squeezing, mushing and playing with the warm, lush loamy soil you could ever feel... Okay, but for most of us in the north maybe not because we deal with a lot of clay, but you get my point, haha!

I’m so grateful for the volunteers who so generously gave their precious time to help me get the garden at the Health Centre tilled, marked out, planted and for their continuous support and hands on help. As far as I know there are 4 families that have been planting traditional (in-ground) gardens for years.

The most exciting news is that our community is in the process of purchasing a greenhouse and preparing for a future community garden site for the next growing season in 2020. I receive many calls, emails, messages via messenger and the occasional visit in my office from the community members regarding this new project. They are all so eager to come out, roll up their sleeves and help be apart of this wonderful venture.

I’m so grateful for the opportunity to be of service to the people of my beautiful community of Berens River. I’m sure that it would be no problem for me to continue sharing about the adventures I’ve had so far. There’s still is so much that I can say, but what I will say is this: Happy gardening and until next time... many blessings to you all. Thank you.

It is a dream of mine to help increase those numbers and get more members of my community involved and actively planting their own.

FARRAH SEMPLE, GARDEN COORDINATOR
LEARNING FROM THE LAND

“It is these practices that have supported us through history and allowed us to be here today, and it is by these same practices, principals, and values that we may thrive for a long time to come.”

DEMIA LAWRENCHUK

With this in mind, a group of Fox Lake Cree Nation community members have been working with youth to apply the morals, values, and skills that have allowed our community to thrive for thousands of years to facilitate a resurgence of self-sustainability and health.

This project is important to the Makeso Sakahikan Inninuwuk (Fox Lake Cree) because we are fast losing the knowledge and ability to harvest from the land which has always provided to us. Though colonization has greatly separated the bulk of us from the knowledge of our language, history, and ceremonies, for some our cultural connection to hunting remains strong. It is our hope that this project influences a legacy of healing and self-sustainability for our community.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2019, youth have taken part in traditional medicine harvest and preparing, harvesting, cleaning, smoking and cooking fish on the fire, preparing and cooking various species of geese and ducks, propagating important plants in the community, and gardening. During these activities, the youth also got to learn Inninimowin (the Cree language), teachings, history, and traditional legends.

Through these activities with youth, we are teaching, and motivating the teachers of the future.
NORTH-TO-NORTH EVENTS building a movement

2018 EVENTS (AT TIME OF PRINTING)
- 14 COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE SHARING
- 4 CAPACITY BUILDING SESSIONS

FULLY SUPPORTED & ADMINISTERED BY NMFCCC:
- PROJECT LEADERS GATHERING: Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, October 2018
- 11 COMMUNITIES
- 12 PARTICIPANTS

TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS & TRADITIONAL FOODS GATHERING: War Lake First Nation, May 2019
- 12 COMMUNITIES
- 26 PARTICIPANTS

It is powerful when people gather in their home territory to share knowledge and strengthen networks and relationships. There is authenticity and justice when people are able to represent themselves and their communities, in person, at meetings and events.

Supporting and sometimes organizing 'North-to-North' events is an area of work the NMFCCC undertakes to be a strong ally to Northern Communities.

Over the last two years Northern community members have:
- dined with the federal Minister of Agriculture
- met with the Provincial Minister of Indigenous Relations
- told their own stories of Indigenous food production to conferences of settler prairie farmers, and a national food security audience
- hosted a delegation of Federal Government Staff to their home territory
- shared their ideas about Indigenous Food Sovereignty with a select pan-Canadian room of 'experts'
- travelled to visit communities in other territories to share stories and inspire each other
- and gathered together in their home territory for deep, thoughtful, and inspiring sharing and movement building.

Together community members are building a movement that is community-led, rooted in local needs and opportunities, and fueled in large part by a vision for a strong future for youth and cultural resurgence. It is our job as allies to support this movement, to make it easier for people to come together with each other, and to represent themselves at events and meetings.

See page 6 for our Theory of Change

Having elders present was one of the best parts of this gathering.”

MICHELLE DEMONSTRATES MEAT SMOKING, WAR LAKE MAY 2019

ROCKET GREENS HYDROPONICS WORKSHOP, CHURCHILL, MARCH 2019
It was important that we had the young men teaching the traditions of preparation of meat.

The food was amazing, and I can’t think of a better way to inspire our group to continue down the path of promoting traditional food.
The 2018 combined gathering was an impactful group experience that built some deep relationships.

Building authentic relationships between community members and funders is foundational to the way our Collaborative works.

Working relationally, instead of transactionally, positively affects our commitment to the work and our understanding of each other. Relationships have affected how funders talk about projects, understand communities and approach their role as allies and partners. Relationship influence how community members see funders, understand philanthropy, and how they communicate about their work and visions healthy communities. Because of relationships we understand each other better and care for each other more deeply.

Combining a North-to-North community gathering with the Funder Learning Trip and the outcome was deeply impactful. Part of the impact came from collectively facing adversity as the trip was relocated from War Lake First Nation to Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation just days before it started. This was due to stress in War Lake because the rail lines were shut down after a train derailment. Our group also encountered a significant amount of deep grief as our host community, and members of our group wrestled with premature deaths and health issues.

Together we shared exciting community-led projects, explored the impact of hydro-electric development in Northern Manitoba, celebrated traditional trade routes and practiced trading with each other, and experienced cultural activities in Wapanohk School and in the community of NCN.

Forging stronger bonds with the people who do this heart work is something I can rely on and use for the rest of my life. We’re all in this together.”

See page 6 for our Theory of Change
“It was a gift to be a part of this gathering.”
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 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 NMFC CCC 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.

BECKY COOK
MISIPAWISTIK CREE NATION

Becky Cook is from Misipawistik Cree Nation. Her parents are Shelley (Parsons) and Ron Cook, her Grandparents are Nora (McKay) and Walter Cook of Grand Rapids and Betty (Torrens) and Syd Parsons of Winnipeg. She was raised on the lands and waters surrounding Misipawistik and Lake Winnipeg. Her family camped out every summer at their family camp at Saskascweyak and spent the fall at the fishing camp at MacBeth Point. A love for the land developed at a young age and eventually led to her receiving her B.Sc. in Geology and Geophysics from the University of Manitoba in 2006. She also learned the importance of balance and respect for the all of creation through participation in ceremonies, fast camps and culture camps. These teachings were the main reason she left her job with the Oil and Gas sector in Calgary to begin work on her Ph. D. She completed her Ph. D. in Marine Geophysics in 2015 and is now committed to her traditional education. Becky was a coordinator with the Northern Manitoba Food Culture and Community Collaborative for 2 years. She has worked with Elders and knowledge holders in her home community of Misipawistik to develop a land-based education program for youth, Misipawistik Pimatisimēskanaw, which offers teachings throughout the year.

ERVIN BIGHETTY
LEAF RAPIDS

My name is Ervin Bighetty. The past 5 years have been the most powerful years for me. I have learned so much and seen so much. My passion for food and a better world hasn’t changed but has brightened. I have been a Northern Advisor for 4-5 years, and I have learned a lot about my own province and the communities inside of it. Many of the communities have similar problems that my own has had or is starting to develop. I have been blessed with this position and, with the guidance of my fellow Advisors in the field, of working for better food, better health and a better world. I have been involved with food for a long time and have learned lots from my mentor and friend Chuck Stensgard and, with the help of my closest friend Christopher Brayley, they have made me the person that I am today. I am thankful for their guidance and strength. Without them I wouldn’t have been able to do what I do today and what I want to do in the future. They are the reason that I care about my home, the food that we grow, the knowledge that we have, and know how important for us to share it all. Food, knowledge, and heart; these are things that build a strong working family and a beautiful garden.

I provide input and opinion to the Collaborative and share my thoughts and feelings about things. From this experience I have been able to pursue other ventures in my life. I have become the Mayor of Leaf Rapids, my hometown. I’ve been in full support of the gardening project here, which is run by Brian Trewin, the coordinator for Grow North. I have been using my position to promote the project and its importance. I believe that growing your own food is just one step in a long staircase for a healthier, friendlier, brighter, and bountiful future.

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

AFRICAN PROVERB
The Sprott Foundation

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.

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.

Heifer International

Heifer International Canada is pleased to provide funding support to the work of the NMFCCC. This contribution is part of the final disbursement of funds due to the windup of the HIC organization. Heifer International's early work in Canada included partnering with and learning from Indigenous Communities. It is fitting that a final disbursement supports this important collaboration.

SeedChange

SeedChange, formerly known as USC Canada, is a non-profit founded in 1945 and rooted in the notions of human dignity and equality. Today, the organization works with farmers around the world, including Canada, to shift the way we grow our food. By harnessing the power of good seeds, farmer leadership and global solidarity, it helps communities thrive. 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 truly 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 of the NMFCCC." - Iris Vaisman, Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security (a project of SeedChange).

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.

La Fondation de la Famille J.W. McConnell

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 include social finance, food and healthcare, indigenous-focused philanthropy, cities for people, and social infrastructure in universities and colleges.

The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation

The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation 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 has been a privilege to spend time in Northern Manitoba visiting and learning from communities and alongside other members of the Collaborative and the Northern Advisors.

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.

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

The Donner Canadian Foundation supports organizations across Canada and believes that it has a responsibility to build respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous peoples. In our work, we aspire to uphold the core values of trust, patience, respect, honesty, clarity, understanding, communication, presence, transparency, flexibility, and reciprocity. The Foundation is honoured to be a member of the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, and Community Collaborative and to have the opportunity to listen and learn from NMFCCC’s staff, advisors, and community partners. We’re excited to be collaborating to support community-developed initiatives that promote food security, community health, community economic development, and environmental sustainability.

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 areas that we believe have a lasting positive effect on the healthy development of children and youth: (1) Early Child Development, (2) Healthy Active Children & Youth, including diabetes prevention and management and food security and independence, (3) Youth and the Environment. In addition to our grantmaking, we leverage our assets to create social good through impact investing. 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.

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An Anonymous Donor with a vision of people in our communities being healthy, educated and economically self-sufficient.
Our children are our future - that's why when I see people working with our youth, I know we are going to keep our goals alive, our teachings, our knowledge. That's what's so amazing. So, if we all keep working as a team, we got this.”