



Willow Lake Métis Nation

Annual Review 2022

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Mission & Vision

Willow Lake Métis Nation (WLMN) is a Métis community whose Citizens now mostly reside in the community of Anzac, Alberta. WLMN's roots lie in the history of the fur trade in Alberta and the economic and political circumstances that evolved during and after the fur trade.

Mission

By operating through a structured governance of transparency and accountability we aim to improve our community's way of life and sovereignty through responsible leadership.

Vision

To effectively represent the rights bearing community of the Willow Lake Métis Nation, ensuring trust, cultural retention, economic stability, a sustainable environment, and a better life for all.

Core Values

Community, Integrity, Identity, Culture, Sustainability



Message from the President

PRESIDENT



Stella
Lavalée

2022 was a year of significant growth for Willow Lake Métis Nation. We grew in membership, in representation, in land and we grew our brand reputation. We successfully ensured we had a seat at many tables – tables that are essential to our viability long into the future and help us ensure a secure economic future for the next generations.

As your elected-President, I am proud of what was accomplished. I was so humbled to represent the Citizens of Willow Lake at many events and announcements. Every single one of us deserves a congratulations – every single one of us is responsible for the success we are seeing. Your contributions are all different and each one of them made a difference in the last year. **Thank you.**

I can't believe that 2022 has already concluded. So many things happened that brought Métis people to the forefront and the goals and issues we are passionate about as a Nation received positive attention. **In 2022 we did many amazing, historical things:**

- ▶ Willow Lake was invited to comment on the 2022 Alberta Budget. alongside our Willow Lake Métis Group team.
- ▶ New team members were welcomed, and our capacity grew!
- ▶ Willow Lake Métis Nation was a part of a historic economic announcement as one of the 23 First Nation and Métis communities who entered into an agreement with Enbridge.
- ▶ We are no longer a landless Métis Nation. We purchased land, celebrated this summer and announced our big goals in regard to the space.
- ▶ We won 2 major awards for our website presence: recognizing us as online examples of excellence in Government and Non-Profit web design.
- ▶ Our Citizens received generous donations, gifts, and support from industry partners.
- ▶ 5 Citizens received Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medals.
- ▶ We formed a partnership with The Resilience Institute to partner on climate resilience.
- ▶ We hosted a well-attended (and fun!) Holiday Gathering.
- ▶ Hosted our inaugural Cultural Cup Golf Tournament and Métis Festival

I'm so appreciative that we can stand in solidarity as a Nation as we walk through another milestone year full of new projects, focuses, and relationships.

“As I look ahead to 2023, I see a bright future. A future filled with promise and clear direction. We are already making significant progress on our Government Relations initiatives, our industry partnerships, and our commitments to Citizens. ~ Stella Lavalée”



Willow Lake Métis Nation Board of Directors

Leadership Team



Justin Bourque
Vice President



Jessica Vanee
Secretary



Joyce Quintal
Treasurer



Feather Bourque
Director

“We must cherish our inheritance. We must preserve our nationality for the youth of our future. The story should be written down to pass on. ~ Louis Riel”



Elder's Spotlight

ELDER'S SPOTLIGHT



Mary V. McKenzie

Mary Victoria McKenzie was born August 3, 1919. She was born in Île-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan to Suzanne and Arthur Woodward. She could speak Cree, Dene, and English. When Mary was around 5 years old, they moved into Waterways, which is now referred to as Fort McMurray. Mary grew up in Fort McMurray and married her partner Fred there. She and Fred lived in a tiny trailer in Fort McMurray and while living there, Mary worked in the hospital. Mary and Fred decided to settle in Anzac, where they continued to raise their 6 children.

During her younger years, Mary could be found hunting chickens and rabbits but would never fish, as she was allergic. She was artistic in many ways. She was a great drawer, loved to do beadwork, and an excellent Bannock maker. Many could attest that Bannock making is an artform. Mary was active in the community. She always attended the community events from Christmas Dinners to the School Plays and always engaged with her family. We also cannot forget Mary's love of picking berries, playing cards and, of course, Bingo. As she got older, there were very few nights of Bingo that she would miss.

Her long black hair, big glasses, and small stature was not to be reckoned with. Although she was tiny, she was quite mighty. Mary could be best known as the little old lady who lived in the trailer up on the hill, beside the tracks, until she passed away at the age of 80.



7 Pillars of Governance

The 7 Pillars of Governance is a system we created for our organization to help us make decisions on behalf of our community in the most informed manner possible and with the best intentions for the greater good.



Community (Core Pillar)

Community is the core pillar and the reason for operations. Community guides our work and decision making, as it is the community in which we serve.



Administration & Governance (How & Why)

Operating with integrity and through transparent operations, we hold ourselves and those we work with accountable.



Cultural Retention (Grounding)

Maintaining our connection to our homeland, our people, and our culture, we purposely conduct ourselves to ensure the preservation and continued practice of our rich Métis culture.



Environment (Observing)

Maintain connection with the land. Observe, document, analyze and act in support of this connection.



Government Relations (Assert)

Maintain respectful and meaningful engagements while asserting our right to self-govern.



Industry Relations (Opportunity)

Collaborate with Industry partners to ensure responsible development of the resource while growing the community.



Growth & Equity (Generational Capacity)

Being a responsible innovative partner.



Community

Community continues to be the core pillar of WLMN.

Community is the reason for our operations and community guides our work and decision making, as it is the community in which we serve. In 2022, WLMN continued to grow and thrive as a community through the following activities:

Métis Festival: On September 10, 2022, we were thrilled to host our Annual Métis Festival. We were thankful to have Community Members and Stakeholders once again, near and far join us in celebrating our Métis Heritage and Culture. We were able to have crib and horseshoe tournaments, as well as jigging, fiddling, singing and moose calling competitions. Additionally, our very own Citizen, Hailey Paulson won best traditional dressed.



MMIW: On May 5, we participated in the community's Missing Murdered and Indigenous Women's Awareness Walk facilitated by Anzac and Bill Woodward Schools. Everyone walked from the Gazebo to Windsurfer's Beach, and back.



Community

Land Acquisition: On June 3, we were finally able to celebrate that we are no longer land-less Métis. The purchase of 205 acres was a huge accomplishment for the Nation. We can't wait to continue to build our Nation for our Citizens.



Career Fair: On November 12, in partnership with WLCA, we hosted our first Career Fair and Tradeshow. This is part of our newest department, Employment and Training. Stay tuned in 2023 for more opportunities.

Administration & Governance

Willow Lake Métis Nation is continuously looking for ways to improve. In 2022 we were able to implement new policies, procedures and practices that will benefit our Nation and Citizens.

In 2022 we were pleased to implement the following:

- ▶ Human Resources Policy
- ▶ Shareholders Agreement
- ▶ Director Policy
- ▶ Medical Policy

The current programs and policies available to our WLMN Citizens includes:

- ▶ Bereavement Assistance Policy
- ▶ Hardship Assistance Policy
- ▶ Training Policy
- ▶ Education Assistance Policy
- ▶ Community Investment & Member Support
- ▶ Funding Policy
- ▶ Medical Policy
- ▶ Elder's Wood Program
- ▶ Christmas Hamper Program
- ▶ Cultural Retention / Harvest Camps
- ▶ Métis Festival
- ▶ Cultural Exchange Golf Tournament
- ▶ Citizen Certificate Program
- ▶ Employment and Training Services
- ▶ Citizen Welcome Kit

Ongoing Activities:

Throughout 2022 we actively held Elder's Circle meetings to ensure that our governance and administration are actively learning from our Elders and taking action on behalf of our community.

We have also continued with the establishment and execution of:

- ▶ New Citizenship/Cards for our Citizens
- ▶ Developing and Hiring for New Positions



Cultural Retention

In 2022 WLMN continued to focus on maintaining our connection to our homeland, our people, and our culture. As a Nation we purposely conduct ourselves in a manner that ensures the preservation and continued practice of our rich Métis culture. In 2022 our Cultural Retention efforts included:

Spring Fish Camp:

Spring Fish Camp was held at two locations in March, Willow Lake and Grist Lake. The first camp, held at Willow Lake, was a two-day camp that had students from Bill Woodward High School in attendance. The Government of Alberta (Alberta Environment and Parks) sent three representatives and the Federal Government (Environment and Climate Change Canada) also sent three representatives to assist with fish health exams and water quality sampling.

Fall Fish/Harvester's Camp:

Fall Fish Camp was held at Winefred Lake over Thanksgiving in October. Camp was set-up just passed the Kirby Lake Aerodrome. There were 26 people that attended the event, with most of them camping the weekend. A net was set on Winefred Lake on Friday afternoon and a haul of 56 fish was pulled on Saturday afternoon. There was a mix of whitefish, pickerel, jackfish, and suckers. Of the 56 fish, 28 were examined and sent away for contaminant testing. Thanksgiving dinner was prepared and served on Saturday evening.

Berry Picking:

We enjoyed a beautiful and very hot day out in the bush. 40 people were in attendance with a delicious lunch of homemade bannock and soup. We also had a going away cake for our Summer Students who worked so hard this year.



Environment

Maintaining our connection with the land continues to be at the center of everything we do as a Nation. In 2022 we continued our commitment to observing, documenting, analyzing, and acting in support of this connection. In 2022 our Environmental activities included:



WLMN Steering Committee:

Currently six WLMN Citizens make up the WLMN Steering Committee; Kyle Whitford, Joyce Quintal, Jason McKenzie, Nick Paulson, Brian Hodgson, and Jordon Huppie. This committee meets at least four times a year to discuss important program initiatives and to offer guidance for the program and department. This year they attended six meetings, as two meetings were had to discuss logistics of fish/harvester's camps.

Indigenous Guardian Program:

Jason McKenzie, Indigenous Guardian, was contracted for another fiscal year in June. This year has been a busy one with fish camps, environmental observations, and training. Over the course of the summer months, various lakes in the area were observed to document information regarding access, vegetation, animals, and weather among other things. Information was compiled and photos were taken to be entered in WLMN databases.

Wood Buffalo Indigenous Sub-Caucus Committee:

A seat on the Wood Buffalo Indigenous Sub-Caucus is reserved for Willow Lake Métis Nation. There are 11 Indigenous groups that sit

on the committee to discuss issues, raise concerns, and complete deliverables as per the workplan. This committee also sits in on monthly Technical Advisory Committee meetings as an observer to gain more insight into program issues, concerns, and status.

Land Use Mapping Interviews:

Several land users came in and provided information on their land use activities, including hunting, fishing, and harvesting. The interviews consist of gathering information regarding land use activities, entering it in WLMN databases and manually mapping the locations. Maps are then scanned and digitized using QGIS mapping. This information is then used for leadership to use at their discretion when it comes to government and industry engagements.

Quarterly Environmental Observations:

Quarterly Environmental Observations were conducted over the course of the year. Photos were taken and environmental information on 11 different sites were compiled and entered in WLMN databases. There are two corridors that are monitored quarterly.

Annual Environmental Monitoring Survey:

The Annual Environmental Monitoring Survey was distributed in early November to land users. The survey gathers annual information on the following various components of the environment: Time on the land, Teaching and language, Weather, Berries and plants, Fish, Birds, Mammals. The information gathered is then entered in WLMN databases and analyzed with the assistance from Certes Applies and Natural Sciences Ltd.



Government Relations

In 2022 the WLMN continued our efforts to promote the cultural, economic, political and social development of the Métis peoples of Willow Lake. A few highlights from this year's Government Relations efforts include:

Credible Assertion:

We submitted our second submission with the Government of Alberta for Credible Assertion. We are currently awaiting approval. We engaged in regular meetings to ensure there is still direct communication between the Government of Alberta and the Willow Lake Métis Nation. We are hoping for a positive outcome in 2023.

Regional Relationship:

We continue to maintain relationships with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. On June 21, we were invited to attend the National Indigenous People's Day event. We have monthly meetings to ensure we are up to date on all things happening in and around the RMWB. We look forward to building a stronger relationship in 2023.



Industry Relations



Enbridge:

Another year of growth and progressive challenge has passed, for both Willow Lake Métis Nation and Enbridge Pipelines (Athabasca) Inc. Enbridge would like to congratulate your Nation for entering into economic partnerships that will benefit members for years to come.

Together, we've been able to ensure the right level of engagement continues to occur and we thank you for your continued patience and resilience. We look forward in 2023 to further productive engagement with Willow Lake Métis Nation in Treaty 8 Territory.

Willow Lake Métis continued to work with our industry partners in a responsible manner to strategize and come to a mutually beneficial outcomes including; economical development, protection of the environment and a sustainable future while protecting the interests of the Willow Lake Métis.

We as a Nation thank our industry partners for investing their time and resources to aid our organization in creating a platform for open dialogue and support for a mutually beneficial relationship.



ConocoPhillips Canada:

At ConocoPhillips Canada, we are committed to creating meaningful partnerships that benefit communities neighbouring our operations. We are grateful for our continued relationship with Willow Lake Métis Nation and look forward to an exciting year ahead.

2022 has proven to be another exciting year of growth for the Willow Lake Métis Nation, including your newly developed strategic and equity partnerships and your historic land purchase that led to the creation of Sohkastwâwin. We would like to extend our congratulations to the community members and collective leadership teams working resiliently to advance the Nation.



Industry Relations



Suncor:

Suncor was honoured to be a part of Willow Lake Métis Nation's celebration in June 2022 as they announced their historic land purchase. It was wonderful to see the investment in the community and their culture through the support of our Astisiy partnership. We look forward to continuing to foster and strengthen our relationship with Willow Lake Métis Nation in 2023.



CNOOC International:

For Willow Lake Métis Nation, 2022 was another year of growth and accomplishment. The year was filled with achieving significant milestones and this trend is undoubtedly set to continue. CNOOC was especially honoured to be invited to attend the Sohkastwâwin celebration in the summer and we're excited to see what's to come in 2023.



Keyera:

In 2022, Willow Lake Métis Nation saw significant success in preserving and practicing the rich Métis culture. These successes were accomplished through collaboration with industry to ensure the responsible development of resources, as well as initiatives from Willow Lake Métis Nation's long-term plan for self-sufficiency. At Keyera, we are committed to advancing Reconciliation to support Indigenous communities to be strong, harmonious, and prosperous. Building the acute accent on our strong relationship with Willow Lake Métis Nation is the steppingstone to building a brighter future together.



MEG Energy:

MEG Energy offers our congratulations to Willow Lake Métis Nation and all community members on your inspirational growth efforts. It's inspiring to watch the community move forward with enhanced initiatives while capturing strong growth in community and economic development. We at MEG, are excited to continue working together with Willow Lake Métis Nation to sustain and build on our strong relationship going forward.



Growth & Equity

Willow Lake Métis Group (WLMG) is proud to have established strong relationships with leading Industry Partners that have allowed us to become the strategic Indigenous owned General Contractor of choice.

Our continued growth through equity partnerships has allowed us to continue to support our Nation's Citizens through the various programs that we offer.



On March 3, 2022, we entered into a 'first of its kind partnership', with Backwoods Energy Services. This partnership brings together First Nations and Métis under one umbrella as Backwoods Energy Services is owned by the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation. This new service line has positioned WLMG to be the Indigenous general contractor of choice within pipeline integrity, security and environmental forestry service.

On March 12, 2022, we formed a partnership with Edge Energy Logistics, a locally owned Indigenous company from Lac La Biche Alberta, providing heavy transportation and logistics across all our service lines as well as multiple producers.

September 8, 2022, WLMG hosted their inaugural Cultural Exchange event at Fort McMurray Golf Club. It was a nice change with different cultural aspects throughout the course. Industry Partnerships and stakeholders were able to enjoy Métis jigging, fresh bannock, Métis Artisan items, hoop games and so much more. All proceeds from this event went back into our Community Programming. We are looking forward to this annual event in 2023.

In September 2022, WLMN, together with 22 other Indigenous communities formed the partnership Athabasca Indigenous Investments (Aii). Together, the 23 communities signed a deal with Enbridge to buy a minority stake in seven pipelines in the Athabasca region. The deal, worth \$1.12 billion, became the largest energy-related Indigenous economic partnership transaction in North America to date.



Looking Forward to 2023

Willow Lake Métis Nation continues to grow, establishing ourselves as a Nation. We remain committed to ensuring trust, preserving cultural retention, building economic stability, safeguarding a sustainable environment, and creating a better life for all. We look forward to continued growth and further establishing our Nation in 2023.

We thank all our fellow Citizens, community members, and industry partners for your continued support.





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