

A Way Forward: Métis Harvesting in Alberta

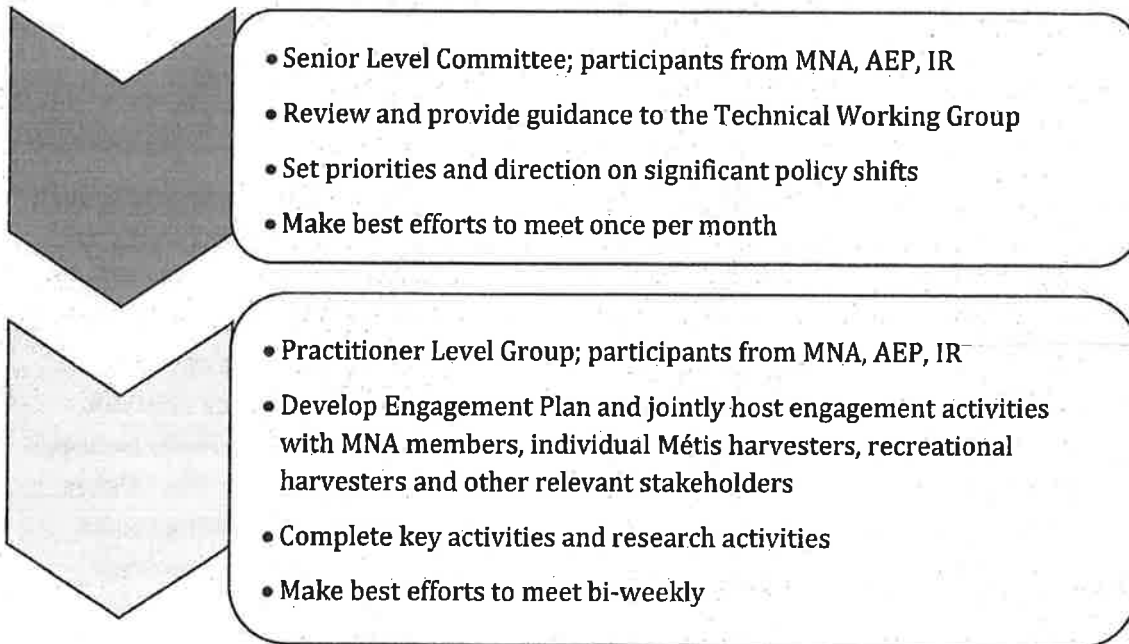
In Alberta, the extent and scope of Métis aboriginal rights has yet to be determined. In this context, through its Métis Harvesting in Alberta (2010) policy (Policy), Alberta seeks to identify those individuals who, in Alberta's view, may have Métis aboriginal rights and, in appropriate circumstances, prevent prosecutions against those individuals. The Policy lists communities that Alberta is currently prepared to consider for the purposes of Métis harvesting as both historic and contemporary Métis communities. The Policy does not formally recognize the listed communities as rights-holding collectives. The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) does not agree with many aspects of Alberta's current Policy. The MNA is, however, interested in constructively engaging with Alberta on Métis harvesting issues, including the possibility of including reference to potential historic and contemporary regional Métis communities in the Policy.

In the *Métis Nation of Alberta – Government of Alberta Framework Agreement* concluded on February 1, 2017, Alberta and the MNA committed to facilitating the recognition and respect of Métis rights in Alberta that upholds the honour of the Crown and advances reconciliation. In keeping with this commitment, Alberta is currently reviewing the Policy. This proposed Way Forward document sets out a process by which the MNA can directly engage with Alberta on Métis harvesting concerns through the review of the Policy. Alberta seeks to work with the MNA to consider certain aspects of Métis harvesting, such as the geographic areas where eligible Métis harvesters can undertake harvesting activities; the extent of potential historical regional Métis communities and areas in Alberta; potential roles for the MNA to participate in the identification of potential eligible Métis harvesters; and opportunities for the MNA to participate in reporting subsistence harvesting information. This engagement is in furtherance of Alberta's commitment to the MNA to pursue collaborative discussions with respect to Métis harvesting rights. This engagement is not a process to formally identify or recognize Métis rights-holding collectives nor will the process determine the extent and scope of Métis rights in Alberta.

Governance

The proposed process would include the creation of two groups, both with representatives from the MNA and Alberta, specifically Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) and Indigenous Relations (IR). The first group would see the existing Coordinating Committee turn into a Steering Committee (senior level) that would provide guidance to a second group, the Technical Working Group. This working group would include practitioners that

could work collaboratively to move forward on the policy review.



Key Activities

Through the work of the Steering Committee and the Technical Working Group, Alberta and the MNA will collaborate on the following activities for the purposes of the Policy review:

- Identify immediate measures to promote respect for Métis harvesting in Alberta
- Collaborate to identify, where possible, potential historic and contemporary regional Métis communities in Alberta
- Consider areas where further research is appropriate in relation to potential historic and contemporary Métis communities and, where possible, undertake collaborative research
- Work collaboratively to identify the potential harvesting areas of the above noted regional Métis communities in Alberta
- Review the MNA Registry and identify potential roles for the MNA in the identification of eligible Métis harvesters
- Identify and consider potential Métis harvesting customs, practices and traditions
- Explore opportunities and processes for the MNA to participate in reporting subsistence harvesting information from MNA members to Alberta to better inform Fish and Wildlife management efforts
- Identify potential changes to Alberta's approach to Métis harvesting to give effect to the results of the foregoing activities

Outcomes

The desired outcome of the processes and activities will be a revised policy on Métis Harvesting in Alberta that is supported by the MNA, implemented by the spring of 2018. Through the collaborative nature of the Steering Committee and Technical Working Group, there will be further relationship building and a shared understanding of Métis people's harvesting concerns.

In addition to the Key Activities, some immediate measures that could be explored to promote respect for Métis harvesting in Alberta include ensuring policy and practices:

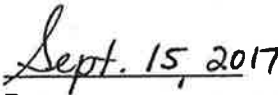
- allow for Métis trap-lines to be passed down to family members;
- eliminate the need for Métis trappers to fulfill fur quotas;
- allow Métis harvesters to use their preferred means of angling; and
- enable effective communication and exchange of information between the MNA and Alberta regarding Alberta's internal process for reviewing potential harvesting charges involving individuals identifying as Métis.

Approvals


The approach and activities set out in this Way Forward document will require approval by Cabinet and leadership of the MNA.



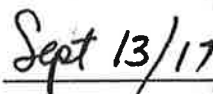
Audrey Poitras
President, Métis Nation of Alberta



Date



MNA Co-Minister of Rights and Accommodation




Date



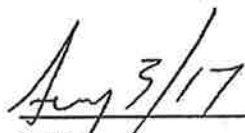
Shannon Phillips
Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks



Date



Richard Feehan
Minister of Indigenous Relations



Date