



KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

Interview Summaries

Abstract

These are the summaries of the Knowledge Holders interviews completed for the Fisher River Cree Nation Conservation Initiative over the period of 2020 – 2021.

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About the Author

Liz (Elizabeth) Murdock is a proud member of Fisher River Cree Nation, with farming and family roots in Peguis First Nation. She holds a Masters degree in Social Work - Indigenous Knowledge, serves on the board of directors for Intertribal Child & Family Services, and gives generously of her time and skills to support various community initiatives.

Liz was project manager for the FRCN Conservation Areas Initiative from 2020 to 2022, and her work was instrumental in creating the foundations for the initiative that we are building on today.

We are grateful for all Liz's efforts and her ongoing support.

Introduction

The goal of this initiative is to create designated conservation areas within the identified parameters of the Fisher River Cree Nation Conservation Areas Initiative study area (See Appendix 2). The initiative's intent is to apply knowledge holder information, the survey samples of community people, input of stakeholders, and western science for the creation of conservation area proposals. These lines on a map will be revised as the Knowledge Holders, community members and stakeholders voice their ideas. The end result will be a final proposal that will be presented to and negotiated with the provincial government.

A total of 22 individuals were interviewed using a purposeful sampling method with the criteria of: having knowledge of the land; historical knowledge of the area; and can be referred to as a knowledge holder in their nation. Fourteen interviewees were from Fisher River Cree Nation and eight from Peguis First Nation - six of whom identified as women, and 16 as men. Four of the women were from Fisher River Cree Nation and two were from Peguis First Nation, while 10 men were from Fisher River, and six from Peguis.

Those interviewed were all from the area, and most currently live and work in Fisher River Cree Nation or Peguis First Nation. They ranged in age from approximately their late forties/early fifties to their seventies.

The interviews were completed in person with the exception of one. Most were held outdoors due to pandemic restrictions during the time of this work. This is evident in some of the recordings where you can hear birds singing, cars on the highway or lawnmowers close by.

The interviewees were provided with questions and maps of the study area. All completed the required paperwork to allow the use of their interviews to be shared. They were given the choice to either: be identified by their names; remain anonymous or; use a pseudonym. All agreed to the publication of quotes from their interviews for the purpose of advancing the initiative. There were two females and two males who did not wish for their names to be used, but all agreed that their comments could be used anonymously. Two of the interviews were not recorded: one by choice not to record, while technical issues prevented the other from being recorded. Summaries of those interviews were not included in this report.

Some of the interviews were summarized while others were presented verbatim. The decision to summarize comments or present them verbatim was determined on a case-by-case basis depending on how the questions were answered.

The questions used to guide the interviews can be found in **Appendix 1**, attached.

Themes

It is important to note that one of the major hurdles to overcome before a few of the interviews were to begin was to have a discussion about how the information being gathered was going to be used. The mistrust of those in power (the government) was mentioned before the beginning of several interviews and the reluctance of some to participate needed to be heard.

The Knowledge Holders spoke of how the government at times has taken the information provided by the people and twisted things around to suit their needs and not always used it for the intended purpose. They expressed concern that providing information also provides the opportunity for the government to say “We did consult with the people....” when the outcomes of such “consultations” don’t result in any significant changes. Knowledge Holders said they have felt like “We expressed what we wanted and they did not listen, so what is the point of having more discussions.” I did my best to explain how the initiative will work, how the information will be used, and what it is hoped the outcomes may be.

Which then led to the second concern I heard repeatedly. The Knowledge Holders said, “I will not pick one piece of land to protect.” This is for two reasons: firstly, there are feelings that it should all be protected and secondly because if they pick one piece of land, again the government then can say, “they picked this piece of land” leaving them the opportunity to do whatever they like with the rest of the lands.

Other common themes were:

- 1) The importance of land to traditional medicine picking;
- 2) The loss of land for providing hunters opportunities to both teach their children and grandchildren the skills necessary to hunting and having no bigger animals to hunt for at all;
- 3) The importance placed on the next generations of children and how protection of the land is so critical for them;
- 4) Sustainability for any economic impact needs to factor in how it will affect the long term of the lands, this includes the peat moss industry.
- 5) The importance of protecting water. Water is medicine. Water is life.

Clean Lands

The majority of the traditional medicine pickers voiced their concerns about having clean land to have clean and healthy medicines. They talked about having lands for the future and how without clean land the medicines will not be healthy and become unusable. They feel they are already going further afield to find clean medicines in places where there is little activity. They are struggling to find the clean medicines needed for their work.

Hunters

The hunters expressed concern about the lack of game animals, especially the moose. There was concern here too about the health of the animals being hunted. There have been numerous times when they have been out and witnessed diseased animals making the meat totally unusable and having to be destroyed.

Future Generations

It is important for most Knowledge Holders to always consider what is best for the future generations of children and grandchildren. To be able to teach them about who they are and how important the lands are in their ongoing development, it is necessary to be on the land, in a natural landscape. To be on the land, the land has to be there. There is concern this may be totally lost if we cannot get it protected.

Peat Moss

There was no support for the peat moss industry. The Knowledge Holders feel this industry is damaging the habitat for the animals that live not only within the immediate area but also those in a much larger area.

There are concerns for the health of the land and how this is affecting Lake Winnipeg. The loss of the environmental filtration to the lake provided by peat moss is the biggest concern as many are feeling the contamination of Lake Winnipeg is damaging the fish populations of the lake.

Loss of the fish also means an economic loss since Fisher River Cree Nation has many fishermen and fisherwomen who use this as a means of economic income. Which eventually also means a change in the traditional lifestyle of the families dependent on the fish for their livelihoods.

Areas To Protect

While the Knowledge Holders expressed concerns about identifying specific areas to protect - most wanted to protect as much as possible and were concerned that identifying specific areas would leave others at a higher risk of being lost to development - many did identify areas of significance. Here is a summary:

Anonymous Elder - Male #1, FRCN

The lands that seem to be the most important to him are Goldeye Lake is at the north end of Zone 7. He also thinks Zones 2, 3, 4 and 5 are important to maintain as they are.

Anonymous Elder - Male #2, FRCN

The north zones are what he feels are most important to protect are Zones 2, 3, 4 and 5. The areas around Kinwow Bay and around the High Rock area.

Lorne Cochrane, FRCN

Lorne wants the whole area protected from Hwy 325 north. He said the government unilaterally cut back the area to end up being what it is now.

Dorothy L. Crate, FRCN

The lake and the shorelines are important to Dorothy. While all of it is important, she feels Kinwow Bay and Mcbeth, Zones 2, 3, 4 and 5 are specifically important to conserve. Another important point for Dorothy is the keeping of the lake clean of garbage and pollutants.

Darrell Mckay, FRCN

The lands that seem to be the most important to him are areas where medicine can be picked. Places like down the Fish Road and the swamps, rivers and creeks. Keeping these areas healthy and clean are vital.

John G. Murdock, FRCN

The lands that seem to be the most important to him are those used for medicines.

Sam Murdock, FRCN

Sam thinks the whole area under discussion should be protected from Riverton to Mcbeth. The area is a natural, traditional hunting area of mainly marsh and swamp.

Graham Smith, FRCN

Graham cares about the land and medicines he uses, and keeping the land free from pollution and garbage is important to him. Graham finds most of these medicines around the areas of Zones 5, 7, 8 and 9.

Anonymous Knowledge Holder - Female #2 - Peguis First Nation

The entire study area is important to her. She has picked medicines in many of the zones and, like many of the traditional medicine people, she finds she needs to go farther afield to gather clean medicines. Zones 6, 7 and 8 are the primary spots used by her. She also has picked in the lower of Zone 4 as well as Zone 5.

Ellis Cochrane, Peguis First Nation

The lands that seem to be the most important to him are in Zones 1, 4 and 5. The lands here are mostly swamp, fens and bogs that drain into Lake Winnipeg - filtered, and clean. The Mantag River system is very important to him.

Floyd Flett, Peguis First Nation

Saving the lands as they are is important for Floyd. The lands in Zones 4 and 5 are especially important as well as some in 6 and 7. He would also like to see an expansion of protected areas in the northern parts of Zones 2 and 3, especially in the Kinwow Bay area and across to that Sturgeon Bay area. He says it will “save a lot of animals” to make the protected areas there bigger. Floyd has concerns too about the pollution that happens when people go out into the bush. Keeping as much area unpolluted and clean he feels is what is crucial for the future of the lands.

Mike Sutherland, Peguis First Nation

Washow Bay peninsula and the shorelines of Fisher Bay and Sturgeon Bay are priorities for Mike in order to protect Lake Winnipeg. He’s also concerned about protecting areas that support moose given the sharp drop in moose populations, particularly in game hunting area 21 and 21a which encompass the northern portion of the study area.

FISHER RIVER CREE NATION KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

Interview Summary #1: Anonymous Elder (Female #1)

The interview was completed by a female elder who allowed us to use her quotes, but wanted to remain anonymous.

This elder is from Fisher River. She has lived and worked in Fisher River Cree Nation for many years. She is a highly respected traditional elder who has raised her children here. She cares deeply for Mother Earth and passes along her teachings to those who seek out her knowledge.

She is a regular land user being a medicine gatherer. It is having clean medicines to use that is an important part of what she wants to see for the future. Following natural laws of sustainability and respect for the land in what it can provide for human beings is how she lives her life.

“We are the ones causing all this damage, the environmental issues, the human beings, it's not anything else, it is not the trees, it is not the animals, it is us that is destroying everything, the human beings. We are breaking natural law in many ways, not just killing the animals and the trees, and harming the air.”

What she says about:

Water:

“You see, down the bank from where I fast, that water is just brown. I wouldn't even use it, but I do still put my tobacco down. I still wouldn't give up hope on life, you give up hope then you give up on life, so I always have hope and pray and put my tobacco down that that water will run clear again.”

Nature & Habitat:

“We will perish, especially without the water and the land, everything we need to look after - it's not just these areas, it's all areas.”

Cultural Lifestyle:

“Our natural medicines are all over and we have to protect them ... It was given for the resources that we need to live.”

Sustainable Development:

“It's important to keep away from chemicals, to keep our environment safe to live in.”

Interview Summary #2: Anonymous Elder (Male#1)

This interview was completed by an elder that did not want his name used. He is an elder in Fisher River. He has lived and worked here for most of his life and knows the land and the animals.

He also worked away from here and has had the opportunities to see the changes in the lands of the communities he has worked in. His experiences in those places also has seen the destruction of lands and waters.

Like many of the elders interviewed, while he sees that all the land is important, Goldeye Lake is something specific he would like to see protected.

He states:

“It’s a beautiful little lake. There’s got to be a lot of jackfish in there. They used to winter fish up there years, winter fisher with nets. You know all those little creeks that go up in there, well jackfish go up in there.”

Priorities for Protection:

The lands that seem to be the most important to him are Goldeye Lake is at the north end of Zone 7. He also thinks Zones 2, 3, 4 and 5 are important to maintain as they are.

What he says about:

Water:

“I remember when we were little kids, we used to go skate around on the river and when we wanted a drink of water, we would just poke a little hole in the ice and have a good drink of water. Now you wouldn’t drink it, you don’t even want to go look at it, it’s so tainted.”

“They are still trying to do those drainages and that is killing all of our swamp land there. Years ago when those little creeks used to run in there, there was no heavy flow of water, it would just trickle in and the water was filtered by those little creeks and whatever else. Now they opened them up wide and some of them are wider than our river here. That’s one of the things they should stop doing.”

Climate Change:

“And these storms we are getting nowadays too. We never heard of tornadoes around Manitoba years ago. Everything is coming with the climate change, I guess. Crazy!”

“Everything yeah, pretty wicked. You look at the little kids running around all happy and you don’t know what’s in the future for them.”

Nature & Habitat:

“They can’t leave Mother Nature alone. Like the beautiful areas that we had are all pretty much taken for that damn almighty dollar. A lot of time I think about my grandkids and where this world is going.”

Cultural Lifestyle:

“They used to go out by boat. You know they would get two, three moose. They would bring it back and there was usually two or three that went out. They would come back and they would share it with the community...That was real hunting then. Walk and pack them out of the bush. It was a lot of work. Come home, give it away and go back out again... But there was a lot of game back then.”

Interview Summary #3: Summary for Anonymous Elder (Male #2)

This elder lives in Fisher River Cree Nation with his family. He has lived and worked in Fisher River for most of his life. He did work in the city too as a younger man. He returned home and raised his children here in Fisher River.

Having land to hunt and fish is important to this man. He continues to use the land and waters in this area for that purpose as much as he can. There are not many healthy animals around these days that can be hunted for food, especially moose. What’s left he thinks should be left alone to try and be revitalized as a population.

Priorities for Protection:

The north zones are what he feels are most important to protect Zones 2, 3, 4 and 5. The areas around Kinwow Bay and around the High Rock area.

What he says about:

Nature & Habitat:

“I spend time on the land with my children and grandchildren teaching them the importance of living off the land. I try and teach them to protect and not destroy.”

Culture/ Lifestyle

“My grandmother used to pick medicines to make poultices. My wife also picks medicine – sweet grass, sage and labrador tea.”

Sustainable Development

“Protect the land. Stop the clearing of trees ie. cutting lumber. When clearing logging does happen, ensure that the loggers do some reforestation, the planting of trees to replace the trees they cut down. Same with the stripping of the peat moss, what are they doing after they take the peat, they need to again ensure that the land can replenish and be repaired to be able to be a place where the animals that live in that habitat can continue to survive.”

Interview Summary #4: Summary for Lorne Cochrane

Lorne Cochrane lives and works in Fisher River. He has extensive experience in governance. He is self employed having his own business in developing and helping with management strategies. He is a Fisher River Cree Nation member who lives here in Fisher River with his family. His children are grown, he has grandchildren now who seem to be his main priority especially when thinking long term about their futures and what may be here for them.

Lorne works hard for the members of Fisher River Cree Nation under reconciliation. His understanding and caring for the people of Fisher River and its waters and lands goes deep. He uses his business experience for the benefit of the Fisher River people with the consideration of economics, the viability and sustainability of any opportunities at the forefront of anything he does. He has seen changes to the land and waters over the years and struggles with initiatives such as these finding while they have good intentions the overwhelming majority of times the government actions are not substantially motivated for any real changes for those who live at the end of the river.

Lorne states:

“We feel like a lot of these initiatives federally and provincially run have hidden agendas that doesn't benefit First Nations who rely on the lake for a livelihood whether it's commercial fishing or hunting or gathering.”

“When we championed the provincial park, we did it to protect our area.”

Priorities for Protection:

Lorne wanted the whole area protected from Hwy 325 north. He said the government unilaterally cut back the area to end up being what it is now.

What he says about:

Water

“We can live with anything in life except water and yet we are damaging and destroying it.”

“The sloughs are intended as a filtration system and now with agriculture changing all that they are just rushing water faster which includes all the agricultural pesticides and different things they use for their crops that deteriorate the waters. That alone contributed to the poor water quality in our community hence the reason we can't have individual wells unless they are set up with iron removers and water filtration systems.”

Nature & Habitat:

“When we championed the provincial park we did it to protect our area. I agree with protecting lands for the environment, air quality or for water quality but doing it within our immediate area when activities outside of it impact on us, it's meaningless. Like why should we spend all our efforts trying to protect and correct historical damages to these lands from private businesses supported by the federal government. Even if we do it now the water quality is still going to be affected because they are not doing nothing in the southern basin, with all the agriculture use of the pesticide.”

Cultural Lifestyle

“That's the frustration we see is that we are becoming comfortable is losing our way of life due to actions and activities bought on us by the federal and provincial government without proper consultation, altering the land use and the environment which is obviously having an impact on the wildlife and the gathering of medicines, berries and food.”

Reconciliation

“I don't know if there is any quick or clean answer about how we do protection because what we do, we do in reaction to damage by other activities that the province does to these lands, such as drainages and agriculture, such as discharging raw sewage into the Red River system, such as the peat plants. Why is it we are always brought on after the fact to try and look at mitigating damage that are in/occurring because of these outside forces or actions that are permitted by the provincial government. That's the bottom line, we got to find a way.”

Interview Summary #5: Summary for Dorothy A. Crate

Dorothy A Crate is a respected elder from Fisher River Cree Nation. Dorothy was married to Grenville Crate Sr. He passed away many years ago. Dorothy speaks fluent Cree. She was the Cree teacher at Charles Sinclair School in Fisher River Cree Nation until her retirement. She can be considered one of the “go to” people when someone needs translating from Cree to English.

Dorothy grew up on the land and spent her childhood years in the bush with her family. She has the lived experience of watching how her parents treated the animals and how they hunted and fished for food to provide for the families. She married into Fisher River as a young woman and has witnessed the changes in the community to the land and waters over the years.

Teaching the young people is an important thing for Dorothy. To have them learn about the land, the importance of keeping it clean and healthy and free of pollution for the future.

Dorothy states:

“We need to keep telling our young people to take care of the land. They need to learn to use their eyes and ears on the land. We were taught as youngsters to do these things.”

What she says about:

Water

“They drank fresh water off of the lake, but you can’t do that now. We used to take our cup and drink right out of the lake.”

She talked about how important the river was to the people of Fisher River and how much it was used for fishing, swimming, water etc.

She remembers how clean the river used to be and how kids used to swim in there, and how now in this time that is not possible due to how polluted the waters are.

Nature & Habitat:

“They need to use their senses about the environment around them. Walk outside into nature to be healthy. She stressed the importance of walking and being healthy and circulating the blood in the body. Staying healthy not only physically but also spiritually, and socially.”

Interview Summary #6: Summary for Dorothy L. Crate

Dorothy L. Crate is a member of the Fisher River Cree Nation. She is a respected elder who has lived and worked in Fisher River for most of her life. She is a fisher woman, learning the life of a fisher person as a means of income for herself and her family. She spent over forty-five years on Lake Winnipeg, learning how to not only fish, but also to keep herself and her helpers safe as they went about their daily routines on the waters of Lake Winnipeg. Learning how to read the weather, the wind and the waters are key to understanding that you can never take anything for granted.

The health of Lake Winnipeg is important to Dorothy. She sees keeping the land and the waters clean as a major part of conservation.

Priorities for Protection:

The lake and the shorelines are important to Dorothy. While all of it is important, she feels Kinnow Bay and Macbeth, Zones 2, 3 and 4 & 5 are specifically important to conserve. Another important point for Dorothy is the keeping of the lake clean of garbage and pollutants.

Dorothy states:

“You have got to respect the lake. You knew when there was a storm coming. You could just tell by the change of the current or you would see your flag starting to move a different way, the wind blowing in a different way.”

“You always watch for these signs. If you see the water coming up a bit. Well, you know, there's a storm coming... You'd have to watch the clouds too... see how they swirl or which way. Oh, there's just so many different things you can tell, even the way the waves curl when they start to blow, by the way it's curling.”

“You'll leave it as you find it. Yeah. That was the motto. And it should stay like that. Don't take advantage of nothing, don't wreck it, don't destroy it.”

Dorothy feels the pollution of the lake is a danger to the fishermen and fisherwomen of the lake. She has no tolerance for those who do not take the time to “leave it as you find it, or make it better.”

What she says about:

Water

The lake and the waters of Lake Winnipeg has been the livelihood for Dorothy and her family. Maintaining the health of the lake is important.

Climate Change

“I enjoyed it and I guess I would love to be outside. You’ve got to respect the lake. You don't know the environment, you know, it's just changing so much. When I first went out, we always knew when there was a storm coming. You could just tell by the change of the current or you would see your flag, you know, starting to move a different way, the wind blowing in a different way.”

“Well, I like to have it, just leave it there for the next generation. I don't know if that's going to happen with where the environment is going. There are so many wicked storms out there.”

Nature & Habitat:

“There's just so many different things you can tell, even the way the waves curl when they start to blow, if the way it's curling some, it's just something that you've been taught that you have to watch for...it stays with you, all that stuff throughout your life. You're always, you know, I like, I'm constantly looking and I'm saying, okay, you know, saying that there's going to be a change. I even watch the birds.”

Cultural/ Lifestyle

“We had a lot of freedom because we were like a little a family there, everybody looking out for everybody.

“She stayed with us, and she spent a great deal of time with us. She'd take me to go for a walk with her and she'd point out these things to me. And she even tried to tell me, the bear was my friend and all these legged animals like that.” (Dorothy in reference to her grandmother)

Sustainable Development

“And we have to let the people know how to pick it. And don't get greedy about it. You know, you just pick what you need.” (medicine picking)

Interview Summary #7: Summary for Terri and Dave Kirkness

Terri and Dave Kirkness are from Fisher River Cree Nation. Dave was a fisherman. He is now retired and has passed on his licenses to his eldest son. Terri is a teacher in the community. She works at the Fisher River High School. Fisher River Cree Nation is home for them. They have lived and worked in the community their entire lives, raising their family here. They have grandchildren who are their primary concern for the future and like other grandparents they want to see these lands and water healthy for their use in the future.

Education and the prevention of further pollution of the lake water are what seem to be the most important. To keep the lands as wild and natural as they can be in today's changing environmental habitats is what they would like to see. They feel that natural lands will help with the retainment and protection of birds, plants and animals.

What they say about:

Water

“The swamps and like the peat moss and all that, it filters the water. It's a natural filter. So, if we don't bother those, and let them be and let them do their jobs so we can have clean water in Lake Winnipeg.”

“At Mcbeth, the water was nice and clear. And then when we got to the point, what's that called Long point and then you could see it getting brown. Then as we got closer and closer, getting darker and darker by the time we got outside of the mouth of the river, I could just smell the river and it smelled like sewer.”

“They have been studying this lake for years. Still no action on it.”

Sustainable Development

“The development of a marina they believe can help in this area.”

Interview Summary #8: Summary for Darrell Mckay

Darrell Mckay is a Fisher River Cree Nation member. He has lived and worked in Fisher River for his life. Darrell and his wife raised their children here. They now have grandchildren who they are enjoying. They want to ensure as much as they can that the lands and waters are clean and healthy for them. Darrell says we need the wetlands, we need them to be healthy.

Darrell Mckay is a gatherer of medicine. He is now a traditional man who works with the medicine he gathers off the land. He has the gift of a sweat lodge and does his best for those who attend. Darrell stresses it is important to remember to “give back for everything you receive.”

He gathers medicines from all over the lands and he is learning what to use them for. For every sickness out there, there is a medicine out there on the land for it. It’s important for him to save the lands where the medicine grows, places like down the Fish Road and the swamps, rivers and creeks.

Priorities for Protection:

The lands that seem to be the most important to him are areas where medicine can be picked. Places like down the Fish Road and the swamps, rivers and creeks. Keeping these areas healthy and clean are vital.

What Darrell says about:

Water

“Water is the first medicine.”

Culture / Lifestyle

Darrell says that it is important to remember to give back for everything we receive. He was told to use what he picks or kills.

“In the old days we used everything and every part. We only take what we need and we are not to waste it.”

Darrell talked a lot about the use of medicine and how people have learned how it’s time to relearn and share the knowledge they either have learned or carry with them.

Interview Summary #9: Summary for Stan Mckay

Stan Mckay is a well known respected elder and knowledge holder of the Fisher River Cree Nation. He grew up on the shore of the Fisher River, speaking only Cree until the age of eight. Stan had to go to residential school as a child. His life and career have been written about in a book called *Journey from Fisher River – A Celebration of the Spirituality of People through the life of Stan Mckay* by Joyce Clouston.

Stan carries memories of what the Fisher River lands and waters were, and the importance of them to the people that live here. He continues to believe being on the land with family is an important part of why protecting wild spaces is necessary.

Stan's comments:

"I have come to believe as I watch people that healing happens on the land."

Stan uses the words; balance, management, grow and maintain, planting and caring and sustainable as he talks about the land and waters in this area. He states:

"If we learn to care for the environment, if we understand the possibilities of doing this regional land care, water care process, we will learn things about ourselves as well."

Stan feels it's important to have the conversation with our neighbours to the south of Fisher River about the land and waters we all live on.

Water

"The well-being of our communities is in many ways, economics, but also just a way of life in the community as it is connected to the water. I think maintaining the quality of water in the lake and our river. To try and do what we can for the river would be important."

Nature & Habitat:

"We share life on the land with the birds and the animals and for that to be balanced we have to acknowledge we share it... so we don't take our land for granted, we share it with all the life around us."

Culture / Lifestyle

"I think when we lose that connection to the land our humanity suffers, we are not healthy people."

"They would walk their trapline and they would find how many houses there were. How many muskrat houses? How many beaver houses? And then they would decide how many animals they are going to trap; like how they are going to manage the population. They are not going to kill or destroy every rathouse or take every animal, they are going to take what's available and what's realistic and what they need and what needs to be kept for future planning."

Reconciliation

“I think if we took that philosophy it’s not about management, it’s about relationships. And I’m hoping that this initiative will be about growing and understanding.”

“There is so much to learn from nature - so much beauty and so many lessons.”

“This initiative that Fisher River is taking with our neighbors is an important possibility and I think the area is very much under stress by what’s happening around it.”

Interview Summary #10: Summary for Steve Mckay

Steve Mckay is an elder from Fisher River Cree Nation. Steve lives with his wife in Fisher River. His time on the land would be considered as being under the grouping of living memory since he is now retired. He has spent time on the water as a fisherman in his younger years.

Steve has had many roles in his life as a man living and providing for his family. He fished and worked as a pulp cutter, a laborer and a carpenter building homes. He worked with men in the logging business with the Fisher River’s logging mill. He worked not only around this area, he traveled away going out of the area as well.

Steve's biggest concern would be the pollution that is around. He would like to see the environment cleaned up, with the use of plastics discarded and the use of gas and oil on the lake be done with more care to keep the lake clean.

He says:

“Fishermen back then were careful not to get gas into the lake. They were careful how they handled the gas and oil. This was their livelihood - they took care not to damage the lake.”

When he talks about fishing he says:

He saw different species of fish back then compared to now. Used to get sauger and sturgeon, majority was pickerel and whitefish. Difference in the fish over the years would be only the sizes.

What he says about:

Water

“The water was clear in the river, you used to be able to see right down to the bottom. And we used to drink that. It was good rain / river water.”

Cultural / Lifestyle

His remembers his grandmother taking the hair of the hides of moose and deer and using that for making clothing they used to wear - moccasins and mitts, etc.

Sustainable Development

Important to plan for areas for the planting of trees for future harvesting.

Interview Summary #11: Summary for John G. Murdock

John Murdock is a knowledge holder from Fisher River Cree Nation. He is a respected lodge holder who has followed the traditional Cree way of life for many years. He holds a sweat lodge and hosts ceremonies at his home. John lives with his family in Fisher River. He is a gentle man, caring a lot about the environment and the people and places around him. His first thought is always about the children now and into the future and what will be the legacy left for them.

He knows about the land and the medicine and berries. Having places to pick medicines and berries are key things to the life he practises. He would be considered a partially active land user going out seasonally to pick medicines that he needs.

Priorities for Protection:

The lands that seem to be the most important to him are those used for medicines.

What he says about:

Water

John talked about how clean the water used to be and how over the years how the flow of the water has changed due to the change in the water levels. There used to be a creek flowing by their house when they were kids and they would take fish out to eat. The creek has now disappeared and he states he would no longer be comfortable eating the fish in the river due to the pollutants and contamination.

Climate Change

The water levels of the river are part of the changes of the climate.

Cultural / Lifestyle

John feels strongly about keeping the lands protected and having and keeping areas for the future of the children. Having something for them to walk in and be available for them to see in a natural state can help maintain some of the traditional values of the Cree people.

Interview Summary #12: Summary for Sam Murdock

Sam Murdock lives and works in Fisher River Cree Nation. He started commercial fishing with his father when he was a young boy at the age of twelve and has been involved in fishing and the fishing industry for many years. This includes not only commercial fishing as a source of income to support his family early in life, but also later in life entering the governing field of the fisheries. He has worked many years on the waters of Lake Winnipeg. It is important for the fishermen of Lake Winnipeg to gain ground in the matters of what the fishermen want to see happen for their future and the future of Lake Winnipeg.

Priorities for Protection:

Sam thinks the whole area under discussion should be protected from Riverton to Mcbeth.

“This is all a Marsh and swamp, this is where the guys still go yet. It's a natural, traditional hunting area.”

Sam talked about the currents of the water and how much they have changed on the lake over the years:

“Back then you could drop your net and you knew which way the current would flow, if it was a north wind, it was as north current. Same with south if it was a south wind the current ran south. They ran the same way as the wind. Now if you have a strong south wind, you will have a north current. The currents have changed since the dams have been constructed.”

What he says about:

Water

“You know prior to 1970 the Lake was very clean and we had a natural flow because the water has actually come from the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and parts of the United States, through Montana and all the waters from that distance will flow into Lake Winnipeg being that Lake Winnipeg is the lowest lying lake in central Canada. We end up with most of the water because of the different rivers that, that flow into this body of water.”

“Just last week we went down to Lockport and I wouldn't eat that fish off that river after knowing what's upstream, you know? I mean, now they're catching pickerel with one eye or fins missing or an extra fin.”

Culture/ Lifestyle

“Like my grandmother used to tell me that they would use it as kids, travel up here for the ceremony and that's when they would pick their medicines and so on. But you know, like the sweats back then weren't tarps, it was birch bark and so on. They would cover the outside, the inside was covered with birch bark and red willow. Right. And then the outside, they would cover that with a peat moss. That's how they kept the heat in today, traditional use. Yeah. I mean, when you think about it, the old way can still be done. It's more work though.”

Reconciliation

“I used to co-chair the Lake Winnipeg stewardship board for seven years, and we came up with 134 recommendations to deal with all this, you know, the contaminants and the chemicals that cause the phosphorus and the nutrients.”

* **NOTE:** Sam told us that very few of these recommendations have ever been implemented*

Lakes Diversion

“So, another big factor here of course, is the Lake Manitoba diversion. As a result of that, because we commercial fish in this area there were a lot of trees and there was like slime in our nets. We had never seen the slime before.”

“I'm thinking in the next three or four years, and that's going to have a devastating effect on this body of water, because all the spawning grounds have changed.”

Flooding was also a concern of Sam's.

Interview Summary #13: Summary for Graham Smith

Graham Smith lives with his family in Fisher River Cree Nation. His family history gives him ties to Peguis First Nation. His father was a Peguis band member. The knowledge he gained was from his father who knew a lot about herbs, and what he has learned through his own practice. Graham is a medicine picker and uses the land in this manner. He does not get around as easily now and is teaching others which medicines to pick, and how. He also will trade what he has for other medicines he may need. Graham credits the medicine he uses for extending his life from the cancer he had in 1996.

Priorities for Protection

Graham cares about the land and medicines he uses, and keeping the land free from pollution and garbage is important to him. Graham finds most of these medicines around the areas of Zones 5, 7, 8 and 9.

What he says about:

Water

Graham feels it important to try and keep the water as clean as possible. There is a lot of contamination in the rivers and lakes.

Nature & Habitat:

Graham talked about how important clean lands are to be able to pick healthy medicines. He finds that with the more open roads are the further afield he needs to go to find medicines from the lands he can use.

Cultural / Lifestyle

Graham openly and freely shares what he knows and what he has. This is traditionally the way of Indigenous peoples.

PEGUIS KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

Interview Summary #14: Summary for Anonymous (Female #2)

This person is a member of Peguis First Nation and lived in the area for a long time. She continues to be a very traditional lady and lives her life in this manner. She however no longer lives in this area. She completed this interview over the phone and email. I decided as an interviewer her views are important to this process.

Priorities for Protection

The entire study area is important to her. She has picked medicines in many of the zones and like many of the traditional medicine people she finds she needs to go farther afield to gather clean medicines. Zones 6, 7 and 8 are the primary spots used by her. She also has picked in the lower of Zone 4 as well as Zone 5.

She states:

“This area we talk about I would like to see it remain the same. Trees growing with vast wilderness for the animals, birds, insects, plants grasses, and medicine. Each having their own healthy habitat. I would like to see it natural and thriving, with clean water for the next seven generations and beyond.”

What she says about:

Water and Climate

“I look at the waterways and there are changes to the shoreline. I am watching them disappear.”

Nature & Habitat:

“Everything is becoming sick animals, birds, people and fish. The numbers of species decreasing. There are some species are already gone. It is time to protect.”

Cultural/ Lifestyle

“In this area there are camps, cabins, land base education, fishing, medicine picking, sweat lodges, Sundances, men and women workshop, hiking, fishing, and boating. All of these activities are out on the land and are vital to the spiritual and mental health of our people.”

Interview Summary #15: Summary for Kathy Bird

Kathy Bird is a member of Peguis First Nation. She is a renowned and well-respected medicine woman. She lives with her husband Carl Bird Jr. at Matootoo Lake. She has extensive experience and knowledge about the plants and their medicinal uses. She is a user of the land in this manner finding the need for healthy sustainable land is needed for the health of the plants she picks and uses in her everyday life as a medicine woman. Kathy has built her life around Matootoo Lake finding the surrounding area a perfect place for hosting and having many traditional ceremonies. Matootoo Lake is a small body of water only accessible by private driveways making it a desirable place for birds and other wildlife.

The future generations of children are central to Kathy. The work she does and the experience she has gained from her traditional teachers, her many years of practising her work and knowledge she carries she is passing on to her children and to others. They spend time with her listening and learning lessons of the land. A clean environment is important to Kathy. It is important to have clean, healthy earth to pick the medicines, those that are free from contaminants and pollution.

Educating our youth about why this is important, creating awareness of the importance of strong leadership to get their voices heard when talking about protecting and conserving the land are all things important to her.

Priorities for Protection

Kathy refused to pinpoint any particular area for protection, as she believes that protecting the whole area is important.

What she says about the:

Water

“We are struggling enough as it is to have that fresh water. Growing up water was free and now we are having to buy it. I never imagined that we would end up having to buy it.”

Climate Change

“I know change is inevitable. But we don't need to add to the speed of the change.”

Nature & Habitat:

“Mother Earth is such an amazing organism, and everything is so well set up and everything is so well balanced so that we can live here, even to how the peat moss keeps the mercury down there. There’s a plan to everything and when you disrupt natural law, you disrupt those things, then that is when you see all the bad things happen.”

Culture – Lifestyle

“When you go into these areas along Fisher River where the sweet grass grows and you just sit there and you are surrounded by the sky and the wind and the sun and the birds and the aroma of the sweet grass. Those things are healing and you can sit there and take a deep breath and relax and enjoy that peace and the beauty of everything that is around you, and that helps to heal your spirit.”

“I’m hoping that more and more of our people are begin to understand the sacred teachings around Mother Earth and our natural laws and those types of things.

Sustainable Development

“The teachings that he gave me were so meaningful to me because it talked about sustainable harvesting, it talked about future generations and so those are our natural laws, sustainability for life to continue and let it be there for seven generations ahead. We are taught to always think seven generations ahead.”

Reconciliation

“We still have to encourage our people to embrace those things again, that which carried our people for thousands and thousands of years. I always tell people, the government did such a good job at putting us out there in the rest of society, as a nothing, as a nobody, wandering around aimlessly trying to survive for the next day, never ever, so many people don’t understand the intricacies of our societies that we have had here for thousands and thousands of years. When you look at when they first came here, the way that our world was and all the people that lived here we were able to keep it that way, fresh water, clean air, you didn’t find garbage anywhere and even how we looked after those things was all natural.”

Interview Summary #16: Summary for Ellis Cochrane

Ellis Cochrane is an elder of Peguis First Nation. He grew up on the land. As a child he lived with his parents and seven siblings. He learned how to hunt, trap and fish from his parents as well as his maternal uncles who were a big part of his education.

His parents were also farmers and worked hard to provide for their children. They had cattle that needed to be fed and watered as well. They used a combination of both ways to survive.

Ellis remembers a lot of the old places and through the years has seen the changes in the landscape in both the land and the waterways. Because he hunted and trapped in many of these places, he has seen their existence disappear gradually and the lands change from swamps and bogs to dryer lands as the farmers expanded their drainage systems for more lands to be used for farming.

One of the things most important to Ellis is:

“The Mantag River system to me is more important than High Rock. It’s a river system goes all the way from Ashern right through to Lake Winnipeg. It’s a water system that has its own filtering system, it has underground rivers goes through the Mantag marsh and it filters everything. Clean water goes through there and it’s a dam good thing pollution don’t come back up the river. There’s so much water and that’s my biggest concern.”

Education is key, says Mr. Cochrane. He would like to see education happening and kept ongoing with the younger children as well as those who are current users of the land. His hope is that the more people who know about the lands and the importance of maintaining clean and healthy land, the more awareness it will bring. He uses himself as an example, he says as a young man, he worked the land, and didn’t think twice about protecting or preserving trees or flowers. It’s through education and awareness and time as well where he has learned the value of what it is we have here. Education is the most important thing, to teach as many people as possible and have them out there teaching others.

Priorities for Protection:

The lands that seem to be the most important to him are in Zones 1, 4 and 5. The lands here are mostly swamp, fens and bogs that drain into Lake Winnipeg - filtered, and clean. The Mantag River system is very important to him.

What he says about:

Water

*“A filtering system is needed. We need to do our best to keep this as best we can. Trying to keep what we have now. And we are going to **try and keep it the way it is.**”*

Climate Change

“The landscape has changed drastically - where there used to swamps, it’s dry now. The little lakes that were here are dried up. What they did is they put a drainage system in here for the farmers and it drained everything. The weather some yes, but it’s mostly man made.”

Cultural Lifestyle

“We try and live as best we can from foods off the lands. The wife can cook up wild meat and knows how to cook them. She tans hides and leathers. She makes items out of them. Her parents are the same, she learned from them.”

Reconciliation

“Designated trails would intensify traffic. We know where to go. Maybe 100 people. But if a trail is created it opens it up to the world. Leave it alone and local.”

Sustainable Development

“There was thick bush here when I was young. But the bulldozers come in and cleared the land and we didn't think nothing. But now we should be teaching our children now from when they are small about protecting and preserving the land. Start teaching them young so they learn the importance of this stuff.”

“Teach people how to grow their own healthier plants rather than chemical grown etc. It's not too late to have people learn how plants, gardens etc.”

Interview Summary #17: Summary for Floyd Flett

Floyd Flett is from Peguis First Nation. He lives in Peguis with his wife and family. He has hunted, fished and trapped in the area for most of his life.

He sees the lands and waters through the lens of this work. As a hunter-gatherer, he sees the damage being done to the lands, the contamination and the subsequent runs off into the trenches, creeks and rivers and into the big lakes. As a provider for his family, he feels that using the plants and animals for subsistence is no longer healthy as they are no longer healthy. The consuming of the plants and the water that animals and fish use to live gets into the food chain, making it unhealthy down the line.

Priorities for Protection:

Saving the lands as they are is important for Floyd. The lands in Zones 4 and 5 are especially important as well as some in 6 and 7. He would also like to see an expansion of protected areas in the northern parts of Zones 2 and 3, especially in the Kinwow Bay area and across to that Sturgeon Bay area. He says it will “save a lot of animals” to make the protected areas there bigger. Floyd has concerns too about the pollution that happens when people go out into the bush. Keeping as much area unpolluted and clean he feels is what is crucial for the future of the lands.

Floyd states:

“A few years ago (maybe 7 – 8 years ago) they went hunting, and there was a family there along the lake and they killed a moose, and that moose was all full of damage. The liver and lungs were all blistered and sick. That tells us you know that something is going on there. Those moose are eating something or drinking the water. If I was them, I would have taken some samples before burning it, because they burnt it up along the lake. There are not many moose around anymore.”

“But now I am even scared and hesitate to eat any moose meat or deer meat. Like I killed one deer last fall and that is what we ate.”

What he says about:

Water

“Pollution too is going to affect the birds and all animals along the shorelines too. The bird nesting etc is all going to be affected. They are not going to know what is going through this channel and it is going to affect the fish population as well.” (the Lake St. Martin channel)

“Is it worth it? The immenseness is great and it's like no one cares. It's overwhelming the destruction that is happening out there.”

Interview Summary #18: Summary for Grant Wayne Manning

Grant Wayne Manningway is from Peguis First Nation. He lives with his family in Peguis First Nation. He is a traditional man and practises his cultural traditions. He is a Sundance Chief that prepares year-round for the time of the Sundance ceremonies. He is also an environmental monitor who has spent time on the land in this capacity ensuring the work being completed by industries is being completed in a manner that protects the plants and animals so as not to be impacted in a negative way. Wayne is also part of a hunter-gatherers group that uses their knowledge and experiences to teach the youth of their community hunting, fishing, trapping, hunting and gathering medicine in land-based education camps and outings. Wayne is an active land-user, gathering medicines needed for the Sundance ceremonies and sweat lodges.

Education of anyone, from adults at the Sundance and sweat lodge ceremonies to youth in the hunter gathers group - needs to be connected to the land. These are land-based skills that are important to Wayne and having the resources to continue them are important.

Wayne says when asked the question - What would you like to see the area to look like in 100 years, into the future?

“Whatever they bother, it's going take more than 100 years to return - it took a lot longer to get to where it is.”

He goes on to say that he would like to see the area remain the way it is now. And to “not be bothered”.

“It will never be the same, we will never bring natural back when it’s been so disturbed.”

What he says about:

Water

“There is a body of water here and that is the most important thing there’s a lot of little plants and medicines there and there is no specific area.”

“Water is the most important thing to look after, polluting the south means polluting the north here.”

Nature & Habitat:

“Leave it as natural as it is, Like why do you want to disturb something that took thousands of years to be the way that it is and do more harm than good?”

Cultural/ Lifestyle

“That’s what the old people always said is that we must protect here, there are no boundaries in what we have to start looking after.”

Reconciliation

“I’m glad that they’re taking the initiative to try to protect this area... Having your own people in this program would really benefit this conservation initiative instead of having to rely on outside people who don’t really care about the same things as we do.”

Sustainable Development

“What we take we have to pay for in the long run; only take what you need.”

Interview Summary #19: Summary for Mike Sutherland

Mike Sutherland is a member of Peguis First Nation. He is a hunter, trapper-gatherer. He is also the Director of the Peguis Consultation & Special Projects Unit for Peguis First Nation. He lives with his wife Sharon and their children. He cares about the future of the land and as he goes about his business whether it be in his career life or his hunter, trapper life he wants others to understand the importance of doing what we can now to protect the land and the animals going forward into the future. His work as the Director of Peguis Consultation & Special Projects Unit keeps him abreast of the government policies that can affect the land, waters and animals around us.

Mike continues to work as a hunter, trapper-gatherer. When he works his trapline he shares the benefits, not only with his family, but with the youth and elders of the community of Peguis as well. The education and life teachings of the ways of the Indigenous people of Peguis are important life skills Mike feels they should learn. He maintains a cycle of opportunities in trapping, gathering and fishing as tools to educate anyone willing to learn.

Priorities for Protection:

Washow Bay peninsula and the shorelines of Fisher Bay and Sturgeon Bay are priorities for Mike in order to protect Lake Winnipeg. He's also concerned about protecting areas that support moose given the sharp drop in moose populations, particularly in game hunting area 21 and 21a which encompass the northern portion of the study area.

Mike states:

“You don't see any moose in that area but you do see a lot of habitat destruction. And that is one of the biggest issues that I have, is the destroying of habitat. You know it's one thing to hunt moose but to destroy that habitat is to destroy that population - without a place to live the moose won't survive.”

What he says about:

Water

“Washow Bay peninsula is a sensitive area, as well as shorelines of Fisher Bay and Sturgeon Bay and so on. We have to make sure and do what we can to protect those areas as well as you look at what's happening with Lake Winnipeg.”

“So, watching out for legislation and making sure we fight tooth and nail to protect our land and our water by opposing (harmful) legislation.”

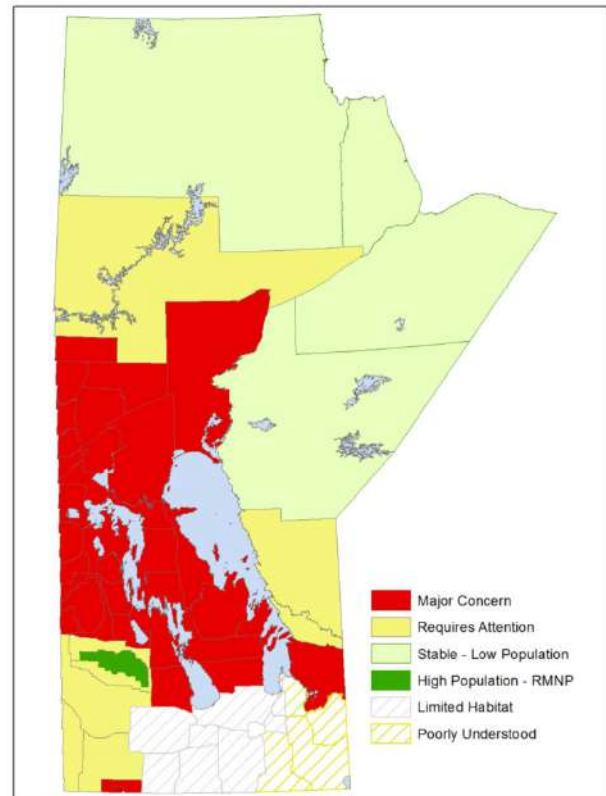
“Washow Bay peninsula is the kidney of Lake Winnipeg. That peat mining industry is going to kill that peninsula and I guess eventually Lake Winnipeg will die.”

Sustainable Development

“There used to be a forestry industry but it is very limited now in our area. It would be nice to see more forestry replanting, tree planting opportunities to help build back what we had within our area before the 89 fire. There is a fishing industry in Fisher Bay and up further north towards Kinnow Bay, Sturgeon Bay and so on, over across at Matheson Island, Loon Straits where a lot of our fishermen go to fish during the regular fishing seasons. We do trap as an economic base, my family so we do make some money trapping throughout the winter months and we've made some good money some years where prices have been higher and furs have been plenty.”

Nature and Climate Change

“The other areas of concern are the low moose populations. Our family hasn’t killed a moose in over 10 years in areas 21 or 21A. We have seen the decline of moose and while we are out in the bush during the winter months we also seen huge increase in the wolf populations which help decimate moose populations. And not just moose, you know as First Nations people we have to be careful with harvesting practices. You know I remember one time there were over a thousand moose in 21 and a good number of moose in 21A. Area 21 now, which is one of the areas in question, has less than 150 moose in it at the last count and area 21A has less than 100. Yet in the early 1990’s 21A was boasting the highest cow/calf population in the world. And that’s the Washow Bay peninsula 21A.”



Map 1. Conservation Status of Moose in Manitoba by Game Hunting Areas

Cultural/ Lifestyle

“I am a trapper, hunter and fisherman. My family we’ve been living and utilizing the land to supplement our food intake every year through with deer and elk, migratory birds, ducks and geese, upland game birds like chickens, ruff grouse, sharptail grouse and rabbits. We pick fruit and berries and also medicines. Our family is a trapping family and we’ve been on my grandfather’s trapline for 46 years and my son is now getting into trapping and he will continue that tradition within our family and so we trap pretty much everything except for wolves. We are wolf clan so we don’t trap wolves.”

Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Knowledge Holders for the Fisher River Cree Nation Conservation Areas Initiative

1. How do you think we could support the conserving (saving) of land and water in this area?
2. What kinds of changes to the environment are you most worried about?
3. What would you like the area to look like in five, ten, twenty, twenty-five, and hundred years from now? What kinds of activities would you like to see in the area?
4. From the maps are their areas of interest to you? And what or why do you think they are important?
5. What can you tell me about the land in this area/zone?
6. What can you tell me about the animals, plants or fish in the area? / zone? What kinds of animals do you harvest for subsistence, or for yourself, your family or community? What kinds of plants or animals do you harvest, hunt or trap for economic reasons?
7. What activities are you are aware of that may happen in this area? Such as hunting, fishing, trapping, medicine picking, berry picking, ceremonial activities, cultural activities, family activities, any other outside activities.
8. Can you think of any industry taking place in these zones? Which zone? Would you please tell me about them?
9. What types of personal activities are happening within these zones? Which zone? Would you please tell me about them?

Protocol
Respecting Crown-Aboriginal
Consultations

Between

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

and

Fisher River Cree Nation



PROTOCOL respecting Crown-Aboriginal consultations dated August 7, 2013.

BETWEEN:

Her Majesty the Queen in Right of the Province of Manitoba,
as represented by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs,

(called "**Manitoba**"),

-and-

Fisher River Cree Nation
as represented by Chief and Council,

(called "**Fisher River**").

WHEREAS:

- A. Manitoba is responsible for the management of Crown lands and natural resources administered and controlled by Manitoba, in accordance with the authority of the Manitoba Natural Resources Transfer Agreement;
- B. Fisher River is signatory to Treaty No. 5;
- C. The members of Fisher River have treaty, Aboriginal, and inherent rights in respect of natural resources and waters on Crown lands and on Fisher River Reserve lands, including rights under Treaty No. 5, the right to hunt, trap, and fish, for food at all seasons of the year on unoccupied Crown land and other land to which they have a right of access as set out in paragraph 13 of the Manitoba Natural Resources Transfer Agreement, and other rights including the right to gather plants for food, medicine, and ceremonies on unoccupied Crown lands;
- D. It is desirable for Manitoba and Fisher River to have a common understanding with respect of sharing information about proposed dispositions, allocations or authorizations respecting Crown land or resources and about Crown-Aboriginal consultation processes within Fisher River's Traditional Territory; and
- E. The Constitution of Canada, including the recognition and affirmation of Aboriginal and treaty rights under s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and International human rights instruments including the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* support the principle that Aboriginal peoples

and governments in Canada should cooperate through agreements and other constructive arrangements to protect fundamental rights of Aboriginal peoples.

THEREFORE, Manitoba and Fisher River express their common understandings as follows:

SECTION 1 - Duration of Protocol

- 1.1 The duration of this Protocol shall be from August 7, 2013 until terminated under subsection 10.1.

SECTION 2 - Traditional Territory

- 2.1 Fisher River's Traditional Territory means the area described in the map attached as Schedule "A" to this Protocol.
- 2.2 The boundaries of Fisher River's Traditional Territory may be amended from time to time by agreement, in writing, by the Parties.
- 2.3 The Parties agree that the traditional territories of other First Nations or Aboriginal communities may overlap or fall within Fisher River's Traditional Territory and that any terms or designations in this Protocol do not affect the Aboriginal and treaty rights of other First Nations and Aboriginal communities nor the Crown's duty to consult with those other First Nations and Aboriginal communities.
- 2.4 Manitoba and Fisher River recognize that additional information acquired through a Traditional Land Use and Occupancy Study and Mapping Initiative may assist the Parties in assessing natural resource related proposals as to potential impacts on the exercise of Fisher River's Aboriginal or Treaty rights.
- 2.5 Manitoba and Fisher River recognize that additional information acquired through a Traditional Land Use and Occupancy Study and Mapping Initiative may assist the Parties in Crown-Aboriginal consultation processes.
- 2.6 Manitoba and Fisher River recognize that additional information acquired through a Traditional Land Use and Occupancy Study and Mapping Initiative may assist the Parties in other assessments and processes relating to or involving social, economic, environmental and other initiatives or programs.

SECTION 3 - Coordinators

- 3.1 Manitoba and Fisher River recognize that the coordination of sharing information and the coordination of Crown-Aboriginal consultation processes will be aided by the identification of a single coordinator for each of them.
- 3.2 Fisher River will provide for a Fisher River community consultation coordinator, who will act as the principal point of contact with the Manitoba consultation facilitator for the purposes of sharing information and for coordinating Crown-Aboriginal consultation processes between the Parties.
- 3.3 Manitoba will provide for a Manitoba consultation facilitator, who will act as the principal point of contact with the Fisher River community consultation coordinator for the purposes of sharing information and coordinating Crown-Aboriginal consultation processes between the Parties.

SECTION 4 - Notifications - Crown Land and Resource Dispositions , Allocations or Authorizations

- 4.1 Manitoba will conduct its internal circulations, reviews and initial assessments of proposed Crown land and resource dispositions, allocations or authorizations that fall within the Fisher River Traditional Territory in accordance with provincial policies and procedures.
- 4.2 Except where Manitoba decides to initiate consultation about a proposed decision or action in accordance with section 5, Manitoba will provide notice to Fisher River of any contemplated dispositions, allocations or authorizations respecting Crown land or resources in Fisher River's Traditional Territory.
- 4.3 The notice provided under subsection 4.2 will include:
 - (a) Information on the contemplated Crown land or resource disposition, allocation or authorization;
 - (b) A summary of comments relating to the Crown land or resource disposition, allocation or authorization as identified by Manitoba during its internal processes;
 - (c) Subject to availability, an orthophotogrammetric based map of the site of the proposed Crown resource disposition, allocation or authorization along with a key map; and
 - (d) any other information or documents that the Parties may consider helpful in evaluating the proposed Crown land or resource disposition, allocation or authorization

- 4.4 Fisher River shall reply to the notice provided under subsection 4.2:
- (a) within forty-five (45) days from receipt of the notice; or
 - (b) by the response date stipulated in the notice, if greater than 45 days; or
 - (c) by such other date as the Parties may agree.
- 4.5 In the reply under subsection 4.4, Fisher River may advise whether it has any concerns about the contemplated disposition and any information that it wishes to have considered by Manitoba in making the decision about the contemplated disposition, allocation or authorization.
- 4.6 Manitoba will consider any information provided by Fisher River.
- 4.7 Manitoba will advise Fisher River, in writing, of any decision made about the contemplated disposition, allocation or authorization, including advising how the information provided by Fisher River was considered by Manitoba in the decision-making process.
- 4.8 Where Manitoba receives a response from Fisher River within the time frames set out in subsection 4.4, and the Parties agree that Crown-Aboriginal consultation is appropriate, the Parties will follow the process set out under section 5.
- 4.9 Where Manitoba does not receive a response from Fisher River within the time frames set out in subsection 4.4, Manitoba will advise Fisher River of Manitoba's intent to make a decision about the contemplated disposition, allocation or authorization if Manitoba does not receive a response from Fisher River within twenty (20) working days of the date of receipt of the written notice.
- 4.10 Where Manitoba does not receive a response from Fisher River within the time frames set out in subsection 4.9, Manitoba will continue with its decision making process and will notify Fisher River, in writing, of its decision.

SECTION 5 - Crown-Aboriginal Consultation Process

- 5.1 Manitoba recognizes it has a duty, grounded in the honour of the Crown, to consult in good faith in a meaningful way with First Nations (including Fisher River Cree Nation), Métis communities and other Aboriginal communities when any proposed provincial law, regulation, decision or action may infringe upon or adversely affect the exercise of a treaty or Aboriginal right of that First Nation, Métis community or other Aboriginal community, as recognized and affirmed

under s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

- 5.2 Fisher River acknowledges that Manitoba's Crown-Aboriginal consultation processes are guided by its *Interim Provincial Policy on Crown Consultation with First Nations, Metis Communities and Other Aboriginal Communities and Guidelines on Crown Consultation with First Nations, Metis Communities and Other Aboriginal Communities*.
- 5.3 Where Manitoba and Fisher River agree that Crown-Aboriginal consultation is appropriate in respect of a Crown decision or action, including a proposed Crown land or resource disposition, allocation or authorization within Fisher River's Traditional Territory they:
 - (a) will work together to develop a consultation workplan and budget, and consultation protocol where necessary, which will set out the nature, scope and timing of each of the specific elements and activities that are to be undertaken as part of the Crown-Aboriginal consultation process with respect of the disposition, allocation or authorization in issue, and which may include the consideration of any potential adverse effects of the decision or action and of possible measures to address the adverse effects;
 - (b) where agreed, will enter into Crown-Aboriginal consultation participation funding agreements to provide for funding to enable Fisher River to participate in the consultation process in accordance with the consultation workplan; and
 - (c) will participate in the consultation process as set out in the consultation workplan.
- 5.4 Manitoba agrees that prior to any final decisions being made about a matter subject to consultation under this section, it will provide Fisher River with a written summary of the Crown-Aboriginal consultation process, including a description of:
 - (a) the concerns identified by Fisher River;
 - (b) the potential adverse effects of the proposed Crown land or resource disposition, allocation or authorization on the exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights; and
 - (c) any proposed measures to address the adverse effects considered in the consultation process.
- 5.5 Fisher River will have a reasonable opportunity to consider the written summary and provide Manitoba with comments, in writing, or in a meeting between the

Parties before the decisions are made.

- 5.6 Manitoba will notify Fisher River, in writing, of any decisions or actions taken by Manitoba resulting from a Crown-Aboriginal consultation process.

SECTION 6 - Fisher River Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Committee

- 6.1 Fisher River has established a Fisher River Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Committee. This committee will review the notifications provided under section 4 of this Protocol and provide recommendations to Fisher River's Chief and Council and will participate in the Crown-Aboriginal consultation process under section 5 of this Protocol where directed to by Chief and Council.

SECTION 7 - Non-Derogation

- 7.1 Nothing in this Protocol shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, as recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.
- 7.2 Nothing in this Protocol precludes Fisher River or Manitoba from seeking any determination or remedy from a court of competent jurisdiction about a Crown-Aboriginal consultation process.

SECTION 8 - Notice

- 8.1 Any notice or other communication to Fisher River under this Protocol shall be in writing and shall be sent to:

Chief and Council and Community Coordinator
Fisher River Cree Nation
Box 367 Koostatak, MB R0C 1S0
Fax: (204) _____
Email: _____

- 8.2 Any notice or other communication to Manitoba under this Protocol shall be in writing and shall be sent to:

Executive Director and Consultation Facilitator
Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat
200-500 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3X1
Fax: (204) 945-3689
Email: robert.wavey@gov.mb.ca

8.3 Any party may provide notice of change of address to the other parties in writing and thereafter all notices shall be sent to the new address.

SECTION 9 - Future Processes

9.1 Manitoba and Fisher River are committed to pursuing discussions about funding for the community coordinator position referred to in section 3 of this Protocol.

9.2 Manitoba and Fisher River are committed to continuing to work together and entering into discussions to provide assistance to Fisher River with respect of Fisher River conducting a Traditional Land Use and Occupancy Study and Mapping Initiative as referred to in Section 2 of this Protocol.

SECTION 10 - General

10.1 Any Party may terminate this Protocol by giving one hundred and eighty (180) days written notice to the other Party to this Protocol.

10.2 The termination of this Protocol will not affect any consultations about proposed decisions or actions of the Crown conducted before the date of termination, and, in the event of termination, Manitoba and Fisher River will address any consultation processes in good faith outside of this Protocol.

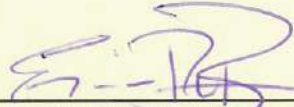
10.3 This Protocol may be amended by the Parties in writing.

10.4 This Protocol may not be assigned by any Party.

This Protocol has been approved by the parties on the date noted below:

for **MANITOBA**

Date: AUG - 7 2013



Honourable Eric Robinson

for **FISHER RIVER CREE NATION**

Date: AUG - 7 2013



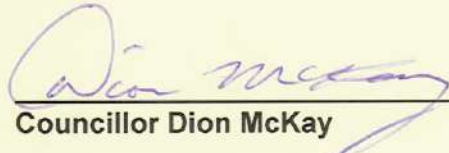
Chief David Crate

Date: AUG - 7 2013



Councillor Carl Cochrane

Date: AUG - 7 2013



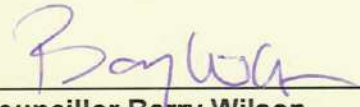
Councillor Dion McKay

Date: AUG - 7 2013



Councillor Darrell Thaddeus

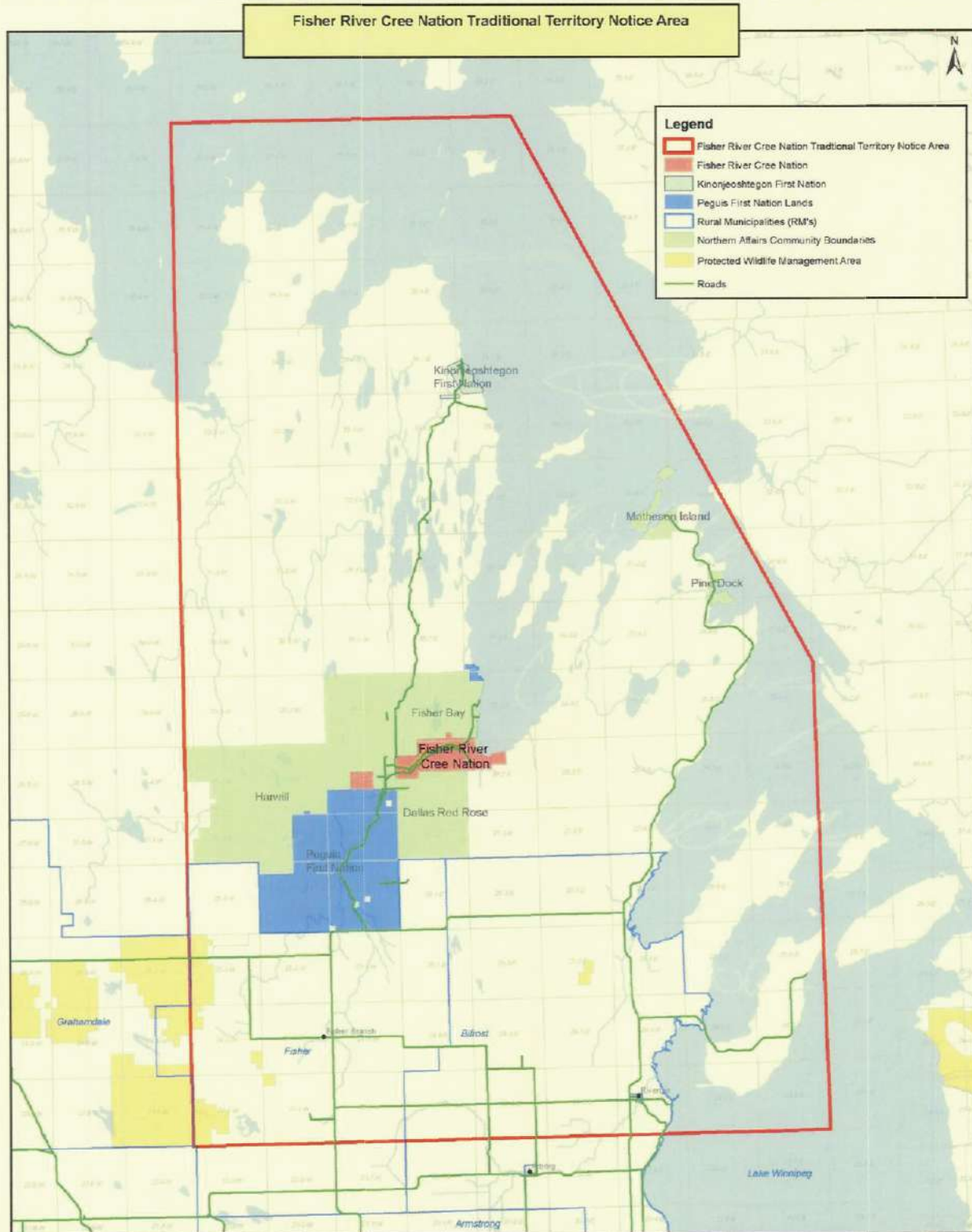
Date: AUG - 7 2013



Councillor Barry Wilson

Schedule "A"

FISHER RIVER CREE NATION TRADITIONAL TERRITORY NOTICE AREA MAP



For illustrative purposes only - prepared June 2013