

2015 PROGRESS REPORT



***A STRONG VOICE
A CLEAR VISION
A BRIGHT FUTURE***



MISSION

It is the mission of our leadership to provide quality services and programs that are coordinated and responsive to the needs of our people. All services and programs will be aimed at making our community progressive and self sustaining, while recognizing that our treaty relationship is paramount.

TANSI!

As we celebrate our 140th anniversary, we are handed a perfect opportunity to look at how far we have come and to look ahead to where we would like to go. I am pleased to report that Fisher River Cree Nation has maintained its strong position on the path of success!

I am proud to have contributed to that success and am especially grateful that I am able reap the benefits of working with a strong council team. Their support and the support of community members has helped ensure that Fisher River is always moving in the right direct – forward.

Over the past year, notable success has been achieved in the areas of infrastructure improvements, economic stability and the protection of Treaty rights.

Recently, council and I met to re-examine our two year practical vision plan for the community. This was a time to reflect on the progress made to date, make adjustments where necessary and to determine new goals and targets as we continue to move forward.

It was encouraging to see all the progress we have made in just two short years. For example, we have succeeded in attaining the first level of accreditation - The Financial Performance Certificate necessary for becoming a borrowing member of through the First Nation Finance Authority.

In order to receive this certificate, we had to implement a sound financial administration system, which in turn helps with accountability and transparency. This certification is a major stepping stone because it means that we are no longer at the mercy of government when it comes to waiting for funding for capital projects.

We have already started work on achieving the second level of accreditation – Financial Management Systems, once we meet the standards to receive this certification we are eligible to access as many loans as we need now and into the future.

With everything we do, we keep the future and the wellbeing of our youth as a top priority. In addition to securing loans to develop infrastructure and our economy, an important way in which we can ensure that future generations have the tools necessary to succeed is through education. We have been working hard to ensure that the education requirements of our youth is not just fulfilled, but surpassed.

One of the major undertakings in the area of education is the renovation of The Charles Sinclair School, along with the construction of a new building for grades 7-12. We are currently working on securing funding and are hopeful that the school renovations will be funded as part of a government pilot project.

We have taken steps to ensure the economic prosperity of our community by establishing new businesses such as the carwash/laundromat and are seeking new opportunities. We are looking into purchasing shares and becoming a member of Castle Building Centre, a reputable Canadian lumber and building material buying group. This would give us the ability to purchase materials, for our many infrastructure projects, directly from the supplier, greatly reducing our overall costs as well as providing employment opportunities for our members.

In keeping with economic development, The Fisher River Economic Development is exploring a micro financing program which would provide low-interest accessible loans to the community members of Fisher River Cree Nation. The combination of low interest rates and assistance business planning would help drive entrepreneurship and improve the likelihood of success for small business owners.

We continue to network and form relationships with like minded organizations, institutions, government and individuals who will help us realize our goals.

These are just a few ways in which we are working to improve our community and make it better for generations to come. As always, we value your input and look forward to discussing any of the information provided in this report or if you have questions or concerns about any other issues please do not hesitate to contact the band office.

Thank you for your continued support.

Chief David Crate



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Chief David Crate



Councilor Dion McKay



Councilor Carl Cochrane



Councilor Barry Wilson



Councilor Darrell Thaddeus

Chief David Crate:

- Finance & Policy Development
- Capital Projects
- Land Claims
- FRCN Business Development
- Housing/ O & M
- Drug Strategy
- Human Resources
- Social Development
- Justice/Policing
- Emergency Preparedness
- Health Services
- Education
- Day Care/Headstart/ECD
- Child & Family Services

Councilor Dion McKay:

- Finance and Policy Development
- Capital Projects
- Land Claims
- FRCN Business Development
- Housing/O&M
- Drug Strategy
- Human Resources
- Education
- Health Services
- Healing Centre
- Justice/Policing
- Sports & Rec./Gaming
- Natural Resources/Environment
- Youth/Jr. Chief & Council
- Social Development
- O.S.E.D.C
- Child & Family Services

Councilor Carl Cochrane:

- Finance and Policy Development
- Capital Projects
- Land Claims
- FRCN Business Development
- Housing/O&M
- Drug Strategy
- Human Resources
- Education
- Sports & Rec./Gaming
- Emergency Preparedness
- Day Care/Headstart/ECD
- Justice/Policing
- Social Development
- Youth/Jr.Chief & Council
- Public Works
- O.S.E.D.C
- Natural Resources/Environment

Councilor Barry Wilson:

- Finance and Policy Development
- Capital Projects
- Land Claims
- FRCN Business Development
- Housing/O&M
- Drug Strategy
- Human Resources
- O.S.E.D.C
- Public Works
- Justice/Policing
- Child & Family Services
- Natural Resources/Environment
- Social Development
- Health Services
- Healing Centre

Councilor Darrell Thaddeus:

- Finance and Policy Development
- Capital Projects
- Land Claims
- FRCN Business Development
- Housing/O&M
- Drug Strategy
- Human Resources
- O.S.E.D.C
- Public Works
- Justice/Policing
- Sports & Rec./Gaming
- Day Care/ Headstart/ ECD
- Emergency Preparedness
- Education
- Personal Care Home

INFRASTRUCTURE AND MORE..... 6

Arena Parking Lot.....	6
Housing Update.....	7
Fisher River Builders	9
Leah Cochrane Memorial	9
OSIS – Internet Upgrades	9
Cemetery Upgrades	10

TRADITIONAL TERRITORY AND STEWARDSHIP 12

Fisher Bay Park	12
Fisher River McBeth Fisheries	12
Peat Moss Appeal.....	14
Reclaiming Traditional Territory	15
Community Consultation By-Laws	16

ECONOMIC INITIATIVES 17

Castle Project	17
Cottage Lots	18
Grocery Store Renovations	18
FNFA Certification.....	18
Hotel and Conference Centre.....	20
Carwash and Laundromat	21
Microfinancing	21

HEALTH AND WELLNESS..... 22

Fitness Centre Staff.....	22
Panorama Project.....	23

EDUCATION 25

School Renovation Project.....	25
Cree Dictionary Launch	25
Indspire Award	26

SPORTS AND RECREATION 27

Hockey.....	27
FRCN Buys York Boat	28

FIRST NATION SAFETY OFFICER PROGRAM..... 29



INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

PARKING LOT PAVED

Last year, the arena parking lot received some major upgrades. The final phase – paving, was completed at the end of summer 2014. During this upgrade, the parking lot gravel was reconstructed, asphalt pavement was installed and improvements to drainage were made.



Housing Committee: From left to right: Larry Murdock, Darrell McKay, Pam Lapensee, Violet Sinclair and Stewart Cochrane.

HOUSING REPORT

Meet the Committee Hard at work for you

The Housing Program has successfully delivered services to over 400 homes on the reserve and has established a fully functioning Housing Committee to guide and direct housing administration, enhancing the level of accountability and reporting to the community.

The Housing Authority currently meets approximately once per month to discuss and make recommendations to improve and administer the housing program and policy and budgets. They also meet with Band members to discuss current issues regarding personal housing situations in order to assist the Housing Authority in prioritization of need, health and safety concerns.

Allocation and Construction of New Housing Units

Fisher River Cree Nation has been conditionally approved by CMHC for eight single family units with construction scheduled to begin in 2015. The project will be considered fully approved when the Ministerial Loan Guarantee (MLG) has been approved by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). The selection process will be completed after the MLG has been received by the Housing Authority.

Four housing units were completed during the 2014/15 fiscal year and are not occupied.

10 Unit RRAP Project
Project Value: \$180,150.00
Funding Source: CMHC

2 Unit HASI Project
Project Value: \$7,000.00
Funding Source: CMHC

8 Unit Project
Project Value: \$1,535,353.24
Approved by CMHC, Awaiting AANDC MLG
Funding Source: CMHC

2 Youth Housing Staff – HIIFNIY
Project Value: \$15,200.00
Funding Source: CMHC

Construction, energy efficiency, selection process and more

Housing Database

The Housing Authority has purchased a database and is currently collecting data to be input into this system. The database will be useful in preparing for future budgets in determining what renovations should be priority for the upcoming year, as well as for keeping records of housing conditions. A database will contain information on all housing units on the Fisher River Cree Nation and updated continually. This database will include the number of houses, condition of units, addresses, householders name, lot numbers, year of construction, year contractors' repairs were done, etc. This database will also assist with the assignment of work orders to contractors and billings.

Housing Selection Process

The Housing Authority utilizes a rating system in the housing selection process. The rating system is applied to three categories i.e.: single people, families and elders to make the housing selection process accessible to all community members. Copies of the rating system are available at the Band Office.

Alternative Energy Sources

The Housing Authority and Fisher River Council are investigating Renewable Energy Sources for future energy needs; such as Wind Energy, Solar Energy, and Geothermal Energy.

Renewable energy resources are clean sources of energy. They can be harnessed without damaging the environment, unlike using fossil fuels which release carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas) and other harmful pollutants into the atmosphere.

The Fisher River Cree Nation completed 66 Geo-Thermal conversions during the 2014/15 fiscal year.

Housing Market Fund

The Housing Department has been working on an application with the First Nations Housing Market Fund (FNMHF) for access to Training Initiatives and Alternative Financing Options for Home Renovation Loans and Homeownership opportunities. We are at the final approval stages for both the Capacity Development and Credit Enhancement Program offered through the FNMHF. Meetings have been held to identify training needs for staff and the community and to begin negotiations with approved lenders for homeownership options.

Manitoba Hydro Direct Install Program

We have recently undertaken installation of Energy Efficient Measures through a new Manitoba Hydro Program. We have been approved for 40 houses at a time and will continue with this initiative until all eligible homes have been complete. The energy efficient measures installed in your home will improve the energy efficiency and home quality comfort of your home, and reduce energy consumption. On average customers save approximately \$90 per year on their energy bill.

Housing Policy Review

A review of the housing policy is currently underway. Recommendations for improvement of the policy will be provided to the community when the initial review is complete.

Matrimonial Real Property Act

The Matrimonial Real Property Act came into place in December 2014. Fisher River Cree Nation will fall under these regulations until a Fisher River Matrimonial Real Property Law is approved by the community. This is one of the areas we will be working on through Capacity Development with the FNMHF.



Diane Bowers

Fisher River Home ownership

The Housing Authority is proud to announce that we had one member utilize our Home ownership Program this past year. Diane Bowers has recently moved into the new home she financed and paid for on her own, with the assistance of our Home ownership contribution.

Street Numbering and Naming

The Housing Program is working on the street numbering and naming project so that we can access 911 service. It is projected that at a minimum, the road signage will be in place this fiscal year.

Keeping you in the loop

Housing Workshops

A Housing Workshop was held on June 9 and 10, 2014 which included presentations on PowerSmart and other Energy Saving Ideas, Home Insurance, CMHC Programs and the First Nation Market Housing Fund (FNMHF). It is the intent of the Housing Authority to hold workshops on an ongoing basis.

Find us online The Housing Department has its own information web page linked to the Fisher River Cree Nation web page. The housing web page contains information that community members can access and download; such as housing applications, housing policy, etc. Relevant information will be added to the website on an ongoing basis.

The Housing Department also has provided information to membership via the Fisher River Cree Nation Facebook page and by community mailouts.

FRCN New Stage – Update June 2015

LEIGH COCHRANE MEMORIAL VISITOR CENTRE – NEW STAGE DESIGN



Project Status and Timeline

HTFC with sub - consultants Crosier Kilgour & Partners Ltd., SMS Engineering and with FRCN representatives have developed the early concept design into complete construction drawings.

HTFC is pleased to inform that FRCN is hiring a local contractor Mervin Murdock to be the General Contractor for the entire project. He will be using local builders for constructing a majority of this project. Outside contractors will be hired solely for the supply and install of the Glue lam structure.

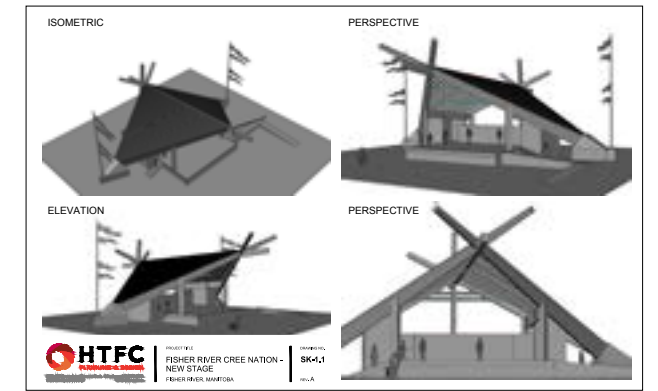
Construction is expected to begin soon, beginning with concrete foundation work. The remaining construction will take place over this winter and next spring. Tentatively contractors are working toward completion of the new stage in time for the 2015 Treaty Days and Homecoming celebrations. The roof structure is to be constructed after the big event.

Fisher River Builders

Established in 1998 by the Fisher River Cree Nation, Fisher River Builders (FRB) is a professional company specializing in major home repair, renovations and new residential and commercial construction. Success was to be accomplished by utilizing licensed trade journeyman and third year apprentices in the carpentry, plumbing and electrical fields.

Today the company continues to be actively engaged in contract work for the Fisher River Cree Nation, Canada Mortgage and Housing – RRAP, new housing starts, external housing projects-off reserve, and geothermal projects.

Long-range plans included the company expanding to provide those same services and qualified staff to other First Nations who lack the experience, resources and expertise. A newly expanded FRB company services is to include new housing construction, major/minor housing repair/renovation; as well as, new commercial building construction including professional construction services.



Cost

Consultants are currently fielding questions from the contractors who are currently finalizing their bid prices. Final bid amounts should be received in the next weeks.

Conceptual Sketches

Detail design sketches, prepared in 2014, are attached to this update, showing perspective views of the stage. These are a fairly accurate model of the stage and all the material sizes. Not depicted in the model is the architectural lighting, site work for removing hydro poles to improve sight lines, loading area and dock for deliveries and electrical power that are part of the project.



OCHEKWI-SIPI INTERNET SERVICES

Occhekwi-Sipi Internet Services (OSIS), a residential and commercial high speed wireless internet company, is slated to undergo expansion to increase their bandwidth – allowing the implementation of new technologies vital for the Charles Sinclair School “Microsoft Partners in Learning” project and Fisher River Health Services “TeleHealth” and E-filing Programs and the Water Treatment Plant Monitoring program.

The bandwidth will increase to 100Megs from its current 40Meg capacity.

OSIS, owned and operated by the Fisher River Economic Development Corp, is located in the FRCN administration complex. Operations include finance, marketing, personnel, client support, technical services, network support and maintenance, operations and management/administration. Revenue is recognized as customers originally sign up for the service and the ongoing monthly fee.



Fisher River Cree Nation Cemetery showing three areas examined by EM38.

FRCN Cemetery Project enters phase two

Fisher River Cree Nation is entering the second phase of a project that will see the current community cemetery, which has almost reached capacity, closed and a new one developed.

The current cemetery, affiliated with the Stevens Memorial United Church, consists of three distinct sections. The first section immediately surrounds the church and based on the deaths dates inscribed on remaining gravestones, is the original graveyard. The second section lies south of a closed section road and contains the majority of the plots within the cemetery. The third area was recently created to compensate for the lack of space within the main cemetery. This third area is located north of the closed section road along the east edge of the cemetery.

Stantec Consulting Ltd was contracted to complete phase one of the project - a geophysical survey of, what is classified as, the “second area” within the cemetery which had been used from around 1950 to the present.

The survey was performed over three days in early September 2014. During this process, three archaeologists scanned the ground, marked all existing graves with markers. Each marker that displayed a family name was photographed. Several graves were marked with a wooden cross that displayed neither a name nor date of death.

Some of the earliest marked burials were found to date back to the 1880s, the oldest being March 21, 1894. In total, there were 326 marked burials with genealogical information, 101 marked with no information and 158 unmarked burials identified in the survey area.

The principal archaeologist then spent the winter going over the data and creating maps and graphs from the data collected in September 2014. Over this period, the project coordinator (Carole O’Brien) met with the archaeologist to monitor the project’s progress.

Additional analysis of the gravestone data were completed and illustrated that after 1980 there was a major increase in community deaths particularly within the 60 years of age and older group. The trends observed in the data support the community’s decision to close the existing cemetery and develop a new one.

The comprehensive report was presented to FRCN Council members on June 15 and is awaiting their approval. Once the report is approved, the project coordinator will make a similar presentation to community members, so that everyone is kept informed about this very important project.

Phase 2 of the Cemetery Project, also known as the “Memory Project”, is expected to begin this summer. During this phase, community members will be invited to look over the information contained in the maps and graphs created by the geophysical survey with the goal of trying to remember the names of people whose graves have been “found” by the geophysical survey but whose whereabouts - and in some cases whose names - have been lost.

Many community members have already volunteered to participate in this project and it is our hope that by providing the location of graves along with the community’s collective effort to try to find FRCN’s lost ones will help bring some degree of healing to the community.



EM38 and Allegro data recorder in operation (© Stantec Consulting Ltd.).



Recording EM38 data at Fisher River Cree Nation Cemetery (© Stantec Consulting Ltd.).



Photographing a gravestone at Fisher River Cree Nation Cemetery (© Stantec Consulting Ltd.).



Photographing a gravestone at Fisher River Cree Nation Cemetery (© Stantec Consulting Ltd.).



TRADITIONAL TERRITORY AND STEWARDSHIP

The Fisher Bay Park Reserve

The Fisher Bay Provincial Park was established in 2011 through the joint efforts of Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship (CWS), Fisher River Cree Nation (FRCN), and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS). During a meeting with FRCN Chief and Council and CPAWS in March of 2013, the Honorable Gord Mackintosh Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship made a commitment to explore the expansion of the boundaries of Fisher Bay Provincial Park.

The Minister accepted the offer of Chief and Council to initiate discussions with stakeholder groups in collaboration with CPAWS and Parks Branch, in an effort to garner support for the proposed park expansion and attempt to address any issues raised through the stakeholder group meetings.

To coordinate the process, The Fisher Bay Provincial Park Expansion Implementation team was established. Its members include: Head of Park Planning and Ecology Jessica Elliot, Regional Park Specialist Tony Merkl, FRCN Chief Crate, FRCN Council Dion McKay and Ron Thiessen.

What next: A proposal from Fisher River Economic Development Corp. (FRED) has been submitted to Western Economic Diversification Canada (WEDC) for the purpose of retaining a project manager to coordinate the project. If the submission has been successful it has a potential start date of July 2015. Postings will be circulated within the community.

Why do we need it? We require all technical pieces of the project to be compiled and coordinated for our next aggregate submission once the call for proposals is announced.

FRCN Fishermen successful in tax exemption claim

Members of the Fisher River McBeth Fisheries (Fisher River Fishers) are now deemed tax exempt based on a precedence set by the Robertson case - the two fishermen from Norway House whose income was ruled as exempt from tax under section 87(1)(b) of the Indian Act (s. 87) since it was situated on a reserve.

Under this new ruling, when filing their income tax returns, the Fisher River Fisher has to outline in their respective tax returns the following:

The taxpayer is claiming exemption from taxation in accordance with the Judgment of the Federal Court of Appeal in HMTQ v. Robertson and Saunders, 2012 FCA 94, with leave of the court refused by the Supreme Court of Canada. This exemption includes the taxpayer's Commercial Fishing Income as well as his [her] employment insurance benefits.

The factual circumstances of the Fisher River Fishers are near identical to the facts in the Robertson case.

- The Fisher River fishers are all Indians as defined by section 2 of the Indian Act. They are all members of the Fisher River Cree Nation, which in 1875 became signatory to Treaty number five (5).
- The Fisher River fishers all live on the Fisher River Cree Nation reserve.
- In the taxation years at issue, all of the Fisher River fishers were self-employed commercial fishers. They own fishing licenses and fishing quotas as members of the Fisher River McBeth Fisheries (the "Co-op"). They generally reach the lakes by boat from the reserve after purchasing gas on reserve. The fishermen store and maintain their boats on reserve and maintained their nets and fishing gear on reserve as well.
- The Fisher River fishers keep their books, records and other materials related to their fishing business on reserve.
- The Fisher River fishers maintain their bank accounts on reserve.
- The Fisher River fishers are members of their Co-op.



The Co-op maintains its administrative office on reserve. The Co-op acts as a representative of its members in the sale of their fish to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC) and assists by providing its members with fishing supplies on credit. The Co-op acts as an agent of FFMC, buying fish from its members and selling the fish to FFMC, for a fee which covered a portion of the Co-op's operating costs.

As a result of the Robertson decision, the exemption at this time is limited to the Fisher River McBeth Fisheries commercial fishing enterprises. Legal counsel is now analyzing the decision in an attempt to also exempt the Goodman's Landing fishermen from taxation.

How it all began Robertson v. Canada

The issue in Robertson v. Canada was whether Mr. Robertson's and Mr. Saunders' (both Indians and members of the Norway House Cree Nation) income from their commercial fishing business was situated on a reserve.

Court Decisions

The trial judge of the Tax Court of Canada, Hirschfield, J., allowed the appeals of the respondents Ronald Robertson and Roger Saunders from assessments of their income tax liability for the taxation years 1999-2004 for Mr. Robertson, and 2002 and 2003 for Mr. Saunders. He held that the Minister of National Revenue had wrongly included their income as business income they had earned in those years from commercial fishing and the employment insurance benefits they have received. The trial judge found that the respondents' income was situated on reserve and was, therefore, exempt from tax under section 87(1)(b) of the Indian Act (s. 87).

The Federal Court of Appeal's Justice Evans, concluded that the business income earned by the fishermen from commercial fishing was situated on the reserve and was not subject to income tax by virtue of section 87. The role of the Co-op, an on-reserve institution, firmly anchored the business activities to the reserve. The commercial activities of FFMC were given no weight in the appeal court's decision and it was found immaterial that the ultimate customers (FFMC's customers) had no connection to a reserve.

Leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada was denied. The decisions of the Tax Court and the Court of Appeal were thus upheld which found that the respondents' income was situated on reserve and was, therefore, exempt from tax under section 87(1)(b) of the Indian Act (s. 87).



FRCN appeals Peat Moss License

On March 23, 2015 the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship issued a revised Environment Act License No. 2288RR (the “License”) to Sunterra Horticulture (Canada) Inc. (“Sunterra”) for the construction, operation and decommissioning of the existing peat harvesting development at the Beaver Point Bog and associated expansion to quarry leases located in the Bullhead and Little Deer lake Bogs.

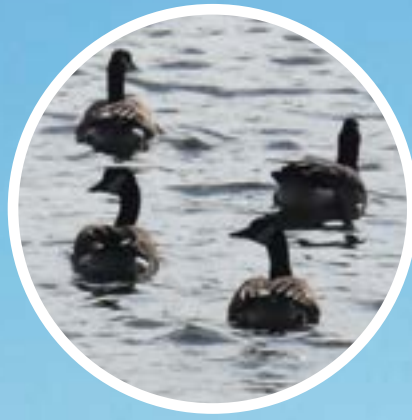
Boudreau Law, on behalf of FRCN, appealed the issuance of the License to Sunterra by the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship via letter dated April 14, 2015. The primary reason for the appeal of the License was due to the fact that Manitoba failed in its obligation to meaningfully consult and accommodate the FRCN leading up to the Crown’s decision to approve the license application.

Other concerns of FRCN relate to the fact that peat lands are considered as the best natural defense against global warming. Manitoba has placed itself in a hypocritical position when it touts hydroelectricity as “green energy” while at the same time it allows the destruction of peat lands that aid in carbon storage as well as a filter for the lakes and water ecosystems.

Sunterra also sought input from FRCN on heritage resources when the ground was still snow covered, and at the same time only provided a window of two weeks to provide insight. FRCN recommended waiting until snowmelt for proper review of the landscape but this recommendation was ignored. This lack of good faith reinforces both the Crown’s and Sunterra’s disrespecting the rights of the FRCN and its members regarding their traditional lands.

Both FRCN’s substantive rights (Treaty rights) and procedural rights (right to meaningful consultation and accommodation) have been neglected based on the reasoning and decision of the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship. Via letter dated April 24, 2015 the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship acknowledged the letter of appeal, indicating that the FRCN’s appeal will be considered in accordance with the Environment Act. No timeframe was offered as to when a decision on the appeal would occur.

On April 29, 2015 Premier Greg Selinger named Tom Nevakshonoff, MLA for the Interlake, as the new Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship. FRCN is hopeful that the new Minister’s understanding of FRCN issues would assist in this appeal process. However, the Crown’s track record on First Nation rights is not too positive.



RECLAIMING TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

Fisher River Cree Nation v. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada

Treaty No. 5 signed by the Indians of Norway House was concluded on 24 September 1875. The terms of the treaty provided for the establishment of a reserve in the vicinity of Fisher River. Band members were originally given three years to relocate to Fisher River but the time period was extended indefinitely in the early 1880’s.

The initial survey of Fisher River was conducted in 1877 and this survey set the size of the reserve at 9,000 acres. In 1886 Fisher River Chief Rundle made a formal request to have the reserve increased to provide for hay and timber for the expanding band. Two additional pieces of adjoining land at the southeast and southwest corners of the reserve were set aside by the Crown in 1887 and 1893 respectively. The First Nation alleges that the Crown in effect took back part of these two additional parcels in 1896 as a result of an erroneous survey conducted in September 1895.

The First Nation claims that the lands originally designated as the southeast addition consisted of 3,777 acres and that OIC PC No. 2980, dated 14 July 1896 alienated this parcel by approximately 1,722,6 acres. The First Nation also claims that the southwest parcel, as originally designated, consisted of 3,600 acres but was also reduced, by the same OIC, by 1,040 acres.

The First Nation has submitted that their claim for damages be based on the following grounds:

- The Crown, by its words and conduct, agreed with Fisher River Cree Nation to set apart for the use and benefit of the Band as reserve lands consisting of the Southwest Addition of 3,600 acres and the Southeast Addition consisting of 3,777 acres;
- The Crown, to the extent that it had set apart the Additions as reserve lands, purported to alienate parts of the said Additions in a manner not consistent with the provisions of the Indian Act;
- The Crown, to the extent that it had not set apart the Additions as reserve lands, breached its agreement to do so;
- Regardless of whether the said Additions had been earlier set apart as reserve lands, the Crown acted in conflict of interest, in breach of fiduciary duty, without reasonable care, and without honour, in failing to protect the interests of the First Nation;

- By failing to have the agreed upon lands correctly surveyed and formally confirmed as additions to the reserve;
- By failing to cause corrections to be made to the survey conducted in September 1895;
- By deeming the lands erroneously described in the said 1895 survey as being all the lands needed by the First Nation at that place; and
- By approving OIC PC No. 2980, dated 14 July 1896, contrary to earlier agreements and OIC PC No. 1978, dated 8 July, 1893.

Activities to Date:

There have been two case management conferences, occurring on December 4, 2014 and February 3, 2015. The next case management conference is scheduled to occur on May 22, 2015. Case management conferences held pursuant to the Specific Claims Tribunal Rules and assist the parties in moving forward towards a hearing on the claim. Tribunal Chair Justice Harry Slade is presiding over the case management process.

The parties have agreed to a bifurcation of the claim. This means that the claim will be heard in two phases. The first phase will be the validation phase. If the claim is validated in the first phase, then a second phase dealing with compensation will occur. In summary there are two phases:

- Validation Phase; and
- Compensation Phase.

Both phases will undergo its own hearing process. The current case management conferences are preparing the parties for the validity phase hearings. Draft legal and factual issues have been shared, as well as other preparatory work in advance of the phase one hearing.

The claim can be monitored as it progresses on the Specific Claims Tribunal website at the following link:

http://www.sct-trp.ca/curre/details_e.asp?ClaimID=20144002

If you have any questions regarding the claim, you can contact Chief or Council or contact the First Nation’s legal counsel J.R. Norman Boudreau, he can be reached at 204-318-2688.





BYLAW CONSULTATIONS

The following draft Bylaws were made available to the membership in a community meeting which occurred on April 21, 2015:

- A By-law for the Licensing of Businesses, Callings, Trades and Occupations and to Regulate the Conduct and Activities of Hawkers, Peddlers or Others on the Reserve (“Business Bylaw”);
- A By-law respecting the prohibition against the inhalation of solvent and gasoline vapours (“Solvent Abuse Bylaw”);
- A By-law for the Recreational Access of Persons Frequenting the Reserve (“Recreational Access Bylaw”);
- A By-law for the Destruction and Control of Noxious Weeds (“Noxious Weeds Bylaw”);
- A By-law for the Prevention of Noise (“Noise Bylaw”); and
- A By-law Respecting the Control of Animals on the Fisher River Reserve Lands (“Animal Control Bylaw”).

As a result of the December 16, 2014 amendments to the Indian Act (the “Act”), bylaws passed under section 81 of the Act do not have to be sent to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development for approval. Bylaws passed after this date become enacted after they are published on the First Nation’s Gazette or the First Nation’s website.

A community consultation meeting on the draft bylaws has been scheduled for May 21, 2015 to obtain membership input.



ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

Castle Building Centre

Over the past three years, Fisher River has spent an average of \$1.1 million on development projects and anticipates spending a similar amount, if not more, in upcoming years. Based on this, FRCN is seeking to purchase shares and become a member of Castle Building Centre.

Castle Building Centres is a reputable Canadian lumber and building material buying group with 295 locations across Canada achieving sales of \$1.5 billion.

FRCN is proposing to construct and operate its own retail Castle Building Centre within the community, giving the Castle Project the ability to buy directly from the building suppliers. Additionally, the Castle Project would offer home hardware supplies to the community and surrounding area.

The Castle Project location will occupy 2,500 sq.ft. of retail space with a 2,500 sq.ft heated warehouse and a 2,500 sq.ft of non-heated storage.

The business plan has been completed and a formal application to Castle Building Centres-Headquarters has been submitted.

Below is an interim photo of the location of the store.



Bay River Cottage Development

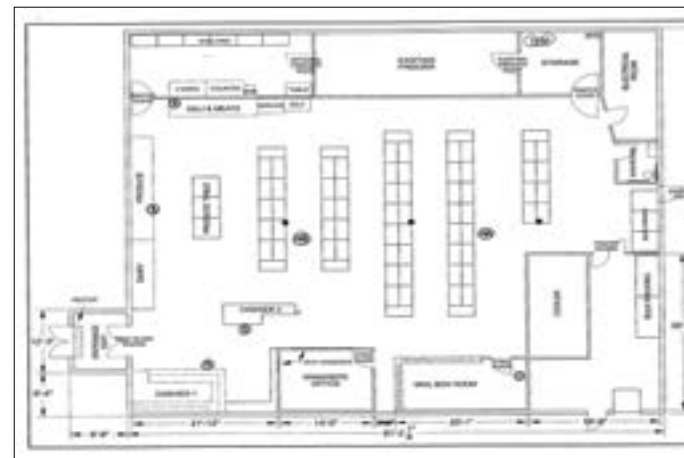
The area in and around the Bay River subdivision encompasses many unique and sensitive terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Fisher River Cree Nation is committed to protecting these ecosystems for future generations, while at the same time promoting and embracing sustainable economic development initiatives to create employment and business opportunities. The Bay River cottage lot subdivision is one of Fisher River Cree Nation's many economic development initiatives.

And as part of the Fisher Bay Park Reserve initiative this economic opportunity was created which was established in 2011 under the Provincial Parks Act after years of determined efforts by Chief and Council of Fisher River Cree Nation, working closely with the Minister of Manitoba Conservation.

- Lakefront Lots: \$46,000 each (18 Lots)
- Backrow Lots: \$14,000 each (35 Lots) and \$30,000 (3 Lots)

Next Steps: The business plan will be finalized, reviewed by board and then submitted to funding agencies. The plan will include:

- lot development;
- a showcase home; and
- marketing strategies



Fisher River Grocery Store

The Fisher River grocery store is currently undergoing renovations, with various phases, and is expected to be completed by July 2015.

The store, which commenced operations on December 13, 2004, was initially established to provide a retail outlet for gasoline, groceries and confectionary items to the members of Fisher River Cree Nation. Today, it has grown to include an ATM terminal as well as the local post office.

FRCN RECEIVES FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

Working on second level of accreditation

In October 2013, Fisher River Cree Nation became one of two Manitoba First Nations to receive accreditation through the First Nation Financial Management Board (FNFMB); St. Theresa Point was the other. In fact they were the first two communities in Manitoba to receive this accreditation.

What is FNFMB

The FNFMB is an Aboriginal institution that provides a suite of financial management tools and services to First Nations governments seeking to strengthen their fiscal stewardship and accountability regime and develop necessary capacity to meet their expanding fiscal and financial management requirements.

FNFMB was created through the First Nations Fiscal Management Act (FMA) which is federal legislation designed primarily to provide participating First Nations with the tools and capacity needed to facilitate their participation in long-term pooled borrowing through the Capital Markets – on a similar basis as other governments in Canada – to support their social and economic development objectives.

To support the FMA's primary initiative, the FNFMB has established the following standards that must be met before a member can access funds:

- Financial Administration Law Standards and Approval
- Financial Management System Standards and Certification
- Financial Performance Standards and Certification

FRCN has since received the first accreditation –The Financial Performance Certificate. This was done through the creation of a Financial Administration Law (FAL). The FAL is a guide of how the area of finance operates and serves to provide comfort to potential investors looking to invest in FRCN by letting them know that a sound financial system is in place.

What does this mean for FRCN?

The creation of FAL helps FRCN implement a sound financial administration system, which in turn helps with accountability and transparency.

It also allows FRCN to work with the First Nation Finance Authority (FNFA) as a borrowing member. This is where the FNFA will assist with accessing funds from the financial markets based on availability of our own source revenue i.e. revenue that is derived from band owned businesses, for example VLTs, Band Store, Tobacco Tax, etc..

Based on the revenue generated from these businesses, the FNFA assists the band in determining our borrowing capacity. In turn, we have to identify whether our own source revenue can pay back the amount borrowed, also identifying the length of term for borrowing. We can identify a length of term for re-payment of up to 30 years.

With the accreditation, FRCN can only borrow through the financial markets once until we can meet the standards to receive the Financial Management Systems accreditation.

Where do we go from here

FRCN is starting the process towards the second accreditation - The Financial Management Systems Accreditation.

This is a collection of policies and procedures, formed and adopted by chief and council, management and staff which are designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding achievement of the First Nation's objectives in the following categories:

- Effectiveness and efficiency of operations
- Reliability of financial reporting
- Compliance with applicable laws and regulations (i.e. FAL)

The FAL acts as the foundation of what will ultimately become the First Nation's Financial Management System. The FAL will be used as a guide to develop and create the overall financial management system. This will be done with help from FNFMB will assist in this process by providing funding as well as templates of sample financial policies. FRCN had received \$15,000 to complete the first step - conducting a "Gap Assessment".

Gap Assessment

During the Gap Assessment we will conduct a review of the current policies to ensure that they are up to date and consistent with FAL. After the policies are updated, they will be implemented.

Another big step would be to establish a Finance/Audit Committee. This would be an independent body that would oversee the finance area. Their main role would be to provide recommendations to chief and council in regards to finance policy development and/or changes required, whether budgets should be approved and who should provide auditing services for the community. This shows that there is an independent process in place on how budgets get approved, for example.



Official signing of the certification

What are the differences between the accreditations

We currently have the Financial Performance Certification which is based on the review of our audits from the last five years. This measures our strengths and weaknesses by comparing the information contained in the audits against seven ratios. They are:

1. Fiscal Growth Rate (FGR): measures financial capacity or risk of overall structural deficit.
2. Liquidity Test Rate (LTR): measures the ability to meet short-term operating obligations.
3. Core Surplus Rate (CSR): measures ability to generate sufficient annual cash flows to maintain operations.
4. Asset Maintenance Ratio (AMR): measures the ability to maintain a sustainable level of capital investment.
5. Net Debt Ratio (NDR): measures debt burden and overall insolvency
6. Budget Performance Rate (BPR): measures the ability to manage and execute budgets
7. Tax Collection Rate (TCR): measures the efficiency and stability in collecting on property taxes.

With this current certification, we are eligible to borrow money from the First Nation Finance Authority only once, until we receive the next accreditation.

The second accreditation, which we are just starting to work on, is the Financial Management System Accreditation.

This now focuses on the system used by the community in the area of finance. So like the creation of the FAL, having our policies created and implemented, creating the procedures as well that will be used, etc. With this accreditation, it opens up the door to borrow from the First Nation Finance Authority as many times as the community needs to, or wants to. We are on track to become the first Manitoba First Nation to achieve this accreditation.

Importance of certification

Access to the funds available through the First Nation Finance Authority could assist our community in becoming closer to self-governance, since we would not be so reliant on federal government funding. We would have access to capital investment dollars to bring more economic development to our community. No federal government guidelines to have to follow, just the guidelines our community develops.

The advantages of joining the FNFA are:

- Access to low rate, below bank prime, loans with repayment terms up to 30 years;
- First Nations choose the repayment terms that work best for their budget;
- FNFA loans do not require collateral;
- FNFA loans can be used to refinance existing debt; and
- FNFA's interest rates and terms parallel those available to provincial and local governments.



FRCN CAR WASH/ LAUNDROMAT

The FRCN has opened its doors to a laundromat and coin-operated car wash that will service FRCN and its surrounding communities. It is located on the main access road between the water treatment plant and fitness centre.

The car wash consists of two interior wash bays and one exterior wash pad for larger vehicles and buses. Each wash station is equipped with a high pressure wand, foam brush and vacuum. All equipment is coin-operated.

The laundromat consists of 10 coin-operated washers and dryers and two industrial washer and dryers. Vending machines stocked with soap, dryer sheets and snacks are conveniently located in the laundromat.

There is also complimentary Satellite TV, coffee and WIFI (Internet).

Hours of Operation:

Monday to Saturday 9:00 am to 10:00 pm
Sunday 9:00 am to 9:00 pm

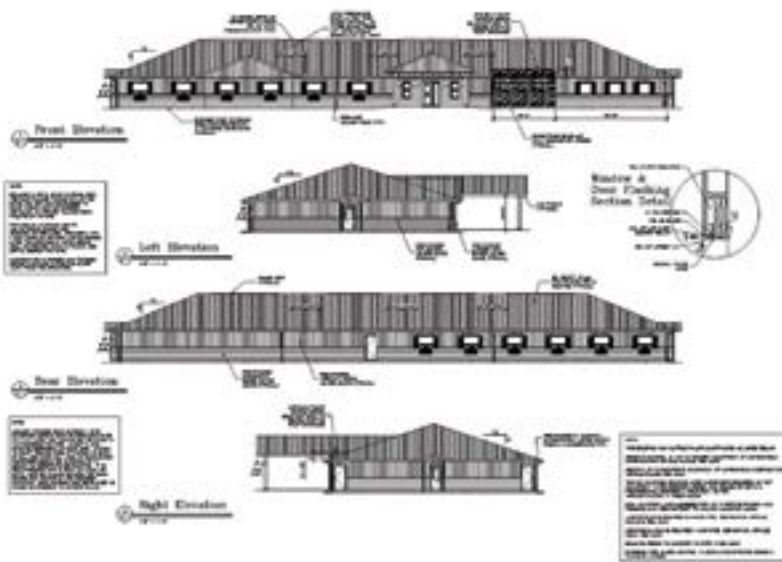
Looking ahead....

Micro Financing

The Fisher River Economic Development is exploring a potential Community Microfinance Corporation which is dedicated to providing low-interest accessible loans to the community members of Fisher River Cree Nation. Recognizing a need for financial accessibility in First Nations communities, the proposed entity would be based in the community of Fisher River Cree Nation encouraging entrepreneurship and business stimulus in the community, by the community, for the community.

The end goal of the entity is not to burden individuals with debt but to stimulate entrepreneurship by providing small loans to the community with the support of Fisher River Economic Development Corporation to the community. FREDCMC believes in applying low interest rates with assistance business planning to ensure businesses for local creative entrepreneurs are set up to succeed from the start. Participants will also have the opportunity to increase their financial literacy and learn how to build and maintain good credit.

This is an exciting time for our community and the possibilities are endless.



12 Unit Hotel/VLT/ Conference Centre

The 2013 economic strategy identified a need to offer accommodations to visitors, business, and family. It was determined that a location within Fisher River Cree Nation would be optimal.

The proposed facility will offer 10 double standard room and two disability serviced rooms, 20 VLTs and a conference room with a capacity of 75.

The entire facility will be smoke free.

Next Steps

- Complete Business Plan for VLT as required by province-completion by June 2015
- Complete Business Plan for Hotel and Conference Centre-July 2015



Meet Yvette Cochrane, the manager of the car wash/laundromat



Grand opening of carwash and laundromat

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Fitness Centre Completed

In September 2014, the fitness centre was opened.

The 40'x80' facility has brand new commercial grade equipment and includes washroom and shower facilities and two office spaces. The centre is also heated/cooled using geothermal.

Programming is a key aspect of the centre and will be targeting many different groups, ranging from youth and elders to diabetes program participants and family centered sports team.



DUSTIN MURDOCK

Health and Fitness Coordinator



Dustin recently graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology, with a major in Exercise Science. He is also a certified personal trainer through the Canadian Society of Exercise Physiologists.

Dustin loves sports and over the years has participated in many including basketball, football and soccer and also has a

background in resistance training. He enjoys being active in many different activities and strongly believes that exercise and being active is the foundation of healthy life.

Dustin is a co-founder of the Carton Coffee Company and enjoys learning, reading, traveling and playing sports in his free time.

JUSTIN SINCLAIR-PAUL

Fitness Staff



Justin is certified through the Manitoba Fitness Council and will soon expand his training to include certification in resistance training, sports conditioning and individual fitness leader programs.

Justin has always been active in the Fisher River community. He worked at the Fisher River Human Resources, as part of the Youth Mentorship Program, for two years

as well as at the Fisher River Sports and Recreation Office where he filled the role of the Assistant Youth Event Coordinator for three years.

Justin spends most of his free time at home with his three children, but he can be found playing basketball twice a week. He also enjoys working out at the Fitness Centre and taking road trips with his family to Pow Wows.

CYNTHIA MURDOCK

Fitness staff

Cynthia, also known as Singing Thunderbird Woman, is a mother and grandmother of two who jogs five kilometers on her days off in an effort to remain fit and active.

Cynthia, a graduate from the Charles Sinclair School, has amassed an impressive number of certifications over the years. They include:

- Family Violence
- Mental Health
- Addiction
- Suicide/ Assist
- A three year diploma in Community Centered Therapy from Red River College
- Aboriginal Community Wellness Diploma from the University of Manitoba
- Certified Addiction Specialists

She was also employed at The Fisher River Healing Centre for five years, the Fisher River NADAP for 13 years and Interlake Reserves Tribal Council as a Brighter Futures Initiatives and a NAYSPS (National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy).

Cynthia is certified through the Manitoba Fitness Council and is looking forward to increasing her knowledge and training in the areas of yoga, Zumba and Pilates. Once she has completed her training she will be able to offer these classes at the fitness centre, adding to the growing number of programs available to help our community members live long, active and healthy lifestyles.

PANORAMA PROJECT

An electronic immunization system

Fisher River approached Health Canada and the province of Manitoba in the fall of 2014 regarding a pilot project that would see the community's immunization records transition to an electronic, online format from the current paper format.

FRCN was successful in their request and the starting phase of the Panorama project was rolled out in spring 2015. This marks the first time that First Nations are piloting at the same time as other organizations. It also provides FRCN with the opportunity to be at the forefront of technological changes affecting health care, including the ability to offer valuable insight and in-depth analysis on issues specific to First Nations, reaffirming the community's place as a leader.

An overview

Panorama is an electronic public health record that will replace the current provincial immunization registry (MIMS) and other paper based systems. It will be used to manage information for immunizations, vaccine inventory, communicable diseases and outbreaks and will be used by all public health providers in the Regional Health Authorities, Manitoba Health, nursing stations and community health centres.

Panorama will provide real-time information access, which is especially important in stopping the spread of diseases during outbreaks, as well as providing accurate up to date information about patients requiring immediate, life-saving treatment. Authorized users will access the application securely via the Internet.

Benefits of Panorama

Panorama will be used by frontline health care providers, specifically nurses, who provide public health services such as immunization and communicable disease management.

In addition to being less time consuming, Panorama offers many other benefits such as:

- better coordination- by connecting care providers within and across geographic boundaries and by managing and assigning work through the system to appropriate health-care providers.
- delivery of quality care- by offering better access to more accurate client immunization information.
- prevention- by offering real-time surveillance and improved detection of outbreaks locally, regionally, and provincially.
- better access- by helping identify individual and group health needs, which is especially important for vulnerable populations.

In addition to nurses, the electronic records will also benefit other health care professionals such as physicians, pharmacists and dentists.

Highlighting the functional areas

Immunization management: includes tools to create and manage immunization schedules and eligibility; built-in forecaster applies logic to keep clients current with vaccinations; maintains client records, including consent and adverse effects; offers

information for future mass immunization clinic needs; reports on coverage rates.

Inventory management: monitors vaccine and supply inventories; supports cold-chain monitoring during storage and transport; ensures distribution and sharing in case of an outbreak.





Case management and investigation (communicable disease): offers support and surveillance tools for investigating, monitoring, managing, analyzing and reporting during communicable disease outbreaks.

Outbreak management: assists public health providers in containing and managing cases and contacts; provides a longitudinal view of the investigation.

Work management: allows users to assign work and followup on status of work items; reports on workload and volumes; introduces new organizing capabilities for public health.

Notification management: fires alerts to communicate about client protection (e.g. Drug allergy), public health worker protection (e.g. Aggressive dog at client site), and threshold (e.g. Number of vaccine cases is low).

Shared services: provides foundational client, provider, and location information that informs all functional areas. Client information includes demographics

Is my privacy protected?

Concerns regarding the protection of privacy go hand in hand with the electronic availability of confidential information, and the Panorama project is no different.

The First Nation and all involved parties have taken major steps to ensure that patient privacy is protected at all times. Only authorized health professionals will have access to information in Panorama, and this access will be based on the requirements of their job.

As is common practice with other electronic health systems, Panorama users will log on using secure usernames and passwords. Additionally, there are tracking features in place within the application that creates an audit trail, meaning that a log, showing the time and user identification, is created anytime patient information is viewed or altered.

Information sharing agreement

In addition to ensuring the protection of confidential information, First Nation communities will sign information sharing agreements with Manitoba Health which lay out the terms and details as to how this information will be protected.

The information sharing and privacy agreements are currently being drafted and will follow First Nations OCAP (ownership, control, access and possession) principles i.e. the right of First Nations communities to own, control, access, and possess information about their peoples.

The project is a partnership between Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch/Health Canada, regional health authorities, and Manitoba eHealth.

Support for Panorama has been approved by the Chiefs in Assembly as part of the Manitoba First Nations eHealth Long Term Strategy and funding has been provided by FNIHB to both AMC eHealth and Manitoba eHealth for project planning for the eventual deployment that will include all First Nation communities

EDUCATION

School renovations on hold FUNDING SOURCES EXPLORED

The Fisher River Cree Nation School feasibility study, completed in November 2013, determined a projected enrollment of 508 students in the year 2022. This projection established the overall size of the required educational facility and resulted in a plan to build a new grade seven to 12 school, with additions and renovations to the existing school to better accommodate the needs of K4 – size. Given the rapid growth in the student population, the community is considering reevaluating the projected enrollment rate.

The original construction cost estimate for the project was \$37.823 million, but is closer to \$40 million now. The school project is on the National Capital Infrastructure List through AANDC, but the community is facing a 30 year wait. In order to expedite the project, a number of approaches have been considered to fund it sooner.

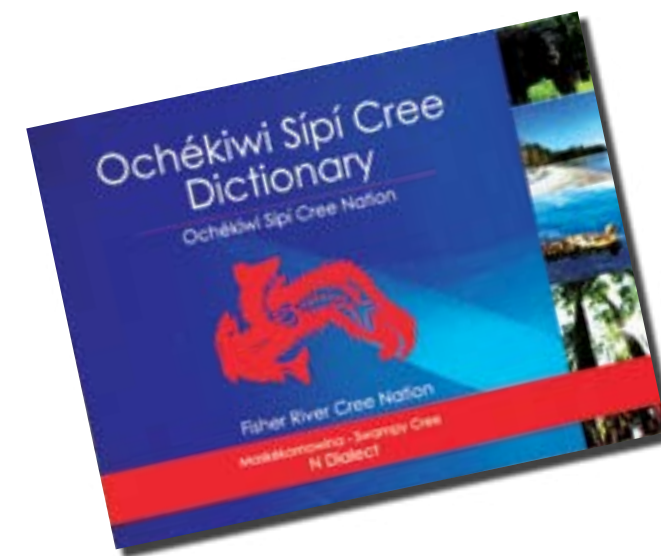
Three options have been identified and are currently being explored. They are:

- Fund through the First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA)
- RBC provides the money (looking for an opportunity to work with FRCN, but require government guarantee that the money will be repaid)
- Public – Private Partnership (P3 - the least likely option)

There are challenges with all three options, which would need to be addressed prior to moving forward. Chief and Council met with regional and federal officials last fall, but not much came of it, however there is another meeting set for early June to further discuss the options and the challenges. Chief and Council is hopeful that they can garner support from the federal officials to pursue at least one option.

As it stands, MP James Bezan and regional general director John (Gianni) DeFrancesco are both supportive of looking at alternative funding options, which could be conducted as a pilot project.

To date, there has been no success in meeting with provincial ministers. All requests were either declined or received no response.



Preservation of a language Community launches Ochékiwi Sipi Cree dictionary FUNDING SOURCES EXPLORED

In an effort to preserve the Cree language, specifically the local dialect, the elders of Fisher River Cree Nation realized that they needed to document the language. They embarked on the process, which extended over a number of years, and released the first edition of a Cree dictionary in 2005.

Over the last two years, under the direction of community elders and the staff at Charles Sinclair School, the first edition underwent significant change and has resulted in a second, more comprehensive dictionary.

The community, joined by contributors and government officials, gathered on April 29, 2015 to celebrate the launch of the second edition of the Ochékiwi Sipi Cree Dictionary.

Copies of the dictionary were later provided to the eldest student in each household attending Charles Sinclair School, meaning that almost every family in the community has a copy. Additional copies are available in the school library.

Chief and Council would like to offer their sincere thanks and appreciation to all the elders of Fisher River Cree Nation who have contributed to the dictionary. During the lengthy process of documenting the language, unfortunately, some of the elders were not able to see the final product. The Ochékiwi Sipi Cree dictionary is dedicated to their memory. It is because of our elders that our Cree language has survived the test of time and other barriers, and for that we are forever grateful.

Thank you also to the committee that was involved in the development of the dictionary and the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre's Publishing Unit for their assistance.



TEACHER “Indspires” YOUTH

Gerry Mason was recognized for his outstanding contribution to youth mentorship with an Indspire Indigenous Educator Award.

Mason along with nine other recipients, hailing from all over Canada, convened in Toronto where their innovative teaching practices and commitment to helping Indigenous students reach their full potential was recognized.

After returning home, Mason was further honoured during a special assembly at the Charles Sinclair School where Chief and Council presented him with a star blanket.

Mason was nominated for the Indspire Indigenous Educator Award in the role model category in the summer of 2013 by Rhonda Kirkness, with support from Chief and Council.

CONGRATULATIONS!



ROOKIE THADDEUS LEADS FISHER RIVER'S INAUGURAL SEASON

By Scott Taylor
Photo Courtesy of the Fisher River Hawks

It is not easy playing for an expansion team. Especially an expansion team in a Jr. B league as good as the Keystone League. For the Fisher River Cree Nation Hawks, Year 1 in the KJHL has not been easy. The team finished the season 2-30-2 and (I suppose it goes without saying) missed the playoffs. For 18-year-old Darryl Thaddeus Jr., however, it's been a wonderful learning experience as well as something he's waited for all his life. "I was born and raised at Fisher River," he said. "When they announced the team, I was pretty excited. I think I was one of the first guys Vince came after."

Vince, of course, is Vince Crate, one of the founders of the Hawks. Along with Tony Bird and Carl Cochrane, Crate went out and applied for the franchise, secured it, hired provincial aboriginal coach Kevin Monkman to coach the team and then sent the young Hawks into battle.

It was, at times, a struggle. In fact, the Hawks had to forfeit the final two games of the season at OCN because they couldn't get enough players together to ice a full team.

However, with players like Thaddeus in the fold, the future looks bright. In fact, Crate is optimistic about the direction of the youthful Hawks and despite the late-season forfeits, is looking forward to the start of the 2015-16 season.

"Many of our players did fine this season despite our youth and inexperience," Crate said. "We do have some quality players who just never got on track, but one player who really got it going was Darryl Thaddeus Jr. His perseverance and determination to do well this season really came out. He was a little better than a point per game. He centers the first line and sometimes plays defense. He's going to be an outstanding player in our league."

Thaddeus finished with 20 goals (including three shorthanded goals) and nine assists in 29 games this season. He led the Hawks in scoring by 17 points. Jared Thickfoot was next on the list with three goals and nine assists.

It was quite a season for a young man who is not only just 18, playing in a league full of 20 and 21-year-olds, but a first-year junior player and Grade 12 student, as well.

"I've played my entire career in Fisher River," he said. "Last year, I played midget in Fisher River. When they announced the team, I decided to get in the best shape I could and did a lot of preparing and training. It was exciting to have a team."

As for the future, Thaddeus says he'd like to try out for a Jr. A team. If he has a goal it's to play for the Winnipeg Blues.

"Next year, I'd like to tryout, but if I don't make it, I'd be happy to play in Fisher River again," he said. "I want to go to college and one day play college hockey. I'd like to take the game as far as I can." ■



“ IT WAS EXCITING
TO HAVE A TEAM ”

FRCN BUYS YORK BOAT

Leading up to the festivities and celebration of the 140th anniversary of Fisher River Cree Nation, a special York boat was commissioned and designed for this special event.

The 40 foot vessel, painted in red and black—the community's colours, is made entirely of aluminum and will therefore not rot or rust.

The boat will be used in the 140 year anniversary celebration later this summer.

FIRST NATION SAFETY OFFICER PROGRAM

The province of Manitoba has tabled a bill aimed at enhancing public safety in First Nation communities. The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nations Safety Officers) was introduced on November 26, 2014 as a replacement for the discontinued federal Band Constable Program.

The bill, The Police Services Amendment Act, has undergone a first reading and in the coming months will continue on its path of normal legislative processing before becoming law.

Once the bill has passed it would give a First Nation the ability to enter into an agreement with the province with the intent of establishing a First Nation Safety Officer Program in their community.

The safety officer would work in collaboration with the local policing authority to enhance public safety in the community by:

- Implementing crime prevention strategies and initiatives;
- Connecting persons in need with social service providers;
- Maintaining a visible presence within the community; and
- Providing information to the local policing authority on ongoing or emerging public safety issues.

The province has developed a comprehensive plan which expands and improves on the federal Band Constable Program through a focus on the following guiding principles:

- A clear funding agreement between Canada and Manitoba as per the federal First Nations Policing Program;
- A clear funding formula, which will include a defined salary and benefits package;
- A clear legislative foundation including defined qualifications, training requirements, uniform and equipment standards and program parameters; and
- A formal agreement between Manitoba and First Nations outlining the First Nations Safety Officer Program and the duties and responsibilities of the First Nations Safety Officers, individual First Nations and the province of Manitoba.

While the federal government is no longer providing funding to First Nations under the Band Constable Program, the federal government can still make contributions under subsection 4.4 of the Terms and Conditions for Contribution Funding Under the First Nations Policing Program to eligible recipients to support a project that is consistent

with the purpose, objectives and expected results of the First Nations Policing Program.

Based on this, Manitoba has requested that the federal government recognize the First Nation Safety Officer Program as a project that is consistent with its terms and conditions for the First Nations Policing Program and as such provide funding to Manitoba to support the Safety Officer Program.

In the meantime, to ensure continuity of services as the Band Constable Program is transitioned to the First Nation Safety Officer Program, Manitoba will be allocating funding to participating First Nations communities as per the terms of the Band Constable Program agreement between the community and the federal government. In short, the provincial funding will ensure continued operation if the Band Constable Program in the community until the new program is established.

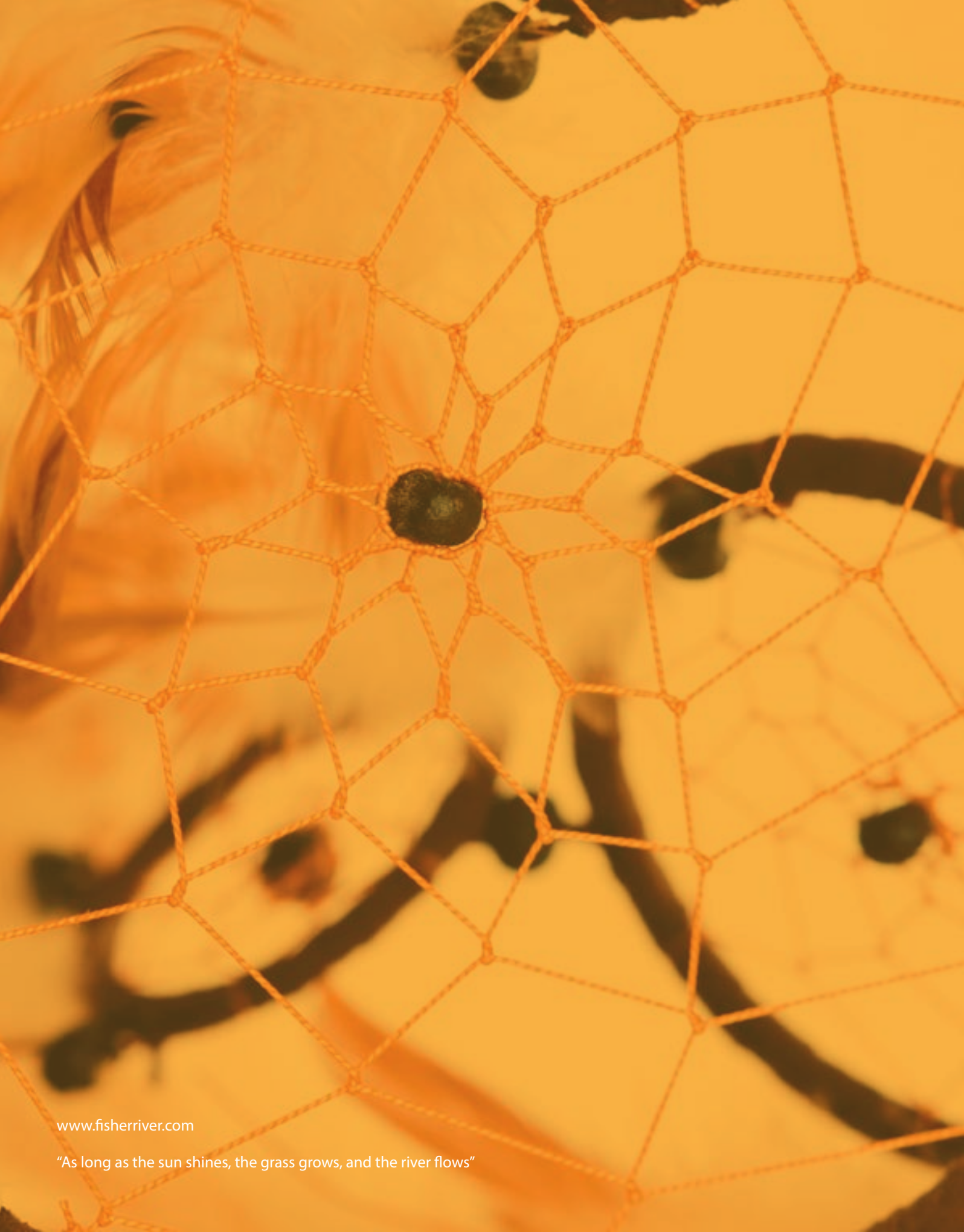


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"As long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the river flows"