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**Métis Nation of Ontario  
Registry and Self-Government  
Readiness Review Final Report**

Submitted to:  
Métis Nation of Ontario

**Know History**  
Historical Services

May 2021

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# Executive Summary

## Background

On October 22, 2017, the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (“**PCMNO**”) passed *Resolution PC171022-08* (the “**Resolution**”), directing the Métis Nation of Ontario (“**MNO**”) administration to retain Know History “to complete a review of all the MNO Registry files in order to prepare for the issuing of new MNO Citizenship Cards”<sup>1</sup> (see Appendix 1).

As set out in the Resolution, this review—referred to as the MNO Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process (“**RSRP**”)—was initiated as part of the MNO’s work to advance Métis rights and self-government in Ontario. This report provides an overview of the RSRP process and outcomes as of January 31, 2021.

## The Basis and Purpose of the RSRP

Similar to other Métis governments from Ontario westward, the MNO’s definition of “Métis”, as set out in the MNO Bylaws, has changed over the last 28 years. In addition, in the MNO’s early years, there was little to no funding or capacity to support the MNO’s centralized registry.

The RSRP was established to review of all of the MNO Registry’s citizenship files in order to determine whether and to what extent those files satisfy the current requirements for MNO citizenship as outlined in the MNO Registry Policy (the “**Registry Policy**”).

In 2004, the MNO’s definition of “Métis” was changed in the MNO Bylaws in order to align with the National Definition of Métis that was adopted by various Métis governments through the Métis National Council General Assembly.

The Registry Policy was subsequently adopted by the PCMNO and ultimately by the MNO Annual General Assembly in order to explain “how” the MNO’s definition of “Métis”, as set out in the MNO Bylaws, is to be interpreted applied by the MNO Registrar.

The Registry Policy is the “Registry process of the MNO as amended from time to time” as described in Article 5(c) of the MNO Bylaws. It must be followed by the MNO Registrar.

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<sup>1</sup> *Resolution PC171022-08* was passed by the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario on October 22, 2017.

For the purposes of the RSRP, the Registry Policy was applied to each citizenship file. It is available on the MNO website at: <https://www.metisnation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2019-august-24-mno-registry-policy.pdf>.

Specifically, the Registry Policy describes four criteria that individuals applying for MNO citizenship must meet:

- i. Self-Identification as Métis (i.e., proof that an individual self-identifies as Métis by way of signing the MNO Oath of Allegiance);
- ii. Proof of Historic Métis Nation Ancestry (i.e., establishing an ancestral connection to a Métis Ancestor as described in the Registry Policy);
- iii. Distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples (i.e., not registered with another Aboriginal nation or on another Aboriginal list); and
- iv. Accepted by the Métis Nation (i.e., completion of the MNO citizenship registration process).

### **The Workflow of the RSRP**

After a thorough review of each citizenship file was completed based on the Registry Policy, each file was designated as either: “Complete,” “Missing Documentation,” or “Incomplete” according to the following criteria:

- **Complete:** A citizenship file contains all documents needed to demonstrate a genealogical connection to a Métis Ancestor and a signed MNO Oath of Allegiance;
- **Missing Documentation:** A citizenship file includes documented proof of a Métis Ancestor, but lacks acceptable documents to support genealogical connection(s) to the ancestor and/or is missing a signed MNO Oath of Allegiance; and
- **Incomplete:** A citizenship file lacks a historic document or any records evidencing an ancestral connection to a Métis Ancestor as defined by the Registry Policy.

Following the review of a citizenship file, each MNO citizen was advised of the status of their file by letter.

Citizens with Complete files were issued a new MNO citizenship card and were also provided with information about which of the seven identified Historic Métis Communities in Ontario they connect to,<sup>2</sup> or where their Métis Ancestor was documented in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland.

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<sup>2</sup> Further information on the seven identified Historic Métis Communities in Ontario is available on the MNO's website: <http://www.metisnation.org/registry/citizenship/historic-m%C3%A9tis-communities-in-ontario/>.

Citizens and applicants with Missing Documentation or Incomplete files were provided with information about the missing documents and current Policy requirements as well as solutions to help them resolve any file issues.

Based on MNO Bylaws and Registry Policy, no individual's MNO citizenship could be terminated as a result of the RSRP.

### **The Outcomes of the RSRP**

As of January 31, 2021, the results of the review of 23,978 MNO citizenship files reveal the following:

- **A total of 71% of all MNO citizenship files (17,014 MNO citizens) were confirmed as having “Complete” citizenship files** (i.e., their file included all the necessary documentation required to meet the MNO's current definition for citizenship and the requirements for citizenship in the MNO Registry Policy).
- Another 1.4% of MNO citizenship files (330 MNO citizens) could “Complete” their file if they signed the MNO's required Oath of Allegiance, and another 4.7% (1,132 MNO citizens) could “Complete” their file simply by providing missing genealogical documents. **If these outstanding requirements were met, a total of 77% of MNO citizenship files (18,476 MNO citizens) would be confirmed as “Complete”.**
- A total of 22.5% of current MNO citizenship files (5,402 MNO citizens) were determined to have “Incomplete” files.
- As a part of the Registry Review, 1,061 MNO citizens files were determined to be inactive because of death, suspension, or withdrawal and were removed from the MNO Registry for one of these reasons.
- Of the MNO citizenship files that are “Complete” (17,014 MNO citizens), based on the primary documents provided to the MNO Registry, these files demonstrate the following:
  - A total of 23% of the MNO's citizenship (3,904 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to Métis communities in western Canada through Métis Scrip (2,470 MNO citizens), Métis land grants issued under the *Manitoba Act, 1870* (768 MNO citizens), or other historical documentation from 1901 or earlier (666 MNO citizens).
  - A total of 9% of the MNO's citizenship (1,522 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to the historic Métis community in Northwestern Ontario:
    - 884 MNO citizens being descendants of the “Halfbreeds of Rainy Lake and River” who collectively adhered as a Métis community to Treaty 3 in 1875, and

- 638 MNO citizens ancestrally connecting to other historic Métis families and settlements in the region.
  - A total of 49% of the MNO's citizenship (8,332 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to the Great Lakes Métis community that was recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Powley*. This community includes well-known Métis populations and settlements at Fort William (present day Thunder Bay), Michipicoten, Sault Ste. Marie, Killarney, and Georgian Bay/Penetanguishene.
  - A total of 6% of the MNO's citizenship (1,045 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to the historic Métis community in the Abitibi-Temiscamingue region.
  - A total of 13% of the MNO's citizenship (2,211 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to historic Métis community in the Mattawa region.
- Collectively, the MNO's current citizenship with "Complete" files can be broken down as having a Métis Ancestor from Western Canada (23%), Northwestern Ontario (9%), the Upper Great Lakes Region (49%), and Northeastern Ontario (19%).
  - In addition, many of the MNO's citizens with "Complete" files have Métis Ancestors from two or more Métis communities within Ontario. For example, of the 17,014 MNO citizens with "Complete" citizenship files, 13,110 trace to one Ontario Métis community, with approximately 39% (5,082 MNO citizens) of that number ancestrally connecting to two or more historic Métis communities in Ontario.
  - Additional research could be undertaken in the future in order to assess further ancestral connections between historic Métis communities in Ontario as well as with those in Western Canada.

A chart further detailing the results of the Registry Review is included below.



	MNO Citizens – Geography of Métis Ancestor(s)	Percentage of MNO Citizens with Complete & Incomplete Files (Total: 23,161)	Percentage of MNO Citizens with Complete Files (Total: 16,102)
<b>Ancestral Connections to Western Canada</b>	3904	16%	23%
<b>Ancestral Connection to Métis Scrip</b>	2470		
<b>Ancestral Connection to Manitoba Act Land Grants</b>	768		
<b>Ancestral Connection to Métis in Western Canada Pre-1901</b>	666		
<b>Ancestral Connections to Northwestern Ontario</b>	1522	6%	9%
<b>Descendants of Treaty 3 Halfbreed Adhesion</b>	884		
<b>Other Northwestern Ontario Métis</b>	638		
<b>Ancestral Connections to Great Lakes Métis</b>	8332	35%	49%
<b>Lake Superior</b>	229		
<b>Sault Ste Marie</b>	1285		
<b>Killarney</b>	341		
<b>Georgian Bay</b>	6477		
<b>Ancestral Connections to Northeastern Ontario</b>	3256	14%	19%
<b>Abitibi Temiscamingue</b>	1045		
<b>Mattawa</b>	2211		
Missing Documents (Signed Oath)	330		
Missing Documents (Other)	1132		
Incomplete Files - No Métis Ancestor Identified	5402		
<b>Total Complete Files</b>	<b>17014</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Files in Progress (under review, reconsideration)</b>	<b>100</b>		
<b>Total Citizens</b>	<b>23978</b>		

Figure 1. MNO Citizens Ancestral Connections

# Glossary

**“Historic Métis Nation Homeland”** means the large territory Métis lived in, used, and occupied from Ontario to British Columbia and includes parts of the Northwest Territories and the northwestern United States. The Métis call this area the Métis Nation Homeland.

**“Identified Historic Métis Community”** or **“Historic Métis Community”** means a group of Métis who prior to Effective Control in a given region of what is now Ontario: developed their own distinct customs, way of life, and recognizable Métis group identity separate from their First Nations and European Forebearers (i.e., more than a mere mixed Aboriginal ancestry population), including asserting themselves as distinct and being recognized by others as distinct; and lived together in various settlements or locations that were inter-connected and inter-dependent through kinship relationships, mobility, trade or other factors; and shared a common way of life as a distinct Métis collective, including shared traditions and practices, participation in niche occupations, etc. Within Ontario, the following seven historic Métis communities have been identified and recognized by the MNO, the courts and/or the Crown:

1. Rainy River/Lake of the Woods/Treaty 3 Historic Métis Community;
2. Northern Lake Superior Historic Métis Community;
3. Abitibi Inland Historic Métis Community;
4. Sault Ste. Marie and Environs Métis Community;
5. Killarney and Environs Historic Métis Community;
6. Georgian Bay and Environs Historic Métis Community; and
7. Mattawa/Ottawa River and Environs Historic Métis Community.

**“Métis Nation of Ontario”** or **“MNO”** means the democratically-elected, self-government representative of various Métis communities in Ontario who hold Aboriginal rights protected by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

**“MNO Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process”** or **“RSRP”** means the registry review process initiated in 2017 by the PCMNO to review whether and to what extent the MNO Registry’s citizenship files meet the current requirements for citizenship as outlined in the Policy.<sup>3</sup>

**“Registry Policy”** or **“Policy”** means the MNO Registry Policy, which has been in place as an interim policy adopted by the PCMNO since March 2009 and was formally adopted by special resolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual General Assembly (**“AGA”**) in August 2014. The Policy includes Guidelines, a Backgrounder, and attached appendices.

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<sup>3</sup> Further information on the RSRP is available on the MNO’s website: <http://www.metisnation.org/news-media/news/rsrp-1/>.

**“Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario”** or **“PCMNO”** means the 19-member council referred to in article 14 of the MNO Secretariat Bylaws.

**“Resolution”** means PCMNO *Resolution PC171022-08*, dated October 22, 2017, which directed the MNO administration to retain Know History to conduct the RSRP. A copy of the Resolution is included at Appendix 1.

**“Root Ancestor”** or **“Métis Root Ancestor”** means an individual who is a Documented Métis living in the Identified Métis Community, or the sibling of a Documented Métis living in the Identified Métis Community; and is ancestrally connected to an Identified Historic Métis Community through their Forebearers, siblings, or themselves living in the community prior to Effective Control (the period of time when the Crown likely effected on the ground legal and political control), and included in a VMFL. For greater certainty, an individual who may be the descendent of a European man and a First Nations woman (i.e., a mixed Aboriginal ancestry individual), without meeting the criteria set out above and being a part of a VMFL, is not a Métis Root Ancestor for the purposes of the Policy.

**“Root Ancestor Descendant”** or **“Métis Root Ancestor Descendant”** means a descendant of a Métis Root Ancestor.

**“Secure Archival Source Historical”** or **“SASH”** is the newly developed, secure, and reliable database used by the MNO Registry.

**“Traditional Harvesting Territory”** or **“MNO Harvesting Areas”** means the 12 identified Métis Traditional Harvesting Territories where the MNO asserts Métis harvesting rights are protected by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, as per *R. v. Powley* (2003).<sup>4</sup>

**“Verified Métis Family Line”** or **“VMFL”** means a family group that has been determined by the MNO Registry to be a part of an Identified Historic Métis Community because the Forebearers and/or Métis Root Ancestors in the family group are documented in an Identified Historic Métis Community prior to Effective Control for that region; there is a Métis Root Ancestor who is a Documented Métis born or living within the Identified Historic Métis Community; and between the Forebearers, the Métis Root Ancestor, and the Descendants of the Métis Root Ancestor there is a sustained and ongoing presence of the family group in the Identified Historic Métis Community for multiple generations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See the map in the MNO Registry Policy.

<sup>5</sup> Further information on VFMLs is available on the MNO’s website:  
<http://www.metisnation.org/registry/citizenship/ontario-m%C3%A9tis-root-ancestors/>.

# Section 1: Context

## 1.1 The MNO, the MNO Definition of Métis, the MNO Bylaws, and the Registry Policy

The MNO is the Métis government of approximately 24,000 Métis citizens who largely live in Ontario.<sup>6</sup>

Similar to other Métis governments from Ontario westward, the MNO's definition of "Métis", as set out in the MNO Bylaws, has changed over the last 28 years. Previously, the MNO's definition of "Métis" included individuals who may have simply had mixed Aboriginal ancestry (as opposed to Métis ancestry) or who were from outside of the geography of Métis Nation Homeland as defined by the MNO.

In 2004, the MNO Annual General Assembly adopted a new definition of Métis, which aligns with the National Definition of Métis approved by the Métis governments that form the Métis National Council, the Supreme Court of Canada's direction in *R. v. Powley* as well as the MNO's assertions with respect to the Métis citizens and communities it represents in Ontario. Article 4 of the MNO Bylaws reads:

4. Citizenship in the MNO shall be limited to individuals interested in furthering the objects of the MNO and who are Métis within the definition adopted by the MNO, which is as follows:

(a) Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the Métis Nation.

Article 5 of the MNO Bylaws also sets out a "process" for citizenship registration:

5. A person is entitled to be registered as a citizen of MNO who:

(a) provides sufficient documentation that he or she is Métis within the meaning of 4(a);

(b) is not enrolled on any other Aboriginal registry; and

(c) applied for admission as a citizen and has been approved through the Registry process of the MNO as amended from time to time.

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<sup>6</sup> The 2019 MNO AGA repealed clauses 6 and 7, which required applicants to prove residency in Ontario, as well as Canadian citizenship. As such, a small number of new citizens reside in the United States, and in provinces outside of Ontario. See: MNO Registry Policy at footnote 6.

In 2009, the PCMNO adopted the Registry Policy as an “interim” policy in order to provide direction to the MNO Registry on how the MNO interprets the definition of “Métis” as set out in the MNO Bylaws as well as what type of documentation is required. In 2014, the Registry Policy was adopted by the MNO Annual General Assembly.

The Registry Policy is the “Registry process of the MNO as amended from time to time” as described in Article 5(c) of the MNO Bylaws. Specifically, the Policy “provides guidance [to the MNO Registrar] on how [Articles 4 and 5 of the] MNO Bylaws and the MNO’s definition for citizenship are to be interpreted.” The MNO Registrar must follow the Registry Policy.

Under the Registry Policy, applicants must meet the following criteria to qualify for MNO citizenship:

- i. Self-Identification as Métis;
- ii. Proof of Historic Métis Nation Ancestry;
- iii. Distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples; and
- iv. Accepted by the Métis Nation.

Within the Registry Policy, the basic theory of who the MNO represents as well as the genealogical requirements that need to be met in order to meet these four criteria are set out. A copy of the Registry Policy is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

In a nutshell, in order to meet these criteria, the Policy requires that each application contain:

- a signed MNO Oath of Allegiance;
- a genealogical chart tracing citizen’s lineage(s) to a documented Métis Ancestor; and
- copies of genealogical documents supporting each link in the citizen’s genealogical chart

In order to be assessed as Complete during the RSRP (see 2.4 File Review), citizenship and applicant files must meet criteria i-iii set out above, while iv is deemed to be met based on the successful completion of MNO citizenship registration process and when a citizenship card is issued.

In addition to the above-related documents, MNO Registry files also contain clerical requirements (e.g., payment records) and general citizen correspondence related to file updates, change of address information, etc.

## **1.2 The Resolution and the RSRP**

On October 22, 2017, the Resolution was passed by the PCMNO directing the MNO’s administration to retain Know History “to complete a review of all the MNO Registry files in order to prepare for the issuing of new MNO Citizenship Cards.” The Resolution directed Know History to complete a review of all the MNO Registry files to determine

whether and to what extent each file met or did not meet the current citizenship requirements as outlined in the Policy. Specifically, the PCMNO directed:

- a. Files that are determined to meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship, including, an identification of whether these individuals ancestrally connect to one of the identified seven historic Métis communities in Ontario or the Métis Nation in western Canada (i.e., through Métis scrip, land grants, etc.) will be issued a new MNO citizenship card.
- b. Files that are determined to not meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship will be notified of what necessary documents are missing so that letters can be sent to these MNO citizens and provide them with a fair and reasonable time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry.

While the Resolution clearly established Know History's role in independently reviewing MNO citizenship files, a systematic review of all of the citizenship files based on the current Policy had never been completed previously.

While the scope of the RSRP was significant, Know History was able to utilize their previous experience with the MNO Harvester Card System audit and professional expertise to successfully manage this scale of a review. For example, in 2015, in preparation for the successful independent review of the MNO Harvester Card system based on the 2004 MNO-Ontario Interim Harvesting Agreement, the MNO commissioned Know History to research and write a series of Verified Métis Family Line reports. These VMFLs provided Métis family histories and robust document collections for each family group in the Identified Historic Métis Communities in Ontario.

Originally, 88 VMFL reports were approved and uploaded to the MNO's website. Since the completion of the independent review in 2017, another 26 family lines have been approved and approximately 2 more are waiting to be finalized. To date, the VMFL packages contained over 380 Métis "Root Ancestors" and over 5,600 Métis "Root Ancestor Descendants."

The genealogical links and historical documents from these VMFL reports were digital and available to Know History as it began the RSRP. This data was uploaded to the MNO Registry's SASH database, so the wealth of information collected in the VMFL process could be used to support the RSRP review. In particular, these VMFLs were able to be used to identify the initial Métis families that made up the historic Métis communities in order to trace these families forward and connect them to current MNO citizens.

When the review began, the MNO Registry was in possession of over 400 banker's boxes containing nearly 30,000 files related to citizens. This large collection was housed at two secure storage facilities. When Registry staff needed to consult a file, they were required to order it from the storage facility, which sometimes took days, exacerbating the large application backlog. At the outset of the RSRP, there were approximately 3,000 applicant files waiting to be processed and a wait period of several years.

Immediately following the Resolution, in November 2017, Know History began reviewing the 19,644 active citizen files in the MNO Registry and was also tasked with reviewing approximately 3,500 citizenship applicant files as per the same Policy criteria. While the review was progressing, the MNO made the decision in May 2019 to restructure its MNO Registry operations so that all Registry functions—including processing new citizenship applications—were administered by Know History. The MNO, as it always has, maintains full ownership of the Registry.

Since May 2019, the MNO Registry has reviewed over 3,500 more citizenship applications, adding to the number of citizen files approved (see Section 3 MNO Citizenship File Outcomes). Tools developed over the course of the RSRP, including the MNO Registry’s Secure Archival Source Historical (“**SASH**”) database, and clear internal guidelines, and a streamlined approach to processing citizenship applications for citizenship have reduced wait times from several years to 60 business days (or five business days for priority files).

# Section 2: RSRP Methodology

Know History developed a workplan that divided the RSRP review into the following sub-tasks, which are each further explained below:

1. Collection and digitization of files
2. Development of guidelines
3. Development of custom database
4. File review and quality assurance
5. Informing MNO citizens and applicants

## 2.1 Collection and Digitization of Files

In late 2017, a team of Know History associates scanned the documents contained in 438 banker's boxes—approximately 30,000 MNO Registry files. These included active citizen files; deceased, withdrawn, and suspended citizen files; applicants; and harvester files. In some cases, a person had more than one file. For example, an individual could have both citizenship and harvester files that included different types of information.

Files and documents were systematically labelled and organized (i.e., by number, name, file type), and each digitized file was checked against the citizenship list provided to Know History by the MNO Registry. An electronic file folder was created on a secure server for each citizen and applicant, where relevant documents were then uploaded. This consolidated all information in one location. Eventually, MNO Registry files were uploaded to the **MNO's newly developed SASH database (see 2.3 Development of Custom Database)**. Over the course of the RSRP, additional hard drives and boxes of files were provided to Know History by the MNO Registry, saved to the secure folder, and processed. Citizenship applications continue to be digitized and processed according to this system.

## 2.2 Development of Guidelines

Next, Know History developed internal guidelines to ensure consistency and accuracy in file review. These guidelines, approved by the MNO Registry and applied to all file review, clarified workflows and quality assurance processes, detailed how to find supporting documents and record facts (see Figure 3, below), and outlined genealogical standards. The guidelines permitted researchers to assess documents objectively and ensure that content in citizen files met a standardized burden of proof.

Reviewers were trained on how to find and verify data on census, scrip, birth, marriage and death records, registers, and other government records (e.g., border crossing documents, attestation papers, obituaries). They considered the origin of each source, dates, familial contexts, and acceptable name variations (based on language or document



type). Documentation that did not meet burden of proof included transcripts, indexes, recent literature, illegible records, and unsupported genealogical information.

The guidelines also included standardized phrases that researchers could include in file review notes about missing documentation, solutions for incomplete files, and genealogical issues. These phrases were later imported into letters to citizens, ensuring that communication with citizens about their file status was clear and consistent. Throughout the RSRP, Know History periodically consulted the MNO Registrar for further clarification (and a final decision) and updated the guidelines as needed.

### 2.3 Development of Custom Database

Know History worked with a database developer to create a secure and reliable MNO Registry database referred to as the SASH database.

Each individual is represented in the SASH database as one distinct entry and all relevant documents naming that person are attached to them in the database. As shown in Figure 2, entries are then linked between citizens, applicants, and their contemporary relatives and historic ancestors based on information provided in historical documents supporting genealogical connections. All documents and file information are uploaded to this database and can be accessed for clear information on individuals' file status, family connections, supporting documents, and more.

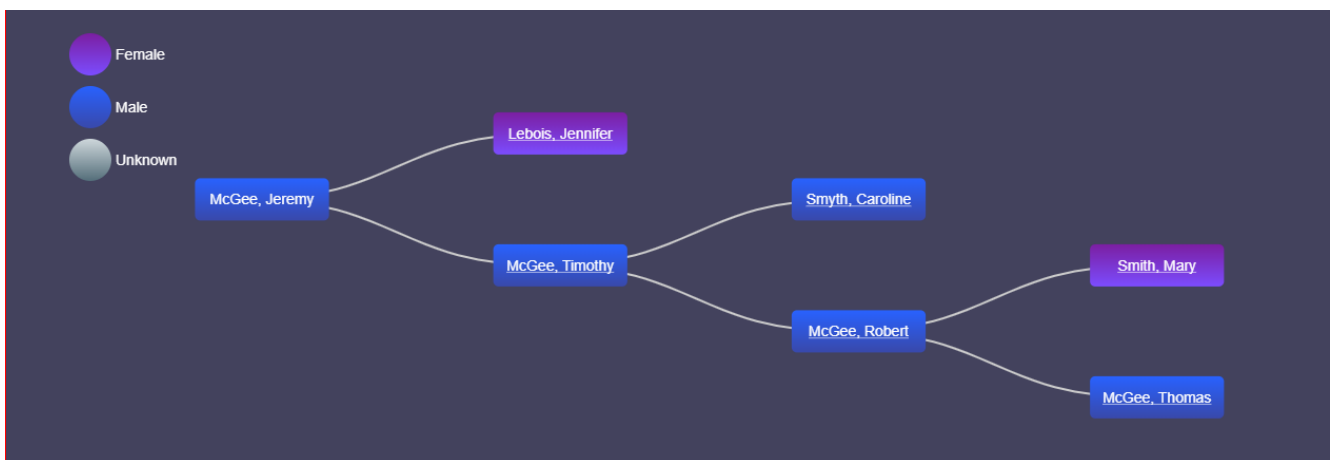


Figure 2. Linked entries in the MNO Registry's SASH Database

The database provides several benefits for citizenship file review, including the following:

- Multiple users can search and process files concurrently;
- Individuals and media are easily searchable and accessible to users;
- Documents can be linked to multiple individuals, meaning that research is not duplicated for every individual connecting to the same family;

- Applicants that link to citizens with Complete files need only provide documents to connect to the Complete file (i.e., the lineage to a Métis Ancestor is already Complete);
- Profiles connected to a Métis Ancestor are auto populated with information about Métis Ancestors, Historic Métis Community, and Traditional Harvesting Territories (if applicable);
- Facts appear on individual entries that outline key details for users (see Figure 3 below);

PRIMARY FACT	TYPE ↑	DATE	PLACE	DETAILS
	Birth	11 Sep 1844	Midland, Simcoe, Ontario	ACTIONS
	Death	3 Oct 1876	Kingston, Ontario	ACTIONS

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Figure 3. Facts on individual profile

- Personal information is secure—database is password locked and encrypted;
- Database is hosted in a private cloud environment located in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia;<sup>7</sup>
- Database developer maintains a hot-standby replicate of the private cloud in Toronto, Ontario such that if a disaster strikes Vancouver, this replicate can be enabled in a very short timeframe;
- Database allows the MNO to generate reports from one central system; and
- A custom function can be used to import the latest genealogical research.

This last feature allowed the MNO Registry to import all of the digital files created during the VMFL research into the SASH database. These and other digital files available in the SASH database have provided a comprehensive repository of information that a large team of researchers can access and rely on when processing MNO Registry files. New

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<sup>7</sup> This hosting environment has the following nine properties: (1) CSAE3416, SSAE16, and PCI/DSS security audit certifications; (2) physical biometric security access constraints; (3) multiple upstream connectivity providers, including Peer1, Shaw, GTT, Cogent, and Vanixi; (4) diverse fibre paths, ensuring construction activities do not impact connectivity; (5) provides DDOS mitigation, ensuring high availability; (5) dedicated N+1 redundant air-conditioning; (7) 95% of the power used in the data centre comes from renewable energies; (8) onsite diesel generator; and (9) uses Cisco, VMWare, and NetApp equipment.

features and reports continue to be developed as necessary to ensure that the Registry, and the MNO can make full use of the data.

## 2.4 File Review

Know History associates reviewed each individual file to determine a file status and specify details to be conveyed to each applicant and citizen.<sup>8</sup> Documentation about applicants, citizens, and ancestors was added to the SASH database, and each file was built out according to the documentation and genealogical chart provided. In some cases, citizens or applicants needed only to link up one or two generations to complete the file review because the necessary connections and documentation had already been added.

Following review, files were assigned a status of “Complete,” “Missing Documentation,” or “Incomplete” according to the following criteria:

- **Complete:** contains all documents needed to demonstrate a genealogical connection to a Métis Ancestor and a signed Oath of Allegiance;
- **Missing Documentation:** includes a Métis Ancestor, but lacks acceptable documents to support genealogical connection(s) to the ancestor and/or is missing a signed Oath of Allegiance; and
- **Incomplete:** lacks a historic record identifying any of the citizen’s ancestors as Métis in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland.<sup>9</sup>

File reviewers added standardized phrases to each file in the database (as discussed above in 2.2 Development of Guidelines). Citizens with Complete files were provided with information about which of the seven identified Historic Métis Communities in Ontario they connect to, or where their Métis Ancestor was documented. Citizens and applicants with Incomplete files were provided with information about missing documents and current Policy requirements, as well as solutions to help them resolve file issues.

## 2.5 Quality Assurance

Every aspect of file review, including each generational link, historical document, and phrasing for letters, went through rigorous quality assurance checks to ensure burden of proof was met and work was completed accurately. The quality assurance team sent files back to reviewers for revisions as required, and files flowed again through the entire system to be updated and re-reviewed by quality assurance (see Figure 4). Each file was

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<sup>8</sup> The MNO Registry also ensures clerical information, such as payment or photo, is complete.

<sup>9</sup> In some cases, Incomplete files were missing administrative documents (such as a signed Oath of Allegiance) or documents supporting the proposed genealogy.

then sent for final quality assurance, and the file status was approved by the project lead and moved to a mailout process that had its own quality assurance.

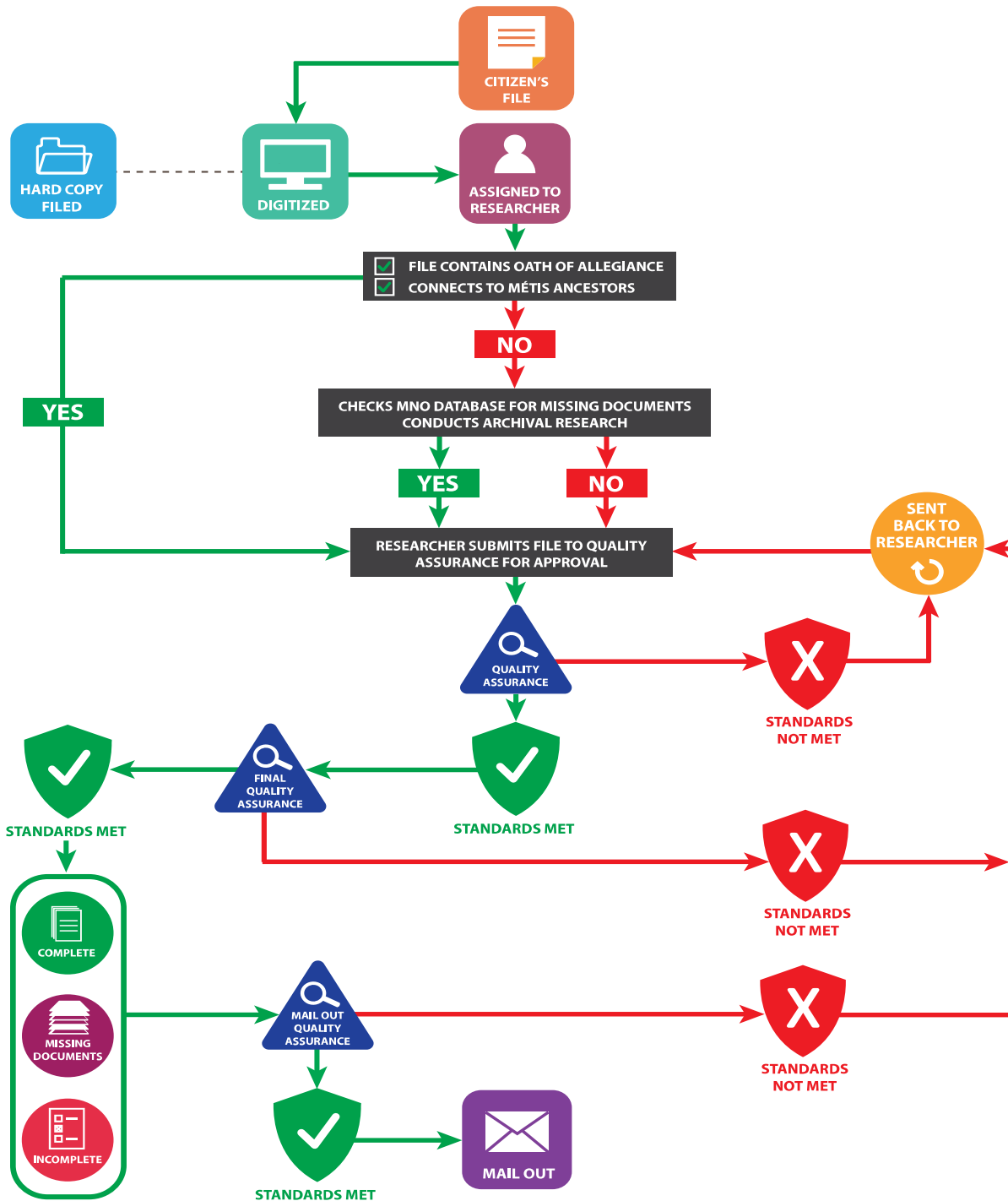


Figure 4. RSRP file review workflow

## 2.6 Informing MNO Citizens and Applicants

Each citizen and applicant was informed of the status of their file review through written correspondence. A mailout team worked to process large batches of letters in order to communicate file review results to citizens and applicants in a fair and reasonable time. Guidelines and a workplan were developed and each letter was tracked in a shared spreadsheet. Batches of letters were assigned to individual letter reviewers using project management software, to ensure tasks were not duplicated and letters were properly prepared and reviewed.

The following process was followed to generate letters:

1. Content was checked to ensure it corresponded to the applicant's or citizen's file and contained correct contact information;
2. Letters were edited to ensure that up to date standardized phrasing was used;
3. Letters were checked for errors in spelling, grammar, and formatting before printing;
4. Duplicate letters (sometimes generated by the database) were removed;
5. If any additional documentation was required, this was indicated in the letter tracking sheet, to ensure documents were printed and included with letters as required;
6. Letters were reviewed by the quality assurance team;
7. Letters and envelope labels were printed and checked a final time for the correct name and address; and
8. Letters were inserted into envelopes, sealed, and mailed to applicants or citizens.

# Section 3: MNO Citizenship File Outcomes

As of January 31, 2021, the MNO had a total of 23,978 citizens in its citizenship Registry. It should be noted that the RSRP is part of an ongoing review process and that there are always a number of files under review as new citizenship applications are received and/or citizens with files assessed as Missing Documentation or Incomplete provide additional documents that could complete their file.

## 3.1 File Status

Of the MNO's 23,978 citizen files, 77% (18,476) included a Métis Ancestor.

Of this 77%, a total of 92% (17,014) were designated as Complete (i.e., contained all documentation necessary to meet the MNO's current citizenship criteria), while the remaining 8% (1,462) were designated as Missing Documentation, but could become Complete if citizens submit the missing documentation (about one quarter of Missing Documentation files were missing only a valid Oath of Allegiance).

A total of 22.5% (5,402) of files were designated as Incomplete, meaning the file contained no Métis Ancestor in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland, or that no clear lineage was provided to connect the citizen to a Métis Ancestor.

Over the course of the RSRP, 1,061 files were determined to be inactive: 837 citizens were identified as deceased, 14 as suspended, and another 210 as withdrawn.

As of January 31, 2021, fewer than 1% of citizen files were "In Process" due to ongoing reconsideration and review.

## 3.2 Complete Files

Complete files connect to Métis Ancestors identified throughout the Historic Métis Nation Homeland as described in the Registry Policy. It should be noted that the RSRP also prioritized tracing ancestry to the seven Identified Historic Métis Communities in Ontario. For example, if an individual connects through their mother to a Métis Ancestor in one of Ontario's seven Historic Métis Communities, and also connects through their father to Manitoba, researchers only built out the citizen's genealogy on the mother's side. The MNO may want to consider future research in this area to identify further genealogical connections with Métis communities in western Canada as well as connections between Ontario Métis communities.

### 3.2.1 Métis Ancestors West of Ontario

Approximately 77% (13,110) of Complete citizen files connect to Métis Ancestors in Historic Métis Communities in Ontario. Approximately 23% (3,904) of Complete citizen files connect only to a Métis Ancestor documented in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland west of Ontario. A total of approximately 5,942 (32%) of Complete citizen files are linked to a Métis Ancestor documented in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland west of Ontario. Of these citizens, approximately 64% connect to Métis Ancestors documented on scrip; 19% connect to Métis Ancestors documented on land grants; and 17% connect to Métis Ancestors documented on censuses or other historic records (e.g., birth/death records) (see Figure 5).

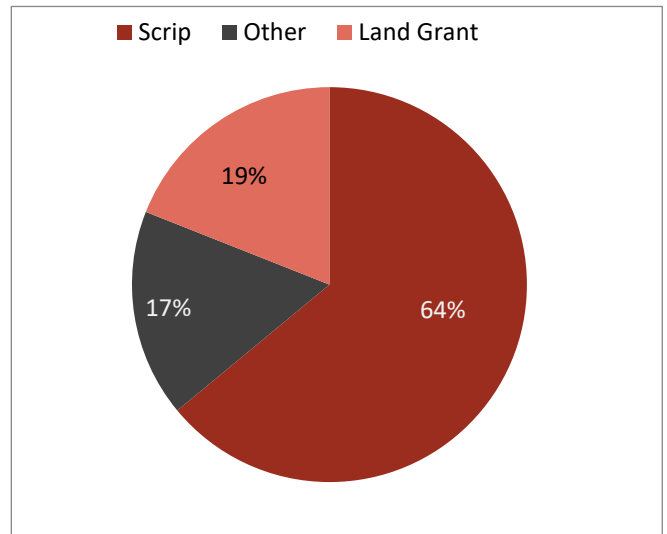


Figure 5. Métis Ancestors documented west of Ontario

### 3.2.2 Métis Ancestors in Ontario

As noted above, of the 17,014 MNO citizen files assessed as Complete, 77% (13,110) connect to Métis Ancestors in Historic Métis Communities in Ontario. Of these, 59% (7,716) citizens connect to a single VMFL, while 35% (4,638) connect to multiple VMFLs in the province.<sup>10</sup> Further, 61% (8,028) connect to one Historic Métis Community in Ontario, while 39% (5,082) connect to multiple Historic Métis Communities (see Figure 6).

Below is a breakdown of the number of citizens that connect to each of the seven different Historic Métis Communities in Ontario:

- Rainy River / Lake of the Woods / Treaty 3 Historic Community: 1,522 citizens
  - 884 MNO citizens being descendants of the “Halfbreeds of Rainy Lake and River” who collectively adhered as a Métis community to Treaty 3 in 1875, and
  - 638 MNO citizens ancestrally connecting to other historic Métis families and settlements in the region.
- Northern Lake Superior Historic Métis Community: 229 citizens

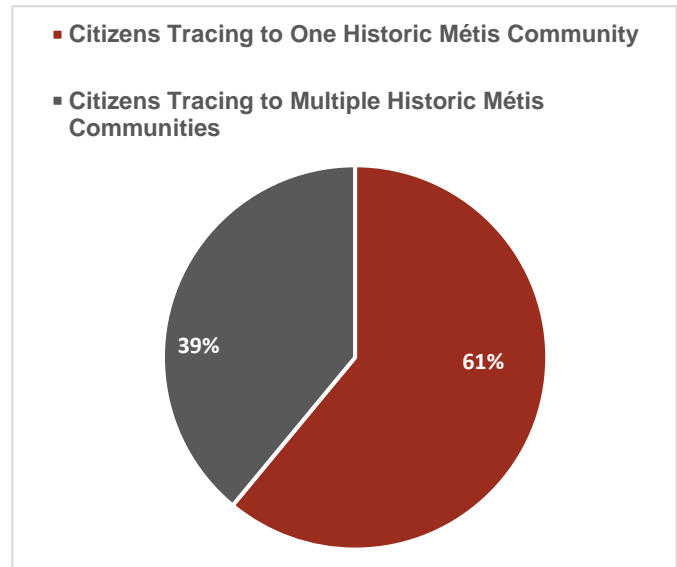


Figure 6. Métis Ancestors tracing to Historic Métis Communities in Ontario

<sup>10</sup> 6% (756) trace to Métis Ancestors in Historic Métis Communities not yet approved as part of a VMFL.

- Sault Ste Marie and Environs Historic Métis Community: 1,285 citizens
- Killarney and Environs Historic Métis Community: 341 citizens
- Georgian Bay and Environs Historic Métis Community: 6,477 citizens
- Mattawa/Ottawa River and Environs Historic Métis Community: 2,211 citizens
- Abitibi Inland Historic Métis Community: 1045 citizens

We note that 8,332 (64%) of the 13,110 citizens who connect to Métis Ancestors in Historic Métis Communities in Ontario connect to the Métis community recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Powley* that includes the Upper Great Lakes region (i.e., Northern Lake Superior, Killarney, Georgian Bay, and Sault Ste. Marie).

Collectively, the MNO's current citizenship with "Complete" files can be broken down as having a Métis Ancestor from Western Canada (23%), Northwestern Ontario (9%), the Upper Great Lakes Region (49%), and Northeastern Ontario (19%).

A chart further detailing the results of the Registry Review is shown as Figure 1.

### **3.3 File Reconsideration**

As per the Policy and the Resolution, citizens whose files were designated as Missing Documentation or Incomplete had the option of submitting documents required to complete their file. In some cases, information submitted by one citizen impacted other citizen files. This usually helped complete citizen files or link them to an additional VMFL. In a small number of cases, additional research provided genealogical information that changed a citizen's file unfavourably. The process of reconsideration is ongoing.



## Section 4: Conclusion

On October 2017, the PCMNO directed the MNO administration to retain Know History to review all MNO citizen files as part of the RSRP. The review of citizen files lasted approximately 17 months and resulted in every active MNO citizenship file being digitized and independently reviewed.

Further, as part of the RSRP, new citizenship applications were also assessed according to the requirements for MNO citizenship outlined in the current Policy. In particular, the new tools and streamlined approach outlined in this report have enabled over 6,000 applicant files to be processed during the RSRP. Know History continues to process new citizenship applications, and file reconsiderations for individuals with Missing Documentation or Incomplete files that provide additional documentation.

As of January 31, 2021, the results of the review of 23,978 MNO citizenship files reveal the following:

- **A total of 71% of all MNO citizenship files (17,014 MNO citizens) were confirmed as having “Complete” citizenship files** (i.e., their file included all the necessary documentation required to meet the MNO’s current definition for citizenship and the requirements for citizenship in the MNO Registry Policy).
- Another 1.4% of MNO citizenship files (330 MNO citizens) could “Complete” their file if they signed the MNO’s required Oath of Allegiance, and another 4.7% (1,132 MNO citizens) could “Complete” their file simply by providing missing genealogical documents. **If these outstanding requirements were met, a total of 77% of MNO citizenship files (18,476 MNO citizens) would be confirmed as “Complete”.**
- A total of 22.5% of current MNO citizenship files (5,402 MNO citizens) were determined to have “Incomplete” files.
- As a part of the Registry Review, 1,061 MNO citizens files were determined to be inactive because of death, suspension, or withdrawal and were removed from the MNO Registry for one of these reasons.
- Of the MNO citizenship files that are “Complete” (17,014 MNO citizens), based on the primary documents provided to the MNO Registry, these files demonstrate the following:
  - A total of 23% of the MNO’s citizenship (3,904 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to Métis communities in western Canada through Métis Scrip (2,470 MNO citizens), Métis land grants issued under the *Manitoba Act, 1870* (768 MNO citizens), or other historical documentation from 1901 or earlier (666 MNO citizens).

- A total of 9% of the MNO's citizenship (1,522 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to the historic Métis community in Northwestern Ontario:
  - 884 MNO citizens being descendants of the "Halfbreeds of Rainy Lake and River" who collectively adhered as a Métis community to Treaty 3 in 1875, and
  - 638 MNO citizens ancestrally connecting to other historic Métis families and settlements in the region.
- A total of 49% of the MNO's citizenship (8,332 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to the Great Lakes Métis community that was recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Powley*. This community includes well-known Métis populations and settlements at Fort William (present day Thunder Bay), Michipicoten, Sault Ste. Marie, Killarney, and Georgian Bay/Penetanguishene.
- A total of 6% of the MNO's citizenship (1,045 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to the historic Métis community in the Abitibi-Temiscamingue region.
- A total of 13% of the MNO's citizenship (2,211 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to historic Métis community in the Mattawa region.
- Collectively, the MNO's current citizenship with "Complete" files can be broken down as having a Métis Ancestor from Western Canada (23%), Northwestern Ontario (9%), the Upper Great Lakes Region (49%), and Northeastern Ontario (19%).

In addition to the RSRP results, the procedures developed as part of the RSRP have become the core tools used by the MNO to manage its citizenship Registry. This includes the MNO Registry's SASH database, a set of Registry guidelines, and a streamlined approach to processing applications for citizenship.

# Appendix 1: PCMNO Resolution PC171022-08

On October 22, 2017 the PCMNO passed *Resolution PC171022-08*, which read:

WHEREAS as the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) prepares to enter into further negotiations on Métis rights, self-government and outstanding Métis claims against the Crown, the credibility of the MNO Registry is essential; and

WHEREAS Section 4 of the MNO Bylaws states that “citizenship in the MNO shall be limited to individuals interested in furthering the objects of the MNO and who are Métis within the definition adopted by the MNO” as set out in Section 4(a) of the MNO Bylaws and further explained in the MNO Registry Policy; and

WHEREAS, for greater certainty, the MNO definition of Métis includes all of the descendants of the seven historic regional rights-bearing Métis communities that have been identified by the MNO as well as citizens of the Métis Nation from western Canada who now live in Ontario; and

WHEREAS the MNO has recently released the results of its Ontario Métis Root Ancestors Project (Phase I), jointly identified seven historic regional rights-bearing Métis communities with Ontario, and completed a successful verification process of all MNO Harvester Card holders for the ongoing Independent Review;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Provisional Council of the MNO direct the MNO administration to retain the consulting firm Know History to complete a review of all the MNO Registry files in order to prepare for the issuing of new MNO Citizenship cards. The review will provide the following information:

- a. Files that are determined to meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship, including, an identification of whether these individuals ancestrally connect to one of the identified seven historic Métis communities in Ontario or the Métis Nation in western Canada (i.e., through Métis scrip, land grants, etc.) will be issued a new MNO citizenship card.
- b. Files that are determined to not meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship will be notified of what necessary documents are missing so that letters can be sent

to these MNO citizens and provide them with a fair and reasonable time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the PCMNO further directs that this review begin with the elected leadership on the PCMNO and Community Councils and that following this review those that meet the MNO citizenship requirements be sent letters confirming their files are complete and that they be issued a new MNO citizenship card. Those that have outstanding documentation required in their files will be notified in writing and provided a fair and reasonable amount of time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry.

# Appendix 2: MNO Registry Policy



## Registry Policy<sup>1</sup> (August 2019)

### Context and Application of the Policy

All individuals applying for citizenship within the Métis Nation of Ontario (“MNO”) must follow and meet the requirements of the MNO Registry Policy (the “Policy”). Collectively, this Policy includes this document as well as the attached guidelines, backgrounder and two appendices. Nothing in this Policy alters the MNO Bylaws or the MNO’s definition for citizenship. This Policy provides guidance on how the MNO Bylaws and the MNO’s definition for citizenship are to be interpreted. It also outlines the administrative processes to be followed for registration. The MNO Registrar must follow the MNO Registry Policy.

### Self-Identification

This means that applicants to the MNO Registry must see themselves and identify themselves as distinctly Métis. This requires that individuals make a positive choice to be culturally and identifiably Métis. Being Métis is to be part of a proud and old culture and aboriginal society. If an individual identifies as an Indian (whether status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty) one is identifying as a different aboriginal people—not as Métis. An individual does not become Métis because one is simply not permitted to register as an Indian or Inuit. An individual is not Métis if they are registered as an Indian or Inuit on another aboriginal registry. An individual is not Métis simply because he or she has some aboriginal ancestry, but does not have Indian or Inuit status. An individual does not become Métis simply because he or she has Indian ancestry with parents who do not live on a reserve or parents who cannot pass on Indian status to them.

### Proving Historic Métis Nation Ancestry

This means that an applicant must have an ancestral connection to the historic Métis society (the “Historic Métis Nation”). This requires a genealogical connection to a “Métis ancestor”<sup>2</sup>—not an Indian or aboriginal ancestor. This Métis ancestor must be connected to the Historic Métis Nation.

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<sup>1</sup> The MNO Registry Policy has been in place—as an interim policy adopted by PCMNO—since March 2009. In August 2014, the Policy was formally adopted by special resolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> MNO AGA. Further amendments to the Registry Policy were made by the 2015 and 2019 MNO AGAs.

<sup>2</sup> Many historic documents identify mixed-race aboriginal individuals using terms other than “Métis”. Such terms may include but are not limited to: chicot, bois-brule, half-breed, French breed, other breed, etc. There is no requirement that an applicant must provide a document that specifically uses the term “Métis”. Documents using these other descriptive terms may, taken together with other evidence, be acceptable as proof of Métis ancestry.

Connection to the Historic Métis Nation means that an applicant's "Métis ancestor" must have identified or been identified by others as a Métis who lived in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland at a time after the Historic Métis Nation came into being, which is generally considered to be the late 1700s. In light of this, and without more, evidence of an Indian or aboriginal ancestor who lived outside the Métis Nation Homeland prior to the late 1700s does not provide sufficient proof that an applicant is Métis. Moreover, and without more, evidence of an individual having an Indian or aboriginal ancestor who lived within the Métis Nation Homeland prior to the late 1700s does not provide sufficient proof that an applicant is Métis.

For the purposes of identifying whether the applicant's Métis ancestor was living within the Historic Métis Nation Homeland, the Métis Nation Homeland is considered the land that the historic Métis Nation lived in, used and occupied as its traditional territory. The Historic Métis Nation Homeland was quite large and the limits were not clearly defined. It is a general theory that this territory covered "west central North America" or the "North West" but there were also no hard borders to the Historic Métis Nation Homeland.

The MNO asserts that the Historic Métis Nation Homeland in Ontario is the territory identified in the map attached as Appendix A. If an applicant can demonstrate a genealogical connection to a Métis ancestor who identified or was recognized as a Métis who lived in this territory in the late 1700s or later, that will suffice to demonstrate an ancestral connection to a Métis ancestor. In applying this policy statement, the MNO recognizes that its identified Métis traditional territories are not defined with absolute precision. So, for example, if an applicant has a Métis ancestor who lived just outside one of these identified Métis traditional territories or over the United States or Quebec border the applicant may meet the requirement for demonstrating a Métis ancestor.

### **Community Acceptance**

This means being accepted as Métis by the rights-bearing Métis collective—the Métis Nation. It is part of the basic theory of "peoplehood" that the people defines itself and its citizens. While many may lay claim to being Métis Nation citizens, it is the role of the people themselves to determine who its citizens are and the terms on which those citizens will be accepted. The Métis Nation is not obliged to accept all claimants. The Métis Nation is in the process of developing national guidelines for acceptance and enrolment. In the meantime, the MNO, as the representative government of the Métis Nation in Ontario, accepts all applicants who meet its registration requirements by registering them with the MNO. Registration as a citizen of MNO constitutes acceptance by the rights-bearing Métis community—the Métis Nation.

Within 6 months of submitting their application to the MNO Registry, an applicant whose application is not complete or has not been approved by the MNO Registrar shall be notified in writing. Such notice shall contain the reason(s) the application is not approved (i.e. more information needed, failure to establish that the claimed Métis ancestor is Métis, etc.). If the application is incomplete, the onus is on the applicant to provide the needed

information to the MNO Registry. There is no appeal process for applications that are incomplete. If the application has not been approved for other reasons, applicants have two levels of appeal, as set out below.

### **Appeals**

The MNO will have a two-stage appeal process. The first stage is a reconsideration of the application by the Registrar. Stage one is a prerequisite for stage two. In stage two an applicant may appeal the reconsideration decision of the Registrar. That appeal application will be reviewed by an independent genealogist with experience in Métis genealogy. The decision of the appeal genealogist will be final and binding on MNO and the applicant. All applications for reconsideration and appeals must be in writing. All reconsideration decisions of the Registrar and appeal decisions by the independent genealogist shall be in writing with reasons and shall be delivered in a timely manner. The MNO may impose fees on applicants for reconsiderations and appeals. In the event that finances are not provided from government to support the Registry, the appeal process may be streamlined or terminated.

### **Independent and Confidential Registry**

MNO shall maintain the Registry as a confidential registry and shall not permit any access to individual files of registry decision making by anyone other than registry personnel and the Registrar. No PCMNO members shall take part in the decision-making with respect to any individual files. No information shall be disclosed from any file except with consent of the applicant or citizen or for research subject to a formal agreement that governs how the information will be used and protected.<sup>3</sup>

### **Security**

The MNO shall make every effort to protect the Registry from fire, theft, mischief and loss of electronic data.

### **Pending Applications**

The MNO shall only accept files that are complete. Only files that are complete will be listed as pending applications. If a file is incomplete or rejected the MNO Registrar will notify the applicant within a timely manner.

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<sup>3</sup> The 2015 MNO AGA replaced “from any file without the consent” with “from any file except with consent” and added the phrase “or for research subject to a formal agreement...”.

**General**

1. The MNO Registry shall be in two separate parts—a Citizenship Registry and a Harvesters Registry.
2. The Registrar shall be solely responsible to register applicants for MNO citizenship.
3. All personal information in the Registry shall remain confidential and no personal information from a file may be disclosed to anyone, including members of the PCMNO, without the consent of the applicant or citizen or for research subject to an agreement that governs how the information will be used and protected.<sup>4</sup>
4. The Registrar shall only register applicants who are citizens of the Métis Nation within the meaning of the Métis Nation Citizenship Definition in the MNO Registry Policy—Backgrounder.
5. No registered MNO citizens will be removed from the MNO Registry unless the Registry receives (a) written consent from that registered citizen; or (b) proof that the citizen is registered as an Indian under the *Indian Act* or is registered as an Inuit or other Aboriginal person under a modern day land claims agreement. Registered MNO citizens may request, in writing, to have their names removed from the MNO Registry.<sup>5</sup>
6. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all of the required documents to support an application.
7. Applications that are incomplete will not be accepted for registration.
8. Many historic documents identify mixed-race aboriginal individuals using terms other than “Métis”. Such terms may include but are not limited to: chicot, bois-brule, half-breed, French breed, other breed, etc. There is no requirement that an applicant must provide a document that specifically uses the term “Métis”. Documents using these other descriptive terms may, taken together with other evidence, be acceptable as proof of Métis ancestry.

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<sup>4</sup> The 2015 MNO AGA replaced “shall be kept strictly confidential” with “shall remain confidential” and added the phrase “or for research subject to an agreement...”. These amendments permit the MNO to continue its health research partnership with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and to pursue other research relationships.

<sup>5</sup> The 2015 MNO AGA added the phrase “unless the Registry receives (a)” and clause (b).



9. Evidence provided in support of an application may include but is not limited to scrip applications, photographs, census records, church records, diaries, journals, secondary sources, government documentation, etc.

### **Applications**

10. Repealed.<sup>6</sup>
11. Repealed.<sup>7</sup>
12. Each applicant must provide a head and shoulders photograph of the applicant.
13. Each applicant must sign a waiver permitting access to his or her file for aggregate data. This waiver will not permit access to personal information without the prior consent of the applicant.
14. Each applicant must pay any required application fee.
15. A completed MNO citizenship application form shall include the following information:
  - a. Full name of applicant;
  - b. Address or place(s) of residence;
  - c. Date of birth;
  - d. Marital status (optional);
  - e. The name of any spouse of the applicant (optional);
  - f. The dates of any marriages of the applicant (optional);
  - g. The names and dates of birth of any children of the citizen; and
  - h. The full name and date of birth of that citizen's mother and father.

### **Self Identification as Métis**

16. Each applicant must sign a declaration that they self-identify as Métis.
17. Each applicant must sign a declaration that they are not registered on another aboriginal registry and are not registered as an Indian under the *Indian Act*. For greater certainty, Métis National Council membership lists or registries are not considered “another aboriginal registry” and applicants may be concurrently

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<sup>6</sup> The 2019 MNO AGA repealed this clause which previously read: “Each applicant must provide proof that he or she is ordinarily resident in Ontario.”

<sup>7</sup> The 2019 MNO AGA repealed this clause which previously read: “Each applicant must provide proof of Canadian citizenship.”

registered or have membership in the Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta or the Métis Nation of British Columbia.

### **Proof of Historic Métis Nation Ancestry**

18. The applicant must prove Historic Métis Nation ancestry by providing evidence of a genealogical connection to a Métis ancestor who lived in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland after 1750.
19. There is some flexibility with respect to the exact boundaries of the Métis Nation Homeland. For example, proof that an applicant's ancestor lived just over the Ontario border in the United States or in Quebec may meet the requirement for demonstrating a Métis ancestor.
20. An applicant must provide documentary proof that links the applicant through each generation to a Métis ancestor.
21. Without more, genealogical proof that the applicant had an Indian ancestor is not sufficient to prove Métis ancestry.
22. Without more, genealogical proof that the applicant had a mixed-race ancestor who lived outside the Historic Métis Nation Homeland is not sufficient to prove Métis ancestry.
23. Without more, genealogical proof that an applicant had a mixed-race ancestor who lived prior to 1750 is not sufficient to prove Métis ancestry.

### **Community Acceptance**

24. The MNO, as the representative government of the Métis Nation in Ontario, accepts all applicants who meet its registration requirements by registering them with the MNO.
25. Registration as a citizen of MNO constitutes acceptance by the rights-bearing Métis community – the Métis Nation.

### **Harvesters Registry**

26. An MNO citizen may apply for a Harvesters Card and shall provide a Captain of the Hunt with proof of the following:
  - a. that he or she is ordinarily resident in and intends to participate in the Métis harvest in his or her traditional territory; and
  - b. if the applicant intends to use firearms or a bow in the Métis harvest, he or she must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of firearms or bow hunting safety or completion of a firearms safety course.

27. Captains of the Hunt shall forward completed applications for Harvesters Cards to the MNO Registry.
28. Harvesters Cards shall have a term of validity of 3 years, which term shall begin from the date of issue.
29. The fee for a Harvesters Card shall be as set by the PCMNO from time to time.
30. An application for renewal of a Harvesters Certificate shall be sent to the applicant's Captain of the Hunt, who shall sign the renewal application form and forward it to MNO for processing.

### **Appeals**

31. Within 6 months of submitting an application to the MNO Registry, an applicant whose application is not complete or has not been approved by the MNO Registrar shall be notified in writing. Such notice shall contain the reason(s) the application is not approved (i.e., more information needed, failure to establish a Métis ancestor, etc.).
32. If the application is incomplete, the onus is on the applicant to provide the needed information to the MNO Registry.
33. There is no appeal or reconsideration for applications that are determined by the MNO Registry to be incomplete.
34. If the application has not been approved for reasons other than being incomplete, an applicant may ask, in writing, to have the decision of the MNO Registrar reconsidered by the MNO Registrar.
35. Written requests for reconsideration must include the grounds for the challenge and may include additional documentation in support of the challenge.
36. Upon receipt of the written request for reconsideration, the MNO Registrar shall consider all the materials in the applicant's file and may consider any additional information during the reconsideration process.
37. The MNO Registrar shall provide a written response to the reconsideration request within 90 days of receiving such request.
38. Reconsideration is a necessary prerequisite to filing an appeal.
39. An applicant may appeal the MNO Registrar's reconsideration decision by:
  - a. in relation to citizenship, completing a MNO Citizenship Final Appeal Request Form. A copy of this Form is attached as Appendix B; or

- b. in relation to a Harvester’s Card, completing a MNO Harvester’s Card Final Appeal Request Form. A copy of this Form is attached as Appendix C; and
  - c. including a payment of \$250.00 to the MNO for the administrative costs associated with the appeal.<sup>8</sup>
40. Upon receipt of the required materials in support of the appeal, the MNO Registrar shall forward the contents of the applicant’s file to an independent, qualified genealogist with experience in Métis genealogy for review and consideration of the applicant’s appeal.
41. This genealogist will review the documents in the applicant’s file based on the MNO Registry Policy, Guidelines, Backgrounder and MNO Harvesting Policy (if applicable). Upon completion of the genealogist’s review, he or she may either uphold or overturn the Registrar’s determination. A letter from the genealogist setting out his or her decision, with reasons, will be provided to the MNO Registrar and the applicant. A copy of the decision shall be placed in the applicant’s file. The decision of the independent genealogist will be final and binding on the parties to the appeal.<sup>95</sup>
42. An applicant must exhaust the MNO reconsideration and appeal process prior to filing any claim or action in a court.

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<sup>8</sup> The 2015 MNO AGA added the phrase “in relation to citizenship” in clause “a” and all of clause “b” as well as the MNO Harvester’s Card Final Appeal Request Form attached as Appendix C.

<sup>9</sup> The 2015 MNO AGA added the phrase “and MNO Harvesting Policy (if applicable).”

## **Registry Policy Backgrounder**

**(August 2019)**

### **The Métis Nation of Ontario Statement of Prime Purpose**

The following are relevant excerpts from the MNO Statement of Prime Purpose, which was adopted when the MNO was initially created:

#### **Who We are as a People**

We, the Métis are a people of the lands, which gave rise to our history and tradition and culture. We call those lands the Métis Homelands. The Homelands stretch from the lakes and rivers of Ontario; cross the wide prairies, traverse the mountains into British Columbia and into the northern reaches of the Northwest Territories. They include the hills and valleys of the north-central American States. These are our lands. They are Métis lands. They are the lands of our past which nurture us today and which we value as the precious foundation of our future. As Métis who live in the Homelands, we hold it to be a fundamental truth that we are one of the Aboriginal peoples of the Americas....

#### **Now Therefore We Declare as Follows:**

We, the Métis Nation, are a distinct Nation among the Aboriginal peoples in Canada and as such our Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. We, the Métis Nation, have the inherent right of self- determination and self-government;

We, the Métis who live within the Métis Homelands of Ontario, desiring to bind our people together to collectively promote our common cultural, social, political, and economic well- being, have founded the Métis Nation of Ontario, to be our representative body with the following aims and objectives:

- to research, publish and promote the genealogical documentation of the Métis, and to establish and maintain a registry of the Métis Citizens of Ontario; ...

### **The Historic Métis Nation and the Historic Métis Nation Homeland**

The Métis are the children of the fur trade and the unions between Indian women and Euro-Canadian men in what was historically known as west central North America or the North West. While the children of the earliest Indian and Euro-Canadian unions had mixed ancestry, the creation of a distinct Métis identity and culture was a process that took some time. It was the subsequent intermarriages between these men and women of mixed ancestry that resulted in the genesis of a new aboriginal society by the late 1700s, which we call the Historic Métis Nation.

The Historic Métis Nation developed a collective identity and consciousness, a language (Michif with regional dialects), a distinctive culture and a way of life. The Historic Métis Nation lived in, used and occupied a large territory from Ontario to British Columbia and includes parts of the Northwest Territories and the northwestern United States. The Métis call this area the Métis Nation Homeland.

The members of the Historic Métis Nation were highly mobile. They moved regularly throughout the Métis Nation Homeland as they exercised their customs, practices and traditions and participated in the fur trade, the buffalo hunt and other cultural, social and economic institutions that were important to their existence. Members of the Historic Métis Nation established their own distinct settlements within the Métis Nation Homeland and lived in or used other settlements established by Indians and non-aboriginal peoples. The mobility of the members of the Historic Métis Nation maintained their extensive kinship connections throughout their Homeland.

Today, the Historic Métis Nation continues and refers to itself and is referred to by others as the Métis Nation. The Métis Nation’s contemporary assertions of aboriginal nationhood are grounded on well-recognized international principles for the recognition of Indigenous people, which includes a shared identity, history, culture, language and territory.

### **The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples**

In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recognized the principle that aboriginal citizenship must be determined by the aboriginal nation itself. Specifically, in relation to Métis citizenship, the Commission recommended that:

Every person who

- (i) identifies himself or herself as Métis and
- (ii) is accepted as such by the nation of Métis people with which that person wishes to be associated, on the basis the criteria and procedures determined by that nation be recognized as a member of that nation for the purposes of a nation-to-nation negotiations and as Métis for that purpose.

### **The Métis National Council Definition**

In September 2002, after years of discussion, the Métis National Council General Assembly unanimously adopted a National Definition for Citizenship within the Métis Nation (“Métis Nation Citizenship Definition”). In doing so, the Métis Nation exercised its inherent right to define itself and its citizenship.

The Métis Nation Citizenship Definition reads as follows:

Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation.

“Historic Métis Nation” means the Aboriginal people then known as Métis or Half-Breeds who resided in Historic Métis Nation Homeland.

“Historic Métis Nation Homeland” means the area of land in west central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-Breeds as they were then known.

“Métis Nation” means the Aboriginal people descended from the Historic Métis Nation, which is now comprised of all Métis Nation citizens and is one of the “aboriginal peoples of Canada” within s.35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

“Distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples” means distinct for cultural and nationhood purposes.

### **R. v. Powley**

In 2003, the Supreme Court of Canada handed down its reasons for judgment in *R. v. Powley*. That case set out a general definition of Métis and made several observations that are relevant to a discussion about who is Métis for constitutional purposes. With respect to the identification of the Métis community, the Supreme Court held that,

[12] A Métis community can be defined as a group of Métis with a distinctive collective identity, living together in the same geographic area and sharing a common way of life.

[17] The inclusion of the Métis in s. 35 represents Canada’s commitment to recognize and value the distinctive Métis cultures, which grew up in areas not yet open to colonization ...

With respect to identification of Métis individuals, the Supreme Court held that,

[31] ... the claimant must self-identify as a member of the Métis community. This self-identification should not be of recent vintage...

[32] ... the claimant must present evidence of an ancestral connection to the historic Métis community...

[33] ... the claimant must demonstrate that he or she is accepted by the modern community whose continuity with the historic community provides the legal foundation for the right being claimed...

[49] ... The development of a more systematic method of identifying Métis rights-holders for the purpose of enforcing hunting regulations is an urgent priority.

### **The Métis Nation of Ontario Definition**

In July 2004, the MNO as the Métis government representing the Métis Nation in Ontario, adopted the Métis Nation Citizenship Definition by consensus at its Annual General Assembly. As well, the Métis Nation Citizenship Definition has been adopted by other Métis governments representing the Métis Nation across the Métis Nation Homeland. These Métis governments include the Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation – Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta and Métis Nation British Columbia. All of these Métis Nation governments are now in the process of implementing the Métis Nation National Definition. In Ontario, the MNO is implementing the Métis National Definition through its Registry process. The MNO Registry is based on the Métis Nation’s inherent

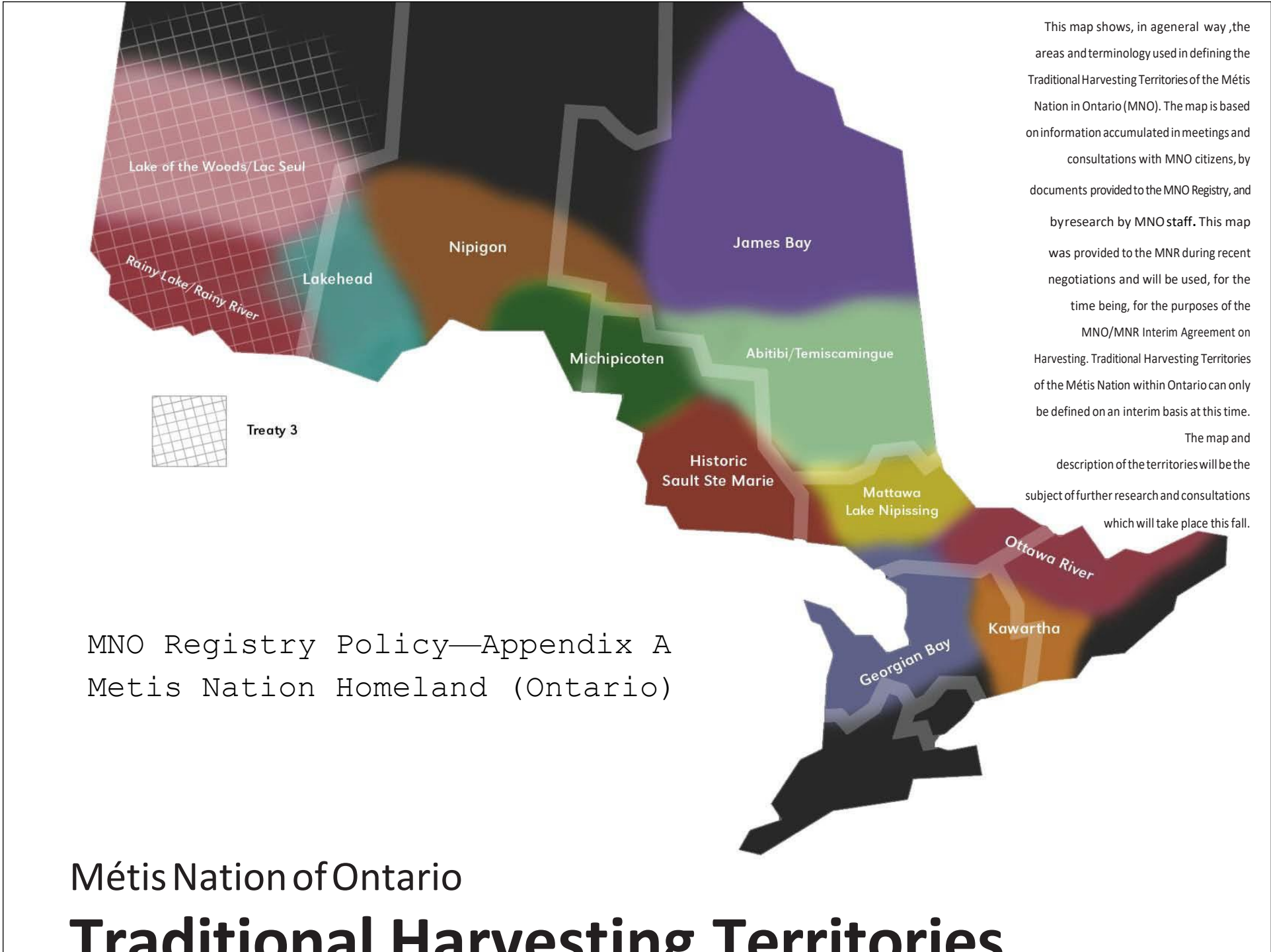
right to register and identify its citizens based on its own customs, practices and traditions. As the representative government of the Métis Nation within Ontario, the MNO Registry is mandated to register and identify all citizens of the Métis Nation who live in Ontario.

### **United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People**

In 2007, the right of an aboriginal people to determine its own identity and citizenship, in accordance with its own customs, practices and traditions, is recognized in international law. Article 33 of the United Nation's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* reads:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions. This does not impair the right of indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship in the States in which they live.
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures.





This map shows, in a general way, the areas and terminology used in defining the Traditional Harvesting Territories of the Métis Nation in Ontario (MNO). The map is based on information accumulated in meetings and consultations with MNO citizens, by documents provided to the MNO Registry, and by research by MNO staff. This map was provided to the MNR during recent negotiations and will be used, for the time being, for the purposes of the MNO/MNR Interim Agreement on Harvesting. Traditional Harvesting Territories of the Métis Nation within Ontario can only be defined on an interim basis at this time.

The map and description of the territories will be the subject of further research and consultations which will take place this fall.

MNO Registry Policy—Appendix A  
 Métis Nation Homeland (Ontario)

Métis Nation of Ontario

# Traditional Harvesting Territories

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [insert name] received the MNO Registrar's reconsideration decision dated \_\_\_\_\_ in which the Registrar upheld her initial decision to reject my application for citizenship.

By sending in this Form, I hereby request an appeal of the MNO Registrar's reconsideration of my application for citizenship.

**Additional Materials for Consideration on this Appeal**

- I have no additional materials for the appeal.
- I enclose the following additional materials may be submitted for consideration as part of an appeal. (Please list and attach to your Form)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

More documents may be listed on a separate paper.

**My contact information is:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_



# Harvester's Card Final Appeal Request Form

## Registry Policy—Appendix C

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I, \_\_\_\_\_ [insert name] received the MNO Registrar's reconsideration decision dated \_\_\_\_\_ in which the Registrar upheld her initial decision to reject my application for a Harvester's Card.

By sending in this Form, I hereby request an appeal of the MNO Registrar's reconsideration of my application for a Harvester's Card.

### Additional Materials for Consideration on this Appeal

- I have no additional materials for the appeal.
- I enclose the following additional materials may be submitted for consideration as part of an appeal. (Please list and attach to your Form)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

More documents may be listed on a separate paper.

### My contact information is:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_