

YEAR IN REVIEW

MNO 30th AGA / MNO Annual Report 2022-23

Name of PCMNO Councilor

Region / Position

Theresa Stenlund

**Regional Councilor for the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community
Region 1**

Introductory Message about work within the Region in 2022/23

The Northwestern Ontario Métis Community “NWOMC” - Region One, represents four community council areas in Northwestern Ontario (Kenora, Dryden, Atikokan and Fort Frances) within the territory of Treaty 3 in addition to the North East corner outside of the Treaty 3 area.

Much has been achieved since the 2022 Annual General Assembly. The Northwestern Ontario Métis community is currently engaged in negotiations with the MNO regarding the self-government work plan and budget for the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community being funded from the Interim Fiscal Financing contribution agreement with the MNO. The Northwestern Ontario Métis Community Regional Implementation Agreement and work plan ensure that the rights and interests of the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community are not forgotten.

Northwestern Ontario is a hub for both the mining and forestry industries. As such, there is a significant amount of mining and forestry activity in the Region. Over the past few years there has also been heightened activity in energy sector development as well as the initiation of important projects such as the highway twinning between Kenora and the Manitoba border (phase 1) and the twinning of the Hydro line from Thunder Bay to Atikokan to Dryden (The Waasigan Transmission Line project). In addition, the Township of Ignace in Northwestern Ontario, is one of the remaining two potential Deep Geological Repository “DGR” storage sites for spent nuclear fuel. All of these activities, coupled with the work associated with the sub-table to the Framework Agreement’s Negotiation Process in relation to the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community and the Treaty 3 Half-breed adhesion for advancing reconciliation with the Northwestern Ontario Métis community, makes the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community a very active and busy region for engagement with industry, government and other proponents.

The Northwestern Ontario Métis community attained a significant achievement in 2022, the establishment of the Northwestern Ontario Métis Child and Family Services “NWOMCFS” with offices in Kenora, Dryden, Atikokan and Fort Frances. This is the first Métis Child and Family Services agency in Ontario with a focus on prevention services.

For additional activities being conducted in Region 1 please refer to the last page of this report – **Ongoing and Other Activities.**

Highlights and Key Achievements

- Rolled out bursaries for NWOMC post-secondary students. There were 8 in May 2022 and additional bursaries distributed the fall 2022. This comes from a \$25,000, 3-year agreement from the Nuclear Waste Management Organization.
- Also rolled out bursaries for NWOMC post-secondary students from the New Gold Participation Agreement that has funds set aside for bursaries for NWOMC citizens for each year during which

Commercial Production occurs. There were 3 students that received bursaries in May 2022 and additional bursaries were provided in the fall of 2022.

- Participated in several Restorative Justice Sentencing Circles on harvesting matters with the MNR, Captain of the Hunt and Community Elder which diverted citizens out of the court system.
- The Northwestern Ontario Métis Community Atlas (book) continues to be in the final stages of review and we are hoping it will be ready for print sometime this year. This is currently undergoing a legal review.
- Commissioned a Children's book: Know History is writing and publishing a historical children's book that tells an engaging story about the historic Métis of Rainy River and Rainy Lake. The book has been written and is currently being designed. The book should be ready for print by the beginning of December.
- NWOMC logo was launched in Spring 2022.
- Implemented an online regional southern Michif language project for the region that was hosted by NWOMC citizens.
- Negotiated funding to advance the Treaty 3 Half-breed adhesion Claim at the Framework Agreement sub-table.
- Continued to represent the NWOMC in discussions related to moving forward with the implementation of the Métis Government Recognition and Self Government Agreement (MGRSA) work plan. This work is continuing to progress slower than anticipated.
- Participated in negotiation of the Learn More Agreement with NWMO.
- Participated in the negotiation of Memorandums of Understanding for Hydro One for capacity to engage the citizens on the current proposed project.
- Negotiated and received funding for the Northwestern Ontario Child & Family Services Agency with the focus on Prevention Services.
- Held a Region 1 Métis business Forum in Dryden.
- Held community engagement sessions to seek feedback on the development of an economic development strategy for the NWOMC.
- Commissioned a NWOMC government booklet: Know History is producing a booklet to serve as a short introduction to the Métis of Northwestern Ontario. This booklet is currently undergoing a legal review, prior to it going to print.
- The NWOMC dispersed training and advertising grants to Region 1 Métis businesses Spring 2023 with funds from an Economic Development Agreement.
- Commissioned a booklet on Community Council Histories of the NWOMC: Know History is writing a booklet on the history of the 4 Community Council's in the NWOMC. The booklet is going to print.
- Commissioned a Cultural Mapping project: Citizen engagement occurred to collect information and map Métis cultural assets throughout the Northwestern Ontario Community to support future tourism development plans, such as interpretive tours, signage, exhibits, and other cultural experiences.
- Worked with the City of Kenora to have the Métis flag permanently raised outside city hall.

Meetings / Projects / Partnerships / Committee Participation / Other Activity

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) – Relationship Table

- LRC and Region 1 Consultation Committee are working with the MNR to establish a relationship table. The table is intended to improve consultations, as well as provide training in Ministry processes such as Crown Land dispositions.

Note: Minor or one-off consultation engagements have not been listed in the briefing below.

Mining

Treasury Metals – Goliath Gold, Goldlund and Miller Projects

- The Goliath Gold Project is a proposed gold mine near Dryden.
- 2017 – MOU signed
- 2019 – MOU Amended to include additional funding for technical review and meetings for the Environmental Impact Statement.
- The federal EA was approved in August 2019.
- The NWOMC is determining when Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA) negotiations with Treasury Metals will begin, likely once the Prefeasibility Study (PFS) is complete. The release of the PFS will be delayed due to the acquisition of the Goldlund and Miller projects (view below) and COVID 19.
- Treasury Metals has acquired the Goldlund and Miller Properties, an exploration site located near the Goliath Gold Project. Treasury Metals will co-develop these projects alongside the Goliath Project.
- The R1CC last met with Treasury Metals on July 6th, 2021.
- Treasury Metals has applied for additional early exploration permits, but met with LRC staff in March 2022 to state that the project is on hold due to financial constraints. LRC staff are waiting to hear more from Treasury Metals and their early ex work after the summer field season is finished.
- Treasury Metals has applied for additional early exploration permits, and met with LRC staff in March 2022 to state that the rest of the project is on hold due to financial constraints.
- Treasury Metals continues with its early exploration activities, including a drill program for Goliath and Goldlund from October 2022 to February 2023.
- The PFS was completed in February 2023 with ‘positive’ results reported, the company is now moving forward on a Feasibility Study.

First Mining Gold (FMG) – Springpole Project

- Springpole is a proposed gold mine in the Red Lake area that is going through a coordinated federal and provincial environmental assessment.
- A Consultation Agreement which provides funding for the consultation process has been secured.
- A Valued Components (VC) workshop was held on May 20th, 2021 with NWOMC Citizens to gather information around Métis-specific values. The information gathered in the workshop has formed a report which will help the NWOMC in the consultation process. The VC information was provided to First Mining Gold together with the Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Study (TKLUS).
- The Provincial EA Terms of Reference were approved by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), in November 2021 (with amendments to address concerns identified through consultation).
- The MNO has retained consulting firm Know History to assist with the Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Study (TKLUS). The work on the TKLUS began in July 2021. The TKLUS was completed as of February 2022 and provided to First Mining Gold in March 2022.
- Federal environmental assessment under IAAC began in April 2022.
- First Mining Gold submitted its draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in June 2022. MNO retained a consultant (MNP) to review and provide comments (July 2022). FMG's responses to MNO's comments were received by December 2022. Additional review of FMG's response package was completed in March 2023 by MNP.
- First Mining Gold is currently completing baselines studies for incorporation into the Final EIS, and plans to submit by Q2 2024. In order to ensure the NWOMC's concerns are adequately addressed, and that Métis s.35 are appropriately contextualized and incorporated in the Final EIS, extensive additional engagement with FMG is required.

Ambershaw Metallics Inc. – Bending Lake Iron Ore Deposit

- The proposed project is located southwest of Ignace near Highway 622 and is an open pit iron ore mine. The project was slated for a federal environmental assessment.
- In May 2020, Ambershaw indicated that because of the current situation with COVID-19, they were not ready to proceed with their engagement schedule. They also noted that they would be seeking a one-year extension to complete their Environmental Assessment (EA) though that request was not formally made to Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC).
- The R1CC tabled a Consultation Agreement with Ambershaw in April 2020.
- In May 2022, IAAC terminated the EA of the Bending Lake Iron Ore Deposit, at the request of Ambershaw, due to an inability to complete their environmental studies within the prescribed timelines set by IAAC.
- In June 2022 LRC staff received an email from federal staff associated with the IAAC process stating that Ambershaw Metallics has shelved the federal process for the foreseeable future due to an inability to complete their environmental studies within the prescribed time limits set by IAAC.
- IAAC has stated that if this or a similar project is proposed at a future date, an impact assessment

under IAAC may be required and the proponent will be required to resubmit an Initial Project Description to IAAC in accordance with section 10 of the *Impact Assessment Act*, 2019.

New Gold – Rainy River Gold Mine

- New Gold owns and operates the Rainy River gold mine (“the Project”) located 65km northwest of Fort Frances. The mine began operating in 2017.
- The mine has a life expectancy of 18 years.
- A participation agreement was signed with New Gold Inc in November 2014.
- The NWOMC participates in the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) and the Environmental Monitoring Board (EMB) for the Project. The mandate of the JIC is to provide a collaborative forum for the NWOMC and New Gold to discuss environmental aspects of the Project, hiring, training and contracting opportunities, and general issues of concern. The Regional Councilor holds the JIC seat for the NWOMC and a Lands Resources and Consultations (LRC) staff liaises with New Gold and participates on the environment committee. The EMB consists of representatives from various communities who discuss aspects of environmental monitoring for the Project and provide recommendations to New Gold for further testing, studies or research for example.
- New Gold has provided advance notice that it plans to apply for the following authorizations or amendments in 2023: Notice of Material Change, Schedule 2 Compensation Plan Amendment, Endangered Species Act Permit Amendment, Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act Authorization. These changes are largely to adapt the mine plan to higher than anticipated water volumes at site. Most of these authorizations require consultation under the federal legislation.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) – Steep Rock Rehabilitation Project

- The Steep Rock site, located approximately three (3) km. north of Atikokan, is an abandoned mining site initially developed in 1943, now owned by the province.
- President Marlene Davidson is representing the Region 1 Consultation Committee (R1CC) at meetings on the Steep Rock Advisory Panel.
- Working on continuing the conversation about an agreement (MOU) between the Ministry and the NWOMC. This task has been stalled due to LRC staff turnover and the vacant position until recently.
- Currently working on developing a Consultation Agreement to enable further engagement on the project.
- The NWOMC met with the MNRF to receive a project update in May and June 2023. The 2022-23 Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) which provides capacity for yearly meetings, site visits and updates, has expired. A new TPA is being developed, which would also include capacity for a site tour in summer or fall of 2023.

Agnico Eagle – Hammond Reef Project

- 2012 MOU signed with previous holder Osisko Hammond Reef Gold Corp.
- 2015 signed a Shared Interest Agreement with NWOMC.

- The project environmental assessment was federally and provincially approved (2018). The project would require additional permitting from relevant regulators to begin construction activities.
- Agnico Eagle renewed their early exploration permit in June 2022. It continues to advance the resource through exploration activities and technical research.
- The project is currently in care and maintenance (hold), with expectations of start-up if the price of gold increases.

Avalon Advanced Materials (AAM) – Separation Rapids

- The Separation Rapids Project is an early exploration stage lithium project located approximately 70 km north of Kenora.
- R1CC last met with Avalon in 2019, to discuss required updates to their Closure Plan (1990), MINES requires the Closure Plan to be updated to comply with 2022 standards.
- Avalon provided a Closure Plan for bulk sampling only in June 2020. A bulk sampling program was completed in 2021. Under the Closure Plan, AAM provided financial assurance for rehabilitation of the bulk sampling area.
- AAM's exploration permit application in 2021 was put on temporary hold for several months due to Region 1 Consultation Committee (R1CC) concerns and lack of engagement. A follow-up conversation with Avalon's CEO Don Bulbar indicated that AAM does not believe engagement with the R1CC is necessary.
- May 2022 – To the knowledge of the Ministry, the bulk sample has not been tested, and is sitting in storage. Extra permissions are required to export the material to Europe.
- If AAM plans to advance the project to construction and production, they would be required to submit a new Closure Plan, and apply to convert their claims to lease. This would trigger MINES to identify and consult with potentially affected Indigenous communities.
- Currently, as the project is still technically in early exploration, the duty to consult lies with MINES. It has not been delegated to AAM.
- Additionally, the early exploration permits are still on hold which means legally no work can be done on the property.

Goldshore – Moss Lake Project

- The Moss Lake Project is an early exploration stage gold property located approximately 35 km southeast of Kashabowie.
- Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment was completed by Goldshore Resources. LRC staff met with Goldshore's team and archaeological consultant to discuss Metis inclusion (or lack thereof) in the assessment, and future Stage 2 archaeological assessments. Goldshore also indicated it was willing to begin discussions on a future consultation agreement with the NWOMC.
- Goldshore is continuing its drilling programs as permitted, and completed a mineral resource estimate in November 2022.
- Goldshore Resources has offered a tour of their core shack at Kashabowie in summer 2023, if the R1CC is interested.

Transmission Lines

Hydro One Networks Inc. (HONI) – Waasigan Transmission Line

- The Hydro One Northwest Bulk Transmission Line Project (later renamed the Waasigan Transmission Line Project) is a proposed double-circuit 230 kilovolt (kV) line between Lakehead Transmission Station (TS) within the Municipality of Shuniah and Mackenzie TS within the Township of Atikokan and a new single-circuit 230 kV line from Mackenzie TS to the Dryden TS.
- The NWOMC Consultation Committee and the Region 2 Consultation Committees have a signed internal agreement stipulating how the RCCs will engage in consultation on the project.
- The relationship between Hydro One and Region 1 is currently strained, as Hydro One is not giving the Métis equal consideration to First Nations in regards to economic participation in the project.
- Community Information Sessions were held in Dryden & Thunder Bay in January 2023. The purpose of the session was to hear about Hydro One's proposed preliminary preferred route for the transmission line. A memo reflecting citizen's concerns with the proposed route from Atikokan to Dryden was then submitted to Hydro One.
- A Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Study (TKLUS) has been submitted to Hydro One in late April 2023. The TKLUS reflects citizen input from citizen's input into a survey from early 2020 and information from approximately 30 interviews with citizens who use the proposed land for their Metis way of life.
- Hydro One released their draft Environmental Assessment for a 7 week review period which will end July 7. The draft EA does not contain information relating to impacts to any Indigenous community. Instead, Hydro One has sent the NWOMC and Region 2 a copy of the document assessing impacts to Metis rights for review before it becomes a public document. We will be requesting an extension to the 7 week review period so that we have sufficient time to review the information and correspond with Citizens.
- Hydro One has signed a contract with Valard Construction for the construction of the line. The project will have employment, training and subcontracting opportunities. We are in correspondence with Valard to better understand what the opportunities are so they can be made available to Metis citizens.
- We continue to have discussions with Hydro One about economic compensation for the Metis arising from impacts to our way of life.
- Upcoming opportunities: Community Information Sessions will be planned in the coming months, likely sometime in late July or August. Opportunities such as open houses or job fairs will also take place once Valard has communicated what jobs, training and subcontracting opportunities will occur in construction of the line.

Wataynikaneyap (“Watay”) Power – New Transmission Line to Pickle Lake

- Wataynikaneyap Power LP is a licensed transmission company equally owned by 24 First Nations communities (51%), in partnership with Fortis Inc. and other private investors (49%) in the new Wataynikaneyap Transmission Line to Pickle Lake.
- The Project is planned, designed and funded to connect 17 remote communities to the provincial power grid.
- The Project broken into two phases; Phase 1 was completed at the end of 2018, and Phase 2 is currently in construction.
- The NWOMC engaged in consultations on the Project in from 2017 - 2019, when the Project was approved by the government. Construction on the Project is now underway.
- The MNO worked to minimize potential impacts to Métis harvesters and NWOMC Citizens during construction and operation of the Project.
- The Project is projected to be completed by mid-2024.
- NWOMC Citizens are invited to reach out to LRC staff with any questions or concerns regarding the project and its construction.
- A Community Information Session was held on 24th November 2022 on the Watay project, which went well.
- Consultation on this project is considered complete.

Nuclear Power and Radioactive Waste Management

At this time Region 1 has only agreed to learn more about this potential project and has not indicated a position on this project.

Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) – MNO General Relationship Agreement

- The NWMO has been looking for a community that is willing to host a Deep Geological Repository (DGR) for used nuclear fuel for a number of years. At this time two sites are being considered to host the DGR, Ignace and South Bruce, Ontario.
- MNO Regions 1 and 7 signed a two-year General Relationship Agreement with NWMO in March 2021 (expired March 2023).
- The agreement included staff to support consultations. Caleigh Lavallee was hired to support MNO Region 1. In June 2022, Caleigh went on maternity leave and she will be returning to work in December 2023. We have not been able to organize as many NWMO events in the past year as we would have liked because we have been short-staffed.
- Despite being short-staffed, we have organized a number of activities to learn about the DGR including:
 - a Transportation Planning Framework and Preliminary Transportation Plan Community In-

formation Session (12 April 2022)

- a Path of Water Community Information Session (25 May, 2022);
 - a Community Information Session to provide a Geoscience Update (26 May 2022);
 - a Community Information Session with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (22 June 2022), at which they explained their role as the nuclear regulator overseeing the NWMO's proposed DGR and all other nuclear projects in Canada.
 - the Open House of the NWMO Ignace Learn More Centre -- 9 members of the NWOMC attended, including the R1CC (8 July 2022)
- The final activity under this agreement is an information session for R1CC called "Confidence in Nuclear Safety". This is being planned for the R1CC in upcoming weeks.
 - The NWMO General Relationship Agreement has expired and will be renegotiated to include more consultation activities and Community Information Sessions in 2023.

Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) – Learn More Agreement

- The MNO has been engaging in consultations with NWMO for a number of years.
- In February 2022, MNO Region 1 signed a "Learn More" Agreement with NWMO to 'learn more' about the impacts a Deep Geological Repository might have on the NWOMC's wellbeing. This agreement expires in June 2023.
- This agreement supported visits of the NWMO Mobile Learn More Centre to Kenora (27 May 2022); Dryden (7 July 2022); and Ignace (8th July 2022). This summer's dates for the NWMO Learn More Mobile Trailer are Kenora June 19th, 2023, Dryden July 24th, 2023, Atikokan July 28th, and Fort Frances on July 28th, 2023.
- In the fall of 2022, a "Request for Proposal" was sent to various consultants to undertake a community wellbeing study. In addition, meetings were held to determine which legal counsel might support the NWOMC going forward and the extension of the 'Learn More' agreement. The legal firm BLG (Nadir) will be providing legal advice and counsel on this project.
- In January 2023, Know History was retained to review NWMO's reports on wellbeing and also initiate a community wellbeing study.
- After the completion of this study, the Learn More Agreement will need to be renegotiated.

Forestry

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) - Forest Management Plans

- Ontario's Crown Forest is divided into 39 Forests, also known as Forest Management Units (FMUs), and each FMU is required to prepare a 10-year forest management plan (FMP). There are 14 FMUs in Region 1- Caribou, Boundary Waters (used to be Sapawe and Crossroute), Dog River-Matawin, Dryden, English River, Kenora, Lac Seul, Red Lake, Trout Lake, Wabigoon, Whiskey Jack, Whitefeather. The Black

Spruce and Lakehead Forests are partly in region 1, but have region 2 taking the lead on these forests.

- Boundary Waters Forest Management Corp was established in 2019 to provide forest management of the Boundary Waters Forest Management Unit (formerly the Crossroute & Sapawe forests). In April 2020, the Sapawe Forest and the Crossroute Forest amalgamated to become the Boundary Waters Forest. The Boundary Waters Forest is under control of the Boundary Water Forest Management Corporation, which is under an enhanced Sustainable Forestry License (eSFL). Under the eSFL, there is an increased number of representatives from various municipalities, business and Indigenous Communities that have a voice and work together to decide how the forest is used. The corporation consists of 16 shareholders, in which there are 4 First Nation shareholders and 1 Métis shareholder which is the MNO. The corporation also has a Board of Directors that consists of 12 people; 4 are from First Nations in Treaty 3, and 1 is from the NWOMC.
- The Northwestern Ontario Métis Community (NWOMC) is proud to have Senator Brian Gouliquer representing the NWOMC as one of the 12 Board Members on the Board of Directors of the Boundary Waters Forest Management Corporation. All 12 Board Members have an equal say in how wood supply from the Boundary Waters Forest is being used, along with other Forest Management duties.
- The preparation of the 10-year forest management plan commences 3 years prior to its implementation.
- Preparation of the forest management plans require consultation with the MNO. Consultations on each plan involves engagement and document reviews.

Planning Teams

- The R1CC appointed a Métis Community Member Representative (Senator Brian Gouliquer) to sit on the Whiskey Jack Planning Team as a contributor to the plan. The LRC branch sits on the Whiskey Jack Planning Team as an observer.
- The Whiskey Jack Planning Team has been on hiatus since fall of 2021. The hiatus is a result of the no-harvest area and the reassessment by the Ministry has not been completed. The Ministry is considering on reducing the size of the no-harvest area, however they received opposition letters from multiple First Nation Communities. The planning team resumed in April 2023. Planning for the Whiskey Jack Forest has experienced delays. The plan is expected to be approved sometime in 2023.
- The R1CC appointed a Métis Community Member Representative (Senator Brian Gouliquer) to sit on the Lac Seul Planning Team as a contributor to the plan. The LRC branch sits on the Lac Seul Planning Team as an observer.

Customized Consultation Approach (CCA)

- The Regional Consultation Committee (RCC) requested a Customized Consultation Approach for the Lac Seul Forest.
- The Sioux Lookout MNRF and the RCC have met four times during this pilot to receive updates for the Lac Seul Forest Management Plan. The RCC has put forward to the MNRF, a proposal for a Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Study on the Lac Seul Forest. The last meeting and open house for citizens will be occurring sometime in the fall.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) – Relationship Table

- LRC and Region 1 Consultation Committee are working with the MNRF to establish a relationship table. The table is intended to improve consultations, as well as provide training in Ministry processes

such as Crown Land dispositions.

- There have been preliminary discussions with the MNRF. LRC has sent a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to MNRF for review and comments in February 2023. Repeated attempts by the LRC team for an update and to move this forward met with stalled responses from the MNRF.

Annual Forestry Workshop

- A virtual conference was scheduled for February 2023, however days before the workshop PCMNO scheduled an urgent meeting on the same date and time, so the Forestry workshop had to be cancelled. An In-person workshop is being planned to be held within the Region and will address Regional issues and topics.
- The LRC Forestry Team is in the final stages of receiving funding from NRCan – Indigenous Forestry Initiative which will assist in the development of a Regional Strategic and Engagement Plan for Forestry which will be designed to meet the needs of the Region. This proposal was submitted in Spring of 2020.

Engagements – Mills

GreenFirst Products

- GreenFirst Forest Products: In June 2021, a letter was written to the Board of Directors for GreenFirst regarding a meeting that was scheduled and that the Woodlands Manager did not show up. GreenFirst reached out to the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community (NWOMC) for an introductory meeting, but at the last minute they decided not to show up as they were not going to pay the NWOMC Honoraria for the meeting. We responded with a letter outlining the dismissal. There has not been a response to date. A new manager with GreenFirst reached out to us in April 2022 to discuss the new location for the mill, and was unaware of the prior dismissal by the company.
- In April 2022, GreenFirst acquired a \$17 million loan to support a proposal to relocate the former Kenora Forest Products mill site, which is still underway.

Domtar/Resolute

- A relationship Agreement with Domtar has been proposed. A Memorandum of Agreement is in draft form. The draft has yet to be shared with Domtar. Recently Domtar (and Resolute) were purchased by a new company in Canada called Paper Excellence. Paper Excellence is a subsidiary of Asia Pulp and Paper, a company that has been associated with deforestation and human rights abuses. The Forest Stewardship Council disassociated from Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) in 2007. APP is a subsidiary of the Sinar Mas Group, one of the largest conglomerates in Indonesia. Due to these changes, the Memorandum of Agreement has been put on pause until we understand what changes may arise from this new ownership.
- The Regional Consultation Committee (RCC) supported the decision made by the Region 2 Consultation Committee to terminate the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Region 2 and Resolute.

- The RCC wrote a letter of support to Region 2.
- Resolute was purchased by Paper Excellence, however part of the Competition Bureau of Canada stepped in and ordered that Paper Excellence sell its Domtar Dryden mill if it wishes to acquire the Resolute Thunder Bay mill due to monopoly concerns.
- Dryden Mill was sold to First Quality Enterprises, an American Company and the pulp and paper mill in Thunder Bay was sold to Atlas Holings.
- <https://www.lockhaven.com/news/local-news/2023/03/first-quality-acquires-pulp-mill-in-canada/>
- The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) sent a notification regarding the proposed transfer of the Sustainable Forest Licenses (SFLs) for the Black Spruce, Caribou, Dog River-Matawin, and the English River Forest Management Units (FMUs).
 - The RCC sent a joint opposition letter with the Region 2 Consultation Committee to the Honorable Graydon Smith, Minister Natural Resources and Forestry.
- Lands, Resources and Consultations (LRC) and the Regional Chair met with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to discuss concerns surrounding Paper Excellence having the Sustainable Forest License (SFL) for seven Forests in Northern Ontario.
- Paper Excellence remains the holder of the SFLs.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Audit Comments- Wabigoon Forest

- The Regional Consultation Committee (RCC) submitted written comments for the FSC Audit on the Wabigoon Forest.
 - The letter stated that there was a lack of engagement with the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community (NWOMC) from Domtar/Paper Excellence.

Engagements-Letters

Boundary Waters

- The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Atikokan office submitted a proposal to re-issue a Land Use Permit (LUP) for a Forestry Accommodation Camp at Premier Lake. The Regional Consultation Committee (RCC) sent an opposition letter in the fall of 2020 for the first proposed issuance of the LUP. The RCC sent a follow up opposition letter in 2022 and requested to meet with the MNRF Atikokan Office to discuss.
- We received a letter from the MNRF in Atikokan in November 2022 that they are considering renewing a 5 year Land Use Permit for a Forestry workers camp on Premier Lake Road in the Boundary Waters Forest Management Unit. We responded in December with a letter of opposition citing that a camp with increased traffic and human presence would have a negative impact on exercising our harvesting rights in the area. A meeting between the MNRF and RCC occurred in April 2023 where we further shared our concerns. The MNRF did end up renewing the LUP but for 3 years instead of the original 5 years.

English River

- An email was sent in December of 2021 requesting corrected maps for the addition of 29 new Wood Storage Yards. Maps were received to the NWOMC with incorrect scales.
- A letter was written in January of 2022 to NDMNRF regarding the addition of 29 new Wood Storage Yards in the English River Forest. The letter outlined a proposed consultation plan for this specific notification. The NWOMC has raised concerns that the addition of a high number of Wood Storage Yard throughout the forest will lead to an increase of industrial activity and noise, and will have an impact on Métis way of life. The NDMNRF has dismissed our concerns in light of new information provided to them. This is still ongoing. Métis harvesters will be contacted by us to discuss how this industrial development may have an impact on their harvesting activities.
- This issue was put on pause during the Paper Excellence purchasing and selling of Forestry companies that occurred since last fall. The LRC Forestry team, with RCC's guidance, will be reaching out to the new companies in the Region to discuss further.

Whiskey Jack Forest

- A letter was written in June 2021, to the Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) regarding an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) called the "Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek Protected Area" within the no harvest zone of the Whiskey Jack Forest. The Northwestern Ontario Métis Community was neglected to be consulted by ECCC. We raised our concerns in a letter to ECCC that we had identified values within this proposed area, and about the lack of consultation by the government. In their response letter, we were told to talk to the Chief of the First Nation about our concerns as they felt that the duty to consult wasn't triggered by this project. In a follow up meeting between NWOMC and ECCC, we were informed that this project is not going to continue past its exploratory phase and were invited to submit an application for an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area if we become inclined.
- This issue has been put on pause by the ECCC, and we have not been informed if or when it will progress to the next stage. The LRC Forestry team believes that it will resurface during the planning stage of the Forest Management Plan.

Dog River-Matawin Forest

- A letter was written to SAI Global, the entity in charge of re-auditing the Dog River-Matawin Forest. This letter was in response to the way that the NWOMC was ignored by Resolute Forest Products. Resolute Forest Products was up for the re-registration of their Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. The R1CC strongly felt that Resolute was not deserving of this certification, as they have a poor relationship with the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community. This letter to SAI Global outlined this relationship. SAI Global replied that because our grievances with Resolute were regard-

ing an issue on the Boundary Waters Forest, and not the Dog River-Matawin Forest that our comments wouldn't apply to this audit. I don't have an update at the time of this report.

Engagements – Meetings – Total of 7 Meetings

- Met with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – Sioux Lookout Office (MNRF) 3 times regarding the Customized Consultation Pilot on the Lac Seul Forest Management Unit.
- Met with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – Atikokan Office (MNRF) in April regarding the Forestry Accommodation Camp on Premier Lake Road in the Boundary Water Forest Management Unit.
- Met with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – Regional Office (MNRF) twice regarding the development of a draft MOU for the MWOMC – MNRF Relationship Table.
- April 2022: Met with GreenFirst about the new proposed mill location.

Capacity Restraints

- There were quite a number of notifications that the Lands Resources and Consultations (LRC) Branch were unable to follow up on due to internal capacity restraints and our current GIS capacity. We received all Annual Work Schedule (AWS) notifications for the 2023-2024 year, and have been working on values analysis for each of the forest units in the region. Some of the GIS work has been contracted out to Know History to complete.

Fisheries

Lake of the Woods Fisheries Management Plan

- Region 1 appointed a Métis Community Member Representative to sit on the Indigenous Advisory Council for the Lake of the Woods (LOTW) Fisheries Management Plan.
- MNRF has partnered with several Indigenous communities, tourism operators, municipal governments and others to form the Lake of the Woods Fisheries Advisory Council, which has been meeting since January 2021 to develop the LOTW draft Recreational Walleye Plan. The Plan aims to increase the walleye population in LOTW.
- The R1CC met with MNRF about these proposed changes on May 26, 2022. R1CC was provided with an update on how public consultations have been going, as well as with a briefing on the process to date.
- MNRF held a number of information sessions about the plan in winter 2022-23, including a Community Information Session with NWOMC citizens on 1 February 2023. At this session, MNRF committed to looking into current conservation enforcement capacity around LOTW.
- The comment period ended in Spring 2023 and changes to the LOTW Fisheries Management Plan are expected to take effect in upcoming months. Changes include reduced sport fishing limits, among others.

International Joint Commission

- Senator Karen Cederwall from the Kenora Métis Council has been appointed by the Region 1 Consultation Committee to the International Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods, Watershed Board (IRLWWB) and IRLWWB Adaptive Management Committee to represent the NWOMC and to bring our Métis voice and interests to the table. President Brady Hupet from the Sunset Country Métis Council is an alternate.
- The **International Rainy Lake of the Woods Watershed Board** “IRLWWB” has had regular meetings on the AMC Adaptive Management Committee; CAG Community Advisory Group and the EC Engagement Committee. **The Board advises the IJC International Joint Commission commissioners who report to the government.**
- International Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods Watershed Board annual meeting with resource management agencies on August 9, 2022.
- Input is being requested for their post flood report and the engagement committee will be meeting. A wild rice report was done by a service agency that didn't have a Métis inclusion aspect in the report and it needs to be evaluated to see if they used historic wild rice studies/reports. So far the (IJC) have only mapped the water level structures and provided this to Treaty 3 GIS staff. The MNRF maps on the geoportal may have been created using the historic research maps, Karen is following up on this.
- The board is also working on: Committees for water levels, aquatic ecosystem and health, adaptive management and engagement committee; Adaptive Management project for Rainy Lake and Namakan (water levels governed by IRLWWB rule curve)- The NWOMC -Region 1 now has a Metis rep(s) to ensure of voice is heard. Karen is pushing for more community engagement.
- Karen attended the Water Science Forum on March 8-9 in International Falls.
- Karen is suggesting to provide information to people living in Rainy River on how to access or report spills in Ontario to an updated emergency plan report.
- Lake of the Woods Nutrients Community Information session on March 27, 2023, funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada.
- August 2023 board and public meeting planned.

Transportation

Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) - Kenora-Manitoba Highway Twinning

- The Ontario Ministry of Transportation is working to four-lane Highway 17 from the Manitoba border to Kenora. The highway project is divided into three sections, with the first section starting at the

Manitoba border. Consultation has completed on Section 1.

- This project is important for transportation safety in the region; this section of Highway 17 is well-known for collisions, and highway twinning is a well-documented method of reducing collisions.
- In April 2022, MTO informed the MNO that the contract for the construction of the first section was awarded to Moncrief. The MNO told MTO that we need to start consultations on Section 2.
- In November 2022, MTO informed the MNO that they have identified alternative routes for Section 2 of the highway and they would like to meet the Regional Consultation Committee in January.
- R1CC met with MTO on January 30th, 2023 to discuss what consultation will look like for the second section of the highway. The MNO proposed a consultation work plan (agreement) to MTO.
- As of June 2023, MTO was still in the process of reviewing the consultation agreement.

Transport Canada (TC), Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO), & Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) – Northern Harbour Marina Expansion

- The owners of Northern Harbour Marina are seeking to expand docking space. The expansion does not require addition land, but would increase the amount of boats and boat traffic at the Harbour. In light of this, The R1CC submitted comments to MNRF on June 30, 2022 expressing concern that this expansion will not help to maintain the unique and valuable character of Lake of the Woods. This project is especially concerning given the current flooding and already notable fuel contamination in the Harbour.
- River Stone Environmental Solutions Inc. completed a navigation study for Northern Harbour. This was sent out to the R1CC on May 18th but we have not had any feedback.

Environmental Research

Experimental Lakes Area – IISD-ELA

- The Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) is situated just south of Highway 17, between Kenora and Vermilion Bay. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) conducts freshwater ecosystem research in this area on 58 lakes of varying sizes. Studies typically take place in sheltered bays or enclosures, so as not to affect the entire water system.
- IISD-ELA exists on a Crown Land lease. The Crown entered into a five-year agreement effective April 1, 2022, which allows IISD to continue to lease the land and operate the ELA.
- A letter was sent to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) and the Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP) expressing concern over the lack of adequate consultation regarding the leased lands and waters and the experiments held in the area. MNRF and MECP met with the Region One Consultation Committee to discuss concerns, but they have indicated that they are only willing to engage in one-off consultation processes and they are not willing to cover any meeting costs with the MNO.

- Training of 7 NWOMC water monitors by IISD-ELA staff in June 2022 at Aaron Provincial Park in Dryden.
- In January 2023, NWOMC was informed of IISD's plans to construct a "Centre of Climate and Lake Learning" facility on the north shore of Boundary Lake. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) informed R1CC that consultation on this has been delegated to IISD. LRC staff reached out to IISD and IISD has expressed a willingness to provide R1CC with a tour of the facility this summer.
- In March 2023, IISD wrote a letter to the MNO saying that they do not expect any of their activities to impact the traditional practices of the Metis, however they are committed to sharing information about their experiments, which are reviewed by a Research Advisory Board and approved by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks before proceeding. The letter included a list of 5 new and ongoing experiments that are being planned for the 2023 open water season. In this letter IISD expressed a willingness to meet with R1CC to discuss the research and education.
- In March 2023, MECP sent MNO an email saying that they are willing to meet the Regional Consultation Committee to introduce some new research they are working on but they are (still) not offering any funding to cover meeting costs.
- The NWOMC will continue to fight for a more comprehensive and adequate consultation process.

Federal Climate Change and Guardians Programs

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) –Métis Nation of Ontario Community-Based Environmental Monitoring Program

- The LRC branch has applied for and received funds from ECCC and CIRNAC to support the development of a community-based environmental and climate change monitoring pilot program.
- The LRC Branch met with the Region 1 Consultation Committee (R1CC), Region One (R1) knowledge holders and youth on February 22, 2020 for a regional engagement session focused on developing the program. After assessing the information gathered, it was determined that an on the land water quality monitoring program would best address the climate change related concerns the NWOMC had.
- The LRC Branch then met with the R1CC on several occasions to further develop the water quality monitoring program including narrowing down sites to monitor. Monitoring occurred in the Winnipeg River, Lake of the Woods, Rainy River/Rainy Lake area, and Ignace area, and the Atikokan area for the first year of the program.
- A water concerns survey was sent out to all R1 households to gather feedback on what waterbodies the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community would like to see monitored and what concerns they had with those waters.
- The LRC Branch and R1 are working towards a partnership with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization. A second water quality monitoring device was purchased for the Region to increase monitoring opportunities and Monitors have begun sampling at one site near Ignace specific to the NWMO proposed Deep Geological Repository. The LRC Branch is working with Hutchinson Environ-

mental Sciences Ltd (HESL) to help identify additional sites related to the NWMO monitoring project.

- In spring 2022, the Dryden Water Quality Monitoring Training Workshop was held on June 5, 2022. Another 7 citizens were trained to become Monitors with the program.
- Over winter 2021-2022 and spring 2022, HESL developed a sampling plan based on citizen concerns and knowledge. HESL met with the RCC on July 5, 2022 to discuss the proposed monitoring sites for the Region.
- In Summer 2022, the LRC Branch hosted two virtual information sessions (July 7 and July 11, 2022) for Monitors to learn about the software the program will use, including a tool to book monitoring dates (Appointy) and an application for entering data from the field (Survey123).
- The first field year for the program began in 2022 and the 2023 field year will commence on May 23, 2023.
- Monitors will sample sites this Spring, Summer and Fall as frequently as once a week until mid-Fall 2023, monitoring for parameters like pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity with the multimeter, while collecting water samples (monthly) and baitfish (once in early fall) for methylmercury and other contaminant analysis.
- The program is expanding to include benthic invertebrate monitoring. Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network (OBBN) training is taking place this Summer for interested NWOMC Citizens. The virtual training took place on June 17-18, 2023 and will be followed by in-person training on July 8-9, 2023 in the Dryden area. OBBN monitoring will be incorporated into the program for the 2024 field year after Citizens successfully complete training.

Other Federal Initiatives

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) - Lake of the Woods Water Quality Engagement

- The purpose of ECCC's Lake of the Woods Science Plan is to conduct research and monitoring on algae and nutrients in the Lake of the Woods watershed.
- In 2023, MNO received funding to meet with the R1CC in order to understand how they can engage on nutrient issues which are of importance to the NWOMC in Lake of the Woods. This meeting took place on March 3, 2023.
- MNO also received funding for a 3rd annual Community Information Session which took place on March 27, 2023. This was a hybrid meeting where ECCC gave an update on nutrient issues in Lake of the Woods as well as presentations on legacy phosphorus loading in the lake, an update on algal blooms and a presentation regarding soil sampling in the Rainy River area by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Treaty Land Entitlements and Additions to Reserve Claims

- The federal and provincial governments are working with several First Nation communities on land

claims. Part of that process is to consult with potentially impacted Indigenous communities.

- Over the years the NWOMC has been asked to consult on **over 20** First Nation land claims: **17** Flooding Claims (Rainy Lake and LOTW), **1** Unsold Surrendered Land Claim (Agency One), **1** Boundary claim (Washagamis Bay), and **4** Treaty Land Entitlement claims (Animakee Wa Zhing #37, ANA Grassy Narrows and Wabauskang; Naicatchewenin and Seine River).
- In 2022 and the first part of 2023, Ontario and Canada reached settlements with 7 First Nations regarding their Flooding Claims: Mitaanjigamiing and Nigigoonsiminikaaning, Niisaachewan Anishinaabe, Nautkemagwanning, Big Grassy River, Ojibways of Onigaming, Animakee Wa Zhing #37. Settlement included financial compensation for past losses and damages as well as continued flooding of reserve lands.
- The MNO has retained consulting firm Know History to develop a report to help identify the potential impact of the claims on the NWOMC's recorded land use. The proposed outline for this report was shared with legal on 16th June 2022.
- Discussions were held with the legal firm Pape, Salter, Teillet to discuss the type of research required to best understand the impact of the numerous First Nations land and flooding claims on the NWOMC. Part of this has included getting Ontario to acknowledge that parts of the lands in question are part of the NWOMC's historic community.
- A meeting was held on 6th May 2022 with Ontario to discuss the consultation issues and with the R1CC in June 2022.
- A virtual Community Information Session was held to review the land claims on 27th October 2022.
- In January, 2023, MNO retained consulting firm MNP to research the potential cumulative impact of these land claims on the NWOMC.
- In January, 2023, MNO retained consulting firm MNP to research the potential cumulative impact of these land claims on the NWOMC. The research is only partially complete as more funding is required to complete the study.
- Funding to support consultations on these land claims is done by application to Ontario every year. The NWOMC hopes to receive further funding in 2023-24 to complete the research and meet with Ontario to discuss the impact of these land claims on Metis rights.

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) – Mercury Contamination - English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation

- During the 1960s and 1970s, a chlor-alkali plant in Dryden released around 10 metric tonnes of mercury into the Wabigoon River. This affected both the English and Wabigoon Rivers. Domtar Inc. currently owns this mill site.
- In July 2017, Ontario announced a trust of \$85 million in support of the mercury clean-up of this river system.
- In December 2019, a letter was sent to the Federal Minister of Health, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, with a meeting request to discuss potential health impacts to Métis citizens resulting from the mercury contamination in the English and Wabigoon Rivers.
- In October 2020, a letter was sent to the English-Wabigoon River Remediation Board with a request for the MNO to obtain Participant Status for future board meetings. The purpose of the Remediation Board provides direction on the use of funds set aside in a trust for the purposes of remediating the

English and Wabigoon Rivers of mercury contamination.

- On June 22, 2021 a meeting with CIRNA, Indigenous Services and Health Canada proved to be a disappointment – they advised that this issue was within the jurisdiction of the Province of Ontario and that the Region should be contacting the Ontario Mercury Disability Board to further discuss the issue.
- The NWOMC sent a letter to MECP on December 18, 2020 requesting that a Métis representative be granted participant status on the English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Panel.
- The NWOMC received a response from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks on October 1st, 2021, explaining that the ministry will consider the request for participant status as part of a 5-year report on the success of the *English and Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Funding Act, 2017*, which includes consultation on the implementation of the act and that we could expect a response in 2022.
- In May 2022, LRC branch staff followed up with the Ministry to ask for a status update on the 5-year report but as of the drafting of this we have not yet received a response.
- On November 28th, 2022, Regional Councillor Stenlund and LRC staff attended a virtual meeting with MECP's Neil Gervais to discuss the English-Wabigoon Rivers Remediation Funding Act.
- On 16th December 2022, NWOMC sent a letter to Assistant Deputy Minister of the Drinking Water and Environmental Compliance Division of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks including another request for a seat on the Remediation Board. The Ministry has not been responsive to NWOMC's letters to date.
- On January 23rd, 2023, MECP replied to NWOMC saying that MECP will provide NWOMC with a draft report for review in coming months. As of June 29th, 2023 we have not received a report to review.

Northwestern Ontario Métis Child and Family Services “NWOMCFS”

- In March 2022 the NWOMCFS received start-up funding from the MCCSS. The NWOMCFS has four locations in Northwestern Ontario. In summary with the overwhelming support and input from the Citizens of the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community, we are the first Region to have developed a Métis Child and Family Agency focused on prevention in the Province of Ontario. We have finally been recognized as having the ability to “Take Care of our Own”.
- To recap, in 2019-2020 the region embarked on a journey which was referred to as “Taking Care of our Own!” The Métis Citizens from the four communities of NWO - Region 1, (Atikokan, Fort Frances, Dryden and Kenora) unanimously agreed through a process of initial community consultations to build and deliver distinct Métis services for the children, youth, and families of our area.
- With the support of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and the MNO, the NWOMC - Region 1 continued on their journey throughout 2020-21 with ongoing community consultations and explored different service models and related programs which would support the development of their Agency. With input of the Citizens, the Agency Vision and Mission was developed. Direction from community consultations led to taking a phased-in approach and to begin with a focus on Prevention work with children and families which may be followed by the development of Protection services. Further outreach and updates continued throughout 2022; this

second part of our journey was referred to as “Coming Home: Taking Care of our Own Part 2.”

- Near the end of the 2022 fiscal year, presentations were made to the MCCSS and other Provincial ministries. This was followed with a presentation to the PCMNO. This process was completed with a final Community Consultation and in summary we have had five such consultations (in- person and virtually) along with several Annual General Meeting’s (AGM’s) update sessions since the Summer of 2019. In total we have met with and received input from over 1000 Citizens. The NWOMC citizens were also directly involved in the naming of the Agency and a contest was held so that the NWOMC citizens could help choose the Agency Logo.

Other Comments

Ongoing and other activities:

- Development of educational materials to tell the story of the Half breed adhesion to Treaty Three (brochure, historical atlas/book and video)
- Continued maintenance of the Region One Business Directory directing potential business contracts and RFP’s to registered Métis Businesses in Region One.
- Economic development opportunities were provided to Region 1 Métis businesses. Community outreach and engagement activities such as community meetings, presentations and workshops related to economic development were held in early 2023.
- Continued engagement with both the federal and provincial governments to educate and provide information about the Half-breed Adhesion and the Métis in Region One.
- Negotiate a Northwestern Ontario Métis Community/Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) Memorandum of Cooperation/Relationship Agreement. This has been taking longer than anticipated, as it has been stalled. Waiting for MNO to review the document.
- Engagement with the MNO regarding the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community Regional Implementation Agreement and Work plan to ensure sufficient capacity is provided for engagement with Region 1 citizens. The Region needs to begin the hiring of regional staff and building a regional government for the Northwestern Ontario Métis Community. This is taking longer than anticipated as the leadership would like these staff to be the regions and work for the region and not be staff working for the MNO, but for the region.
- Engagement with the MNO continued regarding the Interim Fiscal Financing Agreement to ensure that the rights and interests of the NWOMC are acknowledged within the agreement and to ensure that Region 1 will have adequate support and capacity to move forward with regional self-government.
- Continued participation in quarterly meetings with New Gold on the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) on issues such as Human resources concerns, training and contracting opportunities, and general issues of concern.
- Water monitoring training has been provided to citizens in the NWOMC and water monitoring started this spring and summer.
- Working with Ontario for a regional table with the MNR to establish a relationship table and is intended to improve consultations.
- Continued to meet, build and strengthen relationships with all levels of government.

- The Northwestern Ontario Métis Community (NWOMC) or (Region 1) is developing and implementing a Comprehensive Economic Development Framework for our regional Métis community. This economic development framework will be based on an extensive needs analysis in order to provide a sound foundation for economic development strategies, activities, and wealth creation in future years across the various Region 1 Métis Council areas. The Region 1 Consultation Committee has engaged Commerce Assessment Group (COMAG) to lead this initiative. The needs analysis phase of this initiative will comprise multiple lines of research including a document and file review, bilateral stakeholder interviews, and group discussions with Region 1 stakeholders and citizens.
- Provided Region 1 Métis businesses the opportunity to apply for Advertising and Training grants. Many grants were provided to successful Métis businesses.
- Provided some Region 1 Métis businesses the costs to have their Métis business attend Home Shows.
- Provided Region 1 Métis businesses the opportunity to apply to have their membership fees covered for their relevant Métis business.
- Provided Region 1 Métis businesses that are in the mining sector the opportunity to apply to attend PDAC. The NWOMC was able to send some leadership and Métis business to Toronto to attend this event in March 2023.
- Assisted with Region Mobile registry planning. Two sessions were held in the Spring on March 25th in Dryden and March 26th in Kenora. There are upcoming Mobile registries being planned for July 27th in Kenora, July 28th in Fort Frances, July 29th in Atikokan and July 30th in Dryden.
- A Digital Project has been commissioned: It will focus on sharing the vibrant history and culture of the NWOMC. This project will take the shape of an interactive website featuring photographs, maps, and quotes, to tell engaging stories that promote the area as a unique region and connect it to its vibrant past. Know History will handle all aspects of the project, including historical research, interpretive writing, design, and programming.