



Métis Nation communities in Ontario are “an integral part of us,” confirms Métis National Council Expert Panel

“The Panel finds that these communities meet the parameters of the National Definition of the Métis Nation, as adopted by the Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta (now the Otipemisiwak Métis Government), Métis Nation British Columbia, and Métis Nation of Ontario in 2002 and are part of the Métis Nation Homeland.” - Pg. 118

The Métis National Council (“MNC”) Expert Panel’s 260-page Final Report reaffirms that the seven historic Métis communities in northern Ontario are and have always been part of the larger Métis Nation, with deep and enduring ties across the Métis Homeland.

These seven Métis communities have repeatedly proven their history and rights in [joint research](#) with the provincial government, the [Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples](#), and the Supreme Court of Canada, leading to its unanimous decision in [Powley](#).

Despite this proven history of connection and generations of ongoing participation in collective Métis Nation advocacy—including repeated political allyship from the 1816 Victory of the Frog Plain to the 2017 Canada-Métis Nation Accord—some politically and financially motivated actors continued to call into question the existence of the seven Métis communities in Ontario and their connections to the Métis Nation, as a means of advancing their own agendas.

In response, in 2021, the Métis Governments that then made up the Métis National Council (MNC)—the Métis Nation of Ontario (“MNO”); the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan; the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation of Alberta, and the Métis Nation British Columbia—established an independent [Expert Panel](#) to conduct a comprehensive investigation of historic Métis Nation communities in Ontario through the lens of the [2002 National Definition](#) and contemporary Métis governance.

The Expert Panel served as the Métis Nation’s self-determined process for transparently and objectively setting the record straight about historic Métis Nation communities in Ontario.

The Expert Panel was made up of trusted Métis experts—one appointed by each Métis government—with proven knowledge of Métis history, rights, and law. The Expert Panel was tasked with reviewing over 50,000 pages of evidence, engaging with over 160 Métis Nation citizens and leaders during more than 120 hours of meetings, visiting the communities themselves, and ultimately reporting on the fact-based historic and contemporary relationships between the seven Métis communities in northern Ontario and the larger Métis Nation.

The MNC Expert Panel’s 260-page Final Report reflects the most comprehensive, transparent, and objective study ever conducted on historic Métis Nation communities in what is now Ontario. The Final Report unambiguously confirms generations of shared culture, kinship, and political alliances between Métis communities in Ontario and those further west. It affirms that the MNO has upheld the 2002 National Definition that was unanimously adopted by Métis Governments from Ontario-westward, more than twenty years ago.

No other Métis Government and the Métis communities it represents have withstood this level of scrutiny and still proven their histories as strongly as the MNO, be it in the courts, around negotiations tables, and now with the Expert Panel’s Final Report affirmed under Métis law.

This is a powerful and definitive answer to those who have questioned and criticized the MNO.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT WAS THE MNC EXPERT PANEL?

“This Expert Panel is our way, the Métis way, to address this in a responsible, transparent, and objective way.” - Michelle LeClair, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Vice-President, October 26, 2023

The MNC Expert Panel was created in 2021 by a unanimous MNC General Assembly resolution which was, at the time, comprised of Governing Members: Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation of Alberta (OMG), Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S), and Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO). The Expert Panel was Métis Nation self-determination in action.

Each MNC Governing Member appointed a trusted Métis expert who possessed proven knowledge in relevant fields such as Métis Nation history, Métis Nation governance, and Métis Nation laws. The experts appointed a Panel Chair from amongst themselves and determined their own transparent investigative process.

The experts were mandated to work independently during the investigative process, free from political direction or interference by the Governing Member that appointed them. The Expert Panel was provided administrative support by MNC staff.

WHY DID THE MNO VOTE IN FAVOUR OF BEING INVESTIGATED?

The MNO voted in favour of creating the Expert Panel and fully participated in the Expert Panel process out of respect for the Métis Nation’s inherent and exclusive right to determine who its citizens are.

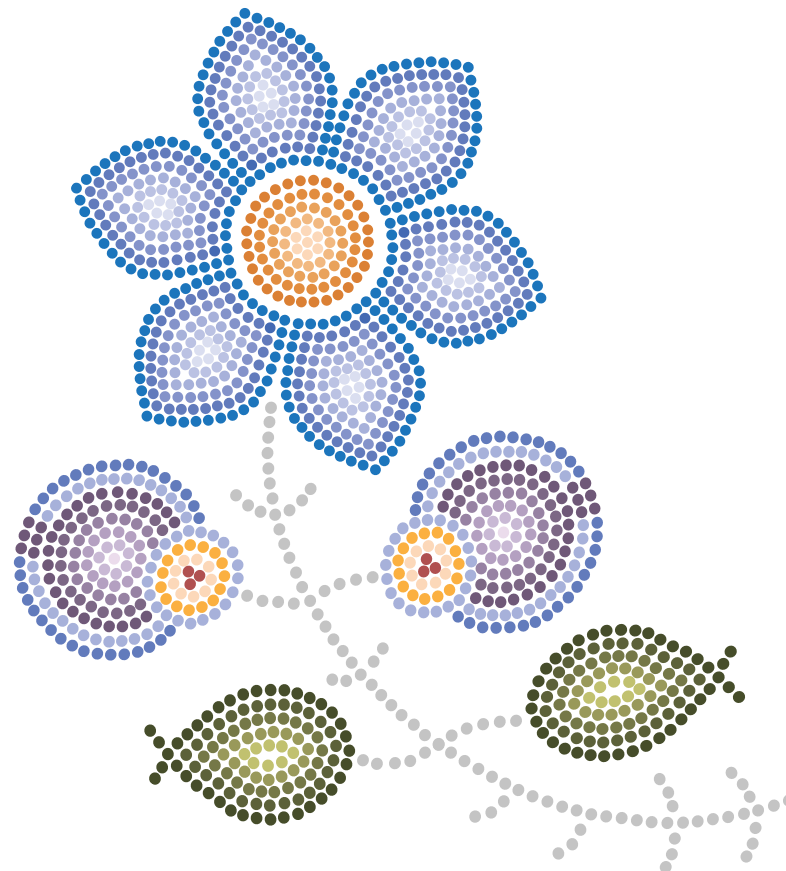
The Expert Panel process provided a fair and transparent opportunity for the Métis Nation to collectively correct the previous politically and financially motivated attempts to undermine and rewrite Métis Nation history, through an independent investigation by respected Métis experts in fields such as Métis Nation history, rights, and law.

WHAT DID THE EXPERT PANEL DO?

The Expert Panel conducted the most comprehensive evidence-based investigation of Métis Nation communities in what is now Ontario.

The Expert Panel’s two-part mandate was to investigate the MNO’s seven historic Métis communities in northern Ontario through the lenses of: 1) the Métis Nation’s National Definition, and 2) contemporary Métis governance.

During its year-long investigation, the Expert Panel gathered over 50,000 pages of evidence, heard from over 160 witnesses from across the Métis Nation including elders, youth, academics, and past political leaders, conducted field visits to each of the Métis communities in Ontario, and openly received additional submissions from any other interested party.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW IS THE EXPERT PANEL DIFFERENT THAN OTHER REPORTS?

The Expert Panel's 260-page Final Report is the result of the most credible and comprehensive evidence-based process ever undertaken to investigate Métis Nation communities.

The Final Report is the culmination of the Métis Nation's self-determined pathway—adopted through a unanimous resolution by four Métis Nation governments—to reach a definitive answer about the seven Métis communities in northern Ontario. Their findings were definitive, "...that these communities meet the parameters of the National Definition of the Métis Nation, as adopted by the Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta (now the Otipemisiwak Métis Government), Métis Nation British Columbia, and Métis Nation of Ontario in 2002 and are part of the Métis Nation Homeland."

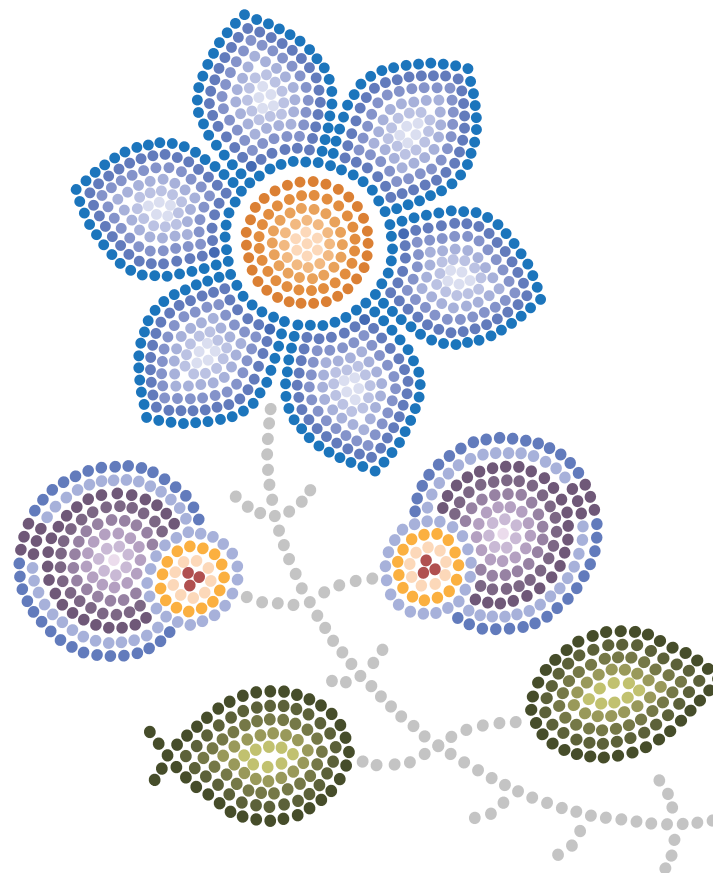
About other recent so-called reports, written by predominantly non-Métis hired consultants, the Expert Panel reviewed five reports "commissioned to challenge the position of the MNO" (listed on page 38) and voiced concerns about their research ethics, criticizing "the credibility of research reports when the author(s) have never been to the community, nor met with contemporary members. This does not adhere to traditional Métis values." These reports included:

- "An Exploratory Study of the Métis Nation of Ontario's 'Historic Métis Communities' in Robinson-Huron Treaty Territory" (2023) by Jennifer Adese, Darryl Leroux, Celeste Pedri-Spade, Sam Restoule, and Amy Shawanda for Robinson-Huron Waawiindamaagewin;
- "The 'Historic Abitibi Inland Métis Community' - Final Report" (2022) by Darryl Leroux for the Wabun Tribal Council;
- "Historic Métis Communities of Ontario: An Evaluation of Evidence" (2020) by Jennifer Adese, Darryl Leroux and Darren O'Toole for the MMF;
- An Analysis of the MNO's Recognition of Six New Historic Métis Communities: a Final Report" (2020) by Darryl Leroux and Darren O'Toole for the MMF;

- "The Sault Ste. Marie "Métis" Community and "Halfbreed Petition" (2023) by Celeste Pedri-Spade and Darryl Leroux for Robinson-Huron Waawiindamaagewin.

The Expert Panel explicitly stated that "While several reports were commissioned outside of the formal academic context, it is our belief that Indigenous communities that commission academics to conduct research that implicates the rights of Indigenous peoples should have even more of an impetus to conduct research that does not breach Indigenous research ethics principles."

The Expert Panel, in contrast, engaged with all perspectives—for and against the recognition of the seven Métis communities in northern Ontario as part of the larger Métis Nation—within their investigation. In addition to reviewing over 50,000 pages of evidence and hearing from over 160 witnesses from across the Métis Nation, the Expert Panel conducted field visits to each of the Métis communities in Ontario, questioned and critiqued each community's submissions, and invited additional submissions from other interested parties.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW WAS THE EXPERT PANEL INDEPENDENT?

The Expert Panel was the Métis Nation's way to address the connection between the seven Métis communities in Ontario and the larger Métis Nation in a responsible, transparent, and objective way. For this reason, the Expert Panel was mandated to work independently during the investigative process, free from political direction or interference by the Métis Governments that appointed them.

To fulfill this mandate, the Expert Panel had the power to request relevant documents and evidence from MNC and its Governing Members, call upon other expert witnesses to provide evidence and testimony for and against the MNO communities, accept additional submissions from any interested party, and request enabling resources from MNC to complete their work in a robust and comprehensive manner.

WHAT EVIDENCE DID THE EXPERT PANEL LOOK AT?

The Expert Panel based its final conclusions on the largest body of multidisciplinary evidence ever compiled to examine the topic of Métis Nation communities in what is now Ontario.

During its year-long investigation, the Expert Panel amassed over 50,000 pages of evidence including historical documents, video, and legal memoranda about the Métis Nation's political and legal positions in the contemporary era. They questioned over 160 witnesses from across the Métis Nation including elders, youth, academics, and past political leaders.

In keeping with [ethical research guidelines](#) when working with Indigenous peoples, they also conducted field visits to each of the Métis communities in Ontario, and considered input from respected Métis academics and other interested parties.

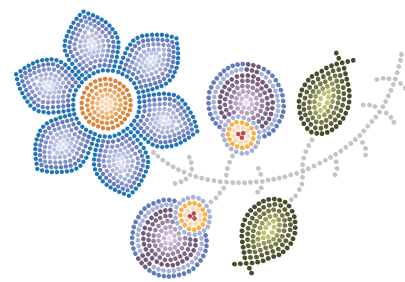
The Expert Panel was also clear that Métis communities themselves must prove their connection to the Métis Nation through robust and credible evidence showing that they meet the 2002 National Definition, stating: "if a community asserts its identity as either Métis or Halfbreed and is part of the Métis Nation, that assertion must be recognized as valid provided it is credible and evidence-based."

WHAT DID THE EXPERT PANEL CONCLUDE?

Citing overwhelming historical evidence and decades of clear recognition by contemporary Métis Nation leaders from Manitoba westward, the MNC Expert Panel concluded that "[T]hese communities meet the parameters of the National Definition of the Métis Nation, as adopted by the Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta (now the Otipemisiwak Métis Government), Métis Nation British Columbia, and Métis Nation of Ontario in 2002 and are part of the Métis Nation Homeland."

In its conclusions, the Expert Panel highlighted the large body of historical and contemporary evidence affirming enduring cultural, political and family connections between the historic Métis Nation communities in what is now Ontario and those farther west. These include clear political alliances and coordination in historic Métis Nation resistances, as well as Métis scrip records that demonstrate family connections from present-day Ontario westward.

The Expert Panel also criticized past MNC leadership and leadership at the Manitoba Métis Federation for attempting to erase parts of the Métis Nation's shared history surrounding historic Métis Nation communities in what is now Ontario through the spread of false information fueled by commissioned reports by paid academics-turned-consultants.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW WILL THE EXPERT PANEL FINAL REPORT BE IMPLEMENTED?

On March 5, 2025, the MNC Board of Governors passed a resolution acknowledging receipt of the Expert Panel Final Report. The resolution affirms the MNC and its Governing Members' support for the National Definition, as adopted by the MNC General Assembly in 2002, and the basis on which it has been adopted by Métis Governments throughout the Homeland.

In the spirit of transparency and good governance, the MNC's Governing Members, by unanimous resolution, also assigned ongoing stewardship of the Expert Panel Final Report to the MNO, to lead its archiving and implementation.

WHAT OTHER NEXT STEPS WILL THE MNO TAKE?

The MNO will continue investing in sharing the many beautiful stories of the historic Métis communities it represents in Ontario, in accessible ways that its citizens and all Canadians can connect with and be proud of.

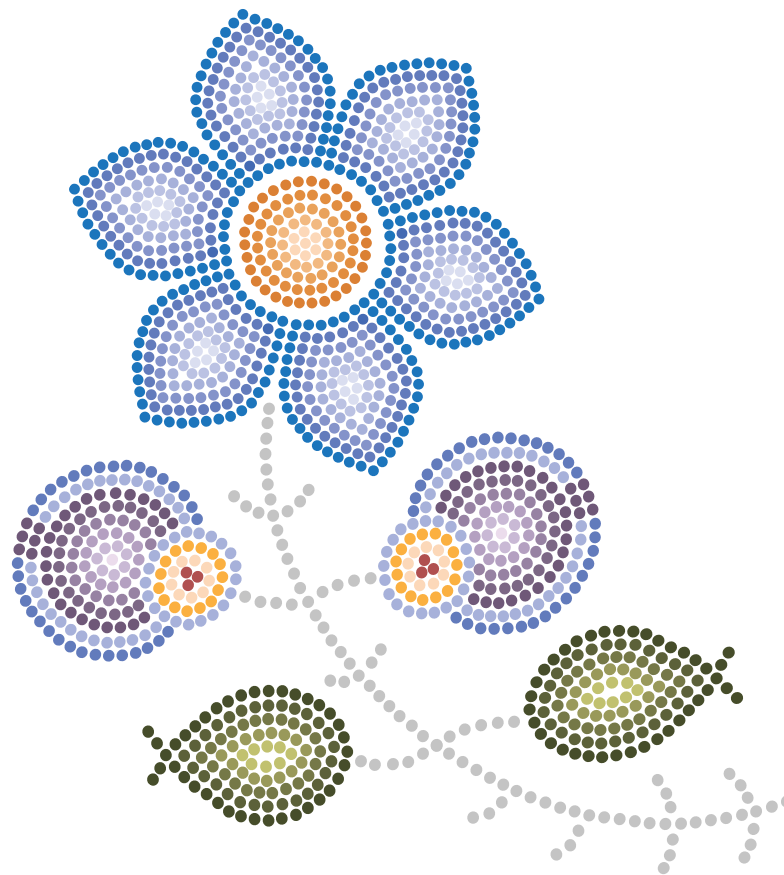
As part of these efforts, the MNO has already released its full written submissions to the MNC Expert Panel. These fully sourced submissions have been fact-checked by historians and directly answer questions about the history of the Métis Nation communities in Ontario and their enduring relationships within the larger Métis Nation. These written submissions can be accessed [here](#).

The MNO is committed to ensuring that the lack of knowledge about historic Métis Nation communities in Ontario can never again be weaponized against our citizens, or to divide the Métis Nation.

WHAT SHOULD MÉTIS NATION CITIZENS DO NOW?

With the MNC Expert Panel's independent evidence-gathering mandate now complete, we encourage Métis Nation citizens to read the Expert Panel's Final Report, which can be accessed [here](#). They are also encouraged to visit [Ontario Métis Facts](#) to learn more about historic Métis Nation communities in Ontario and to share its posts on [Facebook](#).

Our stories are who we are. Learn them, share them, and be proud of them!



Métis Nation
of Ontario 