



Office of the Treaty Commissioner

Year in Review 2020-2021

Cover Acknowledgement: Art by Kevin L. Pee-ace, a
Saskatchewan-based artist and member of the
Yellow Quill First Nation. The work is displayed in the
Office of the Treaty Commissioner

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Message from the Treaty Commissioner



The 2020-21 year provided unpredicted challenges, but also many opportunities for growth as the Office of the Treaty Commissioner team continued their public education, reconciliation, and outreach work. We use this year in review to share those challenges and successes.

As in previous years my focus as the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan continues to be increasing the

understanding of the Treaties, historically, what it means today, and how we can move towards the full spirit and intent of Treaties through reconciliation.

This year we saw our Teaching Treaties in the Classroom program be revitalized and the components moved online to be able to continue trainings that follow COVID-19 protocols. We have seen the Reconciliation groups around Saskatchewan continue to expand in the last year. The OTC has new partnerships underway piloting our new tool for monitoring reconciliation so we can measure the impacts of steps being made.

In this past year we celebrated the successes of women leaders for their honours and appointments and called attention to the need to implement the recommendations of the Final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. We celebrated the lives of Indigenous leaders and knowledge keepers, knowing their wisdom and spirit live on through their teachings.

It continues to be an honour to serve as the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan. Migwec, Tiniki, Hiy Hiy, Merci Cho, Aho, Thank you.



There is no single word to sum up the 2020-21 year. Tumultuous, frightening, wearisome. Resilient, brave, courageous and hopeful. There were many highs and sadly, many lows.

At the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, we managed as well as could when the a coronavirus outbreak was declared a public health emergency in January 2020, and then when COVID-19 became a pandemic in March 2020. Life as we knew it changed and we had to learn how to adapt in this new way of life. Providing a safe workplace for all employees has always been OTC's primary goal. We remained diligent in ensuring the health and safety of our employees, subcontractors, and partners.

We made changes in our office, and the Treaty Commissioner made a call out for homemade masks for distribution into First Nations communities, which at the time were hardest hit with COVID-19.

In this difficult time, we foraged new partnership and deepened existing relationships as people came to answer the call. The Mennonite Central Committee made reusable cloth masks. The Dental College at the University of Saskatchewan sterilized them for distribution. The OTC partnered with the Masked Makers, a group of 15 seamstresses located throughout Saskatchewan in making masks.

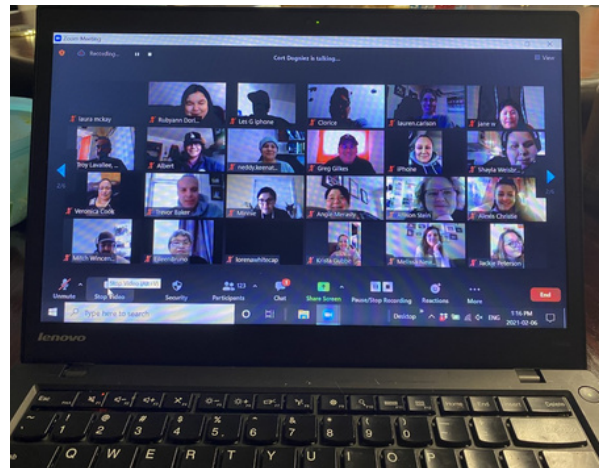
The office has seen hundreds of masks sent out to communities across the province over the last year. The Office of the Treaty Commissioner is pleased to work to be part of supporting Indigenous communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. While we remained vigilant and found new ways to conduct the work of the OTC, we look forward to 2021 with hope and enthusiasm that we can all return to some sort of normalcy

OTC Operations during COVID-19

Public Education at the OTC

Teaching Treaties in the Classroom is an educational experience which encompasses information, processes and resources to successfully teach Treaties to students. Over the Spring/Summer 2020, Teaching Treaties in the Classroom (TTIC) underwent program renewal at the OTC. It was officially launched in August of 2020 in partnership with Yorkton Tribal Council and hosted by Cote Saulteaux Nation in Treaty 4 territory. In the past the program comprised of 4 days of training whereas now the program entails 8 days of training in 2 phases.

Through the renewal process terminology was updated, specific outcomes were identified and the program delivery method was enhanced. These changes were implemented adhering to guidance provided by traditional knowledge keepers, Elders, administrators, and other professional educators. Quantified assessment data accumulated from all Treaty territories were also an essential part to upgrading this program. The program went virtual in February 2020 and was offered every Saturday for the month with more than 140 individuals attending from across Canada; SK, AB, MB, BC, ONT and QC. As a result of the positive response from the February Phase One – TTIC, there has been a demand from tribal councils, school divisions, community schools and post-secondary institutions to host the sessions.



Treaty Kit is a collection of resources, publications and videos to assist and support educators in teaching Treaties in their classrooms. OTC has been producing Treaty Resource Kits since 2007 alongside the mandatory Teaching Treaties in the Classroom training. As time progresses and learning methods change and evolve, we have reviewed any and all outdated and or broken links in the two teacher resource binders for Kindergarten to Grade Six and Grade Seven to Grade Twelve, and replaced with recommended resources. We have also added new publications to the kit.

Speakers Bureau is a collective of traditional knowledge keepers, Elders and facilitators from the various Treaty territories and language groups in the province of Saskatchewan. The bureau continues to provide sessions for the public through the online request form and email requests from strategic alliance partners/MOU partners. Since March 2020 we have been offering these sessions virtually to the public and our partners.

Since 2015 the Ministry of Corrections and Policing (CP) and OTC have an official Strategic Alliance. In July of 2020, OTC and CP renewed their strategic alliance for another 2 years, allowing for this meaningful and important relationship to continue serving the Ministry.

Public Education at the OTC

Since May 2020, the OTC has been working alongside the Treaty Land Sharing Network to support their growth across the Treaty territories in the province of Saskatchewan. Through guidance and consultation, the network aims to achieve their goals through partnership with our organization. The Treaty Land Sharing Network is a group of land title holders, farmers, ranchers, and rural people who have come together to begin the crucial work of honoring Treaties and creating safe spaces for Indigenous people to access the land. The network has hosted virtual events, land sharing events, created a logo, signage for members and a website since partnering with the OTC.

In December 2020 the Saskatchewan Polytechnic and the OTC signed an MOU to support the development of a massive open online course (MOOC) on the Indigenous people of Canada. Through the partnership they will have access to our library and archives to supplement their MOOC, as well as the Indigenization of their courses in all academic departments. Through this partnership the OTC will support the institution's Indigenization of program curriculum while the OTC Speakers Bureau will support staff professional development and student classroom learning.

Beginning in Feb. 2021, the OTC is facilitating virtual educational sessions on the legacy of Indian Residential School Survivors and their family members (survivors of survivors). The sessions are entitled; Fulfilling the Promises: Treaty Right to Education for Indian Residential School Survivors. These sessions increase awareness and understanding of the history and legacy of residential schools, as well as honor the survivors and their families. This information will have the goal of implementing an identity as a Treaty person, an understanding of the historical context of the Indian Residential School system, and a safe place to understand the implications of that legacy, for session participants. The sessions will result in online learning supports, publications and videos about residential schools and that legacy, on our website and social media.

We continue to have sessions with various educational/academic institutions, ministries, agencies, corporations, organizations, businesses, etc. The Speakers Bureau has been hosting free, online events for the public every month since April 2020, which has seen participants not only from Saskatchewan but across Canada and other countries, such as the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. Due to the online platform, and through partnerships, online requests and OTC hosted events, we have reached close to 4,000 people, not including the 2,500 people who engaged with our live, online National Indigenous Peoples Day event on June 21, 2020 which featured cultural performances, educational information, and teachings from traditional knowledge keepers, Elders and artists across the Treaty territories and from various language groups.

Public Education at the OTC

Introducing some members of the Speakers Bureau



**Peter
Nippi**



**Lyndon J.
Linklater**



**Eleanore
Sunchild**



**Joely BigEagle-
Kequahtoway**



**Joseph
Naytowhow**



**Lorne
Kequahtoway**



**Aaron
Tootoosis**

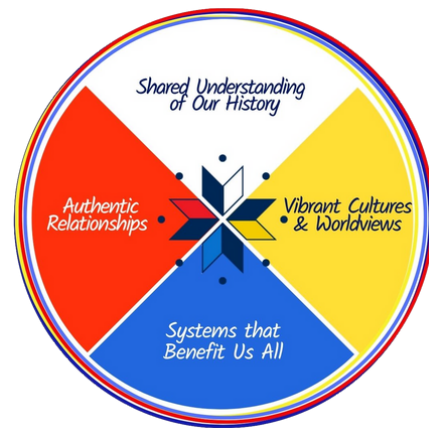


**Russell
McAuley**

Complete lineup at otc.ca

Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation

A key piece to the work of reconciliation is measuring Treaty implementation. Starting in 2014, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner has been working from the ground up to build from the grassroots a vision of successful truth and reconciliation through Treaty implementation, and a methodology that measures true progress. The intention for the measurement strategy is to provide Saskatchewan's peoples, organizations, and systems with shared ways to concretely work towards reconciliation while measuring progress according to the TRC, MMIWG, UNSDG, UNDRIP and locally sourced understandings of the future we want for our grandchildren.



In the 2020-21 year, the OTC worked hard to move forward this framework into a tool aimed at inspiring action, informing learning and increasing our collective impact. There has been considerable interest from organizations in using the OTC framework to map where they are in reconciliation and develop recommendations for action. We have done presentations to Saskatchewan government departments, funding bodies, municipal organizations, academics and non-profits and are moving ahead to finalize a number of new partnerships

From Sept. to Dec. 2020, the OTC worked closely with the City of Saskatoon to pilot a tool called the Growth Model, designed help organizations create measurable action plans for progressing their journey of reconciliation through Treaty implementation. The OTC has continued to work with the city in 2021 to find ways to measure the impact, and to assist them in implementation of their plan.

In November 2020 the OTC signed a Memorandum Of Understanding with the University of Saskatchewan's Vice Provost for Indigenous Engagement, to promote Treaty, and to ensure that more Indigenous students graduate through increased work in Treaty education, implementation, and reconciliation at the university. Part of the goal of the MOU will be the creation of an evaluation tool that will be used to measure progress throughout the university.

In March 2021, the OTC entered into a partnership agreement with the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan to share resources in the creation of a Research and Policy Manager position, to bring together OTC work on promoting and evaluating reconciliation with AFCS work on Indigenous Women's Economic Framework and Friendship Centre Action Plans.

Throughout all of this, OTC continues to support 10 Reconciliation Circles across the province. These circles bring together over 700 Indigenous and non-Indigenous community leaders, including Councillors, Chiefs, Elders, Survivors and youth with representation from First Nations and Tribal Councils, community mayors, Métis Locals, Rural Municipalities, businesses, faith groups and community organizations. While COVID-19 caused a brief pause in these gatherings in-person, the groups adapted and now meet regularly by zoom. They are growing and organizing many local public education and relationship building events.

A Year with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner



In November, the University of Saskatchewan through the Office of the Vice-Provost of Indigenous Engagement and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner signed a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that more Indigenous students graduate through increased work in Treaty education implementation and reconciliation at the university.

The Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan went to Yorkton in October to celebrate the unveiling of the storyboard history of Yorkton and the Brick Mill at the Mill site.

Eight large outdoor mounted panels have been installed on site, covering the history of Yorkton, from First Nations, through the founding of York Colony.



Jessica Sinclair didn't let COVID-19 slow down her awareness raising work.

In May, the 18-year old member of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner Youth in Service project, and put up three banners to raise awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



OTC Library and Archives

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner Library and Archives formally opened in March 2021. It was a fantastic grand opening event hosted by Lyndon Linklater with Elder Evelyn Linklater. Special guests included Lieutenant – Governor Russ Mirasty and Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre President Jesse Sylvestre. Treaty Commissioner Mary Culbertson, was also joined by former Treaty Commissioner David Arnot. After the ribbon cutting we held socially distanced Library and Archives tours.

The creation of the Library and Archives space began in early 2020. The OTC now has secured space for archival documents, secondary reports, maps, books, journals, microfilm, and oral history collection. This collection spans the creation of the OTC in 1989 and the documents collected by the first modern Treaty Commissioner Cliff Wright, to our current Treaty Commissioner Mary Culbertson. We have 120 linear metres of mobile shelving for our archival documents and 20 linear metres of cabinet space for our oral history collection of 648 audio and video recordings.

The inventory of our entire collection is being incorporated into the Saskatchewan Archives Information Network (SAIN) – a searchable database that connects all archives in the province. Members of the public can search our collection and request documents. We can provide email copies or send documents through the mail. Many people contributed to the creation of the OTC Library and Archives, including Layhton Keshane, Colby Senger, Dallas Charles, Deht'anuhzeh Noey, Marvin Netmaker and our Archives Assistant Sage Merasty. Jones Enebeli also contributed to the organization of archives and was instrumental in the creation of the document inventory.

The OTC's research component continued with the previous year's major research projects as well as ad-hoc research requests from the general public. Major research projects include Treaty medal documentation, Treaty annuity paysheet documentation, Dakota Treaty adhesion research, and most recently a research project in support of the 100th anniversary of the Thunderchild First Nation League of Indians conference. In the past year we have fielded over 50 requests from the general public. Some of these included requests for Treaty Land Entitlement documentation, which is held in our library, and requests for historical Treaty photographs. We have done research to help people and municipalities with their land acknowledgements, and fielded numerous requests for information on the Treaty Six famine and pestilence clause. And, of course we have also been able to provide resources from our Library and Archives to support the parties at the OTC Treaty Table.

Talking with the Community



FACEBOOK

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner has 2,797 Likes on Facebook, where we share news and information around Indigenous rights, Treaty implementation and Treaty Issues, and reconciliation. In a daily posting we share articles, upcoming events, and suggested ways for people to engage with their community



TWITTER

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner has 3,033 Followers on Twitter. The content that we shared was retweeted 2,450 times over the past year and had more than 1 million impressions. We share the latest news and information on Indigenous, Treaty rights and reconciliation six-plus times per day.



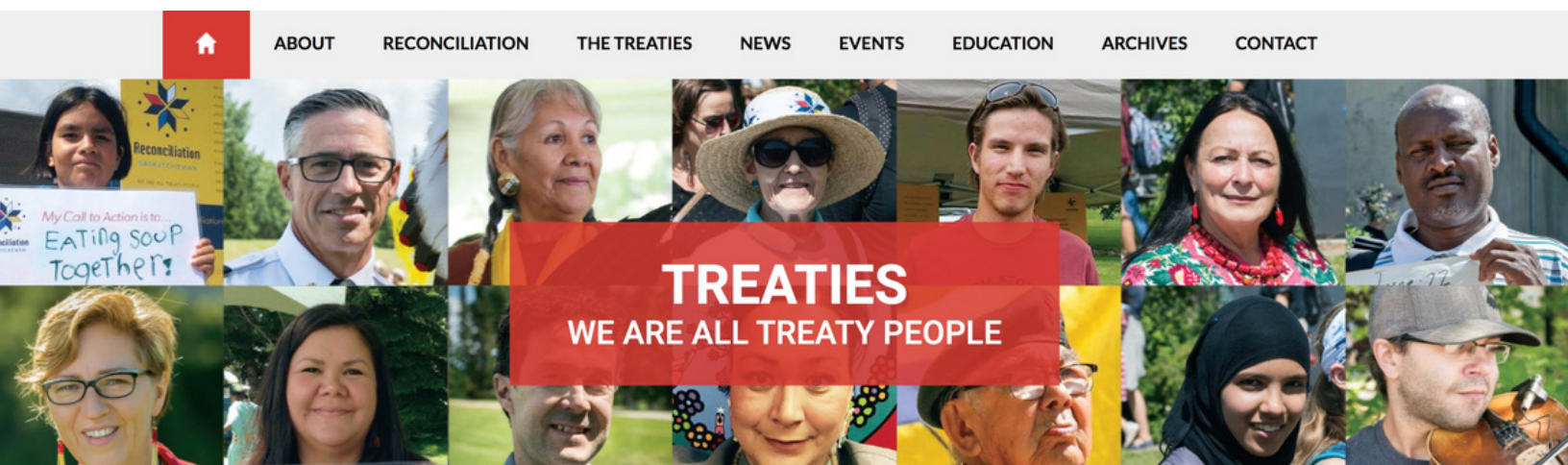
E-NEWSLETTER

Once a month the Office of the Treaty Commissioner shares information about the work of the office, upcoming events, and highlights from our social media. We also have a separate monthly email that details the latest social media. We had 1,206 subscribers at the end of March, and we continue to grow regularly



OTC.CA

At otc.ca, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner shares the latest updates on the work of the office and the team, as well as stories of Reconciliation in Action. There is a form to have the Research team support with research requests and to request a speaker from our Speakers Bureau. We also have links to resource websites and to order resources and books.



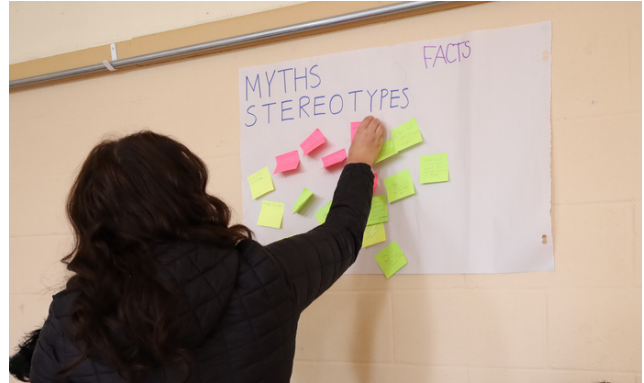
Youth Cultural Exchange

Youth from the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and newcomer youth from the Saskatoon Open Door Society, came together on Oct. 17 to learn more about each other, breakdown cultural stereotypes, and bust myths.

The youth from Canada, China, Somalia, Egypt, India, and Pakistan, got to ask real questions and understand each other's histories and stories.

Indigenous youth talked about trauma and the impact of residential schools, Orange Shirt Day, negative treatment by government, and Treaty Rights. They busted myths about the idea that Indigenous people don't pay taxes, or that communities are dangerous. Newcomer youth talked about leaving home, and the experience of coming to Canada.

They busted myths about being distant from the modern world. The youth want to continue this learning and work together and proposed more activities to follow up in the future. The cultural exchange followed COVID-19 safety protocols, keeping socially distant and wearing masks.



National Indigenous Peoples Day 2020



The Office of the Treaty Commissioner hosted a virtual National Indigenous Peoples Day event on June 21.

We were so excited to have people from across the province join us with their words and performances. The entire event was hosted live by Knowledge Keeper Lyndon Linklater, who pulled the event together wonderfully, sharing information and stories.

OTC celebrates the repatriation of the Treaty medal to Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation



The Office of the Treaty Commissioner celebrated with Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation as Treaty 6 medals were presented to the community Aug. 28.

"It was so important to be there to see a Treaty medal returned home. These medals we presented today are opening the door towards reconciliation, and another small step towards seeing full Treaty implementation," said Treaty Commissioner Mary Culbertson.

Culbertson, and the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Russ Mirasty, presented the Treaty 6 medals at a ceremony at Chief Beardy's Campsite, near St. Anne de Carlton.



The Treaty medals were taken from the communities in 1885 by Canada's military commander at the time, Frederick Middleton, who accused the chiefs of violence, and threatened to burn the reserves if they didn't comply. To ensure the survival of their people and protect them from harm the chiefs handed over the medals. The Cree Nations were labelled rebellion bands by the Canadian government and treaty annuity payments were discontinued for years.

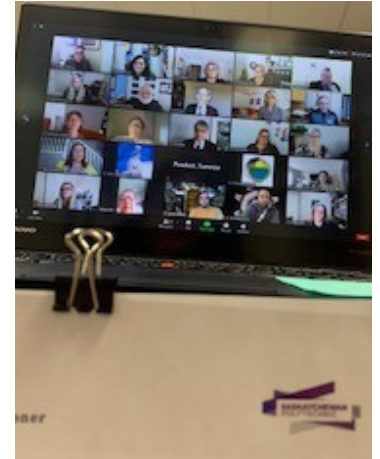
In 2001 Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation argued that the Canadian government over-stated Cree participation in the resistance to eliminate the tribal governance system. On May 6, 2015 the Specific Claims Tribunal agreed that the Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation was not disloyal, and the Crown breached its lawful obligations by stopping the payments. The Government of Canada was required to pay \$4.5 million to the Cree Nation, but the medals were not returned.

"The ceremony giving back Treaty medals is a step towards righting the historical wrongs. Having a shared understanding Canada's history, knowing these stories, is a vital part of the journey of reconciliation," Culbertson said.

The Treaty 6 medals given to Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation are re-orders of the original Treaty medals commissioned by the Crown in 1872.



The OTC 2020-2021 Year in Review Yearbook



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