



Office of the Treaty Commissioner

Year in Review 2021-2022

Cover Acknowledgement: Cover art by Jerry Whitehead, an artist of Cree descent from Peter Chapman First Nation. This work is displayed in the Office of the Treaty Commissioner

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Message from the Treaty Commissioner



It's an honour to share updates with you and to have been able to attend communities and some events as COVID has altered how we gather and how we do business. Despite the uncertainty in the world, our focus continues to be to working towards reconciliation to fulfillment of Treaty obligations and implementation through education, advocacy, and our work at the Treaty Table.

In 2021-22 the Office of the Treaty Commissioner reached thousands of people across the globe with Teaching Treaties in the Classroom workshops, online offerings, and public events like those held during storytelling month, reconciliation circles, and sessions for organizations, businesses and government with members of our speakers' bureau. Our team began travelling to communities again (following public-health protocols) to meet with leaders, survivors, youth, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers. We also shared research from our library and archives. In February we remembered Colten Boushie with a panel involving his family members, FSIN leadership, the families legal supports, the filmmaker of *nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up*, and members of the Treaty Land Sharing Network, which formed in response to his death and the following acquittal.

I remember reading the article in May about the Kamloops residential school and the bodies that had been found there. It was horrifying, heartbreaking and triggering. It is something we as Indigenous people know: that children died, that children were killed, that there were graves, that children were never seen again, and that families never knew where their child or sibling went. As the months went on we saw more and more of these devastating sites being uncovered. This began a reckoning in Canada.

The public finally learned what Indigenous people already knew, and wanted to see a change. This desire speaks to the importance of the work we do here at the OTC, ensuring everyone understands the intergenerational impacts of residential schools, the importance of Orange Shirt Day, the ongoing neglect of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people, and the steps required to work towards true reconciliation. In the following pages you will see a snapshot of the work being done, and the plans for the future. We are all working towards ensuring people understand the true history of Canada no matter how difficult the black stain on history is we must do the work now to ensure this is not going to be carried forward. We know from everyday experiences that there is still violence against women and girls and children, that there is racially motivated violence and racially motivated policy and laws that affect the quality of life for Indigenous people. Racism kills.

In the coming year we look forward to public acts of commemoration, of Treaty boundary signs to be erected firstly on Highway 11 at the Treaty boundary of Treaties 4 and 6. We will be expanding out archives space and most importantly creating an advisory circle of Treaty elders that will advise on accessibility, digitization and protection of oral histories that OTC and other organizations have collected over the decades. In October 2022 we will host an event on the emerging issue of the Duty to Consult failures and processes from across the territories. We can ensure there is a better way the nations can participate in the economy and ensure protection over resources for the next generations.

It continues to be an honour to serve as your Treaty Commissioner. Migwec, Tiniki, Hiy

- Mary Culbertson

Operations at the OTC

As the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) reaches the end 2021-22, we reflect on everything we have to be grateful for in this past year. We have made positive strides in increasing workplace staff, moving office spaces, creating a larger space for our archives, and hiring mentorship students. There have also been challenging times, as we continue navigating the pandemic to ensure we are providing a safe workplace for all employees. We have had some encouraging achievements while overcoming obstacles. Our staff, like any other office, have continued to be affected by the pandemic, by grief, illness and loss. Despite the difficulties, the OTC accomplished many activities by supporting each other along the way.

We continue the good work of promoting respect and understanding of Treaties, and supporting Treaty parties in maintaining and enhancing the Treaty relationship through continued dialogue with all of our Treaty Partnerships and Alliances.

In the fall of 2021, we increased our staff complement and hired four mentorship students in the areas of research and archives, public education, and reconciliation. Each student brought different skills and experiences with them to the organization and they were each paired with a director that mentored them while they were with OTC.

In the spring of 2022, our office relocated to another building which gave our team more room to grow. This was quite the feat and required much planning and organizing of moving both an office and an archive out of one building and setting up space in another. We tried very hard not to have too much interruption to the work at hand. This new workspace makes it easier for the team to work together more collaboratively and has had a positive effect on everyone's health and wellbeing.

Going forward, we are very happy that all of our mentees, and our archival assistant, will continue working with OTC. We look forward to 2022-23 with hope, optimism, and enthusiasm to continue the great work of our all departments at OTC.

Kinanâskomitinan (we thank you)



Public Education at the OTC

As the Office of the Treaty Commissioner continued to manage life during the COVID-19 pandemic, the public education department continued to offer events, workshops, and trainings online and in person following public health protocols.

OTC is proud to provide aspiring and seasoned educators with a learning experience encompassing information, processes and resources to successfully teach Treaties to students. We have more and more public interest for having Phase 1 as a foundation for others to start their learning journey. Teaching Treaties in the Classroom Phase One focuses on providing guidance to teach the chronology of Treaties; uphold the Spirit and Intent of Treaties; increase capacity to teach on Treaty breaches; and promote the message of resilience of Indigenous people. Virtual sessions have reached more than 900 participants.

Teaching Treaties in the Classroom continues to improve as the team looks to add more Indigenous worldview, is researching areas of culture and protocol for all culture groups of Saskatchewan, and adding land-based learnings, Teaching Treaties Outside of the Classroom.

The OTC Treaty Kits took on a new look with a smaller box as resources continue to be digitized and some of the hard copy materials are removed.

Requests for speakers from the OTC Speakers Bureau continued throughout 2021-22, with OTC Speakers Bureau fulfilling requests for virtual sessions on Treaty awareness, Indigenous worldview, reconciliation, and more. For Indigenous Storytelling month, the OTC hosted weekly online events that were attended by 70-100 people each.

As we look toward the future, the Department of Treaty Education is in the midst of developing a TTIC Phase 2, expanding knowledge on First Nations Worldview; myths and misconceptions; protocols; contemporary issues, including mental health supports to help debrief our participants, and end with organizations having the tools they need to be a successful ally.

We are reaching out to our current Strategic Alliances to further develop our relationships, while also expanding partnerships and alliances to other organizations to create successful MOU's that will benefit both parties. We look forward to Pride month with weekly Speakers reaching out to our community; and we look forward to Rock Your Roots: Walk for Reconciliation on National Indigenous People's Day, volunteering on behalf of OTC. Our vision is to continue to grow our Speaker's Bureau, including more youth speakers and speakers that will reach the province's north.

Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner continues to lead important cutting-edge work to promote Truth and Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation.

We are pleased to report that we have made significant progress on three strategies towards the vision. The OTC helped to create 10 Reconciliation Circles of Indigenous and non-Indigenous community leaders – building trust and understanding to pursue reconciliation together. Even during the pandemic, these groups have continued to meet virtually. We've developed a shared vision of successful reconciliation from the voices of thousands of grass roots people. A vision we can strive for and find hope in. This is the Vision for Truth and Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation TRTI. Also, the OTC developed and piloted a framework and process to measure progress on truth and reconciliation – for organizations, individuals, communities or governments.

This TRTI framework integrates information and recommendations from UNDRIP, the TRC, MMIWG, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In the past year we piloted a reconciliation action planning process with SaskCulture, Family Service Saskatoon and the Law Society of Saskatchewan, to map their current place in their reconciliation journey, and to develop measurable recommendations for progress. These first pilots have created great interest in this work from organizations, governments, businesses and communities.

The OTC believes this framework and process could help every organization, government and community in Saskatchewan and Canada to create and hold themselves accountable to a measurable Reconciliation Action Plan.

As we look ahead to the 2022-23 year, we're planning to spend time building our capacity to help more organizations create Action Plans for TRTI.

This includes training more facilitators, expanding our processes, and building learning resources to support organizations, communities and the needs of specific sectors (such as health, justice) to further their journeys to truth and reconciliation. Beginning in the winter of 2023 we have a number of partners ready to work with us in creating measurable action plans for reconciliation.



Since our grand opening in March of 2021 the Office of the Treaty Commissioner Library and Archives has continued to grow, both online and in space at the new OTC office. Over the past year we created an inventory of our entire collection and are now moving this inventory to an online catalog, which is part of the Saskatchewan Archives Information Network (SAIN). In the news office, the physical space has doubled in size and thanks to a grant from Heritage Canada we have added a reading room designed with enhanced COVID safety protocols.

Like many small archives in Canada, we have started to focus on digitizing our collection. In the past year we have made digital copies of our historical Treaty photographs collection and many of our primary historical documents. These are all housed onsite in an internal database and are more easily shared when we get research requests from the public.

We continue to field numerous requests for research from the public. These include requests for Treaty Annuity paylists; requests for historical Treaty photographs; historical Treaty documents; oral history transcripts; Treaty Land Entitlement documents; and historical information on specific First Nations in Saskatchewan. Larger research projects carried out by the OTC include research on landless bands like Stoney Knoll First Nation; Historic Chiefs' Treaty medals; and our primary research project has been archival research in support of ground penetrating radar projects at First Nations Indian Residential School sites.

Looking forward, the OTC Library and Archives is expanding. We have two new positions in the archives: an archives assistant who focuses on our online catalog and a digitization technician who will convert our paper collections and analog video collection to digital mediums. This summer we look to create our first Council of Elders who will guide the OTC Library and Archives on how we share our collection with the public. The council includes 8 Indigenous Elders from across the province and 2 young Indigenous people.

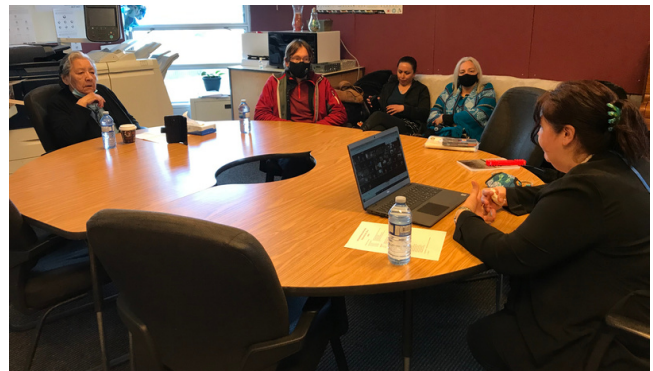
On the research side of things we are focusing on Treaty medals including documenting the histories of existing Treaty medals held by First Nations and looking for medals that are currently housed in museums and archives. We are also continuing to research landless bands, including Stony Knoll Reserve 107. Our most important research project is for Indian Residential School histories. In June of 2021 we started collecting the archival records related to Delmas (Thunderchild); St Anthony's (Onion Lake); St. Michael's (Duck Lake); and Beauval (Lac la Plonge) Indian Residential Schools. Many of these records are housed in collections of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and are written in French. We are transcribing and translating these records and making them available to First Nations conducting ground penetrating radar research and as requested.

A Year with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner



It continues to be of important to learn about residential schools and the lasting impact they had on the lives of many families. The OTC knows more people than ever are interested in being part of reconciliation. That journey needs to be grounded in truth and a shared understanding of our history. Reading about residential schools through the eyes of those who attended them is a good way to start. So we recommend books to get people started.

On Earth Day, the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan and some of the OTC team visited Canoe Lake Cree Nation. After a welcome from the teachers and students of Canoe Lake Miksiw School, the Treaty Commissioner spoke on the importance of Treaty education, as well as the history and the work of the OTC.



The Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan and some of the OTC team joined the Prince Albert Grand Council Every Child Matters Walk in Prince Albert on Sept. 29, 2021.

The walk was hosted to honour the Survivors and children impacted by the Indian Residential Schools as a lead up to the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada.

This year, OTC congratulated several Catholic schools for their installations of Treaty medals. The Treaty Commissioner spoke about a lack of Treaty knowledge in schools when she was young and how pleased she is to see that changing. "Having a medal to look at as a symbol of a relationship that was a framework for building Canada is a significant step in being good Treaty partners."

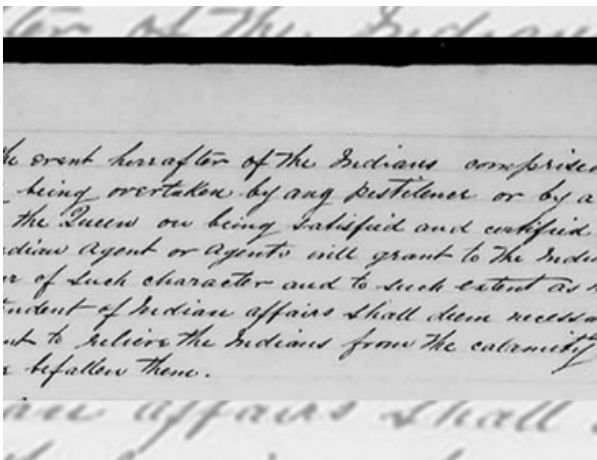


A Year with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner



The Office of the Treaty Commissioner congratulated Gilbert Kewistep for being the 2021 recipient of The Ravi Maithel Find-A-Way Award. The award is designed to honour people who accomplish a task that others thought was impossible. Gilbert's drive and support of reconciliation in Saskatchewan makes him so worthy of this recognition.

The OTC was so pleased to congratulate Eleanore Sunchild for becoming the first Indigenous person to receive the Saskatchewan Trial Lawyers Association Outstanding Lawyer award. Sunchild, a member of the OTC's speakers bureau, was honoured for her ability and drive to go beyond the call of duty and furthering justice causes for the people of Saskatchewan.



The OTC is excited to start a partnership with Eagle Feather News that will allow the office to share some of the information from the library and archives. The OTC team is writing a column to highlight collection documents including the Outside Promised document of Treaty 1; Treaty Commissioner despatches; some of our oral history collection, especially the Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan interviews; and some photographs.

This year the OTC joined the Anishinabe Nation Treaty Authority in honouring Francis Bird as they shared their new Treaty logo. ANTA shared how the creation of the logo was guided by Francis through ceremony and prayer, and his input was the most important part of bringing the Treaty logo to life. Francis passed this summer, so we honour his contributions by sharing this story and giving him credit for his hard work.



A Year with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner



In March, the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan and members of the OTC team travelled to Manitoba for the Treaty 5 Pathway to Self-Determination Meeting alongside the Treaty Commissioner of Manitoba, Loretta Ross. The two-day event featured keynotes, including by Commissioner Mary Culbertson on the Dialogue About Land, and plenary discussion on the duty to consult, principles of self-government, transfer agreements and more.



Thunderchild First Nation hosted the League of Indians of Canada Annual Convention – Centenary edition on Aug. 21, 2021. One hundred years ago, the first League of Indians Gathering took place in June 1921.



In August 2021, the OTC was pleased to host an event alongside Reconciliation Nipawin called Fulfilling the Promises: Treaty Right to Education for Indian Residential School Survivors. The Commissioner, members of the OTC speakers' bureau and youth mentors attended the event alongside Elders, Survivors, Knowledge Keepers and dignitaries.

The Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan was pleased to attend the 2021 summer solstice women's pipe ceremony and feast at Pheasant Rump Nakota First Nation. The Pheasant Rump medicine wheel was hosted and supported by White Bear and Ocean Man First Nations in partnership with Buffalo People Arts Institute and OTC.



A Year with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner

Bi-Giwen: Coming Home – Truth Telling from the Sixties Scoop

The Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan was honoured to speak at the Saskatoon opening of the exhibit Bi-Giwen: Coming Home – Truth Telling from the Sixties Scoop. The first of its kind exhibit shared the experiences of survivors, including twelve personal testimonials of strength and resilience.

Walk of Sorrow

The OTC was pleased to honour Patricia Ballantyne and other walkers of the Walk of Sorrows during an Elite Indian Relay Association Races at the end of August in Saskatoon. After hearing about the uncovering of unmarked graves at the residential school in Kamloops, B.C., Ballantyne walked from Prince Albert to Ottawa on a journey of healing.

Treaty 10 GPR Project Survivors Gathering

In August, the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan and members of the OTC team travelled to Beauval for the launch of the Ground Penetrating Radar Project Launch at English River First Nation's La Plonge Indian Reserve. This event honoured Survivors of the former Beauval Indian Residential School. Elders and drummers as well as representatives of the Catholic Church were in attendance to conduct ceremonies, prayers, and blessings of the grounds.

Reconnecting to the Grassland

In September the Treaty Commissioner and student mentor Autumn Baptiste were invited by Moosomin Nation and Parks Canada to participate in ceremony in Grassland National Park. They met with a councillor from Moosomin and taken to a sacred site to learn the oral history of the area.

Indian Residential School Survivor's Gathering

The Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan was pleased to speak at the Indian Residential School Survivor's Gathering in Regina on Sept. 21, 2021. Also representing the OTC was the director of research and archives, Sheldon Krasowski, who spoke about ongoing research.

Winter Solstice Celebration

In the cold of the December, the Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan travelled to the grounds of the Saskatchewan Legislature to participate in the Winter Solstice Ceremony, pipe ceremony and feast, alongside an Elder from Red Pheasant. The OTC supported the event hosted by Buffalo People Arts Institute by setting up our tipi.

Odaagina Nimi Governance Gathering

The OTC was pleased to attend the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation Odaagina Nimi Governance Gathering at Elk Lake Lodge and Resort in Alberta, March 19-21. Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan spoke about historical Treaties and First Nations on the second day of the event, focused on nation building.

Talking with the Community



FACEBOOK

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner has 4,139 Likes on Facebook a growth of 16 per cent in the 2021-22 year, 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 3,467 Followers on Twitter, growing 12.5 per cent during the 2021-22 year. The content that we shared was retweeted 1,635 and liked 4,558 times over the past year. We share the latest news and information on Indigenous, Treaty rights and reconciliation as well we event information six-plus times per day.



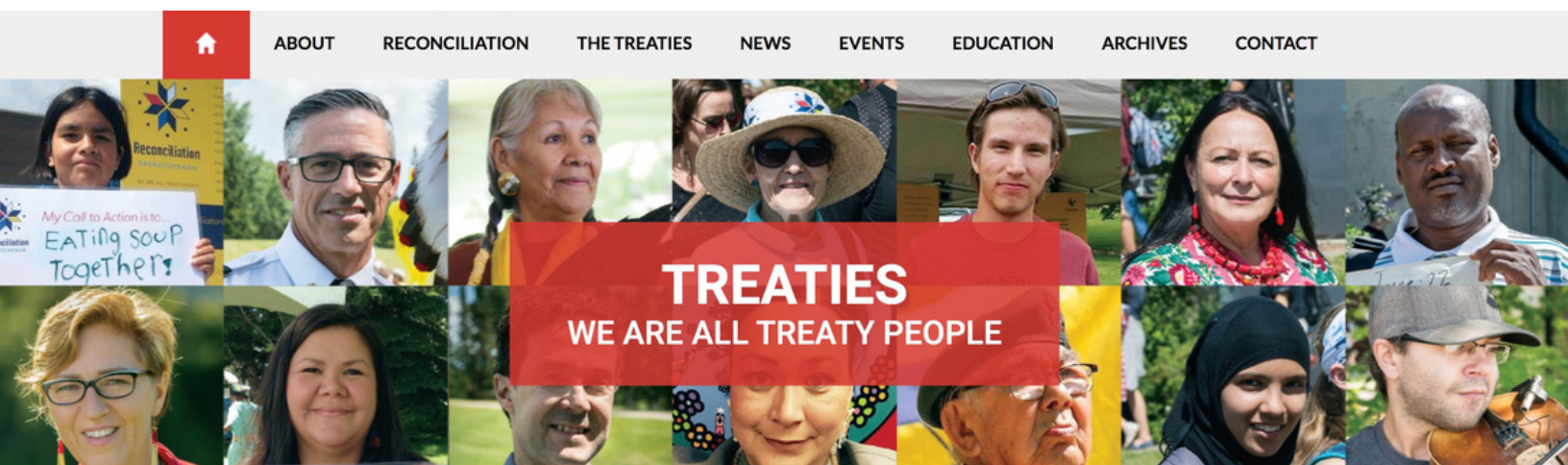
E-NEWSLETTER

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 upcoming event. We had 1,433 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.



OTC Hosts We Will Stand Up Panel

The Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan hosted an event Feb. 9 bringing together people to speak about the legacy of the Gerald Stanley verdict.

On Feb. 9, 2018 Gerald Stanley, a white Saskatchewan farmer was acquitted of killing of 22-year-old Colten Boushie.

Hubbard joined Treaty Commissioner Mary Culbertson, along with Colten's mother Debbie Baptiste, his uncle Alvin Baptiste, Elder Jenny Spyglass, lawyer Eleanore Sunchild, Treaty Land Sharing Network member Mary Smilie, and FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron for a panel discussion.

Debbie and Alvin spoke about missing their family member, the mistreatment of family by the RCMP, and their upset and anger at a lack of inquest or apology.

"Colten may be gone, but he's not forgotten, he's still in our heart," Alvin said.

Mary Smilie spoke about the creation of the Treaty Land Sharing Network as a response to the verdict.

"To bring landholders together to honour the idea of treaties," she said, emphasising that there needs to be land sharing as part of reconciliation.

"Our way forward is through the land, with the land, and understanding the land in a brand-new way."

During the event Hubbard talked about the launch of a new resource developed to support Indigenous families so they can be more informed about the legal system.

There was important discussion on rights, changes to policing, and the importance of standing together, speaking up.

"We need to heal from the generations and generations of trauma," said the Treaty Commissioner. "If we do not heal our nations, communities and people, then our treaties mean nothing. That is the work we have to do, and we have to do it together."



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