

# Office of the Treaty Commissioner

## NEWSLETTER

More available online [otc.ca](http://otc.ca)

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) is mandated to advance the Treaty goal of establishing good relations among all people of Saskatchewan. The OTC continues to work with First Nations, provincial school systems, other educational institutions and the rest of Saskatchewan to raise the awareness and understanding of Treaties in Saskatchewan.



### Upcoming Events

OTC Celebrates  
30 Years  
1989-2019

- Oct. 28 - 30 OTC: Youth in Service Southern Conference
- Oct. 26 - Feast and Round Dance Honouring MMIP
- Nov. 1 to 3 - Spirit of our Nations Powwow
- Nov. 5 to 7 - First Nations Policing and Indigenous Justice National Symposium 2019
- Nov. 6 to 7 - SICCC First Nations Language Keepers Gathering
- Nov. 22 - Office of the Treaty Commissioner 30th anniversary Round Dance
- Dec. 17 to 18 - Oceti Sakowin Treaty Conference



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### Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan

#### Mary Culbertson



The last few months has seen some reasons to celebrate and I was honoured to attend gatherings, celebrations of Treaty, the repatriation of the Red Pheasant Treaty medal.

On July 4, 2019, the stolen Treaty 6 medal was returned home to Red Pheasant Cree Nation, 134 years after it was taken. The event was attended by people from across North America.

On Aug. 28, the Treaty 6 Adhesion 1889 Commemoration Committee celebrated 130 years since the signing of Treaty 6 Adhesion. The day began by honouring the spirit and intent of Treaty with a Pipe Ceremony. There was the unveiling of the Treaty 6 Adhesion plaque and flag at Molanosa, Saskatchewan.

This year we saw the installation of the first Indigenous Lieutenant-Governor for Saskatchewan, Russ Mirasty. I was so pleased to attend the event. Our OTC staff team learned from Sheldon Krasowski, author of *No Surrender: The Land Remains Indigenous*, during one of the office professional development days. At the Treaty 4 Gathering, I was honoured with a ceremony and presentation of a blanket and paintings, and the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council presented Treaty 4 flag to fly at the court house in Fort Qu'Appelle.

Our summer students designed a Treaty re-enactment which was performed at Witchekan Lake First Nation during their Treaty Days at an event that also included the arrival of their new community bus. Also, this summer saw the Saskatchewan First Nations Summer games at Flying Dust First Nations; a big congratulations to all the athletes, chaperons and the families of the athletes.

This fall the office publicly introduced *A Vision for Truth and Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation* and shared the results of a survey. I am so grateful for the participants who took the time to provide us with their honest opinions.





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### OTC Director of Speakers Bureau

#### Amy Seesequasis

A new season is upon us and with that arrival comes change and opportunity. The crisp Autumn air provides an appreciation for the warm months we have been blessed with and a glimpse into the prairie winter that is on its way.

The forthcoming months will see a change to our bureau with an addition of a Youth Speakers Bureau, and more opportunities to engage our Saskatchewan Treaty partners in meaningful Truth and Reconciliation.



The Speakers Bureau is a collective of Knowledge Keepers from various Treaty territories and language groups across the province who share their teachings and wisdom with the public by way of the bureau's various information sharing sessions. Since June 2019 the bureau has reached over 1500 of the Saskatchewan public. That is 1500 people aware of their roles and responsibilities as Treaty people and 1500 people aware of the importance of meaningful truth and reconciliation. Our information sessions are available by request and can be booked by visiting our website. We are a non-profit organization so there may be fees associated with the services requested.

Our summer months were busy attending Treaty Days, youth gatherings/conferences, youth day camps, daycares/childcare centres, community events/ceremonies, and music/cultural festivals amongst our usual requests of educational/informational support to the general public. These past months were a wonderful time to experience all the diversity that makes this province one of vast cultures and heritages. As Treaty partners we have a responsibility to one another to respect each other's culture and beliefs. If we participate in opportunities that allow us to understand our shared history together, while identifying our commonalities and celebrating our differences, it will allow us to form authentic relationships that will foster healthy and inclusive communities reminiscent of the Spirit and Intent of Treaty.

The Speakers Bureau had the opportunity to once again sponsor informational sessions at the 2nd Annual Rural Reconciliation Educational Gathering hosted by the Prairie Rivers Reconciliation Committee. The bureau held 3 sessions; Treaties and Reconciliation, Treaty Simulation Activity and a film screening of We Were Children followed by an information session by a residential school survivor. These educational sessions aim to provide the public with an understanding of their identity as a Treaty person and enable them with opportunities to engage in meaningful reconciliation.



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### OTC Director of Speakers Bureau cont.

That meaningful reconciliation is only achieved when we explore the past and the truth of that history, whether positive or negative. Exploring truth will allow reconciliation to unfold into safe and inclusive communities and a society that honours all their Treaty partners. Justice Murray Sinclair said that we can't have reconciliation without the truth; that it isn't about your responsibility or guilt but your ability to understand the real issues caused by the true history. "I really don't care if you feel responsible for the past. The real question is do you feel a sense of responsibility for the future because that's what this is all about."

These opportunities to engage in meaningful truth and reconciliation will be further promoted with the enhancement of our Speakers Bureau to include 10 Saskatchewan youth with a vision for furthering reconciliation in their communities. Please stay tuned to our website and social media for updates on this exciting initiative.



On Oct.1, Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan Mary Culbertson spent the day at Mother Theresa school with Buffalo People Arts Institute and students.

They did an honour song on the first buffalo hide drum they made, and Culbertson participated in scrapping the buffalo hide.

"It was an amazing learning experience and hope to come back again," she said.



Buffalo People Arts Institute is about sharing traditional Indigenous teachings and knowledge and nurturing it every day so our culture thrives.



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### OTC Director of Education

#### Brenda Ahenakew

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner continues to see the growth of Teaching Treaties in the classroom, and more educators attended workshops, during the summer and early fall of 2019. In September alone, we gave information and training sessions, as well as introductions to the OTC Treaty Kit for the University of Saskatchewan Librarians, The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology, Cumberland College, and on Red Earth First Nation. In August the OTC alongside the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation hosted the Treaty Catalyst Teacher training, with teachers from Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba.



More schools are striving to raise the Treaty flag and install replica Treaty medals in their buildings. We've recently celebrated raisings and installations at St. Andrew's College at the U of S Campus, St. Marguerite School, Saskatoon French School, Cardinal Leger School, St. Lorenzo School, and E.D. Feehan.

To see all the resources available to educators and the public, please visit [otc.ca](http://otc.ca)



#### **Featured Teacher: Cort Dogniez**

Cort Dogniez is a proud Métis man born and raised in Saskatoon. Cort worked for Saskatoon Public Schools as a classroom teacher for 23 years and then as the Coordinator for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Education for nine years. He is currently in the position of the Métis Education Program Leader based at St. Michael Community School but available to all Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

His role supports teachers as they connect the curriculum to Métis and First Nations history and culture while engaging the community in meaningful ways. He has also single-handedly created a Metis display in his school that rivals a museum.



Cort has also been a key workshop "Teaching Treaties in the Classroom" facilitator for the OTC for the past 10 years. He delivers workshops to teachers that arm them with knowledge and resources to go forth into the classroom in a knowledgeable and respectful way. In his role he also maintains a log of "recommended web resources" as a very useful tool for teachers. In the Spring of 2019, Cort received an Inspire - Guiding the Journey national award for his work as an educator and leader. We are so pleased to work with Cort!



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### OTC Director, Reconciliation and Community Partnerships

Rhett Sangster



The Office of the Treaty Commissioner and Reconciliation partners in 10 regions across the province in September introduced a made-in-Saskatchewan Vision for Truth and Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation.

OTC has been working with partners since 2014 to develop the Vision for Reconciliation. In this process, we've asked thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens from Saskatchewan about the reconciliation story they'd like to tell in a generation. The vision was created based on feedback from community leaders, Elders, Residential School Survivors, and the public.

Saskatchewan residents have told us that truth, Reconciliation and the Treaty relationship is about walking together on a journey to create a new, shared future for our children and grandchildren. They've told us that it involves four overlapping and continuous areas of work:

#### Shared Understanding of Our History

- We will understand and honour the history of this land, including past and present wrongs
- We will have respectful relationships with our ancestors and with the land
- Individuals, families, communities and nations will be strong and healing

#### Authentic Relationships

- Strong relationships, partnerships and trust will exist among all people
- We will have greater skills for communicating and managing conflicts

#### Systems that Benefit Us All

- We will have quality of life for all and systems will reject racism
- We will have representative leadership and workforce
- Treaty promises and Indigenous sovereignty will be honoured

#### Vibrant Cultures & Worldviews

- Our cultures and languages will be strong; worldviews respected
- Our social experiences will be woven together; we share and learn from each other

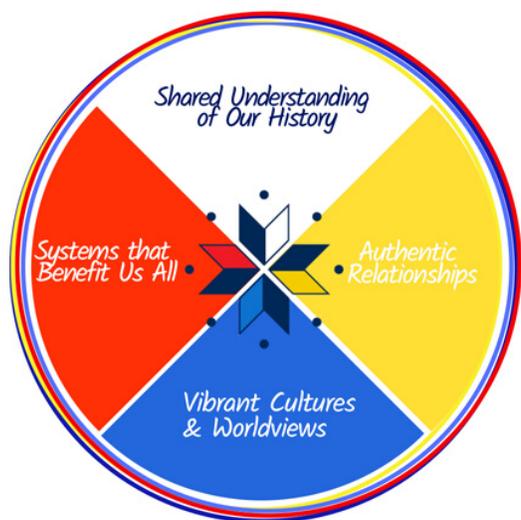


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### OTC News



#### Remembering a former Treaty Commissioner

It is with heavy heart that the Office of the Treaty Commissioner acknowledges the passing of one of the former Treaty Commissioners of Saskatchewan, Hon. Bill McKnight.

"Bill McKnight understood the importance of land and the role of economic independence in Reconciliation. His work on the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework allowed for more economic opportunities for First Nations," said Mary Culbertson, current and fifth Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan.

"He worked to further the understanding that we are all Treaty people, and that economic partnerships and livelihood benefit us all. He will be missed,"

McKnight was Saskatchewan's third Treaty Commissioner, holding the role from 2007 to 2012. He will be remembered for his work supporting Indigenous communities.



#### Measuring Reconciliation

While the OTC's Reconciliation Vision puts forward a common agenda for the future, we also need to know where we are right now, says Rhett Sangster.

As part of the OTC's efforts to measure progress on Truth and Reconciliation through Treaty Implementation, we commissioned a telephone survey of over 3,000 residents from throughout the province.

In the survey results we saw an acknowledgement among the majority of respondents that problems exist in our province, including the presence of racism, inequities in our systems, and poor relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. At the same time we see there is a feeling that relationships are improving and that reconciliation is both important and possible.

For the full results of the survey see [tiny.cc/OTCReconciliationSurvey](http://tiny.cc/OTCReconciliationSurvey)



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### Poundmaker exonerated

On May 23, Chief Poundmaker was exonerated, 130 years after he died.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was at Poundmaker Cree Nation to offer an apology from the Government of Canada.

Amy Seesequasis, the OTC Director of Speakers Bureau, attended the ceremony.

"I was so happy to be there and so proud. I get emotional when I talk about it because I shared that with my family and forever we will remember that moment when Indigenous Treaty partners were recognized," she said.

"It was so beautiful, I cried through that whole ceremony because it meant so much to me as an Indigenous person, as Treaty 6, having children that come from Poundmaker and come from a family that are decedents of him."

In his speech, Trudeau said, "The Government of Canada recognizes that Chief Poundmaker was not a criminal, but someone who worked tirelessly to ensure the survival of his people, and hold the Crown accountable to its obligations as laid out in Treaty 6."

"This is that moment of real truth and reconciliation because our prime minister, our leader of this country took it upon himself to recognize that legacy and do something about it," she said.

(Thank you to Arvid Kuhnle for the images from the Chief Poundmaker exoneration ceremony)

