



We Speak for the Land

**A Summary Report of Discussions
Under the Treaty Strategy (2018)**

**“We speak for the land, for the fliers,
for the crawlers, for the fish, for the
four legged, the rodents and tiniest
of all. We speak for them under
creation because that responsibility
was given to us ... ”**

— Speaker, Northern Regional Treaty Forum



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Note: The numerical footnotes referenced throughout the report will be read at the point where they are cited.





Bone Lake, Haliburton, Ontario.



Reconciliation Tree

As part of the Government of Ontario's journey of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is asking people across the province what reconciliation looks like for them and inviting them to share their hopes and ideas.

The Reconciliation Tree travelled to a number of the Treaty Forums. All forum participants were encouraged to share their hopes and comments. Selected contributions are highlighted throughout this report.¹

Share a digital hope at Ontario.ca/ReconciliationTree.²

Hyperlinks for all footnotes are provided on page 46.

1 A full list of Reconciliation Hopes from the forums is included as an appendix in the facilitator's report entitled *Sharing Indigenous Perspectives: Treaties in Ontario Summary Report*.

2 Ontario and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) websites were provided as an additional resource for forum participants.

Reconciliation Tree at *The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples* launch event.





Northern Regional Treaty Forum



1. Introduction

The 2014 Ontario Budget and the mandate letter to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (as the ministry was then called) committed to moving forward with a Treaty Strategy that would³:

- promote constructive engagement with Indigenous communities
- revitalize treaty relationships
- promote improved socio-economic outcomes for Indigenous people

To shape this commitment and to ensure that Indigenous perspectives were heard, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation engaged an independent Indigenous facilitator to lead forum discussions with Indigenous peoples across Ontario. The forums invited members from Indigenous communities and organizations from across the province to share their perspectives on treaties, as well as the concept of treaty relationships in a contemporary context.

Each forum was open to all participants who chose to attend. Approximately 300 people in total attended the forums to share their individual perspectives. The forum discussions included:

Northern Regional Treaty Forum; Thunder Bay, Ontario; January 10, 2017

- Robinson Superior, Treaty 3, Treaty 5 and Treaty 9 participants included Elders, community leaders and representatives, organizations and youth.

Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum; Toronto, Ontario; February 7, 2017

- Participants included Elders/Senators, youth, community and subject-matter leaders and female leadership from many Indigenous communities and organizations.

Southern Regional Treaty Forum; Hamilton, Ontario; February 21, 2017

- Robinson Huron, Pre-Confederation and Williams Treaty participants included Elders, community leaders and representatives, organizations and youth.

Métis Treaty Awareness Discussions

- Participants included Métis community leaders and representatives, Elders/Senators and youth.
- Facilitated discussion with the Red Sky Métis Independent Nation; Thunder Bay, Ontario; January 11, 2017.
- Facilitated forum with the Métis Nation of Ontario; Toronto, Ontario; March 16, 2017.

Participants across all forums commonly stated that treaties were signed to keep peace and to share resources. Participants discussed what this idea might mean for the people of Ontario and the Government of Ontario, particularly in this time of reconciliation.

The facilitators took handwritten notes and produced a facilitator's report, from which

3 Ontario Budget 2014: *Fostering a Fair Society* website, <<http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2014/bk3.pdf>>; and 2014 Mandate letter: *Aboriginal Affairs*, <Ontario.ca/page/2014-mandate-letter-aboriginal-affairs>.



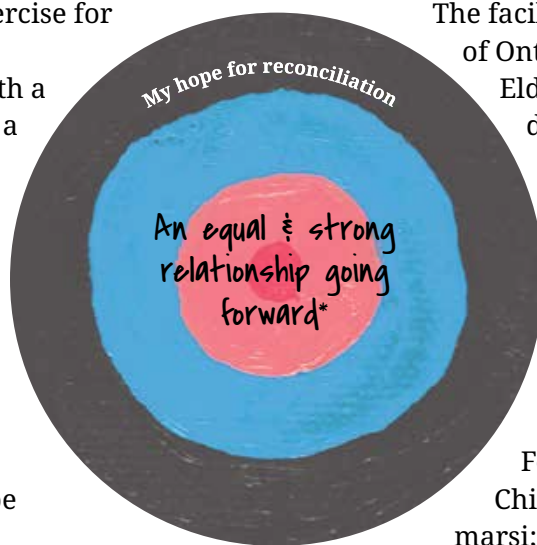
this report was drawn.⁴ In consultation with the independent facilitator, each forum was designed as a culturally appropriate safe space and as a listening exercise for representatives of the Government of Ontario, with a focus on the final report as a discussion tool for everyone.

As part of the facilitated discussions, participants were asked to think about and comment on community wellness and sustainability, relationships, and land.

Since this report would be shared, it was decided that

representatives of the Government of Ontario should attend as observers only and should not take notes or speak during the forums.

The facilitators and the Government of Ontario wish to thank the Elders, Senators, prayers, drummers, singers, and all the speakers, knowledge keepers and participants who so generously gave of their time and wisdom. To each person who left their community and travelled great distances in the wintry months of January, February and March, Chi miigwetch; nia:wen; marsi; thank you.



* Subsequent hopes are translations of this hope.

⁴ All agenda speaker and participant quotes and references can be found in the facilitator's report, entitled *Sharing Indigenous Perspectives: Treaties in Ontario Summary Report*. A copy of this

report, including agendas, discussion guides, facilitator and speaker biographies, as well as summaries and direct materials from speaker presentations, is available upon request. Visit [Ontario.ca/treaties](https://ontario.ca/treaties).



Southern Regional Treaty Forum



Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum



Northern Regional Treaty Forum



Purpose of the Document

The purpose of this report is to summarize what was expressed at the treaty forums, to share Indigenous perspectives, and to raise awareness of the treaties in Ontario.

This report can be used as a discussion tool to introduce and expand on existing treaty knowledge and to facilitate further discussion and work. It represents a master summary of the community voices whose wisdom moves us further along on our journey to reconciliation.

The resources found in the Appendix of this report offer additional avenues for treaty awareness and teaching tools created by Indigenous partners or through partnerships with the Government of Ontario.

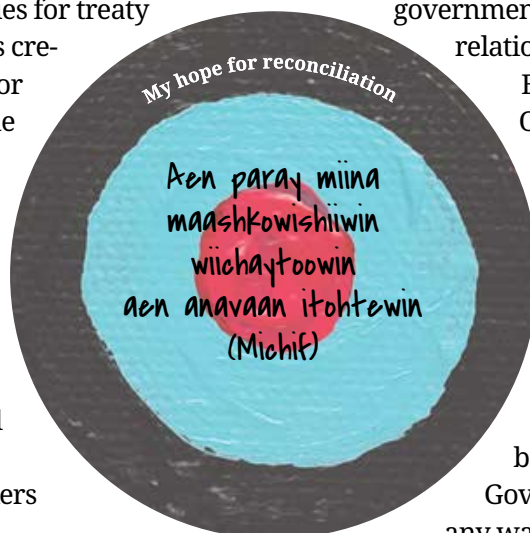
Limitations

This report summarizes what was expressed by participants at the treaty forums. The views expressed during the treaty forums are those of the individual speakers and should not be taken

or interpreted as binding on or limiting any one community or organization in any way.

The Ontario government's role in these forums was limited to organizing and funding the forums. The Government of Ontario produced this report based on the independent facilitator's report of the treaty forums entitled *Sharing Indigenous Perspectives: Treaties in Ontario Summary Report* (available upon request, see footnote 4). Representatives of the Government of Ontario attended the forums as observers and to listen to the speakers. They did not participate in any other way or share the government's views on treaties and treaty relationships during the forums.

Except for Government of Ontario websites, the content of this report is not intended to reflect the views of the Government of Ontario. Nothing in this report should be interpreted as an admission by the Government of Ontario, and this report should not be interpreted as limiting the Government of Ontario's rights in any way. ●



2. Understanding Treaties

Although no one definition of treaty was offered, diverse understandings were shared at each forum session. This supported an understanding of treaties from First Nation and Métis participants' perspectives.

"The meaning of the treaty is not just hunting and fishing; in terms of the administration of rights, non-natives see legal rights, First Nations view treaty from the perspective of fairness.

What does treaty mean? Aboriginal rights predate the time of contact with the settler, whereas treaty rights are identified by treaty. In sharing perspectives, we should consider the national, community and personal view of treaty.

There must be a convergence in thinking about treaty where Western scientific knowledge of laws, principles and paradigms meets Aboriginal wisdom of the sacred, holistic systems, cycles and ceremonies. This convergence creates a true partnership."

— Speaker, Northern Regional Treaty Forum

The Governments of Canada and Ontario, and the courts understand treaties between the

Crown and Indigenous peoples to be solemn agreements that set out promises, obligations and benefits for both parties.⁵ In some cases, agreements predate the Confederation of Canada. The forum discussions focused on treaties between Indigenous peoples and the Crown, and did not include many other treaties developed between Indigenous nations.

As was recognized during the Northern Forum, "First Nations regard treaties as an essential part of peoples living peaceably together; each party in a treaty has equal status; each party has duties and obligations to the other. Treaties exist, and are renewed, created and supported today."⁶

Treaties in Ontario

"Treaties are powerful. Being Anishinabe and being custodians — this empowerment is always within us. We signed in the best interest of Nations within Treaty 3."

— Participant, Northern Regional Treaty Forum

Ontario is covered by at least 40 treaties and other agreements signed between 1781 and 1930.⁷

Treaties between the Crown and Indigenous peoples were negotiated and signed with the



5 INAC's website 'Treaties with Aboriginal People in Canada,' <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100032291/1100100032292>>.

6 From *Sharing Indigenous Perspectives: Treaties in Ontario Summary Report*.

7 From the Ontario 'Treaties' website Ontario.ca/treaties, which also notes that an Algonquins of Ontario land claim is a treaty currently being negotiated.



intent of delivering mutual benefits. From the perspective of some First Nations participants, the use of the English language in the treaty process created issues of miscommunication.

“Despite the promise of the early treaties, including the Two Row Wampum of respectful Nation to Nation relationships, Indigenous people became the target of colonial policies designed to exploit, assimilate and eradicate them. Based on racism, violence and deceit, these policies were devastatingly effective. They disempowered individuals and disenfranchised entire communities.”⁸

In each forum, speakers with knowledge of specific treaties were invited to share their knowledge. The following section includes descriptions of the treaties discussed.

Pre-Confederation Treaties in Ontario

Following the War of 1812, industrialists began to explore the north shores of Lake Huron and Lake Superior for potential resource extraction. As a result, the Crown began to award mining patents. This served to be an important impetus for making treaty. In 1850, two treaties were negotiated and signed for the north shores of Lakes Superior and Huron: the Robinson Superior Treaty and the Robinson Huron Treaty.⁹

Robinson Superior Treaty

The Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850 was entered into in September 1850 at Sault Ste. Marie. Representing Her Majesty the Queen was former government commissioner of public works William Benjamin Robinson

⁸ Message from the Premier in ‘The Journey Together: Ontario’s Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples’ website, Ontario.ca/page/journey-together-ontarios-commitment-reconciliation-indigenous-peoples.

⁹ From *Sharing Indigenous Perspectives: Treaties in Ontario Summary Report*. More information is available on INAC’s website ‘The Robinson Treaties (1850) by Robert J. Surtees,’ <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028974/1100100028976>.

(thus the name of the treaty). Chiefs and principal men of Ojibway communities signed.¹⁰

The Robinson Superior Treaty speaker at the Northern Regional Treaty Forum shared the following:

“The terms of the Robinson Superior Treaty include the following:

‘... and further to allow the said Chiefs and their tribes the full and free privilege to hunt over the territory now ceded by them and to fish in the waters thereof as they have heretofore been in the habit of doing, saving and excepting only such portions of the said territory as may from time to time be sold or leased to individuals, or companies of individuals, and occupied by them with the consent of the provincial government.’

Signatories to the Robinson Superior Treaty have very different views today on what the treaty text says and its meaning. One cannot interpret the treaty without consideration for perspective. For example, ‘on the land’ is how one may view ‘my culture.’ The land and the treaties are not concepts that simply create boundaries but ‘the land’ means ‘the earth and all of its sacredness.’ Further, boundaries do not mean much because of the migratory nature of the people at the time.”

Robinson Huron Treaty

This treaty, also negotiated on behalf of the Queen by William Benjamin Robinson, includes 17 First Nations on the

shores and interior of Lake Huron.¹¹

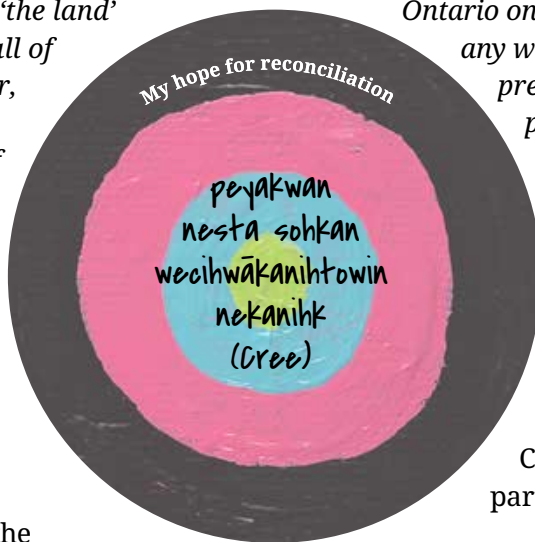
At the Métis Nation of Ontario Forum, one speaker stated that records from this treaty show that the First Nation Chiefs advocated on behalf of those identified as ‘half breeds’ in the area, as demonstrated in Robinson’s diary entry for September 9, 1850:

“Shinguacouse and Nebenaigoching’s came later that day, objected to the sign [sic] unless I pledged to Government to give the half breeds [sic] mentioned in the list handed to me free grant of 100 acres of land. I confirmed certain old residents in the free & full possession of their lands on which they now reside. I told them I had nothing to do with anybody but the Indians & could not make a promise of land.”

The current Robinson Huron Treaty Chiefs met before the Treaty Forum began and asked that the following collective message be brought on behalf of their territories and peoples:

“Nothing stated, presented or inferred by individual presenters or collectives at the Southern Treaties Forum in Hamilton, Ontario on February 21, 2017, will in any way be misconstrued or interpreted as the official collective position of the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850. We view the Southern Treaty Forum discussions as non-prejudicial.”¹²

At the Southern Regional Treaty Forum, the Robinson Huron Treaty Chiefs shared the following as part of a longer statement:



¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Statement of the Robinson Huron Treaty Chiefs to the Southern Regional Treaty forum, from *Sharing Indigenous Perspectives*:

Treaties in Ontario Summary Report, available upon request. Visit Ontario.ca/treaties.



Northern Regional Treaty Forum



Southern Regional Treaty Forum



- *Robinson Huron Treaty First Nations are an unextinguished entity*
- *The Robinson Huron Treaty (RHT) of 1850 is a pre-confederation treaty.*
- *Pre-confederation treaties are legally binding agreements between the Crown and First Nations.*
- *Canada and Ontario as administrators of this treaty have many inherited obligations.*
- *On January 26 and 27th, 2017, the Robinson Huron Treaty Chiefs met in Garden River First Nation and discussed*

the Southern Treaties Forum taking place in Hamilton on February 21, 2017.

- *As a result, the Robinson Huron Treaty Chiefs have asked that we bring forward this collective message on behalf of our territories and Peoples.*

Post-Confederation Treaties in Ontario

Treaty 3

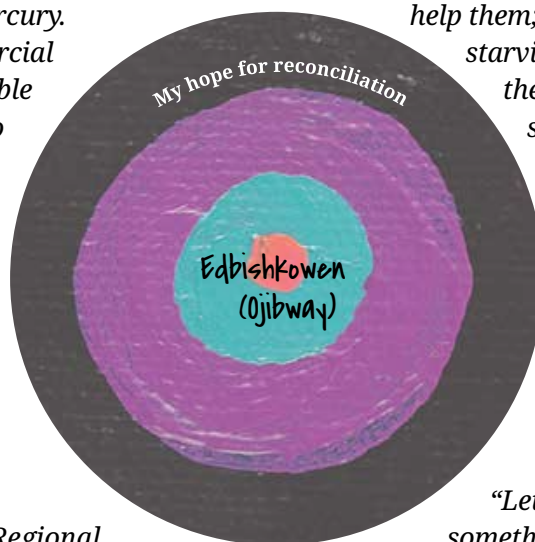
Treaty 3 was entered into on October 3, 1873, by the Dominion of Canada and the 'Saulteaux Tribe of Ojibway Indians' after three years of negotiations. It covers 14,245,000 hectares and includes most of the North-West Angle of the

Lake of the Woods.¹³ In 1875, the “Half-Breeds of Rainy River and Lake” signed an adhesion to Treaty 3.

One Elder at the Northern Regional Treaty Forum, whose great-grandfather was present for the signing of Treaty 3, shared that in the 143 years since the signing, the environmental integrity of the land has changed drastically and that the health of the water, the fish, the animals, the trees and the people have all been compromised.

“At Wabaseemong Independent Nation, which is part of Treaty 3, the people cannot drink the water because the English Wabigoon water system was contaminated with mercury. As a result, the commercial fishery is no longer viable but money continues to be spent on the sport fishery. Fish was an important element of the food supply but today the people are told not to eat the fish anymore. Much of the environment is not well.”

— Speaker, Northern Regional Treaty Forum



the northern areas of both Manitoba and Ontario into treaty. While most of the territory covered by Treaty 5 includes central and northern Manitoba, the Deer Lake, North Spirit, Pikangikum, Poplar Hill and Sandy Lake First Nations within Ontario are also adherents to Treaty 5.¹⁴

During a presentation on Treaty 5 at the Northern Regional Treaty Forum, a speaker stated that one of the treaty's main purposes is to offer protection for the land. It was expressed that hunting, trapping and fishing continue to be important in these regions.

“At the time of Treaty 5, the people were starving and heard that government could help them; people were hungry and starving and that's what brought them into treaty. They were starving but their spirits were strong. Communities are sad today because the young people are suffering.”

“We must listen to the Elders for help — to restore their confidence — they still have much wisdom to offer.”

“Let's not just talk — let's do something together.”

— Participants, Northern Regional Treaty Forum

Treaty 5

Treaty 5 originated in two historical processes. The first process took place from September 1875 to September 1876, and involved many of the Saulteaux and Swampy Cree people around Lake Winnipeg in the province of Manitoba. In 1908, a series of adhesions to Treaty 5 brought a number of Saulteaux and Cree people from

Treaty 9

Treaty 9, also known as the James Bay Treaty, was signed in 1905 and 1906 (with adhesions made in 1929 and 1930) between the Dominion of Canada and a number of Ojibway and Cree First Nations in Northern Ontario.¹⁵

¹³ More information on Treaty 3 can be found on the INAC website 'Treaty Guide to Treaty No. 3 (1873),' <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028667/1100100028669>>.

¹⁴ More information on Treaty 5 can be found on the INAC website

'Treaty Guide to Treaty No. 5 (1875),' <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028692/1100100028693>>.



Southern Regional Treaty Forum

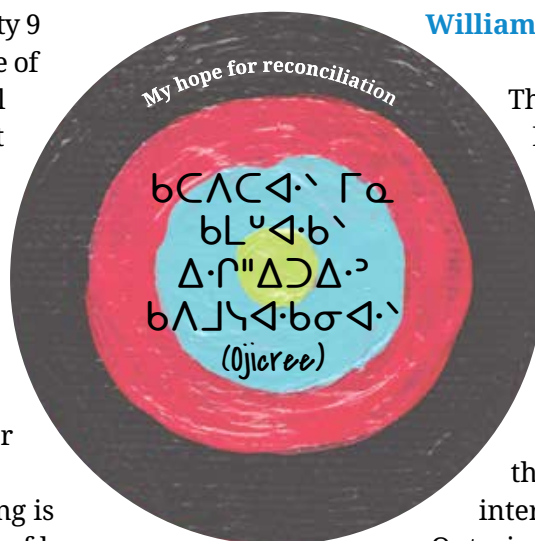
Some participants from Treaty 9 explained that the knowledge of this treaty is found in the oral history of the people and that the purpose of becoming signatories was to provide some protection against unfettered access to natural resources on the land.

At the Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum in Toronto, a speaker from the James Bay spoke about Treaty 9. The following is excerpted from a summary of her presentation:

"People were moved off the land, where they had space to live and practise their traditional way of life, onto reserves which were foreign to them. The Cree people always had a sacred relationship with the land but agreed to share the land with newcomers through the signing of Treaty 9; for this, they receive \$4.00 every year to the present day."

The signing of Treaty 9 was viewed as a ceremony by the people, a ceremony that was witnessed by the Creator. Tobacco was offered to acknowledge the spirit. However, we need to understand the historic abuses we endured to understand what has influenced addictions etc. among our people. Our problems have historical roots so if individuals are on a healing journey today they need to know what happened to the people first ... learn the truth."

— Speaker on the Traditional Role of Cree Women, Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum



Williams Treaties

The seven Williams Treaties First Nations are signatories to various 18th and 19th century treaties that covered lands in different parts of south-central Ontario. After these pre-Confederation treaties were signed, the First Nations maintained that they continued to have an interest in other lands in central Ontario, known as their northern hunting grounds. These lands had not yet been addressed through treaty and were increasingly being subject to encroachment. To address these outstanding issues, new treaties (called the Williams Treaties) were signed between the seven First Nations and the Crown in 1923.¹⁶

"Are we the only ones who view these as sacred?"

— Speaker, Southern Regional Treaty Forum

"If this is a relationship, then why are we the only ones doing all the talking?"

— Participant, Southern Regional Treaty Forum

"Can you sign something if you cannot read it?"

— Participant, Southern Regional Treaty Forum

15 More information on Treaty 9 can be found on the INAC website 'Treaty Guide to Treaty No. 9 (1905-1906),' <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028855/1100100028857>>.

16 From Ontario Newsroom, Williams Treaties Negotiations

Background, <<https://news.ontario.ca/mirr/en/2017/03/negotiations-with-the-williams-treaties-first-nations-toward-a-negotiated-resolution-of-the-aldervil.html>>.



Wampum

Participants in the Southern Regional Treaty Forum explained the concept of wampum during the session. They explained that to record the understanding of the treaty parties, the Haudenosaunee created wampum belts.

Some of the earliest belts, dating back hundreds of years, still survive today.¹⁷

The Wampum Protocol in Treaty Making

speaker explained that in the Guswentah (Two Row Wampum), one row of purple wampum represents the Haudenosaunee; the other row represents the settlers. Around these rows are three white rows, which represent the principles of friendship, trust and respect.

“Contrast these themes of treaty making with the ‘doctrine of discovery’ and the operating assumption of the Crown: that they own the

¹⁷ From *Sharing Indigenous Perspectives: Treaties in Ontario Summary Report*.



Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum

land. For us this is implausible, people do not own the land; the land holds us.”

— Speaker, Southern Regional Treaty Forum

“The 24 Nations Belt is a symbol of what was communicated at the Treaty of Niagara — nations sent runners to invite a great gathering at the Crooked Place (i.e., Niagara Falls). The Treaty of Niagara 1764 saw 2,000-3,000 leaders gather. It would

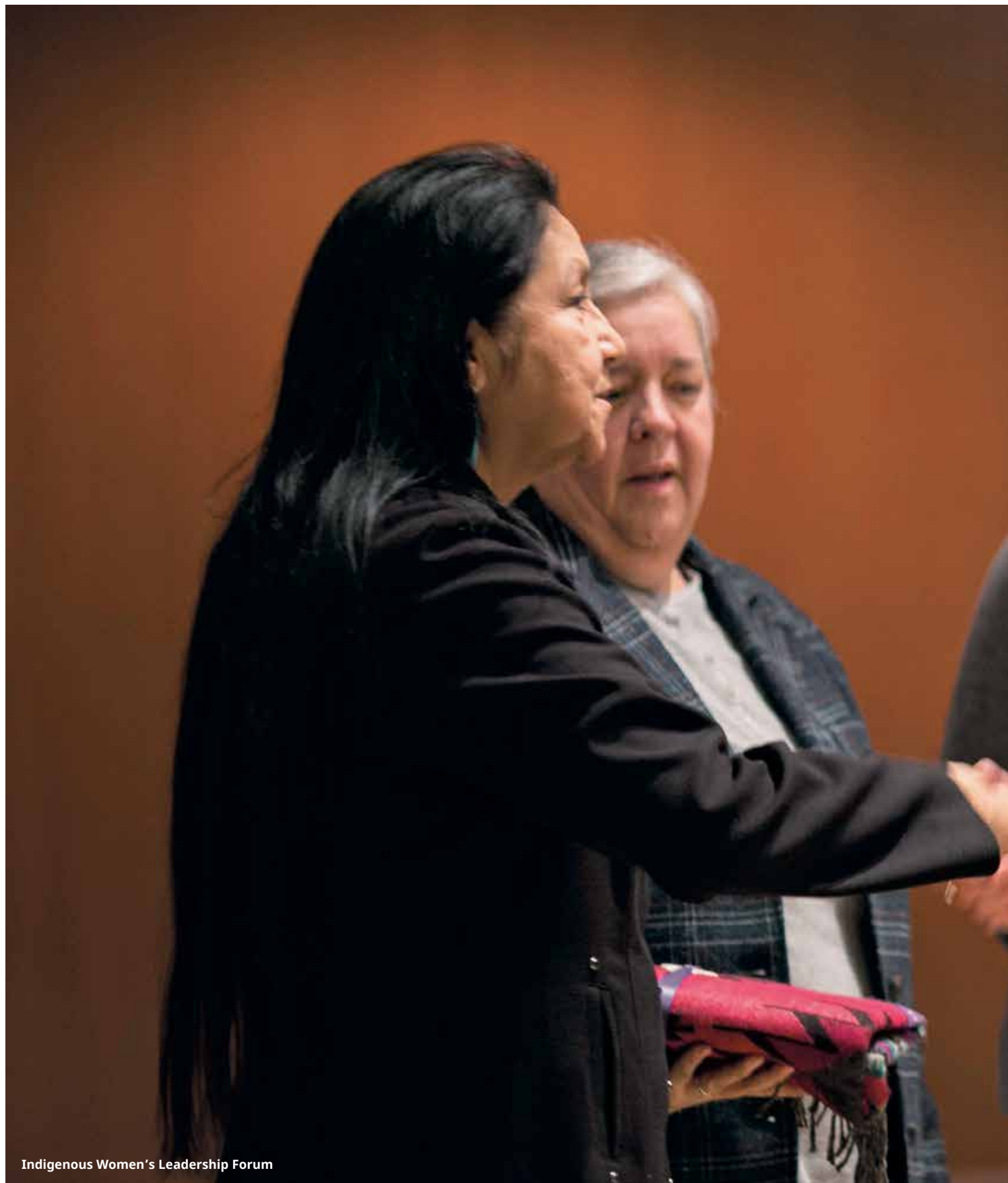
have been a huge encampment at Fort Niagara. Sir Johnson would have met with many nations.

... The Forever Relationship depicted on the belt shows 24 figures and indicates truth.

The 5 hexagons that form the covenant chain of friendship that had been first forged with the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch were again replicated. As long as the grass grows, sun shines and British wear red coats.”

— Speaker, Southern Regional Treaty Forum ●





Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum



3. Roles and Perspectives

“Treaties are not land surrenders from our perspective; First Nations never spoke about land in the treaties; treaty is not a land surrender, not a free-for-all.”

— Participant, Northern Regional Treaty Forum

First Nation and Métis Perspectives

From the initial spirit and intent of the treaties to contemporary applications, First Nations and Métis peoples in Ontario have specific perspectives on the treaties covering the territories in which we all live. Through the facilitated discussions, views and understandings around Peace, Friendship, Trust, Respect, Shared Resources, Environmental Protection and Education were shared.

Peace

“Treaties were undertaken to ensure the peaceful settlement of Canada but it disrupted the life of our people.”

— Speaker, Southern Regional Treaty Forum

In multiple forums, the idea of ongoing peace was a recurring theme, as was the need to stop “fighting each other” and to sit as equals in order to move forward.

Participants shared that a return to these original wampum

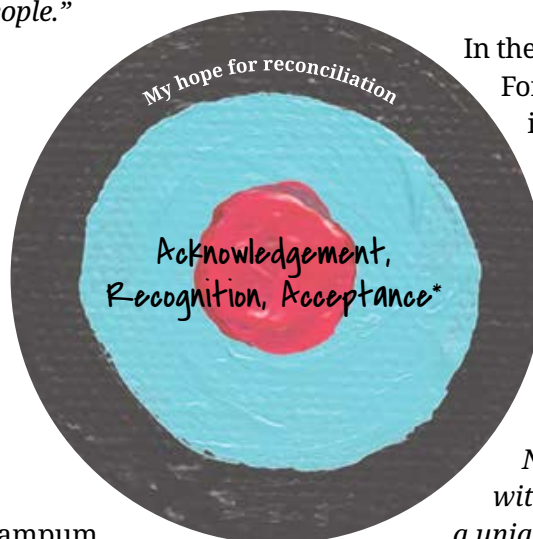
* Subsequent hopes are translations of this hope.

and treaties will remind people of the commitments and peace collectively being sought.

“In many ways ‘treaty’ has been made mythical and we complicate this with laws and legal definitions, but the concept traditionally was about relationships — with the natural world; between each other and with the spirit world — and established the way we agreed to interact. In the modern era, through pre-Confederation, post-Confederation and the numbered treaties, matters have become more complicated and based on human/male laws; we have moved away from the original spirit and intent; we have moved away from our common vision and instead we fight between ourselves.”

— Speaker on the Traditional Role of Haudenosaunee Women, Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum

Friendship



In the Southern Regional Treaty Forum, the Wampum Protocol in Treaty Making speaker spoke about the concept of friendship in the treaty process:

“For First Nations, treaty is imbued with principles. ‘Are we the only ones who view these as sacred?’

Native tradition combined with British protocols to create a unique form of diplomacy in

which all people were shown proper respect; trust was developed; differences resolved peacefully and an ongoing friendship would result.”

One youth participant at the Northern Regional Treaty Forum spoke about peace and harmony within nations in order to build better external relationships, stating, “we must protect our loved ones from harm but we must also learn from the old ways of living together.”

“Treaty means Friendship and Commerce. Make sure our kids know this.”

— Participant, Northern Regional Treaty Forum

Trust

“Twenty-four nations spoke from the heart, spoke truth ... We promised to share use of the territory in exchange for whatever they needed. These were tremendous promises.”

— Speaker, Southern Regional Treaty Forum

In the forums, participants spoke about the commitments made during the treaty processes. Participants shared that the sense of commitment and trust, which had been extended at the time of treaty signing, is ongoing within their communities. However, they also shared that there is less faith when it comes to the position of the government, both at the time of treaty signing and in the current nation-to-nation relationship.

Respect

Forum participants spoke about the need for respect in communities, in relationships and in agreements. Some participants cited a lack of respect from government in upholding the rights included in the treaties, such as hunting and fishing.

“[O]ur communities are only as good as our citizens. We must do all that we can as leaders and community members to ensure that our citizens are given the opportunities for a hand up, not a handout. We must ensure that our Elders and youth are honoured and respected and that our language and culture remain a vital part of our



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growth and development. As we strive to grow and prosper, as we expect our governments to respect our rights and treaties, so too must [we] respect each other as individuals and as Indigenous communities.”

— Speaker, Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum

Shared Resources

“The ‘old people’ talk about treaty signing as a sacred event — the people let the newcomers onto the land to share and the people have held this in their hearts. This sharing — this is what is talked about in this treaty relationship.”

— Speaker on the Traditional Role of Cree Women, Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum

At the Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum, the concept of treaty was discussed as being originally about relationships and the establishment of the way people agreed to interact with each other, including the sharing of resources.

As stated by one participant in the Northern Regional Treaty Forum, there are pervasive misunderstandings in the general Canadian population about First Nations people. Participants continued that there has been a collective forgetting about the sharing set out in the treaties and that the very first beneficiaries were the settlers, who relied on Indigenous communities for survival through a sharing of resources.

Environmental Protection

“As Anishinabe, do we know what justice looks like from the view of Indigenous

knowledge? Do we know what are we trying to achieve? Justice includes responsibility and implies justice for all things, justice for all our relatives — plants, water, ancestors.”

— Speaker, Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum

Participants in each forum spoke about being stewards of the land, and how Indigenous people look to treaty as one of the ways in which protection for territory and all its inhabitants can be secured.

A participant from Treaty 3 shared that in the 143 years since the treaty signing, the environmental integrity of the land has changed so drastically that the health of the water, fish, animals, trees and people have all been compromised.

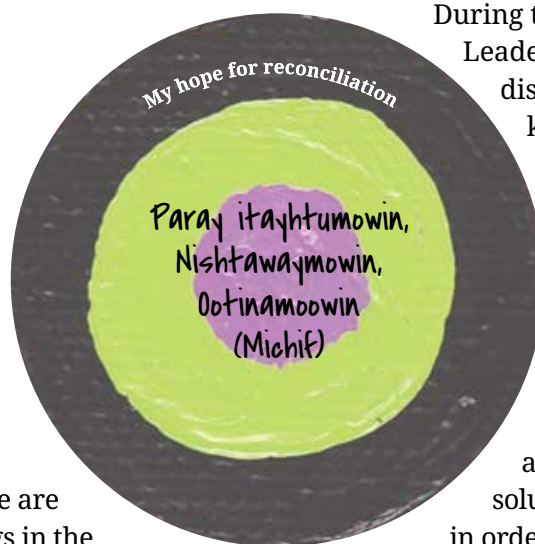
During the Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum, one speaker discussed the importance of keeping environmental protection central in all enterprise.

In both the Northern Regional Treaty Forum and the Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum, participants agreed there is a need to give greater consideration to how to integrate solutions across jurisdictions in order to provide the necessary protections.

Education

“We have a right to govern ourselves (in education, child welfare and lands management) because we have the burden of responsibility for the future.”

— Speaker, Northern Regional Treaty Forum



Across all forums, youth participants emphasized the need for awareness and education about treaty. Youth spoke about the need for education about treaty as part of Ontario school curricula, among and between Indigenous nations, and within communities themselves.

Métis Role in Treaty

Through the forums, it was shared that unique histories, language, culture and worldview make the Métis a distinct and separate nation with a long and important history in Ontario. Part of that history, it was shared, encompasses being present at — and in one case, adhering to — treaty.

Red Sky Métis Independent Nation

The members of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation trace their ancestry back to the “half breeds” that received annuities under the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. Red Sky Métis participants stated that they seek recognition of their unique history and contributions amidst an environment of misunderstanding about who they are.

“... [O]ur citizenship is not intended to create a link to First Nations signatories, but rather to the 1850 Robinson Superior Métis and the 84 half-breed families.”

— Speaker, Red Sky Métis Independent Nation

Red Sky Métis Independent Nation representatives explained that the government’s reason for wanting treaty was to put in place an agreement to live peaceably. They said they seek ways to bring reconciliation to their community through education and recognition.

Métis Nation of Ontario

Métis Nation of Ontario citizens shared the view that, except for the ‘Half-breed Adhesion to Treaty 3,’ the negotiation of treaties in Ontario excluded Ontario Métis as distinct Indigenous communities.

A speaker at the Métis Nation of Ontario Forum described the exclusion of the Métis from treaty-making and went on to cite the Powley trial decision, which said,

“The Métis have been consistently identified as a group that inhabited the areas immediately surrounding Sault Ste. Marie. They were recognized by the Ojibway and it is clear that the Ojibway attempted to have them included in the annual gifts and in the Robinson Treaties. It is equally clear that although Robinson recognized the distinctive Métis group he restricted his dealings with the Indians. Robinson noted that: ‘As the half breeds of Sault Ste. Marie and other places may seek to be recognized by the Government in future payments, it may be well that I state here the answer I gave to their demands on the present occasion. I told them that I came to treat with the chiefs who were present, that the money would be paid to them — that their receipt was sufficient for me — that when in their possession they might give as much or as little to that class of claimants as they pleased.’ ”¹⁸

Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982 says:

- (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

¹⁸ R. v. Powley, [1998] O.J. No. 5310



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- (2) In this Act, “aboriginal peoples of Canada” include the Indians, Inuit and Métis of Canada.
- (3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) “treaty rights” includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

The presentation at the Métis Nation of Ontario Forum emphasized that Section 35(3) makes clear that treaty rights do not stop but continue to be negotiated in modern land agreements.

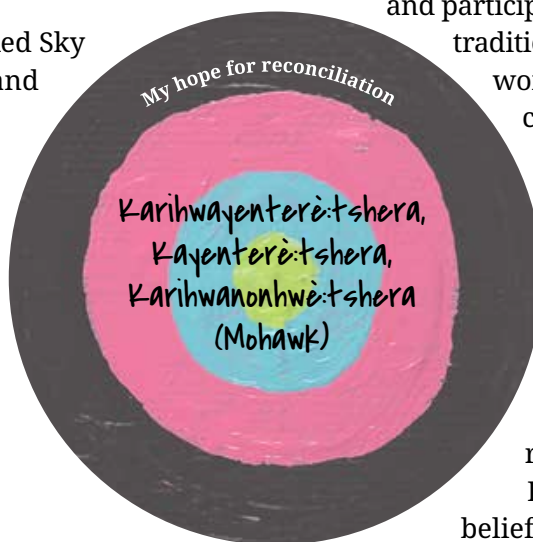
Participants at both the Red Sky Métis Independent Nation and the Métis Nation of Ontario discussions expressed a strong need to tell and share their origin stories and histories, which are a part of Ontario's evolution and run parallel to treaty-making and Crown assimilation policies.

Some Métis Nation of Ontario youth participants spoke about the burden of

proving their very existence and demanding to be included in engagements and in the work securing contemporary agreements. This work, they explained, has been made more demanding by the lack of education about the Métis treaty story.

Women's Role in Treaty

The theme of the Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum was “Strengthening the Role of Women in the Modern Treaty Era.” Speakers and participants spoke about how the traditional roles and positions of women within communities changed with the settlement of Canada, including through the treaty-making process. Women shared that they were excluded from the dialogue when discussing agreements with others outside the community and that a disruption of balance resulted. Participants also shared beliefs that good governance can



be achieved by returning to balance, that men and women had once led together and should do so again.

“... [A]t the level of Regional Chief, there should be a male and a female in that position exercising authority in duality.”

— *Speaker, Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum*

Traditional Leadership Roles

Speakers representing different Indigenous nations were asked to share on the traditional role of women in their cultures.

- **Haudenosaunee:** The traditional role of Haudenosaunee women was described as the social, cultural and economic power of the people, and as peacekeepers and respected knowledge keepers. The women were, therefore, the natural leaders of communities. Clan Mothers are given responsibility to maintain harmony by nominating a Chief through a consensual process within the Clan Mother’s extended family.
- **Anishinabek:** Traditional roles were explained through the Anishinabek creation story and the emergence of male and female with balanced responsibilities. People observed each other and could see who might have the skill and the willingness to work for the nation. From this emerged headmen and headwomen from each clan who had responsibility for maintaining the good order of the community.
- **Cree:** A speaker shared that the traditional role of Cree women and the traditional teachings of the women were informed by the strength,

knowledge and resilience of the Cree women, who kept families together when the people were oppressed, ensuring knowledge was passed down.

- **Métis:** Métis women were traditionally leaders in their communities because they were developers. They were also keepers of Métis knowledge of the land and the environment. They were in charge of community safety and harmony, and were the holders of traditional knowledge for the community.

Youth Perspectives

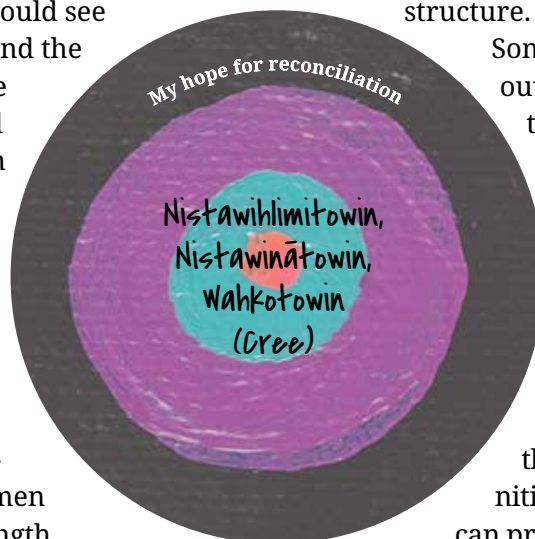
“We must include youth in all our gatherings — half of the audience should be youth. We are the generations coming up. We need to make sure we are inclusive. I am speaking this to the Chiefs as well — many balding male Chiefs here. We need more women Chiefs, balding too, if need be.”

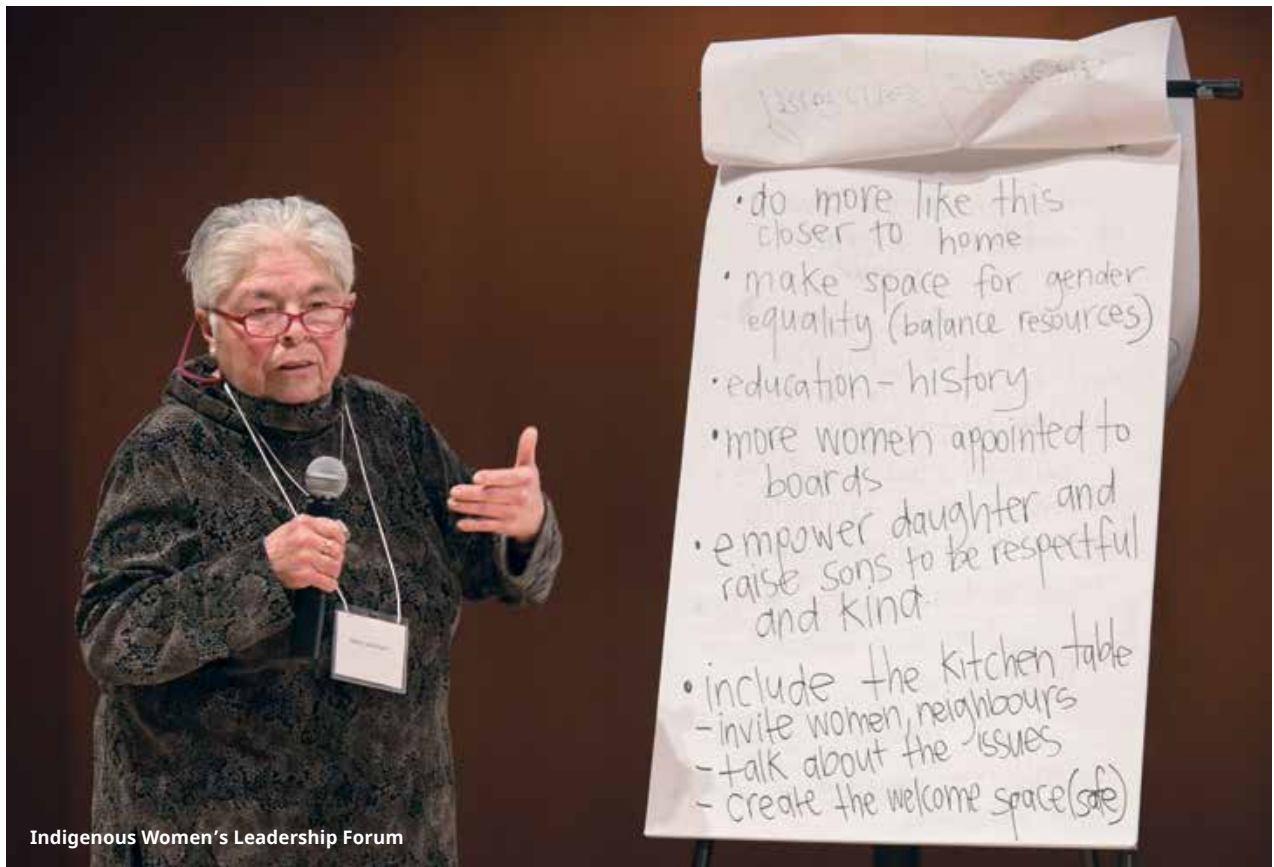
— *Youth Participant, Southern Regional Treaty Forum*

Some youth participants spoke of the need to include creation stories and traditional knowledge in understanding the treaties. Some participants shared notions of treaty as a potential impediment to unity among Indigenous nations, rather than a unifying structure.

Some youth participants spoke out about what they need from the adults in their lives, including traditional teachings and communities’ histories to be shared within the home and the community.

At the Métis Nation of Ontario Forum, some youth participants explained that the Métis simply want recognition as a people so discussion can progress. ●





4. Community Wellness, Sustainability, Relationships and Land

Participants in the forums noted that notions of wellness and sustainability were broad and nuanced, branching out to include many areas, from education to reconciliation. It was expressed at the Northern Regional Treaty Forum that greater consideration must be given to how solutions are integrated across government jurisdictions (e.g., access to health resources, education, environmental protections, etc.).

In the Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum, participants said restoring the health and wellness of individuals, families and communities must be a priority. Some participants referenced broken treaty promises when discussing current issues with wellness and sustainability in Indigenous communities. For example, the Métis Nation of Ontario youth speakers shared their greatest concerns: that Métis were excluded from treaty after promises were made and that within 10 years of the Robinson Huron Treaty, the majority of Métis had lost their land in and around Sault Ste. Marie to settlers.

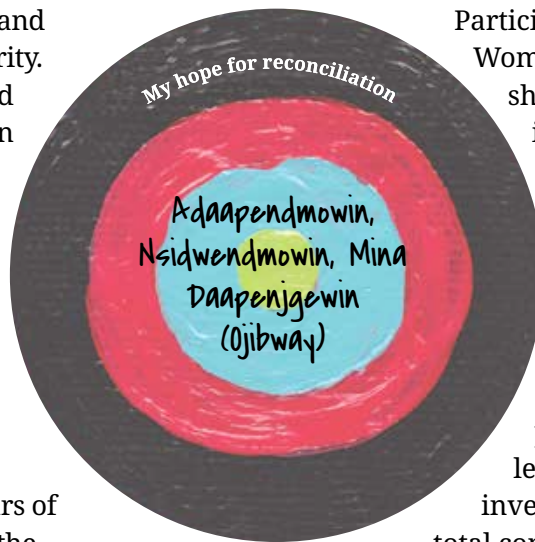
"The sacred promises [were] made, pipes were smoked. We could not have imagined that the British would betray [us]."

— Speaker, Southern Regional Treaty Forum

Participants said education and capacity development in business and administration,

management and co-management are key to maintaining sustainable community structures.

Building opportunities and economies to support long-term success, while ensuring the best social impacts for the community, were identified as paramount for First Nations and Métis participants. Representatives of Treaty 5 shared that they have recently banded together in light of mineral exploration in the area. Their collective mandate is that the well-being of the community comes before outside pressures for revenues.

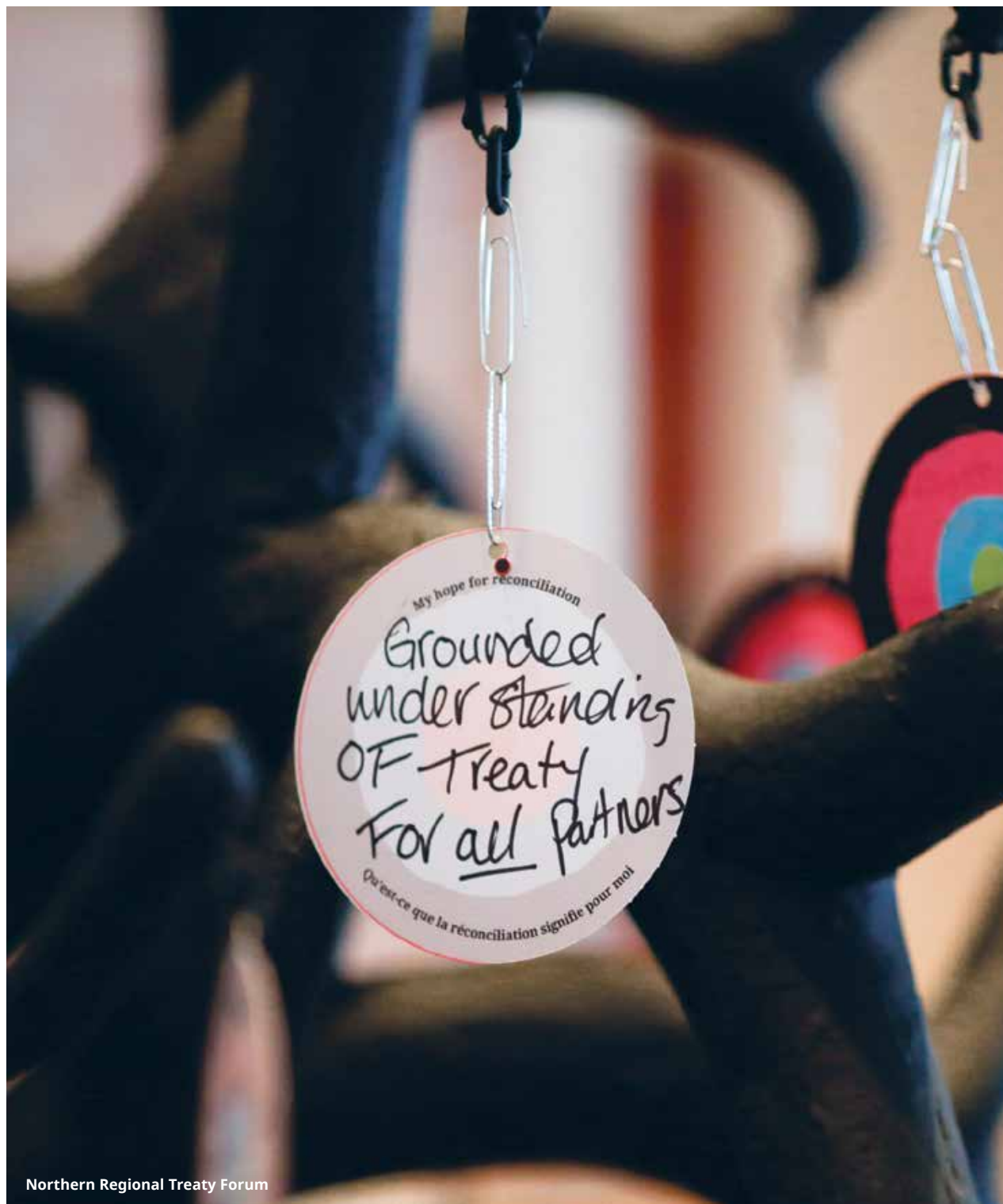


Participants in the Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum shared examples of responsible economic development, such as ensuring continuing capacity through mentorships and succession planning. Some of the other indicators of success shared were consulting with communities, promoting education at all levels, diversifying economic investments, transparency and a total commitment to youth.

For many participants, tradition meant not only cultural or spiritual traditions, but also hunting, fishing, trapping and harvesting off the land. This was said to be tied directly to sustainability in terms of building both economies and food security, and it also was an education in itself, and way to self-development.

"Community wellness is complex and not a single issue. It cannot be oversimplified and neither should the discussion of these issues be in silos — as if separate. There is an





Northern Regional Treaty Forum

intersection of education and health and working with federal and provincial governments. We need to centralize our efforts. Treaty awareness must include the message that treaty people have a right to economic

participation and self-sufficiency. The Crown must be held to account.”

— Speaker, Northern Regional Treaty Forum ●

5. Reconciliation

“When National Chief Fontaine was asked once what land was covered by treaty, his answer was to say ‘every inch.’ In Treaty 3 territory, every October 3 we celebrate the anniversary of Treaty — we give thanks — we speak to the ancestors and the spirits of treaty — the sacred spirit of treaty. We have never heard of our treaty partner honouring them or celebrating them.”

— Speaker, Northern Regional Treaty Forum

Several participants shared that treaty relationships are inseparable from the land and all the inhabitants therein. Participants described the honouring of these relationships as both a responsibility and a gift. Participants suggested actions could include acknowledging and celebrating treaty anniversaries, resource revenue sharing, and treaty partners working together for the protection of the land.

Tending to the lands designated under treaty means looking after and speaking on behalf of the animals, the water, the trees and everything else within that land. For many, it means ceremony and language. It means exercising traditional ways of life such as hunting and fishing. It is a continuum of care and respect that serves as the foundation for all larger relationships.

First Nations and Métis speakers and participants said communities continue to seek ways to preserve and hand down

the invaluable tools protected under treaty, including Indigenous languages, original stories and oral histories, access to and stewardship of the land and waters, and the rights to, and sharing of, education and teachings.

It was stated that all Ontarians have a part to play in treaty relationships, particularly in a contemporary context. Raising awareness of and respect for the treaties and creating true treaty partners were shared as first steps.

Treaty Awareness

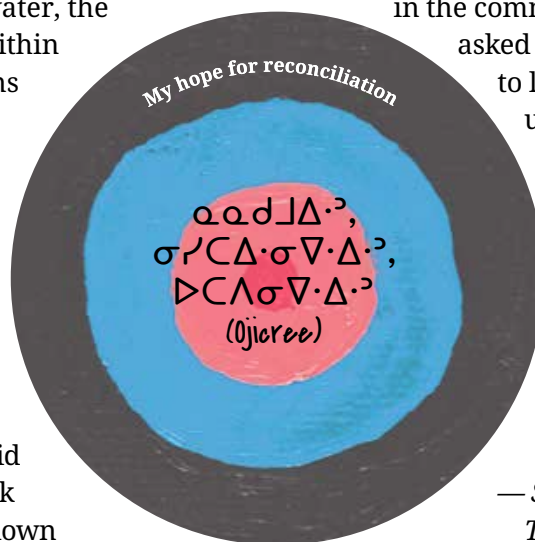
“... [E]ducating those we work with about who we are, what our history is, and sharing our knowledge: this is constant and ongoing work.”

— Speaker, Southern Regional Treaty Forum

Youth participants at the Northern Regional Treaty Forum shared that their information of their treaty comes from school rather than in the communities themselves. Youth asked for more opportunities both to learn and to share their understandings about treaty in order to build nationhood and relationships.

“Education is an important tool, and school curriculum on treaty needs to be developed and shared across Canada.”

— Speaker, Northern Regional Treaty Forum







Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum

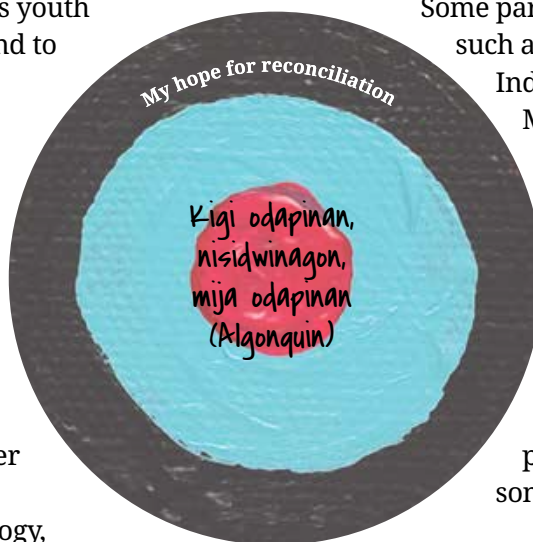
Participants at several forums stated that a more complete understanding of treaties should be taught as part of the Ontario school curriculum for all ages, which would raise awareness of Ontario's Indigenous roots and combat discrimination.

Some forum participants spoke about the need to educate First Nations youth about their place in treaty and to build the models and curriculum to support this education, such as the work being carried out by the Ontario Native Women's Association and work at the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne to overhaul the development and delivery of their school curriculum. Participants also shared other ideas for youth education, including a focus on technology,

mentorship opportunities and access to formal education, and bringing together ceremony, creation stories and treaty information. Participants across all forums shared that they are eager to bring opportunities to youth in the areas of science, engineering, technology and overall community management.

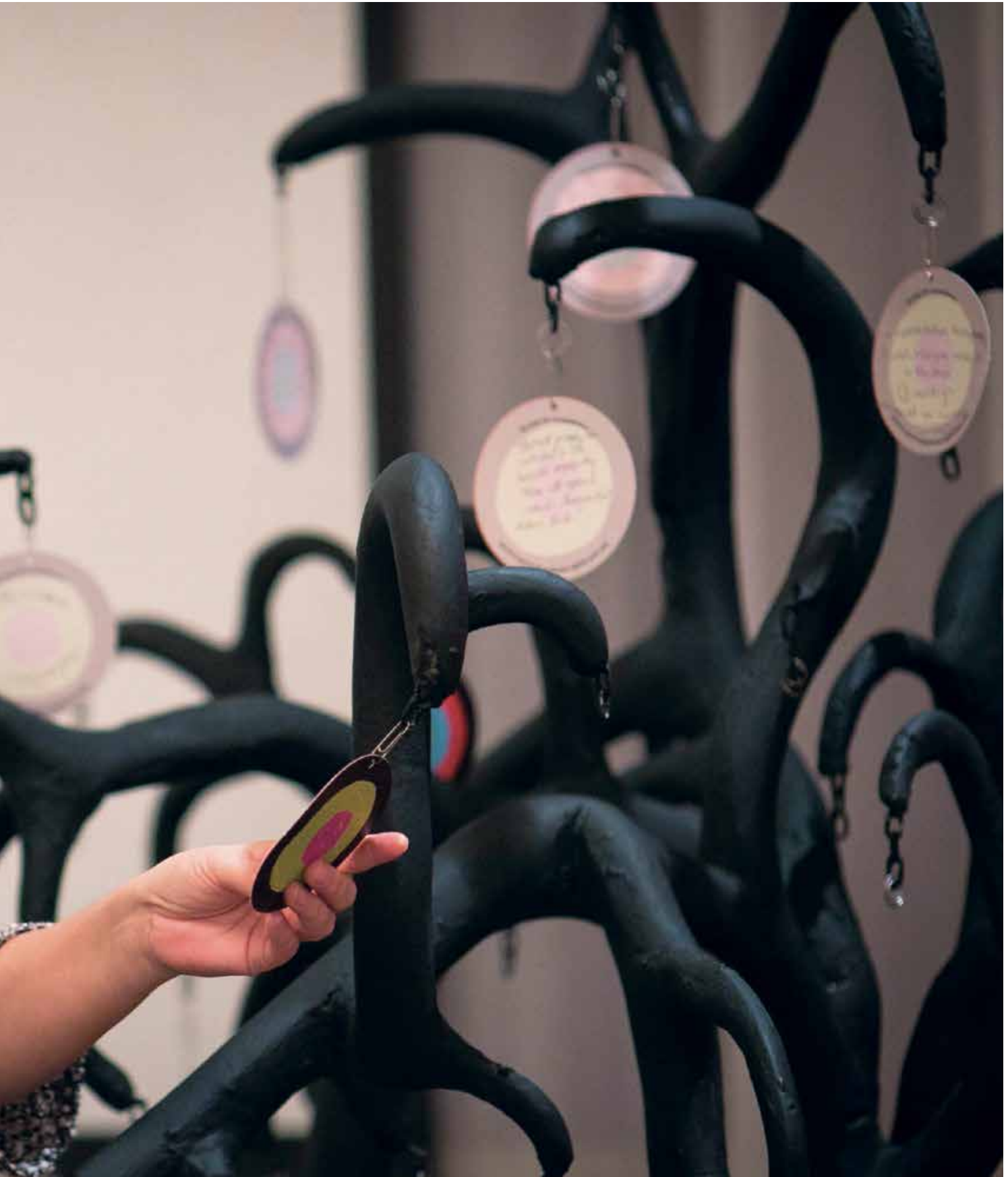
Some participants from communities such as the Red Sky Métis

Independent Nation and the Métis Nation of Ontario see education as integral to their recognition as a distinct people. The importance of sharing the Métis people's role in treaty making cannot be underestimated, particularly with regards to First Nations' historical support for including Métis under some of the treaties in Ontario. ●





Southern Regional Treaty Forum



Appendix

Continuing Your Learning Journey

The Government of Ontario is committed to raising treaty awareness and strengthening treaty relationships as part of the reconciliation journey with Indigenous partners. Many diverse and inclusive treaty awareness initiatives were funded under the Government of Ontario's Treaty Strategy.¹⁹

The following are a few examples of treaty awareness resources and teaching tools created by Indigenous partners or through partnerships with the Government of Ontario.

- The Anishinabek Nation and Ontario launched a project for students called the [“We Are All Treaty People” Teachers’ Kit](#). This kit is comprised of a teachers’ guide that has lesson plans and includes specific Ontario curriculum expectations for grades 1–8. A kit called [Gdoo-sastamoo kii mi: Understanding Our Nation to Nation Relationship](#) was created for grades 9–12.²⁰
- Created by the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, [Toronto’s First Story](#)²¹ is an online and mobile app that maps the Indigenous history of Toronto.
- Along Ontario’s portion of the Trans Canada Trail, [25 new trail markers](#)²² have been installed. These trail markers allow Indigenous communities and organizations to share stories about their history and culture with trail users.
- Historica Canada, through a partnership with the Government of Ontario, released a [Heritage Minute](#)²³ about treaties, focusing on the signing of Treaty 9. Additional information is available through Historica Canada’s [Canadian Encyclopedia entry on Treaty 9](#).²⁴
- [Nishnawbe Aski Nation](#)²⁵ will be launching a treaty website to share treaty resources, including videos, research and transcribed interviews with NAN territory Elders.
- The Métis Nation of Ontario is creating a series of videos on treaty history. Its [web-site](#)²⁶ contains more information, including the [Métis Historic Timeline](#).²⁷

As part of the Government of Ontario’s Treaty Strategy, Indigenous communities and organizations across the province were provided funding for treaty awareness initiatives such as workshops, forums, storytelling sessions, treaty celebration and commemoration ceremonies, educational tools, research papers, and the collection of treaty documents and oral histories.

Many other Indigenous partners (besides those listed here) post treaty resources on their websites. Enrich your treaty learning experience by diversifying your resources as much as possible.

¹⁹ For more information visit [Ontario.ca/treaties](https://ontario.ca/treaties).

²⁰ [Anishinabek Nation Education Resources Webpage](#).

²¹ [Toronto’s First Story: Exploring the Aboriginal History of Toronto](#).

²² [Indigenous Trail Markers Webpage](#).

²³ [Heritage Minute Webpage](#).

²⁴ [Canadian Encyclopedia Website for Treaty 9](#).

²⁵ [Nishnawbe Aski Nation Webpage](#).

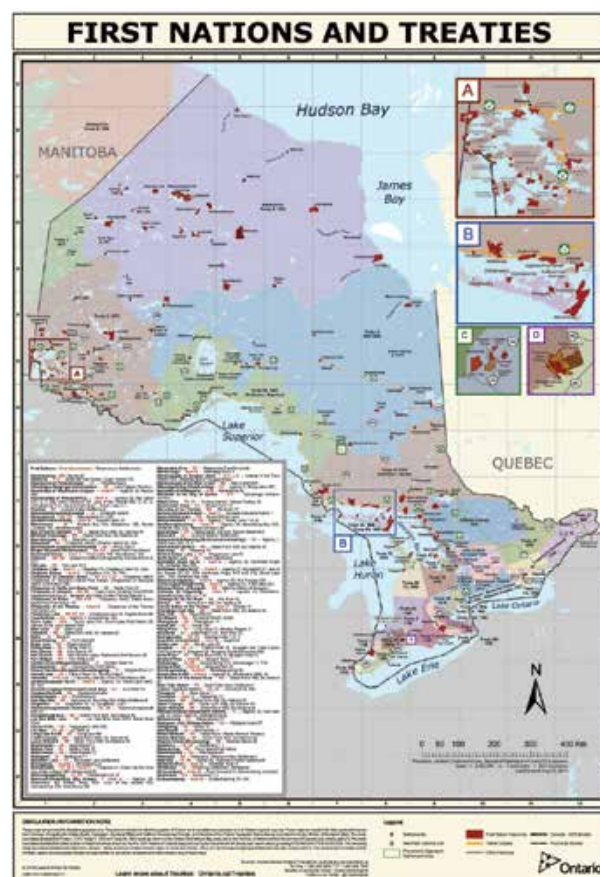
²⁶ [Métis Nation of Ontario Website](#).

The Government of Ontario's Initiatives

Ontario implemented a number of treaty awareness initiatives under the Treaty Strategy, including:

- [250th Anniversary of the Treaty of Fort Niagara](#): In August 2014, the Government of Ontario partnered with First Nation leadership to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Treaty of Fort Niagara.²⁸
- [The Statement in the Provincial Legislature](#)²⁹: In November 2014, the Honourable Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation made a Statement in the Provincial Legislature: “On the Province’s Treaty Relationship with First Nations.” The statement publicly affirmed that treaties are as relevant today as they were when they were made.
- [The First Nations and Treaties Map of Ontario](#)³⁰: Since 2014, the Government of Ontario has distributed more than 11,000 copies of the First Nations and Treaties Map of Ontario to schools and the general public. [An information for educators sheet](#)³¹ was also created to give teachers ideas on how to use the map to complement their curriculum. The map can be ordered online at no charge through [ServiceOntario’s website](#).³²
- [Treaties Recognition Week](#)³³: Since 2016, Ontario has worked with Indigenous

partners to dedicate a week where we put the spotlight on the history of treaty making and the important role they continue to play today. In 2017, 60 Indigenous Knowledge Keepers shared their perspectives with more than 26,000 students across the province in 250 events in schools, libraries and universities.



An accessible version of the First Nations and Treaties Map is available at [Ontario.ca/treaties](https://ontario.ca/treaties).

27 [Métis Nation of Ontario Historic Timeline](#).

28 [Ontario News Release about 250th Anniversary of the Treaty of Fort Niagara](#).

29 [Statement in the Provincial Legislature e-version](#).

30 [Government of Ontario Map of First Nations](#).

31 [Information for Educators Sheet e-version](#).

32 Go to [Service Ontario Website](#) and click on ‘Order publications.’

33 [Ontario News Release about November Treaties Recognition Week](#).

Join the Conversation on Social Media

- **Learn and share with #TreatyON.**

The Government of Ontario launched the #TreatyON social media campaign to acknowledge treaty anniversaries and share information on treaties, treaty history and relationships, and treaty-related events on Twitter and Facebook.

- **The Reconciliation Tree**

Learn more about the Reconciliation Tree or share a digital hope at [Ontario.ca/ReconciliationTree](https://www.ontario.ca/ReconciliationTree).

- **Treaty Texts and History in Ontario and Canada**

Visit Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's page to learn more about treaties:

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028568/1100100028572> (English)

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/fra/1100100028568/1100100028572> (French)

My commitment to learning more about treaties ...

- ☐ Read the resources listed on previous pages about treaties, and visit the websites of Indigenous groups in Ontario.
- ☐ Sign "My Hope for Reconciliation" on the digital tree at [Ontario.ca/ReconciliationTree](https://www.ontario.ca/ReconciliationTree).
- ☐ Join the #TreatyON conversation on Treaties Recognition Week, the first full week of each November.





First Nations and Treaties Map launch event



Anishinabek Nation's We Are All Treaty People Teachers' Kit launch event

Websites Cited

- 2 Ontario and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) websites were provided as an additional resource for forum participants.
- 3 *Ontario Budget 2014: Fostering a Fair Society* website, <<http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2014/bk3.pdf>>; and *2014 Mandate letter: Aboriginal Affairs*, <Ontario.ca/page/2014-mandate-letter-aboriginal-affairs>.
- 4 All agenda speaker and participant quotes and references can be found in the facilitator's report, entitled *Sharing Indigenous Perspectives: Treaties in Ontario Summary Report*. A copy of the facilitator's report from the Independent Facilitators, including agendas, discussion guides, facilitator and speaker biographies, as well as summaries and direct materials from speaker presentations, is available upon request. Visit Ontario.ca/treaties.
- 5 For more information on treaties, visit INAC's website 'Treaties with Aboriginal People in Canada,' <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100032291/1100100032292>>.
- 7 From the Ontario 'Treaties' website Ontario.ca/treaties. The websites of INAC and the Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation were provided as an additional resource for forum participants.
- 8 Message from the Premier in 'The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples' website, <Ontario.ca/page/journey-together-ontarios-commitment-reconciliation-indigenous-peoples>.
- 9 From *Sharing Indigenous Perspectives: Treaties in Ontario Summary Report*. More information is available on INAC's website 'The Robinson Treaties (1850) by Robert J. Surtees,' <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028974/1100100028976>>.
- 12 Statement of the Robinson Huron Treaty Chiefs to the Southern Regional Treaty forum, from *Sharing Indigenous Perspectives: Treaties in Ontario Summary Report*, available upon request. Visit Ontario.ca/treaties.
- 13 More information on Treaty 3 can be found on the INAC website 'Treaty Guide to Treaty No. 3 (1873),' <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028667/1100100028669>>.
- 14 More information on Treaty 5 can be found on the INAC website 'Treaty Guide to Treaty No. 5 (1875),' <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028692/1100100028693>>.
- 15 More information on Treaty 9 can be found on the INAC website 'Treaty Guide to Treaty No. 9 (1905-1906),' <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028855/1100100028857>>.
- 16 From Ontario Newsroom, Williams Treaties Negotiations Backgrounder, <<https://news.ontario.ca/mirr/en/2017/03/negotiations-with-the-williams-treaties-first-nations-toward-a-negotiated-resolution-of-the-alderville.html>>.
- 19 For more information visit Ontario.ca/treaties.
- 20 Anishinabek Nation Education Resources Webpage, <<http://www.anishinabek.ca/education-resources/>>.
- 21 Toronto's First Story: Exploring the Aboriginal History of Toronto, <<https://firststoryblog.wordpress.com/aboutfirststory/>>.
- 22 Indigenous Trail Markers Webpage, <<https://news.ontario.ca/mirr/en/2016/08/indigenous-trail-markers-across-ontario.html>>.
- 23 Heritage Minute Webpage, <https://www.historicacanada.ca/content/heritage-minutes/naskumituwin-treaty?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIi8OK2bvK1QIVnY-zCh3VVQ7AEAAAYASAAEgI8sfD_BwF>.
- 24 Canadian Encyclopedia Website for Treaty 9, <<http://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/treaty-9>>.
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- 31 Information for Educators Sheet e-version, <<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/memos/may2014/InfoEducatorsTreaties.pdf>>.
- 32 Go to Service Ontario Website and click on 'Order publications,' <<https://www.ontario.ca/page/serviceontario>>.
- 33 Ontario News Release about November Treaties Recognition Week, <<https://news.ontario.ca/mirr/en/2016/05/ontario-proclaims-first-week-of-november-treaties-recognition-week.html>>.

Others:

- <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028568/1100100028572> (English)
- <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/fra/1100100028568/1100100028572> (French)
- Ontario.ca/ReconciliationTree

For an accessible version of the footnotes and works cited list, contact the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation at Ontario.ca/indigenous.

Design: Fresh Art & Design Inc.

Fresh Art & Design Inc. is an award-winning, Indigenous-owned communication design firm based in Toronto. As visual storytellers, they bring their client's message to life through the use of compelling

imagery and the written word. Clients range from the largest blue-chip corporations to the smallest non-profit organizations.

Artist: Donald Chrétien

Donald Chrétien, of the Ojibway Nation, is originally from Nipissing First Nation. His career as an artist has spanned 30 years. He began his work in commercial illustration, but in 2004 he became interested in learning about his Ojibway heritage. The result of this awakening is a deep commitment to his community and spirituality. He currently travels to schools as part of the Aboriginal Artists in Schools project that is

sponsored by the Ontario Arts Council. In March 2016, 10 of Donald's original pieces were purchased by the Archives of Ontario. His work is also exhibited on several sites across Turtle Island. This includes a massive 80-foot installation piece for the Vancouver Olympics titled 'Mother, Friend, Small Bird,' which is on permanent display in Vancouver's Pacific Coliseum.



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