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AFN Chief congratulates Lily Gladstone on Golden Globe Award

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Cindy Woodhouse offered her congratulations to Lily Gladstone for their Golden Globes award for Best Female Actor in a Drama in the film, "Killers of the Flower Moon." Gladstone is the first Indigenous recipient of this award.

"Lily Gladstone has made history," said National Chief Woodhouse. "Their portrayal deserves this recognition of artistic excellence. As the first Indigenous person to receive this award, Lily is an inspiration to me and many others. Representation of Indigeneity in arts and culture is critical to sharing our stories, celebrating our peoples, and reaffirming our role as the original storytellers about us and not without us within the entertainment industry."

Lily Gladstone, who is Blackfeet/Nimíipuu, received the award for their portrayal of Mollie Burkhart in Martin Scorsese's film, *Killers of the Flower Moon*. Their acceptance speech on January 7 began in the Blackfeet language, with an introduction to their name and "I love you."

Switching to English, Gladstone said, "I'm so grateful that I can speak even a little bit of my language, which I'm not fluent in, up here because in this business, Native actors used to speak their lines in English and then the sound mixers would run them backwards to accomplish Native languages on camera."

Gladstone, who grew up on the Blackfeet

Nation in Montana, called their win historic, and said it didn't "belong to just me."

They said their win was for "every little rez kid, every little urban kid, every little Native kid who has a dream, who is seeing themselves represented and our stories told by ourselves in our own words with tremendous allies and tremendous trust with and from each other."

Earlier this month, on the first day of this new year, National Chief Woodhouse accepted an invitation by esteemed Elder Leonard Weasel Traveller and Chief Troy Knowlton of the Piikani Nation to participate in a headdress transfer ceremony.

"We've come together today to honour our National Chief, Cindy Woodhouse as she championed the \$43 billion settlement for child welfare and has stepped into a very important national leadership position. Through the headdress ceremony, we're providing her support as she fulfills the mandate in helping and advocating our First Nation communities," said Chief Troy Knowlton of the Piikani Nation.

The headdress transfer is one of the highest honours among First Nations ceremonies for leadership. It validates and celebrates Chiefs' achievements, as the eagle feathers that make up the headdress are sacred and have been blessed to help support leadership in their travels and challenges.

"What a beautiful way to start off 2024. I am so



Screenshot of Lily Gladstone receiving a Golden Globe Award.

blessed and honoured to receive this headdress. I am humbled, thankful and committed to live up to that honour as National Chief," said Woodhouse.

"I feel the collective energy and expectations of our people and am looking forward to our successes. We have lots of work to do, but when First Nation people work together, we can do anything," she said.

"I'm thankful to the Piikani Nation and the Blackfoot Confederacy for sharing their sacred protocols and worldviews. We're raising our children in a better way, around our cultures, ceremonies, and languages," said National Chief Woodhouse.

Lori Deets: Paving the way for inclusive housing

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

In a poignant discussion, Lori Deets, a resilient advocate for safe and affordable housing, sheds light on the challenges within Canada's housing market. As a Sixties Scoop survivor and a committed member of The Pan-Canadian Voice for Women's Housing (PCVWH), Deets emphasizes the urgent need to redefine housing as a fundamental human need.

"I believe that treating housing as a commodity has significantly harmed our country," Deets states, underscoring the adverse effects of viewing housing primarily as an investment tool, exacerbating inequalities and making housing increasingly unattainable for many Canadians.

Participating in the 2023 PCVWH conference in Ottawa last year, Deets joined forces with prominent figures like Marie Houle, the Federal Housing Advocate at The Canadian Human Rights Commission, and Romy Bowers, CEO of CMHC. The event aimed to provide a platform for diverse voices, including women, gender-diverse individuals, and Indigenous women, to address ongoing housing issues.

"It's not just about home ownership; it's about creating communities where people can heal and belong," Deets passionately emphasizes, highlighting the importance of community-building within housing policies.

Deets draws attention to the impact of corporations and affluent individuals acquiring

housing stock, leading to unavailability and unaffordability, particularly affecting Indigenous and marginalized communities. Her advocacy calls for more inclusive housing policies that cater to the diverse needs of communities.

"The stark truth is that rental opportunities often hinge on factors like skin colour, creating a barrier for many," acknowledges Deets. "As an Indigenous woman and a single mother, the persistent concern revolves around potential discrimination tied to both ethnicity and family status."

"Without a home, leading a fulfilling life becomes an insurmountable challenge," adds Deets, who faces personal challenges as a single mother navigating the rental market.

"And when you're out there, it's really hard.

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OWNER RETIRING

After 40 years of publishing the Alberta Native News, the owners wish to retire.

We are hoping some enterprising individual(s) with a passion for communicating Indigenous issues will carry on with publishing the newspaper. It is not easy in this day and age to produce a print media with a supporting digital presence but it is something that serves a vital interest for the Indigenous communities across Treaty 6, 7 and 8 territories.

Expressions of interest from serious individuals are welcome.
Please contact Deborah Shatz, nativeads@gmail.com



The City of Spruce Grove is now accepting expressions of interest from Indigenous artists or Indigenous artist-led teams, collectives, or partnerships for the creation of a new piece of three dimensional public art to be installed at Jubilee Park in 2024.

The submission deadline is Friday, February 16, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. MST. Other key dates are listed below.

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National Ribbon Skirt Day promotes Indigenous culture

By Kinnukana, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On January 4, 2024, Canadians joined together to recognize and participate in National Ribbon Skirt Day. Observed for the first time last year, National Ribbon Skirt Day commemorates the experience of ten year old, Isabella Kulak, a member of Cote First Nation in Saskatchewan who was shamed by an educational assistant for wearing a handmade ribbon skirt to a formal day at the Kamsack Comprehensive School, in Saskatchewan. She was told that it was not formal enough for the event.

Afterwards, Isabella told her family about the incident and her great-aunt, Judy Pelly, made a social media post which sparked a wave of support. Following the incident, women and men wearing their ribbon skirts and shirts walked Isabella to school to show support. Others across Canada began to post pictures of themselves wearing ribbon skirts in her name. Isabella also received uplifting letters and photos from schools across Canada.

After the incident, on January 4th, 2022, Quintin Robertson, director of education and CEO for Good Spirit School Division, apologized to the family and promised to do better. Since then, the school division has been following through, focusing on Indigenous education and reconciliation. On December 15th, 2022, in honour of Isabella, Manitoba Senator Mary Jane McCallum put forward Bill S-219 to formally establish Ribbon Skirt Day in Canada every January 4, and it received Royal Assent and is now an act of Parliament.

All too often, Indigenous people experience similar treatment like Isabella's, and it reminds us of the ongoing challenges that Indigenous

people face today. Indigenous people continue to encounter racism and inequity, and more work needs to take place on the shared path to reconciliation in Canada. Indigenous people have dealt with historical devastations with Residential Schools, Sixties Scoop, and Intergenerational Trauma and continue to navigate the complexities of preserving their culture in a western colonized society.

Ribbon Skirt Day fosters awareness and understanding among non-Indigenous Canadians, promoting cross-cultural dialogue and appreciation for the richness of Indigenous heritage. It serves as a reminder of the strength and resilience of Indigenous people and their enduring commitment to preserving and revitalizing their cultural practises that were taken away from them in the past.

It is necessary that movements like this continue to serve as platforms for Indigenous people to take a stand against racism and express their identity and assert their cultural resilience. Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people use the day as a platform to educate others, declare their cultural resilience and to express who they are and show pride in one's culture.

Anita Cardinal, a member of Woodland Cree First Nation in Alberta and a lawyer, proudly celebrated National Ribbon Skirt Day by posting a picture of herself at her call to the bar while

wearing her ribbon skirt and encouraging others to 'wear them proudly.' Anita said it was important for her to do her call in a ribbon skirt. She got the skirt from Yellowbird Designs in Edmonton, Alberta. Judge Cheryl Arcand-Kootenay, who led the calling also used a ribbon skirt and has been a wonderful mentor for Anita.

Anita said, "Obviously, I wanted to represent, to be in those spaces and places that we know were never built for us. But we are standing proud



Lawyer Anita Cardinal commemorated National Ribbon Skirt Day by posting her photo from her bar call, proudly wearing her ribbon skirt. Photo by Darlene Hildebrandt.

Continued on page 6



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Dismantling encampments in YEG

By Kinnukana, LJI Reporter

In the midst of extreme cold temperatures in early January, the City of Edmonton dismantled eight encampments displacing homeless people, of which many are Indigenous. Eight percent of Edmonton’s population identifies as Indigenous, while 58 per cent of people experiencing homelessness identify as Indigenous (City of Edmonton, 2016 Homeless Count). That is a gross overrepresentation of Indigenous people in Edmonton’s homeless population.

The removal of these encampments raises many concerns by social advocates about the violation of Indigenous rights, cultural displacement, and homelessness. The Coalition for Justice and Human Rights wants camp clearing to stop citywide if certain conditions are not met and have filed a lawsuit against the City.

The City’s policy is to remove every high-risk camp with twenty or more structures. City crews must confirm that there is sufficient shelter capacity, notify city council of removal plans, and get approval from the deputy city manager of community services before proceeding. People living in the camps and social agencies are alerted about the teardown plans two days after a peace officer deems the site high risk.

Individuals who do not want to leave are being forcible removed by the police, who have the authority to use force. Encampment individual’s belongings, everything that they own, are being thrown away in the dump. Once evicted from these encampments, affected individuals must go wait in line for available shelter and/or treatment offered by various service organizations around Edmonton.

Shelters all have certain rules that must be followed. Some shelters are only open certain hours and can result in people being turned away if they attend late. Shelter availability is minimal and often not appropriate for all individuals, especially for those that have partners and/or pets. Some individuals fear that they may be assaulted at a shelter and do not want to stay there.

There are so many reasons why this City of Edmonton policy and the approach they are taking to homelessness are wrong. The forcible removal of Indigenous people from encampments causes continual trauma, on top of what has already happened in the past. Historically, Indigenous people in Canada have been subjected to years of colonialism, historical trauma, and systemic racism – all related to similar policies that focus on colonial approaches that make



Edmonton photo by Brandi Morin.

others conform to social norms.

Indigenous people continue to be forced to assimilate into western society today, with no new and innovative approaches that support a commitment to increased culturally appropriate social supports, long-term housing, and reconciliation.

It is important to recognize that Indigenous people lived nomadic lifestyles on these lands since time immemorial. They had various cultural practices and knew how to live off the land, including during the harsh winter months. They were not deemed to be a risk to public safety. When settlers moved to Canada, they stopped Indigenous people from carrying on their traditional practices. For over a century, Indigenous children were removed from their families and homes and taken to residential schools, with the objective of isolating children from their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture.

All this harm done to Indigenous people has led to intergenerational trauma and huge disparities in healthcare, education, children’s services, housing, etc. During colonization, Indigenous people, families and communities became displaced and continue to struggle today to find their place again in society. Dismantling encampments and sending people to temporary shelters is not a long-term solution and is not addressing the root causes of homelessness. Indigenous people need compassion, humanity, strengthening, and empowerment through a variety of culturally appropriate supports.

The focus on the City policy is to respond in a strong way, in a short amount of time, to prevent high-risk camps from surfacing around the city. However, the City needs to respond in a stronger way to more quickly connect people with appropriate social and housing resources, in a short amount of time, to prevent homeless individuals from all this additional harm.

The City of Edmonton needs to put in place a longer-term plan to address homelessness, rather than addressing it from season to season. The City of Edmonton must take a more collaborative approach with governments, Indigenous leaders and communities to find culturally appropriate, creative and sustainable solutions that respects and revitalizes cultural values and prioritizes the well-being of Indigenous people.

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Inspiring youth through art and cultural teachings

By Kinnukana, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Métis Leader Louis Riel once said, “My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back.” Mary Jane Houle, artist and teacher, is one of those artists that is playing an important role in reviving the spirit of Indigenous people through her art and cultural teachings.

Mary Jane Houle has been working as a Plain’s Cree Teacher for the past seven years at École Racette Junior High School in St. Paul, Alberta, where she teaches language, culture and identity. She is appreciative that the French Catholic school hired her to offer Cree education in Grades six to nine, especially when it is connected to a past of residential schools with horrifying stories. Mary Jane is also an artist – birch bark biter and painter and has been developing her techniques since she was seven years old. She is a mother of five beautiful children and a Kokum to fifteen cherished grand babies. She is originally from Good Fish Lake, but now resides in St. Paul, Alberta.

Mary Jane is the daughter of Charles and Martha Houle of Good Fish Lake Band 128 in Alberta. Her father was a musician and a hunter, and her mother was an artist. Mary Jane’s parents had twelve children and she grew up with them. Her father told her that where they come from is on sacred ground because everything they have in the community is used for something.

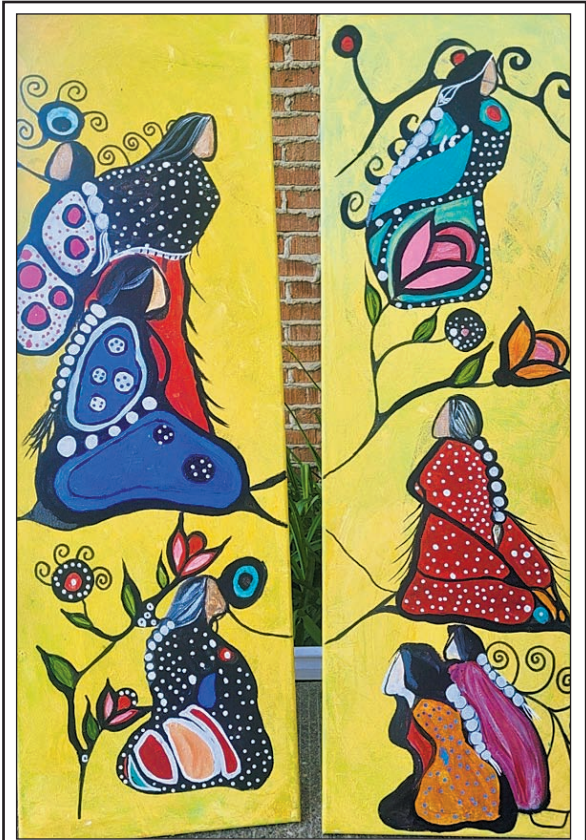
Both Charles and Martha were residential school survivors. Mary Jane said that this did not stop them from giving her and her siblings a strong upbringing and better insight and focus on healing. Because they both attended residential school, her parents made sure that Mary Jane and her siblings never once felt unloved. Her parents

taught them forgiveness, love, peace, understanding and to always be there for each other. Her father emphasized that they should speak to their kids about the natural laws as he believed strongly in them. Mary Jane’s parents also taught them their culture and language, how to hunt, harvest and pick medicines.

Mary Jane’s late mom, Martha, taught her the techniques of birch bark biting. It is an Indigenous art form where artists bite on small pieces of folded birch bark to form intricate designs, which were traditionally used for entertaining in storytelling. In Martha’s stories she would create birds and flowers by folding and biting birch bark. Mary Jane is also a biter, and she does a lot of etching and sketching on birch bark, and she creates birch bark baskets. Before she creates, she likes to pray, sing and smudge. Mary Jane made her own birch bark song.

Mary Jane is also a painter. She focuses on depicting native women in the spirit world to honour their spirits. Mary Jane said, “When I started painting about the spirit world, it just came out. I started painting and I looked at it, and I saw these figures and my spirit just came alive.” Mary Jane paints faceless women in the spirit world because it is so powerful for her in healing. She leads workshops with women, and she said they are so proud of themselves afterwards because they don’t think they can create anything.

Mary Jane is not only a teacher, but she also loves to learn and is a lifetime learner. At 35 years old, she returned to school and completed her Grade 12 education. She then decided to leave her homeland to pursue a post-secondary education. Mary Jane grew up speaking Cree but never



Paintings by Mary Jane Houle.

learned how to read and write it. She decided to study the Cree Language at Blue Quills University and she absolutely loved it. She worked on and off throughout her schooling and completed a Bachelor of Cree. While at Blue Quills, she also studied art for a year. Mary Jane also made a promise to herself that she would complete a Masters program by 56 years of age, and she accomplished it. She now has a Masters of Indigenous Languages, is determined to complete her doctoral studies and wants to be referred to as Dr. Mary Jane Houle one day soon.

Mary Jane said, “Long before our time, our

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2024 Update on the Alberta Minor Injury Cap

By Ronald Jewitt, CAM LLP, Injury Lawyers.

If you have been injured in a road accident, the insurance adjuster handling your claim may tell you that your injury is minor, "capped," or "caught by the cap." This means the amount of money for general damages you can recover for pain and suffering is limited to an amount set each year under Alberta's *Minor Injury Regulation*.

Effective January 1, 2024, the minor injury cap was set at \$6,061 for minor injuries resulting from automobile accidents that occur in Alberta on or after January 1, 2024.

Source: Alberta Superintendent of Insurance Interpretation Bulletin 09-2023

Minor injuries are generally soft tissue injuries, including damage to tissue, ligaments, muscles or tendons. However, whether an injury is "minor" and caught by the cap is not always straightforward; it depends on the evidence related to your injury and its impact on your life. For example, an injury that initially appears minor may well turn out to cause you long-term problems. So, just because an insurance adjuster says your injury is minor and damages are capped

doesn't make it so.

When is a "Minor" injury NOT capped?

If an injury, even one that might otherwise appear minor, causes you serious impairment, if that has been the case since the accident, and it is not expected to improve substantially, then damages for your injury are not covered by the Minor Injury Regulation (i.e., the cap). Serious impairment means that you can't perform the essential tasks of your job or an education or training program, or you cannot do other normal activities of daily life.

Understanding whether your injuries really do fall within the cap is one of many good reasons to talk to a personal



injury lawyer about your case. When it comes to protecting your legal rights, getting accurate, objective information is critical.

The Minor Injury Cap does not cap other damages

It's also important to know that the minor injury cap doesn't limit your ability to claim other types of damages, such as loss of income, cost of care, loss of housekeeping capacity or out-of-pocket expenses.

Questions about the Minor Injury Cap and how it affects you?

We are always happy to help people understand their options regarding an injury claim.

Contact us if you want a free, no-obligation consultation to get answers about your situation.

Ronald Jewitt is a partner at CAM LLP and has 30+ years of personal injury law experience.

Ribbon Skirt Day *cont. from p 3*

and loud in those spaces and reclaiming our own identity. At the calling, we had to wear certain things, like a robe, and everything is so formal, but I didn't want to lose my identity in the process. The ribbon skirt symbolizes identity, resilience and survival, but it also symbolizes reclamation and pride."

Ribbon skirts have a significant cultural importance. They are sewn with colourful ribbons and embellished with symbolic designs that are typically tied to ancestry, community, and spirituality. The skirts convey personal and communal stories. In the past, ribbon skirts were worn as part of Indigenous customs and ceremonies, but many wear ribbon skirts both formally and informally today.

In her legal work, Anita will focus on representing Indigenous children in court, especially those that are in-care. When children

are most vulnerable and they see and talk to her while wearing her traditional clothing, they will be able to relate and feel like they are in a safe space.

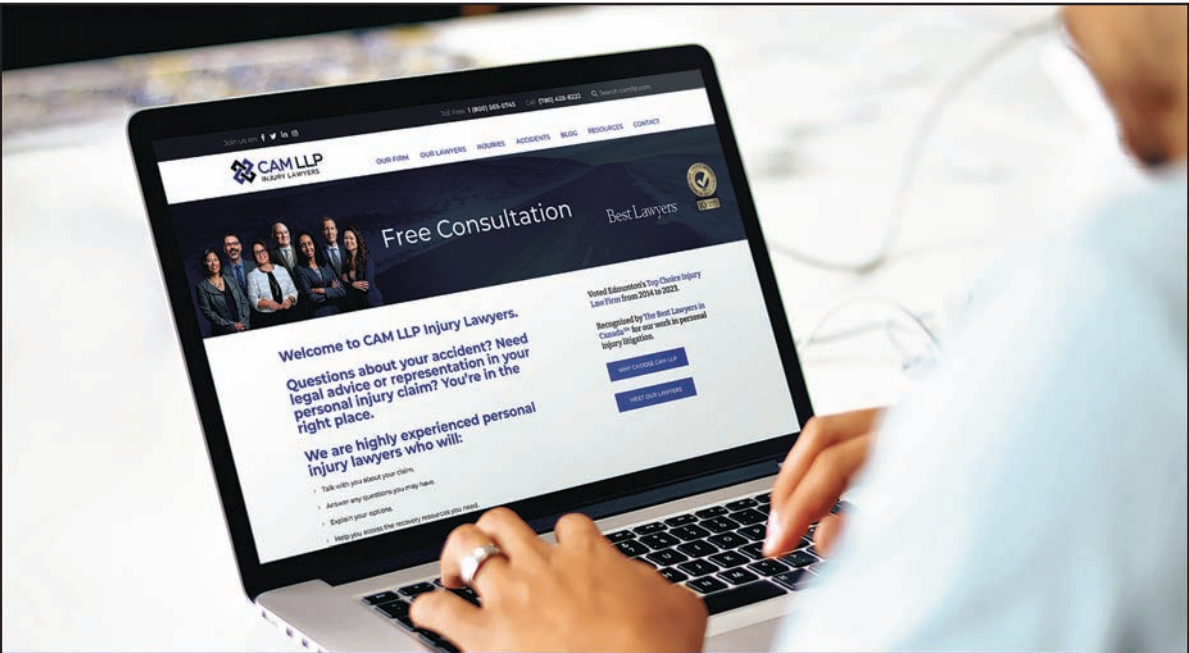
Anita stated, "Reclaiming our power is an important part of reclaiming our identity. For so long we were told and made to feel ashamed and embarrassed of who we are. I think that by representing, we inspire others who see us, they become inspired and empowered. We are wearing our ribbon skirts everywhere from ceremony to the court room because we are reclaiming our power in those spaces. No more hiding or no more being made to feel uncomfortable, because we belong, this is our land."

On National Ribbon Skirt Day and other days of recognition for Indigenous people throughout the year, we can all learn from past experiences and raise awareness to combat racism and discrimination against Indigenous People and



2022 Edmonton Walk a Mile in a Ribbon Skirt Day. Photo: Keegan Haze.

learn to celebrate Indigenous ways of knowing and being.



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Northern communities collaborate on caribou conservation report

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

While there’s been much attention on disputes between First Nations and Métis communities over federal legislation recognizing certain Métis groups as official orders of government, First Nations and Métis communities are collaborating in Alberta to protect its woodland caribou population.

Last month, representatives of 17 First Nations and Métis communities in Alberta tabled a report to the province’s Ministry of Environment and Protected Areas with recommendations on how to uphold Treaty rights in the Wandering River Sub-region in northeastern Alberta.

The report, entitled *Living with the Land*, is intended to assist the province in developing its Wandering River sub-regional land-use plan, which is expected to be released for public input and formal Indigenous consultation in the new year.

Chipewyan Prairie First Nation Chief Vern Janvier said the report “represents a significant change in provincial practice.”

“Alberta has never before engaged this deeply with Indigenous peoples in this region to understand our relationship to the land on which our ancestors have lived for millennia, and on which we have a right to preserve and practice our way of life,” Chief Janvier wrote in a statement.

“I expect the Province will incorporate our recommendations into the Wandering River plan to better manage development and cumulative effects, and to protect woodland caribou and its habitat, not just for us, but for all people.”

Living with the Land includes recommendations on establishing disturbance and reclamation targets for protecting the woodland caribou habitat, eliminating barriers towards Indigenous Peoples’ using the land, resolving competition and conflict for Indigenous land use, and preserving or restoring the quantity, quality and diversity of the sub-region’s land and resources.

“First Nations and Métis people are not stakeholders,” Diane Scoville of the Lakeland Métis said in a statement, “we are rights-holders. Development and conservation decisions both must mitigate impacts to our rights, and when they cannot be adequately mitigated an accommodation must be found.”

In August 2019, the Alberta government established six sub-regional task forces to develop local land-use planning, including caribou conservation, for northern Alberta — Wandering River, Berland, Chinchaga, Cold Lake, Bistcho Lake and Smoky River.

The Cold Lake and Bistcho Lake plans were released in April 2022.

The Wandering River task force reached a consensus recommendation that it adopt a zoning approach “where different areas have different management strategies” as they pertain to local Indigenous rights.

In addition to Indigenous communities, the task force has consulted with energy, forestry, and aggregate industries, municipalities, recreationalists, and environmentalists.

Mike Cardinal of Métis Nation of Alberta Region 1 said working on *Living with the Land* was a “very rewarding” experience.

“We’ve had the opportunity to share Indigenous Knowledge with other communities and to discover we have shared priorities that are important if Alberta is to meet its land use planning aspirations,” he added.

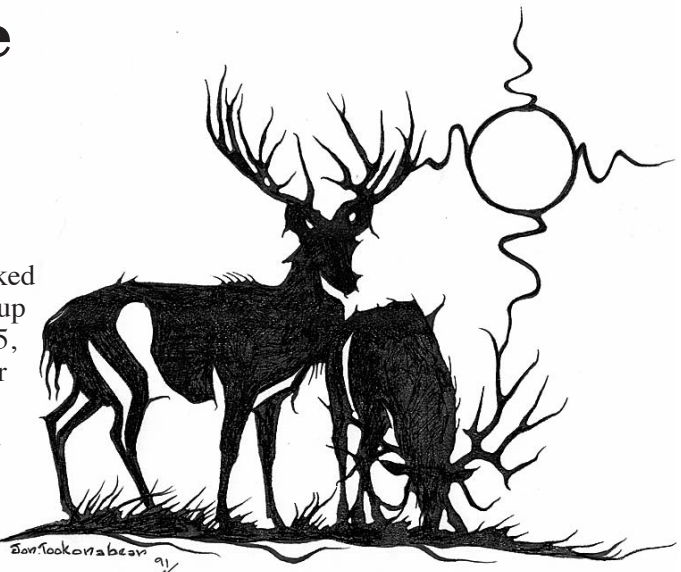
Woodland caribou are designated as a threatened species under Alberta’s Wildlife Act. Its ranges’ restoration are a key goal of the sub-regional plans.

The Wandering River plan will be a statutory component of the broader pre-existing Lower

Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP).

Five of the communities who worked on *Living with the Land* were part of a group who demanded a review of LARP in 2015, resulting in a review panel the following year accepting that the existing plan took insufficient account of the “balance between industrial activity and the ‘constitutionally protected rights’ of First Nations.”

“Our ancestors did not surrender our territory,” said Gilmen Cardinal of the Bigstone Cree Nation. “They agreed to share the land and its bounty with the newcomers. That reciprocal relationship has been lost.



Incorporating an Indigenous worldview into the Wandering River plan will help to restore that balance and advance reconciliation.”

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Piikani Nation declares State of Emergency over fatal opioid poisonings

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The chief of Piikani Nation in southern Alberta has declared a state of emergency after four opioid poisoning deaths occurred in the final week of 2023.

“These deaths will be marked with sorrow throughout the nation,” Piikani Chief Troy Knowlton said, adding that counselling resources will be made available to affected nation members.

“But it is my goal, and the goal of my council, to bring an end to or at least significantly reduce the availability of drugs and to prevent deaths among those who have had their lives ensnared by drugs.”

There were 1,411 opioid poisoning deaths in Alberta from January through September 2023, with a rate of 40.8 deaths reported per 100,000 people, higher than any other years on record, according to the Alberta substance use surveillance system.

Alberta Health Services’ south zone, where Piikani is located, recorded a record high of 184 opioid poisoning deaths in just the first nine months of 2023, compared to 144 in all of 2022, 156 in 2021 and 91 in 2020.

The south, with 76.6 deaths per 100,000 people, was by far the deadliest zone, compared to 47.1 in the Edmonton zone, 38.5 in the Calgary zone, 24.7 in central, which includes Red Deer, and 22.5 in the north, which includes Grande Prairie and Wood Buffalo.

Chief Knowlton promised to “start mediating the problem ... now.”

Contrary to Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations Leonard Standingontheroad’s declaration of a public emergency in July, the Piikani chief, whose Blackfoot nation is part of Treaty 7, made

no explicit mention of harm reduction as a means for addressing the drug poisoning crisis.

Chief Knowlton said in a statement that declaring a state of emergency will allow band council to direct more resources towards law enforcement and addictions treatment, referring to the drug poisoning epidemic as the “public policy challenge of the century, affecting every community from coast to coast.”

Piikani band member Nicole Johnston told *Global News* that one of the recent casualties was a well-known community member.

“Everyone knew the last person that passed away from this opioid and this last death has really hit a lot of people. It really hurt a lot of people in this community,” Johnston said.

Chief Knowlton said nation leadership must work with the local RCMP to engage in “diligent and augmented law enforcement measures to crack down on the source of the problem, namely gangs and drug traffickers.”

Joe Small Leg, a Piikani Elder, said he wants to see improved policing on the reserve.

“I live right in the townsite. There’s even white people coming in to drop off pills, stuff like that – nothing’s happening to them. They’re all able to come in, drop their supply off and leave. I believe it’s still happening today,” he said.

Alberta RCMP Cpl. Troy Savinkoff told *Global* that police will “be proactively working on project-based things, focusing on those offenders that we believe are bringing drugs in that community and hopefully keeping it out.”

“This is a team approach with partners within the communities themselves and everybody has a




part to play in trying ... to prevent these sort of deaths in the community.”

Although he wants to see more law enforcement action, Small Leg identified endemic poverty as the root cause of increased drug use on reserve, which will need to be addressed as part of a long-term solution to the crisis.

“When you’re in poverty everything comes: criminality, crime, alcohol, substance abuse, pills. That all comes with poverty,” he told *Global* reporter Adam Toy.

“Poverty is the big problem here. If you can deal with poverty, start finding jobs, start giving them a spirit, maybe they will come out and put that stuff away.”



Impact Assessment
Agency of Canada

Agence d'évaluation
d'impact du Canada

Marguerite Lake Compressed Air Energy Storage Project

Participant Funding Available

January 10, 2024 — Funding provided by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) is now available to help Indigenous Peoples and the public participate in the impact assessment process for the proposed Marguerite Lake Compressed Air Energy Storage Project, a new power plant located near La Corey, Alberta.

Funding is available for eligible individuals and groups to support their participation throughout the planning phase of the federal impact assessment process. During the current comment period, which ends on January 28, 2024 Indigenous Peoples and the public are invited to review the summary of the Initial Project Description and provide comments. The Agency will retroactively reimburse eligible participants for their participation in this first comment period.

Applications received by **January 30, 2024**, will be considered.


For more information about the Funding Program, including eligibility criteria and the application form, please visit the project home page, reference number 87154, and click on “Participant Funding.” You can also contact the Participant Funding Program by writing to fp-paf@iaac-aeic.gc.ca or by calling 1-866-582-1884. Details about the project can also be found on the project home page.

Additional Information

In October 2023, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced the Government of Canada's guidance on the interim administration of the *Impact Assessment Act* (the IAA), following the recent decision by the Supreme Court of Canada on the constitutionality of the IAA. According to the interim measures, advancing projects through the impact assessment process is at the discretion of the proponent. The Agency remains committed to collaborating with proponents to advance the assessment of projects and discuss the information requirements.

Stay updated on this project by following the Agency on X (previously Twitter): [#EnergyStorage](https://twitter.com/IAAC_AEIC)

For media inquiries, contact the Agency's media relations team by writing to media@iaac-aeic.gc.ca or calling 343-549-3870.





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Lori Deets *cont. from p 2*

You’ve got to be out there talking to everyone,” she adds, emphasizing the daunting reality of seeking safe and affordable housing.

“And when you know, the terrible fact is that most people won’t rent to you based on your skin colour,” exposing the systemic challenges and harmful stereotypes created by society on Indigenous women.

“Now that I have more of an understanding of systemic racism, biases, and discrimination, I can kind of put some barriers up to protect myself, but it’s still really hard,” Deets reflects, acknowledging the resilience required to navigate a system marked by discrimination.

“The ongoing battle is demoralizing. Like everyone else, I yearn for nothing more than a secure place to call home.”

“Surviving in Canada is stressful when you don’t have a stable home,” said Deets.

“As a Sixties Scoop Survivor, I have more than one set of parents,” she reveals, shedding light on the intergenerational harm that Canada has created, perpetuated, and inflicted.

Despite being Indigenous on their ancestral lands, Canada has failed to facilitate homeownership for its Indigenous populations, depriving them of the opportunity to build generational wealth like their non-Indigenous counterparts.

“I have friends [who are] non-Indigenous, who are able to buy their homes -usually because their parents help them,” Deets shares, offering a glimpse into the disparities faced by different demographics.

The recent PCVWH conference in Ottawa delved into the financialization of Canada’s housing market. Many Canadians whose ancestors migrated to Canada have been able to obtain land. A comprehensive report authored by Martine August for the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate revealed the adverse effects of

financialization on housing.

‘Summary Report for the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate,’ delves into the detrimental effects of financialization on Canada’s housing. Examining aspects like the 2008 crisis, Single Family Rentals, and seniors’ housing trends, the report urges a call to action for inclusive and equitable policies. It underscores the pressing need for collaborative efforts to rectify systemic housing issues, providing a clarion call for a more just and inclusive housing landscape.

Integral to PCVWH, the Federal Housing Advocate’s role involves making recommendations to improve housing laws, policies, and programs. PCVWH gives Deets a voice and a platform to connect with many other women facing challenges from diverse backgrounds, and also on reserve women like elder Lavenia Schug. PCVWH is a national project advocating for inclusive housing policies and has been actively driving change since 2017.

Deets says she feels “that society doesn’t think I, as an Indigenous woman can own a home.” There are harmful stereotypes placed on many Indigenous women, she adds, and its these stereotypes that harm, not just Indigenous women but all women. She says, “It’s hard when even my own family thinks that way; it’s the essence of projection.”

Deets ends the interview by saying that ideas like “Land Back” are great but need to have a solid plan behind the idea that’s realistic for Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) to understand, “CHMC isn’t there yet; they don’t understand Land Back. This is why I didn’t bring the idea up while I was in Ottawa. I could tell they would not understand the concept.”

According to LandBack.Org, ‘Landback’ is a movement that has existed for generations with a long legacy of organizing and sacrifice to get Indigenous Lands back into Indigenous hands. Currently, there are ‘Landback’ battles being



Lori Deets and Elder Lavenia Schug in Ottawa at Pan-Canadian Voice for Women's Housing Symposium.

fought all across Turtle Island, to the north and the south.

Deets also says initiatives like the PCVWH are crucial as they connect lived expertise to leaders in the Canadian housing industry. For more information on PCVWH, check out www.pcvwh.ca.



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New book explores the Métis pioneer legacy of Peter Lougheed

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

In her latest literary offering, “The Premier and His Grandmother: Peter Lougheed, Lady Belle, and the Legacy of Métis Identity,” Dr. Doris J. MacKinnon, delicately unravels the familial ties binding former Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed to his Métis grandmother, Isabella Clark Hardisty Lougheed.

For MacKinnon, an academic in North American Indigenous history, who is from northeastern Alberta, this exploration signifies a profound stride in her personal reconciliation journey. Her drive led her to delve into historical narratives, particularly those featuring pioneer Indigenous women. “Indigenous people were the original pioneers,” she declares.

The heart of MacKinnon’s exploration is recognizing the often-overlooked stories of Métis and other Indigenous women. As she puts it, “Métis Indigenous women played a crucial role in establishing pioneer communities, especially during the transition from the fur trade to a more sedentary economy.”

MacKinnon highlights the importance of Indigenous women’s contributions: “Many of the original pioneer women were Indigenous Métis women, actively contributing to the establishment of the first hospitals, literary clubs, and social services in pioneer communities. These women became the backbone of support in areas lacking

essential services.”

“The history of Indigenous women and their significant contributions to Canada are often obscured. These original pioneers settled on the prairies, overcoming challenges. Sadly, their stories are not well-documented,” she adds.

Despite the crucial roles of Metis women in pioneering communities and contributing to societal structures, their stories are seldom acknowledged. MacKinnon says, “Oral history and snippets from newspapers provide glimpses into their impactful lives.”

Isabella Clark Hardisty Lougheed, the Matriarch of the Lougheed family, was often regarded as the first lady of the Calgary area, and played a role in establishing the family’s prominence.

The Lougheeds’ wealth during the Great Depression was lost, but Isabella Clark Hardisty Lougheed’s community influence and societal impact in Calgary endured. Their grand home, now designated a national historic site, bears witness to the enduring contributions that shaped the city’s identity. Once the first to boast electric power in southern Alberta, this residence symbolizes the pioneer spirit that shaped Canada.

Isabella Clark Hardisty Lougheed’s legacy extends beyond the walls of her historic home. As a key figure in Calgary’s social landscape, she hosted many visitors, including royalty, in an era where personal homes doubled as accommodations for dignitaries. This hospitality became integral to establishing Calgary as an essential hub in Canada.

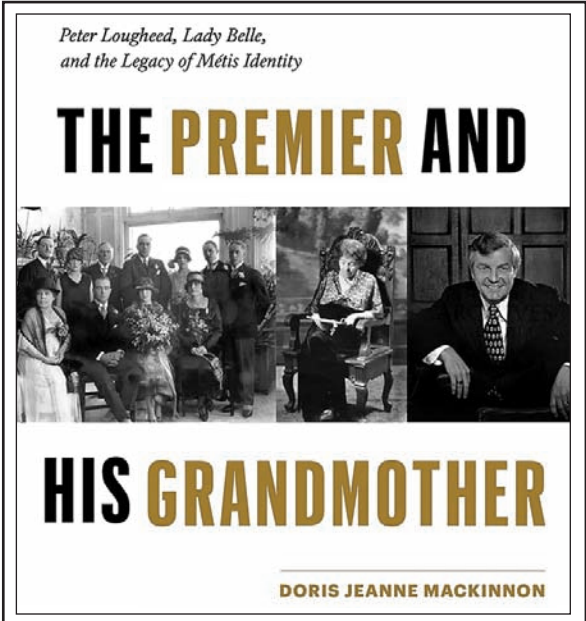
Isabel Hardisty Lougheed’s legacy left an indelible mark on the pages of Canadian history and it continues to resonate.

Reflecting on the challenges faced by Métis people, MacKinnon notes, “There was a time when they were called the hidden people because if they could survive by claiming a non-Indigenous identity, that was sometimes a necessary choice.”

But MacKinnon says, “For Isabel Hardisty Lougheed, the sense is that she was open about her Métis Indigenous identity and never hid it.”

Joe Lougheed, the son of Alberta’s former Premier, Peter Lougheed, provides profound insights into the significance of their Métis heritage. He told ANews, “My father always acknowledged his Métis Indigenous ancestry.

“In our household, a cherished photograph adorned the walls—my father, Peter Lougheed, proudly showcasing his great-grandmother, Mary Allen, a Métis woman.”



For Joe, the Métis identity isn’t a mere historical footnote but a proud legacy spanning generations. He proudly states, “My family is proud of our Métis identity; I can trace my heritage back through multiple generations. I’m honoured to be accepted by the Métis community in Alberta. The inclusion of Métis in the Constitution marked a fundamental moment in history.”

Although Peter Lougheed didn’t overtly display his Métis history, Joe emphasizes that his father regularly spoke about it and took pride in it. The constitutional negotiations, a nuanced negotiation, saw the debated but crucial decision to include Section 35. This marked the first time Métis were recognized in the Constitution of Canada. The inclusion is a constitutional milestone, in the Métis of Alberta’s recent move toward self-government, symbolizing one of many steps in their ongoing struggles for recognition and significance in Alberta.

Joe further reflects on the importance of pride in one’s past and open discussion. “People should take pride in their past and openly discuss it for reconciliation. Sharing these stories is a way of passing on the history of our country to the next generation.”

The narrative captures readers with a compelling story of Peter Lougheed and his grandmother, shedding light on their Métis heritage, struggles, and profound impact on Alberta’s history. MacKinnon’s work is dedicated to unearthing stories contributing to the broader narrative of Indigenous identity and the challenges the Métis community faces. Through individual stories and the overarching historical context, the book contributes to understanding the significance of Métis heritage in Alberta and Canada.

For more information about MacKinnon’s research visit dorisjeanmackinnon.ca.



Lougheed's great-grandmother, Mary Anne Allen's (Thomas), ancestors were the Chinook people of the Pacific Northwest. Photo: Libraries and Cultural Resources Digital Collection, U of C, NA-2758-1.

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Chiefs say they were shut out from consultation on Clean Water Bill

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Chiefs representing forty-seven Treaty 6, 7 and 8 First Nations say the federal government’s First Nations Clean Water Act was drafted without their input and that the federal Indigenous Services minister has ignored their requests for a meeting.

The legislation, which was introduced in the House of Commons on Dec. 11 as Bill C-61, was a condition of an \$8-billion class action settlement the feds reached in 2021 with First Nations across Canada whose members suffered from lack of access to clean drinking water for at least a year since November 1995.

The Chiefs Steering Committee on Technical Services, which provides technical support on water, wastewater and related infrastructure for First Nations in Alberta, says the legislation as it stands does little more than offload responsibility onto First Nations without providing appropriate funding for them to do so.

Tallcree First Nation Chief Rupert Meneen, who represents Treaty 8 on the committee, called Bill C-61 “dump-and-run legislation.”

“Canada is ... basically dumping everything on us to take care of with very little funding,” he told *Alberta Native News*.

Norma Tall, the steering committee’s policy and legal advisor, says that by the Canadian government’s own admission, it has underfunded First Nations’ water, wastewater and other related infrastructure compared with the rest of Canada.

“Nobody ever addresses the reality of it,” Tall said in an interview.

Bill C-61 envisions the creation of a First Nations Water Commission to enforce national drinking water and wastewater standards.

“Taking that on means you’re also taking on the

risks with outdated infrastructure and without access to water,” Tall explained.

“The water isn’t stagnant in any individual reserve. In fact, it flows from the rivers, from the watersheds, from the lakes.”

Chief Meneen says Treaty 6, 7 and 8 chiefs have requested meetings with Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu “to bring our concerns to the table and make Canada understand that there’s more to this than what you guys are putting on paper,” but were ignored.

“Our source waters are drying up, with climate change and everything else that’s happening in this country,” Meneen added.

“If you come to my community, I will show you this little tiny creek we draw our water from every spring when it’s running full. But during the summer, it’s empty, there’s nothing flowing.”

While the legislation pledges “to make best efforts to adequate and sustainable funding for water services on First Nation lands comparable to services received in non-First Nations communities,” it does not specify what level of funding this entails.

Downloading responsibility onto First Nations violates the spirit of Treaty 8, Tall said, with its promise to uphold a collaborative relationship with the Crown “as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the Waters Flow.”

Chief Meneen says the entire extent of the feds’



consultation with Treaty 8 chiefs was a single 45-minute Zoom meeting.

“You can’t call that consultation,” he said. “Forty-five minutes doesn’t give you enough time to really voice the concerns that you have with this legislation.”

This level of consultation is nowhere near the standard of “free, prior and informed consent” outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the Canadian government has endorsed, Tall added.

The feds say they worked closely with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) on the bill and have held consultations with First Nations since 2018, but refuse to release a list of the nations it consulted.

Meneen and Tall say the AFN isn’t the appropriate entity for negotiating legislation impacting Treaty rights, because the AFN hasn’t signed any Treaties itself.

The AFN’s purpose is “to open doors for the rights holders, and the chiefs are the only ones who represent the rights holders,” Tall explained, adding that the AFN is being used to “manufacture consent” for the federal government’s agenda.

Chiefs in Alberta aren’t the only First Nations leaders expressing concerns with Bill C-61.

Chief Chris Moonias of Neskantaga First Nation, a remote community in northern Ontario, has had a drinking water advisory for 28 years — the longest in Canada.

He told *CBC News* that he wanted the government to send an official to his community to interview its 300 members, some of whom have lived their entire lives without access to clean drinking water.

“They just do whatever they want,” Moonias said. “That’s colonialism at its best.”

Inspiring youth *cont. from p 5*

ancestors created and made things for survival and that is why we are still here and never give up. I believe in Truth and Reconciliation because I know somewhere out there creator has a plan for us to build a bridge, come together, and it starts in the school, and it starts at home.”

Mary Jane’s advice to young people is to “keep moving forward, don’t forget who you are, learn about your family, your Kokums (grandfathers) and Moosums (grandmothers) and where they came from. Even if you say one Cree word, that’s a lot. Even if you learn one natural law in Cree, that’s a lot. Know your identity, your culture, pray, smudge, laugh and do art. Those are all good things to heal you.”

Mary Jane is thankful for her parents, her siblings and Dr. Kevin Lewis. She also thanks Councillor James Jackson for his ongoing support and for buying her paintings and showcasing them, and her Cousin Muskwa Houle. If anyone is interested in purchasing Mary Jane’s art, you can reach her at maryjanesteppe@gmail.com

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Marguerite Lake Compressed Air Energy Storage Project

Comments Invited and Information Sessions

What is happening?

January 8, 2024 — Federation Group Inc. is proposing the Marguerite Lake Compressed Air Energy Storage Project, a new 320-megawatt power plant facility located about 16 kilometres north of La Corey, Alberta.

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) invites Indigenous Peoples and the public to review the summary of the Initial Project Description and provide comments on the proposed project. This feedback will help the Agency prepare a summary of issues that will be given to the proponent.

Visit the project homepage on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (reference number 87154) to:

• Learn more about the project.

• Submit your comments online by 11:59 p.m. on January 28, 2024. All comments will be published to the Registry.

• Find information on participant funding, which will be available to eligible participants during this comment period. Details will be announced shortly on the Registry.

• Join a virtual information session to learn more about the project and the impact assessment process. Participants for their participation in this first comment period.

Have a question?

Write to us at Marguerite@iaac-aeic.gc.ca or visit the Agency's website at canada.ca/iaac.

For media inquiries: media@iaac-aeic.gc.ca or 343-549-3870.



Scan the QR-Code to visit the project homepage.





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