

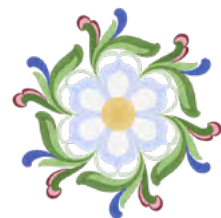


Métis Nation British Columbia

# Food Security Priority Paper

2026

Ministry of Food Security



MÉTIS NATION  
BRITISH COLUMBIA







Front Cover:  
***Passing our Strength from a Stove***  
by Maëlle Rasmussen

# Acknowledgements

Métis Nation British Columbia respects the inherent and treaty rights of all [204 First Nations](#) across British Columbia, where our work takes place. We recognize and honour their continued stewardship and governance.

MNBC recognizes the 38 Métis Chartered Communities located across the province. These Communities provide Métis people with local programming and opportunities for cultural connection and belonging, sometimes after generations of displacement. We celebrate the meaningful contributions of these Communities and of Métis people, both historically and in the present day.

This report would not be possible without the contribution of MNBC Citizens, who lean on the teachings of their ancestors to guide food security work in a good way. We acknowledge and honour the time and knowledge given by Métis Citizens. Maarsii (thank you)!

To honour and uplift Métis teachings, we have highlighted artwork throughout the

***“Métis share a food culture that is resilient and embodies Métis values of respect, kindness, and teamwork. Métis have always honoured food; it nourishes our bodies, connects us to each other and the land.”***

– MNBC MINISTER OF FOOD SECURITY,  
PAULETTE FLAMOND

report from Métis artists across B.C. Their artwork inspires and serves as a reminder that abundance is all around us and we must take care of all our relations. All artwork is designated in the report with the title and artist name beside it. You can find the artists' statements in [Appendix E](#). Maarsii to the Métis artists, who provide hope for a better future.

We are grateful for the wisdom provided by British Columbia Métis Assembly of Natural Resources (BCMANR) Captains of the Hunt: Mark Carlson, Curt Smecher, Holly Tennant,



Marlene Beattie, Gary Ducommun, Rene Lucier, Vic Lavallee, and all Captains who came before. It is the Knowledge Carriers and Elders who keep culture alive, reminding us of the importance of how the land takes care of us when we take care of it. We celebrate you and honour the 25th anniversary of BCMANR.

A special maarsii to MNBC's Communications and Cultural Integration and Resources teams for their time reviewing this priority paper. Gratitude to Darcy Senger for her graphic design work on this report.

We also acknowledge the good work that has been accomplished in partnership with Canada-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) as we continue to work together in Indigenous Climate Leadership. This paper and many of the actions in it would not be possible without their support. It is through respectful collaboration that we can continue to mend our relationship with the land and all our relations.

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# List of Abbreviations

**AAFC** .....

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

**B.C.** .....

British Columbia

**BCAC** .....

British Columbia Agriculture Council

**BCCDC** .....

British Columbia Centre for Disease Control

**BCMANR** .....

British Columbia Métis Assembly of Natural Resources

**CFIA** .....

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

**CIRNAC** .....

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

**CORE** .....

Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Education

**ECCC** .....

Environment and Climate Change Canada

**FAO** .....

Food and Agriculture Organization

**ISC** .....

Indigenous Services Canada

**MNBC** .....

Métis Nation British Columbia

**MNC** .....

Métis National Council

**MNCCS** .....

Métis Nation Climate Change Strategy

**MN-S** .....

Métis Nation Saskatchewan

**NRCan** .....

Natural Resources Canada

**PAL** .....

Possession and Acquisition License

**SDG** .....

Sustainable Development Goals

**STEPS** .....

Skills Training, Employment & Post Secondary

**UNDA** .....

United Nations Declaration Act





# Introduction

## WHO WE ARE

MNBC represents the section 35 rights of approximately 31,000 Métis Citizens who are registered with MNBC and advocates for the over 113,000 self-identified Métis in British Columbia. MNBC represents thirty-eight (38) Métis Chartered Communities in British Columbia. MNBC's mandate is to develop and enhance opportunities for Métis communities by implementing culturally relevant social and economic programs and services. MNBC is recognized by the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Canada. MNBC is the government for Métis in B.C.

MNBC's work on food security uplifts Métis cultural revitalization by creating opportunities for Métis to connect to community and culture through food. This work has been historically completed as part of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Food Security. In May 2025, a new stand-alone Ministry of Food Security was created. As of today, capacity and funding continue to be shared between the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the Ministry of Food Security, as there are many overlapping priorities and connections. The activities, reports and initiatives presented

## WHO ARE THE MÉTIS?

*The Métis emerged through the fur trade during the 1600s to 1700s, predating Canada. Indigenous women and European fur traders created distinct kinship connections along the fur-trading routes, and over time, mixed Indigenous people would intermarry, forming a distinct culture and the establishment of a new Nation. The kinship networks along fur-trade routes would eventually make up the Métis Nation Homeland.<sup>i</sup>*

*The Canadian Museum for Human Rights states that, "In 1982, the Métis were legally recognized as one of Canada's three Aboriginal peoples, along with the First Nations and Inuit."<sup>ii</sup> In 2002, the "National Definition" for "Métis," adopted by the Métis National Council General Assembly, means "a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation."<sup>iii</sup>*



in this document represent the collaborative work of both Ministries under the umbrella of The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and Food Security (hereafter referred to as “the Ministry”). The Ministry also engages in activities at international, federal, provincial, regional, and local levels to support Métis food, environmental, and climate change needs and concerns.

The Ministry of Food Security is mandated to advance and strengthen Métis long-term access to cultural and nutritious foods and practices. This is achieved through research, advocacy, and programming that promotes skill-building and education around practices such as harvesting (hunting, fishing, gathering, etc.), agriculture, and gardening. By incorporating a lens of sustainability, responsibility, and stewardship, the Ministry uplifts Métis and all our relations to support healthy and self-sufficient Métis food systems.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change is mandated to advance research, advocacy, and programs to help connect Métis Citizens to the natural environment in British Columbia. This is done through centering and empowering Métis voices and values in matters related to climate change, conservation, and food security. These efforts honour the connections between Métis Citizens and all our relations so we may strive for a healthy and thriving planet for current and future generations. In addition, the Ministry endeavors to embody and exemplify the vision, mission, and cultural values of Métis Nation British Columbia (see [Appendix A](#)).

The Ministry works intimately with the British Columbia Métis Assembly of Natural Resources

(BCMANR), a non-political committee under MNBC's *Natural Resources Act* and a separate society affiliated with MNBC. Composed of Captains of the Hunt, the Ministry relies on the wisdom of BCMANR to guide and connect Métis with nature, teaching traditional ways of living (e.g., trapping, hunting, gathering). It is with their knowledge that the Ministry can move forward this work in a good way.

***“As Métis, our environment has influenced our lifestyle. Being Métis meant knowing how to survive in nature. Being Métis meant having respect for our environment. Being Métis meant being in tune with nature. Being Métis meant being in tune spiritually with our surroundings. Our culture, our lifestyle, our spirituality was and still is influenced by our environment. Although my mother and my grandparents had little to no education, we still had many teachings.***

***Picking plants for food and medicine was and still is a part of our lifestyle. We have studied plants and their medicinal uses for generations. We have preserved much of the knowledge of traditional plant use as an intellectual right given to us by the Creator and through our ancestors.”***

– ELDER ROSE RICHARDSON,  
MEDICINES TO HELP US<sup>iv</sup>

## MÉTIS CONNECTION TO FOOD

Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples have had a strong connection to the environment through food systems. Prior to contact with Europeans, Indigenous Peoples created food practices that influenced distinct cultural values and provided spiritual nourishment as well as nutritional diversity.<sup>v</sup> Indigenous knowledges and worldviews are shaped through experiences on a personal and social level, through relationships with local ecosystems.<sup>vi</sup> This relationship with the land, or kinship, is built on reciprocity, respect,<sup>vii</sup> or *wahkotowin*.<sup>viii</sup> *Wahkotowin*, a Cree term as defined by Maria Campbell (2007), is the respect and, responsibility, and obligation that humans have to all creation on earth, including the plants, animals, water, and spirits.<sup>ix</sup>





***“[The relationship between food and Métis identity] is an important part of our culture. The dining room was where planning and business took place usually over dinner.***

***Métis people are rooted in sharing their resources with each other during winter months, providing for one another. Food is a central pillar to Métis culture and identity.”***

– MNBC SURVEY RESPONDENT\*

For Métis, food is something that is intricately connected to a sense of being and identity. Métis food history and culture were connected to their way of life by way of their historical work in the fur trade and through buffalo hunts, both of which saw Métis travelling based on the seasons of harvest. These historical practices continue to shape Métis culture today.

Non-human kin demonstrate wahkotowin to us by providing us with food, medicines, and wellbeing, sustaining us through the life stages. For many Métis, food and land are important to the spiritual wellness and connection to culture.



Métis women were and still are central to food culture whereby grandmothers, mothers, and aunties held the important job of managing food. Métis women learned about the ecology and seasons, like knowing when and what to harvest and teaching younger generations how to prepare for upcoming seasons. This knowledge extended into the winter months through preservation activities, where women of all generations would come together to dry meat, berries, and fish, and they “canned everything feasible.”<sup>xii</sup> Métis women helped strengthen food security and community relationships by making sure everyone in the

***“Spirituality and land are so closely tied together. Even if you weren’t really close to your néhiyaw side, you were close to the land. Like, it was hunting, you know, farming, fishing; and we knew that. . . that stuff in our bodies and our spirits were connected.”***

– MÉTIS KEHTËYAK<sup>1</sup> PARTICIPATING IN A RESEARCH PROJECT<sup>xiii</sup>



community was fed despite facing poverty and discrimination.<sup>xii</sup> Métis men also contributed to the welfare of their communities through hunting large game such as buffalo. Métis of all genders were active participants in Métis food culture, and tasks were partly determined by one’s role in the community.

There are numerous historical and ongoing colonial laws and policies that have shaped current food and nutrition landscapes for Métis in B.C. Wahkotowin was disrupted by colonization, limiting Métis access to land through forced relocation, displacement, and the residential school system. The disconnect from land led to a loss in identity, culture, traditional teachings, access to harvesting and food, and a decline in health.<sup>xiv</sup> Despite these harms, Métis people are actively finding ways to reconnect to culture through food practices, preserving and passing along intergenerational knowledge and identity.

Food is a natural way to connect to culture and build kinship with people and the land. This connection is seen at kitchen tables, community hunts (where whole families participated), and shared harvests. Having access to traditional foods in ceremony is also an important factor to foster connection for 2SLGBTQIA+ kin.<sup>xv</sup>

For Métis in B.C. today, food is an intimate connection to culture, food is medicine, food is tied to identity and the sense of being. It is with this knowledge that MNBC is working to repair and restore Métis relationships with food and the land, improving food security and self-sufficiency for Métis communities.

<sup>1</sup> Kehtëyak is a Cree word for “the ones who know”. Participants in this research project identified with kehtëyak more than the word “Elder”.

# Why Food Security?

While Métis across B.C. today identify food security and access to cultural, healthy, and local foods as a priority, this issue is not new. Métis food systems and identity have been impacted since Métis resistance against the Crown.

Historically, Métis suffered massive dispossession of their land through the scrip system after the Métis lost the Red River Resistance. Scrip was implemented by the federal government in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as part of their colonization efforts; whereby land or money vouchers were given to Métis families that were often far away from their current communities.<sup>xvi, xvii</sup> The impacts of colonization and forced dispossession along with the complex and corrupt scrip system left many Métis houseless. Due to the loss of land, Métis would often settle on areas designated by the Crown for road, parkland, or forested regions, where Métis were then referred to as the “Road Allowance People.” These events led to the loss of employment or working in temporary jobs, loss of education for Métis children, and increasing poverty.<sup>xviii</sup> The Ministry recognizes that there are many events that have significantly impacted Métis food security, such as the near extermination of the buffalo, and not all events have been described here. Despite these

hardships, Métis remained resilient in maintaining their identity by continuing to practice their culture and speaking Michif within their homes.

Compounded with the impacts of colonialism that are both presented and missing from this report, the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing extreme climate events further deteriorated food security for Métis families and harvesters, amplifying existing food insecurity and concerns. There were economic strains brought on from the pandemic where the general Canadian population saw an increase in the number of food insecure families at 16.8% in 2018 up to 25.7% in 2023.<sup>xix</sup>



*Photo by Natasha Beauregard*

In 2022, the National Indigenous Peoples Survey estimated that 35.2% of Métis were experiencing some level of food insecurity, with around 34.5% of Métis children reporting being food insecure.<sup>xx</sup> A 2024 federal survey reported that 59% of Métis respondents said that rising costs of living had limited the amount of healthy and nutritious food they could buy during the past six months.<sup>xxi</sup> Food is not only a means of survival but an essential connection to Métis culture, and it is more important than ever that MNBC and the Ministry work to improve food security for Métis in B.C.

Métis in B.C. are actively practicing food self-sufficiency and hold extensive knowledge on food security. For the purpose of this paper and our work with Community, Métis food security does not fit into one single definition. One of the Ministry's main goals is to understand what factors contribute to Métis food security and wellbeing, defined by Community.

Over the years, the Ministry participated in several engagements with Citizens to better understand what food security looks like for Métis people in B.C. Themes that showed up consistently were Citizen's desire to obtain more knowledge on food skills such as harvesting and preservation, learning from Knowledge Carriers locally and on the land, and more support for community building through food. Though an agreed upon definition for Métis food security has not yet been established, for many Métis families, food security looks like being self-sufficient, having access to affordable, whole, nutritious food, and having a relationship with the land where food comes from.

To address Métis food insecurity in a culturally grounded way, MNBC first solidified food security and sovereignty as priorities to achieve socio-economic reconciliation within its strategic plan, with one of its actions to "promote and support food sovereignty."<sup>xxii</sup> Then MNBC's Board created the Ministry of Food Security in 2025 to build capacity and resources that advocate for Métis food security, increase programming, and provide educational opportunities.<sup>xxiii</sup> The Ministry has since adopted a three-pronged approach to this work, applying an individual-, community-, and systems-level lens. This approach is meant to advance food security with sustainable and long-term solutions, centering Métis culture and self-sufficiency.

### **BRITISH COLUMBIA CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL (BCCDC) – DEFINITIONS:**<sup>xxiv</sup>

*Food security means that everyone has equitable access to food that is affordable, culturally preferable, nutritious and safe; everyone has the agency to participate in, and influence food systems; and that food systems are resilient, ecologically sustainable, socially just, and honour Indigenous food sovereignty.*

*Food insecurity exists when factors outside an individual's control negatively impact their access to enough foods that promote wellbeing. Economic, social, environmental, and geographical factors influence this access. Food insecurity is most acutely felt by those who experience the negative impacts of structural inequities, such as discrimination and on-going colonial practices.*

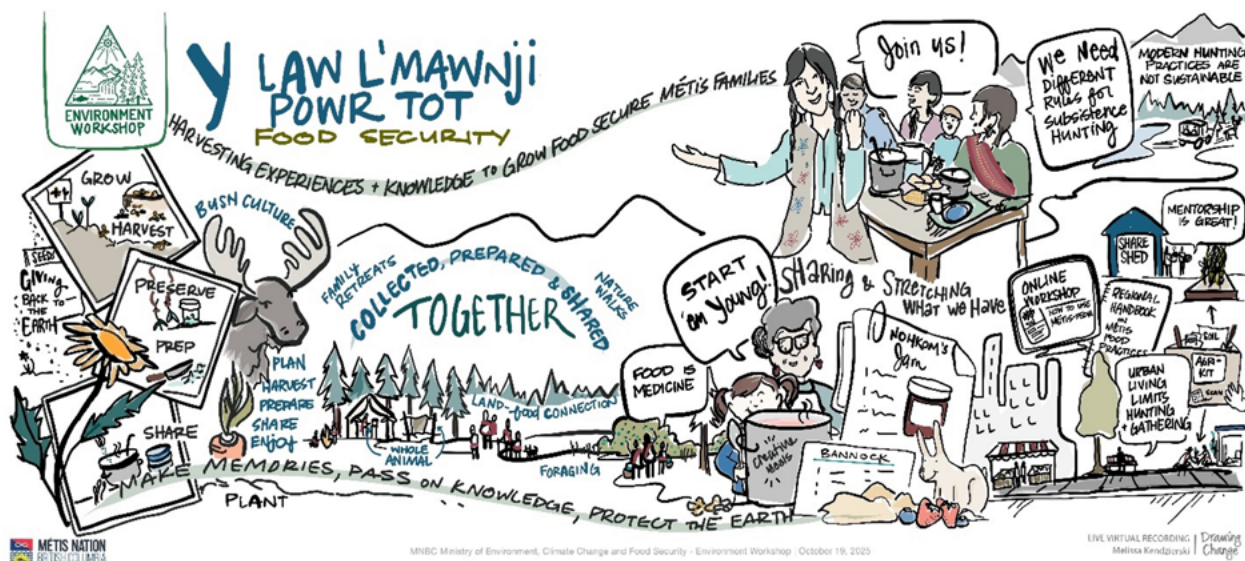


Figure 1: Graphic Recording from MNBC Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Food Security 'Environment Workshop', October 2025

## CURRENT & PAST PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

It wasn't until the beginning of the pandemic that MNBC started to build programs that specifically targeted food security. Funding from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) was used to respond to the challenges that the pandemic brought on for Métis Citizens. Many programs implemented from 2020 to 2026 supported Métis Citizen's access to food by way of direct financial supports such as the Elders Support Program, Harvesters Support Fund, Micôwin Program, and programs aimed at supporting food security.

One such program is the Home Garden Program, MNBC's longest standing food program. First

***"I think back to my ancestors who relied solely on the food they sourced through gardening or hunting. Last year we had a bumper crop of plums. Not only did all of our friends and neighbours enjoy them but we also donated a large box full to our local shelter."***

***-HOME GARDEN PROGRAM PARTICIPANT***

launched in 2021 as a pilot project to support 100 Métis families, the program provided Métis with garden seeds and a microgrant to purchase garden equipment and supplies. The program has been offered for six consecutive years, supporting more than 1,000 households.

In addition, the program provides different educational opportunities, including the distribution of a monthly newsletter featuring one Citizen's journey each month, a gardening manual,<sup>xxv</sup> and topic-based webinars.

An annual survey is sent out to all Home Garden participants to gather information on program effectiveness and the overall skills and knowledge systems that are being built through the program. Additionally, the survey provides an opportunity to gather more information on Métis food security within B.C. and intersecting topics such as climate change, nature, and biodiversity. For example, in the 2025 Home Garden post-program survey, respondents identified that Métis have a distinct food culture that centres harvesting (hunting, fishing, gathering, preserving), growing, sharing, and community-building. Some indicated wishing to learn and return to ancestral ways of harvesting. Food is not only a way to survive but used to create connections and celebrate with each other.



In addition to the Home Garden Program, the Ministry supports various food security programs and initiatives at MNBC including:

### **HARVESTER CARDS AND ANNUAL HARVESTER SURVEY**

***(2001-ongoing)***

MNBC offers MNBC Citizens the chance to apply for an MNBC Harvester Card. Any MNBC Citizen with a Harvester Card are then required to participate in a yearly survey. The annual Harvester Survey supports active Métis harvesters in species monitoring and management in B.C. by asking harvesters to report hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, observations, and other recreational and cultural land uses. Food data, including medicinal and cultural harvesting, are captured within the survey.

### **HARVESTER SUPPORT FUND**

***(2021 & 2025)***

Cultural harvesting practices have become more resource intensive as economic hardships have worsened. In response, the Ministry offered a microgrant to Métis harvesters that held an MNBC Harvester card. These grants covered the cost of fuel, equipment, tag purchases, licensing costs, and other items so Métis harvesters can participate in activities on the land. Approximately 300 harvesters were supported in 2021, and an additional 118 harvesters received the grant in 2025.

## COMMUNITY FOOD ACTION INITIATIVE GRANTS

(2023-ongoing)

The Ministry has received support from Interior Health Authority for Métis food security in the region since 2023. The program provides equal grant distribution across all Métis Chartered Communities in their region to address their own specific food security needs. Fraser Health has provided similar support for Métis Chartered Communities located in their health region in 2025 and 2026.

## COOKBOOK, VERSION 2

(Spring 2024)

The Ministry compiled a collection of Métis traditional and neo-traditional recipes, as well Métis family/ generational recipes, to create a cookbook that supports sharing knowledge and traditions between Métis households. It also serves as a general resource for Métis meal ideas.

## STORIES FROM THE SOIL

(Summer 2026)

The *Stories from the Soil* project is a knowledge-sharing initiative designed to document, preserve, and distribute Métis gardening knowledge, lived experience, and land-based food practices across British Columbia. Building on the success of the Home Garden Program, this project captures



Métis Citizen gardening stories and shares regionally relevant growing knowledge across B.C. climate zones. Beginner and experienced gardeners can use this resource, available digitally and in print, to strengthen food security and climate resilience.



## REPORTS WE HAVE DONE

Over the years, the Ministry has created several reports that either directly or indirectly speak to Métis food security in B.C. The learnings from the reports inform the Ministry on how to better advocate and create food programming for Métis.

### MNBC NATURE PRIORITY PAPER

(2026)

The paper compliments and supports this report, providing information about BCMANR and harvesting. It details the importance of food and nature on historical Métis governance structures and how they are central in keeping Métis communities healthy and culturally connected.

### MNBC NATURE CLIMATE CHANGE PRIORITY PAPER

(2025)

The paper describes health and food as one of five priorities, alongside renewable energy, emergency management, nature stewardship, and sustainable jobs and prosperity. Informed by Métis in B.C., the paper includes an overview of the current and aspirational actions of the Ministry within health and food.

### HOME GARDEN PILOT PROJECT REPORT

(2021)

A review on the successes and challenges of the first iteration of the Home Garden Program, this report also details the

(2021)

## LIFESTYLE AS MEDICINE: THE WAY WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED

(2022)

**Healing with Our Food**  
by Raine Robinson

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD ACCESS SURVEY REPORT**

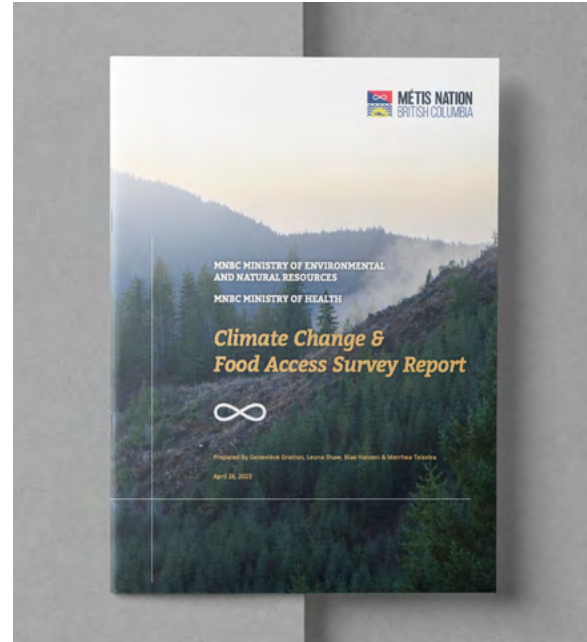
**(2023)**

The report details how the costs of buying, harvesting, and growing food had increased in the early years of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for Métis living in rural and remote areas. It also noted the importance of harvesting for Métis well-being, and how Métis perceive emergency preparedness in their local communities. Climate change impacts on ecosystems and food sources were seen as requiring constant adaptive responses.

## **MÉTIS FOOD (IN)SECURITY AND FOOD AS MEDICINE**

**(2024)**

Published as part of a greater report by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the B.C. Centre for Disease Control, this chapter reflects how the COVID-19 pandemic affected Métis food (in)security in B.C. Results from a B.C. wide survey on population experiences noted Métis reported an increase in difficulty meeting household financial needs and increase worry that food would run out before they had money to buy more due to the pandemic. These statistics were higher than the general B.C. population. The report also notes the good work spearheaded by Métis leaders to care for their communities, where MNBC and Métis Chartered Communities worked together to support struggling families with food and financial relief.



## **FOOD COSTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT STORIES FROM REMOTE COMMUNITIES IN BC**

*A special addendum report to Food Costing in BC 2022 Report*

**(2024)**

This project was led by the BCCDC Food Security Team to gain a better understanding of remote communities' experiences with the rising cost of food and impacts from climate change. River of the Peace Métis Society located in Hudson's Hope was highlighted in one of the remote community's stories. Their challenges in experiencing high food costs and limited food availability drives community members toward producing self-sustaining food locally.

## **HOME GARDEN PROGRAM 2025 SUMMARY REPORT**

**(2026)**

A total of 365 applicants were accepted in the 2025 round of the Home Garden Program. Over half of post-program survey participants noted an increase in drier, hotter, and smokier conditions. Conversely, over half of respondents noted an increase in pollinators (e.g., bees, butterflies, and birds). Respondents also identified that income and loss of knowledge are the biggest barriers to accessing affordable, healthy, and cultural foods. Other concerns included land-use policies, cost of tools, and limited time and space to harvest and preserve food.

Additional reports<sup>2</sup> created by different MNBC ministries that touch on food security:

### **K-12 SCHOOL FOOD REPORT**

**(2022)**

The Ministry of Education surveyed Métis in B.C. on school food needs and nutritional literacy of K-12 families. The survey revealed the biggest barrier to food access was the high cost of foods, and many families relied on “big box” stores for their food needs. Overall, Métis families would prefer to use local resources in B.C. (e.g., local food producers, community gardens) and move away from processed foods. Respondents also identified that more opportunities to discuss traditional foods with Elders, in community, and in schools would benefit their families.

## **MICÔWIN PROGRAM REPORT**

**(2023)**

Highlighting the needs of Métis families, the Mîcôwin Program was created by the Ministry of Children and Families during the pandemic to provide supports in navigating financial instability. The program reached over 350 families by giving direct grocery purchases and helped children and parents’ food security. The report gave a snapshot of Métis families’ challenges during the pandemic, which also emphasized worsening food security.

### **WHAT WE HEARD REPORT, SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM**

**(2026)**

MNBC’s Ministry of Education engaged with Métis educators, school staff, and families to understand the tools needed to support Métis children’s cultural and food needs within the school system. Based on responses, the Ministry of Education will be using the feedback to develop a school food toolkit for educators to use across B.C. This toolkit will provide information on Métis culture and promote activities to teach children about nature, Métis foods, Michif language, and more.

These reports identify food security as a priority for Métis in B.C. As economic and climate conditions have worsened throughout the years, families struggle to access nutritious, healthy, low-cost foods. As such, the Ministry works to find long-term solutions to improve Métis food security. Due to competitive and limited funding

<sup>2</sup> These are internal reports. Please contact the appropriate MNBC ministry for more information.

for food security initiatives, the Ministry leans on partnerships to build needed programming. One of these partnerships lies with a long-standing group that encapsulates Métis harvesting knowledge across B.C. known as the British Columbia Métis Assembly of Natural Resources (BCMANR).

***“Métis recognize and value the fact that our ancestors have been living on the land for many generations, and Métis as a unique culture has done so for many generations. This connection to the land has provided Métis with an extensive body of knowledge, values, beliefs and practices that is often referred to as traditional knowledge.”***

- BCMANR (2019)<sup>xxvi</sup>

## BCMANR

Vital to this work is the partnership that the Ministry shares with the [British Columbia Métis Assembly of Natural Resources](#) (BCMANR). BCMANR is a non-political committee and a separate society affiliated with MNBC. It's made up of eight volunteers, called regional Captains of the Hunt (hereafter referred to as “the Captains”). Collectively, they manage natural resources on behalf of MNBC under MNBC's [Natural Resources Act](#).

BCMANR is, in principle, based on a historical governance structure of the Métis in the 1700-1800s used for buffalo hunts. During these hunts, the Buffalo Assembly, made up of elected community members, would establish the Laws of the Hunt (also referred to as the Laws of the Prairies), which, in turn, were influenced by what



was best for the community. These consensus structures and communal commitments ensured the survival of the Métis during tough times as the health and prosperity of the community was prioritized over individual preferences. Métis were, and remain, resilient because of the collective mindset that communities held.

These historical cultural practices are honoured today in B.C. through BCMANR and the Captains. Established in 2001, BCMANR began as a group of Métis interested in forming a Natural Resource Committee to share their passion for harvesting, and their commitment to ensuring a healthy environment for future generations. Eventually this committee evolved to adopt historical Métis cultural systems of decision-making.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Today, Métis interested in being a Captain apply to BCMANR and are then selected through a Captain Review Panel. All eight Captains, representing the seven regions of B.C. (Region 7 is split into 7a and 7b), complete the Captains Assembly. Duties of the Captains include, but

are not limited to, monitoring natural resource activities in their respective regions, present issues and concerns to the Captains Assembly, and present solutions and recommendations to MNBC and external partners on natural resource matters.<sup>xxviii</sup>

In 2026, BCMANR celebrated its 25th anniversary. The Ministry has a long history of engagement and collaboration with BCMANR, relying on their expertise to create programming and inform environment related policies. BCMANR enriches Ministry programs by uplifting Métis cultural values and traditional harvesting knowledge.

The Captains continue to advocate and encourage Citizens to build relationships with the land by

sharing knowledge on harvesting, including hunting, trapping, and fishing.<sup>3</sup> Over the years, BCMANR Captains have hosted numerous workshops on Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) and Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Education (CORE) to support Citizen's access to harvesting while deepening the teaching of responsibility and stewardship for the land. Currently, the Captains are working on sharing harvesting and food knowledge through a video series, as well as planning for a youth fishing trip this summer.

The Ministry approaches food security work by centering the teachings and skills of the Captains and Knowledge Keepers across B.C. It is with their guidance and contributions that the Ministry advocates for Métis internationally, nationally, regionally, and locally. The next section overviews food policy at varying political levels and how MNBC navigates these landscapes.

***“Being connected to the land is what it’s all about. We’ve done quite a few studies on harvesting. The meat’s better for you, it’s cleaner. ...The physical aspect of going out in the bush and hunting is good for your body and everything. But it’s also really good for your mental health. To me, being out in the bush, that’s my happy place.”***

– MARK CARLSON, BCMANR CHAIR AND  
REGION 4 CAPTAIN



**True Abundance**  
by Paz Q Rainville

<sup>3</sup> To read more about the Captains' experience on how climate change is affecting food and harvesting please read page 10 in [MNBC's Nature Priority Paper](#) (2026) and page 21 in the [Climate Change Priority Paper](#) (2025).



# Policy Landscape

It is recognized by Métis that food system health effects all aspects of life, therefore it is paramount that MNBC works together with all levels of governments to respond effectively. The rising concern of climate change, increase of people experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity, and geopolitical instability has influenced international, national, provincial, regional, and Indigenous governments to work urgently. As a result, Canada and British Columbia have created policies and programs that attempt to address food security in a shifting climate.

Internationally, the United Nations adopted the *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), a framework of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that seek to end poverty in all its forms. Of these goals, goal 2 aims to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.” Following this framework, Canada, which has focused on SDGs since 2008 with the creation of the *Federal Sustainable Development Act*, set to pursue goal two which focused on supporting a healthier and more sustainable food system.

## **FOOD SECURITY VS. FOOD INSECURITY**

*Canada adopted the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization’s (FAO) definition of food security that “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”<sup>xxix</sup>*

*Conversely, food insecurity means “the inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so.”<sup>xxx</sup>*

However, the *2025 Progress Report on the 2022 to 2026 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy* showed the goal status as deteriorated. Most recently, Canada is seeking public input on the *draft 2026-2029 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy* where Goal 2.2 aims to “Strengthen the resilience and sustainability of Canadian agriculture.”

The United Nations also published the [\*United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples\*](#) (UNDRIP) (2007), where Articles 21-25 summarily states Indigenous Peoples have the right to improve their health, social, and economic conditions without discrimination, and have the right to access traditional medicines, plants, animals, and minerals and those they hold spiritual relationships. Known as the [\*UN Declaration Act\*](#), UNDRIP received royal assent in Canada in 2021.

## CANADA FOOD POLICIES & STRATEGIES

Federally, Canada developed several strategies which mention food, and food security, as an important aspect impacted by a changing

climate. The recently released [\*National Food Security Strategy\*](#) (2026) focuses on making food more affordable while making food systems self-sufficient. Within the strategy, there is a commitment to working with Indigenous Peoples and “advance self-determination and improve access to store-bought foods, traditionally hunted and harvested foods, and locally produced food.”<sup>xxxi</sup> Within [\*For Our Future: Indigenous Resilience Report\*](#) (2024), the first Indigenous-led National Knowledge Assessment report on climate change impacts, revitalizing Indigenous food systems have been identified as a priority for Indigenous Peoples to adapt to the changing climate and rebuild relationships with Land, Water, and Ice. The [\*National Adaptation Strategy\*](#) (2023) illustrates how food is a central component to well-being, nature/biodiversity, health and well-being, and



**Community**  
by Heather Doherty

the economy. Canada, then, is pursuing pathways to become more climate resilient through various measures. The [2030 Nature Strategy: Halting and Reversing Biodiversity Loss in Canada](#) sets a path to implement the 23 targets in the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#). These actions also involve uplifting Indigenous communities, including the Métis Nation, and working closely together to improve biodiversity and ecosystem health, which, in turn, affects food security.

Additionally, [The Food Policy for Canada](#) (2019) is a framework that “support[s] the development of food-related policies and programs that continue to support healthier and more sustainable food systems.” A review of this framework in 2024 reported significant investments in community organizations, school food programs, and addressing food fraud.<sup>xxxii</sup>

The vision of the Food Policy and the United Nation SDGs underpin [Canada’s National Pathways](#), a document that details the steps Canada is taking to build equitable, sustainable food systems. This includes strengthening Indigenous food systems through harvester initiatives, improving distinction-based data collection, developing Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), and improving access to

## **FOOD POLICY FOR CANADA, VISION STATEMENT:**

*“All people in Canada are able to access a sufficient amount of safe, nutritious, and culturally diverse food. Canada’s food system is resilient and innovative, sustains our environment and supports our economy.”*

safe drinking water. These documents and frameworks have setup the foundation for the creation of policies such as Canada’s [National School Food Policy](#) (2024). This policy recognizes the importance of Indigenous partnerships, self-determination, and Indigenous-specific approaches to advancing child well-being and food security.





One of the federal departments that focuses on food security within their work is Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). [\*AAFC's 2026-27 departmental plan\*](#) states their continued support of Indigenous Peoples through sustained engagement and partnerships including offering an [\*Indigenous Pathfinder Service\*](#), supporting the [\*Indigenous Student Recruitment Initiative\*](#), and applying an Indigenous lens to its programs, policies, and staffing activities.

The Ministry strives to build upon good relationships with federal partners involved with food security including Environment Climate Change Canada (ECCC), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

## **BRITISH COLUMBIA FOOD POLICIES & STRATEGIES**

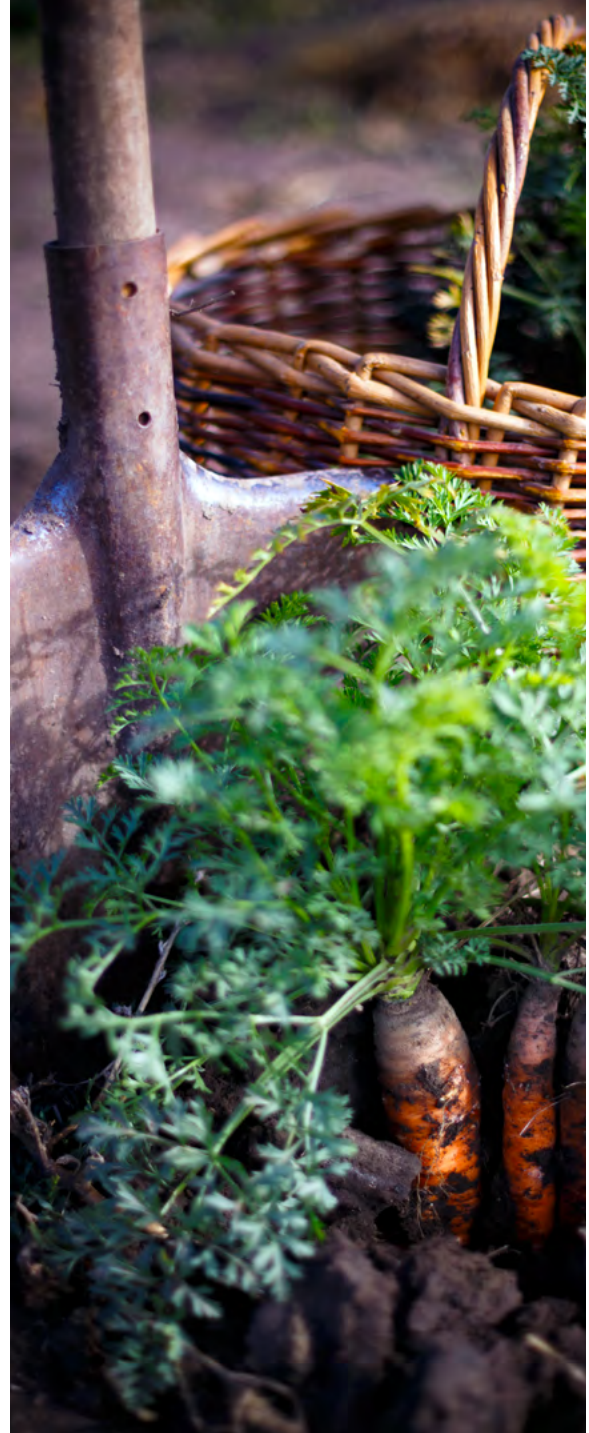
Following the standards set by the federal government, the government of British Columbia developed B.C.'s [\*Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan\*](#) (2022), where Action 4.48 states the province will, "Work with the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food and other Indigenous partners to identify opportunities to strengthen Indigenous food systems and increase Indigenous participation in the agriculture and food sector." MNBC has representation on the Indigenous Advisory Council, advocating for



Métis interests relating to agriculture and food. Progress reports on this action note the complexity of the work and the challenges to implementation.<sup>xxxiii</sup> The 2024 *Poverty Reduction Strategy*, developed through B.C.'s Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, also identified food security as an urgent and emerging issue. The strategy acknowledges the effects of colonialism and high rates of poverty experienced by Indigenous Peoples, but there is no direct commitment to work with Métis or MNBC to address food insecurity.

The B.C. Agriculture Council (BCAC) identified in a *2024 report* an increased need in consultation and collaboration between Indigenous Peoples and farmers. The report notes that consultation efforts concerning agriculture occurs in silos, with government engaging separately with Indigenous Peoples and farmers. The BCAC recommended an increase in financial resources to support Indigenous engagements.

Provincially, the Ministry is working in good faith to establish better relationships with the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, and other ministries that support food security efforts. Due to the publication of the *B.C. Distinctions-Based Approach Primer* in 2023, relations with the province are currently being redefined. At this time, the Ministry does not receive funding from the province for its food security work. In the meantime, the Ministry continues its good work with partners such as the BC Centre for Disease Control.



## CO-DEVELOPMENT WITH CANADA

From 2017-2024, the Ministry worked together with Métis National Council (MNC) and the Governing Members to advance Métis nature and climate priorities at federal tables. MNBC participated in the Métis Nation – Canada Strawberry Moon Table on nature related issues and the Goose Moon Table on climate related issues. These tables were co-developed between the federal government, MNC and the Governing Members<sup>4</sup> to discuss barriers and ways to work together on shared priorities, including food security. This included advocating for long-term sustainable funding for food, nature, and climate programs so Métis

governments could have more autonomy to develop Métis-specific programs rather than applying for funding on a project-by-project basis. A set of Co-Development Principles were introduced in the [Métis Nation Climate Change Strategy](#) (2024) (see [Appendix D](#)) and further defined in a MNC [document](#) in 2025.

Through the federal Indigenous Climate Leadership initiative, the Ministry has worked closely with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to transform environment priorities related to climate, and therefore related to food security priorities, through a Nation-to-

Nation, and government-to-government partnership as stated in [The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan](#) (UNDA Action Plan) Environment priority area (article 29) (see [Appendix C](#)). Furthermore, Actions 86 and 87 speak specifically to supporting Indigenous self-determination on food security, sovereignty, and sustainability.

The Ministry works to ensure that UNDRIP is followed by all levels of government. The



**Métis Women:  
Keepers of the Harvest**  
by Donna Krane

<sup>4</sup> MNBC left the Métis National Council in 2024. Prior to withdrawing, MNBC participated in Goose Moon and Strawberry Moon Table meetings. However, MNBC remains committed to continuing working with federal and provincial government agencies to advance Métis environment, nature, and food priorities.



Ministry continues to meaningfully cooperate, collaborate, and co-develop with CIRNAC and ECCC to advance the Indigenous Climate Leadership work, as well as continuing the partnership with NRCan, and honour UNDA's distinctions-based solutions. The Ministry acknowledges that this work cannot be done through silos, but through an intersectional and wholistic approach with partners.

Food security work requires the reciprocal relationship between all partners, respecting a distinctions-based approach, and respect for nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationships based on the Métis Co-Development Principles (see [Appendix D](#)). Current food legislation and regulatory landscape in Canada is comprehensive, with most taking Indigenous rights and responsibilities into consideration and incorporating Indigenous voices into proposed amendments and policies.

## MÉTIS NATION & INTERNAL PARTNERS

In the spirit of advancing Métis environment and climate needs at a national level, the 2024 [Métis Nation Climate Change Strategy](#) was formed as “an urgent roadmap and call to action” with MNBC contributing as writers and editors of the strategy, ensuring that voices and concerns from Métis in B.C. were reflected throughout the document. Food security is identified as a focus area, specifically addressing climate change impacts on food systems, including accessibility to traditional foods and medicines. Food security and sovereignty are also identified in the Métis National Council's (MNC) [2025 Nature Strategy](#). The strategy provides actions to advance this priority including supporting harvesting practices, enhance community food programs, promote Métis-led agriculture and aquaculture, develop food-sovereignty education programs, and better understand Métis food security and food systems.





These strategies advocate for long-term and sustainable funding to advance Métis-led climate solutions, emphasizing the important role of federal agencies in this work.

In April 2025, MNBC signed a *cooperation agreement* with Métis Nation Saskatchewan (MN-S) which means, “both MN-S and MNBC have agreed to work in a government-to-government relationship to promote the respect and observance of all Métis rights, including joint advocacy with the Government of Canada, where it is identified as mutually beneficial.” The Ministry meets regularly with MN-S’ food security team, exchanging ideas and best practices to support food security across the two provinces.

Within MNBC, the Ministry works in partnership with many other Ministries, including but not limited to Health and Wellness, Housing and Poverty Reduction; Economic Development, Partnerships and Tourism; Finance; Skills, Training, Education, and Post-Secondary (STEPS); Youth; and Sport and Active Living. Working collaboratively, an internal food security working group was formed in spring 2026 to ensure the work at MNBC is not redundant, encompasses Métis wholistic wellness, and focuses on sustainable solutions to increase Métis food security in B.C.





# Priorities & Vision Going Forward

Building upon past work, centering community voices, working closely with other MNBC ministries, and considering existing policies and legislation, the Ministry has identified three priority areas for future work: **Research and Advocacy, Skill-Building, and Relationships and Resources.**

The Ministry envisions a future where Métis are self sufficient; where they have the skills and knowledge to achieve food security for themselves, their households, their communities, and within broader food systems. By approaching food security work through a three-pronged approach (individual-, community-, and systems-level), the Ministry hopes to achieve a future where Métis in B.C. have access to healthy, local foods, and a strong connection to culture and identity.



## Focus Area: Research & Advocacy

As the Ministry works to build capacity, programming, and funding, efforts will be spent on researching and evaluating food security in Métis communities across B.C. As food security is influenced by factors such as an individual's location (e.g., urban, remote, rural), income, and food access/availability, it's important the Ministry gains a fulsome understanding of food security through a wholistic lens. Through this research, the Ministry can advocate for long-term, sustainable funding to uplift communities and improve local food systems.

It is also within the Ministry's aspirations to understand how many Métis participate in the agriculture sector, including the challenges and opportunities for Métis within this space. The Ministry will work to understand and advocate for Métis farmers and agriculturalists as part of this work.

The Ministry hopes to achieve this work in partnership with federal and provincial agencies, including but not limited to CIRNAC, AAFC, ECCC, BCCDC, and B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food (BCAF). This work also cannot be achieved without Métis Chartered Communities, Citizens, BCMANR, and Métis service providers.



## ASPIRATIONS

### RESEARCH

- ∞ Build upon MNBC's food security research including:
  - *Develop a definition for food security through a Métis in B.C. lens with input from BCMANR, Elders, Knowledge Carriers, and Community*
  - *Capture current food initiatives and challenges at community and regional levels*
  - *Develop Métis-specific food security indicators to track trends and progress over time*
  - *Work in partnership with Métis Chartered Communities to develop community-specific food aspirations and initiatives*
- ∞ Engage in community-based research including:
  - *Gather knowledge from Métis Elders, Knowledge Carriers, and BCMANR on Métis cultural food practices*
  - *Gather knowledge from Métis Youth and the Eco-Collective about youth-specific food security needs, concerns, and vision*
  - *Host regular engagement sessions with Citizens to gather feedback on food security views and concerns*
- ∞ Identify Métis in B.C. who are farmers, producers, and agriculturalists
  - *Understand farming needs and challenges in B.C.*
  - *Understand climate change impacts (e.g., crop viability)*
  - *Identify opportunities that support Métis farmers (e.g., Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C.)*

### ADVOCACY

- ∞ Advocate for increase programming and funding for Métis Chartered Community food security efforts
- ∞ Represent Métis interests on policy and legislative work impacting Métis food systems/security on federal and provincial tables
- ∞ Support BCMANR in ensuring Métis harvesters have access to the land and culturally important foods and medicines
- ∞ Secure long-term, sustainable, and distinctions-based funding from federal, provincial, and regional partners for the Ministry to continue food security programming
- ∞ Secure long-term, sustainable, and flexible funding to support Métis harvesters
- ∞ Advocate for the inclusion of Métis farmers on federal and provincial tables

## Focus Area: Skill-Building

The Ministry has heard from Métis the strong desire to learn food skills that improve household food security and build cultural connection. By providing educational resources and opportunities, the Ministry hopes to provide several avenues for Métis to learn life-long skills couched in cultural knowledge.

Through this priority, the Ministry will work with BCMANR, Métis Knowledge Carriers, Elders, and food experts. The Ministry will also partner with MNBC ministries to support wholistic food programming, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Poverty Reduction, Ministry of Sport and Active Living, Ministry of Health and Wellness, and more.



### ASPIRATIONS

- ∞ Facilitate workshops on topics such as preservation, seed-storing and saving, and Métis food security practices
- ∞ Diversify Métis food education and offerings through in-person workshops, virtual workshops, written materials, online resources, local opportunities, and community connections
- ∞ Host PAL and CORE courses in partnership with BCMANR
- ∞ Facilitate educational courses held by Métis Knowledge Carriers and BCMANR to transfer traditional harvesting knowledge to Métis in B.C.
- ∞ Continue MNBC's Home Garden Program
  - *Expand educational opportunities within the program*
- ∞ Partner with MNBC's Ministry of STEPS to promote food related training and careers for Citizens

## Focus Area: Relationships & Resources

As funding for food security work remains highly competitive, it's important that the Ministry establishes networks and resources for Métis to access. Either through existing or new avenues, the Ministry will work to empower Métis communities and strengthen local food systems. The Ministry will strive to strengthen Métis cultural identity through food, building self-sufficient food communities along the way.

The Ministry will work closely with Métis Chartered Communities, Citizens, BCMANR, and Métis service providers across B.C. to advance the aspirations within this focus area, along with Métis and non-Métis food professionals. BCMANR will also be an instrumental partner as they understand cultural harvesting practices and uphold Métis values with respect to the land and all our relations. The Ministry will also work closely with external governments and organizations to expand educational opportunities and resources for Métis.



### ASPIRATIONS

- ∞ Identify food Knowledge Carriers in each region
- ∞ Identify Métis food producers and growers in British Columbia
- ∞ Develop a network of regional Community Food Champions
- ∞ Pilot a seed-saving and sharing network
- ∞ Work closely with Métis Chartered Communities to fulfill their local food goals
- ∞ Work with First Nations and local communities to foster strong relationships and improve local food systems
- ∞ Continue relationship building with Continue relationship building with CIRNAC, ECCC, AAFC, BCCDC, Health Authorities, and other external partners to support Métis food programs
- ∞ Work with AAFC to improve Métis participation in federal food and agriculture programs
- ∞ Cultivate a consistent working relationship with B.C.'s Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- ∞ Create working relationships with established food security organizations to bring knowledge and resources to Métis Chartered Communities



**Nature's Food**  
by Anthony Lemire



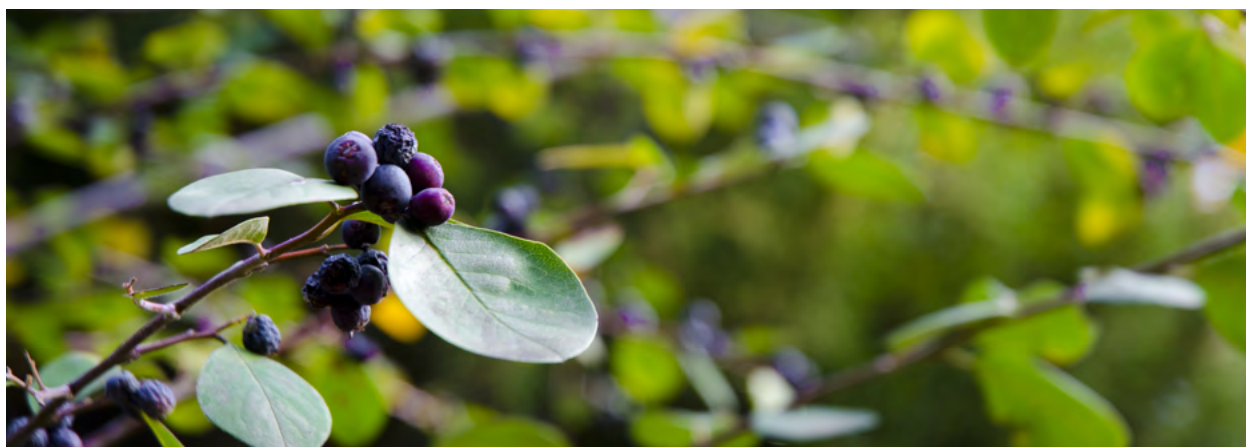


# Conclusion

Métis communities are at the heart of the Ministry's work, where community, culture, and connection to nature are uplifted. As Métis lean on their culture and traditional teachings to inform a path forward, the Ministry listens, learns, and empowers them. We are guided by the past and plan with future generations in mind, for those not yet born.

The Ministry envisions a world where Métis have access to culturally appropriate and nutritious food, where human and ecological systems are healthy and self-reliant. We imagine Métis as people who draw upon Métis ways of knowing

and being to contribute to local environments and food systems. We want Métis to feel prepared to help themselves, their families and communities. The Ministry strives to uplift and enable Métis in B.C. to feed their families, their communities, and steward the environments that support local food systems. Caring for nature, for all our relations, will provide a sustainable future for not just Métis people in B.C., but for all Canadians. It is this vision that drives the work of the Ministry and we are committed to collaborating with partners to achieve and build a future full of abundance for all.



# Appendix A: MNBC Foundations

## MNBC Vision

Métis Nation British Columbia envisions a future where Métis people, communities and children thrive. We are connected to our rich Métis culture, heritage and languages; we achieve strong socio-economic outcomes; and our Métis rights as an Indigenous people are recognized.

## MNBC Mission

As the Métis government in British Columbia, we represent Métis Citizens and promote the rights, recognition, priorities and interests of all Métis in BC. We create opportunities for our people, communities, and children to flourish, and work to ensure access to a range of programs and services to bridge socioeconomic gaps and increase overall well-being for Métis in B.C.

## MNBC's Strategic Plan

The Ministry aligns all activities with the goals set out in Métis Nation British Columbia's 2023/24-2026/27 Strategic Plan, titled KÂ ISI NÂTAMA ÔTA ATI NÎKÂN (Our Way Forward).

- ∞ **Goals 2:** Promote Cultural Revitalization and Cultural Wellness, which includes preserving, promoting, and revitalizing Métis “culture, heritage, and languages and strengthen cultural wellness as a foundation of overall well-being for Métis people.”
  - “Develop and deliver cultural programs, events, and educational resources that foster pride and identity among Métis individuals and communities.”
- ∞ **Goal 3:** Pursue Socio-Economic Reconciliation, including supporting “initiatives that address the social determinants of health and promote holistic well-being for Métis individuals and communities.”
  - “Promote and support food sovereignty.”
- ∞ **Goal 4:** Support Métis Chartered Communities, empowering and engaging Métis Chartered Communities by strengthening agreements, increasing governance capacity, and providing greater opportunities through better communication, strategic partnerships, programs, and services.
  - “Continue to develop and implement programs and initiatives to address the unique needs and aspirations of Métis communities in British Columbia.”
- ∞ **Goal 6:** Develop and restore respectful relationships and partnerships. Beyond establishing relationships with First Nations, governments, non-profits, etc., the Ministry understands that a respectful relationship needs to be nurtured between Métis and the environment.



## MNBC Cultural Values



**Kwayes'kwât'sowin - Integrity:** We hold integrity as a core value. We are honest with ourselves, our colleagues, our communities and our partners. We are reliable and follow through on our word.



**Tâpahtiyim'sowin - Humility:** We show and practice cultural humility and cultural agility. We are open to new ideas and recognize the wisdom that surrounds us from others who carry experiences different than ours.



**Kisîwât'sowin - Kindness:** We show and practice lateral kindness in our organization and to everyone with whom we interact on behalf of MNBC. We practice kaa-wiichihitoyaahk: we take care of each other.



**Sîpihkisôwin - Resilience:** We are resilient and do not fear challenges or setbacks but remain courageous and learn from each step of the journey. We channel the courage of our Métis ancestors who faced adversity and remained resilient.



**Ahtisihcikêwin - Innovation:** We draw on the spirit of Métis innovation and bring forward our curiosity and creativity to problem solve and develop new solutions for our people.



**Atoskâtowin - Teamwork:** We work together and actively seek opportunities to share information, collaborate on initiatives, and practice reciprocity for stronger outcomes. We embrace teamwork to achieve greater potential for success.



**Manâcihitowin - Respect:** we respect ourselves, others, and all Creation.



Photo by Yohann Chaplin

# Appendix B: Aspirations

## Research & Advocacy Aspirations

### RESEARCH

- ∞ Build upon MNBC's food security research including:
  - *Develop a definition for food security through a Métis in B.C. lens with input from BCMANR, Elders, Knowledge Carriers, and Community*
  - *Capture current food initiatives and challenges at community and regional levels*
  - *Develop Métis-specific food security indicators to track trends and progress over time*
  - *Work in partnership with Métis Chartered Communities to develop community-specific food aspirations and initiatives*
- ∞ Engage in community-based research including:
  - *Gather knowledge from Métis Elders, Knowledge Carriers, and BCMANR on Métis cultural food practices*
  - *Gather knowledge from Métis Youth and the Eco-Collective about youth-specific food security needs, concerns, and vision*
  - *Host regular engagement sessions with Citizens to gather feedback on food security views and concerns*
- ∞ Identify Métis in B.C. who are farmers, producers, and agriculturalists
  - *Understand farming needs and challenges in B.C.*
  - *Understand climate change impacts (e.g., crop viability)*
  - *Identify opportunities that support Métis farmers (e.g., Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C.)*

### ADVOCACY

- ∞ Advocate for increase programming and funding for Métis Chartered Community food security efforts
- ∞ Represent Métis interests on policy and legislative work impacting Métis food systems/security on federal and provincial tables
- ∞ Support BCMANR in ensuring Métis harvesters have access to the land and culturally important foods and medicines
- ∞ Secure long-term, sustainable, and distinctions-based funding from federal, provincial, and regional partners for the Ministry to continue food security programming
- ∞ Secure long-term, sustainable, and flexible funding to support Métis harvesters
- ∞ Advocate for the inclusion of Métis farmers on federal and provincial tables



## Skill-Building Aspirations

- ∞ Facilitate workshops on topics such as preservation, seed-storing and saving, and Métis food security practices
- ∞ Diversify Métis food education and offerings through in-person workshops, virtual workshops, written materials, online resources, local opportunities, and community connections
- ∞ Host PAL and CORE courses in partnership with BCMANR
- ∞ Facilitate educational courses held by Métis Knowledge Carriers and BCMANR to transfer traditional harvesting knowledge to Métis in B.C.
- ∞ Continuation of MNBC's Home Garden Program
- *Expand educational opportunities within the program*
- ∞ Partner with MNBC's Ministry of Skills, Training, Employment, and Post-Secondary to promote food related training and careers for Citizens

## Relationships & Resources Aspirations

- ∞ Identify food Knowledge Carriers in each region
- ∞ Identify Métis food producers and growers in British Columbia
- ∞ Develop a network of regional Community Food Champions
- ∞ Pilot a seed-saving and sharing network
- ∞ Work closely with Métis Chartered Communities to fulfill their local food goals
- ∞ Work with First Nations and local communities to foster strong relationships and improve local food systems
- ∞ Continue relationship building with CIRNAC, ECCC, AAFC, BCCDC, Health Authorities, and other external partners to support Métis food programs
- ∞ Work with AAFC to improve Métis participation in federal food and agriculture programs
- ∞ Cultivate a consistent working relationship with B.C.'s Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- ∞ Create working relationships with established food security organizations to bring knowledge and resources to Métis Chartered Communities



# Appendix C: UNDA Actions

*The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan* (UNDA Action Plan) Actions that pertain to environmental priorities (article 29):

**Action 46.** Together with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, advance an Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda, including distinctions-based strategies, that vests the resources and authorities necessary for Indigenous peoples to fully exercise their right to self-determination on climate. **This includes ensuring that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have stable, long-term financing to implement their climate actions, make climate related decisions with the Government of Canada, and that systemic barriers to Indigenous climate leadership are addressed.** (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada)

**Action 47.** Continue to support Indigenous leadership in conservation through initiatives such as Indigenous Guardians, Indigenous Partnerships Initiative and Indigenous-Led Area Based Conservation that will provide capacity support until 2026, as well as the Project Finance for Permanence (Environment and Climate Change Canada).

**Action 48.** Build on important work that has already occurred, to recognize, elevate, and incorporate Indigenous science into Environment and Climate Change Canada scientific inquiry by continuing to stand up the new Indigenous Science Division, established in 2022, to bridge, braid, and weave Indigenous science with western science to inform Environment and Climate Change Canada's science, policy, and program decision making climate leadership are addressed. (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada).



**Action 49.** Create a Canada Water Agency and advance the modernization of the Canada Water Act to reflect Canada's freshwater reality, including climate change and Indigenous rights. (Environment and Climate Change Canada)

**Action 50.** Monitor the implementation of the 2022-26 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and in developing a new strategy for 2026, through their engagement in the Minister's Sustainable Development Advisory Council as well as other consultative methods. Involvement of Indigenous peoples is a core principle of the Federal Sustainable Development Act. The 2022-2026 Federal Sustainability Development Strategy includes perspectives from members of National Indigenous Organizations, a commitment to report on the implementation of the UN Declaration Act, and to take a wide range of actions in support of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. (Environment and Climate Change Canada)

UNDA Actions that pertain to food priorities:

**Action 86.** Support the right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination and food sovereignty according to their own priorities through the provision of long-term and flexible funding to strengthen access to traditional foods and local food systems, including – but not limited to – expanding the Harvesters Support Grant and Community Food Programs Fund. (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada)

**Action 87.** Support Indigenous peoples' food security, sovereignty and sustainability through:

- Funding and other program measures
- Promoting food-focused research to better understand the intersection of Indigenous peoples' food security, sovereignty and sustainability
- Promoting trade in Indigenous peoples' food products and removal of barriers to that trade. (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)



# Appendix D: Co-Development Principles

The *Métis Nation Climate Change Strategy* describes how governments can work collaborative with Métis governments:

To advance the Nation-to-Nation, Government-to-Government relationship based on the respect and recognition of rights, the Principles of Co-Development work to redress the legacy of colonialism and racism experienced by Métis, whether present in legislation, policy, or practices.

The Co-Development Principles formalize a co-development process between Métis Governments and Canada for legislative, regulatory, and administrative matters. These Principles provide clarity on the operational elements needed to ensure full and effective Métis participation.



Areas addressed:

- The co-development of legislative or administrative measures that may affect Métis.
- The importance of Nation-to-Nation, Government-to-Government processes with the Métis Governments.
- The respect for self-government and Métis governments' decision-making and approval processes and timelines.
- The notion of co-development being included in the substantive and procedural aspects of the traditional legislation and policy development cycle.
- Co-development processes and their accommodation of constitutional imperatives, such as parliamentary privilege and cabinet confidence, in a way that does not generally, disproportionately, or unduly limit Indigenous partnership.
- The importance of distinctions-based approaches to co-development processes.
- The resourcing of co-development processes to ensure the capacity of Métis Governments and their ability to appropriately represent their Citizens.

# Appendix E: Artist Statements<sup>5</sup>

Maarsii (thank you) to the artists who contributed their artwork for this report. Below you will find each artists' statements about their respective works, found in chronological order within the paper.



## **Passing our Strength from a Stove** by Maëlle Rasmussen

Connection to culture and knowledge through recipes, which have been passed down through generations, is an invaluable gift; one that allows us to learn more about our communities, the places we came from, and ourselves. This watercolour illustration portrays just a few of the many people who shape the modern-day Métis Nation sharing age-old recipes: Li Boulettes, Bannock, and pemmican, as well as the dish at the end being held by the small child left up for imagination. The purpose behind this choice is to show how new traditions continue to be formed, while old ones are innovated. My artwork also depicts how Métis food traditions bring people together. Through these connections we grow, succeed, and find fulfillment in a way that is unique to us. When painting this piece, I hoped to send a message that despite our individual differences, food has been and will always be a way to connect us as Métis people and for our communities to express love, gratitude, sympathy, and celebration. Our food gives a reflection on how our ways are intertwined and fused with the landscapes that have nourished communities for centuries. However,

instead of focusing on the terrains from which these traditions were born, I chose instead to paint with a positive lens on how elements of cultural wellness including food, nurtures relationships, ambitions and provides us with a way to appreciate and learn about our identities. This piece was created during a road trip from my home on Vancouver Island to my other home of southern Manitoba earlier this month and took inspiration from the perfect balance of diversity and unity of the Métis Nation that I saw along the way, as well as the role in which we fuel ourselves plays in that. Through food we can continue to strengthen our communities and Citizens for generations to come, even as the world feels increasingly uncertain and unpredictable.



## **Healing With Our Food** by Raine Robinson

This art piece "Healing With Our Food" was a passion project inspired by the sentence "Healing the people by healing the land" that I heard at an Indigenous youth activism leadership gathering in 2018. It's a collage of things that I love and that bring me inspiration, healing, and connection to culture and the Earth. This art piece was drawn and sketched out on paper and then hand drawn and coloured in digitally on my drawing tablet. It took me 8+ hours in total, but I loved every moment of it! The whole time while drawing it I was thinking about what it was like growing up on a farm,

<sup>5</sup> Artist statements have been modified for grammar only.

*I was thinking about how food prices now are so difficult and that some of my loved ones need to go to food banks regularly just to eat. I was thinking about how everyone always deserves to have access to healthy food, affordable food, to cultural foods, and to also know the story of where their food comes from. To me growing, harvesting, and processing foods is a direct connection to culture and is incredibly healing. Right now, I'm working for an amazing local company building a food forest and using permaculture techniques and principles to grow large amounts of nutritious healthy food – the project is still young but the goal is to be able to donate most of the food back to the community and to provide education onsite at the farm as well! Okay, so more about this art piece:*

*The quilt pattern in the background of this art piece and behind the apple represents the feeling of being “cloaked and wrapped in the stories of our food and culture.” The stories of our food systems, of growing food, tending to the land and to each other are sacred medicines that are lovingly passed on by our Elders, by our families, and our communities – no matter what our backgrounds are we’re all brought together by food and needing to eat. The apple in front of the quilt represents a specific story of my family – when I was 8 years old my little siblings and I would wear helmets and stand under the towering 100 year elder apple tree on our farm, my mom would climb up the tree and shake the branches and my little siblings and I would hold an outstretched quilt – each of us with a corner – and we’d catch the apples on the quilt. It was a fun game and also yielded so many baskets filled with apples! We would eat apple pie, apple sauce, and solar dried apples year round. The berries return each year and fill the summer with*

*sweetness, delicious food, and joy. I love picking blueberries and strawberries barefoot, feeling the sun on my skin and laughing with my loved ones while harvesting food. Water is life – and the river brings food and fish and dips into the cool water. Harvesting little crayfish as a child and cooking them over my own little fires was magical. The book represents how food systems education should always be available to everyone – that our stories are healing.*



### **True Abundance** by Paz Q Rainville

*The harvest is only abundant when the bounty is shared. In other words, true abundance does not exist until all are provided for.*

*This includes everyone. This includes the whole ecosystem. The strength of the community exists when all are well tended to. This requires us to be conscious of those among us who require more care at a given time – whether it's the mothers, Elders, children, our plant and animal relations, forests, and watersheds. When the most vulnerable among us are supported to be in their fullest expression, we all flourish. This is what Mistahe Astêw Mîcôwin means to me.*

*I'm a farmer in service to the land and my community. Physically growing the food is only one part of the journey; the other pillar is relationality. It takes a village to feed a village. It takes the*

*birds, worms, bees, and many hands in good collaboration to make any of it viable.*

*Since dedicating myself to stewarding food systems, the disparity between those without access to quality food, and those with more than they could ever need has become impossible to ignore. The issue is not scarcity, but distribution. My response to this injustice has fueled the creation of this artwork.*

*The Métis people are a people of adaptation and resilience. Prominently, this resiliency rises from supporting one another through trying times, our people would not exist without the graciousness & commitment of care given to one another. Our adaptation is shown from the merging of traditional knowledge & values with useful foreign materials and influences.*

*To feed themselves, my Métis ancestors relied on Indigenous agrarianism and wild harvesting practices, paired with cultivating non-traditional gardens with seeds and techniques that came from distant lands — root crops, potatoes, and cabbage were prominent foreign integrations. These hearty vegetables didn't require an agreeable long season or robust equipment (compared to grains) and could therefore be grown on marginal land where precarity was prominent, such as on road allotments.*

*Within this artwork is a homage to the root crops, as well as Seneca Root. Root crops would keep well through long Winters (and could handle rough journeys on a Red River cart). While the Seneca Root is a plant Indigenous to Turtle Island and was prominently foraged as a medicine and traded as an income supplement.*

*The central flower is what I refer to as the Grandmother Flower. As I return to*

*my roots, the stories of my relatives have begun to influence me in very meaningful ways. Throughout the artwork, a red thread emerges from the Red River cart. This symbolizes the connection between where we are today as Métis people, to our ancestral ways of feeding & stewarding our communities, ecosystems, and ourselves. I believe cultivating this connection is one of the most important harvests we can receive.*

*The medium of this artwork is digital based using pen & tablet, with a final rendition printed to paper (14"x18").*



### **Community** **by Heather Doherty**

*When I think of food security, the vital importance of community and wâhkôhtowin (kinship with everything) felt pertinent to share in my painting. In order to create sustainable food systems we need to work together and respect all our relations including non human relations. I highlighted nipi (water) by using beads as it's the most vital resource for all living beings on this planet. I wanted to show that we are all connected and need each other to thrive. I spend a lot of time in my garden which helps to feed my family but also supports my emotional wellbeing. I incorporated some of the plants that I am growing with the help of the MNBC Home Garden Program. I used acrylic paints and beads to create this work on a 12" by 24" canvas.*



### **Métis Women: Keepers of the Harvest**

by Donna Krane

*This quilt honours the strength and resilience of Métis women and their connection to the land. The basket of food, river, forest, and moose represent the natural resources that help sustain families and communities.*

*The Métis infinity flag symbolizes the enduring culture and traditions of the Métis people. The words Food, Security, Sovereignty reflect the importance of access to healthy food, traditional knowledge, and the right to care for and provide for future generations.*

*This artwork celebrates Métis women as keepers of culture, knowledge, and community.*



### **Nature's Food**

by Anthony Lemire

*I chose to create an art piece that represents nature and the Métis culture. There are many elements to my illustration, however there are some that stand out to show my experiences. I chose to keep this as a pencil sketch without colour, because I wanted to keep it simple yet full of detail.*

*In my picture I included a coho salmon cooking on a fire and another being caught by a fisherman. There are also two sockeye salmon swimming. I added salmon because they are wild and the Métis have been fishing salmon throughout history as they are an important food source. I added fruits beside the fisherman and hunter because fruits, like Saskatoon berries helped the Métis survive as they provided a balanced diet. Hunting is also part of protein in the Métis cultural diet, so I added a hunter with an elk. The sun and moon are added to show the never ending cycle of day and night which is important to nature and the creation of food.*

*The Métis flag and Canada flag are crossing each other to resemble peace throughout Canada and other Indigenous cultures like the Métis.*

*My personal experiences helped me create this picture because I go fishing with my dad for salmon, which we then cook and eat as a family. This helps me be close to nature and understand how my family ancestors might have done this long ago. There are people in my family that also go hunting, so I can appreciate the hard work that goes into providing food to my family.*

*I want the viewers to understand that the Earth provides food and is a natural environment which we need to care for. I also want the viewer to see that I put much detail and effort into this drawing. I want people to take the time to see all the details as they represent many different aspects about the Metis culture and the food systems in our world.*

# Endnotes

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