

ALL MY RELATIONS

CONSERVATION THROUGH CONNECTION



BCMF
Conservation



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INTRODUCTION

From coast to coast, Métis voices carry stories of resilience, culture, and connection. The All My Relations retreat, held over four days and three nights in Tofino, BC, brought together seven Métis participants from across British Columbia to reflect on the past, engage with the present, and envision the future.

Set against the breathtaking backdrop of the Pacific coastline, the retreat was designed to foster meaningful dialogue, personal reflection, and deep connection to both the land and each other. Each day was thoughtfully structured, blending group discussions, workshops, and outdoor explorations to create a holistic experience of cultural learning and environmental awareness.

The All My Relations retreat fostered connection and reflection through morning workshops, including partner interviews, coastal hikes, watercolor painting activities, and guided cedar and sage smudges, blending creativity with tradition.

Afternoons were dedicated to immersive adventures, each offering a different perspective on the natural world.

Participants embarked on boat tours, witnessing the rich marine ecosystems surrounding Clayoquot Sound, followed by a helicopter tour, providing a breathtaking aerial view of the rugged coastline. A visit to the Ucluelet Aquarium offered hands-on learning about local marine life, reinforcing the importance of conservation and stewardship.

Shared meals, followed by evening discussions set the tone for introspective and thought-provoking conversations, allowing participants to share their unique Métis experiences while exploring themes of identity, traditional knowledge, and conservation.

Through shared experiences on land, sea, and air, the All My Relations retreat cultivated a renewed sense of belonging, strengthening Métis identity while fostering a deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of all living things. As participants departed, they carried forward new friendships, powerful reflections, and an enduring commitment to their role as caretakers of both community and environment.





ROSANNE FORGET



Rosanne Forget was born in Roblin, Manitoba, and raised in Terrace, British Columbia, where she spent most of her formative years. Over the course of her life, she has cultivated a deep connection to the natural world, feeling most at peace by the sea and under the moonlight. It is in these quiet, serene places that she finds clarity and solace.

One of the most significant places in Rosanne's life is Haida Gwaii, especially Masset and Agate Beach. The land and water in this part of the world hold a deep resonance for her, offering a sense of groundedness and connection that is unmatched elsewhere. This sense of connection to nature was further strengthened during her participation in the “All My Relations” retreat, where she discovered newfound courage at a time when she needed it most.

The retreat was an opportunity for Rosanne to face her fears and step outside her comfort zone. A particularly meaningful moment occurred when she overcame her fear of heights and the water. Despite being terrified of both, Rosanne bravely boarded a boat in rough weather and even flew in a helicopter—experiences that were both physically and emotionally challenging. This bravery marked a personal victory for her, symbolizing growth in the face of fear.

For Rosanne, the retreat was about deepening her relationship with nature. She felt the healing atmosphere that the retreat provided, and it helped her further align with her own sense of peace and strength. Rosanne reaffirms her commitment to respecting and protecting the land and water, emphasizing the importance of always taking out what you bring in, being respectful, and doing no harm.

The concept of ‘All My Relations’ took on a new, profound meaning for Rosanne during the retreat. She now views it as a symbol of kinship — one that fostered wonderful friendships that will last a lifetime.

One of the most valuable lessons came from learning new ways to care for her body and spirit, such as breathing techniques and using herbs as medicines. These practices, shared by fellow participants, added another layer of growth to her already deep connection with herself and the world around her.

Rosanne's journey is one of courage, kinship, and a deep reverence for the earth. She continues to honor her role in protecting and respecting the natural world, always striving to leave it better than she found it.

CORAL-LEI SCHWEIGERT



Born in Lethbridge, Alberta, and raised in Coleman, Alberta – Crowsnest Pass, Coral-Lei's connection to nature was formed at an early age, exploring the forest in her backyard. She has always felt most grounded among the trees, where she finds clarity, guidance, and a deep sense of belonging. A transformative experience at a shaman workshop in 2017 reinforced this bond, leading her to an oak tree in an open pasture, where she discovered an unexpected teacher — Jesus, not as a religious figure, but as a presence of wisdom and friendship. Another profound moment came while swimming with her sister, where she encountered her spirit animal, the snake, deepening her understanding of her place in the natural world.

For the past 23 years, Coral-Lei has lived in White Rock, BC, walking the trails near her home almost daily. The ravine near the ocean has become her personal sanctuary, a place where she finds peace and joy in the rhythms of the land and water. During the All My Relations retreat, she gained something unexpected—true friendship. While she has always been skilled at connecting with people, this retreat gave her a sense of family, forging bonds that felt deeper than simple companionship.

A moment that stood out was visiting the secret caves, where the scents, energy, and history of the land left a lasting impression. Her commitment to protecting and respecting the land has only grown stronger—she now feels a responsibility to keep the earth clean, practice sustainable living, and embrace the teachings of tobacco offerings when taking something from nature.

For Coral-Lei, 'All My Relations' now carries a deeper meaning. It is a reminder of the four sacred medicines — tobacco, sweetgrass, cedar, and sage — and the importance of bringing these teachings into her ceremonies with respect for the land, water, and her Métis family. She sees wisdom as more than just knowledge — it is time spent passing on understanding to others. One of her most memorable lessons from the retreat came from Brandt, a young yet knowledgeable participant who reminded her of the power of curiosity and shared learning.

Through her love of the land, learning, and community, Coral-Lei continues to honor the relationships that connect all living beings, carrying forward the teachings and experiences that have shaped her path.

RICK BONE



Born and raised in the Vancouver area, Rick Bone has always felt most at home either in his workshop or out on the land, whether fishing, hunting, or simply observing the world around him. His connection to nature is strongest when watching the ripples of a riverbank or sitting in his boat on a high mountain lake, where the rhythm of the water offers both peace and reflection.

Going into the All My Relations retreat with no expectations, Rick found the entire experience amazing. Walking the trails and beaches of Tofino, listening to the waves, and taking in the natural beauty of the coast reaffirmed his deep-rooted connection to the land. However, it wasn't just the landscape that left an impression — it was the first spark of a growing kinship with those around him, forming bonds that extended beyond shared experiences.

Rick's respect for the land and water has been a lifelong commitment. For him, protecting and honoring nature means giving thanks for what he harvests and ensuring he leaves the land better than he found it. This belief is deeply tied to his understanding of 'All My Relations', which represents the bond between family, culture, and nature, reinforcing the responsibility to uphold and pass down these values.

To Rick, wisdom is knowledge gained through experience over time, shared not just through words but through stories and actions. One of his most meaningful takeaways from the retreat was recognizing the importance of compassion and empathy, especially given the trauma of the past and the challenges ahead for Métis culture. These values, along with a strong connection to land and tradition, continue to shape his journey as a steward of both nature and community.

BRANDT DOUGLAS VON KRIEGER



Born in Kamloops, British Columbia, and raised along the province's vast coastline and rugged landscapes, Brandt Douglas von Krieger developed a deep appreciation for the maritime environment. From an early age, he recognized the water's significance — not just for industry and transportation, but as a vital part of culture, history, and sustainability.

Brandt feels most connected to himself when on the water, whether navigating a boat, observing the tides, or listening to the rhythm of the waves. For him, the ocean provides both clarity and perspective, stripping away distractions and reinforcing what truly matters. He holds a deep connection to places like Barkley Sound, Desolation Sound, Nootka Sound, and Knights Inlet, as well as Haida Gwaii and the Inside Passage, where the intersection of history, ecology, and industry reminds him of the responsibility we have to protect these spaces.

During the All My Relations retreat, Brandt did not expect the depth of connection that would form through shared experiences. Listening to different perspectives broadened his understanding of what it truly means to engage with the land, water, and community.

A particularly meaningful moment was standing on the shoreline after the helicopter landing, watching the Pacific stretch endlessly before them. In that quiet reflection, he felt a shared understanding among the group — that they are all stewards of the land and water, each carrying a responsibility for its future.

Brandt sees his role in conservation as one of leadership and advocacy, ensuring that sustainability is integrated into decision-making. He believes in promoting policies and practices that prioritize long-term ecological health over short-term convenience, recognizing that stewardship is a collective responsibility. After this retreat, All My Relations carries a deeper meaning — representing the interconnectedness of all living things.

To Brandt, wisdom is more than just knowledge; it is lived experience, passed down through mentorship, storytelling, and action. One of his key takeaways from the retreat was recognizing that while connection to place is deeply personal, it is also universal. The land and water tie all people together, shaping traditions, responsibilities, and futures. Through his work, advocacy, and personal commitment to sustainability, Brandt continues to honor and protect the waters and landscapes that have shaped him.

TERRI TERCIER



Born in Edmonton, Alberta, Terri Tercier spent her early years moving between several towns across the province, including St. Albert, Legal, Cold Lake, Red Deer, Calgary, Bonnyville, and Drayton Valley. While these places each played a role in shaping her journey, she found her true home when she moved to Victoria, BC. Living by the ocean and mountains had always been a dream, and she quickly discovered the deep peace and connection she felt when spending time by the sea.

Over the years, Terri has found another special place in Campbell River's Beaver Lodge Lands, where she walks among the trees, moss, mushrooms, and streams, feeling a profound connection to the land. She has always appreciated the quiet wisdom of nature, but during the All My Relations retreat, she experienced something unexpected — a sense of calm and relaxation while on the boat and helicopter rides. Initially, she thought she would feel tense, but instead, she found peace and awe, allowing herself to fully embrace the moment.

For Terri, the power and majesty of the ocean put many aspects of her life into perspective. This retreat reinforced her desire to honor nature every day, walking gently and mindfully whenever she is outside.

A particularly meaningful experience was visiting the Ucluelet Aquarium, where she was able to see and interact with ocean creatures up close. This personal connection to marine life deepened her appreciation for the delicate ecosystems that exist beneath the waves.

Terri hopes to share the knowledge she gained with her friends and family, passing on the lessons and insights she gathered throughout the retreat. After this experience, 'All My Relations' holds a greater meaning for her — she now sees nature as family, interwoven with her relatives and ancestors. She believes that wisdom is passed down through conversation and shared experiences, allowing knowledge to live on through generations.

One of the most valuable lessons she learned during the retreat was the importance of patience and respect, as demonstrated by the facilitators who guided the experience. Through these teachings, her deep reverence for nature has only grown stronger, inspiring her to continue walking gently, learning from the land, and sharing her wisdom with others.

DIANN KEHLER



Born in Kamloops, British Columbia, and raised in Fort St. John, Diann Kehler has spent much of her life connected to the landscapes of British Columbia and Alberta. Since 1996, she has called the Okanagan home, with a few years spent on Vancouver Island in Sooke, where her daughter was born. Throughout her life, nature has been her grounding force — whether by water, trees, rocks, or fresh air, she finds peace in simply walking, sitting, and listening to the world around her.

One of Diann's most cherished places is Eberly, a small campsite on Okanagan Lake. For years, she walked the trails daily, often accompanied by her dogs, enjoying the old-growth trees, quiet surroundings, and the absence of traffic noise. It was not just a place for solitude but a gathering space — her children camped and barbecued there, and when family visited from other provinces, they swam in the lake and explored the ancient Indigenous cliff paintings hidden deep within the landscape.

During the All My Relations retreat, Diann was surprised by how much she learned from the local boat captain and helicopter pilot, both of whom shared a wealth of knowledge. Their deep appreciation for the land and their willingness to share their stories reminded her of the importance of relationship-building.

This experience reaffirmed how calming and transformative the natural world can be, offering moments of growth and learning. Diann believes in promoting education and environmental awareness, particularly among youth.

After this retreat, 'All My Relations' has taken on a deeper meaning, representing kinship, trust, shared learning, and the importance of supporting one another. She sees wisdom as the knowledge gained through life experiences, something that must be passed down through storytelling, traditions, and leadership from elders to keep Métis culture alive.

One of the most valuable lessons she took from the retreat came from Terri, whose ability to truly listen left a lasting impression. During a shared task, Diann was amazed by how much Terri remembered and embraced her words, teaching her the power of genuine presence and deep listening. It was a reminder that wisdom is not just about speaking — it is about hearing, understanding, and passing down knowledge. Through this experience, Diann has reaffirmed her commitment to protecting the land, sharing knowledge, and fostering connection in all aspects of life.

JOCELYN EISERT



Born in Stonewall, Manitoba, and the youngest of 17 siblings, Jocelyn Eisert spent her early years in Marquette before moving to Winnipeg's downtown core at age seven. In 2004, she left Manitoba and made her new home in Fort St. John, British Columbia, where she continues to foster a deep appreciation for land, water, and relationships.

For Jocelyn, feeling connected comes when life slows down, allowing her to pause, reflect, and truly take in nature. She feels most at peace near water, where the rhythmic slapping of waves against the rocks makes her heart sing. Water, for her, is more than an element — it is a pathway, a connector, and a teacher, winding through communities and guiding life itself. She is equally drawn to tall trees, often wondering what the wind whispers to the leaves as it moves through the branches.

The All My Relations retreat brought many unexpected experiences, including her first time seeing a humpback whale and, to her relief, her first time not getting sick in a helicopter. Despite the rain, she found herself excited to be outside, embracing the dampness and discovering awe in the towering trees and lush moss-covered forest floor. The moss, soft and abundant, felt like a pathway to nature, revealing a world of resilience and interconnected life.

A particularly meaningful moment was finding sand dollars, an experience that filled her with gratitude and inspiration.

Jocelyn sees her role in conservation as one of action and leadership. Inspired by the retreat, she is organizing a riverbed cleanup in her community in May, with plans to make it an annual event.

After this retreat, 'All My Relations' carries a profound meaning—it is about connection to people, land, water, sky, nature, and food. She feels immense gratitude for every moment, every shared experience, and for the new family members she has gained. To her, wisdom is found in the nuggets of truth we discover together, in shared knowledge, exchanged emotions, and genuine respect for one another.

One of the most impactful lessons she learned during the retreat came from Rick, who moved her with his emotional honesty. As they walked together, she felt a deep connection — almost like a daughter walking with her father — a moment she honored and cherished. Through experiences like these, Jocelyn continues to cultivate understanding, connection, and gratitude, carrying forward the lessons of 'All My Relations' in both her personal and community life.



NOURISHMENT THE HEART OF GATHERING

WORDS FROM A RETREAT PARTICIPANT

One of the most meaningful aspects of the retreat was the shared meals, providing a relaxed space for conversation, connection, and trust-building. Gathering around food allowed us to share stories, life experiences, and laughter, creating a sense of belonging that deepened as the retreat went on. It was more than just eating—it was a time to bond, respect boundaries, and support one another. The warmth of home-cooked meals and the shared activities that accompanied them helped break down barriers, allowing people to open up, sometimes even becoming emotional in the safety of the group.

I noticed that elders, in particular, cherished these moments. As an elder who lives alone, I miss the family atmosphere of shared meals — not just the food itself, but the time spent together, the storytelling, and even the unexpected fun like leg wrestling and dancing.

It reminded me of the past, when my kids and I would spend full days shopping, cooking, and eating together, or when neighbors gathered for meals before COVID. Speaking with others at the retreat, many felt the same — especially elders who live alone. The tradition of coming together over meals has been lost in modern times, but this retreat was a powerful reminder that we can rebuild these connections, share in community, and overcome isolation through something as simple, yet profound, as breaking bread together.



Food has always been at the heart of Métis gatherings, serving as a source of nourishment, connection, and tradition. For the Métis, shared meals were central to community gatherings, reinforcing bonds between families and fostering a deep sense of belonging. Historically, the Métis relied on communal meals during buffalo hunts, trade routes, and seasonal harvesting, where food was not only sustenance but a means of strengthening relationships. Sharing meals ensured that everyone was cared for, and the act of preparing and eating together created a sense of unity and mutual respect.

At the All My Relations retreat, shared meals were more than just moments to eat — they were a time to slow down, reflect, and connect. In today's fast-paced, modern world, it's easy to overlook the importance of gathering around food, but at the retreat, these moments became essential to building a community. Each meal was a space where we shared stories, laughter, and wisdom, reinforcing the idea that food is not just about physical nourishment, but also about spiritual and emotional well-being.

Gathering around the table each day created a rhythm of togetherness, where barriers were lowered, and friendships deepened.

As plates were passed and meals were enjoyed, conversations flowed freely — sometimes lighthearted, filled with jokes and laughter, and other times reflective and deeply personal. These moments of shared nourishment helped us recognize that we were not just individuals on a retreat, but a community, supporting and learning from one another.

For Métis, and many Indigenous cultures, food has always symbolized kinship, hospitality, and care for one another. At the retreat, it was no different. Whether over breakfast or dinner, each meal was an opportunity to honor tradition, strengthen relationships, and create a space where everyone felt valued and included. The experience reaffirmed that, just as our ancestors gathered around meals to celebrate, reflect, and build community, we too continue this practice — ensuring that food remains a bridge between the past, present, and future.

PARTNER REFLECTIONS

One of the most powerful moments at the All My Relations retreat came during an activity called Partner Reflections. It was simple in structure but profound in impact. Participants were partnered randomly and given 90 minutes to spend together — not with a script of questions or a structured plan, but with an open invitation to simply talk, listen, and connect. Nothing was off-limits. It was about creating space for curiosity, trust, and genuine human connection.

Pairs wandered the grounds — some sitting beneath trees, others strolling the trails, or finding quiet corners to settle in. Conversations unfolded naturally, without the pressure of performance or expectation. Some began by sharing small everyday stories, while others found themselves diving into deeper waters — recounting memories of childhood, the people who shaped them, their dreams for the future, and the hardships they had endured.

When everyone returned, each participant stood and introduced their partner to the group, speaking from the heart about what they had learned and witnessed in their short time together. What emerged was remarkable: reflections filled with fascination, laughter, and even tears. Through storytelling, strangers had become trusted companions, and a sense of community grew stronger with every shared word.

For many, the Partner Reflections activity was an emotional journey — a reminder of how often we move through life without truly seeing or hearing the people around us. It demonstrated that every person carries a lifetime of experiences, waiting to be honored and understood.

In the end, Partner Reflections left a lasting imprint on the retreat, showing that healing, kinship, and understanding begin with a simple act: taking the time to truly listen.

RICK & JOCELYN

Rick and Jocelyn's conversation unfolded with a natural warmth, drawing them into a shared space of storytelling and reflection. Rick, a resident of West Kelowna, spoke of his journeys across British Columbia, his deep connection to his Indigenous heritage, and how retirement had led him to wood whittling, crafting unique walking sticks that embodied his cultural roots. His storytelling exuded a comforting familiarity, reminiscent of cherished memories with loved ones now passed. Despite the challenging weather outside, their interaction was uplifting, characterized by Rick's openness and the relaxed atmosphere between them.

As Rick began to speak about Jocelyn, his words trailed off, leaving an unspoken bond between them. This unfinished narrative symbolized a deeper connection, emphasizing the shared understanding and mutual respect that had developed during their exchange. In that moment, they both recognized that sometimes, the most profound connections are formed not through words, but through the shared experience of simply being present with one another.



DIANN & TERRI

Diann and Terri share stories woven with resilience, adventure, and deep Métis heritage. Terri's roots trace back to early settlers in Vegreville, with ancestors who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company. With Scottish ancestry interlaced in her Métis identity, she embraces her heritage through studying the Michif language. Her journey has been as dynamic as her lineage — backpacking across Africa and later embracing the thrill of motorcycles.

Diann's story is equally compelling. She carries the legacy of her grandfather, a fierce advocate for Métis rights, and has navigated the complexities of identity with determination. Also of Scottish descent, she has faced challenges as a Métis woman, yet her passion for genealogy has deepened her connection to her ancestors. In their reflections, Terri and Diann celebrate their shared love of history and heritage, finding admiration and kinship in each other's journeys.



ROSANNE & CORAL - LEI

From the moment Coral-Lei and Rosanne began sharing their stories, a powerful connection formed — one built on resilience, understanding, and the silent strength of those who have endured deep hardships. Their conversation wove together shared experiences of trauma, and challenges with their own health, revealing the weight each had carried. Coral-Lei saw Rosanne's quiet wisdom, recognizing a healer in her, while Rosanne admired Coral-Lei's unwavering spirit. In speaking their truths, they found both reflection and validation, realizing that healing isn't just about overcoming pain but about having someone who truly understands.

What started as a conversation soon became the foundation of something much deeper — a friendship rooted in support and shared purpose. They spoke of their bodies' struggles, of decisions that defied convention, and of trusting their own instincts over external pressures. They committed to an ongoing connection — envisioning a virtual gathering space, ensuring that the bond they had begun to build would grow into something lasting. In each other, they had found not just a kindred spirit, but a path toward healing.



SEA CAVES

Embarking on a helicopter tour with Atleo Air, the group set out on an unforgettable journey to visit the remote sea caves along the rugged coastline. As the helicopters soared over vast ocean swells and towering cliffs, members took in breathtaking aerial views before descending into an untouched landscape rich with history. Upon arrival, the pilots shared stories of the sea caves, revealing their deep cultural and ecological significance. Some of these caves had long served as traditional burial grounds, holding a sacred connection to the past. The experience was both humbling and awe-inspiring, as members gained a deeper understanding of how the land and water carry the histories of those who came before us.

The group landed in three separate helicopters, stepping onto the rocky shore where the sound of crashing waves echoed through the cavernous spaces. With time to explore the caves and waterfalls, members examined smooth, time-worn stones, tracing their fingers over the marks left by the elements. They observed clusters of gooseneck barnacles, clinging tightly to the rock face, a reminder of the resilience of life in these extreme coastal environments. The sea spray, the mist from the waterfalls, and the sheer grandeur of the caves made the experience deeply immersive — one that blended natural wonder, cultural learning, and personal reflection in a way few had ever experienced before.

















BOATING ADVENTURE

Setting off on a three-hour boating adventure, the group was prepared for an unforgettable experience, rain or shine. The sky was overcast, and the air carried the familiar scent of salt and sea as we left the dock, venturing into the vast, open waters. Though the rain fell steadily, it only added to the untamed beauty of the Pacific coastline. With every wave the boat cut through, the anticipation grew — we were in search of waves and wildlife, ready to witness the raw power and beauty of the ocean.

It didn't take long for the first incredible sighting. A humpback whale surfaced, its massive body breaking through the water with effortless grace before disappearing beneath the waves, leaving behind a trail of ripples. The moment was brief but profound, a reminder of the deep mysteries that lie beneath the surface. As we continued along the coast, we spotted playful otters floating on their backs, rolling in the waves without a care for the storm above.

Overhead, bald eagles soared, scanning the waters below for their next meal, while the jagged rocks along the shoreline came alive with barking sea lions, their deep calls echoing over the crashing surf.

The ocean was alive, and we were in the heart of it. Despite the persistent wind and rain soaking through our layers, there was a shared exhilaration among the group. The water's movement, the fresh ocean air, and the constant sense of discovery made the experience immersive and humbling. The Pacific never fails to remind us of its power, resilience, and ever-changing nature. The journey back to shore was met with a renewed sense of appreciation — not just for the wildlife we had encountered, but for the connection to nature that can only be found in moments like these. Through the wind, the rain, and the waves, we had been given a glimpse into a world far greater than ourselves, and we carried that feeling with us long after we returned to land.







LASTING CONNECTIONS

One of the most powerful outcomes of the All My Relations retreat in March 2025 was the genuine, lasting connections formed between participants. What began as a group of strangers — Métis individuals from across British Columbia — quickly transformed into a tight-knit circle of friends, bound together by shared experiences, ancestry, laughter, and meaningful conversation. Over four days in Tofino, a profound sense of community emerged, one rooted in culture, vulnerability, and a shared passion for land and water conservation.

The retreat was intentionally designed to foster connection. From the very first morning, participants engaged in partner interviews, a team-building exercise that invited them to share personal stories — childhood memories, cultural ties, and reflections on identity. These conversations planted the seeds of trust and friendship, which continued to deepen throughout the retreat.

Through guided hikes, a collaborative watercolor painting session, and immersive excursions by boat and helicopter, participants explored not only the wild landscapes around them but also the deeper layers of their own stories. Visiting the Ucluelet Aquarium and sharing insights about conservation created moments of collective learning, while shared meals provided the space to slow down and reflect. Around the table, laughter flowed freely, tears were shared, and meaningful discussions unfolded — about Métis heritage, reconnection, and healing.

What united the group was a mutual openness — a willingness to show up as they were and to hold space for one another's truths. By the end of the retreat, connections that began as polite introductions had evolved into authentic friendships, many of which continue beyond the retreat itself. The All My Relations retreat reminded each participant that while we may arrive as individuals, we leave as part of something greater — a community rooted in kinship, culture, and collective care for each other and the natural world.









MÉTIS IN BC

Métis in BC emerged as part of a vast and extensive kinship network of thriving mixed-ancestry communities throughout the Pacific Northwest. The shared history and memory of these integrated, polyvalent, and adaptable Métis communities began as early as the late 1700s and continued well past the period of effective Crown control. Unique Métis peoples existed on the land, accessed resources, and established lifeways alongside their First Nations and settler kin, making significant contributions to the social, economic, cultural, and political life of the region.

From the late colonial and early provincial/statehood period to recent times, Métis self-determining communities endured racism, discrimination, and hate, which caused some to passively assimilate into settler society, some to integrate with their First Nations kin, and others to isolate themselves from mainstream and First Nations society. Today we are committed to recognizing and reconstituting these important Indigenous kinship relationships and to restoring the self-determination of all Métis peoples.

Our focus is on mentoring community based researchers through a relational methodology based on trust and accountability to community needs and goals.

We seek to establish a uniquely Métis community based response to community goals and needs. Developing research capacity and reinforcing our relational research methodology and gathering baseline data will strengthen communities to respond to future projects, activities or initiatives dealing with risk assessments. Furthermore this work will lead to increased knowledge partnerships and meaningful sharing with other Indigenous peoples, local and provincial/territorial governments and agencies.

MICHIF LANGUAGE

The Métis are a distinct Indigenous group in Canada, with a unique mixed heritage rooted in both First Nations and European ancestry — particularly from French and Scottish fur traders. Often called the “Children of the Fur Trade,” the Métis emerged through intermarriage and cultural exchange, creating a vibrant culture with its own traditions, music, art, and language.

From the beginning, Métis have been multilingual. Métis people often spoke three or more languages — such as French, English, Cree, and Celtic — and played a vital role as guides and interpreters in the fur trade. This multilingualism remains a key part of Métis identity today.

One of the most distinctive expressions of Métis culture is Michif — a group of contact languages created and spoken by Métis people. Michif languages blend elements from Plains Cree, Ojibwe, and Saukteaux with French, and also include influences from English and Gaelic. Typically, verbs in Michif come from Indigenous languages, while nouns are primarily French.

These languages arose in the early 19th century and were spoken across the prairies, from Manitoba to British Columbia, and into parts of the U.S.

Several varieties of Michif developed, including: Michif French, Heritage Michif, Northern Michif, Southern Michif, Brayet, and Bungi/Bungee.

All Michif languages are considered critically endangered, and some — like Brayet and Bungi — are now extinct. As of 2021, fewer than 1,000 fluent Michif speakers remain in Canada, most of whom are over the age of 70. Without immediate revitalization efforts, these languages could be lost within the next five years.

The term Michif also reflects the meaning of “mixed blood” and has come to symbolize both the language and the people. As Métis, our languages are central to our culture, history, and identity — and passing them on is essential to keeping our Nation strong for future generations.



Scan to learn more about the conservation work happening across BC. Additional links provide information about the BC Métis Federation, Métis culture, language, and the vibrant communities they represent.



BC Métis
FEDERATION