

Reconciliation in Action

Launch of shared online inventory signals a collaborative approach to stewardship and pathway to reconciliation

Friday, 17th of March, 2023

The more we know about our land, water and other natural resources, the better able we are to restore, protect, and enhance these important natural features. Creating a shared inventory is the first step to ensure our communities have; habitat to support biodiversity, recharge areas for safe clean drinking water, land for food security, and build resilience to withstand flooding, drought, and extreme weather events.

Participants of the Collaborative Leadership Initiative (CLI) consisting of 28 Leaders—Chiefs from the Southern Chiefs’ Organizations and the mayors and reeves from the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region, first met in 2017 to find collaborative ways to work together for the benefit of all communities. These leaders understood that natural resources do not fold neatly into boundaries, and in 2021, formed a working group to explore approaches to developing a shared inventory.

To get the process started, the working group met with the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region (WMR), the Southern Chiefs’ Organization (SCO), the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER), the Province of Manitoba and representatives from the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health to assist in the development of guiding principles. Executive Director of the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region, Colleen Sklar, explained *“The project followed the working group’s primary principle to ensure that Indigenous perspectives and world views would be at the front and centre.”*

The working group then enlisted the help of experts from the Municipal Natural Assets Initiative, a Canadian NGO, to create an inventory of wetlands, lakes and rivers, grasslands, forests, shrub lands and agricultural lands. Such inventories are the basis for broader natural asset management efforts. This easy to use, up-to-date, online inventory covers the entire Treaty 1 Territory and beyond and is accessible to everyone. Roy Brooke from Municipal Natural Assets Initiative was present for the launch and commented on how *“This project pushed the boundaries on the process for creating inventories with communities. The emphasis on integrating First Nations worldviews and knowledge will change the way we approach inventory development, and natural asset management more generally, in the future.”*

Jim Bear, one of the advisors on the project said, *“Having access to this land, water and other natural resources inventory will allow for new insights and opportunities for integrated land use planning, shared investment in green and gray infrastructure, connected green corridors and enhanced recreation opportunities, and will encourage a team approach to protect sensitive areas and critical habitats.”*

This land, water and other natural resource inventory is the first of its kind in Canada and provides an important collaborative opportunity to support healthy ecosystems while building partnerships to honour our treaty relationships.

To access the *Land, Water and Other Natural Resources Inventory* please click the link below:
nri.winnipegmetroregion.ca