



Red River Current Newsletter

A Fort McKay First Nation Publication

Volume 15: Issue 10 • October 2025

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation



Each year, September 30th marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The day honours the children who never returned home and survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process.

The National Day for Truth and

Reconciliation also referred to as Orange Shirt Day took place on September 30th.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a day led by Indigenous communities to raise awareness about the intergenerational impacts of residential schools on children, families, and communities. It honours Indigenous children who were lost in the residential school system.

Continued on page 2



CONGRATULATIONS KEON GRANDJAMBE

Keon Grandjambe joined the Sustainability Department as a Junior Environmental Guardian in 2024 and has been working with Ryan Grandjambe since then, learning everything there is to know about water quality monitoring, hydrometric stations, and water modelling at Moose Lake (along with many other things).

As part of his training, Keon was tasked with completing a 10-module environmental monitoring program through the University of Northern British Columbia, and he has just completed all the requirements of the program.

Well done Keon.



FMFN LEADERSHIP TEAM

Raymond Powder, Chief
David Bouchier, Councillor
Crystal McDonald, Councillor
Bobby Shott, Councillor
Melinda Stewart, Councillor

Alvaro Pinto

Vice President of Oilsands
Development & Sustainability

ADMINISTRATION DEPT.

Dorothy McDonald Business
Centre, General Delivery,
Fort McKay, AB T0P 1C0

Phone: 780-828-2430

Hours of Operation:

Monday - Thursday:
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Closed daily: 12 - 1 p.m.

SUBMISSIONS

If you have any photos, stories or
ideas for the Red River Current,
please contact us via email at:
communications@fortmckay.com

Sign up for the FMFN App Today!

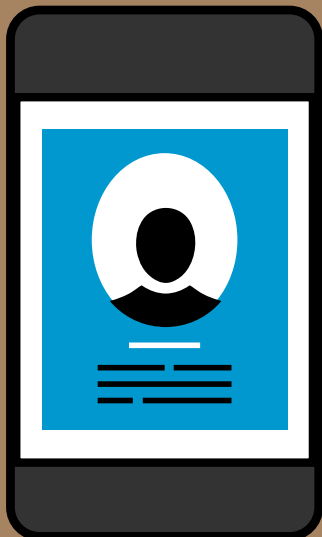
Stay updated with the latest
community news and get
important community
notifications simply by
downloading the Fort McKay
First Nation App on your
iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

Never miss an update and
download the app now!



GET IT ON
Google Play

Download on the
App Store



FORT MCKAY EVENTS NEWS



Continued from page 1

The orange shirt symbolizes
the loss of culture, freedom,
and self-esteem that
many Indigenous children
experienced. This day reminds
us that "Every Child Matters."

This year Fort McKay First

Nation held the ceremony at
the Elsie Fabian School, with
prayers, Cree and Dene Drum
Honour Songs, speeches
by dignitaries, a moment of
silence, videos marking the
solemnity of the day and a
Mini Round Dance.



FORT MCKAY EVENTS NEWS



In this Issue...

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.....	1, 2 & 3
Congratulations Keon Grandjambe.....	1
ATC Cultural Festival 2025.....	4 & 5
FMFN Member leads Hand Games Team to victory at ATC Festival.....	5
Berry Picking in September	6
Harvey Rolland.....	7
'In Our Kitchen' a poem by Frederick McDonald.....	8 & 9
Athabasca Cemetery.....	10
Megan Shott Produces Full Length Movie	11
Graveyard Cleanup.....	11
Fort McKay Pool Teams News.....	12
Youth Visit Fort Edmonton Park.....	13
FMFN Trade Fair.....	14 & 15
Education News.....	16, 17, 18 & 19
Upcoming Events.....	20

FORT MCKAY HEALTH CENTRE

Clinic Dates:

Dr O'Connor -
October 14th - 17th

Dr Taiwo -
October 28th - 30th

PCN Nurse - Every Mon & Wed

Please call in advance if you need to make an appointment with Dr. O'Connor or Charlene.

Immunizations:

Contact the Health Centre to make an appointment with the Public Health Nurse.

For more information on other services offered at the Health Centre, please contact

FORT MCKAY EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

The Employment and Training Centre is there to help you with creating/ updating resumes, searching for and applying for jobs, and offering support for employment and training.

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact the office at **780.828.2478**.

FORT MCKAY 106.3 FM



STAY up to date with the latest music and news!!

Listening to Fort McKay's community radio station!

www.fortmackayfm.com

ATC Cultural Festival 2025



The Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) Cultural Festival took place at J Howard Pew Memorial Park from the 11th - 14th of September, and Fort McKay was well represented in the workshops, the Traditional Village, the Learning Lodge, the children's activities, and the food. The festival is an inclusive, all-ages celebration, welcoming everyone to experience and enjoy Northern Alberta's rich First Nations arts and culture. The festival offers a vibrant space to highlight traditions, share knowledge, and support the continued growth of Cree and Dene cultural revitalization in the region.

The 2025 ATC Cultural Festival displays Cree and Dene artists and Knowledge Keepers from the region's First Nations communities, alongside inspiring guest artists and entertainers. Over the course of four days, the festival showcased a vibrant array of arts and cultural programming.

Thanks to local artist and photographer Fred McDonald for documenting the event.



ATC CULTURAL FESTIVAL



FMFN Member leads Hand Games Team to victory at ATC Festival



Congratulations to Fort McKay's own Leon Grandjambe, captain of the winning team in the Dene Hand Games Tournament at the recent Athabasca Tribal Council Cultural Festival. Drawn in the A bracket, things did not go well at first. They lost their first game on the Friday, which pushed them into the B bracket and made the climb to the top that much harder. However, they came back renewed and determined on the Saturday, winning every game they played and making it into the finals on the Sunday. There they played the winner of the A bracket in the finals, beating them twice to be crowned champions of the tournament. In addition to Leon, the team consisted of an array of local Dene Games aficionados: Kye and Don Voyageur, Chase Grandjambe, Kaya Mercredi and Christian Stewart.

Well done to everyone who took part.



Berry Picking in September

It was a beautiful day for berry picking as a few hardy stalwarts started out from the band hall, guided by Parks staff member Christian McDonald who took them into the trails off Target Road. Thanks to all involved and even though it was a small group, and late in the season, there were still cranberries to be had in time for Thanksgiving turkey.



Harvey Rolland

Harvey Rolland does not like having his picture taken, but he will share his knowledge freely and candidly. He was born in 1943 on his family trapline, and living the traditional way was all he knew. One of ten in the family, seven boys and three girls, Harvey and his sister Katie are all that are left from his generation. He remembers going to school in the mission school in Fort McKay, then later the new school that was built in the community. He also remembers school wasn't really for him, and if he could get out and go back to trapping, he often would. Harvey was taught by his father, who died when Harvey was young, and then later by his grandfather. The family kept horses at Spruce Lake, there was no other transport back then. "We trapped beaver, muskrat, wolf, fox, weasel, squirrel, fisher, mink, marten, lynx, otter, anything and everything." There was good reason for that. If they didn't work, they didn't eat.

Harvey doesn't remember it being a hard life, it was just the way it was. "We never went to town much, didn't need to. Why go to the store when all you needed was there on the land." He has seen the changes over the decades, and he appreciates what is being done in the community to teach the old ways to the youth, but the times have changed for sure. "Living off the land was good, but now you don't need to, and you can't anyway because the land has changed." They used to net fish in the Athabasca River, suckers, whitefish, jackfish, goldeye and pickerel, his favourite. Then they would preserve the catch, not something he would do today, he says.

He remembers his introduction to hunting. "My grandfather gave me a gun and said, 'Go get some food'." So, he did. Back then there were moose to hunt, and the occasional caribou, as well as deer. He tried the old ways of getting fur, sneaking up quietly behind an animal and knocking it out, but he was never too successful at that, so trapping was the mainstay.

In the summers, Harvey would work for forestry as a firefighter. As all men of the land, he has stories of close encounters, like the time he came too close to a bear. He lay down and played dead, and the bear kept coming closer and closer. Finally, Harvey got tired of waiting and jumped up, making a loud noise. "Fortunately, the bear was more scared than I was and ran away."

Harvey also worked for a time at Suncor, and at Albion. One of his last jobs was the Bison Ranch at Syncrude, which where he was happiest, at least while working for a wage.

But he was truly at his happiest in the bush, and while he misses being on the line he is enough of a realist to know that there is no going back. Times have changed, the community has prospered, and Harvey is comfortable in his home in Fort McKay.

CFWE RADIO BINGO

Date

Mondays and Saturdays

Time

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Location

Fort McKay Radio
Canada



‘In Our Kitchen’ by Frederick McDonald

Each month we are going to feature poetry by our Fort McKay members, if you would like to be featured in the Red River Current newsletter, just send your poems to us at **communications@fortmckay.com**, if you want to include any background to the poem please send that along with your poems. This month we are featuring ‘In Our Kitchen’ by Frederick McDonald, here is Fred’s rhetoric for the poem.

‘In Our Kitchen’ is a poem in my first poetry book by Harbour Publishing, Vancouver, 2022. This is my second book; the first is focused on my paintings. The title of the poetry book is: ‘**Dreams and Journeys**’ and has 51 poems. Sometimes I let my mind wander and this kind of dream-like poem comes out of that subconscious meandering. My mom and dad did have a make-yourself-at-home policy, just like I imagine most people from my community does. Enjoy!

In our Kitchen

John Wayne was eating breakfast in the kitchen
he was the fourth stranger
to be sitting there this month
when I woke up
so, I was not really that surprised

Bacon, eggs, beans and home-made toast
my mothers’ favourite, and ours too
the sizzling bacon sound and its smell wafting through my bedroom
made me crawl out of bed

Fresh off the trail, his shirt and vest still dusty
I heard his horse outside

Mom and dad had a
“make yourself at home policy”
and of course, everyone did

Last week there was some fellow
from somewhere north, Alaska I think

Mr. Wayne had made bush coffee just the way grandfather did
there was something familiar I liked about that
I poured myself a nice hot cup
before sitting at our heavy wooden home-made table
cut from 100-year-old Jack Pine

I noticed his big sweat-brimmed hat
hanging on the hook on the wall
typical kind of cowboy hat

Then I noticed his boots, amongst ours
big, with the pointed toes scuffed past repair
probably, I thought, from kicking cow patties
I chuckled to myself

In his gruff smoke and whisky voice, he said,
“howdy Pilgrim,”
now that’s a bit like a cliché I thought, so I replied:
“I reckon I’m doing fine pardner, ummm, I mean Mr. Wayne”
I don’t know what came over me at that moment
“just call me John”, he said
when I looked up at him he had a big grin
he took a sip from his steaming cup



FORT MCKAY POETRY CORNER

Just about that time I heard faint footsteps
my brothers and sister were finally awake too
and soon there would be no food left
I jumped up, loaded my plate
started eating – shoveling it down
food was fair game in our house
even if it was on someone else's plate

Mom walked in the back door, at that moment
with a basket full of clean clothes
something looked out of place - oh yeah...
it must have been that she didn't have that mussed-up housewife look
her hair was done nicely, and
she was wearing her new red flowered summer dress
the one she had ordered from the Sears catalogue last week
that made me smile

John stood up as she entered the kitchen
he said, "let me help you with that ma'am"
of course, mom said that it was okay
looking at me and at the clothes
taking them into the front room
I knew then what my first job of the day was
I ate slower and filled my cup again
and poured John another

Mom said: "Dad's got the boat ready,
John, you can head down anytime you like"
and to me she said that I was to go along too
but only after I finished the clothes
I shoveled down the rest of my food
Mom knew how much I loved his movies
she also knew that it would be handy for dad to have me around

Over the years many folks have made themselves
at home in our kitchen
my mom and dad would have it no other way

And as a kid there would be many more mornings
of strangers in the kitchen
but never anyone, with a dusty hat or big cowboy boots
or a horse in the back yard

05/2019



Athabasca Cemetery



On Thursday September the 25th, a visit to the old cemetery on the north side of the Athabasca River was arranged for interested members of the community.

Susan Shott has been spearheading the upgrading and recognition of this important part of the Nation's history.

"I took on this project because it means so much to me and to our ancestors. The burial ground, located on our reserve lands, lies across the Athabasca River, about a 10 to 15-minute boat ride away. It has been neglected and abandoned for quite some time.

So far, we have identified around sixty unknown grave sites, and I believe there are more that we have not uncovered yet. One particular site contains the remains of about a dozen individuals who were buried together due to smallpox. There is also a tree that we nailed a cross to because we were told that there is a grave site underneath. It is important that we recognize those who have gone and honour their memory."

Susan hopes to do similar work out at Moose Lake as well. For more information, you may contact her at susan.shott@fortmckay.com



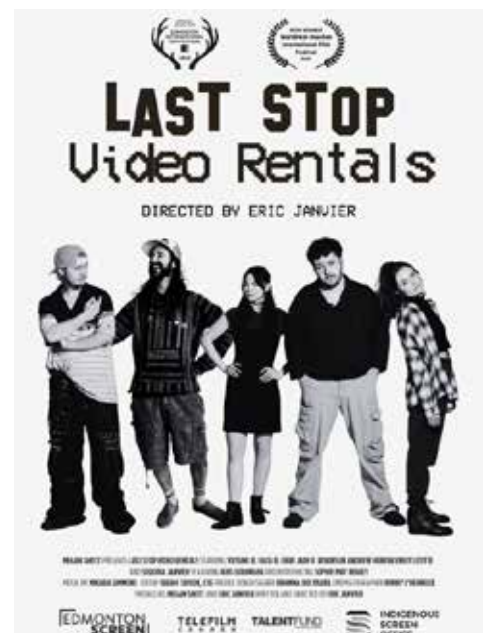
Megan Shott Produces Full Length Movie

Fort McKay Chief and Council warmly congratulate member Megan Shott on the release of her first full length feature movie as producer. Last Stop Video Rentals premiered at the Edmonton International Film Festival and it was the first sold out viewing of the event. It is a nostalgic indie comedy set on one of the most anticipated release days of the '90s: May 19, 1999, the premiere of Star Wars: Episode 1 — The Phantom Menace. The story follows Nick, a heartbroken college dropout who was forced to cover a shift at a struggling video store while navigating his own existential crisis. As the day unfolds, a crew of slacker co-workers, eccentric customers, and unexpected events push each character to confront their own paths and futures.

Megan has also been recognized for her work by the Arts Council of Wood Buffalo as well as YMM Magazine. She is also a supporter of Elsie Fabian School's Land-based learning program and has supported her Mother Marina Nokohoo in the art of moosehide tanning. Currently based in Edmonton, Last Stop Video Rentals was filmed locally, supporting the local cinema industry.

Megan's previous successes include Come Toward the Fire, an Indigenous-led celebration event filmed for CBC Gem special broadcast, and My Girl, a short film that screened internationally at the Māoriland Film Festival and Weengushk International Film Festival. My Girl was set on Treaty 8 territory and explored cultural beliefs, identity, family history, and completeness through her love of both her land and her people. Now Megan has taken the jump to major cinematic production. There is no news as yet whether Last Stop Video Rentals will show in Fort McMurray, but we can only hope it does.

Congratulations Megan.



Graveyard Cleanup

Nobody likes cleanup day, but when it comes to tidying the graveyard, Colt Gladue put out a call to the community and they rallied around. Colt is one of the FMFN Park Rangers and he took the initiative to organize this event and marshal the volunteers. To the call of 'bring your tools, lawn mowers and weed whackers,' the happy band of volunteers set to the task with energy and enthusiasm.

Ryan Abel, Colt's manager in the sustainability department, gave high praise to the team. "Next time you see Colt or anyone else involved, please give them a big high-five. Job well done everyone."



Fort McKay Pool Teams News

Two years ago, the Fort McKay pool representation consisted of one team who played in the local league and attended Alberta tournaments and Battle of the Bands competitions. Fast forward to now, and there are five teams in the local Fort McMurray leagues: Two in the Gold division, The Fort McKay Northern Warriors and the Fort McKay Lights Out, Two in the Silver, The Fort McKay Northern Lights and The Fort McKay Indigenous AF, and one on the Bronze Novice League, The Fort McKay Treaty 8.

Organizer and pool club manager Roy McDonald has driven much of this growth, along with the excellent facilities upstairs in the arena. "We just had a ladies night tournament and there were eleven women who showed up to play. That is eleven more than when we started in 2023."

The Fort McMurray Impact league is mixed, so some of the ladies are already playing competitive pool, but Roy has his eye on the Battle of the Bands tournaments that are run around the province. These are the best of the best in Indigenous and First Nations pool in Alberta, and they have a separate women's competitions.

The Pool club is also celebrating its first two graduates from the youth centre. Zachary Powder and Damian Richards are now old

enough to play in the adult league, and both having been getting game time on the Fort McKay teams in the Fort McMurray Impact league.

If this carries on, we're going to need a bigger pool hall. Well done, Roy, and well done to all the players who come out and have fun.

Photos below are from the Ladies Pool Tournament, held in the Arena. Sue McDonald surprised herself by coming 1st, with Aiden Gardiner 2nd, and Chelsea L'Hommercourt finishing in 3rd place. Congratulations!



Our Youth Visit Fort Edmonton Park and Settle into the Revamped Wellness Centre

These pictures came too late for last month's Red River Current, but the sight of all the youngsters having fun at Fort Edmonton Park was too good to miss, so here they are now.

As you can also see the kids have settled into the new revamped Wellness Centre and everyone seems to be having a good time.



FMFN Trade Fair

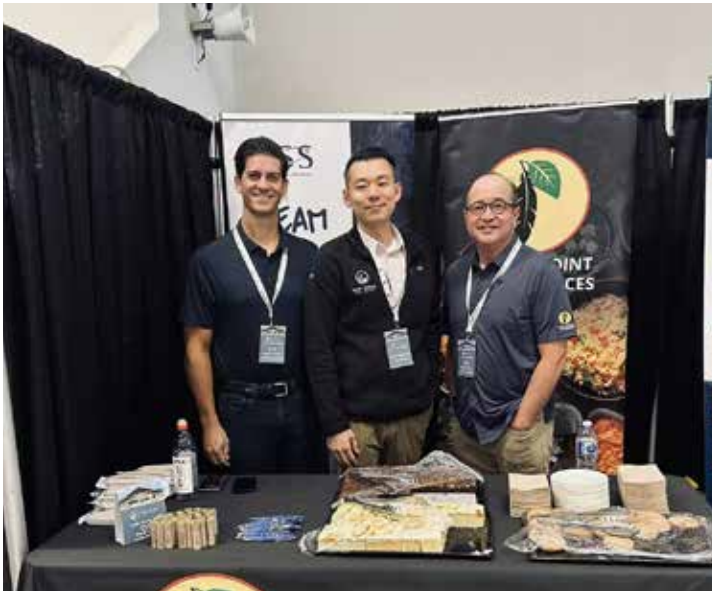
The Fort McKay First Nation Trade Show was held at the new Fort McKay Community Hall on Wednesday September 17th. Thank you to all our trade and support partners who came and displayed their opportunities to the community.

The focus of the trade fair was on employment possibilities, services, and facilities available to the community and upcoming projects. In addition, staff and experts were on hand to address environmental questions and to continue to build relationships between industry partners and the FMFN community.

Thanks to the FMFN HR department who facilitated the event.



COMMUNITY EVENTS NEWS



Grandparents Tea at Elsie Fabian School

September 8th, we had the pleasure of welcoming our students' grandparents into the school for a special Grandparents' Tea. Guests were greeted with hot tea, coffee, and a delightful selection of treats, while the room buzzed with laughter and smiles. It was heartwarming to see students proudly spending time with their grandparents, sharing stories, and creating cherished memories together.

We are especially thankful to the Grade Four class for opening the celebration with a heartfelt prayer and beautifully performing the Tansi song in honour of our guest.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this meaningful celebration!



Meet the Staff Night at EFS

On September 10th, we hosted our annual Meet the Staff Night, and it was a fantastic evening filled with laughter, connection, and fun. Families enjoyed a creative bingo game that had them hunting down staff members and learning more about the amazing team that supports our students. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the night memorable!



EFS Attends ATC Cultural Festival

On September 11th, Elsie Fabian students from Grades 5 to 9 had the opportunity to attend the ATC Cultural Festival. It was a wonderful day filled with learning and engagement as students watched cultural demonstrations and took part in hands-on activities led by local knowledge keepers. The event offered a meaningful way for students to connect with Indigenous culture and traditions. It was both an educational and memorable experience for all who attended.



Supporting Our Post-Secondary Students

On September 29th and October 1st Coral Boucher, Post-Secondary Program Coordinator, traveled to Edmonton and Calgary for the annual visits with Fort McKay's college and university students. During her time there, Coral provided program information and orientation on the PSE program, checked in with students to offer ongoing support, and hosted group dinners to build connection and community.

It was a successful trip that highlighted the dedication of our students and the importance of supporting them throughout their academic journeys. We are so proud of all our PSE students who are pursuing further education — you make Fort McKay proud!



Fort McKay Students Visit Syncrude Bison Ranch

Our Grade 9 students from Elsie Fabian School and the Fort McKay E-Learning Program had the exciting opportunity to visit the Syncrude Bison Ranch last month. Accompanied by their teachers and the Sustainability Department, students learned about the history of the herd, land stewardship, and the role bison play in environmental sustainability.

It was a hands-on learning experience that connected classroom learning with real-world knowledge. A big thank you to the Sustainability Department for organizing this tour - our students truly enjoyed seeing the bison up close and gaining a deeper appreciation for their cultural and ecological importance.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Day	Date	Event	Details
Every Wed	Oct 1 to Oct 29	Dene Online Classes, 6pm - 7:30pm, Instructor Janette Flett-Jones.	Register through Audrey at culture@fortmckay.com .
Every Tues	Oct 7 to Oct 28	Cree Online Classes, 6:30pm - 8:00pm, Instructor Edith Orr.	Register through Audrey at culture@fortmckay.com .
Every Mon	Oct 6 to Oct 27	EFS Gymnasium/Track Hours, M-F, 5:30-8:30pm.	Contact Number, 780-215-5359.
Every Mon	Oct 6 to Oct 27	Fitness Centre: Fall Hours M-F 8:30am-10pm, S-S 10am-6pm.	Contact Number, 780-828-2437.
Wed	Oct 1	Health Centre: Beading Circle 1-3pm and 5-7pm, Acupuncture.	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.
Wed	Oct 1	Wellness Centre: 6-7pm Soccer, 7-8pm Laser Tag.	Contact Julia Soucie: 780-838-1828.
Wed	Oct 1	Youth Centre: Youth Sports 6-8pm.	Contact Katara White: 780-972-9810.
Thurs	Oct 2	Health Centre: Massage Therapy.	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.
Thurs	Oct 2	Wellness Centre: 6-7pm Playground, 7-8pm Obstacle Courses.	Contact Julia Soucie: 780-838-1828.
Fri	Oct 3	Health Centre: Recovery Alberta, Drop-ins 11:30am-2pm.	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.
Sun	Oct 5	Holy Mass - First Sunday of each Month. 4pm in the Church.	Contact 780-791-4305.
Mon	Oct 6	Health Centre: Recovery Alberta, Drop-ins welcome.	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.
Tues	Oct 7	Acupuncture appointments available.	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.
Wed	Oct 8	Health Centre: Beading Circle 1-3pm and 5-7pm, Acupuncture.	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.
Thurs	Oct 9	Health Centre: Massage Therapy.	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.
Fri	Oct 10	Health Centre: Recovery Alberta, Drop-ins 11:30am-2pm	Contact Erin Faichney. 780-215-6723.



Check out our website: www.careersnextgen.ca

For more information, please contact Sabrina:

P: 780-804-5181 | E: swatson@nextgen.org

We are a provincial non-profit organization that is dedicated to building strong, vibrant communities to enable youth on their path to rewarding careers.