

NORTHWEST TERRITORY MÉTIS NATION  
NWT MÉTIS CULTURAL INSTITUTE PRESENTATION ON:

THOR LAKE RARE EARTH ELEMENT PROJECT  
AVALON RARE METALS INC.

TECHNICAL MEETING

Tree of Peace; Yellowknife, NT;  
August 16, 2012

# Northwest Territory Métis Nation and the NWT Métis Cultural Institute

- In 2001 the Northwest Territory Métis Nation (NWTMN) incorporated the Northwest Territories Métis Cultural Institute (NWT MCI) as a Non-Profit Organization under the NWT Societies Act.
- The Executive and Board of Directors of the NWT MCI is the NWTMN Executive and Board of Directors

# NWT Métis Cultural Institute:

## Purpose of Organization

- To coordinate and facilitate research, planning, development, delivery and evaluation of any policy or program concerned with the Métis people of the Northwest Territories or any social or cultural initiative affecting or involving the Métis people of the Northwest Territories;
- To represent the collective views of member organizations on matters pertaining to the culture and social well being of the Métis people of the Northwest Territories;
- To develop and implement culturally based education and training programs for delivery to the Métis People of the Northwest Territories;
- To develop, facilitate and promote Métis Cultural, social and spiritual activities;
- To assume other responsibilities from time to time as determined by member organizations; and
- To record, preserve, protect and repatriate artifacts, and places that are of cultural or historical significance to the Métis people of the Northwest Territories.

# NWT Métis Nation: Traditional Knowledge Policy

Some of the guiding principles of the TK Policy include, but are not limited to the following:

- Ensures the participation of the Councils in NWTMN Traditional Knowledge research activities, including reporting the results of research activities in an appropriate manner and format back to Councils;
- Ensures that research dealing with NWTMN Traditional Knowledge, culture and heritage conducted in the NWTMN Interim Measures Agreement Area gives equal weight to NWTMN Traditional Knowledge;
- Supports the use and preservation of the Michif, Cree and Chipewyan Languages; and
- Supports the ethical use of Métis Traditional Knowledge in renewable and non renewable resource management in the NWT.

# Northwest Territories Métis Cultural Institute: NWTMN Traditional Knowledge Policy

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- The NWT MCI will be responsible for collecting, cataloguing and storing NWTMN Traditional Knowledge.

# Socio-Economic Issues: Culture

## Project impacts on Métis Culture:

### ▣ Disturbance to land base

- Land is an integral part of aboriginal culture;
  - **Historical name places change with disturbances.** In the aboriginal culture an area is named for its historical use by the aboriginal people; place-names that have been in use for centuries will lose their cultural meaning (i.e. The meaning of a name-place called “*the place where we get the plant/animal*” becomes lost when that plant/animal is no longer available in the area due to land disturbance; the name then changes to “to the place of tailings pond X-2” as an example)
  - **land use of area changes.** Hunting/trapping/harvesting areas that are used to carry out cultural activities become unusable as animals move or plants become contaminated.

**Historical Name Places and Land Use in the Project Area need to be thoroughly documented to mitigate cultural impacts (Has not been initiated with the Métis).**

### ▣ New infrastructure & economies

- Changes community cultural dynamics as core cultural values change. (i.e. hunting and trapping to mineral processing or from arts and crafts to hotshot services)
- Work outside of the communities and in an industrial setting.

**Funds for cultural practices need to be increased for accommodation, and an exit strategy must be discussed. (Has not been discussed with the Métis).**

### ▣ Providing access for non aboriginal use of cultural areas

- Roadways created for movement of rare earth metals develop areas that were once only accessible through traditional means.

**Consultation needs to happen on points of access to ensure that cultural routes and areas are not impacted if less culturally significant areas are identified. (No consultation on proposed routes of transportation have been initiated with the Métis).**

# Socio-Economic Issues: Culture

## □ **New “social norms” & the use of Non traditional laws:**

- Changes in meaning of sustainability. Changes from sustainable living to sustainable economies. (a change from “we leave for future generations” to not leaving anything for the future generations).
- Changes in conflict resolution and decision making rules.
- Kinship relationships and obligations change and are challenged.
- Familiarization with Western environmental legislation

**Funds for more cultural activities need to be made available to mitigate issues.**

## □ **Financial disparity**

- Erodes cultural beliefs in sharing. Fragments community and pressures kinship relationships and obligations.

**Funding for community based programs are needed to offset disparity.**

## □ **Racism**

- Discrimination between the Dene and the Métis is culturally detrimental as both group histories and cultures are linked to the land.
- Discrimination contributes to erosion of cultural values of sharing and community.

**Cross cultural training must be done as part of consultation, and must be done in a meaningful way that enforces and respects cultural values.**

## □ **Alcohol and drug availability**

- Disposable incomes contribute to drug and alcohol use within the community, coupled with financial disparity it may contribute to those with less income to turn to the unhealthy lifestyle of selling/dealing in drugs and alcohol to try and recover the gap.

**Consultation on job creation needs to take place to mitigate the effects of drug and alcohol availability.**

# Socio-Economic Issues: Language

## Project Impacts on Métis Language:

- Minimal language use on project site will contribute to the erosion of the already fragile language.  
**Project proponents and government need to provide support and funds for community based initiatives that promote language and culture.**
- *Loss of language contributes to a loss of identity and sense of place. This results in unhealthy communities and further erodes culture; making the impacts more severe.*



# Socio-Economic Issues: Way of Life

## Project impacts on Métis way of life:

- ▣ Traditional food uses
- ▣ Healing
- ▣ Traditional trade
- ▣ Caring for children and community
- ▣ Herbs and plants
- ▣ Traditional justice
- ▣ Respect for elders
- ▣ Hunting and gathering
- ▣ Stories
- ▣ Language use
- ▣ Respect within culture
- ▣ Governance
- ▣ Dances and legends
- ▣ Family structure
- ▣ Songs
- ▣ Arts and crafts
- ▣ Symbolism and ceremony
- ▣ Rites of passage
- ▣ Affection to children
- ▣ Leadership
- ▣ Pride in self
- ▣ Bloodlines and heritage

# Socio-Economic Issues

## **Project impacts on Métis archaeological and heritage resources:**

- Historical name places
- land use of area
- Roadways.

**Studies need to be done in the community to ensure that Métis archaeological and heritage resources are documented prior to project go ahead to mitigate severe cultural impact. Loss of opportunity to document current and past use will result in loss of cultural knowledge. (No consultation has yet been initiated with the Métis).**

# NWT MCI Concerns:

- No engagement, relationship building, or cultural orientation has taken place between the proponent and the Métis;
- There has been no collection or establishment of baseline data on the Métis cultural uses, archaeological and heritage sites within the project area;
- There has been no community visioning, or established cultural components discussed to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the project on the Métis;
- There has been no development of indicators and measurement tools on the project impacts that is normally developed as part of meaningful consultation;
- There is no Strategic Mitigation Plan that has been developed with the Métis; and
- There is no Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation plans that have been discussed with the Métis or had incorporated Métis concerns.
- Non consultation on recent agreement with the Deninu Kue First Nation's agreement with the proponent that will negatively impact the Métis through income disparity, infrastructure, and contribute to racism within the Aboriginal community.

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