

Key Dates: The Métis in Alberta

Long before Alberta was a province, Métis communities were established in many parts of Western Canada.

1928 - Métis began to organize themselves politically in Alberta.

1932 - Malcolm Norris, Jim Brady, Peter Tomkins, Joseph Dion and Felix Calliou organized L'Association des Métis d'Alberta et les Territoires du Nord-Ouest. Its purpose was to lobby for improved social and economic conditions and a land base for Alberta Métis.

1938 - Based on the 1936 recommendations of the Ewing Commission, Alberta passed the *Metis Population Betterment Act*. This Act set aside colonies for Métis people. Alberta became the first province in Canada to enact legislation specific to Métis.

1975 - The Alberta Federation of Metis Settlements Associations was formed.

1985 - "A Resolution Concerning an Amendment to the Alberta Act" (Resolution 18) is unanimously endorsed by the Alberta Legislature. The Resolution commits the Province to pursue constitutional protection of Métis land in the federal *Alberta Act* and the passage of a new *Metis Settlements Act* that would provide a modern framework for local self-government on the Settlements.

1987 - The Alberta/Métis Nation of Alberta Association Framework Agreement is signed. It is the first of a series of Framework Agreements to promote the advancement of Métis people. It provides a framework for the partners to address agreed-upon priorities related to the needs and aspirations of Métis people, while preserving their identity and culture heritage.

1989 - The historic Alberta-Metis Settlements Accord, which forms the basis of today's legislative framework for the Settlements, was signed. The goals of the Accord were a secure Métis land base, local autonomy and economic self-sufficiency.

1990 - Alberta passed four laws related to the Metis Settlements. These laws:

- Provide a governance framework for the eight Metis Settlements
- Protect Metis Settlement lands under Alberta's provincial constitution
- Provided a 17-year statutory funding commitment
- Provide for co-management of sub-surface resources on Settlements.

Land totalling 1.25 million acres was also transferred to the Metis Settlements General Council through letters patent. This is the only recognized Métis land base in Canada protected by legislation.

The passing of these four statutes and the transfer of the land had the effect of staying litigation launched by the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlements against the province.

- 1998** - The *Metis Settlements Statutes Amendment Act* was given royal assent. This Act streamlined administrative processes, increased the effectiveness of government funding arrangements, and recognized the Settlements as local governments for the purposes of a number of provincial Statutes.
- 2003** - The Powley decision was rendered by the Supreme Court of Canada. Two Métis men, Steve and Roddy Powley killed a moose in 1993 and were charged with contravening Ontario hunting law. The men argued that section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* protects the right of Métis to hunt for food. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, which ruled in favour of the Powleys. In a unanimous judgment, the Supreme Court ruled that Métis who meet certain criteria have constitutionally protected Aboriginal rights (such as the right to hunt for food). This decision is the landmark Métis rights decision in Canadian law.
- 2004** - The *Metis Settlements Act* is amended. The amendment made changes to: decision-making at the Metis Settlements General Council; elections; jurisdictional matters; and regulation-making authority. It also established the authority for the creation of the Metis Settlements Ombudsman.
- 2007** - The Government of Alberta and the Metis Settlements General Council sign a one-year funding agreement for \$9 million for 2007-08.
- 2008** - Government of Alberta and the Metis Settlements General Council sign a Three-Year Conditional Grant Funding Agreement, for up to \$18 million in conditional grants to support work focused on effective governance, enhanced accountability and sustainability.
- 2008** - The Government of Alberta and the Métis Nation of Alberta Association (MNAA) sign a new seven-year Framework Agreement, which commits the parties to working together to increase economic opportunities and enhance the well-being of Alberta's Métis people.
- Today** - As of 2009, approximately 8,000 people live on Metis Settlements in Alberta. Read more about [Alberta's Metis Settlements legislation](#).