

MCT CONSTITUTION REFORM CONVENTION

August 20, 2021 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

HOSTED BY FOND DU LAC BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA

Zoom ID is 4508751336 and passcode is 8794593

NOTE: Grand Portage is hosting the October meeting **October 8th** (the second Friday instead of the third Friday). There was a problem getting a facility for the third week.

August 20th Attendees: 32 : Cheryl Edwards FDL (host), John Roderman FDL (co-host), Sandra Borden GP, Wayne Dupuis FDL, Patty Straub WE , Sybil Gund, Nicole Martin Rogers WE (Wilder Institute, 2012, 2014 reports), Michele Palomaki, Birdie Roberts MLB, Mike Davis ML, Perry Skinaway MLB, Michele Beeksma GP, Archie, Muriel Deegan BF, Connie Saaristo, Danielle Smith MLB, Al Olson ML, Raymond Bellcourt, Philip Brodeen, Rose Robinson LL, Payne Martinson, Wally LL, Jolyn WE, Michele P MLB, Celeste, Char Ellis WE, Maureen Jones, Tracey Dagen BF, Payne Martinson LL, Marcie McIntire GP, Ellen Olson GP

9:00 am CDT Welcome by Cheryl Edwards

9:10 am Invocation by Ricky Defore; Wayne gave tobacco.

Roll Call: White Earth, Grand Portage, Mille Lacs, Boise Fort, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake

9: 18 am Ground Rules- the Process is to prioritize issues and select the top issue, discussion, possible solutions, present to communities, take a vote, go back & prioritize/select the next issue.

9:30 am Education committee presentation by Nicole Martin Roberts, White Earth, Wilder Foundation (actuary study). Wayne introduced Nicole Martin Rogers MPP PhD of the Wilder Institute. She was the principal of the report and is from White Earth.

Nicole did a screen share of her presentation. She is a senior researcher raised in the Twin Cities and is on lots of boards. She has been with Wilder Research for 20 years. In 2012, Wilder Research was contracted by the MCT to conduct a study about the tribe's population through 2098 as part of the Constitution Reform. The report was updated in 2014.

The study obtained and reviewed the 1941 MCT Base Roll and did a survey of tribal members (N=785) to learn more about non-MCT blood among tribe. It used the cohort method and was based on blood quantum. It assumed in 2002-2010 males lived until 60, women until 65 years. It used a fertility rate for American Indian women of 2.54 and it used United Nation and US Census data. Note: Not all children born to enrolled women are eligible for membership. For the 2014 study 2013 data for bands was used.

There were 5 scenarios and projected population

1. ¼ quantum, all MCT blood: 41,110 (in 2013) down to 8,993 (in 2098)
2. Allow Chippewa & Canadian First Nation: 41,110 (in 2013) down to 10,625 – 19,934 (in 2098)
3. Any federal or Canadian recognized tribes: 41,110 (2013) down to 12,141 – 20,063 (in 2098)

4. 1/8 blood: 41,110 raises to 42,663 – 53,781 (in 2098), but will eventually decrease
5. Descendants: 16,895 (1941) to 122,449 – 205,356 (2100) similar to the Cherokee Nation; only scenario where population grows.

MCT's population will decline if you keep $\frac{1}{4}$ blood quantum requirement. Population will stabilize over the rest of this century if MCT changes to $\frac{1}{8}$. Population will grow if MCT changes to lineal descent.

Issue- How to keep our culture?

Wilder Report Limitations: It used 2013 MCT population; MCT is a small population (could have flukes)
Recommendations: use data to make decisions about constitutional reform. Consider re-doing the study because of COVID, etc. Learn from other tribes.

Note : A = Nicole

John R: Question (Q). the census shows that our numbers have increased. Note that many natives have not cooperated with the census in the past. Answer (A). The census is problematic, but it is the only and best source of information on mortality. We did use data from the Census for mortality and births.

Sally Fineday: Q When we change our constitution to eliminate blood quantum, it set a precedence to bring back pride in our heritage. A. Full study is on the MCT site.

Birdie A. Email address? A. nicole.martinrogers@wilder.org

Wayne: Q. rolls. At White Earth people are not taken off the rolls until there is a certification. The population is older, out of child bearing age which impacts on growth. A. It is a challenge to keep up with statistics. Q. There have been 15 deaths in Sawyer for overdoses. A. Current changes will impact projections.

Raymond Bellcourt Q. On White Earth people did not cooperate with the Census. What % of members married non-natives? A. We need a statistical survey to ask the question of what other tribal blood do they have. About 60% marry non-native (for all American natives).

Archie: Q, There is a psychological impact to children raised on the reservation who are told that they can not become members. I can not tell my children that they are not Indians. You have to marry who you love. It is a boon to use descendants and he offered multiple reasons. Can you send me the study?
A. yes

Wayne: What other things should we look at related to population? A. Recommendations: look at Minnesota data, and redo projections using new data by cleaning up enrollment data. Consider how to share this information with tribal members before you ask them to vote. I am willing to help you get good information out.

Wayne: The Tribe does not have a demographer. We need to look at many things such as income level. We should know the well being of the tribe; need to update study; need to have a demographer. A.

Having a research partner or your own demographer is a good idea. Other concerns and important requirements are the communication, education, and interaction.

John R. FDL- My personal story, grandmother and mother are full blood. I am ½ and my children are ¼. We should be like other nationality; their children are their nationality. I am worried about our future: climate problems, etc. Scorched earth. Gentle wake our elders. We could light the eighth fire by accepting our children (reference to the Seventh Fire Journey).

Sally Fineday- Since we are writing the grant should we include funds for updating the Wilder Report. Wayne- we will address by polling the delegations. Cheryl- We need a cost estimate from each committee.

Rose Robinson: I like having a demographer at the MCT. We should make a recommendation to MCT to have a department to handle demographics (Nicole: in the enrollment office, University of MN has resources).

Wayne thanked Nicole.

Sandra Borden asked Nicole if she had survey tools. Perhaps we need to tailor our survey for different levels of understanding of our members. Nicole: Yes, we have Survey Monkey and other tools and are willing to help.

There was a discussion on QR Codes which are easy to use, after you have your document.

Patty Straub: We need to get this information to the members.

10: 30 am Strategic Planning- Report on feedback from Bands on the TEC Resolution ; i.e., Should Article II of the Revised Constitution and Bylaws of the MCT be amended....

FDL Report by Cheryl Edwards, They received feedback via Facebook. Education has to happen. It is hard to read. It is not as political as people think. History needs to be taught. The Treaty and Act were not taught. It is over people's head; therefore, Cheryl broke it down and got more responses. Do you agree that BQ should be removed: Do you think enrollment should be handled locally or at tribe level? Should the thoughts be linked; BQ and who controls enrollment. See Cheryl Edwards for all comments.

Grand Portage (Michele): Off rez people did not understand the language and questions on the secretarial portion about meeting percentage voting requirements. Will there be too much control by certain groups, what safe guards would there be?

Cheryl: Resolution vs. Ordinance, we need to not allow unlawful or arbitrary changes.

Raymond Bellcourt: Why is the MCT bringing the resolution forward. Cheryl: the MCT is following our recommendation. Michele: personal observation, the MCT is getting pressure to move things along.

Raymond: recommends everyone should read the White Earth effort to rewrite the constitution. It restores all the power back to the people. Sally Fineday: We are charged to bring the resolution back to our communities. Philip Brodeen: I am the MCT legal counsel and I was asked to write this resolution in June. It was hard to write, and I, now like the Fond du Lac bifocaled question (BQ and who controls enrollment). The resolution needs to be understandable. A significant amount of education is needed. The referendum is just to see if people want to go through a secretarial election. The simpler the resolution the better. John R.: We need to be sharing. Philip: There are resources out there to help you; e.g., Wilder Research. I regretted writing the resolution afterwards. Sally: Is 30% required? Philip Brodeen: yes. Michele B- At the June meeting the TEC said that it is 30% for all eligible voters not just those who voted.

Leech Lake: Sally Fineday- has not put this info out to community. COVID is having an impact. Rose- we have had similar comments as Fond du Lac. There is still a lack of understanding of the constitution.

Mille Lacs: Birdie- we did not hold any meetings. We are working on an education piece. We have been doing research to write a report.

John R.: Colonization has changed our perspective. We need to go back 500 years to get a traditional view. Need to follow the Grandfather Teachings.

White Earth; Patty Straub- We had a meeting last night and had discussion on the use of words such as band and reservation. We will be doing a survey. Char is our chairperson. What is the 30% requirement? All eligible voters.

Wayne: there are time frames that are critical to placing this on the ballot as well, we should discuss this for strategy.

Char: Volunteered to scan Minnesota request for enrollment data and send it to each reservation.

Sally: October is a deadline related to feedback on the Resolution; therefore, we need to review the resolution with our community and report at each meeting. It is a priority homework assignment to enable to get the wording of the resolution.

Bois Fort: Muriel Deegan, speaking for herself- we are having a hard time getting together. We need a big meeting, but nobody seems to be interested. We are geographically divided.

Cheryl: Themes- we need to work on education and on the questions. John R.- people need to get the information in increments (piece by piece) so that people can understand.

Cheryl: A goal is to get something on the ballot. There may not be time to get the Constitution on the ballot; at least the whole constitution.

Philip: Do the enrollment issue and get clear language.

Sandra Borden : Reminder that are two issues (removing the Secretary of Interior from the Constitution and enrollment) and they impact each other.

John R FDL: Removing the Secretary of Interior from the Constitution will support our sovereignty.

Char: White Earth is putting this on the radio and in our newsletter.

Noon Lunch

1:00 pm Reconvened by Cheryl Edwards. She will email the White Earth document (draft Constitution) which has a government structure graph.

Committee Reports

- TEC Committee: Cheryl: need feedback to the resolution before October. **Next TEC is October 28 and 29 at White Earth.**
- Finance Committee- Cheryl: All committees should submit a budget.
- Education Committee- Birdie: we have not met. Rights of Nature is the next topic. John R. FDL volunteered to be on the committee. jwr_777@yahoo.com Education Committee wanted to give to the Drafting committee the assignment of doing a newsletter for the community. The Education committee would write the Education articles. Other committees would write articles about their work.
- Survey Committee - Rose and Sandra. Comment on the survey should be sent to Wayne waynedupuis1@msn.com .
- Drafting Committee- Cheryl and Birdie suggests items from the minutes and committees be used to write your Band newsletters.

Cheryl: Each hosting Band is responsible for minutes and should send minutes to Jane who works with Gary Frazier so that she can post the minutes.

1:30 pm Structure of Government (<https://nativegov.org/rebuilders>)

The document that Wayne recommended was not available at the above website. Cheryl shared a video on Tribal Government (Modern Tribal Governments, Constitutions, and Sovereignty: Richard Luarkie on YouTube (Sep 16,2016) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDneoOGRlJs> .

Another August 16, 2021 video that mentions our work: Indiancountrytoday.com with President Cathy Chavers, President MCT, Boise Forte member was shown. MCT has 40,000 members. The Wilder Study shows that if we do nothing we will disappear. First question to the community, do we want our own bands to determine their own enrollment.

Book recommendation: Doodem and Council Fire by Heidi Bohaker.

1:55 pm Break

2:05 pm Post-It exercise of John R. presentation. Requested comments in Chat.

Started with the Doodem, Totem, Clan system. Also we can have a district division structure to cover the entire United States. One approach of branches of government: Executive Branch (Ogimaa Chief),

Legislative (RBC, TEC), and Judiciary Branch (Tribal Council ,Tribal Court). Also, there could be an oversight Grand Tribal Council (the Community) which overlooks other councils.

Issue: Are we a patriarchal or matriarchal society?

John would like to recognize as many members as possible and grow larger.

Also, structure will be on next month's agenda.

2:45 pm Next Convention date is Friday September 17th, host Boise Forte and Boise Forte will do meeting minutes. **Assignment** to everyone is to work on what governance structure you want.

Recommendation: TEC committee take for action to suggest to the TEC to get a demographer or research contract to provide a method of getting and distributing demographic information to the community.

3:00 pm Adjourn