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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Village of Île-à-la-Crosse unveils plans for Park and Veterans' Memorial at South Bay

June 12, 2024 – Île-à-la-Crosse, SK - Île-à-la-Crosse is the second oldest community in Saskatchewan, behind only Cumberland House in its settlement. A traditional gathering place by the lake, Métis culture has been celebrated at South Bay for more than a century. Designated a Provincial Park in 1953, Saskatchewan turned over the operations to the Village of Île-à-la-Crosse (ILEX) in 2003. Following an extensive planning period, the area will soon be known as The South Bay War Veterans' Park where local war veterans are honoured for their service, having fought on our behalf to protect these sacred, shared lands.

The detailed area plan includes the development of a War Veterans' Memorial that will have the names of 35 Métis Veterans inscribed on it. More names will be added as their involvement in the wars become known.

“Any time Veterans receive acknowledgement it makes me feel proud to be Canadian,” said MN–S citizen John Belanger, an Air Force and Army Veteran from ILEX who spent almost 27 years in uniform and did tours of Kosovo and Bosnia. “A lot of people from our area continue to serve, so we will add more names and I hope this opens the door to include First Nations Veterans from the northwest, past, present and future,” he added.

The Park development and Memorial is possible with the assistance of the Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) government which secured funding through the National Veterans Fund. The \$200,000 cheque presented to the planning committee today will help with future park plans.

“Our MN–S government is here to help our Métis citizens in every way, from Métis cultural and Michif language education opportunities for young learners to developing a tribute to our Veterans. Honouring our past while creating a space that will produce new memories is what the South Bay War Veterans' Park Legacy project is about,” said MN –S President Glen McCallum. “This is our opportunity to pay respect to our Veterans and thank them for their service. This is their moment.”

MN–S Minister of Veterans Mervin ‘Tex’ Bouvier said, “The recreational site has been a vision of the Village since 2018. The South Bay War Veterans' Park plan is based on the local wisdom and experience together with technical input and feedback from key stakeholders. The planning process engaged Elders,





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community members, students, and visitors of in a variety of ways, providing guidance.”

The Northern Village of Île-à-la-Crosse and area envision South Bay War Veterans’ Park becoming recognized as a signature destination in Saskatchewan and beyond. With strong traditional and cultural connections to the land, plans will be driven by sustainable practices with respect to park operations and future development.

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About Métis Nation–Saskatchewan:

Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) is built on a foundation of Métis identity, culture, values, and language. Empowered by the Métis within Saskatchewan, MN–S works to advance Métis rights and strengthen capacity. MN–S represents the political, socioeconomic, cultural, and educational interests of the Métis in the province through an elected representative system at local, regional, and provincial levels. Social media Links: [@MNSask](#), [@metisnationsask](#)

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