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Our Moment to shine at Batoche

July 19, 2024 – The Heartland of the Métis and Treaty 6 Territory, Batoche, SK – Over the course of a weekend in July every year, Batoche is transformed into the third largest city in Saskatchewan. Back to Batoche Days is *the* largest Indigenous gathering in Canada and second largest in North America. This is Métis Nation–Saskatchewan’s (MN–S) moment to dance, sing, share Métis culture, and impart it to the world!

The 2024 Festival officially kicked off with the Grand Entry featuring Elders, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan Russ Mirasty, First Nations Chiefs and Vice Chiefs, Parks Canada Executive Director Jonah Mitchell, and welcoming remarks from Métis Nation–Saskatchewan President Glen McCallum who said, “This is our moment to give back to our citizens and share our Métis identity, culture, values, and language with others. As a government and people, Métis have come a long way. In the last seven years alone, we have built ourselves up to be a reputable voice and partner in this province, revitalized our Michif language, reintroduced bison to our lands at Batoche, and embarked on our own, made-in-Saskatchewan Treaty - Kishchi Mashinaayikun Ooshchi Michif - the Sacred Document from the Michif. We’re bringing nations together and working as one, the way our ancestors did.”

During the opening ceremony, Parks Canada and MN–S renewed their commitment to work towards co-management of Batoche National Historic Site, through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. The co-management agreement will lay out how Parks Canada and the MN–S will work together to enhance the visitor experience; preserve and showcase Métis history, culture, language and heritage; raise public awareness and appreciation; and improve cultural resource and ecological conservation.

MN–S Vice President and Minister of Lands and Environment Michelle LeClair said, “Our MN–S government has made a concerted effort to focus on the preservation and restoration of our lands, our culture, tradition, and Michif language throughout the province, in particular at Batoche. All of our programs and services speak to the sense of pride we have as Métis people and our willingness to foster good relationships with our partners, reengage our youth, make important connections between children and Elders, and reinvigorate our natural surroundings.”





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“Batoche National Historic Site holds great cultural and historic significance for the Métis, and we are honoured to have it be part of the Back to Batoche festival each year,” said The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada. “What better time than during the festival to sign this Memorandum of Understanding, strengthening and renewing the relationship between Parks Canada and Métis Nation—Saskatchewan, and for the Government of Canada to reconfirm its commitment to reconciliation through the strengthening of the existing Batoche National Historic Site collaborative management agreement.”

2024 marks the year both the bison and Dumont Lodge are at Batoche for the public to see and, for the first time in Batoche history, the Canadian Professional Chuckwagon Association (CPCA) joins with the North West Saskatchewan Pony Chuckwagon and Chariot Association (NWSPCCA) and Indian Relay racers as part of the traditional horse and wagon races. Veterinarian services will be on hand to ensure the humane treatment of the animals at all times.

This year’s festival also features the Our Moment tent, where MN–S leadership and members of the MN–S negotiating team will be sharing information about the MN–S self-government treaty currently being negotiated with Canada, and discussing with citizens how the Sacred Document will impact them and their communities.

Since the last Back to Batoche Days, MN–S has made significant investments in infrastructure upgrades at the festival site. Among the improvements are new bathrooms and showers, more electrified camping, an overhaul at the racetrack, and walkway repairs.

MN–S Infrastructure and Housing Minister Loretta King said, “Our government listened to the feedback we received during last year’s festival, the largest to date, and we responded accordingly. We are also proud to say that through the regular tendering processes, Métis contractors and tradespeople were employed to do all the work.”

The Back to Batoche Days festival has grown considerably since the pandemic, breaking attendance records year after year. 2024 promises to be no exception. Over the course of the four days, an estimated 50,000 people will MN–S in our moment to celebration and reconcile.





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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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Quick Facts:

- Located on the South Saskatchewan River an hour north of Saskatoon, Batoche National Historic Site commemorates the historic Métis community of Batoche, Métis river lot land use patterns, and the 1885 conflict between the Métis Provisional Government and the Government of Canada.
- In 1996, the Back to Batoche festival grounds adjacent to Batoche National Historic Site, were transferred to Métis ownership and are now owned and managed by Métis Nation–Saskatchewan.
- In 1998, Parks Canada and Métis Nation–Saskatchewan signed the *Batoche National Historic Site Management Agreement*, which provided for the creation of a Shared Management Board for the Site.
- In December 2020, Parks Canada and Métis Nation–Saskatchewan agreed to explore and discuss a full range of options related to the future management of Batoche National Historic Site under the *Framework Agreement for Advancing Reconciliation*. The two parties signed the *Framework Agreement* on July 20, 2018, through the Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination process.
- In July 2022, Parks Canada transferred approximately 690 hectares of land situated on the west side of the Batoche National Historic Site to the citizens of the Métis Nation–Saskatchewan.
- In December 2023, bison were transported from Grasslands National Park to establish a new herd on the MN–S Batoche lands near Batoche National Historic Site, north of Saskatoon. Eventually, the herd will be relocated to a portion of the 690 hectares of land on Batoche grounds that were transferred from Parks Canada to MN–S in July 2022.

