

MONTH IN REVIEW



TREATY 8
FIRST NATIONS
OF ALBERTA

JULY 21, 2026

TREATY 8 CHIEFS SUMMIT



The Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta Chiefs Summit was held June 23–25, 2026, in Edmonton on Treaty 6 Territory, bringing together Treaty 8 leadership to discuss key priorities and set the direction for several significant initiatives.

Throughout the three-day gathering, Chiefs participated in presentations, strategic discussions, and governance decisions focused on advancing Treaty implementation and strengthening services for Treaty 8 Nations.

A significant outcome of the Summit was the approval of a mandate authorizing the Grand Chief to engage with the Government of Canada on the establishment of bilateral implementation tables.

Chiefs identified economic development, environment, and social programs as the initial priority areas for this government-to-government process, reinforcing Treaty 8's commitment to advancing the implementation of Treaty No. 8.

A highlight of the Summit was a presentation by former Assembly of First Nations National Chief Ovide Mercredi, who spoke to Chiefs about the importance of Treaty implementation, Indigenous governance, and strengthening First Nations-led institutions.

His insights helped frame discussions on the future direction of Treaty 8 and reinforced the importance of advancing the True Spirit and Intent of Treaty No. 8.

IN THIS MONTH'S UPDATE:

IELCC
Graduation

Council of
Chiefs Recap

Anti-Racism
Health
Initiative

WedgeWood
Open House

Last Chance
for Jordan's
Principle
Survey

IELCC GRADUATION CAPS OFF IMPORTANT YEAR



Treaty 8 IELCC Strategic Planning Meeting

A Strategic Planning meeting was held on March 5 - 6, 2026, in Edmonton on Treaty 6 Territory. The main purpose of this meeting was to share information and gather input on what a Treaty 8 IELCC governance structure might look like.

Technicians from IELCC, Health and ISETS were in attendance. Representatives from the IELCC Secretariat – ESDC, FPT Partnerships with West-North ELCC Secretariat -ESDC, Indigenous Services Canada, and the Government of Alberta provided an overview and information on IELCC and funding.

Day 1 also included a presentation from a representative of Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, who provided an overview and insight into Treaty-based funding. A provincial legislative update was presented by a representative from Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta Health Authority, who discussed the impacts of Alberta's Bill 11 "Health Statutes Amendment Act" and Bill 13 "The Regulated Professions Neutrality Act".

Day 2 began with facilitator Tanya Kappo providing an overview of IELCC's development nationally, within Alberta, and across Treaty 8. Attendees were then divided into three groups, where they engaged in discussions around Treaty, Treaty-based funding, and what IELCC could look like for Treaty 8.

Recommendations following the meeting included:

- Establish a Treaty 8 IELCC working group with representatives from each Nation, including representatives from Health, ISETS and IELCC, as well as Elders appointed by Nation leadership.
- Develop a Treaty 8 IELCC licensing and best practices framework.
- Establish an administration team at the Treaty 8 level.

- Information sharing – IELCC information packages for new leadership, briefing notes, quarterly newsletters.

Treaty 8 - NorQuest College Partnership

In 2023, Treaty 8 partnered with NorQuest College to develop and implement an Early Learning and Child Care certificate program for staff who were currently working in the Treaty 8 Nation Head Start and daycare programs.

This program is one of a kind, taking into consideration how unique each Nation's language and culture is, how remote the Nations are and that students would also be working full-time.

This partnership with Treaty 8 and NorQuest College has continued for a third year. The 2025-2026 year has included the addition of a 2-year diploma program and a 1-year certificate program.

It is expected that approximately 40 students will graduate. With this year's graduating class, the Treaty 8-NorQuest College ELCC program will have close to 100 graduates who continue to teach, support and nurture our youngest members.

The graduation celebration is a highlight of the year for all Treaty 8 Nations and is attended by leadership, families, friends, and partners.

Held in Edmonton on Treaty 6 Territory, it is a time to celebrate the success of the Early Learning and Child Care Educators and the important role they have in the community. The following day, students join the larger student body of NorQuest College for Convocation.

The Treaty 8 Grand Chief and Deputy Grand Chief joined the college dignitaries for this memorable occasion and to greet the Treaty 8 students as they crossed the stage to accept their certificates.

The instructor who has been with the Treaty 8 program since its inception was nominated and ultimately received the Jaye Fredrickson Award for Teaching Excellence—the highest teaching honour at NorQuest College. This recognition reflects the exceptional quality of instruction our Treaty 8 ELCC students have received; they have truly been taught by the very best. Treaty 8 IELCC is leading the way with this innovative and very successful program.

Quality Improvement Program

Treaty 8 IELCC submitted a proposal to the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (IELCC) Quality Improvement Projects (QIP) to fund the continuation of the Treaty 8 NorQuest College Early Learning and Child Care Certificate and Diploma programs. The IELCC Quality Improvement Projects stream supports projects that will improve the quality, accessibility, and cultural relevance of early learning and child care services for Indigenous children by using Indigenous knowledge, improving educator training, and creating tools that reflect Indigenous cultures and languages.

External Organizations to Support Treaty 8 IELCC

Treaty 8 had developed a successful partnership with “Supports for Early Learning and Child Care”, which provided significant support to Treaty 8 Nations in northeastern Alberta. Over the past year, the Province of Alberta cut funding to this organization, leaving Treaty 8 programs with little support.

Considerable time was spent researching alternatives and then establishing a working relationship with “Kids Included”. “Kids Included” offers the Access, Support and Participation Program (ASaP), which provides a professional learning series and on-site coaching for educators and program leadership to adopt the Pyramid Model Framework and learn new professional practices. Teams focus on social-emotional learning, an embedded curriculum framework, cultural recognition and trauma-informed care.



The Treaty 8 IELCC Coordinator meets regularly with the team responsible for administering this program to ensure effective service delivery to the Nations. Great care has been taken to build a relationship grounded in cultural sensitivity and a deep understanding of the Nations within Treaty 8.

Federal IELCC Secretariat

The Treaty 8 IELCC Coordinator meets regularly with the Federal IELCC Secretariat to stay informed on funding developments and updates. This ongoing engagement ensures that accurate and timely information is communicated and shared with Treaty 8 technicians, supporting effective planning and coordination across the region.

Level 1 Proposal

A Treaty 8 Introduction to Early Learning and Child Care (Level 1) course has been co-developed by the IELCC Coordinator and the NorQuest College instructor. This course will offer Treaty 8 members the opportunity to obtain the certification to begin working in child care centres. Treaty 8 IELCC has been working with the Province of Alberta to have this course recognized as equivalent to the Province's online option.

The National Expert Working Group on First Nations ELCC (NEWG)

The Treaty 8 IELCC Coordinator actively participates in all NEWG meetings to ensure Treaty 8's concerns, successes, and contributions are effectively represented and recorded.

The virtual and in-person meetings offer the opportunity to network with other First Nations ELCC technicians from across Canada.

Current work being done by the NEWG includes navigating the Canada-wide ELCC and Provincial Standards, First Nations Results Framework and Evaluation Strategy, and future capital investments.

JUNE COUNCIL OF CHIEFS RECAP

The Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta Council of Chiefs met on June 11, 2026, in Edmonton on Treaty 6 Territory to discuss organizational priorities, governance matters, and program initiatives. Agenda items included housing developments, emergency management, Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care, the Reaching Home Program, financial updates, and preparations for several upcoming regional and national meetings.

Chiefs received updates on the Wedgewood housing initiative, the Grande Prairie housing project, and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Wedgewood Ravine Homeowners Association. Discussions also focused on the continued development of the Reaching Home Program and ongoing organizational and financial priorities.

The Council approved revisions to Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta's travel rates and per diem allowances. The updated policy aligns meal and incidental allowances with the Government of Canada Travel Directive while maintaining Treaty 8-specific rates for private accommodation and kilometre reimbursement.

The changes are intended to provide fair, transparent, and consistent reimbursement that better reflects current travel costs while reducing the need for future policy revisions.

Chiefs also approved a one-year Interim Master Service Agreement with Fire & Flood Emergency Services Ltd. The agreement will strengthen emergency management capacity by providing Treaty 8 Nations with access to emergency response services, planning support, training, and specialized resources during the 2026 fire season and future emergency events. The agreement also supports continued exploration of a future Treaty 8-led emergency response model while making it clear that any long-term governance or ownership structure will require separate approval from Chiefs.

Additional discussions included Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care funding and governance, departmental updates, strategic planning, and preparations for upcoming events, including the Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta Annual General Meeting and the Treaties 1-11 Gathering.

LAST CHANCE TO WIN PRIZES THROUGH THE JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE CAREGIVERS SURVEY!

Time is running out to participate in the Health Co-Management (HCoM) Jordan's Principle Caregivers Survey.

Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta encourages all eligible caregivers to complete the survey and share their experiences accessing Jordan's Principle supports.

Feedback gathered through the survey will help inform recommendations to improve service delivery for First Nations children and families. The survey closes on July 30, 2026.



[CLICK HERE OR SCAN THE QR CODE TO TAKE THE SURVEY!](#)

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TREATY 8
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WEDGEWOOD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION

On Wednesday, June 10, Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta staff joined public engagement consultants from Y Station and pipikwan pēhtākwān, along with members of the City of Edmonton's Housing Action Team, for a community engagement session at the Westridge Wolf Willow Country Club Community League.

Attendees had the opportunity to move through a series of interactive stations where they could learn more about Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, the Memorandum of Understanding, and the proposed townhouse development, while providing direct input on the project.

An engagement report will be shared with the community in the coming weeks, with feedback gathered during the session helping to inform the development.



Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta will also continue ongoing dialogue with the community through the Wedgewood Ravine Home Owners Association.

TREATY 8 FIRST NATIONS - WEDGEWOOD RAVINE HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION MOU

ASSEMBLY OF TREATY CHIEFS



SAMSON CREE NATION CHIEF IZAAH SWAMPY-OMEASOO AND TREATY 8 FIRST NATIONS OF ALBERTA GRAND CHIEF TREVOR MERCREDI AT THE ASSEMBLY OF TREATY CHIEFS IN CALGARY ON TREATY 7 TERRITORY.

Chiefs from Treaty No. 6, Treaty No. 7, Treaty No. 8, and the Blackfoot Confederacy convened June 15-17 at the Deerfoot Inn and Casino in Calgary on Treaty 7 Territory for the scheduled Assembly of Treaty Chiefs. Over the three days, Chiefs heard resolutions and motions on topics that included:

- Long-term reform of First Nations child and family services;
- Coordinated advocacy in response to provincial separation efforts;
- Treaty rights, Crown obligations and provincial interference in the Treaty relationship;
- Indigenous sport, recreation, physical activity and wellness;
- Federal funding transfers to Alberta ministries and potential direct funding to Treaty Nations;
- Access to current information on Treaty children in provincial care.

MEET OUR TEAM

GWEN MUSKWA, DIRECTOR OF TREATY RELATIONS



For nearly 29 years, Gwen Muskwa has dedicated her life and career to Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, serving the organization in several roles, including Executive Assistant, Finance team member, Negotiations Coordinator and, currently, Director of Treaty Relations.

A proud member of Bigstone Cree Nation and mother of two, Gwen is a committed Treaty Defender who works persistently to uphold the True Spirit and Intent of Treaty No. 8.

In everything she does, Gwen strives to keep her work rooted in the teachings of Elders, both past and present, whom she credits with inspiring her enduring passion for defending Treaty.

"I have been blessed to learn directly from our Elders and to work diligently to honour their legacy," Gwen explains. "It is our Elders, our youth and the well-being of all members of Treaty No. 8 that give me the motivation and dedication to continue this work."

Before joining Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, Gwen worked in several administrative and financial roles, giving her a diverse skill set that blends operational experience with the unique work she carries out defending and advocating for Treaty as Director of Treaty Relations.

As Gwen approaches her 29th anniversary with the organization this July, she is reflecting on the important work she has accomplished with Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta over the years while recognizing that there are still many goals she hopes to achieve alongside the member Nations.

With the unprecedented challenges and threats facing Treaty in the current political environment, Gwen remains dedicated to the crucial work ahead.

"Mahatma Gandhi once said, 'Be the change you want to see in this world,' and I strive to live by that every single day," says Gwen. "First Nations have always fought to protect our rights, lands, and ways of life. Words cannot describe how proud I am to continue that work and help carry it forward for future generations."

When she isn't working tirelessly to defend Treaty, Gwen enjoys camping and fishing with family and time with her two children and passing traditional First Nations values, culture, and beliefs onto them.

AS LONG AS THE SUN SHINES, THE GRASS GROWS, THE RIVERS FLOW,
AND UNTIL SUCH TIME AS YÍHDÁ SHOULD REVERSE.



TREATY 8
FIRST NATIONS
OF ALBERTA

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