

WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE

WHAT IS A TREATY?

A treaty is a binding agreement between sovereign states that outlines each party's rights, benefits and obligations.

Across Canada, there are 11 numbered treaties between the Crown and First Nations, with Treaties 6, 7 and 8 encompassing most of Alberta.

The two signatory groups had differing reasons for entering into these agreements. The British Crown, and later the Canadian government, wanted land for agriculture, settlement and resource development, so Crown representatives signed treaties in order to transfer land title from the indigenous people to the British Crown, provisions for which had been set out in the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

For indigenous people, treaties were built on an assumption of respectful, co-operative and bilateral relationship, and their provisions were expected to last "as long as the sun shines, the grass grows." The First Nations in the territory now known as Alberta were concerned about the spread of disease, such as smallpox, and the dramatic disappearance of the bison, a main food source. They believed that signing the treaties would ensure the survival of their people.

All treaties included the surrendering of large parcels of land to the Crown, with small parcels set aside for reserve. In many cases, the treaties were very disadvantageous to First Nations people, who often didn't understand the implications of what they were signing. Much reserve land was lost to dishonest deals with government agents. Band councils that were struggling economically were often tricked into selling off some of their land or signed deals that resulted in the loss of mineral and natural resources on their land.

With the signing of treaties, many aspects of First Nations life, such as the nomadic following of buffalo herds, were changed forever. First Nations lost the power to determine their own future and to have an equal role in building the province.

Today, First Nations people view the treaties as a sacred covenant that applies to all the land in the treaty area, not just reserve land. "We are all treaty people" means we all have rights and obligations with respect to the treaty areas.

TREATY 6 — 1876

Treaty 6 was signed at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt in Saskatchewan by representatives of the Crown and leaders of the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Dene, Assiniboine and Ojibwa people. The treaty boundaries extend across central portions of present-day Alberta and Saskatchewan.

TREATY 7 — 1877

Treaty 7 was an agreement between Queen Victoria and several — mainly Blackfoot — First Nations in southern Alberta. The treaty was signed at Blackfoot Crossing on the Siksika Nation.

TREATY 8 — 1899

Treaty 8 was signed between Queen Victoria and various First Nations, including the Woodland Cree, Dunne-za (or Beaver) and Denesuline (Chipewyan) in northern Alberta and those in northeastern British Columbia, northwestern Saskatchewan and southern Northwest Territories.

Many First Nations were missed during the count for Treaty 8, which led to several land claims. Approximately 13 land claims have been settled and two are still ongoing — the Lubicon Lake Nation and Bigstone Cree Nation.

MÉTIS

The advent of the fur trade in west central North America during the 18th century was accompanied by a growing number of offspring of First Nations women and European fur traders. As members of this population established distinct communities separate from those of First Nations and Europeans and married among themselves, a new aboriginal people emerged — the Métis people — with their own unique culture, traditions, language (Michif), way of life, collective consciousness and nationhood.

— Source: Métis Nation of Canada

The Canadian Constitution Act 1982 recognizes the Métis as one of three distinct aboriginal groups in Canada.



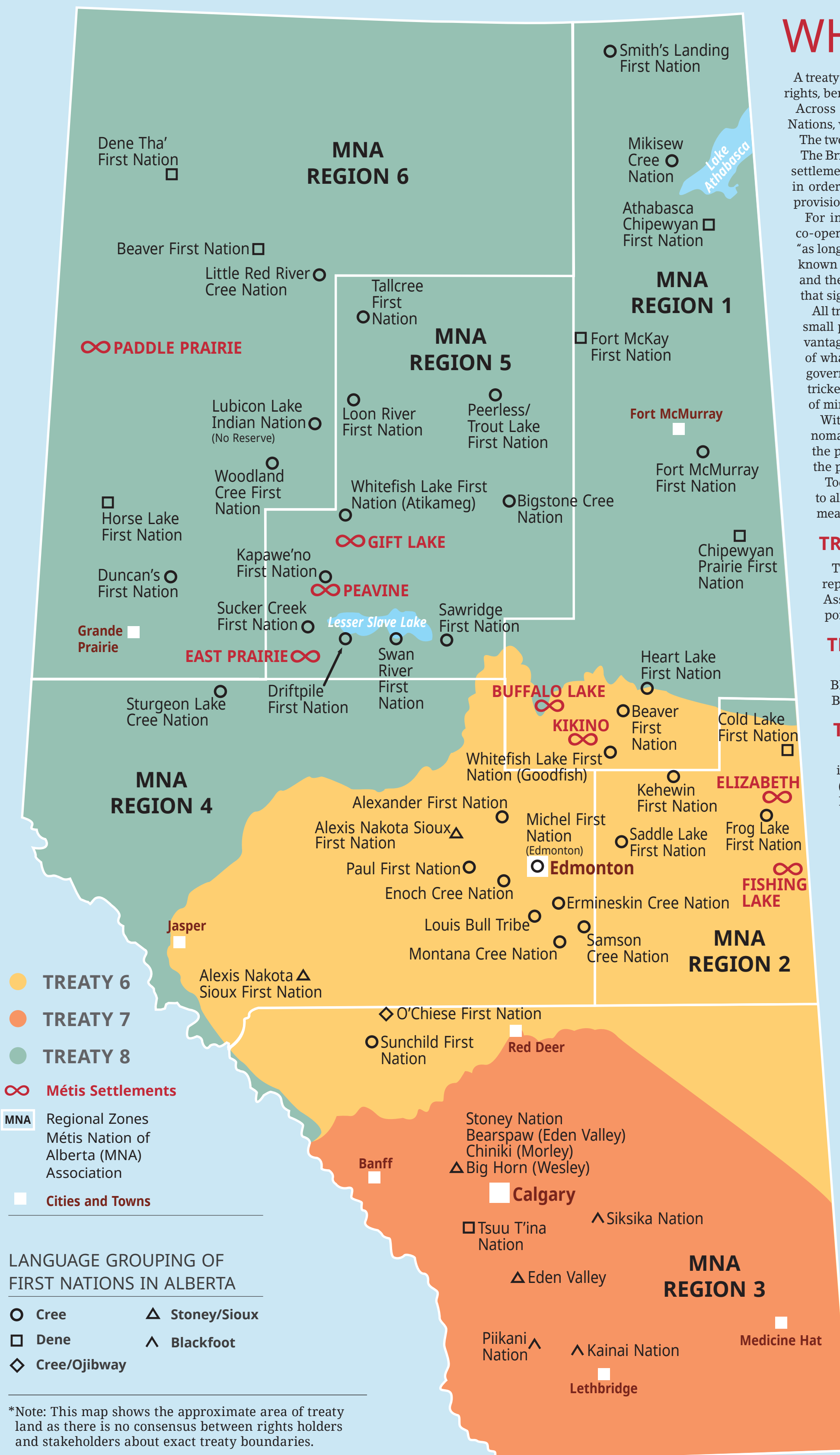
Walking Together

EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION



The Alberta Teachers' Association

The Alberta Teachers' Association is committed to supporting teachers in treaty education through the Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation Professional Learning Project. For more information about Treaty 6, Treaty 7, Treaty 8, Métis or Inuit people, or the services and resources available through Walking Together, please visit www.teachers.ab.ca > For Members > Professional Development > Walking Together.



- TREATY 6
- TREATY 7
- TREATY 8
- ∞ Métis Settlements
- MNA Regional Zones
Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)
Association
- Cities and Towns

- LANGUAGE GROUPING OF FIRST NATIONS IN ALBERTA
- Cree
 - Dene
 - ◇ Cree/Ojibway
 - △ Stoney/Sioux
 - ▲ Blackfoot

*Note: This map shows the approximate area of treaty land as there is no consensus between rights holders and stakeholders about exact treaty boundaries.
Adapted from Alberta Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs