

I would like to introduce myself to the band members that I have not had the opportunity to meet.

My name is Ellen LeCaine, I was born in Assiniboia, Sk., and resided with my parents on the WMLFN until 1980 at which time I moved to Moose Jaw and then to Regina.

I moved back to our first nation in 2002 and was elected councillor for a 4-year term. Into the first week of the 4-year term a lot of Elders and younger members on and off the reserve approached me with their grievances regarding living conditions and unfair treatment from some of the previous leadership spanning over 40 years plus.

Thanks to two other councillors that were elected with me, we set out to make positive changes for WMLFN.

Our only meeting place consisted of cleaning a mouse infested fire hall to entertain Indian Affairs and Band Members that wanted to help us in a positive way.

2006 I was acclaimed Chief for a 3-year term; this gave us the opportunity to renovate an old house and use it for a Band Office.

2008 we built a Community Centre so that we could utilize it for our AGM's, workshops, weddings, funerals, etc.

We, Chief and Council along with our Legal Counsel (MLT Aikins) settled a \$50 million-dollar specific land claim against the government for land that was taken away from us after the war. On January 11, 2020, the \$50 million was ratified and accepted by the majority of the membership.

The \$50 million dollars made it possible to help our members with Post-Secondary Education, Christmas gatherings, AGM'S, purchase of a tractor, snow removal equipment and the construction of a shop for the upkeep of our equipment and finally a new band office.

We are currently working to put headstones on the graves of the deceased members, this is not an easy job as there are graves from the 1800's.

The Federal Government did not acknowledge the Lakota/Dakota bands like other First Nation People, claiming we are Americans.

So, over the last few years we have been working towards compensation for all the wrongs done to us; only recently they (the Gov't) have apologized.

In 2022 we signed a framework agreement to work toward reconciliation with Canada. The compensation settlement would be immense in comparison to the Specific Claim settlement.

When I first started working for our Lakota Nation I looked to our Elders for guidance, now most of them are gone and didn't get to see the positive changes that they have inspired in me.

So, to all my Members far and wide I look to you for your support as Chief so that we may flourish in this changing world.

Thanks(Pilamayaye)

Ellen B LeCaine