

WELCOME TO

Montreal Lake Cree Nation



GAKINO'AMAAGE
TEACH FOR CANADA

Tanisi



Montreal Lake Cree Nation

Tawāw/welcome,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Simon Bird, and I serve as the Principal and Education Director of Senator Allan Bird Memorial School in the beautiful Montreal Lake Cree Nation. I am writing to you today with a heartfelt invitation to join our school community as a teacher through Gakino'amaage: Teach For Canada.



Firstly, I want to express my gratitude for considering the opportunity to teach in our community. I understand that this decision is not to be taken lightly, and I assure you that your dedication and commitment will be valued and appreciated by both our students and staff.

At Senator Allan Bird Memorial School, our philosophy is centered around showing our students that they are “worth it”. We believe in providing them with the highest quality education, nurturing their talents, and helping them reach their full potential. There’s always a lot going on here, but we do our best to meet the moment with a sense of humour and a lot of teamwork. As the leader of this school, I strive to embody this philosophy in every aspect of my work.

I believe in leading by example. That means showing up on time, taking off our outdoor shoes before entering the school, treating our school and community members with respect, and fostering an environment of inclusivity and kindness. I am proud to say that our school community is one where every individual is valued and supported.

I understand that moving to a new community can be daunting, but I want to assure you that Montreal Lake Cree Nation is a welcoming and vibrant community. Our students are eager to learn, and our staff is dedicated to creating a supportive and nurturing environment for everyone.

By joining our team, you will have the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of our students. You will be part of a community that values education and embraces diversity. You will also have the chance to immerse yourself in our culture and learn from our traditions.

I invite you to take the next step in your teaching journey and join us here at Senator Allan Bird Memorial School. Together, we can inspire and empower the next generation of leaders.

Sincerely,

Simon Bird

Principal, Senator Allan Bird Memorial School
Director of Education, Montreal Lake Cree Nation

The Land

Our community is located on some of the traditional territory of the Woodland Cree Nations, just outside of the Prince Albert National Park.

We are located 2.5 hours north of Saskatoon on the south-west tip of the beautiful Montreal Lake and the Bittern River, 30 minutes from Waskesiu Lake and Elk Ridge.

We originally lived on our traditional territory until we were forcibly relocated in 1927 to enable the creation of Prince Albert National Park. We were most recently relocated due to the construction of Highway 2 in Saskatchewan.



Montreal Lake Community Map





Life in the Community

Getting Involved

We are proud of our community and all of the opportunities we have to get together and support each other.

Parents and community members are involved in the school; our library is also a public library and is open to the community. We have a youth center with a recreation program and an arena with a state-of-the-art public gym, in addition to the gym and fitness centre at our school.

Our Chief Roy H. Bird Memorial Youth Centre completed construction in 2021, and is a place for youth to hang out and be themselves. The Centre features games and activities like ping pong, air hockey, and foosball as well as musical instruments, cultural teachings and programs.

We are very sport-oriented, both at the school and in the community at large. We love our hockey, soccer, volleyball, archery, and fishing, and have many festivals and outdoor activities including our annual winter festival.

One of our biggest events is our Annual Fish Derby. The school sells the 50/50 tickets and the profits are divided between the classes for field trips. This is a huge event. It's one of

Canada's biggest fish derbies, and draws people from all over; last year the winner received over \$100,000 for their fish!

We also have hunting days, trapping days, and bazaar days which are wonderful opportunities to get together and celebrate as a community. We encourage all new residents to come out and participate with us!



Community



Our traditional name is Mōniyaw Sākahikan, which translates to Montreal Lake.

Our people have lived in these lands since time immemorial. Before signing our Treaty, most of our people lived in small groups and we thrived, being exceptional hunters and fishers.

A Brief History

- **1889** February 11th: We signed the Adhesion to Treaty 6 under Chief William Charles
- **1981** The first school opened on our lands. It was a small log building with a tin roof and belonged to the Anglican Church of Canada
- **1895** Our local school closed and our students were sent to Emmanuel College in Prince Albert
- **1896** Our local school reopened
- **1897** 1897: After a monumental trip by dog sled, our Chief William Charles together with Chief James Roberts (Lac La Ronge Indian Band) petitioned the Government of Canada for designated farm land. In the spring of 1897, the Little Red River Indian Reserve No. 106A was created to be shared by Lac La Ronge Indian Band and Montreal Lake Cree Nation. Our Chiefs were not aware the land was only granted on a 99 year lease
- **1904-1924** A Métis teacher, John R. Settee, taught our students in Cree at our school
- **1908** The first Hudson Bay Trading Post was built in our community
- **1925** We brought freight to support the community via horse-pulled wagon on the ice road at Montreal Lake
- **1927** Prime Minister William Lyon McKenzie King opened the Prince Albert National Park on our traditional territory. Our people were denied access to our traditional lands and ways of life to make way for “Saskatchewan’s playground”
- **1932** June 7th: The first official air mail from Prince Albert was delivered by float plane to Montreal Lake

- 1946** An Indian Agent, Mrs. Jones, presented our people with a petition that the Little Red River Indian Reserve No. 106A was on a 99 year lease. Mrs. Jones stated that our local residents had not become farmers, and we would need to give up our land and move away. Our people sent letters of appeal to the government, which went unanswered
- 1948** March 31st: Due to the petitions of veteran Angus Merasty and 14 other local veterans, Little Red River Reserve No. 106A was officially divided into two separate reserves for Little Red River Indian Band and Montreal Lake Cree Nation and the 99 year lease was cancelled
- 1952** The Timber Bay Children's Home began serving as a day school for our children and those from surrounding communities. The school operated until 1994
- 2011-2014** We lost 15 community members to suicide, a traumatic crisis for our community
- 2014** August 25th: Our community led a 3-day walk for suicide awareness and support called "You Are Not Alone". We walked in solidarity to show those who are struggling with thoughts of suicide that we love them, support them, and are here for them
- 2015** July: A wildfire threatened our community and destroyed 8 homes. Thankfully, no one was injured
- 2021** August 25th: Our new Chief Roy H Bird Memorial Youth Centre was unveiled after 4 years of planning and construction
- 2022** Appeals to have the Timber Bay Children's Home legally identified as a day school have been unsuccessful because of funding irregularities for the operation of the school. Survivors of the Timber Bay Children's Home and many other day schools in the West continue to appeal. The Ballantyne Project, and organization dedicated to raising awareness of life on reserves and the impacts of Residential Schools and founded by Dwight Ballantyne from Montreal Lake Cree Nation, set a petition to the government of Saskatchewan to recognize Timber Bay Children's Home as a provincially-run Residential School
- 2024** February: Three new school buses arrived to serve our students
- 2024-2028** We have plans for our new school to be built and completed by 2028



Looking Back



Early photos from Montreal Lake Cree Nation

①

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Nelson

②

Hudson's Bay Company (HBC)

③

HBC York boat on Montreal Lake

④

HBC Store at Montreal Lake, built in 1937

⑤

Housing

⑥

Molanosa road sign

⑦

Mail plane at Montreal Lake with first ever air mail, June 7, 1932

⑧

Jean Beattie, Frank Nelson's daughter, with fox furs in 1940

⑨

Teacherage



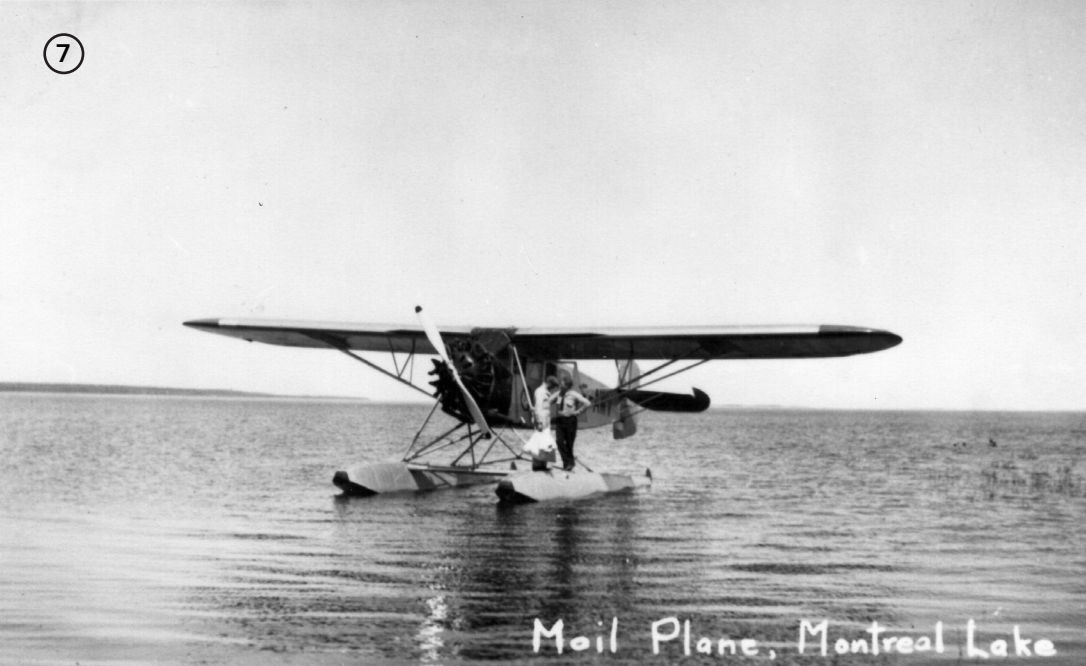
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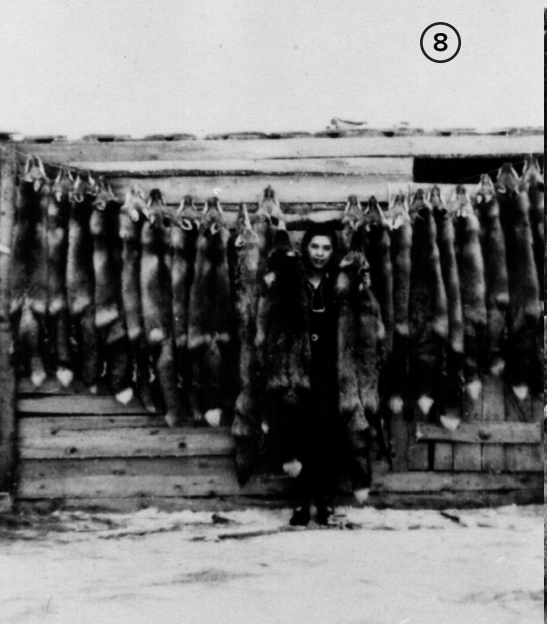
Mail Plane, Montreal Lake

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Teacherage, Montreal Lake.

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Senator Allan Bird Memorial School

Welcome!

Our school is named after our late Elder and decorated veteran Allan Bird. Our school was opened in 3 stages from 1986-1991. The original building is now the high school wing. A gym and elementary wing have been added.

School Population

485

Principal and Education Director

Simon Bird

Grades

Nursery to Grade 12

We are currently planning a new school which we hope to have open by 2028.

We are a school who really value clubs, extracurriculars, activities, and fun. All our teachers are required to sign up for at least two committees, and many choose to sign up for more!

What is your school proud of?

Our staff and students realize we are worth it and we are no one's second choice. We are a small community by a gorgeous lake and we are really relationship-centred. Every classroom has an Education Assistant, and we prioritize the support and development of our students, their parents, our staff, and our community.

School Facilities

Gym, Fitness facility, Industrial Arts classroom, Land Based classroom, Public Library (also open after school hours), Canteen, Hot breakfast, lunch, and snacks

Classes

Land Based, Cree Language, Fitness, Fine Arts

Extracurricular activities

Beading, sewing, hockey, holidays, Junior chief and council, bingo, fish derby, spirit week, Terry Fox Run, Pow Wow Dancing





A Day in the Life of a Teacher

Teachers arrive at school by **8:15 AM**
Bus supervision is at **8:20-9:00 AM**
Recess for Division 1 & 3 is **10:15-10:30 AM**
Recess for Division 2 is **10:30-10:45 AM**
Lunch is eaten in the classroom from **11:30 AM - 12:00 PM**
Recess for Division 1 & 3 is **2:00-2:15**
Recess for Division 2 is **2:15-2:30**
Buses arrive at **3:15 PM** and last run is at **3:45 PM**

Teachers are assigned ½ hour supervision during break time twice a week (on a 6-day cycle)
Teachers have a ½ hour preparation period each day

Teacher Features



Bev Bird Cree Language Teacher

My name is Bev Bird, and I am Senator Allan Bird Memorial School's Cree language teacher. I have been teaching since 1977; the majority of my teaching career has been right here in my home community.

I come from quite a political family! My father was Senator Allan Bird (who the school was named after.) He was a wonderful man who was Chief here for a long time as well as being a Senator for Prince Albert Grand Council and the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations.

What I remember most about my father is our summers in Waskesiu; my father would be a forest fire watcher at the Blue Bell Tower and I would go with him. Whenever I had to go down the big tower by myself he would wrap a rope around my waist and hold on so tight, and I felt so supported.

Many of my brothers were also Chiefs here. Ritchie Bird was a chief, Roy Bird was a Chief and a Regional Director, and Bobby Bird was the 4th Vice Chief.

Bobby passed away about 30 years ago in an accident. After he passed, the Bobby Bird Memorial Scholarship Awards were created. Every October, I sit on the board that accepts submissions from grades 7-12 from all over the Prince Albert Grand Council. We select students based on merit and they can be awarded up to \$1,500 for their hard work.

My advice for new teachers here is to take a chance on us. We are friendly, fun and worth it. You are welcome!

Norma Ross-Ballantyne Grade 8 Teacher

I was born and raised in Montreal Lake Cree Nation. I actually went to and graduated from Senator Allan Bird Memorial School! I've spent 15 years teaching here, and I've also taught in Alberta, Manitoba, and other schools in Saskatchewan. I've been teaching for 23 years total.

I love my school and my community. There are just so many positives. Imagine waking up each morning to see our beautiful lake full of fish! Every day, it's really just "wow!"

My grade 8's are the best. They're so respectful, they listen, and they're here to learn! This will be my first year taking the kids to the science fair. We've got so many great projects happening like "Why do stars exist, why do they die, and what happens after they die" and "Flight: Making a plane out of things I found in my classroom."

My advice for new teachers is to never give up. No matter how tough it is, keep on going. We're worth it. Keep it simple, and ask questions! When I started 23 years ago, I didn't really know what I was doing. I put one foot in front of the other and kept going, and you can, too!





Teacherages



We have several teacherage options available here for single-dweller and family occupancy. All of our teacherages are within walking distance to our school and the Ne-He-Thow Store, and have safety measures including security cameras for your peace of mind.





Our Library

Our library is one-of-a-kind

We focus on the children and growing their love of reading

We serve the school as well as the community, and are part of the public library system for northern Saskatchewan. We have teacher and classroom resources to check out, as well as laptops and iPads, movies, and other tools. If you need a book that isn't in our system, we can request it through the public library.



Books in the Bathroom Project

In each of our school bathrooms, our Chief Librarian Blanche Bird (pictured left) has created a “Books in the Bathroom” project featuring age-appropriate books to pique the curiosity of readers young and old.

Blanche and her daughter Angela (also a librarian who serves the community after-school) hold reading time for the students and lead them in projects like mitt making, beading, and many other crafts. Our students love their library and can often be seen coming to relax in the peace and quiet.

Around the Community



Getting to and from Montreal Lake

From Saskatoon, driving is convenient and smooth. Take Highway 11 to Highway 2 through Prince Albert and continue until you reach Highway 969.



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Jimmy D. Bird Education & Training Centre

②

Roy H. Bird Memorial Youth Centre

③

Nick Bird Memorial Building Housing & Public Works

Quick Facts

Community Name
Montreal Lake Cree Nation

Tribal Council
Prince Albert Grand Council

Provincial Territorial Organization
Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations

Population On-Reserve



1500

Language Spoken



**Woodland
Cree and
English**

Treaty



**Adhesion
to Treaty 6**

Average Yearly Temperature



-20°C
January

17°C
July

Winter Road Open Dates



Year-round



Directory

**Senator Allan Bird
Memorial School**
306-663-5602

**Senator Gilbert Bird
Administration Office**
306-663-5349

Arena
306-663-5868

Ne-He-Thow Store
306-663-5870

Health Centre
306-663-5995

Fire Hall
306-663-5036

RCMP
306-780-5461
(General Inquiries)



Collecting Sap

Students collect sap from oak trees as part of their Land Based education



Beach Day

Students enjoy time out on the water, swimming, fishing, and canoeing in Montreal Lake





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