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The Metis Heritage Survey

The Metis National Council (MNC) and the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) are proposing to develop a major study to determine the location, character and condition of all Metis archaeological (heritage) sites in the Metis Homeland. The homeland region covers an enormous area of Western Canada, harbouring thousands of potential heritage sites, ranging from Metis hunting campsites through single family homesteads to abandoned villages. Virtually no effort has been expended upon recording the location and condition of most of the Metis archaeological sites in the region. As a consequence, these heritage resources are potentially lost to the Metis as a means to remember their past and the important role Metis people played in the development of the nation.

Yet these resources are not lost. Many Metis people (particularly the older generations) remember the locations of these sites, and can recount something about what they looked like, who was there and when they were occupied. This information can be obtained through individual and group informant interviews. A major obstacle to this process is that this kind of information must be collected in an organized and consistent manner by individuals who are trained to recognize what kinds of informant information have archaeological significance. Furthermore, it is believed that the most important information will only be given out to Metis researchers. Finally, it is anticipated that the expected large volumes of information will rapidly overwhelm the abilities of the data collectors to manage the data.

The MNC and GDI therefore propose to institute a pilot project which will 1) train selected Metis students about how to collect heritage-related informant data; 2) develop a heritage data oriented Geographic Information System which can be used to organize and manage the data acquired by the student trainees; 3) evaluate the pilot project's performance and prepare a long-term proposal to expand the project to encompass the entire Metis Homeland.

The project will benefit the Metis people in several ways. It will permit them to begin gathering information about Metis archaeological sites so that they can begin to understand the potential kinds and numbers of sites which are present in the Homeland area, in what condition the sites are in and where they are located. It will enable a training program to be established which will ensure that the work can continue in the future, undertaken by Metis people.

Project Description - The pilot Project

The goal of the Metis Heritage Survey is to obtain comprehensive knowledge about the location, character and condition of Metis archaeological sites in the Metis Homeland. Since the homeland area is so large and varied, a feasibility study will be commissioned to

develop methods and techniques to gather heritage data, organize the information for management purposes and train individuals to collect the information in a consistent and accurate manner. The pilot study area will encompass an area surrounding Saskatoon (see figure 1). The boundary will extend from St. Louis west to the North Saskatchewan River, south from the river elbow to Moose Woods Reserve, east to Little Manitou Lake and north to St. Louis. This area contains a wide variety of Metis sites yet is sufficiently small in size that intensive field work can be undertaken with minimal travel expenses being incurred. The project will be undertaken in three phases, which embody database design, personnel training and evaluation, and data collection and entry.

Part 1 - Implementation of the Geographic Information System

The GIS which will be used for this study will be a modification of the HyperGISTM system devised by Gibson and Russell (1991; see also Gibson 1991). Although Geographic Information Systems are becoming more commonly used for heritage management studies, many organizations are reluctant to make use of these systems for data organization because they are so difficult to use and expensive to maintain. The Metis Heritage Survey has no particular need of the vast array of analytical tools offered by most GIS systems that make them so incomprehensible to untrained researchers. What is most needed is a simple way of tying heritage-oriented descriptive information to geographic location using inexpensive graphics-based personal computers, which is what HyperGIS is designed to do.

No purchase fees are required to make use of the GIS. Costs incurred for its use are based upon time needed to modify the system for a particular use (customization costs) and to digitize the four 1:250,000 NTS map sheets which encompass the pilot study area. These costs also include assistance in upkeep of the data files and preparation of system documentation. Additional time is budgeted for student training and supervision on the system over the length of the pilot project. This includes instruction on how to use the system for data retrieval, reporting, and data export to other kinds of databases. Training will also be extended to GDI staff who will assist in the supervision of the system once it is in place.

The GIS will be customized by Terry Gibson. A prototype of the customized GIS will be installed at the GDI several months in advance of the student training program so that it may be tested and modified by GDI staff prior to full use.

Part 2 - Training and Workplan

A significant portion of this project involves training of individuals who will conduct most of the interview and data entry tasks. Seminars will be taught on the following subjects in a classroom/laboratory venue using the following basic structure:

- 1) Heritage Resource Management from the Metis Perspective
 - what are heritage sites
 - what are the current provincial and federal regulations regarding what is a heritage site and how are they regulated
 - what are ways of ensuring the preservation of heritage sites
- 2) Field Assessment of Potential Metis Archaeological Resources
 - how do we recognize archaeological sites
 - how do you tell if they are threatened
 - how do you record archaeological sites in the field
- 3) Collecting Metis Heritage Data from Informants
 - what kinds of questions can be asked of informants which will give the best information about heritage resources
 - how should heritage information be recorded
- 4) Entering and Using Information on a Metis Heritage GIS
 - why a GIS is used
 - how to enter data on the GIS
 - how to review and analyze data using the GIS
 - how to transfer GIS information to other information management systems

In addition to classroom/laboratory venue, students will go into the field accompanied by instructors who will assist them in interviewing informants, recording informant data and in field-verifying data for inclusion in the resource management program. The practical component is seen as being crucial for developing skills which will be used in a consistent and efficient data collection program.

At the conclusion of the course, students will be given a practical test which will lead to a certificate being issued stating that they have taken training for the program. To pass the test, students must be able to address cultural resource management issues, particularly as they relate to Metis heritage resources; record sites from map data; enter data into the GIS; locate, manage and analyze data using the GIS; and demonstrate a general knowledge about the Metis Heritage Survey such that they can explain its goals and operations to people unfamiliar to the project. Being able to satisfactorily complete these tasks, they would then be eligible to undertake future work with the program when it is expanded to other regions of the Metis Homeland.

Development of the study curriculum will begin several months in advance of the actual classes being taught. Curriculum will be developed by Terry Gibson, Dale Russell and Maureen Rollans. It will be reviewed by GDI and MNC staff prior to being taught. GDI

and MNC will select the students to participate in the program, and will arrange for their support during the course.

Student training will begin the first week of June, 1992. Class and laboratory instruction will be conducted by Terry Gibson and Dale Russell at the Gabriel Dumont Institute and at Western Heritage Services' building as required. Field trips to Metis heritage sites will be supervised by either of these two instructors as needed, with transportation provided by GDI and MNC. Both instructors will accompany students either individually or as a group to conduct interviews with informants. As experience is gained, students will be sent out on their own and their results reviewed by the instructors. All informant contacts will be arranged and approved by GDI.

At the end of the training period, which is expected to take the entire month of June, student performance in informant interviewing, site evaluation and heritage information collection and management will be evaluated. If satisfactory, the GDI will furnish them with a certificate stating that the students have successfully taken the Metis Heritage Survey Course and are eligible to conduct work on their own for the GDI. It is hoped that these students, after sufficient experience, will be able to assist in the training of other individuals when the survey project is expanded.

Part 3 - Data Collection and Pilot Study Evaluation

Students who have successfully completed the GDI Metis Heritage Survey Course will spend an additional two months after the course (July and August) collecting informant and field observation information and incorporating it into the GIS, supervised on a regular basis by the course instructors and by designated GDI staff. At the end of the time period, the students will assist the instructors and GDI staff in preparing a summary report detailing what was learned during the pilot project. The report will be submitted to GDI, the MNC and the Department of Communications. Certain Metis archaeological sites may require that Saskatchewan Archaeological Resource Records (site forms) be completed and submitted to the Saskatchewan Heritage Branch.

At its completion, an overall evaluation of the pilot project will be made, and the feasibility of extending this kind of heritage resource management program to another region will be studied.

Proposed Budget

Rates	Archaeologist (Western Heritage Staff)	\$365.00
	Assistant (Western Heritage Staff)	\$265.00
	Student (Summer Stipend)	\$4000.00

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>PerDs</u>	<u>Charge/unit</u>	<u>Total</u>
Project Management	Archaeologist	1	2	2	\$365.00	\$730.00
Project Administration	GDI Staff					\$2000.00
Project Support	GDI Facilities & Staff					\$3000.00
GIS Customization	Archaeologist	1	7	7	\$365.00	\$2555.00
Map Digitizing/ Placing	Assistant	1	15	15	\$265.00	\$3975.00
GIS Training/ Supervision	Archaeologist	1	10	10	\$365.00	\$3650.00
Curriculum Development	Archaeologist	1	15	15	\$365.00	\$5475.00
Instruction	Archaeologist	1	5	5	\$365.00	\$1825.00
Field/Lab Supervision	Archaeologist	1	15	15	\$365.00	\$5475.00
Training Evaluation	Archaeologist	1	2	2	\$365.00	\$730.00
Student Stipends	Student	3	1	3	\$4000.00	\$12000.00
Report Writing	Archaeologist	1	5	5	\$365.00	\$1825.00
Training Package	Archaeologist	1	10	10	\$365.00	\$3650.00
Total Labour				79		\$46,890.00
Disbursements	Mileage (km)	2000			\$0.32	\$640.00
	Maps					\$500.00
	Equipment Rentals (cameras, recorders, computers)					\$500.00
	Printing/Copying					\$150.00
Total Disbursements						\$1790.00

Project Total	\$48,680.00
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MNC Contribution	\$1,140.00	2%
GDI Contribution	\$17,000.00	35%
Dept. of Communciations	\$30,540.00	63%