



The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Non-Binding Referendum: Outcomes and Next Steps

Presented by:
Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe



Please leave questions or comments in the Chat and we will make certain your questions are answered and comments recorded.

This Zoom meeting is only the first of several in-person community meetings and Zoom meetings that will be held on the topic of Enrollment.





The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) held a **Non-binding referendum**. This is a process that allows the Tribal Executive Committee (TEC) of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe to gain a sense of how the Members are feeling about a certain topic.

Non-binding means that the results **do not change** anything or “bind” the TEC to any particular actions.

FIRST, HOW DOES MCT/BAND ENROLLMENT CURRENTLY WORK?



- **ARTICLE II OF THE MCT CONSTITUTION DEFINES WHO CAN BE MEMBERS OF THE MINNESOTA CHIPPEWA TRIBE (MCT)**
- **Current System: Blood Quantum.** This is a federal invention from the 1930-1950's. It was created to diminish the American Indian population so that eventually tribes would eventually become extinct of members.
- **Article II, Membership:**
 - ❖ Any child with any MCT blood (from 1 or more of the 6 Bands) whose enrollment papers were filed before July 4, 1961, and who had at least 1 parent enrolled.
 - ❖ Any child born after July 3, 1962, who has at least $\frac{1}{4}$ MCT Blood, provided enrollment papers are filed within 1 year of the child's birth.



*Executive Director Susan Klapel,
Department of Natural Resources*



- **At least 1 parent must be a currently enrolled MLB member**
- **1/4 degree of MLB Indian blood**
- **Official roll: annuity roll of April 14, 1941**
- **Supporting documentation is the responsibility of the applicant**
- **Moratorium October 24, 2001**
- **DNA testing to establish parentage**

HOW DOES ENROLLMENT WORK AT MILLE LACS?



- *Application can be picked up in office or online at the Millelacsband.com*
- *Original application is needed, no photocopies*
- *Internal research process*
- *Processing enrollment application for review*
- **BAND ASSEMBLY VOTE**
- **TEC VOTE**
- *Determination letter mailed by MCT*
- *Appeals are made to MCT*

Application for Enrollment-MILLE LACS

Mail to: Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Attn: Tribal Enrollments

43408 Oodena Drive

Onamia, MN 56359



APPLICANT:

Name: _____
(First) (Middle) (Last) (Maiden)

Address: _____
(Number) (Street Name) (City) (State) (Zip)

Date of Birth: _____
(Month) (Day) (Year)

* Birthplace: _____ Social Security # _____
(City) (State)

I hereby certify that the Applicant is an American citizen and not an enrolled member of any Indian Tribe.

Signature of applicant or legal guardian

* If the Applicant was not born in the United States, you must provide proof of citizenship.

<u>BIOLOGICAL MOTHER OF APPLICANT</u>	<u>BIOLOGICAL FATHER OF APPLICANT</u>
Name: _____ <small>(First) (Middle) (Last)</small>	Name: _____ <small>(First) (Middle) (Last)</small>
Address: _____ <small>(Maiden)</small> <small>(Number) (Street Name)</small>	Address: _____ <small>(Number) (Street Name)</small>
_____ <small>(City) (State) (Zip Code)</small>	_____ <small>(City) (State) (Zip Code)</small>
Date of Birth: _____ <small>(Month) (Day) (Year)</small>	Date of Birth: _____ <small>(Month) (Day) (Year)</small>
Social Security # _____	Social Security # _____
Is Mother an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Is Father an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<i>If yes:</i> Mother's Reservation of Enrollment? <input type="checkbox"/> Bois Forte <input type="checkbox"/> Fond du Lac <input type="checkbox"/> Grand Portage <input type="checkbox"/> Leech Lake <input type="checkbox"/> Mille Lacs <input type="checkbox"/> White Earth	<i>If yes:</i> Father's Reservation of Enrollment? <input type="checkbox"/> Bois Forte <input type="checkbox"/> Fond du Lac <input type="checkbox"/> Grand Portage <input type="checkbox"/> Leech Lake <input type="checkbox"/> Mille Lacs <input type="checkbox"/> White Earth
Mother's Enrollment Number? _____	Father's Enrollment Number? _____
Mother's Degree of Minnesota Chippewa Indian Blood? _____	Father's Degree of Minnesota Chippewa Indian Blood? _____
<i>If no:</i> Does Mother possess any Minnesota Chippewa Indian Blood? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <i>If yes:</i> State degree: _____	<i>If no:</i> Does Father possess any Minnesota Chippewa Indian Blood? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <i>If yes:</i> State degree: _____
Name of person Minnesota Chippewa Indian blood comes from: _____	Name of person Minnesota Chippewa Indian blood comes from: _____

By signing this application, I hereby certify under penalty of law that everything contained herein is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Person Filing Application: _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Date: _____ Phone Number: _____

* If child is adopted please provide a copy of the adoption decree*

* See Reverse Side for Important Notice and Instructions*



For decades, MLB elders have expressed concern that membership requirements are too restrictive - their children and grandchildren cannot be granted citizenship in the tribal community they have grown up in.



- In 2014, Wilder Research completed a contract with the MCT to conduct an **MCT POPULATIONS PROJECTION** Report.
- It's purpose was to understand:
 1. **What other non-MCT blood exists within MCT Membership**
 2. **To predict future membership trends based on different scenarios.**



What happens to MCT/Band enrollment if...

1. No changes are made to Blood Quantum
2. Keep $\frac{1}{4}$ Blood Quantum, but allow other Anishinaabe U.S. and First Nations to count toward $\frac{1}{4}$ threshold
3. Keep $\frac{1}{4}$ Blood Quantum, but allow other federally recognized U.S. and verifiable First Nations Blood (non-Anishinaabe) to count toward $\frac{1}{4}$ threshold.
4. Change Blood Quantum to $\frac{1}{8}^{\text{th}}$ MCT blood
5. Get rid of blood quantum and change to lineal descendance. All descendants of enrolled members on 1941 base census roll can be enrolled.



LINEAL DESCENDANCY MEANS:

Any person related to someone whose name appears on the 1941 MCT Tribal Census Base Roll could become enrolled, along with all of their future descendants, no matter what their blood quantum is.

RESULTS FOR MILLE LACS BAND FROM WILDER REPORT:



Scenarios: What happens BY 2098 if....

Results for Mille Lacs Band by 2098

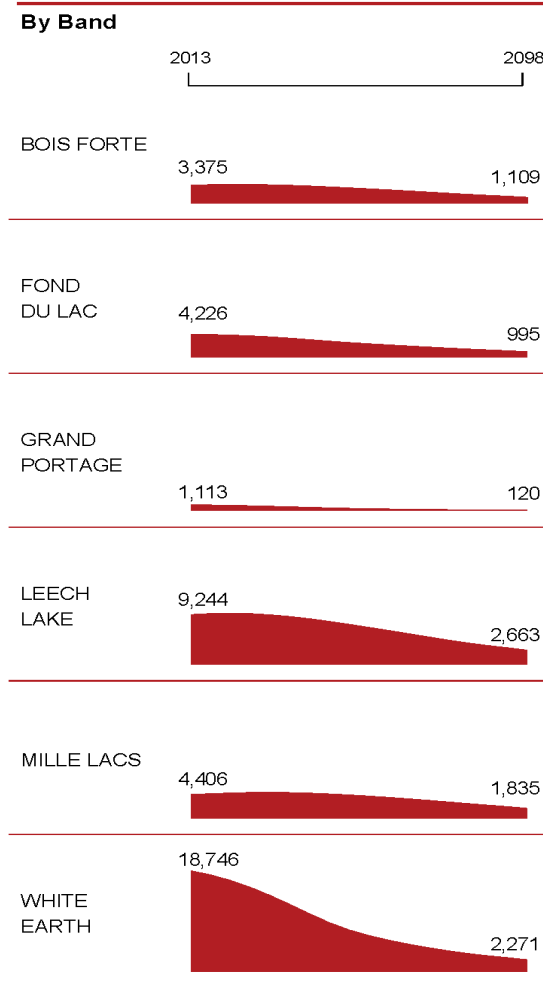
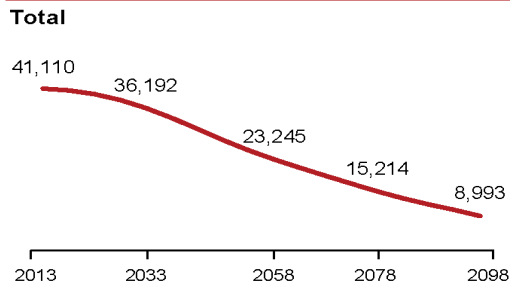
1. No Change in Blood Quantum **1,835**
2. Keep ¼: Allow **other Anishinaabe U.S. and First Nations** blood to count toward ¼ **2,160 – 4,052**
3. Keep ¼: Allow **other** federally recognized tribe (**non-Anishinaabe blood**) U.S. and First Nations blood to count toward ¼ **2,461 – 4,066**
4. Change blood quantum to **1/8** **8,454 – 10,657**
5. Change to **lineal descendency** (all descendants from 1941 base roll can be enrolled. No more blood quantum requirements.) **3,941 – 6,611**



Scenario 1

Population projections for the Minnesota Chippewa tribe assuming no changes are made to the enrollment criteria, which is currently set at a threshold of 1/4 MCT blood to be eligible for enrollment

This is the most restrictive scenario, since it limits enrollment to the current standard of at least 1/4 MCT blood quantum to be eligible for tribal enrollment. Leaving the tribal enrollment criteria as is, the projected enrolled population declines from just over 41,000 in 2013 to just under 9,000 in 2098. This represents a decline of approximately 78 percent or more than 32,000 members.



Predicted Enrollment by 2098 for the 6 Bands if no changes are made to blood quantum.

- Wilder Research, 2014

MLB in 2014: 4,406
MLB in 2098: 1,835



- **All scenarios will result in an initial increase in enrollment for all Bands.**
- **For scenarios 1-4, Enrollment will eventually begin to decline again for all 6 Bands by 2098.**
- **Exception - Scenario 5: A change to Lineal Descendancy (Scenario 5) will result in slow, continued growth for all Bands after 2098.**

- *Wilder Research, 2014*



After the 2014 Wilder Report, the TEC began considering changing Enrollment Requirements.

Because Enrollment requirements are in the MCT Constitution, The only way to change enrollment is to amend (change) the MCT Constitution.

HOW CAN THE MCT CHANGE ENROLLMENT?



TITLE 12 OF THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES A PROCESS FOR AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION.

What is the process?

- 1. 2/3 of the TEC must request that the Secretary of Interior call for a Secretarial Election.**
- 2. If the Secretary approves a Secretarial Election, at least 30% of all eligible MCT Voters (based on the last election) must turn out to vote in the election.**
- 3. A simple majority vote determines the decision**
- 4. If 30% do not turn out to vote, the election has no effect and no changes will be made.**



In February, 2015, the MCT adopted 2 Resolutions with proposed enrollment changes for the MCT Membership to vote on.

“The MCT TEC does hereby support this resolution pursuant to Article XII to call an election to amend Article II, section 1, by adding a paragraph that provides:

Resolution 31-15: MCT Members Indian blood “shall be corrected on the membership rolls of the Tribe by including the **verified First Nation Anishinabe blood** possessed by the member.

- ***Resolution 32-15: MCT Members Indian blood “shall be corrected on the membership rolls of the Tribe by including the **verified federally recognized Anishinabe/Ojibway/Chippewa blood** possessed by the member.***
- ***(Both Resolutions passed on February 24, 2015)***



Resolutions 31-15 and 32-15 from 2015 were adopted and sent to the BIA, but the request for a Secretarial Election to allow MCT Members to vote on these 2 changes was never sent to the Secretary of Interior. These resolutions are still active and pending.

Meanwhile, on March, 2017, the TEC authorized a Constitutional Convention and agreed to allow Delegates to review Enrollment and make their own recommendations for changes to enrollment.

Meanwhile.....A Discovery by the White Earth Nation:



- In 2019, the White Earth Nation discovered that 1,089 original allottees of White Earth, **Mille Lacs**, Leech Lake and Fond du Lac Bands of the MCT were discovered whose blood quantum had somehow changed between 1901 and 1941.
- These 1,089 people were listed as **full-bloods** in the 1901 Allotment List.....
- **But in the 1941 basic Membership Roll, their status had changed to mixed bloods.**
- **89 of these 1,089 people were Mille Lacs Band Members**



The TEC voted to adopt Resolution 36-20 in 2019:

“It shall be the policy of the MCTC to restore full-blood status to the 1089 original allottees including any subsequent discovery of allottees listed as full-blood on one blood roll.”



The MCT does not have the staffing to change all 1,089 allottees back to full-blood status.

When an MCT Member who is denied enrollment appeals the decision, MCT Enrollment committee/staff review the 1,089 list to see if the person appealing enrollment is related to one of the 1,089.

Recommendation: Mille Lacs Band descendants who are denied enrollment because their blood quantum is slightly less than 25% should appeal the decision to see if they are a descendant of one of the 1,089.

Descendants can also re-apply for enrollment.



After approving a Constitutional convention, the TEC decided to allow the Delegates to make recommendations for changes to enrollments, eventhough the TEC had already approved 2 questions for Members to vote on.

The Delegates recommended that 2 questions be asked of voters were different from the 2 TEC Resolutions.

The TEC decided to hold a non-binding referendum vote to ask voters what they thought about the 2 recommendations from the MCT Delegates.



1. Should the Blood Quantum requirement be removed from membership requirements for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe?

YES: 4,778

NO: 2,629

2. Should the six reservations (Bands) of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe be authorized to determine their own membership requirements by Band Ordinance?

YES: 4,236

NO: 2,989

NUMBER OF VOTERS NEEDED TO CHANGE CONSTITUTION:



- **32,728** ballots were mailed out
- Approximately 7,500 were returned as undeliverable
- 17,728 ballots delivered but not returned

- Total number of voters: **7,470** ballots were returned
- 30% that would have been needed if this were a Secretarial election: **9,818**

IF THE TEC DECIDES TO HOLD A SECRETARIAL ELECTION IN THE FUTURE, MORE VOTERS WILL NEED TO VOTE FROM ALL BANDS TO REACH THE 30% FOR THE RESULTS TO BE VALID

- MASSIVE EDUCATIONAL EFFORT

- **Investment:**
Investments in metro area infrastructure projects



NEXT STEPS:

More Zoom meetings and In Person Meetings in each District and Urban Area

Share information about Referendum meaning and results

Get feedback from Band Members about whether they would like to hold a binding vote on these questions

Are there other questions that should be considered?

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MIIGWECH!