



# Media Release

Thursday, April 22nd, 2026

For Immediate Release

## **PAGC reclaims NRTA narrative through new book series**

(Pre-Confederation, Treaty 5, 6, 8 & 10) PRINCE ALBERT, Sask. — A new book series from the Prince Albert Grand Council is aiming to rewrite how the 1930 Natural Resources Transfer Agreements are understood — by placing First Nations voices at the centre of the story.

The PAGC Education Department has released two volumes examining the agreements and their ongoing impact, with a third expected later this spring. The project is being described as one of the first community-driven efforts to document how the agreements continue to shape life for First Nations in northern Saskatchewan.

The NRTA transferred control of Crown lands and natural resources from the federal government to the Prairie provinces — without the consent of First Nations — and altered how treaty rights have been interpreted ever since.

Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte said the work is about reclaiming that narrative.

“The NRTA was written without First Nations. It is time their voices are written into the record,” said Grand Chief Hardlotte. “Our Elders have always said our rights exist whether or not anyone writes them down, but in courts, legislatures and public opinion, the written word carries weight.”

Section 12 of the agreement is often cited as protecting First Nations’ ability to hunt, fish and trap. However, courts have interpreted those rights as limited to “unoccupied” Crown lands and restricted in their commercial use — something PAGC says continues to affect families and land users across the North.

The first book in the series focuses on the historical and political context of the agreements and their impact across Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. The second collects oral histories from northern Saskatchewan hunters and trappers, documenting lived experiences of how the agreements have shaped livelihoods.

A third volume, expected by June 1, will focus on Athabasca communities.

Edward Mirasty of the PAGC Education Department is reminded of an important quote he read that, “if we always wait for permission, we take part in the colonial project.” Therefore, he continues to work with Elders, Knowledge keepers from PAGC

communities to share their stories, histories and understandings to bring voice to First Nations.

“Knowledge is sovereignty,” said Ed Mirasty of the PAGC Education Department. “When our communities produce rigorous, community-grounded analysis of the NRTA, it strengthens our Nations’ standing in legal, political and historical forums. This critical scholarship — supported by the Indigenous Languages Act — comes at a time when Indigenous communities are taking leadership in resisting resource development projects that threaten to pollute our lands and waters and intensify carbon emissions. Our people deserve to see their experiences, their rights and their stewardship reflected in the written record.”

The PAGC Education Department also acknowledged Dr. Rose Roberts and Rosalie Tsannine-Burset, PhD (ABD), for their assistance with interviews and transcription.

PAGC is encouraging First Nations schools and education authorities to take a greater role in teaching and documenting the NRTA through curriculum development, local histories and policy research.

PAGC leaders say the goal is to ensure future generations understand a history still shaping land use, harvesting rights and economic opportunities across northern Saskatchewan, with a teacher’s guide in development to support classroom learning.

#### **About Prince Albert Grand Council:**

The Prince Albert Grand Council is one of the largest tribal councils in Canada with a membership of over 44,000, representing 12 First Nations and the 28 northern communities in the territories of Treaty 5, 6, 8 & 10. To learn more, visit [pagc.sk.ca](http://pagc.sk.ca).

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