

Ojibwe Horse Quick Fact Sheet

Courtesy of the [Ojibwe Horse Society](#)

BASICS

- The Ojibwe Horse breed is also known as Lac La Croix Indian Pony or Lac La Croix Indigenous Pony
- Only horse breed developed by indigenous peoples in Canada
- Traditional range – with Ojibwe people in Ontario and northern Minnesota
- Size: 12 to 14.2 hands, strongly built
- Colours: solid colours including dun, bay, black, red, and grulla.
- Traditional uses: hauling loads, running trap lines, transportation, and Spirit Animal
- Today there are approximately 30 breeding Ojibwe stallions and 80 breeding Ojibwe mares, plus about 70 geldings and retired broodmares.

HISTORY – DECLINE and RESCUE

- Once numbered in the thousands throughout their traditional range
- Numbers declined in first half of 20th century due to use in dog food and glue; replacement by machines; and extermination by Canadian government
- 1977: for “health reasons”, the Canadian government planned to shoot the last four Ojibwe horses living at village of Lac La Croix, Ontario.
- Fred Isham, Wally Olsen, Walter Saatela, and Omar Hilde, and the people of Lac La Croix caught the last four Ojibwe horses (all mares) and spirited them across the border into Minnesota via an ice road.
- Walter Saatela kept the mares at his Minnesota farm immediately after the rescue, and introduced the Spanish Mustang stallion Smokey SMR 169 to breed them. As their numbers grew, Saatela sold or gave away horses to other breeders nearby in Minnesota, including Fred Isham, Lloyd Haas, Bob Walker, Gary Saatela, Robin Fischer, and Walter McElderry.
- All Ojibwe horses today descend from the original four mares that were rescued from Lac La Croix in 1977.
- 1992: Bob Walker contacted Rare Breeds Canada with the suggestion that someone needed to track the ponies and their breeding, and that they might be repatriated to Canada.
- Over the next decade, Rare Breeds Canada coordinated the repatriation of several dozen ponies from the Minnesota breeders, placing them at host farms in Canada.

GENETIC STUDIES

- Ojibwe horse (also LLCIP or Lac La Croix) has been part of several genetic studies:
 - "Maternal lineages in native Canadian equine populations and their relationship to the Nordic and Mountain and Moorland pony breeds" (2012): <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22504109>
 - "Genetic diversity and admixture among Canadian, Mountain and Moorland, and Nordic Pony Populations" (2012): <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22436150>

- Quote from *Maternal lineages* paper: “Interestingly, in the Prystupa et al. (2011) study, the Eriskay and Lac La Croix were among the top breeds recommended for the development of a conservation strategy, indicating that these breeds are not only distinct using autosomal but also mitochondrial information.”
- Geneticist Dr. Gus Cothran has suggested a future project to type the whole genome sequence of the breed in order to learn more about the breed’s origins.

ABOUT THE [OJIBWE HORSE SOCIETY](#)

- Coordinates DNA mane sample testing for parentage verification of all ponies
- Registers Ojibwe horses
- Coordinates blood sample collection for genetic studies
- Coordinates semen collection and preservation program
- Tracks all Ojibwe horses, including any medical conditions
- Facilitates communication between breeders/caretakers
- Assists with advertising horses for sale and placements into breeding programs
- Raises awareness about the breed
- Keeps archives and continues research efforts about the breed history

WHERE THE OJIBWE HORSES ARE TODAY

- Ojibwe horses are kept at farms and reserves across Canada, including:
 - Grey Raven Ranch on Seine River First Nation <https://www.greyravenranch.org/> ; Lac La Croix First Nation; TJ Stables tjstables.ca ; Abbey Gardens abbeygardens.ca (ONTARIO)
 - Aurora Farm aurorafarm.ca ; Haphazard Farm (MANITOBA)
 - Edgewater Farms; With a Twist Ranch www.withatwistranch.com ; Equisoulace equisoulace.ca; Sheena’s Acres <https://www.facebook.com/SheenasAcres/> (ALBERTA)
 - Sacred Way Sanctuary <https://www.sacredwaysanctuary.org/> (ALABAMA)

WHAT OJIBWE HORSES ARE DOING TODAY

- Cultural healing and ceremony
- Equine assisted learning
- Tourism
- Wide variety of equine disciplines including endurance, barrel racing, eventing, gymkhana, driving, parades, and therapy programs for disabled riders