





## Politics

# National Assembly of Remote Communities holds first meeting

Rick Garrick  
Wawatay News

Nishnawbe Aski Nation leaders highlighted the importance of working with leaders from other remote communities on northern remote issues during the initial meeting of the National Assembly of Remote Communities, which was formed in 2021. The May 31-June 2 meeting was co-hosted by Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) First Vice Chief David Pratt and Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

"I'm very excited about this endeavour with FSIN and the many other regions that are getting together for the sake of our remote communities," says Grand Chief Derek Fox via the Zoom virtual platform. "For those who don't know what it's like to live in the remote north ... they endure the high cost of living, the cost of fuel, delivering any kind of services to say Neskantaga or Bearskin Lake. These are things that are often not taken into account when it comes to announcements of funding and ensuring that First Nations get the resources they need."

Narcisse says the leaders want to bring more attention to the plight of remote communities and to identify the severe gaps in services that are prevalent amongst children, youth and families.

"Many of our communities within the remote north sit on very rich resource lands," Narcisse says. "Our children, youth and families should be enjoying a quality of life that is exceeding what they (have) right now."

Deputy Grand Chief Victor Linklater says it is important to keep speaking up because "our children are precious."

"We want them educated, we want them strong, we want them powerful, we want them



Grand Chief Derek Fox speaks about the high cost of living in remote First Nation communities during the National Assembly of Remote Communities, held May 31-June 2 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

healthy, so we need to work together," Linklater says. "It's nice to see a good mixture of Elders, knowledge keepers, youth, leadership, technical people — together we can do great things."

Mushkegowuk Council Deputy Grand Chief Rebecca Friday says it is important to fight for the children, noting that the current generation of children is facing a loss of their language.

"The grandparents can't understand their ... great great grandchildren — it's sad to see that because we need to speak in our language," Friday says. "That's why I spoke (Mushkegomowin) in my opening remarks. I'm trying my best to speak my language the way I was taught. All of my kids speak (Mushkegomowin), but my grandchildren don't."

Theresa Sutherland, member of the NAN Women's Council and Fort Albany citizen, says she has seen how the lack of mental health resources and services impacts First Nations women and by extension their communities.

"While there are a handful of community-based treatment or land-based detox programs scattered throughout the NAN territory, they are underfunded and under resourced," Sutherland

says. "We need holistically comprehensive addictions treatment programs in every community. Women are the heart of our families, the heart of our communities, they can't be expected to leave for the extended time needed to detox, then enter treatment and then move into an aftercare plan."

Ashley Bach, member of the NAN Oshkaatisak Council and Mishkeegamang citizen, says she didn't have an opportunity to grow up in her community due to funding inequities in rural and remote communities, noting she was apprehended at birth and adopted by a non-Native family in B.C. when she was five-years-old.

"We feel at this present time there is no possible means of providing the special needs required by this child and there is simply no resources or facilities in our community that would enable this child to receive the best care possible," Bach says, quoting a letter written by current Mishkeegomang Chief David Masaheyash, who was a councillor at the time. "In that letter, that's where they had to sign away saying that a family outside that wasn't First Nation could adopt me and take care of me because they didn't have those resources to do it themselves."

The National Assembly of Remote Communities was scheduled to focus on three major themes: the Journeys of Remote Communities; the Science of Measuring Remoteness; and Community Vulnerabilities Respecting Settlement Payouts.

"Canada has failed our youth and families for decades, but I am encouraged that we now have a healing path forward," Narcisse says. "The launch of the National Assembly of Remote Communities is an important step on our journey of long-term reform that will be First Nations led, as treaty and Indigenous rights holders, and based on our inherent authority to care for our children. I look forward to taking this historic step with our brothers and sisters from many nations."

Pratt says the National Assembly of Remote Communities was created by First Nations for First Nations.

"This assembly will address the serious funding issues our northern and remote nations face daily and address those areas where investments are critically needed," Pratt says. "Our First Nations children are our future, and we need to create a better path forward for them. This is the first step in that process."

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Politics

NAN mourns passing of Chris Cromarty

Rick Garrick  
Wawatay News

The late Wunnumin Lake Elder Chris Cromarty was honoured for his achievements as one of the founders of Grand Council Treaty No. 9 by Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) on June 10. Cromarty passed on June 9 at the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre.

“Chris was the founding vice-president of Grand Council Treaty No. 9,” says Grand Chief Derek Fox. “He was part of a delegation that asserted the Declaration of NAN to the federal government in 1977. Chris, like all the leaders at the time, they just believed in preserving our traditional practices and of course were concerned with our young people losing touch with their culture.”

Fox adds that Cromarty wanted to ensure that the people of NAN did not lose their

way.

“I know he wanted us to fight for that language, to get it back, assert it and bring it back into our schools,” Fox says. “That might be one of the ways we can honour him is to start fighting for those things that the government took from us. We need to find a way as leaders to get that language back, start by understanding it, encourage our leaders to learn to understand it and then speak it. I think Chris would really like that.”

Cromarty’s funeral was scheduled for June 14 at 1 p.m. at the St. James Church in Wunnumin Lake with Reverend Joey Bluecoat officiating. He was born in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug in 1937 to Eila and Isaac Cromarty and he attended the Pelican Lake Indian residential school near Sioux Lookout and the Shingwauk Indian residential school in Sault Ste. Marie.

“We are very saddened to learn of Chris’s passing and our love and prayers are with his dear wife Annie, his family and his home community of Wunnumin Lake First Nation,” Fox says. “Most NAN First Nations didn’t have electricity, airstrips or running water when leaders like Chris Cromarty established Grand Council Treaty No. 9 to improve the lives of our citizens. Our nations have come a long way since then, but the work we continue to do for our people was built on (the) vision that founders had for Nishnawbe Aski Nation.”

Cromarty was also an integral part of the 1997 Four Party Hospital Services Agreement that united two hospitals in Sioux Lookout into one regional hospital, which eventually became the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre. He served as the inaugural chair of the SLFNHA board of directors

and worked in health until his retirement. He had also managed the Big Trout Lake Co-op and later the Mistik store in Wunnumin Lake.

“As a leader Chris believed in preserving traditional practices and was concerned with young people losing touch with their language, culture and spirituality,” Fox says. “He often spoke about seeing positive change in young people as they returned to traditional teachings. He once commented that (the) world changed in the 1960s with the growing recognition of Indigenous traditions and culture as people were joining together to share their values and the things they treasure. We are seeing more of this today, with Indigenous rights, culture and identity increasingly being recognized and celebrated.”

Cromarty was awarded the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win



photo from Alvin Fiddler tweet

The late Wunnumin Lake Elder Chris Cromarty was honoured for his achievements as one of the founders of Grand Council Treaty No. 9 by Nishnawbe Aski Nation after his passing on June 9.

Health Centre’s inaugural Chris Cromarty Excellence in Leadership Award in 2007 for his tremendous contributions to improving health care in the Sioux Lookout area, and NAN honoured him with a lifetime achievement award in 2012.

“Chris was an inspiration to us all, and we cherish his life of leadership and friendship,” Fox says. “Many of us have grown up with a strong sense of pride and confidence thanks to leaders like him who have guided us along the way.”

Independent special interlocutor appointed

Rick Garrick  
Wawatay News

The Assembly of First Nations is still calling for an independent criminal investigation into unmarked graves and burial sites near residential schools after the federal government appointed an Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites.

“While the appointment of an Independent Special Interlocutor is one element needed to move forward with protecting unmarked burial sites, the Assembly of First Nations will continue to press for an independent criminal investigation so those responsible for the crimes that took place are held accountable,” says Regional Chief Kluane Adamek. “Truth is required before reconciliation and having an impartial investigation of the critical violations of First Nations human rights, with the same urgency and

investment as with this appointment, is required to pave the way for accountability and real justice.”

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald had previously called for a United Nations (UN) Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur to investigate crimes and human rights violations associated with residential institutions at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on April 25.

“I’m calling on the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples along with other special rapporteurs to conduct full-fledged investigations of the circumstances and responsibilities surrounding these institutions, including full redress, criminal prosecutions and sanctions and other remedies for human rights violations including genocide,” Archibald says during an April 25 press conference at the UN. “Canada must not be allowed to investigate itself. Please help us

ensure that something like this never happens again, not just to us but to anyone.”

Archibald says that she calls the residential schools, which were established by the federal government, institutions of assimilation and genocide.

“These institutions were designed to kill the Indian in the child by forbidding them to speak their language, which disconnected them from their families and communities,” Archibald says. “Some people refer to these institutions as residential schools — I don’t call them schools anymore because no school I ever attended had children buried in unmarked graves. Thousands and thousands of our children died in these institutions.”

The federal government announced the appointment of Kimberly Murray as Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian res-

idential schools on June 8.

Murray’s role is to work closely and collaboratively with Indigenous leaders, communities, survivors, families and experts to identify needed measures to recommend a new federal legal framework to ensure the respectful and culturally appropriate treatment and protection of unmarked graves and

burial sites of children at former residential schools.

“I am honoured to have been entrusted with this important responsibility of being the Special Interlocutor,” Murray says. “I am committed to supporting the work of survivors and Indigenous communities to protect, locate, identify, repatriate, and commemorate the children

who died while being forced to attend Indian residential schools. I pledge to do this work using my heart and my mind in a way that honours the memories of the children who never made it home.”

see INTERLOCUTOR on page 5



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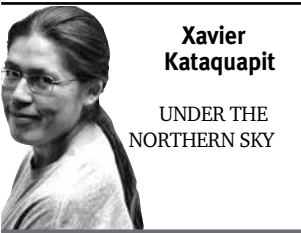
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# Commentary

## Long Covid Has Affected Thousands



**Xavier  
Kataquapit**  
  
UNDER THE  
NORTHERN SKY

Summer has finally arrived and the warm weather has us all excited and out and about. We have all endured a difficult winter and in fact a challenging past three years of the Covid19 pandemic. We deserve to have a great summer.

The fact is that Covid19 is still alive and a threat to us. In Ontario the government is reporting that as of today June 7, 2022 526 people are in hospital with Covid19 and 114 in intensive care. In terms of death, if you are vaccinated with three doses you are generally safe from getting very ill if you get Covid19 or ending up in the hospital and dying. If you are not vaccinated there is more risk you could get very sick, end up in the hospital and perhaps die.

The good news is that Covid19 deaths mostly have to do with those over 80 years of age with 24,671 passing away in Canada as of the end of May 2022. To put things into perspective 8,765 people aged 70 to 79 passed away, 4,415 aged 60 to 69 died and 1,881 50 to 59 succumbed. There were 671 deaths in the age group 40 to 49, 316 died aged 30 to 39, 130 died ages 20 to 29, 18 in the age group 12 to 19 and 32 in those 6 to 11 years of age.

For anyone who was fully vaccinated and had any of the Covid19 variants, it seems their sickness was less severe, they were less likely to be hospitalized and less chance of deaths. For those who were not vaccinated the outcomes were more severe. It is understood that many people ended up with Omicron variants because of how contagious these variants were. However, many who ended up with Omicron hardly felt any symptoms.

I had one of the Omicron variants and I was sick for a week or more and then I coughed for more than a month. A couple of months later I developed symptoms again and coughed for a few more weeks.

I wondered what on earth was going on and then I discovered a condition that is affecting thousands of people who had gone through Covid19. It is referred to as Long Covid.

I know so many people who are still feeling unwell and not back to their good health since having Omicron. They

are complaining about brain fog, exhaustion, fatigue, a sore chest or back, sore throat, headaches and being short of breath on doing anything physical. Through recent study I have discovered that although there is a lot of research going on to discover just how wide spread Long Covid is there is some thought that it might affect about a third of the population who experienced Covid19.

It seems that the more severe cases are in those who were not vaccinated however many people who were vaccinated and did not have severe symptoms are still experiencing Long Covid. Groups like the Long Covid Canada support group is assisting those who are experiencing this condition.

People with severe cases have found they can not work, have trouble returning to a normal productive life and can not support family and friends as they did in the past.

Recent research points to the fact that people who had been infected with the virus experienced a reduction in grey matter and a greater cognitive decline compared with people who had not contracted Covid19. How's that for scary?

There is so much we do not know about Covid19 and how it has affected those who ended up with it but research is going on all over the world now so we should know more soon. In the mean time the best way not to end up with Long Covid is not to get Covid19.

So it is a good idea to get vaccinated and take preventative measures to protect yourself. Although everyone including our governments are acting like Covid19 has ended, the fact is that this is not true and the evidence is that this virus is still circulating and making people sick.

The good news is that if you are not in the older age category you probably won't end up in the hospital, in intensive care or die, however you could end up quite sick and then go on to develop Long Covid which could affect you for many years.

So the best idea is to keep on wearing a mask in public when you are in a building with many people, wash your hands often and do your best to stay away from others who seem to be sick. It is very difficult for doctors to diagnose long term Covid and there are no known treatments currently so it is very much every person for themselves at this point.

We can still have a great summer but we do have to be conscious that we need to be careful.

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## Anishinabek Nation celebrates inaugural Anishinaabe Giizhigad



submitted photo

The Anishinabek Nation celebrated the inaugural June 6 Anishinabek Nation holiday, Anishinaabe Giizhigad, in honour of the historic proclamation of the Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin (constitution).  
“Today, we recognize June 6 as a day of great historical significance for the Anishinabek Nation, member First Nations, and citizens, and is cause for celebration across the Nation,” states Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Reg Niganobe. “It is a day where we remember and acknowledge the assertion of our sovereignty and responsibilities that are foremost guided by the Seven Grandfather Teachings. It is a day where we celebrate Anishinabek and the resiliency of our people who have survived decades of assimilation and racism. Our beautiful culture, traditions, and people will continue on for generations to come.”

## Fast forward from reluctant spring to summer weather



**Graham  
Saunders**  
  
WEATHER

Northern Ontario switched from below normal temperatures to summer heat on May 10. In the Northwest daytime temperatures ranged from 20 to 25 degrees Celsius until middle May, then returned to cooler than seasonal. In the Northeast many locations reported record high daytime temperatures at 30° C and more. In Moosonee, a temperature of 30.2° C on May 10th prompted media stories in Toronto about the north being 5 to 10 degrees warmer than in Southern Ontario. Some locations in the Northeast experienced two or three consecutive days exceeding 30° C. The unusual heat subsided for more than a week, then resumed by the end of the month. The Northeast was 1 and 3° C warmer than normal whereas the monthly average temperatures in the Northwest were near normal in May.

Precipitation amounts in Northeastern Ontario and the far North were near-average in May. There were some flood concerns in the far North because of the timing of the snowmelt and ice jams in some rivers. There were a few evacuations because of flood poten-

tial but little damage because of higher water levels.

Most of the consequences of snowfall were felt in North-western Ontario. The effect of a melting substantial snow-pack was compounded by a Colorado Low (May 12-13) which brought overnight thunderstorms and 30 to 60 mm of rainfall to most areas. This rainfall, already saturated ground conditions and melting snow resulted in local flooding concerns for many communities. Some places like Kenora, Rainy River and other locations already had local state of emergencies because of April high water levels.

A storm system on May 30 featured a variety of interesting weather situations. Many areas of Northwestern Ontario and northern Minnesota continued to cope with high water levels. Sometimes the expression “bank full” is used to imply “any more rainfall means flooding is possible”, i.e. additional water will spill over the banks and become overland flow. Environment Canada issued various watches and warnings during the day across Northwestern Ontario. “Severe thunderstorm warning continued” was a common message as the evening progressed.

“Tornado warning replaces severe thunderstorm warning for: Ignace, Atikokan, [and other area locations...]. At 9:26 p.m. CDT, Environment Canada meteorologists are tracking a severe thunderstorm that is possibly producing a tornado. Damaging winds, large hail and

locally intense rainfall are also possible.”

About this time I received an email message from a friend who lives in Atikokan: “We are having some weather here right now....pretty exciting. I might turn this off now and think about going to the basement.”

### Tornado warnings

Environment Canada issues a variety of statements about specific weather events. These range from warnings to special weather advisories and vary according to the season. Only Environment Canada has the jurisdiction to issue weather alerts. These and other weather information is often passed on by the various media and other agencies like the Weather Network.

The Environment Canada goal is to issue Watches and Warnings six to 24 hours in advance, although severe weather associated with thunderstorms and tornadoes can develop rapidly. Recent media stories noted that “Environment Canada’s tornado warnings falling well short of targets”. The stories were based on assessments by the Northern Tornadoes Project (NTP) based at Western University in London, Ontario. The NTP noted that the success rate of one-hour warning was only 12%.

Radar images can supply clues as to location, movement and intensity of tornadoes. Radar images are colour coded with a spectrum such and the dark purple is heaviest precipi-

tation.

On May 30 radar images showed purple surrounded by red and then yellow south of Dryden. This combination does not necessarily confirm tornado occurrence or precise location but does imply potential tornado activity.

Strong winds, heavy rain and tornadoes took place in northern Minnesota. Many downed trees left thousands without electricity. Environment Canada and NTP are investigating two possible tornadoes in the Dryden area. The intense thunderstorms resulted in 44 mm of rain in Fort Frances, 38 mm in Atikokan and 27 mm in Dryden.

Seven tornadoes have been confirmed by the NWS for Minnesota.

### Outlook for June and July

Northern Ontario is likely to experience near or slightly below seasonal temperatures with near normal precipitation for the final weeks of June.

Several forecasting agencies in April predicted a flip from below normal temperatures to much warmer than seasonal in the summer. We did see such a flip in May, especially in the Northeast. The chances of exceptional heat in July have declined, which also lessens the chances of a repeat of last year’s forest fire season.

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# Politics



photo submitted by Xavier Kataquapi

Historic announcement was celebrated as Beaverhouse First Nation recieved official recognition as a First Nation by the government of Canada. Community citizens, Elders, First Nation leaders and visiting dignitaries came together at the Beaverhouse First Nation office on May 21, 2022 in Kirkland Lake to celebrate the official recognition of their First Nation by the government of Canada.

# Beaverhouse First Nation achieves historic recognition

Beaverhouse First Nation made history when leadership announced to their community that the First Nation had achieved formal recognition as a First Nation from the government of Canada. The historic announcement was sent by the government on April 19, 2022 as an official letter from the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations (ISC), stating that 'Beaverhouse First Nation has demonstrated it is a section 35 rights-bearing First Nation collectivity'. This means that Beaverhouse First Nation is now a recognized First Nation community with rights under the Canadian Constitution.

"It's been a whirlwind of emotions for all of us in the community. I have been involved in this fight for most of my life alongside many of our past leaders such as the late Chief Roy Meaniss, who was a long time advocate for the community. It's been an honour to carry on his legacy and to work with our community to achieve this goal," said Chief Wayne Wabie.

The event was led with a prayer and ceremony by Chief Wabie, along with messages of support by his father and community Elder Tom Wabie.

The legal process for recognition was started by the late Chief Roy Meaniss in the 1980s. Successive Beaverhouse FN Chiefs who continued the process were Chief Gloria McKenzie and Chief Sally Susan Mathias Martel (Marcia Brown-Martel). The community and its leaders had fought for recognition for the past three decades with the major support and expertise of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), the regional political organization that represents First Nations in the Treaty #9 area. Beaverhouse FN as a citizen of Wabun Tribal Council also had support of Wabun.

“This is a very emotional and proud moment for

the people of Beaverhouse First Nation. To have this recognition from the government, from your partners within NAN, from townships and from neighbouring communities means that it is a powerful foundation to build upon. We will be there to support Beaverhouse First Nation and help their nation continue to grow. I am extremely happy to be here with the community today," said Grand Chief Derek Fox, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation in speaking to event participants.

The lead legal representative for Beaverhouse FN, Kim Fullerton was instrumental in representing the First Nation over the years. He is a long time advocate for First Nation communities and organizations primarily in land claims against Canada and Ontario.

"This is a very significant event because Canada is recognizing a new First Nation in the country, which does not happen very often. This is a very proud day for all of us, the community citizens, their leaders and Nishnawbe-Aski Nation who supported the First Nation. It's been a long time coming and it is very satisfying to be able to assist this wonderful group of people," said Fullerton.

His wife Christine Dernoï, was one of the key researchers that worked with Beaverhouse FN and NAN to prepare the legal case with the government. Luke Hunter, Director of Governance, Treaty Im-plementation for NAN was also instrumental in advocating for and assisting Beaverhouse FN leadership in this process over many years.

First Nation recognition for Beaverhouse FN is the first step in starting the process of creating a new relationship with government. The community leadership and its citizens will now take the time to plan for the future direction of the First Nation and negotiate with federal and provincial governments. The federal government

has appointed a federal negotiator to start discussions on this process with a meeting planned for June.

The lack of official First Nation recognition by the government in the past meant a lot of difficulty for the First Nation leadership in establishing, developing and maintaining social, health, education and administrative activities for its citizens.

Chief Wabie gave thanks to the community citizens, Elders and past leaders who supported the efforts and provided the information, research, historical documentation and input critical in establishing the record of their people's history.

"This is a very emotional event for all of us as it makes me realize what is next for our community. This new stage of development will bring healing not just in body, but in mind and spirit and as a whole for all our families," said Councillor Brianna Moore.

First Nation leadership is now hopeful for positive future growth for the community.

"This is going to change Beaverhouse First Nation because nobody can say that we are not a First Nation any more. There is lots of work to be done but I have full faith in our community that we are go-ing to do great things," said Councillor Kayla Batisse.

Councillor Rob Meaniss joined the event via live stream along with other officials and community participants who were not able to attend in person.

"It feels great to be here today. We are a strong community that has managed to hang on to our language and our history through our Elders. Now we will be able to move forward with our youth to build our community and make us stronger," said Councillor Diane Meaniss.

# Independent interlocutor

from page 3

The Special Interlocutor position was created after David Lametti, minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, engaged with Indigenous leaders across the country and the importance of an Indigenous-led response was reiterated.

"The identification of unmarked graves and burial sites of Indigenous children at residential schools has caused us all to reflect on Canada's history and the truth of this troubling past," Lametti says. "I am honoured to announce the appointment of Kimberly Murray as Special Interlocutor. This work will be an important trust-building exercise that will help communities move forward, find healing for families and survivors, and push us all toward a more just framework for honouring the memory of Indigenous children who never returned home from residential schools."

The federal Budget 2022 included proposed spending of \$10.4 million over two years for Justice Canada to support the appointment and work of the Special Interlocutor.

Budget 2022's proposed spending also included \$209.8 million over five years, starting in 2022-23, for Crown-Indige-

nous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada to increase the support provided to communities to document, locate and memorialize burial sites at former residential schools; to support the operations of and a new building for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation; and to ensure the full disclosure of federal documents related to residential schools, where possible.

Other proposed spending in Budget 2020 included \$5.1 million for Public Safety Canada to ensure the Royal Canadian Mounted Police can continue to renew and strengthen existing relationships between the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains, Indigenous communities and police agencies in providing support in missing persons and unidentified remains investigations; \$25 million over three years, starting in 2022-23, for Library and Archives Canada to support the digitization of millions of documents relating to the federal Day School System to ensure survivors and all Canadians have meaningful access to them; and \$25 million over three years, starting in 2022-23, for Parks Canada to support the commemoration and memorialization of former residential schools sites.

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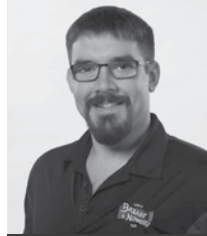


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# Education



# Oshki receives funding to expand PSW and nursing programs

**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute recently received funding from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to increase the number of students entering the Personal Support Worker (PSW) and Practical Nursing programs. The provincial government announced on March 2 that it was investing \$34 million over four years to increase enrolment in nursing and personal support worker programs at six Indigenous Institutes, including Oshki-Wenjack, Anishinabek Educational Institute, First Nations Technical Institute, Kenjgewin Teg, Seven Generations Education Institute and Six Nations Polytechnic.

"There is an urgent need for more nurses and PSWs who are training, working and staying in their communities," says Rebecca Jamieson, chair at the Indigenous Institutes Consortium and president and CEO at Six Nations Polytechnic. "Indigenous Institutes have unique capacities to provide pathways to health care education that link our learners to community health care employers. This funding is critically important as we collectively work to recover from a global pandemic while continuing to create positive paths forward from our collective experience of inter-generational trauma and loss of language and culture."

Oshki-Wenjack plans to offer new intakes of the two-semester PSW program during each semester from the fall of 2022 to the spring of 2025. The students will have their tuition and books fully paid for and they are also eligible to receive an additional \$2,100 scholarship.

"Over the next three years Oshki-Wenjack will be offering a new intake of Personal Support Worker (students) every semester," says Susan Sinclair, academic director at Oshki-Wenjack. "We have funding for books and tuition as well as a clinical stipend for the students when they go into their placement in the long-term care setting or the home and community care setting, which is wonderful because it does provide the student with improved access to the training. The goal is to increase the number of personal support workers that we train so they can go back to the community and work in those positions at the community level."

Oshki-Wenjack also plans to offer two additional Practical Nursing Program cohorts in the winter of 2023 and winter of 2024. Students enrolled in

the five-semester program will receive scholarships valued at \$11,000.

"The goal is again to increase the number of practical nurses that are prepared and ready to go back and practice at the community level," Sinclair says.

Sinclair says Oshki-Wenjack is currently building a lab setting on campus for students to do their training.

“The students can actually go into the lab setting where they can learn things like how to transfer a patient, how to move a patient up and down in bed appropriately, how to administer medication,” Sinclair says. “There’s many different skills that the students learn, so we will have all the equipment for the training for the students here on site.”

The provincial government says the \$34 million investment will support the training of about 340 practical nurses, 60 registered nurses and 400 PSWs over four years.

"By expanding enrolment in PSW and nursing programs at Indigenous Institutes, our government is ensuring learners continue to have access to culturally relevant, high-calibre education, training and supports," says Jill Dunlop, minister of Colleges and Universities. "Providing additional pathways to health care education close to home will also result in more nurses and PSWs who are training, working and staying in their communities."

Sinclair says Oshki-Wenjack is starting to see increased applications for the PSW and Practical Nursing programs since the new intakes were announced.

"The unique feature also about Oshki-Wenjack is we have support services for students on site, we have Elders that can do sharing circles or be there to support, we have tutoring available to students if they are having challenges with their school assignments, we have mental health counselling support, mental health referrals if we need to and we have student navigators who reach out continuously to the students to keep connected and just problem solve with the students and help support them," Sinclair says. "So it's a wraparound service that we provide and it's unique because we get to know the students individually and get to help and support them through their time away from their family and their community while they are training here."

Information about Oshki-Wenjack's PSW and Practical Nursing programs is posted at: [www.oshki.ca](http://www.oshki.ca).



Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute is increasing the number of students entering its Personal Support Worker and Practical Nursing programs through funding from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

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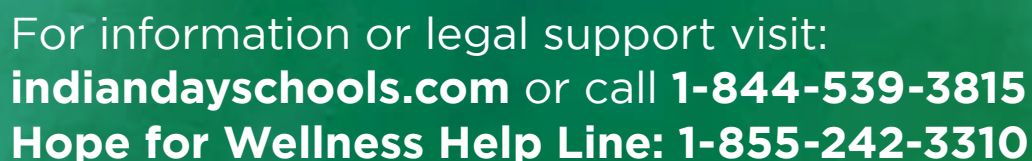
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Culture



Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum (TOP), centre right, dances. The Gathering of the People Powwow featured dancers of all ages at Evergreen Park in Thunder Bay. Rick Garrick/Wawatay News







**If you need legal assistance with your Federal Indian Day School Claims Form, contact Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation Staff:**

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Email: amack@nanlegal.on.ca  
*\*Who can assist in Direction and Resources*

With the recent and on going discoveries of the unmarked graves across the country, and even when you are filling out your “Indian Day School” application form, please know that talking or thinking about painful past experiences can trigger intense thoughts, and or feelings. It really helps to talk to a trusted person, such as a friend, family member or an Elder. In some cases you may not be aware of your own Trauma, and it can resurface. Triggers can happen at anytime time. If your feeling overwhelmed, anxious and or upset, please reach out to someone immediately. Take time out, practice self care, especially through these trying times.

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**Website: [www.nanlegal.on.ca](http://www.nanlegal.on.ca)**





A men's traditional dancer dances his style during the Gathering of the People Powwow, held at Evergreen Park in Thunder Bay.

# Gathering Of People Powwow back after two year hiatus

**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum highlighted the importance of holding gatherings again after two years of the COVID-19 pandemic during the Gathering of the People Powwow in Thunder Bay.

"It's always such a wonderful thing to see people gathering like this," Achneepineskum says. "Even when it's raining people will still come out but it's always much better when the weather is good. This is a great gathering ... and especially coming out of a pandemic, for people to gather like this, to have these opportunities, it's a very good thing."

Achneepineskum says it was good to see all the vendors at the powwow, which was held at Evergreen Park with warmups on May 27 and grand entries and dancing on May 28-29 and a feast on May 28.

"There's more and more vendors that come out to these gatherings and I think we need to do our best to support them," Achneepineskum says.

Roberta Mattinas, one of the powwow organizers and a Constance Lake citizen, says they did a special on May 27 for the 215 potential burial sites discovered a year earlier at a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C.

“(The powwow) is going good so far despite the

weather,” Mattinas says on May 28. “It’s just to get the people to come together. Because of COVID-19, we need to get people to come out and dance and get together.”

Randy White, one of the Whitefish Bay Singers, says the powwow was good, noting that the powwow was "a little bit rainy" on May 28.

"It's a lot drier today and a lot more people, for sure," White says on May 29.

White also noted the importance of the initiation ceremony that was held at the powwow for new dancers to begin their path on the powwow trail.

"We sang for them to come in," White says. "It's always important for people to come into the circle and be a part of the culture and be part of the powwow. It's a good time, it's good for them."

White says the Whitefish Bay Singers began in the late 1960s as a way for youth to hold onto their culture and traditions from the community.

"That was actually requested by the Elders back then to start bringing the young people to start drumming again as a way of holding onto our culture and songs, our language," White says. "So that was a big part of why the Whitefish Bay drum came to be, was to hold onto our traditions."

White also noted the importance of getting back on the powwow trail again after the pandemic.

"A lot of our people really wanted to have that connection again with people, with the drum beat," White says. "It's so important for emotional and mental wellness to get back in touch with that."

Rebecca Sutherland, a Constance Lake citizen who helped gather donations for the powwow, says people were still attending the powwow despite the rainy weather on May 28.

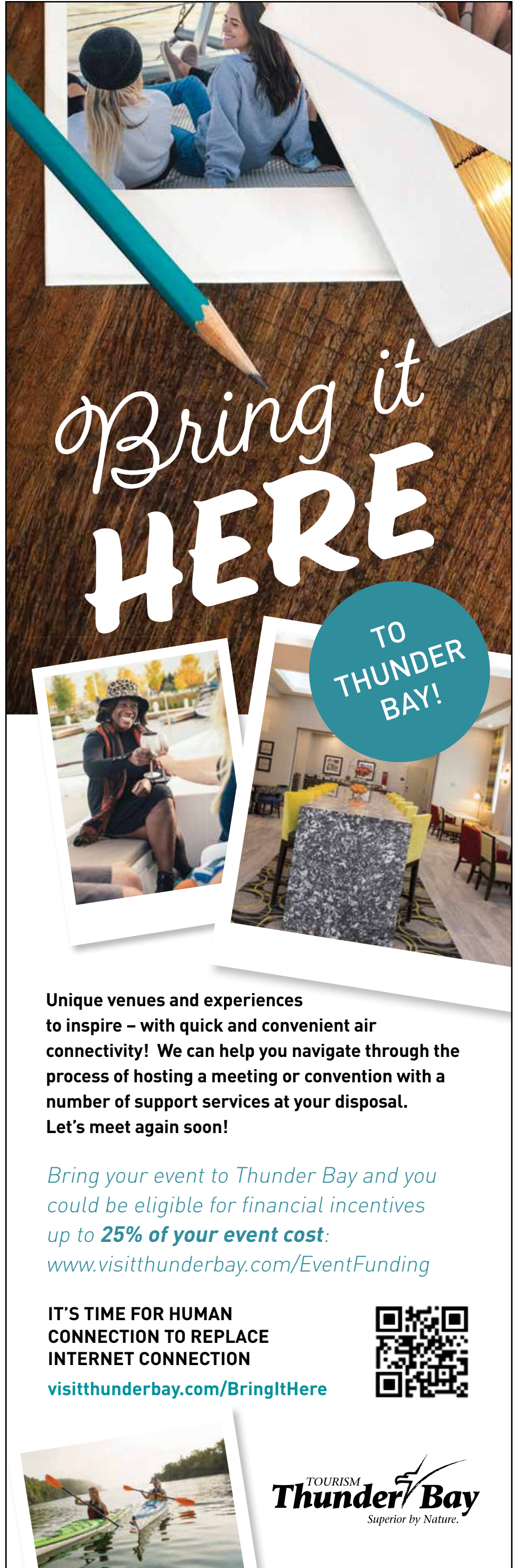
"People are still coming out and enjoying the powwow," Sutherland says on May 28. "I see people are clapping and smiling and talking with one another, and I'm glad they're enjoying themselves."

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Elder Diane Michano-Richmond says the powwow's location at Evergreen Park was "beautiful."

"It's nice to see all the people here dancing in this early pow-wow," Michano-Richmond says. "I'm looking forward to meeting all of our families with the pow-wows coming up."

Janine Desmoulin, emcee at the powwow and Biigtigong Nishnaabeg citizen, says the powwow looked "gorgeous" with the drier weather on May 29.

29. “Our grand entry was beautifully attended,” Desmoulin says. “It’s looking gorgeous with our newfound weather today, it’s beautiful happenings, there’s over 100 people excluding our vendors and all those who are set up and our dancing is going beautifully.”







Nishnawbe Aski Nation  
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**We proclaim July 3-9, 2022, Family Well-Being Week to honour families, celebrate all people and creation. Celebrating family is one way we can come together to strengthen family bonds and build healthy relationships creating harmony and healing to build a better future.**



***Booshoo Wacheya Aaniin,***

Today I bring you greetings from our Nishnawbe Aski Nation offices and the Social Services Department.

In May, we hosted the NAN Spring Chiefs Assembly. It was great to gather again and listen to leadership express their concerns. We will ensure to work effectively and advocate on behalf of our NAN citizens in the direction the Chiefs in Assembly provided.

I am also pleased to announce the National Assembly of Remote Communities (NARC) had its first Symposium. From May 31 to June 2, 2022, Allied leadership from remote communities gathered in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. NAN Co-hosted with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) First Vice Chief David Pratt and his team.

The Symposium provided an opportunity for the National Assembly of Remote Communities to launch its first Assembly formally. NAN Chiefs Committee on Children Youth and Families joined with counterparts from northern Indigenous communities across Canada to celebrate the creation of a collective voice – the National Assembly of Remote Communities. Leadership celebrated along with elders, leaders from women and youth councils, and representatives of Indigenous child welfare agencies and the Government of Canada. In the inaugural Symposium, attendees shared and discussed their journeys of living in a remote community and the costs of living in a remote community. Though we have completed much work, there is still much to do around remoteness, and we will continue to work with our NAN communities to ensure our remote issues and concerns are heard.

Wishing you all the best and continue to be safe and take care.

Meegwetch,

*Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse*



# Family Well-Being Week

**July 3-9, 2022**



**Nishnawbe Aski Nation**  
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***Wachay from the Social Services Department,***

The changing of the seasons helps to remind us that even in times of tremendous hardships and endings, there is growth, warmth and light. For over two years, we have all been challenged by the pandemic and each and every one of us has been impacted emotionally and physically. We are coming through this time forever changed in some manner. But we are coming through.

Our Department continues to support and advocate for our NAN communities and our dedicated staff work tirelessly to ensure needs can be met and voices are being heard. We are grateful not only for this, but for all of you, as you are our motivation and the driving force behind all of the work that we do.

In January 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found Canada guilty of racially discriminating against First Nations children by insufficiently funding child and family services located on reserve. Through intervenor status, NAN was instrumental in the negotiation and signing of the Agreement-In-Principle (AIP) on December 31, 2021. NAN is now involved in the current task of negotiating a Final Settlement Agreement, and this is to ensure the unique needs of our remote communities are addressed. This is expected to be concluded by November 20, 2022, and will be a binding agreement.

While negotiations continue, provisions of the AIP are being implemented: Capital Funding Process, First Nations Representative Service (formerly Band Representative Services), Post-Majority Care Services, Prevention Funding Allocation. As well, Choose Life funding will continue with a commitment to a “back to basics approach” and training/education at the government level.

Another new development coming out of AIP negotiations is the remoteness challenges that are shared across Canada. This has resulted in the establishment of the National Assembly of Remote Communities (NARC). NARC will allow for a unified voice at the national level and will represent an advocacy voice across all sectors.

Taking into account the dynamics of the work involved, we are excited that our Department is growing!

If there is anything I can assist with, or if you have any questions, please reach out to me at [rquachegan@nan.ca](mailto:rquachegan@nan.ca) or to Aurora Smith, Social Services Policy Analyst at [asmith@nan.ca](mailto:asmith@nan.ca).

Stay safe and be well.

*Robin Quachegan*

Director of Social Services

***Boozhoo, Aaniin, Wacheya,***

I would like to start by acknowledging and commending the Family Well-Being Program (FWBp) Community Coordinators for their dedication, passion, endless hours of ongoing support and resources they provide to families. Having to be extremely creative thinking of ways how to support families across Turtle Island during the pandemic. Coordinators have played a vital role providing essential COVID-19 resources, delivering food and supporting the wellbeing of all our relations.

Moving into another year of the pandemic has reduced our ability to gather in person that has been overwhelming and extremely challenging. Communities have shown their resilience by thinking of new ways of offering activities and programs such as radio shows, virtual events and, online activities. This shows the commitment and willingness to overcome these difficult times we are facing. Please contact your local Family Well-Being Program Coordinator to inquire about programs and activities during Family Well-Being Week.

**Here are some activities the FWBp Community Coordinators have done to host Family Well-Being Week:**

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| - Fishing Derby                             | - Gospel Jamboree                 |
| - Baseball Tournament                       | - Karaoke Contest                 |
| - Volleyball Tournament                     | - Family Scavenger Hunt           |
| - Land-Based Camping for Families and Youth | - Social Media Games and Contests |
| - Picking & Harvesting Medicines            | - Family Radio Show               |
| - Community Cookout                         | - Family Photo Contest            |
| - Preparing & Cooking Traditional Food      | - Beach Day                       |

As we move forward and continue to find new ways of supporting each other and start gathering again that we be mindful for the safety of ourselves and families. Continue to follow COVID-19 safety measures, community protocols and follow the direction of our leaders. The more we empower and encourage one another the more we become united and stronger together. We hope to be able to travel soon across Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) territory and see each other in person. May the Creator continue to watch over our families and communities.

Miigwech & God Bless!

*Sheila Marcinyshyn*

**Family Well-Being Program Manager**

For more information please contact:

Sheila Marcinyshyn, [smarcinyshyn@nan.ca](mailto:smarcinyshyn@nan.ca)

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NAN has a contact list and can assist communities and Tribal Councils to apply for their own workers. Email [jordansprinciple@nan.ca](mailto:jordansprinciple@nan.ca)



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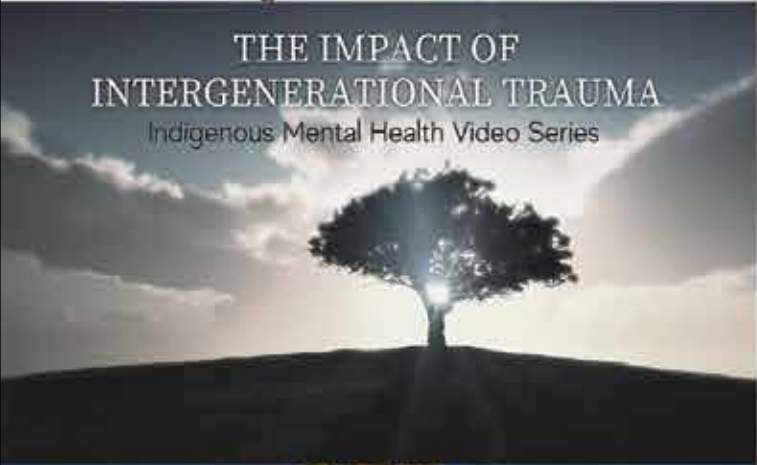
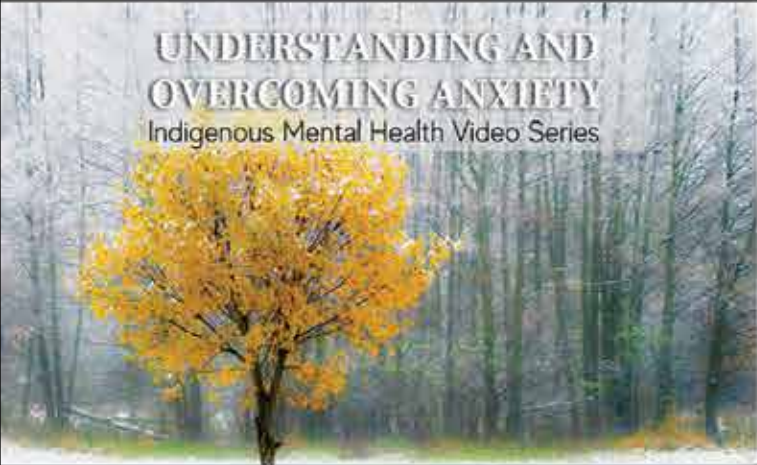
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# Indigenous Mental Health Video Series

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## About the Series

presented by Jasmine Peterson

The Indigenous Mental Health Video Series was designed to provide additional support for Indigenous people who have difficulty accessing mental health services due to pandemic-related travel restrictions, infrastructure limitations (i.e., poor telephone/internet connections), etc.

This video series discusses the impact of intergenerational trauma on Indigenous people and communities and how this has contributed to mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, addictions, and anger. This series provides important education and practical coping strategies, presented in a friendly, conversational manner by Jasmine Peterson.

Jasmine Peterson is a mental health professional of Indigenous descent. She has worked extensively with Indigenous clients over the past seven years at our clinic and in remote Indigenous communities. Jasmine works with children, teens, and adults, providing psychological assessments and counselling/psychotherapy.



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Health

SLFNHA opens new office in Thunder Bay

Rick Garrick  
Wawatay News

Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA) has opened a new satellite office in Thunder Bay to serve the expanding needs of the SLFNHA communities and its growing staff. The new office is located at 981 Balmoral St., Suite 200, at the corner of Balmoral and William Sts. across from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit.

“We’re still not fully operational on that — we’re expecting about 48 staff to be there and we’re up to about 32 now,” says James Morris, CEO and president at SLFNHA. “The reason we did that is we’re running out of space in Sioux Lookout, and it also opens up the doors for us to have a bigger pool of employees to hire because it’s really hard for some people to move to Sioux Lookout.”

Morris says SLFNHA serves more than 40,000 people in 33 First Nations communities, both on and off-reserve, across northwestern Ontario.

“Many people from these communities find themselves needing medical services in urban settings like Thunder Bay,” Morris says. “Having an office here in Thunder Bay will help with patient navigation, facilitate relationships with local stakeholders, and address the growing staffing needs of SLFNHA.”

Morris says there are many citizens from SLFNHA communities who live in Thunder Bay.

“And some of them have



James Morris, SLFNHA CEO and president, and Howard Meshake, acting SLFNHA board chair, presented Fort William Chief Peter Collins with a framed gift during the opening of SLFNHA's new satellite office in Thunder Bay as Jeannie Carpenter looks on.

already asked me now that we have an office here can they work for us and I said sure,” Morris says. “So that was a good sign for me.”

SLFNHA community citizens have made about 5,100 visits to Thunder Bay since April 2021, including about 800 this past

November.

The SLFNHA board was advised in a 2021 report by former public health physician Dr. John Guilfoyle, who has since retired, that a presence in Thunder Bay would address the growing needs of SLFNHA community citizens in urban

settings.

SLFNHA currently employs about 500 staff, and its current offices in Sioux Lookout are still fully functional.

SLFNHA was established in March 1990 for health service delivery and client advocacy after Nishnawbe Aski Nation

(NAN) endorsed the implementation of the appointment of a First Nations health authority that would develop health policy for the Sioux Lookout region and control and administer health services centrally.

The Scott-McKay-Bain Health Panel - From Here to

There: Steps Along the Way report, which was presented to the NAN general assembly in March 1989, recommended a move towards Native self-government with the full participation of First Nations communities for the ongoing responsibility of health care.



Donna Galbreath, senior medical director of Quality Assurance, Southcentral Foundation in Alaska, speaks about the Nuka System of Care during her presentation on the first day of the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA) Health Summit.



Lana Ray, associate professor and research chair in Decolonial Futures, Indigenous Learning at Lakehead University, speaks about treating the underlying issues related to her autoimmune disorder during her presentation.

SLFNHA Health Summit focuses on changing the landscape of First Nations health care

Rick Garrick  
Wawatay News

The importance of changing the focus of First Nations health care was highlighted on the first day of the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA) Health Summit - Kanawenimitisoowin: Looking after ourselves in our own way. The Health Summit was held June 7-9 at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay.

“On May 12, 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I brought my wife (Jeannie Carpenter) home at the advice of the medical professionals that she would be safer at home,” says Howard Meshake, acting SLFNHA board chair. “At that time she was very broken, mentally, physically and spiritually. If nurses and doctors come up

to her today and see her, they’ll say how beautiful she looks, how vibrant she looks and how healthy she looks since I brought her home. That goes to show how bringing our people home makes a difference, which plays into health transformation — we as First Nations people for years have been telling the medical profession we want our loved ones home.”

Lana Ray, associate professor and research chair in Decolonial Futures, Indigenous Learning at Lakehead University, says she has been dealing with some of the underlying issues related to her autoimmune disorder after discontinuing the medication she had been taking for the disorder.

“Instead of dealing with what I understood to now be the symptom, which that medi-

cation was doing for the past 15 years, I started to deal with some of the underlying issues of that and learned more about what those underlying issues were from my new healthcare team,” Ray says, noting that took different medicines to clean her blood and went on an anti-inflammatory diet that included eating wild meat. “I had work that I have to do for myself that I am still doing related to childhood grief and trauma — I was told that was a big part of my condition as well.”

Ray says she also began working on the advice of a traditional healer around meditation and rethinking her lifestyle in terms of the pace she worked at.

“I was given directions in terms of reparations for the

land as well,” Ray says. “My health transformation process is ongoing but I’ve seen some improvements within my health. I’ve had a significant weight loss as well and just am trying to live mino-bimaadiziwin as well.”

Donna Galbreath, senior medical director of Quality Assurance, Southcentral Foundation in Alaska, says the Nuka System of Care, a relationship-based, customer-owned approach to transforming health care, improving outcomes and reducing costs, is owned and operated by Native people in Alaska.

“We changed the entire health care system so that it was based on Alaska Native and American Indian culture and values,” Galbreath says, noting that they only serve Alaska

Native American Indian people. “We took the best of other things — the medical system has lots of things that are good in health care, but how health care is delivered, we changed that. Because of that we were able to improve the health outcomes for the people that we serve. We call the people we serve customer-owners because we believe they are customers and we believe that they own their health care system because we paid for our health care system through land and resources so it belongs to us.”

Galbreath says the health care system is based on what people told them they wanted in their health care system.

“We continue to ask individuals in the community how we can improve, what needs to change, if anything needs

to change, what we are doing well,” Galbreath says. “So it’s constant input, it’s constant back-and-forth as we tweak the system. The general form is there — people said they wanted to see their provider when they wanted to see their provider, so if they wanted to see somebody today, they can see their provider today, not any provider but their provider.”

Galbreath says they created a system based on cultural values with underpinnings of relationship.

“We want to make certain that each individual knows who their provider is and their provider knows them,” Galbreath says. “If you have a relationship, then you have trust and if you have trust, then the individual can be involved in their own health care.”



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Health



Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa speaks about the need for change in health care on the second day of the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority Health Summit, held June 7-9 at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay.



Nishnawbe Aski Nation Health Transformation lead Alvin Fiddler speaks about the Health Transformation process.

MPP Mamakwa advocates for change at SLFNHA Health Summit

Rick Garrick  
Wawatay News

Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa and Health Transformation lead Alvin Fiddler emphasized the need for change on the second day of the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA) Health Summit - Kanawenimisiwin: Looking after ourselves in our own way. The Health Summit was held June 7-9 at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay. “Two weeks ago I got talking to this young mother ... and she started showing me pictures of her son, two to three-years-old,” Mamakwa says. “His body was just covered in scabs.” Mamakwa says the mother told him that her son’s skin con-

dition improved when she was using bottled water to bathe him. “She told me she can’t afford any more bottled water to bathe him,” Mamakwa says, noting that her community does not have clean drinking water. “When we talk about social determinants of health, that’s the way the system treats people, that’s the way the system is designed. The system is not broken, the system is working exactly the way it is designed to, which is to take away the rights of our people to the lands and resources that we have up north.” Mamakwa says an older man also spoke to him about missing his grandchildren and family while undergoing dialysis away

from home. “You know what he did, he just (gave up) his treatment and went home, and he died,” Mamakwa says. “That’s how oppression works, that’s how colonialism works.” Mamakwa says there are 14 boil water advisories in the Kiiwetinoong riding, noting that Neskantaga will reach its 10,000th day on a boil water advisory later this month. “There is no way that would be allowed in Thunder Bay, there is no way that would be allowed in Toronto,” Mamakwa says. “So that’s how oppression works.” Mamakwa says there are some opportunities to make change, such as focusing on specific areas such as youth

and adolescent mental health to address the suicide issue and eliminating chronic diseases such as diabetes. “That’s health transformation,” Mamakwa says. “So it’s really important that we work together on these issues.” Fiddler says Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) has been looking at how it could do the Health Transformation process better in light of changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “We’ve talked about the approaches that we can take in light of some of the changes we have seen over the course of the last two-and-a-half years,” Fiddler says. “We’ve sort of arrived at a three pathway approach, one is immediate needs. There is no question that we cannot

just do away with the day-to-day challenges that we need to address when our families are in emergency right now. We need to commit ourselves to working with those individuals and those families and communities to address whatever needs they may have.” Fiddler says the second part is transforming the health care system. “This is where we all need to come together and work together,” Fiddler says. “NAN will not do all the work. The work that you are doing whether it’s at the SLFNHA level, at the community level or the tribal council level and the work that we are doing at NAN, they need to be part of one big sort of comprehensive

effort working towards a common goal of truly transforming health care for our communities.” Fiddler says the Elders’ teachings and guidance has been important during the Health Transformation process. “They are the ones that remind us of what Health Transformation really is, which is reclaiming our own systems that were there before,” Fiddler says. “That is who we were and that’s what we need to go back to. So that’s sort of the pathways we are looking at moving forward that would help guide our work day-to-day.”

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# Health Summit highlights need for hospitals without borders

ris says. "We're not going to build hospitals up north, we're just going to develop hospital-type services that we can use in the communities. Instead of sending people hundreds of miles away every time they need something, we want to try to (provide) it closer to home. Let's do it there rather than sending people to Thunder Bay or Winnipeg."






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# McIntyre water walk held in Thunder Bay

**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

The For Love of the Rivers 2.0 Water Walk 2022 2nd Water Walk Ceremony was held from 280 Hazelwood Dr. along the McIntyre River to Lake Superior on June 12 in Thunder Bay.

"It's a ceremony for the water to bring healing to the water," says Sheila DeCorte, a water walker from Fort William. "It's something that was started many years ago by the late (Water Walker) Josephine Mandamin and it's a commitment that we made to her as walkers to continue her work that she started."

DeCorte says this was the second of four water walks planned for this year, with the first held along the McVicar Creek in May, the third planned along the Neebing River in July and the fourth planned along the Kaministiquia River for two days in August.

"After joining the late Nokomis Josephine Mandamin in her last water walk from Spirit Mountain to Matane, Quebec in the spring of 2017, I was inspired when I came back to do something for the rivers here in Thunder Bay," DeCorte says. "I really felt the rivers were hurting because of all the losses with our First Nations youth coming from remote communities to go to high school here over a period of years. So I had that little whisper, I needed to do something for the rivers, and then I had the vision to

bring water down from Loch Lomond."

DeCorte says they originally began the For Love of the Rivers Water Walk in 2018 by bringing water down from Loch Lomond and adding it to the rivers through the ceremony of water walks.

“Over the four-year period we did the four directions, so we did Loch Lomond the first year which was from the south,” DeCorte says. “Then we went to the west and picked up water from Kakabeka, and then in the north from Current River. Last year we completed that water commitment by picking up water in the McKenzie River.”

DeCorte says this year's four water walks is the first of a four-year commitment to do those water walks for four years.

"We have to continue doing this so that we can have safe drinking water for not only our generation but future generations to come," DeCorte says.

DeCorte says the McIntyre River water walk was very beautiful and very powerful.

"You've got not only the birds singing, but you've got the river singing to you and talking to you as we walk and pray," DeCorte says. "Every step is a prayer when we're carrying the water."

Sharon Manitowabi, a water walker from Thunder Bay, says the water walk is a relationship with the water, understanding that water is life.

"It's a living being, it has feel-



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Fort William's Sheila DeCorte and another water walker walk along the McIntyre River next to the Thunder Centre during the For Love of the Rivers 2.0 Water Walk 2022 2nd Water Walk Ceremony on June 12 in Thunder Bay.

ings, it acknowledges us and the work that we do with it,” Maniwabi says. “As Anishinabe women we have a responsibility to look after the water.”

Manitowabi says the walkers cannot stop with the pail of water during the water walk because the water keeps moving.

“The McVicar Creek was a good walk — the water was very high at that time and the fish were spawning, so it was a nice treat to be at the mouth and watch those fish,” Manitowabi says. “It felt to me that the water was excited and glad that we were acknowledging it.”

Manitowabi says the water walkers use a relay to carry the water.

"Each individual is not responsible for carrying the water the whole distance," Manitowabi says. "We share that responsibility and hand the water off and the staff off

to the next group of walkers. We encourage other women to come out and join us. This is a four-year commitment so the walks will go on for another three years after this, and we'd really like to get the women out to learn about their responsibilities of the water."

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# Treaty #3 Youth Council doubles its numbers

"I feel like I'll carry this experience throughout my journey," Morrison says. "On a community level, I'm able to bring this experience back and share it with my youth."

A large group of people, including men and women of various ages, are standing in a large circle on a grassy field. They are all holding hands, suggesting a community or reconciliation ceremony. The people are dressed in casual to business-casual attire. In the background, there is a dense line of green trees under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and communal. The image is used as a background for a promotional graphic for NWMO's Reconciliation efforts.

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- CANADIAN RACE RELATIONS FOUNDATION (2020) P.9



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## Alumni Community Development Award

Shawn Jeffries

Isabelle Carpenter



# Community



Rainy River First Nations and the BMI Group celebrated their Aazhogan Limited Partnership's recent acquisition the landmark toll bridge between Fort Frances and International Falls, Minnesota.

# Rainy River international bridge purchased by Aazhogan Partnership

**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

The Aazhogan Limited Partnership between Rainy River First Nations and the BMI Group celebrated their acquisition of full ownership of the landmark toll bridge between Fort Frances and International Falls, Minnesota. The acquisition of the International Bridge includes the recent purchase of the Canadian bridge assets and the purchase of the United States bridge assets in 2021.

"It's symbolic in the fact that it's reconnecting us to our former (citizens) that came from these communities that were amalgamated," says Rainy River Chief Rob McGinnis, noting that Rainy River First Nations includes seven communities that were amalgamated by the federal government in 1914. "And also it's going to be a sole source of revenue for us once the traffic gets back to normal going across the border."

McGinnis says the communities lived, fished, traded and gathered medicines from along the Rainy River for generations before there was a border, and some citizens moved south after the communities were amalgamated and now live in Minnesota.

"Now we own the bridge that crosses it on this imaginary line that is the border between Canada and the United States," McGinnis says. "People are very proud of owning that International Bridge."

McGinnis says some of the community's share of revenue from the International Bridge will help with initiatives such as the community's addictions program.

"We've definitely enhanced our additions program and other programs as well with some of that sole source revenue," McGinnis says. "So it does help in that aspect."

The International Bridge, which is the busiest border crossing in northwestern Ontario and a vital socio-economic linkage between Canada and the United States for visitors and commercial trade, is comprised of two side-by-side bridges, one of steel and the other of concrete, that were constructed in 1908 and 1979.

"We are thrilled to be partners with Rainy River First Nations on the purchase of the bridge," says Paul Veldman, president of the BMI Group. "Like the communities, we want to ensure the bridge remains open for tourism and trade. It is one of the key components for a sustainable economy and will form part of a welcoming experience for everyone who crosses the bridge into Fort Frances and International Falls."

McGinnis says the BMI Group, which owns the former Resolute paper mill in Fort Frances, is reclaiming land from

the mill site.

"There's a demolition process and there's going to be a bunch of land there that is ideal for a number of ventures that could possibly happen," McGinnis says.

McGinnis says his community is also planning to enhance their programming at the Kaya-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung Centre at the Manitou Mounds, which

was located at the centre of a continent-wide trading network and was designated as a National Historic Site of Canada in 1969.

"We've partnered with Lakehead University to develop programming there and possibly some key learning aspects that we could be doing virtually on there with Lakehead," McGin-

nis says.

McGinnis says the area is also known for its fishing and hunting tourism opportunities.

"On the day of the ribbon cutting ceremony there was a four-hour lineup at the bridge crossing — there were a bunch of Americans trying to get over with their boats," McGinnis says, noting that the Interna-

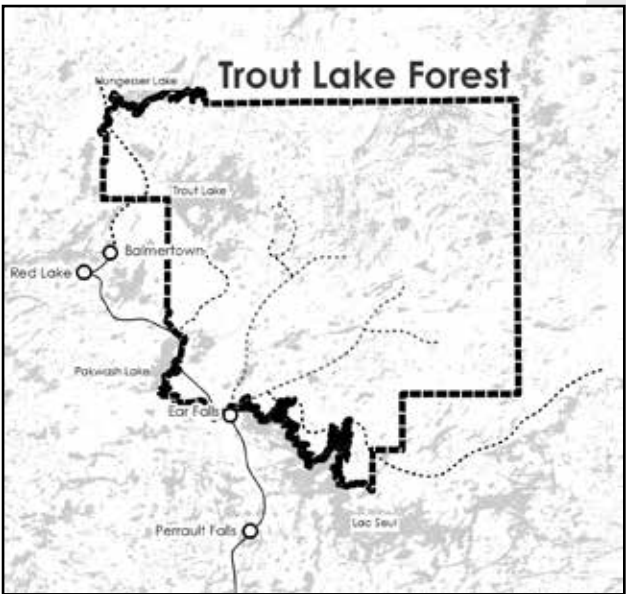
tional Bridge is one of only two privately-owned international bridges between Canada and the United States. "It is a very unique asset."

McGinnis says the Rainy River First Nations leadership team is committed to successfully executing their community's vision of self-sufficiency and self-government.

"This partnership and bridge acquisition is an exemplary model of the types of business transactions we are actively working on for 2022 and beyond," McGinnis says. "There are no limitations to what we can achieve together. I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has supported us on this journey so far."

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Community

Canadian Rangers from northern Ontario celebrate 75th anniversary



photo submitted by Master Corporal Christopher Vernon, Canadian Rangers Junior Canadian Rangers Nadia Shoomin, left, and Daniel McKay from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug flew with the Rangers from Northern Ontario to observe the 75th anniversary in Victoria.



photo submitted by Warrant Officer Terry Afflick Master Corporal Leo Oskineegish of Nibinamik mounts a horse for the first time during training.



photo submitted by Lt. Conrad Olea-Ortega Ranger Conrad Kamenawatamin of Bearskin Lake learned from training with Rangers from other provinces.

Peter Moon  
Special to Wawatay News

A group of seven Canadian Rangers from five First Nations from across Northern Ontario have participated in a national celebration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Rangers in 1947.

The four-day event attracted almost 50 Rangers, who are part-time army reservists, from across the Canadian North to Victoria to meet and train together. They practiced marine search and rescue, the use of a helicopter in loading and unloading patients and cargo, the safe use of all-terrain vehicles, and introduced them to the use of horses.

“I was excited about the horses,” said Ranger Conrad Kamenawatamin of Bearskin Lake First Nation, a small and remote Oji-Cree community in Northern Ontario. “I’ve never been close to one before.”

Like all the Ontario Rangers Master Corporal Leo Oskineegish of Nibinamik First Nation was thrilled by the horses. “It was mission accomplished,” he said. “I finally got on a horse for the first time. We don’t have them up North. I’d only ever seen a horse in a movie before.”

The Rangers in British Columbia train with horses to help them negotiate the province’s rugged terrain.

The celebratory event was held to honour the formal establishment of the Rangers 75 years ago, to commemorate their history, and pay tribute to their continued service to Canada. There are more than 5,000 Rangers in more than 200 small and remote communities across the Canadian North. Most are Indigenous and they operate in 26 Indigenous languages.

“The Rangers in Ontario are not 75 years old,” said Lieutenant-Colonel Shane McArthur, the Canadian Army officer who commands 700 Rangers

in 29 First Nations across the Far North of Ontario. “Our first patrol opened in Moose Factory in 1994. But we share the history, the heritage, and the recognition awarded Rangers because no matter where they are, they all wear the same red hoodie and red ball cap and perform the same types of missions and tasks.

“Our Rangers in Ontario have held their own and have performed above and beyond, particularly during the past couple of years of Covid.”

“Coming and meeting Rangers from all over Canada made me proud to wear my red Ranger sweater,” Master Corporal Oskineegish said.

For most of the Rangers from Ontario the visit to British Columbia was their first.

“I’m really enjoying myself,” Ranger Kamenawatamin said. “It’s really beautiful out here. The mountains are nice, the views are nice, the flowers are nice. I just got off a helicopter flying around an island. I got to see some seals. I’ve met Rangers from other parts of Canada. I’ve seen how they handle tasks. I’m learning a lot.”

The Rangers who represented Northern Ontario at the 75th celebration were Master Corporals Tyson Duncan of Wapekeka, Jean Rabbit-Waboose of Eabametoong, and Leo Oskineegish of Nibinamik; Corporals Harriet Cutfeet from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug and Yolanda Winter from Wapekeka; and Rangers Charlie Jacob from Webequie and Conrad Kamenawatamin from Bearskin Lake.

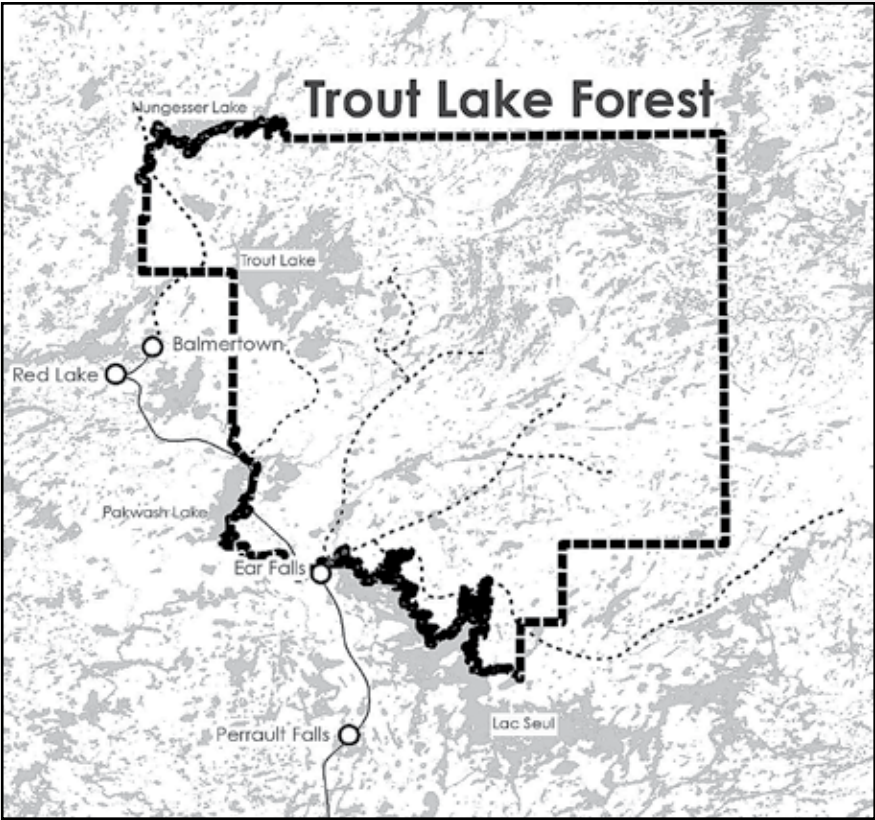
Daniel McKay and Nadia Shooman, two Junior Canadian Rangers from Kitchenuhmaykoosib, went on the trip with the Rangers.

(Sergeant Peter Moon is a Ranger with the 3rd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group at Canadian Forces Base Borden.)

INSPECTION

Inspection of Approved Aerial Herbicide Project for Trout Lake Forest

The Ontario **Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (NDMNR)** invites you to inspect the NDMNR-approved aerial herbicide project. As part of our ongoing efforts to regenerate and protect Ontario’s forests, selected stands on the **Trout Lake Forest** (see map) will be sprayed with herbicide to control competing vegetation, starting on or about: **August 1, 2022**.



The approved project description and project plan for the aerial herbicide project is available electronically for public inspection by contacting Domtar Inc. respectively, during normal business hours and on the Natural Resources Information Portal at <https://nrp.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online> beginning **July 2, 2022 until March 31, 2023** when the Annual Work Schedule expires.

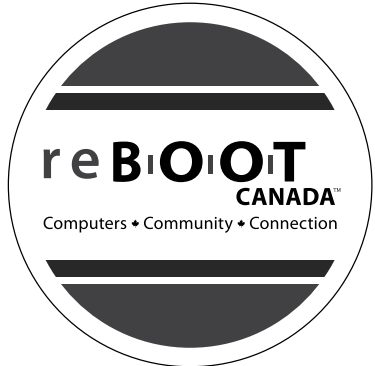
Interested and affected persons and organizations can arrange a remote meeting with NDMNR staff to discuss the aerial herbicide project. For more information, please contact:

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Community

Junior Canadian Rangers' Camp Loon is back for the summer

Peter Moon  
Special to Wawatay News

After being cancelled for each of the last two summers because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Camp Loon, the popular Junior Canadian Ranger camp that provides a week of advanced leadership training, will be held again this summer.

"Camp Loon is a go," said Lieutenant-Colonel Shane McArthur, the Canadian Army officer who runs the Canadian Ranger program in Northern Ontario. "We are looking at having 75 to 100 Junior Rangers at the camp with training from 18 to 22 July. We're excited it is going to happen again this summer. We are looking forward to it."

The Junior Rangers is a Canadian Army program for boys and girls aged 12 to 18 in remote and isolated communities across the Canadian North. There are more than 700 Junior Rangers in 29 First Nations across the Far North of Ontario.

The camp is held in the bush on Springwater Lake, 50 kilometers north of Geraldton. The first Camp Loon was held in 2000 at Constance Lake First Nation and later at several other First Nations before being held for the last several years near Geraldton.

This year's camp will be more austere or simple than past camps, Lt.-Col. McArthur said, and the number of Junior Rangers attending it will be less than usual. "But we're going to make sure the Junior Rangers have a great time, enjoy themselves, and learn some valuable life

skills. And, more importantly, they'll be happy that they came to the camp."

The camp provides selected Junior Rangers with a range of activities that are not normally available to them in their small communities. They include specialized instruction with air rifles, boating, mountain biking, driving all-terrain vehicles, first aid, and traditional arts and crafts. The camp emphasizes the importance of safety on the land and water and in personal lifestyles.

COVID forced the army to suspend Junior Ranger training in the First Nations. It recently restarted in Northern Ontario. "We are not exactly back to normal but we are trying to get back to normal training," said Lt.-Col. McArthur. "We have a huge amount of support from the chiefs. They're happy we have restarted training in their communities and that we are holding Camp Loon again this summer."

The tent camp will be run by a staff of more than 60, made up of Canadian Rangers, who are part-time army reservists, other full- and part-time military personnel, and civilian volunteers. Meals will be provided by a mobile military field kitchen.

(Sergeant Peter Moon is a Ranger with the 3rd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group at Canadian Forces Base Borden.)



Photo submitted by Sergeant Peter Moon, Canadian Rangers  
Junior Canadian Rangers jump into a lake to cool off on a hot day at Camp Loon in 2019.

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COURT ROOM  
2

could we engage in a little role reversal exercise before we get started. you know, to get the ol justice wheels turning



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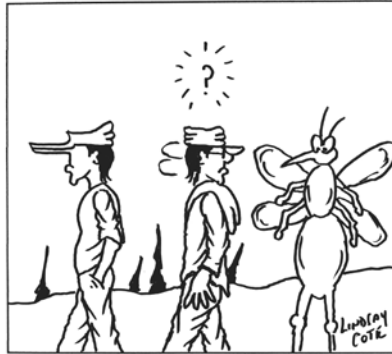
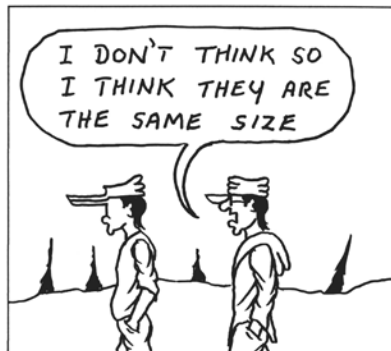
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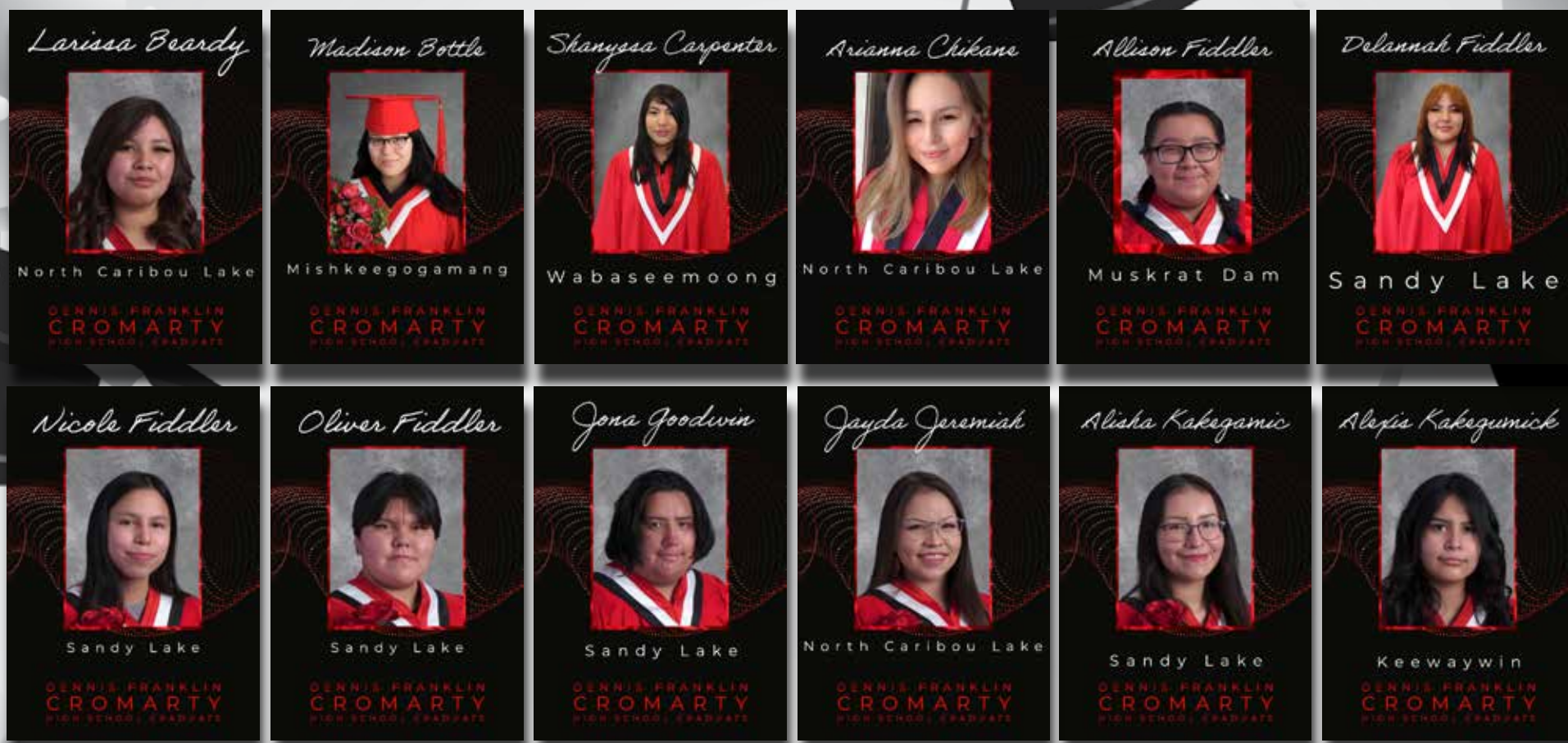
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# Class of 2022



**The staff of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School are proud to recognize the achievements of this year's graduating class. Congratulations to the Class of 2022!**

**We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.**

[illegible]