## NAN hosts Spring Assembly in-person for the first time since 2020

**Rick Garrick** Wawatay News

Nishnawbe Aski Nation held its first in-person hybrid Chiefs gathering since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Canada in early 2020 on May 10-12 at the Delta

Hotel in Thunder Bay.

"It went very well," says Grand Chief
Derek Fox. "We had a good turnout and it was two years in waiting. We've had a couple of virtual assemblies, we've had COVID-19, we've had loss of life due to COVID-19, we've had a lot of trauma due to COVID-19 also and I think it was just great for the leadership to gather."

Fox says the world is not out of the woods yet when it comes to the pandemic, so they were cautious and safe during the Chiefs Spring Assembly.

'We were ensuring that we took all the precautions but at the same time we wanted to ensure that as newly elected leaders, as the new grand chief and executive that we did our best to get direction and guidance from our chiefs," Fox says. "I think all people are tired of virtual meetings so it was time to just do it, and that was the direction we got and it turned out well."

Fox says he talked with Moose Cree Chief Marven Cheechoo about the issue he brought up during the Chiefs Spring Assembly about losing the hospital that is currently located in his community.

"He was concerned about the loss of his hospital in Moose Cree — they're building one in Moosonee and he has every right to be upset with how things transpired," Fox says. "They're taking the hospital out of that community and going on to the mainland (in) Moosonee. We shouldn't be losing hos-

pitals or nursing stations or doctors, those things should be improving so I think we've got to keep the pressure on both levels of government and agencies to ensure that doesn't happen anymore and our First Nations are being equipped and improved with better sources of health and access to health and just the resources in general."

Fox says the housing budget in the NAN communities is largely underfunded, as detailed by Mike McKay, director of infrastructure and housing at NAN, in his NAN Housing Strategy presentation.

"We're backlogged many, many homes, there's 14-15 people in a home, there's no infrastructure, there's no support, there's no land base for them to build those homes, there's all kind of infrastructure issues surrounding those housing issues," Fox says. "Then you've got the social issues that arise from lack of housing and we talked about that, we talked about the opioids, we talked about the suicides, the addictions, the alcohol, the apprehension of children, that all stems from poor housing. If you can't have a house with your family, that leads to many other social issues."

Fox also highlighted the importance of the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service announcement of 18 new Regional Drug Investigative team detectives and staff under their funding agreement for 2022-2025.

"We listened today about the opioid issue, the drug issue, the addiction issue so I think them getting reinforced with the tools and resources to fight this ... is very beneficial to our people, our families in ensuring less drugs enter our communities," Fox says.

Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse



Grand Chief Derek Fox speaks during the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Chiefs Spring Assembly held May 10-12 at the Delta Hotel in Thunder Bay.

says the Chiefs Spring Assembly was a great opportunity to meet the chiefs again and get a mandate from them as

"We heard the priorities from our chiefs this week and it was a great opportunity," Narcisse says. "Virtual meetings can only do so far — we have the personal touch here in terms of having our chiefs in the meeting and just getting direction and asking questions. It was an opportunity for all the chiefs to get together as well, many of them haven't seen each other for a couple of years now.'

Narcisse says the Chiefs Spring Assembly was also an opportunity to identify and reset all the priorities for health, education, infrastructure and other areas at NAN and push forward for NAN-specific processes when dealing with various levels of government.

We have to ensure and affirm that NAN has a specific process because our situation is unique in the remote north with our fly-in communities and our road-access communities," Narcisse says. "We need to have equitable community-based solutions and community-based resourcing when we're moving ahead, so this was a great opportunity to really maintain and push that position and let all levels of government know that we will be looking forward to a NAN-specific process in many of these areas."

Fox says the Keewaywin Conference will be held in the Timmins area in August.

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## **Politics**

# National Chief Archibald speaks at NAN's Spring Assembly

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald and Regional Chief Glen Hare spoke about the healing path forward, sharing wealth and education during the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Chiefs Spring Assembly on May 10.

"When I talk about this healing path forward, it actually comes out of a document that we created at the AFN (Assembly of First Nations) that was used to influence and shift the work of our federal partners," Archibald says. "This healing path forward is really about building a better future for everyone across Turtle Island, one that actually creates greater equity and equality for First Nations so that we can have the same things that every municipality has, clean drinking water, adequate housing, proper services. When we talk about equality and equity, that's what I'm talking about."

Archibald says she has been working with the regional chiefs and federal partners to ensure that First Nations priorities are top of mind and that commitments made are followed through since she was elected 10 months ago.

"A good example of this is the latest federal budget — AFN did a pre-budget submission that included a request for investments of (about) \$104 billion," Archibald says. "Further, we did an analysis on the impacts of this budget announcement on First Nations across Canada. The bottom line though is that the federal government continues to purposefully underfund First Nations and restrict our communities from accessing our true wealth from our lands and resources, and I spoke about that during this recent



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald and Regional Chief Glen Hare met with Grand Chief Derek Fox and Deputy Grand Chiefs Bobby Narcisse, Anna Betty Achneepineskum and Victor Linklater during the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Chiefs Spring Assembly on May 10.

budget cycle."

Archibald says First Nations need a new economic deal that allows First Nations the autonomy, self government, self sufficiency and self determination that is guaranteed under the Constitution.

"Those financial arrangements have to do with sharing the wealth of this country," Archibald says. "All of the wealth in Canada is built upon First Nations lands, whether those lands are treaty lands or unceeded lands. A prime example of this kind of development is the development of the Ring of Fire, First Nations have to move beyond just minimal impact benefit agreements and promises of jobs. We have to move to being owners of those developments, to have a piece of the wealth."

Archibald says they are currently working on a national prosperity table similar to the

one started in Ontario when she was the regional chief but with a focus on a new economic deal and increasing the amount of economic development funding to First Nations.

Hare adds that companies around the world have "deep pockets."

"They need to give back," Hare says. "There's elections right now in Ontario, Ring of Fire's been underlined, partnership has been underlined, let's vote. When they come to us let's raise water, let's raise share the wealth so that our kids can go to school clean and that we can eat."

Hare encourages companies to hire First Nations people, noting that there is a high population of First Nations people and he was given many chances to work when he was young.

"So hire our people," Hare says. "Even though we may falter the first week or the first

month or whatever, pick us up again. We can do it, I've done it. Let's give that chance to our people."

Hare says providing education in Indigenous languages for First Nations children in the education system is another big issue.

"I'm proud to still have my Anishinabemowin voice," Hare says. "All our children can have our voice. Give us that ... in our education system that we have Anishinabemowin as (part of the) curriculum. Our Anishinabemowin means I don't have to repeat myself, but in the (English) language I've got to say it three or four times to be understood."

Archibald and Hare delivered their presentations on the first day of the May 10-12 NAN Chiefs Spring Assembly, which was held at the Delta Hotel in Thunder Bay.

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## **Politics**

## National Chief calls on UN to investigate residential schools

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald called for the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to investigate residential schools at the 21st Session of the United Nations (UN) Permanent Forum on Indigenous

"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 a 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

Archibald says the intergenerational trauma from the residential school system is evident in today's children and adults who don't speak their language fluently.

"Our language is vital because it connects us to everything, our families, our communities, our land, our nationhood," Archibald says. "During this International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032), let's rebuild our languages and cultures, which will contribute to vibrant communi-



National Chief RoseAnne Archibald met with Francisco Calí Tzay, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, during her trip to speak at the 1st Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

ties where our children can sing and talk in the language of our ancestors.'

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."

Archibald says it was important to go to the UN to make the call for the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to be formally invited to Canada to do the study on the unmarked graves at former residential schools and to seek remedies for human rights vio-

"When you bury a child without ceremony, without a grave and you just dig a hole for them and you place them beside the school, which I don't call them schools anymore, when you place them on the grounds of these institutions, that to me is a real human rights violation," Archibald says. "It's a violation against that child, it's a human rights violation."

Archibald says they met with

the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, who said he needs an invitation preferably from the Prime Minister to come to Canada to look at the issue and study it.

"I saw in the media that there is this open invitation (for the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) but in reality we need the formal invitation to the rapporteur so he can do the formal work that needs to be done on this issue," Archibald says.

Archibald also delivered a presentation on the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and met with other Indigenous people from around the world, particularly from North America about mutual goals and things they could

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald met with National Congress of enous Issues.

American Indians President Fawn Sharp during her trip to speak at the 1st Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indig-

work on together internationally, at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

"It was great to meet with Ecuador as well as the Mexico Indigenous representatives," Archibald says. "We took some time to talk about the similar things we were facing in our countries such as Free, Prior and Informed Consent. We also had an opportunity to meet with President Fawn Sharp of the National Congress of American Indians to discuss together what we could do together across this invisible line that cuts across Turtle Island."

Archibald says they often met with other representatives at the Vienna Cafe at the UN.

"We met the ambassador for Bolivia for example just in

passing," Archibald says. "One of the meetings that I had was with the Women's International Forum — it was Indigenous women from around the world who I had an opportunity to talk about some of the issues they were facing in their countries. It's really busy, fast paced. You start with breakfast or early mornings and you are sometimes doing events right into the evening. It's really a whirlwind kind of event and more so this time because not many people stayed for the full period. A lot of the stuff was online so people were really wanting to get together and meet while we were there in New York."

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## **Commentary**

# In The Footsteps Of Our Ancestors



wake up in the morning now to the sound of Niska, the Cree word for a Canada Goose. They fly over my house and I know for sure that spring is certainly on its way.

However, when I look outside my win-dow I see snowbanks and personally I think the cold nasty weather is hanging on a little too long

little too long.
Every-body I talk to feels that this winter was difficult, long, way too snowy and very cold for long stretches up here in northern Ontario.

The thing is I know for sure I can always count on the coming of warmer weather once I hear Niska overhead flying further north to Weenaybek, the Cree word for the great James Bay. Many of my family members and friends along the coast have been on the land now for some time harvesting Niska. They do so with a lot of modern technology and even with the aid of helicopters to fly them into their re-mote traditional hunting grounds. Some things about the hunt though will never change.

My family mostly hunts and gathers on our traditional lands of the Lakitusaki (Lake River) region, the Attawapiskat River delta and on Akamiski Island. My ancestors have being doing this for as long as my people the Cree of James Bay have been documenting time.

Our traditional lands are known to us at a young age. When I was a young boy it was a normal part of life to head out onto our traditional lands to hunt and gather.

We Cree are lucky to have had an upbringing in which our age old ways were passed down from our ancestors in regards to hunting and fishing.

We are the proof that the passing on of these skills was important simply because of the fact we are still here and flourishing despite the arrival of the Europeans and the colonization efforts we had to endure for hundreds of years.

No matter what happened to our world, my people have never stopped following their way of life in heading back out on to traditional lands and utilizing ancient skills that have

had to do with our survival in all kinds of challenges over thou-sands of years.

Although we have dealt with all of the terrors of colonization including religion, forced assimilation, the residential school attempt at genocide and the destruction of family units, there was always the return to our traditional lands to hunt and gather.

When on the land we lived as our ancestors had for thousands of years except maybe for the odd cup of tea or coffee and of course the easy to carry and pre-pare cans of spam, klik, corned beef hash, meatballs in gravy and Irish stew.

On the land we always have the opportunity to harvest as many birds and animals as we want but we are also respectful and thankful for the food we get that has kept us alive for generations...

Much of the time we ate what we harvested in Niska or Way-way, the snow goose or 'wavy'.

On the land we always have the opportunity to harvest as many birds and animals as we want but we are also respectful and thankful for the food we get that has kept us alive for generations.

Our Elders teach us at an early age to harvest only what we need and that we can transport and preserve.

Most carry on with the spring and fall hunts in respectful and grateful teachings in our traditional lands where we connect in the footsteps of our ancestors and we find peace and we are rejuvenated in a world that has been familiar to us for time immemorial.

In the times we are witnessing right now I believe my people of the Great James Bay have the ability and capacity to survive and that is good to know considering the world wide pandemic we are be-ing challenged with and the efforts of world leaders in taking us down a trail to nuclear war. We are the lucky ones.

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## Thunder Bay CEDC Pilot Program for Indigenous Entrepreneurs a success



submitted photo

The Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC) is pleased to announce the success of the pilot program Miinikaanan Badakidoon. The program was launched in December, 2021 as a new Indigenous funding stream of the Starter Company Plus program. The pilot program successfully saw six entrepreneurs complete the program, each obtaining \$5,000 in funding. The Miinikaanan Badakidoon funding will support Indigenous lead businesses and entrepreneurs across the Northwest region.

## Beyond Spring - Into Summer



"April is cruellest month", the poem by T.S.Elliot, is not about weather conditions in Northern Ontario. However, April 2022 is a contender. Yes, it featured a couple of false springs, days with sunshine and above seasonal temperatures. Suggestions of spring conditions are typical in April but were especially brief this year.

The Northwest, for the fourth month in a row, experienced below seasonal temperatures. They were as much as 5 degrees Celsius below normal in an area from Fort Frances to Red Lake to Sioux Lookout. Record low temperatures were set in this area in mid-April and again on April 25. In the Northeast and the far North, temperatures for the month were near or slightly below normal.

The Northwest, also for the fourth month in a row, received more precipitation than normal. Winter-like storms associated with Alberta Clippers delivered combinations of snow and rain and added considerable moisture to the existing snow on the ground. A Colorado Low storm system,

from April 22 to 24, resulted in persistent thunderstorms and record rainfalls from Fort Frances to the Thunder Bay area. The Thunder Bay Airport reported 69 mm of rain in just 12 hours. Other areas received 30 to 80 mm in a 24-hour period. The rainfall, combined with saturated ground conditions and frozen culverts, resulted in washed out roads and local flooding. States of emergency because of flooding, road closures and wastewater infrastructure failures were declared in Fort Frances, Emo and several townships west and north of Thunder Bay.

The storm then tracked northward with significant amounts of rain and then snow from Geraldton to Hudson Bay. In the final tally for April, western and northern areas of the region generally received three times more precipitation than average. In the Northeast precipitation amounts were closer to normal.

Many areas across the Northwest and the far North had a significant amount of snow on the ground at the end of April. Record amounts of moisture in the snowpack were measured in many locations. Rainfall in the first half of May contributed to unusually high water levels, river flows and flooding of lowlving areas.

Most rivers have crested in the Northwest but additional rainfall could cause more problems. Areas of concern are the major rivers that flow into James Bay and Hudson Bay. The winter was colder than normal and river ice was thicker than usual. The potential of ice jams resulted in the evacuation of some communities.

I have been musing about spring for a few months now. "A persistent winter" was the title in March and "This Spring season arrives in several ways" last month. Sometimes reporting about the weather can overlap with complaining about the weather. Well, expecting spring in March in Northern Ontario is probably naïve but I do want to report that this late winter and spring qualifies as very unusual:

- The number of winter and spring storms in the form of Alberta Clippers and Colorado Lows which passed through the region was unusually high,
- 2. The first four months of 2022 were the coldest since 2014,
- 3. The first four months of 2022 had the most precipitation since 1996.

One way to define the beginning of spring in Northern Ontario and most of Canada is when native vegetation buds out. Pussy willows, poplar blooms and some grasses and weeds appear according to air temperature, a "5 and 5" process. Various shrubs swell and then burst with remarkable expansion and unfolding when the average daily temperature

is 5° C for five days in a row. Of course, a couple of very warm days or cold nights will mess a bit with this simple formula.

Using this 5 and 5 process, this spring was about four weeks behind what happened last spring. I sometimes smile to how quickly we adjust to "good weather" (and I include myself in the "we"). Last spring's start was three weeks earlier than average. It is easy to accept this as a new normal but in 2022 the snow shovel was only exchanged for the garden shovel in May.

## Outlook for the rest of May and June

When I write this part of this column I assess various weather predictions for three to five weeks into the future. I select and combine but there is a gap between writing and when you read it. One thing is certain, spring is established across the region.

The temperature pattern has radically changed, and most forecasting agencies are predicting mainly summer-like temperatures in the next weeks and the likelihood of a warmer than average summer. With more uncertainly, most of the region is predicted to shift from recent rainfall warnings to drier conditions.

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## Commentary



ABOVE: The Kataquapit family is carrying on the annual traditional spring goose hunt on Akamiski Island. Pictured on the southern shore of the island is Joseph Kataquapit (far right) with this family from L-R: son Orion, wife Lynda Kataquapit and son Landyn.

Going To Akamiski



any families along the James Bay coast are
headed out onto their ancestral lands during this time of year. It is our most important season as so many events coincide that make it a perfect time to hunt and gather food. Even though it is still winter weather, temperatures moderate at around zero degrees which makes it more hospitable and manageable. This is also the time of the Niska, the Canada Goose migration where millions of these birds fly north for their summer nesting season.

Several of my family members make the journey to cross a small strait at the mouth of the Attawapiskat River over to Akamiski Island, the largest island in James Bay. The name of the island is a Cree word that means 'land on the other side'. It is an area that has been visited by my people for generations and many families from my home community consider this island their traditional

My brother Joseph, his wife Lynda and their sons Orion and Landyn recently made the trip to gather food for themselves for the spring hunt. I was happy to see him and his family make that hunt in the same way our father Marius Kataquapit had done for us when we were



young. My other brother Lawrence and his wife Christine also braved the challenges of travelling to the island in the very early spring. They enjoyed the rejuvenating aspect of being out on the land in the midst of real Canadian wil-derness.

My brothers have established a well built camp on the southern shore of Akamiski close to many areas where dad had once trapped for animals to feed and sustain our family. Many years ago when I visited this family camp with my parents I recall that dad always enjoyed sitting on the high gravel bank of the south shore to admire the vast grey ocean water of James Bay. He reminded us about the many times he had walked along this same shore alone with just a toboggan or a small team of dogs to make this way to his camp or head back to the community. He said it fascinated him to think that he had been there when it was freezing, challenging and he was lonely and with few supplies and food. I understood that when he reflected on his early years it reminded him of all of his fellow hunters and gatherers who survived on the land.

Akamiski Island is an important historic place as my people have hunted and trapped there for generations. We identify this island as part of our traditional lands but Canadian, provincial and territorial governments see it differently. As Mushkego Cree, we reside in Ontario but the island and all islands in James Bay are actually identified as being part of the territory of Nunavut. To complicate matters more, two thirds of the eastern end of the island is identified as the Akimiski Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary by the federal government. This arrangement has historically made it difficult for our leaders to assert our territorial rights to hunting and trapping on this land. We are residents of an outside province, on an island under the stewardship of a territorial government that is a thousand kilometres north and protected by a federal government that is headquartered a thousand kilometres south We do our best to live with the pol-itics regarding this great



past. This has to do with our

ancestral right. The rewards of visiting and using this land come with plenty of risk for all those who venture out to Akamiski as there is danger for travellers who risk moving over thawing ice and snow for hours. It takes plenty of skill, knowledge and awareness to travel safely on this land and frozen ocean. Everyone maintains a network of communications among each other to monitor the weather, the ice, the open water and where other fellow travellers are located. People maintain their safety through their individual skill but also rely on one another to stay aware of the dangers.

The south shore is much like the northern muskeg river banks with high gravel bluffs, pine forests and fresh water lakes and creeks. The northern coast is a wide open flat landscape of tidal coast land, lowlands and swamp. It



photo submitted by Lawrence Rose

ABOVE LEFT: On the way to Akamiski Island in the early spring is Christine Rose with her husband Lawrence Rose who is taking the picture.

photo submitted by Joseph Kataquapit ABOVE: Young traditional hunters from Attawapiskat wearing specially made hunting jackets.

is excellent bird habitat and it is easy to get lost in what seems like a never ending expanse of flat land, scrub and tidal ocean water that seems to have no coastal edge. In the midst of this barren landscape are a few large boulders that sit above the silt, clay and scrub. Our people have used them as markers and

their unusual placement on the flat featureless land are seen as grandfathers or ancestors that stand watch over the people and the animals that roam Akamiski, 'the land on the other

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## Health

## Matawa continues youth mental health programming

**Rick Garrick** Wawatay News

Matawa Health Co-operative Mental Health Services plans to continue offering youth mental health programming after holding a variety of sessions.

'We're going to be doing (youth mental health programming) on Mondays and Thursdays from 7 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.," says Lenora Smith, youth mental health counsellor specializing in youth mental wellness and recreation at Matawa Health Co-operative. (previously) had Elder John Gagnon come in and talk about storytelling and the Seven Grandfather Teachings, we had Mary Magiskan that facilitated beading lanyards and medicine pouches, we had Tim Sofea do some physical activity (with his HIIT workout), we had Simon Magiskan as well that did some storytelling with us and we also had Turtle Concepts that did a workshop for the youth."

Dave Jones, founder at Turtle Concepts, says the participants "absolutely loved" the virtual workshop.

"It was high energy, lots of movement," Jones says. "The reactions were phenomenal and the families loved it. We did a hunting and gathering activity online with them, we always use jigging because it reminds the old people of the old ways."

Jones says they also had a guest fiddler, Ruby John, play some of her music live during the workshop.



Turtle Concepts guest fiddler Ruby John performed some fiddle music during the Turtle Concepts Matawa Health Co-operative Mental Health Services Happiness and Positivity virtual workshop.

Ducharme says. "We're challenging families and youth and children to get engaged and be active and do that legwork to work on their mental wellness in a good way, whether that's pet therapy or getting out for a walk or exercising or cooking or baking or just participating in healthy living activities.

Ducharme says the participants submit photos to the Matawa Health Co-operative Facebook page, with a draw for a prize held every Monday.

"We've seen really great success with that so it's just about trying to get creative and see what's working and what's not working," Ducharme says.

Gloria Hendrick-Laliberte, health promotion education planner at Matawa Health Cobeen doing mental health pro-

tual workshop.

'We did virtual drumming and singing (with Nathaniel and Nodin Moses) every Wednesday night from January to the end of March and we will probably continue that once a month," Hendrick-Laliberte says. "Also we ran a Tea with Auntie G and guest Matawa Elders at lunch time and we had special guests like Turtle Concepts come in one week and then we had Simon Magiskan do storytelling.'

important to provide mental health programming because everyone's mental health

has been affected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our youth need to understand there is still hope out there, that they should be proud of their culture and their traditions and to embrace that," Hendrick-Laliberte says. "We've had families attending the virtual drumming and singing, and they absolutely love it. Nathaniel and Nodin have done songs that incorporate the children that are attending — they have a song (with) Mickey Mouse and Sponge Bob and Nathaniel has a puppet by the name of Echo who the kids can relate to. He talks directly to them so it becomes an interactive event and activity."

Hendrick-Laliberte says they

also hold a walking challenge in May and June for Matawa citizens and staff to track their walking and other activities on a weekly basis.

"It's just a challenge to get people moving and to get families involved," Hendrick-Laliberte says. "I think we're going to do a Walk with Doc too — it involves the physicians in the clinic to go for a walk."

Ducharme says they did not have any of the upcoming youth mental health programming scheduled as of April 1, but information about upcoming events are posted on the Matawa Health Co-operative Facebook page, which is located at: www.facebook.com/ MatawaHealthCooperative/.



Turtle Concepts held a Matawa Health Co-operative Mental Health Services Happiness and Positivity vir-

"It takes a variety of approaches to get people engaged, and sometimes in our efforts to assist in mental health I think we forget that joy and happiness needs to be put to the forefront at times," Jones says. Carly Ducharme, director

of mental health at Matawa Health Co-operative, says beading kits and medicine pouch kits were sent to the participants in Mary Magistan's beading lanyards and medicine pouches online Zoom sessions.

"In addition to the online Zoom programming we've been running, we've been doing a lot of online photo contests through the Matawa Health Co-operative Facebook page in attempts to engage our youth,"

operative, says they have also gramming on Wednesdays.

Hendrick-Laliberte says it is



July 13, 2022

is the last day to submit a claim

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indiandayschools.com or call 1-844-539-3815 Hope for Wellness Help Line: 1-855-242-3310

## Kashechewan and Fort Albany evacuees set to return home

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

The repatriation phase for the Kashechewan and Fort Albany evacuees to return home began May 12 after they were evacuated due to flooding on the Albany River.

'Currently at this time with the reports provided by MNRF (Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry) and our local First Nations river surveillance team, they have indicated ... that the evacuation threat level has officially ended," says Wilbert Wesley, manager of emergency services at Mushkegowuk Council, during a May 12 phone interview. "With those reports we have now begun the repatriation phase (for) our First Nations communities to get back home."

Wesley says the initial evacuation of vulnerable people from Kashechewan was escalated to a full evacuation of Kashechewan and a partial evacuation of Fort Albany as the water flow increased on the Albany River. The evacuees were hosted in six communities, including Hearst, Kapuskasing, Mississauga, Timmins, Thunder Bay and Val Rita.

"A little over a 1,000 (were evacuated from) Kashechewan and just under a 1,000 (from) Fort Albany," Wesley says. "A part of the evacuation process is family reunification, so we want to make sure families stay together. So the numbers tend to fluctuate in each host com-



A group of Kashechewan evacuees participated in a Walk for Healing during their stay in Thunder Bay in 2016.

munity as we start to repatriate families back together."

Wesley says the flooding on the Albany River did not cause any damage in the two communities and the airports this year.

"The (potential for flood) damage is not just to the community itself, but is also to the runways that lie outside of the protective berms that are built to protect the community," Wesley says. "So we monitor (the airport) to ensure it will still be 100 per cent operational, which it has been."

Thunder Bay, in a coordinated effort in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross, Indig-

enous Services Canada, Ontario Health North and the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Ontario, began preparing to host about 400 evacuees from Kashechewan on May 6.

"Thunder Bay will welcome our neighbours from the north in their time of crisis," says Thunder Bay Mayor Bill Mauro. "I have had it confirmed by our emergency services providers that we have sufficient resources to address needs that may arise during the evacuation."

Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Deputy Fire Chief Eric Nordlund says the evacuees were hosted in two hotels with teams in place to support their needs.

"We also had access to COVID-19 testing so if someone's got a young one that is symptomatic we can have them tested right away and provide assistance to make sure they either get extra help or keep them isolated from everyone else," Nordlund says.

Nordlund says Thunder Bay is happy to help out the evacuees from Kashechewan, noting that the city has hosted them numerous times over the years.

"For me, I was able to touch base with some folks I've known for many years now," Nordlund says. "We haven't seen those folks since 2019, so it's been about three years."

Kashechewan declared a State of Emergency on April 13 due to the risk of potential flooding from the Albany River.

"I am very concerned of the risk assessment factors that led to a decision to evacuate the vulnerable population to the southern community, however it is necessary for the safety and well-being of the community," says Kashechewan Chief Gaius Wesley in an April 21 press release. "A joint risk assessment process suggests there

is a high potential of flooding which could endanger the lives of the remaining community (citizens) who are not able to evacuate to the trapline/hunting grounds as per the OTL (On The Land) initiative."

The Land) initiative."
About 1,100 of Kashechewan's 2,000 residents were registered in the OTL initiative, which enables individuals and families to evacuate to their trapline/hunting grounds in anticipation of the high potential of spring flooding.



# First Nations, the Drinking Water Settlement claims process is now open

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#### **Invitation to Participate**

#### Lac Seul 2024 - 2034 Forest Management Plan

The Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (NDMNRF), Ondaadiziwin Forest Management Inc. (OFMI) and the Sioux Lookout Local Citizens' Committee (LCC) invite you to participate in the development of the 2024 - 2034 Forest Management Plan (FMP) for the Lac Seul Forest.

#### **The Planning Process**

The FMP will take approximately two years to complete. During this time, five formal opportunities for public consultation and First Nation and Métis community involvement and consultation are provided. This first stage (Stage 1) notice is to advise you that preparation of the plan has started and to request:

- Your involvement as early as possible in the planning process; Your contribution to background information, particularly information relating to values and important ecological features that could be affected by forest management
- Your view of the desired forest condition and desired benefits which can be obtained from the forest.

#### How to Get Involved

Please provide any comments or information to the NDMNRF Office contact listed below or if you wish to remotely meet and discuss your interests and concerns with the planning team, plan author and/or the LCC, please contact the individuals identified below.

Background information and sources of direction that are available for you to view are described in the 2020 Forest Management Planning Manual) FMPM (Part A, Section 2.3.3.1) https://files.ontario.ca/mnrf-forest-management-planningmanual-en-2020-07-08.pdf

Background information and further information about the forest management planning process will be available for the duration of plan preparation.

The general information regarding the FMP process as well as the information described in this notice, can be made available electronically by contacting OFMI and at the NDMNRF Sioux Lookout District Office listed below, during normal office hours. Remote meetings with representatives of the planning team and the LCC can be requested at any time during the planning process. Reasonable opportunities to remotely meet planning team members during non-business hours will be provided upon request. If you require more information or wish to discuss your interests and concerns with a planning team member, please contact one of the individuals listed below:

#### Kevin Pruys, R.P.F.

Management Forester Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry Sioux Lookout District Office P.O. Box 309, Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1A6 tel: 807-738-4937 e-mail: kevin.pruys@ontario.ca

#### Genevieve Hennessey, R.P.F.

Plan Author

Obishikokaang Resources Corporation P.O. Box 38, 33 Third Ave, Hudson, ON PoV 1X0 tel: 807-285-3496 e-mail: info@obishcorp.ca

#### LCC Planning Team Rep

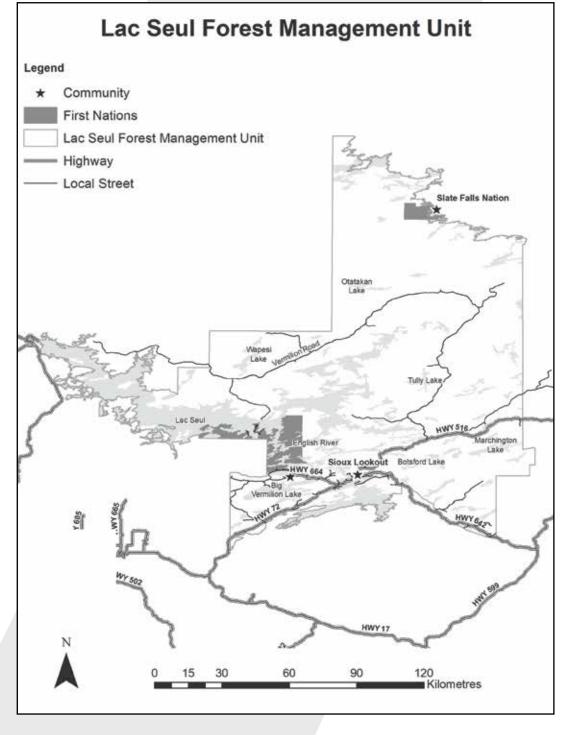
Sioux Lookout Local Citizen's Committee c/o NDMNRF Sioux Lookout District Office P.O. Box 309, Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1A6 tel: 807-737-2904

Anytime during the planning process, you may make a written request to seek resolution of issues with the NDMNRF District Manager or the Regional Director using a process described in the 2020 Forest Management Planning Manual (Part A, Section 2.4.1).

#### Stay Involved

Further information on how to get involved in forest management planning and to better understand the stages of public consultation please visit:

https://www.ontario.ca/document/participate-forestmanagement-ontario/how-get-involved-forest-management



There will be four more formal opportunities for you to be involved. These stages are listed and tentatively scheduled as follows:

Stage Two: Review of the Proposed Long-Term Management Direction October 2022

Stage Three: Review of Proposed Operations February 2023 Stage Four: Review of Draft Forest Management Plan July 2023

Stage Five: Inspection of NDMNRF-Approved Forest Management Plan November 2023

If you would like to be added to a mailing list to be notified of public involvement opportunities, please contact Kevin Pruys at kevin.pruys@ontario.ca or 807-738-4937.

The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (NDMNRF) is collecting your personal information and comments under the authority provided by the Forest Management Planning Manual, 2020 approved by regulation under Section 68 of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994. Any personal information you provide (home and/or email address, name, telephone number, etc.) may be used and shared between NDMNRF and/or the enhanced sustainable forest licensee to contact you regarding comments submitted. Your comments will become part of the public consultation process and may be shared with the general public. Your personal information may also be used by the NDMNRF to send you further information related to this forest management planning exercise. If you have questions about the use of your personal information, please contact Seanna Landry, A/District Business Co-Ordinator, NDMNRF, at seanna.landry@ontario.ca or 807-738-5461.

Renseignements en français : Derek Johnson au 807 220-4273



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## Red Dress Day honoured in Thunder Bay

**Rick Garrick** Wawatay News

A Red Dress Day memorial walk to Boulevard Lake and a Red Dress Day candlelight vigil at City Hall were among the events held in Thunder Bay on

"I prayed about the women we lost, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls," says Constance Lake Elder Florrie Sutherland, who participated in the memorial walk from the Matawa First Nations building on Algoma St. to Boulevard Lake. "I prayed about that going there and back because I know a lot of our family members and people that (were) lost and never came

Sutherland says it was important to recognize the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) issue because it was not acknowledged for "way too long." The Assembly of First Nations states that 16 per cent of all female homicide victims and 11 per cent of missing women in Canada are Indigenous women even though the Indigenous population of the country is 4.3 per cent of the total population.

"It wasn't out in public, no awareness about it," Sutherland says. "So now it's coming out — it's very important that we acknowledge that."

Aroland Elder John Gagnon says he provided some encouraging words for the people who lost loved ones during the opening ceremony for the memorial

"You always give them those words, uplifting kind of words," Gagnon says. "It's good to mingle with the people, especially on a day like this, it's very sacred. I mentioned one of my friends that lost a sister."

Gagnon says Red Dress Day is difficult for people who have lost loved ones. Red Dress Day has been held since Indigenous artist Jamie Black created her REDress project in 2010 that focused on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women across Canada and the United States.

"It's hard for them, especially today because it's a national day to remember," Gagnon says. "When we're all together, it makes us stronger, then we can cope with it a little bit better. When you're by yourself, it's kind of hard to cope with that

Carly Ducharme, director of mental health at the Matawa Health Co-operative, says there was an excellent turnout for the memorial walk.

"I was happy to see a lot of our (citizens) and a lot of people from the (Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services) education centre kind of join together to do (the walk)," Ducharme says.
"We didn't want to go too far because we had some Elders here today."

Ducharme says it was important to hold the memorial walk because MMIWG continues to be a standing issue.

"It is important to draw awareness to this issue because there needs to be systemic changes," Ducharme says. "By bringing awareness to this, hopefully it can motivate change to take place. It is important to come together to honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and to hold them in our hearts and to hold them in our

that day."

The candlelight vigil, which featured about 19 hand drummers, was held at 9:15 p.m. at City Hall by the Animikii Wiikwedong-Deweigan drum group.

"There was a very good turnout, a very good display of support from various community (citizens)," says Sharlene Bourdeau, member of the Animikii

thoughts and (to) recognize Wiikwedong-Deweigan drum group. "I felt it was needed to bring awareness to the fact that there's so many Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in this country and there's still thousands that have gone unsolved."

> Bourdeau says she also requested that the lights at the Boulevard Lake Dam be changed to red on May 5 to

increase awareness of Red Dress Day.

"From a far distance it actually looked like Anishinabe women in red dresses because of the way the water was falling - it looked absolutely stunning," Bourdeau says.

Celina Reitberger, member of the Animikii Wiikwedong-Deweigan drum group, says the drum group previously handed

out Red Dress Day pins at the Intercity Shopping Centre on April 30 and arranged for a local restaurant, Lot 88, to hand out Red Dress Day cookies to customers to raise awareness of the MMIWG issue.

'(The Lot 88 owner) agreed that anyone who showed up dressed in red on (May 5) for dinner would receive 10 per cent off their food bill," Reitberger says. "So we all went there and took advantage of that."

Reitberger says Red Dress Day should be a national holiday because of the ongoing fact of MMIWG.

"Cases are not being solved, it's still happening and we need to make the general public aware of this," Reitberger says.



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## Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation

## Federal Indian Day School Assistance

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

**Megan Wood** Staff Lawyer

Thunder Bay Office Phone: 1-807-622-1413 Direct: 807-627-8083 Toll Free: 1-800-465-5582 Email: mwood@nanlegal.on.ca

Cheryl Suggashie

Public Legal Education & **Communications Coordinator** 

Thunder Bay Office Cell: (807) 620-9253

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

Adam Mack

#### **Public Legal Education**

**Timmins Office** Cell: (705) 262-3389

Email: amack@nanlegal.on.ca

\*Who can assist in Direction and Resources

#### Mental Health Support and additional helpful 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.

#### Please see below for free available Mental Health Resources:

#### **Argyle Community Support Program** (For Indian Day Schools only)

One-on-one support by a trauma informed Claims Assistant

for help completing the Claims Form

Phone: 1-877-515-7525

Monday through Friday 8am - 9pm Eastern (Interpretation services provided upon request) Email: idscommunitysupport@argylepr.com

https://indiandayschools.com/en/support/community-support-

program/

#### Talk 4 Healing: Talk, Text, Chat

Services in Ojibway, Oji-Cree, Cree, English, French 24/7 culturally sensitive counselling, advice, and support to Indigenous women.

Toll Free: 1-855-554-4325 www.talk4healing.com

#### **Hope for Wellness Help Line**

24/7 Services in English, Cree, Ojibway, Inuktitut, French Toll Free 1-855-242-3310

www.hopeforwellness.ca with Chat Feature

#### NAN Hope

Toll Free 1-844-626-4673 Text: 1-844-626-4673

www.nanhope.ca with Chat Feature

#### 24-hour Residential School Crises Line

For immediate emotional assistance

Toll Free: 1-866-925-4419

Access Health Support Services & more information

Toll Free: 1-888-301-6426 www.healthcanada.ge.ca/irs

#### Indian Residential Schools Survivors and Family

Toll Free: 1-800-721-0066

www.irsss.ca

#### **Native Women's Association of Canada**

In-house elders offering support, Monday to Friday 9-11am and

1-3 p.m. Eastern Time Toll Free: 1-888-664-7808

www.nwac.ca

#### **MMIW Crisis Line**

24/7 support to family, friends and community citizens impacted by the loss of a missing or murdered Indigenous woman, girl, or

Two-spirit person Toll Free: 1-844-413-6649 https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/



Toll Free: 1-800-465-5581 Phone: (807) 622-1413 Fax: (807) 622-3024

Email: info@nanlegal.on.ca Website: www.nanlegal.on.ca

Please stay tuned for our future "Virtual Gathering" as we will be discussing; Indian Day Schools, mental health topics, and the discoveries of the unmarked graves. More information to follow!

For more information and or assistance on "Indian Day School Settlement" claims form, with Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation, please visit our website:

https://nanlegal.on.ca/federal-indian-day-school-class-

action/



Nishnawbe Aski Police Service Chief of Police Roland Morrison announced NAPS' new funding agreement on the first day of the May 10-12 NAN Chiefs Spring Assembly.

## NAPS planning to add 18 new officers

**Rick Garrick** Wawatay News

Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS) announced plans to add 18 new Regional Drug Investigative team detectives and staff under their funding agreement for 2022-2025 during the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Chiefs Spring Assembly. NAPS Chief of Police Roland Morrison announced the new funding agreement on the first day of the May 10-12 NAN Chiefs Spring Assembly.

'We're going to have two detective staff sergeants, one will oversee our existing crime units which are situated in Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay and Cochrane," Morrison says. "The other detective staff sergeant position will go to overseeing our specialty officers, which consists of our drug units, our guns and gang officer, our criminal intelligence officer, our analyst. When you look at direct supervision on these regional drug enforcement teams, we have a detective sergeant here already who oversees the officers that are working out of Thunder Bay, but we'll have a detective sergeant overseeing the regional drug enforcement team in Sioux Lookout, we'll have a detective sergeant that's going to oversee the team out of Cochrane."

Morrison says each region will have four detective constables and a detective sergeant strictly focusing on drug enforcement.

"And to ensure that our officers are getting properly trained, it was important for us to increase our training unit, so we did get two additional positions for our training unit," Morrison says.

Morrison says the new regional drug enforcement positions will help deter people from going to the NAPS communities to sell drugs.

"This was something that we needed desperately because many of our communities are suffering, many of our people are suffering," Morrison says. "So to get 18 positions for specialized investigations, that sends a real message to say that the governments have heard us and they made a commitment to NAPS to help us, help

your communities, to help our citizens to make sure that we can deter people from coming to our communities and selling drugs."

Morrison says they also added two K-9 positions, with one to be based in Thunder Bay and one in Cochrane.

"They serve a multitude of capacities within our service," Morrison says. "They can be available for search and rescue, they can be available for executing drug warrants, they're there as a deterrent but they're also there to be that ice breaker sometimes. Having a dog in the room is really a conversation starter, but it's also again a good way to do community service."

Morrison says they are also receiving funding for five new detachment buildings, with construction to begin on the new detachments in Marten Falls and Neskantaga in 2022/2023 and in Attawapiskat, Mishkeegogamang and Chapleau in 2023/2024.

"We've never received funding for five new detachments in one negotiation sitting," Morrison says. "So for the funders to commit this to Nishnawbe Aski Police is really a huge step for them because the need is there to replace our infrastructure. Our newest infrastructure will be stick builds and it will allow Nishnawbe Aski Police to have the equipment to service the communities, it will allow our officers to have appropriate spaces to conduct their work, not only to interview people who were victims, we'll have a safe space for them within our detachments."

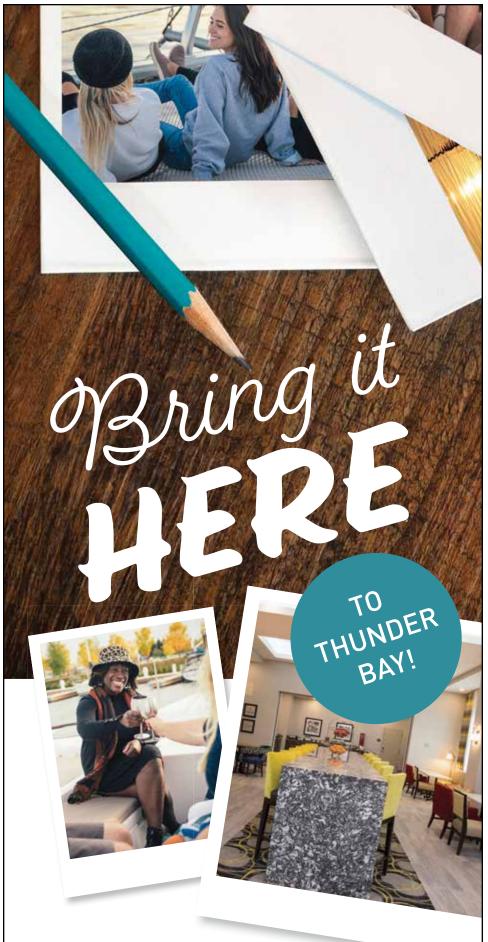
Morrison says the funding agreement also includes new funding for two information technology technicians, one additional finance position, one human resources assistant, three regional e-intake coordinators, one court assistant, one CPIC position and one prisoner transport position.

Mike Metatawabin, NAPS board chair, thanked the leadership from NAN for their ongoing support and resolutions over the years during his comments about the new NAPS funding agreement.

"It made a big difference," Metatawabin says. "I also want to include our legal counsel who were involved, they played a pivotal role as well."

Metatawabin says NAPS is the second largest Indigenous police force in North America. after the Navajo Police Depart-





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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.

#### 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
- Baseball Tournament
- Volleyball Tournament
- Land-Based Camping for Families and Youth
- Picking & Harvesting Medicines Family Radio Show
- Community Cookout

Food

- Preparing & Cooking Traditional Beach Day
- Gospel Jamboree
- Karaoke Contest
- Family Scavenger Hunt
- Social Media Games and Contests
- Family Photo Contest

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 Direct Line: **807-625-4694** or 807-707-1840









#### 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** or to Aurora Smith, Social Services Policy Analyst at **asmith@nan.ca**.

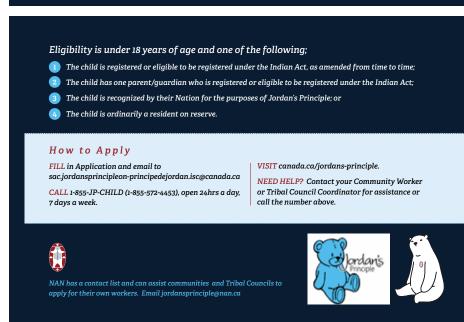
Stay safe and be well.

Robin Quachegan

**Director of Social Services** 





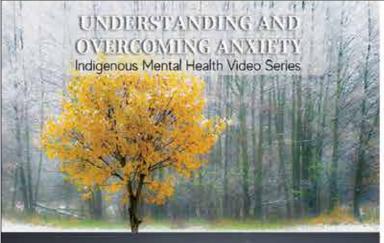


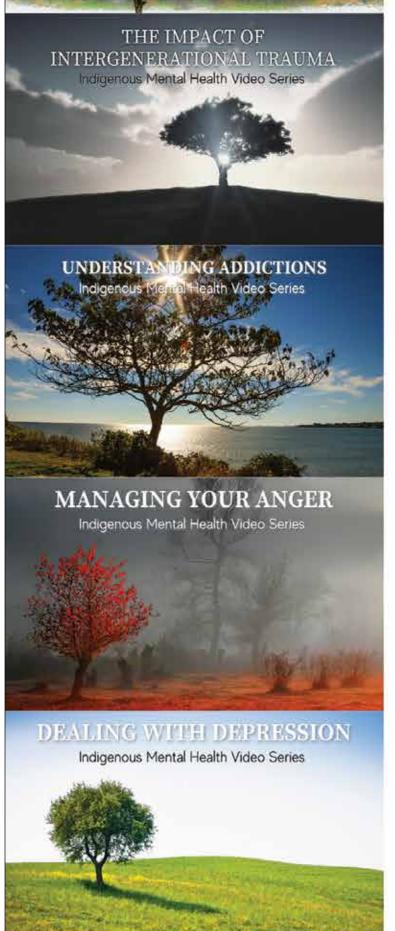




#### Helping you live the life you deserve







## Indigenous Mental Health Video Series

YOUTUBE CHANNEL: SULLIVAN + ASSOCIATES

### **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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## Class action over birth alerts filed in court

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Waddell Phillips Professional Corporation filed a statement of claim for a proposed class action over birth alerts issued by Ontario's legislatively mandated children's aid societies on May 10 at the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

Waddell Phillips Professional Corporation represents two plaintiffs, Katherine Gandy and Emily Walker, who claim on their own behalf and on behalf of the proposed class members declarations including that the defendant children's aid societies intentionally or recklessly, and without lawful justification, intruded

upon the seclusion of the birth parent class members; and the defendant children's aid societies breached the confidence of the birth parent class members by misusing their confidential personal information to the detriment of the birth parent class members.

"We will be suing the children's aid societies of Ontario as well as the ministry which is responsible for child welfare," says Tina Yang, a lawyer with Waddell Phillips Professional Corporation, during a phone interview before the proposed class action was filed. "The core of the claim is the birth alerts system. The core of it is when the child protection authority sends a notice to local hospitals

essentially saying this person who is pregnant may come to your hospital or clinic for care and when they do you should tell us, you should alert us."

Yang says the authority of a child protection authority is focused on the interests of a child.

"There is no authority to take these intrusive steps with parents before there is a child, which is what happened with the birth alerts system," Yang says. "We don't know for sure how many birth alerts were issued in Ontario over the years or even when the system began but we do know the use was widespread. We've heard from many women and many families that have been affected by

birth alerts throughout Ontario and in 2020 the ministry issued a guideline stating that the practice of birth alerts had to stop, so that was the official end of birth alerts in Ontario."

Yang says Waddell Phillips Professional Corporation is spearheading the proposed class action in Ontario and similar actions have been or will be brought across the country.

"It's a proposed class action when it's filed," Yang says. "We have to go to court and ask the court to certify the case as a class action. If and when certification is granted a notice will go out to all people who are potentially affected. At this point people don't have to take any steps — they're welcome

to contact us for information if they want to know more about the class action, but there's nothing they need to do at this point."

The plaintiffs also claim in the proposed class action declarations that the defendant children's aid societies breached the confidence of the birth parent class members by misusing their confidential personal information to the detriment of the birth parent class members; the defendant children's aid societies breached the s. 15 Charter rights of the subclass members and that the infringements are not saved by s. 1 of the Charter; the defendant children's aid societies acted without lawful authority and committed the tort of misfeasance in public office; the defendant Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Ontario owed a duty of care to the class members and breached that duty; and the defendants are liable to the class members for the damages caused by their breaches of common law and statutory duties.

Information about the class action is posted online at: waddellphillips.ca/class-actions/birth-alerts-class-action/, and the proposed class action is posted at: waddellphillips.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/22.05.10-Issued-Statement-of-Claim-FINAL.pdf.

### Canadian Rangers providing emergency help with James Bay evacuations

#### Peter Moon

Special to Wawatay News

Canadian Rangers are providing emergency assistance to three remote First Nations on James Bay as spring ice breakups threaten to flood the communities.

"It's a good example of Canadian Rangers being able to assist their communities when required," said Lieutenant-Colonel Shane McArthur, the Canadian Army officer who commands the 700 Rangers in 29 First Nations across the Far North of Ontario. Rangers are part-time army reservists.

A mobile support team, known as a Ranger Go Team, flew into Kachechewan on Sunday to assist local Rangers in the ongoing evacuation of the Cree community. The Go Team, composed of Rangers from Bearskin Lake, Moose Factory, Sandy Lake, and Pikangikum, all volunteered for the mission. The Albany River frequently forces the community to evacuate when the river floods during the annual ice break-ups.

Rangers are assisting in the evacuation of Fort Albany which is on the south shore of the Albany River and also subject to frequent spring flooding.

In Attawapiskat local Rangers have been placed on active duty to monitor water levels on the Attawapiskat River and be prepared to help evacuees if a major evacuation takes place.

"The Go Team was formed for Kashechewan," Lt.-Col. McArthur said, "so we can support the local Rangers by bringing in additional forces when local Rangers are not sufficient to meet our tasks in an emergency in the community. Some local Rangers have been forced to leave the community because their family members have been flown out and they want to remain together."

"I'm always appreciative of being able whenever we can to provide help," he said. "When a request for assistance comes in we are always ready to do whatever is approved to support our communities as we are mandated to do."

(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 Lieutenant-Colonel Shane McArthur commands the Canadian Rangers of Northern Ontario.

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## Waasigan transmission line gets the green light to advance

Rick Garrick

Wawatay News

A consortium of eight northwestern Ontario First Nations are looking forward to benefits for their communities with the signing of an agreement to advance the Waasigan Transmission Line project from Shuniah to Atikokan and Dryden. The Gwavakocchigewin Limited Partnership (GLP), which represents Eagle Lake, Fort William, Seine River, Nigigoonsiminikaaning, Wabigoon Lake, Lac La Croix, Lac Seul and Ojibway Nation of Saugeen, entered into the agreement with Hydro One Networks Inc. (Hydro One) on May 4 during a ceremony at the Fort William First Nation Community Centre. The agreement provides the eight communities and another First Nation with the opportunity to invest in a 50 per cent stake in the transmission line.

"In the long run we want to get jobs out of this project," says Tom Johnson, president at Gwayakocchigewin Limited Partnership and a Seine citizen. "The dividends we are going to be receiving ... will go a long ways in helping out some of our youth in the community to get ahead and give them a better education. I think it will go a long way in making our community a lot better."

Johnson says the agreement demonstrates the right approach to Indigenous participation on infrastructure devel-

"We must seek out partnerships where we participate as equal partners to support our communities and our (citizens)," Johnson says. "First Nations working together and in a true partnership with Hydro One, will help us secure a brighter future for our peo-

Mark Poweska, president and CEO at Hydro One, says Indigenous communities have historically borne the impacts of infrastructure development in their territories without seeing the benefits.

"As Canadians, we have a responsibility to reflect on our past and take meaningful action towards reconciliation with Indigenous communities," Poweska says. "This announcement is a progressive step to increase opportunities for First Nations communities to participate with industry and with Hydro One as we collectively build the electricity grid of the future."

The Waasigan Transmission Line will bolster capacity in northwestern Ontario by adding 350 megawatts of capacity to the region with a new double-circuit 230 kilovolt (kV)



Lac Seul Chief Clifford Bull signs the agreement to advance the Waasigan Transmission Line project from Shuniah to Atikokan and Dryden during a signing ceremony on May 4 in Fort William.

transmission line between the Lakehead Transmission Station (TS) in Shuniah and Mackenzie TS in Atikokan, and a new single-circuit 230 kV transmission line between Mackenzie TS and Dryden TS in Dryden.

Lac la Croix Chief Carrie Atatise-Norwegian says her community is looking for specific benefits from the GLP.

"We've asked for very specific benefits, including some economic benefits, some positions, training and capacity building as well as resolution of some outstanding hydro issues that our community has been contending with over many years as a result of our semi-isolated location," Atatise-Norwegian says, noting that they have had surges, brownouts and power outages. "We're already in some discussions about some potential options and some solutions to resolve those issues in my community when it comes to the hydro and electricity. I'm optimistic that we'll benefit in that way as well."

Lac Seul Chief Clifford Bull says the Waasigan Transmission Line project is slated to start in a couple of years.

"I think it will certainly bring prosperity in terms of jobs, training," Bull says. "We're looking at working with other JV (joint venture) partners perhaps — the eight communities can look at JVing with other communities where we could expand our opportunities."

Fort William Chief Peter Collins adds that they want to make sure everything done during the project is environmentally friendly.

You heard our Elder talk about the water, how important it is," Collins says. "These (power) lines are going to have to cross over waterways and we're going to make sure the water is protected."

Collins says the Waasigan Transmission Line will provide power for communities and enable the development of mining opportunities.

'There's so many spinoffs that can happen when this transmission corridor heads west from Fort William territory, and the opportunities will be endless for our communities," Collins says.



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## Water settlement claims open until March 23, 2023

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Neskantaga Chief Wayne Moonias stressed the need to get his community's water system operating properly during the April 28 announcement of the opening of the First Nations Drinking Water Settlement claims period. The announcement of the claims period, which is open until March 7, 2023, also included comments by Curve Lake Chief Emily Whetung, Tataskweyak Cree Chief Doreen Spence and Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu.

"We're still dealing with an outstanding project that seems to create more and more issues for the community," Moonias says. "There is a lot of work that needs to be done in terms of bringing our people up to where they need to be in terms of the medical support. We haven't even gone into finding out what exactly our people are facing in terms of the long-standing boil water advisory exposures that they've encountered."

Curve Lake, Neskantaga and Tataskweyak initiated national class action lawsuits in 2019 on behalf of First Nations and their citizens who were subject to a drinking water advisory that lasted at least one year between Nov. 20, 1995 and June 20, 2021

"We've visited houses from time to time where we have toddlers being bandaged up because of sores due to exposures to unsafe drinking water," Moonias says. "So there is a lot of work that has to be done."

Moonias says the community's water infrastructure project is "still going."

"We aren't sure when we can actually have a time to discuss the lifting of the boil water advisory," Moonias says. "It's really disheartening and the trust of the community has gone down since this project has gone over its timeframe. So we are dealing with multiple issues when it comes to access to clean drinking water as well as providing the quality of life that the community (citizens) should be afforded with."

Elders sometimes have to take their wagons a kilometre or two kilometres to access our only reverse osmosis (water) unit in the community...

Neskantaga Chief Wayne
 Moonias

Moonias says a lot of community citizens have not started the application process for the First Nations Drinking Water Settlement claims process due to deaths in the community and the COVID-19 outbreak in February.

"We've encountered a lot of issues as a close-knit community, we've lost Elders," Moonias says. "It's not by any means a celebratory situation

right now in our community because we're still dealing with an ongoing water situation. Elders sometimes have to take their wagons a kilometre or two kilometres to access our only reverse osmosis (water) unit in the community, we have to fly in at least a dozen loads of bottled water into the community. We do appreciate the support given by the minister and her department however this is becoming a normalcy for a dayto-day life in Neskantaga, and we have to change that."

The settlement agreement includes about \$1.5 billion in compensation for individuals deprived of clean drinking water;

the creation of a \$400 million First Nation Economic and Cultural Restoration Fund; and a renewed commitment to Canada's Action Plan for the lifting of all long-term drinking water advisories. It also includes the creation of a First Nations Advisory Committee on Safe Drinking Water; support for First Nations to develop their own safe drinking water by-laws and initiatives; a commitment of at least \$6 billion to support reliable access to safe drinking water on reserves; and the modernization of Canada's First Nations drinking water legisla-

"This settlement agreement is a significant milestone for First Nations, who have fought for the same access to clean water that other communities across the country have," Hajdu says. "My hope is, and I certainly think the settlement



screenshot

Neskantaga Chief Wayne Moonias highlighted the need for a proper water system in his community during the announcement of the opening of the First Nations Drinking Water Settlement claims period.

helps facilitate this, is that with a minimum of \$6 billion that is committed along with additional monetary commitments for operator training and for equity and operator pay that we will get to a point where if there is a disruption in water service, as there can be in any community, that we are well situated to immediately manage that so it doesn't turn into a long-term boil water advisory. There is disruption in water delivery whether it's in Indigenous or non-Indigenous communities, but our goal together with chiefs is to make

sure that no generation has to suffer through long-term boil water advisories again and we can complete this work of lifting the ones that remain and prevent communities from entering long-term boil water advisories."

Whetung highlighted how her community's access to clean drinking water changed during her grandfather's lifetime.

"I sat with my grandfather by Chemong Lake and he shared with me his childhood memories of water so clean he could drink it straight from the source," Whetung says. "In his lifetime, we have reached an unfortunate point where many First Nations have no access to even the basic necessities of life, like drinkable water or clean water to bathe. With this settlement agreement, we are moving toward clean drinking water in many First Nations. We must recognize this is just the first drop in the bucket, but it gives me hope that in my lifetime we can achieve the goal of clean water for all."

Information about the settlement agreement is posted online at: firstnationsdrinkingwater.ca.



## NAN Women's Webinar Series teaches leadership skills

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Wataynikaneyap Power CEO Margaret Kenequanash spoke about leadership and entrepreneurship empowering women leaders during her Nishnawbe Aski Nation Women's Council Winter Wellness Webinar Series Visionary Leadership and Empowerment presentation.

"I focused on the project I'm working on, which is Wataynikaneyap, focused on the guiding principles and what we're doing here," says Kenequanash, a former North Caribou Lake chief and Shibogama First Nations Council executive director who was recognized as a 2022 Changemaker by The Globe and Mail. "I provided a status update on how we are trying to include the women in training so they can be part of it. I talked a little bit about how can we empower women in business and what is our role and how can we shape these discussions and participate given that most of the workplaces are still male-dominated workplaces."

Kenequanash says she learned about leadership from her father and other mentors, leaders and Elders that have helped her over the years.

"Compassion is one area, to be compassionate in helping our people," Kenequanash says. "And showing love to myself as an individual, the people and the co-workers, and being humble and listening and following up. Some of things that I've done over the years is to establish contacts and ensure that we must do appropriate and proper communication, to be educated and be aware of things around you and be sensitive and be knowledgeable of who we are as individuals and as Indigenous people and understanding what business means."

Kenequanash says she also focused on part of her personal journey during the presentation, noting her first role was as a translator in her community.

"My first task at age 12 was to be a translator in my community, and I also planted potatoes," Kenequanash says. "I helped my dad do that and we distributed potatoes in the community. In the capacities and jobs I've worked at over time, I've learned a lot from my parents — my parents really set high standards for us to follow through as well as the Elders and current leaders and former leaders who have mentored me over the years."

Kenequanash says she initially worked at Wawatay Native Communications Society in Sioux Lookout before working at Windigo Tribal Council as an education secretary.

"I got myself involved in the Sioux Lookout Municipal Council back in 1990 and was a councillor there," Kenequanash says, noting that she was next elected as chief of her community. "Then I came out and went back to school, my background is business, and then I started



submitted photos

Wataynikaneyap Power CEO Margaret Kenequanash delivered a presentation during Nishnawbe Aski Nation Women's Council Winter Wellness Webinar Series Visionary Leadership and Empowerment webinar.

working for Shibogama — I was there for 14 years."

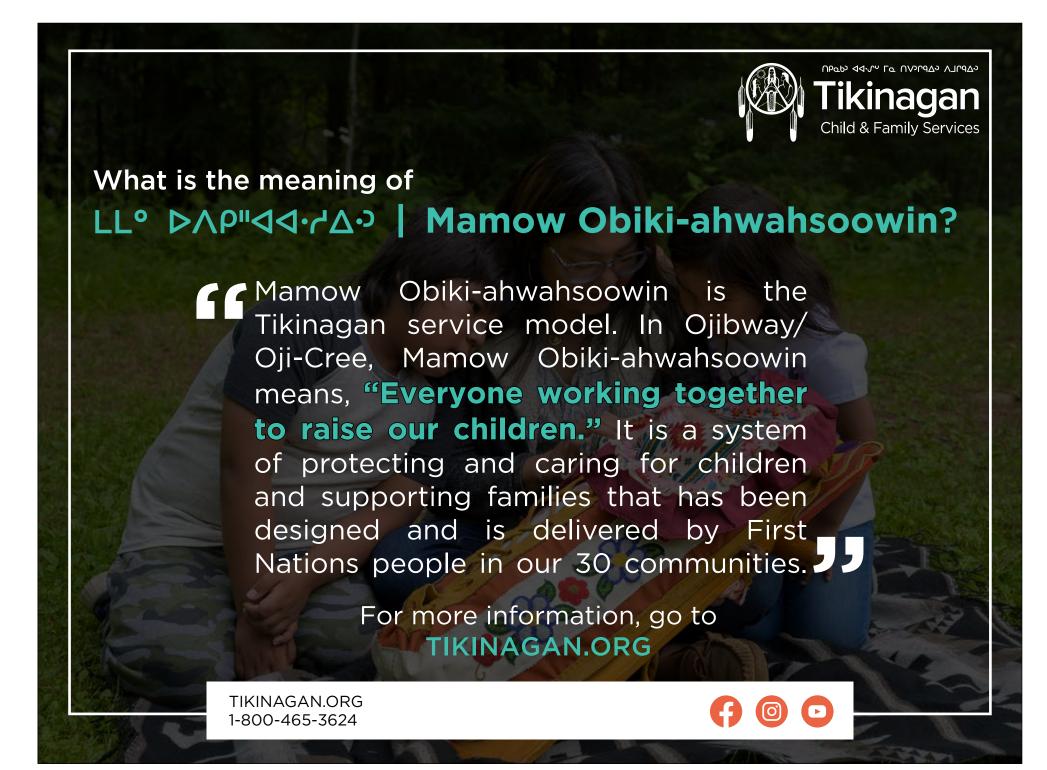
Kenequanash says the Shibogama leadership was talking about energy and the problems the Musselwhite Mine was having with power outages and the communities were having with diesel electric power generators when she was at Shibogama.

"My focus was on energy when I was at Shibogama and I was asked if I wanted to work on the (Wataynikaneyap Power) project itself," Kenequanash says. "I got my blessing from the Elders and the chiefs I worked with that I could move on, and since then I've been working on Wataynikaneyap Power."

The first Women's Council Winter Wellness Webinar Series webinar was scheduled with crafter and social worker Alice Sabourin and poet Maggie Chisel exploring how creative pursuits can allow people to process emotion and trauma while creating something new and unique in the comfort of

their home.

The final Women's Council Winter Wellness Webinar Series webinar was scheduled with Elders Gerry Martin and Sam Achneepineskum discussing violence as a learned behaviour and the role of men in addressing and preventing violence in families and communities.



## Nature Conservancy of Canada launches project to protect the land near Constance Lake

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Constance Lake looks forward to working with the Nature Conservancy of Canada's (NCC) recently announced Boreal Wildlands project to protect about 1,500 square kilometres of boreal forest located south and south-west of Hearst.

"NCC (has) agreed that we will have access to that area to continue our practices however we see fit but also for the Lands and Resources Department to actually set up some monitoring programs," says Constance Lake Councillor Wayne Neegan. "One individual had claimed to have witnessed a caribou so this obviously had sparked some interest from our department and immediately we set up our game-trail cameras in the area."

Neegan says they are working with NCC to look at other programs that could be done in the Boreal Wildlands project area, such as a bat survey and fish sampling in possibly two lakes and the Shekak River.

"We would try to get some bat monitoring devices there to see how many species are existing in that area," Neegan says. "In the past we've identified six different species that roam around just north of Constance Lake, so we'd like to continue to do maybe another survey like that in those areas."



Neegan says NCC approached the community last November to talk about acquiring the Boreal Wildlands property, which harbours more than 100 lakes and 1,300 kilometres of rivers, streams and shoreline.

"As the stewards of our traditional territory, Constance Lake First Nation looks to preserve and protect lands and resources to ensure their sustainable use for current and future generations," Neegan says. "We take an open, responsible and holistic approach on all work we do while respecting history and culture and asserting Constance Lake First Nation's rights and title. We are happy to be working with the Nature Conservancy of Canada to conserve and protect these lands."

Catherine Grenier, president and CEO at NCC, says the Boreal Wildlands project is the largest project NCC has

ever undertaken during the announcement on Earth Day, April 22. "This year we mark Earth

"This year we mark Earth Day with a special announcement — we called it big, bold, boreal," Grenier says. "It's the biggest private land conservation project in the history of this country. It's three times the size of Montreal, 12 times the size of Vancouver or more than twice the size of Toronto."

Grenier adds that NCC acknowledges the long-standing role of Indigenous people as stewards of their traditional lands.

"At the Nature Conservancy of Canada, we strive to be an ally to Indigenous nations through caring for the lands and waters that connect us all," Grenier says.

The Boreal Wildlands project aims to protect forests in an area often referred to as the



photos submitted by Digital Image

The Nature Conservancy of Canada announced a Boreal Wildlands project to protect about 1,500 square kilometres of boreal forest near Hearst on Earth Day.

lungs of the planet and peatlands that absorb and store greenhouse gas emissions. The project also shelters natural corridors that provide refuge for species at risk, including threatened woodland caribou.

"It's part of the largest forest system in the world," Grenier says. "In the face of biodiversity loss and climate change, nature offers us very real solutions. So we are working at a record pace now to conserve the natural areas that are our life support system."

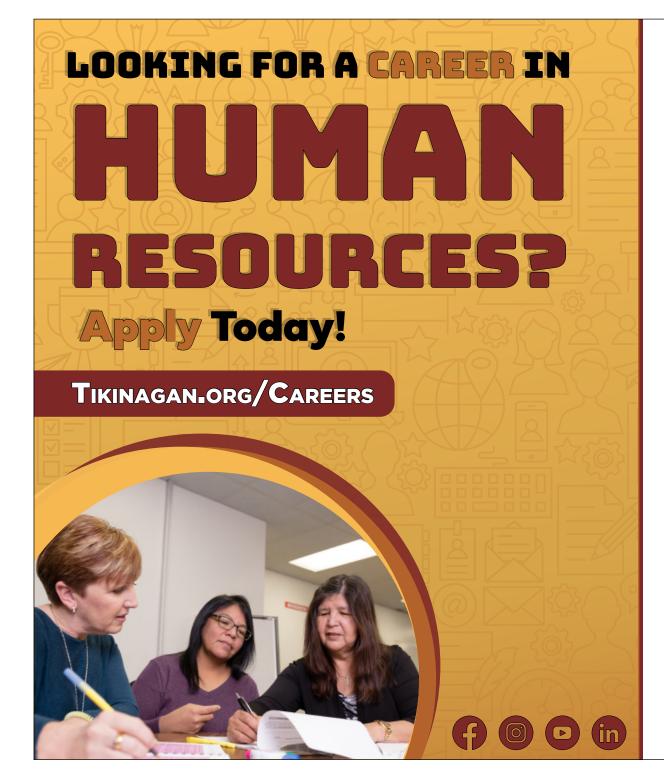
Grenier says the project is part of NCC's commitment to accelerate the pace of conservation across the country.

"In just the past two years, NCC has influenced the protection of land equivalent to twice the size of P.E.I. (Prince Edward Island)," Grenier says. "And by the end of 2030, we aim to double our impact because ... we deeply believe that when nature thrives, we all thrive. Boreal Wildlands is about impact — when we work at this scale, habitats are connected. By protecting entire natural systems, we help nature to deliver the services that are critical for plants, animals and people."

The project was supported through investments from the federal government's Natural Heritage Conservation Program and the provincial government's Greenlands Conservation Partnership as well as a discount on the appraised value of the former forestry lands by Domtar Inc.

"This Earth Day we are excited to show Canadians that global impact starts with local action," Grenier says. "The Boreal Wildlands project is a unique opportunity to make a difference for nature and for people. It is a model for modern conservation. We are grateful to the partners who have inspired us to undertake conservation on this scale. We enthusiastically invite everyone to donate now to help complete the project and make history."

NCC, which has raised about two-thirds of the \$46 million cost of the project, launched their public campaign to raise the remaining \$13 million on April 22. Information is posted online at: boreal-wildlands. nccnaturescapes.ca.





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### Arts & Entertainment







## Wake the Giant Festival set for September

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School student and pianist Malachi Beardy will be featured just before the final act at this year's Wake the Giant Music Festival on Sept. 17.

"We've watched him grow as a musician," says Greg Chomut, an organizer of the Wake the Giant Music Festival. "At our Christmas party just this past year he played a song on the piano that he composed himself, a Malachi Beardy original, and it blew the roof off of the gym. It was a no brainer to ask him to be part of Wake the Giant — he is composing a fresh new track and will be taking the stage at Wake the Giant 2022."

The Wake the Giant Music Festival will also feature Our Lady Peace, DJ Steve Aoki, Aqua, Digging Roots, Neon Dreams, Crown Lands, Aysanabee and Grammy-nominated drum group Young Spirit Singers performing on stage at the Thunder Bay Waterfront.

"This will be a day to remember," says Sean Spenrath, another organizer of the Wake the Giant Music Festival. "This year festival goers can expect acts from a diverse list of genres that will have them screaming lyrics to some of their favourite throwback tunes, a ton of Canadian content and emerging Indigenous artists that are sure to be crowd pleasers. We are stoked."

Chomut says Aysanabee, a Sandy Lake citizen who was raised in the Thunder Bay area, is an up and coming artist in the Canadian music scene.

"I think we'll be seeing a lot from him," Chomut says. "His music is very appealing to everybody from all walks of life. People are really going to enjoy seeing him and we'll be watching his career grow in the future, I'm sure."

Chomut says the Young Spirit Singers are from northern Alberta, noting that they aim to bring in a drum group or artist every year that resonates with the northern communities. "We always have students, jingle dress dancers, and they get to go up on stage with the drum group and do their jingle dress dancing," Chomut says. "And if they're excited about meeting and performing with a drum group that they know, it just feels good to see that excitement."

Chomut says the students are also excited about seeing DJ Steve Aoki live at the Wake the Giant Music Festival.

"There was a lot of excitement around DJ Steve Aoki within the student body," Chomut says.

Chomut says the last performance by Our Lady Peace in Thunder Bay was a big event for the city.

"Everybody seemed to be talking about it so hopefully they draw the same excitement this time around," Chomut says.

The Wake the Giant Festival was created in 2019 as part of the Wake the Giant initiative that includes the Wake the Giant decal program for businesses and organizations to



submitted photos

Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School students and Wake the Giant Music Festival organizers recently painted a poster for this year's upcoming Wake the Giant Music Festival, scheduled for Sept. 17.

post Wake the Giant decals on their doors and windows to indicate a safe space for Indigenous youth.

"Wake the Giant continues to help make our students and their communities feel more welcome and more connected to the City of Thunder Bay through the movement and more specifically, through this incredible event," says AJ Happa, another organizer of the

Wake the Giant Music Festival. "Each year, the Wake the Giant Music Festival creates an atmosphere that helps build stronger bonds in our community by providing an opportunity to get to know each other a little better."

The Wake the Giant Music Festival will also include an Indigenous Craft Market, celebrity appearances, a live art installation and local foods.

"We also have our wellness

tent at the back that has Elders and counsellors and traditional medicines and just a quiet place," Chomut says. "It's a new trend at music festivals for people to escape the hustle and bustle of the festival."

Tickets are now available for sale at: wakethegiant.ca. Tier 1 tickets are \$120 and limited VIP tickets are \$150. Children 11-years-old and under are free but need a ticket to attend.



## Arts & Entertainment



screenshot

Otsistohkwi:yo performed the traditional Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address to open the 2022 Toronto International Storytelling Festival on May 6.



screensho

Alderville Chief Dave Mowat performed blues music with Clayton Yates and Terry Wilkins.



screenshot

Serpent River storyteller Isaac Murdoch shared some of his stories during three sessions on May 12, 13 and 14 at the 2022 Toronto International Storytelling Festival.

## Toronto Storytelling Festival featured artist from across Canada

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

The 2022 Toronto International Storytelling Festival included Indigenous storytellers from across the country, beginning with a Thanksgiving Address by Otsistohkwi:yo and blues music by Alderville Chief Dave Mowat on opening night. The annual festival, held May 6-15, also featured presentations by Isaac Murdoch, Richard Van Camp and Albert Dumont as well as an Indigenous Storytellers Super-Group presentation hosted by Janet Marie Rogers with Murdoch, Jenny Blackbird and Tehakanere Henhawk.

"I've been gifted the task of opening this storytelling festival in the traditional way we do it, my people," says

Otsistohkwi:yo, a teacher from Six Nations who performed the traditional Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address on May 6. "Our people came together a long time ago, they were different nations and they formed this confederacy under the banner of the Great Law of Peace, of putting away our weapons and coming together to support each other with a good mind and peace at the centre of it. This (Thanksgiving Address) is our first ceremony that we were ever given."

Mowat, who performed with Clayton Yates and Terry Wilkins during the Story and Song with Dave Mowat and Clayton Yates session on May 6, says Otsistohkwi:yo did an "amazing" performance.

ing" performance.
"I'm from Alderville First

Nation and there's a number of young people in their 30s that have taken hold of (Anishinabemowin) and done very well in acquiring the fluency,' Mowat says. "Everybody should once in their life learn and understand what the Indian Act is and what it did and what it attempted to do in Canada to Indigenous peoples. That's my reality, is working within the confines of that colonial construct called the Indian Act. It was a racist piece of legislation that sought to undermine the self-governing principles in our First Nations and in our Indigenous communities across Canada."

Murdoch, a storyteller from Serpent River, says it is always wonderful to tell a story during his Bomgiizhik, Indigenous Storytelling presentation on May 12.

"My name is The Man Who Paints the Rocks and I come from the place where the serpents are painted on the rocks," Murdoch says. "Stories in my language, the kind we are telling tonight, are called Aadizookaan — it really means you are telling about spirit.

"Many years ago my grandfather sat me down by a fire and he says: 'You know, when we came here to this Earth we go through four sacred powers. We go through the power of fire and water and earth and wind, and when we get here on Earth we are educated.' He said we already know lots because we just came from the spirit world, that's why babies are so curious, they already know lots. That's why they're trying to show us sticks and stones and leafs and bugs and everything else because they are trying to show us how beautiful the world is."

Van Camp, a storyteller from Fort Smith, NWT, shared a story about how he became a storyteller when a cinnamon bear kept wandering into his community during his Talk: Richard Van Camp, the Basics of Indigenous Storytelling presentation on May 14.

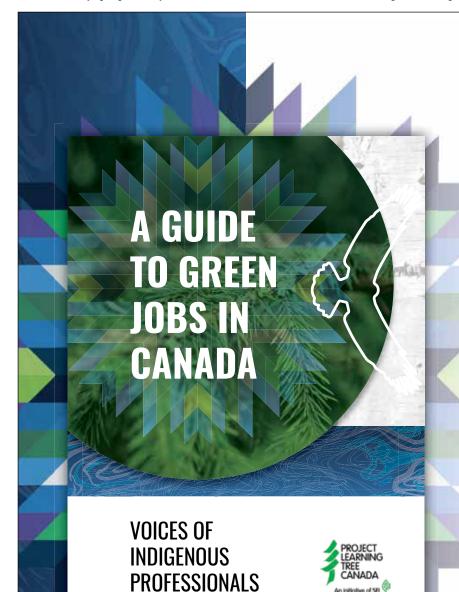
"A cinnamon bear is a cousin of the brown bear, it's a little bit smaller, they're very rare, and it would keep wandering into our community and I would hop on my BMX bike and I would race out to the Caribou Trailer Court because I wanted to see (it)," Van Camp says. "I never got to

see it, it would always take off."

Van Camp says his uncle warned him to be careful around bears when he told him about how he was trying to see the cinnamon bear.

"I said: 'Why,' and he said: 'A bear always knows what you're thinking," Van Camp says. "It was the way he said it that gave me my wings as a listener — if you want to be a better storyteller, you have to become a better listener. You have to learn how to listen with your blood, with your spirit."

Information about the Toronto International Storytelling Festival is posted online at: storytellingtoronto.org.



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## Education

## Lakehead University launches event for the United Nations

Wawatay News

Bemidii State University Ojibwe professor Anton Treuer highlighted how an Elder immersed him in Anishinabemowin during his presentation at Lakehead University's launch event for the United Nations Decade Of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032. Lakehead University also announced a 10-year Indigenous language initiative to support increased fluency of Indigenous languages on and around its campuses in Thunder Bay and Simcoe County during the April 20 launch event.

'When I finished college, I

said I'm not taking a job and I'm not going to go to grad school either, I'm going to come home and walk the Earth, I'm going to hang out with my Elders, I want to spend time in ceremony, I want to learn about our ways, Treuer says, noting that the Elder, a well-known spiritual leader, told him he had been waiting for him when he first met him. "He'd had a dream about somebody and I looked like the person in his dream. I ended up sleeping on his couch, driving him around to funerals and ceremonies and things like that, and what I had is something that a lot of our people are denied, which is a chance to be truly immersed in our language and in our culture."

Treuer also spoke about how he committed to speaking only in Anishinabemowin to his firstborn daughter during her younger years.

'Today she is part of a team that we have been working (with) in Mille Lacs especially, but other communities too, recording and transcribing stories from our Elders," Treuer says. "She's a published author doing work with (Anishinabemowin), and what we've done is we have restored the intergenerational transmission of the language in our family. That's something that is not super common but we would

Treuer says he has had some challenges with continuing his Anishinabemowin initiative with his younger children.

"But frankly with a huge blended family and English being used in so many other places, there are plenty of barriers and my other children are in various stages of knowledge about their language," Treuer says. "We've had our own challenges with keeping this going in our own (family), but it's an ongoing effort. One success story doesn't make a language live, you actually need scale."

Treuer says one of the best predictors of the language a child will know is the language of their peers.

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"So one of the successes for the immersion model with Indigenous language education is that it switches the peer language to the target language, in our case (Anishinabemowin)," Treuer says. Moira McPherson, president and vice-chancellor at Lakehead University, says Lakehead University has been offering the Indigenous Language Teachers Program, originally called the Native Language Teachers Certificate Program, since 1973.

"While we have one of the longest running Indigenous language programs in Canada, we are looking forward to building and expanding on this program through our Decade Of Indigenous Language plan," McPherson says. "We are excited to respond to the Los Pinos Declaration on the Decade of Indigenous languages and look at this as a vital opportunity to continue building collaborative relationships with Indigenous peoples. We hope our commitment to Indigenous language revitalization and our deep appreciation of Indigenous knowledges will result in creating, supporting and maintaining linguistic and cultural justice for the generations of today, and those yet to come."

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## Education

## Lakehead's Global Indigenous Speaker Series continues

Rick Garrick Wawatay News

Mapuche Lafkenche linguist Jacqueline Caniguan raised the issue of Indigenous people being invisible during her May 5 From the south, Wallmapu, Mapuche Country, words to share presentation at Lakehead University's Global Indigenous Speaker Series.

"I always say the First Nations, the Indigenous groups are invisible in the Americas," says Caniguan, a poet, linguist and academic from the University of La Frontera in Temuco, Chile and PhD candidate at the University of Leiden, the Netherlands, as translated from Spanish. "I'm going to share my presentation by telling you something that happened just two days ago — I have a son who is 15 and he called me up from school and he talked to me in our mother tongue, Mapuche, because that is how we speak to each other. When he came home in the afternoon he was very angry because his schoolmates had laughed at him. He said: 'We've been schoolmates for 10 years now and they still haven't realized that I'm Mapuche.' So I told him: 'You see, we continue to be invisible. We might exist, share a space, tread the same path, go to the same restaurants, go to the same schools, and yet we continue to be invisible.

Caniguan says it is extremely important for Indigenous people to try to make themselves

present and to share the steps they have been taking.

"That is why I would like to congratulate (Lakehead University) for having done this (Global Indigenous Speaker Series) and for having these types of speakers where you can hear the voice of the people, the First Nations Indigenous peoples of all of these lands," Caniguan says. "I hope this will continue because I think it's these types of spaces, these types of opportunities that will allow us to look at each other in the eyes so we can share, so we can progress. We won't be able to progress if you don't see who is next to you."

Caniguan says the Mapuche have an aspiration, noting that they are the largest Indigenous people in Chile, with a population of about 1 million according to the 2012 census, including about 51 per cent located in urban centres.

"We're not here just because we're here to exist, we have a dream, and that dream is ... to have a good life, but not a good life in the sense that I want to have a good life, I want to be good inside of myself," Caniguan says. "(It) is a permanent way of living in which you have physical wellbeing, that is to say my health, which is extremely important. We always say it is extremely important to take care of our health."

Caniguan says they have to make sure they are well in all the planes of their lives, materially, physically and spiritually. PUEBLOS
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Mapuche Lafkenche linguist Jacqueline Caniguan highlighted the location of Mapuche territory in south-central Chile during her From the south, Wallmapu, Mapuche Country, words to share presentation on May 5 at Lakehead University's Global Indigenous Speaker Series.

"I have to feed myself properly, I need to be at peace, but at the same time there are a lot of other things involved with my wellbeing," Caniguan says. "This is extremely important and this is something that we are taught from our childhood, even before we were born."

Caniguan says everybody in the Mapuche world has a territorial origin or a geographic space from which they've emerged onto the world.

"But also everybody has their own heritage — that is to say we are part of a story, the story of our family, where we come from and we also have a connection with the territory," Caniguan says. "Those two things lead to the individual in the centre, which is why we

always focus on making sure that we can develop properly and we always insist on knowing our story, our history. When you know your history, your story, your past, you know where you're headed, you've got good ground to place your feet upon and from there you can walk and move ahead. So we always have to know what

our origin is, both in terms of our territory from which we come as well as from our fam-

Caniguan's presentation was the final presentation in the 2022 Global Indigenous Speaker Series.



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