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News

NAN hosts International Overdose Awareness Day walk

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) International Overdose Awareness Day Walk was held on Aug. 27 from the intersection of John St. and Memorial Ave. to Shelter House Thunder Bay.

“This is part of acknowledging the hardships of what our people have to go through and how it’s so important that we stand together and support each other and also to have prayer as a part of that,” says Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum. “So we are going to begin with a prayer song by our Sisters of Turtle Island, and then afterwards we are going to have a prayer by Elder Sam Achneepineskum.”

Achneepineskum thanked the International Overdose Awareness Day Walk participants for taking part in the walk.

“Even one person wearing a purple shirt and raising their voice will make a difference,” Achneepineskum says. “Thank you for coming to make that difference and to raise your voice. I think each of us have lost someone and as I look around this group here, I know we have lost people. It’s so important that we develop a support network, not only for us to gather but to raise our hand in the air and say we need to do more.”

Achneepineskum says the overdose issue is impacting so many people across the country and around the world.

“It’s a national and international issue,” Achneepineskum says. “We had about 40 people that came and joined us on the walk, but like I said, we should have had 400 or more. We are very grateful for those individuals that did come out and I’d like to think that our numbers will increase.”

Achneepineskum says NAN still seems to have a low fatality



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation International Overdose Awareness Day Walk participants marched across Thunder Bay on Aug. 27 to Shelter House Thunder Bay.

rate in the communities.

“But there’s other hardships that our people are dealing with,” Achneepineskum says. “Like the children that are in the child welfare system for example, there’s an increase there. We see a lot of grandmothers now that are taking care of their (grandchildren) because the parents are struggling with addictions. We have more incidents where we have people that are going into our communities to sell drugs, and it’s very disturbing in terms of the drugs they bring in such as fentanyl.”

Whitesand’s Melanie Tibishkogijig says she participated in the walk because she has lost two daughters, one in 2020 and another in 2024.

“They left behind children,” Tibishkogijig says, noting that one daughter left behind one child and the other four children. “So I raise them now, I’ve been gifted that honour of raising them but their moms should have been here. I agree with Anna Betty so strongly,

we need more resources, right from withdrawal management, treatment, aftercare services. Nobody wants to be addicted but it’s such a struggle to get off of it.”

Tibishkogijig says her daughters wanted to get high, but they didn’t want to die.

“The drugs that are out there right now are poison, and it’s killing our people,” Tibishkogijig says. “We need to do more, there needs to be more resources available to them. When someone wants to quit, they want help now, not a week later, not a month later, not six months later.”

Tibishkogijig says one of her daughters was supposed to go for treatment the day after she died.

“So even a few hours is too long,” Tibishkogijig says. “We need a more immediate response to help people that are struggling.”

The Thunder Bay Drug Strategy and Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) also gathered together with the

public and community partners at Shelter House Thunder Bay to commemorate International Overdose Awareness Day on Aug. 27.

“International Overdose Awareness Day is a solemn reminder that overdose is preventable, and every life is worth saving,” says Kandace Belanger, manager of sexual health, street outreach and harm reduction at TBDHU. “This day is also a reminder that harm reduction is evidence-based public health that meets people where they are, with dignity and compassion.”

Rilee Willianen, drug strategy specialist at the City of Thunder Bay, says they gathered together to remember lives lost and to take action.

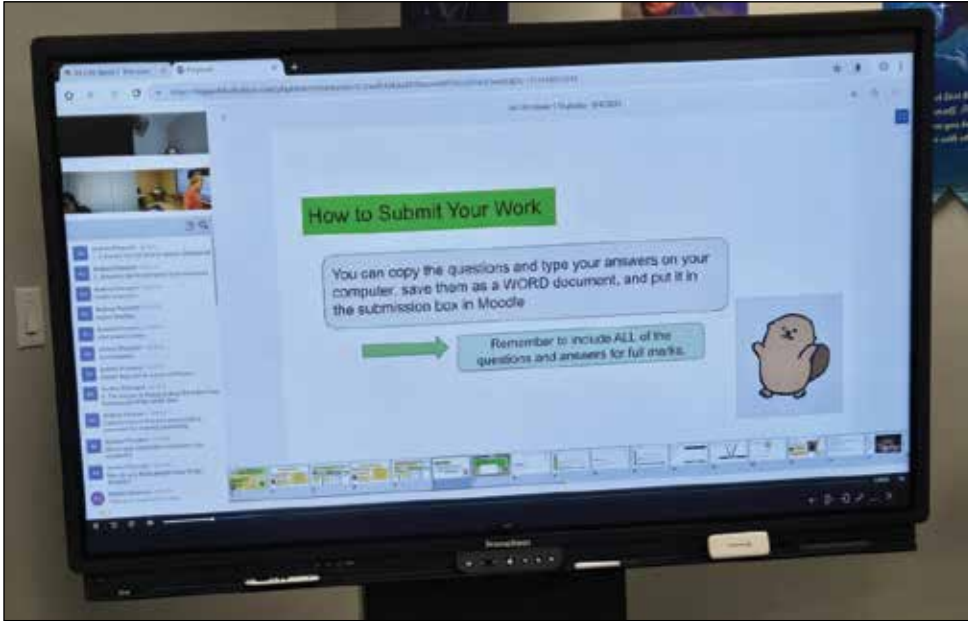
“In 2024, Thunder Bay faced 80 opioid-related deaths, the highest per-capita rate in Ontario,” Willianen says. “We stand with families and friends in grief, and we remain committed to reducing harm, ending stigma and saving lives.”

Thank You, Airlines!

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Education



submitted photo

The Keewaytinook Okimakanak Board of Education Adult Education program is now offering high school courses on evenings and weekends for Indigenous adult learners.

KOBE adult education opens new opportunities

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Keewaytinook Okimakanak Board of Education (KOB) Adult Education program is now offering high school courses on evenings and weekends for Indigenous adult learners including online across the province.

“What we’ve identified is that there’s a number of our community members that are adults and don’t have access to regular high school, whether they

still live in their community or they're working full-time days," says Charlene Hele, adult education coordinator at KOBE. "So we used our Internet high school courses and we developed a hybrid delivery model."

Hele says they can also broadcast the courses via a Zoom platform so people who are living in communities such as North Spirit Lake, Pikangikum or Shoal Lake can use a link to join the class.

"It is fully instructor led, so it's not independent learn-

ing,” Hele says. “The nice thing about our hybrid learning model, they don’t have to be tied to any one location, so as long as they have a stable Internet connection they can connect to the classes. We built the classes to be evenings and Saturdays to help those learners to work around whether it’s their employment schedule or maybe their spouse’s employment schedule.”

see **COURSES** on page 5



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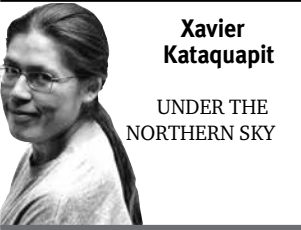
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Commentary

My Iron Horse Keeps Me Balanced



**Xavier
Kataquapit**

UNDER THE
NORTHERN SKY

This wave of cold weather reminds me that I do not have a lot of motorcycle riding time left and that summer will soon be turning into fall. Students are heading back to school and some of the birds are already flying south.

I love my motorcycles because on a bike I am in deep meditation. I must be one hundred percent aware of my control of my bike as I head down the road.

I love classic bikes and I now ride a 2000 BMW R1100R, that features a flat horizontally opposed twin cylinder engine, a design this German company has been producing for over a hundred years. At this point after riding a bike for almost 30 years I feel at one with this magnificent machine rolling down the road.

It is necessary for me to be absolutely conscious of every bump, twist and turn on the road and as well I have to keep an eye on my mirrors to watch for any traffic behind me.

Up here in northern Ontario I also need to watch for animals that cross on to the road. I have often had to brake hard or swerve to miss a moose, a bear, fox and beaver.

Riding a motorcycle is not for everyone and I am the first to admit that it is a dangerous way to get around.

However, as part of my sobriety and being clean and in recovery I am capable to ride with a clear mind and to be extremely careful on my bike rides. This I consider one of the perks of being in recovery for almost 30 years.

Anyone who has a drinking or drug problem does not ride a motorcycle, or at least they don't do it for very long. The chance of having an accident if you are drinking or taking drugs is very high when riding a bike.

As a reward for being in recovery I experience this natural high full of adrenaline, beauty and an amazing sense of connection to the world around me. I like to ride alone and I am not comfortable in groups which I consider dangerous.

For the past few summers I have not been venturing very far on my bike as my partner Mike has been very ill with Pulmonary Fibrosis which affects the lungs.

He is the one who introduced me to motorcycles and taught me how to ride. At the time I had just experienced driving cars here in the south and when I discovered motorcycling a whole new world opened up for me.

I had the best teacher ever in that Mike was a motorcycle journalist and had a long and interesting history in the motorcycle industry.

There is this incredible feeling of freedom as I flow down the road with the wind in my face...

He passed along many decades of knowledge to me and helped me find a few motorcycles that in fact are more like very fine pieces of art rather than mere motorcycles.

Nothing beats pushing my BMW out of the garage and on to the back lane, doing my pre-ride inspection and then firing up this amazing engine built on a history more than a hundred years old.

I have several classic bikes now. My bikes are big but they are also thoroughbreds and handle the road with confidence and style.

My risk taking on the road is always calculated and I stay on the safe side. There is this incredible feeling of freedom as I flow down the road with the wind in my face, the colours of the forest, lakes and sights in a kaleidoscope in my eyes. This is my high.

As I move forward happily with the sound of this amazing engine propelling me down the road, all my troubles, all my daily worries or challenges are left behind in my wake.

The crazy wars in the Ukraine and Gaza, the insane need to keep developing industry that is causing climate change or global warming, the greed, intolerance, racism and bigotry that are a reality these days are not on my mind when I am riding my trusty motorcycle.

I get a break from it all so that I can return home refreshed and at my keyboard to write and push back on the negative things happening in our world with my tiny efforts to help people stay aware, make people think and give thanks to Mother Earth for her beauty and nourishment. My iron horse keeps me balanced.

www.underthenorthernsky.com

The 12th annual Rockin' Recovery Day



Red Rock Indian Band's Sara Kae performed at the 12th Annual Rockin' Recovery Day, held at the CLE Coliseum Building in Thunder Bay.

Weather Patterns and Events: Summer and Early Autumn 2025



**Graham
Saunders**

WEATHER

Last month, this column described the weather conditions that result when high pressure air becomes stationary over the region. Meteorologists refer to this atmospheric pattern as a stationary ridge or an omega block, named for its resemblance to the Greek letter Omega (Ω). These ridges can block the usual west-to-east movement of weather systems, causing similar weather to persist for several consecutive days. Typically, within the block, there are clear skies, warm days, dry conditions, and cooler temperatures overnight.

Blocking situations have been fairly common throughout the summer months this year. While sunny and warm weather may seem ideal, a drawback is that high pressure ridges feature sinking or subsiding air. If wild-fire smoke is present in the middle atmosphere, this subsiding air can bring smoke down to ground level—a phenomenon observed multiple times across Northern Ontario this summer.

August Weather Highlights

Another feature of omega blocks that was mentioned last month was that the dense high pressure air in a blocking situation can divert the west-to-east

flow of air north of the block. This occurred again in early August with very warm air over the prairies being transported over the block and just below Hudson Bay and James Bay. At times during the first two weeks of August, northern locations were warmer than those farther south (which is not the norm). On August 6, Fort Severn, Ontario's most northerly community, recorded a maximum temperature of 33°C — over 10°C warmer than places like Kenora or Thunder Bay in the south of the region. And it also happened to be the warmest place in Ontario on this day.

Temperatures of 30°C were common in the far north as the high-pressure ridge shifted eastward. In Moosonee near James Bay, maximum temperatures ranged from 30.6° C on August 7 to 33° C on August 10.

In early August, Environment Canada issued simultaneous warnings for heat and wild-fire smoke on several occasions in the far north.

This combination of heat and poor air quality raised concerns for those without air conditioning, as opening windows overnight would result in exposure to smoke. Environment Canada does advise if an extreme heat event occurring with poor air quality, to prioritize keeping cool.

Overall, the region was slightly warmer than average.

Precipitation Conditions

August was drier than normal in most of Northern Ontario. Thunder Bay and several other locations did not record any precipitation in the first week.

Substantial rainfall arrived in the second week, particularly in Northwestern Ontario, helping to alleviate wildfire conditions. Heavy rains east of Lake Superior washed out highways, with Sault Ste Marie receiving 147 mm of rainfall in August—nearly double its long-term average. Rainfalls of 50 to 75 mm near Lake Nipigon and to the north helped reduce wildfire risk in the central part of the region.

Most of Northern Ontario avoided killing frost in August, with the coldest temperature in the region recorded in Armstrong, a very frost-prone area. On August 28 a temperature at -2.1°C was recorded.

The potential for frost for increases as we continue into September. The first fall frost date varies considerably with location and from year to year. For example, in Thunder Bay, the earliest fall frost occurred on August 22 and the latest on October 9th.

Gardeners take many measures to extend the growing season as much as possible. Typically, in September there are many days that are warm enough to promote more growth of vegetables. This has certainly been the case this year.

The day with the first fall frost can be difficult to predict. Another seasonal change, which, according my weather records, is easier to predict, is the onset of mornings with more fog.

Fog becomes more frequent in autumn

I take daily weather observations where I live southwest of Thunder Bay around sunrise

and sunset. Almost like clock-work, in the third week of August, I start recording fog and visibility. As the days go by more and more mornings are foggy. Why might this be?

As the autumnal equinox approaches, the region loses nearly four minutes of sunlight each day, resulting in longer, cooler nights. Calm winds and lingering summer warmth create ideal conditions for fog, which is more prevalent now than at any other time of year. Ground-level fog and patches of mist in the distance form when air temperature falls to its dew point, causing water vapour to condense into liquid. Clear skies and light winds in the evening allow the ground to cool quickly, lowering the air temperature at the surface to the dew point and enabling fog formation. The heat energy in the ground radiates into space at night, cooling the air to the point where water condenses. Water for fog comes from soil, lakes and rivers, and grass blades and tree leaves.

Zero visibility, for the purpose of recording weather observations, means not seeing beyond 100 metres.

Fall Outlook

Forecasts indicate that temperatures will be warmer than normal for the last two weeks of September. Environment Canada's extended forecast predicts slightly above-average temperatures and precipitation, particularly in central Northern Ontario during October and November.

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Education

New courses available



submitted photo

The Keewatinook Okimakanak Board of Education Adult Education program is now offering high school courses on evenings and weekends for Indigenous adult learners.

from page 3

Hele says they welcome students from any community who are over the age of 21-years-old and have a status card.

"All of our registrations are happening online through our website, which is koeducation.ca/adult-ed," Hele says. "They can also e-mail me at adulteducation@edu.knet.ca."

Hele says they began offering the courses at the start of the new school year.

"We've got 35 students so far so I'm kind of excited about that," Hele says. "Word still has to get out there, people have to learn that this option is available."

Hele says they also have classrooms for students in Thunder Bay and the Red Lake/Balmer-town area.

"We offer four credit-earning courses per semester, so a semester is going to run for 16

weeks, September to Christmas," Hele says. "If a student wanted to fast track, they could technically take three courses in the semester. They could attend school (on) Wednesday, Thursday, Friday evenings and then Saturday mornings."

Hele says they work around the student's schedules and help them to fill in the gaps in their education with their courses.

“They are all ministry-accredited courses, we just have different delivery methods,” Hele says. “So if you wanted to take

that history class, we would get you registered. If you were not able to attend in person, then you would get on your e-mail a link and it would be a video broadcast of the teacher teaching that history class, and you can interact, you can ask questions. It's like they're live but they're on the other end of that Zoom call."

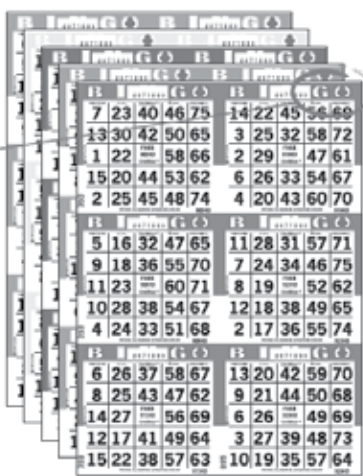
Hele says the assignments and activities are available online for the students.

"For some of those students who may not have a computer but want to do this, I do have some laptops I can lend out," Hele says. "It is a lending library, so I try to take away as many of those obstacles as we could when we were building this so that is an option."

Hele says she has found that many of their mature learners need the structure of set time-frames.

"So that's what we have set up in this case," Hele says. "In order to graduate now, you need to pass OLC40, it's a literacy class. That class right now is scheduled in set times, it's Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 6 to 9:30 p.m. until Christmas."

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National Day for Truth & Reconciliation 2025

Mayor, Councillors and the staff of the Municipality of Sioux Lookout extend best wishes to all aboriginal residents, stakeholders, neighbours and friends on the occasion of National Day for Truth & Reconciliation, September 30, 2025.

We recognize and appreciate the value of aboriginal peoples' contributions to our community, including those who visit and do business here, and wish to foster continued relationship-building opportunities and ongoing efforts to work collaboratively on joint ventures.



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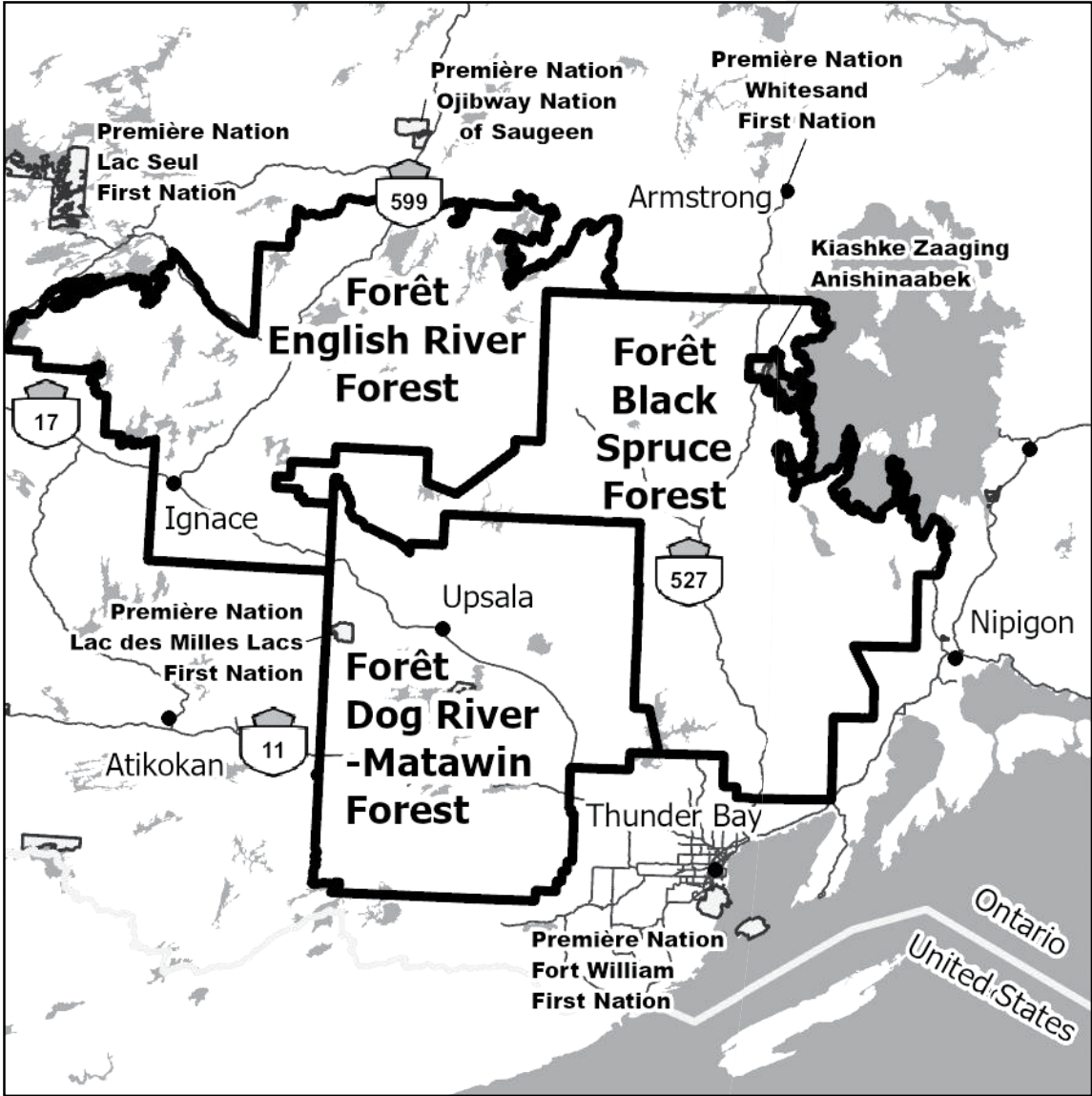
Linda Trudeau
Business Development Officer,
Moose Cree First Nation



Inspection

Inspection of MNR-Approved Prescribed Burn Plan for Slash Pile Burning for Black Spruce Forest, Dog River-Matawin Forest, and English River Forest

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) invites you to inspect the MNR-approved prescribed burn plan for slash pile burning that will be carried out in the **Black Spruce Forest, English River Forest, and the Dog River-Matawin Forest** (see map).



As part of our ongoing efforts to regenerate and protect Ontario's forests, some recently harvested areas have been selected to be burned under the guidelines of the MNR's *Prescribed Burn Manual*. The prescribed burn will reduce the area covered in slash piles while increasing the area available for regeneration and reducing the fire hazard. The burn is scheduled for ignition between **October 21, 2025** and **February 15, 2026**.

The approved prescribed burn plan for slash pile burning, including specific locations and maps, is available for inspection by contacting Resolute FP Inc. or Greenmantle Forest Inc. and on the Natural Resources Information Portal at <https://nrp.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online> until **March 31, 2026**, when the Annual Work Schedule expires. Please note, the **burn** will be occurring in a specific area of the **Black Spruce, Dog River-Matawin & English River Forests**, and not the entire forest management unit. More detailed information on the location of the activities within the **Black Spruce, Dog River-Matawin & English River Forests**, can be obtained electronically on the Natural Resources Information Portal <https://nrp.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online>, or by contacting the MNR staff listed below.

Interested and affected persons and organizations can arrange a virtual or in-person meeting with MNR staff to discuss the prescribed burn plan. For more information, please contact:

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Education

Lakehead holds Survivors Flag raising ceremony

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Lakehead University held a Survivors Flag raising ceremony on Sept. 5 in the lead up to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation at the Agora on the Thunder Bay campus.

"Today we raise the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's Survivors Flag," says Gillian Siddall, president and vice-chancellor at Lakehead University. "This flag is more than a symbol of remembrance, it is a symbol of enduring strength. It honours all those who experienced the injustice and trauma of residential institutions and acknowledges the immeasurable loss borne by Indigenous peoples across this land."

Siddall says 2025 marks 10 years since the release of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which included Calls to Action 62-65 that speak directly to the role of education in reconciliation.

"In that time Lakehead has taken meaningful steps forward, we've expanded Indigenous-focused academic programming, increased support for Indigenous learners and built stronger relationships with Indigenous communities and partners," Siddall says. "And I always want to stop and thank our wonderful staff and faculty who do this work and move us along this difficult but important pathway together."

Siddall says Lakehead University

has woven its commitment to truth and reconciliation into its new strategic plan, a commitment that recognizes reconciliation is not a single action or project but a continuous journey grounded in respect, accountability and Indigenous leadership. The strategic plan is posted on Lakehead University's website at: www.lakeheadu.ca/about/presidents-office/strategic-plans-initiatives/.

"We're just about to launch our strategic plan," Siddall says. "What you will see there is that in each of the five themes, each one of them contains commitments and strategies to reconciliation. At Lakehead, this annual gathering is part of the journey and part of our ongoing promise to walk the path of truth and reconciliation with care, integrity and purpose. This path involves listening, it involves learning and it requires action."

Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin says the residential school experience lasted over many generations, noting that there have also been intergenerational impacts.

"The experience is not only about the people who were at residential school, but now we have to think about the ones who had to endure and experience the impacts that lingered among the survivors when they went home — that is also another chapter," Metatawabin says.

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IMPACT
PROMOTIONS

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Community

Outland youth employment holds closing ceremonies

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Outland Youth Employment Program (OYEP) held its closing ceremonies with speakers and awards and certificate presentations at the Grey Wolf Scout Camp south of Thunder Bay.

"This year was really good, this was my fifth season with OYEP," says Daisha Sugarhead, a crew leader in training (CAT) from Nibinamik. "We had a really good group this year, I love all the kids that came through, it was really fun."

Sugarhead says she started as a ranger with OYEP in 2021.

"I did my two years as a ranger and then I kept going as a CAT," Sugarhead says. "I can be a full crew leader once I get my full driver's licence."

Sugarhead says the CATs stay in the cabins with the rangers and make sure they are following the curfew and enjoying the OYEP content.

"A lot of their concerns come to me first," Sugarhead says. "A lot of what my main responsibilities are is making sure they are OK personally and advocating for them and just being kind of a mentor and getting them ready to adapt to work because this is a lot of the kids' first jobs."

Angel Lyon, a second-year ranger from Lac des Mille Lacs, says the best part of her experience at OYEP was getting to know the other people and making new connections and friendships.

"It was fun, we had a lot of fun, a lot of learning, a lot of growth over the summer," Lyon says. "I had fun doing it all, a lot of growth, a lot of leadership learning. Especially this year, I learned a lot of leadership skills and (about) helping out others. We did first aid so I know that's going to come in handy some day."

Sage Ruby, a first-year ranger from Naicatchewenin, also enjoyed her experience at OYEP.

"It's been really rewarding," Ruby says. "Being here and getting all of this experience while

also being paid has been really amazing to me, and I've built a lot of character being here. Overall the experience has been different, like I would not get this experience elsewhere and to be here is truly an honour to me. This program overall is really awesome and when I go home I'm going to recommend it to the youth around me, it's truly something I don't regret."

Candace Hawkshaw, Ontario operations coordinator at OYEP, says the six-week OYEP began with an orientation and first aid training.

"There's five days of tree planting, five days of working with Trans Canada Trail," Hawkshaw says. "They learn about forestry, mining, energy, they earn a wage, they earn two high school co-op credits if they like, they learn about canoeing, safety."

Hawkshaw says the 25 youth planted about 30,000 trees with Domtar and fixed some trails with Trans Canada Trail over the summer.

"It was about an hour-and-a-half drive from camp every day to plant, so they should be proud of that," Hawkshaw says. "Working with Trans Canada Trail, they fixed a lot of the trails here at the camp, built some boardwalks, built some bridges over the creek. We had Bird Construction come as well so they learned how to build birdhouses, work with wood and they also finished building some more boardwalks."

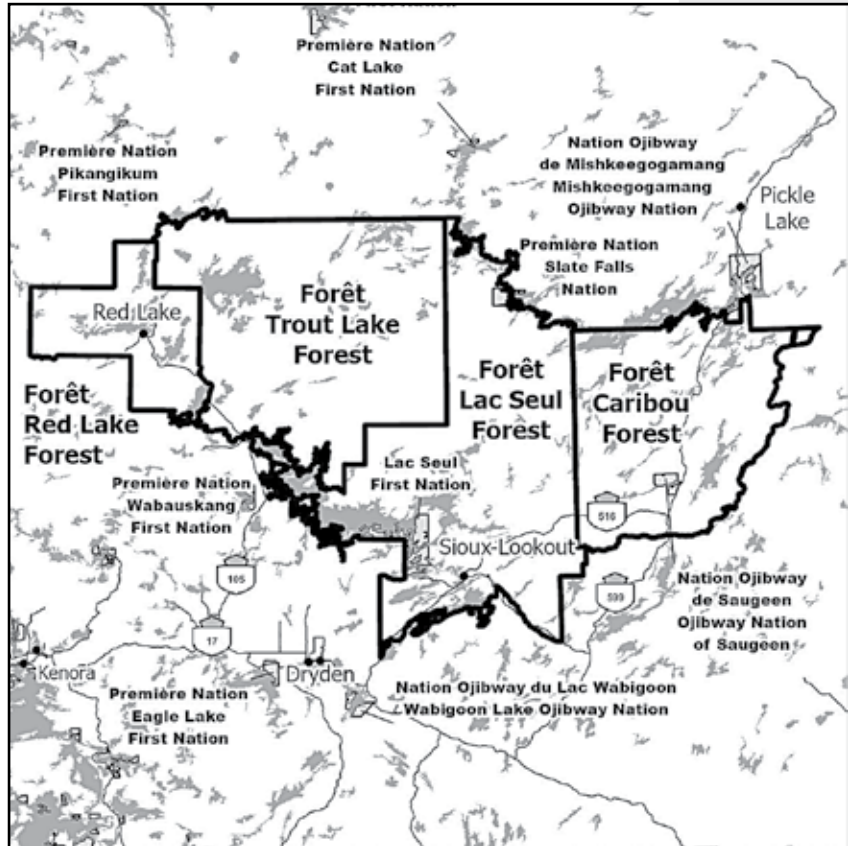
Dave Bradley, who founded OYEP in 2000, says they had six camps across the country this year, including two in Ontario, one in Manitoba, two in Alberta and one in B.C.

"Every one of the six camps is located in a location that exists for another reason, but we rent the site or they donate the site to the program for the summer," Bradley says. "Every one has its own challenges and also its own personality, its own character. This one has a spectacular (gazebo) with a fire underneath, it's just beautiful, a really nice setting for this closing ceremony."

INSPECTION

MNR-Approved Prescribed Burn Plan for Slash Pile Burning for Caribou, Lac Seul, Red Lake, and Trout Lake Forests

The Ontario **Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)** invites you to inspect the MNR-approved prescribed burn plan for slash pile burning that will be carried out in the **Caribou, Lac Seul, Red Lake, and Trout Lake Forests** (see map).



As part of our ongoing efforts to regenerate and protect Ontario's forests, some recently harvested areas have been selected to be burned under the guidelines of the MNR's *Prescribed Burn Manual*. The prescribed burn will reduce the area covered in slash piles while increasing the area available for regeneration and reducing the fire hazard. The burn is scheduled for ignition between **October 15, 2025** and **February 15, 2026**.

The approved prescribed burn plan for slash pile burning, including specific locations and maps, is available for inspection by contacting Resolute FP Canada, Ondaadiziwin Forest Management Inc., Red Lake Forest Management, or Dryden Fibre Canada and on the Natural Resources Information Portal at <https://nrip.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online> until **March 31, 2026**, when the Annual Work Schedule expires. Please note, the burn will be occurring in a specific area of the **Caribou, Lac Seul, Red Lake, and Trout Lake Forests**, and not the entire forest management unit. More detailed information on the location of the activities within the **Caribou, Lac Seul, Red Lake, and Trout Lake Forests** can be obtained electronically on the Natural Resources Information Portal <https://nrip.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online>, or by contacting the MNR staff below.

Interested and affected persons and organizations can arrange a virtual or in-person meeting with MNR staff to discuss the prescribed burn plan. For more information, please contact:

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Arts & Entertainment



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Shibastik performed a verse from his song *Moose River* during The Poets first song at the Wake the Giant.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

The Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School youth jingle dress dancers performed along with The Poets.

Tragically Hip cover band highlights Wake the Giant 2025

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Poets, a Tragically Hip tribute band from Moose Factory/Moosonee, performed songs with Shibastik and a group of jingle dress dancers during the Wake the Giant Music Festival on Sept. 6 in Thunder Bay.

"Shibastik is an old friend of ours from back home so it was a natural fit for us to bring him on stage," says Vic Linklater, lead vocalist with The Poets. "He lives here so it was really a pleasure and an honour to have him on stage with us."

Linklater says they also enjoyed performing with the Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School youth jingle dress dancers.

"That was a bonus for us, I didn't know it until a few minutes before the stage, so it was a pleasure to bring them on on the third song for us," Linklater says. "We're always supporting youth, we always want to support youth in the music and the arts."

The Poets also spoke about protecting the land during their performance.

"We're hugely against that (Bill 5), digging shovels into the land just to make more money, I don't think so," Linklater says. "We think about our ancestors, we think about our unborn as well that are coming here, we've got to protect the land and the waters."

Shibastik says he enjoyed performing with The Poets during their first song.

"I finally got to get on the Wake the Giant stage," Shibastik says. "The Poets, these are guys from back in my hometown, so they booked the show and they asked me to come to be a special guest, so of course I was down to do it. I dropped one of my verses from one of my more popular songs, *Moose River*, because I thought it really applied. I just had a good time up there, it was awesome and I'm so proud of these guys — they nailed it."

Shibastik says he loves the Wake the Giant Music Festival.

"I love the energy, I love the vibe, I love the message behind it all," Shibastik says. "I think it's so powerful, I'm so hon-

oured and happy to see how much people come out to support what this event's about."

Summer Spade, one of the jingle dress dancers and a peer leader with the Regional Multicultural Youth Council, says she enjoyed performing with the other jingle dress dancers during The Poets' third song.

"It was really fun to dance amongst the youth that I mentor throughout the school year," Spade says. "The jingle dresses bring healing to the communities and to our culture they represent resilience, strength, perseverance, obviously healing — I think it's important."

Saffron Fiddler, an assistant with the jingle dress dancers, says she enjoyed helping the jingle dress dancers to prepare for their performance.

"(It's important) to show the youth that it's OK to get out there and to get more engulfed with the culture even if it's more modernized as well," Fiddler says.

Tyra Meekis and Alysha Meekis, two of the jingle dress dancers, also enjoyed performing on the Wake the Giant Music Festival stage.

"It was my first time so it was kind of scary," Tyra says. "I was so nervous but I was with my friend so it was OK at the end."

"That was my first time dancing jingle dress," Alysha says. "I think if other people see us dancing, they would want to dance too."

Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa says the Wake the Giant Music Festival keeps getting better each year.

"I think the lineup is very awesome this year, but also Wake the Giant is about Thunder Bay welcoming the students from the north to make sure they're OK," Mamakwa says. "I say thank you to Thunder Bay for welcoming our students that have to leave their families, leave their ways of life to attend high school."

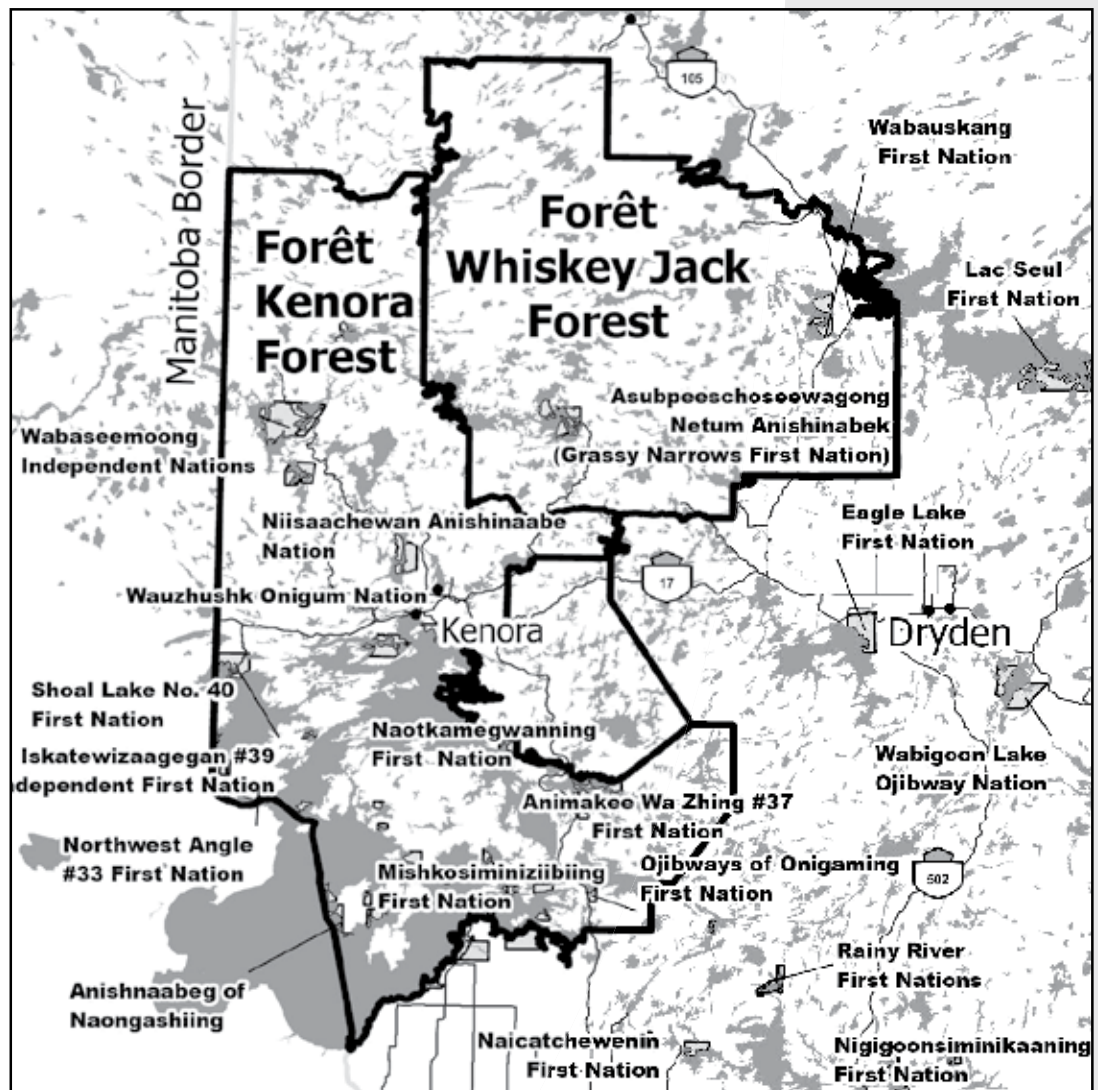
Aroland Elder John Gagnon says the Wake the Giant Music Festival is a beautiful experience.

"All the performers are amazing," Gagnon says. "When they get bands here, they get pumped — they're facing people that get along and love each other, and that's what we should all do."

Inspection

MNR-Approved Prescribed Burn Plan for Slash Pile Burning for the Kenora and Whiskey Jack Forests

The Ontario **Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)** invites you to inspect the MNR-approved prescribed burn plan for slash pile burning that will be carried out in the **Kenora and Whiskey Jack Forests** (see map).



As part of our ongoing efforts to regenerate and protect Ontario's forests, some recently harvested areas have been selected to be burned under the guidelines of the MNR's *Prescribed Burn Manual*. The prescribed burn will reduce the area covered in slash piles while increasing the area available for regeneration and reducing the fire hazard. The burn is scheduled for ignition between **November 1, 2025** and **February 15, 2026**.

The approved prescribed burn plan for slash pile burning, including specific locations and maps, is available for inspection by contacting Miisun Integrated Resource Management Company and on the Natural Resources Information Portal at <https://nrip.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online> until **March 31, 2026**, when the Annual Work Schedule expires. Please note, the burn will be occurring in a specific area of the **Kenora and Whiskey Jack Forests**, and not the entire forest management unit. More detailed information on the location of the activities within the **Kenora and Whiskey Jack Forests**, can be obtained electronically on the Natural Resources Information Portal <https://nrip.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online>, or by contacting the MNR staff below.

Interested and affected persons and organizations can arrange a virtual or in-person meeting with MNR staff to discuss the prescribed burn plan. For more information, please contact:

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Commentary

Defending The Heart Of Mother Earth



Xavier
Kataquapit

UNDER THE
NORTHERN SKY

One of the most beautiful serene places I've ever visited was on the banks of the Opinagau River in northern Ontario, just near the corner of land where James and Hudson Bay meet. This is a river just south of the Lakitusaki River, known in English as Lake River. Opinagau River is also just north of the Nawashi River, the home territory where my mom Susan (Paulmartin/Rose) Kataquapit and her family originated from.

My dad Marius Kataquapit took us to this northern river one fall to go moose hunting. Our group never did manage to see any moose on that trip but it was an amazing time to be on the land surrounded by absolutely no one for hundreds of miles all around.

During that trip, we set up regular base camps along our way and whenever we stopped, my younger brothers and I would head out to walk as much and as far as we could to explore the land.

I remember one afternoon, as we followed the banks of this great river, the sun was warm in the early fall weather and the air was rich with the scent of the forest and the trees. We saw the trickle of a small creek draining into the river and we decided to follow the stream of water. The crystal like line of water wound its way through the tall grass and bushes and rose higher and higher leading to a gap in the

steep banks of the river. The gap widened and rose slightly higher as we moved on. The trickle of water sprouted from a dense mass of mud, sticks, trees and brush that made up a great beaver dam that stood about ten feet high. We grew excited at our find and climbed up to see the lake behind it.

On the crest of this great dam was an amazing sight. We faced west and could see the sun reflecting off a still water lake. Pond vegetation lined the shore, tall grass was spotted everywhere, lily pads floated on the surface and towering trees full of the dull leaves of the late summer surrounded the lake. Everything seemed to be full of life and activity. We could see where beavers had broke trails into the forest, spots of matted grass where moose or bear might have laid down and birds chirped or sang in the forest. It looked as if it were a picture perfect play or production that had been specially made for us to see. We stood in wonder for a while and marvelled at the sight. We knew we were only one of a very few people in the world and throughout time to have visited and witnessed this place.

I think of that place and that moment often. It was so peaceful, so quiet, so serene and so perfect. I imagine that bit of paradise multiplied a million times and realize that this is what makes up the Hudson Bay lowlands and the untouched forests, marshes and peatlands that is the lifeblood in this part of the province and indeed a contributor to life for the planet. This untouched, pristine land and its natural environment act as a giant carbon sink that collects and stores much of the planet's green house

gases. To many researchers and scientists it is known as one of the planets largest such carbon sinks and any disruption to this environment not only releases this carbon back into the atmosphere but it also removes the land's ability to collect that carbon in the first place. The danger in destorying means more global warming.

I want to thank all those people, like my relatives Jeronimo Kataquapit and his family, who have taken the time and effort to attend to the land in order to protect it. I commend all those families that have made the effort to occupy the land that our people have lived on for thousands of years. Their journey as part of 'Here We Stand: Call To Action' has been difficult but they have also been rewarded and nourished by Mother Earth on their protest to protect the land from all kinds of resource development being driven by their opposition to Ontario's Bill 5 and Canada's Bill C5. These youth and Elders are standing their ground for all of us and they are up against huge government pressure both provincially and federally as well as mammoth corporations with plans for many billions of dollars in development in the very heart of Mother Nature. I am in awe of their devotion, wisdom and courage and I remind everyone to support them in their efforts. I urge all First Nation organizations, communities, Chiefs and council members to help these people financially and by sending crews to assist in this stand. I also urge secondary schools and post secondary schools to organize and fund visits of students to learn and help in this valiant effort.

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Victoria Maxwell
January 1, 1934 - July 17, 2025

Victoria passed away peacefully in her home with loving family by her side. She is reunited with her beloved husband Brian Maxwell.

Victoria was born on the shores of Sachigo River where her parents, Alex and Katie Barkman raised their fourteen children. From a young age, Victoria learned to live in rhythm with the land by following her parents traditional harvesting practices. In cold weather, she found warmth in her rabbit fur coat which took her mother five winters to finish and as she got older she learned to sew and create warmth for her loved ones in return. She carried the traditions of her family, community, and the land as gifts throughout her life.

At a young age, Victoria was taken to Pelican Falls Residential School, the same residential school that many of her siblings and cousins attended. This is where she learned to speak English as she was forbidden to speak her own language. When she was finally released, "a residential school survivor", she returned to Sachigo Lake before finding a career as a medical translator. She followed a physician throughout the northern communities to help patients receive care in Oji-Cree, Ojibwe, and Cree languages. During her travels, she met Brian Maxwell, who she always lovingly said had convinced her to follow along on his adventures. Together they operated a summer tourist lodge on Miminiska Lake. Victoria cooked and cared for their guests and started their family with three sons, Sam, Gordon and Ron.

After leaving Miminiska Lodge in 1962, the family settled in Brian's

hometown of Sioux Lookout where they welcomed their daughters Anne and Sadie to the family. Victoria stayed home with their children until 1978 when she started working at Wawatay Native Communications Society as a translator. Over the years there, she made many great friends and enjoyed seeing her worlds connect and her language and culture preserved through print, radio and television. She literally laid the path for translation by dictating the placement of syllabics on the keyboard of her typewriter, and later on her Macintosh computer. She was proud of her work translating stories for Wawatay newspaper and projects like translating the entire phone book for the region and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In 1982, Brian and Victoria bought a property on south Stranger Lake, this time to host family and friends on the land. They built a small cabin which became Victoria's favourite place for returning to her traditional roots.

After Brian passed away in 1992, their home and camp remained gathering places for family and friends. All summer Victoria could be found at camp fishing or preparing meals and bannock on the fire. In her garden she grew towering sunflowers and watched in awe as little visitors climbed her apple tree. In the fall her house filled with the scent of soaking tamarack. On holidays, she fit all her children and their children around a table for her famous turkey, gravy and Kokum buns. Her family travelled from across Canada, Ireland and Thailand to find her teapot filled with Red Rose tea, her tabletop lightly dusted in flour, and some leftover hash in the fridge. No matter where she lived, she was home to her family.

Throughout her life, Victoria maintained a deep sense of pride to be Anishinini. Her grandchildren trailed behind her as she set rabbit snares and picked blueberries. She stitched thousands of beads and made beautiful moccasins and tamarack geese for craft fairs and gifts. She spoke her language with her friends and sisters and taught syllabics to her grandchild-

dren. She was a teacher to her siblings, nieces, nephews, and friends sharing knowledge on how to build a teepee or skin a moose. She told stories honouring her family, community, and traditions on the land to her grandchildren, trusting that they would carry them on in their homes for generations to come.

It is a comfort to know Victoria is reunited with those she loved and missed endlessly throughout her life, her husband Brian and her eldest son, Brian "Sam" Maxwell, her parents, Alex and Katie Barkman, and her brothers and sisters, Sabine Barkman, Amelia Barkman, Alabina Barkman, Mary Chapman, Margaret Bancroft, Juliet Beardy, Jemima Wesley, John Barkman, Richard Barkman, Helen Cromarty, and David Barkman, and many of her best friends.

As Kokum, she will be endlessly loved and missed by her children, Gordon (Jean) Maxwell, Ron (Carol) Maxwell, Margaret "Anne" (Darrell) Morgan, and Sadie (Tom) Maxwell; her daughter-in-law, Orasa Maxwell; her grandchildren Thomas (Emily) Maxwell, James (Anna) Maxwell, Ben (Pak-kawat) Maxwell, Brianne (Christopher) Maxwell, Brent (Katie) Maxwell, Alexa (Nate) Maxwell, Alanna (Jacob) Morgan, Angela (Ben) Maxwell, Nicole Maxwell, Max (Breann) Morgan, Victoria (Greg) Huizinga, Daniel (Oranee) Maxwell, Blaine (Taylor) Kuzemczak, and Ronnie Kuzemczak; her great-grandchildren Noah and Nathan Maxwell, Hunter, Sadie, Jessa, Corey and Macie Huizinga, Andreas and Miles Hawk Maxwell, Eleanor and Adaline Morgan, Anthony Palango, and Ella Maxwell; her sisters Bernice Matthews and Esther Wesley, and many, many beloved nieces, nephews, and friends.

A private service with close family was held at Hillcrest Cemetery officiated by Rev. Andrew Wesley, Victoria's brother-in-law. If friends so desire, donations can be made to the "Windigo Youth Fund" at Windigo First Nations Council, Box 299, 160 Alcona Drive, Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1A3 or drop off during regular business hours.

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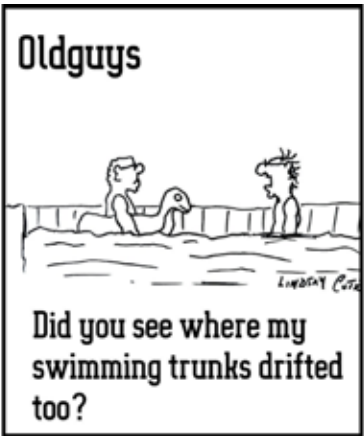
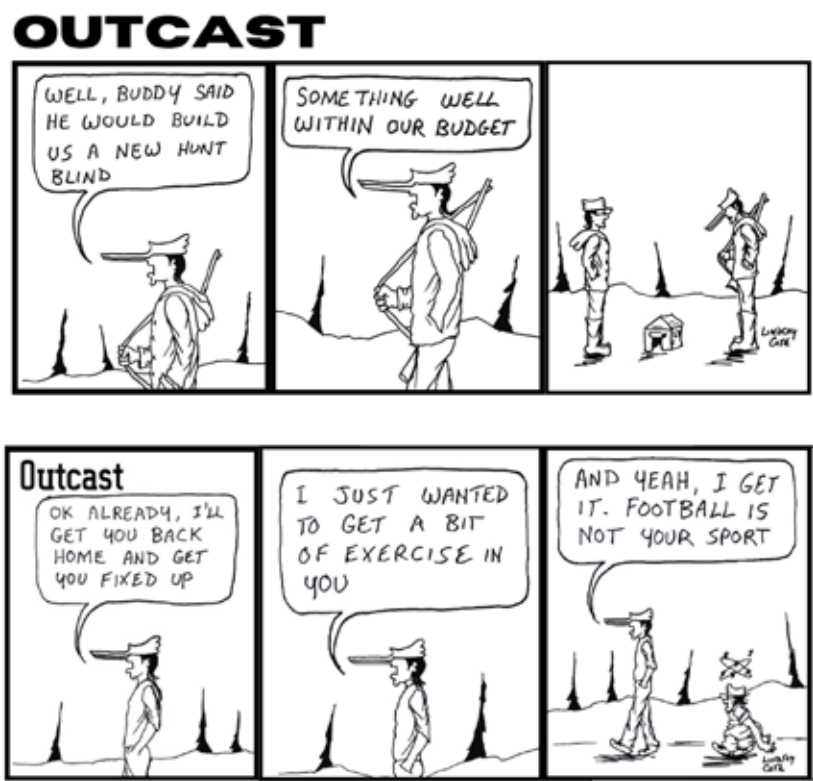
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

Wawatay Communications Society is currently looking for a dynamic and results-driven Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who brings management expertise and embodies the mandate and mission in service of Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities.

Wawatay Communications Society serves the communication needs of First Nations people and the communities of Nishnawbe Aski Nation. It does this through the distribution of a monthly newspaper, daily radio programming, other communication services and a multimedia website that seeks to preserve and enhance indigenous languages and cultures of Indigenous people in northern Ontario.

Mandate

"Wawatay Communications Society is a self-governing, independent community-driven entrepreneurial Indigenous organization dedicated to using appropriate technologies to meet the communication needs of people of Indigenous ancestry in Northern Ontario, wherever they live. In doing so, its founders intended that Wawatay would serve their communities by preserving, maintaining and enhancing Indigenous languages and culture."

Mission

"To provide media capabilities and content that address the unique needs of the Nishnawbe people."

The membership of the Society – 49 First Nation communities within the territory of Nishnawbe Aski Nation– formally adopted the above mandate and mission statement at an Annual General Membership Meeting on May 5-6, 2004.

Location: Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Timmins

Position Summary:

The CEO serves as the chief executive of Wawatay Communications Society and in partnership with the Board, is responsible for the success of the Wawatay Communications Society. Reporting directly to the Board of Directors, the CEO is responsible for creating and implementing a clear sense of direction for the Wawatay Communications Society and its related businesses by defining, communicating, and overseeing the Corporation's mission, goals, operating principles, and strategic actions.

This position is the senior management position in Wawatay Communications Society, with responsibility for:

- The overall management of the business including its overall strategic direction, preparation of agendas and background information for Board meeting and Executive Committee meetings.
- Keeps the Board fully informed of the conditions of Wawatay Communications Society and on all important factors influencing it.
- The development of annual works plans and related capital and operating budgets.
- Development of operational policies and procedures.
- The day-to-day operations management, human resources recruitment and management and budget and financial oversight and monitoring.
- Overall planning, design and implementation of projects and programs within the mandate; and
- Communications and marketing for the purpose of business development

Governance, Strategy Development, Planning and Reporting

- Formulates and updates annual business plan and strategies, policies and procedures for Wawatay Communications Society and brings these to the Board for input, and decision as to ratification.
- Ensures strong strategic and annual planning processes and procedures are undertaken and effective budget and plans are prepared for Board approval.
- Seeks out and develops business opportunities and presents such opportunities to the Board for consideration and decision.
- Oversees fiscal activities, ensuring that all financial and non-financial reporting requirements are met on a timely and accurate basis, and
- Ensures that reports to the Board are always transparent and timely basis.

Community and Relationship Management

- Initiates, develops, and maintains effective strategic relationships and networks with key stakeholders including the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, government agencies, business owners, contractors, customers, potential customers, partners, suppliers, residents, and the business community in relation to their interests in the Corporation.
- Examines and recommends partnerships with private and public entities in support of projects that will assist the Corporation in fulfilling its mission and objectives; and
- Promotes and advocates the profile of the Wawatay Communications Society.

Operational Management

- Schedules Board meetings, prepares agendas, information and reports for consideration and decision by the Board, and ensures the completion of minutes of all Board meetings.
- Ensures the operation of Wawatay Communications Society follows all appropriate legal, regulatory and internal policies as approved by the Board, and are not contrary to policies, bylaws, and relevant government legislation and regulation.
- Prepares an annual performance management plan for approval by the Board.
- Analyzes, prepares reports, presents information and recommendations, and ensures timely completion of all activities.
- Implements the decisions of the Board in an efficient and effective manner,
- Ensures the day-to-day operations of Wawatay Communications Society are effectively and efficiently coordinated, implemented, and conducted within the policy and procedure framework approved by the Board.
- Implements stringent project management processes to ensure the timely, cost effective and profitable development and completion of projects.
- Determines limitations of authority for employees of Wawatay Communications Society covering expenditures, contracts personnel actions, etc.; and
- Establishes policies and procedures for Board approval in relation to consultants and contractors being retained by Wawatay Communications Society and exercises appropriate controls to ensure their use is managed cost effectively.

Staff and Contractor Management and Leadership

- Builds and maintains a high-performance culture through effective performance management, communication and coaching of staff,
- Recruits appropriately skilled staff to all positions and establish appropriate remuneration levels and performance-based conditions for each employee.
- Establishes performance management plans with employee and undertakes performance reviews, recommends salary and benefit changes, promotions and dismissals as appropriate within the authority of the position; and
- Recruits and appoints with the approval of the Board, where necessary.

Financial Management

- Prepares and presents an annual budget to the Board for approval complete with all supporting background information and documentation; and
- Establishes financial controls in relation to undertaking and monitoring the activities of Wawatay Communications Society against the approved budget and provides monthly (or more frequently, as necessary) reports to the Board on the performance of Wawatay Communications Society against the approved budget.

Job Knowledge:

The work requires the following knowledge, skill and/or abilities:

- Significant and proven leadership skills developed through at least five (5) years in a senior management role and experience related to media, communications and business.
- Substantial knowledge of business operations, asset management, marketing, finance, and business processes related to economic and business development activities.
- Proven ability to build effective relationships with external stakeholders and collaboration, inspire and motivate high performance and effectively resolve conflict.
- Knowledge and experience with the First Nations of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory.
- Ability to speak and understand one of the languages of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities;
- Excellent communication and presentation skills.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Post Secondary MBA in Business Management, Commerce or Finance.
- 5 – 10 years of experience in Business Development and Senior Management.
- The ability to communicate in English and Ojibway, Cree or Oji-Cree is an asset.
- Ability to work with both Macintosh and Windows computer platforms.
- A valid Ontario driver's license and cell phone.
- A combination of education and/or experience will be considered.

The Position will be Posted until Filled Start Date: ASAP

Applicants can send their resume, cover letter and contact information for references (in confidence) to:

Board Chair Nick Day nickday@sandylakefn.com

Board Vice Chair Vivian Waswa vivianw@wunnumin.ca

Note: Only applicants considered for an Interview will be contacted.



Sullivan
+ Associates
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY



WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM COUNSELLING?

Counselling provides an opportunity to tell your story. We feel there are many important aspects to a helpful counselling session. It is important that our counsellors:

- Help clients to feel comfortable
- Be non-judgemental
- Be culturally sensitive
- Allow the client to decide what issues to talk about
- Teach coping skills for mental health
- Be a good clinical match for our clients

At Sullivan + Associates Clinical Psychology, we have 40 Master's and Doctoral-level Counsellors who provide service for children, adolescents, adults, couples and families.

We provide counselling services in-person, online and by telephone for all mental health issues with the most common issues being:

- Trauma
- Grief and Loss
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Anger
- Addictions

For counselling services, we are happy to help clients access funding through Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (*FNIHB*) and Indian Residential School (*IRS*) programs.



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