



"Living with Us"... page 20



# MATAWA MESSENGER

The Power of Unity, The Dignity of Difference

L<sup>o</sup>b LJ-ΔΓΔΓ-Δ<sup>α</sup> ΓΡΡ-ϷCL<sup>α</sup>b b<sup>o</sup>V<b<sup>α</sup>-P<sup>o</sup>b

## A KKETS Graduation During the Global Pandemic

On Thursday September 16 2021, the KKETS Adult Education Program (KAEP) held their 2020/2021 graduation ceremony and celebration in Thunder Bay at the Valhalla Inn. The event was a smashing success, and included 76 graduates from their Ontario Secondary School Diploma program.

The ceremony began with an opening drum song by the Neskantaga Women's Hand Drum Group, which was then followed by an opening prayer from KKETS Elder Luke Sagutch. After the enlightening words of the Elder, the graduates and all their guests in the audience had the privilege of hearing wise and motivational speeches by our honorable guests. The KAEP team would like to give a Chi-Miigwetch to NAN Grand Chief Derek Fox, NAN Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcise and to MPP Sol Mamakwa for joining our graduation ceremony and speaking to our graduates.

The ceremony then proceeded to have powerful and uplifting speeches from 2020 Valedictorian Lesley Rowe, as well as 2021 Valedictorian Andrew Magiskan. It was then time for the moment all graduates have been waiting for, the presentation of the 2020/2021 Ontario Secondary School Diplomas to the graduating classes. One by one, KAEP graduates heard their name called as they walked across the stage to receive their certificate. Community members, family and friends of the graduates watched proudly from the audience, knowing how hard the graduates worked to be there.

The ceremony concluded with another song by the Women's Drum Group, and a closing prayer by the Elder. The graduates proudly walked back down the aisle as the audience clapped and cheered for their special moment. The ceremony concluded with a dinner, which included music, karaoke and plenty of laughs.

It was a very special day for the graduates, guests and for the KKETS Adult Education Program. The program said, "Watching our students graduate is the highlight of the job for all of us, and nothing makes us happier than seeing our students achieve success. We encourage anybody who does not have their high school diploma and are thinking about applying to the program, to do so! We want nothing more than to see you on stage in a future graduation class. The KKETS Adult Education Program staff are here to help you through your journey."

"We would like to offer a final congratulations to both our 2020 and 2021 graduating classes. These last two years have been like no other years we have known. The amount of hard work and dedication it took you to continue to stay committed to your schooling during a global pandemic is truly inspiring. You all worked so hard and deserve to be proud of yourselves. Keep moving forward with your goals and dreams. We cannot wait to see what you all do next."



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## Long Lake #58 First Nation Community Engagement Sessions



On July 28-29, 2021, the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction team members along with the Watershed Partners team members were in Long Lake #58 First Nation. Together, we helped facilitate two in-person Covid-safe community engagement sessions related to the community's Band Rep Program. Each session was attended by 25 community members with many additional members interested in participating, however due to Covid restrictions we were limited to the number of people allowed in the designated area. Both sessions were very successful. All participants provided numerous comments, feedback and shared their vision of what they would like to see in their new wellness Band Rep Building. Thank you Chief Desmoulin and Long Lake #58 First Nation for inviting us into your beautiful community!

Long Lake #58 Community Words of Wisdom "Better Together"

## Four Rivers CABIN Training

You may not have seen much of us in person lately, but Four Rivers has been quite active within the homelands of the Matawa member First Nations this summer! With personal interactions becoming safer to do outside, Four Rivers had the opportunity to host training for Matawa members the week of August 9-12, 2021, in Ginoogaming First Nation. Four Rivers partnered with Living Lakes Canada (LLC) and the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) to provide Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network (CABIN) training. Hands-on training focused on the collection of water bugs by following a standardized sampling protocol. By collecting and determining which water bugs are found in waterways, we are able to draw conclusions about the health of rivers, streams and creeks in our homelands!

We were fortunate to have participants from Aroland, Constance Lake, Ginoogaming, Nibinamik, and Webequie First Nations, and were also joined individuals from Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek and the Métis Nation of Ontario. Participants had an "in-class" session where we learned about the basics of CABIN sampling and got a chance to see all of the sampling equipment that is used. The next two and a half days were spent in the field learning how to perform all of the sampling techniques, safety protocols, how to identify good sample sites, data collection, and how to process the

sample once collected. Participants were also exposed to a new process of analyzing the water bugs using environmental DNA (eDNA) in a laboratory setting through a program called Sequencing the Rivers for Environmental Assessment and Monitoring (STREAM). STREAM is located at the University of Guelph and is capable of rapidly generating data on water bug sample analysis, better supporting community-based monitoring initiatives compared to the conventional ways of analyzing samples (which includes looking at, identifying, and counting every bug in every sample while using a microscope – very time consuming!).

On completion of the training all participants received a Field Assistant certificate, which can be upgraded to the Field Technician or Project Manager level certification by completing a set of online modules. Our members are now armed and (almost!) ready to begin their own water bug monitoring initiatives within their homelands to gather baseline data on the health of their rivers, streams, and creeks! We at Four Rivers had a wonderful time working in the field with our community members again, sharing and exchanging knowledge and skills. We look forward to hosting more training sessions and working with many more members in the future! Congratulations to all our participants!

We would also like to send a big thank you to all of those who participated, to Ginoogaming First Nation for hosting us, and to our partners LLC and WWF for providing a great training experience.



Matawa First Nations' Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department is reaching out to Matawa membership to hear their stories. As we journey on the river of life, each of us encounters calm and rough waters. "Keep the Paddles in the Water" is about learning and sharing from each other; our stories of how we keep the paddles in the water with love, respect, honesty, bravery, humility, truth and wisdom.

We invite you to share how you keep your paddles in the water...

Where does your strength come from?  
Where do you look for strength to persevere?  
Share your stories by drawing a picture, writing, taking a photo/video or recording your voice.



Enter your response by visiting the QR code or link below.  
<https://forms.gle/3Sc5u3bwqTXruv1J6>

Questions? Reach out to Rosanna Peever by phone at 1-800-463-2249 (ask for extension 3661) or by email at [rpeever@matawa.on.ca](mailto:rpeever@matawa.on.ca).



**Matawa**  
FIRST NATIONS

**KEEP THE PADDLES IN THE WATER**

**DRAW PRIZES TO BE WON!**

We will be giving away \$5,000 (total prize amount) in random prizes to be drawn. Submissions received before October 31, 2021 at 11:59 pm Eastern Time will be entered for a chance to win draw prizes.

## Promoting Health Throughout Matawa

The Matawa Health Co-operative (MHC) has been busy promoting healthy living with virtual challenges, Health Promotion pop ups, Cooking with Auntie G, Good Food Box and PPE (personal protective equipment) drive thru for Matawa members living in Thunder Bay. Since the start of summer members have been able to pick strawberries, participate in a Healthy Sunrise Challenge, cook some yummy food, receive a Good Food Box and drive thru to pick up PPE.

The MHC staff has travelled to Webequie and Neskantaga for Health Promotion pop ups and provided health education, information and awareness. Members and their families enjoyed the Bouncy Castles, a healthy snack and draws were held for prizes.

Our Summer Students Cameron Labelle and Jamie Lynn Yellowhead worked hard and were a wonderful addition to the MHC team. They were able to support the entire team at MHC and helped at the clinic and the main building. We wish them both the best of luck as they start a new school year.

See some pictures of health promotion events on the next page >>>



**MATAWA HEALTH  
CO-OP**

# A Message from the Matawa Safe Sobering Site Program

The Matawa Safe Sobering Site is a service accessible to all Matawa First Nation's Youth from ages 13-21 who are under the influence of alcohol and other substances. We provide a safe, judgement free zone where students can come in, sleep it off and access Mental Health supports, harm reduction strategies and a referral to treatment. The Matawa Safe Sobering Site staff are fully trained to provide care and monitor students while they achieve a safe level of stabilization.

**The Matawa Safe Sobering Site will be accessible to students starting Tuesday September 7th. To access the site call 807-632-0639, free transportation is available! Located in the Matawa Education and Care Centre.**

## Harm Reduction Program

Over the summer the Harm Reduction Distribution Program has delivered Naloxone (NARCAN) Kits to Matawa First Nation Members as well as to a portion of vulnerable population living in Thunder Bay. Our team was successful in distributing over 200 naloxone kits by doing outreach in the community. Our team was able to provide refreshments and create a safe space to speak with the people about the principles of harm reduction and shared ways to access health and social services. Way to go team!

## Safe Use Kits

The Matawa Safe Sobering Site is now providing Safe Use Options for Matawa First Nation Members residing in Thunder Bay in an effort to reduce harm in the community. Through our partnership with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, we are able to distribute the following kits.

### **SAFE SMOKING KITS**

Smoking drugs can lead to bumps, sores, burns and cuts in the mouth, which can transfer blood onto the pipe. If the pipe is shared, even with the smallest speck of blood (not visible to the naked eye), the Hepatitis-C virus can be transmitted to another person. By providing Safe Smoking Kits we are reducing the chance of transmission by sharing, lending, selling, buying used pipes. Kits include:

#### *Pyrex Stem and Bowl Pipes*

Pyrex pipes are safest because they do not break down when heated and do not conduct heat as much as other materials, so burns are less frequent.

#### *Metal Pipe Screen*

Brass screens are safer to use rather than steel wool or brillo as they do not break down as easily when heated. Steel and brillo screens become loose and can break creating a choking hazard when inhaled, even more damage can occur if the pieces are sucked into the lungs.

#### *Mouth Piece*

Attaching a rubber mouthpiece at the end of the glass pipe prevents burns. Mouthpieces can be different sizes depending on the size of the pipe. Mouthpieces can also be made using rubber bands, tape or a piece of cardboard wrapped around and secured at the end of the pipe.

### **SAFE SNORTING KITS**

Snorting drugs like cocaine requires a straw or a rolled-up bill. Sharing of these items can easily lead to the transmission of the Hepatitis-C virus. Our safe snorting kits include straws, sterile water ampules, condoms and alcohol swabs.

#### *Tips for safer snorting*

- Use your own straw - don't share
- Dollar bills are dirty non-disposable and adds to the risk of germs being spread
- Rinsing out the nose with water after can keep it healthier, and by snorting a few drops, the water will carry the drugs into the throat and none of it will be wasted

### **SAFE INJECTION KITS**

Our Safe Injection kits include needles/syringes, tourniquets, cookers, acidifiers (Vitamin C), filters, and sterile water ampules.

#### *Tips for safer injection*

One of the best ways for people who inject drugs to avoid infection by blood-borne diseases like hepatitis C and HIV is to use new sterile equipment every time.

If a person is injecting in a group, he or she can reduce the chance of accidental sharing by marking his or her own equipment in a way that makes it easy to tell apart from other people's equipment. Some ideas for marking equipment include:

- Using a waterproof felt pen or nail polish
- Putting a piece of tape around the barrel of the syringe, the handle of the cooker and the tourniquet
- Cutting off half the plunger top and half the handle of the cooker
- Scraping a number off the barrel of the syringe

***Save a life- Always Carry Naloxone!***

# Matawa Waka Tere - Revitalizing Our Language

*By Valerie Oshag, Eabametoong First Nation*



*Photo of the Project Team and Summer Students outside the MECC*

*Left to right: Tracy Spence, Lois Whitehead, Lawrence Therriault, Mike Graham, Nancy Ritch, Aroha Watene, Valerie Oshag, Leanne Mendewagon, Matthew Wapoose*

The Summer Student Employment Program started near the end of July and three of the students that applied were assigned to the Language Revitalization Team. The students, including myself, were put to work based on what we could bring to the table – our skills, knowledge and just willingness to help the team.

The project was adapted into Matawa when Chief Johnny Yellowhead of Nibinamik First Nation returned from New Zealand in 2012 and shared information about a Māori Language Revitalization project using accelerated learning techniques, and that the Matawa communities endorsed this project as it is important that we keep our languages alive.

This curriculum would combine the Maori teachings with the Anishinaabe way. The Maori had sought new methods of teaching second language learners and came up with a methodology in the effort to revitalize their native language.

Aroha and Michael (who are the Indigenous Language Specialists) who have been here since 2018, have come all the way from their homelands in New Zealand to help create, implement and share knowledge for this up and coming language curriculum that would be delivered to Matawa members.

The two students that I (Valerie) have been working with are Matthew Wapoose and Leanne Mendewagon (both Ojibwe) – Matthew is from Eabametoong First Nation and Leanne is from Aroland First Nation. They are summer students at the Matawa Education and Care Centre.

The summer students have been working on various tasks, such as creation of flash cards, translating English to Anishinaabemowin for the future students who will partake in the program when it is ready to be delivered.

They have teamed up with the Language Specialists who speak Ojibwe and Oji-Cree to create various resources for the Matawa members and as well as the program that is currently underway for future participants.

***Continued on next page >>>>***

Leanne has been working on resources for the Language Team and she said, “I learned a lot during my time here. It was a very friendly and positive environment, in my opinion.”

She also stated that she improved on her social skills while working here at Matawa with the Language Team. In the fall, she plans to attend the Early Childhood Education program through the Confederation College.

Matthew has started university at Lakehead in the Indigenous STEM Access program because of his passion for science, and has done a lot of work with the resources for the Language Team in the short amount of time that we spent here at Matawa. He described this experience as ‘awesome’ because he wanted to learn Ojibwe and the team were ‘incredibly encouraging’. He hopes to return to work for Matawa one day either as a student, and or eventually as a teacher.

As for myself, I cannot wait for this project to come to life when the Year One curriculum is ready to be delivered to future eager learners like myself. Our languages are a huge part of our identity as Anishinaabe and I have gained so much in this short time from brushing up on my photography skills for language resources and for my Journalism diploma program at Algonquin college, to note taking on a Matawa Programme Advisory Committee with fluent Matawa community language speakers for the development of the Year two curriculum which is still at the early stage.

The whole curriculum is still in the works as the Language Team is working super hard to make this whole language revitalization project become a real thing for our Matawa communities.

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## Presenting at a World Indigenous Conference

*By Nancy Ritch, Language Specialist*

The language team was very busy preparing to present at an online world conference in the month of June. All four language speakers had something to present at the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) and World Indigenous Research Education Conference (WIREC)2021 Conference hosted by Blue Quills University in Alberta on July 5 - 8th 2021. We were all grateful to the Maori for their generosity in assisting us with the presentation about the Ojibwe language pilot program that we delivered from October 2019 to July 2020.

Lawrence Therriault did the first 45 minutes and I (Nancy) did the rest. Lois Whitehead opened the presentation with a positive relaxation script and Tracy Spence shared a ‘think out of the box’ interactive activity with virtual audience participation.

We talked about how we created the Ojibwe Year One program from start to the end, including how it went with the obstacles we faced during the interference of covid-19 and all and highlighted what went well despite some of the hardships we encountered. The presentation went smoothly for the most part with some technical issues to work out as we were presenting, however, Mike brought that all under control. The audience seemed pleased with our presentation and we were asked a few questions at the end of it, such as, what techniques do we use, when do you use the relaxation script, and could we send through our power point. We hope to raise awareness to educational governing bodies that we are very capable of creating and delivering our own grass-roots language curriculum programmes.

This was our first online conference presentation outside of Matawa. It was a good learning experience for the 4 of us Language Specialists. We have since started the Year 2 Curriculum Development Programme by holding a Programme Advisory Committee consultation zoom meeting with some of the Matawa community language speakers and we look forward to completing the Year 1 program Instructor and Student Resources this October.



UNIVERSITY  
nuhelot'ine thaiyots'i nistameyimâkanak  
BLUE QUILLS

## The Orange Abinoojiinh Movement and Remembering the Children Found in Unmarked Graves in Residential Schools Across Canada



When it was announced on May 27, 2021 that ground-penetrating radar uncovered preliminary findings of the remains of 215 children buried on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia, the country was in shock. Amongst Indigenous Peoples, it was triggering and deeply personal. The spirits of these children were re-mourned just the same as they were by their families when they didn't return home from 1890 to 1969, the years when that particular residential school was in operation.

In Thunder Bay, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) lit a sacred fire on May 31 for four days at the former St. Joseph Indian Residential School. After NAN's sacred fire, a separate sacred fire was lit by grassroots people in the Thunder Bay who call themselves the Orange Abinoojiinh Movement. The movement was led by Clarence White and Esther Maud. The new sacred fire was lit based on a vision given to a Matawa member in Thunder Bay who saw that a sacred fire was lit throughout the city in various locations and that this sacred fire would help people to heal and to raise awareness.

The people of this movement wanted to make sure that, as their remains were discovered, the spirits of these children knew that they were being honoured. They continuously held prayers that they, and their families, may finally be at peace. As the months passed from May to September, the remains of children grew from 215 to a number in the thousands. While over 6,500 has been an unsourced number circulating on social media, no one organization has yet been able to determine the accuracy of the numbers at this time. Many residential school survivors in the city, their families and other allies gathered at the sacred fire over the 120 days it was lit.

The sacred fire moved every 8 days to various locations in the city like (in no particular order): Chippewa Park, Kakebeka Falls, Squaw Bay, Arthur Street, Marina Park, Confederation College, Lakehead University, Roots to Harvest, Matawa Training and Wellness Centre and lastly, Thunder Mountain a.k.a. 'Mount McKay' or 'Animikii-wajiw.' After months of maintenance and care, the sacred fire was extinguished by ceremony on the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. It was the longest sacred fire held in the city. The ceremony coincided with the the Fort William First Nation fall pow wow that took place that weekend.

During its time of being alive, bundles of embers from the sacred fire travelled as far away as France, Kamloops in British Columbia and Ottawa. The Matawa Training and Wellness Centre was honoured to be part of this sacred fire's existence and purpose in healing our Peoples.

# ► Four Rivers Drone Program

New technology for mapping & data collection

Available to your community Summer/Fall 2021



**5 Advanced Pilots** | Four Rivers is pleased to announce that this summer 5 staff members have obtained their Advanced Drone Pilot certification through Transport Canada. After intense written exams, flight practice and final flight testing, they are now fully trained and certified to do required drone work for Matawa communities, using any of the drones in the Four Rivers fleet.



**5 Drones in our Fleet** | The Four Rivers fleet contains 2 mini drones, and 3 larger drones. The DJI Matrice 300 RTK (quadcopter) drone, is the real workhorse of the fleet, able to fly in more difficult weather conditions, with its 4 propellers providing maximum stability, and on-board battery warmers for colder temperatures. It is capable of carrying up to three payloads, but is currently carrying the P1 camera. The WingtraOne is a speedy fixed-wing drone able to quickly cover large areas in programmed flight grids, looking a lot like a “flying orange fish”. Both of these drones are capable of precision mapping, with accuracy below 1cm. The smaller DJI Mavic 2 Pro drone is the third of the larger drones. It is also capable of mapping with its onboard camera, as well as capture video through a track & follow feature.

## A drone's eye view!

Imagery Comparison

New  
Technolgooy

Standard



READ MORE ON BACK!





**9 Matawa Communities** | Four Rivers is now ready to deliver detailed mapping and aerial photography services to all of the 9 Matawa member First Nation communities. The quality images produced by our new drone fleet and certified pilots will revolutionize mapping and provide incredibly detailed geospatially-linked images for community needs. Four Rivers can provide this service upon request until approximately the end of October, or until the weather holds out, and will resume flights again in the spring.



**Endless Outputs** | With our versatile drones and trained pilots, Four Rivers' drone program can provide endless possibilities to Matawa communities. Baseline data can be collected and reflowed at intervals to measure and track any change to the landscape, waterways, shorelines, vegetation or other infrastructure. Existing community infrastructure can be accurately documented with 3D imagery, collected and precisely mapped for the first time. Topographical mapping can provide detailed views of specific areas of concern, historic sites, traplines, animal habitat or sensitive environmental regions. Four Rivers' drones also have the capability to be upgraded in the future with other sensors including Lidar scanners or ground-penetrating radar.



High Quality Imagery

3D Modeling



## ► Four Rivers Drone Program

New technology for mapping & data collection  
Available to your community Summer/Fall 2021

Contact: Jasmine Baxter | [jbaxter@fourrivers.group](mailto:jbaxter@fourrivers.group)



## Matawa 33rd Annual General Meeting

Like many organizations throughout the world in the middle of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) global pandemic, Matawa needed to be creative this year on hosting our 33rd Annual General Meeting (AGM). Instead of in one of our communities, it needed to be held in Thunder Bay (in a location with a large room that can accommodate a small amount of people and practicing all recommended physical precautions). The AGM took place from Sept 14 - 16, 2021 with all nine (9) Matawa Chiefs present. Unfortunately, due to pandemic restrictions, Elder/Women/Youth delegations were not able to come together like they usually do at AGM time. To accommodate our members, Matawa webcasted the meeting publicly. The webcast had approximately 1,200 views in total.

On Sept 14, they met to make decisions on corporate business holding a Board of Directors (BOD) meeting. Some highlights included:

- Acceptance of Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services and Matawa audits
- Acceptance of Matawa First Nations Management Department Reports, including the Matawa Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Matawa First Nations Property Inc., Matawa Project Management Group and Gathering of Rivers for Community Care
- Appointment of auditors

They also held a Chiefs Council meeting on September 15 and 16. Some highlights included:

- An Honour Song for the following First Nations whose work this past year will benefit all of the Matawa First Nations: Ginoogaming (for their court case to protect Wiisinin Zaahgi'igan from mining encroachment) and Neskantaga First Nation (for the Agreement in Principle to settle the National Safe Drinking Water Class Action)
- An Honour Song and Ceremony honouring children found in unmarked graves on residential school grounds in Canada and residential school survivors
- Presentation by Chief Judy Desmoulin of the the Matawa Economic Development Corporation and Merv McLeod, First Nations Regional Economic Advisor
- Presentations by Kathy Brady, Manager of the Regional Priorities and Jurisdiction (RP&J) Department and Alanna McKenzie, RP&J Policy Coordinator on a 'Preliminary Report on the Development of the North' and other policy matters affecting First Nations in Matawa
- Presentation by Carol Audet, Manager of Communications on the development of a homelessness strategy for Matawa members in Thunder Bay on behalf of the Matawa Homelessness Task Force

Twenty (20) Matawa Chiefs Council resolutions were passed on different issues including: Biimadeswi-Gamik case management continued development and training resources; resources for Back to our Roots: Chii-Kee-Way Meno Biimadesyung review/recommendations; Matawa Chief Council rejection of Nishnawbe-Aski approach on delivery of programs and services



in the NAN-wide ICP Starlink Project; expansion of Matawa Health Co-operative physician services; Matawa Health Co-operative public health initiative; support for Matawa midwife proposal; Matawa Chiefs Council direction on continued/ongoing support of the Awashishewiigiihiwaywin program; approval of Regional Education Plan for Matawa Education; impact of changes to federal funding on Matawa Education; re-affirmed support for enhanced hub proposal for water/wastewater services; continuing the development of a Matawa homelessness strategy; Matawa Chiefs Council direction for corporate services to be provided to corporate entities; funding for Matawa Education and Care Centre Student Accommodation; advancement of education systems of Matawa First Nations; governance and operations of KKETS; development of an action plan to demand Canada implement the Seven Youth Inquest recommendations related to high schools on-reserve; tuition nominal roll funding for Matawa Education and Care Centre and Matawa Chiefs Council rejection of Ontario and Canada First Nations Prosperity Tables.

All resolutions and annual reports are available on the Matawa website at: [www.matawa.on.ca](http://www.matawa.on.ca) - for resolutions, go to: About Us > Chiefs Council and for financial/annual reports, go to: Reports (in the footer). Hard copies of these reports are also available at First Nation band offices.

We missed going out to be in one of our communities this year again! Pending the resolution of the global pandemic, we look forward to being in Webequie First Nation from July 26 - 25, 2022 to host our 34th annual general meeting.



## Inaugural Back to School Bonanza

On September 2nd the Matawa Awashishewiigiihiwaywiin program welcomed families to a 'Back to School Bonanza' at the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre. The event was open to registered clients to the program and each registered child received a fully loaded backpack. The event was well attended and a huge success, with Jumpy castles, food truck, Health co-op booth, painting, medicine teachings and drummers. It was a wonderful opportunity to engage with our families and there is already discussions on making this an annual event.



Awashishewiigiihiwaywiin (Social Services Framework) provides assistance to families from the Matawa First Nations (both on and off-reserve) who are at-risk of child welfare involvement, have open files, or have had children apprehended. It also supports families from the Matawa First Nations with Customary Care Agreements, Kinship Agreements, and advocacy.

Awashishewiigiihiwaywiin works with families from the Matawa First Nations to support them in navigating the child welfare system through prevention, planning and goal setting using community-based, culturally appropriate/responsive care models for children with a focus on prevention and family reunification. Opportunities are also provided for care givers and children to participate in traditional parenting programs, life skills, cultural programs and other group programs.

To access services and complete an intake, contact them at:  
1-807-620-6233 or 1-807-344-4575 (ask for the Intake Worker)



Curtis Towegijick (Ginoogaming First Nation) and Graeme Saukko-Sved (Four Rivers) piloting a new river transect protocol for evening bat surveys in the Matawa homelands. A microphone and device that records ultrasonic calls is attached vertically to a boat that then travels at a steady speed shortly after sunset for a set distance along a river. Information on bats flying near the river is gathered during the survey, which can provide information on the local bat species and populations!

[www.fourrivers.group](http://www.fourrivers.group)

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## Matawa Rapid Lynx Project Update

The Rapid Lynx network will connect the five remote Matawa First Nations (MFN) communities to the internet in the first phase of construction. The network will be expanded to the four MFN road-access communities in a second phase as additional grant funds are awarded.

To date, 57% of the Phase 1 fiber-optic backbone network running from Aroland to Nibinamik has been placed. The Rapid Lynx backbone network consists of ninety-six (96) strands of glass fiber encased within a specialized armored cable jacket, which is being buried underground to protect it from damage. Prefabricated equipment shelters, known as Points of Presence or PoP shelters, are currently being placed and set up in each of the five remote communities and Aroland at sites approved by the Chiefs and Band Councils.

A PoP shelter requires installation of power, generator, batteries, heating and air conditioning system, monitoring and alarm system, and other equipment to power, secure and protect the optical equipment that will “light” the fiber optic network for service. Training of community members to operate and maintain equipment and systems in the PoPs will be essential to operation of the Rapid Lynx network. Powerful optical switching and distribution equipment will be installed and tested in each of the community PoP shelters. The optical equipment will generate laser beams that travel in hair-thin strands of fiber inside the fiber-optic cable running through the backbone network. The laser beams will transmit Internet data, voice, images, video, audio, games, and other applications at near light speed.

From each PoP, a fiber-optic community distribution network will connect homes, businesses, school, nursing station, public safety and police facilities, band offices, and economic development sites and other sites important to the community. The community distribution networks will interconnect at the PoP sites to the Rapid Lynx fiber-optic backbone and the Internet.



Currently working in:

<b>SECTION 5 NIBINAMIK TO WEBEQUIE</b>	<b>SECTION 1 AROLAND TO MARTEN FALLS</b>	<b>SECTION 2 MARTEN FALLS TO EABAMETOONG</b>	<b>SECTION 3 EABAMETOONG TO NESKANTAGA</b>	<b>SECTION 4 NESKANTAGA TO WEBEQUIE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 48% complete, approximately 86 km of fiber placed</li><li>• Completion projected for November 2021</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partially complete from Far North Boundary to Marten Falls</li><li>• The section from Aroland to the Far North Boundary will be completed by November, 2022</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 92% complete, approximately 167 km of fiber placed</li><li>• Final completion scheduled for April, 2022</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 46% complete, approximately 57 km of fiber placed</li><li>• Completion scheduled for Summer of 2022</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Projected Construction Summer 2022</li></ul>

All PoP shelter placement and set up will continue, please see below:

*Aroland:*

PoP shelter has been placed, still needs power and to be connected to longhaul network.

*Marten Falls:*

PoP shelter placement pending community provided cost estimate for site prep work of shelter site.

*Nibinamik:*

PoP shelter placement pending community provided cost estimate for site prep work of shelter site.

*Eabametoong:*

PoP shelter placement pending community provided cost estimate for site prep work of shelter site.

*Neskantaga:*

Community needs to finalize permanent location for PoP shelter, including site location and cost estimate for site work of shelter site.

*Webequie:*

Community needs to finalize permanent location for PoP shelter, including site location and cost estimate for site prep work of shelter site.

Electronics will be procured and installed beginning in October, 2022.

Distribution networks will be constructed beginning in September, 2022 and completed by November, 2022.

Connection to the Internet Gateway is expected to be completed and Internet service available to the remote Matawa First Nations communities by March 31, 2023.

# Matawa First Nations Management Welcomes New Staff

## Matawa Health Co-operative

### Public Health Nurse, Leola Bouchard-Penagin



Boozhoo my name is Leola Bouchard-Penagin and I am the new Public Health Nurse for Long Lake #58. I graduated from Lakehead in 2010 with my nursing degree and I have had various positions in in Community Health and Home and Community Care. I grew up in Kiashe Zagging then relocated to Thunder Bay for education where I now consider home. On my free time I enjoy spending time on the land fishing/hunting with my large family of 6.

## Matawa Health Co-operative

### EMR Data Clerk, Vicky Reed



Born and raised in rural Northwestern Ontario and belonging to Wabigoon Lake First Nation, Vicky is daughter to Louis and Margaret Meawasige. After living in the US for over 20 years she recently moved back to Canada. She is married to her husband, Rob who both share a home with their two children, Kai and Nicole, in Slate River, Ontario. Favorite pastimes are martial arts – Shuri Ryu Karate and Traditional Okinawan Kobudo. Reveling and unwinding in nature with her family. Writing, and reading. Maintaining a positive outlook on her own path. Vicky experiences life vividly, using words to share wisdom and hope. Author to two books – Path of the Turquoise Warrior (2016), and Little Sparrow’s Cloak of Many Feathers (2020), Currently working on book 2 of the Spirit Guide Series. Vicky’s work background is in customer service and sales (having worked for AT&T in the US), public health (having worked in the Communicable diseases portion of Brown County Public Health) and self employed as an author.

## Technical Services

### Infrastructure Projects Coordinator, Carla Chisel



Good day. My name is Carla Chisel. I’m a Architectural Technologist. Certified Technician in Buildings. My career started at Lynx North Engineering as a Field Inspector, later moving to a Capital Projects Coordinator with Matawa Project Management. I continue to work in the technical field and have experience in

operation and maintenance, capital projects infrastructure and as Technical Service Advisor. I am happy to be working for MFNM Technical Services and look forward to working with Matawa communities on their Infrastructure projects.

## Matawa Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin

### WiiChiiHehWayWin Outreach Program, Leesa Davey



Booshoo, my name is Leesa Davey and I am a member of Neskantaga First Nation and I am a fluent speaker of Anishinawbemowin. I was recently hired on a six-month contract as the Lead Navigator for the WiiChiiHehWayWin Outreach Program which provides service individuals that are homeless or experiencing Mental Health and Addiction issues in the city of Thunder Bay during the COVID-19 pandemic. I work in a team with the Matawa Health and Social Meno Biimadeswin department staff as well as the WiiChiiHehWayWin Outreach Workers to assist individuals with immediate needs and provide navigation of services and resources within the city of Thunder Bay. I have an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree from Lakehead University and I majored in Indigenous Learning. In my personal time, I enjoy spending time with my family and am a mother to two adult daughters and grandmother to three beautiful grandchildren. I enjoy cooking, photography, doing arts and crafts, painting, meditation, gardening and travelling. I look forward to working with others and being of service. Meegwetch.

## Four Rivers Environmental Services Group

### Environmental Services Coordinator, Holly Pyhtila



This summer, I moved from the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction department into a new position with Four Rivers, where I’ll be helping coordinate many of the environmental services Four Rivers delivers. I look forward to continuing working and visiting with all the people I’ve come to know over the past 8 years working at Matawa. It will be exciting to be part of the Four Rivers team as they grow and develop essential and emerging skills and services to share with Matawa members and communities.

## Health Co-operative



### Medical Receptionist (Part Time/Casual), Carla Elayan

I’m a single mom to a 7 year old son with autism, originally from Thunder Bay. Spent 20 years living in Toronto and worked at CTV for 15. I then moved to the Middle East for 6 years and taught there for about 3 years when I decided it was time for us to move back home. Been back for 6 years now. I enjoy hiking and making and selling my art with my boyfriend.



### Scanning a QR code on an Android:

1. Check to see if your phone supports QR code scanning. Not all Android phones come with this ability.
2. Open your scanning app. Open up the app, whether it's Bixby, QR Code Reader, Samsung Optical Reader, or whatever option is installed.
3. Position the QR code. Remember, the code's corners should be fully visible in the scanning window.
4. Choose the correct option. The app should then provide a pop-up option to take an action based on the QR code.



### Scanning a QR code on an iPhone:

1. Open your iPhone's camera
2. Point the camera at the QR code. Your phone should focus in on the QR code after a brief moment
3. Make sure the QR code is centered on your iPhone's screen. All four edges of the QR code should be on your iPhone's screen.
4. Wait for the code to scan. Once the QR code is centered on your iPhone's screen, it should scan almost immediately.
5. Open the QR code's content. Tap the Safari notification that appears at the top of the screen to open the QR code's webpage or other information.

## Living with Us... Atik (Woodland Caribou)



Woodland Caribou are the largest caribou subspecies in Canada. They are medium-sized members of the deer family and thrive in old growth forest, where they can easily find food, and hide from their predators. In the winter they eat mainly lichen, which they are able to sniff out using their great sense of smell. In the summer they eat moss, plants, grass, and willow leaves. Woodland caribou need large areas of undisturbed old-growth forests and wetlands, where they can easily find food and hide from predators.



**Did You Know...** As industrial development pushes further north in Canada, woodland caribou are running out of suitable forest habitat. Climate change is anticipated to further amplify the challenges faced by this northern species. These are reasons why the woodland caribou's boreal population here in Ontario is listed as 'threatened,' meaning that they may become extinct if efforts are not made to help the caribou and protect the integrity of their habitat. Four Rivers received funding through Environment and Climate Change Canada to document community knowledge on the Boreal Woodland Caribou population in the homelands of the Matawa member First Nations. Watch for the video: 'Matawa Member First Nations Communities' Caribou Chronicles,' a file of short stories highlighting caribou realities in Matawa homelands on our Facebook page this fall! Friend us on Facebook at: FourRivers Matawa!

