

March 2022



"Living with Us"... page 16



# MATAWA MESSENGER

The Power of Unity, The Dignity of Difference

L'ub L'Daraduh PpooCLub b'v'b'v'

## Four Rivers Becomes 1st Indigenous-Led Wingtra Drone Product Distributor in the World



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

Four Rivers Inc. has recently become an authorized distributor of Wingtra drone products, and is the first Indigenous-led group in the world to do so.

The Four Rivers drone team mapped all nine (9) Matawa communities last fall using this speedy orange Wingtra drone and have come to rely on the accuracy and reliability of its performance. When there was an opportunity to become a new Canadian distributor for the Swiss drone line, Four Rivers Inc. was happy to support the product.

The Four Rivers drone team met with representatives from Wingtra, Switzerland in February for 2 days of GIS, mapping and advanced flight training. They learned techniques and potential uses for the drone imagery from other countries around the world that will provide new possibilities for Four Rivers work going forward.



wingtra

Welcome New Staff and more....



# New KKETS Program Announcement

**CONTINUING STUDIES@UVIC**

**Certificate in Indigenous Language Revitalization**  
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

## To apply or for more information:

### Caitlynn Baxter, Intake & Referral Officer

Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services (KKETS)  
Email: cabaxter@matawa.on.ca  
523 Algoma St N  
Thunder Bay, ON  
P7A 5C2  
Tel: 807-768-4470  
Cell: 807-633-605  
Toll-Free: 1-888-688-4652  
Fax: 807-768-4471

For information on the Certificate in Indigenous Language Revitalization:  
[continuingstudies.uvic.ca/CILR](http://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/CILR)

### LING 182 Language Learning, Language Revitalization and Social Action (1.5 units)

**Date:** April 4 - May 13, 2022  
**Location:** Online  
**Instructor:** Norman Shewaybick

Students will examine formal and informal approaches to language teaching and learning in Indigenous community settings. Topics include forms of language acquisition, Indigenous teaching and learning strategies, how strategies are related to community needs and goals and the role of community and community members in teaching and learning.

### LING 181 Introductory Linguistics for Language Revitalization (1.5 units)

**Date:** May 23 - June 30, 2022  
**Location:** Online  
**Instructors:** Dr. Heather Bliss

This course will introduce topics in the study of language and linguistics, providing a foundation for understanding language revitalization, with a focus on Cree, Oji-Cree and Ojibway.

These 6-week courses will include two online classes per week on Zoom (2-hour sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings) as well as self-directed assignments and readings.

Note: These courses are fully ONLINE. Students are required to have an appropriate device (computer or laptop) and Internet access.

Applications are now being accepted for the Certificate in Indigenous Language Revitalization is being offered by the University of Victoria's Department of Linguistics and the Division of Continuing Studies in partnership with Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services (KKETS)

The goal of the CILR program is to support communities in language revitalization initiatives, by strengthening understanding of the complex context and characteristics of language loss, maintenance, and recovery, and by developing knowledge of strategies and successes in language revitalization in communities. The program honours traditional knowledge and practices to reach a diverse group of learners. It provides the foundation for language activism, language learning, community language programming, and further study in linguistics, education, and related areas.

Interested individuals are encouraged to register with KKETS through Intake & referral.

**Deadline to apply March 11, 2022.**



University  
of Victoria

## Four Rivers Assists with Blastomycosis Outbreak in Constance Lake First Nation

After a widespread outbreak of blastomycosis was reported in the community of Constance Lake in November 2021, Four Rivers was asked to assist with sampling for the fungus that causes the disease. Sampling teams were deployed immediately and Four Rivers staff worked with the community for five weeks targeting suspected sites for samples of the fungus. All samples collected were sent off for analysis in order to try to determine the source of the blastomycosis outbreak.



>> For more on blastomycosis, go to pages 8 and 9.

## Matawa Employee Assistance Extended to Include Full-Time, Part-Time and Contract Staff

**Reach out. Get help. Feel better.  
Immediate and confidential support.**

You can trust your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) to help you and your family find solutions for a wide range of life's challenges. Caring professionals can help you access support related to:

- Fitness and physical health
- Mental health
- Relationships
- Nutrition and naturopathic medicine
- Finances
- Elder care
- Legal
- And, much more

There are many ways to get help today - all completely confidential.

**Download the LifeWorks app today for convenient access to wellbeing support.**

1. Download the free app on Adroid or iOS - simply search for 'LifeWorks'



2. Open the app, click on 'Log In' and enter your shared log-in credentials

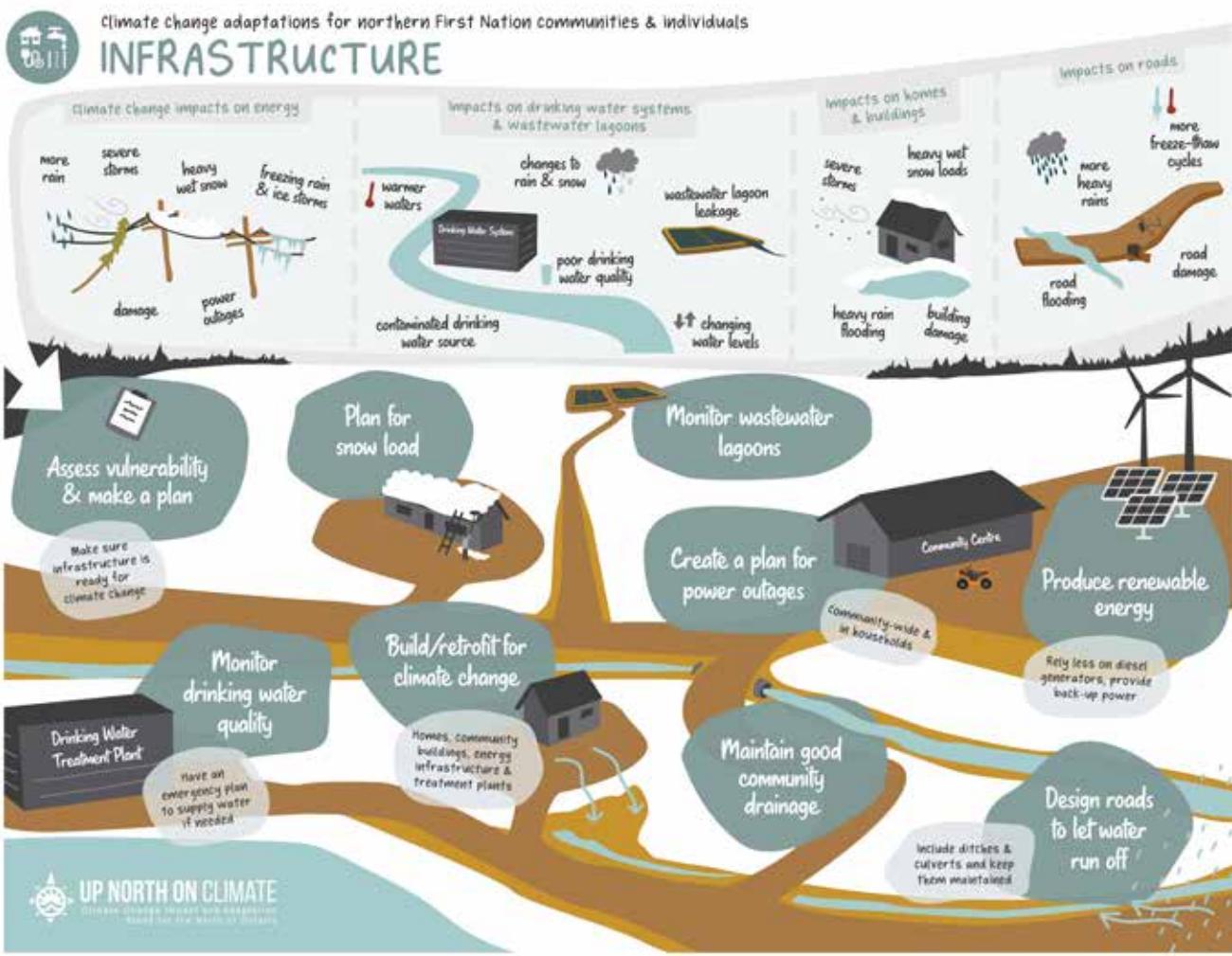
**Username: canadalife Password: lifeworks**

**More info coming soon!**

**Connect with us for confidential support or to learn more.**

Make the right decisions for you and your family with help from your EAP.

For immediate assistance, contact us at **1-866-289-6749**



## Matawa Education - Post Secondary Application Deadlines



Matawa Post-Secondary Program (MPSP) provides Post-Secondary assistance on behalf of the following First Nations: Aroland, Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58, Neskantaga and Webequie. The MPSP provides financial assistance to eligible students towards the cost of their post-secondary education.

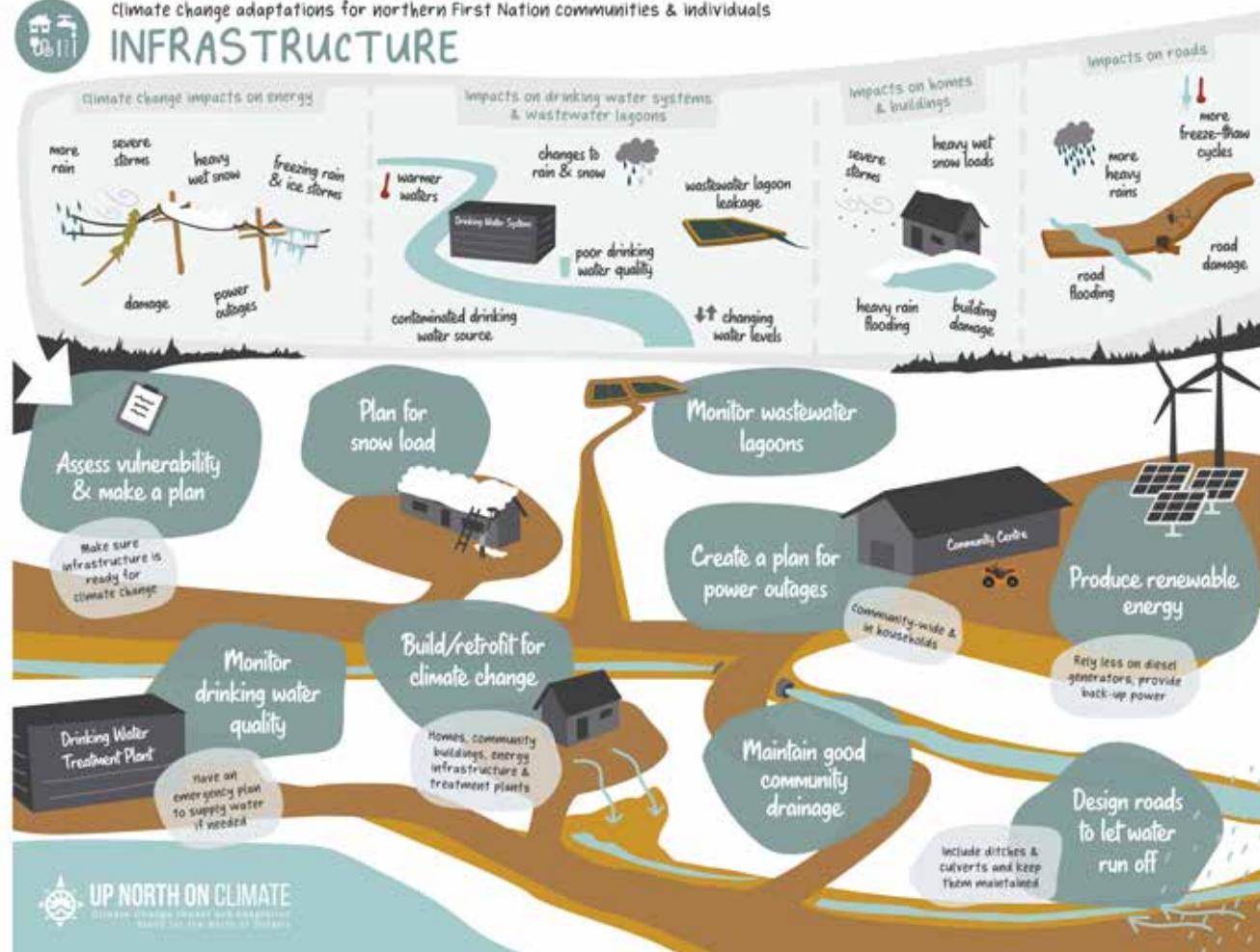
ALL STUDENTS, continuing and new, are required to submit a new application **each term**, according to the following deadline dates:

- May 15th: Fall Term September to December
- May 15th: Fall & Winter Terms September to April
- November 1st: Winter Term January to April
- March 31st: Spring & Summer Terms May to August

**FOR APPLICATIONS please contact the Matawa Post Secondary Office (807)-768-3300 / 1-888-283-9747 or by cell# 807-632-7192 / cell# 807-633-9586.**

## Climate change adaptations for northern First Nation communities & individuals

# INFRASTRUCTURE



## Matawa Health Co-operative Community and Public Health Nurses Weekly Team Planning

DYK that during the COVID-19 office closure the Matawa Health Co-operative Public Health Nurses and Community Health Nurses connect via Zoom for weekly team meetings? This is a chance for staff from this team to discuss upcoming health programming for Matawa communities.

Top: Leola Bouchard-Penagin and Noreen Moskotaywenene  
 Second row: Sandeep Kumar, Tracy Brinkley and Tammy Dube  
 Third row: Chelsea Luxton and Justin Chapdelaine  
 Bottom row: Emily Gordon

# Matawa Waka Tere – Indigenous Language Revitalization Project

**Project Background:** The Matawa Waka Tere – Indigenous Language Revitalization Project is in its fourth Year and has had its fair share of challenges and highlights. The Project which started in March 2018 kicked off with Matawa Education – Pathways to Student Success (PASS) team, when Mike Graham and Aroha Watene from Aotearoa, New Zealand (NZ) accepted to come to Ontario, to share their skills and knowledge they gained in Language Revitalization using accelerated learning methods to help students at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWOA) speak the Māori language at a fast rate. Dr. Rongo Wetere, Founder and Tu-muaki (CEO) of TWOA (translation University of NZ) which he helped establish in 1993; was instrumental in implementing the successful accelerated learning methodology language program for multiple languages in New Zealand.

In 2019-2020 nine out of twenty students graduated from the first Ojibwe Certificate Language class. The Year One Pilot program was successful despite the added challenges imposed by COVID-19. Since the pilot project the team of four Language Specialists including Lawrence Therriault from Aroland First Nation, Nancy Ritch from Marten Falls First Nation, Lois Whitehead and Tracy Spence both from Webequie First Nation reviewed the pilot program and implemented changes to improve student resource content. This redevelopment was under the guidance of the two Language Revitalization Specialists, Aroha, Curriculum Lead and Mike, Methodology Lead. However, extra funding means the team can digitize the Year One program resources into short animation videos and improve the graphic design of the student workbooks.

The Cree curriculum translations are currently on hold until a fluent speaker is able to fill the vacant Language Specialist role. Focus remains on securing funding through accreditation by IAESC and WINHEC (World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium), establishing copyright program protection and selecting and training Community Instructors and Administrative Assistants. This pathway was supported by the Chiefs Council in December 2021. Once the program is accredited, roll out preparations will be underway within Matawa communities and for those First Nations members residing in Thunder Bay.

The goals for 2022-2023 are to seek accreditation for Year One Certificate for Ojibwe, Oji-Cree and Cree Programs. The Matawa Language Specialists will deliver full training to Instructors and Assistants from the communities to run the program.

We are also seeking people with skills to produce Animation, Digital Media and Graphic Design resources for all 3 languages to support Matawa First Nations language revitalization. If you are interested, please let us know.

Preparations are also well underway to develop the Year Two Diploma programs. The team were fortunate to start early consultation preparations in August of last year with over 10 Matawa community speaker representatives who form part of the language project Program Advisory Committee. This month (February), the team will gather to produce program aims and details despite the unpredictable COVID-19 variant challenges – Take Care and Stay Safe!

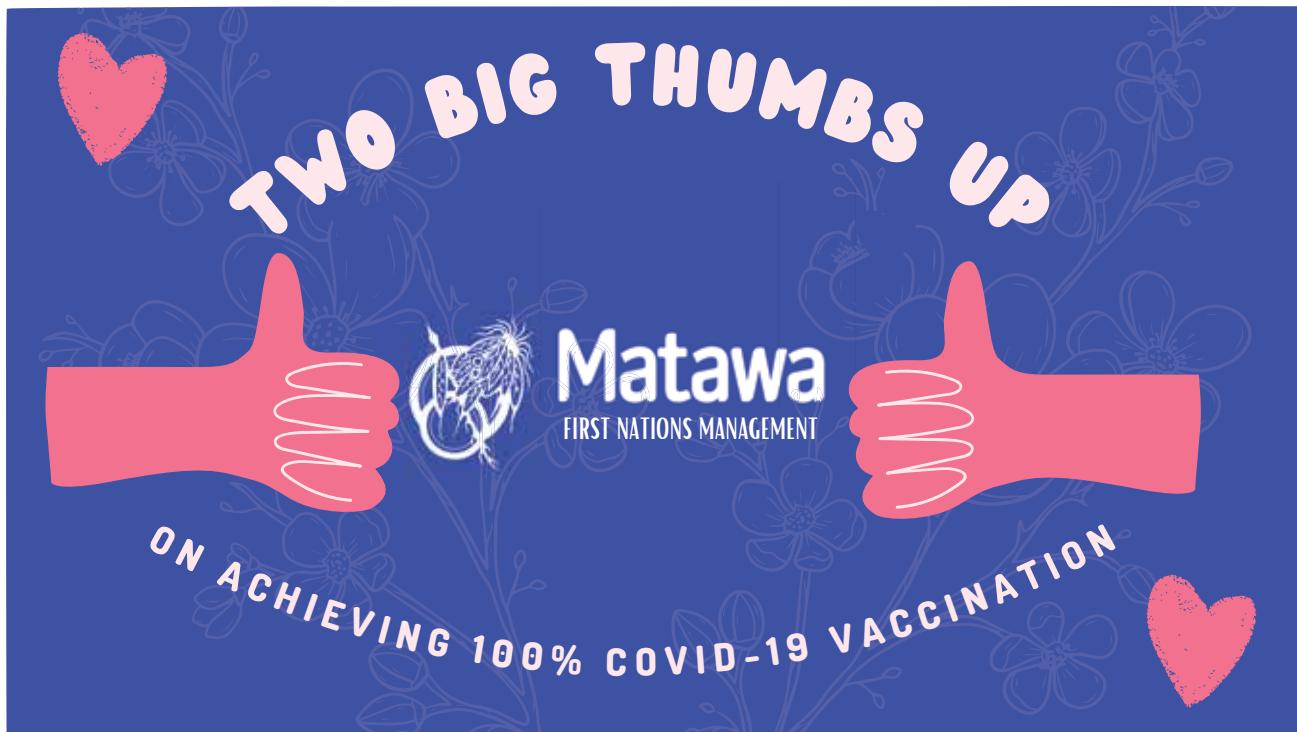
Gitchi Miigwech

The Matawa Waka Tere – Indigenous Language Revitalization Project Team

For Graphic Design, Animation and Digital Media enquiries to assist in the development of language resources, please contact an Indigenous Language Specialist.

Aroha Watene – [awatene@matawa.on.ca](mailto:awatene@matawa.on.ca)  
Lois Whitehead – [lwhitehead@matawa.on.ca](mailto:lwhitehead@matawa.on.ca)  
Nancy Ritch – [nritch@matawa.on.ca](mailto:nritch@matawa.on.ca)





The Ontario government has announced that they will be ending the province's COVID-19 passport program which means that individuals will no longer need to show proof of vaccination to enter businesses or public settings on March 1, 2022. It has been reported that even though the government is ending the vaccine passport, private businesses open to the public may still choose to continue to require proof of vaccination after March 1.

For some background on how we addressed COVID-19 vaccinations as part of our path out of the pandemic, on October 21, 2021 the Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) Board of Directors (BOD) enacted a vaccination policy requiring all eligible staff to be fully vaccinated in order to work at or attend MFNM facilities. This policy was approved by the MFNM BOD even before the Government of Canada said it would require employees in all federally regulated workplaces to be vaccinated against COVID-19 on December 7, 2021. Some Matawa communities like Ginoogaming and Long Lake #58 First Nation adopted a similar vaccination policy.

On December 30, 2021, full MFNM staff vaccination was achieved. Other measures enacted included: full vaccination of new hires, a requirement to attend a COVID-19 vaccination educational session, continued requirement to wear masks, physical distancing and self-screening on a daily basis. Stay tuned for updates on how the MFNM BOD decides to respond to how the Ontario government moves forward on their re-opening plans.

**TUNE IN EVERY 2ND TUESDAY  
FROM 4:00 - 4:30 EST  
(3:00 - 3:30 CST)**

[www.wawataynews.ca/radio](http://www.wawataynews.ca/radio)  
89.9 FM in Sioux Lookout  
106.7 FM in Timmins  
BellTV Channel 962



Upcoming 2022 Shows:

- April 12 and 26
- May 10 and 24
- June 7 and 21

# Blastomycosis

From the Health Canada website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/blastomycosis.html>

## ***What are the symptoms of blastomycosis?***

Symptoms can range from a mild cough that does not go away to serious breathing problems. It may take 21 to 45 days or more before you develop symptoms. Some people may not show any symptoms. Others may develop a long-term form of pneumonia (a lung infection).

Blastomycosis can also cause small bumps, warts or open sores (ulcers) on the skin. They generally appear on the face and the ends of the limbs, such as the hands and feet. There is often little swelling at first.

However, the sores can quickly become more severe. They can turn into abscesses (swollen pockets containing pus) that are often under the skin but can involve any organ. The disease usually begins by affecting the lungs but can eventually spread to the:

- bones
- kidneys
- brain and spinal cord
- stomach and intestines

## ***What do you do if you become ill?***

Consult a health care provider if you have the listed symptoms. Getting treatment as soon as possible greatly increases your chances of recovery.

## ***How is blastomycosis diagnosed?***

Blastomycosis is diagnosed based on symptoms and laboratory tests to check for the fungus that causes the disease.

## ***How is blastomycosis treated?***

Blastomycosis is treated with antifungal drugs.

## ***What are the risks of getting blastomycosis?***

Your risk is highest if you often visit places where the fungus that causes blastomycosis grows. The fungus grows in thickly wooded areas and along streams and rivers, where there is:

- moist soil and leaves
- rotting plants and wood

The fungus that causes blastomycosis is common in soil in areas of Canada, including:

- Ontario
- Quebec
- Manitoba
- Saskatchewan

Blastomycosis is regularly found in the Midwestern, Southeastern and South Central U.S. along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. The disease is more common in North America but has also been reported in:

- India, Israel, Africa, Siberia, Saudi Arabia, central Europe & the United Kingdom

## ***Who is most at risk?***

You have a higher risk of getting blastomycosis if you:

- are an adult male
- have an underlying medical condition such as diabetes
- live or do activities in wooded areas where the fungus is common, this may include: hunters, farmers, campers, forestry workers

## **What are the risks of complications?**

People with a weakened immune system (inability to fight disease easily) have a higher risk of complications. They are more likely to experience:

- severe breathing problems
- a spread of the disease from the lungs to other parts of the body

## **What causes blastomycosis?**

Blastomycosis is a lung infection typically caused by a fungus that grows in moist:

- soil
- leaves
- rotting wood

It can also spread to the skin and other parts of the body. Mushrooms, mould and mildew are examples of fungi.

The fungus that causes blastomycosis grows as:

- a mould in the environment
- yeast in human tissue (it also grows as yeast in the tissue of different mammals, such as dogs and cats)

## **How is blastomycosis spread?**

Blastomycosis is spread when you breathe in small particles of the fungus into your lungs. The particles settle into air sacs in your lungs, where they develop into yeast and cause swelling. The yeast can then spread through your blood to other parts of your body. Blastomycosis does not spread from:

- person to person
- animals to people

## **How can blastomycosis be prevented?**

There is no vaccine to prevent blastomycosis. In areas where the disease is common, it is not always possible to avoid exposure to the fungus that causes blastomycosis. This is because it is found in the soil and rotten wood near lakes and rivers where people:

- hike
- boat
- swim
- camp

People who have weakened immune systems (cannot fight disease easily) should avoid wooded areas where the fungus is widespread.

## **Blastomycosis in Dogs**

*Blastomycosis is a systemic yeastlike fungal infection caused by the organism *Blastomyces dermatitidis*.*

Blastomycosis typically occurs when the dog inhales the airborne fungal spores of the genus *Blastomyces dermatitidis* after the contaminated soil has been disturbed (ex: digging the dirt). The spores can also enter through the skin. The *Blastomyces* fungus thrives in wet environments, such as riverbanks, lakes, and swamps. It's also present in areas with decaying matter, such as wooded areas, forests, and farms.

### **SYMPOMTS**

- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Eye discharge
- Eye inflammation, specifically the iris
- Difficulty breathing
- Skin lesions, which are frequently filled with pus



## **Blastomycosis Fast Facts**

Blastomycosis (or "Blasto") is an infection caused by the fungus *Blastomyces dermatitidis*

Infection can spread to other parts of the body such as skin or bones

Blasto is not spread from person to person

The fungus lives in moist soil and decaying wood and leaves

Illness can occur 2 – 15 weeks after breathing in the fungal spores

Symptoms can include cough, fever, chills, muscle aches, joint pain, and chest pain

Blasto is treatable with antifungal medications

People who smoke, have lung disease, or have weakened immune systems are more likely to become ill

Individuals concerned about Blasto should visit their doctor

Learn more at: <http://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/blastomycosis/>



## FOUR RIVERS WEBINAR SERIES

**New Year, New Series!!**

**Friend us on Facebook (FourRivers Matawa) for the most up to date episode schedule & details!**

**Past Episodes (2022) Listed Below**  
Contact [lprior@fourrivers.group](mailto:lprior@fourrivers.group) for recordings!

**EPISODE 1:** ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING  
ESSENTIALS: WATER

**EPISODE 2:** ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING  
ESSENTIALS: LAND

**EPISODE 3:** CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD  
SOVEREIGNTY

**EPISODE 4:** CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH  
IMPACTS

### UPCOMING EPISODES!

**March 25, 2022**  
10:00am-12:00pm

**EPISODE 5:**  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
ADAPTATION &  
ACTION

**April 8, 2022**  
10:00am-12:00pm

**EPISODE 6:**  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
MONITORING  
ESSENTIALS: CLIMATE

**Hosted on the MS TEAMS  
Meeting Platform!**

Email [lprior@fourrivers.group](mailto:lprior@fourrivers.group) if you have any questions about this fun new series.

## Four Rivers Ice Safety and Rescue Training

On February 22 & 23, 2022, four of our Four Rivers Group field staff members took part in some seriously “cool” and very important ice safety and rescue training. This training helps keep our staff safe when working and supporting environmental monitoring initiatives on frozen lakes and rivers. The group learned to assess ice conditions, performed self rescues as well as practised rescuing their field partner. They tested different scenarios in both protective gear as well as their everyday snowsuits! We are proud of the group for braving the cold waters and learning to be well prepared! The training was facilitated by Boreal River Rescue, in Thunder Bay, ON.



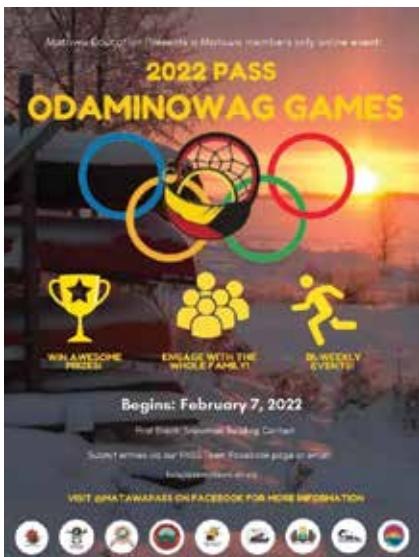
*From left to right: Jasmine Baxter, Environmental Technician; Cristina Ross, Information Systems & Environmental Specialist; Erin Desjardins, Stewardship Intern; Graeme Saukko-Sved, Environmental/Geomatics Technician*



## MATAWA EDUCATION

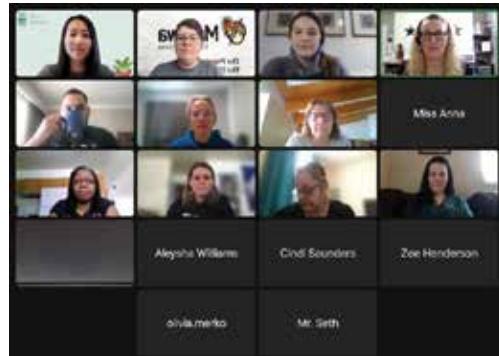
### Pathways to Achieve Student Success (PASS)

Although our Matawa schools are currently in different situations due to COVID-19, the PASS team is still here to support our students and educators. We are currently planning virtual engagement sessions and events for students, families, and community members.



All Matawa members are invited to participate in the Odaminowag Games! This Matawa wide event is to engage students, families, and community members in land-based challenges.

New challenges are presented every 2 weeks and prizes are available to win! Our first two challenges were creative snowman/snow sculpture and ice fishing.



On February 14, Matawa students and families were invited to participate in a Valentine's Storytime for Kids. Stories, games, BINGO, and music and movement activities were shared!



On February 10, we hosted a virtual engagement session with staff from Frontier College. 13 educators from various Matawa schools came together to learn about Financial Literacy. Hilairy, Ellie, and Ashley shared a variety of resources available for grades 4-8. It was a fun afternoon of seeing each other's faces and learning to teach this new math strand of the curriculum!

Stay tuned for more virtual engagement events!



@matawapass

# Canada's Opioid Crisis and the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act

## **Canada's Opioid Crisis**

The opioid crisis is a complex public health issue devastating the lives of many Canadians and their families who are experiencing accidental overdose or death from opioids (powerful pain-relieving drugs including fentanyl). First Nations communities are adversely affected by the Crisis as Indigenous people are 5 times more likely to experience an overdose and three times more likely to die from an overdose than other residents in Canada.

## **The Opioid Crisis is Driven by Several Complex Factors**

### **Contaminated Illegal Drug Supply**

The illegal drug supply is becoming increasingly contaminated with fentanyl, an extremely powerful synthetic opioid that increases the risk of accidental overdose. Fentanyl is the leading cause of opioid-related deaths in Canada.

### **Prescription Opioids**

Prescription opioids are prescribed mainly to treat short-term and long-term pain. High rates of opioid prescribing have contributed to increased exposure to opioids and their potential risks.

### **Opioid Tolerance and Dependence**

Long-term use of prescription opioids can lead to tolerance, which means users will have to increase the amount and frequency they use to get the same effect they are looking for. This is dangerous as it causes your body to become dependent on opioids and can develop into an opioid use disorder. If you are to stop taking opioids even for a short amount of time, your tolerance can decrease very quickly which means if you were to use the same amount previously used, the dose can be fatal.

## **Canada's Opioid Crisis and the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Rates of opioid related harm, especially opioid related deaths have increased exponentially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the marginalized population has been affected disproportionately. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, rates of emergency medical services (EMS) for suspected opioid overdose increased by 57% and rates of fatal opioid overdose increased by 60% in Ontario alone.

Factors that are tied to rising rates of opioid-related harm during the COVID-19 pandemic include pandemic-related stress, social isolation, and mental illness, which in turn resulted in changes in drug use behaviours; border and travel restrictions that created a more erratic and volatile unregulated drug supply; and reduced accessibility of addiction, mental health, and harm reduction services.

## What is the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act?

The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act provides some legal protection for people who experience or witness an overdose and call 911 or their local emergency number for help.

The act became a Law in May 2017, in response to the increasingly overwhelming number of preventable overdoses and deaths caused by opioids, the act is part of the Government's plan to combat the Opioid Crisis.

### How it helps

The Good Samaritan act protects people who make the choice to act in the event of an overdose emergency. It is a fact that 96% of opioid deaths are accidental, and preventable. The Good Samaritan act empowers users and those who come across an overdose emergency by protecting them from single possession charges (possession for personal use) and breach of probation or parole for single possession.

What to do in the event of an overdose emergency

DON'T RUN, CALL 9-1-1!

## Stop an Overdose with Narcan®

**Take these steps to stop an Overdose:**

- 1 Call 911**  
Say "someone isn't breathing" and/or "I think it's an overdose." Stay until help arrives, even if they seem better.
- 2 Give Narcan®**  
Push pump only after tip is in nose. Go to Step 4. If no response in 3 minutes, give another dose.
- 3 Give breaths/CPR**  
Make sure mouth is clear. Tilt head back, lift chin, and pinch nose. Give 1 breath every 5 seconds and make sure chest rises with each breath. Try CPR if you've been trained.
- 4 Stay until help arrives**  
If breathing well, put on side. If not breathing well, repeat Steps 3 and 4. Stay until help arrives.

**Contact the Matawa Safe Sobering Site Harm Reduction Program for free Naloxone kits and training! The site can be reached 24/7 at 807-632-0639.**

If you come upon a scene of a suspected overdose, you need to call 9-1-1 immediately and administer one dose of Naloxone (Narcan) if possible. Stay with the person until emergency medical services arrive. If they start to vomit, roll the person over to the recovery position. *Contact the Matawa Safe Sobering Site Harm Reduction Program for free Naloxone kits and training! The site can be reached 24/7 at 807-632-0639.*

# Matawa First Nations Management Welcomes New Staff

## Health Co-operative

### Youth Mental Health Counsellor, Carrie Nagy



My name is Carrie Nagy and I am the new Youth Mental Health Counsellor with the Matawa Health Cooperative. I am excited to be a part of the growing Mental Health Team and support youth with any mental health issues. I was born and raised in Kenora, ON and moved to Thunder Bay over 7 years ago for my education. I have obtained my Honours Bachelor of Social Work from Lakehead University, as well as a diploma in Child and Youth Work from Confederation College. Before joining Matawa, I worked with children and youth in varying mental health settings within Northwestern Ontario. My passion is working alongside teams that assist children and youth with supportive mental health services, which makes me eager to see what I can do in this role with Matawa Health Cooperative. When I am not working, I enjoy going home and spending time on Lake of the Woods with my family and going on adventures with my dog.

## Health Co-operative

### Youth Mental Health Worker, Lenore Smith



Boozhoo! My name is Lenora Smith and I am excited to have joined the Matawa Mental Health Cooperative team as a Youth Mental Health Worker specializing in Recreation and Programming. I am from Kenora, ON and a member of Naicatchewenin First Nation. I graduated the Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Prevention Program through Canadore College and Seven Generations. I am currently enrolled at Lakehead University, working towards a BA in English. I have a passion for working with youth, as they are the future of tomorrow. I love to help others and will always lend an ear. I believe your mental health is and should always be your first priority. I enjoy working out, iced lattes from somewhere local, and sunrises.

## KKETS

### Harvesters Intern, Kaitlyn Rousseau



Boozhoo, I'm a Thunder Bay local who is originally from Lac Des Mille Lacs First Nation. I am a full-time employee at KKETS as a Harvesters Intern, and parent to two angels: Paul and Aubrey. During my time at the KKETS (since December 2021), I have learned how to assist Northern communities by finding resources that aid in increasing food security, in addition to gathering information in order to optimize food harvesting.

## Education

### Education Partnership Program Liaison, Shelby Ch'ng



With my business closing due to Covid19 restrictions, I decided that it was time to re-enter the mainstream work force. I initially worked at Nishnawbe Aski Nation as a Communications Advisor for their Education Department and have recently transitioned to Matawa Education as the EPP Liaison. I owned my business for 9 years and really enjoyed volunteering as a mentor for young business owners in Thunder Bay. I am an Honorary Lieutenant Colonel for the 38 Service Battalion and in my free time I like to play guitar, paint, write short plays and I am a member of Thunder Bay City Council. I'm looking forward to working with Skylene and the team.

## Awashishewiiglihiwaywiin

### Family Support Worker, Karen Westerback



Hello. My name is Karen Westerback. After having worked 28 years with youth justice, I made the big leap and joined Awashishewiiglihiwaywiin in December 2021. I am a graduate of the Lakehead University Honours Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation Program and the Confederation College Child and Youth Worker program. My time away from work is spent adventure seeking with my corgi Eugene or on the farm with my horse Sponge Bob. I enjoy spending time with my family, showing my horse, hiking, paddling boarding, photography and travelling. I think I can safely say that the more time I spend outside, the happier I am. I am looking forward to working with my team as we work with our Matawa families in our community.

## Technical Services

### Community Expansion Engineer, Dharmender Dhankhar



My name is Dharmender Dhankhar, I became a part of Matawa Technical Services team as a Community Expansion Engineer in December 2021. I moved to Thunder Bay for Lakehead University in 2006 and have been living here since then. I have been working in maintenance and capital projects for more than 10 years and would love to use my experience to support and improve our first nation communities' quality of life through infrastructure improvement project. My first introduction to Matawa organisation was in 2017 when my wife started working with Matawa Education Department. I feel honoured to be a part of our experienced Technical Services team and look forward to serving our communities with hard work and dedication.

## **KKETS**

### **Apprenticeship Coach/Mentor, Will Robinson**



Booshoo, I would like to introduce myself to everyone, my name is Will Robinson and I am a member of Marten Falls First Nation. Throughout my career, I have been a police officer with Indigenous Police Services throughout Quebec and Ontario. After my policing career I became a Heavy Equipment operator and received my ABZ licence.

I have also worked with trainees as they explore their interests in heavy equipment operator skills and job readiness. Most recently I have operated my own winter road transportation, cross border transportation and snow removal business.

## **Matawa Education and Care Centre**

### **Matawa Student Care Centre Manager, Vida Baxter**



I was hired on August 23, 2020 to oversee the day-to-day functioning of the MSCC, up to and including policy development, recruitment and supervision of staff, managing operations, and implementing the vision of the care centre as set out by the Executive Director of Education, CEO, and Matawa

Chiefs Council. The goal was to have the Student Care Centre open by end of February 2022 but due to unfinished renovations, COVID and delay on orders to furnish the 50 rooms which some occupying 2 students per room, we are looking at opening September 2022. I am a member of Marten Falls First Nation. I was a Councillor in my community for 3 terms,(resigned as a Councillor August 21, 2021), a housing manager for three years(2017-2021), Ontario Works Administrator for two years, Teacher-Aide for two years, and Band Administrator for three years. My passion has always been to work with students, to support them in any way I can.

## **COVID-19**

### **Get Tested**



Being tested is the only way to know if you have COVID-19.



Some people with COVID-19 have no symptoms. Common symptoms include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.



Health Services will swab your nose or throat. Knowing test results helps us treat symptoms, stop the spread, and resume activities more quickly.



If you are offered a test, please take it!

### **Get Your Vaccine**



Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself against COVID-19.



The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and approved by Health Canada. It is highly effective in preventing hospitalization and severe symptoms from the virus. Health Services will be offering vaccines to all inmates.



When you are offered a vaccine, please take it! It will help protect you and your loved ones.



Even when vaccinated, you must continue wearing a mask, keep physical distancing, and washing your hands often.



## Living with Us... WANATOWAG (Fungi)



Fungi are everywhere, but they are easy to miss! They are a vital part of the living environment, eating rock, making soil, digesting pollutants, forming relationships with plants and animals. Most fungi form vast networks of many cells known as hyphae (pronounced HY fee), which are fine tubular structures that branch and fuse together to form mycelium (often seen as a network of threads in soil, rotting logs and within plant roots). Hyphae can also make fruiting bodies such as mushrooms. Like fruit on a tree, the mushroom you see is part of a much larger structure. While not all fungi create mushrooms, all produce spores, and fungi use spores like plants use seeds – to spread to new environments.



**Did You Know...** There are ten times more fungi in the world than there are plants! The diversity of fungi is reflected in our relationship with them; we create medicines from them (e.g. penicillin, chaga), eat them (e.g. yeast in bread, citric acid in candy and pop) and need them to keep our environment clean (nature's recyclers). We also suffer diseases from them (e.g. athlete's foot), food losses (e.g. potato blight, mouldy bread) and plant losses (e.g. Dutch elm disease). Four Rivers has been assisting in an environmental investigation in Constance Lake First Nation, trying to determine the habitat of the fungi causing blastomycosis in multiple community members. **If you would like to learn more about the fungi found throughout the Matawa homelands, please contact [info@fourrivers.group](mailto:info@fourrivers.group)**

