



# 2019 / 2020 Annual Report

Prepared for the Matawa 32nd Annual General Meeting





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## Matawa First Nations Management Annual Report

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Matawa First Nations Management

# Message

from the **President of the Board**



## **Dear Membership:**

In my second year as President for the Matawa First Nations Management, I am very proud to say that our Tribal Council continues to thrive and achieve its goals as set forth from each department. As we continue to increase program/project awareness in our communities/urban areas, this would not be possible without the hard work and dedication from staff, whom all contribute their time and service to the betterment for our membership.

As 2019/2020 has provided us with endless possibilities, 2020 has become the year the Coronavirus put a halt on our daily lives. Businesses, schools, airports, borders were forced to close to ensure the safety of our citizens. As a member living in a First Nation Community, access points/gates were established to limit outside visitors from entering. As our governments imposed a State of Emergency, a lot of us were informed to remain at home and practice social distancing. As we put our daily routines and activities on the hold for the good of everyone. With no concrete date when this pandemic will end, we need to be prepared for the long haul.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge the Leadership, Pandemic Teams for all Matawa First Nations Communities, Matawa Health Co-Op for their ongoing efforts to ensure all community members has the necessary information regarding this COVID-19 Pandemic.

It is my pleasure to present you the 2020 Matawa First Nations Annual Report. This annual report highlights every department's success/challenges/or their on-going initiatives respectively. You will also find notable highlights where the Matawa Tribal Council is embarking on (Dawson Court Property, Broadband).

Before I end my statement, I would like to also add, over the course within this pandemic many of our First Nations Communities have lost membership. I would like to ask each and one of you to continue to pray for the families, the community for strength and determination to move forward in a positive way.

**CHE MIIGWETCH!**

**Robinson S. Meshake**  
**President**





## Matawa First Nations Management

# Board of Directors - 2019/2020

### President

**Robinson Meshake**  
Aroland First Nation

### Vice President

**Frank Onabigon**  
Long Lake #58 First Nation

### Secretary/Treasurer

**Charlie Okees**  
Eabametoong First Nation

**Lisa Echum** (Appointed by GFN Chief & Council in November)  
Ginoogaming First Nation

**Stanley Oskineegish**  
Nibinamik First Nation

**Sharon Sakanee**  
Neskantaga First Nation

**Roy Spence**  
Webequie First Nation

**Robert Moonias**  
Marten Falls First Nation

**Rosemary Moonias**  
Constance Lake First Nation





Another great year has come and gone for the Matawa First Nations. I believe it's been a good year for all of us. I believe that growth in an organization is essential but it must be done with the support of our First Nations. Growth must be community driven and community owned. I believe that has been our vision on how Matawa would provide our services.

As you are aware, there is a global crisis, a pandemic called COVID-19 which is impacting the lives of people across the world. Our First Nations and Matawa have taken steps to avert a potential deadly disaster amongst our Peoples. All of our First Nations have gone into lockdown to prevent loss of life. So far, I believe it has worked. But still, we still need to be vigilant and take extreme precautions to keep our communities safe. We know it has created hardships for our Peoples. Currently in the country just south of us “Kichi Mookiiman Aki,” the pandemic is causing many hardships. Unfortunately, some of those impacted are our brothers and sisters of other Nations. Our hearts and prayers are with them. In our history, this is not a first case of a pandemic that will have deadly consequences to our Peoples. We can go back almost 100 years ago when a sickness called the Spanish Flu caused many deaths and hardships for our Peoples of the Land. That is why as First Nations we must take extreme measures to ensure the health and safety of our loves. I wish you good health and I want to encourage you to take heed of the warnings and the preventable measures to keep your family safe.

On behalf of our staff from Matawa First Nations Management, Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS), Matawa Education and Care Centre, Four Rivers Environmental Services Group, Matawa Health Cooperative and our new organization, Awashishewiigihiwaywiin (Social Services Framework), we will do whatever it takes to work with our First Nations to achieve their goals. We are there to provide professional and dedicated support for our First Nations. We are committed to our Peoples of the Land and to our Leadership.

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF

*Chief Ashe Celina  
(Celia) Echum*

DEC 15, 1952 - MAY 9, 2020



OUR COLLEAGUE, OUR FRIEND.  
YOU WILL BE MISSED.

# Love is how you stay alive. Even after you are gone.

## An article from Windspeaker, May 12, 2020

The family announces with sorrow the sudden passing of Chief Ashe Celina (Celia) Echum at Geraldton District Hospital on Saturday May 9, 2020 at the age of 67 years.

Beloved wife of Gabriel Echum (passed August 26, 2013), and dearest mother of Vincent Echum (Sonia), Derek Echum (Lisa), Scott Echum (Krista-Lee), Myles Echum, and Troy Echum (Brittney) of Longlac, Ontario.

She is survived by her mother, Sarah Jane McKay (Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation), and also by five of her siblings: Robson McKay (Winnipeg, Manitoba), Stephanie McKay (Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation), Esther Tait (Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation), Keith McKay (Joyce) of Kasabonika First Nation, and Joe McKay (Elsie) of Sandy Lake First Nation. Celia was the second-oldest child of the eight children in the family, and she was the eldest of the four girls in the family. She is also survived by her sister-in-law Theresa Morin (Ron) of North Bay, Ontario.

Celia was predeceased by: her late husband Gabriel Echum, her father Cornelius McKay, her sister Eva Ostaman, and her brother Marlon ("Roland") McKay. Celia was also predeceased by her sister-in-law Alvina Echum-Abernot, and by her brother-in-law George Abernot. After the passing of George in 2005 and Alvina in 2011, Celia took on their children as her own: Cheryl Imbeault (Edmonton), George Echum (Longlac), Clarine Echum (Longlac), and Ron Echum (Thunder Bay), as well as their children (her grandchildren). Celia will be sadly missed by not only her children, but also by her grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren. Celia also had numerous nieces and nephews, far too many to list.

Celia will be greatly missed by everyone who knew her, as she was a "people's Chief" just as her husband Gabriel was. She sacrificed her life for the betterment of the people and of the community that she served. She was an intelligent, strategic, and powerful leader for the Ginoogaming First Nation people. Like her husband Gabriel, as a Chief, Celia put the peoples' needs ahead of her own personal needs. In taking care of everyone as best she could, Celia possessed a drive to assist others that is rare, that most of us do not have.

Celia was born in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation (a.k.a. "Big Trout"), and as a child she attended the Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora. She would tell stories of how she witnessed abuse that the other children were facing. In her later years, Celia spoke of running away from the residential school at times, so that she could endure the pain of punishment with her fellow students, so they would not have to face suffering alone.

Celia later arrived at Geraldton High School, 33 km west of Longlac, in the 1960's in search of Ontario Secondary School educational attainment. It was during those years, at the age 14-15, when she met the love of her life: Gabriel Echum of Ginoogaming First Nation, who she would later marry in 1970 after she completed her secondary school studies. Gabriel would become Ginoogaming First Nation Chief in 1973, and this commenced their family's political life of dedication to the Ginoogaming First Nation people, which would continue on for the following five decades.

After the birth of her first four sons in 1970-1975, Celia attended Laurentian University via distance education to attain her Community Health Representative (CHR) certification. She excelled at this role in her assistance to the Ginoogaming First Nation community members. She built strong relationships with the local people.

While living in Ginoogaming First Nation with her husband Gabriel and their five sons (Troy Echum born later on, in 1982), Celia cultivated very close relationships with local community Elders, and especially Gabriel's father David Echum ("Omie") who passed on in 2001 at the age of 91 and his wife Elizabeth Echum ("Zebate") who passed on a few years before David. Celia had excellent family relationships with all Ginoogaming First Nation Elders, throughout all of her decades of leadership in the First Nation. She often assembled her Elders in meetings, to receive direction and guidance from them, and she always made sure that they enjoyed platforms from which to speak. Gabriel's uncle Louis Dore ("Ogie") is another Elder who assisted Celia's family, as he lived with them in their family home and helped to take care of Celia and Gabriel's children.

Celia had a very close relationship with the Ginoogaming First Nation people in the following decades. From 1973 to 2005, she was politically active as her husband Gabriel won several consecutive terms as Ginoogaming First Nation Chief (18 years in total). She also was elected several times as Ginoogaming First Nation Band Councillor during many of those years. She

spent several years working in the Ginoogaming First Nation administration as Band Manager, where her relationships with the local people were further deepened, in addition to relationships with the off-reserve membership.

In addition to her grassroots role in the Ginoogaming First Nation community throughout the past several decades, Celia worked tirelessly to advance the needs not only of the Ginoogaming First Nation people, but all Indigenous peoples, through her networking and communications with various boards and associations. Her service was so vast that it is impossible to list here.

Just a few of her extraordinary contributions include her leadership and guidance on: the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Women's Council, the Anishnawbek Police Services (APS) Board of Directors, the Dilico Ojibway Child & Family Services Board of Directors, the Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Board of Directors, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Chiefs political organization, the Chiefs of Ontario political territorial organization, and the Matawa First Nations Chiefs' Council. She served as the KKETS (Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services) co-founder (she also helped to come up with the name of that corporation which was launched in 2011). Celia worked tirelessly in her advocacy, as many can attest to across Ontario, and even across Canada.

Celia had a vested interest in utilizing economic development to advance the needs of her people. The recent Greenstone Gold Mine (GGM) Long Term Relationship Agreement Negotiations (which concluded with the LTRA signing in November 2019), and the 1993 Long Lake Forest Products Partnership Agreement Negotiation Team are two areas where her advisory capacity was instrumental. She was committed to economic, social, human, and community development for her people throughout her lifetime. Celia was a Minodahmun Development Corporation co-founder (a regional corporation to pursue business opportunities for the Greenstone Gold Mines LTRA, that she developed along with Chief Dorothy Towedo of Aroland First Nation, and Chief Theresa Nelson of Animbiigoo Zaagi'igaan Anishinaabek), a Ginoogam Development Corporation co-founder (a forest industry agreement to supply wood fibre to the Longlac Lumber Inc facility, signed in 2015 worked on in the following years with Chief Veronica Waboose of Long Lake #58 First Nation and Chief Dorothy Towedo of Aroland First Nation), and a Nee-daa-kii-Me-Naan Inc co-founder (a forest management corporation established in 2012 with six other area Chiefs). Celia was relentless in her desire to advance her peoples' interests.

Celia was also very active in leading the Ginoogaming First Nation land claims files. With her cousin Wally McKay (former Nishnawbe-Aski Nation Grand Chief 1981-83), she led the Ginoogaming First Nation Treaty Land Entitlement Claim Negotiation Team starting in 2016, with Ontario and Canada which is still in progress. She provided crucial advisory services in the breakthrough Ginoogaming First Nation Ontario Hydro Settlement as Lead Negotiator (which was signed in August 1998). Celia lobbied in the 1990's to move forward the Ginoogaming First Nation Timber Claim Trust Settlement forward which was signed in 2001.

Celia also lobbied throughout her career, for legacy infrastructure projects at the community level such as the Ginoogaming First Nation Health Centre (constructed in 2003-2004), the Ginoogaming First Nation Aboriginal Head Start and Day Care (constructed in 1996, and another second Aboriginal Head Start building constructed in 2019), as well as the forthcoming Ginoogaming First Nation Road and Bridge development.

Notably, as a chief, Celia was the first leader in this region to advance Geraldton area gold mining development through a partnership agreement with Premier Gold Mines in 2009. As noted, she was passionate about First Nation people being self-sufficient through community economic development to service the needs of the people, but also advocated for environmental responsibility and stewardship. She was involved in negotiations for the "Ring of Fire" mining development with the Matawa First Nations Chiefs and leadership and Ontario through a Unity Declaration (2011) that led to the Matawa First Nations Regional Framework Agreement, in 2014-2019. Celia was also co-founder of the Minawshyn Development Corporation (a regional economic development vehicle for Matawa First Nations), as well as serving Ginoogaming First Nation as the Rocky Shore Development Corporation community representative (as shareholder) from 2015-2020.

Locally, Celia was involved in leading a team that established the 1995 Ginoogaming First Nation Gaming License and Ginoogaming Activities, which created a charitable organization to help disadvantaged community members. She also helped to lobby for the construction of the Nimiki Migizi Secondary School (1999-2000) and was instrumental in leading the process to secure funding for a community-led Ginoogaming First Nation Economic Development Strategic Plan (2015). During the 1990's, Celia was an advisor to the Making Ground River Development Corporation, a federally chartered Gi-

noogaming First Nation economic development corporation established in 1995 that garnered prestigious business excellence awards including the 1999 Nishnawbe-Aski Development Fund Corporation of the Year. Later on, she functioned in the same capacity for the federally-chartered Rocky Shore Development Corporation, which also won awards and in 2005 was awarded with the Nishnawbe-Aski Development Fund Corporation of the Year.

One example of the leadership that Celia provided, that had great significance, was the curriculum development for the Aboriginal Workforce & Maintenance Development Program (AWDMP) which operated in Ginoogaming First Nation from 1996 to 2001, and then again in the 2000's to the present. The programming broke barriers to employment for many First Nations people in this region, as the Long Lake Forest Products sawmill and planer operation at that time employed over 289 employees attending from dozens and dozens of First Nation communities.

Celia adopted new ways to engage the Ginoogaming membership by launching a newsletter during her first term (2007), entitled "Community First," which was a vehicle she utilized as a Chief to reach many of her Ginoogaming First Nation members both on- and off-reserve. Celia succeeded in becoming elected as Chief from 2007 to the present day, being continually re-elected in seven victories each and every 2-year term, leading the community for a total of 13 consecutive years to the present. This has never before been accomplished in Ginoogaming First Nation history.

Celia and her husband Gabriel, both before his passing and after, enjoyed a close relationship with Ginoogaming First Nation community member Adolph Rasevych, whose wife Judy was a first cousin of Gabriel's, who grew up with him on their traditional family lands use and trapline area in Arms (50 km southwest of Longlac, near Caramat). The three of them (Celia, Gabriel, and Adolph) were a trio known to many as leadership "dynasty," who met constantly and regularly from 1993 onwards, to devise strategies which could advance the socio-economic position of Ginoogaming First Nation community towards prosperity. They did have a special and unique bond. The three serviced the immediate needs of the community people on a continuous basis with much success. One can imagine that the three are together now, leading a meeting of other passed Elders and leaders, in a Ginoogaming First Nation band meeting, watching the Ginoogaming First Nation developments from above.

Celia always pushed for traditional Anishnawbek spirituality and ceremonies such powwow, traditional hunting and fishing and gathering at Wiisnnewii Zaahgaygin Healing Camp outside the community. She was a spiritual person who also practiced Christian beliefs, and she accepted the different forms of spirituality as she saw them all unified in their commitment to being devout to a Creator, God, or Kitchi-Manitou.

Finally, Celia was inspired by the youth and the future generations. She constantly advocated for better education systems on-reserve, as well as post-secondary funding and wrap around supports. Many First Nation youth found her to be a treasured mentor as she gave them the opportunities to step up and lead projects for the community. Celia believed in the younger generation, as well as the older generation.

Celia and her husband Gabriel were Ginoogaming First Nation Chiefs for 21 of the past 27 years (since 1993), working on improving governance and the financial stability and management systems for the First Nation. Celia represented "unity" of the people and working together with other First Nations towards common goals and objectives. She remained unfazed by political pressure, and was resilient in her work and moving many local and regional milestones that will live on for time to come. Words cannot capture the impact that she had on so many people with her genuine smile, priceless words, and comforting aura. She will be missed so very much, by so very many people.



# Current Matawa Chiefs Council

The Matawa Chiefs Council is comprised of nine (9) First Nations Chiefs of the Matawa First Nations. The Council provides overall strategic direction to the organization and broad governance on collective issues.

For updates on Resolutions passed this year, refer to the 2019/2020 Matawa Chiefs Council Report which is available under separate cover.



**Chief Dorothy Towedo**  
Aroland First Nation



**Chief Chris Moonias**  
Neskantaga First Nation



**Chief Rick Allen**  
Constance Lake First Nation



**Chief Judy Desmoulin**  
Long Lake #58 First Nation



**Chief Sheldon Oskineegish**  
Nibinamik First Nation



**Chief Harvey Yesno**  
Eabametoong First Nation



**Chief Bruce Achneepineskum**  
Marten Falls First Nation



**Chief Cornelius Wabasse**  
Webequie First Nation

Note: Chief Celia Echum (Ginoogaming First Nation) sat on the Matawa Chiefs Council for a majority of the year (until her death on May 9, 2020). Chief Judy Desmoulin of Long Lake #58 First Nation (replacing former Chief Veronica Waboose) and Chief Sheldon Oskineegish of Nibinamik First Nation (replacing Chief Johnny Yellowhead)--joined the Matawa Chiefs Council this year (elections took place in Long Lake #58 First Nation on January 21, 2020 and in Nibinamik First Nation on November 22, 2019).



## Matawa First Nations Management

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## VISION

Matawa First Nations will be prosperous and enriched First Nations both individually and collectively. By creating enhanced social and economic opportunities for everyone, the Matawa First Nations will reach their maximum potential and have confidence in the future.

## MISSION

Matawa First Nations are committed to supporting each other and focusing our collective efforts on core strategic priorities. By working together as a regional community, we will use our combined knowledge and resources in order to champion the social and economic vitality of our First Nations and invest in community and people building.

## VALUES

### Matawa First Nations Work Together

We have the opportunities to grow and reach our maximum potential as a regional group. The diversity within our regional communities is valued and a source of local and regional pride. We are proactively involved in the economic, cultural and political development of the Matawa territory.

### Matawa First Nations are Dynamic and Sustainable Communities

We integrate modern social and economic development practices with our traditional culture and heritage. We build capacity and economic wealth for present and future generations and are well positioned to succeed in the national economy.

### Matawa First Nations Uphold Quality of Life

We invest and protect our quality of life – socially, economically, culturally and environmentally – and ensure that the Matawa First Nations are prosperous and healthy communities in which to live, work and raise a family.



# Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin

## STAFF:

Francine Pellerin, Health Director

Leanne Whitehead, Health & Social Administrative Assistant

Tricia Atlookan, Approaches to Community Wellbeing Facilitator

Ila Beaver, Mental Wellness Team Facilitator/Coordinator

Nicole Jacob, Regional Crisis Intervention Coordinator

Simon Magiskan, Regional Victim Services Coordinator (until March 2020)

## OVERVIEW:

The Health & Social Meno BiimaDesWin (HSMB) department oversees the management, administration and coordination of regionally funded programs and projects. We provide advisory, advocacy and technical support. The HSMB programs and projects offer education awareness, promotion and prevention in areas of wellness and healthy living. We also provide client advocacy and referral services and co-ordinate training & capacity building. The HSMB works in partnership with several groups, organizations, agencies and institutions who are affiliated with our First Nations in Health and Social Programming.





## KEY PRIORITY AREA:

To strengthen, enhance and promote health and wellbeing within our First Nations.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- 1. Increased and continuation of Program Supports for Matawa First Nations.** Funding secured for Jordan's Principle Education Awareness and Coordination, Approaches to Community Wellbeing Project was successfully negotiated for funding, accessed Victim Quick Response Program funding, accessed COVID-19 funding and maintaining the annualized programs.
- 2. Additional one-time funding for Mental Wellness Team (MWT)/Crisis Support.** Due to high number of our First Nation experiencing crisis, HSMB received additional resources to cover some of the expenses.
- 3. Community-based Case Management Model/Manual.** HSMB, through the MWT Program completed the first draft of a community-based case management model entitled "BiiMades Wihgamik-a Place of Life." The manual still needs to be completed for final editing, formatting, and graphics design.
- 4. Increased Provisions for Anishinawbe Supports and Healing.** Continued funding for Traditional Healing and support for all Matawa First Nations.
- 5. Staff Professional Development.** Two HSMB staff are enrolled in an accredited certified training program that is sponsored by other agencies. Other staff attended various workshops for their professional development.
- 6. PDA-Back to Our Roots Gathering.** Back to Our Roots Gathering IX was hosted by Marten Falls First Nation in March 2020. HSMB coordinated with First Nations to increase awareness, build capacity and sharing experience related to prescription drug abuse. Future PDA Gatherings are still to be determined.



## CHALLENGES:

- **Inadequate Program Funding:** HSMB continues to operate with what is committed by funder. This affects in the overall management and administration of HSMB programs, i.e. staffing, travel, training, communication, planning, infrastructure, etc.
- **Resource Allocation Process:** The process of resource allocation needs to be resolved.
- **Implementation of programs due to COVID-19.** The infrastructure capacity needs to be resolved.

## OPPORTUNITIES:

Government funds due to COVID-19 have been announcing new funding in many areas. Accessing the funds could create opportunities to develop new strategies for program/service delivery, enhance emergency plans, capacity and improve infrastructure needs.





# Information Technology (IT) Services

## STAFF:

Rob Wesley, Manager IT Services  
Stefano Fata, IT Helpdesk Analyst

## OVERVIEW:

*1. Ensure corporate information technology is accessible and equipped with current hardware and software*

- Perform professional, technical and analytical tasks to identify business requirements and to procure information technology-based enhancements that meet our corporate business needs and objectives
- Identify, select, design, and implement policies, conventions, and standards for server and network technologies and infrastructure
- Plan, organize, direct, control and evaluate the operations of information systems
- Hire and manage information technology personnel and contractors where required to design, develop, implement, operate, and administer computer and telecommunications software, networks and information systems
- Manage the IT Services budgets and expenditures
- Troubleshoot hardware, software and network operating systems
- Be familiar with all hardware, software and network operating systems
- Provide orientation to new users of existing technology
- Train staff about potential uses of existing technology
- Provide individual training and support on request
- Provide recommendations about accessing information and support
- Maintain current and accurate inventory of

technology hardware, software and resources

*2. Manage, monitor and maintain technology to ensure proper and secure access*

- Troubleshoot all technology issues
- Maintain logs of required repairs and maintenance
- Make recommendations about the purchase of technology resources
- Research current and potential resources and services
- Provide network access to all staff and students
- Maintain servers
- Install work stations
- Connect and setup hardware and install all required software
- Provide network accounts and passwords as required
- Configure and maintain network access requirements
- Implement and monitor security of all aspects pertaining to the network infrastructure
- Advise staff of security breaches and/or a change in passwords or security status
- Identify and prepare hardware for disposal by ensuring removal of all corporate data

*3. Assist with overall management of corporate information technology and computer systems*

- Assist with planning, organization, direction, control and evaluation of the operations of information systems
- Implement policies and procedures for IT management and computer systems operations and development
- Meet with program managers to discuss system requirements, specifications, costs and timelines
- Supervise information technology personnel

and contractors who design, develop, implement, operate and administer computer and telecommunications software, networks and information systems

- Operate within identified computer systems budgets, policies and procedures

#### 4. Quality Management System (QMS)

- Adhere to, implement, review and improve Matawa First Nations Management's Quality Management System as it relates to all duties of the department

*5. Prepare progress reports, briefs, work-plans, budgets and other reports as requested or required for the Chief Executive Officer and/or Board of Directors.*

### KEY PRIORITY AREA:

The IT Services department's key priority area is to provide secure, reliable and continuous access to Matawa's data and information systems to support the sustained delivery of Matawa First Nations programs and services to its partners and communities. IT Services strives to ensure connectivity to such resources by providing a well-designed and reliable network infrastructure.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Working with several new departments to ensure their IT requirements exceeded expectations.
- Assisting the Education department with new servers and their deployment
- Managing and maintaining 20+ individual servers, community Email Systems (have for life) with over 400 email accounts
- Community Web Sites
- Network reconfigurations necessary to keep up-to-date with newer technologies

The Matawa IT department oversees the maintenance of the following in-house hosted web sites:

- <http://www.matawa.on.ca/>
- <http://community.matawa.on.ca/>
- <http://www.ginoogamingfn.ca/>
- <http://www.gatheringofrivers.com/>
- <http://www.mocasintrailsadventures.com/>

### CHALLENGES:

- Learning technologies that have not been in use at Matawa First Nations before.
- Management of our network and the deployment of new equipment or new services during staff working from home due to COVID-19.
- Assisting with the rebuild of the Education computer network with the goal of simpler management for their IT Staff and to allow more automation for end-users.
- Moving or assisting with the moving of health records from current to new management system
- Learning and deploying a new Anti-SPAM and Anti-Virus software from Kaspersky.

### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Moving the Health Coop department to a new Health Records Management System.
- Could easily host additional community web sites.
- Intranet site (Document Sharing site) will have to be developed from scratch, we have looked at potential software titles and are awaiting on potential funding sources



# Awashishewiigiihiwaywin

## STAFF:

Robin Haliuk , Program Manager  
Dionne Beardy, Training Coordinator  
Kelly Tiboni-Ranta, Family Support Worker  
Adora Nawagesic, Family Support Worker  
Britni Westphal, Family Support Worker  
Simon Magiskan, Family Support Worker  
Michelle Levesque, Intake/Admin Worker

## OVERVIEW:

Awashishewiigiihiwaywin (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.

Opportunities are also provided for care givers and children to participate in traditional parenting programs, life skills, and cultural programs. Help is also provided in the following areas:

- Support when dealing with child welfare agencies
- Assistance navigating the system
- Support for personal goals
- Connect to other resources
- Housing advocacy
- Nutritional programming
- Crisis counselling and support
- Address housing, domestic violence and child custody issues
- Referrals to additional supports that work towards family needs
- Traditional programming



## BACKGROUND ON \*NEW\* MATAWA PROGRAM AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In April of 2019, the Matawa Chiefs Council passed Resolution #02 –04/04/2019 mandating the start of the Social Services Framework (later named 'Awashishewiigiihiwaywin'). Recognizing that they needed to come together to address the high number of Matawa First Nations children in care in First Nation communities and in the city of Thunder Bay and other jurisdictions--they directed the development of community-based, culturally appropriate and responsive care models for children with a focus on prevention and family reunification.

In January 2020, a Social Services Advisory Committee was established is to provide strategic guidance on the continued implementation of the Matawa Social Services Framework in accordance to the above stated resolution. The Committee acts in an advisory role to support the program and provide guidance on all aspects including; operations, protocols, finance and budget and program direction. They established a draft terms of reference as follows:

- Membership - shall consist of one representative appointed from each First Nation in Matawa or their alternate
- Technical Support - may include an Elder and a Youth or other technical resource persons, Awashishewiigiihiwaywin staff and Band Reps
- Chair - once representatives have been established, the Chair will be identified as well as any working groups



## KEY PRIORITY AREA:

Awashishewiigiwaywiin 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.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Since we began in September 2019, we have assisted 94 Matawa families with support for child welfare and family assistance this includes 252 children represented within those 94 families
- We have expanded the program from what was originally 4 staff to now include 7 staff
- 120 food hampers delivered in March 2020 to assist with COVID-19 pandemic
- Ongoing support for families including community kitchens and cultural programming to assist in building healthy families
- We have assisted in the closing of 5 open child welfare files with Dilico
- Work collaboratively with existing Band Reps (Constance Lake and Long Lake 58) to support in city clients with child welfare files
- 4 meetings of the advisory working group
- Creation of draft terms of reference for our advisory committee
- Establishing our mission and vision for our program with the input of community representatives
- Identified a program name and logo with the assistance of community elders and a logo contest
- Creation of rack cards to distribute information regarding our program
- We began doing bi-weekly community kitchens for our families
- Prenatal education and support group that included parenting skills with a traditional focus

- Creation of intake forms and work instructions
- Purchase of 2 program vehicles to assist family support workers in working with families
- Collaborations with other service providers including: ONWA, Thunder Bay District Social Services Board, Ontario Disability Support Program, Kinnawaya Legal Clinic, Victim Services, Beendigen, Thundere Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre, Schools and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (Maternal Newborn Unit)
- Community visits to: Marten Falls, Webequie, Constance Lake, Ginoogaming and Long Lake #58 First Nations

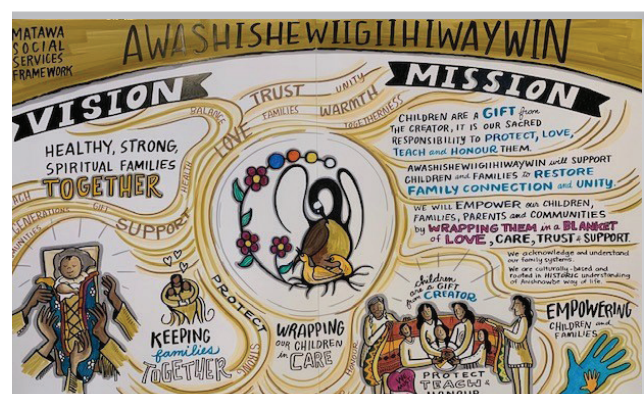
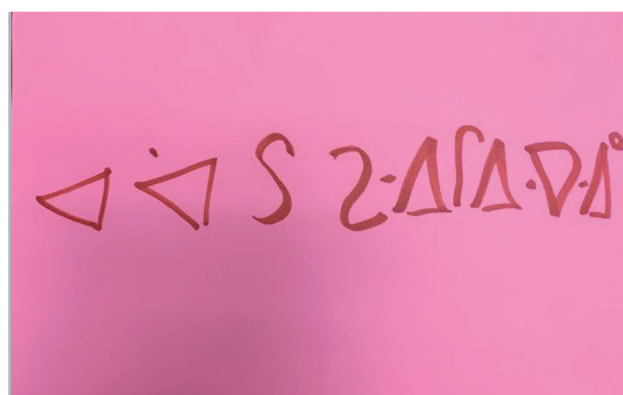
## CHALLENGES:

- Having appointed individuals from each of the 9 communities to support the Advisory Committee, we currently have one appointed from Marten Falls and Band Reps from Long Lake #58 and Constance Lake First Nation (other communities have been sending representatives but have not identified consistent individuals to sit on the committee)
- Housing supports for families on assistance - we have found finding affordable housing has been a challenge and have sadly had to resort to housing 5 families in kitchenette hotel rooms due to the lack of affordable housing
- We have outgrown our space and have had to take over our family-room space to use as additional office space
- COVID-19 created many new challenges for our department including exacerbating the need for food security and stable housing for our clientele, we also could not offer anymore group programming that many families had benefitted from - we had additional community kitchens and ribbon skirt making workshops planned that had to be postponed
- As a new program we have had to develop from the ground up and have had to develop much of what we are doing today as we learn and grow



## OPPORTUNITIES:

- As we move to the new location at the former Dawson Court on Algoma Street in Thunder Bay, we will be able to offer more prevention programming specific to our clients' needs
- Partnerships with the Health Co-operative to support families in a wholistic way that identifies physical needs
- Partnerships with KKETS to support student needs
- Development of formal Memorandums of Understandings and protocols with the 3 Child welfare agencies that serve families from First Nations in Matawa - working relationships have been developed but more formal agreements would be beneficial
- Development of 3 emergency family residences within the new location to reduce number of families needing emergency hotel accommodations
- Continue to support communities who currently do not have Band Rep Funding to develop proposals and assist with the process as needed
- Continue to educate members on new legislation regarding child welfare and advocate for members
- Continue to develop policies and protocols to support the work we do in a good way with consistency and transparency
- Continue to do community engagement and visit all 9 of our beautiful communities that make up Matawa





# Quality Assurance

## STAFF:

Shelly Boudreau, Quality Assurance Coordinator

## OVERVIEW:

Matawa First Nations Management is ISO 9001:2015 registered and has held an ISO Certificate of Registration since December 13, 2012. ISO is an internationally recognized certification which ensures quality services and products of an organization.

ISO registration increases credibility and recognition because it is known worldwide and there are specific Management System requirements that have to be followed in order to maintain registration.

Consistency in the services we provide, continual improvement, evidence-based decision making and ensuring satisfaction from our member First Nations are all important areas of the Quality Management System.

## QA REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE:

The Quality Assurance Department has a committee made up of Quality Assurance Representative from each of the Matawa departments. They meet monthly to discuss issues/concerns, review current policies & practices and identify areas which may require improvement to Matawa's Quality Management System. They also give updates to their department and assist with quality assurance matters when required.

## KEY PRIORITY AREA:

The key priority of the Quality Assurance Department is to ensure that all requirements of the ISO 9001:2015 standard are being met in order to maintain our Certificate of Registration. Ultimately, satisfaction from our member First Nations will always be the focus.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The annual surveillance audit done by SAI Global to ensure compliance of the ISO 9001:2015 standard was held in February 2020. There were no issues identified and Matawa First Nations Management was recommended for continued registration. The Auditor was very impressed with the

organization, staff and all the amazing work that is being done by Matawa.

The Quality Assurance Department continues to provide training to all new employees at Matawa. All employees are advised of the importance of Matawa's Quality Management system. By following the set requirements in their everyday work routine, they prove their willingness to contribute to the effectiveness of the system.

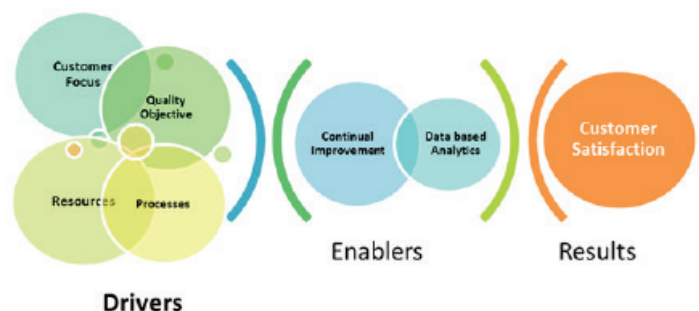
Awareness of the Quality Management System has increased and is promoted through signage throughout the organization. It is also promoted through the Monday Memo, the Matawa Messenger and at the bi-weekly staff meetings.

## CHALLENGES:

There are no real challenges to report at this time. There are some areas of improvement that have been identified in the surveillance audit that will be considered in order to add more value to the Quality Management System.

## OPPORTUNITIES:

Receiving feedback from our member First Nations, program managers and employees is a crucial way to identify opportunities. It is necessary to recognize what we are doing well and what can be improved on in order to meet the needs and requirements of the communities we serve. Each department at Matawa has a process in place to accept feedback and is open to hearing and addressing all comments whether positive or negative. Compliments, concerns, complaints and suggestions will be recorded and acted upon accordingly.





# Financial Advisory

## STAFF:

Lloyd Wabigwan, CPA, CMA, Director Financial Advisory Services

## OVERVIEW:

The Financial Advisory Services Department works closely with the CEO and more specifically; The Band Managers Committee, to assist with managing the development of member First Nations' capacity in relation to accounting, finance, and governance. The department is community-based that provides outreach services, supports, and resources directly to the First Nations at the community level with a focus on sound financial management.

## KEY PRIORITY AREA:

To provide support to member First Nations by providing information and capacity development in the area of accounting, finance, and governance.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Given direction by the Matawa Chiefs Council to establish a Matawa First Nations Financial Management Support Strategy.
- Established and presented to the Matawa Chiefs Council a Matawa First Nations Financial Management Support Strategy/Proposal.
- Given approval of the proposed strategy/proposal and directed by the Matawa Chiefs Council to seek the required funding to support it.
- Provided both the Federal and Provincial government contacts with the Matawa First Nations Financial Management Support Strategy/Proposal and began discussions to have them both look internally to seek other departments

which could fund it. Both levels of government were very interested in the strategy/proposal and hoped to find funding sources.

- Band Managers Committee had a two-day meeting to review and provide input to the Matawa First Nations Financial Management Support Strategy/Proposal.
- Assisted internally with the Matawa team on such things as regional priorities.
- Had a two-day Tax Clinic in partnership with Aboriginal Financial Officers Association (AFOA) to train community volunteer tax preparers. Ten participants took part.

## CHALLENGES:

To establish a network that allows for member First Nations to share best practices and/or key success factors that allows each First Nation to learn from one another in unison so that each member First Nation can feed off one another and share their understanding of what works and what doesn't in terms of developing capacity in relation to accounting, finance, and governance systems.

Getting those member communities who are under the Indigenous Services Canada Default Prevention and Management Policy out; with the ultimate goal of keeping them out (all communities) now and into the future. Ensuring member communities will no longer be at risk of insolvency and that funding and financing avenues are predictable and consistent.

With the COVID-19 pandemic that took effect early in the year and still in effect at the time of writing; it is believed that the governments will not likely prioritize such proposals as the Matawa First Nations Financial Management Support Strategy/Proposal given the health issues being faced. This may well delay the strategy if other revenue sources are unavailable such as own source revenues or other funding agencies.

The lack of internet connectivity or broadband width in the communities will pose a challenge to begin capacity development training via the internet.





# Financial Advisory

## OPPORTUNITIES:

To establish a capacity development process and system which will allow for current community-based staff to increase capacity and understanding of accounting, finance, and governance, and to ensure there will be others who are willing to apply for staffing positions responsible for these roles if and/or when they become vacant.

To improve member First Nations accounting, finance, and governance systems so that accurate and timely information to evaluate a member First Nations financial status is readily available to management for decision making purposes; and to third parties such as financiers in order to make confident decisions about a First Nations borrowing capacity. This will assist with long-term borrowing needs a First Nation may have, i.e. large infrastructure projects.

To establish a clear communication system that allows for member First Nations to share best practices and/or key success factors that allows each First Nation to learn from one another and develop capacity and systems in unison so that each member First Nation can share their understanding of what is being done.

## BAND MANAGERS COMMITTEE

This Committee is the process of being reestablished. It consists of the Band Manager and Finance Manager from each Matawa member community and is to meet on a quarterly basis. The purpose is to provide guidance and direction to the Financial Advisory Services department as to what the regional mandate is to be implemented.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

### CHECK OUT RESOURCES AT THESE WEBSITES!

#### ACCOUNTING/BOOKKEEPING

- Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CPA Canada)
- Accounting Tools
- Bookkeeping for Canadians For Dummies Cheat Sheet
- Beginner Bookkeeping – Bookkeeping for Beginners
- Sage Canada
- Accounting Coach

#### GOVERNANCE

- AFOA Canada
- First Nations Financial Management Board – Tools and Templates
- First Nations Land Management Resource Centre

#### FINANCE MANAGEMENT

- The Canadian Payroll Association
- Government of Canada – Employment Insurance Information for Employers
- Canada Revenue Agency – Canada Pension Plan
- Canada Revenue Agency – Application for Refund – Excise Tax paid on Diesel – Electricity Generation
- WSIB Ontario
- AFOA Canada
- First Nations Finance Authority
- Canada Revenue Agency – GST/HST and Indigenous Peoples
- The First Nations Major Projects Coalition
- Recommendations on First Nations Access to Indian Moneys

#### FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS

- NACCA – National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association
- NADF – Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund
- Prosper Canada
- Canada Revenue Agency – GST/HST and Indigenous Peoples
- AFOA Canada – Accessing Benefits and Receiving Credits – From the Federal Government – Canada Revenue Agency
- Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business
- On-Reserve Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program
- Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services
- Financial Health & Wealth – Native Womens Association of Canada



**Education Department Committee and Staff**

<b>Matawa First Nations Education Authority</b> (Incorporated in August 2017) Tony Sakanee, Neskantaga, President Ennis Jacob, Webequie, Vice President Sandy Moonias, Marten Falls, Treasurer Mary Oskineegish, Nibinamik, Secretary Nancy Waswa, Eabametoong, Director Krista Bouchard, Aroland, Director Sherri Taylor, Ginoogaming, Director	<b>Advisory Services</b> Sharon L. Nate, Education Manager Angela Wapoose, Education Administrator Jeff A. Yellowhead, Education Reception
<b>Pathways to Achieve Student Success</b> Nick Shaver - PASS Program Administrator Aroha Watene - Indigenous Language Revitalization Specialist Bill Spade - Community Liaison Officer Christine Avgeropoulos - Intermediate/Senior Lead Chris Chunick - System Administrator Danielle Gibson - Parent-Student Engagement Lead Douglas Gagnon - Cultural Education Coordinator Gowtham Gajawada - Database Helpdesk Katherine Hughdie - School Success Lead Kelly Soulias - Junior Lead Lawrence Therriault - Indigenous Language Specialist Manish Agarwal - Human Resources Policy Officer Mary Ann Nawagesic - Mental Health Lead Michael Graham - Indigenous Language Revitalization Specialist Nancy Ritch - Indigenous Language Specialist Olivia Merko - Student Nutrition Program Coordinator Susan Sandau - Indigenous Language Specialist Skylene Metatawabin - Education Partnership Program Liaison Susan Zgolak - Primary Lead Wayne Slipperjack - IT Technician	<b>Matawa Education Centre</b> Brad Battiston - MEC Principal Jackie Corbett - Senior Vice-Principal Allyson Gilmour - Guidance Counsellor Angela Sofea – MEC Education Receptionist P/T Aly Wood - Student Activities Coordinator Brittany Kennedy - Curriculum Development Officer Charlotte Baxter - Student Nutrition Support Worker Dallas Watson - Teacher Derek S. Yellowhead - Student Activities Worker Elmer Atlookan - Cultural Worker Emily Jacob - Elder Ian Medwick - Trades Development Officer Jennifer Loranger - Mental Health Worker Jessica BuZanko - Art Teacher Joseph Miller - Outdoor Education Teacher Joseph Willis - Co-operative Education Teacher Marcel Bananish - Cultural Worker Malinda Staal - Mental Health Coordinator Norman Sid Okeese - Student Support Worker Paul Colosimo - Tutor Phyllis Goodwin - Teacher Rowena Moonias - Cultural Worker Samantha Renaud -Teacher Sarah Moonias - Elder Shilpa Dhankhar - Science Teacher Shirley Mekanak - Cultural Worker Shannon Linklater - Student Success Coordinator Stephanie Ritch - Youth Inquest Officer Steve Achneepineskum - Cultural Worker Steve St. Jean - Transition Coordinator Tamara Spence - Mental Health Worker Tim Sofea - Student Support Worker Wilma Goodwin - Education Systems Navigator Vacant – Mental Health Worker
<b>On Call Program</b> Aaron Beardy - On-Call Worker Ashley Nate - On-Call Worker Clinton Quisses - On-Call Worker Diane Gustafson - On-Call Worker Kayla Baxter - On-Call Worker Matilda Suganaqueb - On-Call Worker	<b>Safe Sobering Site</b> Sylvia Fisher - Coordinator Amanda Kavalchuk - Youth Residential Worker Vacant - Addictions Crisis Worker
<b>Post Secondary Program</b> Georgette O’Nabigon - Post-Secondary Coordinator Carly Perras - Student Support Worker	<b>Building Maintenance &amp; Custodians</b> David Sutton - Facility Manager Frank Papah - Custodian Joseph J. Misewace – Custodian



# Education

*We Work Together to Make a Change*

## OVERVIEW:

The Matawa Education Department provides support and advisory services to Matawa First Nations community schools and Education Authorities that result in school improvements and have a positive impact on the quality of students' learning. The Education Department staff support local education authorities, schools and teachers, and network with Aboriginal organizations, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the Provincial Ministry of Education, School Boards, and Post Secondary and Secondary/Elementary institutions. The Department continues to develop its capacity to provide second level services to schools, including IT support, under the Pathways to Achieve Student Success (PASS!) program.

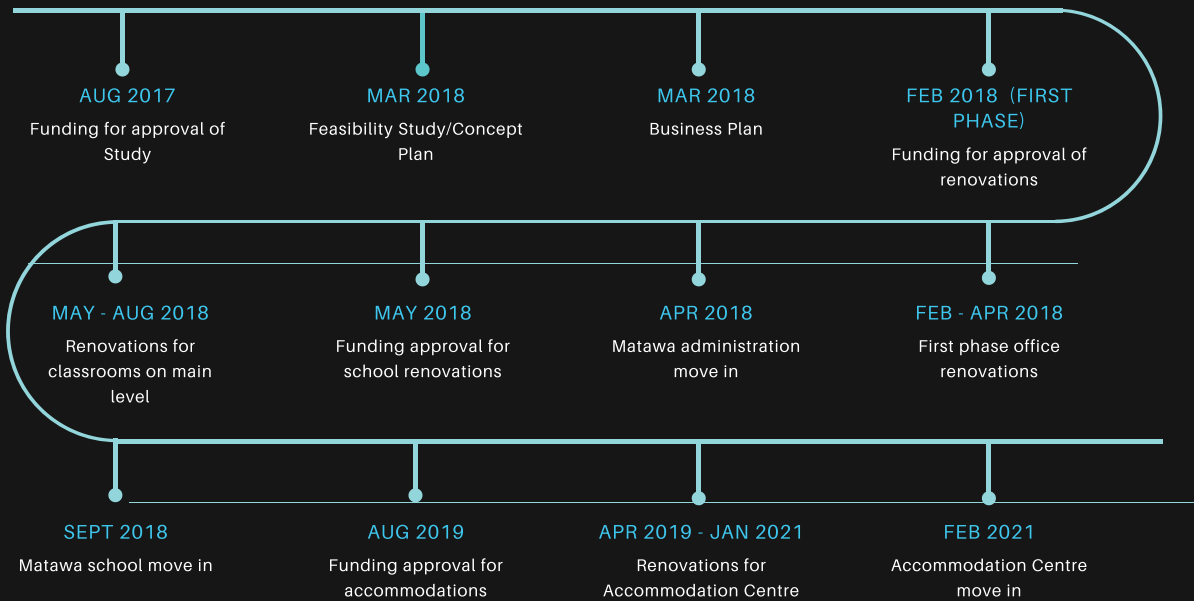
In addition, the Department operates the Matawa Learning Centre, an alternative secondary school approved by the Ontario Ministry of Education. The Matawa Post Secondary Program has responsibility for Post Secondary Administration for five Matawa First Nations; Aroland, Ginoogaming, Long Lake # 58, Neskantaga, and Webequie. Support Services are available as well to other Matawa First Nations students upon request.

## Looking Back and Looking Forward: The Matawa Education & Care Centre

Matawa Education and Care Centre project - in January 2018, Matawa First Nations Management submitted a Minor Capital Application (MCA) Project ARKEM (CIDM#1131559) seeking funding to provide immediate and necessary renovations to Grandview Lodge in order to allow the school portion to open to students and offer programming starting in September 2018. The MCA for this initial scope was approved in February 2018 and work/renovations started shortly after. Grandview Lodge was gifted to the Matawa First Nations Management by the City of Thunder Bay. In this facility is housed the Matawa Education Advisory Services as well as the Matawa Education and Care Centre. Classes have been operational in our new location since September 2018 delivering Ontario Secondary School Credits as well as cultural programming and extracurricular activities (see more on page 26).



## Matawa Education & Care Centre Project Timeline



The Matawa Education and Care Centre was the subject of a Pre-Design Feasibility Study (CIDM# 1208254) and a Business Plan (CIDM #1169511) and these documents clearly articulate the vision, purpose and function of this vital and necessary facility.

### Advisory Services

The Education Department continues to provide technical support for Matawa leadership both directly and through the Matawa First Nations Education Authority. The Education Department continues to provide technical support for the Matawa First Nations communities. Within the Matawa Education are programs such as; the Matawa Education and Care Centre (MECC), Pathways to Achieving Student Success, Post Secondary, and Matawa Waka Tere Language Revitalization.

Support and advisory services to community schools and local education authorities | school improvements and positive impact | quality of students' learning | liaises with Indigenous organizations, governments and education institutions at all levels | continues to develop its capacity to provide second-level services to schools in the Matawa First Nations | IT support under the Pathways to Achieve Student Success (PASS!) program | Post-Secondary Student Services | community liaison | education partnership program liaison | Education Conference | professional development



# Education

*We Work Together to Make a Change*

## Matawa Education & Care Centre Overview

The Matawa Education and Care Centre had 120 students enrolled during the first semester, and 139 students for the second semester for the 2019-2020 school year. There were 7 graduating students this year, with celebrations being conducted at the homes of the students with family members, and a small number of staff due to COVID-19 restrictions. We are planning on having a formal celebration in the new school year when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

This was the third year of our partnership with St. Joseph's Care Group, which provided two full-time Youth Workers and four Trauma Counsellors/Specialists, and a part time Family Therapist for the school year. Our partnership also includes off-site primary care with academic and behavioural assessments with appropriate specialists.

During the past year, the Education Department Manager, Principal, and Youth Inquest Officer were active in meetings, discussions, and proposals based on the Jury Recommendations resulting from the First Nations Youth Inquest. The funding allowed for the continuation of extensive land-based programming, life skills workshops, cultural education and recreational needs of the students. The On-Call Workers continued to provide overnight support for students in need of safe transportation home, keeping intoxicated students out of the police station, and ensured students in need of medical care were taken to the hospital. It was the first year the Safe Sobering Site was able to operate at full capacity.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The Matawa Education Centre completed its second year at our new location, with our highest credit count to date. The MEC also had seven graduates, with celebrations being held with each student and their immediate families. Formal celebrations will be conducted next school year when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The MEC will continue to enhance our land-based cultural credits, cultural programming,

and expand partnerships for our recreational and life skills programs. The MEC also completed the third year of our partnership with St. Joseph's Care Group providing extensive mental wellness, addiction and primary care supports to our students. This past year included the addition of a Family Therapist, increased professional development and training for staff, and additional programming for students. This funding has been approved for an additional two years. MEC also completed our first year of our five-year Youth Inclusion partnership with the City of Thunder Bay. This included expanded opportunities for students to use city wide facilities at no cost, ice time for our hockey credit, employment training opportunities for students and coverage of transit fees for 20 of our students for the school year.

MEC also completed the third phase of our work with the Critical Thinking Consortium, by creating a new Grade 9 English Credit, based entirely on Indigenous resources and materials, many of which are from our communities. For the first time, we received funding through Jordan's Principle for a Special Education program, staffed with four teachers and six classroom assistants. The program was successfully integrated into the school program, with hope that we will receive funding for next school year.

## CHALLENGES:

The major challenge for the school was the closure due to COVID-19. The pandemic has been difficult for the students and staff, especially with the continued uncertainty of what will happen in September 2020 and the start of the next school year. While it has been exciting for students and staff to be in the new location, continued renovation work has been difficult at times. Once again, the students were patient and supportive, and continue to look forward to the work being completed. This will be an ongoing concern until the renovations are completed and the gymnasium is built. The Seven Youth Inquest recommendations continues to require a lot of time from staff to attend various meetings, complete proposals and follow up reports. Most of the funding provided by the federal and provincial governments expires this school year, with no approvals set yet for next school year. While many of the urban



based recommendations have been completed, continued funding is necessary to ensure our students receive the various supports they deserve to be safe and successful while attending school. Many of the community-based recommendations still need to be completed. MEC has been working with our communities and leadership to advocate for these recommendations to be completed. More work is necessary to ensure stable and predictable funding is provided by government. This can only happen through policy changes within government and their willingness to engage in multi-year partnerships with us.

### Pathways to Achieve Student Success (PASS) Overview

The Matawa PASS program provides support services and resources for Matawa schools and Education Authorities, primarily in the areas of literacy, numeracy, information technology, and student retention with funding generated by the federal Interim Funding Formula which replaced proposal-based funding programs like the First Nation Student Success Program (FNSSP) and New Paths for Education. Regular feedback on PASS activities is received from on-site visits by PASS staff, from school principals (through the Principals Working Group), and through the Matawa First Nations Education Authority Board of Directors, which is comprised of Education Directors, or designated representative, from each of the Matawa First Nations.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The **Primary/Junior Lead** (P/J Lead) is responsible for supporting programming, instructional strategies, classroom management practices and evaluation strategies to improve student success in the Primary Division (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6). The P/J Lead also supports the effective implementation and evaluation of literacy and numeracy programs, and strategies to support student learning and achievement. The P/J Lead has continued supporting schools, including assisting Kindergarten teaching staff in conducting the Early Years Evaluation (EYE).

Based on the 2018-2019 results, a collection of literacy and numeracy games and activities were created for staff to reproduce. These focused on the most challenging areas, which included letter identification, letter sounds, sight words, number, and number sense. Four schools completed the EYE for senior kindergarten students in the fall of 2019. Spring assessments for both the junior and kindergarten students were incomplete due to COVID-19. School visits included classroom visits to introduce literacy and numeracy centres and professional development for teachers and teacher assistants. The P/J Lead arranged for all grade one students to receive, "My Heart Fills with Happiness," a free book sponsored by the TD Grade 1 Book Giveaway and The Canadian Children's Book Centre to promote literacy in the home. Resources such as "The Power of Plasticine in Literacy" and "Engaging Readers and Writers" were created and plan to be used with students and staff in the near future. In the spring of 2019, the schools in Aroland First Nation, Eabametoong First Nation, and Neskantaga First Nation implemented a program called, "Welcome to Kindergarten." This event brings together incoming kindergarten students, parents, and teachers to create the foundation for positive relationships and to set the stage for a smooth transition to school and future success. Families received early learning and literacy resources, and learn how to use them at home.

The Primary Lead had the opportunity to participate in the Building Physical Literacy Master Trainer workshop, and will look more into child development, early brain development, and learning through play, the three areas that affect early learning.



## Skill Development

The EYE-TA evaluates aspects of early child development in five developmental domains:

**Awareness of Self and Environment** – a child's understanding of the world and his or her ability to make connections with home and community experiences;

**Social Skills and Approaches to Learning** – a child's attentiveness during classroom activities and his or her ability to interact with peers while respecting classroom rules;

**Cognitive Skills** – a child's basic mathematics and pre-reading skills and his or her ability to solve problems;

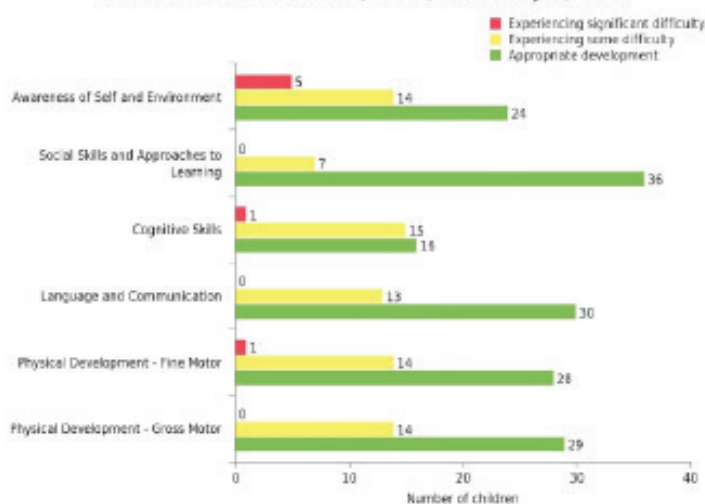
**Language and Communication** – a child's understanding of spoken language and his or her ability to express thoughts and feelings; and

### Physical Development

**Fine motor** – a child's ability to perform small movements that require hand-eye coordination.

**Gross motor** – a child's ability to perform large movements that involve arms, legs, and body.

## Overview of EYE-TA Results, 6 Nov, 2019 - 20 Jan, 2020



The **Junior/Intermediate Lead (J/I Lead)** has provided support to the Matawa First Nations community schools in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and student success in the Junior/Intermediate Division (Grades 4-8). The J/I Lead has participated in relevant literacy and numeracy conferences and has maintained professional relationships, while continuing to build more, during community visits and professional development opportunities. The J/I Lead has coordinated Matawa First Nations schools' staff attendance at the "Reading for the Love of It" and assisted in the coordination of their attendance of Ontario Association of Mathematics Education (an annual math conference). The J/I Lead took part in the planning and organizing of the Matawa/Bowmanville Rotary Bursary Program and its awards banquet. On behalf of the community schools, the J/I Lead continues to build on the working relationship with Roots of Empathy – a program that promotes emotional literacy, which focuses on empathy and kindness. Training workshops for school staffs will reconvene at a later date – all schools will be notified when dates are chosen. The J/I Lead continues to be part of MFNM crisis response teams and has taken a lead role in the purchase of food and resource sent to communities during times of crisis. The J/I Lead became a facilitator of the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) course which qualifies participants to administer the intervention program in times of need.



The **Parent-Student Engagement/Intermediate Lead (PSE/I Lead)** has continued to facilitate meetings and discussions with school staff to review current strategies and best practices as well as barriers to parental and student engagement. Communication regarding literacy and numeracy supports with Intermediate educators is ongoing. The PSE/I Lead has completed professional development in Literacy and Numeracy (Guided Reading in upper grades, creating a culturally and developmentally appropriate math program) to better support Intermediate educators in Matawa First Nations schools, and looks forward to working with them to implement new strategies in the 2020-2021 school year.



## We Work Together to Make a Change



The **School Success Lead's** main responsibilities are to support literacy, numeracy and student retention in Matawa Schools and identify strategies to engage and support students and staff. The School Success Lead also assists with standardized testing (EQAO, CAT-4), and working with other PASS staff to ensure tools are in place to improve literacy, numeracy, and performance standards. The School Success Lead supports the Principal's Working Group scheduling regular meetings (by phone and in-person meetings) which gives principals the opportunities to work and collaborate together, as well as identify opportunities for PASS team support.

The School Success Lead has continued working with the PSE/I Lead to hold Book Launch Parties to celebrate the end of the Matawa Book Translation and Creation Project. Parties have been held or planned for all Matawa communities that participated in the project. So far, the parties have been a great success, with translators reading the translated books, and children enjoying seeing their pictures in the books and enjoying delicious food and snacks.

The School Success Lead secured funding for an author tour for the Matawa communities who asked to participate. Author Andrea Beck was scheduled to visit the schools this May 2020. (Due to COVID-19 restrictions, these visits have been cancelled at this time, but the School Success Lead will be inquiring into deferring the funding so that the visits can be rescheduled in the near future.)

The School Success Lead also worked with the PSE/I Lead to successfully write two grant proposals for musical instruments for all students in Henry Coaster Memorial School and Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre. The funds will be used to purchase hand drum kits so that students can create their own hand drums and learn to drum and sing.

The **Cultural Education Coordinator** provides support to Native Language Teachers and Cultural Education/Outdoor Education Teachers in the Matawa schools. The Cultural Education Coordinator has developed unit plans around clans and syllabics to support language learning in the schools, and has been working on updating and revising the Matawa Treaty curriculum resources. Two schools have been working with the

Cultural Education Coordinator to bring drum teachings to their youth and protocols and etiquette documents are being developed.

The Cultural Education Coordinator has helped in the book translation project and been involved in the annual Matawa Education Conference. The Cultural Education Coordinator has been supporting Matawa Waka Tere (language revitalization project) through gathering documents that will support the development of a Matawa post-secondary institute and providing input into the curriculum being developed. The Cultural Education Coordinator also coordinated teaching staff from the Matawa First Nations schools to attend the Anishinaabemowin Teg Language Conference in Sault Ste. Marie, which unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **Matawa Performance Measurement (IT)** team provides the Matawa Education staff and Matawa schools with technical and/or user support in the areas of school data systems and school user systems including the internet infrastructure needed for these systems. They also implement technical, physical, and administrative security controls to protect the user and data systems. The team consists of a System Administrator, IT Technician and Database Helpdesk, each with specific roles and responsibilities to meet performance measurement requirements.

Work was being done to replace old server and network components to address ongoing connectivity issues in our building. Support to schools was provided through fixing issues with VPN tunnels that allow schools' staff to work on report cards and access school data from home; the purchase of Chromebooks, iPads and other technology; ongoing network maintenance; helpdesk support to Matawa educators; IT security improvements and upgrades; and cleaning up data. The IT team was responsible for the set up and maintenance of the IT needs for the Matawa Education Conference, as well as being the helpdesk for registration.

Additionally, the IT team has been continuing to maintain and deploy cell phones purchased for students attending the MECC as a safety measure brought about by the Youth Inquest. Toward the end of the fiscal year, a focus was put on supporting learning from home.





# Education

*We Work Together to Make a Change*

The goal of **Matawa's Student Nutrition Program** (SNP) is to provide nutritious food to support learning and healthy child and youth development. The SNP supports Ontario's Healthy Kids Strategy (2013) and Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy (2014). Students are fed one to two meals a day which consist of a nutritious breakfast, mid-morning meal or lunch. Matawa's participating schools and communities are:

- Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre (Elementary and Secondary) in Webequie First Nation
- Nibinamik Education Centre in Nibinamik First Nation
- Neskantaga Education Centre in Neskantaga First Nation
- Migizi Wazisin Elementary School in Long Lake #58 First Nation
- Migizi Miigwanan Secondary School in Long Lake #58 First Nation
- Busing Program in Ginoogaming First Nation
- Matawa Education & Care Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario

The other Matawa First Nations communities operate their SNP independently.

Matawa's SNP Coordinator continued to provide program services (e.g., cooking for MEC students, flying food and supplies to our First Nations) and administration (e.g., monthly and quarterly reporting, paying cook salaries, etc.) to the Student Nutrition Programs operating in our participating communities. This past year has seen the hiring of an Student Nutrition Support Worker who is the head cook and assists in all aspects of the SNP at the MECC. There has been an increased collaboration with MECC classes and local not-for-profit organizations (eg, Roots to Harvest) that provided students with hands-on experience in preparing delicious, healthy, and sustainable meals. The daily lunch programs have seen increased student involvement and students have been working with the SNP team to organize special feasts throughout the year to encourage collaboration and celebration of all of the accomplishments in the Education Department and at the MECC.

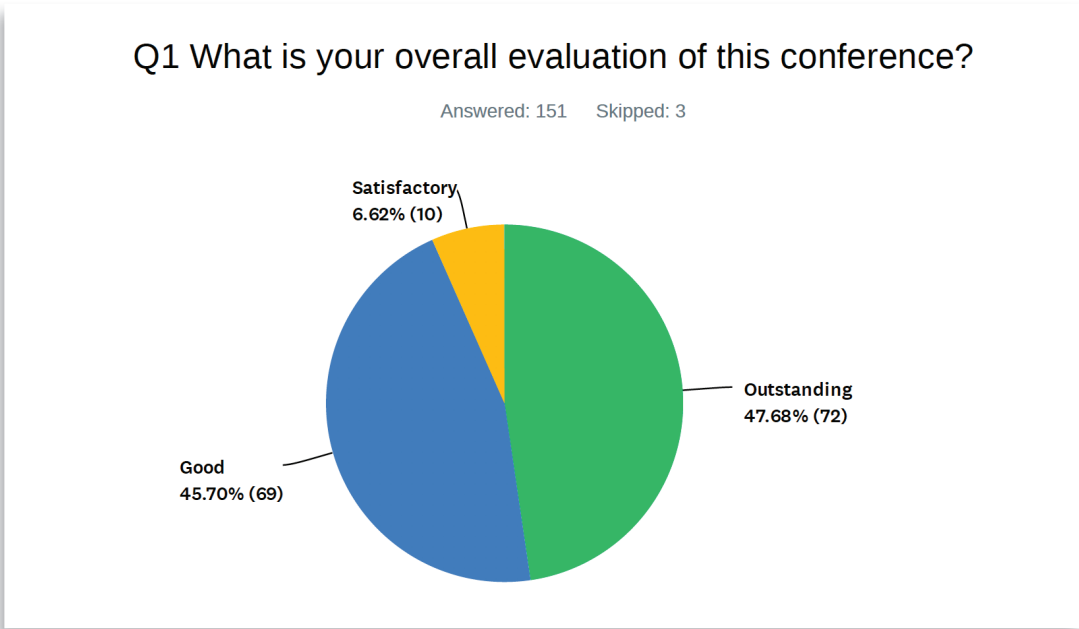


Funding received in 2019-20 also continued to support our language revitalization efforts (see Language Revitalization section to follow) and allowed for continuation of travel to education related meetings, online subscriptions to education job postings sites available to Matawa schools; MECC staffing (Cultural Worker, On-Call Workers, Student Support Workers, Arts Teacher, Student Activities Coordinator, Outdoor Education Teacher) and resources for their programming; and the annual canoe trip (Eabametoong First Nation to Marten Falls First Nation along the Albany River) and its associated land-based leadership credit. Activities delivered by the MECC and supported through this funding were open to any students from a Matawa community.

**Matawa Education Conference**

The 13th Annual Matawa Education Conference was held March 10-12, 2020 at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay, during which we had over 500 participants, presenters and vendors taking part in and making it another great conference. The conference spanned three days and included a wide range of professional development topics for school operations staff, administrators, teachers, principals, education leadership, parents and community members that concentrated on the current needs identified by educators in Matawa schools. Participants came from all nine Matawa First Nations, as well as Keewaytinook Okimakanak Board of Education (KOBÉ), and many of Matawa’s partner organizations. All PASS staff were involved in the planning of the Matawa Education Conference and many facilitated workshops.

On the first day of the 2020 conference, sessions were held with key stakeholders providing feedback and input into a Matawa region education strategic plan that will guide Matawa Education’s future work. The next two days saw various workshops taking place and we continued with the inclusion of Elders our knowledge keepers, and an artisan area. This year, we included special presentations from Neskantaga Student Music Program, MECC Canoe expedition, and musicians from Muskrat Dam who provided entertainment. We also included an opportunity for our Matawa school staff to compete in square dancing in order to win extra funds for end of the year school trips. Conference feedback acquired through surveys show that 93% of replies thought the conference was good to outstanding. Please refer to the conference report for more information about our annual conference.





# Education

*We Work Together to Make a Change*

## Educational Partnerships Program

The Education Partnerships Program (EPP) supports the collaboration among Matawa First Nations, the Ontario Ministry of Education, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and other stakeholders to advance First Nation student achievement in First Nation and provincial schools. Partnership arrangements aim to share expertise and resources and assist in the development of practical working relationships between the various stakeholders at the District School Board (DSB), school and First Nation levels. Funded in 2019-20 were the continuation of the EPP Liaison position; meetings to be held between DSB staff, Matawa First Nations education support staff, and Matawa's EPP Liaison; engagement sessions with the purpose of improving relationships between area DSBs and Matawa First Nations to be held in the First Nations; development of an attendance campaign; and development of a graduation/transition action plan. These activities saw much planning and will be completed in the 2020-21 school year.

The EPP Liaison's objective is to advance Matawa First Nation students' achievement in Matawa First Nation and provincial schools. Through a Joint Implementation Plan with Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), we continue to share expertise and services, coordinate learning initiatives and implement school-based activities. Progression thus far has been to continue to maintain a cooperative partnership relationship with District School Boards' Indigenous Education leads/liaisons in collaborating to host educational engagements within our Matawa First Nation Communities as well as DSBs secondary schools, and to continue advocating within the DSBs through their Indigenous Education advisory committees. The EPP Liaison coordinated our 2020 Matawa Education Conference along with organizing our strategic planning session on Day 1. The EPP Liaison has traveled to Matawa First Nations to support membership in submitting Day School Class Action Settlement Claim Forms and will continue to do so as required. The EPP Liaison also supported NAN in their Boarding Home Training and Student Orientation activities.

## Structural Readiness

Under the funding provided through the 2019-20 Structural Readiness proposal, Matawa Education was able to continue the positions of Community Liaison Officer and Human Resources Policy Officer, and secure funding for other activities (Regional Education Strategic Plan development, Education Consultant to address Special Education policies in Matawa schools, a consultant to support Matawa Education's move away from proposal based funding, and boarding home training).

The **Community Liaison Officer** role was shared by various Matawa Education staff starting in Fall 2019, and much of the duties were assumed by the EPP Liaison. The responsibilities of the Community Liaison Officer included coordinating activities and meetings related to implementation of the Matawa Regional Education Strategic Plan and Education Department organizational readiness, and assisting in the development and implementation of a Matawa Education communication plan.

The **Human Resources (HR) Policy Officer** provided assistance in personnel management and policy development. This included every stage of the recruitment process as well as providing guidance and advice to staff so they feel fully supported and informed. Since the inception of the position in 2017, there has been a focus on health and safety to ensure the Education Department is in compliance with all government legislation and guidelines. Due to a lack of funding, this position ended March 31, 2020.

A new Matawa Regional Education Strategic Plan is in the process of being developed by a consultant following an engagement session on the first day of our annual Education conference. During this session, various education stakeholders from each applicable Matawa First Nations, including youth and Elders, were brought together to help identify regional and local education priorities. Once this strategic plan is completed, it will be presented to Matawa Chiefs for approval and will then be used to guide the activities of the Matawa Education Department.



Similarly, an education consultant is developing a Special Education policy that can be adopted and/or adapted by Matawa schools. A third consultant is assisting Matawa Education as it navigates funding currently being generated by the Interim Funding Formula and eventually by some other process, which could be through Regional Education Agreements.

### Regional Education Agreements

Matawa Education submitted a proposal to begin work on Reciprocal Education Agreements after receiving approval of the proposal from Matawa Chiefs in November 2019. Matawa Education received funding to begin information sharing with Matawa First Nations for the purpose of developing a potential Regional Education Agreement (REA). An information session was held in February 2020 in Thunder Bay for Chiefs, Council Members, Education Directors, and Education Authority members. A second information session was held at the Matawa Education Conference in March 2020 with the same intended audience. In June 2020, Matawa Education submitted a proposal to continue the REA work and to make community visits to hold information sessions regarding REAs and what they can do for the education system in Matawa First Nations individually and regionally. If the proposal receives funding, the next step is to share information within each Matawa community then gather feedback and input that will guide future engagement sessions. These information sessions will help Matawa First Nations communities determine whether or not a REA is the right funding mechanism for them. They will also help Matawa Education to identify priorities to be used to develop an agreement that can then be used to advance to the next phase of the REA process, which is to establish a technical table to prepare for negotiations with the federal government. Alternatively, an individual First Nation can use the work Matawa Education has completed and move on to the next phase independently of Matawa Education.

## OVERALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Please see each PASS staff write up (above) for position-specific highlights.

Once again, participation at the annual Matawa Education Conference remained high with over 500 participants. This past year's conference received a participant satisfaction rating of 93% "good" to "outstanding". The PASS staff continue to strive for improving the conference through reviewing feedback, taking note of best practices from conferences they attend, and conversations with Matawa First Nations schools' staff and education authorities. Please refer to our conference report document for more information.

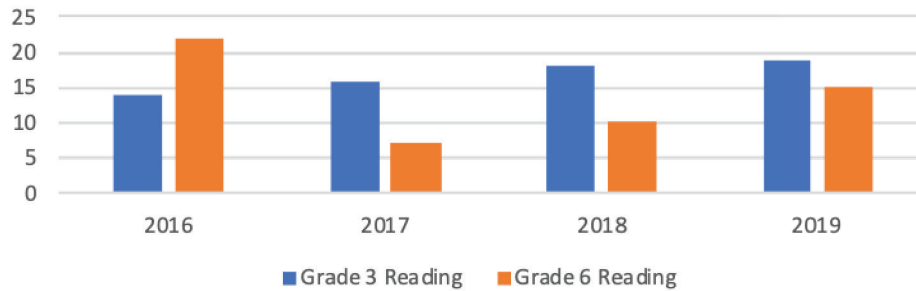
Results from the Education Quality & Accountability Office (EQAO) standardized tests show both Gr. 3 and Gr. 6 reading, writing, and mathematics scores have increased from 2018 to 2019. Gr. 3 reading results have shown steady increases year after year. Each school will have their individual results for a direct comparison.



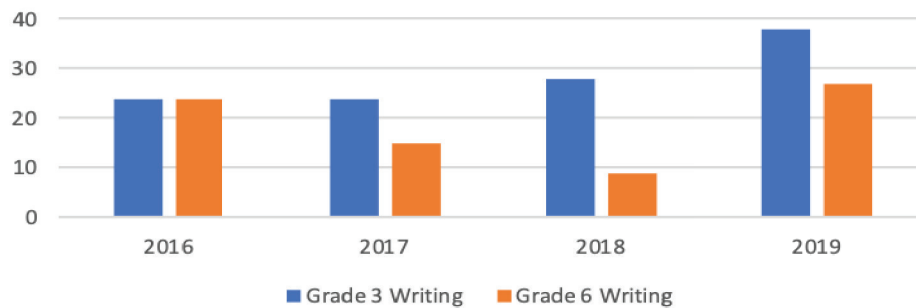


# Education

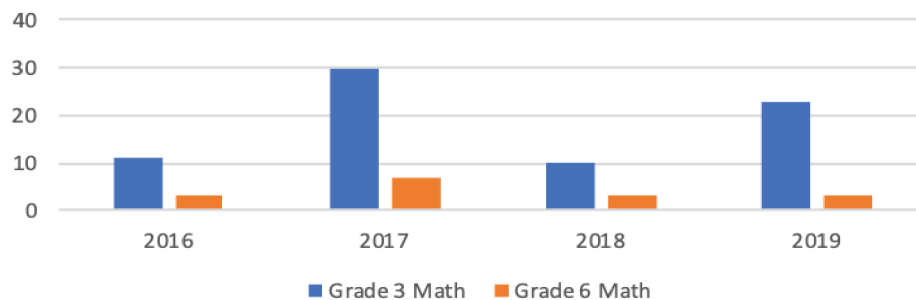
Percentage of Matawa Students  
Achieving the National Average in  
EQAO Reading 2016-2019



Percentage of Matawa Students  
Achieving the National Average in  
EQAO Writing 2016-2019



Percentage of Matawa Students  
Achieving the National Average in  
EQAO Math 2016-2019



In addition to providing workshops in areas of literacy and numeracy, PASS staff are able to provide training or certification to Matawa schools' staff in the following areas:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST)
- Mental Health First Aid
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
- Stop, Now, and Plan (SNAP)
- Physical Literacy
- The Third Path

PASS staff will be in communication with Matawa schools' leadership about delivering these programs to their schools in the new school year.

Through our funding, we were able to support a faster internet connection for Johnny Therriault Memorial School in Aroland First Nation. This has allowed the staff and students to access educational content and utilize education programming online that was previously too bandwidth-intensive. This connection has also allowed them to make full use of the Chromebooks that were purchased over the past two years, and their Google Apps For Education training, which proved valuable for learning at home during COVID-19-related closures.

Delivery of the Matawa Waka Tere (language revitalization) Year 1 Ojibwe Pilot Class will be completed in late July 2020. Year 1 Oji-Cree and Cree programs are nearing completion. Year 2 curriculum and resources will be worked on in 2020-21. Please refer to the Language Revitalization section in the next pages (Other Specific Educational Reports) for more information about the past year.

## CHALLENGES:

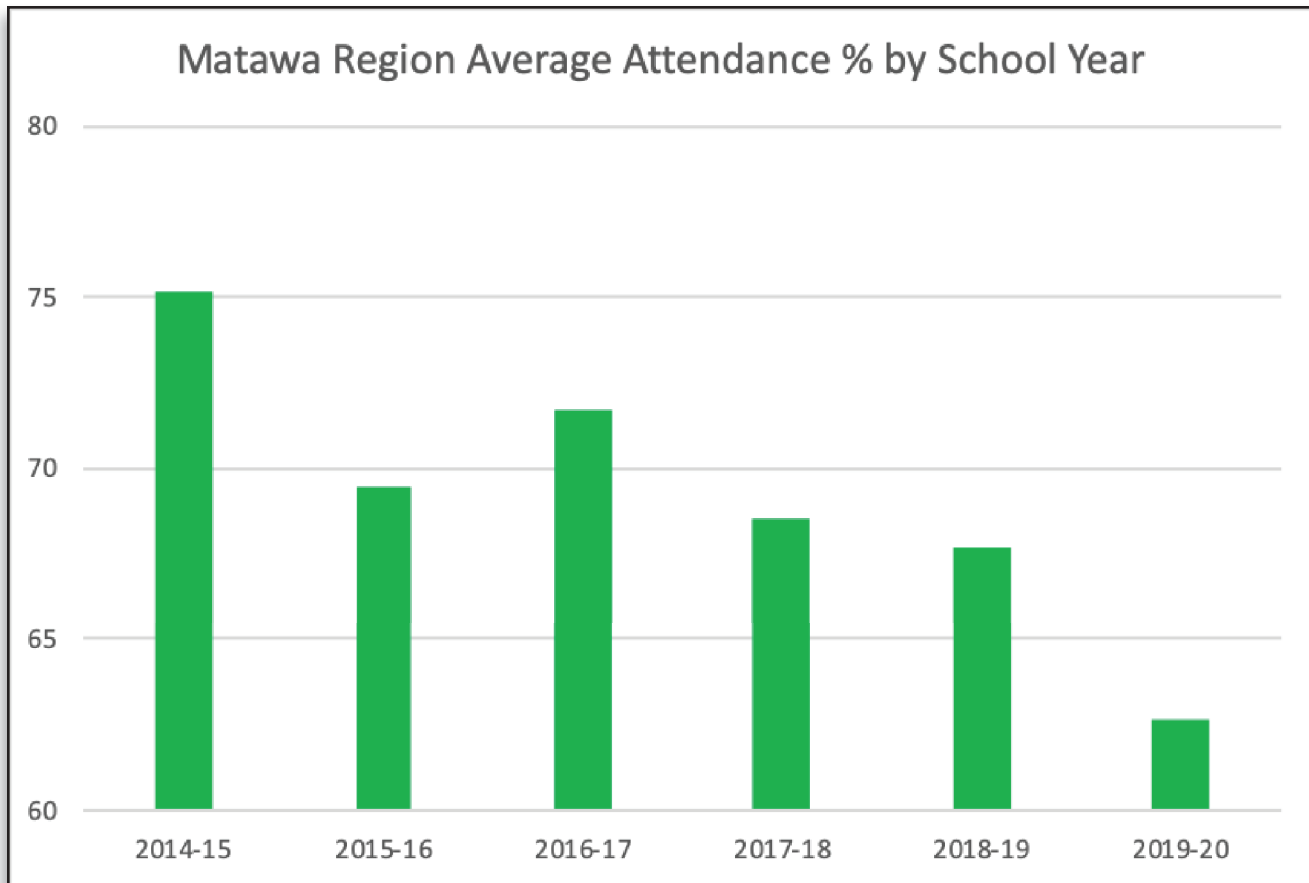
Standardized testing results continue to fluctuate from one year to the next and from one grade and one subject area to another. Only some schools participated in standardized testing in Spring 2019 which may affect the results presented in this report.

Internet connectivity continues to pose a challenge for delivering education using the concept of 21st century learners. Matawa Education has been supporting the use of dedicated satellite internet (Xplornet) in the fly-in community schools and has been making network changes to increase efficiency but bandwidth demands outweigh the bandwidth availability. This is particularly true as the COVID-19 pandemic is making even more obvious.

Overall attendance within the Matawa schools dropped from last year and has seen a decline each year since 2016-17. Please note the 2014-15 and 2017-18 school year data is for six schools while the 2015-16 and 2016-17 data is for seven schools. Due to technical issues at the time of retrieval, the data for 2019-20 is for four schools. Also of note for 2019-20, is that due to COVID-19 related school closures, the data only includes September 2019 to February 2020. Each school will have their own attendance results for a more direct comparison.



# Education



IT staff turnover led to time delays and continuity in service challenges. Similarly, Matawa schools saw varying levels of turnover in staffing and difficulty in recruiting suitable candidates.

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen unusual and significant interruptions to the education system and will likely have significant impact on learning in the foreseeable future.

## OPPORTUNITIES:

With the announcement of EQAO testing being cancelled for 2020 and 2021, Matawa Education will continue seeking culturally appropriate means of assessing the education system within each school and across the region.

Matawa Education has been continuing to prepare for the arrival of fibre-to-home internet in each community through the purchase of Chromebooks, internet infrastructure (e.g., Wi-Fi access points, updated servers), software supporting remote troubleshooting, etc. Once in place, avenues to engage students in their learning that are reliant on dependable and fast internet will be opened up.

A new provincial math curriculum with more focus on financial literacy, computer programming and coding, and stronger links to everyday life may help Matawa students to find more success in school and life. PASS staff will be ready to help Matawa schools with the implementation of the new curriculum in September 2020.

A new regional education strategic plan will provide Matawa Education and its PASS team with an updated direction to meet the needs and priorities of the students of the Matawa First Nations. Mental health and wellness continues to see increased supports. Matawa Education staff have the qualifications required to train school staff in a number of programs related to mental health and wellness. PASS staff continue to seek out new and innovative ways to address the needs of Matawa First Nations educators and students. Matawa's language revitalization project (Matawa Waka Tere) is expected to be launched in applicable Matawa communities pending sufficient government funding.







## OTHER SPECIFIC EDUCATION REPORTS

**Photo Credit: Maria Baxter, Marten Falls First Nation**

Specific reports on Education programs including Post Secondary and Matawa Waka Tere (Indigenous Language Revitalization) continue in this Annual Report from pages 40 - 46.



# Education

## Matawa Post Secondary Program (MPS)

### OVERVIEW:

The Matawa Post Secondary (MPS) Program provides services to the following five communities: Aroland, Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58, Neskantaga and Webequie First Nations. It was established in March 1997.

MPS is currently staffed by Georgette O’Nabigon, Program Coordinator supported by Carly Perras, Post Secondary Program Assistant. MPS Staff work closely with the Advisory Committee (comprised of one representative from each participating First Nations).

### MATAWA POST SECONDARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Krista Bouchard	Aroland First Nation
Sheri Taylor	Ginoogaming First Nation
Patrick Patabon	Long Lake # 58 First Nation
Tony Sakanee	Neskantaga First Nation
Ennis Jacob	Webequie First Nation

The MPS Advisory Committee was established to ensure that their First Nation has decision making with their own post-secondary funding. The MPS Advisory Committee representatives are chosen by their own respective First Nations.

It meets 2 -3 times per year and are in continuous contact via: email and telephone throughout the year. Their role is in these areas:

- Liaison with Matawa Post-Secondary Program and their own First Nation
- Liaison for their students and Post-Secondary Staff
- Decision making with their Education Authority for Student Applications, request and budget

### KEY PRIORITY AREA:

The MPS program provides financial, counselling support services, maintains a database, a liaison for the MPS Advisory, Students and Post-Secondary Institutes. The MPS staff continues to be a member on various committees to represent our students throughout the year.

For the 2019 – 2020 year the MPS have 26 post-secondary graduates from the five participating Matawa post-secondary Communities. The banquet was scheduled for June 4th, 2020 to honor the graduates and the Matawa/Bowmanville Rotary Award winners. However due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to reschedule to September 10th, pending the COVID-19 situation if large events are allowed. An update for the event will be known by mid-August 2020, at this time the First Nations and graduates will be notified.

As for the Matawa/Bowmanville Rotary Awards, the deadline date has been extended to November 6th 2020 for students and schools to submit applications for the bursaries. The bursary award winners will be honored at the Annual Post Secondary Christmas Dinner on December 3rd , 2020 at the Victoria Inn. For the 2019 – 2020 Post-Secondary School year the MPS program had an enrollment of one hundred and nine (109) students with thirteen (13) student withdrawals. Enrolment is based on the number of applicants the MPS program budget can fund. For the 2020 -2021 post-secondary school year, the MPS program currently has a potential of ninety-five (95) students enrolling. However, due to COVID-19 most Post Secondary Institutes will be offering most on-line courses for the fall term, therefore some students may choose to defer their applications until the next school year to attend.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

#### *Maadaadizi Post-Secondary Student Orientation*

In 2013 the Maadaadizi Committee was formed in Thunder Bay consisting of representatives from local Post Secondary Institutes and participating Post-Secondary administering agencies. Maadaadizi means

he/she starts a journey in the Ojibwe language. It's a special day to welcome post-secondary First Nation students and their families to the post-secondary institutions and to the City of Thunder Bay. The event includes Aboriginal role models as keynote speakers and musical performances. Information booths by various organizations are set-up with information and resources for students, children's activities, prizes and refreshments. This event is free and everyone is welcome to attend.

This event is hosted annually at the beginning of the post-secondary school year. The 2019 Maadaadizi orientation was held at the Marina Park on September 7th with keynote Jordon Tootoo (former NHL Player) and performer Nick Sherman (Local). This year's 2020 event that was to be held at the Marina Park on September 12th has been cancelled due to the pandemic and uncertainty of large gatherings.

The Maadaadizi orientation is funded by various organization donations along with the three (3) post secondary institutes that donate financial and in kind. This past school year the Committee hosted student gatherings and feast at the three (3) local post secondary institutes. The purpose of the gatherings is to get the students and support staff together to encourage students to be more familiar with Post Secondary Institute staff and funding agencies with the hope that student will be more comfortable to utilize the resources available

### *Matawa Rotary Bursary Program*

The Bowmanville Rotary Club and Matawa Education Department have been in partnership since 2008 to administer the annual bursary program. The award categories: Elementary, Secondary, Post-Secondary, Apprenticeships/Training and Adult Education. The bursary award criteria are based on literacy, class participation and personal achievements. The bursary award criteria were determined by participating Matawa School representatives and the Bowmanville Rotary Club Mandate. The Matawa Education Staff facilitate the application process, recruit a judging panel with representatives from local post-secondary institutes and teachers. The intention of the bursary is to honor our community members and encourage them while they work towards their educational journey.

### *Aboriginal Youth and Recognition Awards (AYARA)*

The Northwestern Ontario Aboriginal Youth Achievement and Recognition Awards was formally known as The Niigaantige Career Fair. It began in 1987 when a need was identified to address the high attrition rates among Aboriginal students studying at the secondary and post secondary levels. The Awards Ceremony has been gaining more recognition throughout the years and providing self-esteem for our youth.

The AYARA Committee is comprised of all volunteers and community members who represent organizations in Northwestern Ontario. We are committed to encourage and reward Aboriginal youth who focus on innovative ways of learning about and planning for their future.

The AYARA event that was scheduled for May 5th was postponed until circumstances change with the pandemic with respect to large gatherings. Students, schools and First Nations will be notified of an alternative date.

### **CHALLENGES:**

One of the biggest challenge is having enough funding for all student applicants and the ability to increase the monthly allowance rates for some of our First Nations.

### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

Both Post-Secondary staff have the opportunity to sit on various Committees locally to represent the Matawa Post-Secondary Program.

The Post-Secondary Student Support Worker has the opportunity to spend time during the week at the local Post Secondary Institutes to meet with students and take part in student activities which helps with getting to know the students and staff.

The Post-Secondary Coordinator in addition to other Committees has been invited to sit on the Negahneewin Council which is part of Confederation College. (Negahneewin Council Members vision is to create Aboriginal educational and training programming at Confederation College.)





# Education

We Work Together to Make a Change

## Matawa Waka Tere (Indigenous Language Revitalization)

### STAFF:

PASS Team Administrator, Nick Shaver

Indigenous Language Specialists , Aroha Watene and Mike Graham

Indigenous Language Specialists (Ojibwe), Lawrence Therriault and Nancy Ritch

Indigenous Language Specialist (Cree), Suzan Sandau

Indigenous Language Specialist (Oji-Cree), Lois Whitehead

The Matawa Chiefs in Assembly passed Resolution #11-30-07-15 : Language as a Nation Building Tool and will serve 9 Matawa First Nations communities in Northern Ontario and Thunder Bay. In 2017-2018, federal funding was approved through the New Paths for Education program for Matawa First Nations to support language and culture initiatives in the Matawa First Nations communities. This funding allowed work to proceed with Dr. Rongo Wetere and his team of Indigenous Language Specialists under a special program called Matawa Waka Tere meaning 'the merging of rivers on a fast-moving canoe'. This will be the preferred Delivery Methodology that incorporates accelerated learning techniques aimed at helping second language learners learn a language fast. A combination of learning tools and techniques that were developed and used around the world are aimed to equip Indigenous Language Specialists, Instructors and Assistant Instructors to be able to understand their learners' needs and to cater for them.

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### Matawa Waka Tere

A fast-moving canoe on the rivers that meet

*Matawa* in Ojibway refers to the meeting place of the rivers

*Waka* in Maori is the word for canoe

*Tere* in Maori means moving fast

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### KEY PRIORITY AREA:

#### 1. Indigenous Language Revitalization Overview Project Plan

**Update NO 8 - June 2020.** The 4-Phase overview of the Con-joint Degree for Ojibwe, Cree and Oji-Cree (see next page). Developments begin with the Certificate II and Certificate III. The Diploma and Bachelor Degree will follow.



**Key**  Completed Milestones  Current Status  Dr Rongo Wetere  To be achieved

<b>Phase 1</b> Mar - 2018 - Nov 2019	<b>Selection Plan</b>	Curriculum Outline	Accelerated Intro Training	Identify & Select ILS	Ojibwe
					Oji-Cree
					Cree
<b>Phase 2</b> Jun 2018 - July 2020	<b>Curriculum</b>	Mission and Vision Statement	Train ILS	Develop Content Yr1	Consultation
				Develop Resources	Learning Outcomes
					Evidence Requirements
<b>Phase 3</b> TBC	<b>Accreditation</b>	Partnership with SNP	Indigenous Legislation	Accreditation Process for Conjoint Degree	Assessments
<b>Phase 4</b> May 2019 - 2020	<b>Marketing</b>	Instructor Training	Delivery Sites	Marketing	Accreditation Outcome Achieved
					Enrolments and IT Systems

## 2. The Matawa Waka Tere - Year 1 Ojibwe Pilot Class

Year 1 Ojibwe Pilot Program Stats as of 11 June 2020: Chiimaan 1 to 6 Start: 15 Oct 2019 End: 21 July 2020

CHIIMAAN	CH 1	CH 2	CH 3	CH 4	CH 5	CH 6	%
Students Enrolled - Retention Rate	19	18	16	14	12	12	70
Class Attendance % Rate - (85% Overall Minimum)	89	78	74	70	50	n/a	72
Class Assessments % Completion Rate - (100% Overall)	100	74	72	n/a	n/a	n/a	49
Graduation Rate - Students on target to Graduate							12
Student Update: x1 withdrew - change of employment, x2 - health reasons, x4 - COVID-19 workload, not being able to catch up.							

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The Matawa Waka Tere, Year 1 Ojibwe Certificate II pilot program commenced delivery in October 2019 with twenty internal Matawa staff with no registration fees and with no additional federal funding received to assist in ongoing development costs. In April 2020, the face to face program delivery quickly evolved into an online delivery program due to COVID-19. The Cree and Oji-Cree programs will follow suit regarding Priority 1 and Priority 2, and all three programs will be submitted for accreditation as a con-joint certificate program. The adjustment from face to face to online delivery demonstrates the flexibility of the program.



# Education

Two Ojibway Language Specialists started in August 2018 and that enabled the Year 1 Curriculum Document to be developed. A female Cree Language Specialist started in May 2019 and this now allows the Cree language curriculum translations to be developed.

The Curriculum Foundation Document - Certificate in Indigenous Pathways to Speaking the Language Year 1 and the Conjoint Support Document are in Draft 2 of 3 of the development.

Evidence Requirements and Assessments are now complete and are in the process of being moderated.

## OBSERVATIONS:

**Ojibwe Language Revitalization Specialists:** We have completed full training of the Matawa Waka Tere methodology as well as on going refresher trainings. Students find it easier to read and pronounce the Roman Orthography words from the Eastern Ojibwe Chart clearly and confidently. Student Testimonials: [https://youtu.be/vjU6pD\\_Edb4](https://youtu.be/vjU6pD_Edb4)

**Cree Language Revitalization Specialist:** Delivered demonstration classes to Matawa Staff. The Matawa Waka Tere trainings were unique, informative and really helped with learning teaching techniques, Mentors are very creative, encouraging and makes learning fun, and very patient with us using the preferred learning techniques.

**Oji-Cree Language Revitalization Specialist:** Observing the Instructors and students in class over two months showed how quickly the students picked up the language. The lessons are direct and well explained and it makes it easier for the students learning to confidently and competently speak the language in a fun and stress-free environment. The writing system used in the program is Roman Orthography and it is easier for students to learn. As an educator for the language I had noticed students had difficulty with the syllabics writing system. Some Matawa communities use syllabics for their program. I highly recommend Roman Orthography for the Certificate programs. The Language Specialists did a team presentation at the Matawa Education Conference on Language Revitalization.

## CHALLENGES:

COVID-19 was the main obstacle for the Ojibwe Language Pilot Program. From face to face delivery, Zoom became the preferred online site used, and although it is not designed for online learning, the team adapted the program lessons to ensure the students continued with learning the language. The students also went six weeks with no contact due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Prior to the commencement of the program, the Instructors expressed that they felt unprepared to deliver the program because it was a new experience.

There was no designated classroom space to host the program, we had to use the MECC cafeteria and the court street Kitchi Siipi meeting room which was not easily accessible for people in wheelchairs. As a result, we were not able to enroll a staff member due to no other suitable classrooms available. Future Matawa Waka Tere classrooms must be able to easily accommodate people with disabilities.

The collation of assessment evidence, lesson planning and application of the methodology continues to be a work in progress.

Digital skills are an ongoing challenge to develop and create lesson activities including quality program resources and templates, therefore the Indigenous Language Revitalization Specialists continue to provide these resources every step of the way of the pilot.

Funding proposals were submitted by Matawa Education to federal programs, but there has been no approval response to date and the current pandemic has not helped, which means no additional budget to complete the original goal outline. Matawa Education has had to divert funds to ensure the Pilot Program goes ahead and to employ the Oji-Cree Language Specialist.

The Accreditation Council funding was not confirmed this year and activity has temporarily ceased with no updates as to when this will proceed again.

**Ojibwe:** Instructors discovered distinct dialectal differences in curriculum and student resource content, and recommend communities use own dialects in these resource templates.

**Cree:** Constance Lake First Nation needs a community cultural centre as a place to deliver the program.

## OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Accreditation and funding are the main areas that require support so the language program can be implemented as intended in the communities. It is important that Matawa and the federal government recognize the success of the pilot and that this language initiative is a pathway to revive cultural identity and enhance economic progression. The voices of Elders from each community can assist in convincing the government that this program is needed to keep our languages alive. Funding will allow Year 2 to be developed in 2020-2021.
2. The Cree and Oji-Cree programs will use the Ojibwe Curriculum and resource templates during development and the language programs will be submitted as a con-joint program. Curricula will need to reflect community dialects and this will be achieved through Language Specialists and or Community Instructor translations.
3. Provide all staff with online learning support, and to further evolve the methodology as an online delivery to create two Program Delivery Modes (i.e., Face to Face Delivery and Online Delivery).
4. Below is a proposed Internal **Matawa Program Management Structure** for approval to support the quality systems toward accreditation.

### First Nations Community



### Matawa First Nations Management





**Program Administrator** – Maintain and advance the philosophy and methodology of the program curriculum according to the accreditation outcomes

**Student Support Administrator** – Support students entering and exiting the program. These two roles are currently being filled by the two Indigenous Language Specialists which require computer literacy skills.

**Language Instructor** – Deliver the language using community dialect; market the program

**Assistant Instructor** – Provide support to Instructor and students.

**Language Specialists** – Train and support Community Instructors/Assistant Instructors in the Matawa Waka Tere Philosophy and Methodology; maintain the integrity and quality delivery of curriculum content.

**Chief and Council** – Secure building for the classes, market program on community website, local radio station, and community bulletin

**Education Director** – Assist with hiring and resources needed to run the program

**Elders** – language speakers assist community council members select Instructors to be trained by the Language Specialists in the Matawa Waka Tere methodology







# Technical Advisory Services

## STAFF:

Mike Bazdarick, Overall Responsible Operator HUB  
Wesley Bova, P.Eng., Advisory Engineer/Manager of Technical Services

Morris Douglas & Monica Budiselic, Fire Marshalls  
Leah Echum, HUB Support

Lindsey Jupp, Environmental Technician

Karen McGoldrick, Environmental Health Officer

Jeff Mitchell, HUB Technician

Neil Neegan, HUB Operator

Shane Ostomas, Housing Officer

Oksana Ostrovska, Environmental Health Officer

Saverio Rizzo, Housing Inspector/Coordinator

Aaron Wesley, Utilities Coordinator

## OVERVIEW:

Matawa Technical Services assist member communities in the development and maintenance of community infrastructure. This includes assisting with communities with all aspects including the environmental component and Aboriginal Affairs capital approvals process. Matawa First Nations respond to First Nation requests, services provided vary according to individual community needs, levels of individual capacity, technical proficiency, and management expertise. Consequently, the services we provide may vary and could include:

- Project Planning, Development and Reporting
- Operation and Maintenance of Water and Wastewater infrastructure
- Coordination of Water and Wastewater Operator Training
- Environmental Remediation Project support
- Housing Inspection and Programming
- Fire Safety and Protection
- ACRS and ICMS reporting
- Environmental Health Officer Services
- Additional programs as they become available

## KEY PRIORITY AREA:

The resolution of Long-Term Drinking Water Advisories (LTDWA)s was a priority area for last year and all those projects were all significantly impacted by the pandemic in March 2020. The resolution of LTDWAs has been further slowed due the COVID 19 pandemic which has caused delays and suspension of all projects with community lockdowns.

Marten Falls Water Treatment Plant – The water treatment plant has been providing good water to the community. We will be working with the community regarding the plan to lift the LTDWA.

Eabametoong Water Treatment Plant – Chief and Council declared a State of Emergency until all issues related to the water treatment plant and sewage lift station are resolved. We will be working with the community to provide them with support to determine when and if they will be able to lift the LTDWA

Neskantaga Water Treatment Plant- There were issues with the sewage collection and lift station that have hampered the completion of the new water treatment plant project. We will continue to support the community to resolve the longest Boil Water Advisory in Canada.

Nibinamik Water Treatment Plant- The design was completed and the project tendered. The contractor was selected and the construction materials have been mobilized to site. Discussions with Chief and Council are currently underway to determine if this project will be postponed until 2021

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

### COMMUNITY WIDE PROJECTS

- Integrated Capital Management System (ICMS) 2019-2020
- Asset Condition Reporting System (ACRS) 2020 – delayed to fall or spring 2021
- Northern Ontario First Nations Environmental Conference 2019 & 2020



# Technical Advisory Services

- Fuel Tank Registration & Emergency Plans
- Waste Coordinator 2018/2019 – assisting with SWMP projects - \$253,200
- Waste Coordinator 2020/2021 – assisting with SWMP projects - \$95,000
- Winter Road Realignment – complete Mar 31 2020 - \$887,350
- LED Upgrades 2020/2021 (Marten Falls, Neskan- taga, Webequie) – develop MCA - \$444,000
- FCSAP 2020/2021 – develop MCAs - \$ unknown

## Aroland

- School Heating System Upgrade 2020 – design & install pending - \$300,000
- Solid Waste Management Plan 2020 – submitted MCA - \$253,000
- Greenstone Waste Steering Committee – start EA for new landfill
- Addition to Reserve ESA – review reports & partici- pate in meetings

## Constance Lake

- School Repairs 2016 – remaining 20% work stalled due to COVID - \$708,024
- School Gym Roof 2020 – stalled due to COVID - \$217,095
- School LED 2020 – application sent to IESO - \$216,660
- Long-term Solid Waste Management Plan 2020 – develop MCA for transfer station design & con- struction

## Eabametoong

- Soil Remediation 2015 – Treatment Year - \$9,942,077
- Landfill 2017 – Need site selection confirmation from FN – cost included in Remediation project
- New Generator Installation 2019/2020/2021 – C18 & C27 units installed, 3512 being installed now - \$5,957,261
- Road South – assist with applications

## Ginoogaming

- Solid Waste Management Plan 2020 – MCA drafted Apr 2020 - \$253,000
- Greenstone Waste Steering Committee – start EA

for new landfill

- Office Roof & Heating 2020 – develop MCA - \$ unknown
- Streetlight LED Upgrades – apply to IESO - \$ un- known

## Long Lake #58

- Solid Waste Management Plan – MCA submitted by FN
- Greenstone Waste Steering Committee – start EA for new landfill
- School LED Upgrades – apply to IESO - \$ unknown

## Marten Falls

- School Repairs 2016 – 80% complete; fire suppres- sion to reconnect - \$264,737
- School Repairs/Upgrades 2020 – stalled due to COVID - \$612,117
- Solid Waste Management Plan 2019 – 50% com- plete; field investigations for detailed design stalled due to COVID - \$250,000 – Cost Over Run submitted Apr 2020 for \$54,553

## Neskan- taga

- Community Soil Remediation 2017 – ongoing ne- gotiations - \$8,865,249
- Lansdowne INO Soil Remediation 2020 – PAR de- velopment - \$3,300,000
- Solid Waste Management Plan 2019 – waiting for SWMP & community engagement - \$384,000

## Nibinamik

- New Generator Purchase 2019/2020 – 90% com- plete – overhaul C15 - \$900,000
- Switchgear Install 2016 – complete - \$1,207,000
- Generator Installation & DGS Upgrades 2020/2021 – start soon - \$1,469,381
- Solid Waste Management Plan 2019 – issue TOR - \$249,875
- Addition to Reserve ESA – review reports & partici- pate in meetings

## Webequie

- Community Soil Remediation 2014 – bio-cell soil decommissioning delayed due to COVID - \$6,504,694
- Airport Remediation – finalizing legal agreement – awaiting soil decomm from bio-cells
- Solid Waste Management Plan 2018 – waiting

- detailed design report - \$580,250
- School Roof & Boilers 2014 – complete upon final payment process to CLOW - \$2,231,954
- School Boilers 2019/2020 – year-end repairs complete - \$45,786.53
- New Teacherages 2020 – awaiting quote for MCA - \$ unknown
- School Boilers 2020/2021 – develop MCA for more repair/replacement - \$ TBD

## **HOUSING INSPECTION SERVICES**

- Aroland – 2 completed RRAP units, 2 new RRAP units, 2 PCR inspections, (EOI for Sec. 95 submitted in May 2020)
- Constance Lake – 2 completed RRAP, 6 new unit ISC project ongoing, (EOI for Sec. 95 submitted in May 2020)
- Eabametoong – 2 new RRAP, 8 PCR inspections, 6 unit Sec. 95 project ongoing
- Ginoogaming – 2 new RRAP, possible 7 new unit Sec 95 project to be built
- Long Lake #58 – 2 completed RRAP, 2 PCR inspections, 6plex + single unit Sec. 95 project, 2nd 6plex Sec. 95 project, (EOI for Sec. 95 submitted in May 2020)
- Marten Falls – 4 completed RRAP, 2 new insurance builds completed, (EOI for Sec. 95 submitted in May 2020)
- Neskantaga – 5 new builds & 5 major renovation Sec. 95 project ongoing
- Nibinamik – 4 RRAP units, 6 new Sec. 95 units complete, (EOI for Sec. 95 submitted in May 2020)
- Webequie – 2 RRAP units, 4 new Sec. 95 units complete, remaining 2 modular units (duplex) ongoing, (EOI for Sec. 95 submitted in May 2020)

## **OPERATOR HUB PROGRAM**

Three multiple-day site visits to the Eabametoong Water Treatment Plant (WTP) were required to assist with plant operations and maintenance during this quarter. Although the plant is new, numerous equipment failures resulted in the loss of chemical processes necessary to maintain an adequate supply of water to the community. Plant operational parameters were adjusted, and chemical dosages re-calculated, resulting in

the restoration of the water treatment process. On all occasions, extended time with the operators detailing the corrective actions taken. Lack of operator experience and training remains a concern, and operational support will be required and essential until the operators attain confidence and expertise in the operation of their new WTP. As we move into the spring thaw, the raw water quality will also present additional operational challenges.

The AWWAO Training Conference Trade Show was attended with participation in various training sessions to obtain required CEU's for upcoming license renewals.

Technical guidance consisting of numerous site visits and support via telephone provided to Neskantaga First Nation regarding several major distribution leaks and WTP/Wastewater system failures. Site inspections of the sewage force main were also conducted to ensure proper protocols were being followed by contractors and compliance maintained.

Aroland First Nation WTP was visited to inspect log-books and review plant operations and maintenance. All is running well, and the plant continues to produce high-quality potable drinking water, meeting all provincial and federal standards.

Technical guidance and direction given over the phone continues to be a significant influence on reducing emergency responses to remote communities. Such calls were received almost daily, including many after-hour and weekend calls.

On the job training continues in all of the Matawa communities and is well received. During the quarter, there were two sewage overflow events. The overflow in Neskantaga and the other in Ginoogaming First Nation were reported to the Spills Action Centre (SAC) and resolved in a timely and expeditious manner.

Attendance at construction meetings continues in Neskantaga, Eabametoong, Marten Falls and Nibinamik First Nations. Addressing operational questions and concerns of the WTP operators, band councilors, and community members continue to be a priority.

Commissioning of new water main in Long Lake #58



# Technical Advisory Services

was being considered without prior pressure testing or chlorination of the new main. The parties involved were unaware of the requirements for proper chlorination, pressure testing and sampling for new water main installation. A solution to temporarily supply potable water was agreed upon and then put in place, which meets all Federal and Provincial requirements. The commissioning has been put on hold until a qualified contractor can provide proper disinfection and pressure testing.

Liaison with OCWA personnel to carry out equipment tagging at the Marten Falls WTP as part of the asset management program. Weekly communication with OCWA staff at the Longlac WTP as they are the suppliers of water and wastewater services for the communities of Ginoogaming and Long Lake #58. They are responsible for the routine sampling of the distribution system.

Matawa First Nations issued a “work from home” directive on March 16, 2020. Although travel is restricted, technical support is maintained and continues as usual with all nine Matawa communities. Participation in daily, bi-weekly and weekly teleconferences throughout the CORONA pandemic with NAN, Matawa Managers, and Matawa Chiefs has been an asset in maintaining operations and maintenance of water and wastewater infrastructure.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM**

(this report is from the period of Oct 2019 through March 2020)

### **Water Monitoring Program**

We have conducted Bacteriological Water Sampling at the Water Treatment Facilities and on the Distribution System and providing letters to the First Nations on the results, and we are also supplying First Nations Operators with Colilert Supplies, reagents and bottles,

### **Bacteriological water sampling**

Webequie – October 2019 & January 2020

Nibinamik – January 2020

Eabametoong – October 2019 & January 2020

Neskantaga – September 2019, October 2019, December 2019 & February 2020

Constance Lake – September 2019 & February 2020

Long Lake #58 – February 2020

### **Quarterly water sampling**

Webequie – January 2020

Nibinamik – January 2020

Eabametoong – January 2020

Neskantaga – February 2020

Constance Lake – February 2020

Annual Chemical Sampling for communities completed September through December 2019

We have developed forms for Operators so we can assist them with getting supplies to help them monitor the water supply.

### **Wastewater Monitoring Program**

Completed Wastewater Lagoon sampling in Aroland, Neskantaga, and Eabametoong. We provided reports on the results and registered the sampling sites with Wastewater Regulation Data Base, as part of Environment Canada Regulations.

### **Food Safety Program**

We are working on attaining recognition as a Food Safety Program Provider as we have had many requests for Food Safety Training.

We have been forwarding all Food Recall Warnings to our First Nations.

### **Infection Control**

We have been to Head Start facilities and inspected toothbrush and diaper changing stations and reviewed policies and procedures on sick children’s attendance etc.

### **Housing and Building Inspections**

We are working on securing access to the Environmental Housing Information System. We have completed numerous housing and building inspections to access for mold, bed bugs, structure, foundation roof,



chimney safety. We are presently working on a detailed report for the Webequie Headstart Facility. Other housing/building inspections included:

#### Constance Lake

Community Centre Routine Inspection, Food Safety – September 2019

Health Hazard Complaint Inspection, residential, housing – February 2020

#### Eabametoong

RSD Trailers Mold Complaint Inspection – November 2019

Home and Community Care, public complaint inspection – November 2019

Hotel and Restaurant (Food Safety) inspections – November 2019

Pest Infestation Inspection, public complaint, residential – January 2020

Mold Complaint Inspection, residential – January 2020

#### Neskantaga

Neskantaga Elementary School Routine Inspection – October 2019

Mold Complaint Inspection, residential – October 2019

Mold Complaint Inspection, residential – October 2019

Neskantaga Northern Store Routine Inspection – October 2019

Mold Complaint Inspection, sewage back up – November 2019

Bed Bug Complaint Inspection, public complaint – November 2019

Bed Bug Complaint Inspection, Follow-up – December 2019

Bed Bug Complaint Inspection – December 2019

#### Webequie

Motel Routine Inspection, housing and Food Safety – September 2019

Northern Store Routine Inspection – September 2019

Mold Complaint Inspection, residential – January 2020

Health Hazard Complaint Inspection, mold, housing – January 2020

Mold Complaint Inspection, residential – January 2020

#### **Communicable Disease**

We have investigated 12 dog bites, we have worked with local law enforcements to help secure dogs and monitor for the 10-day period to examine signs of rabies, we have provided letters to CHRs, Health Staff and Chief and Councils. We have established a comprehensive dog bit protocol and forms that we developed to help health

staff and band office address dog bite issues.

Eighteen (18) dog bite incidents were closed. All letters and rabies info had been emailed/faxed to the communities.

We are currently looking to establish a Biological Waste Disposal program to help our First Nations dispose of Sharp Containers.

#### **Training**

Part 8 Building Code, Septic System Training Course, Guelph, Arkel Research Centre – October 2019

Canadian Play Ground Safety Training Course and Certification/Exam, Toronto – November 2019

WHIMS and Transportation of Dangerous Goods in October 2019.

We ordered and received the CPSI inspection kit (required for conducting playground inspections).

#### **CHALLENGES:**

The Operator HUBs funding is currently only secured through March 2021. With all the new water treatment plants that will require to have certified operator oversight, we will have to advocate for an extension of this program. There has also been no movement on the resolution of O&M for water and wastewater facilities by AFN, COO or ISC.

We have witnessed that due to issues with sewage collection and treatment systems due to a number of factors including design, capacity, construction, and insufficient O&M. These issues have significantly impacted the construction of new infrastructure.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

Successful application for Emergency Management Coordinator position to assist communities with their emergency management plans for next three fiscal years.



# Four Rivers Environmental Services Group

*Community Focused Environmental & Professional Services Centred in the North*

## STAFF:

Sarah Cockerton, Manager, Four Rivers Environmental Services Group  
Peter Moses, Mineral Development & Information Support Officer  
Kevin Wabasse, Linguistics Officer  
Laura Prior, Communications Specialist  
Kimberly Jorgenson, Environmental Services Coordinator  
Lynn Palmer, Climate Change & Policy Specialist  
Ema Cristina Ross, Environmental Information & Systems Specialist  
Erin Desjardins, Stewardship Intern & Matawa Water Futures Student  
Jennifer Duncan, Geomatics/Project Manager (currently on parental leave)  
Jasmine Baxter, Geomatics Intern & Matawa Water Futures Student  
Sasha Michano, Geomatics Intern & Matawa Water Futures Student  
Charlene Wagenaar, Geomatics Technician  
Kerrie Mazinakouskang, Administrative Support



## OVERVIEW:

Four Rivers was established in 2011 as an environmental services group within Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) to provide environmental support and technical services to the Matawa member First Nation communities facing unprecedented development within their shared traditional territories. In early 2017, Four Rivers Inc. was created as a stream of Four Rivers to expand our service offerings beyond the Matawa member First Nations in a cost-effective and competitive manner.

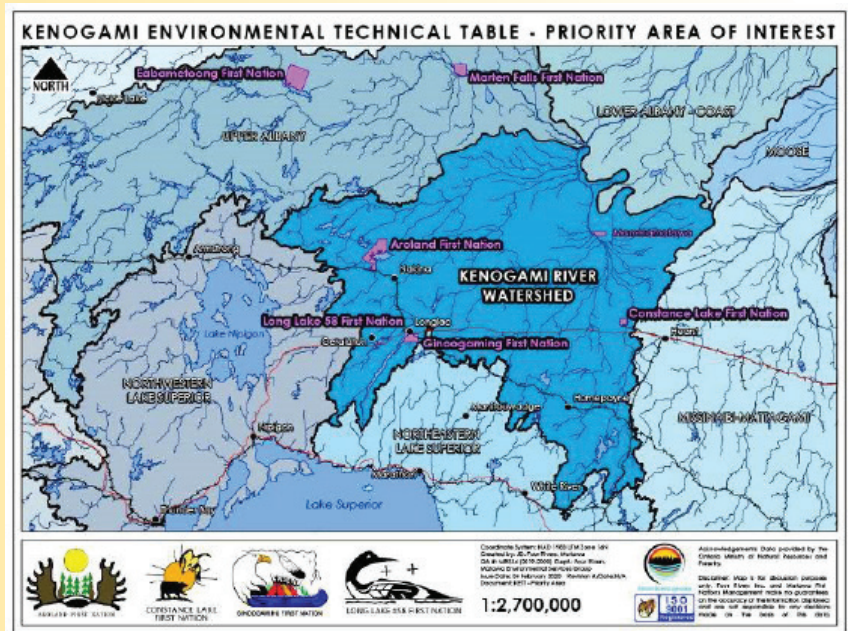
Four Rivers supports capacity building in communities throughout northern Ontario by coordinating and supporting initiatives aimed to assist community-based land and resource management. Four Rivers uses a holistic, community-based approach to projects and strives to:

- Be open and honest in all aspects of our work;
- Be responsive to individual community needs and capacity barriers;
- Build capacity through training and create legacy projects for communities; and,
- Provide innovative, cost-effective and sustainable community-based solutions.



### DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE: **Kenogami Environmental Technical Table (KET Table)**

The KET Table is an emerging committee of technical staff from Matawa member First Nation road access communities who all reside within the Kenogami watershed and who have come together in an ad hoc fashion to address common environmental issues impacting their watershed. Recognizing both the need as well as the potential for collaboration, the KET table was assembled following the Matawa Environment Gathering in December 2019. As the group is in its infancy, and the primary focus is to be solutions oriented, membership at this time is somewhat fluid. That membership includes up to two technical representatives and two alternates each from Aroland FN, Long Lake #58 FN, Ginoogaming FN, and Constance Lake FN, who have significant existing capacity in environmental stewardship and lands & resource initiatives. The group welcomes participation from other member First Nations who are interested.



### KET Table Contributing Participants

Aroland First Nation	Ernie Gagnon, Sam Kashkesh
Constance Lake First Nation	Darius Ferris (Chair), Bertha Sutherland, Alternate: Wayne Neegan
Ginoogaming First Nation	Calvin Taylor, Jason Chapais, Alternates: Conrad Chapais, Leslie O'Nabigon
Long Lake #58 First Nation	Darcy Waboose, Ervin Waboose
Eabametoong First Nation	Ralph Shawinimash (Observer)



### KEY PRIORITY AREA #1: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Four Rivers has developed and delivered numerous environmental programs to support community capacity in the areas of:

- Environmental monitoring;
- Environmental research;
- Environmental governance; and,
- Environmental planning.

Four Rivers aims to help position communities into a place of active leadership relative to the stewardship of their lands and waters. Armed with the knowledge, working relationships, tested techniques, advanced partnerships, and expanded environmental networks, Four Rivers is well-situated to work with communities throughout the North to advance their environmental projects and program visions.

Four Rivers has provided over 100 environmental presentations, training sessions and workshops at various events including community open houses, environmental conferences, university forums and Elder gatherings. Environmental support services have been focused in the areas of environmental assessments & policy; water, soils and sediment samples; vegetation surveys and assessments; acoustic surveying technology for monitoring frog, bird and bat populations; GIS/GPS for values collection & monitoring, benthic biomonitoring; and contaminated sites assessments. Four Rivers actively partners with organizations and institutions to bring enhanced environmental services to communities.

### KEY PRIORITY AREA #2: GEOMATICS & MAPPING SERVICES

Four Rivers offers award winning mapping and geomatics services which are comprehensive in nature. The goal of these services is to provide the support that communities need to gather, store, analyze and display important land, resource and values data to ultimately make informed decisions about their lands and waters. These services can be customized and include map, data and project support as well as training opportunities.

Four Rivers has established secure data storage solutions for information including: GIS data, environmental research data, and traditional knowledge & values data. It is crucial for communities to have access to an organized bank of environmental information in order to guide/participate in environmental stewardship &

monitoring; climate change adaptation planning; community-based land use planning; source water protection initiatives; impact/environmental assessment processes; and resource development processes.

Four Rivers also provides assistance with Traditional Values Collection projects for First Nation communities. Four Rivers has developed a number of different methods for collecting community data depending on community and Elder preferences. Recently we have started to experiment with virtual engagement applications so that Elders can share their stories without getting exposed from the safety of their home.

### KEY PRIORITY AREA #3: PROJECT SUPPORT & COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Four Rivers works with communities to build internal capacity in the resource development sector to 'bridge the gap' from the community outwards. Major barriers often exist for communities in their efforts to lead lands and resource developments in their homelands. These challenges are often based in the absence of established communication processes to successfully link community members to the information required for informed decision-making. Communities also often seek support in developing project proposals, project coordination and reporting.

The ultimate goal of all Four Rivers' services is successful communities who are well-informed, knowledgeable, and able to fully participate in projects and initiatives that are happening within their homelands. Four Rivers has developed proven models of community communication and engagement processes that have been effectively applied by First Nations in Northern Ontario. We have also been supporting a number of communities with their projects for years. We work directly with communities to identify their capacity needs, which can include the development of lands & resource offices; environmental youth outreach and engagement; traditional knowledge values collection support; environmental monitoring training courses; and the development of community specific communication outreach/engagement initiatives.

Four Rivers' project support & communication services are wide-ranging, and apply a holistic approach to community barriers. Every community's or project's unique constraints are considered when developing appropriate implementation strategies, and we regularly apply creative or innovative solutions in addition to tried and tested strategies to convey information. Our team has a proven track record of organizing and facilitating many successful large and small scale meetings, events, workshops and conferences. We are comfortable working with many different types of communication media and languages.





# Four Rivers Environmental Services Group

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Four Rivers successfully carried out numerous projects and initiatives throughout the year both as part of Matawa First Nations Management's publically funded environmental program as well as through Four Rivers Inc. An overall summary of projects and initiatives is shown in the table below.

Four Rivers Environmental Services Group 19-20 Project List	
Project	Brief Description
Youth Documentary (#16-1117-05)	Supporting translation elements relating the ISC Youth Documentary project.
CBLUP Support (#19-1117-08)	Legacy project tailored by MNRF to support identified Community Based Land Use Planning needs. Efforts in 19-20 focused support for MFFN.
MDISO (#19-1117-07)	Support to communities on mineral industry & plans and permits through the Mineral Development & Information Support Officer.
CEAA PFP (#18-1117-11)	Support of participation in engagement opportunities associated with the new Impact Assessment Act. Hosted training sessions and completed policy reviews.
IAA Capacity Support Program (#19-1117-10)	Support of Matawa member First Nations participation in the Impact Assessment Act by supporting capacity building activities. Support of ad hoc committees, hosting information & training sessions.
IAAC Policy Collaboration (#20-1117-01)	Part 1 of a documentation project to capture lessons learned and best practices based on lands and resource initiatives over the last decade with the intent of influencing policy development within IAAC.
Forestry Support (#19-1117-10)	Provision of advisory support relative to the forestry industry, and government policy changes, as requested by Matawa Chiefs Council.
Four Rivers Webinar Series (#20-4444-01)	Broadcast of environmental information that can help build capacity or inform on environmental issues through webinar to Matawa member First Nations
Climate Change ADAPT (#18-1117-07)	Phase 1 of a Climate Change Assessment, Planning and Adaptation Initiative, aiming to develop vulnerability assessments for Matawa member First Nations. Funded through CIRNAC.
Climate Change BRACE (#19-1117-09)	Supported through Laurentian University, this project aims to develop a network of Climate Change Specialists who can channel technical knowledge on Climate Change to member First Nations.
ECCC Caribou (#18-1117-10)	Project aims to support caribou research and research capacity building within Matawa member First Nation communities.
AFSAR Bats (19-1117-02)	Project aims to identify bat species through use of acoustic recorders within Matawa member First Nations as well as deliver outreach.
DFO IPF (#19-1117-03)	Pilot funded through Department of Fisheries and Oceans new funding program with aims to support capacity building within Matawa member First Nations in fish and fish habitat protection.
ECCC Regional Guardians Network (#19-1117-05)	Project aims to support community capacity to empower member First Nations to manage their traditional homelands through an established network of employed community environmental monitors.
Matawa Water Futures (#19-7005-01)	Working in collaboration with Wilfrid Laurier, Lakehead and Laurentian Universities this project is intended to capture community priorities for community-based water monitoring and stewardship and create substantive learning and capacity building opportunities.
Matawa Garden (20-1117-02)	Growing Nutrition & Resilience Project. Growing of food to provide to off-reserve membership, while also documenting the processes to develop how-to and instructional support for in-community gardening efforts. Project initiated during COVID-19. Four Rivers also supporting communication (graphics & translation) associated with COVID-19.
Four Rivers Inc.	Support of <b>over 19 projects</b> to over 11 clients throughout the year.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

As Four Rivers' overall projects and initiatives are too numerous to share in detail, we wanted to share some highlights of the year, many of which are a component of a larger project:

### MATAWA WATER FUTURES STUDENT INTERN PROGRAM

The Matawa Water Futures project (MWF) is a collaborative research project developed by Four Rivers and Wilfrid Laurier University that seeks to increase capacity to maintain the safety of the water in the face of climate change and potential industrial development. The overall objective of the work is the development of a cultural framework for watershed monitoring and stewardship that is developed by the Matawa member First Nations, which puts communities' priorities, concerns and visions for the future at the forefront.

As part of the project aims for Matawa member First Nations to be taking the lead in guiding environmental research within their homelands, it was identified that there were not enough Matawa member First Nation students able to access the university research positions associated with this type of project. With the support of the project and KKETS, one highlight of the project in the last year was the launch of a Matawa Student Intern Program, wherein Matawa members could be supported at University, enrolled in an environmental science or studies field, while also being hired by Four Rivers where their role and duties would be tailored towards their field of study. In this way, participating members would not lose the benefits of employment while undertaking their academic studies, and would be receiving additional mentoring, supports and experience through that employment that benefits their studies. Three individuals from Matawa member First Nations (Erin Desjardins, Jasmine Baxter, Sasha Michano) entered into this program, and all were successful in their first terms of university.



### NEW BAT MONITORING TECHNIQUE

Four Rivers has been experimenting with acoustic monitoring devices ("song meters") for recording wildlife sounds for years as part of our efforts to support community based monitoring. In previous field seasons, Four Rivers would work with community lands and resource staff to hang up song meters in specific locations around the community where they could be programed to turn on and off at certain times to capture bird, amphibian or bat calls. The sound waves of these calls can be later analyzed to determine what species were in the area and can form a part of baseline or ongoing environmental monitoring programs.

In the last year, Four Rivers was able to pilot a new research technique using the song meters which allow for a rapid assessment of species diversity. With support from members from Constance Lake First Nation, Long Lake #58 First Nation and Ginoogaming First Nation, Four Rivers was able to do research along transects by mounting microphones and the song meter to our truck and driving at a steady speed along a relatively straight road. By moving slightly faster than the fastest bat could travel, the team could ensure that every new ultrasonic sound the equipment picked up represented a new bat. This technique allowed the team to not only immediately identify hot spots for bat activity, but could later be analyzed to determine specific species within the area.



# Four Rivers Environmental Services Group



## CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPT

Four Rivers was able to make some significant advancement in the Climate Change Adaptation project in the last year. This included engagement in number of Matawa member First Nations on changes they have been observing, and their concerns for the future. This dialogue will form a major part of the Climate Change vulnerability assessments that Four Rivers is preparing for each of the Matawa member First Nations. This dialogue will be coupled with available environmental and infrastructure information where possible and the assessments will in turn set the ground work for future adaptation planning. As of July 2020, we're nearing the completion of draft reports for Nibinamik First Nation and Webequie First Nation.

A development on this initiative in the last year has been a renewed partnership with Laurentian University through their BRACE project which aims to support technical staff through tribal councils on Climate Change Adaptation. This has provided access to scientific expertise on climate change and related issues in Northern Ontario. Among many highlights of the year is the launch of ongoing on-line presentations on Climate Change and Adaptation, as well as an ongoing northern Ontario First Nation specific discussion forum.



## YELLOWKNIFE TRIP

In the last year, Four Rivers undertook several large initiatives to support capacity building relating to environmental/impact assessments, stewardship, monitoring and Indigenous Guardianship. Among them included the hosting of a fact-finding trip to Yellowknife, North West Territories. This trip had been requested by the Matawa Mineral Technical Committee as far back as 2010 as Matawa member First Nations had expressed the desire to learn from Indigenous communities who were highly active in environmental governance, including governance of environmental assessment/impact processes.

Representatives from Marten Falls First Nation, Neskanataga First Nation, Nibinamik First Nation, Eabametoong First Nation, Constance Lake First Nation, Long Lake #58 First Nation and Ginoogaming First Nation participated on this tour which met with representatives from:

- Deton Cho: Yellowknives Dene Land Development Corporation
- Tlicho Nation Government
- NWT Government Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program Co-Management Steering Committee
- NWT Government Lands Department: Land Use Planning
- Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, Mackenzie Valley Land & Water Board, Wek'eezhii Land & Water Board
- NWT Government Lands Department

Four Rivers will continue to work on disseminating all of the valuable information collected and lessons learned with our delegation.





### FISHERIES PROJECT

Another major highlight of the year included the initiation of a new Fisheries project through the new Inland Habitat Protection Program with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. This project supported the continuation and advancement of fisheries work in Eabametoong First Nation and Constance Lake First Nation as well as the support of a new fisheries research protocol which is already being adopted in communities. This initiative also supported the advancement of fisheries database protocols. It also allowed Four Rivers to provide support to communities in developing their own community specific fisheries project proposals, to which several have been successful and will receive community funding in the upcoming years. While regional support funding has ended at this time, having demonstrated the value of this type of initiative, Four Rivers is hopeful that regional support funding can be secured going forward.



### MATAWA ENVIRONMENT GATHERING, 2019

Four Rivers hosted their second Matawa Environment Gathering on December 10-12, 2019 at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay. This gathering continued and built upon the conversations that started at the previous year's gathering. All Matawa member First Nations participated and shared a wealth of information on the state of their lands and resources, lands and resource use, and hopes for the future. While a gathering report has been drafted, Four Rivers is still working through processing the information shared, so that it can be given back to all communities. Four Rivers hopes to host a third gathering this winter in whatever format is safe and appropriate.







# Four Rivers Environmental Services Group

## CHALLENGES:

### CHANGING REGULATIONS

A major challenge that persisted the entire year was keeping a pace with a large volume of legislative and environmental policy changes at both the federal and provincial levels. Federally, this included the ongoing changes associated with the impacts of Bill C-68 and C-69, and consultation relating to the operational and guidance documents to support that new legislation. At the provincial level impacts to environmental and lands or resource legislation has been unprecedented, impacting potentially all aspects of existing legislation. Provincially, changes have been excessively rapid. The combination of the volume of changes along with the speed in which they have been coming has made it nearly impossible for communities to adequately consider and respond.

### MINERAL DEVELOPMENT & CAPACITY SUPPORTS

In the minerals sector, a persistent challenge of the year has been not only the looming lands and resource changes but the overall instability of capacity to respond within our region. Four Rivers spent a large amount of time last year, trying to negotiate for the longer term (3-year) funding to support our regional support position (Mineral Development & Information Support Officer – “MDISO”) at the tribal council after a shorter term funding had been offered. Our MDISO in turn spent a great deal of time lobbying for the continuation of the Community Communication Liaison Officer (CCLO) positions within each community, which were scheduled to end as of March 21, 2020. The overall instability of the CCLO positions throughout the year lead to a higher degree of turn-over within communities and generally contributed to this capacity instability.

### COVID-19

COVID-19 restrictions and their impacts, including the ability to meet and communicate have compounded

the challenges we have been experiencing in the last year. In the province, particularly in the minerals sector, processes are progressing as “business as usual”. Mineral related plans and permits have continued to be issued despite community inability to participate in the process. The same is true of the advancement of provincial legislative changes. This has created a situation where changes are being made or granted by the province and communities have little or no say in the process.

As a regional environmental support department, COVID-19 has been detrimental in allowing Four Rivers to provide information that member First Nations need relative to the environment and legislative changes. It has also impacted the overall advancement of a large number of initiatives, most of which had major in-community work components, including community engagement.

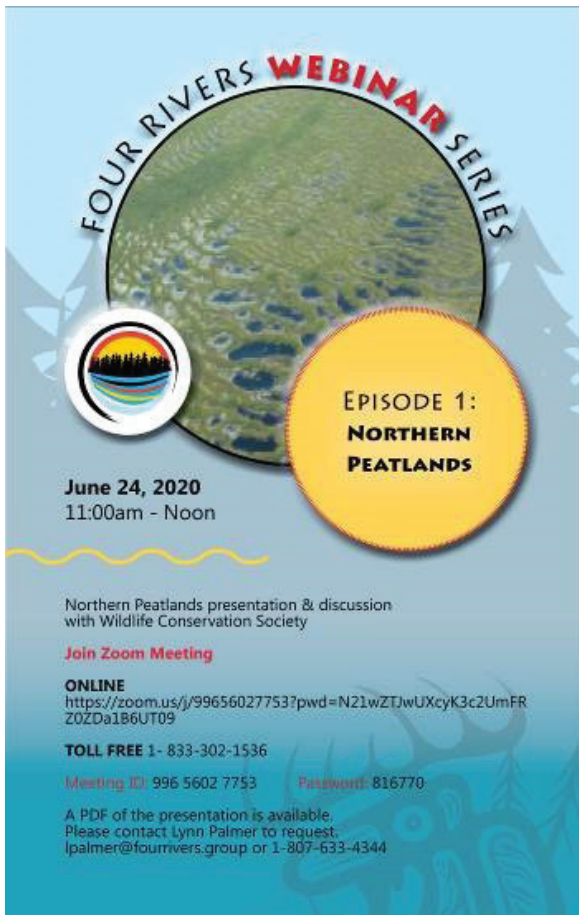
## OPPORTUNITIES:

### VIRTUAL PROGRAMING

While the restrictions associated with COVID-19 have been a major challenge within the last year, they have also forced us to innovate our programing so that initiatives can still advance. Re-working of project work-plans in response to COVID-19 in the last month has included efforts to find virtual solutions to program delivery including outreach and engagement, so that Matawa members can participate in a safe fashion. To this end, Four Rivers has launched a new webinar series, and has started to experiment with online training as well as online interviews and other forms of engagement. While we have started to have some success with various virtual platforms at our disposal, a barrier continues to be poor internet connectivity within the region. To this end, Four Rivers is collaborating with other Matawa departments on short and longer term connectivity solutions. In the future, with changes to our virtual capacity, along with connectivity upgrades, we anticipate that even in the absence of restrictions, Four Rivers will be able to provide some significant enhanced services, particularly in the realm of data transfer, and ongoing supports.



# Four Rivers Environmental Services Group



## NEW POTENTIAL BIRD PROJECT

Building on our successes with acoustic monitoring devices, as well as past species at risk outreach on birds, Four Rivers is hoping to pull together a new bird inventory project with the Canadian Wildlife Service. This project which would not only add to efforts to support community based monitoring throughout the region, but also possibly contribute towards the Ontario bird atlas by supporting baseline data collection on bird species within Matawa member First Nation traditional territories. Should the project advance, it will likely be multi-year and include the procurement of new and updated acoustic monitoring devices, support of collection programs around communities, and outreach on bird species. It is our hope that bat programing may also continue through this initiative.



## DRONE PROGRAM ADVANCEMENT

Changing regulations relating to drone use meant that Four Rivers and Matawa member First Nations with drones have had to re-train and redesign their drone programs. Training for Matawa staff and interested Matawa First Nations members was conducted in August 2019, with a follow-up test drone mapping excursion to Nibinamik First Nation in October 2019. This excursion yielded preliminary 3-D maps of areas around the community which demonstrated the value of this technology from an environmental mapping and monitoring perspective. Four Rivers is currently working on pursuing the advanced training for team members, and upgrading equipment with the intent of starting a 3-D mapping project in-community in the years to come. We are very excited about the prospect of this initiative which we think will be revolutionary to supporting community planning related to environment and infrastructure.





# Rapid Lynx Telecommunications GP Inc.

## STAFF:

Wayne Slipperjack, General Manager in Training  
Audrea Sturgeon, Communications Officer



## OVERVIEW:

MFNM and Matawa First Nations (“MFN”) leaders elected to take control of their communities’ broadband future in 2013 after learning that the NAN project would not have sufficient funds to connect the remote MFN communities as planned. MFNM formed a Broadband Working Group (“BWG”) of representatives appointed by the communities to support and oversee the effort.

## DEPARTMENT COMMITTEES:

### Rapid Lynx Board of Directors

- Aroland – Sam Kashkeesh
- Marten Falls – Robert Moonias
- Eabametoong – Ben Waswa (waiting BCR official appointment)
- Neskantaga – Edward Moonias
- Webequie – James Suganaqueb
- Nibinamik – Matthew Sofea

Election of Offices for President, Treasurer and Secretary have not been done, waiting for Official appointment from Eabametoong First Nation

### Broadband Working Group

- Aroland – Sam Kashkeesh
- Marten Falls – Robert Moonias
- Eabametoong – Ben Waswa, Charlie O’keese
- Neskantaga – Edward Moonias, Gary Quisses
- Webequie – James Suganaqueb, Glen Wabasse
- Nibinamik – Matthew Sofea, Byron Wapoose, Harvey Yellowhead, Gershom Beaver





# Rapid Lynx Telecommunications GP Inc.

## KEY PRIORITY AREA:

Build Fibre Optic Backbone to 5 remote Matawa Communities.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROJECT MILESTONES:

MFNM and Matawa First Nations (“MFN”) leaders elected to take control of their communities’ broadband future in 2013 after learning that the NAN project would not have sufficient funds to connect the remote MFN communities as planned. MFNM formed a Broadband Working Group (“BWG”) of representatives appointed by the communities to support and oversee the effort. Some of the accomplishments and milestones have included:

1) MFNM and the BWG led a feasibility study, completed in 2015, and completed business planning in 2017.

2) In early 2017, ISED’s Connect to Innovate Program (“CTI” Program) and Ontario’s Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines (“MENDM”) announced broadband infrastructure for satellite- dependent remote communities (only). MFNM and the BWG, MFNM were poised and ready to develop and submit an application for funding for a “shovel- ready” project.

3) The Ministries conducted pre-award due diligence in June 2017 and requested additional information and revisions to MFNM’s business plan, including a break-even plan, sensitivity analysis and risk mitigation plan. After further consideration of MFNM’s application, the Ministries announced grant awards to MFNM in October 2017.

The Rapid Lynx project received the third largest award in Canada.

4) MFNM obtained a \$2.0+ million grant from INAC (now ISC) in 2017 to conduct detailed design engineering for a fiber-optic network to connect the remote Matawa First Nations communities to the Internet. Including funds from INAC for design engineering, the Rapid Lynx project received grants totalling over \$67 million for an all new advanced fibre-optic longhaul network (approximately 800km) running from Aroland to Nibinamik, fiber-to-the-premise networks in the remote communities, facilities, and high-capacity carrier-class electronics.

5) Contribution agreements between MFNM and CTI and MENDM were finalized in 2019, after a nearly two-year funding delay by Ontario pending approval of the new government.

6) While awaiting Ontario approval, MFNM worked with AFL, the fibre manufacturer specified by MFNM’s Engineer to maintain fibre pricing and production capacity. In 2018 AFL’s Canadian Division quoted fibre pricing at a special low rate for Canada’s third largest project and offered attractive payment terms to TVC, its Canadian fibre distributor who passed on the benefits to MFNM. However, U.S. tariffs imposed on steel and a worldwide increase in demand for fibre threatened to increase pricing for the armored steel cable specified by MFNM’s Engineer.

AFL worked closely with TVC and MFNM for over a year to allow fibre orders to be placed in advance, then cancelled awaiting Ontario approval, to keep pricing at the 2018 level and guarantee production capacity for shipment in time for the winter road in 2019/2020.

Final orders were placed in 2019, with no increase to the initial price quotation by AFL and TVC, saving the Rapid Lynx Project over \$250,000 on total fiber costs of nearly \$8 million.

7) Pending approval of Ontario’s funding, the BWG worked with MFNM and Rapid Lynx to develop procurement policies, scoring criteria, and a form of contract for long-haul network construction.



This work was completed in January, 2019. Five companies participated in the bid. Rohl Global Networks Inc. submitted the lowest cost responsive bid, and negotiation further reduced the bid cost. The bid was within the budget established by the grant application for long-haul construction and materials.

8) MFNM entered into an agreement with Working Warriors in late 2019 to recruit and provide readiness training for jobs for members of the Matawa First Nations during construction of the longhaul network.

9) Permitting was completed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in only 3.5 months from October, 2019 through January, 2020.

10) Rohl commenced mobilization and construction in February, 2020.

11) Rohl prepared a COVID-19 Continuity Plan which was approved by MFNM and the Chiefs. The Plan requires that Rohl's crews take precautions to avoid contagion in the MFNM communities during construction, and these rules will also apply to Engineering and Project Management, First Nations Members who are working on the project, and any other personnel who must travel along the remote MFN network route.

12) Longhaul network construction is proceeding on schedule with minimal delays due to the pandemic.

13) MFNM is currently engaged in equipment shelter design and procurement in time for shipment on the winter road and set-up.

14) Longhaul network construction is expected to be completed to Eabametoong by November, 2020 and to Nibinamik by 2021. Service is expected to be turned up in 2021 when Bell completes an upgrade on its facilities in Wunnumin and Aroland, and MTO has completed its realignment of the Anaconda Road in the Aroland Area.



15) MFNM is working on a Phase 2 grant funding application for submission to ISED and MENDM this summer to connect the three road access communities of Long Lake #58, Ginoogaming and Constance Lake to the Rapid Lynx long-haul network at Aroland, and deploy fiber-to-the-premise networks in the three communities and Aroland.

O'Sullivan Lake Outfitters, owned and operated by Aroland FN members, is currently providing lodging, food, and cleaning services for the construction crews. Once lockdown restrictions have been lifted, the contractor will seek out community resources to support their operations. The contractor is also looking to utilize local community airports to transport personnel and equipment to and from the job site.



# Rapid Lynx Telecommunications GP Inc.



16) MFNM is in negotiations with potential operating partners who can provide training and operational support services for five years during the early stage start-up of the Rapid Lynx system. This will allow time for training of MFN community members to fill key engineering and management positions.

17) After the five-year period from network completion, referred to by the funders as the “performance period”, the funders will allow assignment of the system by MFNM to Rapid Lynx Telecommunications G.P.

18) Upon completion, Rapid Lynx will be the only advanced fiber-optic network in Ontario’s Far North to support development of the Ring of Fire economic development area. Internet traffic traveling to and from the communities and through the communities to the Ring of Fire area will significantly increase revenues.

The Rapid Lynx network will be 100% Matawa First Nations owned, controlled and operated.

No other network technology in existence today and no other emerging technology can come close to the speed, capacity and asset life of fiber-optic cable.

Fibre-optic networks utilize light in the form of laser beams to transmit voice, video and information at near-light speed over hair-thin strands of glass in the fiber-optic cable sheath.

The capacity of a fiber-optic cable is virtually unlimited, the only restriction on capacity is the capacity of the optical gear connected to the ends of the fiber.

A single glass fiber strand can be made to transmit more capacity by separating the colors of light in the laser beam traveling over the glass. Each color or “lighthwave” can then carry the same amount of traffic as the fiber strand. Prisms available in the industry today can generate 160 channels over a single fiber.

Core optical gear for the Rapid Lynx network will be capable of transmitting up 10 billion bits of information per second at inception, scalable to 100 billion bits without an upgrade to the chassis.

Fiber-optic networks are long-lived assets. Fiber-optic networks have a useful depreciation life of from 26 to 29 years, and a functional life of over 30 years. Many fiber-optic networks properly constructed in the 1980’s are still operating today with no degradation in capacity.

Wireless equipment and communications satellites have a depreciation life of from 7 – 10 Years.

Rapid Lynx was designed to be a “next generation” network serving the needs of MFNM members today and for decades to come.

### CHALLENGES:

- Keeping communities engaged and informed during the construction process. The project team visited several FN communities, prior to the pandemic lock down, to provide project updates and answer community questions. A project Facebook page was created to share information and project photos with the community.
- Maintaining project continuity during a global pandemic. Project meetings and updates are being conducted via teleconference.
- Warmer than usual temperatures impacted winter road conditions, brushing crews were able to expedite the project work and demobilize prior to the winter road closure this year.
- Coordination with other planned improvement projects along the designed route

### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Opportunities for direct employment through Working Warriors include the following construction related positions:
  - Labourers – 3
  - Environmental monitor – 1
  - Medic/Safety Officer – 1
- Rapid Lynx Board of Directors agreed that these will be shared positions with all communities in the project.
- Communities will also benefit indirectly by providing support services and resources such as accommodations, fuel, meals, cleaning, waste management and other camp services to the construction and inspections teams throughout the life of the project.
- Future opportunities for direct employment on this project including brush cutting and clearing, technical and operational support services when the network is active.



## DID YOU KNOW?

### RAPID LYNX TELECOMMUNICATIONS IS WORKING WITH WORKING WARRIORS TO CREATE MORE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MATAWA COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Community members who register with Working Warriors will also have the opportunity to seek employment elsewhere other than our project. Each community has a profile page on the Working Warriors Website.

For more information about Working Warriors click on the link to their website:  
<https://www.workingwarriors.ca/#/home>



**WORKING  
WARRIORS.CA**

**SEE WHAT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE  
AVAILABLE TODAY!**





# Membership

## STAFF:

Barb Rabbit, Membership Indian Registration Administrator (IRA)

## OVERVIEW:

Matawa Membership program provides membership services in areas of status card issuance (laminated Certificate of Indian Status), any changes occurring in the life of an individual registered as a status Indian such as reporting birth, marriage, divorce and death events. Other reports include miscellaneous amendments to amend, add and update information from an individual's existing Registry page. Assisting parents with Indian Registration and birth registration if required. Matawa administers and coordinates membership services to the following First Nation communities:

- Aroland First Nation
- Eabametoong First Nation
- Marten Falls First Nation
- Neskantaga First Nation
- Nibinamik First Nation
- Webequie First Nation

The mandate is to provide an accurate and updated Indian Registry. The Membership Indian Registration Administrator manages internal and external events required for Indian Registration reporting in accordance with the *Indian Act*, federal and provincial statutes and the policies and procedures of the Indian Registration System.

*"The Indian Act is the Canadian federal legislation first passed in 1876 that sets out certain federal government obligations. It provides for the registration of person as Indians, identifies who is entitled to be registered and who is not, sets the requirements of Band Lists (membership) and makes provisions of protests of decisions concerning registration and membership and for appeals."*

- INAC Indian Registration Administrator Manual

## KEY PRIORITY AREA:

### Certificate of Indian Status (CIS) Paper-Laminate Card

Membership Services-IRA provides status card issuance to the card holder that is still in circulation. The following reasons for issuance are as follows:

Lost/Stolen/Damaged card

New First card – New registrants such as infants, toddlers, etc.

Renewals – Expired dated cards for both adults and children

Replacement – Events for marriage, name/birth transfer changes, etc.

### Event Reporting

Any changes occurring in the life of an individual registered as a status Indian are entered in the Indian Registry System (IRS). These changes are called events such as reporting a birth, marriage, divorce and death. Other reports include miscellaneous amendments to amend, add and delete information on the individual's existing registry page.

### Birth and Indian Registrations

Assist parent(s) with the application for registration of a minor child under the Indian Act. Along with birth registration if required.



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

### Community Visits

Matawa Membership Services had previously provided annual community visits to the six First Nations communities. The visits ensure updates on status card issuance and registration of minor children.

### Collaboration with First Nations Reps for Indian Registration Awareness

Matawa Membership Services along with First Nation Liaisons or Reps have been working on promoting and bringing awareness with First Nations programs in both the Birth and Indian registration process. The Healthy Baby/Healthy Children program is an essential venue as the program is geared toward expectant mothers/caregivers that have children under six years old.

## CHALLENGES:

### Birth Registration

Registering a child is an important event. There are still issues arising in delayed birth registration of a child. When a delay in registering a child occurs it becomes more complex. The parent(s) must pay an additional process fee along with the cost of birth certificate and or Live Birth. Once the delayed registration is processed, parents will require certain validation requirements such as a copy of mother's birth certificate and to be commissioned.

### Identification Issues

Many people don't have proper identifications and may not be aware of what is required to get proper IDs when applying for a Certificate of Indian status (laminate card) or the new Secure status card. Many individuals are unable to get IDs due to lack of monetary funds or other situations. Matawa Membership Services is working on to developing identification awareness by Media, newsletter, etc. We are currently working on a committee thru Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic and other organizations to address these identification issues.

### CERTIFICATE OF INDIAN STATUS LAMINATE CARD



- Currently in circulation until product (card) is terminated by INAC
- Most FN offices/Tribal units still carry the laminate card
- CIS expires 5 years for Adults
- CIS expires 3 years for Children

### NEW SECURE CERTIFICATE OF INDIAN STATUS CARD



- Applications available at any regional INAC offices across Canada
- SCIS expires 10 years for Adults
- SCIS expires 5 years for Children

## OPPORTUNITIES:

### Birth Registration Venue

There are now programs for new mothers/caregivers to access programs within their communities such as Healthy Baby/Healthy Children program, Ontario Works, Service Ontario Outreach visits to the community.

### New Secure Status Card Online Application

Ingenuous Services Canada now has a photo app to download when applying for the new Secure status card. You can now apply online and take your own photo from your smartphone. For more detailed instructions check out the Indigenous Services Canada website at: [www.sac-isc-ga.ca](http://www.sac-isc-ga.ca)

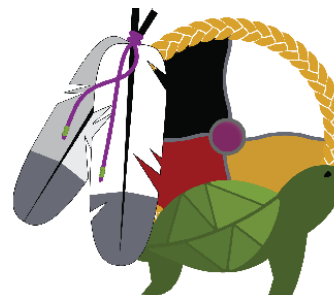


# Health Co-operative

*Circle of Belonging*

## STAFF:

Frances Wesley, Executive Director  
Crystal Bell, Director of Nursing and Clinical Services  
Dr. Catherine Golding, Physician  
Pierrette McLeod, Community Health Nurse Supervisor  
Kelly Kabatay, Certified Diabetes Educator Nurse  
Allison Palmer, Foot Care Nurse  
Justin Chapdelaine, Community Health Nurse  
Nick Kwiatkowski, Diabetes Educator Nurse  
Amy Iserhoff, Community Health Nurse  
Jaimie Livingstone, Mental Health Nurse  
Waverly Puurenen, Mental Health Counsellor  
Noel White, Mental Health Counsellor  
Margaret Capon, Electronic Medical Record (EMR) Privacy Officer  
Sterling Finlayson, Communications and Pandemic Support  
Leah Towedo, Administrative Assistant



**MATAWA HEALTH  
CO-OP**

## COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT:

- Matawa Health and Safety Committee – monthly meetings - Justin Chapdelaine representative for MHC
- Matawa Quality Assurance Team – quarterly meetings – Justin Chapdelaine representative for MHC
- Matawa off-Reserve Food distribution Committee – Crystal Bell, Dr. Catherine Golding, Margaret Capon, Nick Kwiatkowski, Pierrette McLeod (this committee was created within Matawa Health Cooperative to provide food security to off-reserve members during COVID-19)
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation - Health Human Resource Working Group – Crystal Bell, to work with other agencies to secure health care services in northern communities.
- Indigenous Primary Health Care Council – Frances Wesley
- National Federation of Health Cooperatives Board – Frances Wesley
- Northern Ontario School of Medicine - Remote Residency Stream Committee – Crystal Bell, Frances Wesley - working in a trilateral agreement with NOSM and Eabametoong to secure Northern Ontario Medical School (NOSM) residents to work in the community after medical school.
- Regional Diabetes Partnership Committee – Crystal Bell has been representing the Matawa Health

## OVERVIEW

### Mental Health and Addictions

Counselling and psycho-education in areas like:

- Stress management, family issues, managing emotions and coping skills
- Substance abuse, unresolved trauma, grief and loss
- Self esteem
- Critical incident debriefing
- Work with students in schools on bullying and health balance lifestyles
- Complement existing services for mental health and addictions
- Support existing PDA, TH&S, Victims Services, Crisis, Choose Life, Traditional Medicine and Knowledge Keepers
- Work with other service providers and provide support with external services such as Nodin and Dilico

### Diabetes

- Increased incidence of Type 2 diabetes in children & adolescents
- Increased complications associated with diabetes i.e.: retinopathy, neuropathy, nephropathy
- No or lack of diabetes/foot care services in community before Matawa Health Cooperative

### Foot Care

- Foot care is provided to all of our nine (9) Matawa member communities through a foot care nurse collaborate with multi-disciplinary teams throughout Ontario to provide optimal foot healthcare to Matawa community members. Foot Care being provided to off-reserve members as well.

### Community Health Services

- Our community health program's goal is to work with our First Nation communities to educate them about illness and disease prevention, safe health practices, nutrition and wellness
- Programs include Pre and Post Natal support, Healthy Babies Healthy Children programs, school support and education, well woman and men programs, and elder health support
- Programs and educations are not limited to just these areas. We also will assist with any other com-

munity needs as required.

- Our goal is to enhance existing health services which already exists in our First Nation communities.

### Physician Services (NOSM)

- We have one (1) resident who completed the Northern Remote Residency program. He will be completing his return of service in Eabametoong First Nation.
- Three residents are in their final year of the program.
- MHC will be looking at expanding our residency program to other Matawa communities (Readiness to accommodate our residents will assist us in determining which community to go forward with)

### Primary Care Services

- Dr. Catherine Golding has been working daily with the Matawa Health Cooperative since COVID – 19. She is currently on a Physician's Services Agreement and this will be renewed at the end of June 2020. Dr. Golding has been assisting with Medical Officer duties for Matawa Health Cooperative.

### Matawa Education and Care Centre

- Prior to COVID pandemic, we had established a clinic at the Matawa Education and Care Centre offering students access to nursing services and weekly walk in clinic services.

### Nursing Transfer

- We have been promoting Nursing Transfer to our First Nation communities. Eabametoong First Nation signed a Band Council Resolution to proceed with a nursing transfer process. Our goal is to work with EFN and Indigenous Service Canada for a smooth transition of the management of nursing services from ISC to EFN. MHC has put the Nursing Devolution on hold until after the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Urgent Care Walk-in Services

- Matawa Health Cooperative has reached out to road access communities to provide urgent care services on a quarterly basis.



# Health Co-operative

*Circle of Belonging*

- Services include - Allergies, asthma attacks, bronchitis, colds and flus, dehydration, diarrhea, earaches, foreign bodies, gastrointestinal ailments, abscesses, allergies, asthma attacks, bronchitis, gynecological issues, headaches, pink eye, pneumonia, sinusitis and sinus infections, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), sore throats, strep throat, rashes and skin infection, urinary tract infections. First two urgent care clinics were very busy indicating a need.
- Any required follow-up can be done via Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) or through the nurse's travel to the communities.
- The urgent care services have been put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## COVID-19 Pandemic Support

- Matawa Health Cooperative provides telephone nursing support, food distribution support, and elder services to our First Nation communities and members who reside in Thunder Bay.
- We have worked in developing Pandemic Plans and provide guidance to our member communities in developing their own plans.
- Drive through COVID testing has been offered and completed in 2 road access communities.
- Nursing support has been provided in Eabametoong First Nation since March 13, 2020.

## OVERVIEW PARTNERSHIPS

- St. Joseph's Care Group to discuss some of the challenges and gaps in accessing mental health services in the Matawa communities
- Continue our work with Mustimuhw to implement a medical record system and Centre of Excellence
- Develop partnerships with Anishinawbe Mushkiki and other health care service providers to implement health plan
- Liaise with NAN Health Transformation process
- Partnership with Matawa Learning Centre
- Ontario Indigenous Cultural Safety Program
- Working with Matawa Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin Program in meeting the needs of communities who require immediate counselling supports and traditional healers in the area of mental health and addictions

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Clinic set up in the Matawa Education and Care Centre
- Funding secured to hire a Director of Clinical and Nursing Services
- Staff growth over the past year
- Program growth over the last year
- Working together with other departments on developing floor plans for the purchase of Dawson court site for our new working area.
- Access to additional financial resources from the Indigenous Service Canada - Jordan's Principle funding to address Juvenile diabetes.
- Held our first Annual Matawa Health Forum in February
- Annual staff training including cultural, infection control, and team building
- One of our First Nation community members signed a BCR to go through with nursing transfer.
- Finalized a proposal for increased Physician services
- The Matawa Health Cooperative board assisted in the development of the Social Service Framework until a Committee of their own was established

## CHALLENGES:

- COVID-19 pandemic has put a burden on all services being provided from the Matawa Health Co-operative.
- Food security – clients unable to eat according to Diabetes Canada Guidelines
- Pharmacies sometimes do not ship medications on time and clients have to skip on basal insulin
- Staff medical supplies do not get on the plane
- Lack of accommodations
- Medications are not reviewed with clients so clients are unable to tell you why they are taking certain medication
- Lack of communication amongst providers.
- Multiple providers coming into community and need better coordination



- Language barrier
- Optometrist only comes into community once a year – need for increased services
- No preventative eye services – unable to see all clients in community
- Developing our records system, issues around training, broadband, capacity

## OPPORTUNITIES:

Matawa Health Cooperative has opportunity for further growth and development in the following ways:

- development a plan to increase Optometry services to our First Nation communities
- Increase in providing phycology services through our Juvenile Diabetes initiative
- Increase in developing partnerships with other health services providers
- Increase physician services
- Develop a Matawa Mental Health and Wellness Services under the Matawa Health Cooperative
- Increase for clinical and/or urgent care services for our First Nation communities
- Increase partnerships with local and regional health care providers (i.e., Greenstone and Hearst services)



Pictured above: Frances Wesley, Matawa Health Co-operative Executive Director (in #MatawaStrong Contest)





# Communications

## STAFF:

Carol Audet, Communications Manager

## OVERVIEW:

The Communications Department provides communications and advisory support to First Nations in Matawa, Matawa Chiefs Council, Matawa First Nations Management departments, services, corporations, and KKETS departments and services in the following areas:

- Media monitoring and support
- Development of informational materials and promotion
- Brand implementation and visual identity
- Website/cultural portal/intranet updates and training (shared role with Matawa IT)
- Social media updates and monitoring
- Radio broadcasting, recording, PA systems
- Translation equipment

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Continued assistance to communities in employment recruitment and providing up to-date information on COVID-19 (bulletins, social media and website updates)
- Comms Support for Long Lake #58 First Nation CCLO and Marten Falls First Nation CCLO
- Organized Adobe Create Cloud Training - Sept 25, 2019
- Communications Support for Education: Post Secondary Christmas Dinner - Dec 5, 2019, Education Conference - March 2020
- Communications Support for Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction: Standing Committee media (Nov 2019 and Jan 2020) and PDAC March 2020
- Communications Support for Matawa Health Co-operative (MHC): Nishnawbe-Aski Nation Health Summit - Jan 23, 2019, MHC Health Forum Feb 4 - 6, 2020, Chiefs of Ontario Health Forum- Feb 25 - 27, 2020
- Communications Support for Technical Services: development of posters for training and in services to Nibinamik First Nation on infrastructure issues (July 2019 and June 2020)

- Comms Support for CEO's office: Broadband Infrastructure Announcement - Oct 18, 2019, Purchase of Dawson Court - June 2020, Compilation of Matawa Chiefs Council Resolution Updates (various times throughout the year for Matawa Board of Directors & Chiefs)
- Comms Support for Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin: Anti-Racism Proposal - Jan 2020, Presentation to NAN Collaborative Approach for Crisis Response - Feb 19, 2020, Back to Our Roots Gathering - March 3 -5, 2020, Development of Missing Persons Posters throughout the year
- Supervised a Confederation College Business Marketing Student from Matawa - Jan 6 - Apr 9, 2020

## Matawa Messenger Newsletter

- 4 developed this year (although COVID-19 interrupted the March 2020 edition)

## Radio Broadcasting

- 14 Bi-weekly radio shows ongoing providing continuous updates on Matawa programming via Wawatay (meeting target was impacted by COVID-19 this year due to office closure, radio broadcast was put on a hiatus starting on March 10 - last year -> 28 bi-weekly radio shows took place)

## Media Monitoring and Support

Regular media monitoring and support was provided as follows:

- 8 media releases (16 issued last year and 20 the year prior)
- 3 media advisories (10 issued last year and 3 the year prior)
- 25 Bi-Weekly Ring of Fire Media clips (45 issued last year and 127 the prior year)
- Staff kept apprised of news items, published reports/studies, funding opportunities relevant to respective departments

### Informational Materials and Promotion

- Matawa Monday Memo issued every Monday (or Tuesday, if it was a holiday) highlighting schedules of Matawa First Nations Management staff and upcoming events
- Continued participation in Thunder Bay Anti-Racism & Respect Committee
- Promotion of Matawa's support of LGBTQ2S Two-Spirit People during Pride Month in June



### Social Media Update and Media Monitoring

- Increasing followers and likes on social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook) and continuing to double or triple amount of likes/followers
- Creating content responsive to community/world events and efforts made to engage audiences and educate our Peoples

### Website and Intranet Site Development

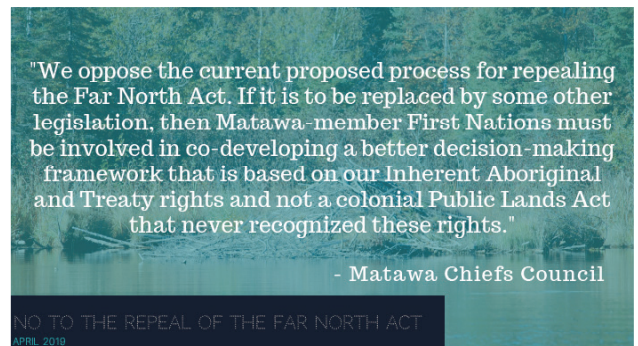
- Talent acquisition component to new modernized Matawa website completed
- Continuation of the translation in one of Matawa's Indigenous languages for new website



## CHALLENGES:

### Maintaining Adequate Staffing Levels

- Department continues to be understaffed for the amount of users of the services
- Require a minimum of 2+ permanent positions and a 1/2 time translator to support the increased number of departmental/community requests and to fulfill some of the opportunities that are available



## OPPORTUNITIES:

- Continued training opportunities for First Nations and MFNM staff in graphic design
- With the approval of respective Matawa First Nations, collaborate with appropriate non-mainstream media outlets and/or policy think tanks on First Nations issues needing exposure





# Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction

## STAFF:

Kathy Brady, Manager  
Alanna McKenzie, Policy Coordinator  
Rosanna Peever, Logistics Coordinator  
Charlene Neegan, Administrative Assistant  
Holly Pyhtila, Information & Implementation Officer

## OVERVIEW:

The Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction (RP&J) department provides support, assistance and advocacy to the Matawa Chiefs Council, Matawa member First Nations, Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Working Group and fellow departments within the Matawa organization. The RP&J department's mandate is to focus on regional topics of jurisdiction, governance and opportunities while respecting the autonomy of each Matawa member First Nation. The department is responsible to ensure the Matawa member communities have quality information on emerging issues that may positively and/or negatively impact the communities. The department prides itself on being transparent, respectful, efficient and professional in their work.

- Track political and governmental developments, aboriginal organizations and their directives - in order to act - instead of react - based on community directives.
- Prepare and distribute detailed briefing notes, original supporting documents, updates and regular translated newsletters.
- Gather and present comprehensive, current research and information on regional priorities, jurisdiction and governance, lands and resources.
- Large gathering, meeting and working group logistics and coordination.
- Capacity building and community engagement.
- Regional planning and preparation of rights-based strategies to move forward with regional planning re: business, decision-making, governance and jurisdiction.
- Research, review and analysis of information regarding inherent aboriginal rights, treaties, government legislation, policy and regulations, past and present.
- Maintain regular communication with Matawa departments, Chiefs Council, community members and working group members.

## REGIONAL PRIORITIES & JURISDICTION WORKING GROUP (RP&JWG)

- The RP&JWG is an evolution of the former Jurisdiction Working Group with a broader mandate of regional priorities, and each Matawa member First Nation appointed one person to the working group from their community.
- The RP&JWG are tasked with regional priorities and jurisdiction research and information gathering, directed by the Chiefs and their communities; to ensure community concerns are brought to the RP&JWG to provide information and recommendations on priority regional subjects.



## KEY PRIORITY AREAS:

### Regional Priorities

The Matawa Member First Nations' people are committed to working collectively with regard to regional priorities, jurisdiction and governance. The RP&J department is responsible to take communities' direction on identified priorities, provide information and strategic recommendations for consideration, and facilitate change as directed.

### Jurisdiction & Governance

The Matawa Member First Nations' people are leaders in asserting their Inherent Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. It is the department's responsibility to stay informed on the ever-changing political landscape across Canada. This includes all levels of government, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The RP&JWG is directed to focus on important initiatives that fall within regional jurisdiction and governance.

### Assistance During the Pandemic

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, assistance has been provided to other Matawa departments and to communities whenever possible by the RP&J department - through the procurement of a variety of personal protective equipment (PPE), securing additional funding for pandemic needs for communities, as well as assisting with stockpiling for a potential second wave. This work will continue as long as it is needed.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

### Summary

2019-2020 was highly productive for the Matawa leadership, members, Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Working Group (RPJWG), Mamow Community Coordinators (MCCs) and RP&J department staff. The Matawa Chiefs Council presented before two (2) Ontario government Standing Committees on regional issues of concern, in addition to meetings and major gatherings held, a community inventory of needs was collected, a

business model was formed, and the Chiefs, RPJWG and MCC groups met often to move important priorities forward and to officially respond to critical developments.

### Matawa Chiefs Council Presentation at Queen's Park

At Queen's Park in Toronto in November 2019, Matawa Chiefs Council presented to the Provincial Standing Committee outlining the significant concerns on mining, lands and rights impacts of the proposed Bill 132 – "Red Tape Reduction" bill. Chief Harvey Yesno of Eabametoong, Chief Celia Echum of Ginoogaming and Chief Veronica Waboose of Long Lake #58 presented on behalf of the Matawa Chiefs Council and told the provincial committee that:

- Matawa First Nations will lead and deliver the next economic boom of this province and that equitable partnerships will result in investment opportunities on a national and international scale
- Matawa First Nations is fully aware of the potential impacts to Inherent Aboriginal and Treaty Rights
- Matawa First Nations are the partners and 'investors of certainty' required for economic and social prosperity.



## Matawa Chiefs Address 2nd Standing Committee

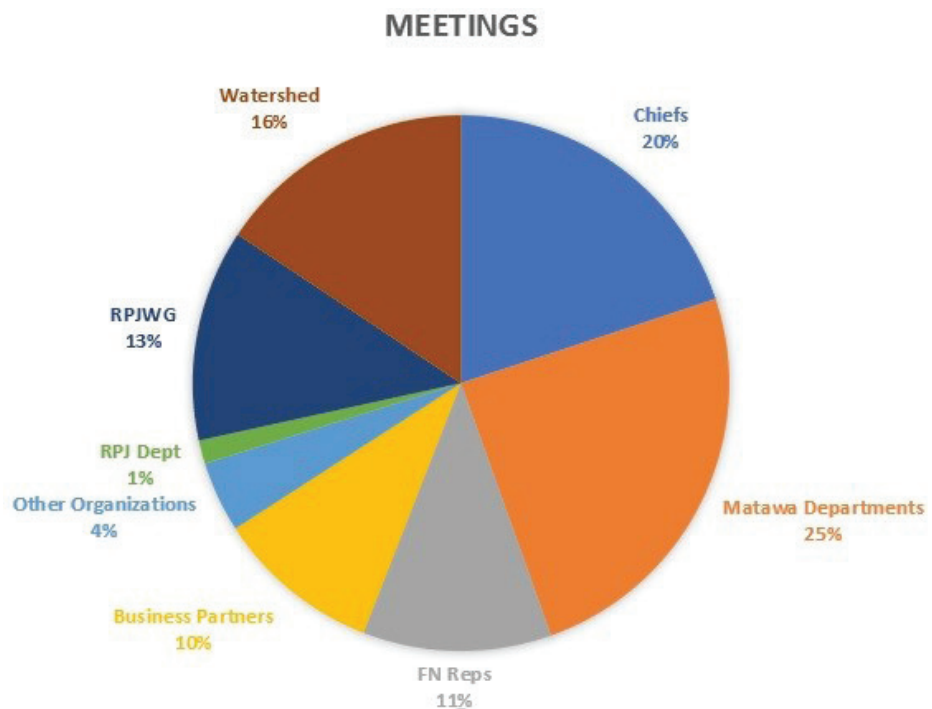


In January 2020, the Chiefs of the Matawa First Nations presented to the Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, saying that certainty from First Nations is the key to the emerging Northern Ontario economy. The presentation was made by Chief Harvey Yesno of Eabametoong First Nation, and Chief Cornelius Wabasse of Webequie First Nation on behalf of the Matawa Chiefs Council, and included these main points:

- Certainty from First Nations is the key to the emerging northern economy.
- The true potential of the development of the North of Ontario may perhaps be in the trillions of dollars and must be considered in its full potential for wealth creation and revenue generation that will benefit First Nations, government and industry as a whole.
- The development of the north will be multi-generational and international in scope.

## Distribution of RP&J Department Meeting Time Over Prior 12 months

	Meetings
Chiefs	42
Matawa Departments	52
FN Reps	24
Business Partners	21
Other Organizations	9
RPJ Dept	3
RPJWG	27
Watershed	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>211</b>





# Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction

## Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Working Group (RP&JWG)

Following the direction from the Matawa Chiefs Council, the RP&JWG met throughout the year to complete work on research, reviewing and option development related to jurisdiction. The productive working sessions produced material for the Matawa Chiefs Council further review and consideration. An important area of focus is discussing and outlining the underlying jurisdiction issues related to lands and resources, and the working group brings a lot of knowledge to the discussions as they are community experts.

## Matawa-Watershed Process; Phase One Complete, Enter Phase Two

In May 2019, over 100 Matawa Chiefs, Elders, youth, community members and Matawa staff attended the Standing Together Gathering at the Nor'Wester Hotel outside Thunder Bay. The event marked the end of "Phase 1" of the Watershed-Matawa collaborative design process. At the gathering, there was also direction and approval from the Matawa Chiefs to start the second phase which began in Neskantaga First Nation.



### 1. Neskantaga Hosts Chiefs' Kick-Off Meeting

Phase 2 of the community-led, regional decision-making process kicked off Aug 23-24 2019 in Neskantaga First Nation, after an urgent need for a decision-making framework was identified across the nine (9) Matawa First Nations. Each community chose a Mamow Community Coordinator (MCC) who became the community contact for this process.

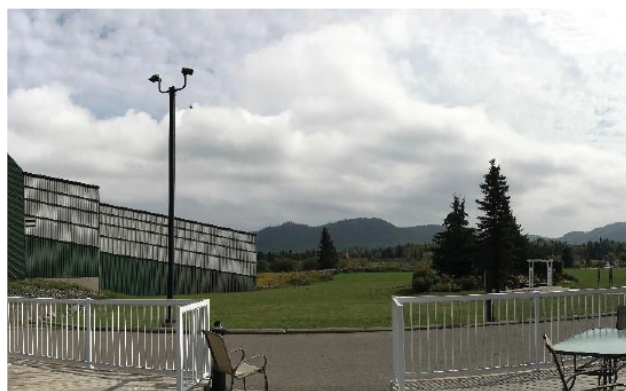
### 2. Training for MCCs

With a variety of backgrounds and experiences, the MCC group came together on September 18-20 2019 to learn techniques and skills to help them connect, communicate and create decision-making networks in their communities. All of the decisions to be made in the Matawa region will have lasting impacts for the people who live there, as well as on the land and water. This training was designed to help MCCs lead the discussions and communicate the issues.





# Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction



## 3. MCCs Gathering in Long Lake #58

In October 2019, Long Lake #58 hosted the Mamow Community Coordinators. Because all the Matawa communities are tied to the land and water, the MCCs recognized that a better way is needed to build a path forward for the future generations. "If we don't stand together, we will be vulnerable to other interests and their influence on our land".

## 4. Mamow Winter Gathering

For three (3) days in January 2020, over 50 community members met at the Nor'Wester Hotel in Thunder Bay. Through the facilitation of the Watershed Partners team, Matawa members were able to focus on the biggest challenges of their specific communities, and then compile the biggest common concerns/challenges in the Matawa region. After three (3) days the group arrived at seven (7) priority topics they felt needed to be addressed:

1. Addictions
2. Cultural Practices
3. Family Unit Breakdown
4. Health & Housing
5. Restrictions to Funding
6. Skills & Education
7. Working Together



## DECISION MAKING Perspectives







### Support for “Journey to Our Homelands”

The RP&J department provided administrative support for a five (5) day canoe journey in September 2020, where Nibinamik First Nation Elder and RP&JWG and MCC Tommy Yellowhead journeyed south to his birthplace of Pinnaemootang. Along with his childhood friend Stephen Neshinapaise, six (6) Nibinamik youth and a camera crew, they paddled upstream to reach the old village where Tommy and Stephen were born. The journey was recorded and will be soon made in to a documentary. The intention for the journey was to inspire all Matawa First Nations to start thinking beyond the Indian Act and connect socially with each other through their rivers, lakes and trails in order to demonstrate the current and traditional land usage for all Matawa communities and First Nation members.



### PDAC Media Event and Panel Presentation

In March 2020, Matawa Chiefs Council presented at the Prospectors and Developers Association Conference (PDAC) in Toronto to share their comprehensive approach to ‘Development of the North’. Components considered includes resource development, employment and training, community decision-making, environmental, financial management, infrastructure, and governmental requirements and opportunities. The work done prior to the event specifically focused on being community-driven and was directed by the Matawa Member First Nations. The current assessment is that Matawa First Nations are at the center of the new emerging northern economy, and are working to position Matawa member communities for the long-term benefits that are anticipated and expected by members and future generations.





# Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction

Enterprise Canada, PCL Constructors Inc, EPCOR, Ontario Power Generation, Matawa Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) signed to Develop Matawa Economic Stimulus Recovery Plan

MOU signatories developed understanding of potential roles going forward i.e. training, infrastructure, health, environment, education etc. Information was compiled to feed into a database for a regional strategic plan, with focus on community infrastructure. Business structure concepts created with each signatory to the MOU being tasked to submit a draft business structure and concept for discussion.

## RP&J Department Community Projects:

- Aroland First Nation has no effective cell service so a booster tower is ready to be installed in the community by CRC Communications as soon as the pandemic is over. Community is currently on full lock down and the Chief has asked to wait for the crew to come in and do the installation. The booster should provide cell service for a good portion of the community
- Long Lake #58 has requested assistance with setting up a radio station for the community. The components have been purchased and delivered for the in-studio portion of the station (microphones, cables, mixer board etc) and an antenna to broadcast the signal is available and secured in Thunder Bay at CRC – however it has been extremely difficult to find a low power FM transmitter to complete the setup. We continue to search for an FM transmitter and will also attempt to secure a second transmitter of this type for Marten Falls as they also have the studio components for a radio station but no way to send a signal to the community.

## Assistance with Pandemic Needs

- Claudine Santos of VIO Volunteers has assisted with obtaining a variety of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shipped directly to Matawa Health Co-op, including (through Conquercovid19.ca) 2500 + 50,700 masks, 50 Face Shields, 2x4 litre bottles sanitizer, 600 XL gloves. A further shipment of gowns and children's masks is expected.

- Watershed Partners assisted with business contacts, and donated \$1500 in hand sanitizer.
- OPG has agreed to donate (around 40K) to support Matawa off-reserve membership for shelter, food and other items required such as PPE – donation will be direct to Matawa
- RP&J department has also procured other pandemic supplies including liquid hand sanitizer, 150 face shields, 2000 99% BFE surgical masks and 5,850 face masks specifically for Eabametoong, and 1,800 more face shields

## Funding

The federal government in June 2019 agreed to fund Phase 2 of Matawa's community-led decision-making process and this federal funding enabled our Matawa First Nations to continue their important work. RP&J department funding for the 2019-2020 fiscal year came from both Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNA) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

## Structural Changes

When the Regional Framework department became the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction department, two former working groups; Matawa Jurisdiction Working Group (MJWG) and the Regional Framework Working Group (RFWG) merged into the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Working Group (RP&JWG). There were also nine (9) Mamow Community Coordinator (MCC) positions created – one for each Matawa community - to help with the community-driven decision-making process. The MCCs received training in communications and facilitation to help them in their roles.



## CHALLENGES:

- Continued funding challenges, with no provincial funds
- Government internal policy, processes and pressure
- Community resource funding, particularly for the pandemic
- Long-term resources to secure funding for community needs
- Communication and implementation
- Agreed direction on regional strategic planning

## OPPORTUNITIES:

- Continue regional strategic plans ensuring each community's individuality is respected, and that there is respect for each other's jurisdiction and for shared jurisdictions within and outside Matawa communities
- In-community engagement is not possible at this time but is necessary to continue
- Explore new ways of communicating in order to keep moving towards a self-sustaining, self-sufficient and self-determined sovereign nation
- Research, review and interpret information regarding aboriginal rights, treaties, government policy and procedures, past and present
- Assist with creating certainty for Matawa members with 'community first'-based plans
- Continue to collect infrastructure data with community update calls and research
- Explore more in-depth regional business models
- Create draft options with Watershed Partners on communicating in a Covid world
- Continue to maintain regular communication with Matawa departments
- Update partners on challenges communities are facing during pandemic
- Continue to maintain regular communication and preparation of documents for initial Chiefs' review and feedback
- Continue focus on preparation of quality information in order to act instead of react based on community directives
- Continue to assist Health Co-op with PPE procurement
- Expand PPE search and network of connections for donations
- Continue to monitor and inform on government plans and policy changes
- Create materials i.e. powerpoints, for communities to inform and get direction on how to move forward





# Economic Development

*Advancing Economic Opportunities by Helping Create Opportunity-Ready Matawa Communities*

## STAFF:

Jonathan Neegan, Economic Development Advisor  
Alexandra Kavalchuk, Economic Development Assistant

## OVERVIEW:

The Matawa Economic Development Department works with our membership communities to promote and foster sustainable economic development through the delivery of quality information products capacity building initiatives and collaborative working projects throughout our region.

We believe in sustainable economic development and that what we do today will impact the next seven generations and we wish to leave them a testimony of our commitment to business excellent and a legacy for which our people will be renowned for.

We also assist our membership communities and aspiring entrepreneurs with business planning, financing, negotiating and strategic planning.

## COMMITTEES:

See next page for a listing of the various committees the Matawa Economic Development Department works with.

## KEY PRIORITY AREA:

1. Infrastructure & Capacity Building Project
2. Community Engagement
3. Renewable Energy Workshops
4. Improved Satellite Services
5. Business Support Program
6. Economic Development Conference

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. Proof of Concept Donation – Telesat/Galaxy
2. Applications to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and Infrastructure Canada
3. Community Capacity Building
4. Renewable Energy Workshops

## CHALLENGES:

Pandemic – The impact of the coronavirus is having a profound and serious impact of the community economy, how we deliver our services and how we respond. It is important that we follow community policies to make a difference in fighting this disease and mitigate its impact on our already compromised communities. Mitigating the impact of this severe shock required providing support to the most vulnerable when it comes to infrastructure and economic development. For example, by providing Marten Falls and Webequie First Nations with a Proof of Concept donation from Telesat and Galaxy, we were able to provide them with high speed internet services until funding from either the CRTC or Infrastructure Canada is approved.



Government – Due to the pandemic, the provincial and federal governments are offering essential services at this time, and have created many delays in processing, accessing funds and have even stopped accepting new requests entirely. This means that our membership communities have less tools and makes it hard for us to understand how decisions are being made during a public health crisis.

Community Resources and Capacity – Communities have their own purposes and there are opportunities for communities to engage with researchers or develop their own agenda. However, a major limitation facing our membership communities is the lack of time and resources to do this work.

Jurisdiction - Where high-quality information exists, it can be difficult to access the information in a way that is geographically relevant. This is because the information sets often apply to our large region that are meaningful for community-based planning.

## **OPPORTUNITIES:**

1. Matawa Internet Service – 51% ownership with training, employment and option of 100% ownership
2. Economic Development Strategy
3. Community Infrastructure
4. Community Training and Capacity Building
5. Relay North Renewable Energy Capacity Building

### **MATAWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:**

Sam Kashkeesh (Aroland First Nation), Lorraine Wesley, Economic Development Officer (Constance Lake First Nation), Ben Waswa, Economic Development Officer (Eabametoong First Nation), Leslie O’Nabigon, Economic Development Officer (Ginoogaming First Nation), Darcy Waboose, Economic Development Officer (Long Lake #58 First Nation), Robert Moonias, Economic Development Officer (Marten Falls First Nation), Edward Moonias, Economic Development Officer (Neskantaga First Nation), Byron Wapoos, Economic Development Officer (Nibinamik First Nation), Glen Wabasse, Economic Development Officer (Webequie First Nation).

### **MATAWA ENERGY WORKING GROUP:**

Sam Kashkeesh (Aroland First Nation), Lorraine Wesley (Constance Lake First Nation), Wayne Neegan (Constance Lake First Nation), Ben Waswa (Eabametoong First Nation), Leslie O’Nabigon (Ginoogaming First Nation), Peter Rasevych (Ginoogaming First Nation), Darcy Waboose (Long Lake #58 First Nation), John Onabigon (Long Lake #58 First Nation), Robert Moonias (Marten Falls First Nation), Lawrence Baxter (Marten Falls First Nation), Byron Wapoos (Nibinamik First Nation), Edward Moonias (Neskantaga First Nation), Gary Quisess (Neskantaga First Nation), Glen Wabasse (Webequie First Nation), James Suganaqueb (Webequie First Nation).

## Notes

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**The Power of Unity  
The Dignity of Difference**