



2021 / 2022

Annual Report

**Prepared for the Matawa 34th Annual General Meeting
July 26 - 28, 2022
Hosted by Webequie First Nation**



WEBEQUIE FIRST NATION





ISO 9001 Quality

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Matawa First Nations Management

Message

from the **President of the Board**

It goes without saying that 2021/22 was one of the most challenging years that many of us have ever experienced. As many of our communities were hit with Covid-19, State of Emergencies were called as a form of help to our local governments to bring in much needed resources and support. At the time, no one could have predicted that this pandemic would last entirely for this fiscal year moving forward.

Virtually every aspect of operations at Matawa was impacted by the pandemic. Countless processes were redesigned, new protocols were introduced to protect the well-being of staff and visitors who access our services.

Into the new year, as numbers climbed, as we saw a spike of community members testing positive and either admitted or isolating for their safety. It was inevitable that this virus was going to hit one way or the other.

As for myself, I was hospitalized as this virus affected my right side of my body. It was at that time where I felt very vulnerable as I laid there in that hospital bed. I never experienced the need for oxygen as I sat feeling helpless at times. As I expressed my utmost gratitude for the outpour of love and prayers, I was able to endure 10 days recovering building up that lung strength. It's times like that where you begin to appreciate and value what you have in front of you.

To the nurses who worked tirelessly around the clock to ensure your vitals are normal and to the doctors who searched far and wide for medicines used to treat this virus, you are forever indebted in my books. The moment I stepped out that door from the hospital, I felt a sense of freedom but I also asked myself "at what cost?" We had numerous relatives that were admitted and lost that battle. It took



awhile to process what had happened and feel the sense of realization. It is very important to remember that this virus is real and getting that vaccine helps.

Behind of all this, our Health Co-op continued to provide support and stepped up and to ensure our communities were kept safe. These amazing professionals displayed compassion, resilience, determination to face unprecedented challenges.

As the acquisition of Dawson Court became reality, we have already witnessed our departments making their transition into the building: KKETS, Matawa Health Co-op, and Awashishewiigihiwaywiin respectfully. We continue to look forward to what is to come from these respective departments.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their leadership and guidance over the year. While our response to this pandemic was front and centre throughout the year, we had many noteworthy accomplishments. It is my utmost pleasure to present you with the 2022 AGM Report highlighting our Tribal Council's success, challenges, and updates from various departments.

CHE MIIGWETCH!

Robinson S. Meshake
President



Matawa First Nations Management

Board of Directors - 2021/2022

President

Robinson Meshake
Aroland First Nation

Vice President

Frank Onabigon
Long Lake #58 First Nation

Secretary/Treasurer

Charlie Okees
Eabametoong First Nation

Lisa Echum

Ginoogaming First Nation

Stanley Oskineegish

Nibinamik First Nation

Christopher Moonias

Neskantaga First Nation

Roy Spence

Webequie First Nation

Robert Moonias

Marten Falls First Nation

Rosemary Moonias

Constance Lake First Nation





A portrait of a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light grey.

premise in the remote communities. We are currently constructing the backbone and we expect this portion of the project to be completed by Fall of 2023.

[illegible]

Just recently, Matawa was confirmed for funding for Phase 2 of the Rapid Lynx project which would extend the backbone network and connect every premise in all four of our road access communities to the Internet over fibre.

[illegible]

[illegible][illegible]

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We ask for your patience as we complete Rapid Lynx which is a vast undertaking traveling nearly 1,200kms over land and under water through areas with no roads and difficult terrain. When complete, the Matawa First Nations will have access to the Internet at reliability and speeds that will rival some of the largest metropolitan areas in Canada, and at affordable pricing, and that will be worth the wait. We look forward to providing this service very soon.

[illegible]

May 26, 2022 big cheque presentation. L to R: David Sertic, Senior Advisor, Commercial Industrial Energy Conservation; David Paul Achneepineskum, Matawa FNM CEO; Nicole Lehto, Enbridge Gas Northern Region Director of Operations, and; Mark Glasier, Enbridge Gas Energy Solutions Supervisor.

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 2021/2022
Matawa Chiefs Council Report which is available under separate cover.



Chief Dorothy Towedo
Aroland First Nation



Chief Sheri Taylor
Ginoogaming First Nation



Chief Wayne Moonias
Neskantaga First Nation



Chief Ramona Sutherland
Constance Lake First Nation



Chief Judy Desmoulin
Long Lake #58 First Nation



Ogimakan Michael Sugarhead
Nibinamik First Nation



Chief Solomon Atlookan
Eabametoong First Nation



Chief Bruce Achneepineskum
Marten Falls First Nation



Chief Cornelius Wabasse
Webequie First Nation

Note: Ogimakan Michael Sugarhead of Nibinamik First Nation joined the Matawa Chiefs Council this year replacing former Chief Sheldon Oskineegish (elections took place in Nibinamik First Nation on November 19, 2021)



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.



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 and other issues (social media and website updates)
- Communications (Comms) Support for: Ginoogaming FN (Agoke and Minodauman employment ads, COVID-19 tracking charts on social media, photo video); Constance Lake FN (1 news release, employment ads, PEOC calls, COVID-19 tracking charts on social media, blastomycosis tracking charts on social media); Neskantaga FN (2 news releases, preparations for meeting with federal Minister); Long Lake #58 FN (employment ads); Aroland FN (MERX tender posting, PEOC calls, draft SOE); Webequie FN (employment ads); Marten Falls FN (1 news release); Eabametoong FN (PEOC calls, COVID-19 tracking charts on social media, COVID-19 outbreak chronology)
- Comms Support for Education: 2 news releases, online fillable forms for website, Seven Youth Inquest Recommendations 112 and 116 social media campaigns, promotion of Safe Sobering

Site's winning of 2021 Mayors Community Safety Award for Outstanding Community Project, creation of Crisis Line posters for Education's PASS program, graduation comms support

- Comms Support for Awashishewiigihiwaywiin: TbayTel for Good Video, 2 news releases, website updates
- Comms Support for Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction: 2 news releases
- Comms Support for Matawa Health Co-operative: Nurses Week 2022, employment ads, sign rental, updates to website
- Comms Support for Technical Services: winter road social media/web updates, media liaison on infrastructure related issues
- Comms Support for CEO's office: big cheque presentation from Endbridge Gas, preparation of Annual General Meeting (AGM) materials and comms support prior to/during AGM
- Comms Support for Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin: 1 news release, employment ads
- Comms Support for Chiefs Council: 2 news releases, Homelessness Policy Analyst position
- Comms support for Matawa Training & Wellness Centre: participation in monthly update meetings and worked with design company on temporary internal/external building signage
- Comms Support for Rapid Lynx: new website, 1 news release, potential project with Mastercard Foundation
- Drafted primary and supplementary questions for MPP Sol Mamakwa to Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Minister regarding birth alerts on July 14, 2022

Media Monitoring and Support

Regular media monitoring and support was provided as follows:

- An average of 1-2 articles/month were published in Wawatay News on an issue related to a Matawa community or MFNM program/service
- 10 media releases (28 issued last year on issues related to the global pandemic and 8 the year prior)
- 2 media advisories (5 issued last year and 3 the

year prior)

- 33 Bi-Weekly Ring of Fire Media clips (42 issued last year and 45 the prior year)
- Staff kept apprised of news items, published reports/studies, funding opportunities relevant to respective departments

Radio Broadcasting

- 18 Bi-weekly radio shows ongoing providing continuous updates on Matawa programming via Wawatay (continued to adapt to method of radio programming with the ongoing global pandemic)

Matawa Messenger Newsletter

- Met workplan target of 4 newsletters/year

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 and Thunder Bay Anti-Racism and Inclusion Accord Committees
- Promotion of Matawa's support of LGBTQ2S Two-Spirit People during Pride Month

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

- Completion of the translation of the website in one of Matawa's Indigenous languages
- Continuous updates of staff directory, job postings, department updates (where provided)
- Rapid Lynx website <http://www.rapidlynx.ca/> completed on Feb 3, 22

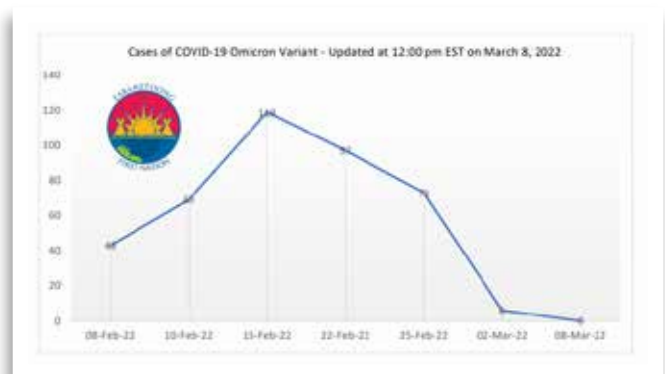
CHALLENGES:

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

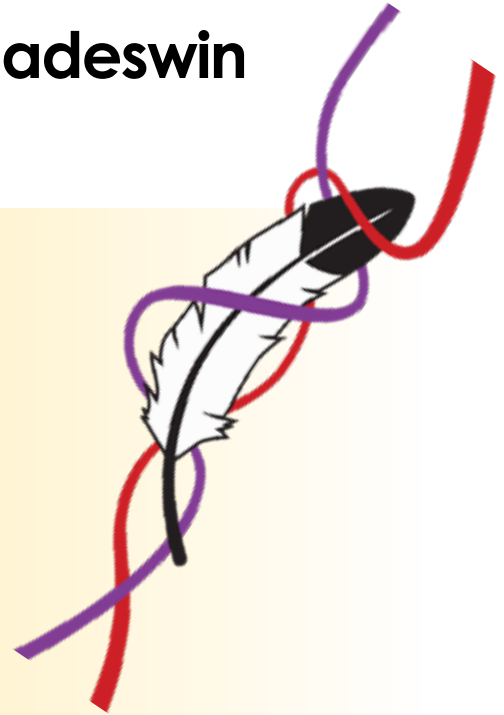




Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin

STAFF:

Francine Pellerin, Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin Director
Steven Okeese, Health & Social Administrative Assistant (on-contract)
Nicole Jacob, Regional Crisis Intervention Coordinator
Derek Atlookan, Regional Crisis Resource Assistant
Elizabeth (Liz) Wapoose, NIHB Client Navigator-1
Cheryl Suganaqueb, NIHB Client Navigator-2 (on-contract)
Hilary Fox, Social Emergency Coordinator
Breanne Anderson, Anti-Indigenous Racism Coordinator
Leesa Davey, WiiChiiHehWayWin Outreach Navigator (on-contract)
Rachel Yesno, WiiChiiHehWayWin Outreach Worker (on contract)
Roland Okeese, WiiChiiHehWayWin Outreach Worker (on contract)



OVERVIEW:

The Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin (HSMB) department oversee the management, administration, coordination and implementation of several health and social wellness programs and initiatives. HSMB provides advisory, advocacy, technical support and direct supports and services to Matawa First Nations experiencing social crisis and/or emergencies. HSMB supports primarily community-based programs, offers limited education awareness, promotion and prevention. We also provide client advocacy and referral services for people accessing NIHB, assist with Jordan's Principle applications, and provide outreach services for people experiencing challenges of living in Thunder Bay. The HSMB works in partnership with several groups, organizations, agencies and institutions who are affiliated with our First Nations in Health and Social Services.

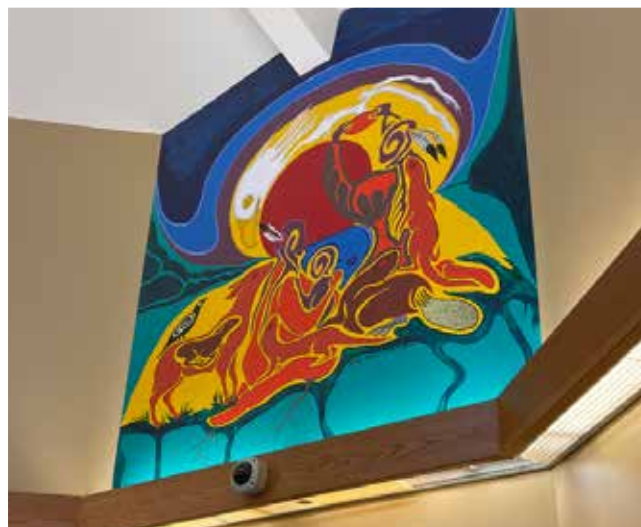


KEY PRIORITY AREA:

To strengthen, enhance and promote health and wellbeing within our First Nations. HSMB's key priority assisted First Nations dealing with COVID-19, to maintain supports to those members who are most affected by COVID-19, and to ensure safety and wellbeing of Matawa members.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Continuation of all HSMB Programs.** HSMB maintains and administers ten ongoing programs and six one-time/short term initiatives.
- **Secured Mental Wellness Team Surge Capacity.** Additional funds were requested for surge capacity due to high volume of social crises within our area.
- **Secured additional one-funding for COVID- 19.** HSMB received additional resources for COVID expenses to cover accommodation and meals for stranded members and food supports for members living in Thunder Bay.
- **Secured full year funding for WiiChiiHehWayWin Outreach.** A proposal was submitted and funding was received to operate until the end of March 2022.
- **Secured Second Harvest Funds.** Through the SEM program, a proposal was submitted and was approved for food security. Through this funding we are able to provide hot lunch foods and to go hamper for local vulnerable population.
- **Supported seven State of Emergencies Declarations and multiple crises across Matawa region.** Mental health/crisis support was provided to First Nations, coordination of goods such as food and supplies and support with logistics. Crises includes overdoses, substance and alcohol related incidents, sudden deaths, homicide and suicide
- **Virtual Educational/ Cultural Awareness Sessions.** Through the Family Violence Prevention funds, HSMB was able to conduct



3 virtual sessions related to Missing and Murdered Women & Girls. Ie: red skirt making and hand drum making.

- **New HSMB Program.** Received 3-year funding for Anti-Indigenous Racism Initiative. AIRI Coordinator has visited 2 First Nations and held one urban symposium in Greenstone on March 25, 2022 with a total of 15 participants from the communities of Aroland, Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58, and Greenstone. AIRI provides incident reporting and referral services, organizes events with Matawa members re: anti-Indigenous racism and develop educational materials.

CHALLENGES:

- Filling the vacant positions. HSMB has 3 full time vacancies to fill.
- COVID-19 restrictions and protocols limited program delivery. Ie, travel restrictions, lack of accommodations, no physical contacts in responding to crises and emergencies
- COVID-19 is also slowing down project completion, limiting participation numbers with in-person events, and causing delays with in-person program and workshop deliveries in Matawa communities. The coordination of services around covid 19 restrictions was very difficult and required a lot of planning.

- Lack of funding continues to be a challenge. HSMB continues to operate with what is committed.
- Lack of accommodations/housing in remote communities. Services are unable to stay as long as the community needs. Cost of charters for incoming help can be reduced drastically if infrastructure for community support is made accessible.
- High cost of transportation to remote communities.
- Access to healthy foods and services. Transportation cost is different from road accessible communities vs. remote communities. Healthy food and services are more accessible among road accessible communities.
- Communication challenges within the system both internal and external.
- Continued social and healing challenges - addictions issues, lack of housing, dealing with historical trauma-residential school, day school, other trauma.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Increase opportunities to create and enhance community services through new programs.
- Participating and partnering with other organizations in health transformation and planning for health system change. I.e. conducting community planning, engagements and assessments with partners.
- Increase internet services and access for First Nations.
- New and innovating delivery methods and virtual capacity building.
- Increase in training and awareness of social emergencies and emergency management.



Traditional medicine mah(sh)kee-kee - COVID-19 support medicine



Awashishewiigihiwaywin

STAFF:

Robin Haliuk , Program Manager
Dionne Beardy, Training Coordinator
Kelly Tiboni-Ranta, Family Support Worker
Ron Frost, Family Support Worker
Brittni Westphal, Intake Worker
Carlee Kwandibens, Family Support Worker
Karen Westerbach, Family Support Worker
Paul Magiskan, Family Support Worker
Simon Magiskan, Cultural Support Worker
Michelle Levesque, Office Administrator
Landyn Atlookan, Food Security Coordinator

OVERVIEW:

Awashishewiigiwaywin (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, cultural programs and other group programs.

- Support when dealing with child welfare agencies
- Assistance navigating the system
- Support for personal goals
- Connect to other resources
- Life skills
- 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



AWASHISHEWIIGIHIWAYWIIN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Matawa First Nations are nine independent First Nations who have come together to address the high number of Matawa First Nation children in care in First Nation communities and in the city of Thunder Bay and other jurisdictions.

Matawa First Nations Chiefs directed the development of community-based, culturally appropriate and responsive care models for children with a focus on prevention and family reunification.

Mandate

Matawa First Nations Chiefs Council have given direction via resolution #02 – 04/04/2019 . As well as Resolution #26-31-07-14 that references Matawa Child Welfare System.

The Social Services Advisory Committee is to provide strategic guidance on the continued implementation of the Matawa Social Services Framework in accordance to the above stated resolutions. The committee will act in an advisory role to support the program and provide guidance on all aspects including; operations, protocols, finance and budget and program direction.

Advisory Committee Membership

The membership of the Social Services Framework Advisory Committee shall consist of one representative



appointed from each of Matawa's nine member communities or their alternate and shall include the following communities: Aroland, Constance Lake, Eabametoong, Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58, Marten Falls, Neskantaga, Nibinamik and Webequie.

Technical Support

- May include an Elder and a Youth or other technical resource persons, Awashishe-Wiigihiwaywiin 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:

- We currently have 114 open family files and that includes 436 individuals
- We have serviced 1584 Matawa individuals in total open and closed files
- We have prevented 67 apprehensions as our program was included in the safety plans with quick response and were able to support families in keeping their children during difficult times
- 28 individual Jordan's principal applications on behalf of families
- 30 referrals for addiction services
- 39 Service plans completed with Child welfare
- 83 social housing applications completed for families
- 70 referrals for medical practioners

- 69 referrals for Mental Health supports
- 42 families seeking traditional support and knowledge
- Completed construction of community kitchen
- Monthly Navigating Child Welfare zoom workshops open to all members
- Hired a Food Security Coordinator to assist with food bank and community kitchen in this program, the following was completed: 13 virtual community kitchens; Delivered approximately 75 good food boxes to registered families each month to a total of 900 boxes of fresh produce in a year; Assisted with Brown Bag Project making and delivering sandwiches to homeless in Thunder Bay once a month 1200 sandwiches distributed in a year; Emergency food supports to families as needed; Work on a formal agreement with the Regional Food Distribution Centre to continue the development of the food bank; Assisted with COVID support for emergency food support
- Hired a Cultural Coordinator to assist with programming and individual support for families which included: Beading; Crafts; Birch bark crafts; Self-care; Story time; Teachings; Smudge kits provided to families; Ribbon skirt making
- Held many events this year including: Back to School event in Thunder Bay open to clients and provided school aged children full backpacks to start the year, 200 were in attendance; Easter event that included egg hunt for all ages approximately, 300 members in attendance; 71 thanksgiving gifts in Thunder Bay were distributed; Christmas bags - we did 200 children's individual Christmas bags delivered to our in-city clients; Red Dress Ceremony with other departments including a walk; Tripple P Parenting offered to clients
- Staff training and development including: Began Wellness Mondays which is a brief opportunity to start the week in a good way and share information and support; Bi-weekly Team meetings to complete case reviews and update staff as needed; Team development through facilitator Lego play; Workshop and education on Trauma informed care; Addictions

and Mental health Strategies for Complex issues (CTRI); Jordan's Principal Training; Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST); Safe food handling certification; Effective Communication; Lateral Violence; Sexual Harassment and Violence prevention; WHMIS; Completed program Policies and procedures

- Facilitated Band representative training for Community Band Reps and our Staff that included the following: Understanding legal powers of Band Reps, Legislation history and the Act, Trauma informed Care, Professional Boundaries, Applying for funding, Effective Communication, Policy and Documentation

CHALLENGES:

- This year has begun the process of First Nations Child and Family Services Reform making funding applications different for off reserve supports for families.
- Complex needs of families including the influx of gangs and addictions in the City of Thunder Bay
- Engagement with in community Band representatives to make sure duplication of services and collaboration is happening always
- Filling vacant positions with our advisory committee
- Lack of in person programming due to office closures and covid restrictions
- Limited shelter beds in the city for women and children in need of safety due to domestic violence, or gang risks
- Lack of child care options for parents wishing to work rather than rely on social assistance (OW)
- Lack of affordable housing for families and long waitlist for rent-geared-to-income units

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Operating 6 transitional housing units within the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre
- More in person programming to support the development of cultural identity
- Increased life skills programming in person to support healthy families

- Partnership development for the growth of the food bank
- Potential application for a Violence against Women's shelter in Thunder Bay for Matawa Members
- Increase the available affordable housing options through partnerships with the District of ThunderBay Social Services Administration Board
- Explore the possibility of child care options for Matawa members children

Awashishewiigihiwaywiin Advisory Committee

Aroland	Vacant
Constance Lake	Vacant
Eabametoong	Vacant
Ginoogaming	Marianne Charles
Long Lake #58	Noreen Agnew
Marten Falls	Patty Achneepineskum
Neskantaga	Vacant
Nibinamik	Vacant
Webequie	Levi Sofea





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 fiscal management.

COMMITTEE:

The Band Managers Committee has been reestablished. The committee 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 for all communities.

KEY PRIORITY AREA:

To provide support to member First Nations by providing information and capacity development in accounting, finance, and governance. This past year it was also decided to focus on providing individual Matawa community members with assistance with income tax return preparation in partnership with the Canada Revenue Agency through the community volunteer income tax program. This is an ongoing effort to assist community members who have simple income tax returns. The service is provided to Matawa members who reside both in the community and those who do not. Individuals

can also enquire about other assistance that the department may be able to assist with in terms of financial guidance and assistance with such things as government applications and other financial challenges they face.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Have been researching funding options for communities and updating the Band Managers Committee with funding streams that could be considered by the communities for their needs.
- As requested, provided input to communities in terms of policy development, job descriptions, and proposal development.
- Attended various COVID 19 update meetings to try to identify priorities in terms of funding from government agencies.
- Assisted internally with the Matawa team on various issues that Covid presented.
- Began providing an Income Tax assistance service to those Matawa members with little to moderate incomes i.e., preparing and submitting tax returns for membership via telephone and the internet. Also assisted individual members with non-tax related enquiries to assist with understanding issues they may have in relation to government related applications, forms, contacts, etc.
- Have been looking into Trusts, Wills & Estates, and different types of funding streams.

CHALLENGES:

The pandemic of Covid 19 has become a priority over the past couple of years with government funders making health related issues top priority; in addition, communities had other crisis issues to manage with limited resources, which made it a challenge to make this department's goals a priority.

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



Financial Advisory

feed off one another and share their understanding of what works and what does not 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 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 and still in effect at the time of writing; it is evident that the governments did not prioritize such proposals as the Matawa First Nations Financial Management Support Strategy/Proposal given the health crisis presented by Covid. Once the pandemic is over, we can hopefully revisit the funders and determine how to proceed and/or have other sources of funding available besides government funding, i.e., have established own source revenues.

Travel restrictions and lack of suitable broadband width for internet in communities has presented a challenge in terms of having Band Manager Committee meetings and being able to provide any sort of workshops or training.

Being dependent on the governments funding has delayed our strategy as we do not know if they will provide the necessary funding. Looking for opportunities for other revenue sources is not impossible but challenging. We need to have our own source revenues and that requires the leadership to advocate that the governments need to have a revenue sharing partnership with First Nations without us having to apply and report back to them.



OPPORTUNITIES:

To establish a capacity development process and/or 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 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 with each other which will allow each First Nation to learn from one another and develop capacity and systems in unison.

To develop momentum with getting individual community members with low to moderate taxable income to file their tax returns which will provide their families with another source of income, i.e., benefits such as the Canada Child Benefit, GST/HST Credit, and more.



Technical Advisory Services

STAFF:

Aaron Wesley Manager of Technical Services
Leah Echum, Technical Services Administration Support

Capital Projects and Housing

Dharmender Dhankar, Community Development Engineer
Lindsay Jupp, Capital Projects Coordinator
Carla Jean-Chisel, Capital Projects Coordinator
Saverio Rizzo, Housing Coordinator/Inspector
Shane Ostamus, Tech Services Projects support

NIBI Services

Michael Bazdarick Water and Wastewater, ORO
Neil Neegan, Water and Wastewater Operator Support
Meghdeep Chauhan, Water and Wastewater Operator Support
Mitchell Elsey, Water and Wastewater Operator Support

Environmental/Public Health

Oksana Ostrovka Environmental/Public Health Inspector
Karen McGoldrick Environmental/Public Health Inspector

Emergency Management

Monica Budeslic, Emergency Management Coordinator
Moe Douglas, Fire Marshall

OVERVIEW:

Capital Projects and Housing

- Project Management
- Capital Projects and Housing Applications
- Project Reporting
- First Nation Infrastructure Investment Plans (FNIIP)
- Operations & Maintenance (O&M) reporting
- Asset Condition Reporting System
- Project Advisory
- Building Inspections
- Conceptual Drawings

NIBI Services

- Water and Wastewater Operator Support
- Remote Monitoring

Environmental/ Public Health

- Water and Wastewater Sampling and Reporting
- Soil Testing
- Housing Inspections
- Safe Food Handling
- Communicable Disease Investigations
- Dog Bite Investigations

Emergency Management

- Emergency Management Coordination
- FireSmart Planning
- Emergency Declarations
- Emergency Response Planning
- Fire Investigations
- Hazardous Identification Risk Assessments
- 911 Services Planning
- Community Wild Fire Protection Plans
- Incident Management Systems
- Fire Mapping



Technical Advisory Services

KEY PRIORITY AREA:

All the Services within Technical Services are Key Priorities, with the overall objective of improving the quality of life for our First Nations on reserve members

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

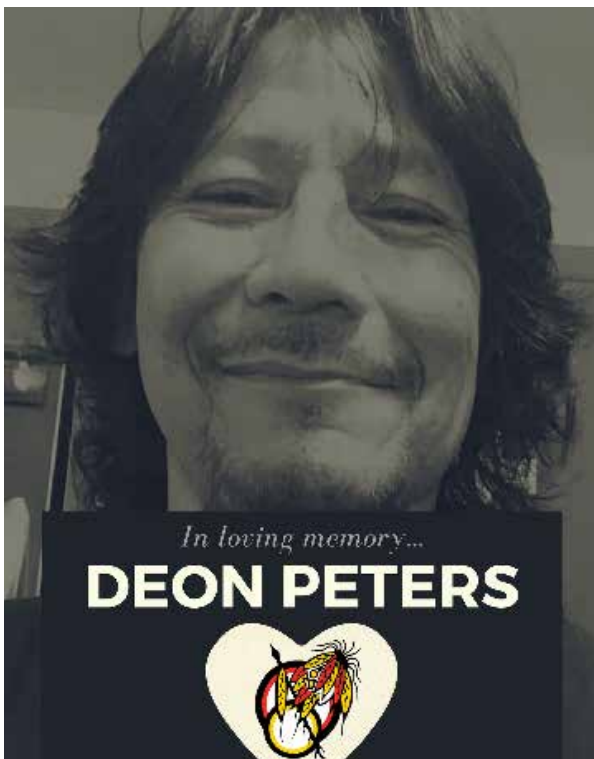
- CWFPF First smart plans
- FNIIP applications
- Community Capital Planning Applications for outstanding
- Expansion and Lot Development Applications
- Operator Support for Marten Falls First Nation
- Blastomycosis sampling
- Water and Wastewater Testing meeting Ontario Drinking Water Regulations

CHALLENGES:

Bureaucracies and COVID-19.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Project management opportunities.



October 1965 - February 1, 2022

Long-Time Marten Falls FN Water Treatment Plant Operator Journeys On

(from a social media post dated February 1, 2022)

“With sad hearts, we acknowledge the death last night of our LOGO CREATOR Deon Peters. Besides the legacy he left his family, he also left behind his knowledge/skills of water treatment plant (WTP) operation in the community of Marten Falls First Nation. He was an anchor at the WTP. Consultants, engineers, contractors, etc. relied on him. Deon was not only a great man to his family but to friends and his community. Our condolences to his family in Marten Falls and Constance Lake First Nation. He will be greatly missed.”



Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction

STAFF:

Kathryn Brady, Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Manager
Alanna McKenzie, Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Policy Coordinator
Rosanna Peever, Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Logistics Coordinator
Alexandra Kavalchuk, Economic Development Administrative Assistant

OVERVIEW:

Originally mandated in 2016 by the Matawa Chiefs Council based on Resolution #01-15/12/2016 Jurisdiction Table the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department is the continuing of the Chiefs direction to examine different topics, mechanisms and options related to and of interest to the Matawa member First Nations. The original topics included but were not limited to roads, permitting and land management. Over time, after the end of the Matawa/Ontario Regional Framework Agreement (2014) by the Ford government in 2017, the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department continues to provide the information, analysis and support to Matawa member First Nations in this area of work.

In 2021 the Matawa Chiefs Council further adopted Resolution 2021-03-07 Matawa Development Corporation Structure Appointments and the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department work of carrying out this direction was established. As directed, the new regional development corporation has been formed to develop opportunities to meet the infrastructure needs of the Matawa communities, and other potentially emerging business opportunities. As part of this process, a number of reputable and established Canadian companies with experience in large-scale construction projects including roads and highways, water treatment, electricity, government relations and finance have signed Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with Matawa to help develop a new path forward. Going forward, these processes are intended to progressively position the Matawa member First Nations to research, plan and participate in the socio-economic aspects of regional development opportunities in the North.

Overall, in terms of policy analysis and support – the focus of the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department since the COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020 has been to be a professional technical and information resource for Matawa member First Nations as Canada and Ontario prepare to emerge financially from the unprecedented challenge of the pandemic within the broadest sense, allowing for Matawa communities to direct the way forward.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEES

- **Matawa Chiefs Council** representing the nine (9) Matawa member First Nations functions as the main reporting and direction providing committee from within the Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) structure.
- **Matawa Development Corporation** (MDC) Board of Directors represents the five (5) member First Nations of Long Lake #58, Constance Lake, Marten Falls, Eabametoong, and Nibinamik at this point in report preparation, and the work continues to provide the opportunity for all Matawa member First Nations to participate in this initiative.
- **Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Working Group** (RP&JWG) had representation as directed from the Matawa member First Nations. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and the required Matawa Board of Directors operational and in-person meeting restrictions still currently in place, the meeting of this group has been unavailable. An updated discussion on RP&JWG next steps by the Matawa Chiefs Council may be

KEY PRIORITY AREAS:

The Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department has worked to carry out two (2) essential mandates within the Matawa Chiefs Council direction:

a) Regional Economic Development Capacity and Opportunity Building

The establishment and formal incorporation of the Matawa Development Corporation (MDC) and the preliminary developmental and relationship building work required with the Matawa, Enterprise Canada, PCL, EPCOR and OPG (MOU Partners). The focus of the regional economic development initiatives is to explore and present real opportunities for the member communities, and based on the community driven and directed positions of the First Nations represented.

The Matawa Development Corporation (MDC) is a newly formed for-profit entity that consist of several Matawa member communities. The MDC focus is on owning and operating large-scale regional businesses that will provide our membership with improved community infrastructure, project management, capacity building, employment and training opportunities. The MDC will approach development in an environmentally responsible and culturally appropriate manner. Together with our strategic partners, the MDC will establish business relationships that support our wholistic vision towards reaching our goals of self-determination through the creation of our own economy.

b) Regional Jurisdiction & Development Related Strategic Issues

Continuing to provide the Matawa Chiefs Council with detailed updates and briefing notes on strategic issues related to the development of the North, changing Ontario and Canada legislation related to rights, land management and significant technical processes such as the forthcoming Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) Regional Assessment on the Ring of Fire Region. Information provided to the Matawa Chiefs Council has focused on positioning and supporting Matawa member First Nations as the leaders of decision-making and developments in their homelands and territories.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Specific work product of this year includes the following deliverables:

Matawa Chiefs Council Resolution

- 2021 09 16 – Matawa Chiefs Council Reject the Ontario and Canada First Nations Economic Growth and Prosperity Tables [Detailed resolution update included in the Matawa 2021-2022 Resolution Updates.]

Political Briefing Notes – Matawa Chiefs Council

- 2021 07 19 – Legal Opinion Regarding Proposed Amendments to the Far North Act, 2010 and Mining/ Forestry Development in the Context of Treaty 9
- 2021 09 14 – Canada/Ontario Initiatives Expected to Proceed Fall 2021
- 2021 11 25 – Mining Related Litigation Proceeding Across Ontario and Canada
- 2021 01 19 – Regional Assessment Update & Draft Statement (significant carry-over document from previous work year reported)
- 2022 02 14 – Regional Assessment Draft Agreement Canada and Ontario
- 2022 03 21 – Ontario's Critical Minerals Strategy 2022-2027
- 2022 03 22 – Ontario's NDMNRF Consultation Framework
- 2022 03 24 – Attawapiskat First Nation v. Ontario, 2022 ONSC 1196

Matawa Development Corporation Briefing Notes

- 2022 01 19 – Matawa Development Corporation Update and Next Steps
- 2022 03 04 – Matawa Development Corporation Board of Directors Update
- 2022 03 22 – Matawa Development Corporation Board of Directors Update
- 2022 03 24 – Matawa Development Corporation Board of Directors Update

Matawa Development Corporation Documents

- Draft Limited Partnership Agreement
- Draft Unanimous Shareholder Agreement
- Corporate Financial Structure PowerPoint
- Corporate Financial Structure Letter of Intent



Media Releases

- 2022 02 23 – Matawa Calls on Canada to Establish a “Matawa/Canada Northern Development Table” for Economic Prosperity That Benefits All Canadians Including First Nations in Budget 2022 02 23 – Canada and Ontario’s Draft Agreement to Conduct a Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire Area
- 2022 04 13 – Matawa Development Corporation and MOU Partners Meet to Address Community Infrastructure and Economic Growth Opportunities

Letters to First Nations Organizations & Government

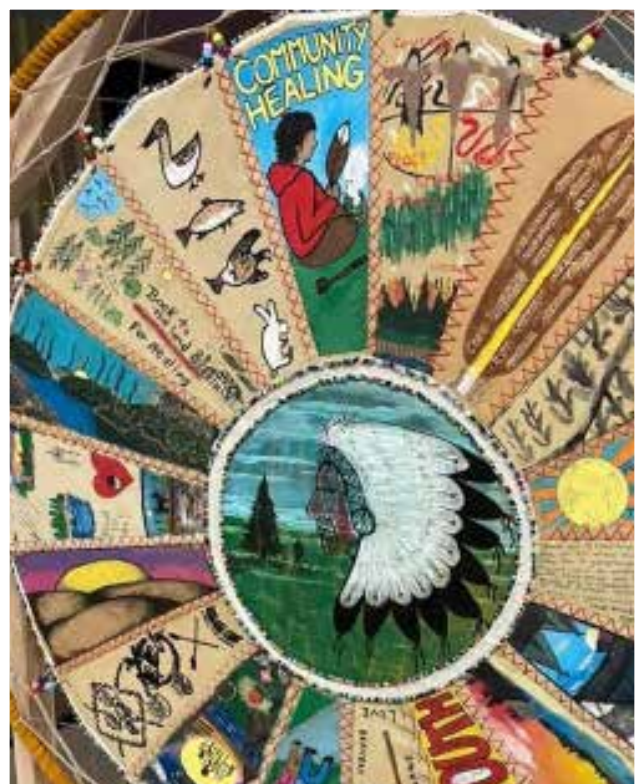
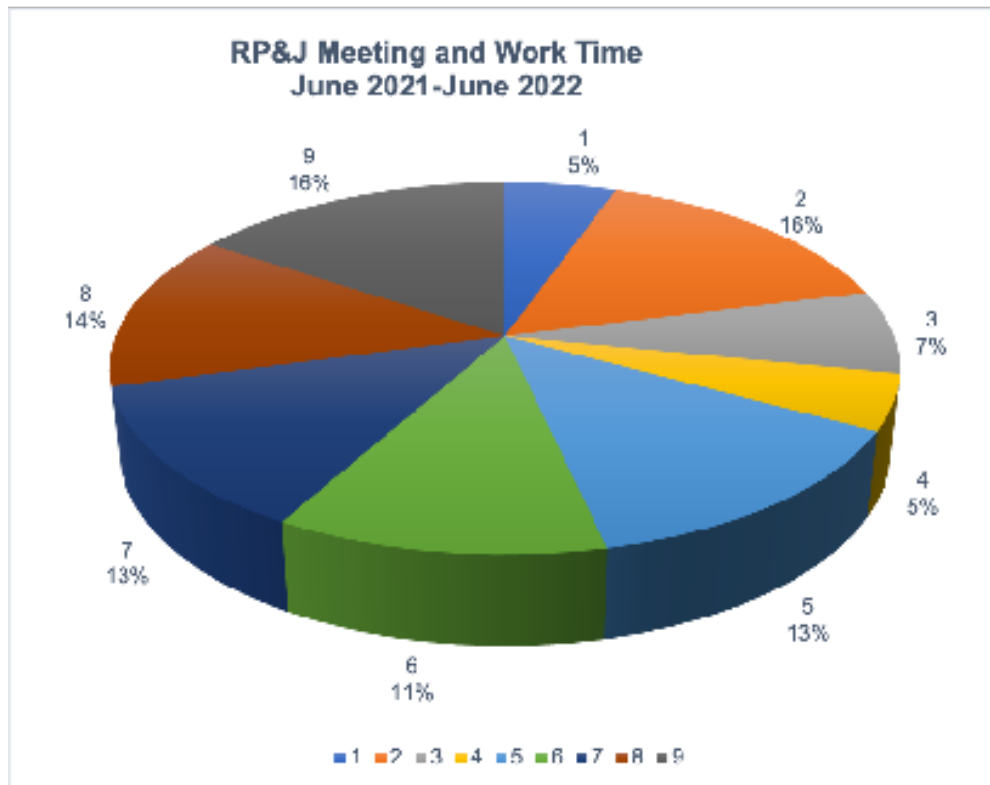
- 2021 09 28 – Matawa Chiefs Council Letter to Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare re: Matawa Chiefs Council Reject the Ontario and Canada First Nations Economic Growth and Prosperity Tables
- 2021 09 28 – Matawa Chiefs Council Letter to National Chief RoseAnne Archibald re: Matawa Chiefs Council Reject the Ontario and Canada First Nations Economic Growth and Prosperity Tables

RP&J DEPARTMENT MEETINGS AND WORK TIME FOR THE YEAR

MEETING TYPE	TOTAL
1 Matawa Chiefs Council Meetings & Updates	20
2 Internal Matawa Departments	58
3 Matawa member First Nations Community Meetings	27
4 All Partners – SOE Community	18
5 MOU Partners	50
6 Matawa Development Corporation	43
7 Other Organizations AFN, NAN, COO, Federal and Provincial Government	47



Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction





Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction

CHALLENGES:

- Matawa member First Nations are at a challenging point in their individual community histories and poised for the potential of significant development (health, social, community, economic, resource, cultural, technological, educational, environmental) of the North.
- It is within this framework and potential issues management that the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department is working to provide the practical and technical support to communities. All work is based on either Matawa Chiefs Council direction, regional priorities and topics identified that may be of interest, regional and community-based requests for information and research, with the overall goal of positioning and supporting Matawa member First Nations towards their community goals and aspirations of self-determination and economic independence.
- The topic areas of the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department can be sensitive, involving both short and long-term considerations while meeting the legitimate demand for First Nations to realize true governance, true economic opportunities and meaningful partnerships with government, industry and other First Nations.





CHALLENGES:

- Continued coordination and support for the Matawa Development Corporation (MDC) Board of Directors as the structure and formation of the corporation continues, including the gathering of business and technical data and information for Matawa member First Nation infrastructure needs with the Matawa MOU Partners Working Group; this technical aspect is also carried out as required in collaboration with the Matawa Technical Services department and staff.
- Continued research, monitoring and presentation of emerging legislative and policy issues and potential positions/strategies to the Matawa Chiefs Council, as the governments of Canada and Ontario have both proceeded with significant initiatives that impact the rights and interests of Matawa member First Nations. Despite the significant health and public safety threat of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the pandemic has provided an opportunity for all levels of government and industry to proceed with the development of the North.
- Overall, the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department works towards supporting Matawa member First Nations in these regional and local community impacting areas of work, as directed by the Matawa Chiefs Council. Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) may be the only tribal council in Ontario with an established economic, resource, northern development, lands and Treaty/Inherent Rights based unit at this point in time. The strategic importance of the Regional Priorities & Jurisdiction Department as an investment by the Matawa Chiefs Council and the MFNM Board of Directors since the discovery and continuing discoveries yet to be made in the Matawa region, homelands and traditional territories is significant.



Health Co-operative

Circle of Belonging



STAFF:

Frances Wesley	Executive Director
Dr. Golding	Physician
Dr. Koo	Physician
Dr. Oyella	Physician
Crystal Bell	Director of Clinical & Nursing Services
Charles Ross	NP Clinic Lead
Lady Javier Avellana	Clinic RPN
Carla E'layan	Medical Receptionist
Kayla Atlookan	Medical Receptionist
Jaimie Petri	EMR Coordinator
Amy Iserhoff	EMR Data Entry
Jaime Livingstone	Mental Health Nurse
Justin Chapdelaine	Community Health Nurse RN
Nick Kwiatkowski	Certified Diabetes Educator RN
Kerri Koski	Certified Diabetes Educator RN
Allison Palmer	Foot Care Nurse RN
Leola Bouchard	Public Health Nurse Lead RN
Tammy Dube	Public Health Nurse RN
Chelsea Luxton	Public Health Nurse RN
Emily Gordon	Public Health Nurse RN
Karen MacDougall	Public Health Nurse RN
Sandeep Kumar	Public Health Nurse RPN
Tracy Binkley	Public Health Nurse RPN
Noreen Moskotaywenene	Community Health Nurse RN
Karen MacDougall	Public Health Nurse RN
Mathew Wapoose	Covid Support Worker
Carly Ducharme-Skinner	Director of Mental Health Services
Waverly Puurunen	Adult Mental Health Counsellor
Noel White	Adult Mental Health Counsellor
Melissa Gagnon	Adult Mental Health Counsellor
Carrie Nagy	Youth Mental Health Counsellor
Lenora Smith	Youth Mental Health Counsellor (Mental Wellness & Recreation)
Cassandra Voets	Youth Mental Health Counsellor
Gloria Hendrick-Laliberte	Health Promotion Educator
Margaret Capon	EMR Privacy/Data
Lorraine Nabigon	Budget Control Officer
Brent Degagne	HR Support
Carmen Blais	Community Engagement Coordinator
Erin Smith	RPN Clinical/MECC
Mahogany McGuire	Executive Assistant
Heather Knapp	Admin Assistant / Public Health
Amanda Irvine	Youth Mental Health Counsellor
Jason Beardy	Director of Health Transformation

COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT:

Nishnawbe Aski Nation – Health Human Resource Working Group – Crystal Bell
Indigenous Primary Health Care Council – Frances Wesley
Northern Ontario School of Medicine Remote Residency Stream – Crystal Bell, Frances Wesley, Paul Capon
National Federation of Health Cooperatives Board - Frances Wesley
Sioux Lookout Area First Nations COVID-19 Regional Planning Table - Crystal Bell, Dr. Golding
Indigenous Food Circle Advisory Committee - Farren Tropea
Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy – Emergency Food Response Table – Farren Tropea
Matawa Homelessness Taskforce – Waverly Puurunen

OVERVIEW:

Matawa Health Co-operative (MHC) is a Matawa First Nation owned health co-operative that provides health care services to enhance existing health services to achieve long-term health and well-being for all members within the nine (9) Matawa First Nations.

Diabetes & Nutrition Programming:

- Increased networking with Matawa community health partners
- Assisting Matawa members how to manage diabetes due to increased rate of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus with younger adults, adolescents, and children
- Working collaboratively with the Matawa Education & Care Centre and Matawa First Nation community schools to provide better services to youth
- Redeployment of staff to public health measures through the global pandemic at times
- Increased evidence of diabetic complications such as higher rate of retinopathy, nephropathy, and neuropathy leading to increase lower limb amputations

Nutrition/Food Programs

- Grocery vouchers (food & milk) get distributed to members on a quarterly basis
- Good Food box distribution monthly to 40 off reserve Matawa homes by delivery and or pick up

- Various food programs & workshops have been offered to members throughout the year
- Cooked traditional foods delivered to members who are in the city for medical appointments by request
- Project Brown Bag – monthly distribution of hot lunch to homeless in the area.

Foot Care

- Foot care is provided to all our 9 Matawa communities and to off reserve members residing in Thunder Bay or those that come to Thunder Bay on medical appointments
- MHC foot care services have been contracted out and we are seeking a part time nurse to fill this position and to continue the collaboration with multi-disciplinary teams throughout the Northwestern area providing optimal foot care
- Pop up foot care clinic was a success and looking at future opportunities and creative ways to service Matawa members in community Working towards developing basic foot care training manual to community support workers; in progress

Community Health/Public Health Services

- The goal of the Community Health/Public Health Program is to enhance capacity to First Nation communities that have existing health services
- Hired a Public Health Lead/Supervisor to oversee both community health nurses (CHN) and public health nurses (PHN) at Matawa Health Co-Op; this team works to provide education about illnesses and disease prevention.
- Other areas of education awareness include safe health practices and nutritional education.
- Assistance in other areas or community needs (home care, pediatrician visits, footcare)
- Community and Public Health nurses are a great asset to the Cooperative as they are specifically assigned to individual communities.

Community Health/Public Health - programs and services include:

- pre/post-natal
- healthy babies and healthy children program
- school supports and education,
- well woman
- well men programs
- Elder health support



Health Co-operative

Circle of Belonging

- Virtual health promotion activities
- Meet n Greet virtually with partners
- Off-reserve vaccination clinic
- Assistance with on reserve vaccination clinic
- Outbreak management support
- Public Health program development
- Off reserve personal protective equipment distribution
- Distributed PPE to all Matawa communities

Primary Care Services - Physician Services

- Our funding agreement with the Ministry of Health allows Matawa Health Cooperative to employ 2.0 full time physicians. MHC has hired a third physician (April, 2021) from the Remote First Nations Residency Program with NOSM who works in Eabametoong First Nation. We have received funding to hire an additional physician through NOSM.
- Our physicians work in collaboration with Sioux Lookout Physicians Regional Inc. who provides physician services to four of our remote communities (Webequie, Nibinamik, Neskantaga, and Eabametoong). Dr. Catherine Golding provides services to Marten Falls First Nation and Dr. Koo provides walk-in services for Aroland First Nation.
- Nurse Practitioner Services in Constance Lake
- Primary Care Services to off reserve members in Thunder Bay are offered through walk-in clinics and MHC temporary clinics.
- Plans are underway to develop a model for physician services for Matawa that will incorporate traditional services.

Matawa Education and Care Centre (MECC)

- March 1, 2021, to current – MECC offers students' access to nursing services and to walk-in services
- COVID-10 testing was offered to staff and students
- Health presentations provided
- Youth engagements
- Respond to the needs of students

Physician Services (NOSM)

- MHC had one (1) Resident who completed the Northern Remote Residency program. She is completing her return of service in Eabametoong First Nation going on year 2
- 1 Resident is in their final year





Health Cooperative

Circle of Belonging



Current Recruitment:

- Discussions with NOSM to expand residency program to other Matawa communities
- Regular medical students and resident rotations through the Matawa Health Cooperative Clinic and to the communities.

Mental Health and Addiction Services

- Providing Adult and Youth Mental Health Services (virtually and in-person) to Matawa members living in community and off-reserve in Thunder Bay.
- Service delivery includes: one on one counselling, grief and loss, suicide prevention services, substance misuse and addiction concerns, wellness checks, etc.
- Mental Health (MH) Counsellor's work with Matawa members to meet their individualized needs (e.g., stress management, anxiety, healthy coping skills, harm-reduction, self-esteem, etc.).
- Service navigation and support: referrals, advocacy, letters of support, Indian day school applications, housing applications, disability, income support/subsidies, Jordan's Principle, Non-Insured Health Benefits, treatment, etc.).
- Youth recreation / mental health and wellness programming (virtually and in-person).
- Mental health-based promotion and collaboration with community schools/faculty.
- Work collaboratively with existing lateral mental health supports within Matawa First Nations Management (e.g., Health & Social, Social Services Framework, Matawa Education & Care Centre)
- Work collaboratively with Matawa First Nations communities, Nursing Stations/staff, health directors, counsellors, and crisis team staff, NNADAP workers, etc.

Traditional Medical and Knowledge Keepers

- Work collaboratively with Matawa First Nations' Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin to respond to the requests/ mental health needs of our membership.
- Contract Traditional Services and supports based on community requests
- Elder Clinics offered from MHC Clinic Site in Thunder Bay.

Nursing Transfer: Nursing Devolution Project

- Ongoing project that promotes Nursing Transfer to our First Nation communities. Our goal is to work with communities to assist and manage their own nursing services
- Meetings were held virtually with Indigenous Services Canada, prepared remote nursing policies and had discussions with Eabametoong, Marten Falls and Aroland First Nations.
- Community Engagement coordinator has been hired to conduct community visits for the nursing transfer and assist with special projects coordination.

Walk-In Clinic Services

- Primary care practitioners (Physicians/Nursing Practitioners) provide on a weekly basis.
- Matawa Health Cooperative have a 1-800- Nursing Support Line – Matawa members have a support line they can call Monday to Friday from 8:30 – 4:30 and ask to speak to a nurse or a mental health worker. They can also seek medical assistance through this support line.

Elders Support

- PPE distribution
- Traditional food distribution
- Distribution of Elder Food Hampers / Grocery & Food Vouchers
- Footcare Services
- Elders Advisory Committee established – Elders from Matawa communities meet quarterly. The committee is being established and will assist and provide guidance to the Matawa Health Cooperative as needed.



Health Cooperative

Circle of Belonging

CHALLENGES:

Physician Services

- Slow process developing a Physician Services Agreement with the province
- Challenge to recruit one more physician to join our team
- Funding discrepancies between provincial ministries and federal departments in salary and incentive packages

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To incorporate an improved integrated, client centered health care delivery model, for its nine (9) communities with primary care focusing on prevention, acute illness treatment and chronic disease management
- To support Matawa First Nations with having their own family physician(s).
- To have the physicians work as employees
- Matawa to develop their own physician services agreement and develop a model that will meet the health needs of community members by offering traditional medicines and healing.
- Continue to work with NOSM and Ontario Medical Association to post and recruit for physicians

Crisis Support

- All Matawa First Nation communities continue to face ongoing crisis' (e.g., pandemic, evacuations, numerous requests for mental health services, suicide). At this time, the Matawa Health Cooperative (MHC) team does not have enough staff to adequately respond to all ongoing community requests in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To continue to work collaboratively with Human Resources to expand MHC's Mental Health Services and fill all MH roles (vacancies) which we have existing funding for.
- MHC to continue to work collaboratively with Health & Social Services and external partners to provide crisis support.
- To explore options for hiring staff (e.g., casual/

contracts) which are specifically dedicated to providing mental health/ crisis support to our First Nation communities.

Covid-19/Pandemic

- Covid-19 and responding to pandemic has led to ongoing staff burnout. Many MHC staff have been required to work above and beyond their job descriptions to meet the demands of Covid-19 global pandemic. Pandemic has led to increased anxieties around the virus and social gatherings

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Public Health funding was secured, and Public Health staff were recruited to take on increased workload which helped to decrease staff burnout and anxieties.



Webequie First Nation – Annual Career Fair – May 2022.



Mental Health Summit - 2021

Lack of Infrastructure in Community

- Lack of accommodations in Matawa communities which hinders MHC's ability to travel to communities

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to work with all our partners and community leaders to address the lack of accommodations at the community level.

Food and Fuel Costs

- Clients unable to eat proper nutritional meals required for disease management according to Diabetes Canada Guidelines. Due to high food costs in many communities, these are not always readily available

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Food hamper programs are provided to community members that includes proper nutritional meals
- Fuel costs of travel to communities have almost doubled
- Work as a team to coordinate travel and accommodations to lessen the costs of travel

Language Barrier

- Barriers include no translator available when needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- First Nations need to assist the Matawa Health Cooperative workers in identifying members who require language translation assistance.

Community Communications

- Lack of community worker communication which makes community planning difficult.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is an increased need to improve communications efforts between health cooperative staff and community in identifying the liaison person; this will improve better communications and health services in the communities.
-



*Frances Wesley, Executive Director –
Emergency Mental Health Summit – Dec 2021.*





Health Cooperative

Circle of Belonging

PARTNERSHIPS

INTERNAL

- Matawa First Nations' Community Health Directors
- Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin
- Awashishe Wiigiwaywiin Social Services Framework
- Chiefs' Council
- Communications
- Matawa Education & Care Centre / St. Joseph's Care Group
- Finance and Administration
- Four Rivers Environmental Services
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Quality Assurance
- Regional Priorities and Jurisdiction
- Technical Services

EXTERNAL

- Matawa First Nations' Community Health Directors
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)
- Indigenous Primary Health Care Council
- Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM)
- Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU)
- Geraldton Family Health Team/ Geraldton District Hospital
- Lake of the Woods District Hospital
- Roots Community Food Centre (Previously Roots to Harvest)
- Nishnawbe Aski Police Services
- Sioux Lookout Health Authority
- Dilico Anishinabek Family Care
- Nodin Mental Health Services

Community Members Go Without Proper Health Services (Eye/Dental)

- No preventative dental services offered in our Matawa communities – some children are going without services for a year due to lack of services. No preventative eye services offered in our Matawa communities

RECOMMENDATIONS

- MHC works with ISC to advocate for the communities to get dental and eye care services for community members. Long-term goal is for MHC to have our own eye care and dental program.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Matawa Health Cooperative has opportunity for further growth and development:

- Increase in developing partnerships with other health services providers
- Increase in physician support – ongoing
- Increase in Public Health support – ongoing
- Recruitment of Special Projects to complete outstanding needs and community request
- Purchase a vehicle for program support
- Develop our own dental and eye care services



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
- Meet with Program Managers to discuss system requirements, specifications, costs and timelines
- 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

- Operate within identified computer systems budgets, policies and procedures
- 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:

- Adaptation of new management tools regarding our email system change
- Working with several new departments to ensure their IT requirements exceeded expectations
- Assisting the Education department with new staffing, maintenance of servers and their dust contamination issue
- Manage and maintain 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
- Adapting to new recommended ways in server use and server management

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.moccasintrailsadventures.com/>
- <http://www.rapidlynx.ca/> (new this year)

CHALLENGES:

- Learning technologies that have not been in use at Matawa First Nations before.
- Working on issues the Matawa Education was having regarding email connectivity
- Moving all Mailboxes (emails) to the cloud.
- Continuation of the management of our network and the deployment of new equipment or new services during staff working from home due to COVID-19
- Assisting the Health Coop with their move and an impending KKETS and Health Coop move to an additional new location and the setup of their required networks
- Adapting to the Microsoft365 Administration tools

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Could easily host additional community web sites
- Intranet site (document sharing site) can now be implemented in a limited capacity using Microsoft365 and their SharePoint solution



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
Erin Desjardins, Stewardship Intern & Matawa Water Futures Student
Jennifer Duncan, Geomatics/Project Manager
Jasmine Baxter, Environmental Technician
Graeme Saukko-Sved, Geomatics/Environmental Technician
Dinesh Gunawardena, Environmental Information & Systems Specialist
Amanda Misnakoshkang, Geomatics Intern
Sonny Black, Environmental Coordination Officer/RPAS Specialist
Holly Pyhtila, Environmental Services Coordinator



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:

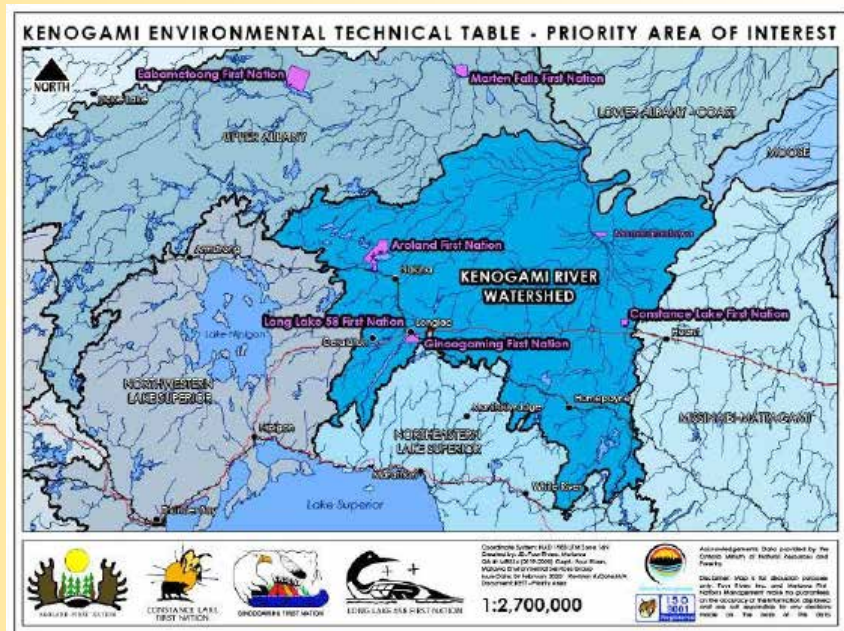
- Be open and honest in all aspects of our work;
- Be responsive to individual community needs and capacities;
- Build capacity through training and create legacy projects for communities; and,
- Provide innovative and sustainable community-based solutions.



Four Rivers Staff participate in Mammamatawa Gathering (May 2022)

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 and the potential for collaboration, the KET table was assembled following the Matawa Environment Gathering in December 2019.



KET Table Contributing Participants

Aroland First Nation	Ernie Gagnon, Sam Kashkesh
Constance Lake First Nation	Darius Ferris (Chair), Bertha Sutherland, Wayne Neegan
Ginoogaming First Nation	Calvin Taylor, Jason Chapais, Conrad Chapais, Leslie O'Nabigon, Peter Rasecych
Long Lake #58 First Nation	Darcy Waboose, Ervin Waboose, Anisa O'Nabigon

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;



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Four Rivers staff nominated for a Thunder Bay Business Excellence Award - May 2022

- Environmental governance; and,
- Environmental planning.

Four Rivers aims to help position communities to 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 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, bat and caribou populations; GIS/GPS for values collection & monitoring, benthic biomonitoring, contaminated sites assessments and drone technology. Four Rivers actively partners with organizations and institutions to bring enhanced environmental services to communities.

KEY PRIORITY AREA #2: GEOMATICS AND 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 customized services include map creation, data collection/storage and project support, as well as training opportunities.

Four Rivers has established secure data storage solutions for information including: GIS data, drone imagery, 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.



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ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Four Rivers successfully carried out numerous projects and initiatives throughout the year both as part of Mātawā First Nations Management's publicly-funded environmental program as well as through Four Rivers Inc. An overall summary of projects and initiatives is shown in the table on the next page.

A GREAT LOSS FELT BY ALL OF OUR STAFF

This year we said good bye to a long time friend and incredible man – Xavier Sagutch - who provided us with insight and wisdom and knowledge that cannot be measured.

Mr. X was a true environmental guardian who constantly inspired all members of the Four Rivers team ongoing.

We will forever value your contributions and friendship Mr. X.



Four Rivers Environmental Services Group 21-22 Project List	
Project	Brief Description
Four Rivers Webinar Series (#20-4444-01)	Broadcast of environmental information to help build capacity or inform on environmental issues through six recorded webinars to Matawa member First Nations.
ENDM MDISO (#19-1117-07)	Support to communities on mineral industry & plans and permits through the Mineral Development & Information Support Officer.
CBLUP Support (#19-1117-08)	Legacy project tailored by MNRF to support identified Community Based Land Use Planning needs. Efforts in 2020-21 focused on support for Marten Falls First Nation.
Garden (#21-1117-07)	Support of garden capacity building, and food security discussions through development of Matawa potato garden and support of Matawa's wellness garden.
Broadband Support (#21-5007-01/02)	Support of Rapid Lynx's broadband project engagement, including overall engagement, management and mapping supports, environmental containment and cleanup, and field/drone work to support corridor alignment and sampling required.
IAAC 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 Regional Assessment (#20-1117-05)	Support of Matawa member First Nations/leadership in engagement, capacity building, and education surrounding the Regional Assessment (RA) in the Ring of Fire area.
Climate Change ADAPT (#18-1117-07)	Climate Change Assessment, Planning and Adaptation initiative, aiming to develop vulnerability assessments for Matawa member First Nations, primarily using drone imagery for all nine Matawa member communities.
Climate Change BRACE (#19-1117-09)	Supported through Laurentian University, this project developed a network of Climate Change Specialists who channeled technical knowledge on Climate Change to member First Nations.
ISC Climate Change Health (#21-1117-05)	Regional support to community-based climate change coordinators who will engage members to better define impacts of climate change on community health with the aim to support adaptation planning.
ISC Climate Change Monitoring (#21-1117-06)	Regional coordination and support of community-based climate monitors and the development of climate monitoring stations, using weather stations and water monitoring equipment, as well as the development of an extreme weather event app.
Drone/GeoHub (#21-1117-04)	Overhauling GIS/mapping program through development of drone program for sustained image acquisition, and GeoHubs for better data compilation and sharing/display with member First Nations. Processed drone imagery captured is included in the individual community hubs.
Matawa Water Futures (#19-7005-01)	Working in collaboration with Wilfrid Laurier, Lakehead and Laurentian Universities, this project captured community priorities for community-based water monitoring and stewardship and created substantive learning and capacity building opportunities.
ECCC Caribou (#18-1117-10)	Project aims to support caribou research and research capacity building within Matawa member First Nation communities.
ECCC AFSAR Bats (#19-1117-02 & MOECP SARSP Bats (#20-1117-03)	Projects aim to identify at risk bat species with participating member First Nations through the use of acoustic recorders, as well as to deliver outreach and training/capacity building opportunities to increase awareness of at-risk bat species and their ecological importance.
ECCC CWS Acoustic (#20-1117-04)	Project aims to support the development of acoustic baseline monitoring programs with interested northern Matawa member First Nations, by working with individual communities to identify monitoring priority areas, and to design acoustic monitoring programs to support their vision.
ECCC Regional Guardians Network (#19-1117-05)	Project aims to support community capacity development to empower member First Nations to actively manage their traditional homelands. The long-term vision is to establish a network of employed community environmental monitors that are the eyes and ears on the lands and waters, supporting our communities to leverage available opportunities to effectively respond to contemporary environmental challenges.
DFO Indigenous Habitat Protection Program (#21-1117-01)	This 2-year project will expand on the established fisheries monitoring capacity and will assist in coordinating 5 community DFO projects (WFN, EFN, GFN, LL58 & CLFN). Four Rivers will coordinate outreach, training and research programs on fish and fish habitat in the Matawa member First Nation homelands, with a focus on specified community priorities.
MOECP Great Lakes Local Action Fund (#21-1117-03)	This co-developed project will work with four member First Nations (AFN, LL58, GFN and CLFN) in a technical capacity (through the KET table) to advance baseline data collection/ water monitoring priorities on Long Lake and its connection to Lake Superior.
Wellness Gardens (#21-1117-10)	Wellness Gardens (#21-1117-10) This food sovereignty program will work with the four road access Matawa member communities to construct large garden domes to potentially grow food all year round.
Four Rivers Inc.	Support of over 20 projects to eight clients throughout the year.



Four Rivers Environmental Services Group

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HIGHLIGHTS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES:

This year's accomplishments exceeded all expectations, particularly during another year operating under the restrictions associated with COVID-19. Brand new approaches to the way work is performed were utilized, providing never-before acquired data. Virtual communication methods continued, and unique platforms for distributing information were perfected, providing more meaningful opportunities to reach out to members, and to each other.

In-community environmental and engagement programs continued to be challenging, however field work was carried out throughout the Matawa homelands, during every season. Drone flights were completed in every Matawa community through the summer and fall, summer and winter field season deployments were successful and a long period of sampling for blastomycosis was carried out through grueling winter weather.

With the equipment, experience, certifications, and knowledge held within the Four Rivers department, opportunities for growth are endless. Work will continue in the foundational areas, however services have expanded as new research and data collection opportunities present themselves - though climate change initiatives, drone imagery possibilities, expanded field methods, and expanded communication streams.

Four Rivers holds over 30 projects and initiatives at any given time, however the year presented some unique and exciting ventures to highlight.

SUCCESSFUL DRONE MAPPING OF ALL 9 COMMUNITIES

In the fall of 2021, the Four Rivers drone team was able to complete drone mapping flights in all nine Matawa communities, and for the very first time, each community will receive highly-detailed, geo-spatially linked, 3D maps of their community. Four Rivers is proud to have been able to accomplish this highly complex project, using cutting-edge technology with a certified staff team.

Since drones can't fly in very cold or wet weather, the Four Rivers drone team was excited and relieved to complete all 9 drone flight plans, just before the snow and cold weather began. Four Rivers plans to return in 2022 to continue to capture community and traditional areas as requested by community leadership, using their drone fleet and team members.





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THUNDER BAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD NOMINATION

The 'Game Changer' award nomination was for Four Rivers developing an innovative approach, using revolutionary technology, to find a way to capture environmental and climate change related data. With the use of drones, Four Rivers staff were able to work outdoors and maintain safe distances, while still capturing important data.

FOUR RIVERS ASSISTS WITH BLASTOMYCOSIS CRISIS IN CONSTANCE LAKE FIRST NATION

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



ACCOUSTIC PROGRAMS

Building on years of pilot monitoring programs with acoustic monitoring devices (song meters), Four Rivers, through a revived relationship with Environment and Climate Change Canada's Canadian Wildlife Services, is embarking on a bird and bat monitoring program across the northern portion of the Matawa member First Nation homelands. Four Rivers procured updated monitoring devices, some of which were deployed in participating community homelands this past winter/spring. The long-term aim of these programs is to have all monitoring carried out by trained community-based monitors, contributing to the communities' own community-based environmental baseline data library, and ultimately contributing to long-term capacity

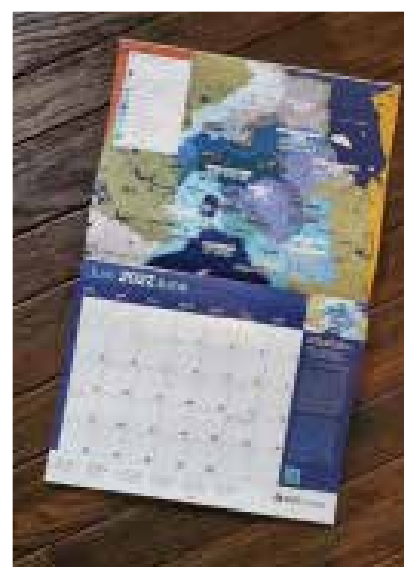


Curtis Towegijick (Ginoogaming First Nation) and Graeme Saukko-Sved (Four Rivers) piloting a new river transect protocol for evening bat surveys in the Matawa homelands. A microphone and device that records ultrasonic calls is attached vertically to a boat that then travels at a steady speed shortly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

www.fourrivers.group

AWARD WINNING MAP FEATURE FROM FOUR RIVERS

This June 2022, keep your eyes out for a special map featured in the ESRI 2022 Calendar. Jennifer Duncan, Project Manager/Geomatics with Four Rivers Environmental Services Group, recently created the map titled "Watersheds within the Matawa Homelands and Traditional Territory". This beautiful map has been selected and officially printed in Esri Canada's annual Map Calendar. It is the feature map for June 2022.





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WINTER FIELD SEASON PROGRAMS

This March, Four Rivers conducted field research in both Webequie and Constance Lake First Nations. To aid in gathering data on wolves in the area, 40 trail cameras were deployed near Webequie, while 20 cameras were deployed around Constance Lake.

Thanks to the community guides whose experience and knowledge of the land helped inform the invaluable data collection to help address community environmental priorities in the future.



Garden dome at Matawa Training and Wellness Centre in Thunder Bay

GARDEN AND GARDEN DOMES

The Matawa Garden project was an exciting initiative lead by Four Rivers through the summers of 2021 and 2022 to provide fresh produce for Matawa members during the COVID-19 pandemic. About 10,000 pounds was harvested and distributed again in the fall of 2021.

In addition to the Slate River potato garden, the construction of garden dome greenhouses was embarked upon. In the fall of 2022, the four Matawa member "road access" communities will have these 26 foot round garden domes constructed in their communities, and the first one has just been completed on the grounds of the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre on Algoma street in Thunder Bay.

FOUR RIVERS INC. - THE FIRST INDIGENOUS-LED WINGTRA DISTRIBUTOR IN THE WORLD

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

Four Rivers drone team mapped all nine Matawa communities last fall using this speedy orange Wingtra drone, and have come to rely on the accuracy and reliability of its performance. When there was an opportunity to become a new Canadian distributor for the Swiss drone line, Four Rivers Inc. was happy to support the product. Four Rivers drone team met with representatives from Wingtra, Switzerland in February for 2 days of GIS, mapping, and advanced flight training. Learning techniques and potential uses for the drone imagery from other countries around the world provided new possibilities for Four Rivers’ work going forward.



COMMUNICATIONS AND REFLECTIVE REPORTS

COVID-19 prevented us again this year from regularly travelling to member First Nations and to have the in-community discussions and dialogues that have been the cornerstone to guiding all environmental programming. Nonetheless, we strongly felt that it was important to continue to advance environmental programming during this time. Four Rivers undertook a few special projects where we went back to our wealth of documented notes and conversations, captured over our previous decade of initiatives, to produce summarized reports that recommended best practices or approaches to programming based on the voices of our member First Nations. A series of six webinars were held, a Climate Change calendar was produced and distributed.





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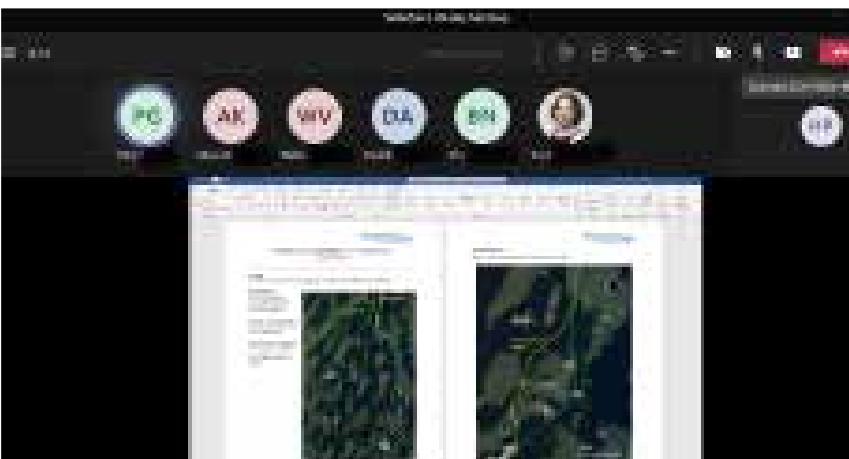
COLD WATER RESCUE TRAINING

In February 2022, Four Rivers Group field staff took part in ice safety and rescue training. This training helps keep our staff safe when working and supporting environmental monitoring initiatives on frozen lakes and rivers. The group learned to assess ice conditions, practise self rescues as well as rescuing their field partner.



SUPPORT FOR RAPID LYNX BROADBAND PROJECT

Four Rivers was able to provide support to Matawa's Rapid Lynx's broadband project offering engagement, management and mapping supports, environmental containment and cleanup, and field/drone work to support corridor alignment and field sampling required.



Matawa Education Authority and Department Staff

Matawa Education Authority Tony Sakanee, Neskantaga - President Ennis Jacob, Webequie - Vice President N/A at time - Treasurer Mary Oskineegish, Nibinamik - Secretary Nancy Waswa, Eabametoong - Director N/A at this time, Aroland - Director Martha Taylor, Ginoogaming - Director Roger Fobister, Marten Falls - Director	Advisory Services & Administration Sharon L. Nate - Executive Director - Education Stephanie Gerrie - Education Coordinator Angela Wapoose - Education Executive Assistant Jeffrey Yellowhead - Education Receptionist Tai Watene - Budget Officer
Pathways to Achieve Student Success (PASS) Skylene Metatawabin, PASS Program Administrator Douglas Gagnon, Cultural Education Coordinator Rafal Zgolak, System Administrator Nathaniel Salgueiro, Database Helpdesk Katherine Hughdie, School Success Lead Kelly Soulias, Junior/Intermediate Lead Shelby Ch'ng, Education Partnerships Program Liaison Mary Ann Nawagesic, Mental Health Lead Susan Zgolak, Primary/Junior Lead	Matawa Post-Secondary Program Georgette O'Nabigon - Post Secondary Coordinator Carly Perras - MPS -Student Support Worker
Indigenous Language Aroha Watene – Indigenous Language Revitalization Specialist Michael Graham – Indigenous Language Revitalization Specialist Lawrence Therriault – Indigenous Language Specialist - Ojibwe Nancy Ritch – Indigenous Language Specialist - Ojibwe Lois Whitehead – Indigenous Language Specialist – Oji-Cree Tracy Spence – Indigenous Language Specialist – Oji-Cree	Building Maintenance & Custodians Scott Russell, O&M Facility Manager Gerald Suganaqueb, O&M Facilities Manager Assistant Blaine Martin, O&M Maintenance Lead Hand Mitchell Spence, O&M Maintenance Lead Hand Joseph Misewace, Lead Custodian Beatrice Mamakwa, Custodian Conrad Moonias, Custodian Felix Quisses, P/T Custodian Kyra Metatawabin, P/T Custodian Mitchell Sutherland, P/T Custodian

Matawa Education & Care Centre Staff

Brad Battiston – Principal Nick Shaver - Vice Principal Adam Cousins - Math Teacher Allan Wemigwans - Trauma Informed Care Coordinator Allyson Gilmour - Guidance Counsellor Aly Wood - Mental Health Land Based Coordinator Barbara Munroe - Classroom Assistant Brett Desimone - PLAR Teacher Brittany Kennedy - Choose Life Coordinator Caitlin McKeich - Distance Education Coordinator Cheryl Ugray - Special Education Coordinator Chris Palmer - Trades Development Officer Eddie Baxter - Mental Health Land Based Coordinator Faith Jacob - Classroom Assistant Fabienne Spiess - Wellness System Navigator Jacqueline Carrier - Special Education Resource Teacher Jeremy Oxford - Teacher Coach	Mental Health Team Malinda Staal - Mental Health Coordinator Jennifer Loranger - Mental Health Worker Katy McGuigan – Mental Health Worker
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John Colledanchise - Classroom Assistant Joseph Willis - Curriculum Development Officer Keshia Teddy - Student Transition Coordinator Kylie Haney - Special Education Resource Teacher Larry Baxter - Student Safety Support Coordinator Luke Pretto - Teacher Matthew Beardy - Classroom Assistant Melinda Rody - Education System Navigator Paul Colosimo - Science Teacher Phyllis Goodwin - Teacher Rebecca Sutherland - MECC-Education Receptionist Samantha Bachynski - Life Skills Teacher Samantha Renaud - Special Education Resource Teacher Savannah Beardy - Special Education Classroom Assistant Shilpa Dhankhar - Math Teacher Stephanie, Bodnarchuk - Teacher Steve Lipson - Cooperative Education Teacher Steve St. Jean - Student Achievement Officer Tracy Dore - Special Education Classroom Assistant	
Elders Emily Jacob - Elder Sarah V. Moonias - Elder	Matawa Care Centre Vacant - Matawa Student Care Centre Manager Asheley Wilson - Youth Care Leader Supervisor
Student Support Workers Sid O'kees - Student Support Worker Tim Sofea – Student Support Worker	Student Nutrition Olivia Merko – Student Nutrition Program Coordinator Charlotte Baxter- Student Nutrition Support Worker
Youth Inquest Stephanie Ritch – Youth Inquest Coordinator Vacant – Youth Inquest Assistant	Cultural Workers Steve Achneepineskum – Cultural Worker Cathy Fobister – Cultural Worker Dakotah Meshake – Cultural Worker Renee Lavoie - Cultural Worker Thomas Lachinette - Cultural Worker
MECC Safe Sobering Site Amanda Kavalchuk - Youth Residential Worker Joseph Meeseetawageesic - Addictions Crisis Worker Levi Yellowhead - Youth Residential Worker Marilyn Misewace - Addictions Crisis Worker Shyanne Packulak - Casual Relief Timothy Fox - Addictions Crisis Worker	On-Call Team Aaron Beardy - On-Call Worker Ashley Nate - On-Call Worker Durell Oskineegish - On-Call Worker Harold Meeseetawageesic - On-Call Casual/SSS Casual Jada Sofea - On-Call Worker Klarissa Sakanee - On-Call Worker Tyson Wapoose - Casual/On Call Worker

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

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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 Education 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 Education 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 Nation students upon request.

The Matawa Education and Care Centre will open its doors September 2022 for 100 students that will be attending secondary school from our Matawa First Nations communities. This has been a project that began in 2015.

Matawa Education & Care Centre Overview

The Matawa Education & Care Centre (MECC) followed a Quadmaster schedule during the 2021-2022 school year to allow for more flexibility due to COVID. This proved to be helpful as we did have to close the MECC to in-person learning following the Christmas break until March 1, 2022. We had a peak of 178 students enrolled at the MECC this year. There were eight potential graduating students this year, with celebrations held at the MECC. All COVID safety precautions and protocols were followed in hosting the event.

This was the fifth year of our partnership with St. Joseph's Care Group, which continued to provide two full time Youth Workers, 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. St. Joseph's Care

Group provided extensive training for our teaching and mental wellness staff in trauma based education approaches and working with students dealing with addictions. Our students continued to have primary access to the Sister Margaret Smith Centre to deal with substance abuse addictions, as well as using their gymnasium for our health and physical education courses and for lunch-time activities.

The Executive Director of Education, Principal, Youth Inquest Officer, and Inquest Assistant continued to be active in meetings, discussions, and proposals based on the Jury Recommendations resulting from the First Nations Youth Inquest. The work includes advocating for the implementation of community based recommendations and the continuation of Choose Life and Jordan's Principle funding.

The On-Call Workers provided 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. We saw a reduction in the overall number of calls involving intoxicated students. The Safe Sobering Site continued to operate at full capacity and offered support services to students under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The MECC completed the year with our highest credit count to date (161.5 credits with Quadmester 4 still to be finalized at the time of this report being written). The COVID related school closure contributed to a dip in the credit count during Quadmester 2, but we rebounded in Quadmester 3 when the school reopened. Returning to in-person learning was a major factor in this credit achievement, as well as improving the mental wellness of the students and staff. The MECC held in-person celebrations at our newly renovated cafeteria with family and staff present (at the time of writing this report, we had eight potential graduates). The MECC completed the fifth 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 additional professional development and training for school staff, and additional programming for students. This funding has been approved for the next school year. The MECC completed the third year of our five-year Youth Inclusion partnership with the City of Thunder Bay. This included food hampers for participating students and their families, personal wellness checks for some students, and coverage of transit fees for 20-30 of our students monthly for the school year.

The MECC implemented three credits (Grade 10 Canadian History, Grade 9 Canadian Geography, and General Learning Strategies) that were developed through the Critical Thinking Consortium last year and also began work on the development of another six credits. As before, these credits are based entirely on Indigenous resources and materials, many of which come from our communities. We were also able to offer Co-operative Education credits through a partnership with Focus Forward for Indigenous Youth, in which students built a pergola under the guidance of a General Contractor, while cultivating career and life skills along the way. Another new course was offered

through a partnership with Outside Looking In (OLI), in which students worked diligently with a dance choreographer, culminating in a dance performance in front of a live audience at Meridian Hall in Toronto.

Our Special Education Program had four Special Education Resource Teachers and six Classroom Assistants provide services and supports to students whether they were in-person or remotely learning. We continued to provide Life Skills and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) courses as per student academic needs.

The MECC was able to deliver remote academic programming for any, and all, students who chose a remote delivery option. Students had the option to switch between remote and in-person learning delivery methods depending on their circumstances throughout the year. We were also able to accommodate students through adaptive learning, which allowed students to attend in-person at scheduled times of the day or week, and utilize remote learning for the remainder. Our academic program was delivered online by supplying Chromebooks to applicable students, and also through traditional methods to students without reliable internet services. Tutoring supports were provided four evenings a week by teachers volunteering their time.

Mental Wellness supports also continued to be provided to remote learners through the phone or online. In-person wellness checks were conducted by St. Joseph's Care Group staff in Thunder Bay, and through Nishnawbe Aski Police Services (NAPS) and/or the Nursing Station for students who went back to their home communities. Cultural programming was imbedded within the classrooms throughout the school year, and through whole-school sessions held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Cultural and Recreational programming was offered as after-school options Tuesday through Friday, and 12 – 8 pm on Saturday.

Despite not having an Outdoor Education Teacher this school year, our Mental Health Land Based Coordinators were able to provide students with many outdoor experiences that developed their skills and self-esteem, and were used toward credits in the courses they took. Some highlights of the experiences include: moose hunting, dog-sledding, ice fishing, goose hunt-



Education

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ing, and whitewater rafting. Many students were able to earn various certifications, such as firearms safety, motorboat safety, whitewater paddling, and first aid.

Renovations to the school and care centre were completed in April 2022, which allowed the full space of the school to be used for the first time since we moved

CHALLENGES:

The primary challenge for the MECC was another school closure due to COVID following the Christmas break. The pandemic has been difficult for students and staff and the emotional high of returning to school in the fall only to experience another shut down in the New Year was deflating. The continued renovations were also disruptive for the students and staff, and the delays in having them completed negatively impacted our ability to offer a full slate of programming.

Many of the community-based First Nations Youth Inquest recommendations still need to be implemented. MECC has been working with our communities and leadership to advocate for these recommendations to receive the necessary funding to be completed. More work is necessary to ensure predictable and reliable funding is provided by the government.

Several positions remained vacant for significant periods of time, including some for the full duration of the school year. This impacts our ability to offer a wide variety of program options to students.

OPPORTUNITIES:

With existing building renovations finally completed, the MECC will be able to offer the students and staff a greater variety of learning spaces, expanded programming, as well as a sense of personal ownership of the school. This will further provide students a sense of belonging and connection with the school space, leading to increased engagement

and participation in the learning process.

The construction on the gymnasium has begun. Once finished, much more student programming, recreation, and community engagement can be built into the school schedule. It will also provide opportunities for Matawa First Nations Management and the Matawa First Nations to hold larger audience gatherings being held in Thunder Bay.



LtoR: Sharon L. Nate, Matawa Education Authority Executive Director and Destiny Edwards, recipient of Jamie Campbell Bursary



Education

We Work Together to Make a Change

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 typically 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. On-site visits by the PASS team in the past year were limited to emergency purposes only and involved either community crisis support or IT support.

KEY PRIORITY AREA:

PASS team supports with annual School Success Plans, numeracy and literacy, and other educational initiatives that support student success. Supports with Information Technology which helps schools with technology implementation and troubleshooting. Hosts Matawa Education Conference annually in March, which includes a wide range of professional development topics that address current needs for Matawa teachers, principals, education leadership, administrators, nutrition program staff, parents and community members.

PASS also provides supports and advisory services by continuing to share information about Regional Education Agreements and federal Education Transformation, gather input and feedback, and begin the development of a draft Regional Education Agreement (REA) for participating Matawa First Nations. COVID-19 restrictions prevented the visits, but Matawa Education created a website for use by



Education leadership, Community Activity Officers, and community members so that information flow could still continue while travel was limited to emergency purposes only. The information sessions will help Matawa First Nation 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.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

With travel to the Matawa communities again limited due to COVID-19, PASS staff worked on new initiatives. They also assisted Matawa First Nations Management during this time with hamper distributions and vaccine clinic transportation. The IT team was able to provide some in-person services, following the procedures set out by each community's pandemic team.

The PASS team continued to assist schools with homework packages that featured a variety of topics, grade levels, and activities. Wellness bags were also created for several schools that focused on literacy, numeracy, and wellness.

In the spring, PASS held bi-weekly virtual challenges for Matawa families in the form of the Odaminowag

(they are playing) Games. These activities encouraged families to work together to share their skills and to learn new ones. Participants submitted photos and were entered to win prizes. Some of the challenges included Window Decorating; Goose Plucking; Singing a Song/Telling a Story in the Language; Ice Fishing; and Snowman Building.

In the absence of community travel, the PASS team hosted virtual engagement sessions with community partners. Sessions were geared towards educators, children, and families. Educators had the opportunity to learn valuable skills that could be used in their classrooms. Children and families also participated in some of our events. Sessions included pre-recorded story hours for children; Financial Literacy with Frontier College; an art session with Angela Benedict; and Trauma Informed Classroom Strategies and Experiential Learning with Right to Play.

PASS Staff also participated in several training opportunities throughout the year including: Mental Health First Aid, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), First Nation Mental Health First Aid, Community Crisis Response, and various workshops and seminars hosted by community partners.

Welcome to JK bags were prepared for all communities to distribute to incoming junior kindergarten students in the fall of 2022. Target areas for the bags included literacy, numeracy, wellness, cultural, and fine motor skills.

The Orange Shirt Day Design contest was an opportunity for Matawa students in grades K-8 to create the design for Orange Shirt Day 2022. The winner's design will be featured on orange shirts to be distributed to Matawa schools in the fall, and a calendar will be created featuring all participants' designs.

The Positive Indigenous Role Models Campaign featured Canadian Indigenous Influencers and respected Matawa members who were brought together in a video/audio campaign to reach the youth of Matawa communities. Role models offered positive words of encouragement and advice as students return

to in class learning.

The Bowmanville Bursary is an annual event in partnership with the Rotary Club from Bowmanville, Ontario that supports literacy skills. The bursary is open to Matawa members who are attending elementary, secondary, post-secondary, adult education, training, apprenticeship, or trades programs. The goal is to promote excellence in literacy, language, leadership, personal achievement, as well as those who demonstrate determination and commitment with education and career goals.

The IT team continued to offer support both remotely and with some in-person services. Internet connectivity was expanded in Eabametoong, Webequie, and Nibinamik. They were able to incorporate Starlink, which improved the internet speed in most schools.

The PASS team has actively been engaging online with community members through their Facebook page. Find us at "Matawa Education – Pathways to Achieving Student Success."



CHALLENGES:

The Annual Matawa Education Conference was cancelled in 2021 and March 2022 due to Covid-19. With protocols being lifted planning for the March 2023 conference will begin in summer 2022. Community travel to the Matawa Communities was not possible for significant portions of the year due to COVID-19 except by our IT staff to address network related issues to help support schools with their chosen method of learning or for emergency purposes. This, along with insufficient internet capacity, limited the supports PASS staff could offer to the Matawa schools.



Education

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The Early Years Evaluation Teacher Assessment (EYE-TA) for SK students was completed by five schools in the fall. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 and school closures, the follow up assessment for the EYE-TA and the Early Years Evaluation Direct Assessment (EYE-DA) for JK students were not able to be completed.

Standardized Assessments (EQAO and CAT 4) were not completed this year due in part to school closures and students readjusting to back to school routines. These assessments will be available for school participation in the future, should they wish.

Internet connectivity continued to pose a challenge for delivering education and even more so for schools that had to close to in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. 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. The IT team had some turnover in staffing and is currently short staffed.

Attendance was greatly impacted by COVID-19. Schools planned for in-person learning, virtual learning, and blended learning, and each community implemented each delivery model to varying degrees with varying success. Engagement of students quickly became a major factor in attendance and student success when schools had to move away from in-person learning. Each school will have their own attendance results for a more direct comparison.

One Matawa school is still waiting to have their Book Launch Party for the Matawa Book

Translation Project, as travel to the community was not possible due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Matawa schools continues to see varying levels of turnover in staffing and difficulty in recruiting suitable candidates, Covid-19 did not make recruitment or retention any easier. We continue to advertise in numerous channels and will be uniting with Apply to Education through their online Job fairs to secure staffing for Matawa schools.

OPPORTUNITIES:

A new five-year regional Matawa Education strategic plan 2021-2026 has provided 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 are gaining more focus in schools, partly as a result of COVID-19. Schools across the province have been facing low engagement and reports are showing an increase in mental health supports being accessed and needed. Matawa Education staff have the qualifications to train school staff in ASIST (Applied Suicide and Intervention Skills Training) and Crisis Prevention Institute Non-Violence Crisis Intervention. PASS staff continue to seek out new and innovative ways to address the wellbeing needs of Matawa First Nations educators and students.

The PASS team also has a variety of virtual sessions tentatively pre-planned and ready to go when there is community/school interest. Some of these sessions are Promethean Teaching a Lesson with your ActivPanel with Promethean; Making a Pouch Bag with Ed-Digenous Traditions; Strategies to Encourage STEM Learning with Accessible Materials with Pueblo Science; Learn to Make a Birchbark Basket with Fort William Historical Park and Elliot Cromarty; and coding and science kits with Science North.

The Human Rights Commission of Ontario recently



Education

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released the Right to Read report, a comprehensive overview of where and how many students in Ontario are not learning to read. The report outlines 157 recommendations around topics like curriculum and instruction, early screening, reading interventions, accommodations and assessments related to the science of reading. The PASS team is researching the science of reading and implementation strategies to promote in the classroom.

Neskantaga Education Centre has had much success with their music program with Barn Owl Music that the PASS team is looking to bring the music program into more schools for the 2022-2023 school year.

The Moccasin Curriculum project will be implemented into the school year for grade 7 and 8 students. The assembling of moccasins represents their journey as they venture out to higher education or wherever their moccasins carry them. The goal is to have students graduate in their moccasins into higher learning. Students will take pride in their Indigenous identity and become mentors to their peers for future programs.

SNAP (Stop Now and Plan) is an evidence-based cognitive behavioural model that provides a framework for teaching children struggling with behaviour issues. Parents, emotional regulation, self-control, and problem-solving skills are supported through strategic strategies to promote growth mindset.

Youth Life Promotion is based on the belief that all young people are capable of finding their own path to a meaningful life. Programs and services from this perspective are holistic, strengths-based and empowerment-focused while aiming to honor youth individuality. The mental health lead will be looking into programs that focus on holistic wellness, physical health, opportunities for youth to attend cultural activities and events, and youth engagement workshops that build upon self-esteem and leadership.

In our Growing Your Own Food workshop, students are introduced to traditional food practices and creating

sustainable food systems through planting and caring for their own tomato plants. Kits are created and sent up to communities, which includes everything needed to grow tomatoes from seed to fruit, as well as a corresponding slide show and worksheet to allow educators to easily and efficiently deliver the workshop to students.

Future plans for the IT team include relocating Outcomes to Dadavan, which will improve troubleshooting services; relocating in-house school services to the cloud to avoid equipment failures and easier access for services; deploying new learning devices for remote learning and/or regular schooling upgrades; and the eventual arrival of the Rapid Lynx fibre optic internet in the Matawa First Nations.

PASS team is working on an engagement strategy to help Matawa schools address the attendance and engagement issues being heightened due to COVID-19. Individual schools may have, or be developing, their own strategy to re-engage students in their learning. Matawa Education staff will be available to support schools in their implementation.





Education

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Matawa Student Care Centre

As a new entity, our mandate is preparing the opening of the Care Centre in September 2022. The purpose of Matawa Student Care Centre is providing a home away from home setting and a continuum of care and support when students struggle to cope with the loneliness of being away from their families.

The second floor has three wings and are mainly utilized for accommodation purpose. There are fifty-five (55) double rooms, with three (3) barrier free rooms, which will provide beds for 110 students. Seven (7) rooms have one bathroom, and the other 48 rooms have shared bathrooms. Each bathroom has a shower. For convenience, laundry rooms are in each wing.

Youth Care Leader offices are in each wing to provide a 24-hour support for students. Spaces will be provided for the students to socialize, relax, study, and have fun.

KEY PRIORITY AREA:

The priority is to manage the safety and security of the students, accommodations, food services, recreational, spiritual, cultural activities, and health services. Wellness supports are in place 24 hours.

A 24-hour support with a 15:1 ratio of care. Parents/Guardians are trusting the MSCC to provide a home away from home for their child, therefore careful planning and developed policies and procedures are in place to help students transition into the Matawa Student Care Centre.

Staff training and orientation is most important. An open dialogue with parents/guardians, Education Authorities, Teachers, Principals, Mental Health Workers, and other support program Managers will certainly help support the students and staff.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Policies and procedures are in place. The policies will be implemented and procedures in place for contacting a student to ensure the well-being or safety through their Care Centre Manager and Youth Care Leader Supervisor. Forms and applications are also completed.

CHALLENGES:

The impact of COVID-19 was the most challenging issue that resulted in the closure of the Matawa Education and Care Centre and other organizations.

Ordering from vendors continues to be a slow process.

Working from home was a challenge due to no privacy and interruptions.

Planned visits to communities were put on hold.

Lack of commitment from Indigenous Services Canada for continued long-term funding for private home placement and boarding home rates.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Student Care Centre is a unique system of care, living with staff that care, housing stabilization, life skill opportunities, community based and living independently.

Preparing students going to college or university. Students who will be residing will be held to a new level of personal responsibility and few boundaries in a world of independence.

Students will learn to manage their life-skills that will lead to growth and live with a roommate who isn't a sibling. It can be a joyful process. Students can motivate and grow together and develop positive, life-long relationships.



Student



Care



Centre



Opening in



September



2022

Other Specific Education Reports



Specific reports on Education programs including Post Secondary and Matawa Waka Tere (Indigenous Language Revitalization) continue in this Annual Report from pages 61- 65.



Education

Matawa Post Secondary Program (MPS)

OVERVIEW:

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

MATAWA POST SECONDARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Annamarie Majiskon	Aroland First Nation
Martha Taylor	Ginoogaming First Nation
Angie Britt	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.

The MPS Advisory Committee meets 2 -3 times per year and are in continuous contact via: email and telephone throughout the year. Other roles include:

- 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 2021 – 2022 year the MPS have 23 Post-Secondary Graduates from the five participating Matawa Post-Secondary Communities. The Graduate Recognition & Awards Banquet will be held in person at the Victoria Inn to honor the graduates and Matawa/Rotary Award winners on June 9th, 2022.

For the 2021 – 2022 Post-Secondary School year the MPS program had an enrollment of one hundred and nine (109) students with twenty nine (29) student withdrawals. Enrolment is based on the number of applicants the MPS program budget can fund.

For the 2022 -2023 Post-Secondary School year the MPS program met on June 7 – 8, 2022 to determine the number of students that can be approved for funding, (about 95 – 100 students are anticipated).

CHALLENGES:

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

Due to the pandemic, it was challenging to work with students via: email, text and phone calls, however these communications worked out quite well.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Both Post-Secondary staff have the opportunity to sit on various Committees locally to represent the Matawa Post-Secondary Program to ensure that our Matawa First Nation Communities are represented.

The Post-Secondary Student Support Worker will once again have 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 past two years this was difficult due to Post Secondary Institutes course (s) – programs were delivered on-line. Therefore, the Post-Secondary Staff communicated with students via; email, text, phone calls and electronic newsletter to provide updates and services.

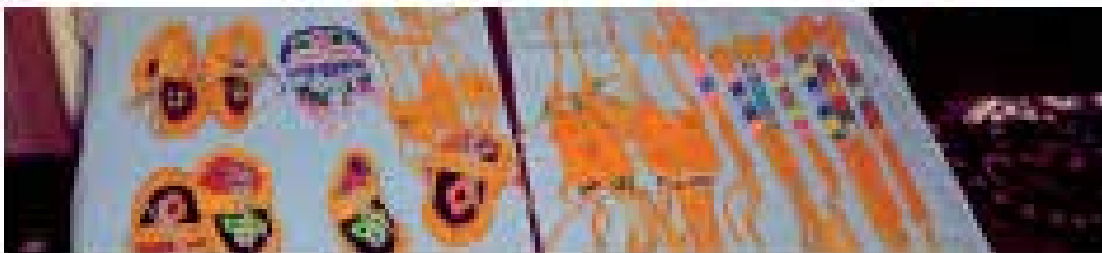
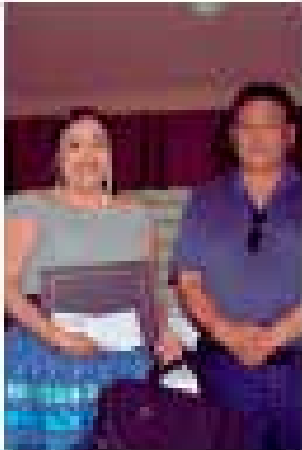
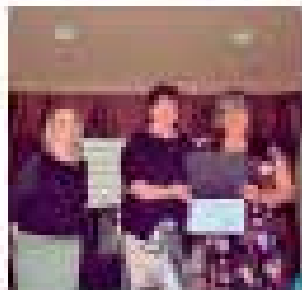
The Post-Secondary Coordinator in addition to other Committees has been invited to sit on the Negahneewin Council which is part of Confederation College. (Negahneewin Council Members vision is to create Aboriginal educational and training programming at Confederation College).



From the Incomindios Website:

“It is with great sadness that we share the passing of Stephanie Quisess from Canada. Stephanie was a powerful speaker, an inspiring defender of Indigenous Peoples’ Rights, and a talented jingle dress dancer and craftswoman. She shared her passions with everyone around her and through her activism moved the world with her strength, brilliance, and voice. We honor her and remember her role as a 2020 Incomindios UN Youth Scholar.”

Stephanie was a student of the Matawa Post-Secondary program and her spirit name was: Wasabi Mashkode-Bizhiki Ikwe (White Buffalo Girl). She will be deeply missed.



2022 POST-SECONDARY GRAD & BOWMANVILLE ROTARY AWARDS



Education

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Matawa Waka Tere (Indigenous Language Revitalization)

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

The Matawa Waka Tere - Indigenous Language Revitalization Project started in March 2018. Two Māori from New Zealand were selected to assist Dr. Rongo Wetere establish language programs for Matawa First Nations Management. By adapting Dr. Wetere's delivery Methodology 'Ako Whakatere' that helped learners learn the Māori language at a faster rate. 'Matawa Waka Tere' translation 'the merging of the rivers on a fast-moving canoe' emerged and informs the development of Matawa's very own Conjoint - Ojibwe, Oji-Cree and Cree Language Curriculums. The programs will be delivered in the 9 Matawa First Nations communities including Thunder Bay by fluent community language speakers once programs are accredited and or adequate funding is made available.

KEY PRIORITY AREA:

Project Outputs for year 1 and Year 2, from July to June 2022 were editing and proofing Year 1 resources and activities, securing language development funding in order to digitize the resources through Professional Graphic design and Media Services. Vacancy positions required are a Cree Language Specialist, a Project Administrator and Student Support persons for roll out of the Year One program once funding is achieved. The MWT Projects Copyright/IP statements for the resources is with management awaiting approval. Permanent Residency Application began in January for the NZ Indigenous language Revitalization Specialists. Year 2 Developments began in August 2021.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Funding was secured to complete Year 1 digital resource production in March 2022 to August/September 2022. A Year 2 online Program Advisory Committee consultation was held in August 2021 with fluent

community language speaker representatives to set topics and subtopics for program content development. As Covid-19 restrictions lifted, the team took advantage of gathering together to work on the Yr2 developments. The title of NIKA will apply to the curriculums. Standardized copyright statements to be included in the program resources have been submitted to management for approval. During the past year or more, the Team have attended a few online language conferences and recognized that the program details and methods applied in this project are an answer to what the people are still talking about in terms of language revitalization.

Methodology accomplishments: Review of Year One MWT Language Program Delivery Methodology Specialists Manual resulted in a Revised Edition being created. This Manual is currently sitting with Generator who are laying up the Manual to give it a more professional look. This work was made possible through the funding we received. The MWT Instructors Methodology Workbook will also be laid-up by Generator on



Education

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completion of the Specialists Manual. Funding also allowed our team to purchase valuable resources such as Ojibwe, Oji-Cree and Cree Dictionaries and a book on Accelerated Learning. Online Methodology Manual has been created as a future resource should Matawa choose to go Online with the Language program, or if another outbreak happens forcing programs to be delivered online.

CHALLENGES:

Securing a Cree Indigenous Language Specialist to complete Year 1 conjoint resources for accreditation has been difficult due to limited Cree speakers living within or moving to Thunder Bay. There are also only very few elderly speakers alive which is very critical for the Cree dialect. The Indigenous language Specialists expressed that working online during Covid-19 pandemic to develop quality content for Yr2 was difficult as the monitors and laptops can only display so much information.

Methodology challenges: Because we only just moved back into the Office earlier this year, it has been a challenge to conduct training in the Methodology. This requires 2 straight weeks of training and it is a challenge finding space as rooms are constantly booked.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Recommendations to hire a Cree translator as opposed to a full-time language specialist for accreditation purposes is an alternate option to completing the program resources. The Matawa Education Board of Directors would need to consider where the language classes would be held in their communities as this information is relevant for accreditation. The Accreditation process will be done through two paths: World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (for international recognition for Indigenous Programs/Institutions) and the Ontario Accreditation either with Skills Council or the standard Ontario accreditation board. Methodology opportunities: Creation and Development of Year

Two MWT Language Program Delivery Methodology Manual has begun. This Manual and the Instructors Methodology Manuals and its content will not follow what was created in New Zealand. The whole Methodology will be new and exclusive to Matawa.

International Decade of Indigenous Languages

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed the period between 2022 and 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032) to draw global attention to the critical status of many Indigenous languages around the world and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization and promotion.

The International Decade aims to secure the rights of Indigenous Peoples to preserve, revitalize and promote their languages, while mainstreaming linguistic diversity and multilingualism into the UN's broader sustainable development efforts. It offers a unique opportunity to collaborate and stimulate a global dialogue, and to take necessary steps for the continued usage, preservation, revitalization and promotion of Indigenous languages around the world.



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 2012. ISO is an internationally recognized certification which assists the organization to provide quality services, increased credibility and consistency in services. Transparent workplans ensure that the goals and objectives of the organization are being monitored and achieved.

QA REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE:

The Quality Assurance Department has a committee made up of Quality Assurance Representatives from each of the Matawa Departments. The QA Reps. meet to discuss issues/concerns, review current processes and identify areas which may require improvement to the Quality Management System. They are a great resource for other staff in their department.

KEY PRIORITY AREA:

Matawa First Nations Management's member First Nations are its number one priority. Each individual community has different needs and wants and it is the responsibility of each department to know what these needs and wants are.

The Quality Assurance Department's key focus is to ensure that ISO 9001:2015 requirements are being implemented and followed in each of Matawa's departments. This is done through training of all employees, department visits, communication and promotion of the Quality Management System.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Although this year was quite different from other years, the department did manage to still provide training to employees, policy & procedure reviews, one-on-one virtual sessions with staff/management, support to assist with crisis issues faced by some of our Matawa communities, virtual professional development and the collection of necessary information. In addition, Health & Safety processes to protect Matawa employees and community members was also a highlight of the department.

CHALLENGES:

The pandemic continued to be the Quality Assurance Department's greatest challenge. While essential staff were quick to work with whatever that has been thrown their way, following set processes were often difficult or impossible to do. COVID restrictions and protocols have often been changed monthly, weekly and even daily.

Department visits were also a challenge at times since many staff worked from home and lock-down periods prohibited any sort of meeting at some times. Some in-person training with many departments while using required COVID safety protocols took place wherever possible.

The Plan/Do/Check/Act cycle was also a challenge to follow again this year as there were often times when things needed to be done very quickly and there was not much time for planning in many cases.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Matawa departments have learned to work together to make things happen, even when several hurdles and challenges exist. New technologies and virtual platforms continue to give us the opportunity to work remotely and still accomplish our goals and objectives.

Working with other departments and sharing resources has been vital to Matawa achieving all of the successes of this past year. The dedication of management and staff has been amazing and proves that teamwork ensures that quality services can still be achieved, even when conditions are not ideal.



Economic Development

Advancing Economic Opportunities by Helping Create Opportunity-Ready Matawa Communities

STAFF:

Jonathan Neegan, Economic Development Advisor
Brent Edwards, Energy Workshop Facilitator

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.

KEY PRIORITY AREA:

1. Infrastructure Assessment
2. Community Engagement
3. Renewable Energy Workshops
4. Economic Development Conference
5. Microgrid Development
6. Community Capacity Building

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- IESO – Education & Capacity Building Fund – School Renewable Energy Workshops
- NRCan – CERRC – Community Energy Workshops
- IEDF – EDG – Community Mining Workshops
- Infrastructure Assessment Study

CHALLENGES:

Covid – The impact of the coronavirus is having a profound and serious impact of the community economics. Due to the lack of community engagement and poor infrastructure, Indigenous communities are not recovering as well as non-Indigenous communities.

Government – Due to the pandemic, Provincial and Federal Governments is offering essential services at this time, and have created many delays in processing, access funds and have even stopped accepting new requests entirely. It is still to be determined how

long it will take the government to recover from the immediate economic impact of the COVID crisis and attention is increasing turning to the long-run impact of the shock of productivity in First Nation communities.

OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Community Infrastructure Assessment
2. Community Capacity Building
3. Revisiting or Applying for Economic Development Strategies
4. Renewable Energy Workshops
5. Business Development

MATAWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Sam Kashkeesh (Aroland First Nation), Ernest Moore, Economic Development Officer (Constance Lake First Nation), Vacant, Economic Development Officer (Eabametoong First Nation), Eugene Labelle, 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)



Rapid Lynx Telecommunications GP Inc.

Check out the new website at: www.rapidlynx.ca

STAFF:

Wayne Slipperjack, General Manager in Training

OVERVIEW:

Matawa First Nations Management (“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 the effort. MFNM facilitated the creation of Rapid Lynx Telecommunications, a for-profit corporation formed to oversee the effort and to own, govern and operate Rapid Lynx after MFNM has completed deployment and operational start-up, as required by ISED and Ontario MENDM-NRF.

RAPID LYNX BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Aroland – Sam Kashkeesh
- **Marten Falls – Robert Moonias, Treasurer**
- Eabametoong – Donald Meeseetawageesic
- Neskantaga – Edward Moonias
- **Webequie – James Suganaqueb, President**
- **Nibinamik – Matthew Sofea, Secretary**



KEY PRIORITY AREA:

- Build Rapid Lynx Fibre Optic Backbone to Aroland and the 5 remote Matawa Communities and light the network for service.
- Obtain grant funding for Rapid Lynx Phase 2 to connect the road access communities to the Rapid Lynx network.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Overall construction of the Rapid Lynx Backbone Network was 57% complete as of May 31, 2022
- Equipment Shelters were procured and delivered to the five remote communities and Aroland. Locations for the shelters have been selected. Site

preparation and set-up is complete in Aroland. MFNM has requested that each of the other communities name a Facility Manager who will be trained to maintain the shelter and compensated by MFNM. MFNM is awaiting the appointments by the communities to complete site preparation and set-up.

- MFNM located an alternative carrier fiber-optic route to interconnect the Rapid Lynx backbone network with the global Internet backbone running through Canada. Interconnection and high-capacity service at 10 Gigabits per second and higher were negotiated at pricing and terms highly favorable to Rapid Lynx, lowering Rapid Lynx’s nonrecurring cost by 91% and recurring monthly costs by approximately 75%.

- The communities of Long Lake #58 and Constance Lake will also be connected to Rapid Lynx and Toronto over fibre-optic cable through additional grant funding from ISED's Universal Broadband Fund and Ontario's Ministry of Infrastructure through its ICON program.

- ISED's and Ontario's combined awards for Phase 2 of Rapid Lynx to connect Aroland to Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58 and Constance Lake and deploy fibre-to-the-home to all residents in the four communities totalled \$62.7 million.

- When Phase 2 funding is combined with Phase 1 funding for the remote communities of \$67.5million, total funding for the Rapid Lynx network is over \$130 million.

- The network will be the only long-haul fibre optic network in Ontario's Far North, and it will be 100% owned, controlled and operated by the Matawa First Nations

- As part of Phase 2 funding, MFNM will connect the Rapid Lynx backbone at Nibinamik to a second interconnection point to the global Internet near Wunnumin Lake. This route would form a Rapid Lynx backbone ring and maximize network security and uptime.

- Rapid Lynx will place the Matawa First Nation communities only 1 hop off of Canada's global Internet backbone and allow Rapid Lynx to obtain ultra high-speed wholesale service at Toronto, where competition is robust and service costs are at the lowest levels in Canada. This will support the business plan of Rapid Lynx while keeping service costs to the communities at an affordable level.

- Four qualified and experienced operating partners have expressed interest in bidding on start-up support for Rapid Lynx. A Request for Proposals has been developed and reviewed by the Rapid Lynx Board of Directors and is expected to be released in June, 2022.
- Electronics to light the network will be procured after selection of an operating partner to make sure that the operator's electronics will seamlessly integrate with Rapid Lynx electronics.

MFNM mitigated major risks to the project in 2021--2022 by:

- Construction dispute management and development of feasible alternatives. Contractor default is insured by a performance surety bond of over \$48 million.
- Addition of a Professional Engineer licensed in Ontario to its Project Management Team. The Engineer has over 40 years' experience in the telecommunications industry.
- Notifying the grant management teams of MENDM and ISED of construction issues and obtaining their support. The Ministries continue to support Phase 1 and announced over \$62.7 million in additional funding for Phase 2.
- Working with the grant management team from Ontario ENDM and Canada's ISED, and with Ontario MTO, MENDM and MNRF to overcome delays to the project due to construction delays and Ontario's re-route of the Anaconda/Painter Lake Roads between Aroland and Marten Falls. The ministries extended the deadline for completion by up to 12 months to allow time for the re-route and construction of that section when caribou migration is not underway, and they are willing to extend it by another 12 months to allow for completion of network construction.
- Backbone network construction is expected to be completed and placement of electronics to light the network for service by March 31, 2024.



Rapid Lynx Telecommunications GP Inc.

Check out the new website at: www.rapidlynx.ca

- Overruns are expected and will be managed by utilizing funds for fibre-to-the-premise distribution networks within the communities, utilizing existing cable or deployment of wireless connectivity to premises until the Ministries can assist with additional funds for fibre-to-the-premise deployment within each community. The priority is to complete the backbone network and light it all the way to Ginoogaming to the Rogers' interconnection to Toronto, without which Internet service cannot be delivered to communities' fibre-to-the-premise networks.
- Opportunities for direct employment will increase during construction of phase 2.
- 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.

CHALLENGES:

- Keeping communities engaged and informed during the construction process and obtaining necessary information from the communities on a timely basis, including information about community Covid-19 protocols.
- Maintaining project continuity during a global pandemic. Project meetings and updates were conducted by teleconference until December, 2021 being conducted via teleconference.
- Warmer than usual temperatures impacting winter road conditions, transporting shelters and cable reels to Matawa FN communities was extremely difficult. Similar conditions next year could slow progress.
- Construction contract dispute and mitigation efforts which will delay construction during the 2022 summer construction season.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- All nine Matawa First Nations communities will have abundant and affordable internet service over advanced fibre-optic cable, which has the longest functional life of any other technology of approximately 40 years, is scalable to meet higher future demand with only an equipment upgrade required.

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Membership

STAFF:

Barb Rabbit, Membership Indian Registration Administrator (IRA)

OVERVIEW:

It offers membership benefits in the form of issuance of status cards (laminated Certificates of Indian Status), as well as reporting changes occurring in one's life during registration as a status Indian, such as births, marriages, divorces, and deaths. In addition, other reports contain amendments to, additions to, and updates to information on an individual's Registry page.

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 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."

- Indigenous Services Canada Indian Registration Administrator Manual

KEY PRIORITY AREA:

To provide an accurate and up-to-date Indian Registry, Membership Service is mandated. The Membership Indian Registration Administrator manages the requirements for Indian Registration reporting related to the Indian Act, federal and provincial statutes, and the Indian Registration System's policies and procedures.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Certificate of Indian Status (CIS) Paper-Laminate Card

Membership Services-IRA provides the laminated paper status card to the cardholder 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 into 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

To register a child with Indigenous Services Canada a long form is required with parental information.

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. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, there was limited travel.

Collaboration with First Nations Reps for Indian Registration Awareness

Our Matawa Membership Services along with First Nation Liaisons and Representatives have been working on bringing awareness of FN's programs for both birth registration and Indian registration. Programs like the Healthy Baby Healthy Children program are essential venues for expectant mothers and caregivers with children under six.

CHALLENGES:

Birth Registration

It has been an ongoing issue within First Nations regarding the registration of children after birth. This issue involves a variety of factors, including:

- Uncertainty regarding the birth registration process
- Confusion with Indian registration and requirements
- Financial difficulties (delayed payments of birth certificates and fees)
- Unable to access the necessary birth documents
- Issues with oral and written communication
- Procrastination to apply for birth until last-minute medical situations

Identification Issues

There are many people without proper identification and unaware of what is required for obtaining a Certificate of Indian Status (laminate card) or the new Secure status card. Lack of finances or other factors prevent many individuals from obtaining IDs. To build awareness of identification, Matawa Membership Services is focusing on developing media, newsletters, and so on. Our organization is currently working with Kinna-Aweya



- 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



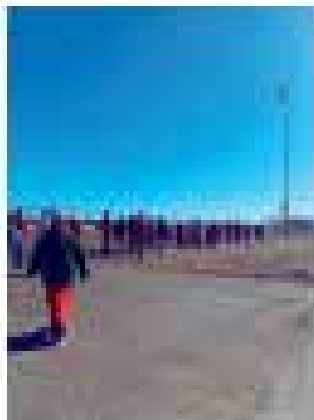
- Applications available at any regional INAC offices across Canada
- SCIS expires 10 years for Adults
- SCIS expires 5 years for Children

Legal Clinic and other organizations to address these issues.

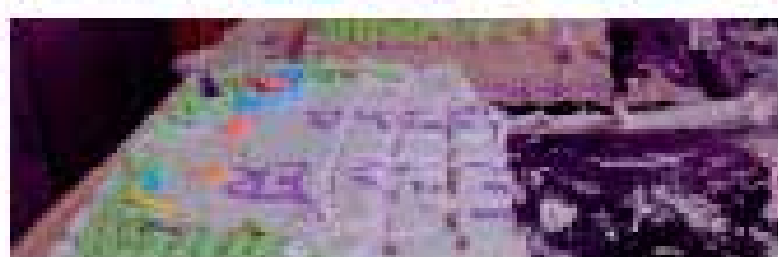
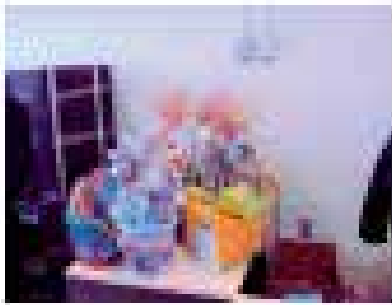
OPPORTUNITIES:

Planning to work with the Norwest Clinic and other organizations that are involved to do an ID Clinic this year. The ID Clinic is a one-day event and provides birth certificate registrations geared to people who can't access services or other needs.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is working to do more training with First Nations with registrations and commissioner stamps for liaisons reps.



RED DRESS DAY - MAY 4, 2022



EASTER EGG HUNT - APRIL 18, 2022

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The Power of Unity
The Dignity of Difference