



**AROLAND FIRST NATION**

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*MEDIA RELEASE*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**AROLAND FIRST NATION BUILDING ON ITS SUCCESS OF SUSTAINABLY DECREASING STRAY  
DOG POPULATION**

**AROLAND, ON:** This weekend, Aroland First Nation will be holding a community-based animal wellness clinic as part of the community's efforts to manage its dog population, which has led to a sustained decrease in the number of stray dogs and an increase in health in safety for both people and pets in the community.

From June 1 to 3, a 15-person veterinary team from the Kim & Stu Lang Community Healthcare Partnership Program at the University of Guelph's Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) will travel to Aroland, approximately 60 kilometres north of Geraldton, to conduct an estimated 30 spay and neuter surgeries, and dozens of vaccinations, wellness exams, and other animal services. The Animal Guardian of Matawa's Animal Service will be joining.

Prior to 2010, Aroland First Nation struggled to manage its dog population due to a lack of access to veterinary care, among other issues. Unmanaged dog populations resulted in stray dogs, dog-related aggression, and increased potential for disease transmission between dogs and humans. Unfortunately, sometimes these dangers lead to culls, an unpopular, crisis-based solution [that research suggests](#) "has little impact on dog population levels, bite reduction, or disease transmission."

In 2009, Aroland First Nation member Mark Bell and his wife, Siru Kantola, began working to manage Aroland's dog population, with a focus on partnering with animal service groups, including veterinarians and dog rescues. Community partners have helped support Aroland by educating members and providing spay and neuter clinics and other preventative care. By 2022, Aroland, a community of around 400 on-reserve members, had roughly 100 dogs, none of which were strays.

Matawa First Nation Management Animal Service's one-year pilot project, supported by Indigenous Services Canada, aims to reproduce the success of Aroland's dog management in all Matawa communities. To that end, Matawa Animal Services has hired nine community-based Animal Guardians in each Matawa First Nation, who are gathering feedback and data on animal populations to develop a sustainability plan tailored to their community.

Matawa's Animals Services project is guided by an Indigenous worldview that asserts a holistic understanding of health that recognizes the health and wellbeing of humans is intrinsically linked to that of animals and the environment. This aligns with the mainstream concept of One Health, which acknowledges that the health of humans, animals, and the environment are intertwined.

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