

Eabametoong First Nation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EABAMETOONG FIRST NATION BEGINNING TO MAKE STRIDES MANAGING ITS DOG POPULATION

EABAMET LAKE, ON: Last week, Eabametoong First Nation made strides towards developing a dog management plan that promotes the health and safety of pets and people in the remote First Nation. On June 3 and 4, with funding from [PetSmart Charities of Canada](#), a team of volunteers from [Cat Lake Friends of Animush](#) and Matawa Animal Services Lead Co-ordinator Judi Cannon flew to Eabametoong to provide an animal wellness clinic and to consult with community members on the community's forthcoming dog management plan.

The veterinarian team, including Dr. Wendy O. Williams, Vanessa Weider, and Sandy Setley, provided care for 84 pets, including both dogs and cats. The animals received wellness exams, parasite control, and vaccines—including vaccinations against rabies, a potentially deadly zoonotic disease that can be transmitted to humans. On June 3, community members shared their vision for the future of pets in Eabametoong during a listening circle, providing vital feedback to guide the development of the community's dog management plan.

Like many remote communities, Eabametoong First Nation, 360 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, faces limited access to veterinary care which has contributed to the overpopulation of dogs. The community of 1600 people has approximately 600 dogs, many of whom are free roaming. Despite efforts to rehome stray dogs, the First Nation has struggled to get its dog population to a manageable level, leading to concerns about safety in the community, as stray dogs pose risks to the health of people, pets, and wildlife.

To increase health, safety and wellbeing in the community, Eabametoong First Nation is developing best practices for human animal population control, which includes introducing a bylaw to limit the number of dogs per household on-reserve, partnering with animal services groups, and building sustainable access to veterinarian care.

Matawa's Animals Services pilot 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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