

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, June 24, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIRST NATIONS IN GREENSTONE AND CONSTANCE LAKE FIRST NATION COLLABORATE WITH PARTNERS ON ANIMAL SERVICES ACTIVITIES

Greenstone, ON—Today, Ginoogaming First Nation (GFN), Long Lake #58 First Nation (LL58), Aroland First Nation (AFN) and Constance Lake First Nation (CLFN) kicked-off the start of a week-long of animal services activities in their communities (varying amounts of days in all these communities). The first event, an Animal Wellness Clinic, takes place in GFN from June 20 – 25 for animals in both LL58 and GFN who have been pre-registered through those community's Animal Guardians or the Matawa Animal Services Pilot-Project. To-date, 140 animals have been registered for surgeries. This will affect the reproduction rate of animals in these communities by 800 less puppies. They will also do internal/external parasite control and microchipping.

Partners include Dr. Patty Lechten (who is a member of the Global Alliance for Animals and People) and team from Allandale Veterinary Hospital (who will be veterinarian team in GFN), PetSmart Charities of Canada, Ontario SPCA and Humane Society and Northern Reach Network. Northern Reach Network normally focusses on transporting pets from northern communities to the south for rehoming. However, they want to support communities to control the population of their pets because it is getting hard to find homes in the south because shelters and rescues are full. Some of the partners participated in National Indigenous Peoples Day activities on June 21.

In addition to the spay and neuter surgeries and wellness exams/vaccines taking place in GFN—Listening Circles have been organized to provide partners an opportunity to build deep relationships/trust and friendships, community consultation to learn the rich history told by the Elders about the connection between pets and people and to gather feedback about removing barriers that exist and creating access to veterinarian care, the animal population to help build sustainability plans, potential pet registries and new bylaws. They will take place as follows:

- June 24 – Ginoogaming First Nation (with PetSmart Charities and Northern Reach)
- June 25 – Long Lake #58 Listening Circle (with PetSmart Charities and Northern Reach)
- June 26 – Aroland First Nation
- June 27 – Constance Lake First Nation (with the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society)

Indigenous scholar Dr. Micheal Yellowbird, Dean and Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba states, “The condition of dogs in our communities is a reflection of us. If they are sick, it is because we are also sick.” Recently, this concept has emerged in western medicine as One Health – that animals, humans and the environment must work together for the health of all. The wellbeing of dog and cat relations is inextricably tied to the wellbeing of First Nations peoples. These activities are part of the Matawa Animal Services Pilot-Project funded by the Government of Canada which ends on March 31, 2024.

QUOTES

“I am grateful for the team of vets and vet technicians who are willing to come to our communities to provide care for our pets. This clinic will control the pet population, keeps our pets safe from disease, and it encourages pet responsibility for our pet owners and community. I look forward to meeting them all this week.”

– Chief Sheri Taylor, Ginoogaming First Nation

QUOTES CONTINUED

“Pets are very important members of families in our community. It is unfortunate that animal services are not available in Greenstone and I hope this will change. I want to commend Long Lake #58 First Nation members who took the opportunity to spay or neuter their pets.”

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

“As an organization, with the generous support of PetSmart Charities of Canada, we are looking forward to supporting a proactive solution to the pet overpopulation challenge. This collaborative, Indigenous led, project is the beginning of a sustainable plan to support healthier communities for pets and people. ”

- *President Amie Kempe, Northern Reach Network*

— 30 —

For more information, please contact Carol Audet, Communications Manager – Matawa First Nations at (807) 632-9663 or by email at caudet@matawa.on.ca

