

2024/2025

Annual Report

Prepared for Matawa's 37th
Annual General Meeting hosted
by Aroland First Nation



Matawa
FIRST NATIONS MANAGEMENT



The Power of Unity.
The Dignity of Difference.

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Prepared for Matawa First Nations Management's 37th Annual General Meeting hosted by Aroland First Nation

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In Loving Memory

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Charlie Okees
September 15, 1950 -
January 16, 2025

Former Eabametoong First Nation Chief and community leader Charlie Okees set out for the everlasting homelands knowing that he made his contribution to the betterment of Indigenous Peoples. Not only did he serve the community, he also provided founding direction to Nishnawbe-Aski Nation and Matawa First Nations Management as the longest serving member on the Board of Directors for over 25 years. His love for his homelands, his community and the People will never be forgotten along with his dedication, commitment, strength and service.



Joseph Misewace
September 25, 1966 -
February 18, 2025

A member Eabametoong Lake First Nation, Joseph (Jojo) David Misewace embraced his faith and traditional teachings and way of life, instilling these values in the staff and students in his role at the Matawa Education and Care Centre. Jojo generously shared his wisdom with the younger generation through his quiet guidance and heartfelt storytelling. He understood the importance of support systems and family values, making him an unwavering rock for his loved ones. He embraced additional responsibilities with love and grace, offering strength and encouragement to those around him. Jojo's legacy lives on through the many lives he touched, the traditions he upheld, and the knowledge he so passionately shared.



Jonathan Neegan
August 23, 1976 -
June 22, 2025

A member of Constance Lake First Nation, Jonathan Xavier Neegan dedicated over a decade to Matawa First Nations Management serving as an Economic Development Advisor, where he worked tirelessly to support and uplift First Nations communities. With unwavering dedication, he championed economic opportunities that honored culture, promoted sustainability, and created pathways for future generations. His insight, humility, and compassion impacted all those he worked with and served. May his memory live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

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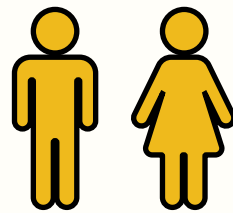
Matawa First Nations are



Matawa First Nations Management

A non-profit tribal council established in 1988, Matawa First Nations Management provides program delivery and advisory services to its nine member First Nations. A non-exhaustive list of the programs services provided by Matawa and its corporations include:

-  Education and training
-  Environmental Services
-  Healthcare
-  Housing
-  Professional Services
-  Social Services
-  Technical Services

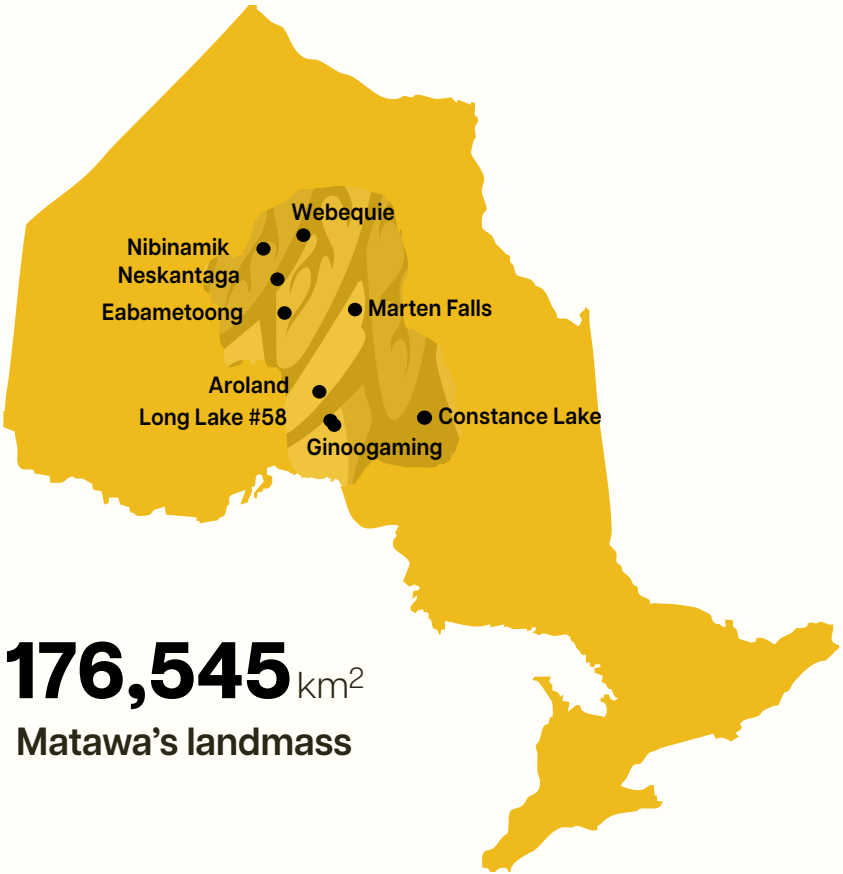


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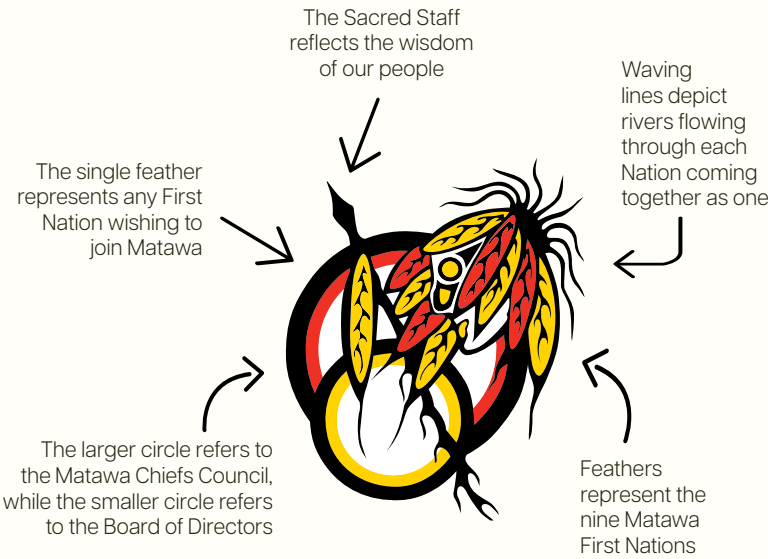
Matawa First Nations total registered population



Scan the QR code to visit Matawa's website



176,545 km²
Matawa's landmass



Matawa's logo was designed by Deon Peters of Marten Falls First Nation

Matawa First Nations Management simplified organizational chart



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

We 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: 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.



Chief Sonny Gagnon
Aroland First Nation



Chief Bruce Achneepineskum
Martin Falls First Nation



Chief Sheri Taylor
Ginoogaming First Nation

The Matawa Chiefs Council provides broad governance on collective issues and overall strategic direction to Matawa First Nations Management



Chief Gary Quisses
Neskantaga First Nation
Chief Gary Quisses replaced former Chief Chris Moonias on the Matawa Chiefs Council on April 1, 2025.



Ogamakan Michael Sugarhead
Nibinamik First Nation



Chief Rick Allen
Constance Lake First Nation



Chief Solomon Atlookan
Eabametoong First Nation



Chief Judy Desmoulin
Long Lake #58 First Nation



Chief Cornelius Wabasse
Webequie First Nation



Rosemary Moonias
President, Matawa First Nations Management
Board of Directors



As we reflect on this past year, I am filled with immense pride in the strength, resilience, and accomplishments of our organization. This year marks a pivotal moment in our journey as we honour the legacy of our outgoing Chief Executive Officer, David Paul Achneepineskum. For decades, David Paul has led with dedication, vision, and a deep commitment to the wellbeing of the Matawa communities. His leadership has shaped the foundation of who we are today, and we are forever grateful for his unwavering service and profound impact.

With gratitude for our past, we now look toward the future. It is with great excitement that we welcome our new CEO, Dr. Sharon L. Nate. Sharon brings with her a bold vision, a wealth of experience, and an unshakable commitment to community-driven solutions. As a respected leader and advocate, she represents a new era for Matawa—one grounded in innovation, accountability, and cultural strength. Under her leadership, we are poised

to build on our momentum and take decisive steps toward the continued advancement of our Nations.

While this annual report highlights the incredible achievements of our departments and communities, it also serves another critical purpose—it invites us to reflect on where we must grow, collaborate more deeply, and improve. As a Board, and as an organization, we are taking this responsibility seriously. The Matawa Review currently underway is a key part of this commitment. It will provide a comprehensive view of our strengths and the areas that need to be strengthened, helping to shape our path forward with transparency and purpose.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us on this journey. We are proud to serve the Matawa communities and look forward to building a stronger, more unified future—together.

In unity,
Rosemary Moonias



Rosemary Moonias
President
Constance Lake First Nation



Walter Oskineegish
Board Member
Nibinamik First Nation



Frank Onabigon
Vice President
Long Lake #58 First Nation



Peter Moonias
Board Member
Neskantaga First Nation



Lisa Echum
Secretary/Treasurer
Ginoogaming First Nation



Robert Moonias
Board Member
Marten Falls First Nation



Joe Baxter
Board Member
Aroland First Nation



Roy Spence
Board Member
Webequie First Nation



Dr. Sharon L. Nate
Chief Executive Officer
Matawa First Nations Management

As I begin my tenure as the Chief Executive Officer of Matawa First Nations Management, I do so with deep respect for our shared history and great hope for our future. It is an honour to step into this role at such a pivotal time when the strength of our people, the richness of our languages, and the wisdom of our leaders continue to guide us forward.

Although my time in this role is just beginning, the work we are doing together is already laying the foundation for a powerful future. The coming together of ideas, the sharing of resources, and the collaborative spirit across our departments and First Nations reflect what Matawa truly means: a place where many rivers meet.

We are standing on the threshold of transformation. The independent review—a process that will provide critical insight into our operations from the community level right up to my office—offers us the opportunity to reflect, grow, and plan boldly. It is not simply a review, it is a collective affirmation that we are ready to move forward with clarity, purpose, and unity.

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At the same time, we remain mindful of the shifting political climate that continues to surround Indigenous organizations, especially in our geographical location in the North. While these changes may impact the landscape around us, they will not define our course. Matawa is not shaped by the decisions of others—we are shaped by our values, our communities, and our commitment to one another. My goal is to support our work, as we stay focused, strong, and united, no matter who is making decisions beyond our circle.

As CEO, I remain committed to being present where it matters most: advocating for the revitalization of our languages, advancing education and mental health supports for our youth, ensuring our members have access to safe and supportive environments, upholding the ethical stewardship of our lands, and fostering leadership within our communities. Our path forward is shaped by the guidance of our Chiefs, rooted in the needs of our people, and driven by a shared vision grounded in culture, connection, and collective care.

The year ahead holds great promise. With the dedication of our staff, the vision of our leadership, and the resilience of our communities, I believe we are on the path to an even stronger Matawa—one where every voice is heard, every youth is uplifted, and every Nation thrives.

Miigwetch,

Dr. Sharon L. Nate

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Animal Wellness Services

Matawa First Nations Management

Staff

Judi Cannon, Indigenous Animal Wellness Specialist
• Jennifer Hughes, Registered Veterinary Technician

Overview

Matawa Animal Wellness Services aims to enhance education on animal wellness within Matawa First Nations while improving overall animal health, reducing fertility rates, and fostering safer, healthier communities through the ‘One Health Model.’ The project offers Animal Wellness and Spay/Neuter Clinics and gathers input from community members and leadership to shape future efforts. The team works with online veterinarians to provide basic care and medications, and shares educational content through the Matawa Pets and People Facebook page. The team also advocates for animal welfare with all levels of government. A final report will present a Community-of-Practice model for use in other remote and road-access First Nations across Canada.

Priorities

- Utilizing the ‘One Health’ model to protect community members’ health and safety by providing spay neuter surgeries, vaccines, and dewormer to pets.
- Advocating with all levels of government and collaborating with regulators to discover new and more efficient ways to deliver veterinarian services.
- Working with communities to accomplish their short- and long-term pet population goals.
- Consulting with and supporting Matawa community’s animal wellness needs, plans and projects.
- Find and work with Indigenous safe partners.
- Provide support and knowledge sharing to community members when they need help with their pets.

Successes

- First big steps in creating healthier communities for pets and people, such as providing communities with veterinarian services—some of which have not received services in 8-10 years. Immediate positive impacts on animal population control and decrease in dog roaming were noted in three communities.



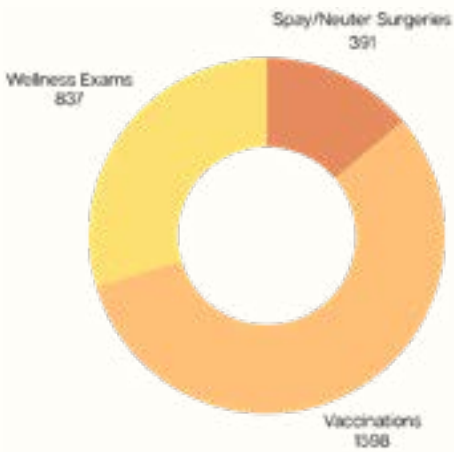
- Consulted with Matawa communities regarding their animal wellness needs and gathered animal population data.
- Co-hosting an Advisory Circle with the College of Veterinarians of Ontario to bring new models of service delivery.
- Creating a new telemedicine portal that removes barriers to veterinary care for First Nations.
- Secured \$1.5 million from Indigenous Services Canada to extend services into year two and three.
- Gained five new animal wellness partners.
- Advocating at the federal and provincial levels for animal wellness, enforcement, and prevention.

This year Matawa Animal Wellness Services planned and carried out two emergency responses: one in Webequie in December 2024 to address a parvovirus outbreak, and another in Neskantaga in May 2025 to check on animals (some that were contaminated by fuel) while community members were evacuated.

Challenges

- Initial pilot project plans were too ambitious given the volume of work needed. Current animal needs were overwhelming given the lack of veterinary services in communities.

- Costs are restrictive due to the current service delivery model and high travel costs for medical teams in southern Ontario travelling to Matawa communities.
- Some funding sources do not allow First Nations to apply for or control funds and the operation of services. Funding sources force First Nations to become partners with groups instead of allowing them to choose groups. The power is in the hands of external groups.
- Challenging to deal with external partners who lack knowledge of Indigenous culture or the effects of colonization and impose unrealistic expectations on community members. Outside partners and regulators do not understand free roaming dogs or the complexities it brings. They do not understand the differences between municipalities and First Nations.



Number of services facilitated by Matawa Animal Wellness Services

- Communities suffer from gaps in knowledge on responsible pet ownership because the relationship of dog and families is in transition due to colonization.
- For years, community members witnessed animal suffering and trauma due to a lack of vet services, and now have conditioned their perspective for the tolerance of injury and illness. This conditioned response is because there hasn’t been any other option except to “let it be,” to cull, or to “let it die.” This is not a community problem, it’s a systemic problem due to the lack of access to veterinarian services.
- External animal welfare groups pressure First Nations to solve overpopulation problems while communities in the south suffer from ill management more resources and support for their successes. It is hypocritical and unrealistic, and this allows the issues to perpetuate.

Matawa Animal Wellness Services and partners facilitated

5 new partnerships
9000lbs of pet food delivered
60 dog transfers



Opportunities

- Establish an Advisory Circle with the Ministry of the Solicitor General to discover new models of service delivery.
- Create a sustainable long-term plan for the delivery of animal wellness and veterinarian services to Matawa communities and beyond.



Staff

Robin Larrett, Program Manager • Martine Caza, Office Administrator • Olivia Jarvis, Reception

Overview

As administration of Awashishewiigiihiwaywiin we oversee the operations and management of the office, departments, financial processing, and personnel.

Mission

Children are a gift from the Creator, it is our sacred responsibility to protect, love, teach and honour them.

Awashishewiigiihiwaywiin will support children and families to restore family connection and unity.

We will empower our children, families, parents and communities by wrapping them in a blanket of love, care, trust and support.

We acknowledge and understand our family systems.

We are culturally-based and rooted in a historic understanding of Anishnawbe way of life. In all our programs we remain true to the original Vision and Mission that was given to us.

Vision

Healthy, strong, spiritual families together.

Priorities

- Annual funding applications and submissions.
- Completing Indigenous Services Canada reporting requirements.
- Completing other internal and external reporting requirements.
- Personnel management.
- Training and professional development.
- Office management.
- Procurement.
- Partnership development.
- Department communication.
- Staff recruitment and retention.
- Data and file management.
- Budget submission and financial accountability.
- Development of departmental procedures and monitoring compliance.

Successes

- Established a formal partnership with Ginoogaming First Nation with Memorandum of Understanding and Proxy for band representative services in Thunder Bay, plus post-majority care support for membership, including in-community support and meetings during staffing crisis.
- Reviewed and redesigned office procedures with support of the finance team, including new processes for staff to improve efficiency and time tracking.

- Provided support and input into Nishnawbe Aski Nation’s Band Rep toolkit to assist other communities in developing and supporting Band Rep programs.
- Enhanced partnerships with the Matawa Health Co-operative to better support families.
- Database transfer with department coordination and integration.
- Completion of playground celebrated with grand opening and media coverage.
- Continue to work with building committees to support functionality of the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre and monitor renovation progress.

This year, Awashishewiigiihiwaywiin staff completed

14+

training and professional development workshops

- Staff training:
 - Our Children Our Way – all programming staff and Family Support Workers
 - Bringing Tradition Home – Lead and Director
 - First Aid – six staff
 - Thunder Bay Police Gang Unit seminar – two staff
 - LGBTQIA2S+ – all staff
 - Indigenous Helper Worker Wellness – five staff
 - Trauma Informed Care – all staff
 - Anti-Human Trafficking March – three staff
 - Lunch and Learn helping those exiting corrections – seven staff
 - Workplace harassment – all staff
 - Mental Health First Aid – two staff that didn’t have it yet
 - Naloxone training – all staff
 - Soft skills – all staff
 - Introduction to Quality Management System – all staff

Challenges

- Staff recruitment and on boarding.
- Multiple annual funding submissions and new guidelines with Indigenous Services Canada.
- Affordable housing.
- Addictions crisis.



Opportunities

- Continued partnership development to meet the growing needs of our families.
- Development of a Matawa-staffed foster placement home to stop our children from living in hotels or being shipped out of the city or district.
- Looking at supports for those families who will be receiving monies in the child welfare settlement and planning to implement supports.
- Advising and supporting the development of a Matawa shelter for intimate partner violence.
- Continue to support the individual needs of Matawa families in a client-centered approach to meet their individual needs and goals.



Overview

Awashishewiigihiwaywiin’s Family Transitional Housing Unit consists of six two-bedroom units where residents share a common living room, kitchen, showers, bathrooms, and laundry. The transitional unit employs one lead, 10 full-time housing support workers and eight relief staff. Housing support workers are present in the unit on a 24/7 basis to support our families during crisis, encourage and assist families to advocate for themselves and their children, help them make important life decisions, and celebrate their successes.

Staff

Samantha Lafreniere, Transitional Housing Worker Lead • Transitional Housing Workers: Angel Brewer, Angel Brewer, Jerid Peltola, Leandra Howald, Brandon Salomon, Connie Koivu, Terri Churchill, Cinnamon Todosichuk, Laureen Sagutch, Elysha Blacker, Whitney Echum • Relief Transitional Housing Workers: Kelsey Baxter, Crystal Gerow, Sandra Kuurila, Tracy Stewardson, Ami Shaganash, Heidi Winters, Chris Gerow, Makayla Poohachoff

Priorities

- Provide a safe and comfortable living environment for Matawa families.
- Assist and provide support for families to establish healthy lifestyles and decisions.
- Assist families to advocate for themselves and their children
- Assist families in finding safe, affordable independent living accommodations.

Successes

- Currently providing safe housing for six families including 10 adults and 16 children.
- Built a relationship with the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) to assist families to find affordable housing.

The Family Transitional Housing Unit helped four families reunite with their children

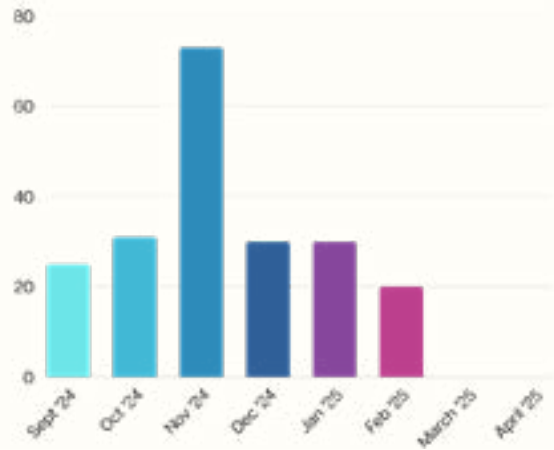
- Provided stable housing to a family that was living in a hotel for last three years.
- Made schooling accessible based on children’s needs.
- Provided in-house programming to provide food security and develop cooking life skills.



Number of residents in Family Transitional Housing Units

Challenges

- Ensuring families meet eligibility criteria and participate in programing.
- Extended delays while units are repaired and cleaned between occupancies.
- Maintaining appropriate staff levels for 24/7 coverage.
- Maintaining cleanliness and organization in common areas.
- Monitoring residents and children in each unit to ensure they are interacting with each other positively and appropriately.
- Enforcing expectations in the Tenant Agreement.
- Providing safety and security for residents and staff.
- Ongoing training for staff.



Number of days units were vacant (all units)

Opportunities

- Preventing children from entering the child welfare system.
- Staff are available 24/7 to talk with and provide families with support during crisis situations.
- Families can reside in the unit for up to two years.
- Answering questions and providing support for clients facing daily life challenges.
- Providing new experiences and life skills through programming.
- Providing families with safe, secure, affordable and private living accommodations.
- Promotion of healthy relationships, activities, and lifestyle choices through access to private and safe outdoor play area and playground, resource room, and in-unit common areas.



Staff

Kelly Tiboni-Ranta, Family Support Lead • Family Support Workers: Jessica Minoletti (currently on maternity leave), Karen Westerbäck, Declan Ruukholm Josephine Pyyka, Shannon Finlayson • Early Childhood Educators/Program Support: Nicole Gamble, Jen Godin, Meaghen Michaud

Overview

Awashishewiigihiwaywiin Family Support Workers work with families on a voluntary, agreed-upon consent-to-service basis. The Family Support program offers support in navigating the child welfare system through prevention, planning and goal-setting, using community-based, culturally appropriate and responsive care models for children with a focus on prevention and family reunification.

Priorities

- Providing support and advocating for families dealing with child welfare agencies.
- Connecting families with resources and supports in the city and help them navigating systems such as housing, Ontario Works, healthcare, education, obtaining identification, etc.



- Addressing life skills such as budgeting and self-care.
- Administering programs and services such as nutrition and food security, crisis counseling and support, and offering Circle of Security Parenting program anger management to both on- and off-reserve members.
- Offer letters of support for Jordan’s Principles applications and referrals to Jordan Principle.
- Offering referrals to Youth in Transition program and the Matawa Health Co-operative and additional supports to address family needs, school tutoring, mental health counselling, etc.
- Advocate for extracurricular activities for children.
- Supporting reunification visits taking place in resource room between families and child welfare agencies including Tikinagan and Dilico.

Families are engaging in programming that reduces isolation, strengthens parenting, and fosters bonding

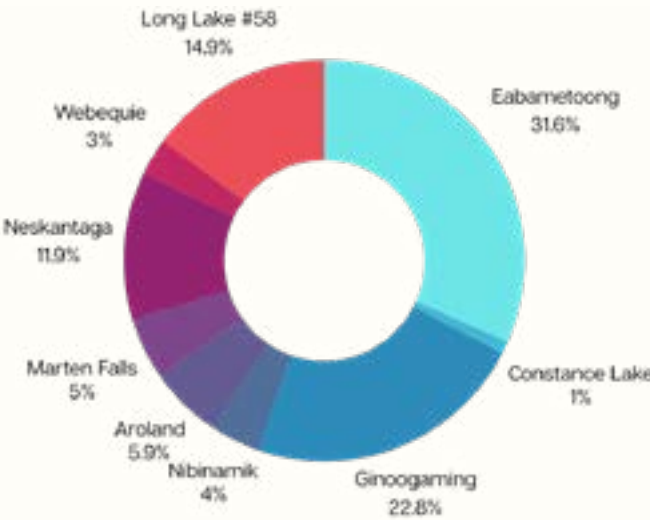
As of June 2025, Awashishewiigihiwaywiin’s Family Support Program had

42 open child welfare files 14 closed child welfare files

Successes

- Child welfare files are getting closed, with children returning home after time in foster care.
- Families are securing stable housing, including in our transitional housing units.
- Service and safety plans include support and advocacy from Matawa programs.

- Healthcare: Referrals are made for addictions and mental health treatment, including counseling, and on-site monthly dental care and other health services are now available.
- We offer physical wellness programs, including fitness training and Equine Therapy, are led by certified staff.
- Culturally relevant programming includes smudging, sharing circles with Elders, regalia making, sewing, and rattle making.
- Food security initiatives like Nutritional Bingos, Community Kitchens, and Healthy Munchables are well attended.



Percentage of open Family Support files by community

- Early childhood programming and pre-/post-natal resources are led by certified educators.
- Families fleeing domestic violence or unsafe environments receive support, including relocation assistance.
- Educational sessions cover topics such as healthy sexual orientation and family relationships.
- Creative and recreational activities include music lessons, painting, Family Day outings (swimming, bowling, tubing), and seasonal celebrations (Christmas, Easter, Back-to-School).
- Families are offered the chance to create family portraits.
- Collaboration and advocacy continue with Band Rep programs, including support for Ginoogaming families facing child welfare issues.

Awashishewiigihiwaywiin’s Family Support Program hosted

98 community kitchens, feeding 1889 people



Challenges

- Having to see some of our children who were unable to stay with any family placed in hotel rooms with child welfare staff because of the shortage of safe homes.
- Lack of units available for families when requesting housing in the city of Thunder Bay.
- Addiction crisis

Opportunities

Work collaboratively with communities and other departments to continue to meet family needs.

Staff

Jessica Sutherland, Jordan’s Principle Lead • Morgan Slipperjack, Jordan’s Principle Case Manager • Jordan’s Principle Navigators: Raili Kuurila, Amber Smitsnuk, Shanna Scarr, Suzanna Williamson, Maria Taylor

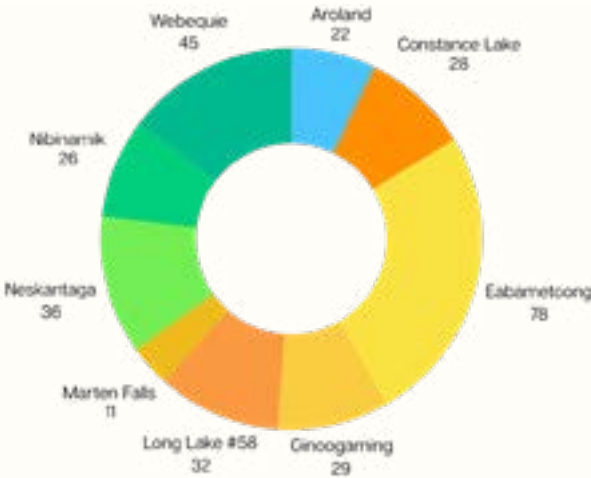
Overview

The Matawa Chiefs recognize the urgent need to provide support to Matawa children through the Jordan’s Principle program, and fully endorse the establishment of the Awashishewiigihiwaywiin Jordan’s Principle Program. Funding can help with a wide range of health, social and educational needs, including the unique needs of First Nations Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ children and youth and those with disabilities. Jordan’s Principle is a legal obligation, which means it has no end date. While programs and initiatives to support it may only exist for short periods of time, Jordan’s Principle will always be there. Jordan’s Principle is a child-first principle and legal rule that ensures First Nations children receive the services and support they need when they need them. Jordan’s Principle’s mandate is to make funding available for First Nation children, families, and communities, promoting substantive equality by providing for culturally appropriate services that safeguard the best interests of the child.

Priorities

- File and case management consistency: use of Excel, OneNote and Dadavan to support timely follow-ups, store consent and service agreements, notes, track purchases, and accurate reporting across all staff.
- Caseload review and staff capacity: ongoing review of staff workloads to ensure equitable distribution to prevent burnout or turnover within our department.
- Training: strengthening staff knowledge around application documentation requirements, recent policy updates, and emerging support needs. Staff capacity building on trauma-informed care, navigating complex family dynamics, and supporting families with children with multiple high needs.

- Professional development in culturally appropriate service delivery, with an emphasis on First Nations values, communication, and family engagement.
- Client engagement: build proactive communication strategies with families to reduce gaps in documentation or expired supports.
- Relationship with Indigenous Services Canada: advocate for clearer ISC communication standards, improved turnaround times, and better access to regional officers for faster resolution of file issues.



Jordan’s Principle applications by community

Successes

- Successfully implemented regular file audits across all staff, improving accountability and client service tracking.
- Funded food support, furniture, clothing, rent support, transportation, baby essentials, technology, and more.
- Successfully accessed \$877,075.21 through Jordan’s Principle to remove barriers to essential services.
- Strengthening family engagement through regular follow-ups and case coordination, ensuring children’s voices and needs were prioritized.
- Traveled to Matawa communities to provide information sessions about Jordan’s Principle and hosted activities for children while assisting with the application process.

Challenges

- Staff capacity: Staff have high caseloads (60+ clients per 6 staff navigators) making full compliance difficult for some staff.
- Data management: Manual tracking systems were time-consuming until automation tools (like Dadavan and excel tables) were introduced.
- High volume of requests created delays during peak periods (e.g., back-to-school season, winter, etc.).
- Limited availability of specialized service providers (e.g., speech-language therapists, occupational therapists/ physical therapists) in Northern and remote areas, even with funding secured.
- Some families faced difficulties gathering required documentation, despite outreach and support from staff.



Status of Jordan’s Principle applications

*Following the national review, it’s become increasingly common for applications to receive partial approvals, where only certain aspects of the request are approved. Similarly, applications may also be partially denied, with some components not meeting the necessary criteria.

Opportunities

- Continued training and reminders for staff about the importance of regular updates and follow-up.



- More outreach and education for families about Jordan’s Principle and the documentation process to streamline applications.
- Expansion of partnerships with local service providers to improve access, especially in high-demand areas like mental health and developmental supports.
- Follow up emails often receive auto replies (from ISC) or delayed responses, slowing application progress even when documentation is complete.
- Requests for additional information from Intake Officers after full documentation is submitted can cause frustration and inconsistent expectations.
- Formal feedback mechanism for Navigators to report recurring ISC-related barriers and advocate for streamlined processes.

650

children from Matawa First Nations received individualized services and support through Jordan’s Principle

Staff

Isabella Shields, Youth in Transition Lead • Youth in Transition Workers: Carlee Kwandibens, Jonah Wesley, Jen Godin, Vacancy to be filled June 2, 2025

Overview

Post-majority support services assist youth aging out of care and young adults formerly in care from the age of majority (18 years-old in Ontario) and up to and including the age of 25. Post-majority support services support the safety and well-being of First Nations youth and young adults in a way that is culturally appropriate, in their self-identified best interest, and provided on the basis of substantive equality. The goal of post-majority support services is to provide wrap-around support that meets the distinct needs of First Nations youth and young adults and promotes and supports holistic positive outcomes for thriving youth and young adults.

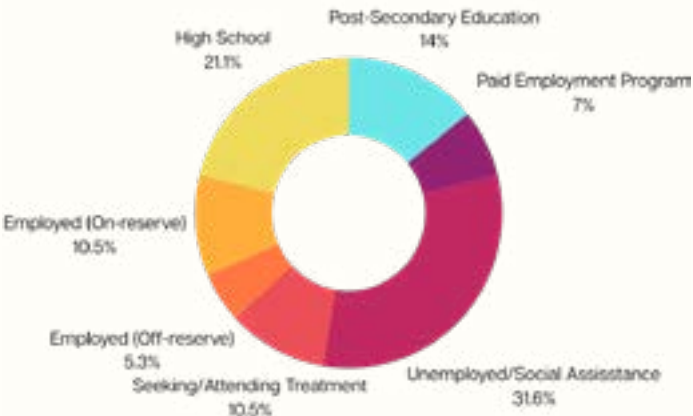
Priorities

Matawa Next Steps, a post-majority care program, services eight pillars of care to ensure equitable standards for all Next Steps Youth.

- **Financial:** Every young person should have the financial resources required to meet their needs. Youth in care deserve a financial starting point that is above the poverty line and allows them to pursue their career interests and dreams.
- **Educational and professional development:** Every young person should experience an environment where they can learn and grow at their own pace in ways that are meaningful to them.
- **Housing:** Every young person should have a place they can call home without strict rules and conditions to abide by.
- **Relationships:** Every young person should have people in their life that they can count on unconditionally and interdependently. Youth in care need to feel that they belong, have worth and are valuable members of their community.
- **Culture and spirituality:** Every young person should be connected to their culture and spirituality, in ways that are meaningful to them, safe, and at their own pace.
- **Health and wellbeing:** Every young person should

be provided with timely and ongoing services and benefits to support their lifelong health and wellbeing. These supports need to be offered within a trauma-informed, non-judgmental harm reduction approach, without significant wait times.

- **Advocacy and rights:** Every young person should have their rights respected and should experience environments where their voices are heard, and their silence is addressed holistically.
- **Emerging adulthood development:** Every young person should experience environments that cultivate personal growth and development as they transition into adulthood.



Employment and professional development status of Next Steps clients

Successes

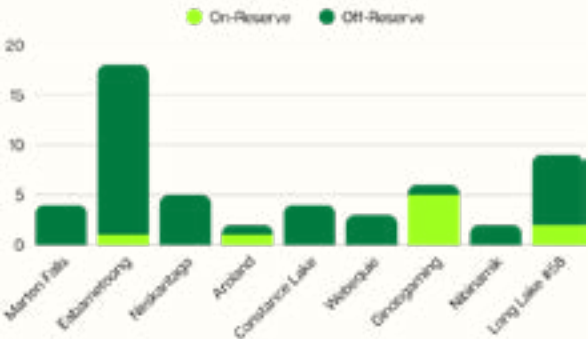
Youth Reconnected to Community of Origin

Between August 2024–June 2025, Next Steps safely and successfully arranged for seven youth to visit their communities of origin. These supports include flights, accommodation, safety planning, connection building, food security and cultural exploration. This allows for an increased sense of identity, relationship building, and connection to culture and family. Consistent visits allowed one of our youth to reform family relationships and reunite with her father in community. She is now employed full-time in her community of origin.

Youth attending Thunder Bay cultural events

Matawa Next Steps provides monthly cultural programming, such as beading, bannock making, traditional food tasting, painting and more. Next Steps successfully connected 17 interested youth to outside cultural resources in Thunder Bay, including at the

Thunder Bay Friendship Centre, ENABG, Métis Nation and Mushkiki. Connecting youth with established organizations in Thunder Bay changes perspectives from Thunder Bay being a barrier to a resource. Community partnership and referrals have expanded our youth’s community involvement and circles of care.



Next Steps program outreach

Youth Attending On-Reserve Events

Matawa Next Steps travels monthly with the Jordan’s Principal team to offer in-community programming, outreach and information sessions. Since August 2024, Next Steps has traveled to Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58, Aroland, and Marten Falls. Anticipated travel to Constance Lake, Eabametoong, Neskantaga, Nibinamik and Webequie between May and September 2025. This results in more intakes and more youth supported in community. Next Steps is committed to becoming a positive and consistent support within our nine communities, fostering trust and collaboration from eligible youth and service providers.

Challenges

Thunder Bay Specific

Like many communities in Canada, Thunder Bay is facing a housing crisis that affects youths’ ability to secure affordable, safe, long-term housing. The lack of stable housing often leads to precarious living situations, including homelessness or reliance on unstable accommodations. Furthermore, the complex systems and wait times to access housing assistance programs can be overwhelming and discouraging for youth transitioning to independence.

Program Observations

For many youth aging out of the child welfare system, the transition to adulthood is overwhelming. Unlike their peers, they often lack essential life skills, basic needs,

and the foundational support systems that help others thrive. When we meet them for intake, the question "Where do you see yourself in five years?" is often met with silence—not because they lack ambition, but because they’ve never been given the space to dream.

Many cannot name their interests or hobbies, having never been encouraged to explore their passions in a safe and nurturing environment. Instead of discovering their identity, they have spent years adapting to what systems have imposed on them, moving from placement to placement, surviving rather than growing.

Transition isn’t linear. In many cases, when youth experience unconditional support for the first time, they regress, not because they don’t want to succeed, but because they’re learning to navigate a world where support doesn’t come with conditions. They test boundaries, struggle with setbacks, and sometimes fall into old patterns—but we don’t give up on them. At Next Steps, we stand beside them through the good and the bad, understanding that healing and growth take time. We do not close files due to unmet expectations—because the only expectations that matter are the ones they set for themselves. Our role is to provide consistent, judgment-free support, helping them rebuild trust, rediscover their identity, and create a future they choose on their own terms.



Opportunities

We are excited to announce that the Next Steps program is in the early stages of developing units in 512 Bertrand Court into Post-Majority Youth Housing. Being adjacent to the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre gives our youth a unique opportunity to access comprehensive support services that promote holistic well-being and personal growth. This project aims to address the ongoing challenges of securing safe and affordable housing for our Matawa youth that also provide on-site support services tailored to their needs.

Staff

Carol Audet, Communications Manager •
Charnel Anderson, Communications Generalist

Overview

Matawa’s Communications department provides communications and advisory support to First Nations in Matawa, the Matawa Chiefs Council, Matawa First Nations Management and its departments, services, corporations, as well as Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services. Services provided include media monitoring and support, development of informational and promotional materials, implementing our brand and visual identity, updating Matawa’s website content in a shared role with Matawa Information Technology, updating and monitoring social media, recording and broadcasting the Matawa Radio Show, providing PA systems and translation equipment, and overseeing Matawa Animal Wellness Services (see report on page 16).

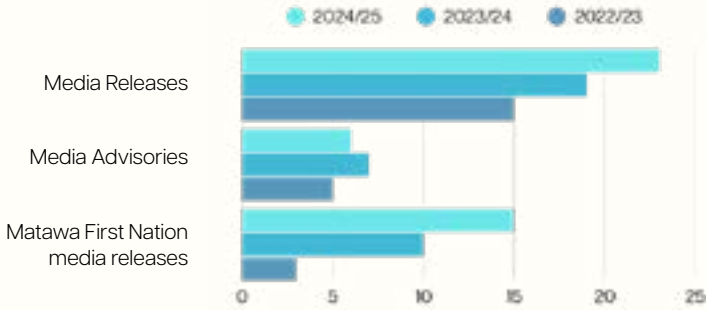
- Successes
- Matawa First Nations
- **All First Nations:** Assisted with employee recruitment, providing up to-date information online, offering animal wellness services, and Gathering of Rivers for Community Care 50/50 payroll raffle draws.
 - **Ginoogaming First Nation:** Four media releases, posting employment ads, and support with community newsletter.
 - **Constance Lake First Nation:** Posting employment ads.
 - **Neskantaga First Nation:** Four media releases and posting employment ads.
 - **Long Lake #58 First Nation:** Help to develop protocol with law enforcement regarding animal control and posting employment ads.
 - **Aroland First Nation:** Employment ads.
 - **Webequie First Nation:** One media release, posting employment ads.
 - **Marten Falls First Nation:** Posting employment ads.
 - **Eabametoong First Nation:** Four media releases, employment ads.



Matawa First Nations Management

- **Awashishewiigihiwaywiin:** Supported and organized media event for the playground grand opening, website and social media updates, and employment ads.
- **Chief Executive Officer’s office:** Prepared Annual General Meeting (AGM) materials and communications support for AGM, Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference, media conferences, public relations and onboarding of new CEO, organized youth delegation to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and employment ads.
- **Four Rivers:** One media release, employment ads.
- **Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin:** Promotion of missing persons, social media and website updates, and posting employment ads.
- **Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services:** One media advisory and one media release and posting employment ads.
- **Matawa Health Co-operative:** Social media and website updates, two media advisories, one media release, and posting employment ads.
- **Matawa Chiefs Council:** Formatting resolution updates, communications support during meetings, posted six Expressions of Interest to fill external board positions.
- **Matawa Training & Wellness Centre:** Organized media event for Royal Bank of Canada and Canada Infrastructure Bank announcement, participated in progress meetings, and assisted with indoor signage.
- **Matawa Education:** Four news releases, two media advisories, and employment ads.
- **Technical Services:** One media release and website and social media updates.

- **Other:** Continued participation in Thunder Bay Anti-Racism & Respect Committee and Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and co-hosted an Orange Shirt Day Reconciliation Walk with True North Aid in Greenstone.



Matawa Communications media relations 2022-2025

Media Monitoring and Support

- Issued 23 media releases and six media advisories, including 15 Matawa First Nation-related media releases, and 36 weekly Ring of Fire media clips.
- Informed staff of relevant news items, published reports/studies, and funding opportunities.

Matawa Radio Show

Produced, recorded and broadcast 22 bi-weekly radio shows on Wawatay radio highlighting Matawa’s programs and services.



Matawa Messenger

Produced, published and distributed four quarterly newsletters that highlight and inform community members about Matawa’s programs and services.

Promotional and Informational Materials

- Issued weekly Monday Memo to communicate staff schedules and upcoming events.
- Produce a monthly internal consolidated travel calendar beginning June 2024.
- Produced and updated collaterals including eight-page brochure, Matawa rack card, a guidebooks for animal care and management tailored to each community.

Social Media Updates and Monitoring

- Co-ordinated social media campaigns, such as the “From JK to PhD” campaign celebrating Matawa grads.
- Increasing followers and likes on Facebook and X, regularly creating and sharing content responsive to community and world events in an effort to engage audiences and educate our Peoples.

From June 2024 to June 2025, Matawa’s Facebook page, operated by Matawa Communications, saw a

243%
increase in
Facebook
interactions

38%
increase in
Facebook
likes

Website Updates

- Regularly update employment ads, events calendar, staff directory, department pages when requested, etc.
- Posted over 205 MFNM job ads from August 2, 2024 to June 13, 2025, plus 13 Expressions of Interest, and over 46 Matawa First Nations job ads.

Challenges

Matawa’s Communications department is understaffed relative to the amount of users of the services.

Opportunities

Matawa First Nations have an opportunity to establish communications staff within their band offices to work with and receive support from Communications.

Staff

Tara Ingram, Director

Dept. Committee

The Economic Development Committee commenced in February 2013 by resolution mandated by the Matawa Chiefs. The committee was established to assist with capacity building, problem solving and collaboration among the communities.

Economic Development Committee

Sam Kashkeesh, Aroland First Nation • Kevin Proctor, Constance Lake First Nation • Ron Misewace, Eabametoong First Nation • Henry Waboose, Ginoogaming First Nation • Robert Starr, Long Lake #58 First Nation • Robert Moonias, Marten Falls First Nation • Edward Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation • Byron Wapoos, Nibinamik First Nation • Glen Wabasse, Webequie First Nation

Overview

Matawa First Nations Management is committed to supporting the advancement, prosperity, and self-determination of its member First Nations. In alignment with these values, the Economic Development department plays a critical role in creating pathways to sustainable economic growth, community well-being, and long-term prosperity across the Matawa region. The department advances the collective economic interests of Matawa First Nations through strategic planning, capacity building, partnership development, and promotion of community-owned and led initiatives, working to empower each community to achieve economic independence.



Photo courtesy of Ingaged Creative Productions

Strategic Economic Planning

- Work collaboratively with leadership and community stakeholders to identify and implement economic strategies tailored to each First Nation's unique context.
- Provide technical assistance in developing community economic development plans, feasibility studies, and investment readiness assessments.

Capacity Building and Training

- Deliver training programs, workshops, and opportunities aimed at enhancing business skills for individuals, leadership, and economic development officers.

Business and Entrepreneurship Development

- Support the development and sustainability of community-owned enterprises and individual entrepreneurs.
- Provide assistance in business planning, funding applications, licensing, and market development.

Partnerships and Investment Facilitation

- Identify and negotiate partnerships with government agencies, industry stakeholders.
- Facilitate equitable investment opportunities that benefit Matawa communities through job creation, ownership, and long-term revenue.

Natural Resource and Infrastructure Development

- Assist Matawa First Nations in natural resource development projects to ensure community interests are protected and promoted.
- Assist in negotiations around impact and benefit agreements, resource revenue sharing, and infrastructure development.

Policy Development and Advocacy

- Advocate for economic policy reforms at the regional, provincial, and federal levels that align with the economic priorities of Matawa First Nations.
- Monitor legislation and regulatory developments impacting Indigenous economic development.

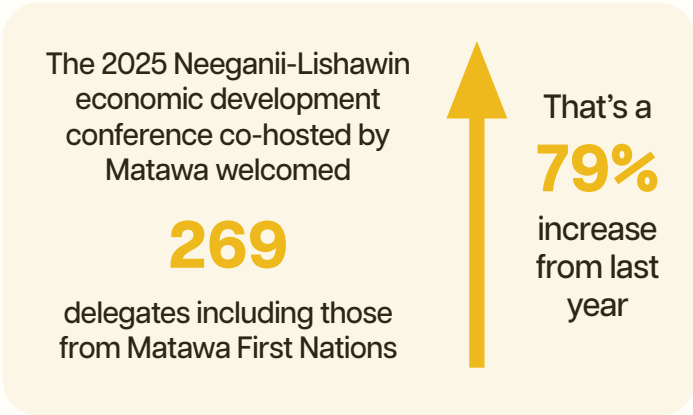
Innovation and Emerging Sectors

- Support initiatives in emerging industries such as clean energy, technology, tourism, digital economies, and land-based enterprises.

The Economic Development department of Matawa First Nations Management serves as a vital resource and advocate for the economic well-being of its member First Nations. Through its programs and initiatives, the department fosters the growth of safe, healthy and prosperous communities.

Priorities

- Capacity building
- Community economic planning and readiness
- Business & entrepreneurship development
- Workforce development and employment
- Regional economic collaboration



Successes

- Held quarterly Economic Development Committee meetings.
- Traveled to communities to assist with their economic development initiatives.
- Co-hosted Economic Development Conference Neeganii-Lishawin in collaboration with Independent First Nations Alliance, Keewaytinook Okimakanak, Shibogam First Nations Council and Windigo Development Corporation. Conference was held on February 11 to 13, 2025, at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay. Sponsored delegates from each community to attend.
- Submitted outstanding claims and final reports to both federal and provincial governments. Received a total of \$ 125,675.39.

Matawa's Economic Development department submitted outstanding claims and final reports to Ontario and Canada, receiving a total of \$125,657.39

Challenges

- Challenges in the communities are infrastructure gaps.
- Limited access to capital and financing.
- Skills gaps within the communities, workforce readiness, and employment barriers.
- Dependency on external funding and a lack of core funding.

Opportunities

- Strategic positioning – opportunities for equity participation, joint ventures, etc.
- Infrastructure Investment – energy, housing etc.
- Green and renewable energy.
- Land-based tourism.
- Regional collaboration and shared prosperity.

Staff

Mike Harding CPA, Finance Controller • Tina Gordon, Senior Finance Officer • Brook Mainville, Finance Officer • Robina Baxter, Finance Officer • Carl Levesque, Finance Officer • Thomas Kelos CPA, Finance Officer • Amanda Coppin, Finance Officer • Ethan Crawford, Finance Officer • James Gascon CPA, Financial Analyst • Tanya Watts, Payroll and Benefits Officer •Gayle Prowett, Payroll and Benefits Officer • Ayla Spyrka, Administrative Assistant (Finance) • Claudia Rheault, Receptionist • Tanaya Tomagatick, Casual Receptionist

Overview

The Finance department provides financial and administrative support services to the Matawa Chiefs, Board of Directors, CEO and Program Managers. The department is responsible for regular financial and compliance reporting (monthly, quarterly, and annually), and proper maintenance of all financial activities for MFNM and its related entities. The department is also responsible for the reception services at Matawa’s main office at 233 Court St. S. and oversees the general operation of the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre (MTWC) at 523 Algoma St. N.

Our clients are all the other staff of MFNM and its associated entities, along with related vendors and funding entities for each of their respective programs. Matawa’s Finance department assists with bookkeeping and payroll services for Matawa Health Co-operative (MHC). We collaborate closely with Executive Directors, Program and Department Managers to provide support and guidance in not only financial matters, but also any operating issues that may arise.

Finance provides advisory services for the various Board and Committees of the Matawa Group, as requested. The Finance department also acts as the oversight for major projects (i.e. broadband project and services, construction of the MTWC and the new Women’s Shelter, facilitation of external debt financing and monitoring/reporting for debt covenant requirements).

Departments and Entities Supported

- **Matawa First Nations Management:** Various programs, including Governance, Finance, Education, Technical, Environmental, etc.
- **Matawa Non-Profit Housing Corporation:** Non-profit providing subsidized housing to people of low or modest income.
- **Four Rivers Inc.:** For-profit enterprise providing environmental and other services.
- **Rapid Lynx Telecommunications GP Inc.:** Broadband project.
- **Matawa Training and Wellness Centre:** Providing office and training spaces for health, social services, and training and education.
- **Matawa First Nations Property Inc.:** For-profit enterprise consisting of building and property at 233 Court St. S.
- **Gathering of Rivers for Community Care (GRCC):** Registered charity with funding from Mastercard for the Guardians program.
- **Achieving the Dream Through Education:** Registered charity.

Priorities

The key priority of the Finance department is maintaining the financial viability of MFNM and its related entities. Matawa’s programs need to be operated efficiently, effectively and within constrained financial and human resources. Matawa’s Program Managers have done a tremendous job controlling their financial resources and working within the budget constraints of funding agreements. Finance assists the Program Managers in proper accounting for all revenue and expenses to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the program funders. During the current fiscal year, key priorities included:

- Finalization of FY2024 consolidated reporting and coordination of the FY2025 audit schedule to ensure timely completion of that reporting.
- Securing a \$15 million loan (15 years @ 1% fixed lending rate) and a \$5 million increase to the RBC mortgage to support the completion of construction for the MTWC.
- Ongoing development of reports, processes, and analyses within the Intacct system to improve automation and improve efficiency of reporting.
- Cash flow monitoring and discussions with funders and vendors to support the ongoing major construction projects.



Successes

- Matawa’s funders require audited financial statements annually to ensure funds were expended in the manner prescribed in the contribution funding agreements. Matawa has received an unqualified audit opinion in its consolidated financial statements since its inception. This is a very high standard and difficult to maintain. This aspect of our work plays a critical role in the ongoing success of Matawa.

Matawa has received an unqualified audit opinion—a very high standard—in its consolidated financial statements since its inception

- A significant portion of the interior work on the MTWC was completed by March 31, 2025, and KKETS, Awashishewiigihiwaywiin and MHC are now all operating in the building.
- Matawa acquired the Bertrand Court facilities from the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, housing property and offices adjacent to the MTWC.

- Initial service connections to Ginoogaming First Nation went live during the year for the ongoing Broadband project.
- Matawa received initial funding and approval for the construction of a Women’s Shelter (contracts subsequently signed in June 2025).
- Matawa’s Membership office is staffed full-time to better serve the Matawa community members.

Challenges

Cash flow continues to be a challenge for Matawa. The demand for services requires constant management of the organization’s financial resources. Matawa has been very successful in attaining contribution agreements with our funders, but advances of funds under those agreements are dependent on timely processing of progress reports and funding requests. As post-COVID measures are continuing to lift, the accuracy and timeliness of those submissions has become more critical. However, variances in Federal and Provincial legislative processes for approval of payments has also resulted in delays with finalization of claims and related payments at the government level. These delays in the release of funds often requires considerable time and effort to manage cash flows to settle accounts with both our vendors and suppliers in a timely manner. Although cash flow is raised as a concern from time to time, our staff have been diligent in addressing the needs and concerns of all our stakeholders.



Finance

Matawa First Nations Management

Adequate human resources are also critical for the Finance department's operation. Skilled, experienced, and resourceful staff are always in demand, so attracting personnel with strong and diverse skill sets can be difficult. We have been fortunate to find and attract qualified candidates, but more creative methods may be needed in the future to retain and develop staff as Matawa continues to grow.



Although the opportunity to be able to fund and develop a major project is generally good news for Matawa, there are presently four major construction/development projects in progress (Broadband, MTWC, Women's Shelter, and Bertrand Court) as well as numerous community projects being coordinated by the Technical department. These existing projects are almost fully utilizing financial and staffing resources, so it is critical that any future opportunities be properly vetted, planned, quoted, and approved prior to proceeding with any commitments to ensure Matawa can fund and complete such projects, as well as generate sufficient cash flows for future operating costs. This may require Matawa to be more selective in its acceptance of such opportunities until such time as the draw on its existing resources lessens.

Opportunities

Matawa has been successful in obtaining contribution agreements that provide funding for specific programming, and a modest amount of funding for ancillary support services (ex. Finance, HR, IT, etc.). However, with the impact of current tariffs and recent

inflationary impacts, all departments must actively discuss and endeavour to request additional funding to offset these costs within their program budgets, including provision for overhead costs related to the otherwise unfunded centralized corporate, finance, and administrative service costs. Available funding for such overhead costs typically represents approximately 10% of a program's budget but funder support towards these costs has been decreasing in recent years. Matawa has been successful in expanding and diversifying its various revenue streams but, in addition to soliciting direct funding for increasing costs, more effort and focus needs to be directed towards utilizing non-government sourced funding to reduce our reliance on funding from outside the authorities. Self-sufficiency remains a goal for Matawa, as it is for our member First Nations.

As Matawa First Nations Management continues growing its programming and services, the Finance department needs to continue to keep pace with the demand for its services. Human resources will be critical to the future success of Matawa's Finance department. Recent additions to our staff complement help ensure the continuation of the high professional standards of the department. There continue to be opportunities for Matawa's members for a satisfying career in Finance. Ideally, where possible, the addition of staff to operationally funded departments should be accompanied by a related funding arrangement to minimize the overhead charges required to be recovered from group entities, given their funding is already constrained.

Self-sufficiency remains a goal for Matawa

The Finance department is continuing to address issues raised from the operational review conducted by an independent third party in 2024. In addition to implementing modifications to the financial processes and reporting, the Finance Department is also exploring better integration of its services throughout the consolidated group.

Matawa's Finance department looks forward to continuing to be a strong and vital component of the current and future success of Matawa, its operating entities, and its member First Nations.

Quality Assurance

Matawa First Nations Management

Staff

Patrick Cheechoo, Quality Manager

Dept. Committee

Internal Working Group: Sarah Cockerton, Four Rivers Environmental Group · Rob Wesley, Information Technology · Angelle Rebelo, Human Resources

QA Representatives: One designate and one alternate from each department and affiliate entity.

QA Internal Audit Team: Ten designates that lead cross-departmental internal audits on an annual basis.

Overview

Matawa's Quality Management System (QMS) is a Board of Directors-driven administrative system of processes to documents objectives, policies, procedures, responsibilities, actions, milestones and improvements to ensure exceptional service and program delivery for Matawa First Nations and their community members while ensuring compliance with regulatory or legislated requirements and external stakeholder expectations. Matawa's QMS promotes organizational efficiency, accountability, and transparency while striving for continual improvement and growth. The Quality Assurance department ensures Quality Management System implementation, monitoring, evaluating and enhancement. MFNM's QMS conforms to ISO 9001:2015, an international standard for quality management. The ISO 9001:2015 Standard is driven by seven guiding principles: Customer Service, Leadership, Engagement of People, Process Approach, Improvement, Evidence-based Decision Making, and Relationship Management.

Priorities

- Ensuring MFNM's successful Certification for ISO 9001:2015 is formalized through the completion of MFNM's Corrective Action Plan and subsequently maintained in perpetuity.
- Ensuring MFNM's Quality Management System is fully digital for all departments and affiliate entities.
- Ensure recruitment and retention of QA personnel to ensure QA is adequately resourced and can provide appropriate supports and services throughout the organization.

Successes

- Four Rivers Group has built and adopted a fully digital platform for departmental quality management documentation and operations. This new QA Hub will be further developed to incorporate a MFNM-wide QA Hub supported by departmental QA Hubs and a centralized Corrective Actions/Preventive Actions Logbook.
- MFNM has progressed with draft governance documentation for Risk and Opportunities Management, which helps ensure proactive and formalized efforts to reduce risk and avoid potential negative impacts to MFNM's strategic outlook, current operations, financial loss or contravention to regulations or legislation.

Matawa's Auditing Firm Intertek said "...the quality management system is effective. We recommend continued ISO 9001:2015 certification, pending acceptance of corrective action plans for the minor findings"

Challenges

- Due to a multi-year gap in personnel, support and services from QA, departments and affiliate entities require QA training and guidance along with a renewed mindset for quality to ensure QA requirements are updated, implemented and continually improved.
- Minor non-conformances were identified during the Registration Audit – Stage 2 (April–May 2025) and MFNM must formally and fully address each non-conformance by August 8, 2025 (90 days from the end of the Audit).
- The QA department is a team of one, and given the size of the organization, which has over 600 employees, the QA department requires more personnel.

Opportunities

- MFNM will identify primary process, which is a new perspective on operations that will help dismantle existing silos between departments and affiliate entities. Documentation of primary processes will include quality objectives that will be monitored, evaluated and improved upon through formal Key Performance Indicators.
- MFNM will identify secondary processes that support our primary processes and identify performance indicators to ensure performance of processes is measured, evaluated and improved upon.

Financial Advisory Services

Matawa First Nations Management

Staff

Lloyd Wabigwan, CPA, CMA, Director

Dept. Committee

The Financial Advisory Services department collaborates with the Band Managers Committee (BMC), which includes the Director of Operations/ Manager and the Finance Manager from each member community, as well as the Director of the Financial Advisory Services department. The committee's goal is to enable communities to share knowledge and information on funding opportunities, capacity building, managerial successes, and other resources to support the effective administration of community headquarters. The committee also advises the department on potential services to offer.

Overview

The Financial Advisory Services department partners with the Chief Executive Officer and the BMC to enhance the administrative capacity and opportunities of member First Nations, focusing on accounting, finance, and governance. The department provides community-based outreach services, support, and resources directly to First Nations administrations and individuals, emphasizing sound financial and fiscal management.

Priorities

Our goal is to support Matawa First Nation administrators and Councils by providing information, resources, and training in accounting, finance, and governance. This includes support in audit planning and preparation, accounting and bookkeeping, awareness of financing avenues and financial aid opportunities, development of administrative policies, proposal development, and other aspects of effective administration and operations management for First Nations governance. Additionally, we assist individual community members with preparing and filing simple income tax returns, understanding and submitting claims for various settlement agreements, and other government applications such as Old Age Security and the Canada Pension Plan. This initiative aims to

support community members both within and outside the community. We are available to provide financial guidance and help with government applications and other financial challenges they may face.

Successes

- Continuously researching funding options for communities and informing the Band Managers Committee of potential funding streams.
- Participated as a member of a community finance audit committee.
- Informed the BMC about various training and capacity development workshops, conferences, and webinars related to First Nation administration.
- Attended the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada (AFOA) 2025 National Conference.
- Assisted the Matawa management team internally with various initiatives and interviews.
- Assisted individual members with non-tax-related inquiries, helping them understand issues related to government applications, forms, and contacts.
- Assisted individuals with the completing and submitting of various settlement claims.

The Financial Advisory Services Department provided an Income Tax preparation service for members with little to moderate incomes, helping them prepare and submit tax returns

- Collaborated with a local financial planning group to prepare a revised proposal to Indigenous Services Canada as our first submission was not approved. The purpose will be to provide free estate management services. If approved, the primary focus of this initiative will be creating Wills and Powers of Attorney for individuals residing in the communities.
- Prepared a Letter of Intent to Prosper Canada to apply for funding for additional staff to expand on the current financial empowerment and support services of filing tax returns, accessing benefits, and settlements and financial training/empowerment.



- Consistently leveraging learning opportunities in accounting, finance, and governance, which are the areas covered by the department.
- Facilitated a personal budgeting workshop for the students at Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services.
- Facilitated a financial literacy workshop for the Matawa summer students.
- Joined the recently created CPA Ontario Indigenous member network.
- Participated in the Matawa Quality Assurance International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Certification Audit process.

Challenges

- Securing long-term government funding to support human resources and activities of the Financial Advisory Services Department has proven arduous. Despite submitting proposals over the years, the uncertainty of government funding has hindered the implementation of our Matawa strategy. Although exploring alternative revenue sources is challenging, it is not impossible. We recognize the need to establish our own revenue streams, which requires advocating for revenue-sharing partnerships with governments, thereby eliminating the need for constant application and reporting.

- Another challenge is assisting member communities in various aspects to ensure they are not at risk of insolvency and have consistent and predictable funding and financing.
- Additionally, inadequate broadband internet access in communities presents a challenge for online communication and activities.

Opportunities

- To continuously promote educational opportunities for community finance staffers and potential future finance staffers, to market it so that future generations take a keen interest in this sector of First Nation management.
- To establish a community-made 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.
- Improve BMC communication, establish an avenue for the BMC members to share their successes and failures and to mentor each other.
- Having the BMC collaborate on what type of common services the Tribal Council can provide in the future in terms of accounting, finance, and governance.

Staff

Adam Daniele, Environmental Technician • Alex Horne, Communications, Logistics & Admin Officer • Clayton Megan, Guardians Intern 1 • Dinesh Gunawardena, Environmental Information & System Specialist • Dwight Beaver, Guardians Intern 1 • Erin Kelly, Environmental Technician • Graeme Saukko-Sved, Environmental/Geomatics Technician • Holly Pyhtila, Manager, Communications & Engagement • James Gascon, Finance Analyst • Janelle Bear, Guardians Intern 1 • Janet Knight, Project Manager, Engagement • Jasmine Baxter, Guardians Navigator • Jennifer Duncan, Community Values Coordinator • Kimberly Jorgenson, Manager, Environment & Technology • Kevin Wabasse, Executive Assistant & Translator • Laura Prior, Communications Specialist • Lucy Percy, Logistics Specialist (Casual) • Lynn Palmer, Environmental Technical Specialist (Casual) • Peter Moses, Mineral Development Information Support Officer • Sarah Cockerton, Managing Director • Serity Moonias, Guardians Intern 1 • Shannon Costigan, Project Manager • Sonny Black, Project Manager, Technology • Vacant, Administrative Assistant • Vacant, Geomatics Technician • Tiana-Lynn Laguillona, Employee Mental Wellness Nurse

Overview

Four Rivers was established in 2011 as an environmental services group within Matawa First Nations Management to provide environmental support and technical services to Matawa member First Nations 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.

Dept. Committee

Onigam Ashookaasata (formerly Kenogami Environmental Technical Table)

The Onigam Ashookaasata was established in December 2019 by the road accessible Matawa member First Nations to address common environmental issues impacting their shared territories within the Kenogami watershed. The membership includes representatives each from Aroland, Long Lake #58, Ginoogaming, and Constance Lake First Nations, who have significant existing capacity in environmental stewardship and lands and resource initiatives, but all Matawa member communities are welcome.

This year, the Onigam Ashookaasata is celebrating their new name and the finalizing of their updated terms of reference. The new name Onigam Ashookaasata was selected by representative members of the founding four-member First Nation communities to symbolize their collective efforts towards stewardship of the shared waters of their homelands, joining words in both Ojibway (Onigam meaning portage) and Cree (Ashookaasata meaning all of us together) to show their connectivity.

Over the year, Onigam Ashookaasata held several in-person and virtual meetings to share knowledge and information as well as to discuss strategies and planning for joint environmental initiatives. Highlights of group's accomplishments this year were a three-day meeting held in Constance Lake First Nation focused choosing a new name, working on their Terms of Reference and building relationships and capacity with regard to moose populations, harvesting and research in their shared homelands.

Onigam Ashookaasata

Mark Bell and Jerry Shabogamik, Aroland First Nation • Wayne Neegan, Bertha Sutherland, Roger Wesley, Carly John-George and Nelson Nakoochee, Constance Lake First Nation • Calvin Taylor, Curtis Towegishig, Crystal Iserhoff and Shelly Rahme, Ginoogaming First Nation • Micheal Fisher, Long Lake #58 First Nation



Regional Assessment Working Group (RAWG)

The Regional Assessment (RA) announced in February 2020 is a co-led initiative between communities in the Matawa and Mushkegowuk territories and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC). The Regional Assessment Working Group (RAWG), made up of community representatives and staff from the IAAC, meets weekly online and monthly in person, where they explore cumulative effects, develop scenarios, and build understanding about the potential changes within their homelands—helping communities make informed decisions for the future. *Most members of the previously active Matawa Environment Technical Table (METT) are now on the Regional Assessment Working Group. METT is paused during this time to support scheduling needs of the RAWG.*

February 2020

Regional Assessment (RA) is announced

April 2023

Regional Assessment Working Group (RAWG) is formed

Winter 2024-25

Initial planning phase concludes and Terms of Reference are finalized

2025-Present

RAWG meets regularly to explore cumulative effects, scenario development, and build insight into potential changes in the homeland

February 2023

Matawa, Mushkegowuk and Canada commit to a co-led RA process

October 2023

RAWG begins holding monthly meetings

2025

The 30-month conduct phase begins and work starts on gathering and compiling existing data, including data gaps analysis

Regional Assessment Working Group

Mark Bell, Aroland First Nation • Bertha Sutherland, Roger Wesley and Wayne Neegan, Constance Lake First Nation • Harry Papah and Derek Atlookan, Eabametoong First Nation • Calvin Taylor and Shelly Rahme, Ginoogaming First Nation • Ervin Waboose, Long Lake #58 First Nation • Alanna Downey-Baxter, Robert Moonias and Kathy Brady, Marten Falls First Nation • Wayne Moonias and Leroy Moonias, Neskantaga First Nation • Roger Oskineegish, Lias Yellowhead and Walter Oskineegish, Nibinamik First Nation • Gordon Wabasse, Webequie First Nation • Alan Young, Facilitator • Other participants: Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Kashechewan, Missanabie Cree, Moose Cree, Weenusk, Chapleau Cree and Canada

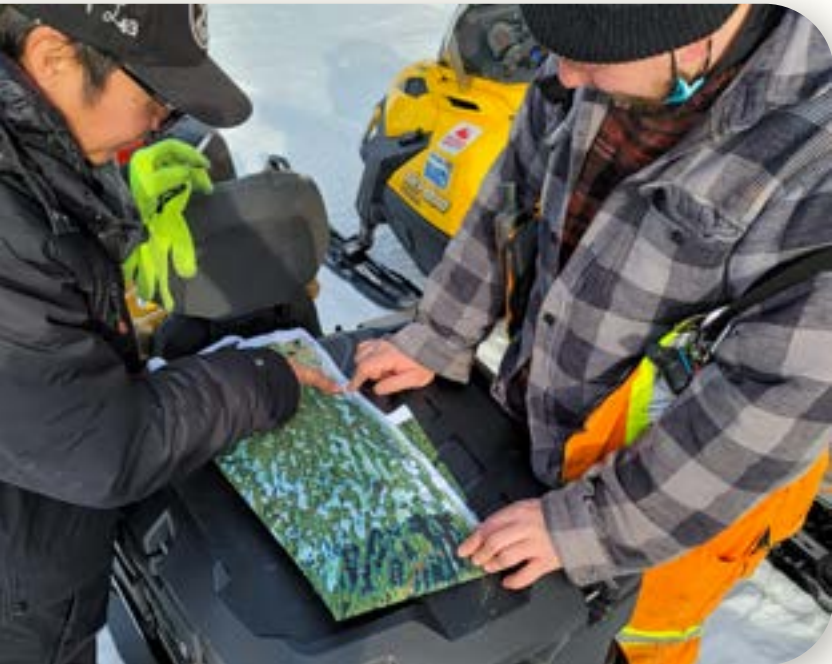
Priorities

Environmental Services

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

Four Rivers provides 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 and video surveying technology for monitoring frog, bird, bat and wolf and caribou populations; Geographic Information System/Global Positioning System (GIS/GPS) for values collection & monitoring, benthic biomonitoring; contaminated sites assessments and drone imagery. Four Rivers actively partners with organizations and institutions to bring enhanced environmental services to communities. This past fiscal year has seen multiple notable accomplishments, including a new partnership

with WSP, the launch of MasterCard Foundation Guardian Internship program as well as four (4) new research projects.



Geomatics and Mapping Services

Four Rivers offers comprehensive, award-winning mapping and geomatics services to provide 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. 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 monitoring; community-based land use planning; source water protection initiatives; impact/environmental assessment processes; and resource development processes. This past fiscal year saw the launch of a new data hub for communities to access and store environmental data, which required significant advancements in server capacity and back-end systems.

Project and Internal Support and Communications, Logistics, and Translation Services

Four Rivers works with communities to build internal capacity in the resource development sector to ‘bridge the gap’ from the community outwards. Major barriers often exist for communities in their effort to lead Lands and Resource development projects, often based in the absence of established communication processes to successfully link community members to the information required for informed decision-making. Communities also often seek support in developing project proposals, project coordination and reporting. The ultimate goal of all Four Rivers’ services is successful communities who are well-informed, knowledgeable, and able to fully participate in projects and initiatives happening within their homelands. Four Rivers’ project support and communication services are wide-ranging and apply a holistic approach to community barriers. Every community’s or project’s unique constraints are considered when developing appropriate implementation strategies, and we regularly apply creative or innovative solutions alongside tried and tested strategies to convey information. Our team has a proven track record of organizing and facilitating successful large and small scale meetings, events, workshops and conferences, including 40+ delegate RAWG meetings in various locations. Four Rivers has also assisted MFNM departments (i.e. Chiefs Council, Tech Services) to provide administrative, logistical, technical and translation services. This past fiscal year has seen notable accomplishments including procuring an entirely new state of the art conference system, design of the groundbreaking Terms of Reference, and the ongoing support for the operational needs of the RAWG.



Successes

Four Rivers successfully carried out numerous projects and initiatives throughout the year both as part of Matawa First Nations Management’s publicly funded environmental programs, as well as through Four Rivers Inc. Some initiatives include support of other projects being carried out by Matawa.

Find a summary of all of Four Rivers projects and initiatives on page 42

Challenges and Opportunities

This past year, Four Rivers saw growth and new challenges, with support and work expanding in new projects and initiatives. These are highlights of our challenges and opportunities over the past year.

Mineral Development Information Support Officer (MDISO)

Our long standing MDISO position and program continues. The past year saw another 12 MDISO Journals (a mining related information piece straight from the pen of Peter Moses) shared through email, as well as regular community visits to share knowledge and grow capacity. Peter Moses continues to support members with plans, permits and/or processes, and regularly supports the sessions that bring together Community Communication Liaison Offices from across Matawa member First Nations. Peter generously shares his extensive knowledge, provides updates and helps build capacity for Matawa members who work in the mining and minerals field.

Field Research

Four Rivers had another very successful year conducting environmental research, including baseline data collection on birds, bats, fish, water and plants. Our outdoor field research primarily spans summer and winter, leaving fall and spring for detailed planning. Summer environmental work is often focused on travelling the rivers and roads. In the winter, we switch to travel by snow machine with a focus on launching remote monitoring equipment (such as trail cameras and song meters) to record throughout the year. This work has been building over several years, and we are

seeing the results and data reflect those efforts. We continue to populate ArcGIS ‘dashboards’ with the data collected, for effective and secure communication and usage of the information.

To date, Four Rivers has launched

290

trail cameras



and captured

+1,000,000

images

... including an image of a cougar near Webequie First Nation—possibly the furthest north they’ve been documented

To date, we have launched and retrieved 290 trail cameras, resulting in over a million images post-processed and analyzed. Highlights include sightings of wolverine and caribou throughout the homelands north of the highway, families of moose and wolves, and even a cougar near Webequie First Nation, which may be the furthest north they’ve been documented.



We've also launched and retrieved over 150 song meters that record both acoustics and ultrasonic. Since it's very specialized work to post-process (requiring special software and expertise), we've only analyzed a portion of the recordings. We've recorded over 91 species, including more than 80 bird species plus frogs, squirrels, wolves and bears, and several at-risk species like rusty blackbird and little brown bat. This summer our environmental staff will be offering engagement and training sessions at community summer events, including the annual MECC Kitchi-Sippi youth trip.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Four Rivers continues to use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to support our work and GIS-specific initiatives. This year we launched the Four Rivers GeoHub, an online platform providing access to key environmental, cultural, and scientific spatial data for Matawa member First Nations. It can be used to support decision-making, research, and stewardship, empowering users to explore and visualize data on land use, natural resources, wildlife, and community values. The GeoHub serves as a place where you can interact with years of collected data, including past and present Four Rivers projects. Community-specific data is always stored, shared, and accessed in accordance with community preferences, using secure passwords and restricted access permissions within this GeoHub.



Scan the QR code to visit
Four Rivers' GeoHub

Using GIS software, we have been able to continue the development of custom surveys, and we are now at 70 surveys for our organization, with a total of 4,443 records. In the last year we have logged over 200 Geomatics tasks undertaken for the organization and the nine Matawa member First Nations. This includes

many custom maps and information requests. Four Rivers has also printed thousands of maps for various uses. We currently have 47 users on our ArcGIS Online platform with room for expansion. Our Drone Program continues to produce high resolution imagery of the Matawa member First Nations, with 13,690 photos taken in 2024. We have also acquired a drone boat to complete detailed depth mapping of the lakes within the homelands. The unit has been tested on Constance Lake with a total of 121,353 depth points taken resulting in a detailed bathymetry map of the lake.



Guardians and Technology Youth Development (MasterCard Foundation)

A long term vision of Four Rivers is to support community environmental monitoring, which includes advocating for and supporting Indigenous Guardians at the community and regional levels. This year we partnered with the Mastercard Foundation to initiate a Guardian Internship that will hire 18 Matawa youth over the next 3 years. This winter we launched the recruiting process for youth Interns, reaching out to members of all Matawa communities both on- and off-reserve. Our promotional video was viewed over 19,000 times, and we received more than 30 applications from across all nine Matawa communities. This spring, we welcomed our first cohort of four Interns, two of which are located in their home communities and two of which are based in Thunder Bay. They've begun a year-long schedule of training, fieldwork experience, and mentorship that will include exposure to all aspects of FRG work, as well as support Rapid Lynx, a full roster of health and safety training, and time spent reflecting on personal and community goals. Besides hiring youth Interns, this project has supported the hiring of an Employee

Mental Wellness Nurse to support the Interns and other FRG staff. Overall, this project will support Matawa youth to develop their personal and professional skills as they explore pathways for further education and employment, as well as supporting our communities with increased capacity, through Four Rivers, to address community priority projects.

Quality Assurance

Four Rivers significantly enhanced our digital record keeping in our departmental Quality Assurance (QA) system with a goal of consistently delivering world class programs and services that meet the wants and needs Matawa member communities. This year's QA system enhancements include the creation and implementation of an online Quality Assurance Hub developed through the ESRI platform. This hub digitizes the previous 'binder' system, mimicking tabs with virtual lists and searchable functions. The QA system displays files, surveys, logbooks, dashboards, trackers and more. This customized system maintains all QA documents and records in a user-friendly manner, while also allowing valuable meta data to be tagged to all the content, increasing efficiency and accuracy. Notably, we have implemented an application called Tiger Asset, an inventory system that manages our departmental assets like drone equipment, field gear and technology. This ongoing effort currently has 513 assets within the system supporting community engagement and field work. Four Rivers participated in the Matawa Quality Assurance Audit at the beginning of May 2025 and met and exceeded the departmental requirements for the anticipated ISO certification.

Regional Assessment and Impact Assessment

A Regional Assessment (RA) is a broad-scale study of an area, and the RA process includes collecting baseline data, identifying patterns and trends, and looking at the combined impacts of all proposed projects, developments, and other factors in the region. Unlike an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Impact Assessment (IA), which look at specific projects and decide if (and how) they can go ahead, RA provides information to inform other decision-making and planning processes. RAs work to understand and protect the environment and communities' wellbeing, while providing opportunity for sustainable development. There are many potential projects in the Ring of Fire area that could impact the environment and the communities' ways of life. The Ring of Fire RA will look at many factors to understand the combined potential impact on the region and produce a final report with recommendations on its findings. Four Rivers has been successful this past year in supporting capacity building initiatives related to these assessment processes by supporting

individual community proposals and initiatives, as well as large capacity building initiatives at the regional level. Specifically, Four Rivers has been providing support to the RAWG, including logistical support for meetings and travel, coordination and project management supports, and supports for developing specific products (i.e. communications materials) that RAWG members require. This past year, the RAWG completed the Terms of Reference for the RA process in the Ring of Fire area, requiring a tremendous amount of time and commitment from the group. We want to acknowledge this historic work that advances the RA to the Conduct Phase, which will provide substantial information to help inform future decisions affecting the Matawa member First Nations and their Homelands.



Four Rivers Environment Gathering

Four Rivers welcomed over 60 community members and delegates to our Environment Gathering in Thunder Bay from December 3 to 5, 2024. The gathering focused on collaboration and knowledge sharing, featuring engaging discussions about the latest developments in environment and technology relevant to the Matawa homelands, including climate change, mining, and ecology. Presentations on wolverine, peat lands, environmental Guardians and blastomycosis awareness were delivered, with lively conversations with community members on priority environmental areas. Meegwetch to all who attended for making the event a success! These environmental gatherings continue to be wonderful opportunities to come together and share.

Four Rivers Projects and Initiatives 2024-2025

Project Title	Funder	Brief Description
Canadian Wildlife Service Acoustic Monitoring	Environment & Climate Change Canada (ECCC)	Project expands on developed of baseline monitoring programs (on birds, bats and wolves) by working with individual communities to identify monitoring priority areas, and to design remote monitoring programs to support their vision.
MDISO (MINES)	Ontario Ministry of Mines (MINES)	Support to communities on mineral industry & plans and permits through the Mineral Development & Information Support Officer.
Community-Based Climate Monitoring	Crown Indigenous Relations & Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)	Project is focusing on gathering climate data collection through the launch of weather stations in all Matawa member First Nations (six installed to date). Protocols around a new bathymetric mapping drone have also been developed, to be piloted on community lakes in 2024.
Aroland First Nation Cell Tower	Ontario Ministry of Mines (MINES)	Worked to obtain funding to construct a cell phone service tower in Aroland First Nation, and continue to provide logistics support to project completion.
Guardians & Tech Youth Development - MCF	Mastercard Foundation (MCF)	Project goals include Matawa youth being trained and working as River Guardians, to be on the land doing environmental monitoring, and to provide support for the Matawa broadband network – Rapid Lynx.
NGN Guardians	First Nations National Guardians Network (NGN)	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.
Regional Assessment Facilitator Costs	Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC)	Flow through of funds to 3rd party RAWG facilitator who supports the Regional Assessment Working Group.
IAAC Indigenous Capacity Support Program	Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC)	Support for capacity building in the areas of Impact Assessments, in order to allow community members and leadership to make informed decisions with regard to potential development which may affect their territory and their future.
CIER Species at Risk	Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER)	Project to work closely with the four Onigam Ashookaasata communities to examine SAR engagement requests, along with documented local and culturally relevant species, to develop a vetting system to sort and handle the requests.
AFSAR Aquatic	Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)	Project involves research on waters and sturgeon populations on two waterways, as well as community capacity building and discussions on sturgeon populations and monitoring.
MINES Plotter Procurement	Ontario Ministry of Mines (MINES+)	Project to see large-format printers (plotters) installed in all nine member First Nations.
MECP Caribou	Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation& Parks (MECP)	Project to start in 2024/25 and include expanding current caribou research (via trail cameras) in three member First Nations. Goal to expand capacity in caribou SAR conversations throughout the homelands, IK documentation and community guardians in field research.
WWF Seed Collection	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	Guardians initiative where seed species will be collected and identified in accordance with local protocols and priorities.
PICCA Climate LU	Laurentian University (LU)	The Partnership for Indigenous Climate Change Adaptation (PICCA) is a specific collaboration lead by Up North On Climate, with the goal of addressing climate change challenges. PICCA partners strive to weave together Indigenous and western knowledge to support the development of climate resilient Indigenous communities in their Traditional Territories.
SARSP Bats	Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation& Parks (MECP)	Involves research and engagement on SAR bat species. Aims to improve knowledge of habitat use and movement as well as increase awareness and reduce direct risks to SAR bats, and provide opportunities to get involved in research and stewardship activities.
ECCC Carbon	Environment & Climate Change Canada (ECCC)	Project to support carbon and peat lands conversations in the Matawa homelands, with training workshops to occur in 2024/25 surrounding vegetation assessments and drone mapping.
Broadband Support Phase 1	Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM)	Four Rivers involvement surrounding environmental responses to Phase 1 work
Broadband Support Phase 2	Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM)	Four Rivers involvement focused on mapping support for planning purposes.
Chiefs Council Support	Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM)	Provide administrative, logistical, technical and translation support when required for Matawa Chiefs Council meetings.
FedNor Infrastructure	Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM)	Matawa energy supply and demand study, as well as an infrastructure report on water and wastewater services in the Matawa region.
Four Rivers Inc.	Various	Support of over 14 projects to 7+ clients.

Health and Social Meno Biimadeswin



Matawa First Nations Management

Staff

Francine Pellerin, Director • Leanne Whitehead, Administrative Assistant • Nicole Jacob, Regional Crisis Intervention Coordinator • Elizabeth (Liz) Wapoose, NIHB Client Navigator • Cheryl Suganaqueb, NIHB Client Navigator • Breanne Anderson, Community Wellness Programs Facilitator • Aaron Tyance, Mental Wellness Team Lead Facilitator • Vacant, Social Emergency Coordinator • Vacant, Victim Services Coordinator

Overview

Health & Social Meno Biimadeswin (HSMB) is responsible for the management, administration, coordination and implementation of a range of health and social wellness programs and initiatives that serve Matawa First Nations. HSMB provides advisory, advocacy and technical support to Matawa First Nations leadership and service providers, and offers support to individuals and communities for social crisis, emergencies, violence prevention, wellness promotion, capacity building and navigation of Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) services. HSMB works in collaboration with affiliated groups, organizations, agencies and institutions. We focus on supporting community-based programs to ensure that community members have access to the resources, services, and advocacy they need to achieve and maintain wellness. HSMB currently oversees ten annualized funding programs and four short-term projects aimed at enhancing the overall wellness and health outcomes for Matawa First Nations members.

Priorities

To strengthen, enhance and promote health and wellbeing of our First Nations, HSMB prioritizes: enhancing community-based supports; responding to social crises in community; addressing client healthcare needs and challenges, and building health and social service capacity.

Successes

- **Continuation of all HSMB Programs:** HSMB maintains and administers ten ongoing programs and four one-time/short term initiatives.
- **Responding to First Nations Crisis:** Forty-two mental health Crisis Response Teams deployed to respond to First Nation. Over 4,618 individual supports provided.
- **Matawa Community Crisis Response Planning Training:** Thirty-five Matawa staff received Thunderbird Partnership Foundation certification. Planning second training session to take place Sept. 2025 for frontline community workers.

- **Supporting Traditional Services:** Supporting eight First Nations with traditional services, knowledge sharing, ceremonies, doctoring and specialist services. Over 400 individuals provided with services.
- **Relationship Building with other First Nation Providers:** Partnering with organizations to address challenges faced by First Nations and improve services and relationships (i.e. coordination of services with NIHB navigators, co-sharing for training/events, coordination of crisis supports, etc.).
- **Coordinating workshops for First Nations staff:** Providing technical support for community-led workshops and advocating for resource support from service providers (ex. Eabametoong Land Gathering and Health and Social Staff workshop, NIHB information session for Health Directors and service providers, Victim Services Orientation Session, and Regional Self-Care Workshop for community frontline workers.

Challenges

- **Inadequate Program Funding:** Existing funding commitments are insufficient, especially given the rising cost of living. Government contributions do not match program needs.
- **Human Resources for Community Crisis:** Limited personnel to respond effectively to community crises. Competing with other agencies for service providers.
- **Recruitment and Retention Issues:** Difficulty attracting to fill vacant positions. Staff fill in vacant position when necessary without proper training.
- **Travel to First Nation Community:** Lack of adequate accommodations for incoming staff.
- **Ongoing Social and Healing Challenges:** Communities continue to face addiction, housing shortages, and long-term effects of historical trauma (e.g., residential schools, day schools). Limited access to childcare compounds social difficulties.
- **Language and Cultural Barriers:** Challenges in both staff training and service delivery due to language differences. Need for culturally-appropriate personnel.
- **Insufficient Training and Professional Development:** Staff lack access to regular and comprehensive training opportunities. Inadequate resources to up skill team members or support them in their evolving roles.
- **Lack of Emergency Resources:** Limited emergency response tools and support hampers the ability to assist clients in urgent situations.

Opportunities

- Continue fostering partnerships with other providers to enhance collaboration and coordination.
- Strengthening community engagement and participation in health transformation initiatives.
- Increase community-based training and awareness programs focused on social emergency management, health and wellness, collaboration, and coordination and case sharing.

Staff

Angelle Rebelo, CHRP, CHRL, Manager • Diego Villanueva, Human Resources Officer • Tiana-Lynn Laguillon, Employee Mental Wellness Nurse

Overview

Matawa Human Resources provides the structure and ability to meet the needs of our First Nations and Matawa First Nations Management’s (MFNM) strategic goals through managing our most valuable resources: our employees. Human Resources manages the life cycle of an employee from the recruitment stage to the termination or resignation stage. At the time of writing this report, MFNM has 620 employees in its workforce. Human Resources also assists with the annual review and revision of First Nation policies and procedures, provides advice and responds to Human Resources queries from the First Nations.

Priorities

- Managing and directing a workforce of 620 employees.
- Review, revision and development of Human Resources and Health and Safety policies and programs.
- Human Resources administration of keeping track of documents including personnel files and employee records related to attendance, performance, training, benefits, vacation and leaves of absence.
- Recruitment, selection and onboarding the right people for the right jobs.
- Employee training and development.
- Sustaining a healthy and safe work environment, physically and psychologically.
- Managing employer-employee relations.
- Overseeing compensation and benefits; managing Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and Canada Life short-term and long-term disability claims.
- Staying current and ensuring compliance with all relevant government legislation (federal, provincial, First Nation) labour laws and employment standards.
- Advising Managers, employees, and First Nations on human resources matters and concerns.

- Hiring of Quality Assurance Project Manager for Matawa First Nations Management; revitalize the Quality Management System and for MFNM to regain ISO 9001 Certification.
- As a “new” department, Human Resources will conform to the Quality Management System’s policies and procedures and develop processes that adhere to the use and monitoring of best practices, risk management, informed decision-making and prevention of process loss and negative impacts to quality.



Successes

- Recruitment and hiring of MFNM’s new Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Sharon Nate.
- Acquisition and launch of a new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) and Payroll program, Automatic Data Processing (ADP): a software solution that helps manage and automate core HR processes and support benefits administration, time and attendance, payroll, and other work flows, as well as the storage of employees’ data, such as personal, demographic, and compensation information. Launch date is projected for June 24, 2025.
- Hired an Employee Mental Wellness Nurse to provide additional mental health and wellness support to all Matawa employees.
- Human Resources department coordinated training and led workshops in-person and online for MFNM employees including: Part 1 and Part 2 Certification training for the Joint Health and Safety Committee members; Fire Safety Training - fire watch and fire extinguisher training; First Aid/CPR and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training; Mental First Aid training; Naloxone training; Workplace Harassment and

- Violence Prevention training, and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System.
- Automated External Defibrillator (AEDs) and First Aid cabinets purchased and installed at the MFNM office, the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre buildings and at Matawa Health Co-operative, Awashishewiigihiwaywiin, KKETS, and Four Rivers Group sites. A third party (Cintas) will conduct monthly inspections at each site and items will be replenished as required.
- Developed an Emergency Response Plan and policies and procedures for the Matawa Training and Wellness Centre including Shelter in Place, Hold and Secure, and Lock down. Communicated plan to employees, residents/clients and Thunder Bay Police Services (TBPS). Mock drills and training sessions held.
- Investigation and resolution of various complaints, grievances and employment legal issues.



Challenges

- Exponential growth of MFNM in all departments and entities necessitates increasing staffing across Matawa to provide required program supports and services.
- Insufficient staffing in the Human Resources department. In order to keep up with Matawa’s growth, there is a need to hire additional Human Resources staff to conduct various Human Resources and Health and Safety functions and new programs to ensure that support and services are available to assist Matawa members.

- Ensuring staff levels in all departments are at optimal levels. Recruitment, selection and retention of staff in specialized employment opportunities within Matawa may be difficult to attain at times.
- Funding opportunities may become limited. Decrease in funding dollars may result in employee layoffs and terminations which will have an impact on the members we serve.

Opportunities

- Centralization of Human Resources files. Files from all Matawa departments and entities to be filed in fire-proof and locked cabinets in the Human Resources department. Archive and destroy files as per File Retention Policy.
- Develop an Asbestos Management Plan for all Matawa buildings and sites.
- Develop and implement an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) for MFNM sites. Communicate plan to employees and TBPS. Training and mock drills will be scheduled.
- Continue with the Workplace Harassment and Violence workshops for employees until all employees are knowledgeable about the policy and procedures and are trained on the program elements.
- Review of MFNM Human Resources and Finance Policies and develop work instructions.
- Develop Health and Safety policies, programs and work instructions; communicate and train employees.
- Plan and organize an Matawa information and career fair. Work with Program Managers and First Nations to set up dates, venue, description of each department and vacant positions in each department.
- Plan and execute a retreat for Matawa managers in the fall of 2025.

Information Technology (IT) Services

Matawa First Nations Management

Staff

Rob Wesley, Manager • Stefano Fata, IT Helpdesk Analyst Tier 1 • Chris Harrington, IT Helpdesk Analyst Tier 2 • Tom Paradis, IT Helpdesk Analyst Tier 2

Overview

Matawa First Nations Management’s Information Technology (IT) Services department provides 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. An additional requirement of the IT Services department will be to oversee the Network Operations Center of the pending Fiber Optic network with the Rapid Lynx Telecommunications group. The IT Services staff will be the initial trainees for all components involved once the project goes online.

Priorities

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 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, manage and supervise 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, and maintain current and accurate inventory of technology hardware, software and resources.
- Provide orientation to new users of existing technology and train staff about potential uses of existing technology. Provide individual training and support on request as well as recommendations about accessing information and support.

Manage, monitor and maintain technology to ensure proper and secure access

- Troubleshoot all technology issues and maintain logs of required repairs and maintenance (Helpdesk Software Application).
- Research current and potential resources and services and make recommendations about the purchase of technology resources.
- Provide network access, and network accounts and passwords as required, to all staff and students. Install workstations and connect and setup hardware and install all required software.
- Implement and monitor security of all aspects pertaining to the network infrastructure and advise staff of security breaches and/or a change in passwords or security status.



The IT Services department oversees the maintenance of the following in-house hosted websites:



www.matawa.on.ca



www.rapidlynx.ca



www.ginoogamingfn.ca



www.gatheringofrivers.com

- Maintain servers and configure and maintain network access requirements.
- Identify and prepare hardware for disposal by ensuring removal of all corporate data.

Assist with overall management of corporate information technology and computer systems

- Assist with planning, organization, direction, control and evaluation of the operations of information systems.
- Implement policies and procedures for IT management and computer systems operations and development.
- Operate within identified computer systems budgets, policies and procedures.

Quality Management System (QMS)

- Adhere to, implement, review and improve Matawa First Nations Management’s Quality Management Systems as it relates to all duties and the department.

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

Successes

- Continued cybersecurity enhancements and implementations.
- All IT Helpdesk Analyst staff will soon attain industry standard certifications.
- Additional full-time IT Helpdesk Analyst staff has proved very beneficial to both the IT Services department and to all staff we serve.
- Continued requirements and management of Microsoft Teams for Ginoogaming First Nation.
- Adaptation of new management tools regarding our email system change.
- Working with several new departments to ensure their IT requirements exceed expectations.
- Partaking in the construction phases of the Matawa Training & Wellness Centre and with the upcoming Women’s Shelter with respect to the IT requirements, security cameras, door lock mechanisms.
- Manage and maintain 20+ individual servers within Matawa and KKETS.
- Community Email Systems with over 400 email accounts, recently moved to a paid subscription model.
- Network reconfigurations necessary to keep up to date with newer technologies.
- Adapting to new ways in server use and management.

Challenges

- Learning technologies that have not been in use at Matawa First Nations before.
- Adapting to the continuing changes of Microsoft 365 Administration tools. Working towards a new onboarding system for Windows and Mac.
- All IT Services staff to attain Industry Standard Certifications in various areas of expertise.
- Monitoring of a growing network infrastructure within separate buildings, currently seeking out a Network Operations Center (NOC) platform.

Opportunities

- Could easily host additional community websites.
- Intranet site (Document Sharing site) can now be implemented in a limited capacity using Microsoft 365 and their SharePoint solution (Matawa Education).

Staff

Alanna McKenzie, Director

Overview

The Lands, Resources & Rights department is responsible for monitoring, updating and supporting the Matawa Chiefs Council, CEO’s Office and other Matawa departments on developments related to the governments of Canada and Ontario on issues and priorities related to the lands, resources and rights of the Matawa member First Nations and their territories and homelands.

Dept. Committee

Matawa Chiefs Council

Priorities

- Monitoring of Canada/Ontario Election Campaigns – Tariff and Annexation Crises
- During the course of the provincial election (February 27, 2025) and federal election (April 28, 2025) campaigns and taking of office by Premier Ford and new Prime Minister Mark Carney – we have provided Matawa Chiefs Council with updates on campaign commitments, documents and cabinet appointments as they occurred.
 - We also prepared a cabinet appointment briefing for Canada’s most recent governmental changeover. The briefing gives an indication of the priorities of the new federal government as well as key Ministers who will be leading next steps forward; as well as Ontario’s new cabinet listing.
 - As part of developments occurring with the election of President Trump, we also provided the Matawa Chiefs Council with a USA Critical Minerals Strategy analysis re: annexation of Canada, Greenland, Ukraine critical minerals agreement and South Africa chromite production considerations.

- Ontario Bill 5 *Protecting Ontario By Unleashing Our Economy Act*, 2025
- With the introduction of Bill 5 by the Ford Government on April 17, 2025 we provided the Matawa Chiefs Council with a briefing note on the proposed legislation.
 - We did advise and prepare to support any Matawa Chiefs Council members or First Nations in Standing Committee hearings if requested. No direct requests were received.



- Ontario Am-Can Fortress Strategy, January 2025
- In January with little notice the Ford Government published the Ontario ‘*Building Fortress Am-Can*’ Ontario’s *AM-CAN Growth Plan*’ we prepared a briefing note analysis of this document.
 - The Fortress Strategy is how Premier Ford is promoting an alliance within Canada and response to the United States tariff and annexation threats (energy and critical minerals).
 - A copy of the Fortress Strategy, the briefing note analysis and NATO’s *Defence-Critical Supply Chain Security Roadmap*, July 2024, was shared with the Matawa Chiefs Council.
 - The NATO roadmap explains the importance of the critical resource supply chain Ontario is putting into place across Treaty 9 (critical minerals, precious metals) and Matawa region (chromite for military and defence production).

- Fednor Project – Infrastructure/Energy Studies and Matawa Development Corporation Realignment
- At the April 15-16, 2025 Matawa Chiefs Council meeting we secured the motion/resolution to proceed with the FedNor funded Infrastructure/Energy Studies and the Matawa Development Corporation (MDC) realignment legal advisory and options development for the approval of the Chiefs.
 - The Infrastructure / Energy Studies are underway for target completion date of June 30, 2025.
 - This work is being undertaken by Lands, Resources & Rights, Economic Development, Technical Services and the Four Rivers Environmental Group.

- Open Call for Research Papers
- At the April 15-16, 2025, Matawa Chiefs Council meeting we secured the motion/resolution to proceed with an open call for research papers related to the Matawa region under the topics of:
 - Inherent/Aboriginal and Treaty Rights* including Treaty Implementation & the Taking Up of Land
 - Government Economy and Revenue*
 - Mining (Chromite, Precious Metals, Critical Minerals)
 - Forestry
 - Hydro and Hydrogen Opportunities*
 - Land (Industrial, Commercial, Residential)
 - Major Regional Infrastructure (transmission corridor*, highways, roads, rail)
 - Security & Defence

- Monitoring Ongoing International and Federal Level Issues
- The Lands, Resources & Rights department also continues to monitor the day-to-day events of the United Nations (International) and federal government (Canada) on issues for example but not limited to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), proposed federal Métis Self-Government recognition legislation, the Bill C-69 Impact Assessment Act, and Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC), etc.
- Requests and Technical Advisory Support
- I also respond to any direct requests and technical/ advisory support requests from Matawa Chiefs Council or First Nation staff as they are made.

Successes

- Energy Sector Support and Issues Identification for Matawa member First Nations:
- Following the January 14-16, 2025, Matawa Energy Summit, we have continued to work within the Lands, Resources & Rights, Economic Development, and Chiefs Council Office to support Matawa member First Nations on energy related issues. Analysis work and continued information gathering processes remain a priority on the energy sector as directed by the Matawa Chiefs Council.
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation Resolutions – Bill 5 and FPIC:
- Attended the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Treaty Special Chiefs Assembly February 4-6 2025 in Toronto and the NAN Special Chiefs Assembly May 20-22, in Toronto.
 - We were able to provide technical support in drafting NAN resolutions related to Bill 5 and Free, Prior & Informed Consent (FPIC).

Challenges

Challenges facing the Matawa Lands, Resources & Rights department is the sheer volume of priorities and interests to be monitored at the international, federal, provincial and First Nation political levels (First Nations, Tribal Council, NAN, Chiefs of Ontario, Assembly of First Nations). The current focus on the development of the territory and homelands of the Matawa member First Nations is multi-generational, and nation-building in scope. This has been the position of Matawa First Nations Management CEO & Staff, long before Canada and Ontario made such claims.

Opportunities

Opportunity is to support and empower Matawa member First Nations, Matawa Chiefs Council and MFNM staff to be active participants and owners in decision-making impacting their traditional territories and homelands. Providing information, support and on-going communication on very complex issues is key to helping all Matawa member First Nations, no matter where they position themselves on the development, or rights protection spectrum. Having the BMC collaborate on what type of common services the Tribal Council can provide in the future in terms of accounting, finance, and governance.



Overview

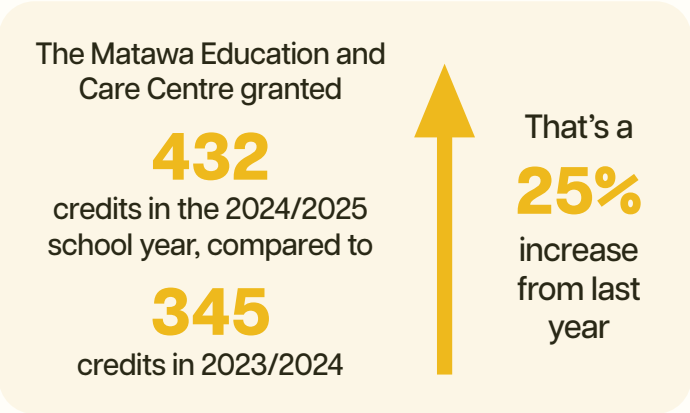
The 2024/25 year marked a period of achievement, innovation and increased interdepartmental collaboration for Matawa Education. Departments worked together to create supportive learning environments that address academic, emotional, cultural, and logistical needs of Matawa youth across remote communities and in Thunder Bay. Strong momentum was demonstrated in student engagement, trades programming, transition services, mental health supports, and education infrastructure. However, the need for stable funding, sustainable staffing, and consistent digital access remains critical.

Program Priorities

- Matawa Education & Care Centre (MECC):** Culturally enriched, trauma-informed academic programming with wraparound supports, distance education, land-based learning, and trades opportunities.
- Post-Secondary Program:** Academic and transitional support for 5 First Nations, focused on student success, female empowerment, and long-term planning.
- Pathways to Achieve Student Success (PASS):** Focused on student achievement through literacy/numeracy, teacher retention, professional development, and school-community engagement.
- Education Information Technology (IT) Department:** Provided technological backbone for all education departments, supporting digital learning, cybersecurity, and infrastructure growth.
- Matawa Student Care Centre (MSCC):** Delivered holistic student housing with emphasis on safety, mental health, cultural identity, life skills, and academic reinforcement.

Notable Successes

- Matawa Education & Care Centre:**
 - 432 credits granted; 14 graduates.
 - Expanded trades, distance learning, and Indigenous-centered curriculum.
 - Supported displaced students from Neskantaga.
- Post-Secondary Program:**
 - 34 graduates; launched a transitional support program funded by ITIF.
 - Strengthened support for Indigenous women and personal outreach to students and communities.
- Pathways to Achieve Student Success:**
 - Hosted 465 participants at the Matawa Education Conference.
 - Delivered Grade 8 workshops, mental health training, literacy programming, and bursaries.
 - Supported displaced students in Eabametoong and Neskantaga.



- IT Department:**
 - Implemented new cybersecurity protocols following a major cyber threat.
 - Supported tech installations at new schools and MECC.
 - Mitigated bandwidth issues and advocated for remote connectivity upgrades.
- Matawa Student Care Centre:**
 - Provided safe housing to 101 students, including four experiencing homelessness.
 - Reduced serious incidents by 25%.
 - Introduced a student-run newsletter, Sunday community kitchen, and cultural activities.
 - Hired additional staff and collaborated with the Matawa Health Co-operative to provide nursing support.

Shared Challenges

- Funding instability:** Cuts to Choose Life and Jordan's Principle jeopardize staff and student services (MECC, MSCC, PASS).
- Staffing shortages:** Challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff across departments (MSCC, MECC, PASS).
- Connectivity Issues:** Limited internet infrastructure in communities and growing demand at MECC strain IT capabilities.
- Crisis response:** Displacement from flooding and fires in Neskantaga and Eabametoong required rapid, coordinated response.

Collaboration Highlights

- MECC, MSCC, and IT:** Joint use of MECC gym and security infrastructure, and coordinated support for displaced students, including housing, learning space, and digital access.
- PASS and Post-Secondary:** Joint delivery of the Bowmanville Rotary Bursaries and transition activities, and Co-engagement with universities and faculty of education programs.
- PASS and MSCC:** Aligned mental health trainings and community engagement tools like handbooks, newsletters, and family outreach.
- MSCC and Matawa Health Co-operative:** Shared service models with MHC enhanced youth care and weekend access to mental health support.



Opportunities

- Unified transition planning:** Build a shared transition strategy from Grade 8 to high school (PASS) and high school to post-secondary (Post-Secondary, MSCC).
- Integrated student wellness strategy:** Leverage strengths of MSCC, MECC, and PASS for trauma-informed, culturally grounded health and academic programming.
- Shared communication tools:** Expand MSCC newsletter to cover all departments, showcasing achievements and fostering transparency across Matawa communities.
- Centralized recruitment model:** Coordinate educator hiring across MECC, PASS, and community schools with joint university engagement strategies.
- Digital Infrastructure:** Collaborate on IT priorities like expanding remote access, online learning tools, and cloud-based document systems (IT, MECC, PASS).

Conclusion

Across departments, Matawa Education continues to build a comprehensive, community-driven education system that nurtures student identity, learning, and well-being. As interdepartmental collaboration deepens, so does the capacity to provide high-quality education that reflects the values, needs, and aspirations of Matawa First Nations. Ongoing advocacy for sustained funding and strategic investment will be essential to maintain and grow this collective impact.



After Hours Student Support

Matawa Education

Staff

Stephanie Ritch, Youth Inquest Manager • Katherine Steele, Youth Inquest Assistant • Vanessa Yesno, Night Supervisor • Addictions Crisis Workers: Colleen Johnston and Jacob Moore • PTE Safe Sobering Site: Danielle Legacy and Tanya Towner • Youth Residential Workers Pearl Atlookan and Summer Robertson • On Call Workers: Cheyanne Meekis, Devon Yesno, Harold Meeseetawageesic, Klarissa Sakanee, Kristen Sugarhead, Lexus Therriault, Owen Atlookan • Outreach Workers: Chris Waite, Derek Gagnon, Elkanah Wesley, Sandra Atlookan • Michelle Mainville, Youth Crisis Intervention Worker • Matawa Health Co-operative Registered Nurses: Rebecca Paavola and Starla Sky • Indigenous Cultural Reintegration Support: Ardelle Sagutcheway and Isaac Hansen • After Hours Student Support Workers: Sylvia Sakanee, Doreen Oskineegish, Faith Jacob, Jada Sofea, Jared Yellowhead, Mya Dixon • PTE After Hours Student Support Workers: Jessica Andreason, Joseph Baxter, Lacey Anderson, Patricia Magiskan, Starr Waboose, Vincent Moonias

Overview

Matawa Education's After Hours Student Support Department consists of: the Safe Sobering Site, On Call Service, Student Outreach, Youth Crisis Intervention, Night Supervision, Indigenous Cultural Revitalization and supporting the First Nation Seven Youth Inquest. After Hours Student Support Department staff are front-line workers once school operations are closed for the evening, overnight and during the weekends. All programs and services support Matawa high school students ages 13-22 attending any high school in Thunder Bay. Staff work as a team to support students as well as answer calls for help from parents, boarding home parents, and community members. These staff often call emergency services such as the Thunder Bay Police Service, Thunder Bay Emergency Medical Services and Thunder Bay Crisis Response to ensure the overall safety of Matawa high school students.

• **Matawa Safe Sobering Site:** Supports Matawa students in need of safe and supervised short term stabilization from alcohol or drugs. The site is housed in the Matawa



Education building, operational 24/7/365, and monitored by Addictions Crisis Workers and Youth Residential Workers.

- **Matawa On Call Service:** Provides free and safe transportation to Matawa students. For Matawa students experiencing intoxication, On Call Workers transport students to the Matawa Safe Sobering Site or call emergency services if necessary. On Call Workers also respond to calls from students, guardians, and local community members pertaining to Matawa students.
- **Student Outreach:** Outreach Workers help students with issues that they are facing, ensure that students are in their boarding homes by curfew, and patrol high risk areas in Thunder Bay to help at-risk Matawa students. Outreach workers work during the evening, over night and weekends.
- **Youth Crisis Intervention:** Youth Crisis Intervention Workers are mental health professionals that provide counselling and support services to youth under emotional distress or experiencing a crisis. Staff provide crisis intervention and support to stabilize students in crisis that are receiving any of the After Hours programs or services.
- **Night Supervisor:** The Night Supervisor is responsible for the After Hours department's operations after hours, attending to student and staff needs. The Night Supervisor manages staff workflow, team schedules, training new hires, evaluating after-hours performance, student data, and coordinating appropriate staff to respond to student crisis.

- **Indigenous Cultural Revitalization:** Indigenous Cultural Revitalization Youth Workers provide programming for Matawa students relating to cultural revitalization and Indigenous mental health promotion and practices. These staff work with youth during lunch-time, evenings, and weekends. These staff often support the Matawa Student Care Centre Cultural Workers.
- **Seven Youth Inquest:** Called following the deaths of students Jethro Anderson, Reggie Bushie, Robyn Harper, Kyle Morrisseau, Paul Panacheese, and Jordan Wabasse, the Seven Youth Inquest took place between October 5, 2015, and June 28, 2016, when the jury rendered its ruling, which included 149 recommendations aimed at keeping youth safe—24 of which were directed at Matawa Education.

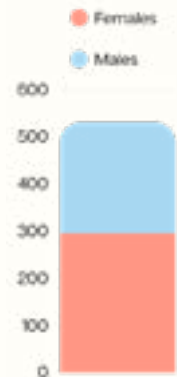
The Seven Youth Inquest aims to counteract and prevent the death of Indigenous youth, who, as young as thirteen years-old relocate to Thunder Bay to continue their education beyond elementary school. Typically, youth arrive in the city alone and face barriers not experienced by non-Indigenous students. Leading up to this transition, guardians are confronted with the uncertainty and probable outcome of deciding between their child's safety or their education.

Matawa's Youth Inquest Manager tracks and implements each Jury recommendation directed at the MECC. The Youth Inquest Manager compiles the MECC's Seven Youth Inquest Annual Report annually for the Ontario Coroner's Office to review. The Youth Inquest Manager also provides support to MECC staff working on various projects associated with the inquest recommendations. The Youth Inquest Manager acts as liaison between MECC and government, as well as First Nation Inquest partners, to complete items associated with the Political Table, Education Table, and Task Team Tables. The Youth Inquest Manager also oversees the Matawa Safe Sobering Site by providing direct supervision to attending staff and students, and also supports MECC School Administration upon request by aiding in the completion of reports, proposals, projects, and other initiatives associated with the Inquest Recommendations.

From April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025, the
Matawa Safe Sobering Site provided
40 active suicide attempt interventions
and **33** self harming interventions

Priorities

- Providing crisis intervention and lifesaving support to Matawa high school students involved in serious incidents.
- Helping Matawa high school students after regular school hours evenings, overnights, and weekends.
- Assisting Matawa high school students in getting home (or to their boarding home) safely.
- Helping meet Matawa students basic needs.



From April 1, 2024 to
March 31, 2025, the
Matawa Safe Sobering
Site provided alcohol
and drug stabilization
services for **520**
students

Successes

After Hours Student Support staff continue to provide crisis intervention and support to Matawa high school students involved in serious incidents—many of which directly attributed to saving students lives.

Summer 2024 was officially the first summer that the Matawa Safe Sobering Site was open to help urban Matawa students living in Thunder Bay year-round. In fact, Matawa Safe Sobering Site has been open 24/7/365 since th 2023 Christmas break.

Various After Hours Student Support staff did outreach to raise awareness about our programs and services by participating in the following special events:

- International Overdose Awareness Day Event – August 28, 2024
- MECC Student Course Fair – September 5, 2024
- Rockin' Recovery – September 7, 2024
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation Student Orientation – September 19, 2024
- Elder's Gathering – November 12-14, 2024
- Neskantaga First Nation Pow Wow – February 28 – March 2, 2025
- Lakehead University Pow wow – March 8-9, 2025
- Webequie Career Fair – May 21, 2025

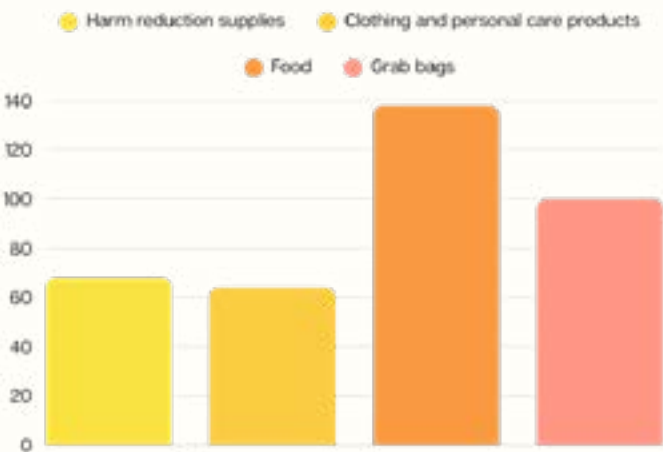
After Hours Student Support

Matawa Education

Matawa Education has partnered with the Matawa Health Co-operative during the 2024/25 academic year to provide two in-house Registered Nurses to better support our vulnerable Matawa high school students needs while accessing the Matawa Safe Sobering Site, increasing both staff and student safety.

Six (6) Jordan Wabasse Memorial Awards were distributed in June 2024 to students excelling in either Outdoor Education or Athletics and were successful graduates of Matawa Education and Care Centre, Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre, or Keewaytinook Internet High School.

One of the After Hours Student Support’s Indigenous Cultural Reintegration Workers helped the Matawa Student Care Centre provide cultural and student activity programming while they were short staffed in May and June 2025.



Supplies distributed to students by Matawa After Hours Student Support

The Youth Inquest Manager worked as part of a Matawa Education team to successfully obtain 10-year accreditation through the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium’s Accreditation Authority for the Matawa Learning Institute and the community-based language program Matawa Waka Tere Indigenous Language Revitalization Program.

The Youth Inquest Manager delivered two (2) Mental Health First Aid trainings to Matawa First Nation members and Matawa First Nations Management staff.

The Youth Inquest Manager was a keynote speaker at Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) annual 2024 Continuity of Care Conference for NAN Education and staff and members.

Challenges

Seven Youth Inquest Challenges:

The following challenges remain for the MECC despite the Seven Youth Inquest recommendations addressed to the Provincial and Federal Government for resolution:

- Lack of stable and predictable funding for the MECC resulting in the inability for long-term strategic planning; inadequate funding resulting in higher staff turnovers; and lack of dedicated funding to meet Inquest recommendations.
- Lack of stable and predictable funding is demonstrated by Indigenous Services Canada’s January 2025 changes to Jordan’s Principle/Choose Life, which may impact Matawa Safe Sobering Site programs and services, as well as other core MECC programs and services. Below is a summary list outlining programs that may be affected by new funding guidelines:
 - Significant reduction in staffing within the Matawa Education department, including the Matawa Education Centre (our secondary school), Matawa Student Care Centre (student accommodations), and the Matawa Safe Sobering Site (after hours student support).
 - Significant reduction in academic, mental wellness, addiction, and student safety programming and supports.
 - Significant reduction in cultural, language, and land-based programming.
 - Significant reduction in special education, distance education and skilled trades education.

From April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025,
After Hours Student Support’s Outreach
Services conducted **3925** curfew calls
to ensure students are home by curfew

Matawa Safe Sobering Site Challenges:

During the 2024/25 academic year, two (2) students that were experiencing homelessness in Thunder Bay received long term emergency shelter from Matawa Safe Sobering Site (SSS). SSS is not designed to be

a homeless shelter as we don’t have the necessary homelessness related programs and services, and we cannot physically separate those experiencing homelessness versus acute intoxication. Matawa SSS staff were often stretched very thin and lacked capacity to do both safe sobering and caring for homeless students.

Challenges facing our Registered Nurses include a lack of medical directives to guide nursing decisions and no access to an on-call physician after regular hours, limiting ability to provide comprehensive care during off-hours and contributing to more visits to the emergency department.

Students learning remotely in their home community and visiting Thunder Bay for medical, counselling, or vacations continue to be a challenge for After Hours Student Support. Staff are not advised in advance of their temporary address in Thunder Bay or who their escort is, therefore, staff do not know where to bring the student or who they can contact during student emergencies.

Finding parental, guardian or boarding home support for students who end up in Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) Emergency Room is an on-going challenge as staff are often unable to contact the guardian to inform them their child is in hospital. After Hours Student Support staff are dealing with multiple crisis each night and often do not have the staff capacity to support students in hospital all night long. Overall, increased parental support is required during medical emergencies.

Opportunities

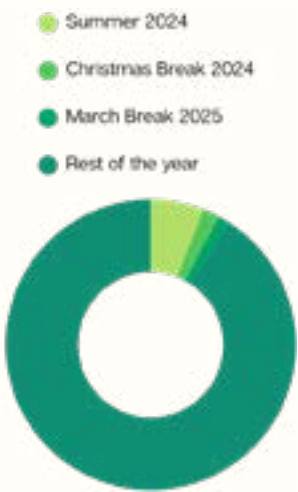
After Hours Student Support department and all its respective programs and services will now be open throughout the year, including March break, summer break, and Christmas break to support students, parents and communities during normal school closures. Overall, staff are our biggest asset and continuous staff development is a key opportunity moving forward.

Our Registered Nurses would benefit from securing medical directives and possibly establishing an on-call physician to expand service availability and decrease visits to the emergency room, as well as, exploring ways to provide after-hours care to students at the Matawa Student Care Centre (MSCC), improving access and responsiveness.

The Youth Inquest Manager has met with Thunder Bay Emergency Management Services to begin the process of establishing a safe drop-off pathway for Matawa high school students so that applicable students picked up by paramedics can be safely diverted to Matawa’s SSS to safely stabilize from alcohol or drugs at our facility

instead of the TBRHSC (unless medically necessary). Once established, Matawa SSS would become a part of the Superior North Specialized Treatment and Alternative Responders, or STAR team, which launched this year.

The Youth Inquest Manager helped submit a proposal to address an August 2024 Chiefs Council Resolution directing Matawa Education to seek and obtain funding for both a Matawa Youth Shelter and Matawa Youth Treatment Centre. In May 2025, we received word from Health Canada’s Mental Health Division and Health Policy Branch that they were almost done reading all the applications and decisions are forthcoming.



Throughout the year,
After Hours Student
Support’s On Call
Service provided
6111 free and safe
rides for urban Matawa
students

The Youth Inquest Manager sits on the TBRHSC’s Indigenous Steering Committee formally established in June 2024. The Committee meets quarterly to ensure that the TBRHSC’s Miskwaa Biidaaban team is working in alignment with their service and partner agreements, and to provide best practice guidance on any existing and current initiatives for Indigenous patients, families, and staff, and provides valuable feedback on Indigenous and EDI initiatives under their 2026 Strategic Plan. Current work involves advocating for Indigenous Services Canada to address ongoing systemic challenges with Non-Insured Health Benefits.

Staff

Brad Battiston, Principal • Jacqueline Carrier, Vice Principal • Nick Shaver, Student Program Officer/ Budget Officer • Brittany Kennedy, Programs Administrator • Alfa Paul, Student Achievement Officer • Alissa Baker-Chaulk, Co-operative Education Teacher • Anita Anderson, Indigenous Language Teacher • Anmol Bagga, Supply Teacher • Aradhana (Ana) Kumari, Distance Education Teacher • Brandon MacLeod, English Teacher • Brett Desimone, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Teacher • Brittany Boucher, Wellness System Navigator • Cheryl Ugray, Special Education Coordinator • Chris Palmer, Trades Development Officer • Debbie McDougall, PLAR Teacher/Curriculum Development Officer • Emily Shandruk, Special Projects Officer • Jamie Bosma, Science Teacher • Janelle Shewaybick, Attendance Officer • Jennessa Darosa, Mental Health Worker • Jennifer Clouthier, Mental Health Coordinator • Joanne Fox, Cultural Mental Health Worker • Kaleigh Caputo, Distance Education Coordinator • Kyle Rozic, IT Technician • Keshia Teddy, Student Transition Coordinator • Lisa Hill, Student Safety Support Coordinator • Lisa Wingert, Mental Health Development Assistant • Melinda Rody, Education System Navigator • Paul Ochnicki, Math Teacher/ Special Education Resource Teacher • Rachel Hillock, Life Skills Teacher • Samantha Bachynski, Visual Arts Teacher • Samantha Renaud, Head Teacher • Steve Achneepineskum, Cultural Lead • Steve St. Jean, Guidance Counsellor • Sylvia Metzner, Education Receptionist • Trevor Taylor, Trades Teacher • Zoogipon Kakegabon, Choose Life Assistant • Outdoor Education Coordinators: Aaron Beardy, Ashley Nate, Kristen Stansell • Elders: Emily Jacob, Leonard Ferris, Sarah Moonias • Mental Health Land Based Coordinators: Aly Wood, Eddie Baxter • Math Teachers: Chelsea Caddo, Manmeet Kapoor • Classroom Assistants: Chrystyna Atlookan-Spence, Destiny Edwards, Eva Sutherland, John Colledanchise, Kendra Cook, Monique Barrow • Teachers: James Cole, Jeremy Oxford, Luke Pretto, Sarika Ahong, Sneha Bhavsar • Student Support Workers: Sid Okees, Tim Sofea • Special Education Resource Teachers: Heather Alanen, Kailee Moir, Karen Desroiser, Katie De Biagio, Lindsay Johnson, Nick Nault



Overview

The Matawa Education & Care Centre (MECC) empowers youth to connect to their identity in a safe and supportive environment. Housed in former a long-term care facility in Thunder Bay, beginning in 2018, the Matawa Education & Care Centre has undergone extensive renovations and retrofitting with most of the work completed by September 2023. The MECC’s holistic program integrates students’ mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual self into the daily schedule and operational programming, as the MECC understands success is not defined by academics, but by personal growth and development.

A high percentage of youth enrolled at the MECC have been out of secondary school for an extended period, or removed from provincial schools for varying circumstances. As a result, when youth arrive at the school, they often lack the confidence needed to successfully pursue their long-term personal and academic goals. The MECC continues to work diligently to create opportunities to bridge service gaps for Matawa youth to continue achieving personal and academic success.

The program and building is designed to facilitate opportunities that encompass an all-inclusive approach for each student, with a focus on wellness and personal growth through culturally-enriched programming.

Specific jobs have been created to combat the immense hardships and challenges Matawa youth face while relocating to a new city.

During the 2024/25 school year the MECC delivered a semestered schedule maintaining flexible learning supports such as in-person delivery, remote delivery, and adaptive learning models.

This year, St. Joseph’s Care Group (SJCG) and the MECC entered its eighth year of collaboration and partnership, which continues to provide two full-time Youth Workers, four Trauma Counselors/Specialists, and a part-time Family Therapist for the school year. The partnership also includes off-site primary care and academic and behavioural assessments with appropriate specialists. SJCG also provided extensive training and support for MECC staff on trauma-based education approaches, while working with students dealing with addictions.

The Principal worked with the Executive Director of Education and staff in meetings, discussions, and proposals based on the Jury Recommendations resulting from the Seven Youth Inquest to advocate for the implementation of community-based recommendations and the continuation of Choose Life and Jordan’s Principle funding.

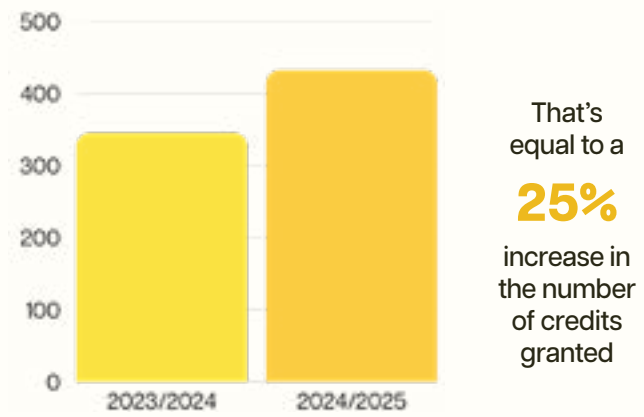
During the 2024/25 school year, the Matawa Education and Care Centre’s peak enrollment was **253** students, including:

- 97** new students
- 106** students with Individual Education Plans
- 133** Distance Education students and **14** graduates

Priorities

- Involve teachers, students, parents, and community partners in developing appropriate, effective, and meaningful learning opportunities through which students can develop self-reliance, initiative, resourcefulness, creativity, and responsibility.
- Provide an environment that supports and encourages self-motivated students to effectively plan and follow their individual learning pathways.

- Encourage students to become reflective, self-directed, and lifelong learners.
- Provide programs and courses reflecting the needs of students and the First Nation communities.



Number of credits granted per school year

Successes

This year the MECC granted 14 Ontario Secondary School Diplomas for graduating students who celebrated their hard work and accomplishments with a school trip to Calgary, Alberta.

Through our partnership with The Critical Thinking Consortium (CTC), a world-wide leader in curriculum development, we have redesigned and developed nine high school courses and 120 learning resources specific to MECC youth that emphasize Indigenous Ways of Knowing in alignment with Ontario Secondary School Curriculum, with more teaching and learning resources under development. Indigenous Culture lessons are being created to teach traditional knowledge and cultural teachings across different subject areas with input that has come strictly from Matawa community members. MECC and CTC’s collaborative curriculum project was accepted to present at several international education conferences over the past two years, as well as at Indspire’s National Gathering for Indigenous Education in Winnipeg in November 2024. These conferences bring together educational leaders from around the world.

The continued development of the welding facility, officially named Oshichigehgaming Sparking Success Lab, is proving to be very successful. Partnerships with the Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB), trade union LiUNA and other organizations and trade providers result in

Matawa Education and Care Centre

Matawa Education

more career pathways for students. The CWB Mind Over Metal welding camp was held in March 2025. With the hiring of a Trades Teacher in May 2024 and utilizing the experiences of other teachers, the MECC offered trades-based credits in Technology and the Skilled Trades (Gr. 9 and 10), Technology and the Skilled Trades Co-op (Gr. 10), Hairstyling and Aesthetics (Gr. 9), and Hospitality and Tourism (Gr. 11). In each semester, the Technology and Skilled Trades Co-op double credit was delivered through a long-standing collaboration with Focus Forward for Indigenous Youth, where the students welded two bicycle racks and built a shelter for one in the first semester, and under the tutelage and guidance of Indigenous artisans created beaded wristlet lanyards, hand drums, belts, birchbark and quill baskets, split-toe moccasins, tikinagans, and regalia in the second semester.

This past year, the MECC expanded its Distance Education programs. The Distance Education Coordinator worked closely with other program areas to provide wraparound virtual and learning support to 133 students, including 43 (or 32%) adaptive learners and 90 (or 68%) remote learners. As well, all Matawa students has access to live teacher-led synchronous learning via Google Classroom.



Our Special Education Program has six and a half Special Education Resource Teachers and five Classroom Assistants who provide services and support to students in-person and remotely. We continued to provide Life Skills and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) courses as per student academic needs.

In addition to the mental health and wellness supports provided by the SJCG partnership, students had access to an art therapist every Wednesday during the school year. Mental health and wellness support was provided to remote learners by telephone and online. When needed, in-person wellness checks were conducted by SJCG staff in Thunder Bay, and through Nishnawbe Aski Police Services and/or the Nursing Station for students living in community.

The Land Based Team provided students with experiential learning opportunities like moose and goose hunting, dog sledding, ice fishing and whitewater rafting

The Land Based Team provided students with several experiential learning opportunities focused on developing leadership and cultural knowledge to improve self-esteem. These opportunities were applied to credits. Some highlights include moose hunting, dog sledding, ice fishing, goose hunting, and whitewater rafting. Students earned various certifications, such as firearms safety, motorboat safety, whitewater paddling, and First Aid.

In collaboration with the Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) the MECC continued to staff a School Resource Officer (SRO) in the school. The SRO's primary role is to support the school community, including students, parents, school staff, and administrators. The SRO assists in critical situations/incidents and provides guidance, training and timely information for all applicable staff, Education Authorities, students, and families.

The MECC and several Matawa Education staff helped the community of Neskantaga First Nation when members had to evacuate due to flooding. To support Neskantaga education staff and students to continue learning, we opened the school cafeteria to feed community members who were evacuated, provided a learning space for students in Grade 7 and 8, facilitated games and activities for the youth, trained school staff, and purchased supplies, equipment, and materials on behalf of the Neskantaga Education Authority. Approximately 10 students in Grade 7 and 8 chose to attend the MECC to continue learning.

Challenges

This year we experienced several tragic losses: two of our students and one Elder from MECC passed away. One student passed away in July 2024, another in December 2024, and our Elder in February 2025. These losses deeply affected MECC students and staff, who were supported with specialized grief counsellors and programs to help cope with the losses.

Due to changes in Jordan's Principle and Choose Life funding eligibility, Matawa Education may face significant loss of funding which could result in the loss of many staff members, services, and programming. More information about these changes and their impacts can be found in the Chiefs Resolution updates.

Several Seven Youth Inquest recommendations still need to be implemented. MECC staff continue working with Matawa leadership to advocate for the necessary funding to implement these recommendations. More work is necessary to ensure the government provides predictable and reliable funding.

Another challenge the school continues to experience is filling several positions with qualified workers. We will continue posting positions and recruiting to provide our students with the best options.

This year **25** students, participated in SSSAA sports including **5** students in girls hockey **5** students in golf **1** student in football **10** students in badminton and **4** students in track and field

Opportunities

MECC students participated in the city-wide Superior School Sport & Activities Association (SSSAA) including one student in football, five students in golf and girls' hockey, ten students in badminton, four students in track and field, and chess. While MECC students did not enter the city-wide high school competitions for volleyball and basketball, they did practice these sports with an eye toward competing next year, and we will be encouraging students to participate in other high school sports and activities. Nine MECC students competed in an invitational chess tournament held at Westgate Collegiate & Vocational Institute, where one student earned a silver medal in the Open Unrated Tournament

for winning four of his five matches, and another student won three of his five matches in the Rated Tournament.

Two special occasion dances were held for Matawa youth, including a Halloween dance for elementary-aged students and families with a DJ and bouncy castle, followed by the high school dance, and a June dance to celebrate graduates and the end of the school year. Once its projector, screen, and sound system is fully operational, the MECC gymnasium will provide a greatly enhanced venue for MFNM and Matawa First Nations to host gatherings and celebrate special events.



The Class of 2025 held its graduation ceremony with family, friends, communities, and staff on June 18, 2025, in the school gym, and it was a huge success. This year MECC kitchen staff, led by Remi and Charlotte, catered a delicious luncheon for the graduation.

The MECC continues to provide opportunities for students to engage in skilled trades, and we continue to expand our trades programming. This past year, we adapted some classrooms to accommodate trades programming and began work to dedicate a space for trades courses.

The MECC will continue working with NAPS and TBPS to promote career opportunities in policing. We continue to work on developing a high school credit course based on the Police Foundations program at Confederation College.

Information Technology (IT)

Matawa Education

Staff

Andrew Sedesky, System Administrator • Nathaniel Salgueiro, IT Technician • Akash Lakhani, Database Helpdesk

Overview

The Matawa Education Information Technology (IT) Department provides centralized and community-based technical support for the Matawa Education & Care Centre (MECC) and six Matawa communities: Marten Falls, Nibinamik, Aroland, Webequie, Fort Hope, and Neskantaga First Nations. The department's mission is to improve educational outcomes and operational efficiency by delivering innovative, reliable, and secure IT solutions. Services include infrastructure setup and maintenance, staff training, cybersecurity, and curriculum-integrated technology supports.

Priorities

- **Technical Support:** Timely troubleshooting for hardware, software, and network systems across MECC and Matawa communities.
- **Infrastructure & Cybersecurity:** Management of servers, communication systems, and robust security measures including two-factor authentication (2FA) and firewalls.
- **Educational Technology Integration:** Training and support for educators and students to maximize the use of digital learning platforms.
- **Community-Based IT Services:** Technology access and initiatives that address unique community needs and reduce the digital divide.
- **Innovation & Project Management:** Leading IT advancements aligned with school goals and recommending emerging technologies.

Successes

- **John C. Yesno School IT Launch:** Installed new servers, fibre lines, smart boards, and network infrastructure; work continues on security and telephony systems.
- **Cybersecurity Incident Mitigation:** Successfully neutralized a large-scale attack with no data loss; implemented enhanced protocols and 2FA.

- **Gymnasium Technology Upgrade:** Procured and coordinated installation of a new projector system to support school events and presentations.
- **Security System Implementation:** Installed an advanced security system at MECC to enhance safety for students and staff.

Matawa Education's IT team successfully neutralized a large-scale cyber attack and has since implemented enhanced protocols and two-factor authentication

Challenges

- **Connectivity Gaps in Communities:** Limited bandwidth in remote First Nations hinders online learning, conferencing, and tech support.
- **Bandwidth Strain at MECC:** Increasing numbers of users and devices impact internet performance; monitoring and infrastructure updates are ongoing.
- **Absence of Static IP Addresses:** Complicates secure access and centralized network management.
- **Unpredictable On-Site Repairs:** It's difficult to prepare for visits to remote communities without prior diagnosis and access to replacement tools.
- **Logistical Constraints:** Delivery delays for IT hardware due to remote locations slow implementation timelines.

Opportunities

- **Technology Trends:** Adoption of cloud services, Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, and education software to transform classroom learning.
- **Connectivity Solutions:** Exploring satellite and wireless technologies to improve bandwidth in remote communities.
- **Professional Development:** Attending IT expos and education technology events to stay ahead of trends.
- **Community Collaboration:** Actively gathering feedback from students, teachers, and families to inform planning.
- **Strategic Planning:** Using community feedback to guide future IT investments aligned with long-term education priorities.

Matawa Post-Secondary

Matawa Education

Staff

Georgette O'Nabigon, Post-Secondary Coordinator • Robert Elliott, Post-Secondary Student Support • Alyssa Maunula, Post-Secondary Transition Coach

Dept. Committee

The Matawa Post-Secondary Advisory Committee, composed of community-appointed representatives, meets twice annually and maintains communication year-round via email and phone. Committee members serve as liaisons between their communities, the MPS staff, and students, providing guidance on application decisions, budgeting, and student supports.

MPS Advisory Committee

Anna Marie Majiskon, Aroland First Nation • Martha Taylor, Ginoogaming First Nation • Patrick Patabon, Long Lake #58 First Nation • Tony Sakanee, Neskantaga First Nation • Ennis Jacob, Webequie First Nation

Overview

Established in 1997, the Matawa Post-Secondary (MPS) Program administers post-secondary funding and provides holistic support to students throughout their educational journeys for five First Nations: Aroland, Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58, Neskantaga, and Webequie.

Priorities

- **Funding Administration:** Oversee post-secondary financial support for five Matawa First Nations.
- **Student Liaison:** Maintain strong communication with students, families, institutions, and support services.
- **Well-being Monitoring:** Support academic success and personal wellness through regular engagement.
- **Advisory Participation:** Represent Matawa students on local and provincial advisory and planning committees.

For the 2024/25 school year, MPS supported 34 graduates, holding a graduate recognition and awards banquet on June 5, 2025, at the MECC Gym. A total of 132 students were served, with 18 withdrawals.

Post-Secondary Transition Coach: A Post-Secondary Transition Coach was hired August 8, 2023, through the Indigenous Targeted Initiatives Fund, to support Grade 12 students and first-year post-secondary learners to make safe and successful transitions. The initiative focuses on one-on-one support, resource development, and empowering female Matawa students.

In 2024/25, MPS supported **132** students, including **34** post secondary graduates

Successes

- **Transitional Support Programming:** The 'Life & Learning After Graduation' project builds on the 2023/24 pilot program. It includes one-on-one planning, student resource development, workshops, and a three-day in-person Transition to Post-Secondary experience. The initiative also targets students who delay post-secondary entry and provides culturally-rooted mentorship.
- **Bowmanville Rotary Bursary Program:** Since 2008, the Bowmanville Rotary Club has partnered with Matawa Education to deliver annual bursaries for students in elementary, secondary, post-secondary, apprenticeship, training, and adult education streams. The awards banquet was held on June 5 at the MECC Gym, recognizing students for literacy, leadership, and perseverance.

Challenges

Funding Instability: A primary ongoing challenge is the lack of sufficient funding to support all eligible student applicants. Monthly living allowance rates have not increased since 1987, leaving students with inadequate support to cover basic living costs, particularly in high-cost urban centres.

Opportunities

- Regular engagement with students through campus visits and student activities.
- Representation on the Confederation College Negahneewin Council and Board of Governors.
- Outreach to Matawa community schools and urban high schools to engage upcoming graduates.
- Participation in local education committees and planning tables to advocate for students' needs.

Pathways to Achieve Student Success

Matawa Education



Staff

Katherine Hughdie, Program Manager • Carly Perras, School Success Lead • Douglas Gagnon, Cultural Education Coordinator • Maryann Nawagesic, Mental Health Lead • Olivia Merko, Student Nutrition Program Coordinator • Shelby Ch’ng, EPP Liaison Officer • Rita Mannella, Student Academic Lead • Marlee Poulin, Community Educator Navigator • Trey Duncan, Recruitment Officer

Overview

The Pathways to Achieve Student Success (PASS) is an integral component of the Matawa Education department, delivering services in literacy, numeracy, student retention, cultural programming, and professional development. The PASS team supports Matawa First Nation schools and communities through direct engagement, strategic planning, and ongoing advocacy. This year, PASS hosted a record-breaking education conference, expanded its training programs, and continued to strengthen its relationships across the Matawa territory and beyond. PASS provides

educational support services to Matawa First Nation schools and, when needed, to communities themselves. PASS supports Johnny Therriault Memorial School in Aroland First Nation, John C. Yesno Education Centre in Eabametoong First Nation, Neskantaga Education Centre in Neskantaga First Nation, Nibinamik Education Centre in Nibinamik First Nation, Henry Coaster Memorial School in Marten Falls First Nation, Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre in Webequie First Nation, and Ginoogaming First Nation.

Feedback and guidance are regularly gathered from community site visits, school principals through the Principals Working Group, and the Matawa First Nations Education Authority Board of Directors.

Priorities

Educational Initiatives: Supporting School Success Plans, literacy and numeracy programming, and hosting the annual Matawa Education Conference.

Community Engagement and Advisory Services: Building relationships and sharing educational resources through outreach and advisory work.

Professional Collaboration: Working with the Rapid Response Northern Schools Team (RRNST), Dorset Piers Mental Health, Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), post-secondary institutions, and others to expand capacity.

Successes

• Hosted the 2025 annual Matawa Education Conference with 465 registrants and 67 presenters. A sacred fire was added to the conference, enhancing cultural grounding.

96% of 2025 Matawa Education conference attendees rated their satisfaction as “good” or “excellent”

- Delivered Youth Life Promotion programs across schools focused on empowerment and holistic well-being.
- Conducted Grade 8 Transition Workshops focused on well-being, self-care, and cultural teachings in most communities.
- Supported recruitment through career fairs, hiring platforms, and university partnerships; initiated a recruitment framework.

- Held four Principals Working Group sessions annually to foster collaboration and mentorship.
- Conducted numerous on-site visits to provide one-on-one support and run community events.
- Delivered six Mental Health First Aid: Adults Interacting with Youth cohort trainings and supported DBT-based programming.
- Improved access to board documentation with a secure, password-protected portal for MFNEA BOD.
- Created a Pen Pal Guide to strengthen literacy, engagement, and community connections.
- Procured and distributed key resources for literacy, numeracy, and student wellness programs.
- Secured the Indigo Love of Reading grant for book purchases across multiple schools (a three-year initiative).
- Implemented the Welcome to Kindergarten Program to support early learners.
- Supported the 2025 Bowmanville Awards & Bursaries, recognizing 13 exceptional students from various grades.



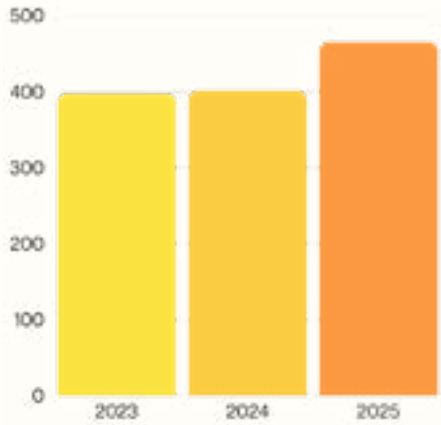
- Enhanced the Student Nutrition Program in partnership with Breakfast Clubs of Canada, improving kitchen infrastructure.
- Delivered cultural and ceremonial services across multiple Matawa events and supported community Powwows.

Challenges

Teacher Turnover and Recruitment: Staffing challenges persist. A retention framework is in development.

School Disruption: Flooding in Neskantaga and the school fire in Eabametoong required rapid response and continued support.

Accessing Historical Documents: Barriers to accessing key files on legacy systems hinder some quality assurance activities.



Number of registered attendees at the annual Matawa Education Conference

Opportunities

- Development of a robust recruitment model tailored to community needs.
- New parent/guardian engagement tools and post-event evaluation forms.
- Continued crisis response capacity for impacted schools.
- Expanded participation in provincial and national education conferences.
- Consistent contributions to the Matawa Messenger for visibility and accountability.
- Relaunch of the Moccasin Curriculum pilot with improved staff training.
- Launch of the 2027–2031 Strategic Planning process through consultation.
- Signed MOU with Lakehead District School Board to improve learning opportunities.
- University Career Fair participation targeting 4th and 5th year education students.
- Ongoing involvement in NAN, regional school boards, and post-secondary advisory boards.

Staff

Malinda Staal, Matawa Student Care Centre Manager • Mental Health Workers: Aaron Therriault, Nicole Beardy, Peter Nawagesic, Tyarra Goodman • Security: Agnes Kwandibens, Bobby Tomagatick, Dylan Stanley, Mary Kakegamic, Micah Beardy and Michaela Sutherland • Youth Care Leader Supervisors: Alexandra Robertson, Joshua McCart and Linden Waboose (Interim) • Youth Care Leaders: Alex Richer, Brandon Morrisseau, Cedar Kwandibens, Chaseon Fiddler, Cindy Jacob, Crissy Hamlin, Conrad King, Dylan Neshinapaise, Gary Bannon, Honey West, Jayme Dunn, Matthew Kokeza, Miranda Echum, Natasha Wabano, Paul Nawagesic, Tammy Moonias and Ziigwan Moses • Part-time Youth Care Leaders: Ankush Mahajan, Anthony Petten, Emily Tornquist, Emmalee Goudie, Hanna Viau, Michelle McConnell, Rakshya Dhakal and Sunshine Moonias • Youth Support Workers: Jennifer Kamande, Raven Echum • Custodial Workers: Jonathan Krause and Theresa Moonias • Cultural Activities Workers: Dakota-colt Meshake and Veronica McGuire • John Gagnon, Elder • Levi Yellowhead, Student Safety Support Liaison • Nissi Paragas, Developmental Social Service Worker • Raven Rodgers, P/T Mental Health Worker • Richard Jourdain, Cultural and Activities Lead • Saba Hosseini, Tutor

Overview

The Matawa Student Care Centre (MSCC) opened in September 2022 to support youth who relocate from remote First Nations to attend high school in Thunder Bay. Located on the second floor of the Matawa Education and Care Centre (MECC), the facility can accommodate up to 106 students, including three barrier-free accessible rooms. MSCC was created to offer safe, culturally-appropriate housing in response to the challenges faced by students living away from home. It provides a secure and supportive living environment, nutritious meals, access to recreation and academic support, and a range of cultural, land-based, and wellness programming. Health needs are supported in collaboration with healthcare providers. MSCC works closely with the MECC and local school boards to coordinate tutoring, monitor attendance, and help students succeed in their academic journeys.



Priorities

Safety and Security

- 24/7 supervision by trained staff.
- Secure entry and visitor management.
- Emergency protocols, drills, and safety training.
- Full Security team working from 6:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.

Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Space

- Daily access to Elders and Cultural Workers.
- Land-based programs and traditional activities.
- Identity, language, and cultural connection encouraged.

Physical and Mental Health Supports

- Mental health supports weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 2 a.m. on weekends.
- Coordinate healthcare with Matawa Health Cooperative.

Academic Support

- On-site tutoring five days a week.
- Quiet study spaces and access to technology.
- Regular attendance and academic tracking.
- Collaboration with teachers and schools.

Professional, Caring Staff

- Low staff-to-student ratio.
- Trained, culturally aware team.
- Staff model respect, empathy, and professionalism.

Successes

Training & Staff Development

- Most staff completed training in Mental Health First Aid, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, safeTALK, trauma-informed practices, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, and medication protocols.

Student Support

- Housed 101 students (including 31 returning) in 2024/25.
- Supported four previously homeless youth in partnership with the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board.
- Four MSCC students graduated high school.
- 25% decrease in serious incidents compared to the previous year.

Wellness, Culture & Community Engagement

- Hosted first annual Student Carnival as part of orientation week, fostering community and belonging.
- Launched a student-led monthly newsletter showcasing achievements, events, and student voices (to be shared with families and communities in the next school year).
- Students developed a unique MSCC logo to represent their “home away from home” to be unveiled next year.
- Introduced new roles: Developmental Social Service Worker, two Student Support Workers, and a Night Supervisor.
- Secured two nursing positions in collaboration with the Matawa Health Cooperative.
- Staff conducted outreach trips to Matawa communities to support families and build trust.

In 2024/25, the Matawa Student and Care Centre housed **101** students, including **31** returning students **4** youth who were previously homeless and **4** MECC graduates.

Program Expansion

- Daily programming now runs seven days per week, with multiple offerings per day based on student input.
- Sunday Community Kitchens teach cooking skills, encourage healthy eating, and promote social connection.

Challenges

Funding Instability: Ongoing uncertainty around funding from ISC including changes to Jordan’s Principle and Choose Life, threatens core services. Advocacy continues for multi-year, stable funding.

Staffing Gaps: Difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff led to temporary reassignment of internal staff to cover essential shifts.

Unequal Funding Access: Not all Matawa communities are able to fund students to live at MSCC, placing burdens on families to secure alternate supports.



Opportunities

- Continue expanding after-hours and weekend programming based on student interests.
- Extend the MSCC newsletter to include highlights from the entire Matawa Education department.
- Ongoing use of MECC gym and workout spaces is encouraging healthy, active lifestyles among students.
- Revamping of the Student Handbook and creation of a new Guardian Handbook will promote consistency, understanding, and stronger family engagement.

Membership

Matawa First Nation Management

Staff

Allen Ledger, Membership/Indian Registration Administrator (IRA)

Overview

Matawa’s Membership department offers membership support such as obtaining status cards and reporting life changes during registration as a Status Indian such as births, marriages, divorces, and deaths. Additionally, other reports contain amendments, additions, and updates to information on an individual’s registry page. The Membership department administers these services for Aroland, Eabametoong, Marten Falls, Neskantaga, Nibinamik and Webequie.

Priorities

To provide an accurate and up-to-date Indian Registry, Membership Service. The Membership Indian Registration Administrator (IRA) 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. “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 a person as Indian, 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,” according to the INAC Indian Registration Administrator Manual.

Birth Registrations: To register a child with Indigenous Services Canada a long form birth certificate is required with parental information.

Community Visit: In addition to providing membership services from Matawa’s head office in Thunder Bay, Matawa’s Membership services also conduct annual community visits to six First Nations communities. The visits ensure timely updates on the status card issuance and registration of children.

Collaboration with First Nation representatives for Indian Registration Awareness: Matawa’s Membership services and First Nation liaisons and representatives have been working on bringing awareness of First

Nation’s programs for both birth and Indian registration. Programs like the Healthy Baby Healthy Children program are essential avenues for expectant mothers and caregivers with children under six.

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, such as reporting a birth, marriage, divorce, and death., are called events. Other reports include miscellaneous amendments to add and delete information on the individual’s registry page.

Challenges

Identification Issues: A significant number of individuals lack proper identification and are not aware of the necessary requirements for obtaining a Certificate of Indian Status (laminated card) or the new Secure Status Card. Unfortunately, financial constraints or other factors often prevent them from obtaining identification. Matawa Membership services takes a firm stance on raising awareness about identification and is currently focusing on creating media, newsletters, and other informative materials. Our organization is actively collaborating with Kinna-awaya Legal Clinic and other groups to address these challenges.

Birth Registration: Registration of children after birth is an ongoing issue within Matawa First Nations. This issue involves a variety of factors, including: uncertainty regarding the birth registration process, confusion with Indian registration and requirements, Financial difficulties (such as delayed payments of birth certificates and fees), inability to access the necessary birth documents, issues with oral and written communication and procrastination to apply for birth until last-minute medical situations.

Opportunities

- Planning to work with the Norwest Clinic and other organizations to do an ID Clinic this year. The ID Clinic is a one-day event that provides birth certificate registrations geared to people who can’t access services or other needs.
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation working to do more training with First Nations with registrations and commissioner stamps for liaisons and representatives.

Urban Housing

Matawa First Nation Management

Staff

Paul Magiskan, Director • Casey Peever, Housing Support Manager, • Housing Support Workers: Trent Thompson, Sabrina Maclaurin, Lora Pucci, Liana Desauliners, Justin Thompson and Reegan Kuurila

Overview

Matawa Urban Housing aims to create a sustainable pathway through the entirety of the housing continuum. With the goal of assisting our community members from homelessness to homeowners. There are many various stages of the housing crisis that we are trying to address. Although the Matawa Urban Housing program cannot help everyone, we aim to make active changes to better the station of Matawa community members.

Priorities

- Expanding existing housing stock.
- Create safe pathways for all community members to access housing support.
- Provide the connections to services and fostering independence.

Matawa Urban Housing will use the rent paid by tenants to provide them with financial assistance to buy their own home

Successes

Acquired 60 rental units in Thunder Bay: These units will be the first units assigned by Matawa Urban Housing to begin the pathway to homeownership through the Home Buyers Support Program. Beginning with these units, Matawa Urban Housing will utilize the rents of individuals paid to provide our people with financial assistance to buy their own home. This program will provide the assistance needed to prepare an individual or young families the tools for home ownership.

Matawa Women’s Shelter: Fully-funded construction and operations costs. The shelter began construction in June 2025. Operational funding expanded to ensure connections to all Matawa communities. Transportation from communities to the shelter is included in shelter funding. Staff training and information sessions regarding gender-based violence will be held regularly beginning in 2026 in the communities and not in Thunder Bay. We will establish a hub in each community to ensure a direct connection going forward.



Challenges

Creating a pathway through housing that allows community members to access all Matawa services. Individuals require support at every step of the housing continuum. If an individual begins their path with us from homelessness, we should have a answer ready for every step of the way from that point to home ownership. We require better coordination of services directly to the community members. We also require individual pathways to service for each community.

Opportunities

With the construction of the shelter, we will create individual pathways to provide services for every community. We will begin working with each community in the coming months to make an individual plan for how to better coordinate our services to the membership. Through this process we will identify and formally recognize individuals in the communities to act as a direct liaison to the housing staff.

Staff

Tara Ingram, Acting General Manager • Wayne Slipperjack, General Manager (on extended medical leave) • Gina Dore, Administrative Assistant (on extended medical leave) • Rob Wesley, IT Director • IT Helpdesk Analysts: Tom Paradis, Stefano Fata, and Chris Harrington

Dept. Committee

MFNM formed a Broadband Working Group (BWG) of representatives appointed by the communities to support the effort which was replaced by the Rapid Lynx Board of Directors.

Rapid Lynx Board of Directors

James Suganaqueb, President, Webequie First Nation • Robert Moonias, Treasurer, Marten Falls First Nation • Matthew Sofea, Secretary, Nibinamik First Nation • Vacant, Neskantaga First Nation • Donald Meeseetawageesic, Eabametoong First Nation • Sam Kashkeesh, Aroland First Nation • Robert Starr, Long Lake #58 First Nation • Henry Waboose, Ginoogaming First Nation • Kevin Proctor, Constance Lake First Nation

Overview

Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) and Matawa First Nations leaders elected to take control of their communities’ broadband future in 2013 after learning that the Nishnawbe Aski Nation project would not have sufficient funds to connect the remote Matawa First Nations communities as planned. 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 for 5 years, as required by Innovation, Science, and Economic Development and Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry.

Priorities

Build the Rapid Lynx Fibre Optic Backbone & Fiber to the Home Distribution Network to all nine Matawa First Nations communities and light the network for service.

Remaining 15%

Completed 85%

Phase 1 Backbone Routes

Completed 23%

Remaining 77%

Phase 2 Backbone Routes

Rapid Lynx backbone route construction progress

Successes

- 617 kilometres (or 85%) of the Phase 1 backbone routes have been completed, with 109 kilometres remaining to complete. 61 kilometres (23%) of the Phase 2 backbone routes have been completed, with 204 kilometres remaining to complete.

Rapid Lynx’s updated Business Plan draft is complete and ready to review with management

- Rogers completed the fibre build from Long Lake #58 First Nation to the Ginoogaming First Nation shelter, installing and testing their equipment. Clearcable installed their equipment, tested, and turned up the service to Toronto.
- Services successfully connected to two anchor institutions (the Health Centre and Band Office) in Ginoogaming First Nation.



- A Master Services Agreement is in place with a Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH)/Distribution contractor. Distribution fibre, other construction materials, and customer access boxes for FTTH/Distribution orders placed for 5 communities: Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58, Aroland, Marten Falls and Eabametoong First Nations.
- Design complete for Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58, Aroland, and in process for Fort Hope and Marten Falls First Nations.
- Pole audits complete for Ginoogaming and Long Lake #58 First Nations.
- Section 4A & 4B Ministry of Natural Resources Crown Land Use Agreements.

Challenges

- Complications surfacing with regards to rights-of-way (ROWs)/Easements changes (e.g. MTO 1A & 2C).
- Environmental factors like shorter winter road seasons, and dry seasons and risk of forest fires causing delays.
- Risk of one or more communities changing their mind on route access, invoking delays.
- Possible conflict with clearing contractors’ expectations for section 2C.
- Compressed construction timeline with both aerial and buried work performed in parallel.

Opportunities

- All nine Matawa First Nations communities will have abundant and affordable Internet service over advanced fibre-optic cable valued at over \$132 million at completion. Fibre-optic cable has the longest functional life of any other technology—40 to 75 years—and is scalable to meet higher future demands with only equipment upgrades. Fiber-optic cable is “Next Generation Technology” because of its long life, reliability and virtually unlimited capacity.
- Education, health care, public safety and economic development will be transformed by access to high capacity, reliable and affordable access to advanced fibre-optic Internet connectivity.
- Opportunities for direct employment will increase during construction of Phase 2.
- Communities will 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.

All nine Matawa First Nations will have abundant and affordable fibre-optic Internet service valued at \$132 million upon the Rapid Lynx project’s completion

- Future opportunities for direct employment on this project including brush cutting and clearing, technical and operational support services when the network is active.
- Matawa First Nations will own, govern and operate the only long-haul fibre optic network in Ontario’s Far North, and will interconnect their network to the global Internet backbone at one of the largest connection points in Canada at Toronto.
- Wholesale business opportunities.
- Ownership and interconnection to the global Internet backbone will ensure that the Matawa First Nations will control their own digital future.

Technical Services

Capital Projects and Housing

Staff

Saverio Rizzo, Manager • Leah Echum, Technical Services Administration Support (on leave since September 2024) • Dharmender Dhankhar, Community Engineer/Projects • Lindsey Jupp, Environmental Technologist • Carla Jean-Chisel, Capital Projects Coordinator • Walter Monias, Housing Inspector/Infrastructure Specialist

Overview

Matawa Technical Services assists member communities in the development and maintenance of community infrastructure. This includes assisting communities with all aspects including the environmental components and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) capital project approvals process. Technical Services responds to First Nation requests and services provided will vary according to individual community needs, levels of individual capacity, technical proficiency, and management expertise. The Capital Projects and Housing services we provide include:

- Project management
- Capital projects and housing applications
- Project reporting
- First Nation Infrastructure Investment Plans (FNIIP)
- Operation & Maintenance reporting (O&M)
- Asset Condition Reporting System (ACRS)
- Project advisory
- Building inspections
- Work with consultants on conceptual drawings

Priorities

All of the services that Technical Services provides are key priorities, however, water, housing, environment, and infrastructure have been the department's focus the last couple of years, with several major capital projects underway. Lifting the Long-Term Drinking Water Advisories is ongoing. There are a number of projects in all communities that are very critical to the growth of Matawa First Nations. Most of the projects are funded by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) while some are funded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Province of Ontario.

Successes

Office administration

- Tech Services QA/QC Rep for ISO 9001.
- Updating Tech Services binders to comply with ISO 9001 re-certification.
- Renewed Transportation of Dangerous Goods certification.
- Certified in Situational Awareness and De-escalation.

See page 78 for the full list of community infrastructure projects supported by Technical Services

Housing - On-reserve

Aroland First Nation

- Assisted with ISC Housing Gaps Fund Application Submission.
- Approved new construction: 6 Units at \$1,840,000.00.
- Assisted with ISC Housing Renovation Funding document submission – Strategic Approach.
- Approved renovation funding – 5 Units at \$319,000.00. Inspections and reporting to be completed.



Status of community infrastructure projects



Constance Lake First Nation

- ISC Housing Renovation Funding – Strategic Approach: Completed pre-inspection reports for document submission. Six (6) Units at \$382,800.00 – 2024/2025. Inspections and reporting to be completed.

Eabametoong First Nation

- Assisted with the submission of ISC's Housing Renovations – Strategic Approach 2024-2025 Funding.
- Ten (10) units at \$756,800.00 – 2024/2025. Inspections and reporting to be completed.
- Temporary School Inspections: Completed inspections of two (2) portable school buildings, report submitted to the community and contractor; and completed inspection of school cafeteria building, report submitted to the community and contractor.
- Portable School – Fire Renovation – Inspection: Completed inspection of portable school building that was renovated, building has fire and smoke damage.
- Six (6) new residential housing unit inspections. Report submitted to the community and contractor.

Ginoogaming First Nation

- Assisting community with a tiny home delivery. Project was put on hold in 2024.. Tiny home is in Thunder Bay and requires delivery to Ginoogaming. Community has estimated that foundation will be ready mid-July 2025.
- Assisted with the submission of ISC's Housing Renovations – Strategic Approach 2024-2025 Funding. Five (5) units at \$319,000.00 – 2024/2025.Pre-inspection and report to be completed. Inspections and reporting to be completed.

- Completed two (2) existing home inspections at the community's request.
- Mould concerns. Report submitted with observations and recommendations.
- Foundation concerns. Report Submitted with observations and recommendations.

Long Lake #58 First Nation

- Currently assisting with the submission of ISC's Housing Renovations – Strategic Approach 2024-2025 Funding. 5 Units at \$319,000.00 – 2024/2025. Pre-Inspection and report to be completed.
- Inspection Request in Thunder Bay. Existing home inspection completed at 625 Dog Lake Road. Home inspection report submitted.
- Completed CMHC On-Reserve Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) Expression of Interest and submitted DCI 41701 Community Infrastructure and Housing report on behalf of Long Lake #58 First Nation.
- Currently assisting with Ministerial Loan Guarantee (MLG) Application – Sec. 95 six (6) unit renovations at \$540,290.00. CMHC reference no. 27203322. Document submissions required.
- Currently assisting with MLG Application – Sec. 95 seven (7) unit renovations at \$735,000.00. CMHC reference no. 26775817.



Technical Services

Capital Projects and Housing

- Currently assisting community with ISC’s Housing Gaps Fund Application – New Construction. Working with BBS Inc. to complete required documents. Five (5) units: three (3) single and one (1) Duplex at \$2,452,900.00.
- Currently assisting with completing outstanding housing reports as stated in the NORR.
- 460671 – Capital Projects Report – 2022-2023 On-Reserve Housing Funds Immediate Needs – seven (7) Units – CRLNB. 460671 – Capital Projects Report – Final Report – Housing Management Subsidy CRLMK. 460671 – Capital Projects Report – Completion Report – On-Reserve Enhanced Housing Capital Project CRKTJ. 460671 – Capital Projects Report – Completion Report – 2021-2022 On-Reserve Housing – Major Renovations Housing Project CRL1U. Currently need financials and project updates for projects to submit reports. Waiting for financials from LL#58 Finance.

Marten Falls First Nation

- Assisted with ISC Housing Gaps Fund Application Submission.
- Approved New Construction: ten (10) units including one (1) sixplex and one (1) fourplex at \$4,907,000.00 (2024/2025: \$1,962,800.00; 2025/2026: \$2,944,200.00).
- Completed On-Reserve Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) Expression of Interest on behalf of Marten Falls First Nation.
- Completed pre-inspection reports for ten (10) unit renovations.



- Completed inspections on two (2) sixplexes - a total of twelve (12) units. Deficiencies report submitted to the community and contractor. Deficiencies have been corrected (with two outstanding items).

Neskantaga First Nation

- Assisted with ISC Housing Gaps Fund Application Submission. Application was unsuccessful.
- Assisted with ISC Immediate Needs Housing – Renovation Application. Application was approved for ten (10) units for \$825,000.00. Worked with community to find contractor and to select units and provide renovation work items. Complete inspections and submit progress reports to ISC.
- Assisted with CMHC On-Reserve Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) application. Application was approved for \$30,000.00 to renovate one (1) unit. Complete inspection and provide renovation scope of work. Complete quarterly progress report. Complete inspection and final report.
- Currently assisting community with updating the community map. Trying to locate community map drawing file.
- Completed inspections for the five (5) duplex projects, ten (10) units in total. Deficiencies report submitted to the community and contractor. Deficiencies have been corrected.
- Completed inspection of Nursing Station to locate fuel smell. Observations and Recommendations report sent to the community.
- Completed Sec. 95 Expression of Interest on behalf of Neskantaga First Nation.

Nibinamik First Nation

- Completed existing home assessments and provided recommended renovation work items and cost estimates.

- Inspection of two (2) new construction units.
- Complete virtual framing inspections of ten (10) new housing units. Provide inspection report to community and contractor.
- Attend weekly meetings with community, consultant and contractor regarding on-going renovation project.

Webequie First Nation

- Sec. 95 three (3) unit triplex with CMHC reference no. 26858506.
- Assist community with submitting required documents including Code Compliance Reports, Declaration Form, Proof of Insurance.
- Assisted with the submission of ISC’s Housing Renovations – Strategic Approach 2024-2025 Funding.
- Ten (10) units at \$756,800.00 – 2024/2025. Complete inspections and assist with reporting requirements.
- Assisted with the submission of ISC’s Housing Gaps Fund. Approved new construction five (5) units at \$2,453,500.00. Complete inspections and assist with reporting requirements.
- Assist community with 2023-2024 On-Reserve Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) project. Declaration Form and extension request required. Original completion date was Feb 27, 2025. Community needs to provide new anticipated completion date.
- Completed CMHC On-Reserve Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) Expression of Interest on behalf of Webequie First Nation.



Challenges

Community representation on project teams is sometimes lacking as staff are overextended, and this can hinder projects from advancing. We need to continue to push ISC for more core funding to support capital projects positions in the communities. The ISC admin fees are insufficient to support a position, and those fees typically go towards their finance department. If there is more coordination, payment reviews and reporting, we would be able to do a lot more across the board.

Technical Services is currently supporting roughly

202

infrastructure projects within Matawa First Nations valued at

\$316,000,000

Opportunities

- There are some project management opportunities available within approved capital projects that some staff have taken on. There will continue to be project management opportunities like this moving forward.
- We realize one of the major needs is lot and subdivision development in most Matawa communities. We have been working with ISC slowly to move forward.

Technical Services

Environmental and Public Health

Staff

Oksana Ostrovska, Environmental/Public Health Inspector • Karen McGoldrick, Environmental/Public Health Inspector

Overview

Matawa Technical Services provides the service of an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) certified through the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors, to protect, promote and enhance the health of Matawa First Nations through programs and services including:

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

Successes

Environmental Health Officers have instilled of number of temporary boil water advisories for various reasons in a few different communities. These have since been lifted following proper water testing provided.

Highlights

Drinking water

- Colilert, water and wastewater testing reagents and supplies were ordered and shipped or delivered to: Eabametoong (CHR and WTP), Marten Falls, Webequie (WTP and WWTP), Nibinamik, Neskantaga, Aroland, Constance Lake.
- Water sampling schedule planning for Eagle Earth Healing Centre in Constance Lake and troubleshooting water system issues.
- Neskantaga community presentations regarding drinking water in Neskantaga in April 2025.
- Boil Water Advisories:
 - Aroland: Issued July 17, 2024 and rescinded on July 22, 2024
 - Constance Lake: Issued March 21, 2025 and rescinded on March 27, 2025

Bacteriological Water Testing

June 2024 Constance Lake Neskantaga Nibinamik	July 2024 Aroland Constance Lake Eabametoong Marten Falls
August 2024 Constance Lake Webequie	September 2024 Aroland Constance Lake Nibinamik Webequie
October 2024 Constance Lake Eabametoong Marten Falls Webequie Neskantaga	November 2024 Constance Lake Marten Falls Webequie Nibinamik
December 2024 Aroland Constance Lake Marten Falls	January 2025 Aroland Constance Lake Nibinamik
February 2025 Aroland Constance Lake Eabametoong Marten Falls Neskantaga	March 2025 Constance Lake Long Lake #58 Ginoogaming Webequie
April 2025 Constance Lake Nibinamik	May 2025 Constance Lake Neskantaga Marten Falls

Annual water testing

June 2024 Ginoogaming Long Lake #58 Neskantaga Nibinamik	July 2024 Aroland Constance Lake Eabametoong Marten Falls
August 2024 Webequie	

Quarterly Water Testing

June 2024 Ginoogaming Long Lake #58 Nibinamik Neskantaga	August 2024 Webequie	October 2024 Ginoogaming Long Lake #58 Eabametoong Marten Falls Neskantaga	December 2024 Aroland Constance Lake	February 2025 Aroland Constance Lake Eabametoong Marten Falls Neskantaga	April 2025 Nibinamik
July 2024 Aroland Constance Lake Eabametoong Marten Falls	September 2024 Nibinamik	November 2024 Webequie	January 2025 Nibinamik	March 2025 Long Lake #58, Ginoogaming, Webequie	May 2025 Marten Falls, Neskantaga

Water Colour Testing

Total Organic Colour (TOC), Dissolved Organic Colour (DOC)

June 2024 Neskantaga Nibinamik	October 2024 Eabametoong Marten Falls Neskantaga	February 2025 Eabametoong Marten Falls Neskantaga	April 2025 Nibinamik
July 2024 Eabametoong Marten Falls	September 2024 Nibinamik	January 2025 Nibinamik	May 2025 Marten Falls, Neskantaga

Lead Testing Program

June 2024 Neskantaga Nibinamik	July 2024 Neskantaga Marten Falls
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Wastewater Monitoring

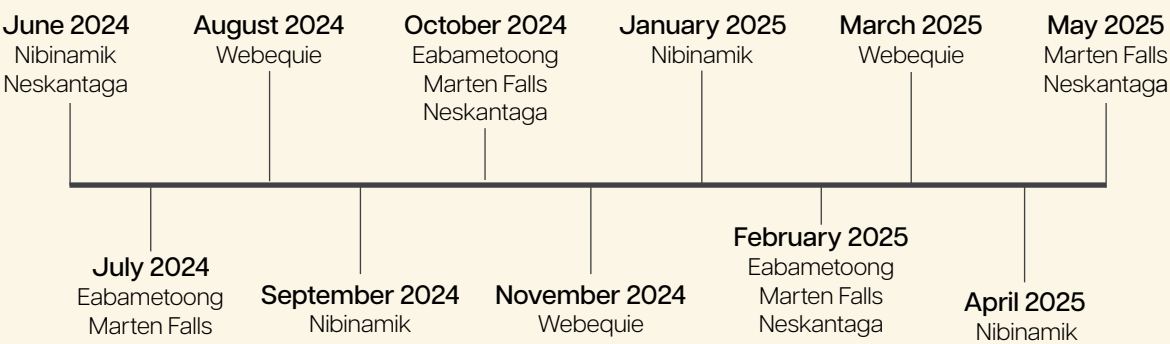
Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulations (WSER). Sampling was conducted at the septic lagoons and Webequie Wastewater Treatment Plant. All communities that are subject to report to Effluent Regulatory Reporting Information System (ERRIS) were supplied with the WSER kits. The annual (2024) monitoring reports were submitted in ERRIS for Aroland, Eabametoong, Marten Falls, Neskantaga and Webequie First Nations (Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4).

June 2024 Eabametoong Neskantaga Webequie	August 2024 Aroland Webequie	October 2024 Eabametoong Webequie Marten Falls	December 2024 Webequie	February 2025 Webequie	April 2025 Webequie
July 2024 Webequie	September 2024 Webequie	November 2024 Webequie	January 2025 Webequie	March 2025 Webequie	May 2025 Webequie Marten Falls

Technical Services

Environmental and Public Health

Manganese Testing Program



Food Safety

- Food Handler Certification course was offered at:
- Matawa First Nations Management in May 2024 with eight (8) attendees participating and receiving their certification.
 - Constance Lake First Nation in July 2024 with ten (10) attendees, resulting in seven (7) certified food handlers.
 - Aroland First Nation in October 2024 with eight (8) attendees, resulting in six (6) certified food handlers.

This year, Environmental and Public Health offered

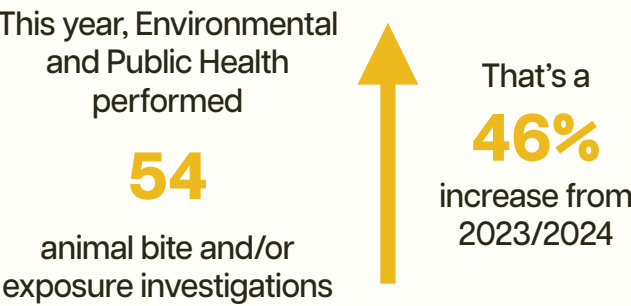
3

Food Handler Certification courses where

21

people received certification

- We're updating the Food Handler Certification course presentation to create a more interactive and appealing course. It is the hope that this course can be incorporated annually or bi-annually into the education boards for all Matawa schools to educate the youth on food safety and prepare them for any future work in the food industry.
- There were 29 food recall warnings and/or alerts faxed out to the Matawa First Nations communities.



Communicable Disease Program

- We performed 54 animal bite/exposure incident follow-up investigations. Fifty-two (52) of those investigations have been followed up and closed, while two (2) are in progress.
- Education and awareness regarding the ongoing blastomycosis outbreak in Constance Lake First Nation that began in October 2021. There have been no new cases of blastomycosis in 2024 to date.
- Assisting with the Constance Lake Coroner's Inquest regarding the 2021 Blastomycosis outbreak.

Biomedical Waste Disposal

- Biomedical waste/sharps were collected from Marten Falls, Aroland and Constance Lake and picked up by Stericycle on the scheduled date(s) as per the agreement.



Environmental Health Inspections

Aroland First Nation

- September 2024: School inspection on request due to vandalism event.
- April 2025: Routine school inspection and on request due to smell from kitchen plumbing.

Eabametoong First Nation

- October 2024:– Corny's Variety – routine store inspection.
- February 2025: Indoor Air Quality (IQA) assessment of public access buildings including Band Office, Tikinagan/HSS building, communication building/radio station, Eabametoong Inn, airport terminal building.
- February 2025: Pest infestation complaint inspection, community resident L. O.
- April 2025: Indoor Air Quality (IQA) assessment of Eabametoong First Nation Education Authority building due to fuel-like odor complaint.

Ginoogaming First Nation

- March 2025: Routine daycare inspection.

Long Lake #58 First Nation

- June 2024: Housing inspections regarding mould/indoor air quality complaints.

Marten Falls First Nation

- October 2024: Pest infestation complaint inspection at Band Office.

- October 2024: Henry Coaster Memorial School kitchen inspection.
- May 2025: Mould complaint inspection upon request from community residents E. C. & C. A.

Neskantaga First Nation

- February 2025: Pest infestation complaint inspection upon request from community resident, D. M.
- April 2025: Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) assessment request for the Band Office.

Nibinamik First Nation

- September 2024: Daycare/Family Resource Centre routine inspection.
- September 2024: School playground inspection.

Webequie First Nation

- August 2024: Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre and daycare playground inspection.
- September 2024: Mould complaint inspection upon request from community residents, T. & C. S.
- September 2024: Mould complaint inspection upon request from community resident, M. M.
- September 2024: Mould complaint inspection at the Band Office.

Matawa First Nations Management

- Awashishewiigihiwaywiin playground inspection.



Technical Services

NIBI Services



Staff

Michael Bazdarick, Water and Wastewater, Overall Responsible Operator (ORO) • Meghdeep Chauhan, Water and Wastewater Operator Support • Mitchell Eley, Water and Wastewater Operator Support • Leonard Wavy, Water and Wastewater Operator Support

Overview

Nibi Services provides ongoing water and wastewater support to Matawa First Nations and their Water and Wastewater Operators. This support includes 24/7 emergency services and training to ensure required certification in accordance with Ontario Drinking Water Regulations and Federal Guidelines for Operations. Nibi Services also monitors and collects water quality data in the Matawa First Nations including overseeing the calibration of water treatment equipment including filter media replacement, reverse osmosis repairs, and chlorination. The NIBI Services we provide include Water and Wastewater Operator support and remote monitoring.

Successes

- Responded to 190 after hour calls to assist with operational and maintenance concerns at the various water and wastewater facilities.
- 24/7 technical guidance and direction given over the phone continues to be a major factor in the reduction of emergency responses into the remote communities.
- Provided 467 days of on-site operational support at Water Treatment Plants in Aroland, Constance Lake, Eabametoong, Marten Falls, Nibinamik and Webequie when local operators were unavailable for coverage.

Nibi Services responded to

190

after hours calls to assist with operational and maintenance concerns at water and wastewater facilities within the Matawa First Nations

- Continued with on-the-job training, technical direction, support and assistance to relief operators at the Marten Falls Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and in Nibinamik.
- Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) continues to operate and maintain the Neskantaga WTP.
- Daily check of facilities through remote monitoring is ongoing and continues to be an asset in maintaining the various plants and operations.
- Attended various construction progress meetings for the Eabametoong, Nibinamik and Neskantaga WTPs.
- Developed and implemented operational procedures, daily logs and spreadsheets for daily operation of the Marten Falls WTP.
- With the support of the Chief and Council of Marten Falls, our Overall Responsible Operator would like to make a recommendation to initiate the process for the lifting of the Boil Water Advisory in Marten Falls.
- Assisted with lab work, carried out monthly calibration and servicing of analyzers when required and provided routine maintenance and calibration of various equipment.

- Reviewed best operating practices with plant operators to optimize plant operations and maintenance.
- Liaise with Northern Water Works Incorporated to complete annual inspections of water and wastewater facilities as requested by Indigenous Services Canada.
- Trained on-site contractors on proper use of hydrants and ONT.REG 170 requirements for taking water.
- Attended the Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario (AWWAO) conference in Orillia to complete required courses and training to maintain level of certification for licenses.



Challenges

- The lack of qualified licensed operators is of high concern and affecting the safe operation and maintenance of the majority of the water treatment plants.
- Accommodation while on-site also continues to affect the level of support that could be provided.
- The Operator HUBs funding is currently secured through March 2026. With all the new water treatment plants that will require to have certified operator oversight, we will have to advocate for an extension of this program and be able to staff additional operators to assist/mentor community operators. There also should be a succession plan to bring in younger operators with proper training to take over when the current operators retire. The communities that have

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

This year, Nibi Services provided

467

days of on-site operational support at water treatment plans in Matawa communities

Opportunities

We will continue to work with Indigenous Services Canada in regards to the Matawa HUB with regards to additional staffing and extending the funds in future years. A proposal is going in soon to extend the HUB services for another 5 years. One thought for the future would be having a Water Authority. This has already started on the East Coast.



Technical Services

Emergency Management

Staff

Monica Budiselic, Emergency Management Coordinator • Moe Douglas, Fire Marshall

Overview

Matawa Technical Services has a Fire Marshall and provides Emergency Management services like emergency management coordination, FireSmart and emergency response planning, emergency declarations, fire investigations, Hazardous Identification Risk Assessments, 911 services planning, community wildfire protection plans, Incident Management Systems and fire mapping.

Successes

Emergency Management Highlights

FireSmart Program: The goal of FireSmart is to increase the number of trained and capable individuals within all nine Matawa communities to increase safety and the readiness to respond to emergencies, as well as providing employment opportunities to successful candidates. This is done by providing entry level forest fire suppression training (SP100 courses). The following was sent to each Matawa community between May and April 2024:

- Forest Fire Suppression Equipment kit: a pump, pump tool kit, hard suction intake hose, 25L fuel tank, 1-1/2” forestry hose, hose packs, 10 sprinkler heads.
- FireSmart Mitigation Equipment (4-person crew): axes, Nomex safety wear, shovels, clearing axes, rakes, chainsaw, brush saw, weed trimmer, chainsaw sharpening kit, brush saw blade, woodcutter safety kits (chaps, ear protection, shield, etc.), gloves and safety glasses, and a 5-person first aid kit.

SP-100 Wildland Fire Fighting Courses:

- Spring 2023: Geraldton with 18 attendees.
- Spring 2024: Geraldton with 22 attendees, Eabametoong with 10 attendees, Webequie with 10 attendees.
- Spring 2025: There are two courses scheduled in Geraldton from May 26-30 and June 2-6.

Disaster Checklist: Collaborating with Red Cross to develop templates and checklists for specific disasters (the most common being floods and fires), and a generic template for other hazards that may affect a community.



Master Emergency Response Plans: Engaging with communities in updating and developing All Hazards Emergency Response Plans. Neskantaga and Eabametoong have created an Emergency Management Program Committee that is actively updating existing plans while Matawa’s Emergency Management Coordinator is providing assistance.

Next Generation 911: Just getting started on this project. Need all streets and roads named, and all homes require civic numbers. This will tie in with Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping for 911 services. Technical Services, Four Rivers and Emergency Management Coordinator are collaborating. Next Generation 911 (NG911) is in the works and we want to make sure our First Nations communities are included. Funding is still being sought.

Emergency Management Curriculum: An in-person meeting took place to collaborate with like-minded Indigenous and non-Indigenous subject matter experts to develop Grade 11 and 12 curriculum for a Basic Emergency Management Course covering the “five feathers” of Emergency Management. It’s expected that two (2) pilot courses will be ready to roll out, one at the Matawa Education and Care Centre, and another at Geraldton Composite High School. This will give students in Grade 11 and 12 an excellent opportunity to prepare for a career in Emergency Management. Our younger generations have a lot to say and we are listening.

Fire Marshall Highlights

- The Matawa Training and Wellness Centre training project Fire Watch will end this fiscal year.
- Working with our First Nation fire departments for

additional fire protection equipment, fire training, fire prevention, and furthering the development of critical building Fire Safety Plans in all our communities.

- Virtually attended Matawa fly-in communities’ Ministry of Transportation Ontario airport table top exercise.

Aroland First Nation

- Building fire inspections for special requests (school), and fire inspections with an area fire plan, existing mobile fire apparatus inspection and training with school Operations and Maintenance staff.

Constance Lake First Nation

- House, multiple building fire investigation follow-ups, special request house fire inspections, Eagles Earth fire inspections with an area fire plan, assisted with fire training community volunteers on Fort Gary Mobile Fire Apparatus with firefighting equipment.

Eabametoong First Nation

- House, multiple building fire investigation follow-ups, Mobile Fire Apparatus repair, maintenance. Unsuccessful repair to the pump. Assist r with wildfire rapid attack vehicle training.

Ginoogaming First Nation

- Building fire inspections requested for the Training Centre and training.

Long Lake #58 First Nation

- Building fire inspections requested for the school.

Marten Falls First Nation

- House fire investigation follow-ups.

Neskantaga First Nation

- House fire investigation follow-ups. Accessing portable fire extinguishers for the houses.



Nibinamik First Nation

- House fire investigation and follow-ups, assist with the specifications for a rapid attack mobile fire apparatus.

Webequie First Nation

- House fire investigation follow-up, assist with the specifications of Mobile Fire Apparatus with firefighting equipment and training. Assist EMC with wildfire rapid attack vehicle training.

Matawa First Nation communities did not have a serious fire injury or fatal fire in 2023-2024

Infrastructure Fire Safety Plans: Engaging with communities to develop and update critical infrastructure occupancies Fire Safety Plans.

Training for Fire Departments: Basic Exterior-Only Firefighting Training is critical for communities with fire suppression equipment. Emphasis is on firefighter safety and knowledge of community fire suppression equipment in firefighting, techniques and equipment maintenance. Some members have engaged in this training. It’s very difficult recruiting volunteers for the fire department.

Training for Assembly Occupancy: Developing a cultural seminar package for training fire safety and evacuation protocols and procedures in assembly occupancy.

Future of Fire Prevention and Protection: Next generation of fire prevention and protection will include the perspectives of road and air access communities and their responses with their available resources. A collaborative approach will be taken to bring different working skills in the community to meet the individual fire safety initiatives successfully. Completing the training of individuals in infrastructure inspections to meet the fire safety requirement of the community.

Challenges

The lack of volunteers for fire protection is still at the forefront of our communities and has placed tremendous restriction on the normal fire safety activities.

Opportunities

The Emergency Management position is being funding on a year-to-year basis. We are working with ISC to try to make this position permanent as it is well needed.

Technical Services

Community Infrastructure Projects

Aroland First Nation

Approved (ongoing project) Not approved (new project) Priority Complete

No.	Project		Approval Date	Status
1	Emergency Building Design	LJ		Awaiting NAPS documentation
2	Capital Planning Study CRL51	LJ	2022	Completion report submitted Oct. 30, 2024
3	Solid Waste Management Plan CR313	LJ	2021	Waiting for reports from WSP
4	Recycling Program CR34Q	LJ	2023	Budget allocation report June 23, 2023; not started
5	Garbage Truck Purchase CR33C	LJ	2023	Truck ready for delivery; need to setup local program
6	New Daycare	LJ	TBD	Design drawing stage
7	Greenstone Waste Steering Committee	LJ	2018	Ongoing
8	Elders Complex Design and Construction	CC	2023	Framing being worked on currently; water/sewer connected
9	CMHC Housing Accelerator Project	CC	2023	Submission partially approved. A number of initiatives to be completed. Monitoring Well installed to quantify dw supply. Twenty (20) lots north of community
10	Wastewater Lagoon Expansion Study	CC	2022	Neegan Burnside suggested to sole source
11	ISC Housing Renos - Approved 24/25	WM	2024	5 units approved - to be completed
12	ISC Housing GAP fund - 6 new units	WM	2025	
13	Backup Well	LJ		PAR
14	WTP Expansion/Study	CC/DD		PAR - unless some HAF funds?
15	New Teacherages	LJ		PAR
16	Lift Station Backup Power	DD		

Constance Lake First Nation

Approved (ongoing project) Not approved (new project) Priority Complete

No.	Project		Approval Date	Status
1	School Repairs ARKIW	LJ		Project completion report yet to submit
2	Wastewater System and Lagoon Upgrade	DD	2023	Project should be completed by spring 2025
3	ISC Housing Renos - Approved 24/25	WM	2024	6 units approved; to be completed
4	Waste Transfer Station	LJ		Not yet started MCA
5	School Feasibility Study (Expansion)	LJ		Not yet started MCA
6	Recycling Program	LJ		Not yet started MCA
7	School Roof Replacement	LJ		Not yet started MCA
8	MCA for Capital Plan Study	DD	2023	Waiting for ISC approval
9	ISC Housing GAP - 5 units	WM	2025	\$340,350 FN contribution
10	Micro Subdivision	CC		
11	Community Arena	CLFN	2024	In progress
12	ISC Housing GAP - 20 new lots	WM	2025	
13	CMHC Sec. 95 renos	WM	2024	Four (4) renos through CMHC; two (2) completed so far

Eabametoong First Nation

Approved (ongoing project) Not approved (new project) Priority Complete

No.	Project		Approval Date	Status
1	Remediation & Landfill CR3YN	LJ	2015	Approval letter Oct. 16, 2015; treatment & decomm to complete
2	DGS Upgrades CRKOI	LJ	2019	Approval letter Aug. 2019; COR in development
3	IPA Operational Support 22-23	LJ	2022	Approval letter Nov. 2022; close out
4	IPA Operational Support 23-24	LJ	2023	Approval letter Nov. 2023; close out
5	IPA Operational Support 24-25	LJ	2024	TBC

Ginoogaming First Nation

Approved (ongoing project) Not approved (new project) Priority Complete

No.	Project		Approval Date	Status
1	Recycling Program CR32W	LJ	2022	Close out; submit new annual O&M for ISC continued funding
2	Garbage Truck Purchase CR33A	LJ	2022	Delivered; close out project; establish annual O&M for continued ISC funding
3	Greenstone Waste Steering Committee	LJ	2018	Ongoing
4	Emergency Temp Bridge Replacement	DD	2024	Approved; working on ISC PAR documents
5	Immediate Needs - Lot Development (4)	DD	2024	Approved; now complete
6	ISC Housing Renos - Approved 24/25	WM	2024	5 units approved; to be completed
7	HAF - Micro Subdivision	CC		Geotech & topo will help apply for 40 year subdivision; MoG utility capacity talks
8	Making Ground Bridge - CAS	LJ	2024	On hold for legal answers re: existing bridge
9	Initial stages of possible subdivision CHIF	CC/DD	2024	SBA submitting May 19, 2025; based on CPS conceptual; geotech was done
10	Training Centre Back-up Generator	LJ		Not yet started PAR
11	Public Works Garage	LJ		Not yet started PAR
12	Lift Station Backup Power	SR/DD	2020	Complete; 2 generators & 2 transfer switches
13	Lift Station 3 Phase Upgrades	DD		
14	Waste Transfer Station	LJ		Not yet started PAR
15	New Band Office			

Long Lake #58 First Nation

Approved (ongoing project) Not approved (new project) Priority Complete

No.	Project		Approval Date	Status
1	Garbage Truck Purchase CR33B	LJ	2023	Received; FN to close out reporting?
2	Recycling Program CR34A	LJ	2023	Budget allocation report June 2023; Not started; working with M. Fisher and E. Bouchard to start
3	Greenstone Waste Steering Committee	LJ	2018	Ongoing
4	Waste Transfer Station	LJ		Not yet started PAR
5	Capital Planning Study	CC	2023	Neegan Burnside was the successful consultant; CPS to start
6	CMHC Housing Accelerator Project	CC	2023	Portion of submission was approved; a number of initiatives to be completed

7	ISC Housing Renos - Approved 24/25		WM	2024	5 units approved; to be completed
8	ISC Immediate Needs Renos 22/23		WM	2024	7 renovations; in progress
9	RHI - Two 4-plexes		WM	2023	Two 4-plexes now complete
Marten Falls First Nation <div><div></div> Approved (ongoing project) <div></div> Not approved (new project) <div></div> Priority <div></div> Complete</div>					
No.	Project		Approval Date	Status	
1	DGS Upgrades CRKTW	LJ	2020	Closing out	
2	School Repairs	LJ		Closing out	
3	New Teacherages CRL5X	LJ	2022	Closing out	
4	DGS Voltage Upgrades CRLHX	DD/LJ/SR	2023	Phase 1 complete; phase 2 requires additional funds	
5	Water and Wastewater Professional Services Accommodations	DD	2022	Submitted and approved; not completed	
6	Low Lift Station Rebuilding - Relocation of Wet Well Project	DD/SR/MB	2023	Approved; ongoing; Colliers	
7	ISC Immediate Needs - 10 Renos	WM	2022	In progress	
8	ISC Immediate Needs - 3 New Units	WM	2022	3 new builds; to be started	
9	Two 6-plexes Construction RHI	WM	2023	Complete based on final inspection	
10	ISC Housing Renos - Approved 24/25	WM	2024	10 units approved; to be completed	
11	ISC GAP - 6-plex and 4-plex	WM	2025	10 units	
12	Detox Centre	MFFN			
13	Healing Centre	MFFN			
14	New Subdivision Development	DD	2024	PAR submitted	
15	New Services for 6-plexes	DD			
16	WW Distribution System Upgrades	TBD		Colliers? Lagoon, lift stations, force main	
17	DGS Temp Upgrade 2025/6?		TBD	HORCI proposal Oct. 29, 2024; ISC funds must be confirmed by Mar. 2025	
18	DGS Upgrade 2026/7?		TBD	HORCI proposal Nov. 5, 2024; ISC funds must be confirmed by Aug. 2025	
19	Electric to Oil Conversion		2025	Conversion of electric heat to oil for 3 teacherages, 4-plex, contractors camp, etc.	
Neskantaga First Nation <div><div></div> Approved (ongoing project) <div></div> Not approved (new project) <div></div> Priority <div></div> Complete</div>					
No.	Project		Approval Date	Status	
1	LH Roadworks CRKTS	LJ	2021	Approval letter Feb. 2021; Dispute for COR	
2	Waste Management CRK9P	LJ	2019	Engagement session still to be scheduled; Stantec delays/ PCR for site investigations	
3	DGS Upgrades CRLDS	LJ	2023	New unit up WR & temp unit out; work to continue this summer	
4	WR Mile 3 Upgrades	NFN		Funding to NFN	
5	WR Otoskowin Bridge Design	NFN/LJ		Not yet started PAR	
6	New Police Detachment	CC	2021	Substantial completion issued; few deficiencies to be addressed	
7	INO Sites Remediation Project	CC	2023	Stantec doing contract admin and Matawa doing PM for this	
8	Capital Planning Study	CC/SBA	2024	Initially water system assessment we're trying to turn into a full Capital Planning Study	
9	Water & Wastewater Assessment and Options	CC/SBA	2023	WTP had performance test to de-rate the plant to 2.5 L/Sec.; options on next steps TBD	
10	Archeology Study	CC/SBA	2024	Archaeological assessment that ties into multiple issues, including dead end removal to system	
11	8-unit Teacherage Project (extras to housing)	Colliers	2023	Approved and currently in process	
12	RHI - 5 New Builds	WM	2023	In progress	
13	ISC Renovations - 10 units	WM	2024	In progress	
14	ADCO Trailer Hookups & Repairs	LJ			

15	Arena Upgrades				
16	Youth Centre		Pawliuk		Concept dwgs complete; next stage design
17	Lift Station & Hydrant Upgrades		SR	2023	Now complete
Nibinamik First Nation <div><div></div> Approved (ongoing project) <div></div> Not approved (new project) <div></div> Priority <div></div> Complete</div>					
No.	Project		Approval Date	Status	
1	DGS Upgrades Ph1 CRKTC	LJ	2020	Approval letter June 2, 2020; complete & closing out	
2	DGS Upgrade Phase 2 CRLFX	LJ	2024	Colliers PM, LJ reporting; ADCO award; on-site to start asap	
3	DGS Fuel Spill	LJ	TBD	Clean-up funds TBD	
4	Waste Management CRKGX; near complete?	LJ	2019	Approval letter Feb 28 2019; Maybe new bridge to site?	
5	Addition to Reserve ESA Phase 3	LJ	2022	Completion ready; outstanding \$4k TBC allocation	
6	Remediation Design & Construction	LJ	TBD	Drafting TOR & PAR for project funds & start	
7	IPA Operational Support 23-24	LJ	2023	LED upgrades to be completed	
8	IPA Operational Support 24-25	LJ			
9	Water & Wastewater Professional Services Accommodations	DD	2022	Submitted and approved; almost complete	
10	New Water Treatment Plant	SR/MB/DD	2020	Plant still not completed; Matawa operators have been running plant since March 2024	
11	Lagoon Rehabilitation Project; Colliers	DD	2023	Approved and very close to completion	
12	ISC Housing Renos - Approved 24/25	WM	2024	5 units approved; to be completed	
13	ISC GAP - 10 Units	WM	2025	10 units	
14	ISC GAP funding - 4 Lots	WM	2025	4 lots	
15	Nursing Station Residences	NFN/RBC			
16	Lift Station Backup Power	DD			
17	Micro Subdivision	CC	2024	New site location	
18	Subdivision as per CPS	CC/DD			
19	Winter Road Crossing 1 - On-reserve	LJ		PAR not submitted yet	
20	School Feasibility Study	TBD			
21	New Band Office	TBD			
22	Airport Bulk Tank Farm	LJ	TBD	Not yet started PAR	
23	School Bulk Tank Upgrade	LJ	TBD	Old project still open	
Webequie First Nation <div><div></div> Approved (ongoing project) <div></div> Not approved (new project) <div></div> Priority <div></div> Complete</div>					
No.	Project		Approval Date	Status	
1	Waste management planning CRK96	LJ	2018	Community visit still to be scheduled	
2	Waste Diversion CR30Q	LJ	2020	Near complete; closing out	
3	MTO/HORCI Remediation	LJ		Stalled	
4	DGS Upgrades CRKTX	LJ	2021	Solar RFP to Stantec; LED complete; outstanding funds transfer to project account	
5	Remediation ARJUS	LJ	2016	Project completion report yet to submit	
6	School Heating Assmt CRLTM	LJ	2024	Drafting TOR for heating assessment; new boiler installed	
7	School Repairs & Upgrades	LJ		Draft PAR; teepee, windows, doors, siding, flooring	
8	School Feasibility Study	LJ		Draft PAR; hired Colliers on own, seeking reimbursement & funds for geotech, etc.	
9	Drying Beds Upgrade	LJ	TBD	Submitted MCA May 2023	
10	School Modular Classrooms CRM3H	LJ	TBD	Submitted MCA Oct 2023 & again Oct 2024	
11	New Teacherages	LJ	TBD	Not yet started PAR	
12	School Fuel Upgrades	LJ	TBD	Not yet started PAR	
13	Band Rep Building	WFN	2024	Design completed but project not funded yet; submitted to JP	



Matawa
FIRST NATIONS MANAGEMENT