ANISHINABEK NEWS .ca
The voice of the Anishinabek Nation
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Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg citizens and leadership participated in the July 4 Bill 5 protest. Leadership included Chief Louis Kwissiwa and Neskantaga First Nation Chief Gary Quisess, Anishinabek Nation Deputy Grand Council Chief Chris Plain and Michipicoten First Nation Chief Chad Edgar.

Anishinabek Nation statement on the Building Canada Act and Government engagement:

Honouring our Treaty and inherent rights and protecting our future

ANISHINABEK NATION HEAD OFFICE (July 18, 2025) – The Anishinabek Nation recognizes the growing global demand for critical minerals and the significant impact their extraction can have on our territories, rights, and future generations. We acknowledge the potential for economic participation that responsible development offers for all types of projects; however, we are unequivocally committed to ensuring that any and all resource extraction activities and any projects being contemplated within our traditional and treaty territories are conducted in a manner that respects our inherent and Treaty rights, and the well-being of our people.

For millennia, we have been stewards of these lands and waters, guided by the principles of Mino-Bimaadiziwin – the Good Life – which emphasizes balance, respect, and sustainability. Treaties are living agreements that guarantee our rights to hunt, fish, trap, gather, and pursue our traditional way of life on our territories. These rights, affirmed in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, are paramount and will not be compromised for short-term economic gain.

Therefore, the Anishinabek Nation declares the following principles to guide our engagement with the Crown, industry, and other stakeholders regarding all resource extraction activities:

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC): We assert our right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for any activity proposed within our traditional territories. This is not merely consultation, it requires a process of meaningful engagement where our communities have the opportunity to fully understand the potential impacts of a project, provide their free and informed consent, and participate in decision-making. This consent must be obtained before any exploration, development, or resource extraction activities commence. We will establish our own processes and protocols for FPIC guided by Anishinabek laws and customs.

Inherent and Treaty Rights and Indigenous Knowledge Integration: All extraction activities must be conducted in a manner that respects and protects our inherent and Treaty Rights. The Robinson Huron and Robinson Superior Treaties, which our ancestors entered with the British Crown, are also part of that unique historical and constitutional fabric. Our Indigenous Knowledge is invaluable in understanding the interconnectedness of the environment and the potential consequences of resource extraction, which must be integrated into all stages of project planning, environmental assessments, and monitoring. We will require rigorous assessments that go beyond conventional environmental impact.

Environmental Protection and Sustainability: The health and well-being of our lands and waters are inextricably linked to our well-being. We will demand the highest environmental standards and safeguards to prevent pollution, habitat destruction, and disruption of ecosystems. Sustainable extraction practices that minimize environmental impact and prioritize reclamation are essential.

Benefit Sharing and Economic Participation: We will ensure a fair and equitable share of the economic benefits derived from all resource extraction on our territories, which includes, but is not limited to, our annuities owed to the rights holders yearly, revenue sharing, employment opportunities, skills training, and business development opportunities for our citizens. We will advocate for innovative financial models that ensure our communities benefit directly and sustainably from resource development.

Meaningful Consultation and Partnership: His Majesty said recently: "The Government will be a reliable partner to Indigenous Peoples, upholding its fundamental commitment to advancing reconciliation". We expect genuine and respectful consultation and accommodation from government and industry at all stages of project development, from initial exploration to mine closure and reclamation. Consultation must be based on mutual respect, transparency, and willingness to listen to our concerns and incorporate our perspectives. We are open to exploring partnerships provided that they are based on mutual benefit, shared values, and commitment to sustainable development.

Protecting Sacred Sites and Cultural Heritage: We will unwaveringly protect our sacred sites, burial grounds, and areas of cultural significance from any disturbance related to critical mineral extraction or any other activity. These sites are integral to our identity, history, and spiritual well-being. Prior to any development, thorough archaeological and cultural heritage assessments must be conducted in consultation with our communities to identify and protect these irreplaceable resources.

The Anishinabek Nation is committed to working collaboratively with government, industry, and other stakeholders to ensure that critical minerals extraction is conducted in a responsible and sustainable manner that respects our rights, protects our environment, and benefits our communities. We will not hesitate to use any and all available means at our disposal, including legal challenges, to protect our Treaty rights and defend our inherent rights to our lands and our resources.

We call upon the Crown (Canada and Ontario) to recognize and respect our rights, engage with us in good faith, and work with us to build a future where resource development and our inherent and Treaty rights can coexist in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

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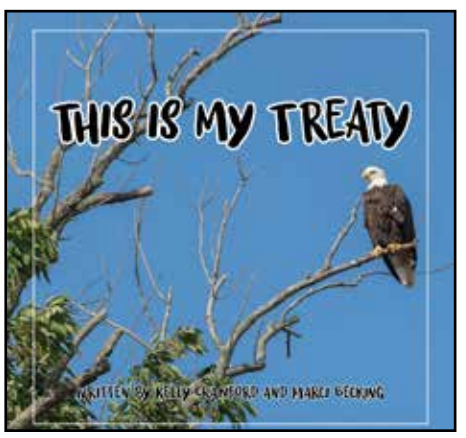

Just in time for Treaties Recognition Week November 3-7, 2025, “This is my Treaty” is available to order now through Goodminds.com or by emailing orders@anishinabek.ca.

The book is geared towards preschool/kindergarten aged students and is also available in Anishinaabemowin and French.

Written by Kelly Crawfod and Marci Becking. Photography by Sara Corthwaite and Charles Fiado.

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Chiefs of Ontario meeting with Minister of Indigenous Services Mandy Gull-Masty in Ottawa prior to discussions on Bill C-5 in Gatineau.

Political quarterly update: Summer

The summer season has been a busy one for Anishinabek Nation! It has been very busy for the Political Office, with Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing the Economy Act, and C-5: One Canadian Economy Act, taking up a considerable amount of time and effort throughout the summer. It has been a busy season with numerous meetings, activities, protests, and forums. The focus has been on engaging with leadership to ensure the Anishinabek Nation is prepared to advance the interests of our Nations and be steadfast with one Anishinaabe voice, and as one Anishinaabe family in advancing those interests and advocacy efforts for all Anishinabek.

The Political Office is currently preparing for our regional meetings and the Fall Assembly. There will be an opportunity to strengthen our relationships in every region, and the Political Office will bring forward those priorities to the provincial and federal governments, while ensuring the messaging that our communities are the rights holders and will make any final decisions that may affect them. In spring, Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige reminded Ontario of the original relationship at the Standing Committee Hearings on Bill 5. Now that both Bill 5 and C-5 have passed, our focus has been on ensuring the Anishinabek Nation is prepared with a strategy to address these pieces of legislation prior to being implemented in Anishinabek territories. The vision for this exercise is to assert Anishinabek First Nation leadership in shaping, responding to (through participation or opposition), and ultimately benefiting from all development within Anishinabek First Nation lands. This shift from reactive opposition to proactive co-design or principle opposition is backed by inherent and Treaty rights, jurisdiction, capacity, and our economic readiness.

Anishinabek Nation leadership will ensure that priorities and mandates are front and centre as these are brought forth to the appropriate leaders who can work with us to achieve solutions and outcomes for all of our Anishinabek communities and citizens. The Anishinabek Nation is committed to providing policy alternatives, economic tools, and governance rooted in Anishinaabe teachings. The future of regulation and development in our territories must be built with us and not after us!

We were happy to see the return of the pow wow season in many First Nations. The Grand Council Chief and Deputy Grand Council Chief had the opportunity to visit some of these celebratory events over the summer in various Anishinabek Nation communities. Coming together through dance and song, being around the big drums and sharing stories and meals has had such an uplifting impact on our spirits. Experiencing the joy and happiness of everyone and seeing all the stunning regalia has us feeling such gratitude to be able to return to your communities in this manner.

In the final weeks in August, our Executive Director Brendan Huston, Northern Superior Regional Chief Mel Hardy, and new Director of Policy for the Political Office Mathew Hoppe, undertook several community visits in the Northern Superior Region from August 18-22. They visited Namaygoosisagagun First Nation, Red Rock Indian Band, Biigtigong Nishnaabeg, Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg, and Michipicoten First Nation. They also had the opportunity to visit with Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek in Thunder Bay. They appreciated the opportunity to see a bit of each community and meet face-to-face with leadership and senior staff when schedules permitted. Special thanks to Regional Chief Hardy for his guidance and leadership during the visits and to the Anishinabek Nation staff for planning and their logistical support. It was an excellent opportunity to spend time amongst the communities and further relationship-building with our Northern Superior First Nations.

The Fall Grand Council Assembly is scheduled to take place in the Lake Huron Region in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, on November 3-5, 2025. We hope you all have a wonderful fall, enjoy the fall colours, and have a successful harvest!

Deputy Grand Council Chief Chris Plain, Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation Chief Kelly LaRocca and her son with Southeast Regional Chief Marsha Smoke at the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation Pow Wow held on July 19-20.

Namaygoosisagagun First Nation Chief Helen Paavola took the new Anishinabek Nation Executive Director Brendan Huston to her community on the north shore of Collins Lake. He toured the Northern Superior region First Nations with Northern Superior Regional Chief Mel Hardy in August, listening to the issues and concerns of the First Nations.

Anishinabek Nation leadership met with Ontario Premier Doug Ford this summer to talk about Bill 5, *Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025* and its impact that the Act will have on First Nations in the Anishinabek Nation.

Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige with the Waindubence family who accepted a Lifetime Achievement Award for Getzit Gord-baa. Full story on pages 8-9.

- Photo by Prachi Nanavati

Ipperwash 30th anniversary reminder that ‘duty to consult’ remains an ongoing issue

ANISHINABEK NATION TERRITORY (September 5, 2025) — The Anishinabek Nation remembers these events, and our thoughts are with the community of Kettle and Stony Point during this solemn time. This time is an opportunity to reflect on the challenges we continue to face as we advance the ongoing work to ensure lands wrongfully taken are returned to the rightful owners and that our ancestors are not forgotten.

“The Anishinabek Nation has been working on heritage and burials, treaty, and public education, but this is often done without the support from our provincial government counterparts,” states Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige. “For far too long, the Government of Ontario has been ignoring our inherent and treaty rights. History has proven this as we remember the events that led to the tragic incident at Ipperwash Provincial Park, and the inaction of the Government of Ontario to prevent it. We need expedited processes that will ensure tragedies like Ipperwash never happen again. Co-management is no longer an option for lands that rightfully belong to our First Nations. The events at Ipperwash has produced a resentment that has been ingrained in our memory and has set back First Nations-Government relations in Ontario. The damage resulting from those events led to a loss of trust, which still resonates across the Anishinabek territory today.”

In 2007, The Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry produced 100 recommendations for implementation, and the Anishinabek Nation is disappointed that there continues to be little to no movement on the implementation of the recommendations. The OPP has addressed 25 policing recommendations; however, it has yet to implement them.

As an organization, we had identified key recommendations for Ontario, which were not implemented:

1. The provincial government should establish a permanent, independent, and impartial agency to facilitate and oversee the settling of land and treaty claims in Ontario. The agency should be called the Treaty Commission of Ontario.

15. The provincial government should promote respect and understanding of the duty to consult and accommodate within relevant provincial agencies and Ontario municipalities.

22. The provincial government should work with First Nations and First Nation organizations to develop policies that acknowledge the uniqueness of First Nation burial and heritage sites, ensure that First Nations are aware of decisions affecting burial and heritage sites, and promote First Nations participation indecision-making. These rules and policies should eventually be incorporated into provincial legislation, regulations, and other government policies as appropriate.

30. The Ministry of Education should establish formal working relationships with First Nation organizations to promote more First Nation perspectives and content in the elementary and secondary school curricula.

37. The provincial government should establish and fund an Ontario First Nation Reconciliation Fund. The Ministry of Indigenous Affairs should work with First Nations and First Nation organizations to determine the mandate, governance structure, funding guidelines, and administrative structure of the fund. The provincial government should commit sufficient resources to the fund to enable it to achieve its objectives.

56. The federal and provincial governments should update their policies on First Nation policing to recognize that self-administered First Nation police services in Ontario are the primary police service providers in their communities. The Anishinabek Nation remains committed to working with other First Nations, provincial organizations, and various government ministries within the federal and provincial governments to implement the recommendations.

“These recommendations are very similar to what First Nations have been saying to the Government since the spring about Bill 5, Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, 2025. We have hope that our partners will see how advancing relationships with First Nations does not come from continuing to ignore, violate, and threaten the inherent rights of Anishinabek people and undermines the foundational principles of the treaty relationship. The journey to reconciliation must be a reciprocal one for all partners involved. On this 30th anniversary, I call upon the Premier to stand up on behalf of all Ontarians and do the right thing and implement the Ipperwash Inquiries and the OPP recommendations,” states Grand Council Chief Debassige.

Anishinabek Nation 7th Generation Charity

AN7GC Anishinabek Nation 7th Generation Charity

The Anishinabek Nation 7th Generation Charity (AN7GC) is committed to improving the quality of life of Anishinabek citizens by providing financial support, where no other funding exists, in the areas of Education, Health, Youth, Culture, Social, Elders, Emergency Crisis and Disaster Relief.

The AN7GC is a self-sufficient registered charity relying fully on the success of its fundraising initiatives in order to support its Mission and Vision.

Our Mission

As the official charitable fundraising arm of the Anishinabek Nation, the Anishinabek Nation 7th Generation Charity is committed to improving the quality of life of Anishinabek Nation citizens by providing support where no other funding exists.

Our Vision

The Anishinabek Nation 7th Generation Charity will help create educated, healthy, and culturally enriched citizens that will continue to grow a stable, strong, and prosperous Anishinabek Nation.

Chi-Miigwech to our generous partners!

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To make a donation please visit **www.an7gc.ca/donate**

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Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law safeguards and promotes the well-being of Anishinaabe children and youth

Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige - Photo by Victoria Racette

ANISHINABEK NATION HEAD OFFICE (August 8, 2025) – Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige has issued the following statement regarding the Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law:

"It is important our children see themselves in a system they're in and a part of – the Anishinabek Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being System was always a goal and dream for the Anishinabek Nation.

At the foundation of our System is the Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law. The Law acknowledges, respects, and supports the primary role of the parents, guardians, families, and communities in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of Anishinaabe children and youth.

As a Law drafted under First Nations' inherent jurisdiction with input from our citizens residing on and off-territory, the First Nations choosing to enact this Law for their communities are the lawmakers; they will be responsible for the delivery of child and family services for Anishinabek families.

On the Anishinabek Nation's path to self- government, our Child Well-Being Team is negotiating a main table tripartite self-government agreement and supporting bilateral fiscal agreements with the Province of Ontario, and the Government of Canada in the area of child, youth, and family well-being. Our approach is grounded in Anishinaabe law and governed by inherent rights, free from externally imposed legislative frameworks.

Through our Law and the self-government agreement, we will continue to reaffirm the foundational truth that Anishinabek First Nations are sovereign Nations. Through our System, we will continue Koganaawsawin (raising up our children)."

ANISHINABEK NATION
TREATY EDUCATION RESOURCE

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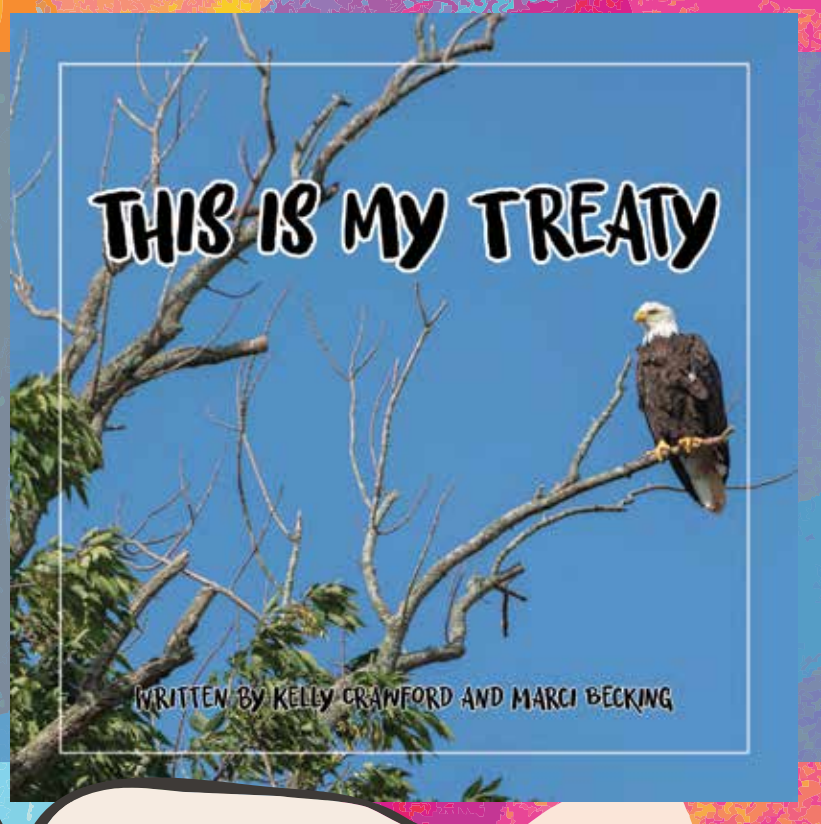
Also available at: goodminds.com



4 myths about Health Transformation

What is Health Transformation? It is a self-governing agreement that has no impact on treaty rights. Each First Nation will determine health priorities at the community level. Together, we will be in the business of health - there will be more jobs and opportunities for our people.

1

Myth: *This will divide the Anishinabek Nation - leaving First Nations behind.*
Fact: There is **strength in numbers**. If we are **united**, we can **secure more funding** for all of us - together.

2

Myth: *The Union of Ontario Indians is just going to run the Health Authority.*
Fact: The Health Authority will take direction from the First Nations. There will be a **clear separation of politics and business**.

3

Myth: *We will give up our rights by signing an agreement.*
Fact: First Nations will always have **inherent and treaty rights**. We are taking over a broken system and **creating a better system**.

4

Myth: *Funding is not enough - we will be worse off.*
Fact: We will **negotiate for more funding.** We would **never negotiate for less.**

www.health-transformation.ca

Details of Nipissing First Nation program provided at family well-being conference

Karen Auger, Wiidooktaagyang's co-ordinator, spearheads Nipissing First Nation's community-based programming. Auger was a featured speaker at the Anishinabek Nation family well-being conference held from July 29-30 in Chippewas of Rama First Nation.

By Sam Laskaris

CHIPPEWAS OF RAMA FIRST NATION – It's a program whose origins trace back a dozen years. But for some attendees at a recent conference, it was the first time that they were hearing details about Nipissing First Nation's Wiidooktaagyang program.

In English, the program, which follows a holistic, community service approach, translates to 'We Are Helping One Another.'

Karen Auger, Wiidooktaagyang's co-ordinator, spearheads her First Nation's community-based programming. Auger was one of the featured speakers at an Anishinabek Nation family well-being conference, which was held from July 29-30 at Casino Rama Resort, located in Chippewas of Rama First Nation.

The conference was titled, 'connection, care, courage'.

Auger collaborates with other Nipissing departments to plan, implement, and support monitor care programs that promote both individual and family strengths and advance well-being.

Wiidooktaagyang has been around for more than a decade. Auger said Nipissing representatives long ago recognized there was a need to support some of its First Nation members with multiple complex needs.

Throughout portions of 2013 and the following year, various frontline staff, managers, leadership representatives, Elders, and community members held meetings to develop the program's approach and philosophy, and determine resources required to support it.

Auger became a Wiidooktaagyang case manager in 2017 and the program co-ordinator last year.

"When this program first started within Nipissing, we had all of our staff trained, so whether you were working in housing, social services, or facilities and maintenance," she said, adding they all had the knowledge to assist community members.

That workload fell solely into Auger's hands when she became Nipissing's case manager eight years ago. It was quickly realized that additional staff needed to be hired to properly assist all community members.

There are currently various ways for Nipissing members to access the Wiidooktaagyang program.

"Community members can self-refer," Auger said. "So, they can call us or they can stop by the office."

Also, others can make a referral on someone's behalf.

Service integration for Wiikdooktaagyang aims to help those Nipissing members with various needs. Some individuals have chronic needs, while others may have acute health or social concerns. And others need some help as their concerns are impacting others.

Auger said her program is not suited for those who are presenting in crisis. Other Nipissing departments are better equipped to handle these situations. But they can eventually transition to Wiikdooktaagyang services.

The two-day workshop also featured other speakers, workshops, and activities.

Tracy Robinson, whose duties include coordinating Anishinabek Nation's family well-being program, believes an annual conference attended by frontline workers is extremely beneficial.

"There is so much happening in all of the communities," Robinson said. "[Workers are dealing with] everything from capacity issues and having to wear many hats, to grief and loss, to struggles with addiction, domestic violence, and mental health."

Representatives from the Anishinabek Nation, which provides support to 39 First Nations throughout Ontario, recommended frontline family well-being workers get together once a year.

"It's something we decided would be most effective to have a big annual event, to have a theme, get speakers, do activities, and do the things that would most help," Robinson said.

Others who attended this year's conference were Marsha Smoke, Anishinabek Nation's Southeast Regional Chief, and Stan Cloud, a director with Anishinabek Nation's Social Development Department, and Koganaawsawin – the coordinating body of the Anishinabek Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being System.

First Nation representatives who also assist with their community's family well-being work also took part.

Working Group building roadmap for Health Transformation

Health leaders participated in group activities on Health Transformation during their two-day session in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

By Jesse Johnson

SAULT STE. MARIE, ON — Leaders, health professionals, and community representatives gathered at the Quattro Hotel and Conference Centre in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, for a two-day Health Transformation Working Group meeting on July 16 and 17.

The meeting opened with a warm welcome and a traditional offering of thanks, including the Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe declaration recited by Ookomis Donna Debassige, Anishinabek Nation Getzidjig Advisory Council Lake Huron Region member.

An agenda review by the Project Lead, Gerrilynn Manitowabi, set the tone for a collaborative and focused working environment.

The Project Manager, Loretta Nootchtai, provided an overview from the April 2025 Working Group meeting and proceeded to share updates on key initiatives, the Chiefs Symposium report, Grand Council Assembly, and the ongoing Communications Strategy. Several supporting documents, including the final Chiefs Symposium Report, were highlighted as foundational for continued progress and distributed to the group with plans for wider distribution in the coming weeks.

The Health Transformation Communications Officer, Jesse Johnson, presented an overview of the draft Communications Strategy. A copy of the draft strategy was circulated ahead of the meeting to allow for in-depth feedback during the session. The morning concluded with an exercise to obtain additional key messaging from the group for inclusion into the strategy.

Governance took centre stage in the afternoon with a full group discussion on the existing preferred governance model structure. An exercise was conducted to identify additional elements, inclusive of roles and responsibilities, that the group would like to see incorporated within the structure of a potential Anishinabek First Nation Health Authority.

Day Two kicked off with a recap of Day One and a focused session on the "Roadmap to Health Transformation", where teams collaboratively engaged in exercises to map a path forward.

Objectives of the session included defining steps and identifying timelines for pursuing Anishinabek Health Transformation, ensuring the approach is collaborative, and aiming to achieve group consensus on the process.

The final day also included the completion of a reporting template where the group worked together to compile a documented summary of key highlights from the meeting to report back to their communities and leadership.

These Working Group meetings reflect the Anishinabek Nation's commitment to health sovereignty, community-driven priorities, and collaborative leadership. With traditional knowledge and structured planning at the forefront, the Health Transformation Working Group continues to chart an actionable course toward improved health outcomes for Anishinabek Nation members.

The next Working Group meeting is planned for October 15-16. Anishinabek Nation member First Nations are encouraged to send representatives such as Chiefs, Councillors, health directors, and finance experts to attend the Working Group meetings. The Health Transformation Team is determined to give every community an opportunity to share their voice as they continue to work towards transformation.

To contact an Anishinabek Nation Health Transformation team member for more information, please visit health-transformation.ca.

Evening of Excellence Casino Rama August 28, 2025

CHIPPEWAS OF RAMA FIRST NATION - Friends, family, and colleagues gathered at Casino Rama in Chippewas of Rama First Nation on August 28, for the Anishinabek Nation 7th Generation Charity annual Evening of Excellence, where 17 deserving Anishinabek Nation citizens received Lifetime Achievement Awards for their outstanding contributions.

The Lifetime Achievement Awards recognize individuals who have made a lifetime commitment to improving the quality of life on First Nations through volunteerism, political service, language preservation, health services, social services, personal achievement, cultural practice, and those who are survivors of Indian Residential School or who served in the military.

2025 Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients:

Darrell Mandamin, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory: Darrell has dedicated his entire career to public service through peacekeeping and policing work on behalf of the Wikwemikong Tribal Police Service and the Anishinabek Police Service. He has been a steady, loyal ambassador of the Mukwa Doodem through keeping the community safe.

Throughout his career, he's always been ready to respond with a calm demeanour in any situation, whether it be a minor incident or situations that are dangerous or traumatic in nature. As you can imagine, in his line of work, he is subjected to many forms of abuse, whether it be physical, mental, verbal, or even spiritual, but he is always responding healthily to ensure the safety of the people involved as well as the community at large. In his role of leadership within the Police Service, he has at times been a mentor to new recruits from First Nations and First Nation Policing.

Andrew McGregor, Whitefish River First Nation: Andrew is a friend, brother, Father, and Grandfather to many, and is known as a source of wisdom, strength, and honour. An Indian Residential School Survivor, he is a man of few words. He has been a lifelong example of hard work, pride, and respect. He is a bridge to the past, whether it be family or community history, sharing his knowledge, stories, and traditions that connect all those who are in his presence. Family is of the utmost importance, always helping those with advice, knowledge, reassurance, or just a helping hand. He is a bridge to family history, sharing stories and family traditions that bring the past to today.

Anne Marie Jones, Garden River First Nation: For over 36 years, Anne Marie has shown an unwavering commitment and dedication to her role within the Garden River FN education unit.Meticulously managing numerous files, she demonstrates a remarkable attention to detail and a deep sense of responsibility that fosters trusting and supportive relationships. She's a valued team player who collaborates seamlessly with her colleagues, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the education unit. Her influence extends beyond Garden River as she actively represents the community on multiple boards and committees, cultivating strong partnerships resulting in positive change and empowerment within the community.

Brian Ziegler, Whitefish River First Nation: Known to most as 'Chuck', he has served with distinction for over three decades as a police officer with the United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin Anishinaabe Police Service (UCCM APS), consistently demonstrating courage, integrity, and commitment to community.

His journey began in Whitefish River First Nation, where he was raised in a family that instilled in him the values of humility, strength, and fairness. Though his early life was marked by systemic challenges and the impacts of racial discrimination, he emerged from those experiences with deep empathy and an unshakable sense of justice. His life's work has reflected those lessons, offering protection and compassion to the people he served.

Throughout his 30-year career, he has worn many hats: frontline responder, Scenes of Crime Officer, Traffic Management Officer, Shift Supervisor, and lead investigator in major cases. Each role was approached with the same unwavering dedication to public safety and community well-being. The humanity he brings to the badge is what sets him apart. He has been known to lift the spirits of those around him with quick wit and a well-timed joke, even amid high-stress situations.

Danette McGregor, Whitefish River First Nation: Danette is known as an esteemed leader and cultural advocate within her community. For over two decades, she has left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of countless individuals, shaping the future through her role as an educator at the Maamwe Kendaasing Early Learning and Innovation Centre.

More recently, she has focused on the language. Under her leadership, the Anishinaabemowin program has flourished, becoming a cornerstone of the educational experience at Maamwe Kendaasing. Her work serves as a profound and integral link in the fabric of Anishinabek society, weaving together threads of resilience, cultural revitalization, and intergenerational healing.

Her lifetime work symbolizes a collective journey of resilience, healing, and cultural resurgence for the Anishinabek people.

Dolores Naponse, Atikameksheng Anishnawbek: Dolores is an Indian Residential School Survivor and a well-respected Elder in her community. She is an active member of the Health Committee, where she has been instrumental in promoting a balanced, holistic lifestyle. Through the Committee's work, she has helped enhance, guide, and promote individual cultural values and principles, leading to personal, family, and community healing for present and future generations.

In 2000, she organized a Diabetes Walk aimed to raise awareness of diabetes in our First Nation. She walked approximately 30 Kilometres a day from the Manitoba border to Ottawa from May to July.

On September 30, 2022, she was selected to throw the "first pitch" at a Toronto Blue Jays game for their acknowledgement of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, honouring all Indian Residential School Survivors. She has impacted many people throughout her life. Her charisma, inviting smile, and humility make you feel seen and important. Her dedication, passion, and profound impact on the community have been truly remarkable.

The Late Elizabeth 'Liza' Commanda, Nipissing First Nation: Liza was a trailblazer whose achievements in the 1930s brought pride and inspiration to her First Nation at a time when Indigenous representation in public life was exceedingly rare — especially for women.

In 1933, Liza competed in the prestigious Women's Marathon Swim at the Canadian National Exhibition (C.N.E.) in Toronto. She was the only Indigenous woman to compete in this gruelling 10-mile open water event, which drew international athletes. She trained in the cold, open waters of Lake Nipissing, and carried with her the pride of her people — and the strength of generations before and after her.

Her achievement was not solely athletic. By stepping into a public space as an Indigenous woman in the 1930s,

But her greatest legacy goes beyond her athletic accomplishments. Liza endured the deep injustices of her time — systemic racism, and the forced removal of some of her children to Indian Residential School. Despite these hardships, she held her family together with quiet strength and unshakable love.

Gail 'Kiki' McGregor, Whitefish River First Nation: Affectionately known as Kiki, she has served the community in countless roles for over 45 years. She became the youngest-ever member of the WRFN Recreation Committee and has never stopped showing up. She is a co-founder of the Annual Powwow Gathering and remains a key part of its continued success. Whether organizing community events, seasonal solstice ceremonies, baby welcomings, or annual parades, she has been the quiet current behind many of the community's most meaningful traditions.

Her gifts extend far beyond event coordination — she is a Knowledge Keeper and a spiritual woman whose wisdom profoundly shapes the lives of many, grounding others in Anishinaabe ways of being. Her work with the senior population is especially meaningful, as she brings wellness practices, language, and culturally grounded care to both Elders and clients. Her journey has not been without hardship. Very few can say they have supported their First Nation from youth into their elder years with such constancy and purpose. Gail is a living thread connecting the past to the present — embodying the teachings, values, and spiritual strength of the Anishinabek people.

Ian Campeau, Nipissing First Nation: At a young age, Ian pursued his love for music. His start as a DJ led him to co-found the group 'A Tribe Called Red' in the late 2000s. They changed the way of music by blending electronic music and pow wow music, which became known as Electric Pow Wow. Throughout his 10 years with the group, they enjoyed much success, getting long-listed for Canada's prestigious Polaris Music Prize and in early 2014, the group was nominated for Breakthrough Group of the Year and Electronic Album of the Year at the Juno Awards, ultimately winning the Juno Award for Breakthrough Group of the Year. In 2017, the group was shortlisted for the Polaris Music Prize and was named Album of the Year at the Independent Music Awards, in addition to opening the Juno Awards gala that year.

Later that year, Ian announced that he was leaving the band, releasing a statement saying, "After almost ten years in A Tribe Called Red, I've decided to leave the band and shift my energy to my speaking career, mentorship, and advocacy work…"

And that is exactly what he has done. He has been a strong advocate for Indigenous rights and the Anishinaabemowin language. Moving back to his home community, he has become a positive role model to the youth, connecting with them and working with them to focus on the right path.

Jack Brown, Kettle & Stony Point First Nation: Jack has been committed as a water champion for over 30 years. As a certified water operator, educator, and trainer in First Nations across Ontario, he ensures our communities are well advised on needed services. He always goes the extra mile to provide support in obtaining necessary training to promote self-sufficiency and healthy water services.

In addition, he is also a band councillor who has actively contributed to the establishment of his community's radio station, golf course, and various infrastructure. He wholeheartedly promotes education and living the Anishinaabe way, working tirelessly for the betterment of our communities.

Janet George, Kettle & Stony Point First Nation: Serving her community for over 20 years as their Health Director, she has been instrumental in creating and sustaining the intricate health services program. Her work over the years has included establishing the much-needed Assisted Living Facility, the Mental Health and Wellness Program in addition to various health policies within her community as well as others.

She has been a long-time Board member for the Southern Ontario Health Access Centres and spent time working with the N'Amerind Friendship Centre, exemplifying her desire to not only help within her own community, but also make a difference abroad.

She is a role model, paving a path for others to follow in life and in health, and is always available to those seeking advice in all health matters, sharing her cultural teachings and knowledge.

Keith McCrady, Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek: True leadership is not simply having a vision, as there is no shortage of good ideas. The real test is the ability to translate that vision into action and meaningful service, and Keith has done this remarkably.

He started his career in child and youth care prior to stepping into the role of executive director at 2 Spirited People of the 1st Nations in 2017. This organization was founded in 1989 to help support 2 Spirited People at risk of or living with HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C or other co-infections. When he began his role with the organization,

Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige and Deputy Grand Council Chief Chris Plain with some of the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award recipients at Chippewas of Rama First Nation on August 28, 2025. - Photo by Prachi Nanavati

there were five full-time staff. Under his leadership since that time, 2 Spirits has grown to over 130 staff and has expanded across the city of Toronto with three satellite offices. It operates the only Indigenous led crisis response service and has plans for expansion to Thunder Bay.

He embodies the qualities of a true leader who lives by the Seven Grandfather Teachings. He is a role model through his honesty, authenticity, courage, and compassion.

The Late Melvina Corbiere, M'Chigeeng First Nation: A residential school survivor, she often described this experience in a positive way, in the sense that it helped equip her and others with the tools they needed to be leaders of change in First Nation communities.

As a teacher, she inspired many students to achieve their educational goals. With her kind approach, she worked as a peer within the teaching community to help other teachers understand the First Nations people, their systems of governance, language traditions, and culture. She helped break down the barriers of colonialist attitudes towards First Nation people in a positive way.

After many years as a teacher, she became a Principal and Director of Education. During this time, she was instrumental in acquiring control of the M'Chigeeng First Nations Educational system from Indian Affairs Canada, becoming one of the first First Nations in Canada to achieve broad control of their educational system.

She was fluent in Ojibway and had a lifetime of cultural understanding. As an elementary educator, she saw a need for resource development to help teachers with language development. With her educational background and knowledge of curriculum, she worked with the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation and the Kenjigewin Teg Educational Institute to help develop books and curriculum resources in the language. These resources and others were shared with many teachers across the province and around Turtle Island to help those understand and speak Anishinaabemowin.

Robert Bressette Jr., Kettle & Stony Point First Nation: For more than 20 years, Robert has been a well-respected educator within his community. He is affectionately known as 'Mr. B' to both past and present students, for whom he had and continues to have a hand in shaping their outlook and futures through positive reinforcement and instilling belief in their abilities to succeed.

His love of sports has been a guiding light throughout his life, working and volunteering in countless ways within his community and abroad. From coaching to training in multiple sports at multiple levels, he has even won awards for his work as a trainer. He not only makes every effort to encourage, promote pride, self-respect and camaraderie with others, he believes that everyone has potential and the right to self-determination.

Currently, he is the Principle for Hillside School in his community. He has earned the respect and trust of his co-workers and students through the years because of his nature to nurture, support and promote healthy competition, lifestyle and learning.

Steven George, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory: Steven has been the local historian for Wiikwemkoong and fellow Anishinaabe communities within the Anishinaabe Territory for many years. Rooted in rich Anishinaabemowin fluency, historical knowledge, and genealogy knowledge, he has been called upon to bridge the past into the present while preparing and building a future. He is often sought for his insight, reference, understanding, and interpretation of Anishinaabemowin.

At the core of being Anishinaabe is language and culture. He demonstrates his retention of culture and language while sharing it with many. His ability to recall and share history helps bridge the divide amongst generations and helps to regain identity in family, and community with the knowledge that people's identity is integral to the future of the Anishinabek.

The Late Wendy Tyson, Wahnapitae First Nation: Wendy spent over 25 years working for her community, starting as a youth worker, ultimately holding more than seven different positions throughout her career in addition to serving on numerous committees. She touched every part of her community, whether it was through the work she did in her job, volunteering for events, or fundraising activities, there wasn't a person in the community from babies through to Elders who didn't feel the positive impact she had.

The list of things she did is literally too long to mention. She was one of those people that a community is lucky to have who is just everywhere all the time, always helping, always volunteering, always working, always trying to make a positive difference and give her community the best. She brought courage, humility, truth, respect, wisdom, honesty and love to everyone and everything she touched in her community.

The Late Gordon Waindubence, Sheguiandah First Nation: Our next award recipient dedicated his life's work to the Anishinabek Nation and tonight, we remember and honour, the late former Anishinabek Nation Head Getzit Gordon Waindubence-baa of Sheguiandah First Nation who returned to the Spirit World on November 24, 2021.

In 1997, former Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Vernon Roote-baa offered Elder Gordon tobacco to build a Nation. He accepted but said it would take time. He fasted and received a clear vision for the Anishinabek Nation. He set out to carve the Eagle Staff and would encourage each member First Nation to share an Eagle Feather to represent unity.

He worked tirelessly for over 24 years to build a strong Nation and to guide leadership in this endeavour. He travelled throughout the Nation, sharing his cultural knowledge and gifts with determination in developing a Nation and fostering Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinabe – One Anishinaabe Family.

We recognize him for all he has done for the Anishinabek Nation and say "Chi-Miigwech" for the following significant events:

-Appointed as the first head Getzit of the Anishinabek Nation

Implemented the traditional stand-up election process for the Anishinabek Nation's leadership and for the Chiefs of Ontario

-Helped create Ngo Dwe Waangizid with Manitoulin Getzidjig

-Created the June 6 Anishinaabe Giizhigad yearly holiday in recognition of the acceptance of the Chi-Naaknigewin by Chiefs-in-Assembly on June 6, 2012.

-Implemented and shared the Doodem (clan) governance system for restoration of jurisdiction in education and governance, which is carried on today by head Getzit Richard Assinewai and Elder Gordon's son Chop Waindubence

-Taught the importance of engaging with Elders wherever we went

-Built the arbour that stands at the Anishinabek Nation head office

-Gifted an Eagle Feather to Getzit Richard Assinewai to become Head Getzit of the Anishinabek Nation, to carry on the important work that he started and ensure that the Nation was in good hands

-Provided guidance to staff, Anishinabek Chiefs, citizens, and leadership and shared his kindness, built strong friendships, and showed Zaagidwin for us all - Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe

To learn more about the Anishinabek Nation 7th Generation Charity, visit.an7gc.ca

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ZENSHIP) DECLARATION

Waawaashkesh Doodem (Clan)

E-niigaanwidood E’Dbendaagzijig - Commissioner on Citizenship:

Dr. Jeannette Corbiere Lavell

ppy that the Anishinabek Nation Declaration on E'Dbendaagzijig received unanimous support from Anishinabek Chiefs-in-Assembly at the Grand Council Assembly on June 3, 2025, in London, Ontario. The Grand Council ion was moved by Curve Lake First Nation Ogimaa Keith Knott and seconded by Zhiibaahaasing First Nation Chief lls.

shinabek Nation Declaration on E’Dbendaagzijig emphasizes inherent rights and Anishinaabe laws, governance, e, territory, and identity. This is what we mean when we maintain that we are a “distinct nation” with inherent at we have never surrendered.

shinabek Nation Declaration on E'Dbendaagzijig is a two-pronged approach with external and internal strategies. lly, it is a strong statement to Canada that only the Anishinabek have the authority to determine who our people authority relies on our inherent rights and is affirmed in our Treaties, recognized by the Constitution Act, 1982, 35, and by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Our future negotiations with will aim to reset the relationship and to resource the nation-to-nation relationship based on our determination of ongs. It is critical that we are united in our approach in our discussions with Canada.

ly, the Declaration is meant to inspire and strengthen our people and our communities to go forward with the ment of their First Nation Citizenship Laws and to exercise the sovereignty that was given to us by the Creator: to he Anishinaabe Laws given to us. This is where we must rely on our language, history, and governance laws. This ently expressed in Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe, the Preamble of the Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin.

t steps are to incorporate the Anishinabek Nation Declaration on E'Dbendaagzijig into our existing daagzijig Naaknigewin, and to confirm the amended law with the Pipe Ceremony. A strategic work plan is being d that will assemble a collaborative team from Leadership, Commissioners, Nation Council, and self-governing such as B'Maakonigan. The strategic work plan will include the nation-to-nation discussions with Canada g E'Dbendaagzijig Laws and fiscal relationships; a citizen engagement strategy to build awareness of Citizenship an Act issues; promotion of the E’Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin, 2009, and the One-Parent Rule; and the creation lkit to assist First Nations in drafting their Citizenship Laws.

rward, it is recommended that the Anishinabek Nation Declaration on E'Dbendaagzijig is the starting point of our discussions to develop First Nation E'Dbendaagzijig Laws and the further development of the Anishinabek E'Dbendaagzijig Naaknigewin, 2009, per Resolution #2023-10.

ilable to assist our Anishinabek First Nations in the development of citizenship laws and to help chart the path to ermination.

Beausoleil First Nation celebrates launch of new state-of-the-art ferry

Beausoleil celebrated its new ferry, the Niigaan Enaazhek, with a launch ceremony and on-board tour in early August. - Photo supplied

By Rick Garrick

BEAUSOLEIL FIRST NATION — Beausoleil celebrated the launch of its new custom-built state-of-the-art ferry, the Niigaan Enaazhek, with a launch ceremony and on-board tour in early August.

"It's been a long time coming and it finally arrived (on Aug. 8)," says Beausoleil Chief Joanne Sandy. "It's about time that we got it. It was tendered out in 2019, and we are just getting it now. It's not fully operational right now, we're just waiting for Transport Canada's guidelines and regulations with regards to the safe manning of the vessel."

Chief Sandy says there are other matters to deal with to get the ferry operational.

"They've licensed the old [Sandy Graham ferry] until the end of the year, then it has to be decommissioned," Sandy says. "But we're hopeful that in the next few weeks that we're going to be fully operational."

Sandy says the new ferry, which is a double-ended Ice Class Super 1A vessel, has ice-breaking capabilities for ice up to 24 inches thick.

"Everybody is happy we got a new ferry, and we don't have to park it because it has ice-breaking capabilities," Sandy says. "It'll be operational all year around."

Beausoleil Councillor Marla Monague says the community is so excited about having the new ferry, which is rated to carry up to 150 passengers and 36 vehicles, compared to the Sandy Graham, which was rated for 99 passengers and 26 vehicles. The new ferry is also rated with a maximum speed of 11.5 knots compared to the old ferry's maximum speed of 8.5 knots.

"It was such an amazing day when the boat sailed in there a couple of weeks ago on the Friday," Monague says. "It's something we never experienced before, a brand-new ferry that is made just for us with our specific needs, that is going to be safe and reliable for transportation for our community. People have been there for generations now and we've never had a brand-new multipurpose ferry ever. It's always been old vessels that we've had to buy from the States and have to get them retrofitted."

Monague says the new ferry is a beautiful vessel.

"It's made for our needs, it's just amazing," Monague says.

Monague says her community used to have an ice road to the mainland up to about a decade ago.

"We used to have thick ice, so everybody used to rely on snowmobiles during the winter to get to and from across, and once it got really thick, people would use their vehicles," Monague says. "But we don't get ice that thick anymore where it's safe enough to use vehicles — I would say it's been over a decade since we had ice that thick where we've been able to travel on it safely."

Monague says it took decades worth of advocacy by the Chiefs and Councils to get the new ferry.

"I know at least five different Chiefs that were advocating for this ferry," Monague says. "It wasn't just leaders, it was the entire community for a generation saying we need this."

Monague says whole community attended the arrival of the new ferry.

"It was just such a great moment," Monague says. "I went to go see it back in March when it was still in Superior, (Wisconsin), and I cried when I first walked on it because I couldn't believe that it belonged to us and that finally, after all of these years, we were going to have something that was going to meet our needs and our community could be proud of."

TEK Elders hold demonstration against Glyphosate spraying

On August 14 in Serpent River First Nation, many attendees gathered, blocking the highway, doing a Round Dance in support of stopping the spraying.

By Leslie Knibbs

SERPENT RIVER FIRST NATION - The Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) group held a two-hour direct-action protest rally against the spraying of glyphosate in area forests on August 14. During the two-hour rally, several people took part in a Round Dance, stopping the traffic on the Trans-Canada Highway.

The protest was held between 10 am and noon at the Serpent River First Nation (SRFN) Trading Post on Highway 17 and was the latest effort in the TEK's continuing campaign to stop aerial spraying. The scheduled spraying of glyphosate includes Sudbury, Temagami, Dryden, Spanish, Pineland, Trout Lake, Lac Seul, Gordon Cosens, Abitibi, and Nipissing forests.

The TEK group is made up mainly of Elders from Garden River First Nation, Sagamok First Nation, Thessalon First Nation, Batchewana First Nation, as well as Mississauga #8 First Nation and Serpent River First Nation. Elder Caroline Recollet from Wahnapitae First Nation serves as the spokesperson for the Elders' "Stop the Spray" Campaign. Recently, TEK released the following statement: "TEK rejects the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' claims about the need for herbicide 'management,' and reminds us that TEK Elders founder Raymond Owl refers to aerial glyphosate use as 'raining poison from the sky.'

"Ontario has an obligation to respect our Treaty rights," said Elder Recollet. "When forests are converted to plantations, all life is affected – we share these lands with all creation."

Chiefs of Ontario released a statement on July 31, informing the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) that all 40 First Nations have come to a consensus to reject glyphosate use in forestry across all First Nations' lands. The Chiefs of Ontario have taken up the campaign on the TEK Elders' behalf, and several Chiefs have been invited to join the action on August 14.

The Elders are long-standing opponents to the spraying of chemicals on the land and in forests. For more than a decade, TEK has been actively protesting and lobbying both the provincial and federal governments against aerial spraying. They have held numerous demonstrations on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, as well as Queen's Park in Toronto. Indeed, what began with a small group of TEK Elders meeting together in Serpent River First Nation and Mississauga #8 First Nation over 10 years ago has manifested into a province-wide movement for change in the way forestry management is maintained.

TEK Elders have had little to no success in their struggle in convincing the governments to stop the spraying over the last decade; however, their persistence and dedication to the cause has exponentially brought awareness to the issue resulting in mounting concern by many municipalities, environmental groups, as well as other individuals, all aligning themselves with the TEK as allies with a sole purpose of putting a stop to aerial spraying.

Their message has spread fast throughout Ontario, with many other First Nations holding their own rallies or protests.

Municipalities and their citizens across the province are offering support to stop the spraying. These include Moonbeam, Kirkland Lake, and Sudbury, among others, and they continue to email their MPPs calling for the immediate halt to aerial spraying of glyphosate.

Sudbury leads the way in the number of emails sent to the province. Local MPP France Gélinas in the Nickel Belt has worked steadily advocating for the ban. Several groups, including Stop The Spray Ontario, have started petitions to present to the province.

Elder Joe Jones from Garden River First Nation has been a member of TEK since the group's formation and has participated in many actions. According to Jones, TEK has been hammering away trying to get their message across to the government.

"They don't listen," he said recently.

The founders of TEK Raymond Owl from Sagamok First Nation and Willie Pine from Mississauga #8 First Nation have been out in the forest for many years at different times of the year, noting the dramatic changes in the wildlife when harvesting, as well as the many diverse trees in the mixed forests have, in some cases, been replaced by jack pine plantations as a result of using glyphosate-based herbicides. Healthy mixed and natural forests are increasingly becoming plantations for profit by the lumber industry. When confronted with this information, the MNR claims the herbicide is a necessity to "control competing vegetation." According to the MRN and forestry groups using the herbicide, it (glyphosate) is necessary and helps "meet long-term wood supply needs."

On August 19, Dr. Susan Bell Chiblow, a citizen of Garden River First Nation and professor at the University of Guelph, distributed a press release about a new project led by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders to "transform how chemical risk is managed." At the heart of Indigenous approaches to caring for the land, waters, air, and eachother, the project's intent is to set out priorities, develop protocols, and prepare for the interdisciplinary collaborative work ahead. According to the press release, "The six-year-long initiative, 'Towards Sustainable Futures: Transforming Chemical Risk Management with Indigenous Expertise', sets out to profoundly transform chemical risk management in Indigenous community-based practices, university labs and classes, regulatory practices, and policy development."

Nipissing First Nation (NFN) recently held a rally in front of MPP Vic Fedeli's office opposing aerial spraying. NFN Gimaa (Chief) Cathy Stevens said in a recent interview that NFN, like all other First Nations, opposes the spraying of the forests in her area. This is not the first time NFN has dealt with the issue. At an earlier time, Hydro One was using aerial spraying to clear power line pathways; however, after NFN approached them requesting a halt to this method of controlling vegetation, Hydro One put a stop to the spraying and instead used manual clearing methods by hiring local NFN citizens to do the job.

"Aerial spraying years back put a directive to the MNR to stop the aerial spraying," she explained. "Hydro One was very respectful, hiring members of our community to clear the underbrush...The concern that we have is that the community members that use the medicines."

The spraying operation on the North Shore would result in 4,500 hectares being doused with the herbicide glyphosate, negatively affecting aquatic life, killing blueberries and other plants, as well as medicines and tree species common to a natural forest, effectively changing the natural landscape from a pristine forest to a plantation of easy-to-harvest spruce and pine trees for the lumber industry.

From an economic point of view, the Ontario forestry industry generated $21.6 billion in revenue, supported 42,500 direct jobs. The industry exports $7.95 billion in forestry products in 2024. In contrast, the neighbouring province of Quebec, which had completely banned the aerial spraying of glyphosate in its forests, exported $11.3 billion in forest products, employing 61,000 workers. Quebec's forests make up 20 per cent of Canada's forested area. Canada is the third largest country with forests, second only to China and Russia.

Despite NFN and others requesting a stop to the spraying of glyphosate in their forests, the MNR has started the province-wide annual spraying; however, the North Shore forests have been spared this year, with the MNR putting a stop to the aerial spraying this year only, according to their offices in Sault Ste Marie, Ont. There has been no press release announcing the halt to spraying or an explanation as to why it was stopped.

On Monday, August 25, days after the TEK demonstration and other protests on aerial spraying, Andrew Horahan, executive vice-president of Interfor (company contracted by MNR to do aerial spraying) confirmed in a statement, that there would be no aerial spraying this year in sections of Northern Ontario.

"For 2025, Interfor has chosen not to proceed with an herbicide application in the Pineland, Spanish, and Northshore forests."

ANEDO Anishinabek Nation Economic Development Opportunities

Save the Date

October 14-17, 2025

The Anishinabek Nation Economic Development Department is proud to host its 3rd Annual Anishinabek Nation Economic Development Opportunities Forum from October 14-17, 2025.

ANEDO gathers business owners, economic development officers, and government and industry representatives to build relationships, share best practices, and learn about emerging opportunities to empower, evolve, and evoke economic development.

Casino Rama Resort, Chippewas of Rama First Nation

This forum is welcome to everyone: Anishinabek Nation member First Nations and other communities; Indigenous and non-Indigenous Business Owners; Procurement Organizations; Funders; and more.

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ETHICAL ACCOUNTABLE EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-CENTRED

Serpent River First Nation breaks ground for new housing development

By Leslie Knibbs

ELLIOT LAKE - Despite the early chill in the air, many people came out to attend the groundbreaking ceremony in Elliot Lake to begin the start of a housing project developed by Serpent River First Nation (SRFN).

The First Nation has taken steps to provide housing opportunities for citizens living in Elliot Lake. A groundbreaking ceremony took place on August 25 at the site of the new project. Working in collaboration with Elliot Lake and RSG General Contracting from Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., the plan is to build 22 townhouses with two bedrooms and two bathrooms, each with an attached garage. The development is located in a residential area at 80 Dieppe Avenue within a short distance of shops and services. With pre-established facilities and services, water and sewage are available.

The project came about following community engagement sessions at SRFN over the past year and provided Chief and Council "with the guidance and support to focus on off-reserve housing," according to a media release. The rental properties will be available to members of SRFN, as well as the public.

Chief Wilma-Lee Johnston, Councillors Steve Meawasige and Shirley McLeod, and Elliot Lake Mayor Andrew Wannan took part in the groundbreaking. Before the groundbreaking, Chief and councillors together, with Lee-Simpson Johnston, performed a ceremony near the bush at the back of the site with a prayer song and drumming, as well as the laying down of Semaa. Chief Wilma-Lee spoke before the start of the groundbreaking.

Serpent River First Nation Councillors Steve Meawasige and Shirley McLeod with Chief Wilma-Lee Johnston, and Elliot Lake Mayor Andrew Wannan at the groundbreaking for new housing development on Aug. 25.

"It is with great pride and gratitude that I welcome you all to this groundbreaking ceremony, making a bold new chapter for SRFN and the future of urban housing in our region. Today, we stand together on the threshold of progress, united in purpose and hope, as we break ground for a remarkable project: 23 new housing units that will offer comfort, dignity, and a foundation for growth to families in need."

Further to this, she added, "Across Canada, we face unprecedented challenges, rising costs, growing demand, and the urgent need for safe, quality homes. Yet today, here in the city of Elliot Lake, in the heart of Serpent River First Nation Territory, we answer that call with action, vision, and solidarity."

The development is expected to be completed by the Fall of 2026, with some of the units ready for occupancy in early 2026.

Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg passes historic trespassing law

Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg, ON, September 3, 2025 – On Tuesday, Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg (NN) Chief, Council, and Leadership passed the Trespassing and Safety Naaknigewin (law), historic legislation to ensure the safety and well-being of the community. The Naaknigewin is the first of its kind to be passed by the nation and provides new, legally enforceable measures to patrol, remove and prosecute people who enter the Territory illegally or violate community laws. The decision is a direct response to the State of Emergency declared last Fall by NN leadership over concerns for community welfare stemming from rising drug activity, violence and related crime, which threatens our youth, Elders and families. "Our first responsibility is to keep our people safe," said Chief Louis Kwissiwa of Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg. "This Naaknigewin gives police the clear authority they need to act quickly and fairly when individuals refuse to respect our community, our laws, and our right to live in safety." The community has struggled to meet the growing policing demands due to a lack of engagement by provincial and federal governments in meeting their treaty obligations. NN took extraordinary steps to preserve law and order, with support from Anishinabek Police Services (APS), including the installation of security cameras, licence plate readers, and the retention of external emergency security services. But this was a band-aid solution to a much larger issue and was financially unsustainable. "The Anishinabek Police Service supports NN's Naaknigewin to ensure the safety and security of their community. First Nation Communities have the inherent right to pass their own laws. Today is historic as NN and APS work together on protecting the people," said APS Chief Jeff Skye.

Police may request identification, assess circumstances, and issue a direction to leave. If a person refuses or returns while banned, officers may remove the person and recommend charges under the Trespassing Naaknigewin and/or applicable criminal statutes. Officers will document interactions to support transparency, accountability, and any needed court proceedings. The Naaknigewin includes appeal pathways for bans and ensures reasonable accommodations for emergency or extenuating circumstances. "This is one tool among many," said Paul Michtics, Director of Safety and Security for Pic Mobert First Nation. "We will continue investing in prevention, harm reduction, and healing—while making it clear that predatory behaviour has no place on our Territory.

Statement on the *Building Canada Act* and Government engagement: Honouring our Treaty and inherent rights and protecting our future

ANISHINABEK NATION – The Anishinabek Nation recognizes the growing global demand for critical minerals and the significant impact their extraction can have on our territories, rights, and future generations. We acknowledge the potential for economic participation that responsible development offers for all types of projects; however, we are unequivocally committed to ensuring that any and all resource extraction activities and any projects being contemplated within our traditional and treaty territories are conducted in a manner that respects our inherent and Treaty rights, and the well-being of our people.

For millennia, we have been stewards of these lands and waters, guided by the principles of Mino-Bimaadiziwin – the Good Life – which emphasizes balance, respect, and sustainability. Treaties are living agreements that guarantee our rights to hunt, fish, trap, gather, and pursue our traditional way of life on our territories. These rights, affirmed in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, are paramount and will not be compromised for short-term economic gain.

The Anishinabek Nation declares the following principles to guide our engagement with the Crown, industry, and other stakeholders regarding all resource extraction activities:

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent: We assert our right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for any activity proposed within our traditional territories. This is not merely consultation, it requires a process of meaningful engagement where our communities have the opportunity to fully understand the potential impacts of a project, provide their free and informed consent, and participate in decision-making. This consent must be obtained before any exploration, development, or resource extraction activities commence. We will establish our own processes and protocols for FPIC guided by Anishinabek laws and customs.

Inherent and Treaty Rights and Indigenous Knowledge Integration: All extraction activities must be conducted in a manner that respects and protects our inherent and Treaty Rights. The Robinson Huron and Robinson Superior Treaties, which our ancestors entered with the British Crown, are also part of that unique historical and constitutional fabric. Our Indigenous Knowledge is invaluable in understanding the interconnectedness of the environment and the potential consequences of resource extraction, which must be integrated into all stages of project planning, environmental assessments, and monitoring. We will require rigorous assessments that go beyond conventional environmental impact.

Environmental Protection and Sustainability: The health and well-being of our lands and waters are inextricably linked to our well-being. We will demand the highest environmental standards and safeguards to prevent pollution, habitat destruction, and disruption of ecosystems. Sustainable extraction practices that minimize environmental impact and prioritize reclamation are essential.

Benefit Sharing and Economic Participation: We will ensure a fair and equitable share of the economic benefits derived from all resource extraction on our territories, which includes, but is not limited to, our annuities owed to the rights holders yearly, revenue sharing, employment opportunities, skills training, and business development opportunities for our citizens. We will advocate for innovative financial models that ensure our communities benefit directly and sustainably from resource development.

Meaningful Consultation and Partnership: His Majesty said recently: "The Government will be a reliable partner to Indigenous Peoples, upholding its fundamental commitment to advancing reconciliation". We expect genuine and respectful consultation and accommodation from government and industry at all stages of project development, from initial exploration to mine closure and reclamation. Consultation must be based on mutual respect, transparency, and willingness to listen to our concerns and incorporate our perspectives. We are open to exploring partnerships provided that they are based on mutual benefit, shared values, and commitment to sustainable development.

Protecting Sacred Sites and Cultural Heritage: We will unwaveringly protect our sacred sites, burial grounds, and areas of cultural significance from any disturbance related to critical mineral extraction or any other activity. These sites are integral to our identity, history, and spiritual well-being. Prior to any development, thorough archaeological and cultural heritage assessments must be conducted in consultation with our communities to identify and protect these irreplaceable resources.

The Anishinabek Nation is committed to working collaboratively with government, industry, and other stakeholders to ensure that critical minerals extraction is conducted in a responsible and sustainable manner that respects our rights, protects our environment, and benefits our communities. We will not hesitate to use any and all available means at our disposal, including legal challenges, to protect our Treaty rights and defend our inherent rights to our lands and our resources.

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Questions:
natasha.george@anishinabek.ca

Long Lake #58 paving the way for students through education

By Rick Garrick

THUNDER BAY — Long Lake #58 Chief Judy Desmoulin and education director Claire Onabigon highlighted their community's education system during Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Education Jurisdiction Summit 2025: Best Practices for Reclaiming Jurisdiction. Held July 23-24 at Delta Hotels Thunder Bay, the Summit included a presentation by Chief Desmoulin and Onabigon on The Anishinabek Education System: The Long Lake #58 Experience - Transitioning to a New Education System, and a panel discussion on Creating a First Nation Education System by Desmoulin, Onabigon, Tracey O'Donnell, legal counsel, Anishinabek Education System, and Anishinabek Nation Commissioner on Governance Patrick Madahbee.

"There's a whole reason why schools even exist in Canada — it's to prepare the minds for the society that they are expected to live in," Chief Desmoulin says. "When this information came to me, I turned it around and I thought, 'OK, we can use this sort of system to help shape and support our minds as Indigenous people because [for] far too long, they tried to make us be somebody we weren't.' So with an opportunity like this, we have every opportunity to shape the way that we were meant to be."

Chief Desmoulin says her community now provides education for citizens from 18-months-old to the oldest adults. Long Lake #58 has an elementary school and a secondary school for students up to Grade 12.

"We have an adult ed program as well, so we accommodate the adult classroom learning in the evenings," Chief Desmoulin says.

Chief Desmoulin says Long Lake #58 got involved early with the Anishinabek Nation's Kinoomaadziwin Education Body Anishinabek Education System. The Anishinabek Education System includes 23 Anishinabek First Nations with about 25,000 citizens and about 2,000 on-reserve students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12. Information about the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body Anishinabek Education System is posted on their website.

"I was one of the key people that responded at the time," Chief Desmoulin says. "We gathered there with no resources, no money to get to meetings or anything like that, but we made it work, and to make a long story short, I am very satisfied with what we have now, we have more than enough to do what we need to do. But again, we still have our community issues to solve — we're still coming out of and dealing with all of the atrocities that have happened to our people."

Chief Desmoulin says Long Lake #58 had seven Grade 12 graduates over the 25 years before they opened up their own schools in the community.

"So the same period of time, 25 years later, we have 90 graduates, so we've done … a lot better job than anybody else when we took over and did it ourselves," Desmoulin says. "Change is scary and in this process, when we started there was lots of unknowns, but you deal with those unknowns one at a time, and it was worth it. When you're in the driver's seat going through those unknowns, you gain the confidence."

Onabigon says Long Lake #58 is the only one of the 23 Anishinabek First Nations that has both elementary and secondary schools.

Long Lake #58 Chief Judy Desmoulin speaks during the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Education Jurisdiction Summit 2025: Best Practices for Reclaiming Jurisdiction, held July 23-24 at Delta Hotels Thunder Bay.

"Our schools are student-centred and we focus on our children and youths' well-being," Onabigon says. "For our students' spiritual well-being and for spiritual programming, we now have a teaching lodge, a sweat lodge, we have Elders in the classroom, cultural teachings, we have another curriculum, History through Our Elders, and then we have our annual language and culture days."

Onabigon says they are planning to develop a language and culture education department, noting that culture and language is the basis of what they do and how they meet the needs of their children.

"We'll have a cultural coordinator and a language coordinator who will oversee the department; they will research and determine what programs and aesthetics are needed to make us unique Anishinabek schools," Onabigon says, noting that the language and culture education department will also include two language instructors, two language EAs and a land-based coordinator and teachers. "The reason I say aesthetics is because currently, you could take our school and put it in any city or town and it would fit right in because it looks like a provincial school, so we need to make it unique to us, make it unique to the Anishinabek at Long Lake #58."

Onabigon also detailed many of the advancements they have achieved in their schools through the Anishinabek Education System funding.

"Because of that funding, we are able to do so much more for our students and our community," Onabigon says.

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Negotiations in Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being

The Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Team is currently negotiating a main table tripartite self-government agreement, and supporting bilateral fiscal agreements with the Province of Ontario, and the Government of Canada in the area of child, youth, and family well-being.

Questions? Contact: Katrina Langevin, Assistant Negotiator and Implementation Manager
Email: katrina.langevin@anishinabek.ca

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER

ABINOOJIINYAN ONJI E-BIMIIKANG

Appointed at the Anishinabek Fall Assembly in 2019, Anishinabek Nation Children's Commissioner Duke Peltier is an independent voice for Anishinabek children and youth, advocating for their best interest(s), rights and well-being.

Questions? Want to learn more about the Office of the Children's Commissioner? In need of advocacy or support? **Contact: koganaawsawin@anishinabek.ca**

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WAMPUM BELT PUZZLE

504 PIECE

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Wampum belt photography by RYAN PEPLINSKIE
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Click link to register: https://11anhealthconf.sched.com

Deadline is September 15, 2025. Once filled, registration will close.

Tony H. Jocko Memorial Heroes in Health Awards

Our community champions enhance the strength of our community members by motivating our citizens to become more active, healthy, and improve the overall well-being our of First Nations. They are our team, our family, and integral to our community's overall growth.

We invite nominations for individuals who are devoted to health services and have shown exceptional commitment to maintaining the health and safety of Anishinabek Nation communities across our territory. They can be your Community Nurses, Office Assistant, Receptionist, Community Wellness Worker, Nutrionist, Building Maintenance Worker(s), Home Support, Medical Drivers and Community Care Workers.

Please submit your nomination (with photo), including an explanation of why you consider this person(s) your Hero in Health, along with a supporting letter from your community Health Director/Manager no later than September 5th to priscilla.goulais@anishinabek.ca

These individuals will be honoured at the Anishinabek Nation 11th Annual Health Conference.

For information, contact **Jess Pamejewon**

E-mail: jessica.pamejewon@anishinabek.ca | Fax 705-497-9135 | Telephone: 705-497-9127

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