

Mattagami First Nation **DRUM**



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**Volume Five
Issue Two**

WORDS FROM THE CHIEF



**Chief Chad
Boissoneau
Mattagami
First Nation**

Here we are well into 2019 and it is setting up to be a very good year for Mattagami First Nation.

So much has been happening in our community and all of it has to do with our Council, staff and our members who go to work every day to make things better for all of us.

***We have all
been pulling
together to
make
change for
the better***

We have been so successful in moving ahead and developing Mattagami First Nation to become one of the most industrious, organized, efficient and caring First Nations in the province. I look around and see our people involved in all kinds of good projects and employed in mining, forestry and other resource development and business initiatives. We have come from being a struggling community a few decades ago to a more self sustaining and prosperous First Nation.

Our success has been hard fought by previous Chiefs and Councils, our Elders, by Wabun Tribal Council and our family of Wabun Chiefs. We have all been pulling together to make change for the better and that has reaped major rewards. Recently,

we managed in a cooperative effort to obtain a history making agreement with the province of Ontario regarding Resource Revenue Sharing (RRS). That means that soon we will be receiving payments from forestry and mining operations and that provides us with one more step forward in becoming a self sufficient First Nation. Many thanks to all the other Wabun Chiefs, Councils and Jason Batise, Wabun Executive Director as well as Shawn Batise, who held that position for so many years.

It feels great to see so many of our members working in good paying positions as a result of agreements we have signed with resource developers. I know so many who are employed with companies like Tahoe Resources Inc., Goldcorp Inc. and our own Niiwin General Partnership Inc. We are involved in developing initiatives in mining, forestry and hydro and we will maintain a growth in these areas into the future. The results of our negotiating good agreements with government and resource developers means that we have more control on making our own decisions in terms of developing and financing Mattagami First Nation.

Currently we are still negotiating with Iamgold concerning the Cote Gold Project and we are hopeful that a mine will develop in the near future.

However, with all of our successes we still need to focus more efforts, energy and development for our Elders and our youth in the community. The real success story of Mattagami First Nation has to do with all of us pulling together and caring for each other. Right now I am so grateful to see so much wonderful programming in our local school and through youth initiatives that are providing our young people with skills, traditional and cultural knowledge and a new era of hope. I am also excited about efforts regarding plans for a facility and services for assisted living in Mattagami First Nation and more care and programming for our Elders. Myself and our Council are committed to making life

better for our Elders and providing care for them here in the community as they age rather than have to leave and move into a care facility out of town. That issue is very dear to my heart.

***Our real success
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We are also making a commitment to making sure that all of our people get every opportunity for training and education that allows them to reach for their dreams in terms of careers. Over the next few years I see a lot of development and progress in these areas and that provide us with a positive and productive trail to follow into the future. No matter how much money we have, our real success as a community has to do with the strength, good health and ingenuity of our people and we have to make sure to keep moving in that direction based on our traditions and culture.

So much thanks to all our volunteers who work so hard to make our community a better, safer and more prosperous place to live in. Many thanks to our Elders for helping to guide us on our path and to our young people for walking in our footsteps with a vision of hope for the future. Thanks also to our capable and progressive Band Manager, Juanita Luke and our entire staff for hanging in there and giving myself and council the time, strength, resources and encouragement to deal with government and resource development lobbying and negotiations. We are on the right track.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

There are so many projects happening in Mattagami First Nation. We are off to a great start for 2019 and through the hard work of our Chief and Council and staff, life is better than it has ever been for us. The wonderful thing about how things work in Mattagami First Nation has to do with input from our community members as we do a lot of consulting with all kinds of sessions to involve people. Funding opportunities are available for many projects that improve the lives of our Elders, youth and community members in general. It is up to us to identify these opportunities through the efforts of our staff and the direction of our Chief and Council as well as our Elders.

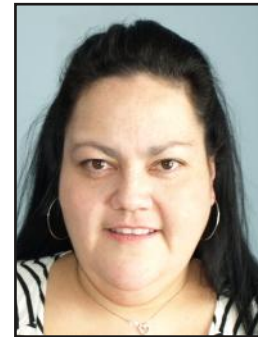
*I want to know
that our
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healthy
community*

To make sure that we are identifying the community needs, we have a continuing process of involving everyone in creative and efficient ways. The Harmony Project has helped us in many ways to connect with each other and keep the lines of communication open and

we are continuing with this process. Through community meetings, surveys and events we are always looking for ways to bring our members into the process of governance by engaging our members with our administration and leadership to make sure we are planning for the future in a meaningful, transparent and responsible manner.

Our community is very much like a huge family. We don't always get along for all kinds of reasons but when we strive to keep the lines of communication open and we make efforts to engage with everyone and hear their voices, we work things out and make good decisions for our future. We have to be forgiving with each other while balancing that with the expectations of respect for one another, tolerance of our differences and an openness to work together to make things happen. The Harmony Project has helped us in this endeavour and continues to do so.

I really enjoyed the community input session based on the World Cafe method which drew many of our members of all ages to provide their input into what they want to see developed. It was amazing to see young children providing their input along with Elders and the complete spectrum of ages. We appealed for input from everyone and I am pleased with the input we received. The process involved seating people in groups of four in a comfortable cafe style conversation environment. One person remained at each table while the others rotated and at the end of this process the result was that we had a lot of good input that we could draw from and



**Juanita
Luke**
Executive
Director

use for planning.

I am so proud of everyone in Mattagami First Nation for being open and for participating in our continued efforts to make sure we are moving ahead with development in our community with grass roots input. Our leadership in Chief and Council supports these initiatives and participates in them and at the end of the day it makes for a very positive and transparent line of development into the future. It is one thing to sit back and complain and criticize but much more healthy for people to join together and contribute to our development.

In many Native and Non Native communities, decisions are made by the very few in leadership roles while community members do not have much access to how things develop. Thankfully, here in Mattagami FN we are on the cutting edge of governance and strategic planning through good communications and a process that give all of us a voice. Of course this is also very satisfying for many of our Elders to see as it hearkens back to the way things were done long ago by our ancestors based on our traditions and culture.

I want to know that our grandchildren and future generations are inheriting a healthy community with all kinds of modern services, in a safe environment, with the ability to access a great education and work at satisfying and rewarding careers. That gives us all a good reason to get up and go to work every day and to contribute to our community when we are asked for our input.

Future generations are depending on it.

Front Cover Photo

photo by Dorothy Naveau

The Mattagami FN Winter Pow Wow was held at the Community Complex on December 28, 2018. Pictured are dancers during a fun competition. They are from L-R (in back): Beesym with his aunt Dayna Cosgrove, Supervisor of Prevention Services, Kunuwanimano Child & Family Services and Winter / Summer Pow Wow Organizer. In front are: Mattagami Youth Dancers Ava Naveau and Kailyn Naveau.

School Renovations Planned

The Mattagami First Nation Public Works and Housing Department is looking to secure funding for general repairs and upgrades for the Mary Jane Memorial Elementary School. Tracy Harnack, Public Works and Housing Director explained that they are working towards gathering information and estimates from contractors in preparation for funding submission.

The planned repairs include re-shingling of the school building's roof, general repairs of all exterior siding, trims, soffits and fascia; repainting of the interior rooms, retiling of bathroom facilities and replacing flooring. Upgrades include the installation of a security system for the entire school, a sprinkler system for fire suppression and a new system for locking doors to match other town buildings. An upgraded locking system would make it easier to facilitate lock down events during emergencies.



Tracy Harnack,
Public Works
and Housing
Director

“These upgrades and repairs are for the health and safety of our students as well as our teaching staff. It is also a way for us to fix and maintain our public education building to create a healthy, clean and inviting environment for our children at school. It gives them a sense of pride in their school and shows them they are important to our community,” said Harnack.

She is responsible for overseeing the maintenance and operations of all the infrastructure of the community including roads, waste management, cemetery, administration buildings, water plant, school and all rental units operated by the First Nation.

She is assisted in her work by Maggie Gignac, Housing Assistant. Gignac had originally worked with Dayna Cosgrove in collaboration with Kunuwanimano Child & Family Services to seek out this funding until the project was moved to the First Nation Public Works and Housing Department. Cosgrove has since moved onto a full time position

with Kunuwanimano but continues to provide her assistance.

In addition to seeking assistance for the school, Harnack and Gignac are also hoping to secure additional funding for housing repairs in the community for a criteria that fits families with children under the age of 18.

“We are looking for this funding because we want to help our families create healthy and safe environments for our youth at home. We want to ensure their health and well being in all environments and give them an opportunity to excel in school and at home,” said Harnack.

The funding is being sought through collaborations with Kunuwanimano un-



Maggie Gignac,
Housing
Assistant

der human rights federal funding associated with Jordan's Principle, a program meant to ensure that First Nations children would get the products, services and supports they need, when they need them.

Development For Youth

Dayna Cosgrove, Supervisor of Prevention Services, Kunuwanimano Child & Family Services is heading a project to establish a new youth centre for Mattagami First Nation. Construction is underway to renovate the existing community rink shed and replace it with an expanded building that will include more facilities and space for youth programming.

“Our goal is to have a consistent flow of programs available to the youth and give them a safe and fun place in the community to simply hang out. This is important for our youth as it allows us to have a dedicated space for them and to ensure that we are taking care of our young people,” explained Cosgrove.

The new building will include a panoramic view of the rink area, two locker rooms, a canteen, a lobby area that can display various youth memorabilia and a play room for youth activities and events. Cosgrove added that the building would also include an office space for Kunuwanimano Child & Family Services.

Building work has started with Second Construction and it is estimated that the project will be completed by September 2019.

Funding is being provided through a Human Rights Federal Funding Request in collaboration between Mattagami FN and Kunuwanimano. This request is a result of the case made by Cindy Blackstock and the As-

sembly of First Nations for the government of Canada to implement Jordan's Principle which provides equal and accessible funding for Aboriginal youth on reserves. Jordan's Principle originated from the memory of Jordan River Anderson, young boy from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba. Jordan was born with multiple disabilities and lived in hospitals while the provincial and federal governments could not decide on who should provide special home care for him. Before any help could be agreed upon or provided, Jordan passed away at the age of five in hospital care. In 2007, the federal government passed Jordan's Principle in memory of Jordan. It is meant to ensure that First Nations children would get the products, services and supports they need, when they need them.

Cosgrove, who has been with Kunuwanimano for the past year, manages services for youth programming and prevention services for Wahgoshig FN, Mattagami FN and First Nations in the Chapeau area. She travels regularly to these communities and her office is based in Mattagami FN.

“I feel very good about my work. I am amazed and grateful that we were able to develop this building project for Mattagami youth. We need to provide them with services and programs like this to keep them occupied and to let them know that we want the very best for them,” commented Cosgrove.

Traditional Teachings For Youth

On January 17, 2019, Grade Five and Six students from the Mary Jane Memorial Elementary School participated in traditional harvesting teachings on the land. Mattagami First Nation has been creating programs such as this to bring back the traditions and culture of its ancestors. The First Nation Health Department has helped to create these programs for young people that is providing them with traditional skills and a grounding that they need to survive in this world.

The day long event featured two groups that were facilitated by Choose Life Program workers Dawn McKenzie, Brent Boissoneau, Betty Naveau and Sydney Constant. The group took part in an adventure that featured traveling in the winter landscape and wilderness to learn teachings about snaring and harvesting rabbits.

"We are so fortunate to have our school located right here in Mattagami First Nation so that our students can benefit from growing up in a supportive atmosphere surrounded by Elders and family members. Thanks so much to the health department and the Choose Life Workers for providing our students with this land based traditional and cultural day of teachings," commented Tracey Harvey, Principal of the Mary Jane Naveau Memorial Elementary School.

The Choose Life programming which is administered by Eileen Boissoneau, Health Director for Mattagami FN has been instrumental in providing young people in the community with traditional and cultural teachings.

"I am very proud of our Choose Life staff for coming up with such great program ideas that provide skills

through traditional and cultural initiatives that really helps to connect our young people to their ancestors. The skills that are taught such as teaching respect for wildlife and the land and showing them how to take only what is needed provides them with a healthy view on life," explained Eileen Boissoneau.

The group learned how to move on the land in the extreme winter weather, how to prepare for and set up a snare and how to follow up in skinning and

preparing a rabbit for use as food and clothing.

"Thankfully I grew up with a lot of teachings from my parents and Elders. This type of traditional and cultural programming by our Choose Life staff and our Health Department makes me very proud of the trail we are on. We are making sure our younger generation receives the skills and knowledge which has been handed down by our ancestors," commented Chief Chad Boissoneau.



photo provided by Mattagami Health

GRADE 5/6 STUDENTS FROM THE MARY JANE NAVEAU MEMORIAL SCHOOL FROM BACK ROW L-R: KATIE HOOYSMA, MASON MCKAY, DESMOND MCKAY AND GABRIEL NAVEAU. FRONT ROW L-R: WYATT MCKAY, AVA NAVEAU, TATUM NAVEAU AND BLAINE POLSON. IN FRONT IS NOAH NAVEAU.

Assisted Living Project Proposed

Mattagami First Nation Chief Chad Boissoneau and Council have been lobbying for and supporting development of Assisted Home Living for some time and through the efforts of the Administration and specifically the Health Department, plans are developing to meet these needs.

Currently Health Director Eileen Boissoneau is working with her staff to develop plans for Assisted Home Living for those who require constant care and have difficulty living on their own in the community.

The idea is to develop a start up initiative that would keep those who need care and local Elders in the community rather than being faced with having to

leave to move away for care.

"We are planning on a basic level to start with and hoping to have a six to eight room facility right here in the community so that our people who need full time care can remain with their family and friends and familiar surroundings. This solution would include providing care, meals, medication disbursement, arranging medical appointments as needed and maintaining a safe, secure and comfortable environment," explained Health Director Boissoneau.

Currently the Health Department is doing what it can to keep people needing a high level of care in the community and with family.

Hopefully, the plans for moving ahead with an actual facility and devoted services and some staff will ensure that Elders and others needing care can remain a vital part of Mattagami FN.

"Our priorities at this point in the development of our community has much to do with making life better for our Elders and our youth. Our Elders have provided all of the work and efforts to give us what we have today in Mattagami First Nation and we want to make sure that they remain part of our community and to be with their family and friends as they age and require more care," explained Chief Chad Boissoneau.

8th Annual Summer Pow Wow



THE EIGHTH ANNUAL MATTAGAMI FN POW WOW PARTICIPANTS FROM L-R ARE: DANA COSGROVE, POW WOW COORDINATOR; MC GREG 'MISTA WASIS' DREAYER, DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF WALTER NAVEAU, NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION (NAN); MATTAGAMI FN CHIEF CHAD BOISSONEAU, DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF JASON SMALLBOY, NAN; ARENA DIRECTOR GERALD CHUM, MOOSE CREE FN AND RON SHISHEESH, DRUMMER AND SINGER. IN FRONT ARE COMMUNITY YOUTH DANCERS TATUM NAVEAU AND TESSA THOMAS.

The Eagles were back overhead for the Eighth Annual Mattagami First Nation Summer Pow Wow, which took place on August 18 and 19, 2018 in the community. This tradition of the eagles visiting seemed more important than ever as the Pow Wow was titled 'Celebrating Our Land And Water' and it was led by host drum High Ridge Singers, Moose Cree First Nation (FN) co-host drum Young Eagle Singers, North Bay and invited drum Northern Spirit Singers, Brunswick House FN.

"This is our day. The Pow Wow was the traditional way our people gathered in the past and we are happy to be presenting it now for the eighth year. I welcome all those who came to share this weekend with us and I give thanks to all those who worked so hard to make it happen," explained Chief Chad Boissoneau.

There was an air of excitement and pride as the newly elected Nishnawbe-

Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Walter Naveau returned home from his recent election success. Deputy Grand Chief Naveau is also a past Chief of Mattagami FN. There was an honour song dedicated to Deputy Grand Chief Naveau and also for reelected NAN Deputy Grand Chief Jason Smallboy, Moose Cree FN, who was also at the Pow Wow. Pow Wow Elders were Alex Jacobs and Clara Prince of Nipissing FN.

"It makes my heart feel good to be here today as your Deputy Grand Chief for NAN and I am happy to be seeing so many family and friends here this weekend. This Pow Wow is dedicated to the land and water and I have worked over the years and will continue to strive to keep our traditional values at the forefront as we move forward," commented Deputy Grand Chief Naveau.

The two day event was guided by

MC Greg 'Mista Wasis' Dreaver, Treaty 6 Territory, Saskatchewan and Arena Director Gerald Chum, Moose Cree FN.

The Pow Wow fire was watched over by Pow Wow Fire Keeper Morrison Solomon, of Neyaashiinigiimi (Chippewas of Nawash) FN. Many local youth assisted with the event.

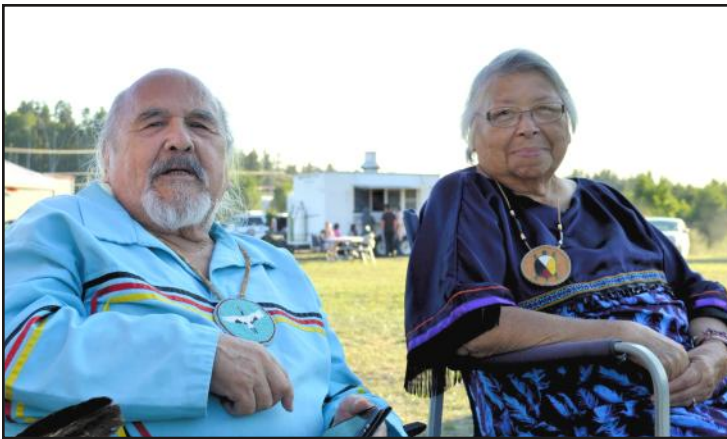
"I am finding it exciting to be at the Pow Wow and helping out. There are so many people here and a lot of good things happening this weekend," said 14 year old Kaleb Naveau.



NATHAN NAVEAU, MATTAGAMI FN

Mattagami FN Pow Wow 2019 September 14 & 15, 2019

for more information
see our Facebook page at
"Mattagami First Nation Annual
Traditional Pow wow - Public Page"



POW WOW ELDERS WERE GRANDFATHER ALEX JACOBS, NIPISSING FN AND GRANDMOTHER CLARA PRINCE, NIPISSING FN.



LOCAL DANCERS, SINGERS AND DRUMMERS FROM L-R: SHAWN JAMES BEAUVAIS, MARK CARPENTER AND NATHAN NAVEAU.



JINGLE DRESS DANCERS TAKING PART IN A POW WOW CONTEST AT THE EIGHTH ANNUAL MATTAGAMI FN POW WOW ARE L-R: CALEE BOISSONEAU HUNTER AND TESSA THOMAS.



NORTHERN SPIRIT SINGERS OF BRUNSWICK HOUSE FN. FROM L-R ARE: (IN FRONT) ETHANIAL WESLEY, BRENNAN BRISCOE, JASON SAUNDERS, JACY JOLIVET, AMADEUS NESHAWABIN, WILFRED TANGIE-REDBREAST AND DREYDEN AGAWA (IN FRONT).

Dayna Cosgrove, a Mattagami FN member and traditional dancer was the lead organizer of the event.

“I am so grateful for all the support and the assistance we get from our Chief and Council and the community. It feels great to see everyone viewing and participating in our traditional ways. I am also very proud of our young people who are beginning to dance,” said Cosgrove.

Theland Kicknosway, a hoop dancer

thrilled everyone in an evening performance that featured glowing hoops.

Community members spent the day’s events visiting old and new friends while snacking from local vendors that sold traditional foods including moose and fish and modern treats such as funnel cake and ice cream. Vendors also included local artists and artisans who sold artwork and traditional crafts.

The first day of events also featured

a morning breakfast and an afternoon feast which was organized by Tracy Harnack with volunteer family members and friends. For information on the upcoming 9th Annual Mattagami FN Pow Wow please go to their Facebook page at Mattagami First Nation Annual Traditional Pow Wow - Public Page or call the FN office at 705-894-2072.

The 2019 Pow Wow is set for September 14 and 15, 2019.

Mattagami FN Election

Elections for Chief and Council
for Mattagami First Nation
on April 6, 2019

Candidates For Chief

Chad Boissoneau

Joyce Constant

Lawrence Naveau

Candidates For Councillor

Daisy Naveau

Devin Naveau

Gary Naveau

Larry Naveau

Leonard Sr. Naveau

Morris Naveau

Kevin Perreault

Jennifer Constant

Wendy Debastos

Lucas Harnack

Samuel Kloetstra

Gerald Luke

Brenda McKay

Ivan McKay



SERVICEMASTER RESTORE OF TIMMINS PROVIDED THE USE OF ONE OF THEIR PONTOON BOATS AT THE MFN TOURNAMENT IN JUNE 2018.



TOURNAMENT PARTICIPANTS PREPARING FOR THE 2018 MFN WALLEYE TOURNAMENT IN JUNE 2018.

MFN Fishing Bigger And Better

The Mattagami First Nation (MFN) Annual Pike Fishing Derby drew 253 registrations on March 9, 2019. The derby which is organized and staged by MFN Fishing and community volunteers serves as a fundraiser for programming in the First Nation and also as a means to promote tourism. MFN Fishing is an organizing body consisting of long time organizers Jessica Naveau, of Mattagami FN and Crystel Vallee.

“We utilize these fishing derbies as a means to raise funds for our First Nation and our events have supported Elder and youth programming in the community. We also see this as a way to promote our community through tourism. Our fishing events also provide us with the opportunity to bring together people in a healthy sporting activity that gets us all out into nature and on the lake,” explained Naveau, lead organizer for the

fishing events.

Naveau and Vallee have been working together with many other volunteers over the years to produce the popular fishing derbies. There are three annual tournaments including the Pike Ice Fishing Derby in the winter, the Walleye Tournament in summer and the Fall Classic Walleye derby.

“These derbies are all happening due to the efforts of my co-organizer Crystel Vallee and all the amazing volunteers that step forward to help out. We are also so thankful to Chief and Council and all our members who participate and allow us to all enjoy these gatherings. A big thanks also to the Timmins Porcupine Search and Rescue organization for their commitment to assisting us with the events,” commented Naveau.

Her father Larry Naveau and her grandfather Elder Leonard Naveau have

been instrumental in getting these events off the ground and continuing for the community.

The MFN Walleye Tournament held in summer and the MFN Fall Classic Walleye Tournament are part of the Northern Ontario Walleye Trail Circuit (NOWT). The Mattagami FN tournaments are included in the circuit which tallies winners who take part in all their events and allows them the opportunity to become Angler of The Year.

For more information on winners, sponsors and upcoming events go to:

www.mfnfishing.com

or see their facebook page at: MFN Fishing

all photos provided by MFN Fishing

**Mattagami Lake FN
Walleye Tournament
June 2019**

**will be held on
June 1 and 2, 2019 in
Mattagami First Nation.**

**For more information contact
the organizers directly:
Jessica Naveau 705-221-4248**



**2018 MFN FALL CLASSIC TOURNAMENT WINNERS
JODY VILLENEUVE & CHAD VIS**



**2018 MFN WALLEYE TOURNAMENT WINNERS
GREG GEOFFREY AND CHAD DALRYMPLE**

Winter Teachings On The Land

Mattagami First Nation Health organized a Traditional Winter Trip on the land for community youth. The event was organized by Brent Boissoneau, a Choose Life Project Worker for Mattagami FN Health. The winter trip took place between March 4 and 7 at the Naveau family trapping grounds and cabin on the Grassy River. Landon McKay, Desmond McKay and Noah Naveau, who are students from the Mary Jane Naveau Memorial Elementary School took part in the three day trip.

“Our youth did a lot and I had a chance to learn along with them about life on the land. The lessons were not just about how to set traps or gather animals. The time we spent on the land allowed our youth to hear about our history, our legends and the stories about their ancestors and those who came before us,” said Boissoneau.

The trip was led by Larry Naveau, a traditional hunter, trapper and teacher. Naveau regularly visits his family’s traditional trapping area and maintains a comfortable hunt camp on the Grassy River. The seven bed camp is well built, insulated and heated with a wood stove.

Larry Naveau was assisted by Blake Baulne, who is also a traditional hunter and trapper from the community. Wilbert Wesley, Mattagami FN Fire Chief, also provided teaching on survival training and use of survival kits in the wilderness.

Youth were shown how to set traps for beaver, marten and how to snare for rabbits. They also learned how to ice fish. They caught one marten during the trip and Larry demonstrated to youth how the animal was collected, skinned for fur and used for food. Their lessons also included how to live on the land in the winter time, how to make temporary shelters, how to start camp fires and how to stay warm in cold weather.

“I don’t think we were quite prepared for how hard it can be to live on the land in the winter time. On one afternoon, Larry led us out on a big snowshoe adventure and we all walked into the forest to try to track and locate a moose. It is a lot of work to wander into deep snow and after some time, we were all exhausted and headed back. It was a good lesson



photo provided by Brent Boissoneau

MATTAGAMI FN STUDENTS FROM THE MARY JANE NAVEAU MEMORIAL SCHOOL TOOK PART IN A WINTER TRIP TO LEARN TRADITIONAL HUNTING AND TRAPPING SKILLS. THEY ARE PICTURED HERE WITH THEIR TRIP LEADERS.



photo provided by Brent Boissoneau

LOCAL TRADITIONAL TRAPPER LARRY NAVEAU DEMONSTRATES FOR MATTAGAMI YOUTH HOW TO SET A BEAVER TRAP

in understanding what it takes to go hunting and trapping on the land. This is how our Elders and ancestors lived all the time a long ago and it was good for our youth to understand that,” said Boissoneau.

He added that at the end of every day, everyone was comfortable, warm and safe at the Naveau camp. Every morning and evening, they had hot meals and great views of the lake before heading out on snow machines and at times snowshoes.

“The Naveau camp at Grassy Lake is special to many people in our community. Lots of people have been up there and Larry keeps a small journal of everyone that has stayed, what they did and how their hunt or fishing went. They even made notes for us and Larry and Wilbert asked the youth what they did that day and noted it in the journal. It was special for us to see notes our relatives and Elders have made over the years and exciting for us to add our story,” said Boissoneau.

A similar program was held for the girls in March and it will be reported on in the next issue of the Mattagami Drum.

The Choose Life Program provides programming, education and support for local youth. Boissoneau started his position as a Choose Life Project Worker for Mattagami FN Health in August 2017. He is one of several Choose Life Project Workers including: Betty Naveau, Sydney Naveau and Dawn McKenzie.

Over the past winter, their group has hosted craft making workshops that have introduced participants to animal hide crafts such as making moccasins, gloves and mitts. They have even introduced bead making on hide and bead work art. These programs and events are mainly for youth but also include adults and community members so that everyone can connect to their Aboriginal culture, heritage and language.

Land Code Process Developing



Amanda Pontorno
Land Code Coordinator

The Land Code Advisory Committee (LCAC) is actively seeking the input and feedback of the community in preparation for an upcoming community vote to accept or oppose a new Land Code for Mattagami FN. The vote will be held on August 21, 2019 in the community.

Amanda Pontorno, Land Code Coordinator who works under the direction of the LCAC, has been working to inform, include and communicate to community members on what the new Land Code will mean for Mattagami FN.

“As it stands right now, our First Nation lands are held under the control of the government through provisions created by the Indian Act. Whenever our leadership or our community members want to move forward on any project or issue that involves our land, we have to

work with the government and have their approval to move ahead. Adopting a Land Code for ourselves will mean that our people, our community will gain control over our own lands,” said Pontorno.

The goal of the whole Land Code process is to allow Mattagami First Nation to step away from government control and develop its own laws about land use, the environment and natural resources, as well as to take advantage of economic development opportunities through new land management powers.

The Land Code process is led by the LCAC which includes members: Dorothy Naveau, Eileen Boissoneau, Tina Minarik, Chelsea Debastos, Laurie Miller, Samuel Kloetstra and former Mattagami FN Chief and current Deputy Grand Chief Walter Naveau, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN).

Currently, the next phase of the process includes an environmental assessment which will be conducted by Neegan Burnside, a majority Aboriginal-owned engineering and environmental services firm based in Orangeville, Ontario. The environment assessment will be carried out in the community and on the original reserve lands on Lake Mattagami.

Pontorno encourages community members to contact her and her com-

mittee to learn as much as they can about this process. She wants community members to understand the full meaning of this process as well as to know that existing First Nation rights will be protected.

In preparation for the upcoming vote, she encourages all community members and those living off reserve to contact herself or the Mattagami FN office to update contact information and mailing addresses to allow their administration office to keep in touch with every First Nation member.

All registered adult members of Mattagami FN who live on or off reserve can cast their vote in August. They will receive a voting package leading up to the event which is why it is critical for members to update their contact information.

A short informative video has also been created by the Land Code Committee and can be viewed on the Land Code website.

For more information

Amanda Pontorno

705-894-2072 ext 240

amanda.pontorno@mattagami.com

Land Code website:

www.mattagamilandcode.com

Backup Power Systems For Families

Thanks to the efforts of Eileen Boissoneau, Health Director and Emergency Management Coordinator, 32 new total home generators will be installed in Mattagami First Nation this spring.

The generators will solve an on going problem with power outages which occur on a regular basis and creates emergency situations for families living in the community. Due to the semi remote location of Mattagami FN, power outages occur often in local homes due to severe weather during the winter and summer months. This results in total loss of power for heat, lighting, refrigeration and cooking facilities.

“I am very thankful to the funders associated with the Jordan’s Principle for making this investment in our community in terms of solving a long standing problem dealing with so many power outages we have over the year. The funding has allowed us to provide homes with children under 18 in them to qualify for state of the art total home generators that will serve to keep our children safe and comfortable even during a power out-

age,” explained Boissoneau.

The funding for the units was provided through Jordan’s Principle, a federal program that ensures Aboriginal youth are provided for services and programs when they need them.

She had to conduct research in the community to identify what families who would meet the criteria for the generator program. Then she had to provide quotes for the generators, arrange for an electrician to consult on what was required and organize for delivery and installation of the units. She also had to ensure that propane units would be installed to power the generators. The highly automated generators are capable of powering an entire household and when a power outage occurs the propane powered units start up automatically.

“I was very happy to learn we were approved for the generators back in January. Everything is ready for the installation but we are just waiting now for the snow to go so that can be done. I have seen over the years the hardships that power outages cause our families. Chil-

dren are traumatized by not having any light, families can’t prepare hot meals, food spoils in fridges and freezers. In the extreme cold of winter, furnaces and heaters can’t function and that becomes dangerous,” explained Boissoneau.

The generators should be in place at some point this spring and the homeowners will be supplied with the first fill up of propane but it will be up to them to maintain the unit and to refill the propane tank as needed.

Chief and Council have been working hard to lobby for funding and programming that improves life for community members.

“Life at times is more difficult when you live in a semi remote community but we are making inroads all the time to have the services, safety and comfort that people enjoy who live in populated towns and cities. We want to make sure our members and in particular our children and Elders are cared for and that none of us are lacking because we live in a First Nation,” commented Chief Chad Boissoneau.

Lands & Economic Futures Path

Jennifer Constant, First Nation Councillor and Lands and Economic Development Coordinator, is working with First Nation administration staff to plan for the future growth of the community through the Lands & Economic Futures Path (LEFP) Project. This is the first time that this type of large scale planning has taken place in Mattagami FN. Funding has been secured by the First Nation to conduct four planning projects and studies including a Land Use Plan, a Waste Management Plan, updating the First Nation Capital Plan and an Economic Feasibility Study. This new planning project is being coordinated by Jessica Vaillancourt, LEFP Coordinator.

***“This is an exciting time for our community”
- Jennifer Constant***

“We are expecting a lot of growth for our community in the next few years. There will be economic growth as our members find more work and as our community becomes more in-

involved in partnerships and agreements with resource developers. We need to start planning ahead for this growth so that we are not always reacting to new problems as they arise in the future. This planning is designed to include the input of the community through consultations and to listen to their feedback about the short term and long term effects of this growth and how we will deal with everything,” said Constant.

The LEFP is funded through the Community Opportunity Readiness Program (CORP) through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). This project is needed for the community as the previous capital plan for the First Nation was conducted over 20 years ago. Constant explained that the previous plan is no longer up to date and does not capture the current and future needs and opportunities of the community.

She added that this is the first time this type of planning has taken place with the goal of gathering as much community input as possible. The planning group is taking extra efforts to meet with Elders at open house events, meeting with community members, speaking with youth and even visiting children at the local school to hear what is important to them.

“This is an exciting time for our community and we want to make sure that as we move forward, that our members and our families have an active part in how Mattagami First Nation



Jennifer Constant
Lands and Economic Development Coordinator

will grow. This is another part of our overall development process along the lines of the Harmony movement which follows a more traditional and cultural way of doing things and drawing from a grass roots perspective,” explained Constant.

The LEFP is currently being conducted by Ken Peterson of Peterson Consulting for the Economic Feasibility Study; First Nation Engineering Services for the Waste Management Planning and Caroline Burgess of Odonaterra Consulting for Land Use Planning.

“We need to plan for our future so that we can deal with any major issues that may arise with the building and development we may want to do in our community. I am grateful for the work that Jennifer and her team have done to prepare for the future using the input and guidance of our membership,” said Chief Chad Boissoneau.

Safer Roads With New Plow Truck



photo by Jennifer Constant

THE MATTAGAMI FN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT RECEIVED A NEW SNOW PLOW TRUCK TO SERVICE THE COMMUNITY. PICTURED ARE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT STAFF FROM L-R : STEVEN WILKINSON, MAINTENANCE; GERALD LUKE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR & MAINTENANCE; CURTIS FOWLER, HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR & MAINTENANCE AND KEVIN PERREAULT, HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR & MAINTENANCE

WINTER POW WOW

all photos provided by Dorothy Naveau



TATUM NAVEAU,
MATTAGAMI FN YOUTH DANCER



THELAND KICKNOSWAY
WALPOLE ISLAND BKEJWANONG



KAILYN MCKAY,
MATTAGAMI FN YOUTH DANCER



SEVERAL DRUM GROUPS TOOK PART IN THE WINTER POW WOW HELD AT THE MATTAGAMI FN COMMUNITY COMPLEX.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS, YOUTH, VISITORS AND GUESTS ALL TOOK PART IN THE MATTAGAMI FN WINTER POW WOW HELD ON DECEMBER 28, 2018.



Mattagami FN Drum

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