

Mattagami First Nation **DRUM**



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- **New Housing Construction**
- **Community Comprehensive Plan Developing**
- **Cathy Naveau & Robert Hooysma Remembered**

**Volume Seven
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WORDS FROM THE CHIEF



**Chief Chad
Boissoneau**
Mattagami
First Nation

I am so proud of council, our staff, Elders and our youth and community members for connecting and supporting all of us in meeting the challenges of the past few years. Who would have ever known that we would be hit by a world wide pandemic, a recession and so many challenges. However, thanks to everyone and also in remembering the past Chiefs and councils and our ancestors for all the work they did in making sure we survived and thrived to get through the tough times. I call on everyone to continue working together and supporting each other as we know very well that globally today with conflict in war, economic uncertainty, pandemic and epidemic threats and the devastation of climate change all will provide more challenges in the years to come.

In positions of leadership we always have to deal with challenges that involve the impact of resource development on our lands while at the same time working to make sure any development creates opportunity for Mattagami First Nation members. My priority is always to be committed to making life better for our people and leaving a legacy that provides great opportunities and quality of life for our future generations. Our grandchildren and great grandchildren will reap the benefits of the decisions we make now. It is never easy striving for that balance between what is good in terms of resource development and protecting our ancestral lands. It certainly is a challenge to have to sit at the table with government pushing for development and resource developers that represent huge corporate interests. The one thing I can tell you for sure

is that every time Chief and council attend meetings with these stakeholders I am happy for the fact that these days we are actually at the table and included in making decisions that impact our lands. Not too long ago this was not possible and many of us remember a time where life was very difficult for our parents and grandparents and we had to deal with all of the harsh realities of colonialism including racism and residential schools.

*We have
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So, no matter what, I see it as progress that we are at the table and being consulted and included in any development that affects our lands. That has led to the fact that our community is now thriving, we have new housing starts, infrastructure, great services and many of our people are employed in good paying jobs with resource developers. Yes there have been some negative impacts on our lands and this affects the creatures also of our area but we have to strive to work towards a balance that does as little damage as possible while benefiting our people.

One of the most recent challenges we as leaders in Chief and Council have had to face has to do with Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act, which proposes a series of amendments to make it easier and faster to approve and build new mines, as well as to recover minerals from mine tailings and waste. The fact is that no Indigenous leadership is

really against mining or other resource development initiatives that affect our lands however what the Ontario government has done in this case is to legislate changes without free and informed prior consent and a framework for consultation in the proposed amendments to the Mining Act in Bill 71. I think at this point we are all interested in working with governments and resource developers but changes can't be decided on without consulting with Indigenous leadership when it comes to these important types of legislation that affect our people and our lands. All this does is get everyone in conflict and that is not a meaningful way to move forward. I have a lot of respect for everyone involved in this issue and I regret that we have been put in a position where there is a fight rather than intelligent and meaningful negotiations and consultation.

We have struggled through the ages and we have survived and now we have a voice. It is important that governments recognize that we need free and informed prior consent when it comes to making laws that affect our people and lands. We don't want to see governments back peddle on this issue but rather to recognize that it is better for everyone involved to really make sure Indigenous voices continue to be heard and consulted with before legislation happens that impacts our people and lands. The reality is that Mattagami First Nation Chief and Council has a great working relationship with resource developers and government. We have seen a lot of progress in our community with our members as a result of positive relations with developers while doing our best for our members and the environment. There is no need to stir the pot and create negative conflict and division. We can all figure out a way to move forward in a fair and just way. Hopefully there will be some kind of positive resolution in dealing with Bill 71 so that we can continue on the way to meaningful, responsible and profitable development for us all.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

We have so much to be thankful for and proud of in Mattagami First Nation. Just think about all of the challenges we have had to face over the past few years with the Covid 19 Pandemic and all of the disruption, chaos, hurt, pain, sickness and death it has caused but we handled these various crisis points very well. We managed to stay positive and working together to keep our community functioning with so many of us rising to the challenges presented.

Many wonderful people passed away and we had to deal as a community in grieving as a large family and then doing as much as we could help people heal and move forward. As difficult as challenges might be it is up to us to get through the hard times as a community that works together and we have to stay grounded and discover ways to improve ourselves as our youth, our children, grandchildren and future generations are depending on us.

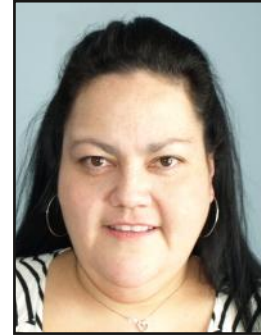
Every time I connect with our members whether it is at events like our wonderful pow wow, working with staff and Chief and Council and figuring how best to move forward with good initiatives I am always so happy to see us treating each other with respect and for the most part being kind and open. Conflict has no place in our meetings of the minds to make things better for Mattagami First Nation. When we are all sitting around a table trying to make things work it always encourages myself and others to see smiles and kindness. We care about each other.

One of the ways we are currently improving things for our community is through the Community Comprehensive plan. This is planning for the long term development of Mattagami First Nation. It will provide a way to plan and to ensure we are meeting our goals with annual reviews. As part of this planning we have been providing community engagement to make sure we are getting input from our members. I am so happy with the openness and willingness Chief and Council, staff and our membership have provided us in participating in all this planning dedicated to making things better for all of us moving forward.

*So much is
happening in
our First
Nation as we
move ahead*

We have so many great people in leadership and on staff with all of our departments and it is good to see that all of our skills and hard work will become part of a planning process that keeps us in communication and sharing information so that improved and more efficient decisions can be made in terms of prioritizing projects and allocating or directing funding. With reporting from all departments every quarter we will have a much better operation in terms of making things happen for Mattagami First Nation. All of this planning will expand on the Harmony Project process we have been going through in drawing from more traditional and cultural ways of planning and communicating through engagement and input from our members. It is all about community.

So much is happening in our First Nation as we move ahead with our Community Comprehensive Plan. We are working towards a Financial Policy and Financial Law that will guide our



**Juanita
Luke**
Executive
Director

financial future as well as make us more accountable and transparent to our membership. Our leaders in Council are being trained and learning valuable skills through the Certified Indigenous Leadership program and our senior staff including myself are enrolled in the Certified Aboriginal Professional Administrator program. This all adds to our capacity to do more great things as of course knowledge is power.

Our First Nation has also opted into the First Nation Elections Act which means we can have more control over how our local government is run. We are happy to have Nicole Richmond, an Indigenous lawyer assisting us in terms of governance and guiding us. In the long term this change will give us more control over how we elect our Chief and Council and give us more stability for the future.

There is a lot in terms of organizational development going on and this is helping us develop more skills, providing better transparency and check points while also improving communication between all of us and all that leads to more trust all the way around. We have also embarked on improving our process in how we handle funds and good investment strategies so that we maintain a good financial condition and provide stability for future generations. With all the success we have achieved in resource development agreements and participation we need to make sure we are handling funding and moneys achieved in the most efficient, helpful and transparent ways. We all need to give ourselves a pat on the back for moving Mattagami First Nation into a profitable more transparent and healthy community on a good pathway to the future.

Front Cover

*photo submitted by
Kourtney Baulne*

*The 'Awakening Our Spirit'
Pow Wow was held at the
Community Complex in
Mattagami on January 28, 2023.*

*Pictured L-R are Kourtney
Baulne and Sue Harnack Prince
who took part in a special coming
out ceremony at the gathering.*

Mattagami FN Plans For Future

Mattagami First Nation is in the process of implementing a Community Comprehensive Plan (CCP) to create a system to organize the administration's policies and procedures, create more accountability, keep the community informed and to have members contribute to the growth of the First Nation administration office.

"The most important aspect of this new planning is that we want input from the community and we want to take that guidance to better serve our First Nation. We have taken many opportunities to hear what our members have to say," explained Juanita Luke, Executive Director of Mattagami FN.

The First Nation administration started development of this project in November 2021 and they are currently in the process of completing the planning stages. A final draft report was completed in March and final community engagement to discuss the project took place in April. First Nation administration is hoping to start implementing the completed plan in May.

The CCP is also being developed in tandem with several other projects to ensure its success including: a Capacity Building project to train leadership and senior staff members to provide added training, development of a new Financial Policy that will provide more guidance to financial matters and the First Nation opting into the new First Nation Elections Act that will give leadership more stability to implement and manage these changes.

"Chief and Council is happy with the great job our Executive Director and staff are doing in developing systems that contribute to transparency and efficiency here in Mattagami First Nation," commented Chief Chad Boissoneau.

The CCP project was made possible through funding support by the First Nation Market Housing Fund. This long-term project planning is being designed to organize the work and responsibilities of the administration office and its departments over the long-term future.

"This has been a plan that we have been designing for a long time. We hope that once it is completed, we will have a system in place that will allow all our departments and all our staff to follow planning based on an annual basis. That annual planning will in turn go towards overall multi year planning for the long term," said Luke.

She added that this project is a pro-

gression of all the work that has been developing in their administration over the past few years.

"We have a lot of great people working for our First Nation and this planning is going to help all of us work together in a more coordinated way to better serve our community. We all know what we have to do and we all have busy schedules and deadlines to follow to complete our duties but we seldom have to time to know what all the other departments are doing. By working together under one planning system everyone will benefit in Mattagami First Nation," commented Luke.

The CCP is also being designed to create more accountability to the community by implementing a regular reporting schedule to the membership. Reporting will be conducted on a quarterly basis every year through open houses to keep the community informed on what is taking place with the administration. Each department at the First Nation administration will develop their own planning goals during the year and it will be mandatory for them to provide regular reporting on their progress.

"We need to provide this regular reporting to let our membership know that we have taken their guidance, implemented that input and reported back to them on a regular basis as to how we are moving towards those goals," said Luke.

Urban Systems was hired in order to help lead the project over the past year. Urban Systems is represented through the work of Dan Penner, Community Planner, who is working directly with Mattagami FN Administration. Urban Systems is a professional services firm based in western Canada that provides consultation services to clients in the public and private sectors. The company uses an interdisciplinary approach to help build communities for clients including First Nations, school boards, large and small municipalities, provincial governments and land developers.

Nicole Richmond, an Indigenous lawyer that has represented Mattagami FN on other projects, is working with Chief and Council to support this development and to determine how it will operate within local First Nation leadership.

Capacity Building

Mattagami First Nation Administration is providing Capacity Building through ongoing skills, training and education of its staff and leadership. This Capacity Building was made possible through funding provided by First Nation Housing Market Fund. This training and education is also part of the First Nation administration's ongoing plans for a Community Comprehensive Plan (CCP).

"The Community Comprehensive Plan and Capacity Building is meant to ensure a more stable future for our community. If we put in place long term planning goals, then we will be better organized and capable to fulfill the current needs of our membership. All of this work also means that it will build a sense of trust between the community, the administrative staff and the First Nation leadership. It makes us all accountable to one another," explained Juanita Luke, Executive Director, Mattagami FN.

Five members of current and past Council took part in a Certified Indi-

genous Leadership (CIL) Program with the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association (AFOA). From the previous term of leadership, Councillors Wendy Debastos, Devin Naveau and Jennifer Constant recently graduated from the program this past February. In current leadership, Councillors Betty Naveau and Joyce Luke are enrolled in the program and they will graduate from this program in February 2024. The CIL program provides training on several topics including First Nation governance, effective leadership, community and external relations, nation building, community economic development and financial oversight.

Staff members from First Nation administration are also involved in this capacity building project. Eight Mattagami FN Managers are currently enrolled in a Certified Aboriginal Professional Administrator (CAPA) program with AFOA. This more intensive program provides training and education to participants in eight modules through an online education

Elections Act Development

Mattagami First Nation has opted into the First Nations Election Act (FNEA). The First Nation is hoping that by starting work on this process the community will eventually develop a custom election code.

“We have officially opted into the act now and it means that we are on the path towards changing how we conduct our elections. This is the first step our community wants to take to work towards a custom election system for Mattagami First Nation. We want to get out of the antiquated section 74 of the Indian act,” explained Juanita Luke, Executive Director of Mattagami FN.

The administration is hoping to implement these new changes before the upcoming local Chief and Council election later this fall 2023. The greatest change that would occur would be the length of time for terms of office. Currently under the Indian Act election code, Chief and Councillors are elected every two years. Under the new change with the FNEA, leadership would hold a four year term of office.

“It is good to see so much improvement as it relates to changes in governance and Chief and Council appreciate all of the knowledge, energy

and dedication that our administration is providing to ensure Mattagami First Nation is progressive and responsible in moving ahead based on our desire for self-governance and self-sufficiency,” commented Chief Chad Boissoneau.

A Band Council resolution was passed to begin the process of the First Nation opting into the FNEA. First Nation membership were kept informed of the proposed changes through community engagement meetings and information sessions.

Mattagami FN is the first in the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) territory in northern Ontario to opt into the First Nation Election Act (FNEA). The FNEA came into force in 2015 as an alternative to the current Indian Act election system. The FNEA was developed through the recommendations of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs (APC). One of the key components of the FNEA is to provide a framework under which a First Nation can opt-out of the legislation by developing its own community election code and submitting it to a community vote.

“This is a really exciting change for the membership. The longer goal is to

work towards control over the election process and generally move towards self determination and nation building. This is really just a good first step and it will give leadership time to work towards achieving those goals,” explained Nicole Richmond, Mattagami FN Lawyer and Governance Consultant.

She is working with the First Nation in making this transition to the FNEA. She is an Anishinaabe lawyer from Biigtigong Nishnaabeg (Pic River) First Nation and a recognized academic in Indigenous governance training and education. Richmond has been involved in several projects with Mattagami FN including a governance training program for Chief and Council in November 2021. Over the past year, she has also been working with the membership through consultation meetings and gatherings to inform the community on the new FNEA and the changes that it will involve.

“Our leadership has really appreciated the work that Nicole has done for our community on this project and in other work over the years. Our leadership trusts her as she brings in a wealth of education, knowledge and experience from an Indigenous and traditional perspective,” commented Luke.

Currently, Mattagami FN is awaiting confirmation from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) that the community has been placed on the schedule of First Nations under the new FNEA.

“We are anticipating that by the fall election of this year that the community will be under the new FNEA. There will be new procedures including the nomination of candidates and selection of candidates. Most of the changes that will take place are small but the biggest change will be the term lengths of elected council from two years to four years,” said Richmond.

The transition into the new FNEA will also include informing and educating the membership on the roles and responsibilities of Chief and Council.

Leading up to the fall election, in August or September, the administration is hoping to make available training for individuals who want to run for leadership positions including Chief or Council member.

The administration is also working with community members to keep everyone informed on the progress of these changes. A website has been created with background information and details.

For more information community members can visit:

www.mattagamifnea.com

Community members are encouraged to make contact with any questions or concerns they may have.

Provides Training

format. The CAPA program is a highly recognized training program for First Nation administrative managers. It is specifically designed to set high competency standards and enhance the knowledge and professional development of administrators in on-reserve, off-reserve and in remote, rural and urban settings. In 2013, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) passed a resolution to support CAPA as a credential when hiring personnel in their administration and management positions.

“When we took on the challenge of making this training available to our managers, we had to do so in addition to all our other work we have to do on a regular basis. I also took part in this initiative and it has been a lot of meaningful training to get through this program with our staff. It’s always good to provide access and encouragement to added training and education as it is a way of empowering everyone in their respective roles,” commented Juanita Luke, Executive Director.

In addition to Luke taking part in the

training, other program managers involved included Eileen Boissoneau, Health Director; Julie McKay, Lands And Resources Director; Dorothy Naveau, Housing Director; Tim Harvey, CEO Mattagami Aki LP; Tracy Harvey, Principal of Mary Jane Naveau Memorial Elementary School; Cindy McKay, Education Director and Derek McKay, Post Secondary Education Director.

The Aboriginal Financial Officers Association is a non-profit association founded in 1999 that helps Indigenous people better manage and govern their communities and organizations. It is the only organization in Canada that focuses on capacity development for Indigenous professionals who are working in all areas of management, finance, band administration, leadership and program management. The association provides training, education and certification in Indigenous Financial Management, Indigenous Professional Administrators and Indigenous Leadership.

Awakening Our Spirit Pow Wow



Mattagami First Nation hosted the 'Awakening Our Spirit' Pow Wow on January 28, 2023. The event was the first major community Pow Wow since the start of the pandemic and it was a cause for celebration for the First Nation as it was the first time many participants could join in a less restrictive gathering.

"Everyone was so happy to see this event come together. After so many restrictions due to the pandemic, we were thrilled to see everyone gather again. This was the first time we could start to feel more normal again and it was a form of healing for everyone as we had all felt isolated and disconnected from one another," explained Betty Naveau, Choose Life Project Worker.

She was one of the organizers of this community gathering. As a Choose Life Project Worker, her duties include working with other Choose Life Project workers to create, develop and promote cultural and traditional programs, services and events to help foster and encourage healthier life styles and provide social supports for local youth. She started her current position in August 2017 but for many years, she has been involved in encouraging cultural knowledge and traditions in her community. Naveau is dedicated to serving her community as she is also a current Council member with First Nation leadership

and a volunteer firefighter.

"We want to bring back as much of our cultural identity and traditions as possible. We could not have been able to put on this Pow Wow event without the work and support of so many people. The theme of this year's event was 'Awakening Our Spirit' because we want to encourage the process of revitalizing our culture and traditions and bringing back those old ways so that our children can know their heritage. These connections brings a sense of pride in our youth in knowing who they are and where they come from," said Naveau.

A special part of the Pow Wow event included a Coming Out ceremony for two local members. A Coming Out ceremony is a significant event as it introduces individuals to the community as dedicated dancers or performers for the first time in their full regalia. It is an important event as it celebrates an individual's dedication to their performance, the craft making of their regalia and a recognition of the ceremonies and teachings they have learned so far.

The Pow Wow included the Coming Out ceremonies of Kourtney Baulne and Sue Harnack Prince. Baulne is a staff member of the First Nation Administration and she is also a First Nation Council member.

"The Coming Out ceremony is a happy event for everyone as it intro-

duces these community members in their regalia and in their dance. It is an emotional event that can only be experienced by just being there and seeing them perform and in seeing the reaction of everyone at the Pow Wow," said Naveau.

The Pow Wow coordination and development was led by a Pow Wow committee which included members from the Mattagami FN Health Department and community members including Eileen Boissoneau, Andrea Naveau, Ashley Gignac, Brent Boissoneau, Kory Wheesk, Scott Luke, Myra McKay, Dawn Corston, Gillian Prince, Neebin Prince, Sue Harnack Prince and Tracy Harnack.

"We have such a great community spirit here in Mattagami First Nation and so many people who volunteer their time to provide meaningful, educational and spiritual events for our members. The Pow Wow is a great example of the good work our councillors, staff and members do to make sure our traditions and culture is celebrated," explained Chief Chad Boissoneau.

The Pow Wow was sponsored by Mattagami First Nation Health. Head Elders were Mattagami FN Elders Leonard Naveau Sr and Clara Prince. Youth Dancers were Beesym Couchie and Tatum Naveau. Head Adult Male Dancer was Donny Sutherland and Head



Adult Female Dancer was Dawn McKenzie. The Host Drum was Thunder Creek and Co-Host Drum was Home Fire. The performance event was managed by Emcee Kirby Mianskum and Arena Director Gerald Chum.

Food preparation and cooking was led by Darlene and Gary Naveau, Sherrie Clement and April Naveau.

“We are very thankful to our First Nation Chief and Council for the support and providing the space at our community centre to host this Pow Wow. This was a very fun event for everyone. It makes my heart happy to see everyone together and to know that our young people are learning so much and celebrating their culture. They learn so much and that is what makes Pow Wows like this so special,” said Naveau.

ALL PHOTOS FROM MATTAGAMI POW WOW PAGE



Robert Hooysma Memorial

Mattagami First Nation and the Hooysma family mourned the passing of 46 year old Robert ‘Bob’ Hooysma on November 30, 2022 at Health Sciences North in Sudbury. A service was held in his home community of Mattagami First Nation on December 7, 2022. He was interred at the Mattagami First Nation cemetery.

Robert was the son of the late Marlene (Naveau) Couliner, of Mattagami FN and Bob Hooijsma of Matheson, Ontario. Marlene’s parents were Mary Jane and Walter Naveau. Robert’s siblings are Jason Hooysma, Amanda Thompson and Anthony Regimbald.

Robert was born in Timmins and was raised by his family in Mattagami FN as a child. In 1982 he was removed from his family by children’s services in what has been identified as part of the Sixties Scoop, a system of mass removal of Indigenous children from their communities into the child welfare system to be placed in non-Indigenous homes. According to legal events that dealt with this issue, although it is called the Sixties Scoop, Indigenous children and families originally represented children from the 1960s but later developed to include individuals from the 1950s and on until the 1990s.

“When we were kidnapped by Children’s Aide Society in 1982, our family was broken apart. My brother Bob and I stayed together and we grew up in Sudbury. None of us knew that our other siblings were living and grew up in the outskirts of the city of Sudbury until we were adults. We grew up within miles of one another and no one ever bothered to tell us or

connect any of us in any way,” explained Jason Hooysma.

Their sister Amanda Thompson first met her brothers in 2005.

“Bob was such a good uncle to our family. He would appear without warning to stay with us. He was a smart, fun and kind person who was always good to our family. He had a lot of difficulties in his life but even through everything, he was still a happy guy who enjoyed making others laugh,” said Thompson.

Amanda and Jason moved back to their home community of Mattagami First Nation where they now live and they hope that soon their brother Anthony will join them as well.

Robert grew up in Sudbury where he attended primary and secondary school. In the foster care system, he was paired together with his brother Jason Hooysma and they both were raised together from the time they were children.

“I have lots of good memories of my brother. He was always there to stick up for me and act like that father figure in my life. He was a very outgoing, outspoken and vibrant human being who loved his family and he was there to help us when he could,” said Jason Hooysma.

As a young man Robert worked for a time as forest fire fighter. He reconnected to his home community in later years and spent time living with his uncle Elder Morris Naveau where he learned about his heritage and his family. As an adult, he fell into a difficult lifestyle due to mental health challenges and spent many years wandering in a nomadic lifestyle to

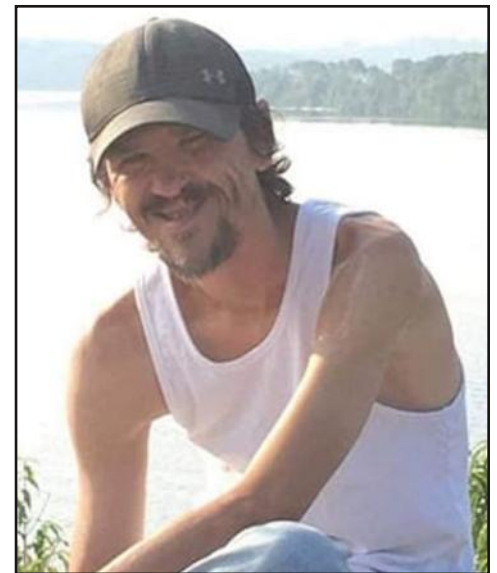


PHOTO FROM HOOYSMA FAMILY

various cities and towns including Sudbury, Toronto, Ottawa, London and Thunder Bay.

Robert is survived by his siblings Jason Hooysma, Amanda Thompson and Anthony Regimbald. He is also the uncle of Brady (deceased), Kolton, Gavin (deceased), Kage, Lara, Karess, Danica, Kendra and Jaline.

The history of colonization and all of the destructive initiatives rising out of it have had a huge negative affect on many Indigenous children across the country and in honour of Robert we all must commit to healing those damaged by the actions of governments of the past. We must remember Robert in his passing with our commitment to fight for justice and compensation with changes in place that protect our future generations and provide for a healing.

Lands And Resources - Julie McKay



**Julie
McKay**
Lands And
Resources
Director

Julie McKay is the Lands and Resources Director for Mattagami First Nation. She also holds responsibilities as an Impact Assessment Coordinator (IAC), representing the First Nation in regard to a mining development with the Canada Nickel Company.

As Lands and Resources Director, her main role is to keep the community informed and engaged in any natural resource development taking place on their traditional territory.

Her work involves communicating with the community, First Nation administration and various resource development companies. She sits on committees related to natural resource development to represent Mattagami FN.

"This is an exciting time for our community as we are involved in many different resource development projects," said McKay.

Her work is mainly involved in mining developments but her efforts also involves hydroelectric and solar energy projects.

As the Mattagami FN IAC with the Canada Nickel Project, she communicates with the mining company to keep the community informed on the project. She also sits on various boards and committees associated to the development of the mining project.

Over the past several years, the Lands and Resources department of the First Nation has grown to take on many roles and responsibilities as the community has participated in more resource development projects, especially in mining. The Lands and Resources Director now mainly deals with mining related projects and developments.

McKay, who was born and raised in the community, took on her current work in March 2022. Before her current position, she had been with Wabun Tribal Council in Timmins where she worked in various positions over 18

years with the organization. She was employed in positions with the tribal council's health department and she also gained a wealth of experience in the council's employment and training department where she was able to gain an understanding and insight into the mining industry.

"I'm really happy to be back in my home community and to be working for our First Nation. I like being able to help and represent our membership. I want to assist our community to develop but to also make our work and efforts transparent and open by involving the membership, letting them know what is happening and keeping everyone informed," said McKay.

She recently took part in the Producers & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) Convention in March 2023. This major annual international event held by the PDAC brings together mining and resource development representatives from all over the world. McKay was invited to participate in a 'Negotiating agreements in early exploration: Best practices MOU's and EA's' presentation session as a panelist to represent her First Nation's perspectives on mining development to an audience of industry representatives and participants.

"This was my first time speaking as a panelist at a major event in front of so many people involved in this industry. As challenging as it was for me, it felt good to represent our people in this way and it was also an important learning experience for me as well. I was very honoured to be asked to participate and it was also indication of how far our community has come nationally and even internationally in participating in the mining industry and in representing ourselves in these developments," said McKay.

She was proud to represent her community as she wore a custom handcrafted traditional ribbon skirt and she made sure to provide proper land acknowledgements for her community and the wider territory of the people of Wabun Tribal Council.

McKay is a dedicated individual who is passionate about helping her First Nation.

"I would like to see our community continue to grow and prosper. We have to participate in the resource development industry but with the knowledge of protecting the land, our environment

and our people from pollution and any harmful effects. We need to be mindful of all cumulative effects on our lands as this can impede our ability to practice our traditional ways and maintain our treaty rights," said McKay.

She and her spouse Gordon Henderson have a 13 year old daughter Audrey.

'Couleurs du Nord' TFO Children's Television Program

In August 2022, Julie McKay assisted local Mattagami First Nation youth in taking part in a production of 'Couleurs du Nord', a children's television program featured on Télévision française de l'Ontario (TFO), a public broadcaster that provides French language television programming in Ontario.

"This was an exciting event for our local youth as we have several young people who are bilingual in French and English. It is special because in addition to speaking the two languages, these youth are also learning their Ojibway language as well," said McKay.

Her daughter Audrey Henderson was featured in the video along with local youth Mahdabiin McKay, Nakia McKay and Owen Goudreau. Elders Leonard Naveau and Clara Prince were also featured in the program as they provided some teachings and words of wisdom.

The production crew featured film locations at the community's beach front, a tour of the First Nation, the Pow Wow grounds and the water front. They also spent time working with the show host to create a mural on one of the community's public buildings.

"We are eagerly awaiting when the show will appear and we plan on hosting a watch party when it is announced later this year," said McKay.

Couleurs du Nord is a short form feature French language program for young audiences that highlights northern Indigenous communities. The program is hosted by Mique Michelle, mural artist and show host. The show format features interactions with local youth and in having them participate in producing prominent public murals in the community where each episode takes place. The show aired its first season in 2022 and a second upcoming season which includes the episode set in Mattagami FN, is set to appear later this fall.

New Housing Construction

The Mattagami Housing Department will start construction this spring of five new housing units for Mattagami First Nation. The housing construction projects will include two new duplexes and one single unit home. The project was funded through Indigenous Services Canada.

“There has been a good pace of development over the past several years. Last year we built two units and the year before that we built four. These five new units will help our community to grow by providing some new homes for our members,” explained Dorothy Naveau, Housing Director.

Construction is set to start during the spring. The building lots are fully serviceable as they were previously allocated for development and are ready to receive water and waste utilities as well as access to electrical utilities.

“It really is great to see all of our work in Mattagami First Nation providing a positive environment in terms of opportunities for our members. Congratulations to our Housing Director and staff for their efforts in developing much needed housing for our community,” commented Chief Chad Boissoneau.

The First Nation has contracted WQ Carpentry to build the three new housing units. WQ Carpentry is a local building contracting company owned by William Quachegan, a local First Nation resident who has been involved in the construction and building of several homes in the community.

“The leadership wanted to support a local business and it is also easier to have our builder nearby in case we need additional help with any issues

that may arise in the future concerning these new housing units. William is also familiar with our community as he has worked in construction in our community over many years,” commented Naveau.

She pointed out that there are more lots of land ready for development in the near future but they will need additional work in order to supply them with water, waste water and electrical utilities.

“We have a long waiting list of applicants wanting homes in the community and although there are ready spaces for building homes, it will take time, effort and finances in order for any new construction to be constructed. There are many members that want to move back to their home community here in Mattagami FN due to the mining jobs that have been made available over recent years,” said Naveau.

She added that many families were severely affected by the Covid19 pandemic as they struggled to access services and community support outside the First Nation in city and town centres in northern Ontario. The effects of the pandemic have resulted in many families living outside the community wanting to move back to their home First Nation.

Naveau is responsible for the management of the First Nation Housing Department which includes applying for and managing funding opportunities, completing organization reports, developing work plans for her department and in dealing with and addressing housing related policies and issues in the community.



Dorothy Naveau
Housing Director

She works closely with several organizations that deal with Indigenous housing policies, funding and support including Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), First Nation Market Housing Fund, Indigenous Services Canada, banking institutions for mortgage financing and other partner organizations that deal with Indigenous housing services, supports or financing. She also works closely with the other departments in Mattagami First Nation administration to coordinate activities and ensure good communication in moving efforts ahead. The FN Housing Department is the lead organization in the building, construction and then the maintenance and management of housing developments in the community.

Naveau is supported in her work by Madison Nicolas, Administrative Assistant.

The Housing Department also works closely with the Public Works Department in managing and maintaining the community's many First Nation infrastructure properties including the administrative office and public buildings.



PHOTOS FROM MATTAGAMI FN HOUSING

MATTAGAMI FN HOUSING DEPARTMENT IS MOVING AHEAD WITH NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT. HOUSING DIRECTOR DOROTHY NAVEAU AND HER STAFF ARE EXCITED ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW HOMES FOR THE COMMUNITY.

Cathy Naveau Remembered



Mattagami First Nation lost one of its pillars of traditional, cultural and educational influencers with the passing of Cathy Lynn Naveau (Worme), on January 8, 2023 at the age of 59. She was the beloved wife of Elder and past Chief Walter Naveau of Mattagami First Nation.

Cathy's story with Mattagami FN started when she first met Walter Naveau in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Walter recalled the story by describing how he was at a low point in his life at the age of 32 in the late 1980s. After struggling with addictions and an unhealthy lifestyle in Mattagami FN he moved to Saskatchewan.

"My intent at the time was to run away with what I had. I was addicted, I was struggling and I felt hopeless, lonely, broken and I had nowhere to turn," said Walter Naveau.

Cathy at the time was studying law and justice in an effort to become a lawyer as several people in her family had done the same. Walter's sister introduced him to Cathy and it sparked a lifelong relationship between the two.

"Cath told me that we met each other because the Creator had caused our paths to cross one another. I know that to be true because if I had not met the love of my life, I would not have experienced all the beautiful positive changes I felt, the sobriety I started and the path I regained back to my traditions and culture. Everything good in my life happened after I met Cath," said Walter Naveau.

They married on September 4, 1992 and they lived in Mattagami FN while also maintaining a strong connection to Cathy's family in Saskatchewan.

Walter also got to meet and know Cathy's father Elder Vincent Amiskusees, a traditional leader who was also a Second World War veteran. He also became acquainted with her uncle Glen Worme who was a traditional teacher from Kawacatoose First Nation.

"I had no idea of traditional culture or ways until I met Cath. She introduced me to all these people and through her help and the guidance of her Elders they led me back to the teachings of the drum, the sweat lodge and so much more. This was a medicine that I needed to give me strength and direction," explained Walter Naveau.

Cathy applied her education and training through her work as Education Director for Mattagami FN. In this position, she helped to bring in the Keewaytinook Internet High School (KIHS) into the community. The program has allowed secondary school students to stay close to home without having to attend their studies hours away or move out of the community.

"Cath's father Vincent was a great man who had achieved a lot of education during his lifetime. He taught us that education was the key to help ourselves and he encouraged Cath to use that knowledge to get as much as she could to help her people. He encouraged both of us to work towards an education for ourselves and for our young people because it could help all our communities,"

said Walter Naveau.

Over their lives together, both Cathy and Walter continued sharing their traditional knowledge by helping family, friends and acquaintances to reconnect back to their cultural heritage. They both also worked tirelessly to help many people to break free from addictions and negative lifestyles. As Walter Naveau built up his education, he completed training to become a National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (NNADAP) Worker for Mattagami FN.

The couple raised their own children but also adopted children into their family and they did their best to help youth who were struggling or needed a helping hand.

As a traditional knowledge keeper, Cathy was instrumental in sharing her experience in Pow Wow gatherings and in making connections to singers, dancers, teachers and traditional people to help in starting up Mattagami FN's first Pow Wow in 2011. The annual event has promoted pride and awareness of the community's traditional past and it has become a major gathering on the Pow Wow trail every summer in northern Ontario.

Walter admitted that Cathy always had great faith in his ability to lead his people on many fronts. Through her support and encouragement, he first became a Councillor and eventually became Chief for five terms in Mattagami FN. In



PHOTOS FROM NAVEAU FAMILY

CATHY NAVEAU AND HER HUSBAND WALTER NAVEAU PICTURED HERE IN 2019.

2018, he was elected by the Chiefs of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) to become one of three Deputy Grand Chiefs to lead the organization which represents 49 First Nations in Treaty 9 in northern Ontario.

“Cath made me believe that I could lead my community and even become Chief. I didn’t have as much faith in myself but through her encouragement, I was able to achieve a lot and work with so many people,” explained Walter Naveau.

Over the past few years, life was made difficult with the loss of family. During the Covid19 pandemic, Cathy lost two sisters to the sickness. At the same time, her mother needed more care as she suffered with Alzheimer’s disease. Cathy and Walter took her mother Jeanette into their home to care for her.

A month after Cathy’s passing, the family was further saddened by the loss of her mother Jeanette Ruth Machinine in Timmins on February 14, 2023.

Cathy is the loving mother of Sarah Woolf (Metin), Jonn Naveau (Niibin Kwe), Fallon Worme (Dylan Boissoneau), Noconi Naveau, Tyler Justin Naveau, Max Naveau and Ethan Naveau. Cherished grandmother of Sadic, Jackson, Mason, Vincent and Dion. She will be greatly missed by her siblings Jennifer Worme, Cory Amiskusees (Tzena) and Allison George (Charles) and by many nieces and nephews.

“Cath loved her family very much and she was proud of all the things that her children and grandchildren were accomplishing,” said Walter Naveau.

Cathy is predeceased by her father Vincent Amiskusees and by her two sisters Carol Isbister (Donald) and Lydia Worme (Glen).

“I said to her a long time ago that she had given me everything that I have. She gave me love, our children, our family, she taught me to love her, love myself and love others. What more could a man ask for? The simplest things in life may come for free but we have to earn them and with Cath .. I did,” said Walter Naveau.

The Naveau family were honoured at the community service for Cathy Naveau with the participation of several past and current Chiefs and leaders of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN), Wabun Tribal Council, Mushkegowuk Council and Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council.

A community gathering was held at the Mattagami FN Community Complex on January 14 which was organized and operated through the volunteerism of many community members who served a feast for everyone who attended.

Mia Van Alphen Featured

Mia Van Alphen is the Executive Assistant (EA) for Mattagami Aki LP. She is also the Impact Benefits Agreement (IBA) Coordinator for Mattagami FN concerning the development of the Cote Gold Mine Project by IAMGOLD.

She started her initial position as EA for Mattagami Aki in September 2022. As the EA, she is responsible for providing direct administration and office management to the Aki Development Corporation and support the growth of the organization and its relationship to the community.

In January 2023, she took on the additional role of IBA Coordinator. As IBA Coordinator, she provides liaison duties between the community and the company concerning the Cote Gold Mining Project. As IBA Coordinator she sits on several committees to represent the community. She is part of an IBA Committee that includes representatives from Mattagami FN, Flying Post FN and IAMGOLD with the committee’s stated purpose of - ‘facilitating a forum for effective and cooperative communication and to determine measures to implement the IBA as well as build upon and strengthen relationships’.

She is also part of an Environmental Committee which is involved in addressing environmental issues and in working together to plan for solutions to mitigate any concerns. She is also involved with the Socio-Economic Management and Monitoring Plan (SEMMP) Committee, which provides a process to monitor any questions or concerns about how this new mining project is impacting the community from a social, economic and cultural perspective with the influx of new activity and employment. In these committee groups, she sits with industry and First Nation representatives involved with the Cote Gold Project including members of the company, Mattagami FN and Flying Post FN.

“I play the part of being a mediator or middle person between the community and the company. I keep the community informed on what is happening at the mine and I do my best to communicate any new developments that are taking place,” said Van Alphen.

She works with the community by hosting open houses and events where she can directly communicate in person. The Mattagami Aki organization is also working with the rest of the administration in developing and implementing a Community Comprehensive Plan, which will provide a system of transparency and communication. This new system will give the Mattagami FN administration and Mattagami Aki organizations a guide as to what the community needs and what benefits they would like to see for their membership.

Van Alphen has a diverse employment background that has allowed her to gain much workplace experience for her current roles. She worked in Alberta for six years at one of the provinces oil sands mining projects for G4S in Investigative Support, where she led guards in conducting contraband inspections and project site security duties. After this work, she worked for a short period as a Peace Officer in Calgary, Alberta.

In 2017, she returned to Ontario where she



Mia Van Alphen
Executive Assistant
Mattagami Aki LP

received support from Wabun Tribal Council to complete a Hard Rock Underground Common Core program at Kidd Creek in Timmins. Although this was valuable training, she explained that it was difficult to find work so she again had to change her career path. In 2019 she went to Georgian College in Barrie where she attended a three year Business Administrative Human Resources program.

“This was a difficult period for myself and my family. The Covid19 Pandemic occurred while I started my new college program so it disrupted all our courses and classroom time. At this same time, my family also dealt with the passing of our father. It was definitely a challenging period in my life,” explained Van Alphen.

Her father Tony Van Alphen passed away at the age of 68 on August 7, 2022 in Ottawa from cancer.

She added that part of the reason for returning to Ontario was to be closer to father and to be with her family as she had also dealt with the loss of a close friend in 2017. She returned to her home First Nation in the fall of 2022 and moved in with her aunt Juanita Luke, who she has a close bond to. As a child, she grew up in the city but spent many summers living with her extended family in Mattagami FN.

“It feels so good to be back in Mattagami and to be with my family and to be close to the wilderness and natural landscape. This feels like a homecoming for me because Juanita’s home is the place where I came back to every summer. Life in the city was very restrictive and oppressive and to have the good fortune to have my family here for me has always helped me. My aunt Juanita is more like an elder sister and she has always allowed me to be more whole and to be my true authentic self,” commented Van Alphen.

At 37 years of age, she was born on Vancouver Island in British Columbia but she mainly grew up in Oakville, Ontario. She enjoys travelling and exploring, especially in spending time in the wilderness to camp, go hiking or to just be on the land. At one point she spent half a year nomadically travelling and exploring Vancouver Island in her half ton truck.

Her mother is Elaine Gagnon, who works as an Integrated Case Worker for Halton Region in southern Ontario. She also has a brother Zachary Van Alphen.

Elaine Gagnon’s mother was Betsy (Naveau) Gagnon and her mother was known as Elizabeth ‘Lizzie’ Naveau.

Financial Policy Developed

Mattagami First Nation administration is continuing its organization development and planning with the creation of a Financial Policy.

"A Financial Policy for our administration ensures that we can protect our financial resources, provide better budget management and manage our investments for years to come. It ties into our people's philosophy of doing things now to ensure the safety, well being and protection of the next seven generations," explained Juanita Luke, Executive Director of Mattagami FN.

The process of developing a Financial Policy would lead to the Financial Administration Law which would then be accredited through the First Nations Financial Management Board (FNFMB). Accreditation means that any new policies that are created can first be evaluated by a trusted independent third party organization to ensure that proper standards are followed and implemented. The steps to accreditation would include creating the financial law, an assessment conducted by the FNFMB and then finally implementing and applying these new laws to the First Nation administration. The FNFMB is a non-profit First Nation organization that helps First Nations put in place good governance and finance practises.

"We have a very bright administration team here in Mattagami First Nation that is assisting us in providing better systems that lead to more transparency and accountability. I am very proud of all of our staff and their efforts and happy to see many of our young people stepping into administrative roles here in the community," explained Chief Chad Boissoneau.

Mattagami FN has been involved in several beneficial projects, partnerships and agreements over the past few years that is providing much needed revenue resources for the community. The administration wants to ensure that these new financial resources are well managed, protected and will ensure benefits to the community now and far into the future. The new Financial Policy is being developed in conjunction with a Community Comprehensive Plan (CCP) in an effort to help leadership plan for community development for the long term.

"We are doing reasonably well now but we need to plan for the future to ensure that we can maintain what we have and continue this success in the years to come. We are developing the Community Comprehensive Plan and a new Financial Policy to ensure our current and future leadership as well as administration benefit through this long-term planning. It is necessary to make sure all the projects and developments we are working on are connected in a way to properly track and control our financial resources and make sure that everything is used as efficiently as possible," said Luke.

*"It ensures
that our
financial
resources
are
protected"*

She added that the new Financial Policy will address risk management, roles and responsibilities and procurement approval levels. Over the past couple of decades, Mattagami FN has grown to develop many different agreements and partnerships in resource development which has given the community a source of revenue to benefit the community.

"A Financial Policy allows our administrative staff a more clear means to work together for the benefit of the community through all the projects and programs we are involved in. It ensures that our financial resources are protected and it is also another development for our administration to provide accountability to build trust with our membership," explained Luke.

The First Nation has also developed an investment portfolio to manage their financial resources. Luke explained that

eventually the First Nation would also like to create a Financial Trust to manage these financial resources. The creation of a new trust fund would be separate from the existing Mattagami FN Community Development Trust which was established in 2004.

The First Nation is working with MNP LLP Financial Services based in Alberta to develop the new Financial Policy for the First Nation.

A separate financial policy is also being developed for Mattagami Aki LP. The Mattagami Aki LP was created out of the Impacts and Benefits Agreement (IBA) established with IAMGOLD concerning their Cote Gold mining project. As part of the IBA, the company agreed to create business partnerships with Mattagami FN. In turn, Mattagami FN created Mattagami Aki LP to manage these partnerships as an independent organization that is still owned by the First Nation. It is a business arrangement that allows Mattagami Aki LP to act as an independent management firm while also being owned by the First Nation and flowing all benefits to the community.



Mattagami FN Drum

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