

# WASOQOPA'Q FIRST NATION **AGM REPORT**

2024-2025



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# CHIEF DEBORAH ROBINSON

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Kwe'!

Since our last Wasoqopa'q A.G.M. we have held Band Elections 2025! Congratulations to all Band Councillors as we continue to work together to represent you the band members with a new 5-year mandate. Thank you, the people for your support, trust and confidence in leadership.

The band populations continues to grow with a total of 2024 as of September 15th 2025.



Our staff currently consist of 245-250 people (approximately), in over 20 departments with supports and programs to help our people. Please note that all Councillor/staff reports are attached with detailed information and updates.

Thank you to all those who work so hard (both paid and volunteer), staff and community members, who contribute in so many ways to serve this band and give your all...you are truly appreciated! Welaioq. I think of the many people who work behind the scenes to host community events such as Mawiomis, Powwows, cultural gatherings, youth, family and elder events, workshops, community meetings, etc. while promoting our culture and educating those outside of our communities. When we do well our whole nation will heal and become stronger and more vibrant for our future generations to come.

This is who we are as Mi'kmaq people...we must never forget who we are and especially all those who have passed on to the spirit world this past year and throughout the years never to be forgotten...our ancestors.

Band Council meetings continue to be held every second week as well as online/ virtual meetings when necessary.

I currently remain President of Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services of NS, which I have held the past 16 years.

# CHIEF DEBORAH ROBINSON



All 8 Council Members hold various Portfolios in the Band Council and as your Chief I am ex-officio of these, I continue to represent you at various levels (local, municipal, and federal).

Economic development and service growth continues in Wasoqopa'q including; TRU Hotel, fisheries, gaming, tobacco outlets, convenience stores, forestry (Gardners Mills), Hammonds Plains Gas Bar, Woman's Healing Shelter, MacPherson's and the Milton Market Building.

Throughout the year I have represented WFN and attended many events including Youth & Elders, Truth & Reconciliation, MMIWG, GR Powwow, NS Mi'kmaq Summer Games, Treaty Day, Harvest Feast, Student Awards, Community Christmas Dinners, Language events, "Dreams Take Flight", Remembrance Day Ceremonies, Retreats, Meetings with- Premier Tim Houston, Leah Martin Minister of L'nu Affairs, Mayor Pam Mood, District Chief Sherry Pictou, AFN National Chief Andrea Paul and Senator Paul Prosper. I attended the AFN AGA, Fisherwoman's Conference, Treaty Education Symposium, Tajikeimik Mawiomi, and Canada Day Celebrations.

As your Chief I remain a board member or executive committee member of the following boards/organizations: All NS Mi'kmaq Chiefs (ANSMC), Kwilmu'kw Maw-Klusuaqn (KMKNO), Atlantic Policy Congress (APC), Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM), Mi'kmaq Family & Children Services of NS (MFCS), Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey (MK), Native Alcohol & Drug Abuse Counselling Association (NADACA), Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre (MNFC), Mi'kmaq Regional Advisory Committee for Union of NS (UNSM MRAC), Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN), Mi'kmaq Employment Training Secretariat (METS), NS Health & Wellness (Tajikeimik), Tripartite Forum.

In conclusion of this year's Annual AGM Report 2025, I am humbled, honoured, and grateful to continue to serve you as your chief.



# DEPUTY CHIEF RACHEL FALLS

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I would like to start first by saying thank you to Wasoqopa'q members for your support and in believing in me as your councillor and I will continue to work hard on your behalf.

Wasoqopa'q just made a recent purchase of the business MacPherson's in the town of Liverpool and it employs some of our members. The majority of our members reside in the town of Liverpool and surrounding areas and MacPherson's also comes with beautiful grounds which will be developed into a cultural environment where community events will be held. Another purchase was recently made in Liverpool, the Milton Market building which will be used for a variety of programming, including a Adult Education a drop in center and cultural workshop space. this will save Wasoqopa'q First Nation in rental fees for this area.

The women shelter situated on the Hammonds Plains is not to be expected to make a profit but rather to be a safe, peaceful cultural environment for Wasoqopa'q and Indigenous women and their children who need shelter from abusive relationships. Heather Matthews was hired as the Executive Director of Weli-ankweyasimk women's shelter on February 11, 2025, and Executive Director is still in the staffing process. Hopefully this will not be the last healing center because Wasoqopa'q First nation needs addiction centers, men, youth's healing centers and senior's nursing homes.

Kokum Cultural trail is currently underway in Yarmouth adjacent to TRU Hotel and was developed in partnership with our Community Enhancement and Economic Development officers. We are waiting for funding from the Province for the trail to make it safe an accessible to walk and be enjoyed by the community members, and also interpretive panels will be added as cultural component.

Wasoqopa'q Language and Cultural Committee did up another proposal for language which consisted of a whole family weekend, the families emersed in Mi'kmaq language all weekend with fluent speakers from other communities. This took place on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025 with about 8 families.

# DEPUTY CHIEF RACHEL FALLS



Waoqopa'q First Nation did run two basketball camps this past June and August, these camps were hosted in Gold River and Yarmouth. These camps would not have taken place if we did not have the volunteers who offer their free time and also took the basketball coach training offer by CMM in February 2025 so a big thank you to these volunteers for making this happen. The Yarmouth area offered a Lacrosse session that was hosted by CMM, the turn out wasn't the best but the youth that attended had a great time. CMM will be offering the same session in Gold River if not before the cold weather it will take place in 2026.

The 2025 Mi'kmaq summer games were held in Wagmatcook First Nation. The Kespuwick team participated this is makeup of Bear River, Annapolis Valley, Glooscap and Wasoqopa'q First Nation. Wasoqopa'q had 28 athletes who participated in the 2025 summer games, the athletes brought home 78 medals in total. We had 37 gold and 24 silver and 17 bronze, our athletes did amazing and had great time, there were a few hiccups but we will learn from them and try to improve for next year and next year Mi'kmaq Summer games will be hosted in Sipekne'katik First Nation. I think best event of the whole summer games was the pin exchange, every community designs their pins and trade them with other communities and organizations with all athletes of ages and I would say the athletes would agree with me it was the best part of the games.

NSWALKS held a walk audit on the Yarmouth reserve with community members to evaluate what would help make walking in the community safe and accessible for all Wasoqopa'q members with disabilities, seniors and youths. The walk was led by Cathy Leblanc who is the Mi'kmaw walking Coordinator with Hike Nova Scotia, Catherine Drocesbeck the Program Manager with Hike Nova Scotia and Rachel Falls who is Walk Leader for Hike Nova Scotia. Some of the things that were identified were signage, wider shoulders on the road, lighting and sidewalks.





I would like to begin by thanking those of you who placed your trust in me for another term as Councillor. I am looking forward to the next five years.

This past year has been another year of positive growth for our First Nation. In addition to attending regular Chief and Council meetings some work I have been involved in include:  
Fisheries:

In fisheries I continue to Chair the Kespuwick Fishing Advisory Board. We continue to grow our commercial fishery and expand our operations. Our Moderate Livelihood Fishery continues to evolve and I work hard to ensure I am voice for our community. I attend weekly meetings on the Treaty Rights Protected Fishery leadership Advisory with other communities in our District. I work directly with our Fisheries Director, Curtis Falls to address and discuss issues as it relates to Commercial, MLF and Food, Social and Ceremony fisheries.

This past year I worked with District Chief Sherry Pictou to bring the Women's' Fishing conference to our community.

#### Education:

In Education I am in regular contact with our Education Director Janice Francis to address issues that arise and review policies. I also attend the annual Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey education conference.

We recently purchased the property in Queens County known as the Milton Market. We will be renaming the building with a Mi'kmaw name. This space will be used as a Learning centre with a focus a focus on adult learning. We will also use the space for workshops and various other get togethers. I am excited to work with Albert Conrad to help develop the space.

#### Legal:

As various legal matters occur throughout the year I often take on a role as liaison with our Legal Counsel to work towards constructive outcomes.

I attend many meetings, conferences, workshops and community events. A sample of those I attended this past year included:

- CMM Semi- Annual Assembly
- HR Planning and discussions
- Mk Education Symposium
- Dreamers Gala
- Fisher Women's Gathering
- CMM AGM
- Harvest Feast and Youth Harvest Feast
- Truth and Reconciliation Day
- Earth Day Wildcat
- Wasoqopa'q Language Planning
- Youth Carnival Medway
- Student awards Gold River





I want to take a moment to thank you all for your continued support and understanding as I transition into my new role. It has been a busy, rewarding time, and I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to serve our community.

Over the past few months, I've been actively engaging in a variety of initiatives and meetings. I've met with the RCMP to address ongoing concerns in our communities and have been working to help create pollinator-friendly gardens in Wildcat that support biodiversity and environmental sustainability.

My schedule has included many important gatherings—from Chief & Council meetings, Emergency Management Organization (EMO) sessions, the Annual General Meeting with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, to connecting with band members both in person and online. I've also worked closely with EMO members on key issues like fire bans and travel restrictions. Working with my fellow councillors on projects to help communities thrive and reach the goals that they would like to see.

Some of the highlights of my time so far include:

- My swearing-in ceremony
- The honour of presenting an award to our graduating student from North Queens
- Spending grading day with Wildcat students and families at Kejimikujik National Park
- Taking part in the burial and pipe ceremony in Argyle
- Meeting band members from as far away as Vancouver, Washington
- Doing my first welcoming at Gold River Powwow

Each of these moments has been incredibly meaningful, and I carry them with me with gratitude.

I have attended the Mi'kmaw Summer Games in Wagmatcook First Nation this August. The fall is also shaping up to be full, with community events, workshops, and meetings lined up so far for September and October.

I've been volunteering at various community events, which has given me the opportunity to connect with members both on and off-community. I've also been involved in transplanting shoreline restoration plants—ensuring they're thriving and ready for their permanent homes. Additionally, I've been engaged in important work with the Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) initiative in the Queens area, as well as with Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR).

I'm excited for what's ahead and look forward to continuing to work with and for our band members. I also look forward to receiving my official portfolio and collaborating with my fellow councillors to grow and support new projects and ideas that will benefit all members of Wasoqopa'q—now and for generations to come.

# COUNCILLOR AVIS JOHNSON

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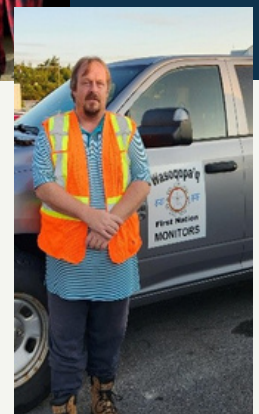


I'd like to thank you all for your continued support in the June 14th election for giving me the opportunity to represent and work for you. I love what I do and I am always humbled by the support I receive. As always, I look forward to our continued growth together. Wela'liog

I want to take this time to focus on some very important work that we do and those that do it and that's our monitoring team. What is monitoring? Monitoring is a very important role that we take on we do contracts with NSP to monitor any current dam structures that will be dewatered or any major changes in construction, etc.

Our monitors spend their days on-site watching and protecting. They educate those that stumble on these rich archaeological sites to advise them that they are protected sites and that they fall under the Special Places Protection Act 1989 and that there are fines associated with any looting that may take place beginning at \$10,000.00. It is ever so important that we have these monitoring teams in place to protect these historic sites.

Our monitors have been on one of the Mersey Hydro Dams since mid-August and will continue to be present until the end of November.



**Our Monitoring crews – John Junta, Stephen (Smokey) Francis, Bernie Pictou, Edward Wry, Albert Conrad, Connor Howard, Marianne Burbine and Dylan Nickerson.  
( Not pictured- Jayson Surette)**

# COUNCILLOR ANDREW FRANCIS

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I would like to start by acknowledging my gratitude for the support I received during the recent election. I'm very excited to continue the work to make our band even better.

Over the last year, I attended the Chief and Council meetings, as well as represent the band at KMKNO, Assembly of First Nations, Ulnooweg, Atlantic Policy Congress, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, etc. This is my second year as a member of the Police Advisory Board, which provides advice to the Region of Queens Municipality on enforcement and maintenance of law and order.



As a member of the IPCA (Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas), I sit at the table with community elders, earth keepers, CMM and Bear River First Nation to discuss ways of establishing a protected area around the Mersey River Corridor. The Mersey River is one of the most significant water migration routes for the Mi'kmaq and has sustained us for millennia. Our people have the primary roles of protecting and conserving the lands and waters through customary law, governance and traditional knowledge. Many species are disappearing, and this is one way of ensuring their survival. With the dams closed again this summer for repair, and the severe drought conditions, Archeologists have found more undocumented sites. I continue to attend the Mi'kmaq Advisory Committee with Parks Canada and representatives from the Mi'kmaq communities. We are involved in the co-governance of natural resources and cultural and historical connections within Federal Parks.

I have recently been involved with the Pemsik (Port Joli) Conservation Area, located in Southwestern Mi'kmaki. The area vision is inspired by a petroglyph representing Nukumi (Grandmother), in particular grandmother's dress, the marine portion of the conservation area. It encompasses the coastal area from Broad River to Hemeon's Head and extends seaward 75-100 kms. The purpose is to preserve culturally significant areas and traditional ecological knowledge passed down through the generations.

Last year, the decision was made to halt the moose hunt in Unama'ki for three years. There has been a significant population decline that has been caused by the effects of climate change, deforestation, hunting pressures and parasites have been contributing to the drop in numbers. The population will be monitored and assessed regularly with several measures in place. This year's population count observed approximately 1900 moose, which is a positive sign, however 3000-3600 moose are required to maintain a sustainable hunt. As stewards of the land, we have the responsibility to be part of the management plan, so there is moose for the next seven generations.

Thank you to all the Wasoqopa'q First Nation staff for their hard work and dedication to keeping our communities running. I look forward to another successful year.

# COUNCILLOR MIKE PAUL

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Thanks to everyone for taking the time to join us today. Also, a big thank you to everyone who voted during our recent election. It shows your concern and commitment to our Nation. I would like to thank Tom Pictou for his years on council and welcome Crystal Jermey as we continue to work for all of Wasoqopa'q.

My present portfolios are employment, training and education; economic development; finance and human resources. I work with all council members supporting the work in their portfolios as we work together for all of our communities. Again, this past summer I was re-elected to the board of directors of the First Nations Finance Authority (fnfa.ca), a national organization that provides financing to First Nations across Canada.

We have a few big projects completed and on going with the purchase of MacPherson's in Liverpool (as a going concern) and the purchase of the Milton Market in Milton (for the building and property). The Hammonds Plains Gas Bar finally opened and the delayed Weli-ankweyasimk Women's Shelter will hopefully be operational sometime this fall.

If you are in the area serviced by the Hammonds Plains Office notices are sent by email so make sure your contact information is up to date. We need to know when you turn 65 to ensure you are on our seniors list. I am available to all members and keep an office in Hammonds Plains but can meet anywhere.

I again want to take this time to thank our staff. We couldn't do it without you and I appreciate and thank you for your commitment to our community.

I would like to express my sympathy to the families who recently lost loved ones and wish hope to the families who have loved ones sick and/or in hospital. Best wishes on your path to wellness.

I can be reached at 902 483-7040. I am always looking for ideas and suggestions.



# COUNCILLOR NATTEAL BATTISTE

email: nbattiste@wasoqopaq.ca



Portfolios: Finance, Economic Development, Nova Scotia Power, Sports/Recreation, Youth and Health.

Committees/Board: Mawaknutma'tnej Circle (King's College), Red Road Project, The Genevieve Francis Memorial Fund, Tribal Boxing Gym, Akwekon and WHOMS.

Involved District/Municipality: Lungenburg Municipality, including but not limited to Chester, Mahone Bay and Bridgewater

I'd like to extend my deepest condolences to the families and community members we lost this year—my thoughts and prayers remain with you. As we close 2025, I wish everyone strength and health in the new year.

To our employees, band members, and Chief and Council, welalioq for your teamwork and dedication. Each year, it is inspiring to see our growth as we continue building a stronger L'nu community by living and working through our history, culture, and values.

## Community Highlights

There are many achievements that our employee's have achieved this year, and especially being an election year - there is so much to highlight and congratulate our staff! Wela'lin to for the tremendous work you have done within and for all of our communities.





## COUNCILLOR NATTEAL BATTISTE

In the past year, we can celebrate:

- Increased Culture activities, including workshops, learning retreats, programming and infrastructures
- Our Red Road project has had another successful year, testing a new pilot program that served lunches and activities in Gold River, Yarmouth also was able to increase their youth activities through this initiative.
- Our Economic development has achieved several milestones: solar gardens, MacPherson's, cultural infrastructures (improvements and new), education spaces and land acquired/ATR progress.
- This year, we had 11 children approved for the Dreams Take Flight, a once in a lifetime day trip to Disney Land - I look forward to being a part of this yearly project moving forward.
- Re-established services within Gold River's Health Centre and increased mental health support.

Ongoing Projects and Goals

This next year I want to continue to prioritize initiatives that strengthen safety, wellness, and economic growth within our community.

- RCMP/Community Safety: I continue to build a healthy relationship with the RCMP, primarily with Lunenburg County. This includes bi-weekly updates, quarterly reports, organizing Town Halls and sharing our communities' concerns with the RCMP and the Assembly. Goals: Continued community engagement, education, patrol, treaty & by-law education.
- Economic Development: Our fiscal year for 2026 will be a turning point for our economic development. I look forward to being a part of community engagement sessions as we form an incorporation to expand our Economic Department.
- Assembly Focus: RCMP/Police Reform, Police Welfare Checks, UNDRIP, Child Welfare, and the 2nd Generation Cut-Off remain key areas of involvement

Closing

As we wrap up the year of 2025, Thank you, Welalioq to our members for entrusting me to serve our community for a second term. This past year being an election year has allowed me to be face to face with so many of our members. The time spent and conversations held has helped me tremendously with focus and drive as I prepare to serve for another term. I remain active on my own facebook group with daily communication/updates on activities and band updates. Serving in this role continues to be a great honor, not only as an opportunity to give back, but as a personal journey of cultural practice and growth. Each year brings new challenges, but also the gift of walking forward together.

# COUNCILLOR JEFF PURDY

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I would like to start off by thanking you for Re-electing me, June 14th election. I will continue to do my best and work towards building our communities up for the next 5 years to represent Wasoqopa'q First Nation (WFN) on all levels of government, Federal, Provincial, Municipality. My roles include but not limited to:

**Managerial Responsibilities:** As part of the Chief and Council (C&C), I work with WFN staff to establish directions, set goals, and help manage day-to-day operations.

**Private-Sector Negotiations:** help establish commercial partnerships for the benefit of WFN.

**Finance & Audit Committee:** As co-chair of the AFN Finance & Audit Committee, I contributed to budget adjustments and the approval of audits to ensure the needs of both staff and community members are addressed.

**Archaeology:** Collaborate with the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR) along with Canadian Culture and Heritage (CCTH) and Nova Scotia Power and Parks Canada on establishing best Archaeology practices for sensitive archaeology areas.

**Indigenous Protected and Conservation Areas (IPCA):** Sit on a working group for IPCA's to help establish protected areas

**Species at Risk:** help developed and using a 2 eyed seeing approach on Species at Risk and the cultural importance.

**Mining:** Represent WFN with lithium and gold mining activities.

**Mainland Moose Recovery:** active role in recovery efforts for the mainland moose populations

**CB moose Management:** working group to help manage CB moose population

**Fisheries (Kespwick Resources) council** has put me on the fisheries file this term to help and support.

**Mi'kmaq Grand Counsel:** represent kespukitk district as a Keptin on Grand Council

## Highlights

Advocating for the conservation of lands and ecosystems by regularly participating in meetings or working groups that address Mi'kmaq best practices in the extractives or energy sectors, protect Species at Risk and address invasive species.

Advocating for the preservation of Mi'kmaq cultural sites by promoting Mi'kmaq archaeological best practices.

- Regular Archeology Meetings and updates with KMKNO, Canadian Culture and Heritage (CCTH)
- KMKNO / DNRR CB moose management
- Main land Moose Recovery Team
- Regular Mining & Energy Meetings/ updates with KMKNO and the province
- Regular Forestry meetings with KMKNO and the Province on Best forestry practices and Archeology assessments on harvesting blocks
- Working closely with KWIL MU'KW MAWKLUQAQ (KMKNO), Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) & Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNM) staff

#### Upcoming Projects/conferences/Future plans

Archaeological: Continue promoting Mi'kmaq archaeological best practices and participating in annual Mi'kmaq Archaeology updates. Scheduled visits to key Mi'kmaq archaeology sites, with plans to post protection signs to help prevent illegal activity.

Mining and Energy: Work with partners in the energy and mining sectors to promote community economic development by attending site visits for lithium deposits around Yarmouth with mining partners, participating in mining symposiums and energy conferences.

Species at Risk: Continued involvement in meetings and surveys concerning the conservation of the mainland moose population

Focusing on traditional food security initiatives and other initiatives that promote community resilience. Promoting healthy ecosystems, particularly addressing Species at Risk. Attending regular working group meetings and work with partners to collect data from the environment and from community members through surveys.

#### Comments

As we move into 2026, I like to reflect on the accomplishments of 2025, and say that I am very thankful for all of the hard working and dedicated staff across all of Wasoqopa'q. We have overcome many significant challenges and made strides to improve our community's economic and social outlook. I am confident we will continue to move forward towards prosperity and greater opportunities.

Moose: The population has increased but still not high enough for a harvest. I recognize how difficult this situation is for many community members and harvesters as we continue to refrain from harvesting moose at this time. This is why I have taken an interest in promoting traditional food security initiatives and will continue to do so in the coming years. I recognize the need to preserve this resource for our future generations. I will continue to promote the recovery of healthy moose populations by participating in the Moose Management Team. This team is made up of several Chiefs, KMKNO staff and experts, and folks from the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources. The team works with the Province to ensure the recovery of the moose population by addressing many factors that impact moose in Cape Breton, including habitat loss, over harvesting, the impacts of climate change, and the spread of brain worm and other parasites. There will be more webinars on this issue throughout the year to maintain an open and transparent discussion, and I encourage all harvesters and community members to participate. Promoting a healthy Mainland moose population is also an issue that is very important to me. I will continue to promote Two-Eyed Seeing and work to protect and restore habitat critical to Mainland moose populations. I will also work with provincial and private sector partners to ensure this species is protected.

Mining: lithium exploration is at a standstill in Yarmouth and surrounding areas. Everything has been put on hold for now while I wait to see what the next steps will be. I will continue to work diligently to ensure community needs are met as mining proponents consider how to develop these deposits. The Province is pushing for more critical mineral production in Nova Scotia.

Archaeology: Protecting archeology sites helps to protect our traditional areas and helps us affirm our Rights and Title. However, I recognize that archaeology and the preservation of these sites also helps community members to reconnect with their Mi'kmaq culture and understand our ancestors. I will continue to work alongside partners to promote archaeological best practices and ensure these sites remain protected. I am deeply concerned that the looting of our sites is still happening, and will work with partners to ensure this illegal act is addressed. The Special Places Protection Act makes this looting illegal, with fines starting at \$10,000 for individuals and \$200,000 for industry willingly knowing they destroyed or looted an archeological site.

Collecting Artifacts may seem harmless, it takes away from all Mi'kmaq, rights and title and the spiritual connection to these sites are lost.

C&C continue to work hard as a team and have the best interest for all Wasoqopa'q members and the Mi'kmaw Nation

# CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

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## ***About the FNCFS Prevention Program:***

The First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Prevention Program provides funding for developing and implementing community-based programs that strengthen families and help reduce child protection cases. Rooted in self-determination and cultural revitalization, the prevention stream encourages Wasoqopa'q-led approaches to wellness, safety, and belonging.

## ***Key Features of the Prevention Program:***

**Community-Driven Services:** Wasoqopa'q can choose and develop programs that match our unique needs, priorities, and cultural traditions.

**Flexible Funding:** Prevention funds can support a wide range of activities, including youth engagement, parenting support, land-based healing, mental health services, and family wellness initiatives, if they are designed to prevent crisis and strengthen family systems.

**Culturally-Based Delivery:** Services incorporate language, ceremonies, values, and kinship systems, focusing on restoring Mi'kmaw methods of caring for children and families.

**Not Protection-Focused:** Prevention funds do not support child apprehension or protection services. The goal is to lessen the need for protection through upstream, proactive supports.

## ***Tiers of Prevention-Focused Programming:***

**Primary Prevention:** Universal programs that promote cultural identity, strengthen family bonds, and enhance well-being for all members (i.e., community meals, day camps, youth activities, Elder engagement, parenting circles).

**Secondary Prevention:** Focused supports for individuals or families at risk of crisis (i.e., mental health counseling, addiction support, transportation to access services, men's healing groups).

**Tertiary Prevention:** Intensive, often individual supports that help stabilize families in crisis or prevent breakdowns.

**Band Designate:** The Band Designate is a legally recognized position that represents the First Nation in child protection issues, ensuring the community's cultural values and interests are upheld in cooperation with provincial agencies.

Over the summer of 2025, the FNCFS program has been able to support the following community programming:

Summer hot lunch program in Yarmouth delivered through the existing Summer Day Camp program. Pilot Summer Day Camp program in Gold River, as well as Back to school hair cuts for students in Gold River, Hammonds Plains, Milton, Wildcat and Yarmouth.

# COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT & CULTURE REVITALIZATION

Melanie Robinson- Director email: mrobinson@wasoqopaq.ca



## *At a Glance Highlights*

- Funding secured for the third Mi'kmaw Language Program- Kepmite'Isultiek III 100% of the funding was spent only for the Mi'kmaw Language instructor hired for the 11-month program and the 14 participants that participated in the language program.  
11 intensive community based language / Mi'kmaw Culture sessions are being held throughout the year for 3 days per session.  
Participants commit to teach and share their teachings. Applications were sent out and there was room for 15 applicants and 7 new participants.
- 93 applications were submitted and Three organizations have been awarded funding under the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Project to address childhood obesity and chronic disease in the province. The successful applicants are Acadia University, Upward Mobility Kitchens East Inc., and Wasoqopa'q First Nation. The total amount of funding is \$1.05 million- Wasoqopa'q First Nation was the only First Nation to receive funding and we were successful with our \$400,000 proposal where every dollar will go toward Cultural Healing grounds in Liverpool along the Mersey River- there will be Community Engagement Session to be held at the Best Wester in Liverpool on October 2 at 6pm
- Wasoqopa'q First Nation has an aim to provide culturally safe spaces for community members and youth to learn about traditional foods, harvesting and preparing these traditional foods, alongside risky play areas for young children to play and explore movements that depict our traditional ways of hunting and harvesting our traditional foods such as bow hunting, arrow head production, spearing and canoeing as well as climbing and other risky play fun that is modern and well built to standards and safety codes.
- The funding requested will be to build an outbuildings that are capable of having a safe cleaning space for foods harvested such as wild game and fish and root vegetables. Many of our youth do not have mentors in their lives to teach them these skills that address their mental health and food security for their families and many of their elders and parents or caregivers do not have these skills, so we need to learn them together as a community and flourish  
Traditional Knowledge Keepers House with Roof. This site will allow presenters to huddle safely under a roof when they want to share their stories and knowledge. This site can be used for youth who wish to demonstrate their art or sit quietly and listen to stories of the past. Our medicine keepers can share their knowledge about harvesting medicines and food with small groups or larger groups. We need this area when we invite tourists and tours in and public schools in to properly welcome to the area.
- Pepkwijite' Ma'tijik Newtitipa'q/ They will Drum All Night has been funded through Mi'kmaq History Month Community Activities Support program- through this program will consist of 2 performances by the Mi'kmaw Heritage Actors- a group of passionate actors , singers, dancers and drummers. They are the only Indigenous Theater group in the Atlantic. They showcase our Mi'kmaq history , culture a, language , stories with pride.  
Queens County at the Astor Theater and Yarmouth Par en Bas Theater

### ***Partnerships- Governance & Role***

- Mi'kmaq Cultural Authenticity – Mi'kmawitasik : Mi'kmaw Made- Cultural Tourism for Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia was fully developed and launched
- Continue to work with Mi'kmaw Kina'matenewey Advisory on Mi'kmaw Language
- Continue to work with the Advisory for the Mi'kmaw Language Legislation
- Continue to work with Mi'kmawey Debert as Advisory member on the project, we are in the final Design of the project
- Work with Yarmouth Art Gallery and development of Land's End Cultural Arts Center
- Continue to work with the Acadia First Nation Recreation Committee
- Continue to work with the Town of Yarmouth and surrounding Municipalities working toward Reconciliation events and projects
- Continue to work with the Acadia First Nation Mikmaw Language & Culture Committee

### ***Programs and Cultural Engagement***

- Youth Drumming continue in Yarmouth and our Youth Drum Group, Kespukwitk Samqwan Sunset Drummers meet at different events and perform their drum songs – the youth drummers have performed in many events
- Annual Mi'kmaw Student Awards
- Medicine Bundles aq Mi'kmaw Languages sessions in community
- Wasoqopa'q First Nation name change official – continue work on Branding and logo changes- the four Highway signs are now being refitted to promote our official name change as of October 2025
- Fulfill Mi'kmaw Band Designate duties as confidentially outlined in job description
- Manage Red Road Youth Project and Youth employed report directly to myself and Michelle Roy- Mi'kmaw Language and Culture Coordinator
- Funding secured through Food Security Initiatives Program allowed WFN to role out the second phase of the Food Security Program and 327 air fryers were delivered to Band Members of Wasoqopa'q First Nation
- Mi'kmaw Language Toy Bingo was held in Yarmouth in November , this is where community members gathered to have fun and learn the language while securing some gifts prior to the Christmas Holidays
- Ordered Wikuoms for all communities and these will be delivered in the spring of 2025
- Funding secured to Culture and Language Resource Coordinator- This position , reporting to the Community Enhancement and Cultural Development Officer , the coordinator is responsible to for supporting cultural programs, events and activities, providing opportunities to enhance cultural awareness, traditional knowledge transfer and promote overall healing and wellness within Wasoqopa'q First Nation communities.
- Facilitate Drum workshops and Culture Workshops for youth in the Yarmouth Community
- Working on a project for a Traditional Healing Heritage Park in Yarmouth, secured funding for landscaping/ beautification, Interpretive Panels and Pavilion, along with the EDO for WFN
- KOKOM Interpretive Park is nearing completion, the Mi'kmaw Pavilion has been built, the completion of the 7 interpretive panels are now being developed
- KOKOM Park is now working with a design company – General Public and Partners to complete the design phase of the panels
- Weliankweyasimk Women's Shelter in Hammonds Plains is near completion. Continue to work with other staff on the successful Proposal submitted by Acadia First Nation for a Domestic Violence Shelter to be built in the Hammonds Plains reserve.

### ***Upcoming Projects/Future plans***

- Continue to seek ways to secure funding for the future of the Mi'kmaq of Wasoqopa'q First Nation.
- New Mi'kmaw Youth Center-Yarmouth
- Youth Center-Gold River Community
- Cultural Center/Artifact Holding Facility-Yarmouth
- Culturally safe Mobile Mi'kmaw Artistry unit for all our Lnu'k & communities
- Land Based Food Insecurity teaching houses and Healing Houses
- John Cook Memorial Park
- Truth and Reconciliation Programs throughout Mi'kma'ki

# ECOLOGY

Scott Jermeý- Program Manager  
email: psjermey@hotmail.com



The Wasoqopa'q Ecology program conducts monitoring and research on Species at Risk and other culturally significant species, mainly within the Kespukwitk district of Mikma'ki. Our crew of 3 full-time and 4 seasonal staff/students closely collaborate with various other ecological organizations both indigenous/non-indigenous, such as Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, Parks Canada, Mersey Tobetic Research Institute, Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, Clean Annapolis River, Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy etc.

We currently are carrying out work on:

- Bats
- Blanding's Turtle
- Eastern Ribbon Snake
- Wisqoq (Black Ash)
- Native & invasive fish species
- Invasives HWA & EAB
- Pine Marten



We also set on various boards and working groups such as Mersey River IPCA and have recently carried out a Shoreline Restoration project with the Southwest Nova Biosphere on Brazil Lake (Yarmouth County) and Pohnook Lake (Queens County)

We also work closely with local schools on their Land-based Learning programs.

Our program is funded mainly through Environment Climate Change Canada and based out of the Wildcat Community.



## Projects & Highlights 2024-2025:

**Gold River Solar PV Project:** WFN was a successful proponent of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program and the Low Carbon Communities Program to build a 100kW net metering solar project. Through these programs 75% of the capitol costs and \$75k of development costs were secured. With a net metering project, power generated from the panels feeds directly into the building. The Gold Nugget was an optimal choice based on its location and energy consumption. This will significantly lower the costs of power to the building. The system is a ground mounted system located just behind the building. Commissioning is scheduled in Q3 of 2025.

**Hammonds Plains Entertainment - Mobil Gas Bar:** The Hammonds Plains Mobil gas bar is complete and has been in operation since early 2025. The site includes 4 pumps (8 fueling stations) along with a new expanded retail convenience store.

**Weliankweyasimk Women's Shelter:** The Weliankweyasimk Women's Shelter, located in Hammonds Plains, is currently under construction with a completion target of fall 2025. This much needed infrastructure project will provide emergency, temporary lodging for Indigenous women and children. The project is being funded through ISC and CMHC.

**MacPhersons:** MacPherson's, located in Liverpool, was purchased and is now owned and operated by Wasoqopa'q FN. The business operates an appliances & furniture store, hunting & fishing supplies and a variety of other goods. The operation also continues to lease out the Needs Gas and Convenience store located on the property. The purchase included additional vacant land located behind the current established businesses which extends to the banks of the Mersey River. Planning is underway to develop this area into a cultural gathering place.

**Wasoqopa'q Community Solar Project:** In partnership with Natural Forces Solar, WFN is in the early stages of developing a 10 MW solar project. An introductory community session was hosted in August. As the project progresses more detailed information sessions will be held.

**WFN Economic Development Committee** – our committee meets regularly to discuss new strategies and business development in an effort to increase and diversify our current business holdings, form strategic partnerships and to secure funding for projects.

**Lands:** We continue to actively work on Additions to Reserves (ATR) files in several areas including Gardners Mill (John Cook), Shelburne, Medway and Yarmouth. These files have seen significant progress this year and continue to be a priority.

## Upcoming Projects/Future Plans:

- Hammonds Plains Development
- Gold River Mawio'mi Grounds Phase 2
- Land Use & Strategic Plan
- Wasoqopa'q Community Solar Project
- MacPhersons Cultural Development





## Completed projects/Highlights

- Distributed Grade 12 graduation stoles throughout our communities.
- Attended and presented at the 2025 Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK) Symposium.
- Attended and made a presentation at the Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK) Student Awards ceremony.
- Attended Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK) Community Connection meetings.
- Participated in staff training.
- Hosted, along with employment, meet and greets within our various communities.
- Provided post secondary educational assistance to 44 eligible registered band members. Types of support provided were tuition, books and living assistance.
- Language and Cultural gathering
- Meet and greet for post secondary students

## Unfinished Projects/Ongoing Programming

- Mi'kmaw language classes.
- Post Secondary educational assistance
- Financial support for elementary/secondary students
- Daycare, headstart, youth programming
- Student support/tutoring services for elementary/secondary/post secondary students
- After school programming
- Annual recognition of our elementary/secondary students for their academic achievements
- Along with employment, referral agents for GEO Connects
- In conjunction with the South Shore Regional Centre for Education and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development working on an Equity in Action plan.
- Working in collaboration with Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK)

## Upcoming Projects/Future plans for your Department

- Host job/career fairs
  - Host basic computer skills for older learners
  - Collecting educational highlights/programming for (MK) Symposiums
- Continue to make every effort to provide learners with opportunities to grow, develop and succeed.
  - Effectively manage our resources and encourage our students to value the choices offered by higher education.

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Joseph Falls- Program Coordinator  
email: jfalls@wasoqopaq.ca



Wasoqopa'q First Nation has been actively engaged with Emergency Management practices since at least 2018 when we first began consultation on an All Hazards Emergency Response Plan. The document was created through consultation with Heather MacKenzie-Carey (a leading Emergency Management Consultant in Nova Scotia for: private entities, all levels of government, & First Nation Bands). The document covers the policies and procedures which determine how our nation responds to various emergencies. The document covers our response plan for all types of emergencies including hurricanes, floods, wildfire, hazardous material exposures and various other emergencies and was approved by Chief and Council in May 2018. It highlights the community's vulnerabilities to various hazards (environmental or human caused) and attributes a risk score which determines how likely the event is to occur and how much impact the event may have on the community. As the cornerstone to our emergency response, this document was updated in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The document is now due for review and update. In 2024, ISC (Indigenous Services Canada) approved funding for Emergency Management Coordinator positions throughout the Atlantic provinces. One of the main goals in creating this position was to ensure all communities had a new or up-to-date Emergency Management Plans.

## **Projects**

Wasoqopa'q Wildfire Education Program funded by Wawanesa Insurance's Community Wildfire Prevention Grants in partnership with FireSmart Canada

Wasoqopa'q Emergency Management team has been awarded a \$15,000 grant to complete wildfire education and mitigation activities in the community. This project is currently in development and will be rolled out in the next 6 – 9 months. It will involve community engagement and education sessions and will provide equipment for Wasoqopa'q to complete light fuel mitigation work in the community.

## **Training**

The Wasoqopa'q Emergency Management team has been engaged in ICS (Incident Command System) training over the last 12 – 18 months. We have several members who have completed ICS level 300 or higher training and several more members with ICS level 100 to 200 training. The goal is to increase the capacity of Wasoqopa'q with ICS by having more training offered to admin staff and community members. ICS training ensures a coordinated response to emergencies when needed.

## **Four Pillars of Emergency Management**

**Response** - Actions taken immediately before, during, and after a disaster to save lives, minimize damage, and provide essential services.

**Recovery** - Efforts to restore a community to its normal or near-normal conditions after a disaster.

**Mitigation** - Efforts to reduce the overall impact of a disaster, such as building codes or infrastructure improvements.

**Preparedness** - Activities that build the capacity to respond to an emergency, including training, exercises, and planning.



# EMPLOYMENT/ TRAINING

Wanda Westhaver-Indigenous Employment Officer  
email: wandawesthaver@wasoqopaq.ca



Fiscal year 2024/25 came with some challenges for the Employment and Training program. However, despite being off work for three months due to having a Trapizoidectomy and LMTR surgery on my hand, we still had a very successful year and was able to offer clients the following programs:

Work Experience Programs: 9 clients (wage subsidies were provided for clients to assist the in gaining meaningful work experiences.)

Project Based Training: 27 clients participated in project-based training activities. These included a ribbon workshop, a high-top moccasin workshop and a tiny home expedition/work experience for 7 ladies. These ladies got to travel to Eel Ground First Nation and actually experience the building of tiny homes. They got to have hands on experience with the builds in progress. It was a great experience for all.

SWEP- Summer Student placements: 4 students were placed

Entrepreneurship Training: 11 clients participated in an 8-module program delivered over several months. Some of the curriculum was provided by St Mary's University – Women in business program.

Skills Development: 19 clients were assisted with post secondary training.

Driver Training: Assisted 6 clients with obtaining driver training.

Apprenticeship Training: One client successfully gained their journeyman's status and one other continues in her journey towards red seal certification.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

Amanda Lloyd- Chief Financial Officer  
email: alloyd@wasoqopaq.ca



## REPORT ON RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is a key component to the financial health of a First Nation. It is a high level review of possible risks that may impede our ability to provide programs and services. Our risk register includes information about the known risks and uncertainties that may affect our financial position.

By reviewing this document annually both through the Finance and Audit Committee and then again at the Chief and Council level, we are prepared to shift resources to mitigate risks that have a high likelihood and high impact to our operations.

| # | Risk Category                             | Event   | Impact  |
|---|---|---|---|
|   | Health & Safety                           | Medical outbreak on reserve                                 | Reduced health of members / potential loss of members   |
|   | Service Delivery                          | Services required in six different communities              | Run 3.5 mm deficit each year on base funding provided by federal government   |
|   | Economic Development                      | Decrease in tobacco sales, VLTs                             | Loss of profit to fund programs/services etc  |
|   | Skills and Capacity                       | High number of key employees retiring in the next ten years | Loss of knowledge   |
|   | Infrastructure / Geographic Opportunity & | Offices need renovations/expansion/improvements             | Crowded workspaces. Offices not meeting the needs of the staff or communities. All locations are impacted - needed across all, competing for resources  |
|   | Service Delivery                          | Six reserves - competing needs in each location             | Fractured resources. Duplication of services, lot of time spent in transit. Difficult to staff employees in different locations. Difficult to get services to all members. High cost to deliver |

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

An additional \$9.8M in capital assets were acquired during the March 31, 2025 fiscal year. Key projects underway are:

- Construction of the Women's Shelter continues in Hammonds Plains. This construction is being funded by CMHC and ISC, with ISC further committed to funding much of the operating costs over a number of years. This project is expected to be occupied by the end of 2025.
- A gas bar was opened in February 2025 at the Hammonds Plains Entertainment site, This project cost a total of \$1.7M
- The Rapid Housing project wrapped up during the year. This project cost \$7.7M over 4 years and resulted in a total of 21 homes

# FINANCIAL REPORT



| Funder  | Asset Type                             | Cost 2024-2025 | Forecasted 2025 -2026 | Total      |
|---|--|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| CMM   | Wildcat Greenhouse                     | 9,500          | 25,000                | 34,500     |
| Rapid Housing Initiative (CMHC)                                   | Band – owned housing                   | 2,434,300      | -                     | 2,434,300  |
| OSR/ECCC  | Vehicles                               | 159,150        | 65,000                | 224,150    |
| OSR/ACOA  | Gold River Powwow grounds              | 4,100          | -                     | 4,100      |
| OSR/ACOA  | Yarmouth Cultural park                 | 61,800         | -                     | 61,800     |
| OSR   | Retail operations assets               | 63,600         | 50,000                | 113,600    |
| OSR   | Green Energy projects                  | 161,000        | 100,000               | 261,000    |
| OSR   | Fisheries Assets                       | 578,000        | 2,500,000             | 3,078,000  |
| ISC   | Computers/Electronics                  | 8,850          | 40,000                | 48,850     |
| CMHC/OSR/ISC  | Community Buildings                    | 16,800         | -                     | 16,800     |
| CMHC/OSR  | CMHC Houses                            | 515,200        | 350,000               | 865,200    |
| OSR   | Hammonds Plains gas station            | 1,709,550      | -                     | 1,709,550  |
| TBD   | Yarmouth Youth Centre                  | -              | 250,000               | 250,000    |
| CMHC/ISC  | Women’s Shelter                        | 3,286,300      | 1,500,000             | 4,786,300  |
| OSR   | Land purchase                          | 373,750        | 150,000               | 523,750    |
| ISC/OSR   | Band owned Housing                     | 301,900        | -                     | 301,900    |
| OSR   | Cultural Equipment                     | 48,650         | -                     | 48,650     |
| OSR   | Roads and Paving                       | 96,550         | 150,000               | 246,550    |
| OSR   | Community Buildings – office additions | -              | 500,000               | 500,000    |
| PNS   | Cultural assets - Liverpool            | -              | 400,000               | 400,000    |
| <i>OSR = own source revenues from General Fund (unrestricted)</i> |  | 9,829,000      | 6,080,000             | 15,909,000 |



## FINANCIALS

### Summary of Audited Financial Statements

For a full copy of the audited financials and schedule of remuneration for Chief and Council, please see our website:

<https://www.acadiafirstnation.ca/about-us/governance/financial-statements.html>

### Highlights

Total revenues of over \$59 Million across all operations (2024 - \$57M). Own source revenue represents 73.2% of the total (2024 - 76.8%).

Incorporated entities \$32.4M (2024 - \$32.6M)

Fisheries \$5.6M (2024 - \$5.6M)

Net surplus of \$6.9M (2024 - \$5.9M)

Tangible capital assets totalled \$56.3M by the end of the year (2024 - \$49.7M). The total value of assets insured is over \$83.5M.

Total cash and cash equivalents \$18.6M (2024 - \$19M).

Total Long term debt is \$18.5M (2024 - \$18.6M). FNFA accounts for \$14M (2024 - \$14.5M) and CMHC Housing loans account for the remainder \$4.3M (2024 - \$4.1M)

HST debt is decreasing on schedule with approximately \$250,000 remaining to be paid.

### ***Government support payments from are broken down into the following:***

**Band Support \$ 569,771 (2024 - \$ 646,080)**

**Contribution to proposal driven projects \$ 1,162,134 (2024 - \$ 601,980)**

**Education \$ 1,942,239 (2024 - \$ 1,537,899)**

**Capital/Maintenance \$ 1,194,380 (2024 - \$ 1,238,167)**

**Social \$ 1,623,683 (2024 - \$ 1,877,831)**

**Health \$ 1,338,953 (2024 - \$ 891,179)**

**CMHC Subsidy \$ 274,029 (2024 - \$ 239,658)**

**Fisheries \$ - (2024 - \$ 86,244)**

**Training \$ 512,428 (2024 - \$ 732,869)**

### ***Key expenses:***

**Profit sharing paid out to members \$ 1,184,000 (2024 - \$ 1,154,100)**

**Post secondary tuition and allowances \$ 916,320 (2024 - \$ 825,235)**

**Repairs to band owned buildings \$ 231,173 (2024 - \$ 462,802)**

**Crew share paid to fishermen \$ 2,288,207 (2024 - \$ 2,259,297)**

**Retail operation expenditures \$ 27,113,036 (2024 - \$27,421,114)**

**Elder payments \$ 672,100 (2024 - \$ 655,100)**

# FINANCIAL REPORT



Wasoqopa'q First Nation and its entities paid out approximately \$11.7M in payroll during the fiscal year (2024 - \$11M) supported over 250 jobs at its annual peak in December.

The Band supports its November profit sharing allocation through funds taken from the five gas bars/gaming establishments -\$1,618,000 (2024- \$1,629,000), the fisheries - \$279,000 (2024 - \$ 276,000) and the sale of quota tobacco - \$265,000 (2024 - \$ 309,000). A percentage is set aside from their gross revenues each year for this allocation. This year an additional allocation was set aside to assist with the development of future economic activities for the communities. The amounts set aside are as follows:

Profit allocation \$1,297,000 (2024 - \$ 1,328,000)

Economic development \$ 865,000 (2024 - \$ 886,000)





## Independent Auditor's Report

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To the Chief and Council of  
Wasoqopa'q First Nation

### Opinion

We have audited the consolidated financial statements of Wasoqopa'q First Nation (the "Band"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2025, and the consolidated statements of operations, accumulated surplus, changes in net debt and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the consolidated financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

In our opinion, the accompanying consolidated financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the consolidated financial position of Wasoqopa'q First Nation as at March 31, 2025, and the results of its consolidated operations, changes in net debt and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards.

### Other Matters

Our audit was conducted for the purposes of forming an opinion on the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole. The Schedules of revenues and expenditures on pages 28 to 37 are presented for purposes of additional information and are not a required part of the consolidated financial statements. Such information has been subject to the auditing procedures applied, only to the extent necessary to express an opinion, in the audit of the consolidated financial statements taken as a whole.

### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Band in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the consolidated financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

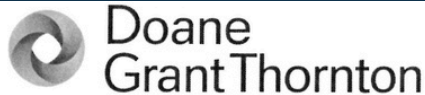
### Responsibilities of management and Chief and Council for the Consolidated Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of consolidated financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the consolidated financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Band's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to a going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Band or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative to do so.

Chief and Council are responsible for overseeing the Band's financial reporting process.

# FINANCIAL REPORT



## Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Consolidated Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether these consolidated financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these consolidated financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Band's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Band's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the consolidated financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Band to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the consolidated financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the consolidated financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the Band and its subsidiaries to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.

We communicate with Chief and Council regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Yarmouth, Canada  
August 5, 2025

*Doane Grant Thornton LLP*

Chartered Professional Accountants

# FINANCIAL REPORT



## Wasoqopa'q First Nation Consolidated Statement of Operations

Year Ended March 31

|   | Budget<br>2025    | Actual<br>2025      | Actual<br>2024      |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Revenues</b>                             |                   |                     |                     |
| Federal government operating transfers      | \$ 5,810,040      | \$ 6,448,230        | \$ 6,314,008        |
| Federal government capital transfers        | 450,000           | 4,801,866           | 3,121,642           |
| Provincial government operating transfers   | 285,000           | 315,421             | 276,909             |
| Economic activities                         | 11,165,000        | 10,904,100          | 11,709,374          |
| Economic activities – incorporated entities | 32,668,108        | 32,364,754          | 32,576,389          |
| Other                                       | <u>3,256,500</u>  | <u>4,271,231</u>    | <u>3,631,144</u>    |
|   | <u>53,634,648</u> | <u>59,105,602</u>   | <u>57,629,466</u>   |
| <b>Expenses</b>                             |                   |                     |                     |
| Band management and support                 | 14,736,500        | 13,652,400          | 13,982,016          |
| Education                                   | 1,309,775         | 1,754,538           | 1,546,321           |
| Community maintenance                       | 1,890,000         | 1,771,694           | 1,803,749           |
| Social services                             | 1,145,000         | 1,184,794           | 940,362             |
| Community health                            | 735,040           | 970,598             | 940,726             |
| Housing                                     | 656,500           | 1,121,850           | 692,753             |
| Fisheries                                   | 3,667,050         | 3,856,269           | 3,775,704           |
| Training                                    | 500,000           | 569,359             | 540,199             |
| Forestry                                    | 92,000            | 176,771             | 72,362              |
| Incorporated entities                       | <u>28,205,370</u> | <u>27,113,036</u>   | <u>27,421,114</u>   |
|   | <u>52,937,235</u> | <u>52,171,309</u>   | <u>51,715,306</u>   |
| <b>Annual surplus</b>                       | <u>\$ 697,413</u> | <u>\$ 6,934,293</u> | <u>\$ 5,914,161</u> |

Federal government transfers (Note 19)

## Wasoqopa'q First Nation Consolidated Statement of Changes in Net Debt

| March 31   | Budget<br>2025        | 2025                  | 2024                  |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Annual Surplus                                       | \$ 697,413            | \$ 6,934,293          | \$ 5,914,161          |
| Tangible capital asset additions                     | (10,955,000)          | (9,828,809)           | (6,314,352)           |
| Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets          | -                     | 167,212               | -                     |
| Amortization of asset retirement<br>obligation asset | -                     | 22,351                | 22,351                |
| Amortization of tangible capital assets              | <u>3,000,000</u>      | <u>3,020,853</u>      | <u>2,746,752</u>      |
| (Increase) decrease in net debt                      | <u>\$ (7,257,587)</u> | 315,900               | 2,368,912             |
| Net debt, beginning of year                          |                       | <u>(2,626,453)</u>    | <u>(4,995,368)</u>    |
| Net debt, end of year                                |                       | <u>\$ (2,310,553)</u> | <u>\$ (2,626,453)</u> |

# FINANCIAL REPORT



## Wasoqopa'q First Nation Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

| March 31   | 2025                 | 2024                 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents                 |                      |                      |
| <b>Operations</b>  |                      |                      |
| Annual surplus   | \$ 6,934,293         | \$ 5,914,161         |
| Amortization   | 3,020,853            | 2,746,752            |
| Accretion expense  | 27,994               | 35,643               |
| Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets                      | 167,212              | -                    |
| Changes in non-cash operating working capital balances (Note 10) | (311,380)            | 1,178,785            |
| Amortization of asset retirement obligation asset                | <u>22,351</u>        | <u>22,351</u>        |
|  | <u>9,861,323</u>     | <u>9,897,692</u>     |
| <b>Financing</b>   |                      |                      |
| Advances of long-term debt, net of repayments                    | <u>(431,514)</u>     | <u>(336,646)</u>     |
| <b>Capital transactions</b>                                      |                      |                      |
| Purchase of tangible capital assets                              | <u>(9,828,809)</u>   | <u>(6,314,352)</u>   |
| Decrease (increase) in cash and cash equivalents                 | (399,000)            | 3,246,694            |
| Cash and cash equivalents  |                      |                      |
| Beginning of year  | <u>19,045,929</u>    | <u>15,799,235</u>    |
| End of year  | <u>\$ 18,646,929</u> | <u>\$ 19,045,929</u> |

## Wasoqopa'q First Nation Schedule of Honoraria, Travel Expenses and Other Remuneration paid to Chief and Council

Year Ended March 31, 2024

| Name of Individual<br>Chief/Council<br>Member | Months | Honoraria         | Travel<br>Expenses | Other            | 2025<br>Total      | 2024<br>Total     |
|---|--------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Chief Deborah Robinson                        | 12     | \$ 154,449        | \$ 4,692           | \$ -             | \$ 159,141         | \$ 155,165        |
| Charmaine Stevens                             | 12     | 99,289            | 9,180              | -                | 108,469            | 103,648           |
| Michael Paul                                  | 12     | 99,289            | 6,682              | -                | 105,971            | 101,414           |
| Thomas Pictou                                 | 12     | 99,289            | 9,404              | 3,876            | 112,569            | 110,660           |
| Andrew Francis                                | 12     | 99,289            | 3,516              |                  | 102,805            | 97,826            |
| Avis Johnson                                  | 12     | 99,289            | 4,578              |                  | 103,867            | 98,584            |
| Rachel Falls                                  | 12     | 99,289            | 449                | 2,748            | 102,486            | 100,727           |
| Jeff Purdy                                    | 12     | 99,289            | 7,807              | 5,861            | 112,957            | 109,351           |
| Natteal Battiste                              | 12     | <u>99,289</u>     | <u>1,139</u>       | <u>2,630</u>     | <u>103,058</u>     | <u>101,134</u>    |
|   |        | <u>\$ 948,761</u> | <u>\$ 47,447</u>   | <u>\$ 15,115</u> | <u>\$1,011,323</u> | <u>\$ 978,509</u> |

Other represents payments made by the Band on behalf of the individual are for a medical or pension contribution.



Michael Westhaver RN Community Health Nurse (902)627-1245  
Kolby Blair NADACA, Mental Health and Addictions Coordinator (902)742-8883  
Sarah-Lyn Pettipas Administrative Assistant, Gold River Health Centre (902)627-1245

### ***Nova Scotia Health Visiting Clinicians***

Jonathan Fourdraine Clinical Therapist, Mental Health and Addictions (907)627-1245  
Terry Zaichkowski Clinical Therapist, Mental Health and Addictions (902)742-4337  
Matt Mahoney Family Nurse Practitioner

Wasoqopa'q First Nation Health Team and NADACA have sponsored and hosted numerous events throughout our communities, some including: March Break Wellness Workshops for Youth, Steeper Climb Workshops, Community Christmas Dinner, Student Awards, Summer Family Trip, Medicine Bundles, Women's Wellness Sessions, Online Wellness activities and NADACA Addictions Awareness Week.

Our Health Team has also partnered with organizations including Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre, Mi'kmaw Family & Children's Services, Healing Our Nations and The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq to co-host multiple workshops and events throughout our communities including Naloxone Training, Men's Wellness Sessions, Painting Sessions, Family Violence Awareness, Sisters in Spirit and a Babysitters Course.

Our Health Team is actively working to support and refer band members seeking addiction and wellness care to NADACA's Virtual Aboriginal Wellness Program, inpatient treatment centre and counselling options in community or online. Please reach out to your closest health centre if you require support.

Additionally, we invite band and community members on Facebook to join the NADACA Programming (WFN) page for online wellness activities.

Some services and programs ongoing;

- Playgroup with CMM Krista Wardrope 0-5 Years (Gold River)
- VON Foot Care Clinic for seniors & diabetics
- Flu + Covid vaccination clinics
- NIHB transportation appointment assistance.
- Laser quit smoking therapy
- Provide MSI renewals
- Gold River Health Centre, created a NIHB information booklet on what is covered for community members
- EHS billing invoices for reimbursement
- Laser Quit smoking therapy



- Providing medicine bundles for community members – Sage, sweetgrass, birch bark & tobacco
- Provide community members with local providers that direct bill NIHB
- Maternal Child Health/ New baby assistance

Waoqopaq is very excited to welcome a new member to our team, since August of 2025, Michael Westhaver a Registered nurse and graduated from Dalhousie University in 2009 with Bachelors of Science in Nursing. With 16 years' experience in a variety of clinical settings. (Medical/Surgical, Ambulatory Care, Endoscopy, Post-Anesthesia Care) we are so pleased to have him in our community of Gold River serving all of Wasoqopaq. Michael has been travelling between the various sites and communities meeting colleagues and members to gather what ideas from area specific programming is needed. Through attending Senior's sessions, the Gold River Powwow, Red Road events, engagement with community is top priority. Already organizing Mobile clinics that will address client needs (blood pressure monitoring, blood sugar checks, education sessions), is a wonderful start. Also, networking with a variety of health providers (Indigenous Services Canada, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, VON, Continuing Care, Public Health) to bring services, education and workshops to community members while coordinating with NIHB to provide medical supplies and services to our members. Our CHN is eager to explore and implement mental wellness education/workshops that are appropriate and culturally sensitive (in coordination with CMM).

Upcoming Projects/Future plans for your Department;

- Flu Shot clinics (Fall 2025)
- Child and Youth Mental Health Clinician
- Drug Awareness Week 2025 will be hosted in November. Programming will be offered in-person in communities, as well as online programming.
- Health Fair (Fall 2026)
- Ongoing education workshops in person throughout all WFN communities.
- The health team is committed to continuing to partnering with organizations in providing programming throughout our communities.
- Continued Medicine Bundle workshops
- Traditional Healing workshops
- Expanded Laser Quit smoking therapy

# HOUSING

Jim Pictou- jimpictou@wasoqopaq.ca  
Marie Falls- mariefalls@wasoqopaq.ca



This report summarizes the significant achievements in housing and community infrastructure development completed in the 2022-2025 fiscal years, funded primarily through partnerships with CMHC and ISC. Key accomplishments include the construction of new housing units, major upgrades to existing stock, essential site work for community projects, and the implementation of a modernized maintenance management system. The department also outlines committed projects for the upcoming fiscal year, demonstrating a continued strategic focus on addressing community needs.

## Completed Projects & Capital Highlights (2024-2025)

### New Housing Construction

- Rapid Housing Initiative: Successfully completed, resulting in 22 families being housed.
- Senior Housing: Purchased 2 two new accessible 2-bedroom senior units in Gold River.
- Mini-Homes: Installed two new mini-homes on the Yarmouth reserve.

### Major Renovations and Infrastructure

- Roofing: Replaced a total of 5 roofs with durable metal roofing through the RRAP program and ISC funding.
- Decks & Outbuildings: Completed major repairs or full replacements of 6 resident decks. Constructed 16 new sheds for community members.
- Infrastructure: Built a new pump house to service the Senior's complex in Gold River.

### Community Project Site Work

- Wildcat Greenhouse: Completed all essential ground servicing for the greenhouse project, including the installation of water and power connections.

### Maintenance & Operational Repairs

The department handled a high volume of routine maintenance requests, including but not limited to:

- Installation and repair of taps, toilets, sinks, and tubs.
- Construction of accessibility ramps.
- Flooring replacement and drain repairs.
- Driveway maintenance and water heater replacement (2 units).

### Funding Partners

Projects were made possible through strategic financial partnerships:

- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC): Funded metal roofs (RRAP program), the mini-home in Yarmouth, and the two senior units in Gold River.
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC): Funded a mini-home, renovation projects, roofing, lot servicing, and the capital for the upcoming senior units.



## ***4.0 Ongoing and Upcoming Projects (2024-2026)***

### ***Confirmed Capital Projects***

- Senior Housing: ISC has approved funding for two additional senior units for the 2025/2026 fiscal year.
- Community Infrastructure: Delivery of two new mini-offices:
  - o One in Wildcat for the Earth Keepers.
  - o One in Yarmouth for Waste Management.

### ***Programs & Initiatives***

- Mi'kmaw Home Energy Efficiency Project (MHEEP): Currently in Phase 8. The majority of homes have undergone energy assessments. Residents who have not yet had an assessment are encouraged to contact the Housing Department.
- Maintenance Management System (MMS): In partnership with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM), the department is developing and implementing a customized digital system.
  - o Status: The system is now live and operational.
  - o Benefits: This program will enhance the tracking of housing assets, repair requests, operational maintenance, and capital projects.
  - o Community Action: Residents can now submit repair requests online via a digital form accessible through the department's website or by scanning a dedicated QR code.

## **WFN Citizen Problem Reporter ([arcgis.com](https://arcgis.com))**



# HUMAN RESOURCES

Lisa Francis-Beaver- Human Resources Director  
email: [hrdirector@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:hrdirector@wasoqopaq.ca)



The WFN Human Resources Department marks the fifth year in restructuring and building a new HR High Performance System (HPWS) that provides a combination of HR structures, practices, policies and procedures interconnected to deliver an HR system that is flexible, adaptable and meets the needs of the employer and provides a positive work environment for all employees. Research has demonstrated that effective HR systems can greatly influence attitudes and behaviors and overall group performance. Key drivers of attitudes and behaviors are job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Building and implementing an HR high performance work system brings emphasis to employee involvement, and reflection of commitment to Wasoqopa'q First Nation's organizational culture. As a First Nation, the foundation and principles, along with the core values of the organizational culture are built upon our Seven Sacred Teachings. Our Mi'kmaq culture is an intrinsic and interwoven part of how WFN Human Resources operates from HR policies to practices to employee relations. The HPWS, as it is established and grows, is to be aligned with the WFN Strategic Plan and its associated vision, mission, goals and objectives established.



## CULTURE, AWARENESS & EDUCATION

- Continued to rewrite the HR Manuals for administration and business operations
- Finalized the HR Strategic Plan and 3-year workplan and executed an HR Strategy and annual workplan
- Established and provided an annual report including activities, accomplishments, metrics and future actions
- Finalized and met all reporting and audit requirements for all funding programs,
- Initial drafting of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Policy, and Substance Policy,
- Developed and implemented the Inventory Guidelines for business operations



## EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

- Continued, to develop the Respectful Workplace Employee training program materials and online platform
- 2nd draft of the WFN Aboriginal Preferential Hiring Policy and WFN Technology and Social Media Policy
- Finalized and had approved the WFN Respectful Workplace Employee Policy
- Developed and implemented Respectful Workplace signage and Employee Protocol posters
- Prepared and conducted Respectful Workplace Training program for all administration staff and Business Managers



## RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & HIRING

- Provided advice, guidance, tools and resources to Business Managers regarding employee matters
- Led thirty-two (32) new and or vacant positions recruitment processes
- Developed, with the Band Manager nine (9) new positions in administration and or business operations
- Supported the onboarding process for 80+ employees.
- Redeveloped the Interview Guide to implement a new scoring system and inclusion of new categories
- Redeveloped the Reference Check Form to include step by step instructions for gathering information and completion



## HEALTH, WELLNESS & SAFETY

- Completed occupational health and safety, and violence and harassment in the workplace required reporting
- Conducted and addressed health and safety incidents and investigations
- Maintained the employee health and safety database and conducted a health and safety inventory audit
- Obtained initial health and safety equipment for existing administration and business operations
- Designed and developed a Mental Health Resource guide
- Supported the WFN with the NSP Tusket, Roseway and Mersey Cowie Falls Contractor Projects



## RECOGNITION, TRAINING & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- In total, 182 employees were trained this year in health and safety, including First Aid/CPR, WHMIS, OHS, Food Handler's, NVCI and Mental Health First Aid, including, a complete occupational health and safety program for WFN Forestry
- Planned, organized and led the Business Manager's Forum with the Business Managers and Inventory Department.
- Planned and conducted HR & Inventory Training Program for YWW Management Team, staff and other Business Managers including the development of a new HR Training Module.
- Established and administered, with the Consultant, leadership and employee training in business operations



## TEAMWORK

- Participated and provided HR updates in quarterly Business Manager meetings
- Led staff meetings in business operations, as needed
- Maintained the HR Administration and Business Operations employee database
- Established a Request for Proposal to support operational planning for the Weli-Ankweyasimkl Women's Shelter
- Assisted Hammonds Plains Entertainment gas station expansion, with employee related policies, procedures, and recruitment processes

# HUMAN RESOURCES

LOOK AHEAD 2025-2026 FISCAL YEAR



## Objectives

The WFN Human Resources Department continues to focus on the key pillars of the HR Strategy, aligning the goals and objectives for the 2025 to 2026 fiscal year to support WFN employees and the growing needs in administration and business operations.



### CULTURE, AWARENESS & EDUCATION

Emphasis and focus on new HR Manuals, with a new Employee Handbook. Establish new HR Policies and Procedures associated with the ongoing implementation of the HR Strategic Plan as needed.



### EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Finalize and implement new complimentary HR policies including a Technology and Social Media Policy, Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Policy and Substance Use Prevention Policy.



### RECRUITMENT, SELECTION & HIRING

Establish a Recruitment and Hiring Handbook to support leadership in recruitment processes, employee onboarding and orientation. Support existing and new positions with finalized job descriptions in administration and business operations.



### HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLNESS

Focus on developing a new Occupational Health and Safety Plan, and health and safety equipment across all administration and business locations. Support employees in health and safety training opportunities and capacity development.



### RECOGNITION, TRAINING & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Organize and implement HR training across administration and business locations as appropriate, with a focus on leadership, problem solving, mental health first aid, and conflict resolution



### RELATIONSHIPS, ENGAGEMENT & TEAMWORK

Lead and support teamwork opportunities, including employee sessions, professional development, quarterly Business Manager meetings, and staff meetings in administration and business operations.

# INVENTORY

Sherry Anthony- Inventory Manager  
email: sherrya@wasoqopaq.ca



We maintain an accurate Database, for all our Quota and Retail Locations from Yarmouth to Halifax.

We also maintain accurate records for all Quota purchases and issue as much allocation to our Band Members each month, while staying within our allocation. We continue to effectively maintain permissions, new members, changes, constantly updating our systems as well as working with suppliers to try and obtain and keep the best possible pricing in today's market for our band members and customers.

We maintain accurate Inventory Control for all our locations, do monthly Inventory counts, full store counts scheduled, prepare monthly reports for the Finance Dept. as well as POS support, and daily structure support within our database system. We also hold regular Inventory meeting's, Manager Meeting's and other meetings as needed. We also support the Stores and other depts on an as need basis.

Sherry Anthony, Inventory Control Manager over sees all Quota for Medway, Hammonds Plains, Gold Nugget, AFN entertainment Centre and AfNEC Bingo, as well as clerical office duties. Supports the Jadon Robinson Memorial Golf Tournament and The Harvest Feast. Josephine Falls, Inventory Control Clerk over sees Hammonds Plains, Gold Nugget, Gold Bean and AFN Entertainment as well as clerical office duties. Supports the Yarmouth Harvest Feast. Wendy Lejeune, Inventory Control Clerk over sees Your Winners World, Winners One Stop, Medway Entertainment, Medway Food, Medway Ice Cream Hut and Medway Races, Quota Customers, as well as clerical office duties.

Each employee is tasked with their own set of duties in order to keep all our locations running smoothly.

Our daily aim is to bring all areas of the Inventory Dept together, to be the greatest benefit to our Businesses, Band Members and Customers, to ensure we maintain market share and value. As times are changing, we too are changing to adapt, we have introduced many changes just this year to help us all move forward for the betterment of us all.



- Katyn Goodwin – Financial Comptroller: fisheries@acadiaband.ca
- Michelle White – Administrative Assistant: fms@acadiaband.ca
- Darlene Coulton – Livelihood Fisheries Liaison: mlf@acadiaband.ca

## ***Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) Fisheries***

### Community Engagement and Planning

Since 2017, Acadia First Nation has operated under the Netukulimk FSC Fish Harvest Plan, which originated from a series of community meetings held since 2016. This plan governs the harvest of fish for food, social, and ceremonial purposes by Acadia First Nation members, as an expression of Netukulimk and Mi'kmaq self-government, protected by section 35 of the Constitution Act, Canada.

In the near future, Wasoqopa'q First Nation plans on have more FSC fishing engagement sessions. The focus of these meetings will be to review and update the Netukulimk FSC Fish Harvest Plan, ensuring the plan reflects community needs and values.

## ***Principles and Rights***

- FSC fishing rights for Mi'kmaq are a priority in the fishery, once conservation needs are addressed.
- The Netukulimk Fishing Plan is a living document, updated as required by Chief and Council, and does not exhaustively define the scope of Aboriginal fishing rights.
- The plan is intended as a management tool for the 2024/2025 season, supporting the exercise of fishing rights within a framework of proper fisheries management and conservation.
- This plan does not address or define the “moderate livelihood” Treaty fishery.
- Wasoqopa'q First Nation does not recognize or accept DFO-issued licences as valid or enforceable for FSC purposes, maintaining its own management process. The community is open to discussions with DFO when valid conservation or management objectives are presented.

### Harvest and Distribution

- Annual distribution of lobster and scallops throughout the community supports food security and cultural practices.
- Approximately 200 members receive lobster tags for Lobster Fishing Areas (LFA) 33, 34, and 35 for FSC purposes.



## ***Communal Commercial Fisheries - Fleet Overview and Licensing***

- 12 vessels are currently active in the KRI communal commercial fleet.
- 7 vessels operate 7 lobster licences in LFA 34.
- 3 vessels operate 4 lobster licences in LFA 33.
- 1 fixed gear and 1 mobile gear groundfish licence.
- 13 lobster licences are leased annually.
- 1 vessel fishes Snow Crab in Area 4x with a Band member as captain.
- 3 vessels fish Full Bay and 2 fish East of Baccaro scallops.
- 2 vessels hold SWNS Bluefin Tuna licences.
- 11 clam licences, 4 marine licences, and 5 gaspereau licences were harvested by WFN members.

## ***Investments and Growth***

KRI continues to invest in the fishing fleet, with significant upgrades and overhauls to many vessels in recent years. Plans are in place to replace older vessels, ensuring the fleet remains modern and efficient. KRI's objective is steady growth through the acquisition of additional assets, including vessels and licences, to enhance fishing capacity and economic returns. In the past year, KRI has made significant strides in expanding its presence within the Canadian commercial fishing sector. Notably, KRI successfully acquired a Fullbay scallop licence from the Membertou First Nation. This strategic acquisition not only strengthens KRI's operational capabilities in the scallop fishery but also fosters meaningful relationships with Indigenous partners, reflecting a commitment to reconciliation and sustainable resource management. Beyond this recent transaction, KRI is currently in the process of pursuing the acquisition of additional major fishing access rights and associated fishing assets. These efforts are aimed at further diversifying KRI's portfolio, increasing its catch capacity, and positioning the company as a prominent player in the Atlantic fisheries sector. With these ongoing and future acquisitions, KRI is set to enhance its operational footprint, contribute to local economies, and support the development of sustainable fishing practices in Canadian waters.

## ***Future Projects and Opportunities***

- KRI is exploring lateral investments such as acquiring a lobster pound, establishing boat repair or building facilities, and securing bait supply chains to further solidify its position in the industry.
- Strategic and opportunistic purchases of access rights and assets are considered as they arise, with flexibility to seize beneficial opportunities for the community.

### **Training and Capacity Building**

All harvesters have completed marine training and certifications, and ongoing training is supported and sponsored by KRI. This includes funding for band members who are not part of the communal commercial fleet but wish to pursue fishing training, supporting the development of skills and opportunities for all interested community members.

Kespuwick Resources Inc. remains dedicated to sustainable fisheries management, economic growth, and the exercise of Mi'kmaq rights and self-governance. Through ongoing investment, community engagement, and strategic planning, KRI aims to ensure that fisheries continue to provide for the needs of Acadia First Nation, both now and for future generations. **Page 38**



As the Mi'kmaw Language and Culture Coordinator for Wasoqopa'q First Nation, I am honored to share this report on the progress we have made and the work that lies ahead. Our Nation faces a unique situation: with six reserves spread across the South Shore of Nova Scotia and approximately 80% of our band members living off-reserve, it is a challenge to gather our people for consistent cultural and language exchange. Adding to this, the limited number of fluent speakers makes it difficult to create natural conversation opportunities. Despite these challenges, I have been working to create inclusive, meaningful programming that brings together language and culture, ensuring that both are lived, shared, and celebrated in Wasoqopa'q.

Over the past months, I have coordinated and delivered a variety of language-embedded cultural activities, ensuring that Mi'kmaw words and teachings are naturally incorporated into every gathering. Highlights include: Rawhide Rattles – introducing learners to words such as m'kekn (leather), pkekn (hide/skin), and ukpitni'sewet (to sew by hand). Mini Peaked Caps – teaching animal and color vocabulary (muin – bear, kitpu – eagle, maqtewe'k – spotted). Moccasin Making & Cultural Silhouettes – incorporating numbers, colors, and sewing vocabulary. Mi'kmaw Language Bingo – engaging families and youth in a fun, social way to reinforce everyday words.

I also partnered with community members and artists to expand cultural engagement through workshops: Wooden Flowers with Dusty Meuse, Medicine Bags with Cherry Whynot, Painted Rocks with Sarah Pettipas. These initiatives have provided opportunities for participants of all ages to practice language while connecting with our traditions.

Looking ahead, I am committed to expanding our programming to reach more of our members and deepen the connection between language and cultural identity. Planned initiatives include: **Nemi'k Walks** – land-based walks where language is shared through place-based teachings. **Language Bingo & Waltes Tournaments** – building on the success of games as an intergenerational learning tool. **The Red Road Project** – embedding language into youth-focused programming. **Online Learning Opportunities** – expanding access for off-reserve members who cannot attend in person. **Youth & Elder Socials** – creating spaces for natural storytelling, conversation, and cultural sharing. **Partnerships with Regional Advocates** – strengthening collaboration with other Mi'kmaw language champions to share resources and best practices.

### **Strategic Priorities My role will continue to focus on five key areas:**

Community Engagement – increasing participation across all reserves and ensuring inclusivity for all members. Curriculum Development – integrating structured vocabulary and conversational lessons into cultural activities. Intergenerational Learning – connecting youth with Elders to preserve oral traditions and strengthen community ties. Cultural Integration – embedding Mi'kmaw language into every aspect of cultural life, from crafts to feasts to daily conversation.

Sustainability – pursuing funding and partnerships to ensure long-term support for language revitalization.

The Mi'kmaw language is at the heart of our culture, identity, and way of life. Through cultural activities, community events, and innovative learning methods, we are creating spaces where our people can reclaim, speak, and live our language with pride. I look forward to continuing this important journey with the support of our Elders, youth, leadership, and community members.

# MEMBERSHIP

Debra Gloade- Membership Clerk  
email: dgloade@wasoqopaq.ca



Total number of band members : 2041

Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) Card:

I recommend you apply for a renewal of your status card 6 months prior to the expiration date on your current card, as it can take approximately 4 months for delivery of the new card.

A person's registration under the Indian Act does not expire . The 10 digit registration number can be used to access certain services. However, registered persons with an expired card may find it difficult to access some services and programs.

For applications to renew your SCIS card , or any questions regarding registration I can be reached at the Yarmouth Office or via email.



Registration  
number

Renewal date

# MODERATE LIVELIHOOD FISHERIES



Darlene Coulton- Liaison Officer email: mlf@wasoqopaq.ca

## Projects and Highlights

### Lobster (Jakej) Netukulimk TRP Fisheries

Engagements are held with all communities before the start of each fishing season to update all harvesters on the TRP plan for the upcoming fishery taking place.

### District 33-34 season

There were approximately 50 harvesters registered for the 2024-2025 season. A total of 17 vessels participated with each harvester receiving 100 tags with a maximum of 350 tags per vessel. The season ran from the last Monday in November 2024 until May 31 2025. We are currently fishing the same season as the non-native fishermen.

### Elver (eel) Fisheries 2025

With an increase in quota from DFO there were a total of 8 bands participating in the season from Cape Breton to Yarmouth. Results of community engagements and online surveys it was agreed by the harvesters to fish as a competitive fishery with a max of 5 kg per individual until the total quota was caught at which time the fishery for our communities was closed. There were approximately 700 harvesters who took part.

Quota was caught, slight problems along the way with such a large amount of harvesters, these issues will be reviewed before the 2026 elver season.

### District 35 lobster season

District 35 is a very small fisheries for Kespukwitk with access to 1000 tags for the season which runs from October 14- December 31 with a closure until End of February- July 31. We had a total of 6 vessels who participated with 18 harvesters allocated 40 tags per individual.



# WELI-ANKWEYASIMK WOMEN'S SHELTER

Heather Matthews Executive Director  
email: [wws@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:wws@wasoqopaq.ca)



The Weli-Ankweyasimk Women's Shelter is steadily moving toward opening its doors as a safe, culturally grounded space for women and children experiencing violence. Over the past few months we have focused on building capacity, securing funding, strengthening partnerships, and preparing the facility for full operation.

On top of the core operations funding from ISC, the Shelter has successfully received multiple funding streams to support both capital and operational needs:

- ISC Prevention Funding – to develop an Integrated Outreach Team supporting violence prevention and community education.
- Daylight Fund – Houssian Foundation – contribution toward program supplies and start-up needs.

- Transition House Association of Nova Scotia (THANS) Capital Fund – dedicated funds to purchase a shelter van for client transportation and outreach.

Strong partnerships continue to guide our progress. We are active members of the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia (THANS) and the Nation Indigenous Circle Against Family Violence (NICAFV), ensuring our programs reflect best practices in violence prevention and trauma-informed care. Ongoing collaboration with the RCMP supports community safety planning and coordinated responses. We have also engaged with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and Native Council of Nova Scotia to strengthen outreach to Indigenous women living off-reserve, among other key partners.

An Executive Director (ED) has been hired in February to lead the Shelter's operations, strategic planning, and community engagement. In addition, two core team members are now on board: a Shelter Supervisor to oversee daily operations and a Maintenance Worker to ensure a safe and welcoming environment. Recruitment continues for additional frontline and outreach positions, with interviews currently underway.

The ED is working with consultants to finalize the Shelter's Operations Manual and Human Resources (HR) Manual, ensuring strong governance, clear policies, and consistent procedures for staff and clients. The team has been busy planning programs, creating schedules, ordering furniture, household items, and program materials to create a warm, culturally safe space.

Next Steps:

- Complete remaining hires and provide comprehensive staff training in trauma-informed, culturally grounded practice.
- Finalize the Operations Manual and HR Manual.
- Continue community engagement and outreach to ensure women and families know about available services.
- Prepare for a soft opening and community blessing once building is complete

The Weli-Ankweyasimk Women's Shelter stands as a vital step toward healing, safety, and empowerment for Wasoqopa'q First Nation and surrounding communities. We extend gratitude to Chief and Council, our funders, and community members for their unwavering support as we move toward opening in the coming months.

# YOUTH CENTRE YARMOUTH

Jacklyn Cameron – Youth Center Coordinator  
youthcenter@wasoqopaq.ca 902-742-6928



## Staff:

**Stephanie Tuplin – Assistant Youth Center Coordinator**

**Vanessa Doucette – Early Childhood Educator**

**Sandra Lane, Stacey Purdy (ECE), Loretta Jarvis (ECE),**

**Thomasina Soucy and Ava Falls – Afterschool/Drop-in workers**

## Head Start:

The Wasoqopa'q First Nation Head Start is a half day program that offers a cultural and small group learning experience for First Nations children and community members ages 2-5 years. The program ran from September 2024 – June 2025. Two of our students will be returning for their second year and we have two new registrations for 25-26.

Head Start incorporates and promotes Mi'kmaw language and culture, play and interest-based learning, and school readiness.

## After School Program:

The After School program runs from Monday – Friday 2:30 – 5:30pm. The program has spaces for 25 children who are attending elementary school. In 2024, and September 2025 the after-school program is at capacity.

The After School program provides a daily snack, planned activities and indoor/outdoor play.

## Drop – In/Teen Night:

The Youth Center is open in the evening from 6pm – 8pm for drop in. Youth in community are welcome to drop by and play, use our chrome books/tablets and have a safe, supervised space to hang out with their peers.

Teen Night has been successful since its start in 2022. We host a teen night once per month for youth ages 11 – 17. In the past we have done paint night, beading, trivia, cooking, and outings such as cineplex and swimming. We have about 10 youth that attend this regularly.

## Day Camps:

March Break Day Camp was at capacity with 25 participants. Daily themes and activities are planned with an outing to cineplex and a sleepover at the Youth Center to end off March Break. Summer Day Camp was also full, with weekly themes and local beach trips. We also took our group to Atlantic Splash and The Discovery Center in Halifax to end off a great summer!

Youth Center staff continue to update skills and knowledge. In 2025, two staff graduated from the Wabanaki Bachelor of Education cohort and one staff member obtained level 2 ECE. Staff also regularly attend culturally significant professional development throughout the year

# CONTACT INFORMATION



## Yarmouth

Jillian Maxwell  
Administrative Assistant  
Office: 902 742-0257  
frontdesk@wasoqopaq.ca

## Wildcat

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