

# WASOQOPA'Q FIRST NATION

Annual Report 2023-2024



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

2

Chief and Council Contact Information	Page 3	Housing	Page 30
Chiefs Report	Pages 4-5	Human Resources	Pages 31-32
Council Reports	Pages 6-17	Inventory	Page 33
Community Enhancement & Culture	Pages 18-19	Kespuwick Resources	Pages 34
Economic Development	Page 20	Moderate Livelihood	Page 35
Education	Page 21	Membership	Page 36
Employment and Training	Page 22	Social	Page 37
Financial Report	Pages 23-28	Youth	Page 38
Health	Page 29		



## CHIEF AND COUNCIL 2024

3

*Back Left*

Councillor Jeff Purdy

[jeffpurdy@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:jeffpurdy@wasoqopaq.ca)

Councillor Charmaine Stevens

[charmainestevens@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:charmainestevens@wasoqopaq.ca)

Councillor Mike Paul

[mikepaul@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:mikepaul@wasoqopaq.ca)

Councillor Avis Johnson

[avisjohnson@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:avisjohnson@wasoqopaq.ca)

Councillor Rachel Falls

[rachelfalls@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:rachelfalls@wasoqopaq.ca)

Chief Deborah Robinson

[deborahrobinson@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:deborahrobinson@wasoqopaq.ca)

Councillor Tom Pictou

[tompictou@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:tompictou@wasoqopaq.ca)

Councillor Natteal Battiste

[nbattiste@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:nbattiste@wasoqopaq.ca)

Councillor Andrew Francis *(not pictured)*

[andrewfrancis@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:andrewfrancis@wasoqopaq.ca)



# CHIEF DEBORAH ROBINSON

4

Kwe'!

I shall begin with a warm welcome to all new band members of Wasoqopa'q First Nation and special thanks to all of you who have supported the work and decisions of your Chief and Council as we move forward with the best interest of you and our future generations yet unborn.

Our band unlike any other, is not always the easiest to administer due to our unique geographical locations of six (6) reserves spread across N.S. from Halifax to Yarmouth Counties. (Hammonds Plains, Gold River, Medway, Ponhook, Wildcat and Yarmouth Reserves). We also have an administrative office in Shelburne.

We now have a band population of 2015 in total including both on and off reserve, whom we try to provide services

to where possible. Some of these include monthly assistance to elders (seniors age 65 and over) in the Province of NS, students, youth and band members requesting financial assistance in various programs including profit sharing for those aged 18 and over. We continue to do the best we can as we always try to do better.

We now have approximately 257 staff across our businesses and offices who help us provide the best programs and services possible. Thank you to all of them! Wela'liog Staff!

I want to express my condolences to those families who have lost loved ones over the past year...we share your grief and remain there with support for each other during these difficult times as a community and a Mi'kmaq Nation.

It is encouraging to see our communities engaging in celebratory events with each year growing larger in numbers. I am so proud of our younger people who are actively taking part in all celebrations especially in their dancing, singing and drumming, in promotion of our own culture. Also to those who are learning to speak our Mi'kmaq language, Congratulations! It gets better with each passing year...something to be so very proud of.

It makes my heart happy to see families, children and parents thriving economically, socially and in many other ways in a positive way. Our children are the heartbeat of our Nation...our most precious resource.

There are eight (8) Band Councillors who are assigned and hold portfolios for all areas of governance and community, all who have reported on their progress in their own individual reports...I am indebted and thank them all for their efforts and contributions to make this band a better place for all of us and future generations...Wela'liog Council!

Band Council meetings are usually held every two (2) weeks as well as online when necessary. It is a pleasure to report that we have made progress with the ATR (Additions to Reserve) program as this is moving along with the following properties Gardner's Mills (Yarmouth), Shelburne (located adjacent to highway 103) which are in the process of acquiring "reserve status". (Please see staff reports for further details).

Band administrative offices are located in Yarmouth, Medway, Wildcat, Gold River, and Hammonds Plains along with Shelburne (off-reserve). The Band business operations continue to thrive which include fisheries, gaming, hotel, tobacco sales, weekly bingo, gas service operations, convenience stores, restaurants, with the goal in mind to enhance our own source revenue. This revenue will assist in providing and building upon services that existing funding programs fail to reach. We are hoping to open our gas bar and woman's shelter soon which are still under construction in Hammonds Plains.

The position of Chief is very demanding at times. It is difficult to try and manage your time and set out priorities to meet commitments, which means a lot of travel and time away from home and family. I do the best I can in representing you to the best of my ability at all levels of government (Municipal, Regional, Provincial and Federal) along with my colleagues the Chiefs of NS Regional and National. I thank my family at home for all their love and support...Wela'lin!

Some organizations and committees I am a part of include:

ANSMC (All NS Mi'kmaq Chiefs), KMKNO (Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn) , APC (Atlantic Policy Congress), AFN (Assembly of First Nations), CMM (Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq), MFCS (Mi'kmaq Family and Children Services), MK (Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey), NADACA (Native Alcohol and Drug Counselling Association), MNFC (Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre), MRAC (UNSM-Mi'kmaq Regional Advisory Committee), MLSN (Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network), METS (Mi'kmaq Employment Training Secretariat), Tajikeimik (NS Health and Wellness), NSNWA ( Nova Scotia Native Women's Association).

Some events I have attended over the past year include Flag Raising, Truth and Reconciliation, Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, Powwows, NS Mi'kmaq Summer Games, Treaty Day, Harvest Feast,

Students Awards, Wasoqopa'q Mid-Winter Feast, Community Christmas Dinners, Mother's Day, Language Events, Hunters Mountain Cultural Event, Retreats, Congres Mondial Acadien Gathering, Lte. Governor of NS functions, Prime Ministers visits, Provincial Government, Municipal and Town representatives.

Our Band Office in Yarmouth was honoured with a cordial visit by the Governor General of Canada Her Honour Mary Simon on August 15<sup>th</sup>, where some staff members were on had to greet her. This was a memorable event.

I pay special attention to all events, gatherings and invitations from our Wasoqopa'q First Nation Communities and an on call for any personal/private visits when requested.

This year our Annual General Meeting is being held in the Valley as we as a Council felt it is important to be as inclusive as possible and host meetings throughout the Kespwick District, accommodating all of our membership located around the province.

As I reflect on the past year, I feel we have made significant progress and we shall continue to do so on our journey forward...a bright and beautiful future for the next generations of those yet unborn here in our beautiful Wasoqopa'q!!

This will conclude my report for 2024.

May the Creator guide, protect and bless you all!

Thank you, Wela'lioq!

Chief Deborah Robinson



# COUNCILLOR ANDREW FRANCIS

6

Another year has passed and as I look back, I am filled with gratitude of our communities partnerships. I attended numerous 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 was my first year as a member of the Police Advisory Board, which provides advice to the Region of Queens Municipality on enforcement of law, the maintenance of law and order and the prevention of crime.

As a member of the IPCA (Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas), I have the opportunity to 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 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. The Mersey River has six hydro dams on the lower portion of the river and during July, the head pond was lowered on the sixth dam. Archeologists found a significant number of artifacts in a short window of time.

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.

In late summer the decision was made to halt the moose hunt in Unama'ki for three years. There has been a significant population decline that does not allow for a sustainable harvest. 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. As stewards of the land, we have the responsibility to 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.

Wela'liog

Andrew

# COUNCILLOR JEFF PURDY

7

**Kwe'** Throughout the 2023-2024 year, I have actively participated in various portfolios, boards, and committees to represent Wasoqopa'q First Nation (WFN). 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 WFN Finance & Audit Committee, I contributed to budget adjustments and the approval of audits to ensure the needs of both staff and community members were addressed.

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

Mi'kmaq Grand Council: represent Kespukitk district

## 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

MAWKLUSAQN (KMKNO), Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) & Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNM) staff. Identifying hemlock stands with Department of Environment that has Invasive species Hemlock woolly adelgid (WHA)

## Upcoming Projects/conferences/Future plans

Looking ahead to 2024-2025, several important initiatives and events are on the horizon:

Conferences and Assemblies: Participation in the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) Annual General Assembly (AGA), KMKNO Yearly Nationhood Conference, and Mi'kmaq Grand Council meetings.

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. This includes CB Moose Healing Ceremony, attending regular working group meetings and work with partners to collect data from the environment and from community members through surveys. As we move into 2025, and the election in June, I am looking forward to speaking with and engaging as many community members as possible. I would also like to reflect on the accomplishments of 2024, and say that I am very thankful for all of the hard working and dedicated staff across all of Wasoqopa'q teams. 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: Like many of our community members, I am deeply concerned over the sharp decline in moose populations in Cape Breton, and 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 year. I encourage folks to visit Cape Breton and take the opportunity to reconnect with the land and heal spiritually, do not harvest moose at this time and recognize the need to preserve this resource for our future generations.

I will also 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 still moving forward in Yarmouth and surrounding areas. 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 archaeology 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 the Mi'kmaw Nation. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me

Wela'liog Jeff Purdy

# COUNCILLOR CHARMAINE STEVENS

9

Kwe'

One of our most significant achievements this year is our name change. We recognize the importance and significance of preserving the Mi'kmaq language and as such it was the right time to take the step to officially change our name to Wasoqopa'q First Nation. Much thanks to Melanie Purdy-Robinson who led this effort and who also works continuously to ensure language programs are offered to our communities.

My main portfolios include Fishing, Education, Legal and Health.

Fishing : I work directly with our fishing director Curtis Falls and am the Chair of the Kespukwitk Resources committee. I share this portfolio with Councillor Tom Pictou. Our board deals primarily with the commercial fishing fleet. Regular meetings are held throughout the year. On the Moderate Livelihood Fishery I meet weekly with other communities from the Kespukwitk district team on our Netukulimk MLF plan. We continually work together to address challenging MLF issues. In our Food Social and Ceremony fisheries we have been reviewing and discussing how we can better manage our fisheries while respecting our resources.

Education: This past year I approached our Council with the idea of a Post Secondary conference for our students. Council wholeheartedly supported the idea and I'm pleased to report we held a very successful weekend conference. Our students were able to get together and meet one another and share in their experiences. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my past year. The success was in huge part to our HR Director Lisa Francis Beaver who led the planning and management of the weekend.

I continue to work with our Education director to improve and address all education issues. Councillor Mike Paul who holds the Employment and Training Portfolio has joined

in the Education portfolio as the two often work together.

Legal: I continue work as a liaison between our Council and our Legal Counsel on many issues. I am engaged weekly if not daily in the many complex matters.

Health: In our Health field we have had a variety of challenges over the past year but are working to ensure we offer as many services as possible to address the health concerns of our members. Marla Robinson-Pyne is our Health Director and offers a full review found within this Annual Report.

Currently I am working with District Chief Sherry Pictou, CMM and Melanie Robinson-Purdy to bring a Women's Fishing retreat to our members. It is hoped this retreat will be held in the New Year. Stay tuned for more details!

On top of my regular Portfolio duties I attended numerous meetings and conferences with Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, Atlantic Policy Congress, Mi'kmaw Rights Initiative(KMKNO), Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK), Assembly of First Nations and various other organizations.

Wela'lin Councillor Charmaine Stevens



# COUNCILLOR NATTEAL BATTISTE

10

Kwe', teluisi nin Natteal Battiste, wetapeski Kespukwitk, wiki Kjipuktuk.

Portfolios: Finance, Economic Development, Species at Risk, 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, DENR (CMM), Akwekon and WHOMS.

Involved District/Municipality: Chester, Mahone Bay and Bridgewater

I'd like to start off by extending my deepest condolences to our beloved band members and community members. My thoughts and prayers are with our communities. I send my best wishes and prayers to all of our communities as we finish the year of 2024.

To our employees, band members and the remainder of Chief and Council, thank you for the continuous teamwork and accomplishments that we have accomplished this year. It is a heartfelt feeling to see our steady growth as we grow as a stronger L'nu community, not just with the opportunities, but instilling our history and culture into our ways of thinking and operating.

Alongside the many outstanding accomplishments that have been addressed throughout this report. I'd like to highlight the highlights that have happened in the Gold River area.

As Gold River remains one of the biggest communities that I am a primary contact for - we have seen yet another year of positive growth and momentum. With the expansion of 4 new homes in the 2024 year, we have welcomed many new families into our community.



The Gold River Community Centre Committee is off to an amazing start bringing back food social gatherings, events and connection within the community. We have now had the Red Road project running for its 4th year, promoting safe, alcohol free events for our youth. We continue to increase the amount of activities/workshops happening within our community.

Thank you for all those involved in this year's Powwow. Although I was not able to attend, due to getting married, the positive feedback shows that this event will always reunite our community and promote healing amongst us all.

## Ongoing Projects/Goals:

This year, in Gold River, we hosted our first Town Hall with the RCMP of Chester/Lunenburg District. I plan to continue to develop a stronger connection with our RCMP to help us in our goal to have a safe/clean community.

## COUNCILLOR NATTEAL BATTISTE CONTINUED

I have recently called on the province to discuss the Gold River's Bridge and am looking forward to the engagement sessions that should be taking place soon.

I have taken a key interest in our economic development, including, but not limited to, forestry, oceans technology, technology innovations and green energy projects. I will continue to educate myself in these fields to open more doors for partnerships and opportunities that gives our community leverage in the direction our province's economic development is heading towards.

Within the assembly, I have a key interest in our RCMP/Police Reform, including Police Welfare Checks, UNDRIP, Child Welfare and recently joined the conversations on the 2nd Generation Cut Off.

My primary communication channel still remains my active Councillor page on facebook but please check out all of Wasoqopa'q's groups as there are so many activities going on weekly.

As we come to an end for the 2024 year, I want to say thank you for the ongoing support, prayers and education. This role not only allows me to give back to our community, but the practice of my culture and growth I have received year over year is the greatest gift of all.

Welalioq aqq Nmultus.



## COUNCILLOR MIKE PAUL

11

Hello everyone, my name is Michael Paul ([mikepaul@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:mikepaul@wasoqopaq.ca) 902-483-7040), Councillor residing in the HRM area. I work for all of Wasoqopa'q and have an office at our Hammonds Plains location.

I work with and support all council members as we work together in the Governance of our Nation. My main portfolios are employment, training and education; economic development; finance, and human resources. I am also elected to the Board of Directors of the First Nation Finance Authority ([fnfa.ca](http://fnfa.ca)), a national organization that provides financing to First Nations across Canada.

# COUNCILLOR MIKE PAUL

12

I would like to thank members and the general public for their patience while the HP location is under construction. I am pleased to say that we are finally getting gas pumps installed and hope to be operational by the end of this year. The women's shelter construction is still under way and we hope to be operational early 2025. Of course, these dates are approximate, may be a bit sooner or a bit later. I still have hope that we can get a community centre in HP so our members up this way will have a place to gather, meet, provide programming and rental opportunities similar to Yarmouth, Wild Cat and Gold River.

Just a reminder that the HP office emails notices. If you are in the area served by the HP office, and haven't already done so, please provide your email address to [acadiaband@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:acadiaband@wasoqopaq.ca) and keep it updated if it changes. Also, a reminder that if your address changes, or if you are a new member please advise the office so we can update our records. One last reminder, if you are turning 65 please let us know so we can ensure that you are on our seniors list.

Some of the HP area activities over the past year have included senior's lunches; lobster and scallop distribution; youth March break, grading and summer get togethers; Christmas dinner; porcupine quill, tobacco, ribbon skirt, moccasin, medicine bundle and youth wellness workshops; community comprehensive meetings and garden box distribution.

The HP office has just under 300 households (many with multiple members), 52 seniors, 53 registered and 72 unregistered youth. These numbers are approximate and always changing. Our total Wasoqopa'q membership is over 2000 members.

We have been fortunate that over the past 2 years or so we have approximately 20 new

housing units for members. In part funding from the rapid housing initiative allowed this to happen. Although we still have a great need for housing, this is the largest number of homes we have been able to obtain in such a short time period. We will continue to go after any and all funding available for housing.

Please feel free to contact me with your suggestions and ideas to make our Nation better. My contact information is above. In particular I'd like suggestions for economic development so we can diversify our revenue streams to keep our community growing and provide the services our members require.

A BIG THANK YOU to all our hard-working staff. Your commitment to your job and our members is what keeps us operating. Just letting you know that you are appreciated and missed when you are away from your duties.

In closing 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. Good luck to everyone on their path to wellness.

Thank you for taking some time to be with us today and showing interest in your Nation. The more we work together the more we can accomplish. Have a safe journey home.

Mike Paul, Councillor

# COUNCILLOR RACHEL FALLS

13



Kwe' and Pjila'si, Wasoqopa'q Elders, youth and community members, it is hard to believe that it's that time of the year again- AGM report. The Committees that I am most active in: Culture and Language, Yarmouth/Shelburne/Valley Recreation, Economic Development, Emergency Measures, Physical Activity, Harvest Feast, The Rose Purdy Center, Youth Mental Health Focus group in Yarmouth and NSWALKS.

Dec, 2023: Mi'kmaw Circle of Hope Society is an Indigenous-led organization committed to empowering Indigenous youth, families, and Mi'kmaw people. It was founded in 2019 by Heidi Marshall who saw and felt the need for the concerns of Mi'kmaw people.

Wearing Our Identity celebrates Indigenous women and allows us a chance to showcase aboriginal designs in a fashion show. Last year a fashion show took place in Cape Breton at Membertou Trade Center, where two of our own Wasoqopa'q members showcased their own fashion designs and bead work. The Mi'kmaw Circle of Hope Society did a fantastic job showcasing all these Indigenous Women's designs.

Learning my culture is a never-ending teaching, every year we as a community seem to be learning something new. WFN members got to learn how to make traditional baskets by Stephen Jerome Jr. Stephen Jerome Jr. is recognized as an ancestral black ash basket maker from Gesgapegiag Quebec. Stephen taught in three Wasoqopa'q communities, all 60 community members took home a beautiful Mi'kmaq black ash basket made in 4 hours.

Back in April of 2024, Earth Keepers of Wasoqopa'q held a Spring Feast honoring Elder Rose Ann Morris and her family. Rose Morris was our oldest elder from Wasoqopa'q (Gold River area) and she was well respected in all first nation communities not just Wasoqopa'q. The ceremony served traditional foods, cultural activities, entertainment and Rose was given a beautiful blanket as a gift. It was a beautiful event. Sadly, Rose made her way to the spirit world May 13,2024. Rose, you will be sadly missed.

Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey [MK] is the official name for Mikmaw Educational Authority, officially created in 1997. The Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey represents the educational interests of 12 Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. Each year MK gives the Mi' maw Language Award to a student who has the highest mark in their Mi'kmaw language class or to a student who uses and promotes the Mi'kmaw language both inside and outside of the classroom. Wasoqopa'q had two high school students and one university student who received the award. The MK Language Award took place on July 2nd, 2024 in Halifax.

Some events that Wasoqop'aq partnered with: Wasoqop'aq and the Black Loyalist, Missing and Murdered Women and Girls was led by one of Wasoqopa'q members. National Indigenous Day, June 21,2024 in the town of Locketport. On September 30, 2024 Truth and Reconciliation in Sackville one of our members helped take the initiative to bring awareness to her community of Sackville about what truth and Reconciliation means to her. On Oct 8,2024 Wasoqopa'q (Yarmouth) brought 200 students from Plymouth school for some Mi'kmaq teachings and traditional foods. It was a magical and fun day seeing the smiles on the little student's faces and they really enjoyed getting out of the classrooms and into the community for a couple hours. The best part of it all was hearing the kid's voices saying thank you and how they enjoy the food.

Hammonds Plains Entertainment is finally getting a gas station. The digging has begun so the work should be done sometime in the new year. I would like to end my report by thanking my Elders, youth and fellow band members for your wise advice and support that you have all shown me over the past year, I am listening.

Wela'iloq Councilor Rachel

# COUNCILLOR TOM PICTOU

14

**Portfolios:** Economic Development, Fisheries & Housing

**Committees/Boards:** Kespuwick Advisory Committee, FSC (Food, Social and Ceremonial) Committee, Harvest Feast Committee, Economic Development Committee and Shelburne & Yarmouth Rec Committees.

## **Highlights & Updates:**

*Economic Development* Construction is currently underway for a new gas bar in Hammonds Plains with a completion date of late 2024. The gas bar will tie into the current retail operation, Hammonds Plains Entertainment. This will be a Mobil branded site with 4 pumps (8 fueling stations). The project also includes a new expanded retail convenience store.

Upgrades to the Mawio'mi grounds in Gold River, which included washrooms, showers and camping area has been completed.

Kokum Park, green space adjacent to the Tru Hotel in Yarmouth is nearing completion, this included a walkway, landscaping and pavilion. Interpretative panels will soon be installed and will complete this project.

Our second Solar PV project, located in Gold River, is underway and once commissioned will deliver clean energy to the Gold Nugget.

Tru By Hilton Hotel located in Yarmouth continues to exceed expectations with

many sold out nights throughout the year.

We continue to work through the process on our Addition to Reserves (ATR) files: Gardners Mills, Shelburne, Medway and Yarmouth. The demand for additional land for housing and business continues to grow and progress on these files remains a priority.

## Fisheries

The fisheries portfolio includes Commercial (Kespuwick Resources Inc), Moderate Livelihood (MLF) and Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC).

The Kespuwick Advisory Committee continues to meet regularly to discuss commercial operations, which has been very successful. We will continue to work towards expanding our fleet, acquiring more licenses & quota and providing employment and training for our members.

# COUNCILLOR TOM PICTOU

15



Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) - Approximately 200 members receive lobster tags for LFA 33, 34 and 35 to provide lobsters for FSC purpose. Additionally, each year, lobster and scallops are distributed throughout the community. Last year 8000lbs pound of scallops and over 16000 lbs of lobster were distributed through the entire community. I have had the opportunity to see many of you over the past few months during lobster deliveries to our communities.

Moderate Livelihood - I have attended many meetings regarding Moderate Livelihood

throughout the year as we continue to establish our fisheries. Although there have been challenges, it is rewarding to see our fishers out on the water exercising their treaty rights and I wish them all a prosperous and safe fishing season.

## Housing

It has been another busy year in housing, we have been able to provide a total of 12 new homes this past year to our communities. We will continue working to secure more funding for additional homes as we know the need is great.

The construction is underway for the Weliankweyasimk Women's Shelter, located in Hammonds Plains. This much needed infrastructure project will provide emergency, temporary lodging for Indigenous women and children.

I also attend regular Chief and Council meetings, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) meetings, Nationhood conferences and other various meeting and events.

I would like to thank all of our staff members for their hard work throughout the year. It is through our dedicated staff that we continue to achieve success. This coming year, we will work towards continued growth and development to provide further opportunities to our members. I look forward to seeing you all at our community events throughout the year.

Wela'liq,

Tom Pictou

# COUNCILLOR AVIS JOHNSON

16

Kwe' Everyone,

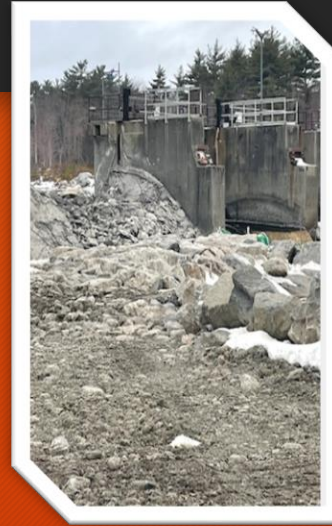
Portfolio's - Finance (FAC), Nova Scotia Power, Elders, Ecology/Earthkeepers, Housing, Emergency Management and Social.

Portfolio Highlights:

Finance - I am currently the Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee. The FAC meets quarterly to discuss finance policies, budgets, financial procedures, accountability and transparency. One of the main roles is to review procedures and or policies and make recommendations to Chief and Council for approval. One of our most recent recommendations was to review and update the assistance to off- reserve. Previously it was a maximum of \$1000.00 per household once every three years for things such as appliances and or household repairs. The form has been updated to reflect a maximum of \$1000.00 for band members 18 and over and not per household upon approval. Look for the updated application form on our website and it can also be found at your local office.

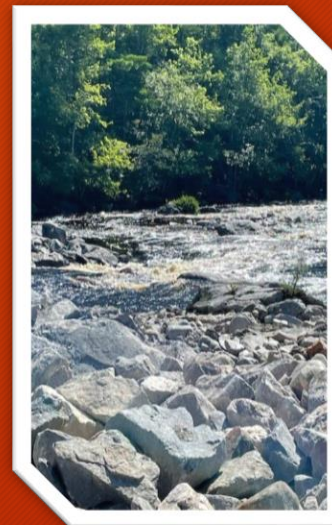
Nova Scotia Power - In the past year our monitoring team had three projects under their watchful eye.

Roseway Power Dam - Roseway had not been in operation for a period of over ten years prior to the decommissioning. There were multiple phases to this project. One being very important and that was to make sure that due diligence had been done in the area of archaeology and that a plan would be developed to avoid any high potential areas. Next came the phases of removal of the dam structure itself to help in the restoring of fish passage. The project ran from February and concluded in mid-August.



Tusket Dam - Environmental Monitoring. This project began in April and concluded late July. This project consisted of daily fish counts, monitoring and reporting.

Cowie Falls - the monitoring team spent a couple of weeks in the area to monitor the lowered head pond and surrounding area. There were significant amounts of artifacts exposed and high potential for looting. Over 2000 artifacts were surface collected during the dewatering.



Davis MacIntyre & Associates hosted an evening at the Milton Community Hall in October so members could view some of the 39,000 artifacts that were recovered through surface collection during the 2021/22 drawdown of Lake Vaughn, Gavels Lake and Kings Lake at Tusket Falls (Yarmouth).

# COUNCILLOR AVIS JOHNSON

17

I wish to express my gratitude to our dedicated monitoring team who braved all of the elements to protect our history. The team consisted of John Junta (Supervisor) and monitors, Elder Bernie Pictou, Edward Wry, David Burbine, Marianne Burbine, David Burbine Jr., and Stephen Francis.



Ecology/Earthkeepers team consists of Scott Jerney (Project Manager) and Earthkeepers, Crystal Jerney and Chkupan Moore. You will often find them out and about in the communities or greater communities, promoting, educating, learning and monitoring. There is so much to learn from the Ecology team and the partnerships they have built. Most recently because of partnerships and great working relationships, the Southwest Nova Biosphere have transferred 47 acres of land located in Molega to Wasoqopa'q First Nation. The Biosphere felt that the ecology team would provide the best stewardship of the land. Watch for further updates on a gathering to honor the land transfer.

Housing - The housing Department has had a busy year preparing new lots for new homes they were able to put in place continuing on from the Rapid Housing Initiative. Housing always has endless projects and one of those highlights is the development of senior housing units located in Gold River. One home is currently in place (not ready for occupancy), another will arrive in the near future. The site will eventually be a home to six senior housing units.

Emergency Management - In August, WFN welcomed Joseph Falls into his new role as our Emergency Management Coordinator. Joseph's new role will play a critical role in maintaining our WFNs emergency preparedness and response programs. Most recently, the emergency management team has been obtaining ICS 100 and ICS 200 level training. Pandemics, floods and wild fires have shown us that we always need to be well trained and prepared.

Outside of maintaining my portfolio's, I sit on many other various committees within WFN to aid in the progression of building a stronger nation.

Our staff continue to deliver services and programming for the betterment of our communities. Without our dedicated, hardworking staff, Chief and Council would not be able to progress as much as what we do within our portfolios. Wela'lin/thank you to all our administration/business management and staff.

Wela'liq

[avisjohnson@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:avisjohnson@wasoqopaq.ca) 902-350-0547

# COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

18

Melanie Robinson-Purdy

[mrobinson@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:mrobinson@wasoqopaq.ca)

## Mi'kmaw Language and Cultural Programs:

### *Kepmite'lsultiek II (Mi'kmaw Language Program):*

Funding secured for the second edition of the program. All funds were allocated to maintain the Mi'kmaw Language instructor and support the 14 participants. 11 intensive, community-based language and cultural sessions (3 days each) were held over the year. The participants committed to sharing their knowledge, fostering Language transmission within the community.

Funding secured as a team through our Wasoqopa'q First Nation Language and Culture Committee : Funding secure a 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.

## Mi'kmaq Cultural Authenticity:

Mi'kmawitasik: Mi'kmaw Made - Cultural Tourism: This initiative was fully developed and launched, showcasing the cultural richness of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia.



## Advisory and Legislative Work:

Mi'kmaw Kina'matenewey Advisory on Language: Continued collaboration on language preservation efforts for all of Mi'kma'ki with all 13 Mi'kmaw Bands.

Mi'kmaw Language Legislation Advisory: Ongoing work to contribute to the development of legislation supporting the Mi'kmaw language, for all of Mi'kma'ki.

Mi'kmawey Debert Schematic Design and Advisory Member- The Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre will be a meaningful and dynamic centre for Mi'kmaw people, and for visitors from across Nova Scotia, Canada and the world. Currently in the planning stages, the Centre will be built in Debert, Nova Scotia—a place where our ancestors lived more than 11,000 years ago, and a place where they still dwell today.

The future cultural centre is dedicated to sharing, protecting and exploring the stories and lives of our earliest ancestors and those who have come after them in Mi'kma'ki.

Continue to work with the Acadia First Nation Mikmaq Language & Culture Committee

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

## Community support for Mi'kmaw Artistry Development:

Craft Display at Tru by Hilton Hotel: A sales display was set up for local community members to sell their crafts.

Collaboration with Mi'kmaw Artists: We worked with Tru Hilton to create a culturally safe venue for marketing Mi'kmaw merchandise.

### Food Security Initiative:

First Phase: Over 200 garden boxes and vegetable seeds were distributed to band members.

Second Phase (November 2024): Air fryers will be delivered to community members to promote healthy cooking.

### Community and Youth Mi'kmaw Culture and Language Development:

Youth Drumming and Performance: The Kespukwitk Samqwan Sunset Drummers performed at multiple events, including Canada Day, school events, and multicultural festivals.

Youth Drum-Making Workshop: 12 youth participated in a hand drum-making session with Peter Pictou.

Mi'kmaw Toy Bingo: This language-based event in Yarmouth helped community members learn the Mi'kmaw language while having fun.

### Cultural Mi'kmaw Workshops:

Youth Drum Making session held in Yarmouth with Peter Pictou- 12 youth were able to make a drum ( hand drum)

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

Basket-Making Sessions: 60 large baskets were created through workshops with Stephen Jerome from Gesgapegiag. Porcupine Quill Workshops: Harvesting Porcupine quills and mini medallion workshops were held in Wildcat , Gold River and Yarmouth in June 2024, Cultural teaching on interesting facts on porcupine quills , assorted way of harvesting quills off a porcupine and teachings on tools and supplies used in cleaning and storing quills. Lessons on preparing raw

materials- Birchbark , quills and assorted colors of sinew to choose from , this was great for beginners and an introduction to quill art.

Medicine Bundles & Mi'kmaw Language Sessions: Supporting cultural and linguistic education.

### Major Community Events:

Annual Mi'kmaw Student Awards: Celebrating academic achievements.

Annual Mi'kmaw Harvest Feast: A cultural gathering for the community.

### Community Projects and Infrastructure:

Traditional Healing Heritage Park (Yarmouth): Funding secured for landscaping, interpretive panels, and a pavilion.

KOKOM Interpretive Park: Pavilion built and committee members selected to advise on interpretive panels.

Weliankweyasimk Women's Shelter (Hammonds Plains): Working on completing the domestic violence shelter aimed for fall 2024

### Future Projects and Plans:

Securing ongoing funding for Wasoqopa'q First Nation programs.

Development of Youth Centers in Yarmouth and Gold River. Cultural Center/Artifact Holding Facility in Yarmouth.

Launch of a mobile Mi'kmaw Artistry unit.

Land-based food insecurity teaching houses and healing houses.

Creation of the John Cook Memorial Park.

Implementation of Truth and Reconciliation Programs across Mi'kma'ki.



19

This report outlines the accomplishments of the past year and highlights future initiatives designed to strengthen Wasoqopa'q First Nation's cultural, linguistic, and community infrastructure.

Through collaborative efforts, we continue to foster growth, cultural integrity, and well-being for our people.

Wela'liq

Melanie Robinson-Purdy

Lnuisultinej, Wetnu'kwalsi, Wetnu'kwalsin?

### Projects & Highlights 2023-2024:

Gold River Mawio'mi Grounds Revitalization Project Phase 1: In partnership with the WFN housing department, funding was secured for phase 1 of the project. Infrastructure upgrades to the grounds under this phase have now been completed and include a newly designated camping area, new comfort station (washrooms/sinks/showers) and preliminary designs and costing for a future build of an arbour (funds to be secured in a phase 2). Funding for this project was secured through ACOA with WFN housing department completing the construction.

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 will be a ground mounted system located just behind the building. The lot has been cleared and construction of the site will soon begin with commissioning in Q1 of 2025.

Kokum Cultural Path: This project is currently underway in Yarmouth; adjacent to the Tru Hotel and was developed in partnership with our Community Enhancement Officer. The Kokum Cultural Path will provide a green space with interpretive panels reflecting culture and history. This project is being funded through the Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities program. A pavilion/outdoor stage was constructed last summer as in addition to the green space and will enhance the area and provide a new community event space. Funding for the pavilion was provided by ACOA.

Hammonds Plains Mobil Gas Bar: Construction has begun for our new gas bar in Hammonds Plains, the gas bar will become part of the current retail operation, Hammonds Plains Entertainment. This will be a Mobil branded site with 4 pumps (8 fueling stations) along with a new expanded retail convenience store. The project is scheduled to be completed in late 2024.

Weliankweyasimk Women's Shelter: The Weliankweyasimk Women's Shelter, located in Hammonds Plains, is currently under construction with a completion date of early 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.

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 are actively working on Additions to Reserves (ATR) files in several areas including Gardners Mill, Shelburne, Medway and Yarmouth. These files remain a top priority.

**Upcoming Projects/Future Plans:**  
Hammonds Plains Commercial Development  
Gold River Mawio'mi Grounds Phase 2  
Land Use & Strategic Plan  
New Business Initiatives & Partnerships



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Rachel Stevenson

[rstevenson@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:rstevenson@wasoqopaq.ca)

20

### Completed projects/Highlights 2023-2024 (events organized/held, yearly programming etc.)

Developed a policy for student support assistance (elementary/secondary).  
Distributed Grade 12 graduation stoles throughout our communities.  
Attended and presented at the 2024 Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK) Symposium.  
Participated in staff training.  
Created a resource for post secondary students along with a document for other funding options.  
Developed, through language and culture, a "Laptop for Learners" partnership with Nuu-Chah-Nulth First Nation and Gratitude Salmon Seafood located in British Columbia.

### Unfinished Projects/Ongoing Programming

Mi'kmaw language classes  
Post Secondary educational assistance  
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  
Working in collaboration with Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK)

### Upcoming Projects/Future plans

- Host job/career fairs
- Host basic computer skills for older learners
- Collecting educational highlights/programming for (MK) Symposiums

### Other plans

Continue to make every effort to provide students with opportunities to grow, develop and succeed as independent learners thus reaching their full potential.  
Effectively manage our resources and encourage our students to value the choices offered by higher education.



# EDUCATION

Janice Francis

[janicefrancis@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:janicefrancis@wasoqopaq.ca)

# EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

Wanda Westhaver

[wandawesthaver@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:wandawesthaver@wasoqopaq.ca)

22

## Highlights for 2023-24

Summer students - 10 students were assisted with summer work placements.

Skills Development - 13 students were assisted with post-secondary education funding (NSCC and Short-courses).

Employment Readiness - A week long Women's Employment Readiness program was hosted in Liverpool during the summer of 2023. We had 14 ladies from all areas of Wasoqopa'q participate in the program. The program was made available through a partnership with Mount Saint Vincent University.

Community Garden in Medway was established and the first year was very successful. Seniors in the area were provided with various fresh vegetables and pickles made from cucumbers from the garden.

Drivers Training - We assisted a total of 7 clients with driver training.

Work Experience - We assisted a total of 11 clients with wage subsidies for work experience.

Projects/Workshops - A lot of focus was put on cultural type training projects with the hopes that the members would continue to develop their skills and eventually start thinking

about turning their crafts into a small business to help offset the cost of living as well as sharing the teachings with others to help keep our culture alive and thriving.

Entrepreneurship - An 8 module entrepreneurship training program was developed and delivered to 11 clients who were interested in opening/operating their own business.

A variety of offerings were held throughout the province including: Leather mittens, drum bags, moccasins, ribbon skirts, medicine bags, and beaded ornaments.

A gun safety course was also held in two areas.

Apprenticeship - We supported a total of 2 clients on the apprenticeship journey.

## UPCOMING /Future Plans

Plans for community meet and greets to introduce the new education/employment coordinator and gather information/ideas on the types of programming members would like to see offered in their areas

Continue with Entrepreneurship training supports

Life Skills, Employment support, and cultural Workshops

Seek additional funds for programming through proposal writing and grants

Continue to build partnerships with service providers and stakeholders



# FINANCIAL REPORT

23

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

The fiscal year March 31, 2024 saw an additional \$6M in capital assets acquired. Key projects underway are:

Construction of the Women’s Shelter has begun 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 spring of 2025.

The two Rapid Housing Initiative projects have seen 22 new modular homes constructed since December 2021. At the end of September 2024 all homes were occupied and the projects are considered complete.

Funder	Asset Type	Cost 2023-2024	Forecasted 2024 -2025	Total
CMM	Wildcat Greenhouse	-	50,000	50,000
Rapid Housing Initiative (CMHC)	Band -owned housing	2,178,015	2,000,000	4,178,015
OSR/ECCC	Vehicles	52,695	65,000	117,695
OSR/ACOA	Gold River Powwow grounds	167,475	-	167,475
OSR/ACOA	Yarmouth Cultural park	221,612	-	221,612
OSR	Retail operations assets	188,440	50,000	238,440
OSR	Green Energy projects	-	100,000	100,000
OSR	Fisheries Assets	643,417	500,000	1,143,417
ISC	Computers/Electronics	-	40,000	40,000
CMHC/OSR/ISC	Community Buildings	259,949	350,000	609,949
CMHC/OSR	CMHC Houses	709,782	350,000	1,059,782
OSR	Hammonds Plains gas station	-	1,500,000	1,500,000
TBD	Yarmouth Youth Centre	-	1,500,000	1,500,000
CMHC/ISC	Women’s Shelter	1,716,030	4,100,000	5,816,030
ISC	Infrastructure	12,233	150,000	162,233
OSR	Land purchase	164,702	150,000	314,702
OSR	Commercial buildings	-	50,000	50,000
				17,269,350
OSR = own source revenues from General Fund (unrestricted)		6,314,350	10,955,000	

# 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	Risk Management Plan
Health & Safety	Medical outbreak on reserve	Reduced health of members / potential loss of members	Emergency Preparedness Plan, Offer vaccines at health centres to keep up to date
Service Delivery	Services required in six different communities	Run 3.5 mm deficit each year on base funding provided by federal government	Increase own source revenue to fund programs/services. Diversify investments / business holdings.
Skills and Capacity	High number of key employees retiring in the next ten years	Loss of knowledge	Identify key positions that require a succession plan, create and implement succession plan. (Housing (2), Social, Education, Native Employment Officer, Fisheries finance, Membership Clerk)
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 services/programs to all communities, or programs/services can only be offered to some communities due to cost. Some staff in different locations have never met each other. Staff feel unsupported.	Comprehensive community plan. Research options for improved internet / cell service
Land Protection and Environment	Run out of land base in Yarmouth	Limits the number of new houses / businesses in that community	Discussions with ISC for potential of using ISC funds to purchase fee simple lands adjacent to community, place into

## 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://acadiafirstnation.ca/about-us/governance/financial-statements.html>

## Highlights

Total revenues of over \$57 Million across all operations (2023 - \$55M). Own source revenue represents 76.8% of the total (2023 - 76.4%).

Incorporated entities \$32.6 M (2023 - \$31.2M)

Fisheries \$5.6M (2023 - \$4.5M)

Net surplus of \$5.9M (2023 - \$6.6M)

Tangible capital assets totalled \$49.7M by the end of the year (2023 - \$46.1M). The total value of assets insured is over \$75M.

Total cash and cash equivalents \$19M (2023 - \$15.8M).

Total Long term debt is \$18.6M (2023 - \$19M). FNFA accounts for \$14.5M (2023 - \$15.1M) and CMHC Housing loans account for the remainder \$4.1M (2023 - \$3.9M)

HST debt is decreasing on schedule with approximately \$550,000 remaining to be paid.

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

Band Support	\$ 646,080	(2023 - \$ 566,135)
Contribution to proposal driven projects	\$ 601,980	(2023 - \$ 1,679,660)
Education	\$ 1,537,899	(2023 - \$ 1,313,610)
Capital/Maintenance	\$ 1,238,167	(2023 - \$ 1,044,090)
Social	\$ 1,877,831	(2023 - \$ 1,495,296)
Health	\$ 891,179	(2023 - \$ 816,777)
CMHC Subsidy	\$ 239,658	(2023 - \$ 210,862)
Fisheries	\$ 86,244	(2023 - \$ 43,850)
Training	\$ 732,869	(2023 - \$ 494,920)

**Key expenses:**

Profit sharing paid out to members	\$ 1,154,100	(2023 - \$ 1,109,000)
Post secondary tuition and allowances	\$ 825,235	(2023 - \$ 747,208)
Repairs to band owned buildings	\$ 521,932	(2023 - \$ 405,409)
Crew share paid to fishermen	\$ 2,259,297	(2023 - \$ 1,779,105)
Salaries	\$ 3,949,854	(2023 - \$ 3,801,808)
Retail operation expenditures	\$ 27,421,114	(2023 - \$26,393,772)
Elder payments	\$ 655,100	(2023 - \$ 518,600)

Wasoqopa'q First Nation and it's entities paid out approximately \$10M in payroll during the fiscal year (2023 - \$9.3M) supported over 250 jobs at it's annual peak in December.

The Band supports it's November profit sharing allocation through funds taken from the five gas bars/gaming establishments -\$1,629,000 (2023- \$1,558,000), the fisheries - \$276,000 (2023 - \$ 222,500) and the sale of quota tobacco – \$309,000 (2023 - \$ 328,500). 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	\$1,325,000	(2023 - \$ 1,265,000)
Economic development	\$ 885,000	(2023 - \$ 844,000)

# FINANCIAL REPORT



## Independent Auditor's Report

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, 2024, 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, 2024, 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 29 to 38 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.

### 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  
July 29, 2024



Chartered Professional Accountants

**Wasoqopa'q First Nation**  
**Consolidated Statement of Operations**

Year Ended March 31

	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Actual 2023
<b>Revenues</b>			
Federal government operating transfers	\$ 4,751,127	\$ 6,314,008	\$ 5,337,818
Federal government capital transfers	350,000	3,121,642	3,674,595
Provincial government operating transfers	150,000	276,909	263,099
Economic activities	12,165,000	11,709,374	11,043,602
Economic activities – incorporated entities	30,454,817	32,576,389	31,155,080
Other	3,396,318	3,631,144	3,787,241
	<u>51,267,262</u>	<u>57,629,466</u>	<u>55,261,435</u>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Band management and support	15,355,550	13,982,016	13,274,166
Education	987,768	1,546,321	1,323,230
Community maintenance	1,663,200	1,803,749	1,606,658
Social services	996,050	940,362	908,402
Community health	701,127	940,726	645,127
Housing	668,550	692,753	672,292
Fisheries	3,265,050	3,775,704	3,299,802
Training	475,000	540,199	492,663
Forestry	64,500	72,362	112,304
Incorporated entities	26,024,643	27,421,114	26,332,227
	<u>50,201,438</u>	<u>51,715,305</u>	<u>48,666,870</u>
<b>Annual surplus</b>	<u>\$ 1,065,824</u>	<u>\$ 5,914,161</u>	<u>\$ 6,594,566</u>

Federal government transfers (Note 20)

See accompanying notes to the consolidated financial statements.

**Wasoqopa'q First Nation**  
**Consolidated Statement of Financial Position**

March 31

2024

2023

<b>Financial assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 19,045,929	\$ 15,799,235
Receivables (Note 6)	2,049,982	1,471,590
Inventory held for resale (Note 1)	1,261,518	1,314,284
Restricted cash and deposits		
Funds on deposit at DISC (Note 15 a))	12,821	12,399
Funds on deposit at FNFA (Note 15 b))	1,249,046	1,202,833
CMHC reserves (Note 10)	715,482	785,097
	<u>24,334,778</u>	<u>20,585,438</u>
<b>Financial liabilities</b>		
Payables and accruals (Note 9)	1,900,437	1,562,718
Deferred revenue (Note 3)	5,191,162	3,547,453
Assessment of sales tax, penalties and interest (Note 17)	536,438	836,438
Asset retirement obligation (Note 23)	668,105	632,462
Long-term debt (Note 8)	18,665,088	19,001,734
	<u>26,961,231</u>	<u>25,580,806</u>
<b>Net debt</b>	<u>(2,626,453)</u>	<u>(4,995,368)</u>
<b>Non-financial assets</b>		
Portfolio investments (Note 22)	2	2
Tangible capital assets (Note 7)	49,703,553	46,135,956
Asset retirement obligation asset	610,111	632,462
Intangibles (Note 1)	4,437,000	4,437,000
Prepaid expenses	88,695	74,517
	<u>54,839,361</u>	<u>51,279,937</u>
<b>Accumulated surplus</b>	<u>\$ 52,212,908</u>	<u>\$ 46,284,569</u>
<b>Accumulated surplus (Page 5)</b>	<u>\$ 52,212,908</u>	<u>\$ 46,284,569</u>

Contingencies and commitments (Note 17)

On behalf of the Band

\_\_\_\_\_ Chief \_\_\_\_\_ Band Manager

See accompanying notes to the consolidated financial statements

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

March 31	2024	2023
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		
<b>Operations</b>		
Annual surplus	\$ 5,914,161	\$ 6,594,566
Amortization	2,746,752	2,573,817
Accretion expense	35,643	-
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	-	-
Changes in non-cash operating working capital balances (Note 11)	1,178,785	(3,212,518)
Amortization of asset retirement obligation asset	22,351	-
	<u>9,897,692</u>	<u>5,955,864</u>
<b>Financing</b>		
Advances of long-term debt, net of repayments	(336,646)	(803,042)
<b>Capital transactions</b>		
Asset retirement obligation addition	-	(632,462)
Purchase of tangible capital assets	(6,314,352)	(6,333,476)
	<u>(6,314,352)</u>	<u>(6,965,935)</u>
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	3,246,694	(1,813,115)
Cash and cash equivalents		
Beginning of year	15,799,235	17,612,351
End of year	<u>\$ 19,045,929</u>	<u>\$ 15,799,235</u>

See accompanying notes to the consolidated financial statements

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

March 31	Budget	2024	2023
Surplus	\$ 1,065,824	\$ 5,914,161	\$ 6,594,566
Tangible capital asset additions	(8,580,000)	(6,314,352)	(6,333,476)
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	-	-	-
Asset retirement obligation addition	-	-	(632,462)
Amortization of asset retirement obligation asset	-	22,351	-
Amortization of tangible capital assets	2,750,000	2,746,752	2,573,817
Decrease in net debt	<u>\$ (4,764,176)</u>	<u>2,368,912</u>	<u>2,202,445</u>
Net debt, beginning of year		<u>(4,995,368)</u>	<u>(7,197,812)</u>
Net debt, end of year		<u>\$ (2,626,453)</u>	<u>\$ (4,995,368)</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 Chief/Council Member	Months	Honoraria	Travel Expenses	Other	2024 Total	2023 Total
Chief Deborah Robinson	12	\$ 149,660	\$ 5,505	\$ -	\$ 155,165	\$ 142,727
Charmaine Stevens	12	96,210	7,438	-	103,648	96,716
Michael Paul	12	96,210	5,204	-	101,414	92,434
Thomas Pictou	12	96,210	9,858	4,592	110,660	96,990
Andrew Francis	12	96,210	1,616	-	97,826	90,437
Avis Johnson	12	96,210	2,374	-	98,584	90,520
Rachel Falls	12	96,210	1,743	2,774	100,727	90,263
Jeff Purdy	12	96,210	8,487	4,654	109,351	99,050
Natteal Battiste	12	96,210	2,270	2,654	101,134	94,716
		<u>\$ 919,340</u>	<u>\$ 44,495</u>	<u>\$ 14,675</u>	<u>\$ 978,509</u>	<u>\$ 893,853</u>

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

# HEALTH

Marla Robinson-Pyne Health Director  
[marlarobinson-pyne@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:marlarobinson-pyne@wasoqopaq.ca)  
(902) 742-4337

Kolby Blair NADACA, Mental Health and Addictions Coordinator (902)742-8883  
Jessica Bannon Clinical Social Worker and Mental Health Clinician (907)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 (907)627-1245

29

## Completed Projects/ Highlights

COHI (Children's Oral Health Initiative)

WFn Mental Health Clinician

Footcare and VON resumed in community; Yarmouth, Medway, Gold River.

Laugh and Learn Play group, Gold River Health Centre.

NADACA visited 7 areas and hosted Medicine Bundle workshops.

Addictions Awareness Week was recognized with a series of in-person and online workshops and activities, some including: Opioids Awareness, Recognizing an Overdose, Harm Reduction, Self-Care, and Addictions Awareness Bingo.

WFn Health assisted with the planning and hosting of the Yarmouth Community Christmas Dinner. During March Break, we hosted youth wellness workshops in Gold River, Wildcat, Halifax and Yarmouth. These workshops explored wellness and selfcare for youth.

WFn Health assisted with the delivery of raised garden beds, soil and seeds to 6 areas.

WFn Health hosted Keeping Tobacco Sacred workshops in Gold River, Wildcat, Halifax and Yarmouth. We were also able to mail information and tobacco seeds to band members not able to attend the workshops. We were also able to assist with planning and hosting the Yarmouth Student Awards ceremony.

WFn Health have hosted multiple online wellness activities for adults, youth and families on the Facebook page "NADACA Programming (WFn)".

The health team has also partnered with organizations including The Steeper Climb, The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, Mi'kmaw Family & Children's Services and the Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre. Through these partnerships, we were able to have programming and workshops focused on: Shelf help, Mindfulness, Grief and Bereavement, LuskiniK Kits, Self Love, Ribbon Skirts, Celebrating Mothers, Porcupine Harvesting, Men's Wellness Evening, Youth Summer Camp and Internet Safety for Youth.



## Ongoing Programming

Development of the Health Centre Occupational Health and Safety System

Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselling Assoc. Information Sessions

Collaboration with Methadone clinic to offer services from Gold River Health Centre

Diabetes Education with Anne Gottschall (CMM)

## Upcoming Projects/Future plans

Drug Awareness Week 2024 will be hosted in November. Programming will be offered in-person in communities, as well as online programming.

Foot Care clinics in Shelburne

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

## Completed Projects/Highlights

The Housing Department applied for funding in March of 2023 through the Rapid Housing Initiative ROUND 3 and received funding for 8 new modular homes 4 went to Gold River and 4 in Yarmouth. Housing staff built a comfort station on the Gold River reserves Powow Grounds that is 100 % complete.

CMHC funded a new mini home that was delivered to the Yarmouth Reserve.

There were 6 decks replaced and/or major repairs

6 new steps replaced or repaired

There were 2 water heaters replaced.

6 Sheds were built

A new pump house was built for the Wilcat Community Center and greenhouse.

A subdivision has been designed for 6 seniors houses in Gold River these units will be 2 bedroom-accessible homes, and one home is finished.

And also many everyday repairs such as taps, toilets, sinks, tubs, ramps, flooring, drains, driveways, etc.. These are just a few of the many repairs that are called into the Housing Department.

## Upcoming Projects

On-reserve housing



The housing department is working with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq on the development and implementation of the customized Maintenance Management System for housing and infrastructure.

The CMMNS Maintenance Management Program will provide our community with the ability to better track our housing, housing requests for repairs, O&M activities and capital projects.

With this CMMNS the on-reserve community can fill out request for repairs with our online form, a link to the form can be accessed through our website or you can scan the QR code.

Upcoming Inspection of all homes on reserve TBD The CMM on behalf of WFN will be conducting a visual condition assessment, which is a walkthrough of your home by a qualified buildings inspector with the goal of identifying building conditions that could cause a health and safety hazard to the occupant, a building code compliance infraction or general maintenance issues in the home. The inspector will be taking photos to document the inspection to accompany a report that will be generated on behalf of the First Nation. We will be looking at the exterior and interior of your home. A notice will go out to each home notifying you when the inspection will take place at you home.

# HOUSING

Jim Pictou Housing Director

[jpictou@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:jpictou@wasoqopaq.ca)

Marie Falls Housing Manager

[Mfalls@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:Mfalls@wasoqopaq.ca)



30

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



**CULTURE, AWARENESS & EDUCATION**

- Finalize and have approved the new HR Manuals for administration and business operations
- Revise and establish new HR Policies and Procedures associated with the HR Strategic Plan as needed
- Finalize, have approved and implement the HR Strategic Plan
- Establish a new Performance Review Template for business operations
- Finalize, have approved and implement the Respectful Workplace online training program

**EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY**

- Finalize, have approved and implement the new Technology and Social Media Policy
- Conduct research regarding the establishment of a cultural awareness training program for new employees
- Explore opportunities for specific cultural sessions and or ceremonies for specific Mi'kmaq/Indigenous holidays and or celebrations for all employees

**HEALTH, WELLNESS & SAFETY**

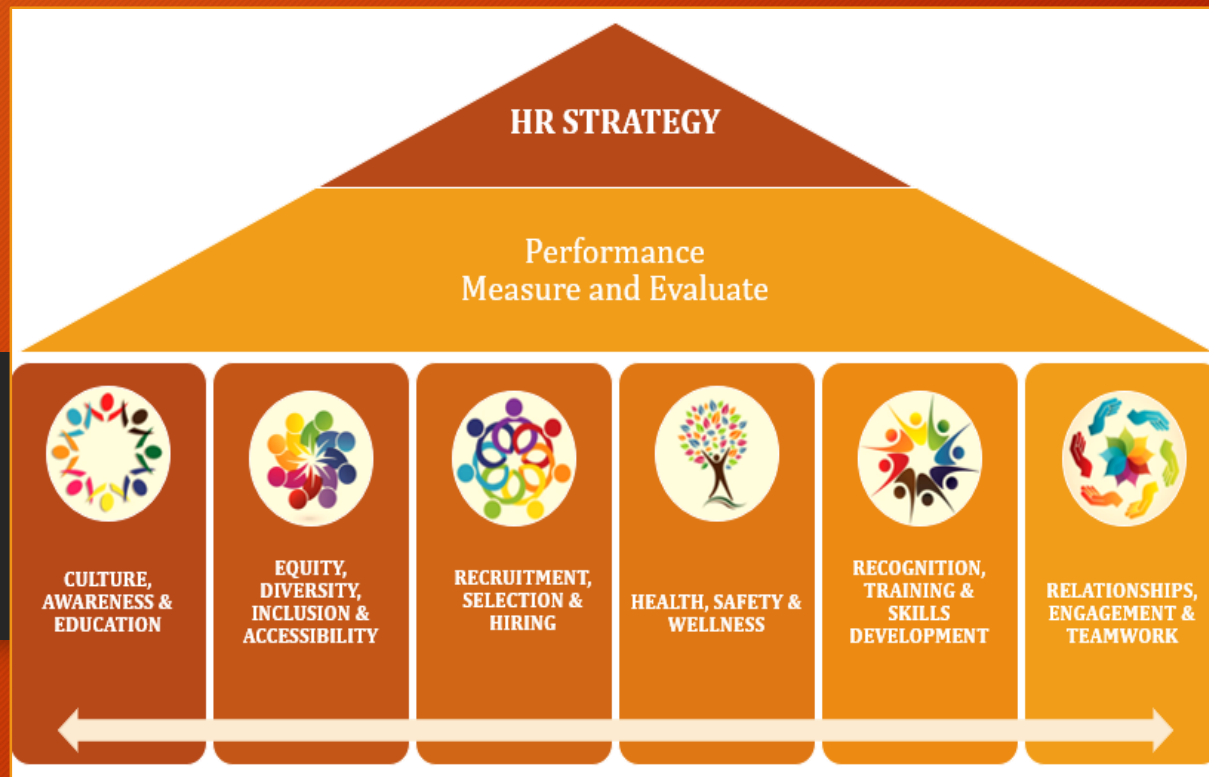
- Amalgamation of the JOHS Committee with the WFN Emergency Management Committee
- Finalize and implement the new Occupational Health and Safety Plan
- Organize annual Occupational Health and Safety Training for employees
- Source and update all health and safety equipment for all administrative and business locations

**RECOGNITION, TRAINING & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

- Develop and deliver training on the new SharePoint Site for Business Managers
- Support employees professional development goals

**RECRUITMENT, HIRING & SELECTION**

- Finalize revisions to all Job Descriptions in administration and business operations
- Finalize the new Recruitment and Hiring Process/Handbook
- Establish, print and distribute a new Employee Handbook
- Facilitate and lead all WFN hiring processes for administration and business operations
- Conduct new employee orientations as needed



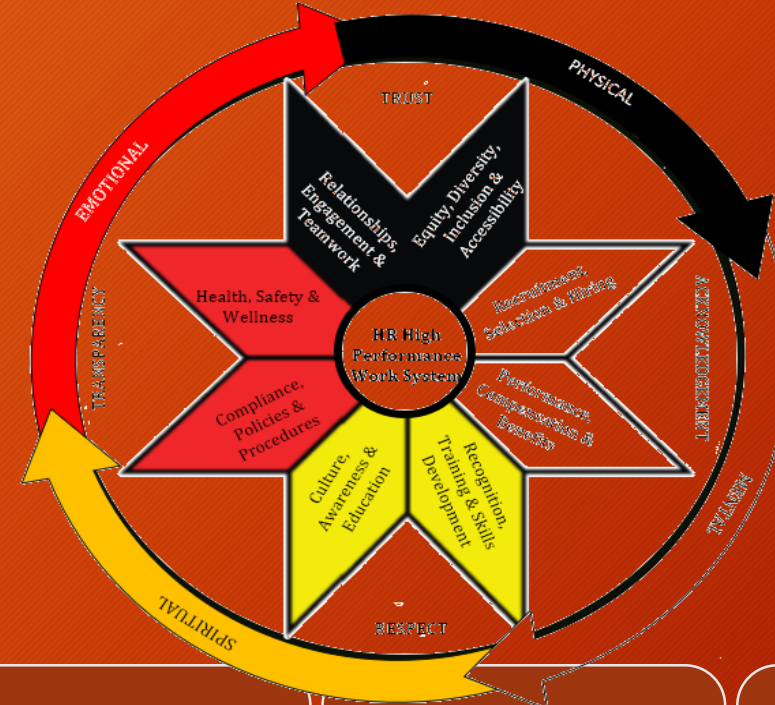
# HUMAN RESOURCES

Lisa Francis-Beaver

[lmfrancisbeaver@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:lmfrancisbeaver@wasoqopaq.ca)

The WFN Human Resources Department continues to strive in establishing and delivering a 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. 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 within this high performance work system 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.



## Activities & Accomplishments



### CULTURE, AWARENESS & EDUCATION

- Continued to review the newly drafted HR Manuals for administration and business operations
- Drafted, with the Consultant, the HR Strategic Plan and 3-year workplan
- Established and executed an HR Strategy and annual workplan
- Established and provided an annual report including activities, accomplishments, metrics and future goals and objectives
- Monitored and ensured compliance with all legal standards
- Maintained project reporting, budgets and completed required audits in accordance with activities and expenditures per budget.



### EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

- Drafted the WFN Technology and Social Media Policy
- Prepared and conducted employee engagement sessions for Senior Leaders and all staff
- Finalized and had approved the WFN Respectful Workplace Employee Policy
- Drafted Respectful Workplace signage and Employee Protocol posters
- Continued, with the Consultants, to develop the Respectful Workplace Employee training program materials and online platform
- Continued to transition all HR materials, including policies, procedures, forms and templates to respectful, gender neutral language



### RECRUITMENT, HIRING & RETENTION

- Continued to review drafts of all the new and revised Job Descriptions in administration and business operations
- Implemented the new Job Description and Job Posting templates
- Provided advice, guidance, tools and resources to Business Managers regarding employee matters
- Led the recruitment processes, including Interview Committees for approximately twenty-six (26) new and or vacant positions
- Developed, with the Band Manager fourteen (14) new positions in administration and or business operations



### HEALTH, WELLNESS & SAFETY

- Conducted safety assessments in all administrative and business operations locations
- Drafted, the WFN Health and Safety Plan
- Conducted a Business Managers and Senior Leaders engagement session regarding the WFN Health and Safety Plan
- Monitored and ensured compliance with all legal standards
- Developed safety plans and supported recruitment, selection and hiring processes for NS Power Projects
- Administered the WFN SunLife Group Benefits and Defined Contribution Pension Plan programs
- Conducted and addressed, with the Band Manager, incidents and investigations



### RECOGNITION, TRAINING & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Organized a Non-Crisis Violence Intervention Certification Program
- Planned and organized twelve (12) days of First Aid/CPR training to one hundred and twenty-four (124) employees in administration and business operations for a total of one hundred and twenty four (124) employees
- Organized and planned an Occupational Health and Safety and WHMIS training program for NSP Project employees
- Planned and organized, with the Housing Director, a complete occupational health and safety training program for the Housing and Maintenance employees
- Organized two in person food handler's courses for administration employees
- Organized twenty-four online food handlers' courses for employees



### RELATIONSHIPS, ENGAGEMENT & TEAMWORK

- Conducted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chief and Council Retreat in crisis management and Mental Health First Aid
- Prepared a WFN Staff Professional Development two day session for administration
- Established and conducted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Senior Management Session
- Planned and conducted, with the Consultant and Council representatives a WFN Youth Retreat with post secondary students in Nova Scotia
- Participated and provided HR updates in quarterly Business Manager meetings
- Reviewed and streamlined, as warranted, HR employee processes
- Provided advice, guidance, tools and resources to support Business Managers with employee matters
- Led staff meetings in business operations, as needed

# INVENTORY

*Sherry Anthony*

*Inventory Control Manager*

*Office 902-742-2128*

*[sherrya@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:sherrya@wasoqopaq.ca)*

Josephine Falls  
*[jfalls@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:jfalls@wasoqopaq.ca)*

Wendy LeJeune  
*[wllejeune@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:wllejeune@wasoqopaq.ca)*

33

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 meetings, Manager Meetings 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 part Quota, YWW Tobacco, Afneq Bingo and Winner's One Stop as well as clerical office duties. Supports the Jadon Robinson Memorial Golf Tournament.

Josephine Falls, Inventory Control Clerk over sees part Quota, YWW Retail, Hammonds Plains and AFN Entertainment as well as clerical office duties. Supports the Yarmouth Harvest Feast.

Wendy LeJeune, Inventory Control Clerk over sees The Gold Nugget, The Gold Bean, Medway Entertainment, Medway Food, Medway Ice Cream Hut and Medway Races, Quota Customers, as well as clerical office duties. Supports the Gold River Powwow.

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.



# KESPUWICK RESOURCES INC.

Curtis Falls  
Director of Operations  
[curtisfalls@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:curtisfalls@wasoqopaq.ca)

Rena Falls - Financial Comptroller [rfalls@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:rfalls@wasoqopaq.ca)

Michelle White - Administrative Assistant [fms@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:fms@wasoqopaq.ca)

Darlene Coulton - Livelihood Fisheries Liaison [mlf@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:mlf@wasoqopaq.ca)

34

## Food, Social and Ceremonial - Highlights:

In May, Wasoqopa'q First Nation members interested in Food, Social and Ceremonial fishing were invited to attend our FSC community engagement meeting. The purpose of the engagement meetings was to update the community's Netukulimk FSC Fish Harvest Plan.

Since 2017, WFN has been fishing under the Food, Social and Ceremonial Netukulimk Fish harvesting plan that was created from multiple community engagement meetings that started in 2016.

This Fishing Plan deals with food, social and ceremonial ("FSC") fishing harvest by members of the WFN as an aspect of netukulimk and as an exercise of Mi'kmaq self-government protected by section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, Canada.

Access for the exercise of the FSC rights of the Mi'kmaq are priority in the fishery, after the needs of conservation have been met.

This Netukulimk Fishing Plan is an evolving document and will be updated or amended by Chief and Council as required. It does not exhaustively define our Aboriginal right to fish or its scope; however, for the 2024/2025 fishing season, it is intended to provide a mechanism for the exercise of those rights within a system of proper management of the fisheries and the conservation and protection of fish.

The Food, Social and Ceremonial Netukulimk Fishing Plan does not apply to or define our "moderate livelihood" Treaty fishery.

Wasoqopaq First Nation does not accept a DFO issued license. The

DFO imposed license is not valid or enforceable.

WFN has its own food, social and ceremonial management process. When DFO has valid conservation or management objectives our community will be open to discussing them.

Access for the exercise of the FSC rights of the Mi'kmaq are priority in the fishery, after the needs of conservation have been met.

Annually, Lobster and scallops are distributed throughout the community.

Approximately 200 members receive lobster tags for LFA 33, 34 and 35 to provide lobsters for FSC purpose.

## Communal Commercial - Highlights:

12 vessels are in KRI communal commercial Fleet

7 Vessel fish 7 Lobster license in LFA 34

3 vessel fish 4 lobster license in LFA 33

1 fixed gear groundfish license and 1 mobile gear groundfish license

13 lobster licenses are leased on an annual basis.

1 vessel fish 4x Snow crab with a Band member as captain

2 Vessels fish Full Bay and 2 East of Baccaro Scallops

2 vessels fish 2 SWNS Bluefin Tuna licenses

11 clam licenses were harvested by WFN Members

5 marine licenses were harvested by WNF Members

5 gaspereau licenses were fished by WFN Band Members

1 used vessel was purchased for Lobster fishing in LFA 33, and it was captained by a WFN band member.

Purchased another Marine Worm license

## Upcoming Projects/Future Plans

The CFE is currently considering making lateral investments to further solidify its place in the industry and capture a greater proportion of profit from its fishery activities (i.e. owning their own lobster pound, looking at operating their own repair or boat building facilities, supplying their own bait). While the opportunities are not identified, it is the nature of the fishing industry that strategic and opportunistic access purchases arise seemingly out of the blue (at times) and it may be the desire of the Chief and Council to take advantage of an opportunistic situation.

It is KRI objective to keep growing by continuing to gain more assets in the form of vessels and licenses to expand its fish harvesting capabilities. In recent years it is reinvesting in its fishing fleet by completing drastic overalls many of its vessels. It will replace some of its vessels in the coming years.

Over the years all our harvesters have obtained marine training and certifications and continue to acquire training sponsored by KRI. In addition, KRI funds band member's fishing training who do not fish in our communal commercial fleet.

#### District 33-34:

The 2023-2024 season has seen huge improvements with total traps allocated to each registered vessel. 100 tags per harvester with a total of 350 per vessel. We have seen a great number of improvements with catches and are now preparing for the 24-25 season. Meetings have been held with harvesters and we are expecting approximately 50 - 60 harvesters taking part this season.

#### District 35:

The 2024 season is about to open on October 14. This district includes Digby. We currently have approximately 40 harvesters that wish to participate with no increase in the total tag allocation of 1000. This becomes challenging as no tag increases leaves our harvesters/vessels fishing well below the allocation to commercial licenses (300 per vessel). DFO will not increase the allocation due to the total effort in the area being at its maximum.

#### Elver:

DFO has announced the distribution of half of the commercial elver quota to first nations in 2025. The Assembly of First Nation Chiefs are currently in discussions with DFO regarding this announcement. The Kespuwitk team has been meeting regularly regarding this. Kespuwitk consists of Wasoqopa'q, Glooscap, Annapolis Valley FN, and Bear River.

#### Ongoing Goals and Future Plans:

Regular Meetings with DFO and Leadership

Technical Team meetings to review current activity with harvesters

More discussion on other types of fisheries

Regular contact with our harvesters through our liaison workers and community meetings. This will ensure compliance with our plan and gain input from our harvesters regarding moderate livelihood fishery.

We will continue to invest our time to ensure that our rights in all fisheries will be recognized by the Minister of Fisheries and DFO



# MODERATE LIVELIHOOD FISHERIES

Darlene Coulton

[MLF@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:MLF@wasoqopaq.ca)

902-774-2980

35



Total number of band members : 2015

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.

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada		CERTIFICATE OF INDIAN STATUS / CERTIFICAT DE STATUT INDIEN	
Registration no./Numéro d'inscription	9997001801	Family Name/Nom de famille	JOHNSON
		Given Names/Prénoms	LOUISE
		Alias/Nom d'emprunt	ANNE
Date of Birth/Date de naissance	1980/01/13	Gender/Genre	F
Date of Issue/Date de délivrance	2021/01/03	Renew Before/Renouveler avant	2031/01/13
Registry Group no. and Name/N° du groupe de registre et nom	3456 - BAND NAME		

**Registration number**

**Renewal date**

# MEMBERSHIP

Debra Glode Indian Registration Administrator  
[dglode@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:dglode@wasoqopaq.ca)

In March of 2024 Cecilia Ernst left her position as IEO and moved to the social case management position. In May she began holding community sessions to inform social clients on what case management is and how it can help them. Cecilia has taken the lead on holding community workshops through case management funding. And has thus far had a ribbon shirt workshop, basic shelf workshop in Gold River, Wildcat and Yarmouth. There is currently an ongoing parenting group in Gold River which she will take to other communities should there be interest, and we have an up coming canning workshop in each community. These workshops help our clients by teaching them new skills while connecting to their culture. Cecilia also spends time meeting with case management clients to help them achieve their goals and finding out what is important to them so that we can base our programming on client needs.

Ta'n Etli-tpi'tmk or Mi'kmaq Social Governance Association are hoping to have the software for the new enhanced social program in full use by next year, case managers are currently using this software for some aspects of case management. They also have been providing ongoing training to both the case managers and SDA's on the software.

The Mi'kmaq Social Governance association has also provided case managers and SDA's training with the Ontario Native Welfare Administrators Association to better prepare us to help our clients through their unique situations.

In September clients with children saw an increase to their bi-weekly payments as we added a basic needs amount to payments for under age dependents, and in October there was a 44% increase to all payments. The Social Governance Association has stated that there will be disability supports funding coming from ISC in the new year, however, there are few details at this time regarding this funding and how it will be implemented in each community.

The province of Nova Scotia has implemented a free hot lunch program in its schools however it is not due to be fully implemented until sometime in October, so to continue supporting our clients and their children with food security the social department has continued with our hot lunch program and will continue to support our clients with this so long as it's needed.

Unfinished Projects/Ongoing Programming  
Enhanced Social Policy will be ongoing for the next fiscal year.

Training with Social Association will be on going.  
Hot lunch program will continue.

Upcoming Projects/Future plans  
We are hoping to find funding to put up at least two food pantries to help with food security not just for our clients but all community members.  
Community workshops focusing on food security and culture.  
Client specific training.  
Social Association working to secure more funding for those with disabilities.

# SOCIAL

Crystal Croft - Social Development Administrator  
[crystalcroft@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:crystalcroft@wasoqopaq.ca)

Cecilia Ernst - Social Case Manager  
[Cecilia@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:Cecilia@wasoqopaq.ca)

# YARMOUTH YOUTH CENTRE

Jacklyn Cameron - Youth Center Coordinator  
[afnyouthcenter@wasoqopaq.ca](mailto:afnyouthcenter@wasoqopaq.ca) 902-742-6928

Stephanie Tuplin - Assistant Youth Center Coordinator

Vanessa Doucette - Early Childhood Educator

Sandra Lane, Stacey Purdy, Morgan Muise, Loretta Jarvis - Afterschool/Drop-in

38

The Wasoqopa'q First Nation Head Start program offers a half-day cultural and small group learning experience for first nations children and community members ages 2-5 years. Head Start focuses on Mi'kmaq language, culture, community and school readiness. The program ran from September 2023 - June 2024. Two students graduated the program and started in public school. Currently we have 3 students registered for the 2024-2025 school year.

March Break Day Camp 2024 had 16 participants signed up for the week. The week included theme days such as "Popcorn Pics" where we went to the movie theatre. "Creative Kids" as we explored art from all over the world. Supernova students from DAL university also came for a day to do S.T.E.M. activities with the participants. We ended March Break with a sleepover at TRU Yarmouth.

Summer day camp runs for 8 weeks in the summer. This past summer, the camp had approximately 25 participants, with weekly themes and beach trips. We also had a day trip to Shubenacadie Wildlife Park and Asitu'lisk.

The After School Program continues to run daily from 2:30pm-5:30pm with 23 participants for the 2024-2025 school year. This program is for students who are in grades primary to 6.

The Drop-in program runs Monday-Friday from 6pm-8pm. It gives children and youth in the community a safe, supervised space to meet with their peers, access computers and games, work on homework, etc.

"Teen Night" is once a month from 6pm-8pm. Teen night has been a success with anywhere from 5-10 participants each session. Past sessions included "Paint Night", "Trivia Night", "Movie Night" and "Games Night".

The Youth Center team hosts an annual tree lighting event at Christmas time and an annual Halloween Dance. The team also volunteers for events such as the community Harvest Feast and the Jstrong Golf Tournament.

Youth Center staff continue to take part in professional development and relevant training as the opportunities arise. This year all staff members attended Mawitaik Wjit Knijannaq (Early Childhood Conference) at Delta Dartmouth.