



DECEMBER 2020

SAMQWAN SAMAQAN + SAGE

Leading progress, innovation, and a long-term solution for water and wastewater management for Atlantic First Nations communities.

The Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (AFNWA) is a not-for-profit, pan-Atlantic water utility that is owned and operated by First Nations, for First Nations.

Our goal is to provide clean drinking water and safe wastewater services to participating First Nations communities. The AFNWA will be responsible for the operation, maintenance, and capital upgrades of all water and wastewater assets in each participating First Nations community. We are committed to helping build stronger First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada, in support of long-term plans for the communities we serve.

2020 PROGRESS UPDATES

Foundational work to establish the organizational structure of the AFNWA is well underway, despite the impact of COVID-19.

In June 2020, we were pleased that the Government of Canada recognized Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination and declared its commitment to support the AFNWA through the signing of a framework agreement. Since then, we have been busy meeting with communities and building the organization from the ground up. Key milestones include:

- » Fourteen (14) communities are committed to the AFNWA and have signed Band Council Resolutions (BCRs).
 - These communities are located within Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island and represent 61% of the total Atlantic First Nations by population.
 - These communities, along with any other interested First Nations communities, are welcome to join at any time.
 - Seven (7) more Atlantic First Nations communities have expressed interest in participating in the AFNWA.
- » Since June 2020, we held monthly meetings with our Board of Directors. Our Board is comprised of Chief Wilbert Marshall, Potlotek (Chair); Chief Ross Perley, Tobique (Vice Chair); Chief Andrea Paul, Pictou Landing; Chief Terry Paul, Membertou; Chief Arren Sock, Elsipogtog; Chief Darlene Bernard, Lennox Island.
- » 13 community meetings held during 2020
- » Implementation of the Full Service Decentralized (FSD) organizational structure that is most consistent with Chiefs, Councillors, Elders, and Operators concept of ownership and traditional values.
- » AFNWA Board has approved:
 - Governance Manual
 - Human Resources Policy
 - Financial Policy and Procedures Manual
 - Board of Directors and Elders Advisory Council Compensation Policy
 - Employee Salary Framework
 - Community Term Sheets (how to join and participate in AFNWA)
 - Transition Implementation Plan
- » AFNWA headquarters is tentatively secured in Millbrook, NS, a Mi'kmaw community near Truro.
- » Two new hires to the management team, including the Manager of Communications and Outreach, Adam Gould, and the Manager of Engineering, John Lam.
- » Interviews for Global TV + APTN feature airing January 2021.



“We want to be able, at the end of the day, to turn on the tap and drink a glass of water. Some communities can’t do that. We are the ones that are going to be accountable for that. Working as a team together will make us that much stronger.”

– Chief Andrea Paul, Pictou Landing First Nation

2021 LOOKING AHEAD

For many, 2020 was an exceptionally challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Key highlights include continuing to build our team, completing operational plans and processes, and engaging with stakeholders along the way. We are proud of the progress our team has made and we are excited for what 2021 holds for AFNWA.

QUICK FACTS

1

The Water Authority is a not-for-profit water utility that is owned and operated by First Nations, for First Nations. The goal of the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (AFNWA) is to provide clean drinking water and safe wastewater services to participating First Nations communities.

5

The utility will employ approximately 40 people by Spring 2022 with the majority coming from First Nations backgrounds. We will be responsible for delivering water and wastewater services to over 4,500 households and business, representing 60% of First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada.

2

The benefits of the AFNWA are First Nations control and capacity building, sustainable funding, transfer of legal liability, risk reduction, increased operational efficiencies, a strong, unified voice, and economic development opportunities.

6

AFNWA chose ‘Samqwan-Samaqan+Sage’ as its newsletter name to honour two sacred elements: water and sage. Samqwan is the Mi’kmaw word for water; Samaqan is its Wolastoqiyik translation. Water introduced life to Earth and sustains us—it is sacred. Sage is a herb used by many cultures to cleanse and purify surroundings, and also to welcome benevolent spirits into our presence. Samqwan-Samaqan+Sage brings us water and wisdom.

3

A community will be able to join and become a voting member of the Water Authority by passing a Band Council Resolution (BCR) to confirm their commitment to joining the AFNWA.

4

No individual resident will be asked to pay for water or water services the AFNWA provides.





SPRING 2021

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2021 PROGRESS UPDATE

It's full steam ahead for AFNWA; a trickle is now a flowing stream. Since our first newsletter issue in December, we have reached new milestones that we're excited to share.

- » Following a peer review by the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA), our completed Business Case was submitted to the Government of Canada. The OCWA review was a solid endorsement of the work to date and the path ahead.
- » [AFNWA's team continues to grow](#). We're pleased to welcome:
 - Mohamed Osman, Asset Management Technologist
 - Heather Patriarche, Administrative Assistant
 - Chantal LeBlanc, Manager of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer
 - James Trimble, Manager of Operations
- With nine (9) full-time staff currently, AFNWA expects to employ 40 by Spring 2022
- » The Board of Directors welcomes [Eskasoni's Chief Leroy Denny to the AFNWA Board](#). Eskasoni is the largest First Nations community in Atlantic Canada with a population near 5,000, and we are honoured to have Chief Leroy join us.
- » Global News and APTN teamed with the Institute for Investigative Journalism, to produce [Broken Promises](#). AFNWA interim CEO, Carl Yates was featured as part of the story as well as Tobique's lead Operator, Gregg Brewer. Find the story at: <https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/first-nations-water-operators-federal-government>.
- » Carl Yates, CEO of AFNWA, is the 2021 recipient of the [AWWA Abel Wolman Award of Excellence](#), which recognizes 'those whose careers in the water profession exemplify vision, creativity, and excellent professional performance.'
- » Two key projects underway are the [Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition \(SCADA\) Master Plan](#) and the [Asset Management Plan \(AMP\)](#).
 - The SCADA Master Plan is being conducted by Eramosa Engineering Inc. It includes a review of the hardware and software systems that control and monitor water/wastewater equipment and the development of a Desired State Report to be completed in fall 2021.
 - The AMP includes a framework for ongoing management of assets and a ten-year capital plan. The project will include wastewater environmental risk assessments, assessment of groundwater wells to determine if they are influenced by surface water, infrastructure condition assessments, and an operational survey to check valves on watermains, and inspect fire hydrants and manholes. The work is being carried out by Dillon Consulting Ltd.



“And today we’re making ourselves accountable. We’re making future governments accountable. And while there have been many reasons for the delay, I want to state as clearly as possible that, ultimately, I bear the responsibility for this, and I have the duty and responsibility to get this done. **Today we’re announcing an additional investment of more than \$1.5 billion to accelerate work to lift all long-term drinking water advisories on reserve.** What communities want is not an Ottawa-imposed deadline; it’s a long-term commitment to access to clean water.”

– The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada

Tied to this announcement is a commitment from the federal government to provide 100% funding for the operation and maintenance of water and wastewater systems in First Nations communities.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

With a focus on building capacity and training future water workers, AFNWA teamed with NSCC and NBCC and established two scholarship opportunities for First Nations students. The *Nujo'tmuk Samuqwan Award* will be awarded for the first time this year at NSCC. At NBCC, we honour the memory of Danny Lanteigne, a leader in his First Nations community and the water and wastewater profession with rollout coming this spring.

As of April 1, we have a new office that will act as our headquarters. We are now located at 13 Treaty Trail in Millbrook, Nova Scotia.

Not only will AFNWA have a permanent headquarters with the new office, we are settling our presence online. You can soon visit our website at www.afnwa.ca, but for now, find us on [LinkedIn](#).

As Covid-19 restrictions ease, we look forward to site visits, workshops with community-based operators, information sessions for everyone, and event sponsorship.

STAYING CONNECTED

For more information, please contact:

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 Find us on [LinkedIn](#)



nscc Foundation





SUMMER 2021

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2021 PROGRESS UPDATES

For AFNWA, spring was a time of thriving and reaching new milestones. As we thawed out over the season, water trickles grew into streams, and Atlantic Canada bloomed into summer. Our small organization experienced considerable growth during this time, and we share these updates with you.

- » **We welcomed five new members to our team:**
 - Derek Allison, Corporate Services Administrative Assistant
 - Pamela Harvie, Operations Administrative Assistant
 - Verna Langley, HR Generalist
 - Trevor Martin, IT Coordinator
 - Tiannie Paul, Operations Engineer
- » **AFNWA is very proud to announce the launch of our new website afnwa.ca.** This is a key objective of the Board-approved Communications and Outreach Strategy. Visit the site for upcoming career opportunities and to learn about our vision to provide sustainable water and wastewater services.
- » **We are pleased to announce that St. Mary's First Nation in New Brunswick** is the latest participant in our asset management planning (AMP) work.
- » The Board of Directors now has ten members, with **three new board members joining** in May 2021: Todd Hoskin, CEO of Ulnooweg Development along with Assembly of First Nations Regional Chiefs, Paul Prosper (Nova Scotia and Newfoundland) and Roger Augustine (New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island). Our Board meets every two months to provide oversight on operations and is eager to host an in-person meeting soon.
- » **Upcoming Operators Workshop**

AFNWA encourages all community-based Operators to participate in the upcoming Operators Workshop on July 27, 2021 in Millbrook. We aim to host this session in person, following all health and safety requirements.
- » Currently, AFNWA is looking to secure **additional office space to house our growing team**, and we aim to share an update shortly.

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

Summers in the east are always very warm, full of sun, and we Atlantic Canadians love being near the water. As provincial regulations ease, we hope to visit Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik communities, and enjoy gatherings with everyone.

In collaboration with Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC) and its Regional Water Coordinator, we will deliver virtual workshops over summer followed by a larger gathering in the fall. Topics will include water and wastewater regulatory regimes, clean drinking water, youth and water, careers in water, and water technology and innovations. The project takes inspiration from the Safe Drinking Water Foundation's Operation Water Spirit (OWS), which emphasizes First Nations culture and perspectives regarding water for First Nation students, and provides a new perspective to non-Indigenous students about the water issues facing First Nations.

For more information on upcoming workshops, educational opportunities, and careers, we encourage you to visit our new website at afnwa.ca. You can also visit us in-person at our office: 13 Treaty Trail in Millbrook, NS.

Without community-based water Operators, we may not have the resources to make high quality water. To acknowledge the important role of our Operators, AFNWA co-branded a t-shirt with the **American Water Works Association**, a first for both organizations.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Tiannie Paul, AFNWA Operations Engineer

AFNWA is a groundbreaking idea that is now a reality in both the figurative and literal sense. One could describe Tiannie Paul similarly; she is the first Mi'kmaw woman to graduate from Cape Breton University's Engineering Diploma program in November 2018 and went on to earn an engineering degree from Dalhousie in June 2021. She wears her iron ring with pride.

When asked about her reaction to being recruited by AFNWA in her senior year, Tiannie shared, "I would say it was a massive honor and a push for me to excel in my coursework. It also made me realize that my experiences as a First Nations female engineer were valuable to the AFNWA, and it motivated me to get through the final—and most challenging—parts of my degree."

Through our work with Dalhousie University and Dr. Graham Gagnon, we met Tiannie in her senior year and knew that she was meant to be part of AFNWA's journey.

Born and raised in Eskasoni, in Unama'ki, Tiannie is currently working part-time and will join AFNWA full-time as the Operations Engineer. Tiannie is also an up-and-coming artisan, and cites her baby sister, Piper, as her greatest inspiration. "I will strive to take my knowledge gained through my undergraduate, research and personal experiences as a First Nations female engineer to help provide safe clean water and wastewater services to all participating AFNWA communities."



“**Mi'klukwe Mkite'tmsi aqq Kksalsi.**” Translated from Mi'kmaw to English, it says to, **“Work hard, believe in yourself, and love yourself.”**

– AFNWA Operations Engineer, Tiannie Paul's advice to Indigenous youth.



We recently added new signage to our headquarters in Millbrook, so we are very easy to find when you visit us!

STAYING CONNECTED

For more information, please contact:

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FALL 2021

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2021 PROGRESS UPDATES

We are pleased to announce the opening of our second office located at 6 Louise Street in Truro, NS! As our team continued to grow this year, we soon ran out of space at 13 Treaty Trail in Millbrook, which will remain our HQ until we build a custom purpose building in 2023. These offices will house the Engineering Communications and Outreach, Corporate Services, and Operations departments.



We congratulate Mohamed Osman on earning his Professional Engineer designation in July! In Canada, the professional engineer (P.Eng.) designation represents the highest standards of engineering knowledge, experience, and professionalism. Originally the Asset Management Technologist, Mohamed was promoted to Project Engineer following a recent open competition.

Join us in welcoming new staff members to our growing team: Oriana Galfi, Financial Controller; Mark Geck, Safety & Security Coordinator; Lauren Mills, Communications Associate; John Vandenberg, Regulatory Compliance Coordinator; Gary West, Superintendent of Operations; and Jeff Wujick, Superintendent of Technical Services.

Upholding our commitment to building community capacity and upgrading worker skills, several workshops were held over the summer. With COVID-19 restrictions eased, AFNWA was able to host in-person workshops that had many community-based water monitors (CBWM) and operators in attendance. CBWMs met in Millbrook on July 26 and September 28 for gas detection equipment training. Operators' workshops were held on July 27 in Millbrook and October 6 in Moncton. We have also added the Operators' Corner to our website.

Methilda Knockwood-Snache was appointed by her peers to be Chair of the Elders Advisory Lodge. In her role as EAL Chair, Methilda will join the Board in bi-monthly meetings, upholding AFNWA's dedication to Two-Eyed Seeing.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Trevor Martin, IT Coordinator

Growing up in Listugui Mi'qmaq First Nation in Quebec, Trevor was a huge gamer which piqued his interest in the technical aspects of how computers work. By his early teens, he was engaging in programming and scripting for different platforms.

Trevor's passion for working in both the hardware and software arenas of the computer industry motivated him to attend CompuCollege School of Business (now Eastern College) in Fredericton, NB where he earned a diploma as an Information Systems Specialist. This laid the groundwork for him to acquire multiple Microsoft certifications.

As the IT Coordinator for AFNWA, Trevor provides technical support, staff member training, drafting and implementing IT policies, procuring hardware and software, as well as configuring and maintaining the head office networks.

When asked about his goals in this role, Trevor shared, "One of the many issues we find throughout our communities is the lack of IT representation. I'm hoping to engage with communities that will become part of the AFNWA to provide advice or ideas to assist with tackling their IT problems if they lack general support."

Prior to joining the AFNWA, Trevor worked for the Listugui Mi'qmaq Government, where, through advocacy and educational endeavours, he encouraged youth in his community to consider information technology as a serious career option. He looks



forward to having the same impact through his relationships with youth in communities that the AFNWA will be affiliated with.

Trevor offers this advice to Indigenous youth looking to start a career in the IT field: "Everything we do in our modern lives involves technology. Career opportunities are limitless in this field. Mobile development isn't going anywhere, profound knowledge and interest in mobile coding, scripting, or programming, in general, is always in need, and I think this is something our youth should be channeling some interest in."

Besides gaming, during his leisure time, Trevor enjoys playing hockey and taking his family rockhounding along Nova Scotia's numerous beautiful beaches.



“A ‘near miss’ is a safety deficit. Report it. Correct it.”

– Carl Yates, Interim CEO, AFNWA

This quote about safety was captured at AFNWA's first weekly meeting on workplace safety, hosted by Carl Yates, CEO, and Mark Geck, Safety and Security Coordinator.



COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

Lauren Mills is our new Communications Associate! She joins us from Halifax, NS, where she resides with her dog, Huey, and is a graduate of Mount Saint Vincent University's Bachelor of Public Relations program.

The recipient of the very first Nujot'mu'k Samuqwan Award is NSCC student Merina Sark of Paqtnkek. Merina's story was shared in NSCC's fall newsletter that can be found on its [website](#). We will have an update on the NBCC Danny Lanteigne Memorial Award in the future!

AFNWA records another milestone with the production of its first annual report! With help from NATIONAL Public Relations, who oversaw the style and format of the publication, the annual report was approved by the Board in October and is now available on our website at www.afnwa.ca.

The pow wow trail returned this summer, and AFNWA was fortunate to have presence in Lennox Island, PEI, and Eskasoni, NS. Some events and pow wows were cancelled due to a rise in COVID-19 cases, but we look forward to meeting community members next year in person. Over the winter months, we look forward to connecting with our communities virtually. We were also fortunate to attend the Pat Marr Memorial Labour Day Tournament in Sipeknek'atik in September, the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Millbrook, and Mi'kmaq Treaty Day events in October.

In July, AFNWA supported the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC) water symposium to raise awareness of the importance of regulations, especially with our youth. A second virtual gathering took place on November 23.

FOLLOW AFNWA ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

