



WINTER 2022

# SAMQWAN + SAGE SAMAQAN

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, Wabanaki Nations 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.

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## 2021 PROGRESS UPDATE

- » AFNWA congratulates departed Board member **Roger Augustine** on his recent retirement. Roger's career spanned over 40 years where he was elected Chief of Eel Ground First Nation, and most recently spent almost 13 years as AFN Regional Chief for New Brunswick and PEI.
- » The **Board approved** the following policies at recent meetings: Occupational Health and Safety (OSH), Flextime, Fraud, Whistleblower, Asset Management, Privacy, Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest, COVID-19 Vaccination, and IT. AFNWA policies are added to our **website** upon Board approval.
- » We welcomed **Mark MacDonald** to the Engineering Department in December 2021. Mark is our new Asset Management Technologist, and 21st staff member.

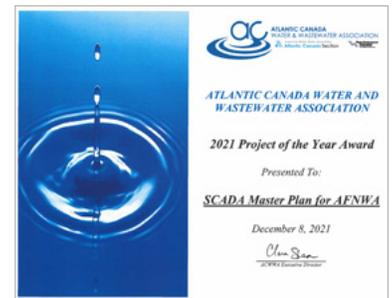


- » The Operations Department is hosting **Safety Update** meetings on Tuesday mornings. The weekly gatherings, hosted by Safety and Security Coordinator Mark Geck, share info and advice on how we can work individually and collectively to keep ourselves and teammates safe and healthy. All AFNWA staff are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and have completed First Aid Training.

- » AFNWA continues to **complete projects** and achieve new milestones by finalizing the Asset Management Plans [AMPs] and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition Master Plan. Dillon Consulting completed 17 community AMPs as the SCADA Master Plan was carried out by Eramosa Engineering. AFNWA, in partnership with the First Nations Infrastructure Institute is working to complete a cost recovery pilot with Paqtnek First Nation regarding infrastructure associated with economic growth.
- » Atlantic Canada Water Works Association presented AFNWA with its 2021 **Project of the Year award** (Small Project Category) for our SCADA Master Plan.

- » Our **Ten-Year Capital and Operations Budget** was submitted to ISC in December upon invitation from the Government of Canada for consideration in the 2022-23 federal budget.

- » Indigenous Services Canada **Minister Patty Hajdu** accepted a request from the AFNWA Board Chair Chief Wilbert Marshall to discuss the AFNWA journey in recognition of our common vision for self-determination and capacity building within First Nations. The discussion was positive and the Minister will continue to support and monitor our progress!



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Mohamed Osman, Project Engineer

AFNWA's Project Engineer, Mohamed Osman, has been passionate about math and drawing since he was a young boy growing up in Sudan. Following in his father's and grandfather's footsteps, Mohamed studied civil engineering at the University of Khartoum.

Upon graduating, Mohamed began work as a construction engineer in Sudan's oil and gas sector. It was in this role that he discovered a keen interest in environmental engineering as it combined his love of nature and math. In 2003, he moved to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia for work and later completed his Master's (2006) and Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering (2013) at King Saud University. He continued his work as an environmental engineer while teaching Environmental Engineering at KSU.

In 2020, Mohamed, his wife, and their two daughters immigrated to Canada. They chose Canada because they were looking for a home where they would find peace, a better quality of life, respect for cultural diversity, and be surrounded by nature. When he first arrived in Halifax, Mohamed worked as an interim environmental analyst with the NS Department of Environment before joining AFNWA in January 2021 as an Asset Management Technologist. Six months later, he was promoted to his current role as Project Manager. Last summer, Mohamed earned his Professional Engineer designation.

As a project engineer, Mohamed oversees a range of capital projects and plays a key role in the asset management program related to AFNWA's infrastructure. Mohamed's duties include managing projects from beginning to end—including



concept development, project design oversight, tender process management, construction management, and facilities commissioning.

Mohamed believes that the success of one of us at AFNWA is the success of all of us. **"We are paving the way to create a successful model embedded with values from First Nations cultures."** Mohamed is looking forward to ever-increasing engagement with AFNWA's operators as he shares his expertise and learns from the "real champions" of safe drinking water and expert wastewater management.

A lifelong lover of learning, Mohamed wants to learn as much as he can about Indigenous culture. Outside of work, he balances his very busy life by spending quality time with his family, reading, visiting nature, walking on trails, talking with friends, and going to the gym. Eventually, he hopes to travel throughout Canada, discovering new places and meeting new people.

## COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

- » The [Cape Breton Post](#) published a feature in late January on the water authority and our plans for 2022-23. Board Chief Terry Paul, Membertou, was interviewed for the [SaltWire Network](#) publication, along with our CEO, Carl Yates, and Unama'ki's own James MacKinnon, our COO.
- » AFNWA will have a feature article in an upcoming issue of the American Water Works Association [Journal AWWA](#), following an article in OWWA's fall 2021 issue of [Ontario Pipeline](#).
- » Adam Gould was featured in [AWWA Member Spotlight](#) for November and in recognition of Alaska Native Heritage.
- » Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC) hosted the latest [Water Talks](#) virtual series in January with support from AFNWA. The sold out symposium included a presentation by AFNWA CEO Carl Yates. APC Water Talks has upcoming sessions for Indigenous students and youth in the coming weeks. Visit the APC and AFNWA social media pages for more information.

- » Indigenous students and youth are invited and encouraged to join the upcoming [Operators Workshop](#) on **March 22**. The training event has information on how to register in the brand-new [Events](#) page on our website.



- » AFNWA has a busy spring and summer ahead with its outreach program, including several [sponsorships](#) in Unama'ki and Kijipuktuk that will be covered in the next issue!

## FOLLOW AFNWA ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





SPRING 2022

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## 2022 PROGRESS UPDATES

**World Water Day** was March 22<sup>nd</sup> and we celebrated together with community water operators at our latest **Operators Workshop**. AFNWA noted the continued attendance of Dale Ward, the only Indigenous woman who is currently serving her community as a water operator in Atlantic Canada. AFNWA plans to develop initiatives that will direct women and girls to pursue studies and careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). The next Operators Workshop will be in June with details to come.

Our team welcomed **Mark E. MacDonald** in March as Technical Services Technologist. He will work directly with Jeff Wujcik, Superintendent of Technical Services, in our Operations Department.

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, the federal government released **Budget 2022**, which proposed to provide Indigenous Services Canada with an additional **\$173.2 million over 10 years** starting in 2022–23 to support the transfer of water and wastewater services in Wabanaki communities to AFNWA. Following a news release, interim CEO Carl Yates, interim COO James MacKinnon, Board Chair Chief Wilbert Marshall, and Vice-Chair Chief Ross Perley were featured in interviews with CBC, SaltWire, Global News, and Brunswick News. Following the budget announcement, Chief Wilbert, Carl, and James also enjoyed a supportive conversation with Indigenous Services Minister, Patty Hajdu.

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, Crown-Indigenous Relations **Minister Marc Miller** attended our **Agreements Workshop** with Chiefs in Dartmouth. Joining him were Members of Parliament Kody Bloise (Kings-Hants) and Jaime Battiste (Sydney-Victoria).

The Association of Consulting Engineering Companies – New Brunswick presented its **2022 Engineering Excellence Award** to Dillon Consulting Ltd. and AFNWA. John Lam attended the ACEC-NB event along with Dillon's Julie DiCicco, Ryan Dunbar, and Angel Ransom of the First Nations Major Project Coalition (pictured below from left to right).



Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Marc Miller being smudged by Elder Methilda Knockwood-Snache. Also pictured: Chief Wilbert Marshall (AFNWA Board Chair) and Jaime Battiste, MP.

AFNWA is currently working with Dalhousie University's **Centre for Water Resources Studies (CWRS)** on regulatory compliance operations plans, and needs the assistance of two Indigenous students for **summer internships**. Interns will work closely with Dalhousie and AFNWA staff to conduct drinking water sampling and learn about data collection and analysis. The position is based out of Halifax or Truro and interested students can apply or learn more by contacting Megan Fuller at [Megan.Fuller@dal.ca](mailto:Megan.Fuller@dal.ca).

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### James Trimble, Manager of Operations

James “Jim” Trimble joined AFNWA in April 2021 as Manager of Operations, bringing over 30 years of water and wastewater management experience in Indigenous communities. As leader of the Operations team, he ensures that all operators are fully trained and licensed and that water, wastewater treatment plants, and related infrastructure are operated and maintained to industry standards. His responsibilities also include oversight for quality assurance and quality control to ensure AFNWA delivers on its mission to provide high quality drinking water and wastewater services that meet the highest standards in the land.

Before AFNWA, Jim was Director of Capital and Public Works at Beausoleil First Nation, an Ojibwe community on Christian Island, ON. In his 11 years there, he was dedicated to solving issues in water and wastewater such as lack of operator training resources and securing funding for capital projects, operations, and maintenance activities. One of his major accomplishments prior to his tenure in Beausoleil was with Nunatsiavut in Labrador where he was the lead on the construction of facilities in Torngat Mountains National Park.

James is the father of seven and resides in Woodstock, NB, with his wife of 29 years and their two youngest children. The Trimbles are designated as a level three foster home to help First Nations youth.



His personal goal is to complete his MBA, demonstrate that this operations management style can succeed across Canada, and continue advocating for First Nations careers in trades. In his spare time, he enjoys video games, with a two cream and one sugar dark roast from Tim Hortons.

“We need to make First Nations water and wastewater services the same as other leading municipalities across the country. We need long-term plans for upgrading infrastructure in the communities instead of battling Indigenous Services Canada every year for funding.”

“We are leading the country in our approach to fixing long-standing issues with First Nations water.”

– James Trimble (when asked why he decided to join the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority)

March also ended on a cultural theme, this time in a thoughtful session with Houston Barnaby and Corey Mattie of **Indigenous Treaty Partners**. Our staff enjoyed an interactive afternoon of learning a deeper history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. AFNWA looks forward to having our friends from ITP back for more knowledge sharing in the future.



## COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

AFNWA had the honour of hosting Millbrook Elder-in-training, **Patsy Paul-Martin**, on March 1st as part of our staff cultural training. Patsy shared stories about Mi'kmaw culture, growing up in Mi'kma'ki, and then smudged our colleagues and office spaces at both Louise St. and Treaty Trail. Wela'liek, Patsy, our door is always open!

We are proud to be an official sponsor for **Samqwan: Encore**, showing at the Highland Arts Theatre in Sydney, May 5–8, and Neptune Theatre from May 12–15. In the same week, AFNWA will also be a sponsor of the **National Aboriginal Hockey Championships** taking place in Membertou, NS, from May 9–14. Our team is grateful for the opportunities to be involved with cultural events, sports and recreation, and the arts in Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik communities.

The **pow wow trail** was announced in March and AFNWA staff hope to see you at events over the summer! The first Mawio'mi for pow wow season is in Pictou Landing First Nation, June 4–5, and wraps up the weekend of September 24–25 in Paqtnekek. Join us on social media for info on when you can expect to see us along the pow wow trail!

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SUMMER 2022

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## PROGRESS UPDATE

The Atlantic First Nations Water Authority is honoured to share the news that two more communities have confirmed their desire to explore membership in AFNWA and to participate in our Asset Management Plans [AMP]. We welcome **Wagmatcook and We'koqma'q** to the AFNWA journey, and look forward to working in the communities as we move towards full operations. All five Unama'ki bands are now AFNWA AMP participants!

In May, our team was delighted to be recognized at the **Canadian Network of Asset Managers Tereo Awards**. John Lam, Manager of Engineering, accepted the **Innovator Award** for AFNWA, which is awarded to "an organization successfully developing and implementing Asset Management approaches to effect business improvement."



The Operations and Engineering Department are working with the Dalhousie Centre for Water Resource Studies [CWRS] on our **water sampling program** that will see the team visit several Wabanaki communities over the next several months. Starting in June with Glooscap First Nation, the joint project involves acquiring multiple water samples on a quarterly basis in several Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey communities.

AFNWA and CWRS were also highlighted at the International Water Association's **Water Safety Conference 2022** recently held in Narvik, Norway. Tiannie Paul, Operations Engineer, and Megan Fuller, Dalhousie University, offered a visual presentation on **Two-Eyed Seeing: Development of One Water Safety Plans**.

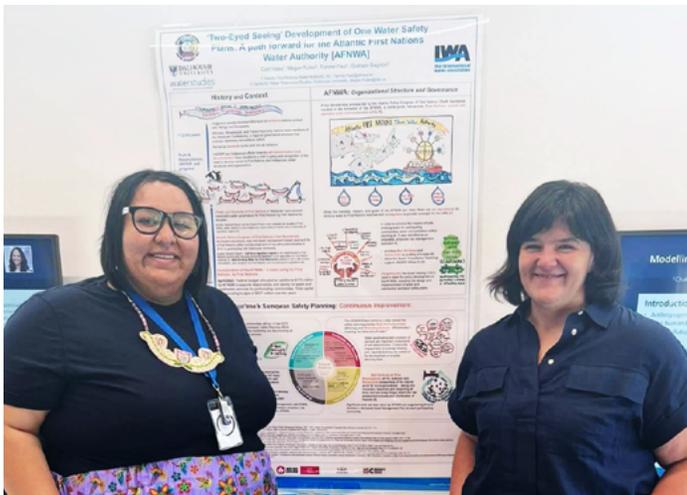


Photo credit: Megan Fuller

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Verna Langley, HR Generalist

As AFNWA Human Resources Generalist, Verna is responsible for a broad spectrum of HR activities with a recent focus on recruitment over the spring and summer. She has been busy writing and distributing job postings, coordinating and conducting interviews, and directing orientation with new employees. Verna also writes and develops HR policies, is a member of the Social and Personnel Committees, and coordinates all employee training. Before joining AFNWA in June 2021, Verna worked at Pictou Landing First Nation's band office in a similar position.

“AFNWA is a wonderful organization to work for,” she shared, adding, “All employees are here for the same reasons and truly care about the drinking water and wastewater, and the water Operators in all First Nations communities.”



Verna is Mi'kmaq, has been married for 24 years, and has five children, four grandchildren, and a variety of pets. Beading and sewing are her personal passion. Verna's goal in this role is to ensure that First Nations are a top priority when it comes to hiring new staff and policy development.

## COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

The Mi'kma'ki Water Walk began in May and made its way through Truro in June. Through our Social Committee, AFNWA was able to donate to aid walkers with supplies and a cash donation. Chantal Leblanc, Manager of Corporate Services, spent a sunny and spiritual afternoon with the Grandmothers, an experience she describes as “unforgettable.” The Social Committee also supported an initiative to send aid to Ukraine.

On June 27, we enjoyed a great conversation with Bitu Malekian and Aditya Chaudhuri from [The Water Movement](#). It was our pleasure to host and share ideas for future collaborations and how we can inspire Indigenous youth to pursue passions in water and wastewater services. The Water Movement works to bridge connections between Indigenous water operators and provide a collaborative online space where they can connect, share lessons learned, and access a video library.



The AFNWA was invited to the [Paqtnkek Career Fair](#) on June 28 and our booth was busy from start to finish. Lauren Mills and Adam Gould answered questions from intrigued students, elected councillors, band staff, and even other exhibitors. The opportunity also allowed us to share QR codes for instant access to our social media apps.

Following our successful sponsorships in the spring, our team looks forward to supporting more events over the summer. In July, Potlotek hosted the [Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Summer Games](#) with support from AFNWA as Ti'am Sponsor. We are also a Premier Sponsor of the [#JStrong Golf Tournament](#) in Acadia First Nation, which honours the memory of the late Jadon Robinson. For the third year in a row, the AFNWA is sponsoring the Tobique [Neqotkuk] Labour Day Festival.

The [PowWow Trail](#) is nearing its halfway mark with many gatherings scheduled for August and September. Our team has been fortunate to be part of the ceremonies in Pictou Landing, Abegweit, St. Mary's, Eskasoni, Sipekne'katik, Neqotkuk, and Potlotek to date. If you catch any of these events in the future, drop by the AFNWA booth, meet our staff, ask questions, and take home some swag!



NBCC has identified a successful candidate for the [Danny Lanteigne Memorial Scholarship](#). Jayden Dedam, a graduate of Miramichi Valley High, enters the Business Administration: Management program at the Moncton campus this September.



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FALL 2022

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## 2022 PROGRESS UPDATE

- » On November 7, AFNWA made history with the signing of the Service Delivery Transfer Agreement with The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). Joined by her team, Minister Hajdu joined Board Chair, Chief Wilbert Marshall, Interim CEO Carl Yates, and Interim COO James MacKinnon to affirm the ministerial transfer of responsibilities. Chair of the Elders Advisory Lodge, Methilda Knockwood-Snache, provided an opening water ceremony and presented the Minister with an eagle feather and Chief Marshall with a rattle.
- » We have completed all hiring leading up to the formal community membership phase, welcoming **six new team members** to our growing family: Alex Davis, Planning & Development Engineer; Chandler Fraser, Junior IT Coordinator; Margie Hennigar, Controller; Dan MacDonald, Safety & Security Coordinator; Wanda Ralph, Procurement Officer; Micah Reid, Utility Tech.
- » The **AFNWA Board** grew by two members in fall. Joining us are AFN Regional Chief for New Brunswick, Joanna Bernard, and Dr. Shelley Denny, Director of Aquatic Research and Stewardship, with the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources.

Joanna Bernard, AFN Regional Chief for New Brunswick

Dr. Shelley Denny, Director of Aquatic Research and Stewardship



- » In October, AFNWA brought home **ACWWA awards** from the Atlantic Canada Water and Wastewater Association annual conference. Tiannie Paul, Operations Engineer, received the 2022 Emerging Leader Award. The Engineering Department shared Project of the Year for Medium Utility with Dillon Consulting, for development of 17 asset management plans for water and wastewater systems. Corbin Stevens, Operator for Pictou Landing, received the Silent Hero Award.



Corbin Stevens received the Silent Hero Award & Tiannie Paul, Operations Engineer, received the 2022 Emerging Leader Award



AFNWA shared Project of the Year for Medium Utility with Dillon Consulting

- » Corbin was also profiled in the November-December issue of **Water Canada Magazine**. Saul Chernos wrote the article that can be downloaded [here](#). Our own John Lam, Manager of Engineering, authored a piece in the fall/winter edition of the Canadian Water & Wastewater Association's (CWWA) **WaterSource magazine**, that focuses on upgrading wastewater treatment facilities in First Nations communities. Project Engineer, Mohamed Osman, was also featured in the **AWWA Member Spotlight** for September.
- » Also, in September, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the **First Nations Financial Management Board (FNFMB)** to explore a framework for the FNFMB to serve as the economic oversight agency for AFNWA.



Signing ceremony

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Meet Alex Davis, Planning and Development Engineer!

Alex joined the Engineering Department at the end of August 2022, having previously worked in the Halifax office of L3Harris Technologies, an aerospace and defence company.

A Mi'kmaw from the Miawpukek First Nation in Newfoundland, Alex was raised by his grandparents in a small community on the south coast. Ever since he was a young child, Alex has loved building things out of whatever materials were on hand, such as the cardboard boxes that Christmas presents came in. Helping his grandfather fix and build things around the house also sparked his interest in engineering. With support from both grandparents, Alex pursued engineering immediately after high school, graduating from Dalhousie University in 2015 with a Bachelor of Engineering, specializing in Industrial Engineering.

As AFNWA's Planning and Development Engineer, Alex works with member communities to support their planning for current and

future residential and commercial needs. This includes helping identify areas where present water and wastewater networks can be expanded and ensuring adequate capacities in the water supply and wastewater systems. His primary goals are to learn more about his Mi'kmaw culture and to ensure the communities we serve have the resources they need for their development.

Alex resides in Enfield, NS, with his partner and their three children. When he's not at the office, he enjoys a cup of tea while tinkering on backyard building projects in the company of his dogs, spending time with his family, and, when time permits, exploring the backcountry on his bike.

**"I recommend taking your time to research and figure out what type of job you want to do with your engineering degree. Engineers can take on various career paths, so learning about the type of job you may want to do early on will help with course and co-op employer selection."**

– Alex's advice to Indigenous youth who might be interested in a career in engineering



## COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

» During **Truth & Reconciliation Week** in late September, our team was privileged to host Elder and residential school survivor, Mary Hatfield, for a deep afternoon of learning.



» AFNWA is now on **YouTube!** We have two feature videos on the site that were completed in collaboration with Northern Creative Inc., that were shared with communities and band councils. You can access them by clicking on the blue text above, or by searching 'afnwa\_inc' in the app.

» The **2021-22 Annual Report** is now published and available in PDF on our website on the Documents page. Our second publication was done in collaboration with NATIONAL Public Relations, and hard copies are available by request!

» Communications and Outreach staff met with students at an **Indigenous Career Fair** hosted by Unama'ki College and Cape Breton University. The October event brought Indigenous organizations from across the province together for an informative day of networking.

» AFNWA thanks the team from North American Indigenous Games 2023 for inviting us to partner up for a float in the 27th annual **SaltWire Parade of Lights** on November 19. We are excited to be a part of the festivities coming next July and look forward to more sponsorship and support opportunities.

## FOLLOW AFNWA ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

