



WINTER 2024

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, 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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PROGRESS UPDATE

» **First year in service:** AFNWA marked its one year anniversary in full operation as our first communities, Lennox Island and Neqotkuk, confirmed their membership on March 1, 2023. At that time, four community water operators joined our staff. The AFNWA looks forward to many years of high quality service delivery in all of our member communities!

» **Bill C-61:** Chief Wilbert Marshall, AFNWA Board Chair, joined Minister Patty Hajdu to support the introduction of Bill C-61 in December. Bill C-61 is an act respecting water, source water, drinking water, wastewater, and related infrastructure on First Nation lands.



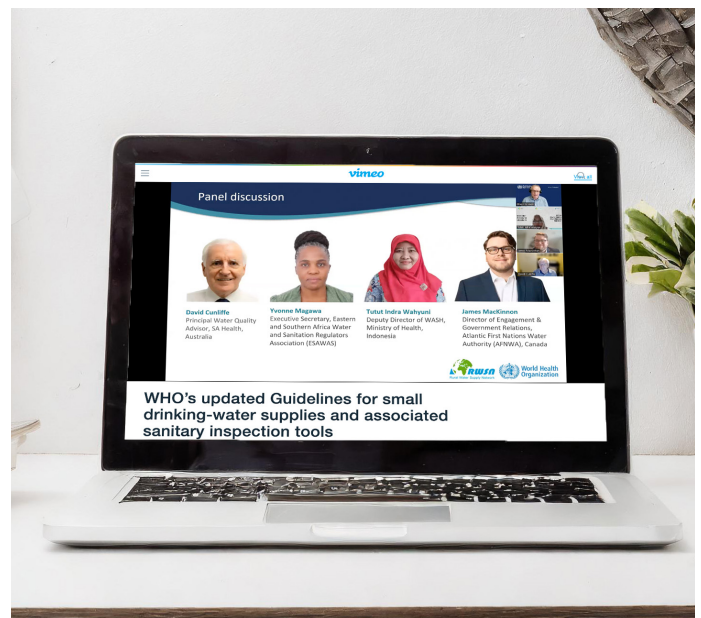
» **Operator training:** As part of our commitment to building Indigenous capacity in communities, our operators gathered for a quarterly operators' workshop in February. In March, the team members met again in preparation of their Level 1 Water Treatment exams this March. We are all rooting for you, team!



Quarterly operators workshop.

» **Employment:** Our team continues growing with three (3) positions available: Director of Operations Engineering, and Compliance; Utility Technologist – Instrumentation & Controls/Industrial Electrician; and Vacuum/Jet Rodder Combination Unit Truck Operator (6- to 9-month term). Full job descriptions are found on our website.

» **WHO panel:** James MacKinnon, Director of Engagement & Government Relations, was a recent panelist in a discussion hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO). Joined by peers from around the world, James discussed the importance of regulations to delivering safe, clean drinking water.



James MacKinnon featured on a panel discussion with the World Health Organization (WHO).

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Adam Gould, Manager of Communications and Outreach



A member of the Mi'kmaq Nation from Membertou, NS, with roots across Mi'kma'ki, Adam is one of the AFNWA "Original Six" senior managers, recruited in 2020 as part of the transition to full operations. As Manager of Communications and Outreach, Adam plays a diverse and strategic role in the growing utility.

Not-for-profit PR is Adam's niche, having worked with tribal councils, First Nations bands, and all levels of government for over 15 years. Before his career began, Adam graduated from University College of Cape Breton (now Cape Breton University) with a BA,

followed by a BPR from Mount Saint Vincent University. Adam then decided to pursue a career in communications and enrolled full-time at Royal Roads University as the first Mi'kmaq in the Master of Arts in International and Intercultural Communications (MAIIC) program.

At 18, Adam was given the spiritual name "Strong Standing Giant" and had the gift of leadership. His warrior animal is the black buffalo and his protector animal is the red fox.

When not at work, Adam's duties as a single fur-dad takeover, caring for his beloved 19-year-old fur baby Cleo! If there is any free time in between both jobs he enjoys the art of house music and deejaying, cheering for sports entertainers and combat personalities. Through his AFNWA role, Adam is reconnecting more with his Mi'kmaq roots by participating at traditional gathering events, visiting communities for the very first time, and building friendships when sharing the AFNWA story.

COMMUNICATIONS + OUTREACH

» **Social media:** If you follow our Facebook page, you have seen our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) campaign. In February, we began a weekly program highlighting some of the important questions we are asked by residents and allies. The campaign will continue into spring with general questions about AFNWA and our governance structure. Stay tuned to our social media pages for more campaigns in the future!

» **Outreach:** Winter months usually put a pause on Indigenous events, but we take advantage of any opportunity to meet new faces and share our story. Our team travelled to Moncton for NBCC's career fair for business, engineering, and IT students where we promoted our academic bursary. Later in the month, the inaugural Kojua Gathering was held in Millbrook where AFNWA winter hats and t-shirts were very popular with dancers and guests.

» **Annual Report:** The 2022-23 edition is published for download from our website at www.afnwa.ca/documents-library. The report highlights our first year of service delivery in Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey communities.



FOLLOW AFNWA ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





SPRING-SUMMER 2024

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PROGRESS UPDATE

» **First Nations Clean Water Act:** In June, James MacKinnon emphasized the importance of Indigenous-developed regulations and enforcement, long-term funding, and recognition of individual wells and septic systems to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs study of Bill C-61. The FNCWA is an Act respecting water, source water, drinking water, wastewater, and related infrastructure on First Nation lands.



» **NIWOD, March 21:** Samantha Johnson, Potlotek Operator, represented AFNWA at the National Indigenous Water Operators Day (NIWOD) event in Ottawa. We thank the Water Movement, Engineers Without Borders, and Carleton University for inviting and hosting our team on their special day of recognition!



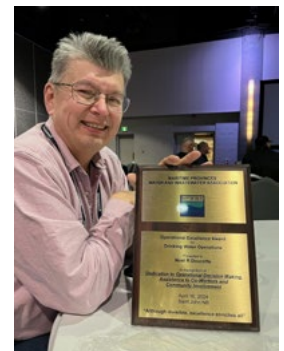
Photo credit: the Water Movement

» **Membership:** We proudly welcomed We'koqma'q as our 13th official member on July 31.

» **Elsipogtog plant and well:** Congratulations to Elsipogtog community on its infrastructure upgrades. The new greensand filtration system is now online and removes manganese to acceptable levels. The new well has been running since early spring.

» **Social fund:** In the past year, the AFNWA Social Committee has donated over \$13,000 to Indigenous initiatives in Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey communities.

» **MPWWA Award:** We congratulate Noel Doucette, Potlotek Operator, recipient of the *Operational Excellence Award for Drinking Water* in recognition of his "Dedication to Operational Decision Making, Assistance to Co-Workers, and Community Involvement" at the Maritime Provinces Water and Wastewater Association conference.



PROGRESS UPDATE

» **New staff:** New to the team are Justin Gallant, Vacuum Truck & Jet Rod Operator; Travis Keenan, Technical Services Technologist; and Dean Perley of Neqotkuk, Operator.

» **NSERC:** In December 2023, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) approved a \$4.3 million Alliance Grant to the Centre for Water Resources Studies (CWRS), in partnership with AFNWA and Ulnuoweg Education Centre.

Our collaboration will generate innovative and knowledgeable practices, seen through the Indigenous lens. The parties' main goal is to train future Indigenous and non-Indigenous water stewards with a knowledge of Two-Eyed Seeing, guided by the Wabanaki worldview.

AFNWA and partners have also sought input of the Elders Advisory Lodge to ensure Indigenous language and traditional knowledge is at the forefront of the research.

» **Minister visit:** Chrystia Freeland, Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, recently toured the Centre for Water Resources Studies (CWRS) at Dalhousie University to highlight Budget 2024. Susheel Arora, CEO, and James MacKinnon, Engagement & Government Relations Director, joined the Minister in emphasizing the AFNWA partnership with CWRS.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



John Lam, P. Eng. Director of Engineering

Having joined AFNWA in November 2020, John oversees our asset management, master planning, capital improvement planning, and provision of technical services. In his 30+ years of consulting engineering, John acquired significant expertise

in various water and wastewater treatment technologies.

After graduating from University of New Brunswick with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, John worked across Canada for provincial and territorial governments. In the Northwest Territories, he was the project officer and then regional municipal engineer.

His contributions to engineering include development of innovative enhancements to treatment technologies including disposal of treated effluent using evapotranspiration, greenhouse wastewater treatment, and engineered spring/siphon for water supply.

As a Class I Wastewater Treatment Operator, John operated up to 20 wastewater treatment plants in Bermuda and Mi'kma'ki, developing and delivering technical and continuing education training courses for post-secondary institutions and NGOs.

He was the lead author for the *Atlantic Canada Wastewater Guidelines Manual for Collection, Treatment, and Disposal* (2006), and is a steering committee member for the current update of both the water and wastewater guidelines. John also was a Wastewater Program Lead with Environment Nova Scotia.

John offers the following advice to Indigenous youth and students: "Be confident in yourself and your community. Be aware that there are many cheering you on, including friends outside of your community, myself included. You may need to get outside of your comfort zone. It will be worth it."

AFNWA would like to share that John will soon make a major shift in his role as Director of Engineering. Our great friend is retiring this winter, AFNWA will be forever grateful for John's contributions to the communities, our organization, and the discipline of engineering.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Jason Leclerc, P. Eng. Director of Operations

We invite you to join us in welcoming Jason LeClerc to the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority. Jason joined our team in July as the new Director of Operations, Engineering & Compliance.

Jason is a graduate of the Class of 2013 at the

University of Moncton where he earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. He is a Professional Engineer (P. Eng.) with significant utility and professional experience. He has worked in a few departments with Saint John Water over the previous decade with expanding roles. His rise at the utility culminated in his

most recent role as Utility Manager – Water and Sanitary Systems and Urban Stormwater.

Along with his utility experience, Jason also holds operator certifications with Water Distribution Class IV and Wastewater Collection Class II. Through the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company, he has successfully completed the Pipeline Assessment and Certification Program and expects to complete NASSCO Project Management Professional (PMP) program later this year.

Jason has been active in his short time with AFNWA, eagerly contributing to our mission of delivering high quality services to our member communities and visiting member communities to meet all Operations staff.

LinkedIn users should connect with Jason on the page or app, or clicking [here!](#)

COMMUNICATIONS + OUTREACH



» **Recent sponsorships:** Our first sponsorship of the new fiscal year was for the 2nd Annual Paqtnekek Competition Pow Wow in April. Over the summer, we were again delighted to support the annual Neqotkuk Bike Rodeo, a program that provides youth with new bicycles.

» **Events:** Spring is in the past and AFNWA teammates spent the summer on the pow wow trail. In March, we hosted a booth with our friends CWRS at Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey's education and career fair, meeting students from across Mi'kma'ki.

» **Website updates:** When you visit our page, you will notice changes to the main page. We have moved the Careers and Procurement sections to the main page and updated our FAQs for a wider audience.



» **Danny Lanteigne Award:**

We congratulate Trent Francis of Neqotkuk as our 2024 recipient. Trent is a Business Administration student at NBCC Moncton campus, focusing on Financial Management.

» **Simply Cast:** AFNWA has teamed up with local business, Simply Cast, to improve our direct communications with Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey communities. Together, we are developing an alert system that allows community members to register and receive notices and updates using an app on your phone. Users can choose to receive alerts via phone, SMS (text), email, the Simply Cast app, or all. If you aren't registered for updates, click [here!](#) Registration can also be completed with the info on our website.

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FALL 2024

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PROGRESS UPDATE



Photo credit: John Lam

» **Awards:** Join us in congratulating Operator Samantha Johnson, Potlotek, and Supervisor Andrew Lafford, Eskasoni. Samantha received the *Rising Star Award*, and Andrew the *Silent Hero Award*, at the annual ACWWA Conference in September.

» **New Staff:** We recently welcomed Brent Pierro, as a water & wastewater operator from Wagmatcook, to AFNWA. Brent joins the Unama'ki service area team. Wela'lin for the photo, Brent!



» **Certifications:** The AFNWA would like to congratulate our staff for achieving the following certifications and levels in 2024:

Operator-in-Training: Alex Davis, Alex Marshall, Andrew Lafford, Chris Pictou, Dean Perley, Dillon Francis, Georgina Sock, Jodie MacPhail, Margie Hennigar, Patrick Jeddore, and Virick Francis.

Water Distribution: Alex Davis, Brandon Sock, Dillon Francis, Jeff Wujcik, and Justin Moulton.

Water Treatment: Andrew Lafford, Blade Sylliboy, Dylan Bernard, and Mark Francis; **Water Treatment II:** Andrew Lafford.

Wastewater Collection: Alex Davis, Andrew Lafford, Justin Moulton, and Mark Francis.

Wastewater Treatment: Blade Sylliboy and Jeff Wujcik.

PROGRESS UPDATE

» **AGM:** Our Annual General Meeting was held in person in September. There, AFNWA's member Chiefs appointed Chief Sidney Peters to the Board of Directors. From Glooscap, Chief Sid will serve a four-year term in the role. Chief Darlene Bernard, Lennox Island, was reappointed to serve a second term.



Photo credit: Robyn Crowe

» **Canada-Australia Dialogue Sessions:** In November, James MacKinnon, Director of Engagement & Government Relations introduced AFNWA at the Canada-Australia dialogue sessions. This gathering, hosted by Deputy Minister of Indigenous Services Canada, Gina Wilson, and CEO of the National Indigenous Australians Agency, Jody Broun, strengthens Canada's bilateral relationship with Australia and open continuous dialogue.

» **CBWM & Operator Workshop:** The annual Community Based Water Monitor & Operator Workshop took place on November 19–21 in Millbrook. Participants heard from AFNWA

staff and industry experts on various topics including our oversight standards, waterborne illnesses, and how climate change affects water treatment. The awards dinner celebrated the monitors who completed 100 per cent of their annual sampling and we thank them for their dedicated work. AFNWA thanks our partners at First Nations and Inuit Health Branch for its support for the annual gathering.

» **IRP:** At our November meeting, the Board approved the funding request to initiate the Integrated Resource Plan in accordance with our 10-Year Business Plan. An IRP is a 25-year, comprehensive infrastructure plan to optimize and integrate investments needs related to three strategic drivers: asset renewal, growth, and compliance. This foundational project will require significant community engagement, and we look forward to getting out and chatting with residents in our 13 member communities!

» **Millbrook Water Tower:** Construction continues on the new water tower in Millbrook. Mohamed Osman, Project Engineer, snapped this recent photo! We look forward to the completion of this project in 2025.



Photo credit: Mohamed Osman

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Introducing Chris Fahie, M.A.Sc., P. Eng., AFNWA Director of Engineering

As our dear friend John Lam approaches his well-earned retirement, the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (AFNWA) undertook an extensive search to find the perfect candidate to lead our Engineering Department.

We are excited to announce that Chris Fahie joined us in September as Director of Engineering.

In his new role, Chris brings 24 years of experience in engineering design, operations, process optimization, asset management, master planning, capital improvement planning, construction contracts, and project management of water and wastewater assets.

Before joining AFNWA, Chris spent a decade with Halifax Water, where he advanced from Project Engineer to Manager of Wastewater Treatment and Quality and

finally to Manager of Process Engineering. His extensive experience in engineering design, project management, and strategic leadership ensures that AFNWA services will continue to be delivered with the highest standards of reliability and efficiency.

Chris holds a Master of Applied Science in Civil Engineering, a Bachelor of Engineering in Environmental Engineering, and a Bachelor of Science in Biology, all from Dalhousie University. He is a licensed Professional Engineer with Engineers Nova Scotia and is an active member of the Water Environment Federation (WEF). Chris also served as the Past Director of Member Involvement on the ACWWA Board for six years.

Before joining our team, Chris honed his expertise with leading consulting engineering firms including Dillon Consulting Ltd., CBCL Ltd., and AECOM across the US and Canada. We are thrilled to have him onboard as we continue to strengthen our work in serving Indigenous communities across the region.

Welcome to the team, Chris!

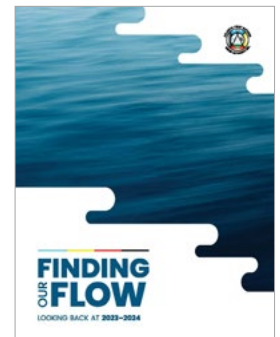
COMMUNICATIONS + OUTREACH

» **Alert App:** In 2025, you can expect changes to our communications delivery to help streamline our service notices to all member communities. With the SimplyCast app, residents can receive advisories and updates through the app, by SMS, by getting a phone call or email—or both. AFNWA will still publish notices on our Facebook page, and you can register now by clicking [here!](#)



» **Annual Report:** *Finding Our Flow*, the 2023–24 review, is now available on the Documents page of our website.

Download your PDF now!



Reporting emergencies:

Fridge magnets with our emergency contacts were distributed to member communities by our Operations team. Residents can get one at either the health centre or band office, or ask one of the Operators in your community!

For **Neqotkuk & Bilijik** call **(506) 247-1207**

In **Elsipogtog & Lennox Island** call **(506) 247-1209**

And **for all nine NS members**, call **(902) 603-0312**

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