



SPRING 2023

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.

AFNWA is 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, and supporting long-term planning initiatives.

2023 PROGRESS UPDATE

- » AFNWA has welcomed five **Service Area Supervisors**, who are very active in communities since official onboarding while continuing to welcome more operators to our growing family. The five Supervisors are: **Gregg Brewer of Neqotkuk**, *Wolastokuk Supervisor*; **Travis Dymont of Lennox Island**, *Epekwitk-Misigeneegatig Supervisor*; **Corbin Stevens of Pictou Landing**, *We'kokepwitk Supervisor*; **Pat Jeddore of Eskasoni**, *Unama'ki Supervisor*; and **Andrew Lafford of Eskasoni**, *Float Supervisor*. Welcome to the team!
- » In addition to Supervisors, we also welcome **17 water and wastewater operators** to AFNWA. Please welcome Justin Moulton and Joe Sockabasin of Neqotkuk; Brandon Sock and Nathan Jadis of Elsipogtog; Justin Cabot, Stephen Francis, Virik Francis, Ryan Googoo, Jordan Stevens, and Blade Sylliboy of Eskasoni; Noel Doucette, Samantha Johnson, and Alex Marshall of Potlotek; Dylan Bernard and Ronnie Peck of Wagmatcook; Robert Francis of Pictou Landing; and Chris Pictou of Paqtnkek.
- » Operations Engineer Tiannie Paul and company created a logo for our approach to water and wastewater safety planning, which exemplifies our mission and responsibility to community. In Wolastoqey, it is **Wolankeyutomune Samaqan**; in Mi'kmaw, it is **Nujo'tme'k Samqwan**; and translates to, "we take care of the water." Tiannie shared the following description:

"The full circle represents **Msit Nokmaq** and **Psiw Ntolnapemok**, or "all my relations." This concept reminds us that everything is connected. Our organizational colours—blue, yellow, red, and black—are on the top, while the bottom colours are blue and brown, representing the Western and Indigenous knowledge, **Etuaptmumk**, or Two-Eyed Seeing. The green plants within the circle are **Netukulimk**—sustainability for seven generations to come. Two individuals are non-gender and unbiased, represented as elders or elder and youth, holding the water."





EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Gary West, Superintendent of Operations

In his line of work, Gary considers everyday to be a new adventure. Daily operations can take him

from the office to various worksites to complete different tasks, something he enjoys as his duties present “new puzzles to solve” and he enjoys developing strategies to accomplish goals.

Following college, Gary travelled extensively while assuming many new roles including bartending and construction. His focus on water and wastewater services would come later, and experience working with Indigenous peoples across Canada made him a great fit for AFNWA and his role in working with supervisors and operators in member communities. One of the necessities of the water/wastewater treatment industry is remaining updated and certified in every expanding industry and continuous learning is a must. His office walls are lined with certifications and accomplishments, a symbol of his dedication to the profession, and includes courses from the Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC), Certified Adult

Educator, every single course available by the Water Programs at Sacramento University, ICS 300, and Operations Chief for incident command systems.

Gary is an avid reader, and enjoys relaxing with a good book at any time and any place. He also loves relaxing at home with family—his daughter and their two dogs—or experiencing the Atlantic coastline on his motorcycle.

When asked his advice for young workers looking to enter the operations industry, Gary shares:

“Make sure you do your homework on the industry before deciding on a career in operations. It’s very rewarding, comes with multiple perks, and it’s gratifying to know you are helping the environment and making the world a better place. The hours can be long and hard, and as previously mentioned you can never stop learning so be prepared for a lot of courses and tests.”

We congratulate Gary for obtaining his Class 4 in water treatment, and Class 2 in water distribution. This certification is important as the water treatment plant in Potlotek has been classified as a Level 4 plant with Gary assigned as Operator in Direct Responsible Charge. Keep up the great work Gary. You make us proud.

COMMUNICATIONS + OUTREACH

» The **North American Indigenous Games Canoe Relay** has begun and will spring along until early July, when its final stop will be in Kijipuktuk on July 7—one week before the games officially kick off! Since pickup day on April 28, we’ve towed the birchbark canoe to Acadia, Bear River, Annapolis Valley, Glooscap, Membertou, Eskasoni, Wagmatcook, We’koqma’q, and Potlotek. We will see you in communities when the relay continues into summer.

» AFNWA was a **Friendship Sponsor** of the first Paqtneke Competition Pow Wow held in early April. We were also fortunate to support other events including Premier Partner for National Engineering Month, hosted by Engineers NS; four-star level for Maritime Provinces Water & Wastewater Association [MPWWA] annual seminar; and Gold Sponsor for 48th annual Wallace Bernard Memorial Youth Hockey Tournament. Our team also participated in the Sipekne’katik Career Expo and Eskasoni Health Fair and look forward to seeing you on the pow wow trail over summer!

» We sought an Indigenous artist to create an original art piece based on our corporate values, as recommended by the Elders Advisory Lodge. AFNWA thanks and congratulates **Emma Hassencahl-Perley of Neqotkuk**, whose hockey stick design was featured at the 2023 IIHF World Junior Championships. Woliwon, Emma, we are thrilled to display your creation at our offices.



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