



## **ALGONQUIN NATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES SECRETARIAT & ALGONQUIN NATION SECRETARIAT 43<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Held in-person at the arena, Notre-Dame-du-Nord, on Timiskaming Territory  
Chairpersons: Chief Vicky Chief (TFN), Chief Lisa Robinson (WLFN), Chief Casey Ratt (ABL)  
16 – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023

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DRAFT MINUTES [NOTE: THE REGISTRATION LIST IS ATTACHED TO THE OFFICIAL COPY]

### **DAY 1 – THURSDAY, 16 November 2023**

#### **1. OPENING PRAYER AND DRUMMERS**

The members of Spirit Wind Singers opened the Assembly with a song, and Elder Hervey Papatie (ABL) offered the opening prayer.

#### **2. OPENING REMARKS**

Quorum was confirmed at 10:30 AM.

Chief Vicky Chief (TFN) welcomed everyone to TFN territory and expressed her joy in seeing how everyone had come to work together.

Chief Lisa Robinson (WLFN), Chair of the ANPSS Board of Directors, welcomed everyone and thanked Chief Lisa for hosting the AGA, again.

She shared that this AGA was focused primarily on dialogue with the members, with special discussion sessions set aside in the afternoon of the first day to hear from the Elders, Youth, Women and Men. The Board and ANPSS Team want to hear from everyone about what their priorities are, and how we can all work together to do even better.

She also shared that the AGA is an important process to hold the ANPSS Board and Team accountable to the members. She thanked the Chief and the Board for their good work, and she extended a special meegwetch to Darlene Chevrier for her many years of board service and her extended knowledge.

She also thanked Elder Hervey Papatie for his commitment, and his special focus on engaging with and developing our youth.

She thanked Annie Presseault, ANPSS Director of Finances and Administrative Services and Interim Executive Director, for obtaining funding for the AGA through a special fund related to UNDRIP.

She then briefly outlined the history of UNDRIP, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and its significance to the work of the member communities and ANPSS, especially at this time:

- 1948, after WW II, the United Nations issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recognizing that all persons have equal value and worth (which we call “dignity”), simply by virtue of being a



human being. We all share the same equal “universal” and inherent rights to things like life, liberty, access to work, education, and health, among others.

### **So, why this new UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?**

- Thanks to a lot of activism since 1948, by Indigenous peoples around the world, including Canada with the former NIB and now the AFN, the world leadership at the UN came to realize that **colonialism, and its lingering ideology and practices was systematically discriminating against Indigenous peoples and their Indigenous rights**, the rights we should have never lost to colonialist powers.
- UNDRIP was developed and written by Indigenous people, including Indigenous persons from Canada. That process was very difficult and took over 20 years.
- Chief Lisa acknowledged the important work of Chief Wilton Littlechild, the Cree lawyer, Chief of Maskawacis, and member of the TRC, who made major contributions to the development of UNDRIP.

The intent of UNDRIP was simple:

- **To provide all governments with a clear declaration of what universal human rights mean for Indigenous peoples, as seen by Indigenous peoples.**
- In this way, UNDRIP is to serve as a guiding framework for meaningful reconciliation, leading ultimately to full self government over traditional lands.

### **Steps leading to final adoption in Canada:**

- UNDRIP was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007, by 144 member states. Only four (4) members opposed it, including Canada, under the Harper Government.
- In 2015, the TRC Report recommended strongly that the *UNDRIP was the best framework* to guide the fair and equitable implementation of its recommendations, leading to a just reconciliation.
- In 2016, UNDRIP was endorsed by the Trudeau government, as part of Canada’s process of reconciliation.
- On June 21, 2021, the Canadian government adopted the *UNDRIP Peoples’ Act*. The purpose of the Act is to affirm UNDRIP as an international human rights instrument that can help interpret and apply Canadian law. It provides a *Indigenous* framework to help the federal governments advance the implementation of UNDRIP.
- The Act requires extensive consultations and cooperation between the federal government and Indigenous peoples to develop and implement a national action plan to achieve the broad objectives of UNDRIP. The AFN has been heavily involved in that process.
- So far, BC is the only province to have adopted UNDRIP.
- The governments of New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan wrote to the Prime Minister and requested asked that the Act be amended to specify that it does not apply to provincial laws; this request was not accepted.
- The CAQ government in Quebec promised to adopt the UNDRIP in its elections promises in 2018, but nothing has happened so far.

Chief Lisa emphasised that the ultimate goal of UNDRIP is to recognize full self government for Indigenous peoples; it positions First Nations in Canada to relate to all other governments on a nation-to-nation footing.



She also stressed the importance of each of us, individually and collectively to know, affirm and exercise our un-surrendered rights as Indigenous peoples.

### **Proposed ANPSS follow-up actions**

Chief Lisa shared that she will propose to the Board of Directors that the ANPSS organize education and engagement sessions with the member communities during the next year.

In those education engagement sessions, members will be asked what priority of actions they believe we should be taking to exercise and affirm our Indigenous rights...

- Individually;
- At the local level, and
- At the regional level, with support from the ANPSS.

Meanwhile, the best way to achieve our rights, as Indigenous peoples, is to continue to exercise and affirm our rights, as we know them.

**NOTE:** Chief Casey Ratt (ABL) was detained in his travel and joined the meeting at 11:05 AM, after the opening remarks by the Chiefs. When he did speak, he also expressed his satisfaction in seeing everyone come together for this important work.

### **3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** (copy available) (Resolution #2023-01)

The proposed agenda was reviewed and adopted by the members.

*Proposed by Norman Matchewan, ABL*

*Seconded by Martha Polson, WLFN*

**The agenda was APPROVED by consensus agreement.**

### **4. READING & APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 42<sup>nd</sup> AGA** (Resolution #2023-02)

*WHEREAS* the minutes of the 42nd Annual General Assembly, held on October 25-26, 2022, were available at the Tribal Council Office, and Notice was posted in each community, at least 21 days ago;

*WHEREAS* copies were provided to the Assembly to review and read out by Willy Fournier;

*WHEREAS* the following revisions were requested:

- Fix typos;
- Clarification on an activity in community update for Wolf Lake;

*WHEREAS* the minutes, as revised, are proposed for adoption.

*Proposed by Darlene Chevrier, TFN*

*Seconded by Dianna Wabie, TFN*

**The minutes, as revised, were APPROVED by consensus agreement.**



## 5. ANPSS ANNUAL REPORT

Annie Presseault gave a full report of the actions taken by the ANPSS during the period ending 31 March 2023, and explained that some of these activities had carried over into the current fiscal period.

All of the work accomplished by the ANPSS is focused on implementing the key “priorities” from the ANPSS Strategic Plan.

The following are highlights; a detailed copy of the Annual Report was made available on the ANPSS website following the meeting is attached to this meeting summary.

### A. **Cultural empowerment** is the #1 priority in the Strategic Plan and Stephany Lafave, Coordinator – Cultural Empowerment, reported on the following:

- a. Cultural empowerment: the ANPSS organized a number of important activities including:
  - i. The new Anishinabemowin language lexicon (with English and French), for general use, is complete and copies were distributed at the meeting;
  - ii. The youth gathering, with close to 50 participants aged 13 – 28 years, at the Eco Centre in Elk Lake was a big success, based on the participation and responses from the participants.
- b. The Anishinabe Ankinotimakin Misingan, the Anishinabe Translation Book (English and French), with terms for general use, is complete and copies were distributed at the meeting.

Stephany’s report also included a viewing of the film, *Nigi Kidonan* (I am speaking), focused on the importance and joys of learning our Anishinabemowin, and featuring some acknowledged speakers and enthusiastic students. It was developed with an Anishinabe film company.

**Looking forward:** Stephany reported that the ANPSS will work with recognized language speakers from the member communities to develop new learning tools for Anishinabemowin, including workbooks, flashcards, and an online language course.

The ANPSS is developing a 5-year funding proposal to obtain sustained funding for cultural and language learning, including gatherings, workshops, language conferences, workbooks, and language courses.

### B. **Capacity Building (training)** (priority #7): 7 special training sessions in two of the communities were delivered and funded through the ANPSS.

### C. **Wholistically healthy members** (priority #3):

Keith McCue, the Hospital Liaison Worker working on behalf of the member communities briefly explained his work, which is largely to ensure that members from the communities, especially English speaking members accessing hospitals in the Rouyn CISSS, receive on-site support to ensure that all information is fully understood between the patient and the health provider. The Liaison Worker also helps provide cultural knowledge and support, as required.

He shared the following annual data:

Total number of clients served	116
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Total number of requests	169
Average requests/month	19
Average requests/week	4

**Question:** Is there a specific date in which you are in TFN, and could it be better communicated to the members?

**Response:** Yes, it is normally every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, and we will see how to make it better known to the community.

- D. An equitable and fair work environment (priority #4):** Working with the Director Generals' Steering Committee and the approval of the Board, the ANPSS retained a capable compensation consultant, approved the methodology for conducting professional salary surveys, and obtained the funding so the consultant can work with each member community to survey and update its salary scale.

**Communications remains a challenge:**

Annie shared that she continues to be surprised by how little the member communities, including the political and administrative leadership, seem to know about the work and activities of the ANPSS, this despite regular updates issued after each Board meeting. She will explore with the Board and the Director Generals how to improve communications.

There were no questions.

The Report was accepted, as presented, by the members.

## 6. ANS ANNUAL REPORT

Alison McBride, Acting Director of the ANS, shared the following report.

- a. Completed a large portion of research on land sales records to support specific claims.
- b. Participated in the burial of an Indigenous Ancestor at Fort Chambly in May, along with persons from AANTC, the Mohawk Councils of Kahnawake, Akwesasane and Kahnésatake, the Huron Wendat, and the Wabanaki.
- c. Participated at the National Claims Research Council (NCRW) in Vancouver, as previous host (2022) and member of the planning committee.
- d. Continue to collaborate with University of Ottawa and Carleton University on select aspects of the research for the claims.
- e. Provided admin support for claims:
  - Burwash claim, in negotiation for TFN;
  - 1849 Claim, at tribunal for TFN & WLFN;
  - Reserve Claim, at tribunal for WLFN.
- f. Advised that the contribution funding for researching our claims has stopped, since all claims are now in negotiations or at the tribunal. This puts the funding burden directly on each community to obtain and manage loan funding to process their claims. For years, research directors have asked that funding be contribution funding for the life of the claim.



- g. Identified that several sections of the UNDRIP are very relevant to the member communities, ex. Section 37 which calls for the respect of the terms of treaties and agreements with Indigenous peoples, which applies to our specific claims.

*Question:* Is there any movement on the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) file?

*Response:* Chief Lisa shared that the AOO file has been on pause.

- Given that both TFN and WLFN have considerable traditional territories on the west side of the Ottawa River, and that these were arbitrarily separated by the colonialist power, we would be better to speak of the “east and west parts” of the river and our territories.
- Ontario participants at the Table are well resourced and we are not. It is difficult to get to the Table.
- The issues are further complicated by the Métis Nation of Ontario Recognition Agreement, see Report of the Grand Chief, item 8, below.
- We need to continue doing our environmental and technical work, and good communications with the communities.

## **7. APPOINTMENT OF RESOLUTION AND ELECTION COMMITTEES (Resolution #2023-03 & Resolution #2023-04)**

Alison McBride explained the procedures for these appointments.

### **Resolutions Committee**

The following volunteered and were approved to serve on the Resolutions Committee:

- Melissa Robinson, WLFN
- Lindsay McLaren-Polson, TFN
- Willy Fournier, facilitator

### **Appointment of Elections Assistants**

The following volunteered as elections assistants:

- Stephaney LaFave;
- Serena McLaren, TFN.

## **8. PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE ANPSS & ANS AUDIT REPORTS**

Annie Presseault, Director of Financial Services, presented the highlights of the ANPSS audit. The text of the financial report was included in each participant’s documentation folder.

*Question:* Why did the funding for ANPSS almost double between 2022 and 2023?

*Response:* The additional funds were obtained to support the new initiatives identified in the ANPSS Annual Report, see item #5, above.



Annie Presseault recommended that the financial audit report for the ANPSS for the period ending 31 March 2023 be approved.

*Proposed by:* Darelene Chevrier (TFN)  
*Seconded by:* Normand Matchewan (ABL)

**APPROVED by consensus agreement.** (Resolution #2023-05)

Annie Presseault then presented the highlights of the ANS audit. The text of the ANS financial report was included in each participant's documentation folder.

There were no questions.

Annie Presseault recommended that the financial audit report for ANS the period ending 31 March 2023 be approved.

*Proposed by:* Diana Wabie (TFN)  
*Seconded by:* Normand Matchewan (ABL)

**APPROVED by consensus agreement.** (Resolution #2023-05)

## **APPROVAL OF THE AUDITOR FOR F2024**

Annie Presseault recommended that Christine Noel, C.P.A. be appointed auditor for ANS and ANPSS for F2024.

*Proposed by:* Dominic Lafontaine (TFN)  
*Seconded by:* Naomi Robinson

**APPROVED by consensus agreement.** (Resolution #2023-05)

## **L U N C H was served on site**

### **9. COMMUNITY UPDATES**

#### **TFN – Chief Vicky Chief**

Chief Vicky again thanked everyone for coming to the AGA. She shared the following developments with the members.

- The construction of the Kiwetin school addition is now complete and everyone is enjoying the new facility, and proud of the good work.
- The regional policing project is progressing: an *ad hoc* committee has been created to obtain direct input from the communities. Audrey McLaren and Kelly McBride represent TFN.



- Many members attended the Algonquin Gathering August 15&16 in Ottawa which focused on grass roots participation and the identity and unification of our People, and our nationhood.
- Road projects: these are progressing, but not quite as fast as planned.
- The Youth Centre is mostly finished; the internal furnishings are still being installed. There will be an opening event where the community can share its pride in this fine facility for the youth.
- Meetings continue with Hydro Quebec regarding outstanding claims and future projects.
- *Ni Dakinaan* just celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and everyone is proud of its accomplishments.
- ATR (Addition to Reserve) is in its final stages and about to be returned to the community.
- TFN has conducted its first community consultations on its land claim and is pleased with the participation.
- The community is developing a long-awaited shelter for those suffering from homelessness.
- The Safe House has been moved closer to the community, for better support.
- The vacancies for the social workers positions have now been filled.
- The Kitchisipi River Symposium was a great success and the work on the Ottawa River ecosystem continues.

### Questions

- a. A TFN member (Brian McKenzie) asked what is happening to support moose hunting on TFN territory? Where is the funding to allow members to establish their camps and exercise their rights to their land?

*Response:* The Chief shared that TFN is looking at both ways to obtain funding, and ways to harvest and share construction work materials (lumber) for the use of the members.

Chief Ratt shared that ABL has purchased its own sawmill for these purposes. ABL, not the Quebec government, will establish its regulations for wood harvesting on ABL lands.

- b. The member suggested that the member communities need to pass and enforce our own by-laws governing the access and use of our lands.
- c. A second TFN member (Conrad Polson) suggested that TFN and the other member communities need to affirm and exercise their un-surrendered rights over the full traditional territory, all the areas to which the ancestors travelled and which they occupied at various times for different purposes, consistent with our ways of living.
- We need to be directly involved in establishing a 4<sup>th</sup> level government, that can interact on an equal basis with other governments.
  - Likewise, we need to be careful in working with the FN Fiscal Management structure to ensure we do not lose our rights to tax, and our right to *not* be taxed.
  - We need to be better informed and dedicate more resources to this work.

*Response:* Chief Vicky thanked the member for these important perspectives. She observed that the member communities were at different levels of capability in dealing with these issues. ABL was clearly the strongest community in living consistent with the Anishinabe culture and language. WLFN is still seeking the return of its un-surrendered land base. TFN is somewhere in the middle. It is very important that we all find even better ways of working together to understand and develop better processes for affirming and protecting our rights and ways of doing things, as declared in the UNDRIP.





- d. A member from ABL (Normand Matchewan) shared that it was important to also re-institute and respect our protocols that outlined how we are to ask for permission to enter another community's territory for hunting or harvesting purposes, or to convene meetings.
  - This work will benefit from re-establishing the Anishinabe names we used to indicate the different things we did at different places on our territory.
  - We also need to work together to context the Quebec Mining Act, which clearly infringes on our un-surrendered rights.
- e. Elder Hervey Papatie shared that he received instructions from his father, who had received them from his Father, that it was now his turn and his duty to watch over the family territory, and to know and live according to the Anishinabe beliefs and spiritual connection with the Land. He said he only came to really understand his Father when he returned to live on the land 20 years ago. He shared that he also sensed a new freedom, like he had finally been let free out of cage.

### **ABL – Chief Casey Ratt**

Chief Casey expressed his appreciation in seeing all the members, including the strong delegation from ABL. He then shared the following updates.

- Bill C-92: *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families* (Canada). ABL to work on this and address the mis-guided jurisdictional claims of Quebec so ABL can take its direct and legitimate control for the care of its children and youth, as provided for in the Act.
- Six (6) new houses will be constructed by early 2024. They will be rent free, reflecting Chief Ratt's firm belief that this is only fair given that colonialist governments placed the ABL members on the current site and promised electricity and housing. ABL still relies on diesel generators, costing up to \$750,000 / year.
- The Chief reminded the members that ABL still does not allow any forestry or mining development on its lands, without full approval of the community. The intent is to heal and protect the land and wildlife for future generations.
- ABL purchased heavy equipment and is seeking the road clearing and maintenance contract for the road connecting ABL to the highway.
- Moose moratorium: ABL wants the moratorium to extend beyond the 5-year period.
  - It also wants the current study to include full on-the-land, field-based studies to better identify the current diseases that continue to harm and reduce the moose population.
  - ABL also wants full jurisdiction over its own moose management plan, similar to those used by the ZEC's.

Brian McKenzie (TFN) shared that there is some evidence of a decline in the tick infestation.

### **WLFN – Chief Lisa Robinson**

- The Chief reminded everyone that WLFN are the original occupiers of the Dumoine River (the Dumoine River Band) and Hunter's Point areas, from which the members were totally displaced as of 1969.
- WLFN's claim process:
  - Negotiations continue, including community engagement;
  - Difficult to evaluate the impact on us, including loss of language and culture; it's more than simply numbers;



- WLFN is developing its perspective on what needs to be done, resolved.
- Attachment to the Land:
  - A recent, guided canoe trip on the Dumoine River provided the Chief with a deeper sense of, and attachment to the land;
  - The youth participated in a successful fall moose hunt, and shared the meat with the community;
  - The youth and others participated in cultural learning, gathering 66 specific plants to prepare an important traditional medicine Eskagumidek that requires 20 days to fully brew.
- Governance: learning to lead in a good way for all members
  - Establishing Elders and Youth Councils to grow capacity, and to be consulted on key issues;
  - A WLFN Constitution: this is an important government tool, and much more work needs to be done;
  - FNFMA (First Nations Fiscal Management Act): WLFN has registered for certification under the FNFMA. This will eventually increase our ability to fully govern all fiscal aspects of WLFN, including helping to strengthen our financial administration. With this, WLFN is also transitioning from mostly project funding to sustainable funding for full FN governance.
- Economic Development: we will be working to transition our current band-owned businesses into an arms'-length, FN economic development corporation to better support the continuing economic development of WLFN.
- Organizational tune-up: WLFN Administration has updated its organizational structure to meet planned needs and updated the job descriptions and goals for each position, for better clarity and accountability.
- WLFN recently hired a new Executive Assistant to better assist both the Director General and the Chief and Council, and to enhance better communications.
- Strategic Plan: WLFN will soon be embarking on its first, comprehensive community-based strategic planning process, similar to that used by TFN, and the ANPSS. The Plan will provide clear direction for the WLFN government and serve as basis to obtain the required funding.

#### **Update of the Grand Chief (Chief Lisa Robinson)**

As Grand Chief of the Tribal Council, Chief Lisa shared the following:

- *Métis Government Recognition and Self Government Implementation Agreement.* Supporting the Chiefs of Ontario and Mohawk Chiefs to correct the Government of Canada's mis-guided acceptance of the Metis of Ontario, and to reject and kill this Agreement.
  - The Agreement contradicts and eliminates the un-surrendered land rights of the First Nations who have always occupied the claimed territories. This Agreement will only further complicate existing claims and historical grievances with First Nations.
  - The process will require further meetings with senior government persons, elected persons and senators.
  - The ANS released a press release on this issue.
- Algonquin Nation Governance – a Provincial Territorial Organization is needed to serve as a political body for the entire Anishinabe Algonquin Nation. This would create a new structure and leave the Tribal Councils (ANPSS and AANTC) intact to continue to provide programs and services to the communities.
- Quebec is challenging Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, Metis Youth and Families* at the Supreme Court of Canada. This is important because our Anishinabe Laws regarding our



youth and families supersede any provincial and federal law. A decision is to be rendered before Christmas.

- The Indigenous Space in Ottawa: the agreement for this important space is expected to be signed soon. It will provide for a Dedicated Algonquin space in Ottawa, with facilities and a place for our Nation to gather, utilize, re-build and grow.
- Indigenous Procurement: The requirement of federal departments and agencies ensures a minimum 5% of the total value of contracts are held by Indigenous businesses, this can include purchasing, suppliers, contracts etc. Opportunities for Anishinabe contractors and businesses.
- Pathway to Strengthening the Algonquin Anishinabe Workforce: Headed by Decontie Construction with a purpose to grow and connect our tradespeople to opportunities and training.
- Algonquin Nation Gathering August 15 & 16 in Ottawa with a theme of Identity and Nation Building. There was discussion about pretendianism, land guardians and land issues, archeology programs and re-building our Nation.

## **10. GROUP DISCUSSIONS (ELDERS, YOUTH, WOMEN, MEN)**

Chief Lisa reminded everyone that this was the most important item in the entire AGA; this is the opportunity for the members to clearly identify the most important things each group – Elders, Youth, Women and Men – want to address at the regional level during the next few years.

The facilitator from each group provided the group's feedback to Assembly. It was obvious that there was a lot of agreement among the four groups on each of the questions.

NOTE: The specific feedback from each group can be seen in Appendix "A" of these Minutes.

For the confirmation and general feedback, see item #13, on Day 2, as recorded below.

## **A D J O U R N M E N T OF THE FIRST DAY, AND FEAST**

### **Day 2 – Friday, 17 November 2022**

#### **11. OPENING SONG AND PRAYER**

Chief Vicky Chief welcomed everyone back.

The Spirit Wind Singers sang a welcoming song to open second day.

Elder Hervey Papatie offered a prayer.

Quorum was confirmed at 10:30 AM.



## 12. NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

- a. Nominations for Elder's representative:  
Hervey Papatie (ABL) was elected by acclamation, for a 2-year term.
- b. Nominations for the Men's representative:
  - **Brian King**, TFN  
Nominated by Meagan Wabie, TFN  
Seconded by Sacha Wabie, TFN
  - **Craig Rossignol**, WLFN  
Nominated by Newman Wabie, TFN  
Seconded by Dominic Lafontaine, TFN
  - **Eddie Ratt**, ABL  
Nominated by Jeanette Wawatie, ABL  
Seconded by Anida Decoursay

**NOTE:** Craig Rossignol was appointed community representative for Wolf Lake and withdrew from the election

The nominees were invited to present themselves and their intentions if elected.

## 13. FEEDBACK FROM THE GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON DAY ONE

In the feedback following the facilitated sessions with each group, it was clear that there was a lot of similarity and agreement on the top priorities and related recommendations among the four groups (Elders, Youth, Women, Men).

Willy Fournier presented the priorities and recommendations from each group, see Appendix "A", and the following general feedback.

**Question #1:** What are the priority issues you would like to be able to do or work on, at a *regional* level? Why are these issues important to you?

1. **Cultural empowerment, including good knowledge and use of Anishnabemowin.**
2. **Acknowledgement of our un-surrendered title, rights, jurisdiction and governance over our ancestral lands, especially by Quebec, and the full exercise of our rights and jurisdiction.**
3. **Knowledge and practice of our duties of respect and care for our lands.**
4. **Healthy living, including healing on the land.**

These priorities are very important to us because they help us be and live as Anishinabe in our traditional living relationships with our ancestral lands. All four (4) of these priorities are inter-related and inter-dependent. These priorities also align directly with key elements of the UNDRIP.

Other important and related priorities identified by the groups include:



5. The wellbeing, health and development (education) of our children and youth: preparing the next generation of Anishinabe.
6. Sharing our knowledge, learning and working together (locally and regionally) on our priorities.
7. Having a clear alignment and commitment of our political leadership with these priorities and holding them accountable in addressing these priorities.
8. *Icitcikiwin* (“we’re doing it, making it happen”): Moving from the thinking and the talking to *action*, and taking personal and collective *responsibility* (we need to be there and do our part to make these things happen).

**Question #2: What types of support will you require from:**

- a. Your local community?
- b. The ANPSS?

- Informed involvement and action, at both local and regional level (people need to be informed so they can take the discuss and the best actions);
- Funding and other resources, including staff, to support our work;
- Learning and working together (locally and regionally) with clear planning, action and accountability, including by the political leadership;
- Good regional coordination and collaboration by all.

**Question #3: How often will you want to meet on a regional basis to ensure good focus and follow-up on your priority issues?**

The groups recommended holding regional meetings meeting for each group four (4) times a year, preferably on a seasonal basis.

There was general agreement that this was a valid general summary of the group discussions and that we should proceed to work on these things.

**Follow-up:** The Board of the ANPSS will look at the detailed feedback from each group and work to obtain the resources required, and to provide the required coordination so each group can move forward with its important work.

## **14. FOCUS & PRIORITIES FOR F2024 - 25**

Chief Lisa Robinson, as Chair of the Board, shared the ANPSS will be working on the following priorities during the next 12 months.

- a. Continue our efforts to recruit qualified people, preferably Indigenous, to fill the following key the leadership positions:
  - Executive Director (hopefully we will recruit this person before we recruit the Managers);
  - Manager – Cultural Empowerment and Engagement;
  - Manager – Community Profiles and Economic Development.



Continue to implement the priorities identified in the ANPSS Strategic Plan, including:

- b. Obtain sustainable funding to support the implementation of the Plan;
- c. Build on the recent accomplishments in the cultural empowerment of the youth, including the Anishinabe language, *with the help of our Elders*;
- d. Provide support and coordination for the group engagement priorities (Elders, Youth, Women and Men) identified above in item #13, above;
- e. Start developing the community profiles, which will provide very helpful, updated information to both the Administrative and the Political leadership in each community;
- f. Work with the DG's Steering Committee to establish a separate *Health Advisory* team, comprised of the local Directors of Health and Social Services, and identify specific *health* actions that require *regional* support;
- g. Take the same approach with the DG's to put in place an *Economic Development Advisory Team* to identify specific economic development actions that require *regional* support;
- h. Look at ways to educate all members about our rights under the UNDRIP, and consult them on the types of specific actions we should be taking at the regional level.

Chief Lisa reminded everyone that the DG's know the needs of their respective communities as well as anyone, and we count on them to provide guidance to the work of the ANPSS, including proposing any updates to the goals in the Strategic Plan to better align with changing circumstances. We also count on them to help maintain good communications about the work of the ANPSS with their personnel.

She concluded Richard by thanking Annie and the ANPSS Team for their good work, and thanking each of the DG's, Richard Kearny (TFN), Robyn DeContie (ABL) and Martha Polson (WLFN) for their good work, support and guidance.

## **H E A L T H   B R E A K**

### **15. COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS TO NOMINATE THEIR COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE AS DIRECTOR (ANPSS BOARD)**

Chief Lisa explained the special provisions in the ANPSS By-Laws that require that there be one (1) community representative from each community to serve as a director on the Board. That person must be appointed solely by the Chief.

The Board agreed that the AGA agenda would provide the time for the participating members from each community to meet together with their Chief and recommend to their Chief the person that serve as the community's director. The person had to be present at the meeting.

Each Chief reported the following community representative as the new community representative and director on the Board:

- TFN: Lindsay McLaren-Polson
- ABL: Jeannette Wawatie
- WLFN: Craig Rossignol

### **16. ELECTION RESULTS for the DIRECTOR REPRESENTING MEN (Resolution #2022-0 6)**



### **Polling Report**

- 60 ballots printed
- 32 ballots cast

### **Results for Men's Representative**

- 18 votes for **Eddie Ratt**
- 14 votes for Brian King

It was *proposed* by Dominic Lafontaine (TFN), and *seconded* by Craig Rossignol (WLFN) that:

- a. The results of the election be accepted;
- b. The ballots be destroyed.

**APPROVED by consensus agreement.**

## **17. NEXT YEAR'S ASSEMBLY**

Chief Lisa thanked Chief Vicky for their hospitality in hosting the AGA, and for stepping in for WLFN.

She suggested that TFN was the best location to hold the next meeting, because of its central location.

**There was general agreement that: TFN will host the next AGA, in 2024.**

## **18. CLOSING OF ASSEMBLY**

Chief Vicky thanked everyone for their contributions in the discussions; she said this has provided important guidance going forward. She also welcomed the new directors and looks forward to working with them. And she was pleased to be welcoming everyone back in TFN, for next year's AGA.

Chief Casey also thanked everyone who made the effort to come and contribute. He appreciated the quality of the discussions and exchanges. He reminded everyone that we now need to act (*icitcikiwin*) and move forward in our work.

Chief Lisa also thanked everyone for making the commitment to come and share their thinking, to better shape the work of the Tribal Council, going forward.

She expressed a big *meegwetch* and appreciation to each of the following:

- Annie and the ANPSS Team for all the good work and support, including obtaining much needed additional funding, and for organizing the AGA;
- The Board for its strong commitment, and its good guidance and governance;
- The ISC for its funding and its helpful approaches as we try to obtain the sustainable funding to support the full implementation of the Plan;
- Elder Hervey Papatie for his personal dedication, and especially his determination to engage the youth in the work of the ANPSS;



- Chief Vicky and the TFN for being such good hosts;
- The participants at the AGA for their active support and their thoughtful contributions, which will guide and encourage the Board and the Team in how to keep moving forward.

She wished everyone safe travels home.

The Spirit Wind Singers sang a final song to close the Assembly.

Elder Hervey Papatie offered a closing prayer.

**The Assembly adjourned at 12:30 PM.**

**All participants were invited to a tour of the new ANPSS office space, and to an open lunch.**





## **APPENDIX “A”**

### **OPERATIONS REPORT (2023 – 2024)**

Annie Presseault, *Interim* Executive Director

Presented to the AGA on 16 November 2023

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#### **The VISION of the ANPSS is of....**

- ❖ Engaged and capable members and communities
- ❖ Empowered by our Anishinabe language and culture
- ❖ Successfully pursuing our goals

#### **The Mission of the ANPSS is *to work in direct partnership with the communities ...***

- **To contribute to and support the empowerment, capability and success of our members, their communities and their governments**

We do this by *working closely with the communities to:*

- Help build capacity, including serving as a talent pool for new Anishinabe staff
- Help design and develop new programs, tools and services
- Develop and coordinate select regional projects, programs and services to make optimal use of resources
- Provide specialized services and expertise



**The first Strategic Plan of the ANPSS was approved by consensus agreement at the AGA (2022), and the Board directed the Administration to implement the Plan.**

Several things were accomplished, as indicated in this Operations Report.

However, the ANPSS has faced the same challenge as other organizations in recruiting qualified Indigenous persons for senior leadership roles, including an Executive Director.

The Plan calls for important capacity building in the ANPSS, in developing of both personnel and programs for the future, so we can meet our commitments to the members, as outlined in the Plan. We need to get the right people, even if it takes longer. The recruitment of the Executive Director, and two (2) key manager positions is an ongoing priority.

## **Accomplishments during the past year**

### **Strategic Priority #1: CULTURAL EMPOWERMENT**

#### **Living healthy, productive culturally empowered lives, as Algonquins**

- **Our members are empowered by, and proud of, their Anishinabe language, culture, practices and identity; they pursue and live healthy, productive Anishinabe lives.**

The cultural empowerment, including our Anishinabe language, is the *top priority in the Plan*, and we have made some good progress.

The current focus is on our Youth, supported by the knowledge of our Elders. We have coordinated significant developments.

**The following was reported to the AGA by Stephany Lafave, Coordinator – Cultural Empowerment.**

#### **E. Cultural empowerment**

- c. The ANPSS organized a number of important activities including:
  - i. The new Anishinabemowin language lexicon (with English and French), for general use, is complete and copies were distributed at the meeting;
  - ii. The youth gathering, with close to 50 participants aged 13 – 28 years, held at the Eco Centre in Elk Lake, was a big success, based on the participation and responses from the participants.
- d. The Anishinabe Ankinotimakin Misingan, the Anishinabe Translation Book (English and French), with terms for general use, is complete and copies were distributed at the meeting.

Stephany's report also included a viewing of the film, *Nigi Kidonan* (I am speaking), focused on the importance and joys of learning our Anishinabemowin, and featuring some acknowledged speakers and enthusiastic students from the member communities.

It was developed with an Anishinabe film company.



**Looking forward:** Stephany reported that the ANPSS will work with recognized language speakers from the member communities to develop new learning tools for Anishinabemowin, including workbooks, flashcards, and an online language course.

The ANPSS is developing a 5-year funding proposal to obtain sustained funding for cultural and language learning, including gatherings, workshops, language conferences, workbooks, and language courses.

### **Strategic Priority #7: COMPETENT PERSONNEL, COUNCILLORS & BOARD DIRECTORS IN OUR MEMBER COMMUNITIES (CAPACITY BUILDING)**

Though capacity building is Priority #7 in the Plan, it is one where the ANPSS continues its strong track record of meeting the training needs of the member communities with quality, timely training. We obtained the required funding and usually helped find the appropriate trainer for the following capacity building projects:

1. Proposal Writing, provided by Maple Leaf (WLFN)
2. Safe Talk (Suicide alertness) (TFN)
3. Chief and Council Training: Leadership Planning Session - Establishing Roles and Responsibilities, provided by MNP (TFN)
4. Restoring Balance: Trauma informed care and therapeutic processes (WLFN)
5. Human Resources training, provided by INFONEX (TFN)
6. Wills & Estates (ABL, TFN, WLFN)
7. Archival training, with a focus on digitalizing archives (ANPSS)

### **Strategic Priority #3: WHOLISTICALLY HEALTHY MEMBERS**

- **Our members benefit from our traditional ways of healing, especially on-the-land.**
- **Our members have culturally safe and secure access to local hospital services, including supported follow-up.**

Keith McCue (TFN) is the Hospital Liaison Worker working on behalf of the member communities. His responsibility is to ensure that members from the communities, especially English speaking members accessing hospitals in the Rouyn CISSS, receive on-site support to ensure that all information is fully understood between the patient and the health provider.

The Liaison Worker also helps provide cultural knowledge and support to the hospital personnel, as required.

During the year, the Health Liaison Worker provided the following support:

Total number of clients served	116
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Total number of requests	169
Average requests/month	19
Average requests/week	4

ANPSS also obtained special funding for the Algonquin Long Term Care facility in TFN which enabled it to make improvements to better protect the residents, especially in the event of another pandemic.

#### **Strategic Priority #4: EQUITABLE, EFFECTIVE & FAIR WORK ENVIRONMENT**

- **Our employees work in a productive, effective and fair work environment, including receiving equitable compensation, based on timely professional compensation data.**

1. Equitable compensation (salaries) for the staff of the member communities and the ANPSS is a major priority for the member communities and the ANPSS.
  - ANPSS retained a highly qualified compensation firm and the member communities have reviewed, refined and approved the proposed approach.
  - All three communities have started their respective salary surveys with the consultant.
  - The ANPSS has completed the updating of its salary scales, to better enable it to recruit the quality Indigenous personnel it needs.
2. HR Services:
  - ANPSS provided HR services to one community (WLFN), though the funding for this is currently depleted.
  - We continue to look for a good Indigenous HR generalist.

#### **New Horizon for TFN Elders:**

- ANPSS continues to seek additional funding for the three (3) member communities.

## **COMMUNICATIONS: a major challenge**

Like many organizations, the work and achievements of the ANPSS are not known by most of the members in the communities, and even among many in the leadership positions. This is the case even though the Board issues a brief progress report to all members following each Board meeting.



The ANPSS will explore this ongoing challenge with the Board and the community groups (ELDERS, YOUTH, WOMEN and MEN) and look at ways to better inform the members on an ongoing basis.

## Meegwetch

I would like to personally thank all members of the ANPSS Team, and the many people who helped us in our work during the past year; we very much appreciate this.

I would also like to thank Chief Lisa, our Chairperson, and the Board for their guidance and good support.

Meegwetch.

**Annie Presseault**  
**Director – Financial and Administrative Services**  
**Interim Executive Director**  
(16 November 2022)



## **ATTACHMENT “B”**

### **SUMMARY OF GROUP ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS**

- ❖ **Elders**
  - ❖ **Youth**
  - ❖ **Women**
  - ❖ **Men**
-



## ELDERS Feedback

**What are the priority issues you (ELDERS) would like to be able to do or work on, at a *regional* level? Why are these issues important to you?**

**NOTE:** The Elders insist that all the priorities they identified inter-related, interdependent and inter-active. They need to be addressed together, consistent with the way we live. They are also fully supported by the UNDRIP.

### **Priority #1: RIGHTS & GOVERNANCE**

- ❖ **Have our un-surrendered Anishinabe rights to our lands and our cultural ways of living in relationship with our lands fully acknowledged by informed governments, especially Quebec**

**And...**

- ❖ **Freely exercise our Anishinabe governance rights over our lands and wildlife so they flourish for our children and our future generations, and heal us now.**

#### **Related actions**

1. Teach our children and youth respect and how to care for the land, by accompanying them to live on our lands.
2. Teach our children and youth the beliefs, knowledge and skills we have about the land.
3. Teach our children and youth our Anishinabemowin, as our way of knowing, understanding and communicating our relationship with the land.
4. Live on the land, as a good way to heal, including from addictions.
5. Care for our lands so we can pass on our family territories, in a healthy state, to our next generations, including camps, hunting territories, traplines.

#### **Other considerations**

- Live on the land with my grandchildren, to teach them our ways, teachings, skills, respect and care for the land.
- More gatherings for Youth and Elders, together,



### **Priority #2: OUR ANISHINABE WAYS OF LIVING WITH THE LAND**

- ❖ **Revitalize our full, living and spiritual relationship with the land that includes:**
  - **Living on and caring for our lands, based on our Anishinabe culture, our ways of speaking, thinking, knowing, doing and being;**
  - **Our spiritual relationship with the land, including our ceremonies;**
  - **Healing on the land;**

**And...**

- **Ensuring we have the political commitment and accountability to support this.**

#### **Related actions (*not* ranked)**

1. We need to understand “culture” as our way of living, as Anishinabe.
2. We need to strengthen our use of ceremonies, as learning and healing.
3. We need a land-based healing centre for youth struggling with addictions.

### **Priority #3:**

#### **LIVING OUR LIVES and OUR ANISHINABE WAYS, without external restrictions**

- ❖ **The conservation and free practice of our Anishinabe ways of living, free of restrictions or impositions from external governments (provincial, federal, municipal), including having the resources (funding) to do so.**

#### **Related actions**

1. Exercise our sole right to manage and conserve our Anishinabe hunting and fishing practices, with no external government restrictions.
2. Ensure we all regain a good knowledge of the land, the trees, water, plants, wildlife, and natural medicines (from our Knowledge Keepers).
3. Learn and use our Anishinabemowin, which embodies our teachings and knowledge.
4. Know our ancestral relations and practices on the land.

#### **Other priorities for Elders (*not* ranked)**

- Improve home safety for Elders.
- Work on addictions in our communities, at all levels in an integrated way: “well-briority”.





**What types of support will you (Elders) require from:**

- c. Your local community?**
- d. The ANPSS?**

## **Required Support**

### **A. Local**

- Make this work a priority for everyone, including the leadership
- Knowledge from our Knowledge Keepers
- Support from each other
- Strong support from our leaders
- *Iciticikiwin*: move from our minds (thinking) to action (doing it)
- Good communications: all of us need to be well informed and united about what we are fighting for

### **B. Regional**

- The funding to enable us to achieve these priorities
- Ensuring these are also ANPSS (& ANS) priorities
- A time frame and a plan of action that we commit to follow
- Shared expertise, enabled through ANPSS
- Supportive outside partnerships, collaboration and support / advocacy
- User-friendly and timely communications among all of us



How often will you (Elders) want to meet on a *regional* basis to ensure good focus and follow-up on your priority issues?

*To enable us to work together in a good way, as Elders, to help us achieve these types of outcomes...*

- We will need to meet at least 4 times a year, preferably on a *seasonal* basis.



## YOUTH Feedback

What are the priority issues you (the Youth) would like to be able to do or work on, at a *regional* level? Why are these issues important to you?

What support will you (Youth) require, locally and regionally?

### **Priority #1: CULTURAL EMPOWERMENT**

Knowing and being empowered by our Anishinabe culture and language

- ❖ Learn our Anishinabe ways, teachings, knowledge from our Knowledge Keepers

### **Related actions and required support**

#### **A. Local: have a planned and integrated approach that includes..**

1. Regular, well planned learning experiences on the land, with our Elders.
2. The opportunity to serve and learn as “Assistants” to our Elders, including as summer students, with the opportunity to be paid.
3. Planning and holding good workshops, with full involvement of the Elders.
4. User-friendly ways for youth to know what’s available locally and beyond, and to indicate their interests.
5. The funding, staff and facilities to support these activities and the learning.

#### **B. Regional**

1. Coordination and communications (sharing info & networking) among the three (3) communities.
2. Adequate funding to support the regional activities.



### **Priority #2: HEALTHY, CREATIVE LIVING**

- Have good access to good sports and recreation programming and facilities, including both sports and creative activities (arts, crafts, music)

#### **Related actions and required support**

##### **A. Local**

1. Plan and commit to getting a good local facility, get the funding and build the facility.
2. Get good staff.
3. Develop and deliver the quality programming.

##### **B. Regional**

- Good networking and support to help obtain the required funding.

### **Priority #3: ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR POST SECONDARY EDUCATION**

- ❖ Ensure our students have problem free, adequate funding to support all the basic expenses for post secondary education.

#### **Related actions and required support**

##### **A. Local**

1. Ensure there is adequate funding to cover all the basics: school costs, good lodging, food, local transportation (including 2 trips home / academic year).
2. Ensure students fully understand the conditions and any options, to avoid misunderstandings and the impact on reliable funding.

##### **B. Regional**

1. Look at ways to work together to provide good housing in select college / university centres.
2. Funding for travel (2 trips home per academic year).

### **OTHER YOUTH PRIORITIES (not ranked)**

1. Quick and good help to address the mental health issues affecting many of the Youth.
2. Record (video) the teaching of our Elders, before it is too late.
3. Develop good housing units for youth, like apartments or other smaller units.
4. Increase the visibility (signs, designated sights) of our Anishinabe presence and history throughout our lands.



How often will you (Youth) want to meet on a *regional* basis to ensure good focus and follow-up on your priority issues?

The Youth would like to meet at least four (4) times a year, on a regional basis, preferably on a *seasonal* schedule.



## WOMEN's Feedback

What are the priority issues you (the WOMEN) would like to be able to do or work on, at a *regional* level? Why are these issues important to you?

What support will you (the WOMEN) require, locally and regionally?

### TOP Priorities

1. More women's gathering so we can socialize, share and learn from each other, and plan the things we want to do.
2. Have a land-based Anishinabe curriculum in our schools.
3. Learn about and use our traditional medicines.
4. Help the community and women heal from trauma and addictions, especially through on the land healing and cultural programming.

### REQUIRED SUPPORT

We need a 3-year plan and resources (funding and coordinated support) that enable...

- a. Well communicated and coordinated opportunities for women to come together, share, learn and set priorities;
- b. Unity and cooperation among the 3 communities.

How often will you (WOMEN) want to meet on a *regional* basis to ensure good focus and follow-up on your priority issues?

The Women did not specify how many times they would like to meet, at the regional level, during the year. They did mention that there should be "more" women's gatherings, as stated in their Priority #1, above.



### **OTHER Priorities (*not* ranked)**

1. Revitalize and use our Anishinabemowin.
2. Spend more time on the land, together as women, learning and practising our traditional skills (hunting, fishing, gathering).
3. Learn more about our role and duties as “protectors of the water”.
4. Re-establish our Anishinabe protocols and have them available in writing for easy reference and learning.
5. Provide more education on health issues.
6. Provide more housing for our Elders, including support for independent living.
7. Work together, as women with youth, to build a cultural lodge.



## MEN's Feedback

What are the priority issues you (the MEN) would like to be able to do or work on, at a *regional* level? Why are these issues important to you?

### **Priority #1: OUR ANISHINABE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE**

- ❖ Re-empower ourselves with our Anishinabe culture and language

#### **RELATED ACTIONS**

- Prioritize the knowledge, competence and use of our language.
- Assure good awareness and education of our cultural teachings.
- Encourage mentorship and mutual support.
- Maintain a compassionate relationship with the land (Moose Whisperer).
- Show solidarity and pride in the practice of our culture and the use of our Anishnabemowin.

### **Priority #2: “LAND BACK” AND SELF-GOVERNMENT**

- ❖ Re-take full control of our lands and exercise good Anishinabe governance.

#### **RELATED ACTIONS**

- Re-implement, know and respect our Anishinabe protocols clearly outlining our agreements on accessing each other's lands.
- Hold ourselves and our political leadership accountable to our duties to the land, as responsible caretakers.

### **Priority #3: RESPONSIBLE CARE & MANAGEMENT OF OUR LANDS**

- ❖ Establish our role and duties as the responsible caretakers of our land

#### **RELATED ACTIONS**

- Protect the moose, and other wildlife.
- Learn best practices from other First Nations.
- Have clear land management plans, implement and enforce them.





**What types of support will you (MEN) require from:**

- a. Your local community?**
- b. The ANPSS?**

## **Required Support**

### **A. Local**

1. Funding and resources to support these priorities.
2. Full, informed community involvement and support.
3. Full political alignment and support.
4. Manpower: people to help do the work.

### **A. Regional**

1. Vision (including spiritual).
2. Have a clear Political Statement, including our Land Protocols.
3. Financial support to do this work.
4. Development of land and language protocols.
5. Coordination of regional meetings.
6. Partnership with other cultural organizations.

**How often will you (MEN) want to meet on a *regional* basis to ensure good focus and follow-up on your priority issues?**

The Men would like to meet a minimum of three (3) times a year on a regional basis, but preferably four (4) times a year, scheduled on a seasonal basis.

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23 November 2023 (wf)