



ANNUAL REPORT
2021 - 2022

***WORKING
TOGETHER
IN UNITY***

Regional Chief Joanna Bernard
NB AFN



'Qey/'Kwey,

Welcome, New Brunswick Chiefs, to the 1st Annual General Assembly (AGA) of the NB AFN Region.

First, I want to thank the Chiefs for electing me to represent you at the Assembly of First Nations. It is with great honour that I represent the Wolastoqey and Mi'kmaq leaders. It is my intention to continue moving the region's agenda forward.

I recognize each community's uniqueness; I commit to lobbying the federal and provincial governments to recognize each community's authority to create its own laws and to exercise jurisdiction. I also commit to moving our nations together in unity on common issues so that we become a strong voice at the national level.

Time has past by quickly since I was elected as Regional Chief on November 30, 2021. I have spent most of my time establishing an incorporated regional office, familiarizing myself with Assembly of First Nation mandates and directives, and attending meetings within the region. One of my key focuses is to meet with the Chiefs in New Brunswick to ensure open communication, dialogue, and transparency. I continue working on pursuing the key issues that unite us in keeping with my campaign commitment to move forward with unity and inclusion.

The New Brunswick provincial government has closed itself to progressing its relationship with First Nations. It continually violates First Nations title and treaty rights. It also introduced a 'gag order' last fall forbidding public servants from issuing territorial or title acknowledgements. Throughout this time, First Nations have been, and continue to be, very vocal about the government's ongoing disrespect of our people. I stand with the Chiefs and will work on their behalf to encourage the provincial government to move forward in a way that respects our self-determination. There is much work to be done and we must work together, building positive and collaborative relationships.

I welcome and encourage open dialogue and communication. I want to continue to hear and learn from my Elders and fellow leaders. Thank you for your patience as I have transitioned into this new position. I look forward to serving my region!



Board of Directors



Chief Sacha Labillios
Eel River Bar First Nation



Chief Gabriel Atwin
Kingsclear First Nation



Staff



Lisa Tomah
Executive Assistant



Tawnia Morin
Financial Clerk



AFN Fisheries Portfolio

Recent heat waves and floods and pandemic measures raised many issues with respect to the impacts of climate change on First Nation fisheries. Our only resolution on the blue economy and climate change has been withdrawn and may re-submitted during the December Special Chiefs' Assembly.

The National Fisheries Committee remains committed to the National Aquaculture Working Groups' work on an approach towards the co-development of an Aquaculture Act that respects the inherent rights of First Nations, their laws, and their decision-making concerning their waters and coastlines.

On July 20, 2022, the National Fisheries Committee co-Chairs met with Joyce Murray, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. During this meeting, the Minister pledged to examining her commitments with respect to communication about funding for engagement for the future Aquaculture Act.

Minister Murray also committed to follow up on Lennox Island treaty fishery issues that include location, redfish allocation, snow crab access for the food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) fishery, aquaculture (mussels development issue), and Rights Reconciliation Agreement funding disbursements. The National Fisheries Committee invited the Minister to attend its next meeting, which is scheduled to be held before the Special Chiefs' Assembly in December 2022. Minister Murray has since visited the co-Chairs during her tours of PEI and New Brunswick.

NFC co-Chair, Regional Chief Terry Teegee (who also leads the National Action Plan for UNDRIP implementation) drew attention to the BC action plan and its 80-plus commitments that would be prioritized over the next five years. He noted that his position means he is looking for an alignment with the Fisheries Act and UNDRIP. He has received many comments from BC First Nations that the Fisheries Act does not live up to UNDRIP expectations.

The co-Chairs noted that the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management (AAROM) agreement will need to be renewed in 2023. As such, planning for the next five years will need to begin as soon as possible as well as renewed mandates for this work.

Co-Chair Joanna Bernard relayed her concerns to the Minister about re-stocking of rivers in NB. Invasive aquatic species, like the smallmouth bass, and the application for permission to add pesticides to control their spread has been the source of friction between Wolastiqiyik and Mi'kmaq.

On September 27, 2022, the AFN was approached to begin co-developing an agenda for the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Agriculture Ministers. The focus will be to restart a relationship in support of the rightful place of First Nations among the decision-makers for a rapidly declining food source we all share a responsibility for preserving. The invitation to the National Chief to attend has not yet been sent at the time of this report.



Transport Canada has also signaled to the National Fisheries Committee its proposed approach that is specific to Indigenous peoples who are interested in adding their navigable waters to the CNWA schedule. The AFN continues to work cooperatively with Transport Canada on this and other legislation under that department's responsibility.

On August 11, 2022, Sipekne'katik opened its food and ceremonial fishery under its own management plan. In its approach, the 13 First Nations in Nova Scotia can catch up to 40 marketable lobsters per trap per day. Since the Sipekne'katik fishery opened, DFO Fisheries officers have been harassing Indigenous fishers on the Saulnierville Wharf and have since seized their traps.

The National Fisheries Committee is regularly briefed on the Oceans Protection Program and the OPP Subcommittee's work. The Subcommittee continues to work collaboratively with Transport Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard on the assessment of the Oceans Protection Program. To date, the OPP Subcommittee completed phase one of the assessment and has begun the work on phase two. The second phase includes continued evaluation of the OPP design, process, outputs, and the impact of the OPP on First Nations' goals with respect to their communities, marine governance, protection, and ecosystems.

Management Committee Portfolio

The Management Committee was established by the Executive Committee as a standing committee mandated to ensure administrative and financial activities of the NIB/AFN are consistent with approved policies, authorities and guidelines as adopted by the Management Committee, Executive Committee and First Nations-in-Assembly.

The Management Committee has also been instrumental in reviewing and updating both the Human Resource policy and Finance Policy. The updated Finance Policy was adopted by the Executive Committee October 2021 and is due for a review this month (annual review provision included in the update from last year). The Human Resource policy was amended and adopted by the Executive in March 2022. A significant change/inclusion was the Whistle-blowers policy section.

The members of the Management Committee, as appointed by the National Chief, in accordance with the TOR, are Regional Kluane Adamek (Chairperson), Regional Chief Glen Hare, Regional Chief Joanna Bernard, Regional Chief Paul Prosper and Regional Chief Ghislain Picard.



2SLGBTQQIA+ Portfolio

Health care, justice, and social workers, along with many others, continue to point to a real problem in discrimination against 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

During the MMIWG Inquiry, it became clear that 2SLGBTQQIA+ people were being disproportionately affected as well and had even less access to safe spaces and supports. Moreover, they do not have their own specific vehicle within the larger First Nation political advocacy structures to advance their specific concerns.

Submissions made to the national inquiry with specific reference to Two-Spirit people reflect the need for a distinctions-based approach that considers the unique safety challenges Two-Spirit individuals and groups face. As a result, there are 32 calls for justice within the MMIWG Final Report that specifically pertain to 2SLGBTQQIA+ people; generally, they call for: (1) greater awareness of Two-Spirit issues; (2) the implementation of practical supports, programs, and services; (3) being inclusive of their unique perspective in decision-making; (4) data collection and research that better reflects their needs and priorities; (5) culturally safety; (6) mentorship; (7) increased opportunities to advance action to support their wellbeing; (8) program and service design that accommodates their gender and non-binary identities; (9) research and knowledge gathering on pre-colonial knowledge and teachings about the place, roles, and responsibilities of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to support belonging, safety, and wellbeing, and; (10) addressing transphobia and homophobia in First Nation communities as well as the broader community.

Formulating a response to 2SLGBTQQIA+ issues is often assigned to women and women's groups. Indeed, this has also been the approach AFN has taken historically. While there may be some solidarity in terms of responding to a patriarchal colonial system, we now acknowledge that 2SLGBTQQIA+ experiences are not the same as those of women. Space must be made for 2SLGBTQQIA+ voices, communications, and representation so that they can lead systemic structural change that is responsive to them. The National Chief has committed to this, and a resolution is currently under development to amend the AFN Charter to create a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council.

Highlights of the Year

APC All Chiefs meetings in Dartmouth, NS (May 25-26, 2022)

Guest Speaker, National Chief RoseAnne Archibald, spoke on the Assembly of First Nations' direction and priorities. Other presentations included the Atlantic First Nations Health Partnerships who presented on health priorities and the Mental Wellness Strategic Action Plan. Indigenous Services Canada, Fisheries, Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC), Atlantic Indigenous Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AIEDIRP) and the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (AFNWA).





Membership Forum and COVID 19 Information Session in St Marys First Nation, NB (May 30-31, 2022)

On May 30th and 31st the Chiefs of NB and technical staff attended a two-day Membership Forum and COVID-19 Information Session at St. Mary's First Nation. Guest Speakers included:

Dr. Pam Palmater
Chief Patricia Bernard, Madawaska Maliseet First Nation
Professor Cheryl Simon Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie



COVID 19 Gathering/Membership Forum



AGA – Walking the Healing Path Vancouver, BC (July 6-8, 2022)

The Assembly meeting's theme was Walking the Healing Path. The Assembly started one day after the AFN announced a \$20 billion settlement to compensate First Nations children and their families over the harms caused by chronic underfunding of child welfare on reserves. The deal was announced by ISC as the largest in Canadian history. The AGA was overshadowed by controversy involving the AFN National Chief and the AFN's executive council and dominated the three-day-long assembly.



COVID 19 Update and Appreciation Dinner for Former RC Roger Augustine – Vancouver, BC (July 5, 2022)

Several Chiefs, Council members, former staff and friends gathered for an evening of appreciation in honor of long time Regional Chief Roger Augustine. Guest speakers included RC Woodhouse, RC Teegee, RC O'Hare, RC Bernard, Wendall Metallic and Galen Augustine. A presentation on defeating COVID 19 and lessons learned for the Wolastoqiyik and Mi'kmaq communities was delivered by Isabelle Wallace, RN, BScN, MScN





Black Bear Parade – Gagetown, NB (August 12, 2022)

Honorary Colonel RC Bernard attended the Black Bear Parade. The Black Bear is an Indigenous Canadian Armed Forces Program that is a six-week course based on the Primary Reserve Basic Military Qualification-Common (BMQ-C) course. It is designed to make Indigenous peoples aware of the potential military or civilian careers within the Department of National Defence.





Health Transformations meetings – St. Andrews, NB (August 15-17, 2022)

In Oct. 2019, the NB Chiefs, along with Health Directors, and Tribal Council policy analysts resolved to seek agreement on a NB/FN governance structure to support devolution. In 2020, NSMDC, MAWIW, and WTCI submitted successful proposals in governance development and policy research. In 2021, the Federal budget committed \$107.1 million over 3 years to facilitate FN Health Transformation efforts. In July 2021, FNIHB and NB Chiefs met to determine the readiness of FN Health Transformation in NB. In August 2022, the three Tribal Organizations hosted the New Brunswick First Nations Health Summit.



Honourable Marco Mendicino, Minister of Public Safety Meeting Moncton, NB (August 24, 2022)

In December 2021, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness announced he would create new First Nations Policing legislation and the federal government committed to working with First Nations to create the federal framework that recognizes First Nations policing as an essential service. Attendees continued to advocate for changes to the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP), equitable funds and resources to create safe communities.





Climate Gathering Fredericton, NB (September 27-29, 2022)

Over 400 First Nation leaders, experts, youth, women, Knowledge Keepers, and other professionals gathered in Fredericton, NB for the 2nd Annual Climate Gathering. Participants explored solutions in the face of rapid change at local, regional, national and international levels.



Other Notable Gatherings:

Papal Visit, Quebec City
(July 24-30, 2022)

Caring Society with Dr. Cindy Blackstock and
Child and Family Directors
(August 29, 2022)

Wolastoqey Chief and Council Summit
(September 12-14, 2022)

Wolastoqey Fisheries Forum
(September 20-22, 2022)

Accomplishments to date:

Incorporation of NBAFN
Terms of Reference for NBAFN Office
Board of Directors established

Coming Soon:

Website Launch
Welcome Signs

Resolutions:

SMR Resolution – Draft Resolution #48/2022



New Brunswick Regional Office of AFN