

SUMMER 2023

# WEEHTAMAKAYWIN

MUSHKEGOWUK COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

## CONTENTS

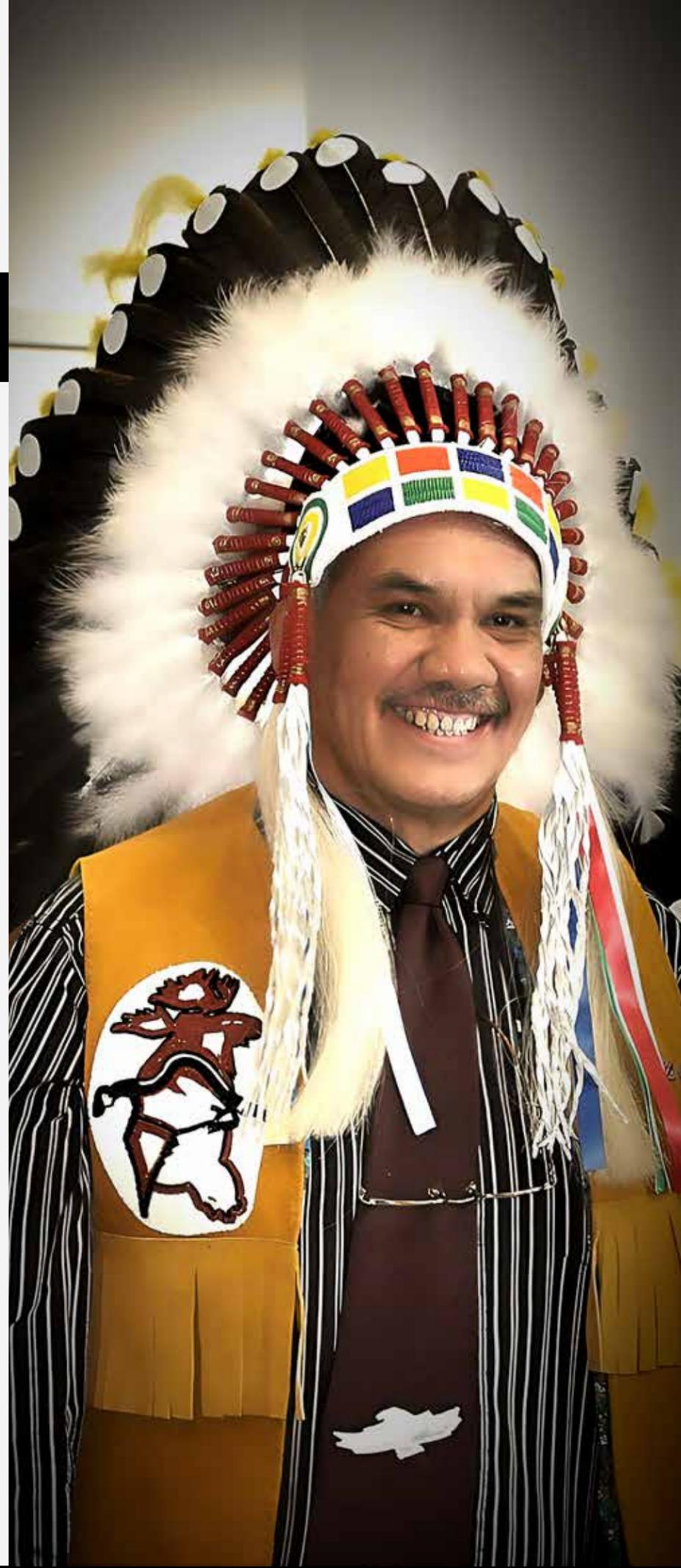
- IN HONOUR AND REMEMBRANCE OF GRAND CHIEF DR. STAN LOUTTIT .....1
- FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GRAND CHIEF ..... 3
- FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF.....4
- LANDS AND RESOURCES ..... 5
- MUSHKEGOWUK TASK FORCE FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES ..... 7
- CREEFEST ININEW MAKOSHEWIN REACHES 20 YEAR MILESTONE ..... 9
- MUSHKEGOWUK HEALTH GOVERNANCE AND AUTHORITY ..... 10
- TECHNICAL SERVICES..... 11
- MUSHKEGOWUK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION..... 13
- NATION REBUILDING INITIATIVE ..... 14



IN CELEBRATION AND REMEMBRANCE OF THE LATE

# MUSHKEGOWUK COUNCIL GRAND CHIEF

# DR STAN LOUTTIT



# IN HONOUR AND REMEMBRANCE OF GRAND CHIEF DR. STAN LOUTTIT

Elected by the Omuşkegowuk in 2004, 2007 and 2011 to the position of Mushkegowuk Grand Chief. He was our leader until his last day with us on June 10, 2014

He was always committed to being the best possible Servant for the Omuşkegowuk, and always wanted other people and governments to work with him to make life better for not only the Omuşkegowuk, but for all Canadians. He always found the passion, determination, knowledge and energy to work hard and to always do the best he could.

His presence alone bought a good feeling of “unity and strength” to our gatherings and assemblies. When he spoke, he spoke with respect, honour, passion, and with a wealth of knowledge.

Stan was our most effective advocate and keeper of the Real Treaty No. 9, As Orally Agreed-to. At numerous gatherings and meetings, he patiently but forcefully explained the spirit and intent of our sacred Treaty with the Crown.

One of the most tragic but memorable moments in his time was when he responded to a distress call from the people of Weenusk in 1986. He also played a key role with the negotiations to get the community re-located and re-built upriver on higher ground at a place known today as “Peawanuck.” Stan was presented with a Ministerial Award, and the Governor General’s Medal of Bravery, in recognition of his efforts during the Winisk Flood.

As an active traditional harvester (a good hunter and trapper) for pretty much all his life, Stan upheld the highest respect and honour for the animals, geese and fish he harvested. The teachings he received and the traditional things he did, provided him with a strong spiritual connection with the land, water, all living things, especially with our Creator.

His extensive and successful professional career included high level administrative and political positions with Indian Affairs, Health Canada (Moose Factory General Hospital), Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Moose Cree First Nation and Mushkegowuk Council.

In 1994, he was elected to the position of Deputy Grand Chief for Nishnawbe Aski Nation. He served in the Deputy Grand Chief position for 5 years and made many positive changes throughout the Nishnawbe Aski Nation in that time. For his leadership qualities and dedication, Stan earned and was awarded the Emile Nakogee Leadership Award of Excellence for this service.

For his advocacy and leadership during the 2005 Kashechewan water (E. coli) crisis, which made national headlines across Canada, Stan was appointed to a National Expert Panel on Water by the federal Minister of Indian Affairs. Today, the Report of the Expert Panel on Safe Drinking Water for First Nations continues to be very influential in the design and delivery of safe drinking water for the First Nations in Canada.

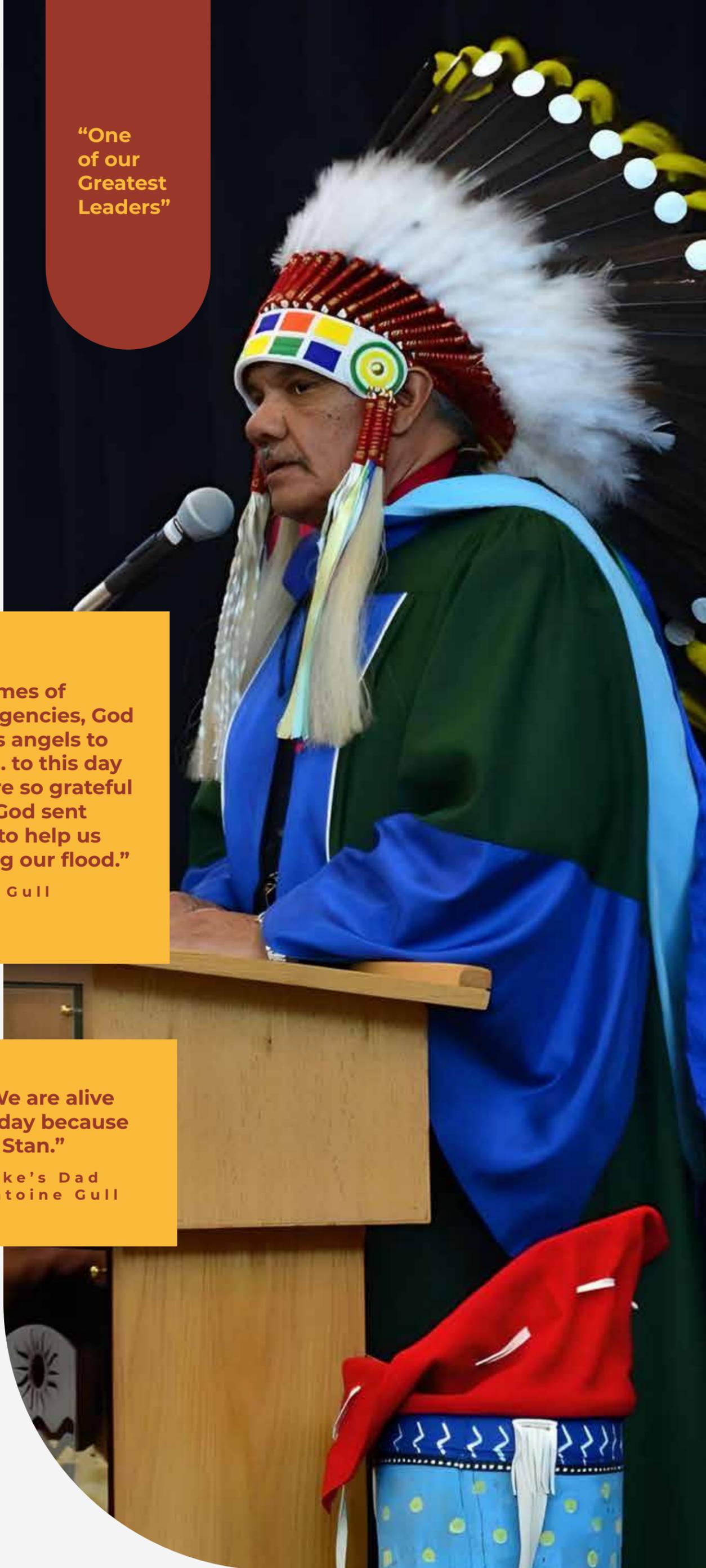
“One of our Greatest Leaders”

“In times of emergencies, God sends angels to help... to this day we are so grateful that God sent Stan to help us during our flood.”

Luke Gull

“We are alive today because of Stan.”

Luke’s Dad  
Antoine Gull





**“Stan is one of the greatest people on earth.”**

Luke Gull

**“Stanley did so much for us...he is going to heaven.”**

Louis Bird

**“The First Nations made a huge amount of progress while Stan was there as our Grand Chief.”**

Norm Wesley

**“Seeing and hearing you speak inspired me when I was a young person.”**

Late Chief Derek Stephen

**“He was, in its truest meaning, a gifted and respected person, a powerful speaker and most of all a true leader.”**



## FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GRAND CHIEF

Submitted by the  
Mushkegowuk Council  
Grand Chief  
Alison Linklater

### Wachay Misiway,

The spring and summer have been challenging to say the least.

There have been substantial seizures of narcotics headed for our communities, but yet overdoses continue to come too often. Swelling rivers from the spring thaw have subsided, and we now are surviving the worst forest fire season this country has ever seen.

I can only imagine the loss that many in our communities are going through.

We can find hope in our history as the original people of this land that lived without technology and within our rightful place in nature. We have survived destitute hunting and fishing seasons. We protected our culture through decades of assault at the hands of colonialism and residential school. Strength and resilience make up a significant part of our being, often beyond our awareness.

The light at the end of the tunnel will come from within us and the stories we carry of our past. Our way of life was one of harmony with a planet that is now struggling to balance itself. Our place as stewards of this land now calls stronger than ever and we must regain that purpose.

To those in the community that continue to share your bounty with those that need it, thank you. To families whose members struggle with addiction you are not alone nor weak, this is an epidemic hiding in plain sight that is devastating us all.

I have witnessed firsthand the determination of our community leaders and commend their resolve and service. We can be confident that solutions will arise from our very capable Omushkegowuk and that healing of our land and people can begin.

**We can draw confidence from the strength of our ancestors, hope in our history of resilience, and determination in our love for one another.**

**In Vigilance and Indigenous Strength  
Grand Chief Alison Linklater**





## FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF

Written by the  
Mushkegowuk Council  
Deputy Grand Chief  
Rebecca Friday

### Good Day to All

First, I want to acknowledge our Creator and our ceremonies and how you practice in your ways, I respect that. I want to take this time to reflect on our Mental health, our physical health, our Spiritual health and our emotional health.

When I speak on these teachings, words and action takes place within our lives.

Our history plays a big part of knowledge we pass on to our youth, so they are not confused. We can move on with our lives in a good way, which our ancestors created for us, in these teachings that came from them. We follow these teachings so we can make better choices in our governance.

Healing plays a big part of history. We need to learn to know the history. We can do it for our children.

Mental health is huge in our communities. Our Physical health plays a big part of what we need to take care of, especially to prevent diabetes. Spiritual health is very important, we need to ask the Creator to help us. We need to pray. Emotional Health is, how do we take care of our emotions. We need to allow

ourselves to feel these emotions such as crying, sadness, anger. How do we express them.

We are in a critical time for all the decisions we make as Leaders. These decisions we make are for the future generations. The focus is based on our knowledge from past leaders. We need to start to listen and apply those knowledgeable teachings and work from there. Mother Earth needs her protection. We are responsible as Caregivers.

**“If we must die, we die  
defending our rights.”**

**Sitting Bull**

Sitting Bull (1831-1890) is one of the most famous Indigenous leaders in history. As a Hunkpapa Lakota leader, he resisted government policies and fought for Native rights. After years of evading capture and struggling with starvation, Sitting Bull eventually surrendered. He worked at Buffalo Bill's Wild West, where he became a celebrity. When he returned home, government authorities grew fearful of the Ghost Dance movement, a religious movement that promised the renewal of the earth, resurrections, and an end to oppression. Because of Sitting Bull's influence, police tried to arrest him and prevent him from joining the movement, but he was killed instead. His remains are buried at Mobridge, South Dakota, his birthplace.





## LANDS AND RESOURCES

Written by the Acting Director of Lands and Resources Lawrence Martin and Interim Executive Director Vern Cheechoo

These activities were conducted in accordance with the project's goals and objectives as to promote environmental stewardship, economic prosperity, improve Omushkego health and well-being for the current and future generations, and to preserve and protect the Omushkego homelands.

To begin, in addition to signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the previous Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, Honorable Jonathan Wilkinson (now Minister of Natural Resources of Canada) is to undertake a feasibility study for the National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA). The Mushkegowuk Council met with the current Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, Hon. Steven Guilbeault, in December of 2021; Minister Guilbeault confirmed that the NMCA project is: "of great importance to him and his government."

In December of 2021, the Mushkegowuk Council along with partners (see below) met with Parks Canada representatives in Ottawa to discuss a Contribution Agreement to financially support the Feasibility Assessment. From these discussions, the Mushkegowuk Council has advocated and pushed Parks Canada to include more flexibility in the Contribution Agreement as allowed by Treasury Board Guidelines for Contribution Agreements with Indigenous Organizations – this flexibility in the contribution agreement has been accepted by Parks Canada and they have committed to altering their original approach to the Contribution Agreement. The Contribution Agreement was finally signed in January 2023.

Next, we also continue to strengthen and bolster our collaboration with supporting conservation organizations. The Mushkegowuk Council has connected with a core group of marine collaborators (Oceans North, Wildlands League, WWF-Canada) with whom it meets regularly. We also collaborate and work with various other conservation organizations (Wildlife Conservation Society, Ducks Unlimited, Audubon, Ecojustice) as well as academic





institutions (University of Toronto, University of Manitoba, University of Waterloo) who assist us on terrestrial and coastal conservation issues.

COVID restrictions have required us to have virtual meetings, as opposed to meetings in-person, until the end of 2022. These virtual meetings have been effective at getting the answers we were seeking with regards to Indigenous Knowledge gathering and, much to our surprise, the Elders have adapted easily to them. Since COVID public health restrictions have been mostly lifted, we are now allowed to meet in person.

However, with the time spared by travel restrictions we have been able to create a detailed workplan, (attached) which outlines our tasks and timelines. In the attached workplan, the “communications” tab briefly summarizes our strategies in terms of communications. First, our department (Lands and Resources) is working with the Mushkegowuk Council’s Governance Department’s communication team to achieve the identified goals and priorities. We have been and will continue to develop posters and pamphlets and distribute them to targeted households. It is important to note that all communication products directed to Omushkego audiences are translated in Cree. In addition, following the hire of a communications specialist for the marine conservation projects, we have been developing a social media presence on different platforms, and keeping them up to date with relevant information about recent developments in our project. Moreover, we have been holding regular workshops with Elders to update them on the project and to retrieve Cree expressions of science terminology pertaining to the NMCA initiative.

**From Troy Woodhouse:**

The Mushkegowuk Council represents seven First Nations in northeastern Ontario covering, nearly one third of the province. This area has some of the last free-flowing rivers and the most intact boreal forests left on earth, globally significant peatlands, and large areas where wildlife flourishes. Omushkego (the strong people) still engage in traditional lifestyles and have rights and responsibilities to steward

the land. There have been impacts from forestry, mining, and hydro power development in this area, especially in the homelands of the more southern communities. For communities in the north, there are several region-opening and growth-inducing industrial developments proposed, including major mining developments and roads and transmission infrastructure in the so-called ‘Ring of Fire’ mineral region that is upstream of three Mushkegowuk communities. All communities are experiencing the impacts of climate change, both directly through events like increased flooding, as well as indirectly through impacts to the fish, wildlife, and lands. The decisions faced by the Mushkegowuk communities about whether or not to allow developments could fundamentally impact the land and water, and our way of life, for generations. Communities and Mushkegowuk Council are being asked by proponents, and by provincial and federal governments, to engage on a project-by-project basis in impact assessment. Communities and Mushkegowuk Council often must depend on third-party service providers and consultants to participate in impact assessments, and often do not have access to information and resources needed to support their participation

**“As part of its efforts to implement an NMCA in the marine and coastal portion of the Omushkego Homelands, the Mushkegowuk Council (MC) has completed several activities and has reached many milestones towards achieving the feasibility assessment for the NMCA in the period spanning September 2021 to May 2022.”**

**Vern Cheechoo and Lawrence Martin speaking at IMAPC 5, February 2023**

in these processes. The program of work outlined in this proposal helps build communities’ and Mushkegowuk Council’s ability to participate proactively in impact assessment, including in engagement with proponents and governments. We propose to do this by supporting community understanding of Canada’s impact assessment processes; creating an impact assessment toolkit that includes Omushkego values, priorities, and stewardship principles; supporting the development of an information hub; and developing community-based guidelines and protocols for how Indigenous Knowledge is considered in impact assessment. For this project, we will work with all seven member communities of the Mushkegowuk Council, as well as with Weenusk First Nation, who are not a member community, but who we collaborate and work with frequently.





## MUSHKEGOWUK TASK FORCE FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Article written and submitted by Special Projects Officer Doug Cheechoo

Going into its 7th year and continuing to cause direct and indirect premature and preventable deaths, destruction of our Cree way of life, and widespread mental health crisis; **the November 2017 declared state of emergency for this devastating health pandemic remains in effect.**

During the COVID global pandemic, the increased rates of premature death among our population and the serious mental health distress within our communities confirm that our Opioid Pandemic intensified. The Opioid crisis is much stronger and continues on its destructive path in our communities. We need a dedicated permanent program and long-term funding to bring this health pandemic under control. The need to reactivate the Task Force for Healthier Communities has been directed by our community and regional leadership tables, health forums and recent Spring Assembly of the Omushkegowuk. Despite the absence of operational funding for the Task Force, meetings on December 13/22, February 1/23 and March 1/23 were conducted.

**The following are some recommendations/concerns coming from the 3 recent TF meetings:** In the messages, it was very clear that we need to reactivate the Task Force immediately. The OPIOID CRISIS in our communities is very serious, dangerous, and continues to escalate. We need to continue working together on this health pandemic.

- Our regional campaign needs to be reactivated and enhanced immediately.
- NAPS needs to be provided with more resources for the Mushkegowuk Drug Enforcement Unit.
- Representatives from Moose Cree and Moosonee agreed that they need to work together on developing and implementing strategies.
- The newly established NAPS DEU for the Mushkegowuk First Nations is operational and has been successful in the urban projects (busts).
- The drug busts in the urban centers help, but the enforcement needs to be equally or increased in the communities.
- Our schools need to implement more awareness programs.
- The youth need to be part of the Task Force.



**“We are in a humanitarian crisis... Bring more solutions to the Opioid Crisis... We need aftercare services...It’s time to put our differences aside and go forward together... Mushkegowuk could be very powerful.”**

**Delegates of our May 2023 Spring Assembly**

- The Task Force continues to be a great support for NAPS.
- NAPS continues to be seriously challenged with staffing issues.
- NAPS will work with ONTC to conduct enforcement on the Polar Bear Express.
- We need more officers and a plan for a K-9 Unit.
- Recommend that screening of passengers and baggage should be implemented on the Polar Bear Express.
- We need to do something about the LCBO allowing liquor purchases for bootlegging.
- Transportation of illicit drugs on the WAHA medical charters (Kingston & Timmins) needs to stop.

In an effort to minimize any duplication/overlap with other services and community-based strategies, and to seek funding support, we are currently reviewing the mandate and structure of the Task Force for Healthier Communities. Once the review is complete, the revised mandate will be presented to the Council of Chiefs for approval, and a new funding proposal will be submitted to the appropriate funding sources.

We continue to collaborate with the appropriate governments on the following:

**Canada Post:** Developing and implementing strategies to reduce the flow of illicit drugs into our communities.

**Passenger and Cargo Screening at Timmins Airport:** The development and implementation of a passenger and cargo screening system for flights coming into our communities.

**Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (Polar Bear Express):** Need to resume discussions on what can be done to reduce the flow of illicit drugs on the train.

**Liquor Control Board of Ontario:** We are asking LCBO to stop the illegal activity of selling large amounts of liquor to individuals without a permit, in Moosonee.

**Cree Speaking Justice of the Peace:** We need a local Cree-speaking Justice of the Peace (JP) to help enforce our laws and by-laws, provide justice in our language and culture, and to provide better access to a JP for all of our people, including victims of crime, accused people, and police officers. Meetings with the federal and provincial justice ministries are on-going.

**Zoom Court Stations for the James Bay Coastal Communities:** This on-going work with Canada and Ontario is very important for greater access to justice. If supported this would begin to address longstanding and serious gaps in access to justice experienced by members living in the remote Mushkegowuk communities.

In conclusion, it is important for us to acknowledge that some progress is being made at the community and regional levels. The land-based healing, traditional harvesting, mental health, spiritual gatherings, recreation, public safety (and other) programs and services continue to help many community members and families with their healing journeys. Some of our work with our police services, federal and provincial governments is helping, but there is still so much work that needs to be done before we achieve more noticeable results in our communities. We need to keep building on the progress we’ve made so far!

# CREEFEST ININEW MAKOSHEWIN REACHES 20 YEAR MILESTONE

Article Written and  
Submitted by Greg  
Spence

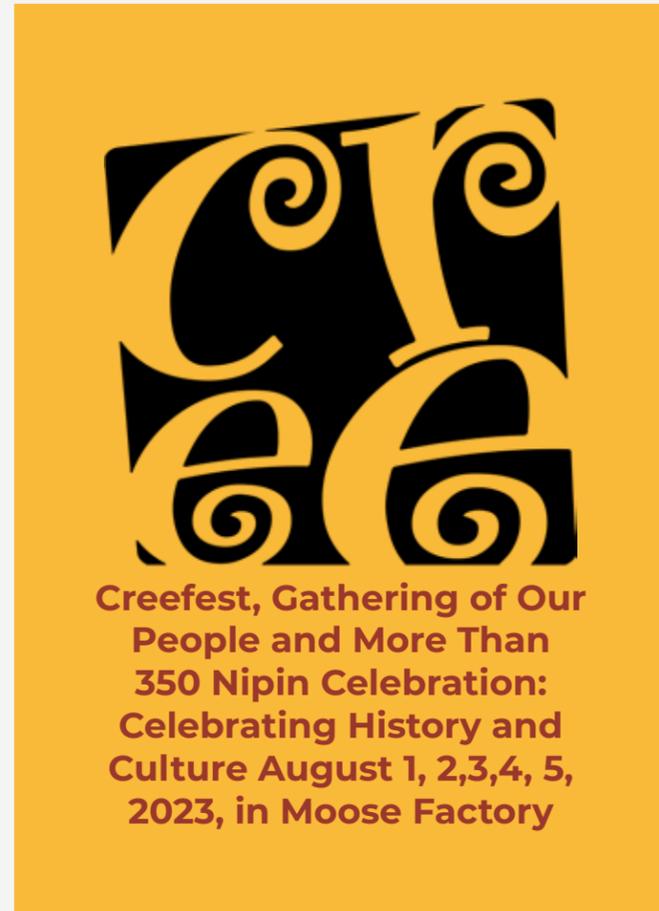
CreeFest-Ininew Makoshewin is a cultural summer festival which acknowledges the diversity and richness of arts, crafts, music and cultural characteristics of the Omushkego peoples.

It has reached its twentieth year since it was inaugurated by Moose Cree First Nation's Gathering of Our People festival in 2003.

CreeFest is the modern day setting of this tradition of cultural celebration rotating to its member First Nations each summer showcasing the talents and unique cultural characteristics of the hosting First Nation and other member communities. CreeFest provides an opportunity for emerging talent to experience performance and exposure on a larger scale while learning from established Aboriginal artists brought to the festival each year.

The Elders as our traditional educators continue to pass on their knowledge and teachings to the youth and children. Without the participation of the Elders, the CreeFest event would not have its unique quality and of which their presence is significant to the spirit of the CreeFest celebration.

Our elders provide the traditional support by reinforcing Cree culture by sharing history, teaching of traditions, food preparation and techniques, family values and the connection of the land and the people. The transferring of the teachings and knowledge, cultural skills, art of story telling provide the foundation for our communities, children, families to use those traditional values in their own life experiences.



And, for this special regional anniversary event, Creefest will include a special ceremony to honour and recognize our great leaders that dedicated their lives to improving the quality of life for the citizens of the Mushkegowuk First Nations.



# MUSHKEGOWUK HEALTH GOVERNANCE AND AUTHORITY

Written by Director of  
Health Janis Wabano

Elizabeth (Betty) Gunner was awarded the Tribute Award for Partnership in honour of her commitment to Mushkegowuk kids with disabilities and their families.

Betty was among nine individuals who were recognized for their impact on kids with disabilities and their families at the Empowered Kids Ontario (EKO) 2023 Spring Symposium in Toronto in April.

Betty spearheaded the development of the James Bay Special needs Services System Planning Table, which is called MaMouPiMoTayTaa – Together We Walk, which is now a program run by Mushkegowuk Council's health department, Mushkegowuk Okimawiwin Minopimatisiwinik Atoskawikamik (OMA).

This planning table was developed in collaboration with the Cochrane Temiskaming Children's Treatment Centre and Mushkegowuk Council's Omushkego Education as a provincial initiative to support children and youth with disabilities. Betty served as the Community Relations Coordinator with Omushkego Education, where she brought the voice and perspective of Indigenous families to service providers.

**Elizabeth  
(Betty)  
Gunner  
Awarded for  
Dedication to  
Children with  
Disabilities**



Betty dedicated her career to equity and access to services for Mushkegowuk children to ensure kids with disabilities and their families can live their best lives. She aided in the development of an adaption of the speech and language program called "Moe the Mouse" which was specific to Cree-speaking children. She also led the roll-out of a universal Handwriting Without Teams program in James Bay area schools, was an active participant in the development of a newly created Pediatric Indigenous Rehab Assist post-secondary program, bridge information technology for families through creating an iPad loan program where tablets are loaded with various programs.

EKO's Tribute Award is EKO's oldest and most prestigious recognition, which is presented to individuals, teams and organizations that have made lasting contributions for kids with disabilities and their families.

The Mushkegowuk OMA Team would like to congratulate Betty for this outstanding achievement!

For more information about Betty's achievements, visit: <https://empoweredkidsontario.ca/elizabethgunner>



# TECHNICAL SERVICES

From Fort Albany Women's Shelter Coordinator Margaret Keesic:

The Transition House will provide additional support to Women and children that come through Fort Albany Womens Shelter. In the past we have experienced women and children leave their homes, only to go back to abusive relationship due to lack of housing. Our hope is to provide additional support and services to families that access the shelter by providing an additional stay up to a year at the Transitional Homes. This gives opportunity to the home community to provide homes and resources to their community member that access Fort Albany Women Shelter.

One of units is dedicated to our two spirited community. We understand that there are lack of services in our area for LGBTQ2 community. We hope to provide a safe space for all within the Fort Albany Women Shelter Programming.

From Mushkegowuk Council Technical Services Project Officer Chris Seguin:

Mushkegowuk Council Technical Services(MCTS) assisted Fort Albany's Woman's Shelter throughout all pre-construction activities for their 7-unit Transitional Housing Project.

MCTS engaged with Barry Martin to create a full drawing package for the build and our team reviewed and provided comments on all aspects of the drawings. We also worked with EXP to have geotechnical investigations and environmental site assessments complete at the proposed sites. Furthermore, we engaged with MNP to establish a minimum baseline of insurance requirements for the project and worked with Fort Albany's insurance provider with providing technical information they required. Lastly Mushkegowuk assisted with preparing the CCDC-2 contract to ensure a sufficient contract was in place for the project.

Overall MCTS assisted the Woman's Shelter with all aspects of the project and we will continue to do so as construction has recently started. Going forward we'll be collaborating with Barry Martin to provide Code Compliance and monthly progress inspections to ensure the build is meeting the Ontario Building Code and drawing specifications. We'll also provide project management support by scheduling regular meetings with the Project Team to ensure an effective line of communication is established with all parties.





Meegwetch to fire departments of neighbouring communities for your generous donations to Omushkego fire services. These donations get us a step closer to providing equitable emergency services in our communities.

Mushkegowuk Council EMS Manager Wilbert Wesley



**Richard Vallie**  
Fire Chief  
Cochrane  
Ontario

10 sets  
of bunker  
gear



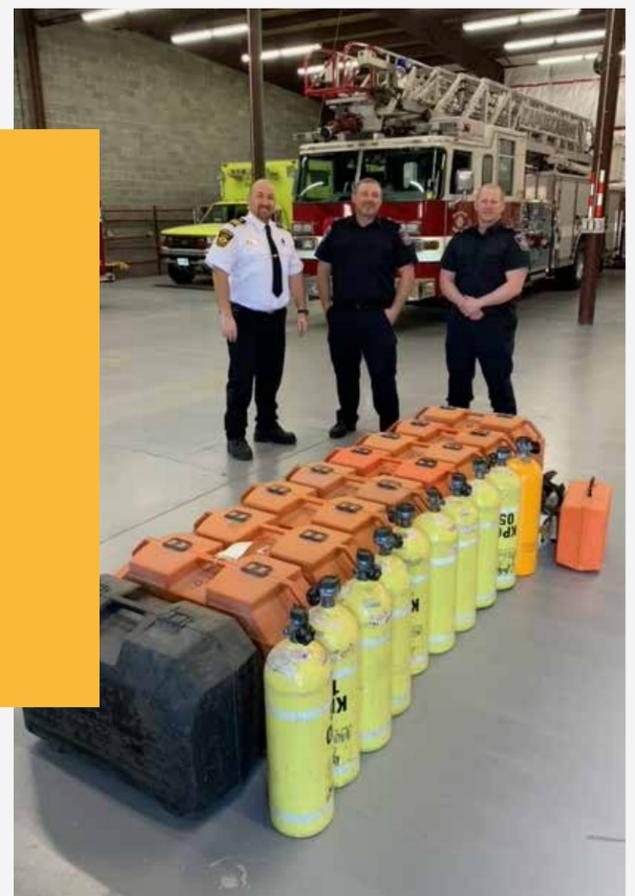
**Curtis Fowler**  
Fire Chief  
Mattagami  
First Nation

Bunker gear,  
smoke  
alarms,  
& fire  
prevention  
materials



**Pat Kennedy**  
Fire Chief  
& Crew,  
Kapuskasing  
Ontario

SCBA's and  
cylinders





## MUSHKEGOWUK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Written and Submitted by the Chief Executive Office of Mushkegowuk Development Corporation  
Albalina Metatawabin

[www.mushkegowukdc.ca](http://www.mushkegowukdc.ca)  
[www.greatnorthcastle.ca](http://www.greatnorthcastle.ca)

### Business Updates:

#### MDC Properties

The Mushkegowuk Regional Economic Development LP, is undertaking a feasibility study and business plan to address the accommodations needs for patient travel while accessing health care services outside of the region. This project aligns with our existing business model of responding to economic leakages and those with a regional reach, while creating economic benefits for our Partners.

**MDC Supply GP, operating as Great North Builder's Supplies – [www.greatnorthcastle.ca](http://www.greatnorthcastle.ca)**

Great North Builder's Supplies celebrated its 3rd anniversary this past March; a milestone only achieved with the support of our loyal customers and committed owners. By working together, we continue to strengthen the regional economy through job creation and wealth generation for, you, the owner.

#### **New Commercial and Industrial division under MDC Supply GP**

Our new Commercial & Industrial Supply division has opened an operating a new location in Timmins that provides a local footprint to service different industries, such as Mining, Energy,

**The Mushkegowuk Development Corporation's successful business ventures generate resources to enable each member community to invest in itself - creating more vibrant, healthy and sustainable First Nation communities.**

**Mushkegowuk Development Corporation Vision Statement**

**Mushkegowuk Development Corporation (MDC) will successfully develop, own and operate significant regional businesses, which will benefit the Mushkegowuk Nation and our region's communities by generating wealth, while creating employment and respecting the environment and our traditional cultural principles and values.**

**Mushkegowuk Development Corporation Mission Statement**

and the many other commercial customers in the Timmins and surrounding areas.

Included in this sector are the First Nation organizations (education, health, political and other administration offices). We carry essential products such as copy paper, toilet paper, paper towels as an example of how we can respond to your needs.

### **Additional Supply Partners added:**

With strategic partnerships established with industry leaders in industrial cleaning and equipment products, mining supplies, cybersecurity, and financial solutions, MDC Supply GP aims to provide a comprehensive supply solution to communities and a wider range of businesses.

Industrial Cleaning and Equipment – serving all sectors.

Safety Supplies, Soil stabilizing solutions, commercial building products, furniture (camps / other) – Mining, other resource sectors, First Nation projects served.

Cybersecurity compliance and protection – All sectors served.

Private Equity Source and advisory for large projects – serving all First Nations and sectors.

MDC Supply GP's expansion plans to diversify its product portfolio and expand into commercial supply markets demonstrates the company's commitment growth and to meeting the evolving needs of its customers.

Jason Wesley can be contacted directly about your commercial and industrial needs at [jasonwesley@mushkegowuk.ca](mailto:jasonwesley@mushkegowuk.ca) or at [greatnorthbuilders@mushkegowuk.ca](mailto:greatnorthbuilders@mushkegowuk.ca).

### **General Partner update**

Our last update mentioned changes in the board governance, through directors leaving and with intent to share introduce new members to the board. A press release was issued in March introducing two new members: Barry Payne and Kate Durst. The press release can be found on our website at: [www.mushkegowukdc.ca](http://www.mushkegowukdc.ca) and provides further information for them.

The board will be making further appointments in the next few weeks. We do welcome inquiries from those who have an interest in the board, please reach out to our Interim President Waylon Iserhoff or myself about this.

We wish everyone well and to remain safe, especially if travelling during this summer season.



## NATION REBUILDING INITIATIVE

Written and submitted by the Director of Nation Rebuilding Initiative  
**Natasha Martin**

### Wachay,

Times just seem to keep getting harder for our communities. The cost of living continues to climb, spring evacuations transitioned into summer evacuations, the land and rivers continue to endure unprecedented periods without rain, and addiction continues to grow in our communities.

The department will continue to host functions and be present at events where we can be. Omushkego encompasses a vast amount of land that is difficult for any regional leadership to adequately serve, but we will continue to optimize

our resources and program delivery. Considering the difficult circumstances we find ourselves in, it amazes me that whether it be a high level political meeting or grass roots event I find the flame of optimism and determination continues kindled within our people. Our optimism is constantly challenged by the pressures of the extraordinary times we are living, but yet I am continually inspired by the unwavering determination within Omushkego to live and work for a good life.

I believe the atmosphere of our upbringing and the history of our people have instilled a resilience in us that is second to none. We have lived through hard times only to become stronger because of it. I am glad to stand by those who are struggling, grieving, and succeeding. Our resilience will pave a path to a healthy tomorrow lived by an Omushkego that would make our ancestors proud.

Our prayers and support go out to those struggling with addiction, mental health, and keeping food on the table. Our thoughts and inspiration are with those that continue to work and educate themselves.

The Nation Rebuilding department is proud to provide this newsletter to you and please feel free to reach out to us with questions and suggestions at:

[nationrebuilding@mushkegowuk.ca](mailto:nationrebuilding@mushkegowuk.ca)

Take care of each other and keep the flame of optimism burning bright.

WEEHTAMAKAYWIN NEWSLETTER PROUDLY  
COMPILED AND DISTRIBUTED BY:

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**OMUSHKEGO**  
NATION REBUILDING INITIATIVE

NEWSLETTER LAYOUT & DESIGN BY DANIEL CHEECHOO

Honouring Our

# ILLILIWUK & INNINIWUK

Grand Chiefs and Deputy Grand Chiefs

1983 - 2023

**Alison Linklater**  
GRAND CHIEF  
2022 - present

**David Fletcher**  
CHAIRMAN  
1983 - 1984

**Fred Wesley**  
CHAIRMAN  
1984 - 1985

**Munroe Linklater**  
CHAIRMAN - 1986

**George Hunter**  
CHAIRMAN  
1986 - 1987

**Norm Wesley**  
CHAIRMAN  
1987 - 1988

**Alex Spence**  
CHAIRMAN  
1989 - 1991

**Stan Louttit**  
CHAIRMAN  
1992 - 1994

**Rosanne Archibald**  
CHAIRPERSON  
1994 - 1995

**Ernie T. Sutherland**  
CHAIRMAN  
1996 - 1997

**Lawrence Martin**  
GRAND CHIEF  
1998 - 2000

**Oliver Wesley**  
DEPUTY  
GRAND CHIEF  
1998 - 2001

**Ignace Gull**  
GRAND CHIEF  
2001 - 2002

**Mike Carpenter**  
DEPUTY  
GRAND CHIEF  
2001 - 2004

**Ernest Beck**  
GRAND CHIEF  
2002 - 2003

**Jonathon Solomon**  
DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF  
2004 - 2006

**Leo Friday**  
DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF  
2006 - 2015

**Stan Louttit**  
GRAND CHIEF  
2004 - 2014

**Lawrence Martin**  
GRAND CHIEF  
2014 - 2015

**Rebecca Friday**  
DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF  
2015 - 2023

**Jonathon Solomon**  
GRAND CHIEF  
2015 - 2022

**KASHECHEWAN CREE FIRST NATION**

**Missanabie Cree First Nation**

**Weenusk First Nation**

**Moose Cree First Nation**

**FORT ALBANY FIRST NATION**

**Attawapiskat First Nation**

**Taykwa Tagamou Nation**

**CHAPLEAU CREE FIRST NATION**

**A Strong, Proud and United Illiliwuk & Inniniwuk Nation**

Built on Vision, Passion, Leadership, Knowledge, Kindness, Courage and Sacrifice.