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Aseniwuche Stories



Community members, industry partners and friends of AWN kicked off the 2021/2022 school year with student awards, bannock burgers and cake!

their immense support and contributions to the awards and BBQ—including helping us set up! Because of their generosity, AWN will be covering some of the school fees required for agendas, swimming lessons, and elective courses. We kindly ask families for their patience as we coordinate payment with the schools.

We'd also like to thank: Linda, Bob, Denise and Jane of 100 Caring Hearts for coming to our swift rescue and donating their time and barbeque to cook up delicious hot dogs and burgers, Andrew Storrie and Country Pump Out for donating a handwash station, and of course, Shayna Sinclair and the incredible staff at Susa Creek School for helping set up, take down and host the event. We wish everyone a safe and happy school year!

FISH & STREAMS

Our new Aquatic Habitat Restoration program has been going swimmingly thanks to Habitat Stewardship Co-ordinator Nate Medinski. Nate's been busy leading several projects, community engagement events and participating in several unique field opportunities with other agencies. We look forward to learning more from Nate and seeing how the program grows!

A VERY FISHY SUMMER

Contributed by Nate Medinski

From August 16th to 20th, AWN's Aquatic Habitat Stewardship Coordinator Nate Medinski and Consultation Coordinator Vivian McDonald participated in a fisheries survey with Alberta Environment and Parks staff in the upper Little Smoky River watershed. The focus of the survey was to collect information on the distribution (where fish are found in the watershed) and relative abundance (how many fish are captured per hour of fishing effort) of different species, including Arctic Grayling, Bull Trout, Northern Pike and Walleye. Fish sampling for this survey was done through sample angling, using both fly and spin casting methods.

The first day of the trip started with Vivian outfishing both Nate and Ben (AEP Fisheries Biologist, Grande Prairie), by catching the only fish of the day—a Northern Pike downstream of the Highway 43 bridge crossing near Fox Creek. The second and third days of the trip saw more action, as all the crews got into catching some Arctic Grayling in the upper reaches of the Little Smoky River, and more Walleye and Pike in the lower reaches. The trip saw a little too much action when one of the field crews from Edson was bluff charged by a large Grizzly Bear. Luckily, they kept their wits about them and escaped unharmed.

Overall, this was an excellent opportunity to build capacity within the community on fisheries and aquatics monitoring programs and to learn more about how AEP conducts watershed-scale fisheries assessments. We'd like to send a great big thank you to Ben Kissinger, Adrian Meinke and KayeDon Wilcox for inviting us to participate in such an interesting field survey. It was a great way to continue developing a collaborative relationship between our two organizations. AWN community members, including youth, interested in participating in future fish and streams fieldwork opportunities are highly encouraged to contact me at ahrf@aseniwuche.com.



UPDATE FROM CONSULTATION, LAND & RESOURCES

Contributed by Vivian McDonald

The Terrestrial Studies Initiative (TSI) finally got off the ground after being delayed by COVID-19 for over a year. Throughout the summer, we were able to log many important sites in the Willmore Wilderness Park that the Aseniwuche Winewak used historically and continue to use today.

We've received an extension to continue the FRIAA TLU work that has been ongoing for the past several years. This is good news as we can identify more important historical sites.

Consultation, Land & Resources will also be conducting a TLU in the Foothills Forest Products area of operations (E8 and E10). We hoped to have started the Foothills TLU already. However, progress will depend on weather conditions in the coming months.

As always, it's humbling working with the Elders and learning from them. Their memories and the history they share with me and ultimately AWN is the foundation for the Nation's connection to the land. If you are fortunate enough to sit and listen to an Elder, cherish the moment. They have been in our TLU decades before us. They have seen and experienced the pristine conditions of the land and remember its bounty and beauty.

ELECTROFISHING IN PINTO CREEK

Contributed by Nate Medinski

Earlier this month, Nate and Interim Executive Director Courteney Wanyandie-Smith helped Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) with a fish and stream habitat survey of Pinto Creek, approximately 45 minutes south of Grande Cache. The goal of the survey was to assess the relative abundance (how many fish are captured per hour of fishing effort) of Athabasca Rainbow Trout, an endangered species, and to collect genetic information to determine if these fish were pure strain or hybrids for conservation and species recovery purposes. Fish were sampled using a method called “backpack electrofishing”, where electricity is carefully added to the water to attract the fish, which are then netted and placed into a bucket for further sampling.

The water levels were very high following the heavy rainfall of the previous two days, but the first site downstream of the Highway 40 crossing was in good enough condition to sample. Luckily no one went for an unexpected swim (though I jumped into the creek too eagerly at one point and nearly filled my chest waders in a deep spot). Four rainbow trout were captured at the first site, and habitat information and fin clips were collected for analysis. Stream flows at the second sample site, the Polecat Road bridge crossing over Pinto Creek, was unfortunately not as suitable for in-stream work. The crew did however manage to complete some electrofishing and captured several juvenile Arctic Grayling and Mountain Whitefish.

Overall, this was another fantastic opportunity to build fish and fish habitat assessment capacity within the community and to learn about how DFO conducts studies aiming to recover fish species at risk. Special thanks to Tyana Rudolfson from DFO for reaching out to us to join in on fieldwork within the AWN Traditional Land Use area.



Nate's fishing demo at the Stay in School Awards drew a fascinated crowd. Both Rainbow Trout used for the demo were carefully returned to the creek after the event.





A TOURISM CELEBRATION

The AWN Tourism Celebration, funded by Travel Alberta, was held at Peavine Lake on September 1st. The event celebrated the past year of development and learning that many community members have completed. With guests from the tourism and energy industries, the talents of community artisans and performers were put on a dazzling display! The incredible feast made by the AWN camp cooks included mushroom and elk stroganoff on spaghetti squash, slow-cooked bison short ribs and bannock. With plenty of sunshine and laughter, the day was enjoyed by all who attended.

– Contributed by Gina Goldie



FAMILY WELLNESS

Contributed by Lorraine Delorme

Soak up the last few warm and sunny days by spending quality time outdoors.

- Learn how to skip stones
- Look for shapes in the clouds
- Cook a meal over the fire
- Go puddle stomping
- Ask them to teach you how to do something they're good at
- Or teach you something they learned at school
- Ask them to read you a story, or take turns

WHAT CAN YOUR CHILD TEACH YOU?

"There are many things to learn from our kids being a teacher to us. Of course, I know that parents are the main teachers in a family, but it's good to let our children hone their teaching skills too. They'll need them one day at work, in friendships, and even in their own parenting days. So as you spend time with your child, look for opportunities to encourage and allow them to teach you."

Source: Nancy Jergins, iMom

BEDTIME AFFIRMATIONS

"As important as it is for parents to encourage, love and support their children, it is just as important that children learn to create these positive emotions within themselves. Affirming positive messages are like acts of kindness towards themselves that build self-esteem and self-belief."

Source: Ripple Kindness Project

- Today I did my very best, now my mind is set to rest.
- I am loved so wide and deep, that in peace, I can sleep.
- I have the power to conquer my fear, and knowing that, my mind is clear.

'A Tourism Celebration' cont'd

Over the past year, the AWN Tourism Project has accomplished many goals. The Culture Camp has been redesigned by an Advisory Group of camp workers and a landscape architect. Several local entrepreneurs have completed courses and worked hard on business planning and development. Lauren Moberly (Fallen Mountain Soap) has earned many accomplishments including winning the Amy Willier Grant, a national Aboriginal Business Women's award, and a complete e-commerce website from Indigenous Tourism Alberta. Curtis and Mel Hallock of Indian Trail Adventures also were awarded a website grant.

Prior to the event, camp staff completed 5 days of training with two of Canada's top Indigenous Tourism consultants, who've also developed a 5-year business plan for the camp. Community members discussed the challenging question of how to expand camp programming to include tourism experiences that honour and preserve cultural traditions and protocol, and are also authentic to AWN. Additional audiences beyond industry partners were identified, such as schools and other Indigenous people. It was agreed that the camp will only offer services to tourists that respect the culture and community. Everyone spoke of the powerful opportunity that tourism represents to preserve culture and teach traditional skills.



At the celebration, the 20 days of culinary training the cooks did with Chef Cindy Lazarenko came together in a fantastic 3-course meal. The cooks proudly wore new AWN ribbon aprons designed by the talented Selena Moberly (Rocky Mountain Designs). Vicky Wanyandie taught bannock-making, Traditional Knowledge Keeper Stuart McDonald led a Medicinal Plant walk and community artisans Garry and Leissa McDonald, Rebecca Wanyandie and Lauren showcased their products and shared teachings. Robert Wanyandie, along with Justin and Jacob Wanyandie, Stephen McDonald and Cody McDonald carried on the tradition of the James Gang Drummers while wearing beautiful new ribbon shirts designed by Robert. The dancers were truly the highlight of the day, performing jingle, ribbon and shawl dances. Thank you to all the community members!

The event took place on the new deck that measures 52 by 42 feet; an incredible addition to the camp! The construction was made possible by a generous donation from Weyerhaeuser Canada, and grant money from the Prairies Economic Development Canada. Also slated to be completed this year is a 32-foot fire shelter based on a wickiup, 3 comfort-camping tent platforms, and entrance gates. It's also hoped that an industry-style camp kitchen and washroom trailers can be purchased or donated. AWN staff and contractors are currently working on grant applications to fund further development, as well as additional training and capacity building for community members.



CARIBOU PATROL



–Contributed by Stephanie Leonard

Caribou Patrol would like to thank everyone who participated in the Photo Scavenger Hunt throughout the summer. We hope you had fun learning about caribou and taking photos. If there's enough interest, we may bring the scavenger hunt back in the future. Keep an eye out and continue to #careaboutcaribou!

Right now, caribou sightings have been few and far between as the summer comes to an end. It's still possible for motorists to see some of the caribou that like to stay near Highway 40 year-round, and sightings should increase over the next few months as we get into the fall migration. It's critical to slow down and watch for caribou and other wildlife in the caribou corridor no matter the time of year. Thank you to everyone who reports.

Please be aware that several male caribou have been observed demonstrating more aggressive behaviour than in previous years. We're expecting things to escalate during the fall rut. Please exercise extreme caution if you are out of your vehicle near wildlife.

Caribou Patrol offers free information sessions and programming for companies, schools and public interest groups. We've got tons of information about the biology, specific needs and threats of the west-central caribou herds, the Caribou Patrol Program, and what the public can do, both individually and as an organization, to conserve caribou. Email info@cariboupatrol.ca or call 780-827-4014 for more information. We're excited to meet you (Zoom presentations available)!



Photo credit: Clayton Dubyk

SITE REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Contributed by Brenda McFadyen-Landry

In 2020, to support economic recovery, the federal government announced \$1.7 billion in funding for the cleanup of unreclaimed oil and gas wells in Canada. The province of Alberta established the Site Rehabilitation Program to administer \$1 billion of the grant funding allocated. Application periods with identified priorities are focused on abandonment and reclamation activities of upstream oil and gas wells, pipelines and associated facilities. Eligible oil and gas companies (licensees) receive a funding allocation which they use to nominate sites into the program. The Companies contract service providers to complete the work with grant payments made directly from the Government of Alberta to the Contractor. Incentives are in place to utilize a qualified Indigenous company.

In 2021, ADC with support from Willows Construction submitted a proposal to Canadian Natural Resources for their Remediation and Reclamation Program. In July, ADC successfully completed three sites and is looking forward to further opportunities for both our equipment and operators over the next year. Congratulations to the ADC team for a job well done with special thanks to Willows Construction and Clayton Dubyk with CNRL who has been very supportive throughout the process.

AWN UPDATE FROM BILL C-92 QUEBEC COURT OF APPEAL HEARING

Contributed by Claire Truesdale, JFK Law

From September 14 to 16, Aseniwuche Winewak Nation was in the Québec Court of Appeal for a court case on federal law regarding child and family services for Indigenous people called An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families (Bill C-92). The Québec government asked the court to find that the federal government did not have the power to make this law under Canada's Constitution because it interfered with provincial services. The federal government said that they did have this power because they have power over "Indians and lands reserved for Indians". Awn was granted intervener status by the court to make arguments in support of the law.

The law sets national minimum standards for all child and family services delivered to Indigenous people across Canada. These standards are aimed at protecting Indigenous children and families' rights to their cultures and identities as Indigenous peoples and to keeping children in their families and communities as much as possible. The law also recognizes that Indigenous people have a right to self-government, including a right to make their own laws about child and family services for their communities.

AWN's lawyer from JFK Law made arguments in support of Canada's position that the law is valid. We gave the court examples of Awn's negative experiences with the provincial child and family services systems and explained how communities like Awn fall through the cracks of these systems, leaving Awn children and families vulnerable. We explained the importance of a law that would apply to all Indigenous peoples across Canada, not just bands under the Indian Act. The judges seemed sympathetic to our arguments and Canada and the other interveners said Awn made an important contribution to the case. The court "reserved" their decision which means they will think further about the case before deciding whether to uphold the law or not. They will likely make a decision in the next 4-8 months.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: (1) Stephen McDonald triple-checking his chest waders are leak-proof, (2) Justin Wanyandie collecting data including temperature and pH of the water, (3) Stephen, Justin and Katie Wong, (4) Devina Doire modelling Jamie Okuma's designs at the Santa Fe Indian Market Fashion show in California, (5) Courtney Wanyandie-Smith harvesting potatoes grown at the Tawow Centre, (6) Brenda McFadyyn-Landry and Courtney present a drum to Jennifer Ezekiel and Kelsey McKague from CDN Controls for their dedication and efforts developing the Emerging Leaders Training Program.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS



AWN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Following the Nomination Meeting on August 24, 2021, the following positions were declared elected by acclamation:

- Stephen McDonald, Director
- Stevie Snider, Director
- Rueben Moberly, Director
- Alfred Wanyandie, Director

Following the Election on September 8, 2021, the following positions were declared elected by majority vote:

- David MacPhee, President
- Cathy Wanyandie, Director
- Shirley Haggart, Director

The 2021-2025 AWN Board of Directors held their Organizational Meeting on September 17, 2021. The first Regular AWN Board of Directors Meeting will be on Saturday, September 25, 2021.

COMMUNITY NEWS



CO-OPERATIVE & ENTERPRISE WELL SURVEYS SEPTEMBER 20-24

Longtime partner Matrix Solutions has dedicated in-kind research and now fieldwork to help AWN address water issues related to the wells in the Co-operatives and Enterprises. Between September 20 and 24, Matrix staff Danny Kibrom and AWN community member Billy McDonald will be visiting residences to collect well data. If residents are available and willing, Danny and Billy are interested in speaking with community members about their wells and water quality. **For the health and safety of Danny, Billy and all community members, please hold conversations outdoors and maintain physical distancing.** Danny and Billy's field surveying starts Monday afternoon. If you see them, make sure to say hi!

Monday Muskeg Seepee & Susa Creek

Thursday Joachim & Wanyandie Flats

Tuesday Susa Creek & Grande Cache Lake

Friday Any locations that may have been missed

Wednesday Victor Lake

CONGRATULATIONS, DARREN WANYANDIE & SHANIA MCDONALD!



We're happy to report community members Darren Wanyandie and Shania McDonald passed their Class 5 training and road tests with flying colours last week. Holding their full licenses will open up more work opportunities for Darren and Shania, both of whom work at Aseniwuche Development Corporation. Way to go!

The AWN Class 5 Driver's Training Program covers the cost of the Class 5 Training (15 hours of classroom training, 10 hours in-car practice), road test, vehicle rental and accommodations in Grande Prairie. Training is administered by Summit Driver Training. Upon successful completion of the course, students will receive a certificate they can present to auto insurance providers for a small discount. The next course is November 20-24, spots are available on a first-come-first-serve basis. Pick up an application from the AWN office or call 780-827-5510 for details.

AWN COVID-19 MEASURES

AWN and the Tawow Centre are open and staff continue to work in the office. We require anyone entering the office to complete a COVID screening and temperature check. We kindly remind everyone that Albertans who receive a positive COVID test or are experiencing any of the core symptoms are legally required to isolate for 10 days. Face masks and physical distancing are mandatory indoors at all times. Thank you for helping us keep everyone safe. For more information, please visit alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx



Did you know that the ADC Fabrication Shop takes custom orders? Our creative and unique fire pit designs will add that special touch to any backyard bonfire. We also do custom wall art, key chains, garden décor and more!

Find out how what we can create for you!

780 • 827 • 9670



SOUP & SANDWICH RETURNS WEDNESDAYS

The Trauma-Informed Care Program (TIC) is excited for the return of Soup & Sandwich!

Anyone is welcome to come to the Tawow Centre for a warm and filling lunch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Masks and physical distancing are mandatory while indoors. All visitors will be required to complete a COVID screening and temperature check.

NEXT SOUP & SANDWICH:
Wednesday, September 29



CANCER SCREEN TESTS COMING TO GRANDE CACHE OCT. 12-16

The AHS Screen Test Mobile Mammography Clinic will be returning to Grande Cache from October 12 to 16, 2021. Screen Test brings breast cancer screening to women across Alberta with its state-of-the-art mobile mammography unit.

Cervical (Pap test) and colorectal (FIT home stool test) screening will be available from October 13-15 as well.

BOOK AN APPOINTMENT:
1-800-667-0604

