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STAY IN SCHOOL AWARDS

On Sept 4, 2025, AWN celebrated the new school year and recognized our incredible students with a BBQ at Firemans Pit, and a gift of a drawstring back pack with a water bottle and \$25 gift card, along with a certificate. We had staff from Northlands and Grande Yellowhead School divisions visit which is always great.

We have some fantastic people to thank who helped make Stay in School possible. Our generous sponsors and our BBQ/Cooks Jane and Brent from CNRL, and our Tawow Staff for helping with set up, prep, clean up, Country Pump Out and Firemans Pit for hosting us and everyone who helped in anyway. It is very much appreciated.

We had so much fun at this year's Stay in School Awards, and we hope you did too!



2025 AWN ELECTIONS NOMINATION MEETING

Tuesday, October 14th, 2025

AWN Land & Resources - 10008 99 St, Grande Cache
1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Positions Open For Nominations:

- President, Aseniwuche Winewak Nation
- Director, Wanyandie Flats Cooperative
- Director, Joachim Enterprise
- Director, Victor Lake Cooperative
- Director, Grande Cache Lake Enterprise
- Director, Susa Creek Cooperative
- Director, Muskeg See-Pee Cooperative

ELIGIBILITY

Nominees must be: a member of Aseniwuche Winewak Nation, 18 years of age or older and maintain their primary residence on a Co-operative or Enterprise or within the Hamlet of Grande Cache.

HOW TO MAKE A NOMINATION An elector may nominate a candidate at the nomination meeting by stating their name, the name of the elector they are nominating, and whether they are nominating the elector for the position of President or one of the Director positions. The nomination must be seconded by another elector. The seconder must also state their name. The elector nominated must be at the meeting and state that they will accept the office if elected.

Please direct any questions about the upcoming AWN Elections to the Electoral Officer:

Peter Fortna, Willow Springs Strategic Solutions
peter@willowspringsss.com | (780) 381-9168

COMMUNITY CULTURAL HUNTING CAMP

Contributed by Vivian McDonald

In early September AWN had it's first Community Hunting/Cultural camp at the Copton Airstrip alongside the Copton Creek.

Our Elders and community people have been asking for this type of camp for years; it was time to make it a reality.

The location was chosen as it was historically a high utilized area and travel corridor by the AWN people. The still visible remains of cabins, well used trails and old camping areas are a testament to this.

The camp was not only about hunting and harvesting, but it was also an event to bring people together, to visit, laugh and build or reconnect kinship in the natural environment. It was about reviving our culture, teaching/mentoring and practicing our traditional way of life. This included honoring whatever was harvested with protocol and ceremony. Participants of all ages – as young as six months – were introduced to the different ways of cutting and preparing meat, stretching and fleshing a hide, what type of wood to use to smoke the meat with, plant gathering and soap making. Despite the modest harvest of big game animals (contrary to the “slaughter fest” rumors) – 2 moose, 2 sheep – many visitors went home with some fresh meat. Coffee, tea, stories, laughter and fresh food were enjoyed around the campfire throughout the 8 days. Many people asked if the camp be two weeks long; some ended up camping when they initially just came for the day.

Despite this being the first camp and hiccups were expected to crop up; it could not have gone better. The weather, the location and the magic that happens when you are out on the land away from noise and distraction all contributed to the success of this camp.

Participant Feedback:

Alyssa Akesh: The hunting at Copton was incredible. We celebrated harvesting, we shared, we laughed and we learned. This is community healing. Thank you, AWN, Elders, Knowledge Holders and every single participant for this opportunity.

Stephen McDonald: Hello, the camp was nice, it was good to see that those who were able to go seem to be relaxed and feeling good. I am thankful the camp was able to happen.



On September 27th, 2025, at the River Cree Resort & Casino, the Wahkohtowin Law and Governance Lodge hosted the premiere of the short documentary “Wahkohtowin: Miyo-Wícêtowin Principles and Practice Course Film” and the debut of the book “Moose Hide Tanning Manual”. The film created by Cree film maker Tom Crier, it showcases the land based learning course available to the University of Alberta students.

The day introduced the Wahkohtowin documentary film and the AWN hide tanning manual, as well as offered an opportunity to reflect on the significance of land based learning through panel discussion and hands on activities.

Through this work, Wahkohtowin hopes to encourage growth, provide space for reflection on relationships with the land, and build deeper understandings of what Indigenous law can look like and celebrate the richness of Indigenous law and the ways we may learn it.

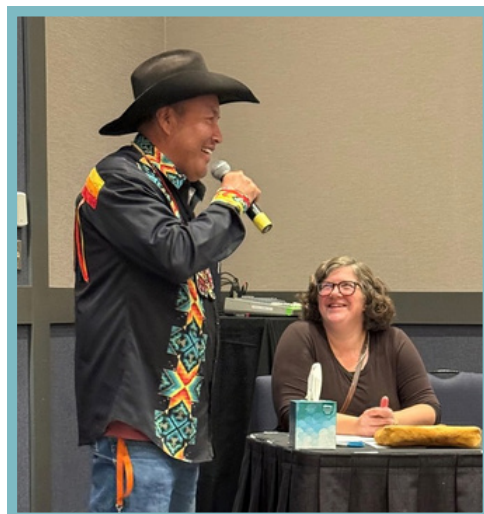
In 2016 the late Elder Adelaide McDonald of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation had the vision of starting a land- based learning course for University of Alberta students. Since 2017, the Faculty of Law has offered an experimental land based course for engaging in Indigenous laws centered around the core activity of home tanning a hide. This course is co-developed and co-taught in Susa Creek by late Elder Adelaide McDonald. The Moose Hide Tanning Manual was created by the instructional team of the course alongside Gavin Cazon-Wilkes using photos and lessons.

It was an emotional and beautiful event. Huge Thank You to the Wahkohtowin Law and Governance Lodge as well as our Community Members for creating the opportunity for a land based learning course, as well as keeping tradition alive.

AWN community members and those who took part in teaching this course were invited to this event. Instructors and members spoke on the movie about how the course went, as well as personal stories about late Elder Adelaide.



Pictured Above: Late Elder Adelaide McDonald



**Scan the QR code to
watch
the movie on
YouTube!**



CARIBOU PATROL

Caribou Patrol is an Indigenous-led stewardship program, run by Aseniwuche Winewak Nation (AWN), that promotes caribou conservation within AWN's traditional territory. This grassroots program was started in 2012 in response to west-central Alberta's declining caribou herd populations.

The objectives of this program are to:

- Reduce the potential of vehicle collisions with woodland caribou on area roadways through road patrols
- Increase public safety by providing the public with wildlife road sharing information and tips.
- Enhance awareness of caribou management and wildlife road sharing through education and outreach initiatives for three specific user groups: the public, industry
- Collect data on wildlife sightings

Road patrols involve driving the Caribou Corridor, which is a 40 km stretch of highway between Muskeg River and Big Berland River, and occasionally other roads that fall inside caribou ranges, looking for caribou, other wildlife and potential hazards to people or wildlife. Patrols focus on caribou-vehicle collisions and are conducted daily during caribou migrations, and semi-regularly during the rest of the year depending on sightings and abundance.

If caribou are sighted on or near the road, Caribou Patrol Crews will use various techniques to either help the caribou cross safely or encourage them to get away from the road and danger.

Crews will also speak with and provide information to travellers as well as placing road signs to warn motorists when and where caribou are regularly seen, encouraging them to slow down and watch for wildlife in those areas.

Caribou Patrol also spends a lot of time providing education about the program as well as the caribou and their threats by attending public events, providing presentations and information sessions and through the creation of our Edukits. There are five versions of our Edukit directed at different audiences: junior for younger children with more fun activities, Student for older children, public for young adults and adults, a shorter French booklet, and one aimed at people working in the industry sector.

Digital versions of all our EduKits are available for download on our web page.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Little has happened for the program outside of planning our fall activities and preparing for next years program. Hopefully we'll have more to report on soon. If you have a group that might be interested in having Caribou Patrol present to them, reach out and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Caribou Patrol is incredibly excited about our Lichen Collection and Calgary Zoo trips happening in October. We will be collecting lichen for Calgary Zoo's resident caribou on October 4th between Grande Cache and Hinton. If a community member was interested in joining us for the lichen collection, please reach out to Stephanie at stephanie@aseniwuche.com.

We will be in Calgary with the youth participants from October 24th to 26th. We can't wait to report on our successes next month!

THE CARIBOU

The rut is the mating season for many ungulates, including caribou, and is characterized in males by an increase in testosterone, increased aggression and increased interest in females.

The mating system of Woodland Caribou is polygynous, with dominant bulls breeding with several cows in late September to mid-October. During rut, males engage in frequent and furious sparring battles with their antlers before the most dominant male gets opportunity to mate with females. Rutting group size varies between ecotype with up to a dozen for Mountain Caribou, and several dozen for Northern Caribou.

Female caribou can start breeding as early as 16 months of age and most will breed annually by the time they are 28 months old. The males are technically able to breed at 18-20 months of age, but as large males with large antlers do most of the mating, most won't have opportunity to breed females before their third or fourth year.



RECOVERY CAPITAL CONFERENCE OF CANADA

Contributed by Kim Hallock

On September 23-25, 2025, Kim, Sharon, Tara and Mel, Tawow Centre's Complex team travelled to Calgary, AB to participate in the Recovery Capital Conference of Canada. There have been a lot of changes to Alberta Health Services Mental Health and Addiction Ministry and Mandate over the past year, and our team needed to gather information in order to better serve our community.

We attended the networking reception, meeting more than 2000 participants and dozens of treatment center/addiction support organizations staff. Opening remarks were followed by a wonderful Indigenous Prayer, Grand Entry, Dance exhibition and comedian. Our team attended all of the available sessions, Mel and Kim attended the Government side while Tara and Sharon attended the Indigenous sessions. We had the opportunity to hear from many experts in the field of Mental Health & Addictions, as well as learn what Recovery Alberta's plans are for the coming year - each evening we got together to discuss how what we learned will impact our community and our work.

The Premier, Danielle Smith, was a keynote speaker and helped us to understand the overall vision and direction that the government is taking in dealing with the current mental health and addiction crisis that is impacting the whole province. She outlined the new Compassionate Care Act and the timelines for the initiative.

This new act has created law to force addiction and mental health treatment on people who are a danger to themselves or others. While the capacity is not yet built to house the many individuals who will be picked up and detained during treatment, they are all well on the way and we are likely to see the first Albertan's to be held under this new legislation early in the new year.

Tawow staff are increasing our efforts to get our vulnerable community members to get clean & sober now, on their own volition, rather than wait and have it forced on them - potentially requiring months of institutionalization. If you or someone you care about is struggling with severe drug addiction, alcoholism and/or mental health issues, please come and see our team at Tawow - we will do our best to help you and those you love on the journey to recovery.



TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION DAY

Contributed by Kelisha Villafana-Gillis

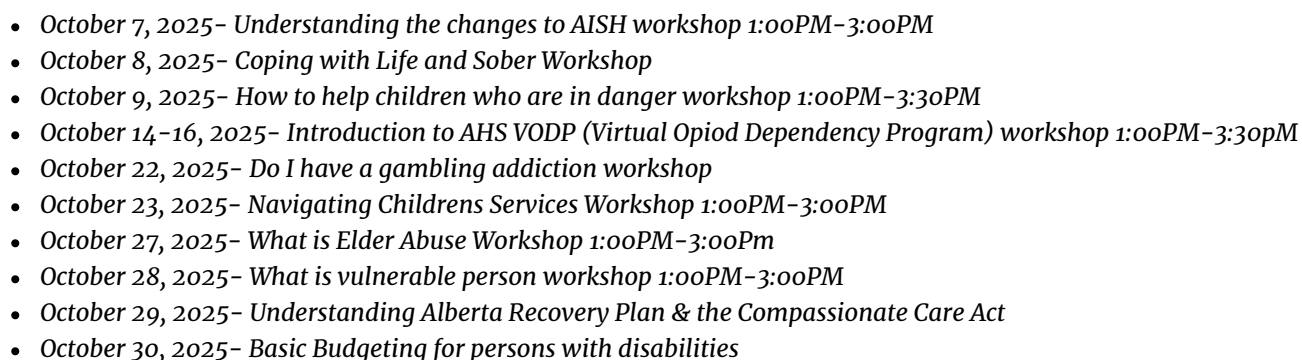


On Sept 30, 2025, the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, the Tawow Staff attended the events for Grande Cache Community Schools.

The event at the schools ran smoothly with the help of Aimee Allers, Mackenzie Holden, Kelisha Villafana-Gillis and the Cree Club members. The day began with drumming by the James Gang Drummers, smudge by Alice Moberly and prayers by Joe Karakuntie. For the elementary school kids, each class walked around the school field 2 times while stopping to read the posters made by each class stating facts about the meaning of Truth and Reconciliation day. After the walk the students gathered in a big circle to have a small feast of blueberries, salmon and bannock. For closing remarks, the event ended with the whole school gathered in one big circle to have round dance with more drumming and singing. For the middle school and high school everything was pretty much the same, except the students walked around the field in their friend groups 4 times while reading the signs. The Truth and Reconciliation day events for the schools were a success and thank you to all who were present.



OCTOBER WORKSHOPS at Tawow Community Centre



**ON HALLOWEEN OCTOBER 31, BRING YOUR LITTLE ONES BY
THE TAWOW COMMUNITY CENTRE & AWN OFFICE
THEY WILL BE HANDING OUT CANDY
9:00AM-4:30PM**





Happy Halloween! Stay safe trick or treating.

Trick or Treating Safety Tips:

- Travel in groups or with an adult
- Carry a flashlight or wear glowsticks for visibility
- Stay on sidewalks and paths
- Look for traffic before crossing streets
- Never run into the street or through yards
- Only visit houses where the lights are on
- Never enter a strangers home or vehicle
- Have guardians check candy before eating