

IN THIS ISSUE

- Indigenous Day Celebrations
- School Cultural Celebrations
- AWN Youth Learning Journey
- Caribou Patrol Updates
- Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage
- July Community Events
- Job Opportunities

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AWN & MOUNTAIN METIS CELEBRATE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DAY

JUNE 19TH 2026 • Contributed by Nadine Alexis



In partnership with Mountain Métis, we proudly celebrated National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 19 with a wonderful day filled with culture, community, and connection. The weather cooperated beautifully, providing the perfect backdrop for a memorable celebration.

Guests enjoyed a variety of activities and performances throughout the day. Robert Wanyandie did an outstanding job as the event emcee, keeping the program running smoothly while engaging the crowd. Penny Anderson delighted attendees with a lively Red River Jig performance, joined by several youth participants.

We were also honoured to enjoy powwow dancing by youth led by Aydan Joachim, captivating hoop dancing by Terrance Littlelent, who encouraged participation from both youth and the crowd, and powerful drumming by the Red Rose Thunder Drum Group.



Overall, it was a fantastic day, and we extend our sincere thanks to everyone who helped make it such a success.

Thank you to all who attended and helped us celebrate Indigenous culture, traditions, and community spirit. We look forward to gathering together again next year.





Contributed by Tara Crane

The high school field was filled with learning, celebration, and community spirit as students gathered to recognize National Indigenous Peoples Day. Students from schools across the area came together to experience and celebrate Indigenous culture through a morning of meaningful activities. Staff from AWN's Group of Companies met up to bbq lunch for all the students who came with their classmates to sit as a group for this special day.

One of the most loved highlights of the day was watching the talented dancers, whose colourful regalia and powerful performances shared stories of tradition, identity, and resilience. The steady beat of the drum echoed throughout the grounds, bringing everyone together and reminding us of the importance of culture, connection, and community.

Students had the opportunity to interact with the horses, learning about their significance of their role of being packing horses. These hands-on experiences encouraged curiosity, respect, and meaningful conversations among students of all ages.

The day was a wonderful opportunity to learn, reflect, and celebrate the rich cultures and contributions of Indigenous Peoples. Seeing students from different grades come together with open minds and hearts made the event a memorable experience for everyone involved.





NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

AT SUSA CREEK SCHOOL

Contributed by Tara Crane

National Indigenous Peoples Day 2026 at Susa Creek School.

On June 19th, Susa Creek School came alive with celebration, gratitude, and a strong sense of community as we gathered to honour National Indigenous Peoples Day 2026. Students, families, knowledge keepers, and community members joined together in a shared spirit of learning, connection, and pride.

We were honoured to welcome Terrance Littletent, who invited students to reflect on identity, purpose, and their personal journeys. Through storytelling and lived experience, he encouraged students to think deeply about their "why" and the values that shape their lives. The teachings the youth are seeking were clear as Terrance returned for AWNs evening event at the tourism centre asking for volunteers and two of those young boys eagerly jumped at the opportunity to learn. Now they are looking for more of that connection. They are thinking of their

identity and the wheels are in motion to set goals of personal growth.

The gathering was further enriched by the participation of youth from the Return to the Hunt program, who supported intergenerational learning and mentorship throughout the morning. Together, staff, students and youth along with elder Joe Karakuntie listened to how cultural teachings, land-based learning, and strong community relationships help strengthen identity and foster a sense of belonging. We cannot forget the laughter and smiles that will last a lifetime from all in attendance as Return to the Hunt mentor Charlie McDonald was selected to learn a quick dance and morphed into Michael Jackson. Thank you Charlie for being such a good sport!

National Indigenous Peoples Day provides an opportunity to celebrate the cultures, traditions, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. We are deeply grateful to Terrance Littletent, Elder Joe Karakuntie, the Return to the Hunt youth, and all who helped make this day so meaningful. Their contributions strengthened the connections between school, family, and community, and reminded us of the importance of learning from one another.



SUSA CREEK SCHOOL MEETING THE NEW PRINCIPAL

Northland School Division announces Robyn Shinkaruk as Principal of Susa Creek School for the 2026-2027 school year. Shinkaruk has teaching experience in Alberta and internationally, including Southampton and Rosario.

She aims to empower families and communities through education, quoting Nelson Mandela: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Superintendent Cal Johnson welcomes her, highlighting her diverse experience and commitment to student support. Shinkaruk holds a Bachelor of Education in Biology from the University of Alberta and a Master of Education from Athabasca University.



AWN YOUTH RECONNECT WITH JASPER LEARNING JOURNEY

Contributed by Lauren Moberly

After several months of planning, 15 Aseniwuche Winewak Nation youth travelled to Jasper on June 13-14 for a unique experience designed to reconnect them with their traditional territories while exploring future career opportunities in tourism and hospitality.

Throughout the weekend, participants learned about tourism operations at Maligne Lake, visited Spirit Island, rode the Jasper SkyTram to the summit of Whistlers Mountain, explored the Columbia Icefield aboard the famous Ice Explorer vehicles, and experienced the Glacier Skywalk. Throughout the trip, youth also had the opportunity to meet with Pursuit team members and learn

about the many career paths available within Jasper's tourism industry.

The trip concluded with a special visit to the Jasper Planetarium and a closing circle where participants reflected on their experiences. More than just a sightseeing trip, the weekend provided an opportunity for AWN youth to strengthen their connection to their ancestral lands, build new relationships, and gain exposure to future educational and career possibilities.

The experience was made possible through the collaboration between Lauren Moberly and Pursuit Banff Jasper Collection, with support from Aseniwuche Winewak Nation, Mountain Métis, Travel Jasper, the Jasper Planetarium, dedicated chaperones, and the families who entrusted their youth to participate.

WELCOME BACK

BESSIE SAUNDERS VISIT

On June 13, our community had the pleasure of welcoming Bessie Saunders back for a special visit from Kamloops, British Columbia. While Bessie does not often have the opportunity to return home and spend time with family and friends, this visit was particularly meaningful.

To celebrate the occasion, community members came together to organize a potluck meal, creating a warm and welcoming gathering where everyone could reconnect, share stories, and enjoy one another's company. The event was filled with laughter, good food, and heartfelt conversations, reflecting the strong sense of community that brings us together.

We extend our gratitude to everyone who helped make this gathering possible. Bessie's visit was a wonderful reminder of the importance of family, friendship, and maintaining connections with our community, no matter the distance.



On June 12th, Caribou Patrol visited Mrs. Graham's Grade 4/5 class at Westhaven Elementary School in Edson to share the importance of caribou conservation. The students were exceptionally enthusiastic — their participation and questions made for one of our more energetic classroom visits. We always love connecting with young learners, and this group reminded us exactly why.

If you have an organization that is interested in having a presentation from Caribou Patrol, please reach out.

From June 15–19, the North American Caribou Workshop (NACW) convened in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories — and AWN was proud to have several members in attendance. The conference was a rich gathering of scientists, Indigenous leaders, conservationists, and policymakers from across North America and northern Europe. Sessions ranged from inspiring breakthroughs in caribou conservation to sobering accounts of population decline.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Caribou Patrol will be at the Canada Day celebration in Jasper National Park on July 1. If you're attending, stop by and say hello!

Following the loss of Bruno, one of our beloved bull caribou, AWN has been exploring new ways to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions on Highway 40. A proposed three-year study, in partnership with Alberta Transportation and fRI Research, will evaluate two types of Virtual Fence Technology designed to help keep both wildlife and motorists safe while protecting the natural migration of the A La Pêche caribou herd.

Funding has been applied for, and if approved, the technology could be installed before this fall's migration.
For more information: <https://www.cariboupatrol.ca/>

painting a full and honest picture of where the work stands today.

AWN member Marc Jr. Doire, consultant Jaymie Campbell, and lawyer Blair Feltmate presented on caribou conservation, Indigenous rights, and the failures of government management on AWN's traditional territory in Alberta — a timely and important contribution to the national conversation. AWN staff member Stephanie Leonard joined representatives from Jasper National Park to speak to the power of collaboration and partnership in supporting Jasper's Caribou Breeding Facility. Stephanie, alongside long-time community supporter Chantelle Bambrick, also presented a poster on an exciting Caribou Patrol project AWN hopes to launch later this year — more details can be found in Upcoming Activities.

The NACW left attendees with new ideas, new connections, and renewed hope for caribou herds that urgently need both.

HERD UPDATES

THE CARIBOU



This year's spring was slow to arrive, and the caribou migration followed suit. While our crew was out every day during peak periods and received a solid number of sightings, it was a quieter migration than most years. Even so, we're still calling it a success. Not a single caribou was lost to a vehicle collision this season.

As the migration winds down and our crews reduce their time on the highway, we want to remind motorists to keep slowing down and staying alert when travelling through the caribou corridor. A handful of caribou always linger into the summer months, and they deserve the same care and caution as the height of migration.

LAC ST ANNE PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULE



Saturday, July 18

- 1 pm Pipe Ceremony & Flag Raising Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation
- 6.30 pm Mass Lac Ste Anne Parish
- 8:30 pm Mass Cursillo Community

Sunday, July 19

- 9 am Rosary Pilgrims
- 10:30 am Mass Alexis and Paul Nakota Sioux First Nations
- 3 pm Mass and Blessing of the Lake St. Theresa Point, Manitoba
- 6:30 pm Mass Enoch and Alexander First Nations
- 8:30 pm Movie Night

Monday, July 20

- 9 am Rosary Pilgrims
- 10:30 am Youth Mass Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas
- 3 pm Mass Tlicho First Nation, Behchoko, NT
- 6:30 pm Cree Mass Pelican Narrows & Sandy Bay, SK
- 8:30 pm Movie Night

Tuesday, July 21

- 9 am Rosary Pilgrims
- 10:30 am Mass Dene Nations of Saskatchewan
- 1 pm Mass St Paul Diocese
- 3 pm Healing Service
- 6:30 pm Mass Métis Nation of Alberta
- 8:30 pm Step Seven Healing Prayer and Sobriety Pledge Archbishop Sylvain Lavoie, O.M.I.

Wednesday, July 22

- 9 am Rosary Pilgrims
- 10:30 am Mass Sacred Heart Parish of the First Peoples, Edmonton, AB
- 3 pm Mass Blackfoot Confederacy: Holy Trinity Parish, Siksika, AB
- 6:30 pm Mass Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Parish, Maskwacis, AB
- 8:30 pm Way of the Cross

Thursday, July 23

- 10 am Mass Pilgrims

CALLING ALL 2026 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES!

LOOKING FOR PHOTOS!

Aseniwuche Winewak Nation is proud to recognize and celebrate the incredible accomplishments of our 2026 graduates!

Graduation is an important milestone that reflects years of hard work, determination, and perseverance. Whether you've completed high school, college, university, a trade program, apprenticeship, certificate, diploma, or degree, we want to celebrate your success with the entire AWN community.

In the next edition of the AWN Community Newsletter, we will be featuring our graduates and highlighting the achievements of our members. This is a wonderful opportunity to recognize your accomplishment and inspire future generations of learners within our community.

If you are an AWN community member—or you have a family member who graduated this year—we invite you to submit the following:

-  A graduation photo
-  The graduate's full name
-  The name of the school, college, university, or training institution
-  The program, certificate, diploma, degree, or trade completed (optional)



Please send your submissions to either of the following email addresses:

 citizenshipclerk@aseniwuche.com

 admin@aseniwuche.com

Let's come together to honour the dedication, resilience, and achievements of our graduates. Your success is something our entire community can celebrate, and we look forward to recognizing each of you in our upcoming newsletter.

Congratulations to the AWN Class of 2026! We are proud of you and can't wait to celebrate your accomplishments.

