



WINTER 2023

SAMQWAN + SAGE SAMAQAN

Leading progress, innovation, and a long-term solution for water and wastewater management for Atlantic First Nations communities.

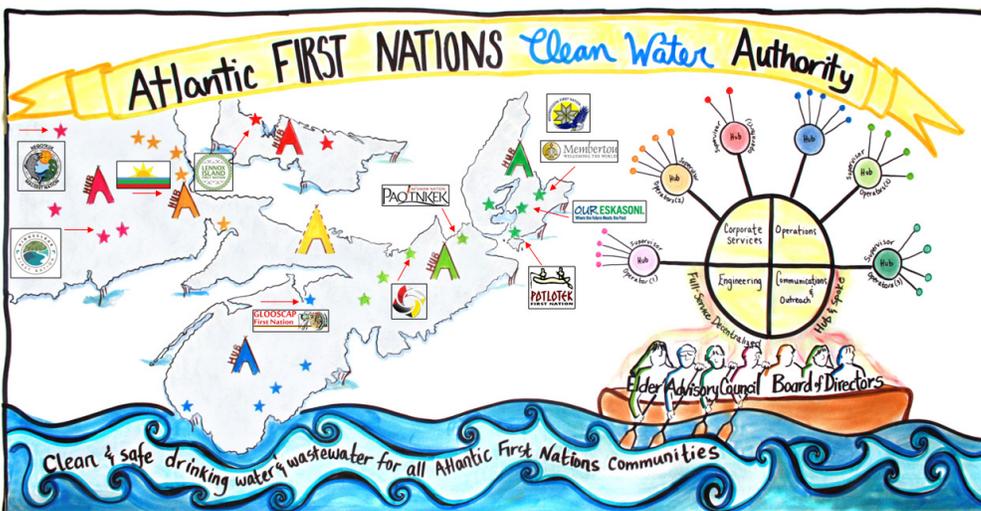
The Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (AFNWA) is a not-for-profit, Wabanaki Nations water utility that is owned and operated by First Nations, for First Nations. Our goal is to provide clean drinking water and safe wastewater services to participating First Nations communities.

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2023 PROGRESS UPDATE

- » The Atlantic First Nations Water Authority is officially in business with operations underway! Indigenous Services Canada required eight (8) communities to pass band council resolutions (BCR) to ratify the [Service Deliver Transfer Agreement \[SDTA\]](#) and this was accomplished on December 1, 2022. The first 'early adopters' are Elsipogtog, Eskasoni, Lennox Island, Paqtnek, Pictou Landing, Potlotek, Membertou, and Neqotkuk [Tobique]. Since then, we have received BCRs from Glooscap, Wagmatcook and Bilijik [Kingsclear]. We anticipate more communities to confirm their memberships over the coming months.
- » We are excited to report that Corbin Stevens has achieved his [Level 3](#) certifications in both water and wastewater. Congratulations, Corbin!

- » AFNWA and ISC signed the [10-Year Funding Agreement](#) on February 3, 2023. Aligning with the SDTA, the Funding Agreement is a commitment of \$170 million for capital and operations and has the full support of the Minister of Indigenous Services, the Honourable Patty Hajdu. Discussions that happened over months have led to AFNWA funding being secured for the next 10 years!
- » In January, AFNWA received news that we were the recipient of the [Deputy Ministers' 2022 Recognition Award](#) in Partnerships and Collaboration. The AFNWA team was nominated by Louis Dumulon, Regional Director General for ISC (Gatineau). The project team included Mirjana Vaclavik, Rosemary Glynn-Conrad, Eilish Cleary, Jason Catoul, Len O'Neil, Xavier Redhead, Nick Sanders, Gabrielle Robert, Daniele Pion, Melanie Twomey, Brock Dumville, James MacKinnon, Carl Yates, and John Lam.



The AFNWA storyboard that is displayed proudly in our boardroom provides a visual of our progress. As a community confirms its membership via BCR, we add their logo to the storyboard. As of March 1, we have 10 early adopters.

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH



» On a stormy evening in late January, CEO Carl Yates, COO James MacKinnon, and Engineering Manager John Lam gathered with Paqtnkek community members. The **Community Café** saw Indigenous organizations and local industry representatives share background on their work and future projects, including a glimpse of the future Paqtnkek business centre. *Photo credit: Rose Paul, Paqtnkek*



» The pow wow trail returned earlier in 2023 and up first was **NSCC Truro Campus Mawio'mi**—where we were all “reunited, and it felt so good!” Good times, great people, AFNWA scholarship information, and the best swag is all we needed for a surprisingly mild February day.



» March is **National Engineering Month**, and we proudly supported the Engineers NS “Spotlight on Local Innovation” event earlier in the month. AFNWA’s professional engineers were joined by friends from Dalhousie University’s Centre for Water Resource Studies, including a young engineering student.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Chantal LeBlanc CPA, CMA, MBA, Manager of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer

Chantal joined the AFNWA team in March 2021, bringing an extensive background in commercial banking including managing a national portfolio of Indigenous clients.

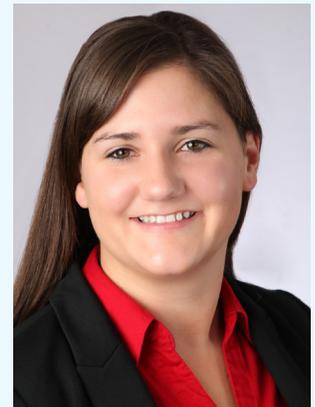
Upon departure from her Commercial Banking career, she assumed the role of Chief Financial Officer for a group of companies participating in various industries, including manufacturing and commercial real estate.

Wearing many hats in her role as AFNWA Manager of Corporate Services and CFO, she leads a team of six responsible for human resources, information technology, payroll and finance, and procurement services. As CFO, she is Treasurer to the AFNWA Board and the audit and finance committee.

When Chantal isn’t crunching numbers or putting out fires, she enjoys time working on home renovation projects and backcountry camping with her husband Bryan and their three daughters (including twins) all under age four. How this extraordinary and dedicated woman successfully manages her work/home balance is anyone’s guess!

Chantal has many goals for herself, her team, and AFNWA. She would like to spend time in AFNWA’s member communities to learn more about water and wastewater management, as well as to support our new operators.

“In my role as CFO, being transparent to the communities is my highest priority. If we don’t have the trust of the communities, then we will not be successful.”



FOLLOW AFNWA ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





SPRING 2023

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2023 PROGRESS UPDATE

» AFNWA has welcomed five **Service Area Supervisors**, who are very active in communities since official onboarding while continuing to welcome more operators to our growing family. The five Supervisors are: **Gregg Brewer of Neqotkuk, Wolastokuk Supervisor**; **Travis Dymont of Lennox Island, Epekwitk-Misigeneegatig Supervisor**; **Corbin Stevens of Pictou Landing, We'kopekwitk Supervisor**; **Pat Jeddore of Eskasoni, Unama'ki Supervisor**; and **Andrew Lafford of Eskasoni, Float Supervisor**. Welcome to the team!

» In addition to Supervisors, we also welcome **17 water and wastewater operators** to AFNWA. Please welcome Justin Moulton and Joe Sockabasin of Neqotkuk; Brandon Sock and Nathan Jadis of Elsipogtog; Justin Cabot, Stephen Francis, Virik Francis, Ryan Googoo, Jordan Stevens, and Blade Sylliboy of Eskasoni; Noel Doucette, Samantha Johnson, and Alex Marshall of Potlotek; Dylan Bernard and Ronnie Peck of Wagmatcook; Robert Francis of Pictou Landing; and Chris Pictou of Paqtnkek.

» Operations Engineer Tiannie Paul and company created a logo for our approach to water and wastewater safety planning, which exemplifies our mission and responsibility to community. In Wolastoqey, it is **Wolankeyutomune Samaqan**; in Mi'kmaw, it is **Nujo'tme'k Samqwan**; and translates to, "we take care of the water." Tiannie shared the following description:

"The full circle represents **Msit Nokmaq** and **Psiw NtoInapemok**, or "all my relations." This concept reminds us that everything is connected. Our organizational colours—blue, yellow, red, and black—are on the top, while the bottom colours are blue and brown, representing the Western and Indigenous knowledge, **Etuaptmumk**, or Two-Eyed Seeing. The green plants within the circle are **Netukulimk**—sustainability for seven generations to come. Two individuals are non-gender and unbiased, represented as elders or elder and youth, holding the water."





EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Gary West, Superintendent of Operations

In his line of work, Gary considers everyday to be a new adventure. Daily operations can take him

from the office to various worksites to complete different tasks, something he enjoys as his duties present “new puzzles to solve” and he enjoys developing strategies to accomplish goals.

Following college, Gary travelled extensively while assuming many new roles including bartending and construction. His focus on water and wastewater services would come later, and experience working with Indigenous peoples across Canada made him a great fit for AFNWA and his role in working with supervisors and operators in member communities. One of the necessities of the water/wastewater treatment industry is remaining updated and certified in every expanding industry and continuous learning is a must. His office walls are lined with certifications and accomplishments, a symbol of his dedication to the profession, and includes courses from the Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC), Certified Adult

Educator, every single course available by the Water Programs at Sacramento University, ICS 300, and Operations Chief for incident command systems.

Gary is an avid reader, and enjoys relaxing with a good book at any time and any place. He also loves relaxing at home with family—his daughter and their two dogs—or experiencing the Atlantic coastline on his motorcycle.

When asked his advice for young workers looking to enter the operations industry, Gary shares:

“Make sure you do your homework on the industry before deciding on a career in operations. It’s very rewarding, comes with multiple perks, and it’s gratifying to know you are helping the environment and making the world a better place. The hours can be long and hard, and as previously mentioned you can never stop learning so be prepared for a lot of courses and tests.”

We congratulate Gary for obtaining his Class 4 in water treatment, and Class 2 in water distribution. This certification is important as the water treatment plant in Potlotek has been classified as a Level 4 plant with Gary assigned as Operator in Direct Responsible Charge. Keep up the great work Gary. You make us proud.

COMMUNICATIONS + OUTREACH

» The **North American Indigenous Games Canoe Relay** has begun and will spring along until early July, when its final stop will be in Kijipuktuk on July 7—one week before the games officially kick off! Since pickup day on April 28, we’ve towed the birchbark canoe to Acadia, Bear River, Annapolis Valley, Glooscap, Membertou, Eskasoni, Wagmatcook, We’koqma’q, and Potlotek. We will see you in communities when the relay continues into summer.

» AFNWA was a **Friendship Sponsor** of the first Paqtnkek Competition Pow Wow held in early April. We were also fortunate to support other events including Premier Partner for National Engineering Month, hosted by Engineers NS; four-star level for Maritime Provinces Water & Wastewater Association [MPWWA] annual seminar; and Gold Sponsor for 48th annual Wallace Bernard Memorial Youth Hockey Tournament. Our team also participated in the Sipekne’katik Career Expo and Eskasoni Health Fair and look forward to seeing you on the pow wow trail over summer!

» We sought an Indigenous artist to create an original art piece based on our corporate values, as recommended by the Elders Advisory Lodge. AFNWA thanks and congratulates **Emma Hassencahl-Perley of Neqotkuk**, whose hockey stick design was featured at the 2023 IIHF World Junior Championships. Woliwon, Emma, we are thrilled to display your creation at our offices.



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SUMMER 2023

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PROGRESS UPDATE

» We thank **former Interim CEO Carl Yates** and wish him all the best as he strolls into the wonderful world of retirement. Carl's role was key in AFNWA transitioning from an 'idea into a reality' since his appointment by the Board in 2020. Wela'liek/Woliwon, Carl!



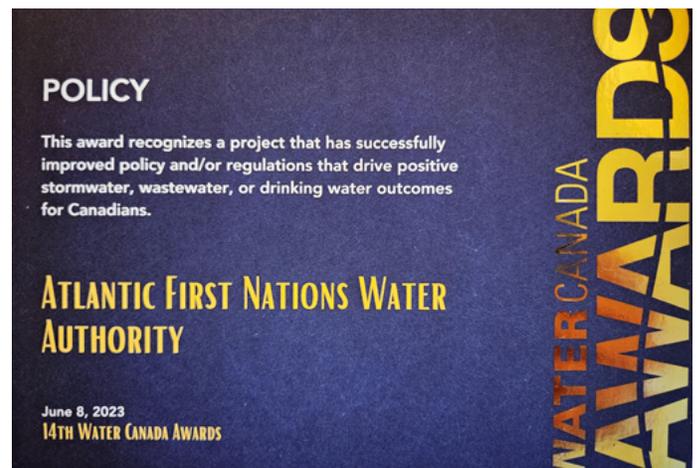
» The summer has also seen **new team members** join the AFNWA family. We welcome Jodie MacPhail, Utility Tech—Industrial Electrician; Nathan Martinello, Junior Utility Technician, who is joining us for summer; and Mark Francis, Bilijk (Kingsclear) Operator. It is our pleasure to have you all join us in further strengthening the Operations department.

» James MacKinnon is now Director of Engagement & Government Relations, one of the **new roles** set forth by the AFNWA Board. John Lam is now Director of Engineering; Chantal LeBlanc is Director of Corporate Services, and still CFO; and James Trimble is our Director of Operations.

» AFNWA would like to **congratulate Board members** and Regional Chiefs, Johanna Bernard (NB) and Paul 'PJ' Prosper (NS/NL), on their new roles. Regional Chief Paul was appointed as an independent member to the Senate of Canada and Regional Chief Johanna was named as the interim National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. We wish you both all the best in your new roles.

» Millbrook has confirmed their memberships, having submitted their respective BCRs. AFNWA now has **12 member** communities in an official capacity. The criteria outlined by ISC in the Service Delivery Transfer Agreement is formally satisfied and now ratified.

» AFNWA received the **Water Canada Award for Policy**, which recognizes a project that has successfully improved policy and/or regulations that drive positive stormwater, wastewater, or drinking water outcomes for Canadians. We also congratulate Jeff Wujcik, Superintendent of Technical Services, and Mark E. MacDonald, Utility Tech, on upgrading their water and wastewater level certifications.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet **Susheel Arora, M.A.Sc., P.Eng.**
Chief Executive Officer



As part of its post-transition objectives, AFNWA required new leadership with a strong background in water and wastewater systems.

Susheel Arora, former Director of Operations at Halifax Water, brings over 20 years of expertise and field work to his new role as AFNWA CEO.

Susheel previously led One Water, an initiative involving wastewater and stormwater collections, water distribution, treatment, and biosolids management for the Halifax region, advocating its holistic approach in the value of water.

His career includes having earned two master's degrees, one in Environmental Engineering and other in Applied Sciences. He also graduated from Harvard Business School's General Management program.

An active member of Engineers Nova Scotia, Susheel also participates in professional organizations such as Water Environment Federation (WEF), American Water Works Association (AWWA), and the International Water Association (IWA).

Susheel practices an active life style and is always keen to explore new countries and cultures. He is the volunteer Vice-Chair of the Board at Zatzman Sportsplex, Dartmouth.

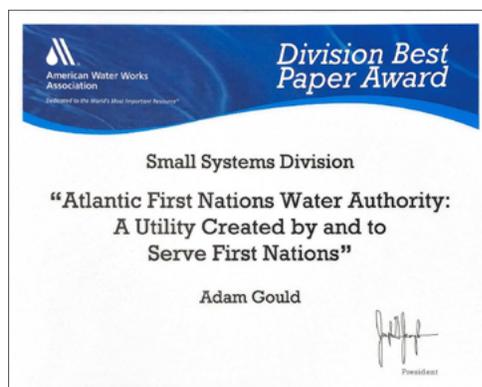
COMMUNICATIONS + OUTREACH

» Congratulations to C+O Manager Adam Gould for receiving the **AWWA Division Best Paper Award**—Small Systems Division at ACE23 in June.

» AFNWA rolled out an awareness campaign on Facebook known as the 3Ps, which focuses on items that are safe to flush down the toilet. Nothing should be flushed down your toilet except for the **3Ps: pee, poop, and toilet paper!**

» We also remind community members that important announcements regarding water and wastewater services are posted on our **Facebook page**. Advisories are currently listed for Elsipogtog and Eskasoni, with updates shared on a weekly basis.

» It is a busy season for **sponsorships**, having wrapped up some over spring, while supporting new initiatives in summer. AFNWA is thankful for opportunities to support the Every Child Matters hockey tournament, the #JStrong charity fundraiser, and the 2023 Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Summer Games including the 'Family Fun Day' hosted by Mi'kmaw Family & Children's Services of Nova Scotia.



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FALL 2023

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PROGRESS UPDATE

» **Board report:** AFNWA congratulates Pictou Landing Chief, Andrea Paul on her election as Regional Chief for Nova Scotia with the Assembly of First Nations. Regional Chief Andrea remains on our board of directors in the new role.



Tuma Young

We also welcome Tuma Young, K.C., who also shares knowledge and teachings as facilitator of our Elders Advisory Lodge. At our Annual General Meeting, Chiefs Wilbert Marshall, Chief Ross Perley and Chief Terry Paul were reelected for second terms on the board. The Board of Directors also reelected Chief Wilbert Marshall and Chief Ross Perley as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

» **CBWMs + Operators Training:** Our annual training was held on November 21-23, with Community Based Water Monitors (CBWM) and Operators from across the Atlantic Region taking part. We congratulate the CBWMs who received certificates of recognition for completing 100% of their sampling over the past year. Certificates were presented to: Blade Sylliboy, Brett Googoo, Brian Polchies, Brittney Green, Chris Pictou, Dale Ward, Darlene Augustine, Darlene Bachiri, Jason Moulton, Johnny Paul, Katrina Paul, Lorraine Marshall, Mark Francis, Mitchell Toney, Nick Sacobie, Patrick Jeddore, Peter MacLeod, Rex Drew, Ryan Traugh, Simon Paul, Stephen Knockwood, and Travis Dymont. Photos are on our [Facebook page!](#)

» **New team members:** Join us in welcoming to the team Dillon Francis, Bilijk Operator; Terrie Blackburn, Administrative Assistant with Communications and Engagement; Shannon Cousens, Executive Administrator to the CEO; and Javenny Francis as Junior Safety Coordinator.

» **Elders Advisory Lodge:** The EAL held its first in-person meeting in Truro this past October. We look forward to more in-person meetings in the future!



Charles Doucette, Kenneth Francis, Tuma Young, Methilda Knockwood-Snache, James MacKinnon, and Gail Tupper.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Jeff Wujcik, Superintendent of Technical Services



One of several homegrown Capers on staff, Jeff joined the AFNWA team in September 2021 as Superintendent of Technical Services. He manages the technical services team which includes two Technical Services Technologists, with his schedule taking him to communities across the entire

region on any given day. Jeff and his team are responsible for the installation and maintenance of all electrical, instrumentation and programming of our water and wastewater assets.

Following graduation from NSCC in 2011, Jeff spent a year working in Alberta before returning to complete his Red Seal in Instrumentation and Controls. Alberta called again and Jeff was on his way to Fort McMurray, becoming an Instrumentation Supervisor in 2013. There, Jeff was part of various projects over the next five years primarily focused on Instrumentation and Electrical

construction and commissioning in the Oil and Gas industry. In 2018 Jeff accepted a position as the Instrumentation, Electrical and Programming Superintendent with Rosneft Oil Company in Kurdistan, Iraq.

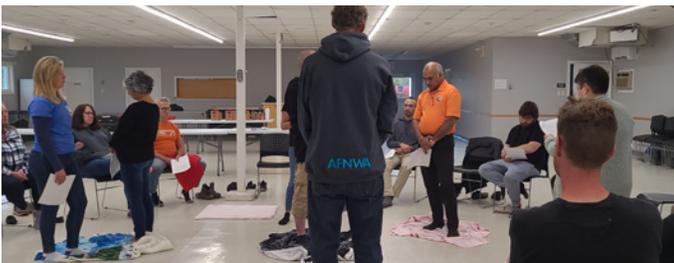
In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic would ground most international travel, so Jeff would again reprise his Instrumentation Supervisor role in Fort McMurray. A year later, AFNWA sought candidates to fill two superintendent positions, presenting an opportunity to be much closer to home and family. We are fortunate and grateful to have Jeff on our team as the Superintendent of Technical Services as he contributed to development of the AFNWA Operations Department. He is currently pursuing his electrical apprenticeship with AFNWA support, and has his 4th class power engineering.

At home in Unama'ki he is a local volunteer firefighter, and enjoys woodworking as a hobby, or time out on a golf course. He and wife Jessica are parents to son, Cole, and are expecting a daughter in May 2024.

COMMUNICATIONS + OUTREACH

» **2022-23 Annual Report:** Produced with help from NATIONAL Public Relations, our annual report is now available on our website. Printed copies will be distributed to all stakeholders, with copies available to community members upon request.

» **Blanket Exercise:** Led by Indigevisor, our office staff came together in October for a powerful learning experience on Indigenous history. We shared stories, smiles, and tears with each other while gaining valuable awareness on centuries of Indigenous history in Canada. AFNWA thanks our friends at Indigevisor: Nadine Bernard, Ashley Stevens, and Elder Joe Francis.



» **Signage:** Working with Operations and local businesses, several offices display the AFNWA logo on community infrastructures with more coming! Signage is now featured in Lennox Island, Potlotek, and Neqotkuk!

» **Sponsorships:** Fall was a bustling quarter for sponsorship requests. AFNWA was pleased to support events across the region including Neqotkuk Labour Day Festival, 14th Annual MCPEI Charity Golf Tournament, Prismatic's production of *Pisuwin: The Wolastoqiyik Story*, and several recreation programs in Unama'ki.

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