



SPRING-SUMMER 2024

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.

AFNWA is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and capital upgrades of all water and wastewater assets in each participating First Nations community. We are committed to helping build stronger First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada, and supporting long-term planning initiatives.

PROGRESS UPDATE

» **First Nations Clean Water Act:** In June, James MacKinnon emphasized the importance of Indigenous-developed regulations and enforcement, long-term funding, and recognition of individual wells and septic systems to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs study of Bill C-61. The FNCWA is an Act respecting water, source water, drinking water, wastewater, and related infrastructure on First Nation lands.



» **Membership:** We proudly welcomed We'koqma'q as our 13th official member on July 31.

» **Elsipogtog plant and well:** Congratulations to Elsipogtog community on its infrastructure upgrades. The new greensand filtration system is now online and removes manganese to acceptable levels. The new well has been running since early spring.

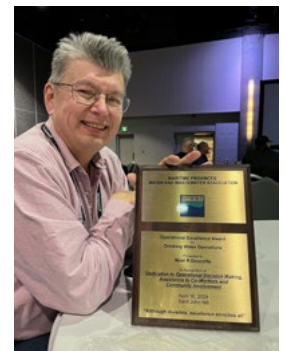
» **Social fund:** In the past year, the AFNWA Social Committee has donated over \$13,000 to Indigenous initiatives in Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey communities.

» **NIWOD, March 21:** Samantha Johnson, Potlotek Operator, represented AFNWA at the National Indigenous Water Operators Day (NIWOD) event in Ottawa. We thank the Water Movement, Engineers Without Borders, and Carleton University for inviting and hosting our team on their special day of recognition!



Photo credit: the Water Movement

» **MPWWA Award:** We congratulate Noel Doucette, Potlotek Operator, recipient of the *Operational Excellence Award for Drinking Water* in recognition of his "Dedication to Operational Decision Making, Assistance to Co-Workers, and Community Involvement" at the Maritime Provinces Water and Wastewater Association conference.



PROGRESS UPDATE

» **New staff:** New to the team are Justin Gallant, Vacuum Truck & Jet Rod Operator; Travis Keenan, Technical Services Technologist; and Dean Perley of Neqotkuk, Operator.

» **NSERC:** In December 2023, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) approved a \$4.3 million Alliance Grant to the Centre for Water Resources Studies (CWRS), in partnership with AFNWA and Ulnuoweg Education Centre.

Our collaboration will generate innovative and knowledgeable practices, seen through the Indigenous lens. The parties' main goal is to train future Indigenous and non-Indigenous water stewards with a knowledge of Two-Eyed Seeing, guided by the Wabanaki worldview.

AFNWA and partners have also sought input of the Elders Advisory Lodge to ensure Indigenous language and traditional knowledge is at the forefront of the research.

» **Minister visit:** Chrystia Freeland, Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, recently toured the Centre for Water Resources Studies (CWRS) at Dalhousie University to highlight Budget 2024. Susheel Arora, CEO, and James MacKinnon, Engagement & Government Relations Director, joined the Minister in emphasizing the AFNWA partnership with CWRS.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



John Lam, P. Eng. Director of Engineering

Having joined AFNWA in November 2020, John oversees our asset management, master planning, capital improvement planning, and provision of technical services. In his 30+ years of consulting engineering, John acquired significant expertise

in various water and wastewater treatment technologies.

After graduating from University of New Brunswick with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, John worked across Canada for provincial and territorial governments. In the Northwest Territories, he was the project officer and then regional municipal engineer.

His contributions to engineering include development of innovative enhancements to treatment technologies including disposal of treated effluent using evapotranspiration, greenhouse wastewater treatment, and engineered spring/siphon for water supply.

As a Class I Wastewater Treatment Operator, John operated up to 20 wastewater treatment plants in Bermuda and Mi'kma'ki, developing and delivering technical and continuing education training courses for post-secondary institutions and NGOs.

He was the lead author for the *Atlantic Canada Wastewater Guidelines Manual for Collection, Treatment, and Disposal* (2006), and is a steering committee member for the current update of both the water and wastewater guidelines. John also was a Wastewater Program Lead with Environment Nova Scotia.

John offers the following advice to Indigenous youth and students: "Be confident in yourself and your community. Be aware that there are many cheering you on, including friends outside of your community, myself included. You may need to get outside of your comfort zone. It will be worth it."

AFNWA would like to share that John will soon make a major shift in his role as Director of Engineering. Our great friend is retiring this winter, AFNWA will be forever grateful for John's contributions to the communities, our organization, and the discipline of engineering.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Jason Leclerc, P. Eng. Director of Operations

We invite you to join us in welcoming Jason LeClerc to the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority. Jason joined our team in July as the new Director of Operations, Engineering & Compliance.

Jason is a graduate of the Class of 2013 at the

University of Moncton where he earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. He is a Professional Engineer (P. Eng.) with significant utility and professional experience. He has worked in a few departments with Saint John Water over the previous decade with expanding roles. His rise at the utility culminated in his

most recent role as Utility Manager – Water and Sanitary Systems and Urban Stormwater.

Along with his utility experience, Jason also holds operator certifications with Water Distribution Class IV and Wastewater Collection Class II. Through the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company, he has successfully completed the Pipeline Assessment and Certification Program and expects to complete NASSCO Project Management Professional (PMP) program later this year.

Jason has been active in his short time with AFNWA, eagerly contributing to our mission of delivering high quality services to our member communities and visiting member communities to meet all Operations staff.

LinkedIn users should connect with Jason on the page or app, or clicking [here!](#)

COMMUNICATIONS + OUTREACH



» **Recent sponsorships:** Our first sponsorship of the new fiscal year was for the 2nd Annual Paqtneq Competition Pow Wow in April. Over the summer, we were again delighted to support the annual Neqotkuk Bike Rodeo, a program that provides youth with new bicycles.

» **Events:** Spring is in the past and AFNWA teammates spent the summer on the pow wow trail. In March, we hosted a booth with our friends CWRS at Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey's education and career fair, meeting students from across Mi'kma'ki.

» **Website updates:** When you visit our page, you will notice changes to the main page. We have moved the Careers and Procurement sections to the main page and updated our FAQs for a wider audience.



» **Danny Lanteigne Award:**

We congratulate Trent Francis of Neqotkuk as our 2024 recipient. Trent is a Business Administration student at NBCC Moncton campus, focusing on Financial Management.

» **Simply Cast:** AFNWA has teamed up with local business, Simply Cast, to improve our direct communications with Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey communities. Together, we are developing an alert system that allows community members to register and receive notices and updates using an app on your phone. Users can choose to receive alerts via phone, SMS (text), email, the Simply Cast app, or all. If you aren't registered for updates, click [here!](#) Registration can also be completed with the info on our website.

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