



AGRICULTURAL ASSET INVENTORY

DRAFT DOCUMENT





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NGO DWE WAANGIZID ANISHINAABE One Anishinaabe Family

**Debenjiged gii'saan anishinaaben akiing giibi dgwon gaadeni
mnidoo waadiziwin.**

Creator placed the Anishinaabe on the earth along with the gift of spirituality.

**Shkode, nibi, aki, noodin, giibi dgosdoonan wii naagdownmang
maanpii Shkagmigaang.**

Here on Mother Earth, there were gifts given to the Anishinaabe to look after,
fire, water, earth and wind.

**Debenjiged gii miinaan gechtwaa wendaagog Anishinaaben
waa naagdoonjin ninda niizhwaswi kino maadwinan.**

The Creator also gave the Anishinaabe seven sacred gifts to guide them. They are:

**Zaagidwin, Debwewin, Mnaadendmowin, Nbwaakaawin,
Dbaadendiziwin, Gwekwaadziwin miinwa Aakedhewin.**

Love, Truth, Respect, Wisdom, Humility, Honesty and Bravery.

Debenjiged kiimiingona dedbinwe wi naagdownendiwin.

Creator gave us sovereignty to govern ourselves.

**Ka mnaadendanaa gaabi zhiwebag miinwaa nango megwaa ezhwebag,
miinwa geyaabi waa ni zhiwebag.**

We respect and honour the past, present and future.

(Preamble to the Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin -
as adopted by the Grand Council in June 2011)

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The Anishinabek Nation would like to thank the leadership and staff of the 39 member communities of the Anishinabek Nation who took the time to provide the information required for the development of this report, and to the owners of businesses throughout Anishinabek treaty areas.

Due to challenges associated with the Covid 19 pandemic, this report should be considered draft in nature. Not all communities were able to be reached and the assets of all communities have not been included in this report.

VISION

The Lands and Resources Department is responsible for overseeing areas such as resource development and management, trapping, mining, water protection, and environmental stewardship. The Department works to build capacity in, and create opportunities for Anishinabek First Nations, to empower them to increase the natural, technical and financial capacity derived and generated from their lands and natural resources.

The Lands and Resources Department seeks to foster a better quality of life by ensuring access to natural resources that support the goals, principles and values of the Anishinabek Nation.

ASSET INVENTORY PROJECT INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the Anishinabek Nation initiated an agricultural asset inventory project. The project was conducted by funding provided from the Indian Agricultural Program of Ontario (IAPO) by funding provided under the Government of Ontario's Indigenous Economic Development Fund (IEDF).

The purpose of the project was to reach out to the 39 member nations of the Anishinabek Nation to identify existing agricultural initiatives and assets. A survey was conducted with band staff and other appropriate contacts to seek out information about band owned and privately owned agricultural enterprises, community-based agriculture initiatives such as community gardens, and to identify existing restaurants, catering businesses, food banks, and tourism-related establishments that may provide food as a service, and to identify any existing farmers and agricultural producers.

The survey also included questions focused on any food-related infrastructure and on food consumers situated within reserves including daycares, schools and seniors residences.

The survey also included information on aquaculture-related businesses and on cannabis related businesses. The survey included development of a database of these agricultural endeavors which is being maintained by the Anishinabek Nation Lands and Resources Department and is currently housed at the Wikwemikong GIS Lab.

STATUS OF FARMING IN ONTARIO

Ontario is home to almost 50,000 farms producing over 200 different agricultural commodities including fruit, vegetables, cash crops, livestock, forage crops, maple syrup, and ornamental plants. Although Northern Ontario comprises approximately 80% of land area in the Province, it contains only about 6% of the Province's population. The north has a significant presence of First Nation people and contains only about 5 % of farms in the Province.(Agronomy,2017).

Northern Ontario presents both a challenge and a huge opportunity for First Nation farming success. Challenges include adverse climatic conditions, insufficient infrastructure and support services, lack of crop diversification, and an ageing population with many youth leaving the communities (Agronomy, 2017). However, the north does offer fertile soils, good road networks and an affordable land base to start up a farm business. Climate change will result in an expansion of suitable climatic conditions in some areas of the Province, resulting in the potential for growth of new crops further north.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD FOR ANISHINABEK NATION COMMUNITIES

Communities of the Anishinabek Nation traditionally have had a strong dependence on fishing, hunting and gathering as well as subsistence farming to meet their dietary needs. This includes access to traditional foods (often derived from fishing, hunting and trapping) and high value medicinal plants gathered from traditional lands. First Nation farmers require the opportunity to domesticate certain wild foods (for example, wild rice) and bring them into wider cultivation. Funding opportunities are required to allow First Nation farmers to develop the infrastructure needed to house larger agricultural opportunities.

THE UN DECLARATION

The UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous People makes several statements on the rights of indigenous people to plants, animals, seeds and medicines.

Article 24 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their **vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals**. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.

Article 31 states "Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, **seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora**, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts.

Indigenous people have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions."

Covid 19 Epidemic

The Covid-19 epidemic has resulted in challenges to the food supply chain from production to consumption and has raised concerns about food production, processing, distribution and demand. It has resulted in movement restrictions for workers, closures of food production facilities and changes in the way food is purchased and distributed.

The Covid 19 epidemic has impacted the ability of some Anishinabek communities to obtain fresh food on a regular basis due to changes in transportation, shortages in the frequency of deliveries, changes in the frequency of shopping trips permitted outside the community, and impacted on the financial resources of food consumers resulting in an increased demand on food banks and local food supports. It has enhanced the awareness of food security and sovereignty for individual communities and enhanced interest in local production of food and food sovereignty and security.

SNAPSHOT OF AN AGRICULTURE

The Anishinabek Nation is active in a number of different agricultural production sectors and in some processing sectors. The key production sectors that will be discussed in this report include maple syrup production, wild rice production, bee keeping and honey production, aquaculture, fruit and vegetable production, traditional and commercial fishing and livestock production.



MAPLE SYRUP

History

First Nations have been making maple syrup since time immemorial and in the 16th century First Nations shared the maple syrup making process with Europeans. Maple syrup making is also community tradition that takes place during the time of the Sugar Moon. More than just a tasty treat, the Syrup was used in First Nation communities for bartering, medicine and in the preservation of food instead of using salt.

Industry Profile

Ontario maple syrup producers produced approximately 2.2 million litres of maple syrup in 2011, valued at \$32, 559 million. Ontario is the second largest producer of maple syrup, after Quebec. The province's maple syrup industry is estimated to be worth \$10.9 million annually, with production occurring mainly in southern Ontario. (Beyond the Fields, 2013).

There are about 2,755 maple producers in Ontario, producing about 3.9 million litres of syrup per year from approximately 4 million taps. The regions with the highest production are Waterloo-Wellington in southern Ontario and Lanark County in eastern Ontario.

The maple sugar industry in Ontario has a strong development potential, especially on Crown land. Apart from its current economic importance, the sector has an important historical and cultural value. Climate change has the potential to impact future maple syrup production in Ontario.

The development of specialty products such as maple butter, candies, taffy and gourmet products is common in Ontario. Furthermore, it has a competitive advantage in its proximity to important urban centers and the United States market. Maple syrup festivals held in various towns and villages show the upward cultural and economic dynamics of an industry that is far from having reached its full potential.

The Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association (OMSPA), the main representative body of maple syrup producers in the province, includes 500 members. The Association provides them with information, network services, marketing, and training. It also represents the maple syrup sector at various levels of government alongside private and academic partners. It provides consumers with information on the benefits of using maple products and on where to obtain locally produced maple syrup.

Currently Ontario maple producers can only supply 60% of the Ontario market with the balance being imported from Quebec without factoring in exports. Maple products are in high demand.

The sustainability of maple production will outperform the cash income produced by lumber production for a hardwood woodlot with proper management practices. What most people do not realize is that despite Quebec producing approximately 72% of the world's supply of maple syrup, Ontario actually has more tapable trees than Quebec and has the potential to dominate world supply.

While there is a learning curve involved with maple production and equipment can be expensive, the maple season easily incorporates into cash crop operations, hobby farms, and woodlots given the season arrives after a long winter of indoors but before any yardwork or seeding can take place. Maple production is a perfect add on to your farm profits if you have a maple stand located on your property and it doesn't necessarily need to be sugar maple. Any type of maple tree can be used for maple syrup production although the season may be shorter and the sugar content lower using soft maples.

Most people starting out will produce for the farm and perhaps some family and friends but production typically outgrows that supply and before you know it you are selling to local neighbours. The biggest difference between Ontario maple and Quebec maple is the uniqueness of the flavour. Most Ontario producers only sell their own syrup which will have a unique flavour based on their trees, soil conditions, and processing techniques. Quebec producers all get blended into essentially a canning factory for a uniform taste but their logistics and distribution make it hard to compete from a price stand point for the big shops like Loblaws or Sobeys. Produce a good quality syrup and you will have the local sales to support your maple business.

AN Maple Businesses

There are currently four maple production companies within the Anishinabek Nation.

Giizhigat Maple Products is a 3500 tap operation located on St. Josephs' Island and has been operating since the spring of 2015. The business would like to construct a new sugar shack in the future.

Wasauksing Maple Products is located on Parry Island (Wasauksing First Nation) and has been operating a not-for-profit sugar bush on and off since the late 1970's. In recent years, Wasauksing Maple Products has focused on producing a high quality product for the area market in anticipation of moving towards a for-profit business model. As per the vision of the community members of Wasauksing, the community is working to develop the business into a for-profit venture that is renowned for its quality maple products throughout Canada and the world. Maple syrup making is a community tradition in Wasauksing and the community has recently revived the community tradition of holding an annual Maplefest to honour the Sugar Moon, where everyone is welcome. (Wasauksing website, October 2020)

Tom's Sugar Shack is located in Garden Village on the Nipissing First Nation reserve. The business has been operating for several years and produces maple syrup, sugar and candy. (Personal communication, Tom Stevens)

First Nation Cultural Tours

Jacob Charles is the owner and operator of First Nation Cultural Tours located on Georgina Island. He is a third generation Maple Syrup maker and has been enjoying the process for almost thirty years. Taught by his father who was taught by his father before him, Maple Syrup making holds a very traditional significance for Jacob and First Nations People.

*Photo Credit: First Nation Cultural Tours
(<https://firstnationculturaltours.com/site/sugar-bush/>)*



AN Community Production

Wikwemikong Unceded Reserve has a large number of maple bushes and sugar shacks operated by individual families for community use. Four of these bushes are operated commercially but on a very small scale.

Serpent River First Nation has a large high value maple bush and shack located on the eastern peninsula of the reserve. The community operates a not for profit sugar bush for community use. There is an excellent potential here for Serpent River to further develop the sugar bush for community economic benefit.

Thessalon First Nation has a large high value maple bush on the northern periphery of the reserve. Some community members utilize portions of the bush to produce syrup for individual families. There is an excellent potential here for Thessalon FN to further develop the sugar bush for community economic benefit.

Whitefish River First Nation has several maple bush areas that are operated by 5 individual families. The potential and scale of these bushes have not been fully assessed for commercial production and it is unknown if this is an economic development objective of the community.

Aamjiwnaang has a maple sugar bush of 135 acres in size located on Degurse Road. The bush is currently used by the education department to educate children about Anishinaabe teachings. The community has created a beautiful youtube video entitled Ziidbaatogeng: Maple Syrup Making (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oy7Jl7_v7Hs) which is about an elder teaching grandchildren, youth and

community members about the maple syrup making tradition.

(<https://anishinabeknews.ca/2020/05/01/aamjiwnaang-first-nation-helps-at-home-learners-take-in-anishinaabe-teachings/>) (Vicki Ware, Education Services Coordinator)

Curve Lake Sugar Bush

This paragraph describes the Curve Lake Sugar Bush enterprise in their own words:

“Each year, the community comes together to harvest maple syrup from the wooded area on the outskirts of the community. Elders, knowledge-keepers, administration, community members and youth come together each year to collect, boil, clean and package the syrup for distribution throughout the community. It is our hopes that in the coming years, we will be able to expand this program in order to provide greater knowledge sharing to the youth, both within our community, and in our neighbouring schools.”

Beausoleil Island

Beausoleil Island has high value maple resources on Christian Island. There are four family sugar bushes. One resident sells his syrup to a store, Vic’s Variety. The community also owns patent land off reserve that includes a sugar shack and high value maple bush.

Fort William First Nation

Fort William First Nation has a small (350 tap) sugar bush that is operated by the local community in a traditional manner. The sugar bush is located in a valley on top of Mount McKay or Anemki Wajew, the sacred mountain.

The Fort William First Nation people have harvested maple sap since time immemorial and a community collective of members have been resurrecting that ancestral tradition for the last 8 years. As community members began to get a little older and have families, and those that came from families that were taught about the sugar bush their blood memory began to drive them to learn more about the history of their people in harvesting maple sap become reality in 2013.

The group is made up of a number of families who have now made a yearly tradition of harvesting the sap and making maple syrup for their respective families and other community members. This is a fully grassroots driven initiative that has struggles to fund their actions over the years with supplies and machinery needed for the production of maple syrup. (Source: <https://www.understandingourfoodsystems.com/community/fwfn>)

Mississauga First Nation

Mississauga First Nation has several maple bushes and several residents have shown interest in producing syrup for their own needs. There is potential here for commercial production at a larger scale.

Dokis First Nation

Dokis First Nation has significant maple stands, and a few families make syrup for personal use only. There was previously one commercial operator, but he relocated.



*Photo Credit: Dave Koski
(<http://www.thewalleye.ca/the-resurgence-of-the-sugar-bush/>)*

Sheshegwaning First Nation

Sheshegwaning First Nation has sugar bush resources, but the level of development of these bushes is unknown. Some may be operated at a small scale for individual families.

Aundeck Omni Kaning

A private individual and a couple of other small family bushes exist.

Atikameksheng Anishinabek

Atikameksheng has 3 to 4 small family sugar bushes and no commercial bushes.

Chippewas of the Thames

Members of this community have planted a small young maple forest. No other maple forest is present at a scale needed to produce syrup, at least based on information provided at the time of this writing.

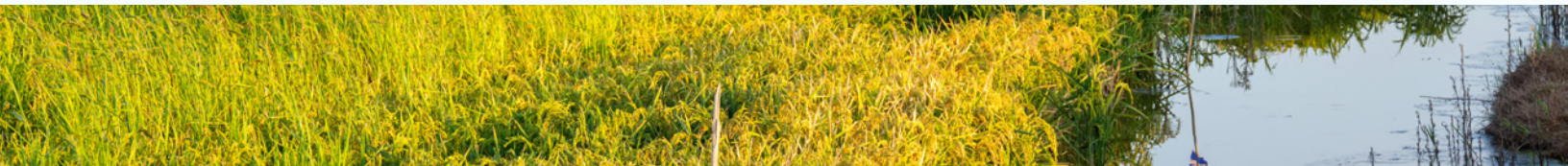
Chippewas of Rama

This community has a sugar bush which is utilized for cultural activities. Very little infrastructure is present. The location of the bush has not yet been documented.

It is recommended that provision of infrastructure resources and funding to scale up community-based endeavors be made available, where possible, to develop into full scale profitable maple sugar enterprises. It may be possible to scale up Birch syrup production in the north.

Birch Syrup

Birch syrup is less common than maple syrup due to the significantly greater amount of tree sap needed to produce a unit of syrup. There is one known producer in northern Ontario, located near Thunder Bay. However, birch syrup industries in the Yukon and Alaska are strong, with one cup (250 ml) of birch syrup selling for \$25. Thus, there may be more opportunities to increase production in northern Ontario (Beyond the Fields, 2013)



WILD RICE (MANOOMIN) “THE GOOD SEED”

History

Wild rice is a semi-aquatic annual grass with an edible grain that grows with abundance in North America's Great Lakes region. It is one of the only two native grains commonly eaten and is known by the Ojibway as **manoomin**. Wild rice has been cultivated and eaten for centuries by the Ojibway and was foretold by the Ojibway Seven Fires prophecy as being a place that signified the Ojibway's final resting place, a place “where food grows on water”. Wild rice is harvested in late August and September.

The Ojibwe followed a prophecy from the Atlantic coast to the Great Lakes, and have harvested manoomin (wild rice) in the late summer ever since. The Kawartha Lakes area in Southern Ontario was once the rice bowl of North America. Wild rice was gathered historically by First Nations on Rice Lake and other lakes in the vicinity.

Historically, the natural rice bowl extended over an area west of Lake Superior to Southern Manitoba and into adjacent states of Minnesota; Wisconsin and Michigan. Many lakes and rivers received their names

from the presence of Wild Rice. The best known is Rice Lake, part of the Trent-Severn Waterway. (<http://aldervillesavanna.ca/index.php/wild-rice/>)

Wild rice plays an important ecological function. It provides protection from high winds and waves along shorelines, thereby preventing erosion of loose soils and provides habitat for a wide diversity of wildlife. It also provides habitat for aquatic waterbirds, muskrat, fish, ducks, geese and migratory birds including some species at risk.

There are both northern and southern native varieties of wild rice. Northern wild rice is *Zizania palustris*. Southern wild rice is *Zizania aquatic aquatica* and grows to a height of 3 to 4 meters with a small seed measuring about 1 cm. This type of rice is rare and is only present in a few locations in Southern Ontario. (<http://aldervillesavanna.ca/index.php/wild-rice/>)

The development of the Trent Severn Canal, built in 1833, and the introduction of dams changed the flow of waters in the Kawartha Lakes and the Trent River resulting in the decimation of wild rice beds from flooding. Wild rice beds have also been impacted by shoreline development, dredging and the introduction of the common carp.

Today, there's a tense, decades-old standoff between James Whetung of Curve Lake First Nation, who is a rice activist, and recreational users of the rice lakes. Mr. Whetung has been reseeded wild rice in this area for the past 30 years. Boating, fishing, and swimming are difficult where the thick rice beds are flourishing once again. Cottage owners claim their property values are dropping as a result. Whetung has become a well known activist for wild rice restoration.

His opponents created a group called "Save Pigeon Lake" to thwart Whetung's efforts. Well-known Canadian author Drew Hayden Taylor, himself from Curve Lake First Nations, wrote a play about it, called Cottagers and Indians.

Wild rice is also native to many lakes within Northwestern Ontario and has been a traditional food source for centuries in this region. Restoration of the wild rice beds are very important for the future of wild rice, especially in Southern Ontario.

Industry Profile

Wild rice is a high demand product due to its many positive health benefits. It has no preservatives or artificial flavours, it is an excellent source of fibre, is low in fat and is rich in protein and minerals. The food is enjoyed as a delicacy throughout North America and beyond. Being a naturally grown grass seed, it is an all natural product. The product has the ability to reseed itself and grow continuously. The product can also be stored and frozen or preserved for later use, making it an important survival food.

In 2006, Canada produced more than 1 million kilograms of wild rice, 12% of which came from Ontario (Beyond the Fields, 2013). In 2012 wild rice was priced at \$4/kg. Today 340 g can be purchased for approximately \$10.00.

Industry Leaders

Within Ontario, there are only three major companies providing wild rice to the market.

Canadian Pure Wild Rice

Kailey Divers is the operator of Canadian Pure Wild Rice in Wabigoon, Ontario which is outside of the Robinson Superior Treaty Area. This rice is harvested and packaged in Northwestern Ontario. Other products sold include salad dressing, beeswax food wraps and wild rice casserole dehydrated products. (www.canadianpurewildrice.ca)

Wildly Canadian is based in Thunder Bay, Ontario and provides a variety of natural products including wild rice, maple syrup, honey, specialty bars, cranberry juice and natural and organic grains. (<https://www.wildlycanadian.com/>)

AN Wild Rice Businesses

Black Duck Wild Rice

James Whetung is the owner of Black Duck Wild Rice which is a social enterprise involved with seeding, harvesting, processing and educating about the traditional aspect of wild rice as a sovereign food. Black Duck Wild Rice is enacting their Indigenous rights and is working to restore Indigenous food sovereignty for their community and within their traditional territory.

Black Duck harvests green rice from the Kawartha Lakes region and processes (cures, roasts, dances, winnows) it into high quality wild rice for local consumption. This can be purchased in half, whole or 5 lbs amounts at the Peterborough Farmers Market, By the Bushel Community Food Cooperative and directly from Black Duck in Curve Lake First Nation.

Anishinaabe Wild Rice Experience

(<https://www.ontariotravel.net/en/listing/Wild-Rice-Experience/202199>)

Anishinaabe Wild Rice Experience is a family operated business owned by Rhonda LeClair, based in Nolalu Ontario that provides an authentic cultural "hands-on" activity for learners who want to experience harvesting and processing wild rice in a traditional and contemporary setting. During the one or two-day experience, participants will connect to the environment and with each other as team members creating beautiful memories harvesting a natural grown food source from the land. The experience includes collecting, cleaning, drying, parching, hulling, and winnowing wild rice. Lunch and dinner are provided daily. This company also offers school tours, and has a bed and breakfast available for rental.

AN Community Production

Wikwemkoong Unceded Nation has made efforts to rehabilitate wild rice beds within their traditional territory along the shorelines of Lake Huron.

Alderville First Nation

Alderville Black Oak Savanna supports community Elder Jeff Beaver in his Wild Rice teachings, education and research.

Other Communities

A number of other communities in the Northern Superior Region have shown interest in learning more about how to rehabilitate wild rice in the lakes in this region and wild rice lakes within traditional territories are still present and valuable agricultural assets for these communities. There has been a renewed interest in wild rice rejuvenation and rehabilitation to enhance First Nation food sovereignty and supply (Anderson & Whetung, 2018).



WHITE RICE

White rice has potential for cultivation in southwestern regions of Ontario. A project is currently underway at the University of Guelph's Ridgetown campus to grow a one hectare rice paddy near Chatham, Ontario. A company called FangZheng Agriculture Enterprises Inc. is working in partnership with the University of Guelph on this research study. White rice can be grown in both paddy and field production systems and requires a flat landscape and a clay-loam soil, but can only be grown in areas with 3,150 heat units. Potential barriers to growing this crop in Ontario may include the cost of production, yields and lack of registered pest control products.

Another barrier may be that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency does not permit the importation of rice seed for field production because of the fear that white rice could become invasive or act as a vector for pathogens.

<https://farmtario.com/crops/ontario-trials-of-cold-tolerant-rice-could-prove-alternative-crop-potential/>



TRADITIONAL AND COMMERCIAL FISHING

History

First Nation people have been fishing for personal, subsistence, commercial, ceremonial and trading purposes since time immemorial. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights. (Parliament of Canada, 2020). A number of Supreme Court of Canada decisions have clarified the rights of First Nations people to fish. These cases include *R. vs Sparrow*, and *R. v. Van der Peet*. The rights of First Nations people to fish commercially were upheld in *R v. Marshall*.

On the upper Great Lakes, lake whitefish was an important staple in the diet of First Nation people and many villages were located near spawning grounds. During the spring and fall, spawning season, fish were a regular and predictable food source. Fish was traditionally fished with gill nets, hoop nets, baited bone hooks and spears. It was dried and stored as a subsistence food for the winter months and in its dried form was even used as a form of currency. Whitefish was also used as a source for oil.

The St. Mary's Rapids at Sault Ste Marie was the traditional gathering place of the Three Fires Confederacy and was a traditional gathering place for millennia, because of the prolific spawning of whitefish in the rapids at this location (Kerr, S. J 2010).

The Great Lakes were known as "the Five Freshwater Seas," Nayaano-nibiimaang in Anishinaabemowin. Each lake has its own Anishinaabemowin name.

Nipissing First Nation Fisheries Law

In April 2015, the Government of Ontario recognized Nipissing First Nations Chi-Naaknigewin (Constitution) and Fisheries Law, a first for Ontario. This recognition supports a new approach to fisheries management on Lake Nipissing and nation-to-nation relationship building.

(https://www.nfn.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2020/04/2019_20_MOU_Update_Report_Final_2020-04-22.pdf)

To build on the successes of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), NFN and MNRF signed a three-year agreement to continue sustainably managing the Lake Nipissing fishery. This cooperative work supports the recovery of the Lake Nipissing walleye population and NFN's Fisheries Law.

Aboriginal Commercial Fishing Licenses

There are a number of Anishinabek Nation fishermen conducting commercial fishing activities in Ontario, under the authority of Aboriginal Commercial Fishing Licenses (ACFL's) that are issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. These agreements may specify specific quota allocations, fishing areas, times, species, methods used, and other restrictions.

In 2020, licenses were issued to Fort William First Nation, Red Rock Indian Band, Pays Plat First Nation, Biigtigong Nishnaabeg (Pic River) and Michipicoten First Nation for Lake Superior. (Personal communication, Ken LaCroix, MNRF, April 28, 2020).

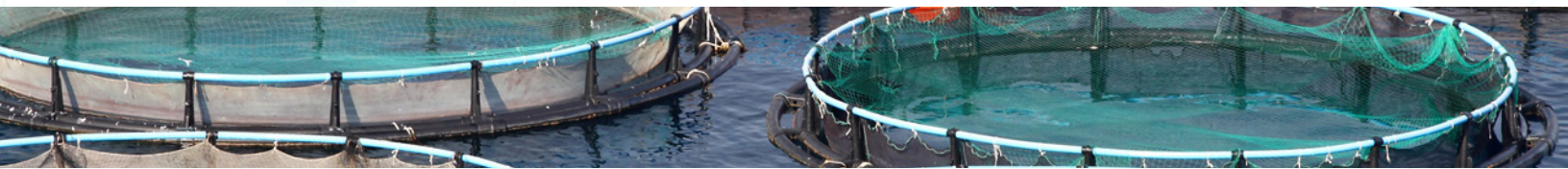
For Lake Huron, communities who held aboriginal commercial fishing licenses in 2020 included Aundeck Omni Kaning and Serpent River First Nation.

Waubetek Economic Development Corporation has developed an Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy for the region that identifies potential business opportunities in recreational and commercial fisheries as well as aquaculture. On the aquaculture component, Waubetek has partnered with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to be the lead organization for an aquaculture initiative in Central Canada covering Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. A Fisheries Asset Mapping document has also been completed for use by the First Nations in North-East Ontario.

In the strategy, the following strategic elements were identified:

- Develop capacity in commercial fisheries, aquaculture, recreational fisheries, processing and marketing;
- Access to capital and infrastructure to support fisheries and aquaculture development;
- Access to objective information to identify, explore and develop potential opportunities in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development;
- Identify and deliver training and skills development programming; and
- Enhance First Nations autonomy regarding fisheries management in traditional Aboriginal territories.

(<https://www.waubetek.com/article/aboriginal-fisheries-strategy-166.asp>)



AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture, or fish farming, is increasingly popular in Ontario. Under provincial legislation, more than 40 species of fish are now eligible to be raised, including tilapia, shrimp, four species of trout, arctic char, yellow perch, walleye, bass and barramundi.

History

Fish and shrimp is farmed all over Ontario, with the earliest farms dating back to 1953. Most rainbow trout is hatched in land-based facilities throughout the province, and then transported to open net-pens in Georgian Bay and the adjacent North Channel to grow to market size. Other species, such as shrimp, tilapia, and barramundi grow in land-based facilities throughout the province.

The majority of seafood farmed in Ontario is destined for grocery stores and dinner plates in the province and exported abroad. The Government of Ontario operates nine fish culture stations where fish are bred to be released for sport fishing and conservation.

Ontario has been farming fish and other seafood for more than sixty years. Rainbow trout net-pen aquaculture has shown no negative effects to native fish populations. In fact, recent studies are showing the opposite, with fish farms actually helping dwindling populations of native fish species to recover. (Ontario Aquaculture Association, 2020).

A five-year study from the Department of Fisheries & Oceans in the province's Experimental Lakes Area demonstrated that the added nutrients from net-pen farms caused wild lake trout to spawn three years earlier than they had previously, which doubled their population during the duration of the study. Increased biodiversity occurs around net-pen sites in Georgian Bay and the adjacent North Channel according to a study conducted by the University of Guelph.

Industry Profile

Ontario's aquaculture industry continues to emerge as an important employer and economic driver throughout much of the province, including in many rural, remote, and Indigenous communities (<https://ontarioseafoodfarmers.ca>). The Ontario Aquaculture Association (OAA) is an industry-led organization that fosters growth, innovation and partnerships for the province's thriving seafood farmers. By production and volume, the OAA represents over 95% of the aquaculture industry in Ontario, including finfish and shrimp sectors, land-based and open net-pen operations, feed suppliers and other companies across the province's farmed seafood value chain.

Aquaculture takes place in either open net pens or on land-based farms. The open net pen industry focuses mainly on the production of rainbow trout. Aquaculture contributes 122 million to the Ontario economy and provides over 550 direct and indirect jobs. Approximately 8,000 tonnes of farmed seafood are grown in Ontario every year (Ontario Aquaculture Association).

AN Role in Aquaculture

A number of Anishinabek Nation communities are involved either directly or indirectly in aquaculture projects. The following businesses are owned either in whole or in part by Anishinabek Nation citizens.

Buzwah Fisheries is based on Manitowaning Bay in Wiikwemkoong Unceded Nation and operates a BAP-certified aquaculture site, supplying rainbow trout across Canada.

Odawa Island Farms is a rainbow trout open water pen system facility based just off the coastline of Sheshegwaning First Nation. The farm is co-owned by John O Foods and Sheshegwaning First Nation. The farm offers a sustainable source of trout raised in pristine waters. The trout is shipped and processed at the organically certified John O Foods plant within hours of being harvested, allowing for a fully traceable product of the highest quality.

New North Fisheries

New North Fisheries is a relatively new farmed whitefish project located in Manitowaning Bay off the coast of Wiikwemkoong Unceded Reserve. The facility is co-owned by Mr Jeff Tuerk and Mr. Ross Herbert, from Henvey Inlet First Nation. The project is rearing whitefish for human consumption and has received assistance from College Boreal, the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Aboriginal Aquaculture in Canada Initiative (<https://www.manitoulin.com/entrepreneurs-see-farmed-whitefish-off-season-complement-traditional-harvest/>).

Wabuno Fish Farm and Processing Plant-Aundeck Omni Kaning

Aundeck Omni Kaning has owned and operated Wabuno Fish Farms and Wabuno Fish Processors since 1992 and are continuing their relationship with the business in a smaller capacity. The product, rainbow trout, was grown, processed and sold to domestic and export markets. This original initiative created 13 full-time positions and continues to be a significant contributor to the AOK First Nation economy. Since its inception in 1992, this business has created over 75 full-time and part-time jobs.

Aundeck Omni Kaning currently leases the aquaculture site to Cole Munro.

Curve Lake Aquaculture Development Project-Developmental

Curve Lake describes their project in their own words:

“The Aquaculture project is focused on developing a Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) that will produce 125 MT (275,000 lbs) of fish annually. The project looks at the potential to incorporate an aquaponics component that will produce leafy greens and tomatoes for the First Nation year round. There is also the potential for the fish waste to be used as fertilizer for the sustainable community garden. There are two types of species that are in consideration, which are Tilapia and Barramundi, where Barramundi being the most profitable over a 10 year period.

The fresh fish would be shipped to Toronto’s live market where we have contact with 2 major wholesalers. This would be a turnkey operation in respects to supplying the fish to the wholesaler. The Wholesaler would truck the fish from our facility to Toronto on a regular basis.

The project will need approximately \$2.5 Million to begin the business. With the potential of additional Education/Visitors centre and additional greenhouses and retail sales, to be added in the future. The Aquaculture business would provide, food security for community, employment opportunities (FT & PT), and a sustainable business with potential for retail sales, tourism, and outreach programs. This facility will have the potential to produce annual profits to be utilized for other business ventures by the FN.

With the financial support of NICFI through Waubutek, Curve Lake First Nation has completed the feasibility study and have moved into the business plan and design stage of this project.”

Mississauga First Nation Land Based Aquaculture Project-Developmental

Mississauga First Nation is embarking on the development of a large closed containment aquaculture project. Project partners are working diligently to bring this business opportunity online as soon as November 2021. Funders for the project include Indigenous Services Canada, FedNor, NOHFC, and The Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Mississauga First Nation is in the process of developing a business corporation that will oversee operations for the MFN aquaculture project.

Pic River First Nation Marine Based Aquaculture Project-Developmental

Pic River First Nation is conducting feasibility work for a marine-based aquaculture project in Lake Superior. The project would focus on the growing of rainbow trout using an open net pen system and fish would be sent to southern Ontario for processing at the Cole-Munro fish processing facility.

Michipicoten First Nation Feasibility Study-Developmental

In 2020 Michipicoten First Nation sought funding from the NICFI (Northern Integrated Commercial Fishing Initiative) to conduct a feasibility study into aquaculture and aquaponics at Michipicoten First Nation. The project is planned to commence in 2021 and will examine options for aquaculture and aquaponics development in the community.

AN Community Involvement

Several Anishinabek Nation communities are employed directly by the aquaculture industry in addition to the communities mentioned above. These communities include Wasauksing First Nation (Aqua-Cage Fisheries in Parry Sound) and several communities on Manitoulin Island.

North Wind Fish Farm is situated on Manitoulin Island is owned by industry leader Cole Munro. It employs those in the local area.

Aqua-Cage Fisheries is an aquaculture farm in Parry Sound, Ontario that produces rainbow trout for the food market. It employs members from and is in close vicinity to Wausauksing First Nation.

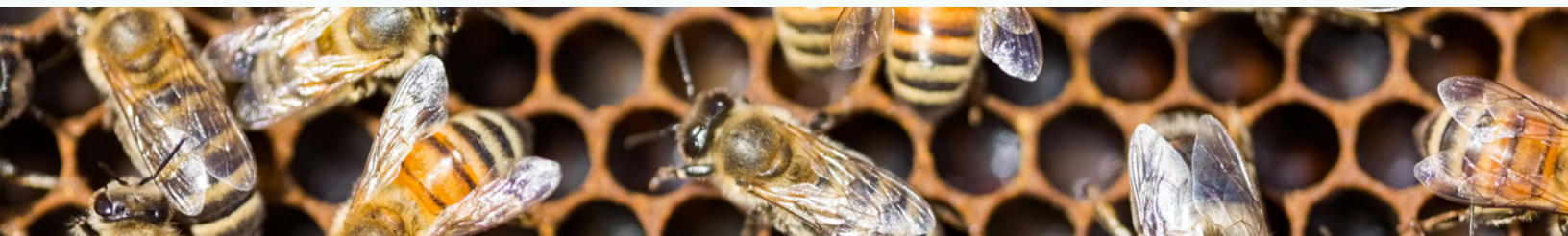
This company receives fingerlings from a hatchery in Southern Ontario, grow the fish in the open waters of Georgian Bay and harvest them for a processor that ships to major grocery stores. Aqua-Cage produces environmentally sustainable, high quality fish for the consumer.

Atikameksheng Anishinabek Hatchery

Atikameksheng Anishinabek has submitted a proposal to develop a fish hatchery in the community and is currently awaiting confirmation of funding. This would be a non-profit community-based venture with the objective of enhancing local fish stocks.

Whitefish River First Nation

The community is working on a hatchery project at a site below Willisville Hill on an old site managed by Vale. The property was previously managed by Whitefish Falls Fish and Game. They are doing walleye culture and have purchased 8 microhatcheries that will be installed at the Band Hall. The purpose of the project is to contribute to sustainable fisheries populations in the Bay of Islands area of Lake Huron's North Channel. This project is a non-profit community based venture.



BEEKEEPING AND HONEY PRODUCTION

History

Beekeeping with honeybees, or apiculture, is the art of keeping bees for honey and beeswax and evolved from honey hunting and gathering. Egyptian records show that, as early as 3000 BC, bees were provided with domiciles and kept for honey production.

Industry Profile

There are approximately 7,000 beekeepers in Canada operating a total of 600,000 colonies of honeybees. The ratio of commercially operated bee colonies to those owned by hobbyists is 80:20 and the reverse is true for the number of operators i.e 20% of the beekeepers maintain 80% of the colonies.

Canada produces 75 million pounds of honey annually. Approximately one third of the crop is from Alberta, one third from Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and one third from rest of country. Half of all honey produced is exported with 80-90% being exported to the U.S. (<https://honeycouncil.ca>).

Wintering

A high percentage of Quebec colonies are wintered indoors. This method of overwintering has gained some popularity in northern Alberta and northern BC. Everywhere else the majority of colonies are wintered outdoors using varieties of insulated wrapping material. Different methods of management allow beekeepers to overwinter bees in 1, 2 or 3 brood chambers.

Canada ranks 1st in the world for canola production.

Pollination of canola is a major activity for the Canadian honey bee industry. Each year around 300,000 colonies of honey bees (half the colonies in Canada) contribute to the annual crop of 12.6 million tonnes of open pollinated canola oil seed. As well, another 80,000 colonies (approximately 12% of the colonies in Canada) are dedicated to pollinating the highly specialized hybrid seed canola industry. This hybrid seed industry is dependent on honey bees for precise pollen transfer of specific genetic lines.

Canada ranks 2nd in the world for blueberry production. (North American produces 75% of the world's blueberries). Beekeepers provide around 35,000 colonies of honey bees for blueberry pollination.

Canada is 16th in the world for apple production and beekeepers supply around 15,000 colonies for the pollination of tree fruit.

Bee losses

In 2008, Ontario lost 33% of active bee colonies over the winter. Winter losses of these colonies is complex but may be attributed to varroa mite. The cause of colony death is complex but has mainly been attributed to the failure of varroa mite treatments through mite resistance to chemicals, incomplete or incorrect formic acid treatment. Some losses were attributed to poor nutrition in fall which was compounded by drought and grasshoppers. Varroa mites were first reported in New Brunswick in 1989. Since then the mites have spread across Canada. Over time the mites have developed resistance to the synthetic chemical treatments (fluvalinate and coumaphos). All provinces are reporting treatment tolerant varroa mites.

Other factors currently influencing bee and honey production include hive health, high production costs, a reliance on imported packages and queens, competition from low priced honey imports, a reliance on foreign workers and the development of few value-added products.

In 2012, systemic neonicotinoid pesticides applied as corn and soy seed treatments were found to be responsible for acute and chronic bee mortality.

AN Role in Beekeeping

There are four Anishinabek Nation owned honey businesses within Ontario.

Makwa Honey is based in Sault Ste. Marie Ontario and aspires to be the premier Anishinabek beekeeper and provider in Ontario with a focus on protecting and preserving honeybees for high quality honey production and education in order to leave a legacy for our children. Makwa honey is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the honeybee and educates the Anishinabek and public about the value of the honeybee as a pollinator, the importance of honey in our living as well as practices beekeeping in alignment with our Anishinabek values for the next seven generations. (Makwawise, 2020)

Makwa Honey expanded their operation in 2020 through a partnership with Cape Chin collection (Christian and Barbara Von Der Heide) and currently only sells honey in bulk. The company produced an approximate volume of 22,000 pounds in 2020 and has hives at several different locations in Ontario, including Algoma Highlands Blueberry Farm and Winery in Wawa.

In 2020 the company expanded its product offerings to include Makwa Mead and a CBD honey stick.

Capital Honey is based in Ottawa and cares for nearly 50 beehives that help pollinate organic vegetables at the Just Food Farm. It is owned by Ron St. Louis, who is originally from Dokis First Nation. Capital Honey has a Certified Naturally Grown designation which means they do not use synthetic pesticides or antibiotics to control pests or diseases.

The company breeds bees to be resistant to pests and diseases, gentle to work with and adapted to the local climate. The company offers learning programs and courses in beekeeping.

The company offers their honey products through an online store, through the Just Food Farm in Ottawa and at a variety of retailers and summer farmer markets. Bulk and wholesale orders are also available. (www.capitalbees.ca).

Georgina Island Honey is based on Georgina Island First Nation and sells 100 percent raw, unpasteurized local honey. This company was started in 2015 by Darla and Andrew Gibson and the operation grew to over 30 bee colonies. The company uses buckfast bees and is currently in a rebuilding phase.

Neyaaba'aakwaang Honey is a small apiary run by Fran Couchie in Nipissing First Nation. It is composed of three hives. Honey produced is sold locally on a small scale. Fran also provides support to starting beekeepers and is a member of the Powassan Bee Club.

Green Legacy Farm is based in Bonfield Ontario and began a small 3 hive apiary in the summer of 2020. The company hopes to move into local honey sales in 2021 through their farmstand and local retailers.

AN Community Involvement

There is a growing interest in beekeeping among Anishinabek Nation individuals and communities.

In the summer of 2020, Serpent River First Nation developed an apiary. Individuals who have some experience with keeping bees include the following:

Gail Jacko of Manitoulin Island is a beekeeper.

Wayne LeBlanc of Lively Ontario is a member of Wiikwemkoong Unceded Nation and is an experienced beekeeper who sometimes offers bee courses.

Tori Cress of Beausoleil Island also is a beekeeper.

<https://www.manitoulin.com/aundeck-omni-kaning-beekeeping-course-calls-for-being-prepared-for-sweet-harvest/>



COMMUNITY GARDENS AND GREENHOUSE PROJECTS

The interest in community gardens among Anishinabek Nation communities is growing. There are many community gardens across the Nation including the following:

Serpent River First Nation

Serpent River established a community garden in 2019 and during the same year, a small greenhouse was constructed at the community garden. The intent of the greenhouse and community garden is to enhance food security for the local community and to build capacity in agricultural endeavors. The greenhouse and garden are operated by the Nigaanin department. Food grown is contributed to the Nigaanin Foodbank.



Serpent River Community Garden

Nipissing First Nation

Nipissing First Nation currently operates a small community garden. Produce is provided to the community at no cost and the community is permitted to pick their own produce. The garden is operated by the Health Department.



Production Scale Greenhouse

A feasibility study for a production scale greenhouse is underway by Nipissing First Nation and the community continues to move forward with this project. The greenhouse will provide a healthy and sustainable food source for citizens and the surrounding area and will provide employment and capacity building opportunities. The feasibility study will examine labour supply requirements, market demand for produce and will look at greenhouse building design, the availability of site-specific resources and opportunities for system validation (Nipissing First Nation website, 2020).

Photo Location: Nipissing First Nation Community Garden

Photo Credit: Lynn Moreau

Curve Lake First Nation-Oshkigamong Gitigaan:

Curve Lake First Nation describes their gardening project in their own words:

“This new project was created in response to increased food security concerns at Curve Lake First Nation and the realities that became known to us through the COVID-19 Pandemic. The community has a threat of being unable to secure healthy and safe food for a variety of reasons, but the pandemic has shown us just how great the threat is. We need to be able to grow enough fresh food to support our community through tougher times and also to ensure that healthy options are available at all times. The Oshkigamong Gitigaan (Curve Lake Farm) has been designed as a way to ensure that our membership has these items available to them.

Starting out as a 5 acre plot, we have begun work to test and mitigate the soil, turn up the existing crops, fertilize the soil and plant clover and oats in order to begin to get the land to a place where we can successfully grow vegetables and fruit. The cost for this first stage was great at \$7000. Over the next 4 years, our budget predicts a \$150,000 price to create a sustainable community garden. We hope to be able to sell some of the produce in order to sustain the farm, and to offer the produce to our members at a reduced cost through a number of programs and sales locations.”

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is supporting this project in 2021.

Wikwemkoong Unceded Reserve

In June of 2018 Wikwemikong Unceded Nation began the groundbreaking ceremony for development of a high school greenhouse located at the Wasse-Abin High School on reserve. The project is a collaboration between the commission, the Wikwemikong Housing Department, Technical Services, Department of Lands and Natural Resources, Public Works, Wikwemikong Board of Education, Wikwemikong Heritage Organization and Focus Forward for Indigenous Youth. The greenhouse will be heated using biothermal and solar energy. The greenhouse is 56 feet long and 24 feet wide.



<http://Raylectron.com>

Wasse-Abin Wikwemikong High School-Greenhouse for Change (<https://windspeaker.com/news/windspeaker-news/wikwemikong-greenhouse-increases-food-security-offers-students-trades-training-and-green-industry-credits>)

Once the greenhouse is operational, three green industry courses will be offered at the high school, benefiting the students with credits earned from hands-on learning, exposure to healthy food and increased awareness of local agriculture. The controlled environment of a greenhouse will allow the students to learn new technologies in the agriculture field and will allow year-round activities and learning.

Seedlings will be grown for Wikwemikong’s Foodshare program and seed saving education will be an important part of the curriculum.



Photo Credit: Christianna Jones

A second greenhouse (hoophouse) viewed below, is also being developed by the First Nation.

Namaygoosisagagun

This photo shows the frame of a small greenhouse constructed in the community. Materials were brought in by snowmobile and train to develop this small greenhouse. It was used to grow vegetables for the community.

Thessalon First Nation

This photo shows members of Thessalon First Nation at a small raised bed community garden they have created on reserve. Resident William Bissaillon has spearheaded this initiative.



Thessalon Community Garden

Chippewas of the Thames (Rama)

<https://www.ramacommunityfarm.com/gallery/>

The Rama Community Farm, also known as Maawnjiyidigwaag Gtigan, is located on Airport Road in Ramara, Ontario. The community farm is owned and operated by the Chippewas of Rama First Nation and was established in 2018. The farm provides fresh produce and enhances food security for the community and neighbours in the Ramara area. The farm follows indigenous farming practices and although not designated as certified organic, farms utilizing environmental principles that enhance biodiversity, avoid the use of chemical fertilizers and include utilizes crop rotation, reduced tilling, controlled irrigation and biodiversity enhancements.

Fresh produce is provided to elders at the seniors centre and those still in their home, the Rama Food Bank, the Early Childhood Education Centre and Kendassawin Elementary School. Approximately 3 full time and 5 part time community members are employed at the farm.

Infrastructure includes a 150 x 30 foot large greenhouse and a 100 x 60 farm building that includes vegetable processing stations, a walk in refrigerator, a kitchen and serves as farm store as well as a base for community events and farm tours.

Because of Covid 19, the farm plans to sell produce at the local band-owned Shell station this year rather than at the farm site, and no on-farm tours will be permitted during the 2021 growing season. Future plans at the farm include the introduction of livestock.

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation holds other agricultural assets including hundreds of acres of private land off reserve, a sugar bush and approximately 30 acres of other lands suitable for agricultural development on-reserve. It also owns the local casino (Casino Rama) which contains a number of restaurants. A legal cannabis dispensary, Rama Cannabis is also owned by the community. The community also owns the local Tim Hortons and Shell station.



Photo credit: www.ramacommunityfarm.com

Sheshegwaning First Nation-Growcer Unit

In June of 2020, largely as a result of the Covid 19 epidemic, Sheshegwaning First Nation installed a Growcer hydroponic growing unit in the community. The Growcer system is comprised of a container farm housed in a shipping container, hydroponic growing equipment and LED lights that creates a self-contained growing system suitable for year round growing of fresh greens. The Growcer system employs one full time and two part-time workers from the community. The harvest is utilized for a local business, Mkwa Catering, as well as for the community who can purchase weekly subscriptions. The system purchased allows for the production of 450 heads of greens weekly.

<https://www.northernontariobusiness.com/industry-news/aboriginal-businesses/future-of-food-is-fresh-and-green-for-manitoulin-first-nation-2582908>

Alderville First Nation Black Oak Savannah Ecology Centre

Located on Alderville First Nation, the Alderville Black Oak Savannah is the largest intact tract of native grassland habitat in Central Ontario. The Alderville Black Oak Savannah Ecology Centre's mandate includes ecological restoration, education and research.

Gitigaan at the Black Oak Savanna

The Gitigaan at the Black Oak Savanna acts as an Interpretive Garden and hosts various educational and outreach groups throughout the year. The Gitigaan hosts a variety of native plant species and features a water feature, insect habitat, gathering place and interactive and educational components.

Native Plant Nursery-Developmental

The Alderville Native Plant Nursery is a developmental project that is being advanced to respond to the need for a commercial source of native Ontario plants, with genetics adapted to the Rice Lake Plains area. The nursery will fill a niche for large scale projects and partners as well as small personal gardening projects, with an emphasis on grassland plants for tall-grass prairie and oak savanna restoration. The greenhouse will provide a location to grow local organic vegetables, fruit and medicine crops for Alderville First Nation residents. In 2020 funding was secured through the Greenbelt Foundation and plans are underway to construct the greenhouse and hoop house structures in the spring of 2021. It should become operational in the spring of 2022. (Alderville First Nation website, 2021).

History of the Black Oak Savannah

When the Ojibway arrived on the Rice Lake Plains circa 1700, they found Haudenosaunee— Iroquoian peoples settled in agricultural villages. The Ojibway saw them burning areas to clear land for crops, and called the area Pemedashkotayang, Lake of the Burning Plains. In 1835 the Mississauga Ojibway started to settle permanently near Rice Lake, migrating from a Methodist mission on Lake Ontario, to what is now Alderville First Nation. By the late 1850s burning of the land had slowed, and the growth of European settlement and agriculture around Rice Lake had essentially eliminated the natural ecosystems in the area.

Fast forward 140 years, and a 105-acre piece of land on Alderville First Nation was slated for development. In 1999, local biologist, Elder, and artist, Rick Beaver noticed a mix of rare plant species on the site that are specific to two endangered ecosystems: Tallgrass Prairie and Black Oak Savanna. Rick Beaver brought this information to Chief & Council, who declared the area a natural history site and protected it from development.

What was then a series of old agricultural fields has been transformed over the past 20 years into a thriving grassland restoration site with an abundance of plant and animal species. Mr. Beaver was instrumental in the preservation, conservation and restoration of what we now know as the Alderville Black Oak Savanna (Alderville BOS). The site is now the largest intact tract of native grassland habitat left within the Rice Lake Plains and Eastern Ontario, and plays a key role in the future restoration of this unique eco-region by acting as a pristine source for native plants and seed.

The Alderville Black Oak Savannah's mission is to preserve, restore and expand rare grassland habitats, educate and extend related/revenant environmental information to the public and community members, and provide a high quality and diverse research site. The bulk of the ecological restoration work centres around three main activities: prescribed burning, planting native species, and invasive species control. (Alderville First Nation, 2020)

Fort William First Nation-Gaa-Azhe Anishinaabeyaayang (Back to Our Way) Community Garden

Fort William First Nation developed a community garden in 2016 on the grounds of the Ontario Works building in partnership with Roots to Harvest, an incorporated, not-for-profit organization based in Thunder Bay that provides educational opportunities for youth to engage with local agriculture and cultivate healthy communities. The 265-foot by 40-foot garden features raised beds for vegetables, orchard trees, and a variety of berries. (Anishinabek News, 2016).



The gardening work is part of the employment program for Ontario Works' clients and brings food security to the community. Food from the garden also goes to the Ontario Works Food bank located in the community.

Long Lake First Nation

Long Lake First Nation began a community garden at the daycare in the summer of 2019. Children from the daycare and the school have assisted with planting, art projects around the garden and weeding and watering of the garden. There was a plan to continue the garden in 2020.

(<https://www.understandingourfoodsystems.com/community/1158>)



GREENHOUSES

Several First Nations have purchased or developed greenhouse structures. There are a number of communities who are interested in the development of greenhouses to enhance local food security, but have not yet had the opportunity to develop these assets. Others have developed business opportunities focused on greenhouse cultivation.

Aamjiwmaang Greenhouse and Native Plant Nursery

Aamjiwmaang has a greenhouse and native plant nursery known as Maajiigin Gumig which has been operating since September of 2015. The greenhouse is 54 x 34 and sits just outside of the Maawn Doosh Gumig Community and Youth Centre parking lot. The greenhouse is a native plant greenhouse focusing on growing native plants for the Aamjiwmaang community and surrounding Sarnia-Lambton Area.

Initiatives of the green house include Native plant rescue and restoration, seed collection and cleaning, native plant propagation, multi-generation teaching and learning, ecology stewardship education, and reconnecting with the Earth. The greenhouse is also gathering place for learning how to help native plants thrive once planted. Native plant workshops are offered at this location.



*Aamjiwmaang Greenhouse and Native Plant Nursery
(Photo credit: Aamjiwmaang First Nation)*

Thessalon First Nation Biocentre

Thessalon First Nation acquired the Bio Centre through a land negotiation by the Ministry of Natural Resources in the year 2000. The Bio Centre includes a complex of 17 greenhouses and large cold storage facility with a certified organic food processing/packaging area.

The Bio Centre is a key economic asset for Thessalon First Nation and is located 20 km northwest of the reserve on Highway 129. The Thessalon Bio Centre is a high quality facility that was previously utilized to produce tree seedlings for the forest industry. The facility has produced as much as 1.5 million tree seedlings. These seedling contracts allowed employment for two full time staff and up to 10 seasonal jobs for band members. The Bio Centre is a unique resource for economic development on the North Shore of Lake Huron.

Thessalon First Nation is exploring ways of operating the facility to its fullest potential and is seeking to identify new possible industries, markets and partnerships that could expand the use of the Bio Centre for the First Nation's benefit. Staff recognize the need to align the economic outlook of this unique resource with education, motivation and training opportunities. (Thessalon First Nation, 2020).



Source: (<https://www.thessalonfirstnation.ca/bio-centre.html>)

Red Rock First Nation

Red Rock First Nation has a community garden that is based at the band hall.

The community also has purchased a 300 acre private property along the Nipigon River close to Nipigon, Ontario. The property has several buildings and a well and is suitable for agricultural development (Photo, left)

Chalet Lodge is another location with potential for agricultural development at Red Rock First Nation. The lodge is a tourism resort owned by the Band and is located on the Lake Helen Reserve.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/chalet-lodge-opening-1.4713988>

(<https://anishinabeknews.ca/2020/09/25/building-indigenous-food-sovereignty-in-14-first-nations-in-northern-superior-region/>)





FOREST AND FRESHWATER FOODS

Forest and freshwater foods are those that include plants, animals and fungi and these foods are harvested directly from the wild. These types of foods have been critically important for Anishinabek Nation since time immemorial. These types of foods include moose, deer, caribou, waterfowl, fish, berries, nuts, seeds, fiddleheads, wild rice, mushrooms and plants used for tea and medicine.

Forest and freshwater foods are an unrecognized economic resource that can be leveraged to foster long-term prosperity for communities while allowing for the maintenance of ecological health and integrity (Beyond the Fields, 2003). Individual inventories of these resources have not been conducted in any detail by the Anishinabek Nation but present an opportunity for future work. The development of an Anishinabek Nation food map is underway.

Cultural Camps

Many communities have organized cultural camps that engage elders and youth in traditional activities such as hunting, trapping and fishing. These activities are very important both culturally and as a source of subsistence. The eating of food from the trapline is also an important traditional and subsistence activity. A wide variety of animals are still eaten traditionally after being harvested either through hunting or trapping, the most important of which include moose, deer, rabbit, beaver, muskrat, grouse, etc. A wide range of fish species are eaten including walleye, pike, trout, smelt, etc.

Plants act as both food and medicine and many different species are collected from the forests and fields both on reserve and in the traditional territory.

Blueberries

The blueberry bush (*Vaccinium*) is a Native North American species. Early settlers used the fruit in their diet by incorporating it into a variety of foods and medicine. In 2010, Canadian sales of lowbush blueberries in provinces other than Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were valued at \$8,355,000.⁴⁷ It is unclear what percentage of the lowbush blueberries were wild and came from northern Ontario. However, there is a thriving local market for blueberries across the province of Ontario every summer. Prices vary but are usually between \$7.50 and \$15.00 per litre (Beyond the Fields, 2013). First Nations have traditionally relied upon blueberries, strawberries, cranberries and many other types of berries. The economic and subsistence value of the sale of these foods at the community level has not been assessed but present good future opportunity.

Fiddleheads

Fiddleheads are the babies of ferns that are traditionally harvested in spring. There are no known commercial harvesters for this crop in Northern Ontario, but there is a market for these products at restaurants, grocery stores and farmer's markets. Many major supermarkets carry frozen fiddleheads from the east coast.

Fiddleheads sell for approximately \$5-7.50 per kilogram, and up to \$10 per kilogram in a gourmet food store (Beyond the Fields, 2013).

Mushrooms

The wild mushroom market in northern Ontario is modest. Fine-dining restaurants and some specialty grocery stores purchase wild mushrooms in season, generally from independent harvesters. Popular varieties include morels, chanterelles and oyster mushrooms. Commercial harvesting of mushrooms in northern Ontario appears to be uncommon, but they can sell for as much as \$13 per kilogram (Beyond the Fields, 2013).

Teas

Many forest plants are used for teas including: wild rose hips, highbush cranberries, Labrador tea, wild mint, stinging nettle, raspberry and various tree barks. There are at least two commercial tea producers in northern Ontario that incorporate local forest foods (Beyond the Fields, 2013). Teas made from wild plants present another potential economic development opportunity for First Nations but remain important for medicine.



FOOD PROCESSING

The Anishinabek Nation has three food processing/value-added businesses. They include the following:

Tea Horse

Tea Horse was founded by Denise Atkinson and Marc H. Bohémier and is a Certified Aboriginal Business with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. Their focus is on health and wellness and the restorative properties contained in tea, herbal infusions and wild craft foods like wild rice, North America's original "superfood". They engage with Indigenous Elders and harvesters of traditional plants for guidance on how to proceed with creating non-timber forest resource initiatives that will support and empower Indigenous Peoples and communities.

They source their product from Canadian tea experts who travel to the tea growing regions of the world and buy directly from the farmer. They also utilize traditionally harvested wild rice that is direct-sourced from Indigenous harvesters in Northwester Ontario. Purchasing non-cultivated, natural wild rice supports Indigenous harvesters, preserves Indigenous food sovereignty and the eco-system in which it grows.
<https://www.teahorse.ca/about-us/>

Crazy Good Spices

Crazy Good Spices produces a line of all natural spices that are sold to a wide range of retail stores across Canada.

Realizing that the challenging demands of everyday life don't always leave time for people to cook daily meals with fresh herbs. Grace realized that there was a need to assist people in flavouring their dishes and meals with easy to use balanced blends of herbs and spices. This is how the exciting and expanding product line

of Grace's Crazy Good Spices came to be. Now, people are discovering the joy of being able to produce their own crazy good food at home with this line of all natural spices.
<https://crazygoodspices.com/>

Butcher Shop-Beausoleil First Nation-Developmental

As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, Beausoleil First Nation faces extreme food security issues and to address this need a private individual is seeking to establish a butcher shop and community abattoir on Beausoleil Island. The project seeks to work in partnership with the band to establish a meat service counter providing fresh meats, beef, pork, poultry and deli. The project will initially utilize portable units with the long term goal of retrofitting a pre-existing building owned by the band. The project is currently seeking funding approval.



OTHER FOOD SERVICES

Supermarkets

The Anishinabek Nation has three supermarkets that provide food services to their local communities and the surrounding area. They include:



Points Preference Supermarket-Kettle and Stony Point
Points Preference Supermarket is located in Kettle and Stony Point First Nation and includes meat, bakery, deli, grocery, produce and a seasonal garden centre. It serves the surrounding community of Lambton Shores.



M'Chigeeng Freshmart

The M'Chigeeng Freshmart is located in M'Chigeeng First Nation and includes a deli and meat, grocery, produce and serves communities on Manitoulin Island. It opened in June 2019. The store is managed by the HIAH Development Corporation, who fosters economic development initiatives and acts as an umbrella organization for M'Chigeeng owned businesses and investment projects.

Photo Credit: Manitoulin Expositor, June 26, 2019

Andy's Food Town

Andy's Food Town is located in Wiikwemkoong and is managed by the A. Manitowabi Group. It includes a Freshmart as well as other businesses and services.

Caterers

Caterering plays an important role in the provision of food to Anishinabek communities. There are many individuals and companies performing this role and these companies provide services both within and external to First Nations.

Restaurants

The Anishinabek Nation member communities have a wide range of restaurants and stores providing food services to communities. Those most commonly encountered include the provision of fast food at gas bars, pizza shops, and fish and chip shops which operate on a seasonal basis. There are also a number of sit down restaurants.

Of note is the Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Centre, an establishment which includes fine dining combined with elegant accommodation. This hotel is owned by a consortium of First Nations and is located in Little Current, Ontario. Of note also is Casino Rama which contains several restaurants.



CANNABIS AND HEMP PRODUCTION

Cannabis History

In October of 2018, recreational cannabis use, production and sale was legalized in Canada through the federal legislation, the Cannabis Act (Cannabis Act, 2018). The Cannabis Act (Bill C-45) was passed with the purpose of preventing youth from accessing cannabis, protecting public health and safety, and deterring criminal activity. A regulatory framework for the production, distribution, sale, cultivation, and possession of cannabis across Canada was created (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2018; Cannabis Act, 2018). The previous legislation that legalized the Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations (“ACMPR”) was repealed and replaced by the Cannabis Act, however registered medical cannabis users still maintain their legal right to grow, purchase and use medical cannabis (Cannabis Act, 2018). Cannabis production in Canada takes two forms; medical cannabis production and commercial cannabis production.

Industry Profile

Growing recognition of cannabis as a value - added agriculture crop opens new opportunities for Licensed Producers (LP's) to get support from agriculture ministries, departments and agencies. For Ontario LPs, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is showing interest in the cannabis sector and has established an internal Cannabis and Hemp Working Group in partnership with the Cannabis Council of Canada. (<https://cannabis-council.ca>).

OMAFRA is encouraging local LP's to register as agricultural producers. LPs are encouraged to be on record in order to enhance the data around cannabis outputs and in order to establish cannabis as a crop worthy of supports and protection such as crop insurance (Cannabis Council, 2021). OMAFRA is providing technical

assistance to growers and OMAFRA has launched a research opportunity with the University of Guelph to help develop science-based policy to reduce the subjective odour concerns associated with cannabis production.

Anishinabek Nation Cannabis Production

Nipissing First Nation-Golden Harvest Organics

Nipissing First Nation is home to a brand new cannabis manufacturing plant. Golden Harvest Organics is a 30,000 square foot cannabis growing facility located at 2 Migizi Miikun. The new plant is one of the first Health Canada regulated wholesale cannabis production facilities in Ontario. The plant plans to employ 80 individuals (Northernontario.ctvnews.ca).

Anishinabek Nation Legal Dispensaries

A few legal dispensaries are present across the Anishinabek Nation. These include Creekside Cannabis in Mississauga First Nation, Life's a Beach in Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, Northern Zen Cannabis, Cheerful Charlie's Cannabis and Kana Leaf in Nipissing First Nation. There may be agricultural opportunities for cannabis production to supply these legal dispensaries. A number of illegal dispensaries exist across the Nation but there is no legal mechanism to enforce these.

Hemp Production for Grain and Fibre

The following information was obtained from the OMAFRA website:

“Industrial hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) is one of the oldest cultivated plants in the world. For centuries, its fibres have been used to make ropes, sails and clothing. The species was banned in North America in the 1930s because its leaves and flowers contain a hallucinogenic drug known as delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). It was banned internationally in 1961 under the United Nations' Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs.

In 1998, Canada created Industrial Hemp Regulations under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. These regulations allow for the controlled production, sale, movement, processing, exporting and importing of industrial hemp and hemp products that conform to conditions imposed by the Regulations.

Industrial hemp seeds must be of a variety listed in Health Canada's List of Approved Cultivars. Plants and plant parts may not contain more than 0.3% THC when sampled and tested in the approved manner. Products made or derived from hemp must not contain more than 10 micrograms of THC per gram. Industrial hemp stalks, with leaves and flowers removed, and non-viable hemp seeds (grain), are exempt from the Act. Anyone found in possession of hemp plant parts - other than the stalk and non-viable grain, without the appropriate licence - is in possession of a controlled substance and may be charged under the Act.

Industrial hemp may only be grown under licence from Health Canada. Leaf or seed residue found in vehicles or machinery, without the proper licences, may constitute possession of a controlled substance in Canada or elsewhere.

Industrial hemp licences are issued for a calendar year only and must be renewed if product is carried into the new year. Hemp licences are only valid in Canada. Transporting product in any form to another country, including the United States, may constitute an offence in that country.

Information about varieties, licences and regulations may be obtained from Health Canada.”

Industrial hemp is grown for both fibre and grain and its oil is another important product.

Industrial hemp is a legitimate agricultural crop worthy of further investigation and potential cultivation in Anishinabek Nation communities. Some interest in the cultivation of this crop has been shown (OMAFRA 2021).



OTHER AGRICULTURAL ASSETS

The Anishinabek Nation has other agricultural assets in the form of reserve lands that are currently undeveloped but that may be suitable for agriculture. Some of these assets take the form of private (patent) land that has been purchased or obtained by the First Nation. Some of the land is undergoing the addition to reserve (ATR) process. Some of these parcels are lands that have already undergone the addition to reserve process. Some lands may be the subject of ongoing land claim negotiations.

Specialty Crops

In 2013, the Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre completed research on the potential market opportunity for growing and marketing specialty crops. Crops studied included chickpeas, lentils, field peas, flax seed, mustard seed, canola, durum wheat, white spring wheat and mill house barley, all crops deemed viable for northwestern Ontario according to research conducted at the Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Station. This report found that there is little appetite from food producers to purchase directly from small farmers but there are numerous market intermediaries who will purchase, handle and market these commodities. A key factor to successful selling to buyers is to keep transportation costs low and to focus on buyers in Manitoba, Minnesota and Southern Ontario to reduce transportation costs. Margins can be high but producers are required to invest in packaging, marketing and distribution outside of Northwestern Ontario. Chickpeas and flax were two crops that illustrate a high potential profit, however many conditions can influence the profitability of these crops including the field size, customer location and transportation options, soil conditions and variations in pricing. (Northwestern Ontario Specialty Crop Market, 2013).

Anishinabek Nation Specialty Crop Production

It is currently unknown if the Anishinabek Nation has members producing specialty crops but this may be a potential opportunity across Ontario that is worthy of further investigation.

Traditional Farming and Market Opportunity

Traditional farming is described here to include the production of raising livestock or growing crops. The Anishinabek Nation has very few private individuals currently undertaking these activities. As part of the comprehensive asset inventory project, individual farmers were surveyed on the type of animals being raised, and/or the type of crops being grown. The most common livestock being raised include chickens, horses, pigs and cows. Many individuals grow their own vegetables in backyards but very few produce vegetables for commercial sale. There is a strong focus on subsistence farming activities to enhance food security at the community level.

Two market studies have been conducted in Ontario focused on the opportunities that exist to produce and market local food. The North Central Food and Agriculture Market Study was completed in June of 2018 by the Rural Agri-Innovation Network, otherwise known as RAIN, which is a division of the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC) (rainalgoma.ca/marketstudy). The study examined the regional markets in Algoma, Manitoulin and Sudbury areas to examine the regional food market demand and included interviews with local food retail, processing, food services and food programs in the area, and focus groups with local producers. The study identified gaps between the amounts of food sourced locally and the amounts being

sourced outside of the region. Strong market demand was identified for sweet corn, wheat, carrots, apples, beef and eggs in addition to other products.

The second market study was conducted by the Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy in October of 2017. It was completed with the objective of determining the demand for local food and to identify opportunities for local food production and processing. The study found that there are a number of food commodities where there are significant local food deficits that could potentially be addressed by local food producers/processors. Potatoes, tomatoes, carrots and dry onions are four vegetables where there are significant deficits of locally produced products.

This market study showed that there are good market opportunities for First Nation communities in the Thunder Bay area to begin local production of a variety of products.

SUMMARY

The Anishinabek Nation has a wide array of agricultural assets. Further work is currently underway by the Anishinabek Nation to develop a unique agricultural profile for each of the 39 member nations, as well as an extensive food map/database project. As well, an agricultural strategy is under active development. For more information on these efforts, please contact the Lands and Resources office at the Anishinabek Nation.

ANISHINABEK NATION AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

LAKE HURON REGION



Tom Stevens

Owner, Tom's Sugar Shack
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Tom Stevens is from Nipissing First Nation and is 27 years old. He has been making maple syrup for over 20 years and has been operating his own maple syrup business "Tom's Sugarshack" for 12 years. He started producing maple syrup with sap buckets then eventually it grew into a vacuum tubing system. Tom uses a reverse osmosis system to make it more efficient and environmentally friendly. He is currently expanding the tubing system for the 2020 production year.

He is also a gardener and produces a lot of his own vegetables for home consumption and for giving away to family and friends. Tom brings his valuable experience and knowledge as a maple syrup producer to the Committee.

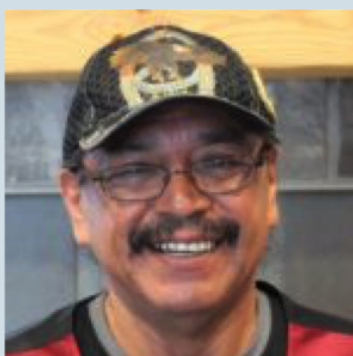
NORTHERN SUPERIOR REGION



Chief Marcus Hardy

Red Rock Indian Band
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Marcus Hardy was elected Chief of the Red Rock Indian Band on September 7, 2019. At the age of 36 he is the youngest elected Chief in Red Rock Indian Band history. As Chief, his priorities are the sustainability of his First Nation, youth and elders and the preservation and restoration of the Anishinabek culture. A focus on improving existing community infrastructure has the Red Rock Indian Band exploring and implementing smarter energy options to suit the community's growing needs. Prior to being elected, Chief Hardy had a 16 year career in the Canadian Armed Forces, retiring in 2016. Marcus lives on Lake Helen Reserve and is an active volunteer. He is married and a proud father of 7 children.



**Mike Esquega
(Elder Representative)**

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Mike Esquega resides on the Rocky Bay Reserve also known as Binjitiwabik Zaaging Anishinabek. Mike was born a mile down from the reserve in Giiyabshi Niiyaashing. He comes from a family with 15 siblings and has five children, all with their own families. His political career began in 1983, first as a Councillor for 12 years, then he was Chief for 14 years. He was Robinson Superior Regional Chief for 10 years. Currently he is the Northern Superior Regional Elder and has acted in that capacity since 2003.

SOUTHEAST REGION



Ron St. Louis

Capital Bees
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Ron St. Louis is a member of Dokis First Nation and is the owner of Capital Bees in Ottawa where he currently resides. He has been keeping bees since 2011 and teaching a hands-on natural beekeeping program in Ottawa at the Just Food Farm since 2015. He is a registered beekeeper and has a permit for queen and nucleus colony sales through OMAFRA. He breeds bees to be resistant to pests and diseases and has been a member of the Ontario Resistant Honey Bee Selection program (ORHBS) since 2017.

Ron has been interested in sustainable agriculture and food security for many years and has a Permaculture Design Certificate (PDC) and is also working on a permaculture food forest on his allocated land at the Just Food Farm in Ottawa. He believes food sovereignty is the key to self determination and hopes that by joining the Advisory Committee he will be brought closer to his people and traditional lands.

SOUTHWEST REGION



**Kyle Williams,
Greenhouse Technician
(Youth Representative)**

Maajiigin Gumig Native Plant Nursery
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Kyle Williams works as a Greenhouse Technician at a native plant nursery operated by Aamjiwmaang First Nation, Maajiigin Gumig. He has a strong interest in promoting ecological functions in developed areas, and soil health and in promoting agriculture. He attend symposiums and meetings focused on soil health and phosphorus management. He helps promote community

gardening and bee keeping, maple syrup tapping, and restoration of wetlands and decommissioned agricultural areas. He has a strong interest in the use of native plants.



**Jennifer Whiteye,
Executive Director**

Southern First Nations Secretariat
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Jennifer Whiteye is an active member of the Delaware Nation – Moravian of the Thames community who has spent most of her career advancing local First Nations. Jennifer holds a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Management and Organizational Studies with distinction and specialization in finance and administration from the University of Western Ontario. She has worked at the Southern First Nations Secretariat, a Tribal Council located in southwestern

Ontario, for 14 years. As Executive Director since 2014, she implements the strategic direction as defined by the London District Chiefs Council (LDCC) and Board of Directors while ensuring the smooth overall operation of SFNS. This includes project management and oversight related to all programs.

Southern First Nations Secretariat has recently developed a business directory and the tribal council hopes to enhance opportunities for agricultural development for their member communities.

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The Mission of the Lands
& Resources

Department is to foster a
better quality of life by
ensuring access to
natural resources in
support of the goals,
principles and values of
the Anishinabek Nation.



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