



A Newsletter for Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators!

THE WATERDRUM

March 2019

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Thank you Valhalla Inn



On behalf of AWWAO, we would like to say thank you for hosting our 24th AGM & Training Conference & Tradeshow at the Valhalla Inn in downtown Thunder Bay, Ontario.



Sponsored by:



Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario





The meaning of the AWWAO logo as described by the artist:

Tree—represents Mother Earth

Sun—brings Life to our Environment

Eagle—watches over the Environment

Sky—ensures the Cycle of Water

ABOUT US

The Aboriginal Water & Wastewater Association of Ontario is an information source for water environment and Operator training and certification issues and technology. AWWAO's members include professionals from Ontario First Nations, Environmental Health Officers, Tribal Councils, Municipal Suppliers and some Government Agencies.

AWWAO is dedicated to the transfer of information and concepts regarding all areas of the water environment. As members of the American Water Works Association (AWWA), the Ontario Water Works Association (OWWA), the Water Environment Federation (WEF) and the Water Environment Association of Ontario (WEAO), we provide an invaluable network for those involved in water and wastewater industry. AWWAO, through a partnering agreement with Keewatinook Okimakanak and Health Canada co-operates and liaises with the above noted associations, and all provincial and federal government agencies. AWWAO has a volunteer seat on many of the various association's committees.

AWWAO offers its members the opportunity to:

- ◆ Be updated and informed about issues that affect the water environment.
- ◆ Interact with persons in various fields of water expertise.
- ◆ Promote concerns of the membership through a collective voice.
- ◆ Exchange information and ideas to other members, the public and Chiefs and Council.

To date, the AWWAO consistently rank the training and certification of Plant Operators as its top priority. The attainment of Certification is widely recognized as essential to performing a good job, at a high level, in the water and wastewater treatment plant operations, and an indicator of a responsible and contributing community member.

MEMBERSHIP

\$200.00 Membership Fee for First Nations Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators per operator. This Membership entitles the Operator(s) to the AWWAO Newsletter, monthly bulletin, Annual Report and the Annual General Assembly and Training Conference cost reimbursement, if applicable.

\$400.00 Membership Fee for Non-Operator, Public Works Management, Administration and Management of a First Nation or Non-First Nation. This Membership entitles the Member to the AWWAO Newsletter, monthly bulletins, Annual Report and invitation to the Annual General Assembly and Training Conference.

Please Print

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

First Nation/Business: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

VISION

Our Vision is to be the Association that best understands and satisfies the training, education, certification and licensing needs of Operators of Ontario First Nations. Our dedication to supporting Operators touches not only health, but safety, spirit and empowerment ... most of all knowledge.

OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To act as a voice and forum for First Nation Plant Operators in Ontario, publish a newsletter, promote communications and networking among Plant Operators and other persons interested in AWWAO's objectives;
- ◆ Promote the importance of a safe and potable water supply and the highest standard of wastewater operations;
- ◆ Promote the development and delivery of continuing education and training programs for Plant Operators and others involved in water and wastewater treatment;
- ◆ Promote the importance of technical training in maintaining and upgrading the Operator's knowledge of proper water and wastewater operation and maintenance requirements;
- ◆ Promote the importance of involving qualified Operator's in the design, construction or upgrading of water and wastewater treatment plants;
- ◆ Promote the importance of proper training, certification and licensing of Operators;
- ◆ Promote the importance of enhanced lab testing of potable water and monitoring of wastewater effluents; and
- ◆ Promote the importance of establishing an effective Operations & Maintenance Management Plan to ensure proper care is performed for the assets.

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a member oriented, non-profit Association, providing province-wide and year-round high-quality services and an annual forum for the First Nations Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators, allowing for networking opportunities at the same time. We are committed to providing high quality information on the water and wastewater industry through the quarterly newsletter. We are dedicated to promoting, preserving and protecting the water, natural resources and environment through the education, training and networking of the Ontario First Nations Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators.

The Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario's newsletter is published quarterly by the AWWAO at Box 20001, RPO, Riverview Postal Outlet
Dryden, ON P8N 0A1
Tel: (807) 216-8085
E-mail: info@awwao.org

Advertising opportunities and/or submission or request of information, please contact the Association Coordinator.



AWWAO Board of Directors

The Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario was very pleased to have hosted the 24th Annual General meeting and Training Conference and Tradeshow at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay, Ontario. The conference was held during the week of January 28, 2019.

The Board of Directors, along with the AWWAO coordinator worked hard to bring you this conference. With great success, AWWAO has hosted several conference though our 24 year history. After more than 24 years, membership is still growing and we look forward to it every year.

This conference captured a three-day program of training courses, tradeshow vendors, presentations and interactive dialogue between the attendees. The event was well attended with a host of lively and informative speakers taking part on the conference.



The conference welcomed water and wastewater professionals from across Ontario. The purpose of the conference was to promote the development of continuing education and training for Plant Operators and others involved in water and wastewater treatment.

The 4th Annual Tradeshow showcased a wide variety of options for attendees and businesses to engage and interact with each other. We had 32 vendors this year! The vendors put on an excellent show for those attending the tradeshow. Interactive displays and live

demos were available to keep things interesting. Throughout the conference, attendees had the opportunity to network, socialize and explore challenges in the protection and treatment of our water supply.

A big thank you to Indigenous Services Canada for funding this event and for their continued support.

We would also like to thank Walkerton Clean Water Centre, Keewaytinook Centre of Excellence and World Water Operator Training Company and Ontario Clean Water Agency for providing us with the training courses.

It is fair to conclude that the conference was a great success! So many people have contributed in so many ways to turn this event into a smoothly running meeting with many very interesting presentations and a very good atmosphere for discussion and networking.



AWWAO Membership

AWWAO would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support over the past 12 months. We value all contributions to AWWAO and memberships make up the lifeblood of our organization. Your involvement is extremely important to us and very much appreciated.

In 2019 AWWAO has seen new faces and welcomed new members, both Regular and Associate to the Association.

Total Regular Membership 2019:117

Total Associate Membership 2019: 12

24th Annual Conference Registration



2013/14
Conference
Attendance:
87

2014/15
Conference
Attendance:
69

2015/16
Conference
Attendance:
96

2016/17
Conference
Attendance:
99

2017/2018
Conference
Attendance:
120

2018/2019
Conference
Attendance:
90



Annual General Meeting

This years Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at the Valhalla Inn on January 30, 2019. The agenda was distributed to all members in attendance for their review and reference. There was a total of 42 First Nation Operators in attendance.

The AWWAO directors presented the organizational past fiscal year's financial and legal activities to the membership at the AGM . Board elections were held as well.

AWWAO thanks the membership for attending and encourages members to keep an open dialogue throughout the year.



The Gary Oja Award, Instructor of the Year

New this year, AWWAO has created a Gary Oja Award for the Instructor of the Year. This award will be awarded at the beginning of next year in honor of Gary, who passed away suddenly in 2018. Gary was described as being a trainer who was particularly keen on training First Nation individuals across Ontario. He worked out of Dryden in the Keewaytinook Centre of Excellence.

Gary began his career with the MOE and OCWA retiring on August 8, 2007. During his employment he held various positions including, operator, senior operator, assistant manager, acting operations manager and acting manager in the Northwest Hub. His employment started in Atikokan followed by Ear Falls, Red Lake, Sault St Marie, North Bay and ending in Terrace Bay. Gary was well liked by all co-workers and was always willing to take on new initiatives. After retirement, he returned to Thunder Bay and during his retirement, he worked part time as a consultant and instructor in water and wastewater. Gary will be truly missed by many operators.



24th AGM & Training Conference Classes

AWWAO would like to thank all of the instructors!!



Cont'd



4th Annual Tradeshow

AWWO would like to express our thanks to the 32 exhibitors for sharing their knowledge and expertise at the 4th Annual Tradeshow.



Cont'd



Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario holds 24th annual conference

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario (AWWAO) held the water taste challenge again at the 24th AGM Training and Tradeshow Conference in Thunder Bay.

"The operators bring in the water from their First Nation Communities and we have a panel of judges that test the water," says Sara Campbell, coordinator of AWWAO. "They pick the water that tastes the best. We just want to make sure that everyone has safe drinking water. It's a fun thing to do."

The water is judged on taste, colour, odor and overall refreshing quality. The winners of the water taste challenge have their name and community or organization engraved on the water cup challenge trophy.

"Afterwards we deliver one personally to the community," Campbell says. "It's very nice for them to have and to be recognized."

This year's water taste challenge winners were Michael Gillis from Constance Lake for the northern Ontario award and Andrew Recollet from Whitefish River for the southern Ontario award.

A presentation was also made about the Gary Oja Award for the Instructor of the Year, which will be awarded beginning next year in honour of Oja, who passed away in 2019. Oja was described as being a trainer who was particularly keen on training the First Nation individuals across Ontario. He worked out of Dryden in the Keewaytinook Centre of Excellence.

Campbell says the conference, which was held at the Valhalla Inn, also featured the operator of the year award for the north and south region. Charles Friday from Seine River First Nation won the northern Ontario reward and Aaron Beaucage from Nipissing First Nation won the southern Ontario Award.

"It was a really good turnout," Campbell says. "We had about 70 operators in attendance."



Whitefish River's Andrew Recollet won the Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario's water taste challenge southern Ontario award at the 24th Annual General Meeting, Training and Tradeshow Conference in Thunder Bay.



Whitefish River's Andrew Recollet, Nipissing's Aaron Beaucage, Seine River's Charles Friday and Constance Lake's Michael Gillis won the water taste challenge and operator of the year awards.

Cont'd

The training portion of the conference featured a variety of workshops, including Safe Drinking Water Operator Essentials, Maintenancefest and UV and Ozone Disinfection on the first and second days. The third day featured Operator Responsibilities for Certification/Introduction to Source Water Protection, Water Leak Detection Operational Imperatives and Microbiology of Wastewater.

"The Walkerton Clean Water Centre is putting on the Maintenancefest and my module that I am teaching is calibrating and maintaining common lab and online equipment," says Laura Zettler, drinking water resource coordinator with the Walkerton Clean Water Centre. "Our training module is all hands-on and we are working with a variety of different lab units and online analyzers. We are going through how to calibrate them so that they are reading accurately. We are also going through checks to make sure we can go back and double check that all of our readings are coming out right and we are going through troubleshooting so if anything doesn't work, what you would do to try to fix that."

Zettler says the participants appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the equipment she was showing them during the module

"Some of them have the equipment that we've been using and they've learned new things about it," Zettler says. "And other people don't have the equipment that I've been showing them, but they're going to get it in the future so they thought it was really great to get some hands-on experience on it before it actually arrives at their plant."

Tony Santos, an instructor with the Walkerton Clean Water Centre and manager of compliance and quality control with the City of Thunder Bay, delivered the Safe Drinking Water Operator Essentials works

"It's to provide operators with an understanding of things that are changing within the regulations of the province of Ontario as well as sampling techniques, techniques for water main repairs and distribution of water mains," Santos says. "I'm talking about climate change and just making sure operators have a basic understanding of what is coming up in the future for them."

Has your email address recently changed (e.g. john@company.com to johnsmith@company.com)? Not a problem! Please [send us a note](#) requesting that we update your email address, and we'd be happy to take care of it.



7th Annual Water Taste Challenge

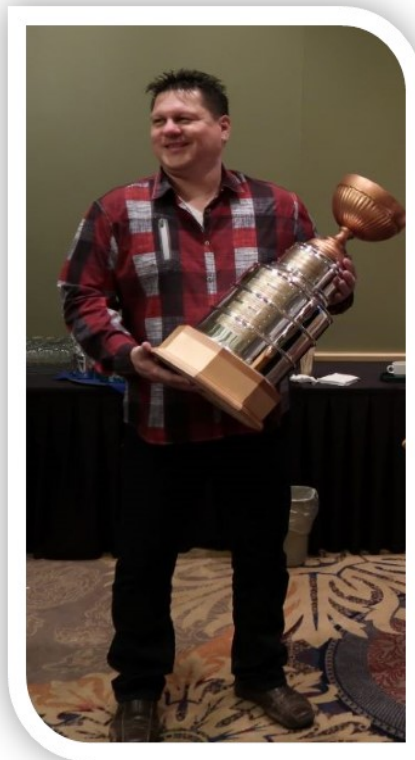
The 7th annual Water Taste Challenge was held at the Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario's 24th Annual General Meeting Training Conference and Tradeshow in Thunder Bay, Ontario the last week of January 2019.

The water taste challenge received six water entries, four from Northern Ontario and two from Southern Ontario.

The Northern "Josephine Mandamin" Water Taste Challenge Cup's winning entry was from the Constance Lake First Nation water treatment facility located on the scenic shores of Constance Lake near Hearst.

Class 3 water Operator Michael Gillis accepted the Northern Cup on behalf of Constance Lake First Nation. Michael not only manages the treatment plant but also serves as the primary and Overall Responsible Operator.

The Class 2 Water Treatment Plant commissioned in 2016 treats the Water with 2 Pressurized Train Filters containing MD80 Greensand Media using only one chemical solution which is Sodium Hypochlorite for Iron and Manganese removal and disinfection.



Michael Gillis holding the Northern Cup

The Southern "Derek Kamanga" Water Taste Challenge Cup's winning entry was from Whitefish River, also known as Birch Island First Nation. This was their 5th win in 7 years. Wow! Outstanding! There is definitely something in the water there.

Cont'd

Whitefish River First Nation Class I Water Treatment Operator Andrew Recollet once again accepted the Cup on behalf of his First Nation.



Andrew Recollet holding the Southern Cup

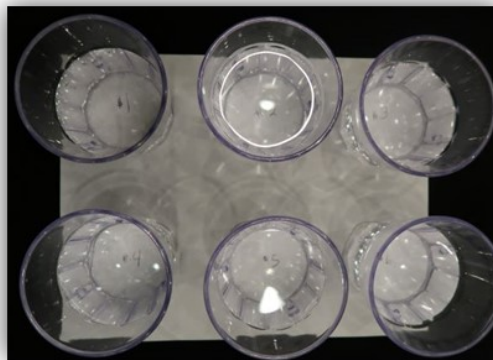
The 7th Annual Water Taste Challenge was a huge success and the AWWAO sends out a Chi-Miigwetch to the six volunteer water taste challenge judges.



Judges from l – r, Enrico, Kendra, Justin, Jag, Whitney and Kaitlyn



7th Annual Water Taste Challenge Judge Panel hard at Work



Water Samples from all Six Entries

The judge's based their decision on water quality parameters including water clarity, taste, odour and overall refreshment factor. Each water sample was scored from 0-5 and totaled for a possible maximum score of 20. The entries with the highest scores won the challenge. The origin of each sample was kept secret from the judges creating a fair challenge for all entrants.

The winning entries were announced later on in the day during the awards ceremony after the annual general meeting.

The 2018-19 AWWAO board of directors sincerely thanks all those who contributed to the success of the event including the judges, the hotel staff and most of all the AWWAO members who took the time to enter a water sample into the water taste challenge event.

The AWWAO continues to encourage its membership to participate in the water taste challenge from year to year and we look forward to seeing you and a gallon of your finest water at the 25th Annual General Meeting, Training Conference and Tradeshow.

Congratulations to the 2018-19 Water Taste Challenge Cup Winners!

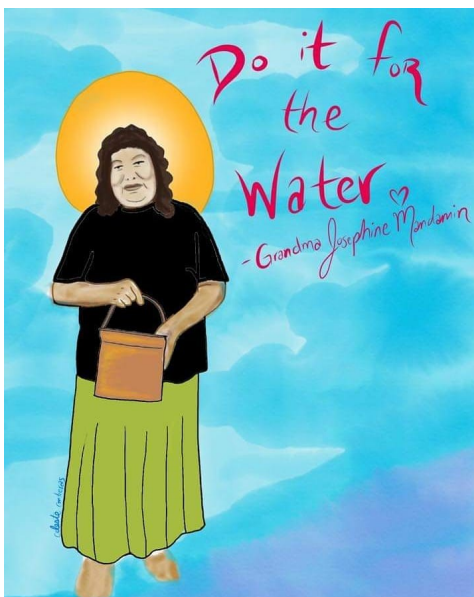
Authored by P. Tangie

Guest Speakers

AWWAO would like to thank our honored guest speakers, Chief Peter Collins (Fort William) , Whitney Roos (EHO for Indigenous Services Canada) and Marcie Snyder (Water First) who have shared their very interesting and exclusive presentations providing the conference attendees with new information for thinking and further development .



Josephine Mandamin



"Water is alive. It needs to be respected. We must recognize her as a living entity."

— Grandmother Josephine Mandamin



Josephine Mandamin, water activist who walked 17,000 km around the Great Lakes, dies at 77

Rhiannon Johnson · CBC News · Posted: Feb 25, 2019 3:43 PM ET | Last Updated: February 25



A photo from the initial Mother Nature Water Walk around Lake Superior in 2003. (Mother Nature Water Walk)

Josephine Mandamin, a well known environmental activist from Wikwemikong First Nation in Ontario, died Friday morning. She was 77.

In 2003, concerned about the pollution of rivers and lakes, she co-founded [Mother Earth Water Walk](#). She eventually circumnavigated the shores of all five Great Lakes, a total distance of more than 17,000 km.

"As women, we are carriers of the water. We carry life for the people," Mandamin said in 2016.

"So when we carry that water, we are telling people that we will go any lengths for the water. We'll probably even give our lives for the water if we have to."

Mandamin leaves behind her husband, eight children, 13 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. She was the great-aunt of youth activist Autumn Peltier, who also campaigns for water protection.

Family member Stephanie Peltier wrote on Facebook on Friday that "Biidasige aka Josephine was an amazing teacher that opened that path for us to stand up for our water and Mother Earth."

Mandamin served as the head of the Anishinabek Women's Water Commission. She and the Water Walks group received the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation in 2016.



Cont'd

The story of Mandamin's water walks was told in a children's book called *The Water Walker* by Joanne Robertson, published in 2017.



Josephine Mandamin, centre left, with family members including great-niece Autumn Peltier, far right. (Submitted by Stephanie Peltier)

"We have lost a great advocate, teacher, and role model," said Glen Hare, Grand Chief of the Anishinabek Nation, of which Wikwemikong is a member.

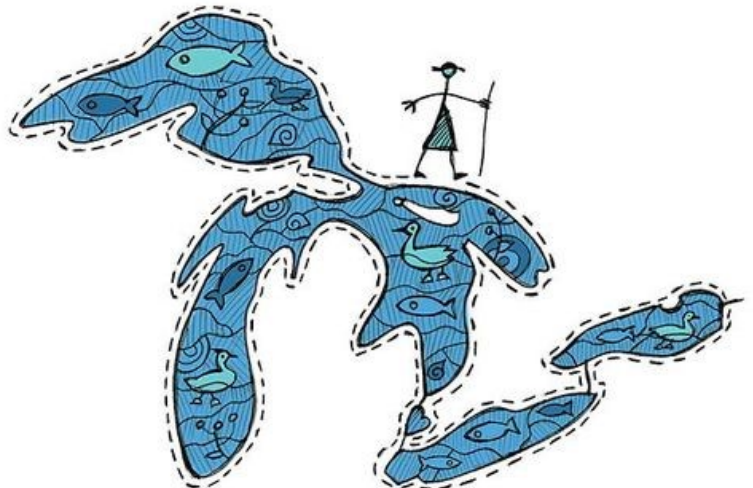
"She will be so deeply missed by all and will be fondly remembered for all of what she did to protect the water."

In a statement issued Friday, Carolyn Bennett, minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations said Mandamin "taught all of us of the fragility of water, and the risks that exist to the health and sustainability of our waterways."

"The important work she started through Mother Earth Water Walk and the Great Lakes Guardians' Council lays the foundation for the future of the Great Lakes Waterways, and for the next seven generations of water walkers and water warriors from across Turtle Island," she said.

"She has touched many of our lives and we are truly grateful to have gained knowledge and wisdom from this inspirational woman and her life's work."

Mandamin's funeral took place Monday in Wikwemikong First Nation.



In Memory of Josephine Mandamin



Water is Life!

Reciprocity, Responsibilities, Hope

"We've known for a long time that water is alive. Water can hear you. Water can sense what you are saying and what you are feeling. There's been a place where I put tobacco in the water, where the water is so still. It was dead. I prayed for it. I put my tobacco in the water and my tobacco started floating around. So the water came alive. It heard my prayers. It heard the song. So I know it listens, and it can come alive if you pay attention to it. Give it respect and it can come alive. Like anything. Like a person who is sick... if you give them love, take care of them, they'll come alive. They'll feel better. It's the same with our mother, the earth, and the water. Give it love."

***Elder Josephine Mandamin,
Ojibway, Lake Superior, Ontario***



Event recap: Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario

Feb.27. 2019



The Aboriginal Water & Wastewater Association of Ontario presented awards for Operator of the Year and the Water Cup Challenge at the association's 2019 conference and tradeshow in Thunder Bay. (Left to Right) South Water Cup Challenge Winner Andrew Recollett, Whitefish River First Nation; South Operator of the Year Aaron Beaucage, Nipissing First Nation; North Operator of the Year Charles Friday, Pwi-Di-Goo-Zing Ne-Yaa-Zhing Advisory Services; North Water Cup Challenge Winner Michael Gillis, Constance Lake First Nation.

From January 29-31, 2019 Thunder Bay played host to the 24th annual Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario's conference and tradeshow.

The [Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario](#) (AWWAO) is an organization formed by and for the benefit of First Nation Water and Wastewater operators from the province of Ontario.

The AWWAO Conference aims to promote the development and delivery of certified training programs for members and others involved in the water and wastewater industry.

Over 90 people and 32 exhibiting companies made their way to Thunder Bay to attend the event. Highlights of the conference included: the AWWAO general meeting, banquet dinner, guest speakers and a performance by comedian Moccasin Joe.

Cont'd

According to the conference organizers, one of the most successful training sessions was Maintenancefest, delivered by the [Walkerton Clean Water Centre](#).

This unique training experience included three hands-on training modules: iron and manganese in groundwater; maintenance and calibration of lab equipment; and sampling, testing, adverse results and corrective actions. Participants rotated through modules, and earned Continuing Education Units (CEU).

Operator and Water System Awards

Each year, the AWWAO recognizes First Nation Operators in Ontario who go above and beyond doing a good job. The Operator of the Year award is given to one operator from the North and one from the South who:

- Provides an example to others of the many facets of being an operator, particularly in supporting the other activities of other operators
- Make the extra effort to support and educate their fellow operators
- Encourage others to become more involved
- Go out of their way to help everyone in the water and wastewater field
- Volunteer to help others and serve on committees
- And all while doing the things that are necessary to be good at their job



The winners of the 2019 AWWAO Operator of the Year award were: (South) Aaron Beaucage, Nipissing First Nation; and (North) Charles Friday, Pwi-Di-Goo-Zing Ne-Yaa-Zhing Advisory Services.

The conference also featured the Water Cup Challenge which involved a panel of judges weighing the taste and appearance of tap water produced by reserve water systems. The 2019 Water Cup Challenge winners were: (South) Andrew Recollett, Whitefish River First Nation, and (North) Michael Gillis, Constance Lake First Nation.

First Nations Zone

Many First Nations communities in Ontario choose to follow provincial training and certification requirements, and participate in Ontario's Operator Certification and Training Program.

The Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC) is committed to supporting First Nations drinking water systems in Ontario. Established in 2004, the Centre provides a state-of-the-art facility and highly skilled research and training staff to meet the specific needs of drinking water operators in Ontario, including operators in First Nations communities.

Operator Certification and Training

The Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC), Keewaytinook Okimakanak/Northern Chiefs Council (KO) and the Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC) have entered into a partnership to collaborate on projects that support drinking water operator training, certification and mentorship to First Nations communities in Ontario. Information about the projects being undertaken through this collaborative effort will be communicated to all First Nations communities in Ontario. [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) – OFNTSC, KO, WCWC](#)



World Water Day 2019 – Leaving no one behind



World Water Day, on 22 March every year, is about focusing attention on the importance of water. This year's theme, 'Leaving no one behind', adapts the central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that as sustainable development progresses, everyone must benefit.

Sustainable Development Goal 6 is crystal clear: water for all by 2030. By definition, this means leaving no one behind. But today, billions of people are still living without safe water – their households, schools, workplaces, farms and factories struggling to survive and thrive. Marginalized groups – women, children, refugees, indigenous peoples, disabled people and many others – are often overlooked, and sometimes face discrimination, as they try to access and manage the safe water they need.

This World Water Day, 22nd March, is about tackling the water crisis by addressing the reasons why so many people are being left behind. Get familiar with the issues – why are people being left behind without safe water and what can be done to reach them?

Explore this year's theme and browse our collection of stories to find out more: www.worldwaterday.org

Newly redesigned website!

We have a newly redesigned website !

Our Secretary Jason Fox was the person behind the new design and creation. A main template was chosen and from there, content copied from the old site, or added as new content.

The new site now has a "MEDIA" page, which we can showcase pictures and videos from past events. The new page also included direct links to our Facebook page. The page was also designed to be mobile friendly, if you view the page on your phone or tablet, the look will be different then when viewing it on a desktop/laptop. The mobile version has a tab at the top and bottom of the screen and when used, will either open up the links to the other pages on the site, or a direct buttons which connect you to us via phone, email and social media.

The desktop version is similar to our old site, with tabs along the top of the page. Each tab brings you to the section displayed.

We are currently still updating some small details on the site. The new site also allows us to quickly add content and links to items that our members may require.

We hope you enjoy the new look, and we would appreciate any sort of feedback.

Thank you !

