



A Newsletter for Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators!

# THE WATERDRUM

July 2021

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*"WATER" you waiting for? Drink up!!*

Whether we realize it or not, water plays a huge role in our individual wellness. Drinking water is proven to increase energy levels and metabolic rates (burning of calories). By not meeting your daily recommended water intake of 8-16 cups, you could be setting yourself up for a "sluggish" year.

Water is one of the body's most essential nutrients! Every cell, tissue, and organ in your body needs water to work properly. Drinking water has many other great benefits:

- ◆ Promotes skin health
- ◆ Lubricates joints and other body tissues
- ◆ Regulates digestion
- ◆ Prevents dehydration
- ◆ Boosts performance during physical activity and exercise



**A person can live without food for about a month, but only about a week without water.**

### **Water are you waiting for?**

Get your glass filled to the brim and drink up.  
To your best health, AWWAO

*drink up!*

**Sponsored by: Indigenous Services Canada and First Nations Inuit Health Branch**



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 Keewaytinook 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

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.

Drinking Water Week May 2-8, 2021



Looking back at how difficult this pandemic has been, imagine it without clean, safe water to wash our hands, clean our homes and businesses, cook our food, and fight the wildfires that threatened so many communities around the state. Drinking water operators worked hard this past year to ensure that no one would experience water loss — for any reason.

AWWAO recognizes these diligent individuals May 2–8 Drinking Water Week, an annual event during the first full week of May. In honor of Drinking Water Week, “WATER ARE WE DOING?” AWWAO offered the membership the COVID 19 and Drinking Water Course, which will be held in September. We also had a draw prize for an iPad. We would like to congratulate Aaron Beaucage from Nipissing First Nation on winning the draw prize.



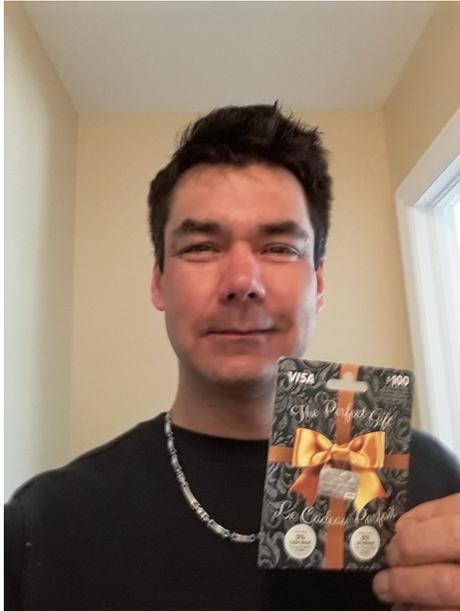
Hello. I am thankful for AWWAO and all the great training and support they offer. AWWAO has helped me immensely in getting my certification. I do enjoy all the great events and information shared with my fellow aboriginal operators. I gladly accept this prize for drinking water week as a water operator. Thank you AWWAO. The work you do is very much appreciated.

Aaron Beaucage

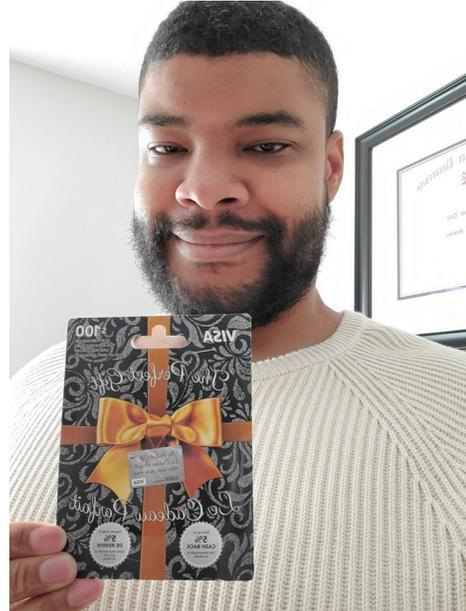


## Draw Prize Winners

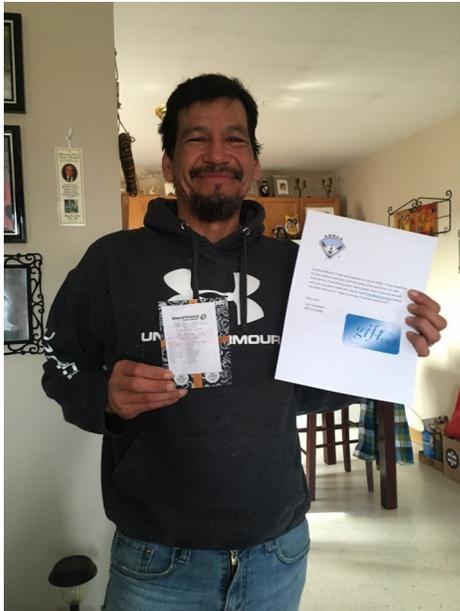
Below are a few winners of the prizes drawn at the 26th AGM. Congratulations!



Thank you AWWAO for the gift card and all the other swag, it was very much appreciated. Hope to see people in person for the next AGM. Jason Ball (Temagami First Nation)



Shayne Dale (Ontario First Nation Technical Services Center)



Chris Wemigwans (Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation)



Donovan Cup (Lac La Croix First Nation)

*WWOTC Thrilled to Welcome New York State Water Operators to its Webinar Classrooms*



The New York State Department of Health has recently approved the WWOTC as a training provider for New York state water operators.

The WWOTC team is thrilled to bring its service and expertise to some of its American neighbours and will relish every opportunity to build their skills and capacities. Not many operator training agencies can boast the same breadth and variety of course content that WWOTC has, so it is expected that New Yorkers will be chomping at the bit to get into its classrooms.

Another positive outcome that is expected, besides the general increase in business for WWOTC, is the international relationship building and co-mingling that will naturally occur as Canadians and Americans train together. There's sure to be an increase in the diversity of student perspectives that are entering WWOTC's webinars and this is something that will benefit everyone involved.

Owner and President, Doug Cooper says, "I'm very excited to see New York operators signing up for our courses. The geographical diversity this could add to our classes will only enrich the student experience."

WWOTC is well aware of how operators are always starved for new and interesting courses so this could bring about an even broader library of selections.

"If you'd like to learn more about WWOTC, contact Chase Taylor at [ctaylor@wwotc.ca](mailto:ctaylor@wwotc.ca) OR visit [www.wwotc.com](http://www.wwotc.com)".



## De-Icer Winners

We are from Whitefish River First Nation, our plant is a Class II, Slow Sand Filtration with UV and Ozone. Mark Shawanda is the Operator in Charge, Andy Recollet is the back-up operator and Amy Waboose is the Water Quality Analyst.

My name is Mark Shawanda, I have my Level 2 in Water Treatment Subsystem also my Level 2 in Water Distribution and Supply Subsystem. I have been working with Whitefish River First Nation for 30 years, and 17 of those years I have been here at the Water Treatment Plant

My name is Amy Waboose and I currently obtain my Water Treatment Subsystem Operator in Training (O.I.T) Certificate, My Water Distribution and Supply Subsystem Operator in Training (O.I.T) Certificate and my Water Quality Analyst Certificate, I have been working in the plant for 5 years now.

My name is Andy Recollet and I currently hold my Level 2 in Water Treatment Subsystem, I have been working in Whitefish River since 2010.

Thank you for the New De-Icer!



Mark Shawanda, Alex Nahwegahbow, Andy Recollet and Amy Waboose



Mark Shawanda



Andy Recollet



Amy Waboose

*Cont'd*

On behalf of Naicatchewenin First Nation, especially Water Treatment and maintenance staff (Terry Smith, Don Smith, Tim Romyn and Teeple Plumbing and Heating) we would like to thank AWWAO, its organizers, board members and staff for the opportunity to win the Magikist De-Icer Line Thawer. In the past year there has not been a lot of good news, events, training and in person meetings put on hold, areas in lockdown so Sara's call informing us that we had won, was a very pleasant surprise. Hopefully we don't have to use it, but it is very reassuring knowing that we have it if we do need it.

Once again thank you to AWWAO,  
On Behalf of Naicatchewenin First Nation



*Don Smith, Terry Smith and Tim Romyn*



## Defining an Operator

Hany G. Jadaa; C.Chem., M.Sc. Eng.

**LEXICON** Environmental Consulting Services Inc.

Throughout my career in the business of water and wastewater operations, I have, numerous times, been asked the question “*what is it that defines a plant operator*” and “*what are an operator’s duties*”. The answer to many may seem quite a simple one. First, an operator is someone who operates a water system, being either a water treatment plant or a water distribution system, or, someone who operates a wastewater system, being a wastewater treatment plant or a wastewater collection system, or, someone who operates more than one of the above. Second, their duties should be defined by the requirements of the type of system they operate as well as the requirements stated in their job description.

But what does the word “*operate*” mean? Since my experience is mostly limited to water treatment plant and wastewater treatment plant operations (not collection and distribution systems), I can only speak about the operations side of things, and only from my own perspective having worked for a few years as a treatment operator before joining the consulting engineering industry.

In its simplest definition, a plant operator is someone who performs many tasks, some on a daily basis, others more frequently (depending on the nature of the task and the nature of the operation).

We all know that the specific duties of a plant operator really depend on the type and size of the facility. In a small plant, one operator may be responsible for operating and maintaining all of the systems. In large plants however, multiple operators work together and are more specialized in their duties, often relying on computerized systems to help them operate and monitor plant processes and performance.

Operator duties share some common grounds. Tasks typically include pushing switches to engage some process to proceed or disconnect, engaging various types of pumps, opening, closing and controlling valves to control or modulate certain flows in the plant, reading various instruments and gauges and monitoring their values, as well as collecting samples from various points in their plants, then either performing the analysis themselves or sending those samples to a commercial laboratory for analysis. In addition to these tasks, an operator may also look after maintaining and repairing various types of plant machinery and equipment, whether that be mechanical or electrical (conveyors, compressors, boilers, electrical panels, etc.). All of these tasks, every single one of them, are very important parts of our job as operators.

But our job is not “just another job”. At the end of the day, the operators are the essential link between providing safe drinking water to our communities and protecting our aquatic environment upon which all life depends. If you think very carefully about this statement, you will understand that our job is not just another job, it is also an enormous responsibility.

If you are an operator who works in a drinking water treatment plant, the responsibility resting upon your shoulder cannot be overstressed. You are the person responsible for the delivery of safe drinking water to your community, with all the definitions of the word safe. Being a water a treatment plant operator, you are accountable for the health and well-being of every single person in your community. Any time you let your guard down, you may have to answer for an incident where you may have caused a waterborne disease outbreak (very much similar to what happened to multiple communities in the not-so-distant past in North America) and as such you may have to face some serious consequences.

And if you are an operator who works in a wastewater treatment facility, you are tasked with ensuring that any

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discharges from the plant meet all the regulatory and legislative requirements within your jurisdictional boundaries (whether they are municipal, provincial, federal, or all of the above). You have a civil duty and a legal obligation to protect every aspect of the natural environment along with every user and every community within that environment, near and far. Once again, if you let your guard down, you may have to face some grave consequences.

Putting it all in perspective then, maybe we should be asking a different question than the ones I usually get asked, and that is *“what is it that defines a “good and responsible” operator”*. And in order to answer that question, let's start from the bottom up.

### Know the Science

One of the most basic and fundamental issues that we must understand is the nature of what water and wastewater treatment is all about. In other words, we need to identify and appreciate the science behind the operations. And yes, I did say the word *“science”*. Because after all, it is those basic scientific principles that we must be thoroughly conversant in and which we must put to practice in our daily jobs as plant operators.

At this point let me let you in on a little secret. The science principles behind our plant operations have not changed at all since the time they were discovered. What has changed over the years is our own knowledge and awareness of the sciences that apply. Many operators do not realize the importance and the significance of sciences, like chemistry and microbiology, which are two of the most fundamental sciences that dictate everything that happens in our plants. It is also these two basic sciences that explain why certain processes do not happen in our facilities as we always plan. Furthermore, our scientific awareness in those two main disciplines of science has also changed our approach to treatment (i.e., the way we design plants as engineers and the way we operate the plants as operators) in order to make our water safer to drink and our wastewater safer to discharge.

### Know the Legislation

The next thing that has changed over the years is the legislative requirements under which we operate our facilities. Safe drinking water requirements as well as wastewater discharge mandates have become more stringent in the last few years, and will continue to become more and more stringent in the coming years. These changes in the legislated requirements require us to seek newer technologies and more innovative approaches not only to treatment, but also to the way we think about treatment. As operators, we have a strong mandate and a responsibility to keep up with those technological advances and the scientific principles behind them in order to meet all of our stated legal obligations. Therefore, know your plant's permits and ECAs (Environmental Compliance Approval) and everything in these documents (equipment, processes, limits, guidelines, permissible values, tests, testing frequencies, reporting requirements, etc.). At the end of the day, it is that concept of *“due diligence”* that defines our actions (or inactions) and makes us good operators.

One last note on this issue. Remember – it is okay to make mistakes. The important thing is to learn from our mistakes, communicate them to others so others can learn from them as well, and be honest and transparent about your actions. Do not make up stories, and never falsify data.

### Know Your Plant

I would like to introduce you to a bit of history. When I started in the business many years ago, the operators



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to run our plants by hand. Almost every process in the plants used to run totally manually. From running chemical feed pumps and flow control pumps, to backwashing filters, to opening and closing valves, even analyzing samples in our own laboratories and charting our own data, all of it was done manually. Furthermore, some measurements in the plants were taken manually with the assistance of very rudimentary devices (some were even ingeniously rigged at the plant). Even all the operational math was done by hand. Moving forward to the last 15-20 years, operators now have the luxury of (almost) totally operating their plants through sophisticated SCADA systems running on very powerful computers and notebooks. If you ask me what is one of the main skills that a good operator should have, it is his or her ability to run their plant totally manually without the reliance on computers and SCADA systems. In other words, a good operator is someone who can run their plant with the SCADA system turned off. While computers and their operating systems are quite important as a tool to help you do your job, it is that much needed ability to touch, smell, feel, and listen to your plant and its processes and equipment, along with your own ability to collect samples, analyze, chart, and interpret data, combined with your own powers of connecting all the dots – it is all of that which makes a good operator.

One of my very good operator friends said it best a few years ago – “do not put your blind faith in computers and SCADA systems – they too have limitations”! And in my many years of working as a consultant to the industry, I have witnessed those limitations first hand numerous times.

Finally keep in mind the following. 1) Just because you are an operator with a license to operate one kind of plant does not mean you can operate all kinds of plants. Every plant is different, and every plant comes with its own design and its own set of technologies and equipment. Therefore, every plant offers its own logistical challenges, equipment challenges, and operational challenges. That is where your plant-specific, on-the-job training comes in, and not for a week or two. Every operator that walks into a new facility needs to spend weeks, if not months, before they can become comfortable with the plant, its equipment, and its operations. 2) Two pieces of equipment that look alike, with the same specs, and located at the same plant, and in the same location serving the same purpose, may operate totally differently. Many factors kick into this discussion (but are outside the scope of this article). And that is why it is critical that you perform your daily walks and inspections of every part of your plant and use your senses to guide you to what action (or inaction) you need to do.

### **Know Your Plant's Performance and its Operational Limits**

There is something that most of us operators (and sometimes managers and supervisors) seem to keep forgetting. And that is the difference between “regulatory sampling” and “operational sampling”. Regulatory sampling and analysis are required by regulators for regulatory purposes. This type of sampling and analysis ensures that every one of us meets their legal obligations (as required by our operating permits and local jurisdictions). Operational sampling and analysis, which in most cases is much more cumbersome and demanding, is required by operations and for operational purposes. It is the one that ensures that our plants run as they are supposed to and in accordance with their design specs and within their operational limits.

Let me put it to you this way. If we operate our plants beyond their design limits, on either end of the spectrum, they may not be able to achieve their performance expectations or meet the regulatory limits that we seek. If that happens, we could face some serious consequences or even get charged accordingly. In that context, what makes for a good operator is one that truly knows and understands their plant, its equipment, its capabilities, its typical performance measures, values and design limits, and what this equipment can and cannot do. The simple reality is almost all of this can be done in-house by operators through four simple steps:

## Cont'd

1. knowing your plant with every process and piece of equipment inside out
2. ensuring proper, effective and representative sampling and analysis from multiple points in the plant, consistent with written protocols and procedures
3. connecting the dots between all generated values, and,
4. being able to interpret the data and decide how to proceed to solve a problem (if there is a problem).

On that note – another question that I get frequently asked is *“when should I take samples”*. In my opinion, a good operator is someone who understands the need for baseline conditions. My simple answer is *“you should be taking samples when your plant is running at its best”*. That’s when you are able to generate baseline conditions. And when you start noticing any signs of trouble in your plant’s performance, that’s when you need to collect more samples, but now at least you have those baseline conditions to which you can compare your new values. Otherwise, you are just shooting in the dark without any baseline knowledge of what is working right and what isn’t.

### Learn the Language of Your Plant

There is another important quality that defines a good operator. I think we can all agree that plants do not use (and cannot use) the English language as a method of communication with operators. Plants communicate with us through visuals and numbers. Simple. Isn’t this why we need to walk our plants and collect tens (if not hundreds or thousands) of data points each and every day from multiple locations in our plants?

With this in mind, the challenge us now becomes how to make sense of all of these visuals and data points. In other words, *“what is it that the plant is trying to tell us”*. To put it simply, a good operator is someone who is able to assimilate all that information in some logical order and figure out what the data means, how to connect one parameter with another (visual and numerical), how to interpret it all, and how to evaluate the effects of one value on another. This is where certain computer tools can offer a great deal of assistance in data management, visualization, and interpretation, provided the information is assembled in some logical form that directly translates to plant processes. Any operator can collect notes, numbers, measurements, and values, and store them on various data sheets and computer forms. However, a good operator is someone who knows his/her plant inside out and knows how to assemble all data points in a logical and methodical manner thus allowing for proper interpretation and evaluation of multiple performance measures at any given point in time.

### And Finally – Don’t Be Afraid to Communicate

Operators are proud people. Almost every operator I have met has pride in their plant and in their work. But I tell operators *“don’t let your pride stand in the way of communicating with your colleagues and your superiors”*. When it comes to understanding data and making plant decisions based on your understanding, don’t be afraid of consulting with your colleagues and your superiors. We do not work alone; we work as a team. Making process changes in the plant is not a one-person decision; it is a team effort. As long as we all work with the same information and share common operational goals, and as long as we all follow the science and consult with our fellow operators, supervisors, managers, trainers, and other educators, our plants will perform according to plan. Finally remember – your personal experience is important, and so is everyone else’s. That is the strength of a good operator.

If you have chosen a career as an operator in the water and/or wastewater business, it is these qualities that define you as a good and responsible operator. After all, what you do is more than just another job.

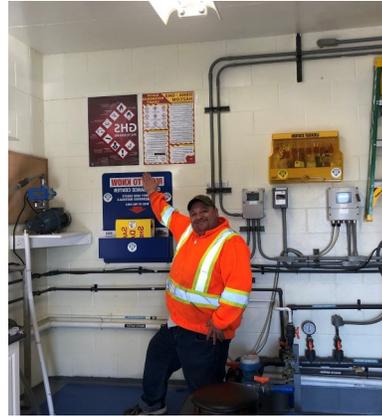


## Deluxe SDS compliance center and GHS compliance kits

To keep our First Nation Operators safe, AWWAO provided the water/wastewater plants Deluxe SDS compliance center and GHS compliance kits.



Clayton Barnes  
(Mohawk of Akwesasne)



Darron Iserhoff  
(Taykwa Tagamou First Nation)



JR Shawana  
(Michipicoten First Nation)



Doug Bisailon  
(Thessalon First Nation)



Thanks Sara / AWWAO

This display is now part of our Sewage Treatment Plant lab to keep all of the MSDS's in order. Dean Walker



Thanks AWWAO! Class III Water Treatment.

Cliff Mamakwa  
(Wunnumin Lake First Nation)

## Lock out tag out

AWWAO provided the water/wastewater plants with Lock out tag out mount stations to help prevent: Contact with a hazard while performing tasks that require the removal, by-passing, or deactivation of safe guarding devices. The unintended release of hazardous energy (stored energy). The unintended start-up or motion of machinery, equipment, or processes.



Greg Edwards  
(Wahgoshig First Nation)



Thomas Archiblad  
(Tagamou First Nation)



Larry Mitchell  
(Mohawk of Akwesasne)



JR Shawana  
(Michipicoten First Nation)



Amanda Kelly



Thanks for the lockout station and compliance center  
for Onigaming Water treatment plant.  
Brian Indian



## *In Memory of Mark Shawanda*

It is ironic that Mark's heart failed him because those of us in his life knew it never failed the rest of us; his heart was big and he put it into everything he did.

Let me begin by telling you what Mark meant to the community of Whitefish River. Mark was our Water Treatment Plant Operator for many years, our Water Warrior so to speak because this was not just a job to him. He was passionate about his role in ensuring our community had not only safe drinking water, but the best tasting drinking water anywhere! And we have proof as Whitefish River's water was award winning and Mark got to hoist, "The Stanley Cup," of water awards many times over the years. In this role, he was a mentor to many as he encouraged and guided the next generation of Water Warriors for our People. To those, I ask that you take every drop of what he showed you to heart; the good and the bad. If he got impatient with you or raised his voice, ask yourself why? It is because Mark knew how vitally important his role was to the health of our community and he wanted to impart that in each of you. Mark knew the details mattered and he took pride in measuring them; knowing what it meant to the health of each and every one of us. That being said, Mark's job was not just in the Water Treatment Plant – it took him out into the community too. With each water sample, he saw the faces of those impacted by his work; the families, the children and the workers. Again, I hope those who follow in Mark's footsteps see that this is where he put his heart into the job. As he went into each household or community building, it was more than "shooting the shit," so to speak. He was creating community connections as he visited, shared stories, talked hockey and handed out invites to his next poker game. Our village is small but it is growing; please continue making those community connections just as Mark did because they matter; they mattered to Mark and they mattered to us. I know his visits will be missed. However, that was not the only community role which Mark put his heart into, as anyone involved in Minor Hockey would know.

Mark continued on in the tradition of his parents, the late Nick and Margaret Shawanda as he wholeheartedly gave of his time and energy to promote minor hockey in Whitefish River. He coached teams, he sat on Committees and he helped organize our yearly trips to the Little NHL tournaments! As someone who played in his own youth, Mark knew the value of sports and what playing in the Little NHL Tournament meant to the youth of our community. He worked tirelessly to ensure they got the opportunity.

Speaking of the rink . . . that was Mark's second home. He played growing up and was involved in Men's hockey as he got older. I am sure each of us has a Men's hockey tournament story with Mark, but it cannot top the one Debbie shares with him as it was at one such tournament that they met! (As they were nearing 40 years, I guess some good did come out of those tournaments!)

I am sure Mark's greatest position ever played was the role of fan; as a father then as a grandfather. He and Debbie took many trips and drove many hours to stand in cold rinks and cheer on their children and grandchildren. Jacinta shared a story of Mark even hitting the ice again for his Grandson, Torrence! That is the kind of Father and Grandfather he was – sacrificing but loving it wholeheartedly.

In recent years, Mark was able to enjoy quieter times travelling with Debbie, renovating the house (to host his grandchildren or poker nights!), enjoying concerts, the horses or spending time on the water with his family in the boat. His health challenges never stopped him as he approached everything with a quiet passion, witty one-liners and lots of laughs.

Challenges Mark and Debbie faced and overcame.

Marks deep belief in traditional medicine and healing and ways.

*Cont'd*

Mark's passing has left a deep void in our hearts and in our community. Please remember him in the love he shared and the teachings and laughter he brought – and know that he is doing the same right now where he is as he asks, "Pull my finger."

Chief Franklin Paibomsai

**Obituary**

In Loving Memory of  
Mark Hilary Shawanda  
October 12, 1961 - April 8, 2021

The family announces with sorrow our father's passing, his return to home on Thursday, April 8, 2021.

Son of the late Margaret and Henry Shawanda of Wiky and WRFN.

Survived by his wife Debbie Shawanda.

Father of Daniel, Cory (baa), Cheryl, Trevor (Amy) and Chris (baa).

Grandfather of Daniel Jr., Sapphire (baa), Mackenzie, Devon, Torrance, Tennille, Zoey, Laily, Manny, Gloria and Binnakwii.

Brother of Steve, Charles (baa), Bruce, Robert, David, Trevor (baa), Margaret (baa) and Jacinta (Bill) and brother-in-law of Lorraine (Adam), Muriel, Darlean, Dolores (Roger), Louie and Freddy (baa).

Godfather of Josh Shawanda, Skylar Shawanda and Victoria Pires.

Mark leaves behind his special furry friend Roxy.  
Will be missed by many nieces, nephews and friends.

Mark had a passion for the waters no matter where it was. Sometimes it was on the ice as a hockey coach or player. He enjoyed the lake cruising and fishing on his boat, and most importantly, his job working at the water plant in Birch Island as plant operator. He had 32 years of loyalty and service under his belt. He shared his humour and laughter everywhere he went. He loved to travel. He loved horse racing and playing poker. He was the king of one liner jokes. He looked forward to visits with the grandchildren and watching their hockey games. Cherish the moments you shared with him.



## After 30 years, Zhiibaahaasing to lose boil water advisory

By

**Warren Schlote**

March 24, 2021



*Since Zhiibaahaasing got its portable package water plant last December, a truck has re-distributed the treated water to homes.*

ZHIIBAAHAASING – This past Thursday, March 18, a quartet of cabinet ministers in the Canadian and Ontarian governments joined with First Nation chiefs, councillors and band managers to announce a multi-million-dollar investment into ending boil water advisories in Ontario First Nations, including in the press conference’s host community of Zhiibaahaasing, whose citizens have had to boil their drinking water for three decades since the community’s rebirth in 1991.

“I’m ecstatic. I’m so happy; I was choking up when I was trying to speak there yesterday,” said Zhiibaahaasing Ogimaa-kwe Irene Kells. “It’s a good feeling to know that we’re finally going to get pipe water and safe drinking water, not the way we’ve been living in the past years here in the community. The safety of our people comes first.”

Zhiibaahaasing hosted Thursday’s joint announcement between the three levels of government. In that community, Canada will provide \$2,009,388, Ontario will contribute \$491,094 and Zhiibaahaasing will add in \$178,702 for upgrades to its water storage and distribution system.

The project will involve a new below-ground water storage reservoir with a high-lift pump to move the water into a new distribution system, as well as fire pumps. Drinking water transmission pipes will extend through the community as well as fire hydrants; this should greatly enhance fire safety in the First Nation.

This is not the end of the job, however. The community still intends to build a new water treatment plant 300 feet inland from the shoreline and the existing flooded facilities.

Present community has never had potable water.

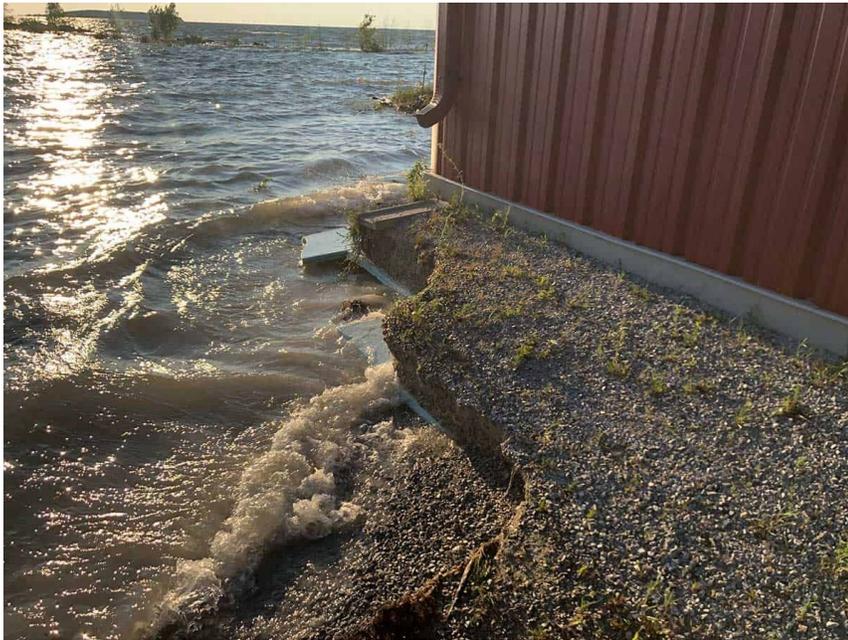
Zhiibaahaasing’s fresh water challenges have existed since the community re-formed in 1991. Its traditional territory is on present-day Cockburn Island but the community went dormant for 11 years starting in 1980, with no

*Cont'd*

Ogimaa-kwe Kells became chief of the rebirthed community at its current location in 1991. She has held the role since that time.

Previously, the few families living in Zhiibaahaasing's current location had used shallow wells for their water but when the community tried drilling wells in 1991, all they found was sulfur-contaminated supply.

Although the community eventually built a water treatment plant on the lakeshore, they had to rely on holding the treated water in concrete cisterns. Until the upgrades come into effect, that water gets trucked to homes.



*Record-high water levels compromised Zhiibaahaasing's existing water treatment plant's structure. A new permanent plant is needed.*

"Our First Nation has been under a self-imposed boil water advisory (since 1991) because, according to the regulations in Ontario, concrete is not to be used for holding potable water," said deputy chief Kevin Mossip.

Moving the water from the central cisterns to homes added considerably more points of potential contamination. There have also been issues with dogs being around the water supply and the holding tanks freezing in the winter.

Water plant reaches breaking point.

Disaster struck last summer when water levels in Lake Huron reached record highs.

"We had a water treatment plant that was doing its job in Zhiibaahaasing until the water came about 100, 150 feet up the shore and began to wash out our present plant we had by the lake," Mr. Mossip said.

Water plant operator Jonathan Riberdy was closely watching the water levels and one night in June 2020, he noted water levels rapidly rising and threatening to flood the plant.

"Everything was going to flood if it wasn't for Jon being quick on his feet, quick-thinking. E. Corbiere and Sons (of M'Chigeeng) came in at the middle of the night to help stop the plant from being washed away," Ogimaa-kwe Kells said.



*Cont'd*

The response was not enough to prevent a part of the building from getting washed out, which threatened a larger collapse.

“When that happened, council got together and declared a state of emergency because we didn’t feel it was safe for the operator to go in,” said Mr. Mossip.

Zhiibaahaasing had to find another source of water and was exploring potential suppliers between Manitoulin and Sudbury. The community eventually turned once more to M’Chigeeng, which provided thrice-weekly water deliveries beginning in June 2020.

It was a good option, but not the solution they needed. Because of the length of the transportation and the delivery method, the water was not considered potable for human consumption.

“Since June and until we got the new (temporary) plant, we’ve been hauling in bottled water from Culligan in Sudbury. We get 250 jugs of water monthly to ensure our community members have clean water,” said band manager Bobbisue Kells-Riberdy.

Demand varies depending on the season but the deliveries were an expensive and inefficient way of ensuring safe water.

The community also had to adapt to conserving water on non-delivery days and completing all their tasks such as laundry on delivery dates. Sometimes, water pumps ran dry when people forgot to turn them off or when a water delivery date changed.

“In the beginning, we were not used to having water being there when we needed it,” said Ms. Kells-Riberdy. Zhiibaahaasing got some reprieve in December of 2020 when Indigenous Services Canada delivered a self-contained portable packaged water plant to the First Nation.

Such units are housed in metal shipping containers and are full of the equipment required to treat the water supply.

This offered a relatively safe product, but such mobile units are not officially certified to produce clean, potable drinking water. As such, the community remains under a precautionary boil water advisory.

Zhiibaahaasing placed the plant about 300 feet inland, where flooding will not be a risk.

Funding covers part of solution.

The recent funding announcement offers roughly \$2.5 million for Zhiibaahaasing to build a robust water distribution system that can handle future expansion. The key part of the allotment, in addition to the storage reservoir, distribution pump and fire system, is the network of pipes that will finally connect Zhiibaahaasing homes to a water distribution system.

Although the temporary portable water plant can feed into this system, the community will remain under the boil water advisory due to its lack of certification. The new reservoir is on a site, however, that is set aside for a future, permanent water treatment facility.

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“We’re now aiming to get another \$10 million more to put a proper treatment plant in, like you have in Gore Bay or Sheshegwaning. But we’re one step closer to 100 percent pure water,” said Mr. Mossip.

Zhiibaahaaasing has a three-year window in which to install the reservoir, distribution and fire systems, but the community is acting quickly to correct their long-standing infrastructure gap as soon as possible. The construction of the permanent plant has a further two- to three-year timeframe.

“Everybody that’s heard so far is pretty excited about it. We haven’t formally notified the community because this just happened yesterday,” said Ogimaa-kwe Kells in a conversation with The Expositor on March 19. “I’m happy to hear that this is actually going to happen because we’ve been living this way for so many years.”

Getting clean drinking water means everything to me as a community member as well as the plant operator. You know when you sit at home and you can turn that tap and know 100% that the water is safe. Then I can breathe knowing that all of our people have the best water we can serve. The water from Lake Huron is so clean just need to keep moving the right direction first distribution system then the new water plant. This is the way we need to do it as this is how the funding rolls out it was great to be in the right place at the right time when Bobbi-Sue Kells-Riberdy and I learned about this green stream at the AFN Water Symposium last year. I am so proud of the hard work BobbiSue does for all of us even when we don’t see it but that’s a great leader with passion she learned from the best. Get your community out there and push we all deserve clean save drinking water in the world! Water is Life and without it we can not survive! Very humble that I was mentioned in this write up as well thank you for that Ogimaa -Kwe Irene Kells. Also shout out to Aaron Corbiere for E. Corbiere & Son for being there so quick so we still had a water plant from there quick response. We will keep working hard to make this all happen. One People One Nation! Chi Miigwetch.

Jonathan Riberdy



*The sea can is the interim replacement until the new water treatment plant is built.*



*The smaller red building is the low lift. The bigger red building is the water plant that got decommissioned last year due to high water.*



*iPad winner*

Aaniin, my name is Shane Taylor, I am a proud member from Curve Lake First Nation. I recently accepted a position within the Public Work Department on my reserve which I withhold the employment position of equipment operator and operator in training for a Water Technician. I am looking forward to receiving my water training with Aboriginal Water and Wastewater Association of Ontario, but most importantly I am eager to get back to a normal life where training can take place in person and move past the virtual online training. I would really like to thank AWWAO for the beautiful iPad, I was very fortunate to win such as extravagant gift.

Miigwetch,  
Shane Taylor



*Shane Taylor*



Thank you



Kent Stephen and Karolyn Newby

We would like to thank you for the 2 Safety Data Sheet compliance centers you sent to Mississauga's of Scugog Island First Nation (MSIFN). Please see the attached picture with 2 of our operators holding one of the centers you sent to us. Kent Stephen and Karolyn Newby are pictured. They are 2 of the 4 operators we have here at MSIFN. The Water Treatment plant and distribution system are producing clean, safe water and we are about to start making service connections to the community. Kent: "I am very proud to be a part of this team and able to serve the indigenous community especially in these trying times." Kent brings a wealth of municipal water and wastewater experience to the team, especially lending his strength of maintenance to the team. Karolyn is the longest serving operator with

the team. She has been able to share her expertise with the other team members as they have joined the group. The team looks forward to having the plant fully serve the community once the connections are done. Also, currently underway are upgrades to the community's wastewater treatment plant. A collection system will also be part of the upgrades and added in the near future. The Water Wastewater Operations Team is very excited about being a part of the upgrades at MSIFN. It is a great community to serve. The operators at MSIFN Water all enjoy coming to work everyday and are very vested in continuously making improvements to the new water system. The Team has been treated so kindly by the community which makes serving MSIFN a very rewarding job.

Keith Lepine  
Water/Wastewater Supervisor

Anni, my name is Kayla Abitong and I am from Sagamok Anishnawbek. I'd like to say miigwetch for the awesome First Aid kit, lock and tag out boards for our water department. Miigwetch to all AWWAO staff and board members for all your hard work, dedication and continuous support not only for our community but for all of Ontario's First Nations water Operators. Without this organization it would be challenging to keep up with training, certification renewal and upgraded certification.

Sagamok is located 90km west of Sudbury, we have a growing population of 1856 members on the reserve. Our team consists of an OIC, level 1 WT/WD operator and a part time OIT. We service 428 homes with a distribution of 18km long and a 900 cubic meter water tower along with 3 ground water wells.

Miigwetch again AWWAO we all look forward to seeing you all soon.



*Ontario Water Works Association*



The Ontario Water Works Association (OWWA) is excited to share that the first ever virtual edition of Ontario's Water Conference & Trade Show was a tremendous success with over 500 delegates and 150 exhibitors attending the event from the comfort of their own workplaces (and in many cases homes!). We were able to enhance accessibility beyond our usual geographic audience to offer access to a greater amount of technical content, and to provide several platforms for networking and engaging with manufacturers and suppliers, including the virtual Trade Show floor with 50 booths. The Conference opened on Monday April 19 with a welcome from OWWA Executive Director Michele Grenier and incoming OWWA President Jaime Boutilier, as well as remarks from the Ontario Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Hon. Jeff Yurek. Melanie Debassige, Executive Director of the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation provided a land acknowledgement for the conference and lands serviced by OWWA members, and also shared information on OFNTSC's continued work to support the delivery of water and wastewater projects in indigenous communities across the province. We were very pleased to have AWWAO featured on our virtual trade show floor, making new connections and networking with attendees. Planning for the 2022 in-person event in Niagara Falls May 2 to 4, 2022 is well underway. We are hoping to offer over 120 technical sessions and full trade show floor, and we look forward to welcoming you there! Look out for early registration on our website ([www.owwa.ca](http://www.owwa.ca)) in the Fall!

Samantha Buch

**Programs Manager**

Ontario Water Works Association

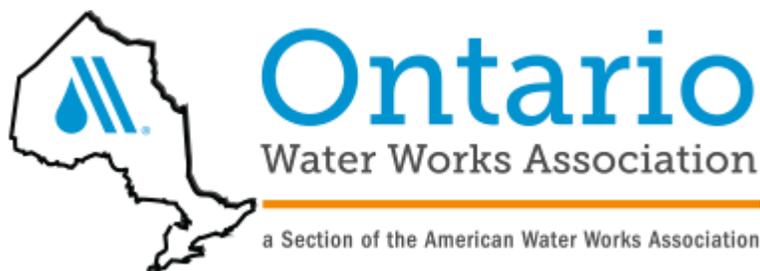
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News from AWWAO operators

With fighting/ negotiating with ISC we have secured 22.5 million for new plant and distribution, however the construction will require 55 million for the project. We have gone back to the feds to attain the required funds. Things look promising with meetings with RDG. We currently at 66% design phase with 99% coming next month. Construction to start this summer.

Fred Dubeau Chippewas of Nawash



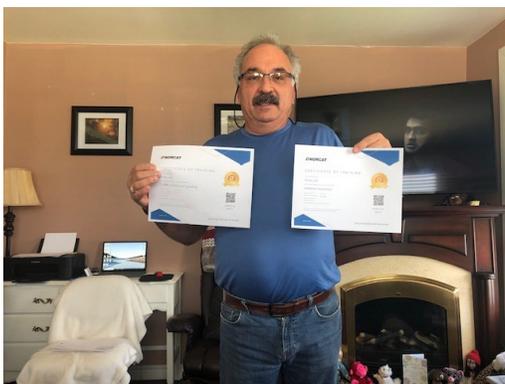
In spite of the pandemic I am glad people can still gather virtually and share their talents and knowledge. Also I have really been appreciating the online trainings sponsored by AWWAO. Miigwetch

Karolyne Newby Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation



Thanks AWWAO for the first aid kit.

Dean Walker  
City of Dryden



Thanks AWWAO

Ian Fortin OFNTSC  
Hub Technician

