



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
PRESENTS

## **APITIPi BEAT**

COMMUNITY UPDATE

AUGUST | 2025



# APITUPI BEAT

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## AUGUST 2025

### TANSI, APITUPI ANICINAPEK NATION!



*We're excited to bring you the summer edition of Apitipi Beat, your community newsletter dedicated to sharing the stories, progress, and achievements shaping our Nation's future.*

*This season marks a time of renewed leadership and continued growth. With the recent election of our Chief and Council, we are entering a new chapter guided by strong voices, community vision, and the teachings of our ancestors. Together, we move forward with unity and purpose, ensuring a thriving future for the next seven generations.*

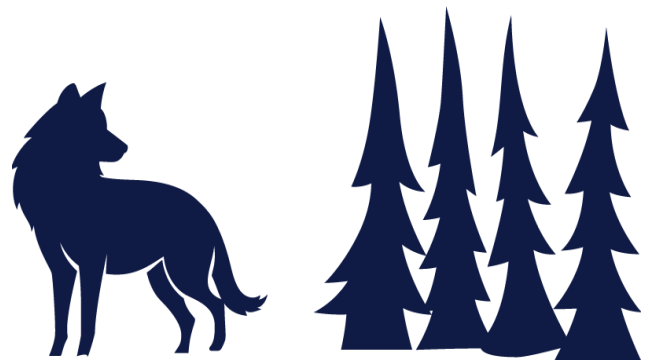
*Inside this edition, you'll find updates that showcase our collective efforts in food sovereignty, youth leadership, and sustainable economic development. From the flourishing Food Forest and greenhouse at Leading Cloud Gardens to our transformative Food Systems Tour, these projects are helping us reclaim traditional knowledge and strengthen our self-reliance.*

*We're also proud to highlight major milestones in economic growth, including the ACT Biochar Project, new capacity-building*

*initiatives, and energy programs that are making our community more resilient and self-sufficient. Our youth continue to shine—whether through the Outland Youth Employment Program, hands-on energy retreats, or traditional activities like our community fishing derby.*

*Apitipi Beat is more than a newsletter—it's a space to celebrate our people, share knowledge, and inspire one another. As you read, we invite you to reflect on the incredible progress being made and to stay involved in shaping the bright future of Apitipi Anicinapek Nation.*

*Miigwetch to everyone who contributes time, energy, and heart to these initiatives. Together, we're building not just projects and programs—but a legacy of strength, culture, and sovereignty for generations to come.*





# ***APITITI BEAT***

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## **AUGUST 2025**

### ***LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE***

- Apitipi Beat Welcome Message
- Spotlight on Jason Wong: Economic Development Officer
- Newly Elected Chief and Council

### ***COMMUNITY GROWTH & FOOD SOVEREIGNTY***

- Leading Cloud Gardens: Greenhouse, Compost Project & Food Forest
- Food Systems Tour: Learning from Ontario First Nations
- Food Forest Milestone – AgriSpirit Fund Impact

### ***MAJOR PROJECTS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT***

- ACT Biochar Project – New MOU and Future Phases

### ***YOUTH & CAPACITY BUILDING***

- Youth Energy Retreat – Riverstone Campus Experience
- OYEP Program – Skills for Future Leaders
- Proposal Writing Workshop – Building Community Skills
- Wired for Change: Energy Programs and Solar Cabin Project
- Community Fishing Derby – Tradition and Togetherness

### ***IN THE PIPELINE EVENTS***

- key Event Dates

### ***CLOSING REMARKS***

- Call for Community Participation and Feedback
- Thank You to Contributors



# JASON WONG



## DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Jason Wong, a proud Cree member of Attawapiskat First Nation, spent his early years in Moosonee, Ontario, where he learned the importance of family, land, and community. At age six, his family moved to Toronto, where he spent most of his life before returning North to work with Apitipi Anicinapek Nation.

Jason's family reflects a blend of entrepreneurship, finance, and education. His father's side, originally from Taishan, China, comes from a family of business owners and entrepreneurs, instilling in Jason the value of hard work and vision in business. Jason's Wabano side is a story of resilience, his Great-Granny, Marguerite Wabano, was a respected Cree Elder and residential school survivor. In June 2008, at age 104, she sat in a place of honour in the House of Commons when Prime Minister Stephen Harper personally delivered the federal government's apology to her and other residential school survivors for the harms caused by the residential school system.

Before joining AAN, Jason built a career in the hospitality industry, managing large hotel operations for major brands, which developed his skills in team building, customer service, operational finance, and leadership. In 2020, Jason brought these skills to Apitipi Anicinapek Nation as the Director of Economic Development, focusing on building a resilient, sovereign economy aligned with the Nation's values.

Jason manages Apitipi-owned businesses, including overseeing the community gas station, and is actively working on developing the ACT Biochar project, which will position AAN as a leader in Indigenous-led renewable energy while creating long-term employment opportunities. He serves as President of Kisis Aki, a partnership between Apitipi Anicinapek Nation and Taykwa Tagamou Nation that owns 37.5% of the Cochrane Solar Project with Northland Power. Additionally, Jason oversees four solar projects in Southern Ontario, ensuring AAN's investments align with sustainable energy and economic independence.

Beyond Apitipi, Jason serves as a director on the boards for the Cochrane Solar Project, the Far North East Training Board (FNETB) and the Ontario First Nations Economic Development Association (OFNEDA), contributing to Indigenous economic strategy and training across the province.

In October 2024, Jason was honoured as "EDO of the Year" by OFNEDA for his commitment to advancing Indigenous economic development in the North. In 2025, he completed his Technician of Aboriginal Economic Development (TAED) certification, further strengthening his ability to align funding, governance, and community-led planning to bring projects from vision to action.

Jason's leadership centres on mentoring emerging leaders, building strong teams, and ensuring community voices guide every project. Alongside Kara, Allison, and many other committed members, these efforts are creating opportunities for all while protecting land, culture, and traditions for the next seven generations. Every project is designed with strong financial planning and deep community trust, ensuring sustainable growth for years to come.







### ***Apitipi Anicinapek Nation – Elected May 31, 2025***

It is with great respect and renewed hope that we warmly welcome the newly elected Chief and Council of Apitipi Anicinapek Nation. On May 31, 2025, our community came together at the Band Office to cast their votes, reflect on our shared values, and choose the leaders who will walk with us into the next four years.

We are proud to introduce the incoming leadership:

Chief June Black

Deputy Chief Christopher Sackaney

Youth Councillor Allison Paul

Elder Councillor Maurice Kistabish

Councillors: Tracy Nadon, Marty Nadon, Tina Lacourciere, and Brian Tremblay

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to each of you. Your commitment to serve our Nation is an honourable responsibility, and we are confident in the strength, knowledge, and care you each bring to the table. This newly elected Council reflects a balance of experience and fresh perspective, and we look forward to the leadership, guidance, and community spirit that will shape your term.

Leadership in our Nation is rooted in more than titles—it is rooted in trust, accountability, and connection. It means walking alongside the people, making space for all voices, and holding firm to the teachings of our ancestors while building a future our grandchildren will be proud of.

As we look ahead, we do so with hope, unity, and the shared goal of nurturing a thriving Apitipi Anicinapek Nation—grounded in our culture, guided by our values, and strengthened by each other.

Miigwetch to all who stood for leadership, and to every community member who voted. Your voices have shaped this important moment. May the journey ahead be one of unity, progress, and good medicine.

***We are in good hands. Let the work begin!***







# LEADING CLOUD GARDENS: GROWING COMMUNITY, CULTURE, AND OPPORTUNITY

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## ***Economic Development Newsletter – Summer 2025 Update***

Exciting things are sprouting at Leading Cloud Gardens! As we move into the heart of the 2025 growing season, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation is seeing incredible progress in food sovereignty, youth engagement, and local agriculture. What started as a small revival has blossomed into a dynamic hub for learning, healing, and sustainable food production—rooted in our community, culture, and land.

### **Here's what's been growing:**

#### ***Greenhouse Fully Operational***

In a major milestone, our 30x50-foot greenhouse is now fully operational! After being recovered in November 2024—thanks to the incredible crew led by Tony Larson—we filled the raised beds with nutrient-rich soil and began planting in June. The greenhouse now houses tomatoes, lettuce, herbs, and peppers, all thriving under ideal conditions. This structure extends our growing season and supports year-round learning for youth and families.

#### **Garden Fence Completed & Standing Strong**

The new garden fence is now fully installed and standing tall! Approved by Chief and Council and completed this spring, the fence plays a vital role in keeping our space safe—protecting our crops from

dogs, vehicles, and other disruptions. It also beautifully frames our emerging Food Forest, clearly defining the area as a dedicated space for growth, gathering, and healing.

#### ***Compost Project in Full Swing***

June marked the launch of our large-scale Community Compost Project, in partnership with Docterre, EFAO, and local volunteers. Over five custom compost recipes were built using a mix of fish, hay, manure, woodchips, and other organic materials. The piles are now actively decomposing and will help replenish depleted soils in the fall. This project not only supports garden fertility—it's also been a valuable educational experience for youth and community members alike.

#### **Food Forest Planted!**

Thanks to generous funding from Farm Credit Canada and EFAO/OSCIA, our very first Food Forest has officially been planted! With trees, berry bushes, shrubs, and medicinal plants now rooted in the soil, this space has been thoughtfully designed to reflect traditional teachings and celebrate biodiversity. The forest will grow into a living legacy—serving as an outdoor classroom, sustainable food source, and a lasting gift for our community.





## LEADING CLOUD GARDENS: GROWING COMMUNITY, CULTURE, AND OPPORTUNITY

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### **Traditional Seeds Return Home**

With deep gratitude, we've received speckled Algonquin bean and Algonquin pumpkin seeds from seed keepers in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. These culturally significant seeds have been returned to Algonquin territory and are now being planted at Leading Cloud Gardens—reviving ancestral varieties and reconnecting them to their roots.

### **Monthly Food Preservation Workshops**

Sponsored by the Jordan's Principle/Choose Life program, our Monthly Food Preservation Workshops continue to bring the community together for hands-on learning. Led by Marty Nadon, Angie Crichton-McLaren, and Kara Tremblay, these sessions have included jam-making, soup prep, pickling, and much more. Each gathering shares vital skills while strengthening food security and cultural pride. to her profound love for her community, her family, and the land that sustains them.

### **Medicine Wheel Rock Garden Planting**

This season, community members came together to plant the Medicine Wheel Rock Garden at the Apitipi

Anicinapek Nation Health Center. The garden represents the four sacred directions and elements of holistic wellness—mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. With vibrant medicinal plants and meaningful stones placed with care, this space now offers a peaceful and culturally rooted area for reflection, healing, and connection to traditional teachings.

### **Youth Leadership & Summer Work**

Youth engagement remains a top priority. This season, Jason E. and Dreydin S. have returned to support daily operations—helping plant trees, maintain compost piles, and care for crops. Additional youth will join through summer programming and OYEP, gaining valuable experience in food systems, teamwork, and land-based learning.

### **New Ways to Stay Connected**

We're launching our Leading Cloud Gardens Facebook page—follow along for real-time updates on planting days, harvests, workshops, and community news. It's a great way to stay in the loop and get involved.





*Rendering of Airex Energy's Carbonity Plant in Sept-Îles, QC – a model similar to the future ACT Biochar Project in Kirkland Lake*

## ACT BIOCHAR PROJECT

**ACT Biochar July 2025** - Apitipi Anicinapek Nation is proud to share a major milestone in our journey toward self-reliance and sustainable development. We have officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Airex Energy to advance the ACT – Apitipi Cik8atik Tep8e8in Biochar Project in Kirkland Lake. This marks the beginning of a new chapter in Nation-led climate innovation and economic opportunity.

The name ACT stands for **Apitipi Cik8atik Tep8e8in**, which in the Algonquin language translates to Apitipi Big Pine Tree Truth:

- Cik8atik (pronounced She-Kwa-Tik) = Big Pine Tree
- Tep8e8in (pronounced Tep Weh Wehn) = Truth

This name, gifted through language and cultural teachings, embodies our commitment to standing tall in truth and responsibility, rooted in the strength of our land and people.

### **AAN has taken important steps to solidify this venture:**

- Land purchased in Kirkland Lake's industrial area to house the forthcoming biochar facility
- A new business arm formed, created laterally to

ARLP and controlled directly by AAN, ensuring full ownership and community benefits

Supported by a comprehensive business plan and a marketing feasibility study, this project affirms strong demand and economic viability for biochar and biocarbon products. In partnership with Airex Energy and their CarbonFX™ technology, we will convert forestry by-products—like sawdust, bark, and wood chips—into high-value biochar and biocarbon products used in agriculture, steelmaking, mining, and environmental restoration, while helping to capture carbon and fight climate change.

This positions AAN as one of the first Indigenous Nations in Canada—and globally—to own and operate a commercial-scale biochar facility, placing us at the forefront of emerging global biochar and carbon credit markets.

Thanks to the generous support of our partners: Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the Indigenous Forestry Initiative Program of NRCan, and the Ontario Biomass Forestry Program, the groundwork has been laid and the team is ready to move forward.





This project will create over 20 direct jobs, build capacity through training, and harness synergies with Nation-owned businesses, including Black Diamond Forestry and Apitipi Trucking, enhancing our forestry supply chain and adding expertise and value within our economy.

A strong reinvestment strategy will ensure that profits are returned to Apitipi Nation to support housing, youth programs, health services, cultural revitalization, and infrastructure—building a brighter future for our people.

This is more than a project, it is a model for Indigenous economic sovereignty, climate leadership, and innovation grounded in our values, language, and vision for the next seven generations. From land stewardship to economic sovereignty, the project has been designed to reflect the beliefs that have guided our people for generations.

At the heart of this project is a commitment to protecting and honoring the land. The biochar process reuses forestry by-products, materials that would otherwise go to waste, and turns them into

products that restore soil, capture carbon, and reduce emissions. This is a modern application of our traditional belief that nothing should be wasted, and everything has purpose when we live in balance with the Earth.

In using Airex Energy's CarbonFX™ technology, we are embracing innovative clean energy solutions that align with the Indigenous principle of planning for the next seven generations. We are not simply creating jobs — we are building a sustainable economic engine that will benefit our children, our grandchildren, and those yet to come.

This project is an example of what's possible when we bring together traditional knowledge, community leadership, and forward-thinking innovation. The ACT Biochar Project is not only building infrastructure — it is building pride, purpose, and prosperity for Apitipi Anicinapek Nation.

### What's Next for the ACT Biochar Project?

**Site Preparation:** Surveying, geotechnical work, and environmental compliance for the land purchased in Kirkland Lake.

**Engineering & Design:** Working with technical teams to develop facility designs and layout, readying for permit applications.

**Capital Fundraising:** Seeking major capital investment through a combination of government grants, private investment, and Indigenous economic development funds to support the ~\$100 million project.

**Construction Phase (targeted 2026):** Launching site development and facility construction, with a focus on local hiring and procurement.

This phase will require continued community engagement, transparent updates, and opportunities for AAN members to participate in the development journey.





## PROPOSAL WRITING WORKSHOP: STRENGTHENING SKILLS

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On February 19-20, 2025, a dedicated group of community leaders and project coordinators gathered at the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation Boardroom in South Porcupine, ON, for an insightful Proposal Writing Workshop. Facilitated by Matti Prima in partnership with Catalyste+, a non-profit economic development organization, the workshop provided hands-on guidance to participants eager to develop their proposal writing skills and explore the integration of AI tools in their work.

### **Building Stronger Proposals for Community Projects**

The workshop kicked off on February 19th with a warm welcome from Matti Prima, who introduced key strategies for developing fundable, clear, and compelling proposals. Participants worked through structured exercises focused on project planning, defining objectives, and budgeting strategies.

A major highlight of the first day was the deep dive into the challenges of securing funding—participants reflected on past applications, identified barriers such as limited access to funding advisors, and discussed ways to enhance confidence in submitting proposals.

### **Harnessing AI for Efficiency & Innovation**

On February 20th, the group reconvened for the second day of training, delving into a groundbreaking session on utilizing AI for work efficiency. With

guidance from Matti and Jason Wong, participants explored how AI-powered tools can streamline proposal writing, improve data organization, and support content development. From generating structured proposals to analyzing funding criteria, AI was highlighted as a key resource in modernizing the grant application process.

### **Collaboration & Next Steps**

Throughout the two-day event, the participants not only gained practical skills but also fostered a sense of collaboration, sharing their unique experiences and project visions. With hands-on exercises, real-time proposal drafting, and AI demonstrations, attendees left feeling empowered to take their funding applications to the next level.

This workshop underscored the importance of continuous learning and adaptation in the funding landscape. The skills developed in this session will play a crucial role in securing resources to support community-driven projects focused on sustainability, economic growth, and development.







## YOUTH RETREAT BRINGS ENERGY EDUCATION AND CONNECTION TO LIFE

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**Durham, ON. June 2025**— Earlier this summer, youth from Apitipi Anicinapek Nation gathered at the Elephant Thoughts Riverstone Campus for a five-day energy retreat they won't soon forget. Located on 136 acres just outside Durham, Ontario, the Riverstone Campus—nestled along the Saugeen River—offered the perfect mix of nature, learning, and fun.

Each day was filled with hands-on programming focused on energy education, sustainability, and the connection between land and community. From building circuits to exploring solar power, the kids dove into interactive learning that sparked curiosity and built confidence. They even had the opportunity to visit **Bruce Power**, where they toured parts of the facility and learned how nuclear energy plays a role in Ontario's electricity system.

After the workshops, the fun kept going with swimming, hiking, games, and campfire hangs. The property's wood-fired hot tub and sauna were big hits, and accommodations ranged from cozy "bunkys" to the larger "Stone House," giving the retreat a welcoming camp-like vibe. The youth bonded quickly and made lasting memories throughout the week.

This unforgettable experience wouldn't have been possible without **Lisa Franco**, the retreat coordinator, and **Marni**, Director of Education at Elephant Thoughts.

Their dedication made everything run smoothly. A heartfelt thanks also goes to the amazing **staff and volunteers at Riverstone**, and to **Apitipi ChooseLife** for chaperoning and transporting the youth to and from the camp.

The retreat created space for learning, laughter, and connection—and reminded everyone how powerful it is when youth have opportunities to grow and explore in safe, supportive spaces. Until next time, Riverstone!







## A MOVEMENT IN MOTION: TRANSFORMATIVE FOOD TOUR

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### ***April 22–26, 2025 | From Seeds to Stories — We Journeyed Together***

This past April, five dedicated staff from Apitipi Anicinapek Nation came together across departments to participate in a powerful and transformative Food Systems Tour across Ontario. With representation from the Food Committee, Economic Development, Social Development, and the Child and Youth department, the team travelled to visit a number of First Nations and institutions leading the way in Indigenous food sovereignty. Organized with the support of GIDT, the tour served as both a learning experience and a deep affirmation that our Nation is on a path of strength, purpose, and reconnection.

The journey began on April 22 with a visit to Trent University, where the group met with the Indigenous Studies Department and explored their on-site garden fields. The blending of traditional knowledge with academic institutions highlighted the importance of weaving Indigenous worldviews into education and reminded us that food sovereignty begins with teaching, mentorship, and land-based learning.

The following day, the team visited Curve Lake First Nation, where they were welcomed by a thriving agriculture program. The Curve Lake team generously shared their experience in managing gardens, hoop houses, a maple bush farm, an aquaponics greenhouse, and a community farm stand. Their innovative approach and community-centered focus

offered real-world insight into what's possible when food is grown with vision and rooted in culture.

On the third day, the group travelled to Rama First Nation to visit the Rama Maawnijiydiwag Gitigaan Agricultural Centre. What they witnessed was nothing short of inspiring. The facility includes a mobile farm stall trailer, large greenhouse, several active fields, cold storage rooms, and freezers — all designed to







nourish the community while supporting local infrastructure. Conversations that day touched on the broader scope of Indigenous food security, including gardening, Mnoomin (wild rice) harvesting, foraging, and the respectful harvesting of wild game. Rama's team shared with clarity and care, showing what's possible when a community commits fully to its food system.

The final leg of the tour brought the Apitipi team to Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory. There, they were welcomed by Debajehmujig Storytellers at the Cultural Centre site, where the sharing of maple sugar candies and sacred creation stories became a powerful reminder that food is not just nourishment — it is medicine, story, and ceremony. The team also toured Wiikwemkoong's garden sites and agricultural spaces, meeting with local producers working with greenhouses, cattle, chickens, turkeys, and corn. Each person they met reflected a piece of the larger vision for food restoration and self-determination.

By the time the team returned home, their hearts were full and their spirits recharged. The tour offered not only practical inspiration but also deep validation that the work underway at Leading Cloud Gardens is part of a growing, Nation-wide movement. We are not alone. Across Turtle Island, communities are reclaiming their food systems, reawakening traditional practices, and reimagining futures built on health, resilience, and Indigenous knowledge.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who welcomed us during the tour. To Trent University, miigwetch for grounding us in land-based learning and academic connection. To Curve Lake First Nation, thank you for sharing your thriving agricultural spaces and innovative approaches to community food systems. To Rama First Nation and the Maawnijiydiwag Gitigaan Agricultural Centre, we are deeply grateful for your generosity, teachings, and the inspiration drawn from your impressive infrastructure and vision. And to Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, miigwetch for the stories, the sweet maple gifts, and the reminder that food is sacred. Each of you helped light the path forward for Apitipi, and we are truly honoured to have learned from you.

Chi Miigwetch to GIDT for your dedication and support in making this tour possible. Your guidance and partnership have helped plant seeds that will continue to grow here at home.

This experience left us with new energy, strong connections, and a powerful message: Apitipi is ready. We are learning, growing, leading, and rising. Food sovereignty is not a dream — it is our living path forward.





## WIRED FOR CHANGE: COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECTS IN MOTION

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This month has been full of progress across several community energy projects. We have launched Round Two of the **Energy Affordability Program (EAP)**, continuing to offer *free in-home energy audits and upgrades* to help families lower their electricity bills. Households are receiving energy-efficient refrigerators, freezers, LED light bulbs, smart power bars, and insulation. A new feature in this round includes *heat-pump wall units* that provide both heating and cooling, helping reduce the need for space heaters or window ACs. Twenty homes are benefiting from this round, and I'm currently waiting on the final report from **Save on Energy** so we can move forward with delivering appliances and other upgrades.



We are also making great strides through the **First Nation Community Building Retrofit Program (FNCBRP)**. With the help of **Bearg's Home Performance Solutions** and **Cambium Indigenous Professional Services (CIPS)**, we are assessing and planning upgrades for key community buildings—like the band office, health centre, and gathering hall. Improvements like weather stripping, insulation, and efficient lighting will help reduce energy use, cut costs, and extend the life of these spaces.

Another exciting project is the Solar Cabin Project, where we're preparing to install solar panels on four

*Picture of Blower Door Testing*



cabins at the North End. These cabins are used for cultural camps, land-based programs, and family gatherings. Switching from gas generators to solar will make these spaces more eco-friendly and self-sufficient.

None of this would be possible without the generous funding from the **Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO)**. I'm truly grateful for their ongoing support in meeting our community's energy needs. A special thank you to the team at **CIPS**, who have been by my side from the application process to planning and reporting. Their help has made a big difference in bringing these projects to life.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved. It's been a busy and productive month, and I look forward to continuing this work for a more sustainable future.



# A FOOD FOREST TAKES ROOT IN APITUPI ANICINAPEK NATION

## **Funded by Farm Credit Canada's AgriSpirit Fund**

This spring, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation reached a major milestone in its food sovereignty journey with the successful planting of our first Food Forest. Thanks to a generous \$20,000 grant from Farm Credit Canada through the AgriSpirit Fund, this land-based project was brought to life through the hands and hearts of our youth, Elders, and volunteers.

## **What is a Food Forest?**

A Food Forest is a self-sustaining growing system modeled after the natural structure of a forest. It includes layers of food- and medicine-producing plants—such as fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, perennial vegetables, herbs, and traditional medicines—that support one another and thrive without requiring intensive maintenance.

## **May–June 2025: Community-Led Planting**

The planting took place during May and June 2025, with youth and community members leading the effort. Trees, shrubs, and medicinal plants were carefully placed to reflect traditional teachings, biodiversity, and long-term sustainability. The project supports cultural healing, intergenerational learning, and greater access to fresh, healthy, local foods.



## ***The Food Forest will serve as:***

- A gathering place for cultural teachings and ceremonies
- An outdoor classroom for workshops on foraging, seed saving, and preservation
- A source of traditional medicine and nutritional food
- A living legacy of Indigenous knowledge and stewardship
- Pathways, signage, and educational elements will be added over time to enhance the space and ensure it serves the community for generations.

## **Get Involved**

This is only the beginning. We invite community members to continue shaping and caring for the Food Forest through upcoming work bees, workshops, and visits. Whether you want to lend a hand, share knowledge, or learn, your involvement is welcome and encouraged. Together, we are cultivating more than food—we're cultivating connection, resilience, and a vibrant future.

***Thank you Farm Credit Canada!***



# HOOKED ON TRADITION AND REEL COMMUNITY SPIRIT



**Lake Abitibi | March 29, 2025**

## **Back on the Ice with Our Community**

The 2025 Apitipi Anicinapek Nation Fishing Derby brought over 100 community members together on Lake Abitibi for a beautiful day of land-based connection, laughter, and learning. With clear skies and a shared spirit, elders and youth stood side by side in celebration of tradition and togetherness.

## **Honoring the Harvest**

More than 15 fish were caught and donated to the Culture Department freezer to support community sharing. Young fishers like Violet, Sequoia and Dreydin proudly harvested fish, showcasing the intergenerational transfer of skills and love for the land.

## **Over 100 Prizes Shared**

Thanks to generous donors and volunteers, over 100 prizes were given out—from gear to gifts for all ages. Some took home fish, some took home prizes, but everyone left with lasting memories.

## **Miigwech to All Involved**

This day wouldn't have been possible without the efforts of organizers, cooks, donors, shuttle drivers, safety helpers, and countless volunteers. Your hard work and love brought this event to life.



*Left: Violet  
Ellison*

*Below: Sequoia  
Tremblay and  
Wasaya  
Sackaney*







## BUILDING SKILLS, GROWING OUR FUTURE

**Esker Lake | July, 2025** -This summer, five youth from Apitipi Anicinapek Nation are taking part in the Outland Youth Employment Program (OYEP)—a six-week land-based education, training, and work opportunity designed specifically for Indigenous youth.

Our Nation is proud to support this ongoing partnership with OYEP, which blends traditional knowledge with practical skills in forestry, natural resource management, and leadership development. Together, OYEP and AAN are helping prepare the next generation of leaders, giving them the tools and confidence to succeed in future careers and community roles.

Funding for this program has been made possible through Indigenous Services Canada's First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy, supporting summer work experience and skills development initiatives for our youth.

This partnership also plays a key role in driving economic development for AAN. The skills gained through OYEP directly support Nation-owned ventures and community projects, including:

- Black Diamond Drilling: Preparing youth for future employment in the growing mining services sector.

- Gaining hands-on experience in cutting and processing wood for household wood stoves and producing wood chips for our in-community biomass boiler project, which supports local renewable energy solutions.
- Building capacity for sustainable forestry practices and emerging green technologies that benefit our Nation.

By engaging our youth early in programs like OYEP, we are developing a skilled workforce, fostering leadership capacity, and ensuring long-term economic sovereignty and self-reliance for Apitipi Anicinapek Nation.

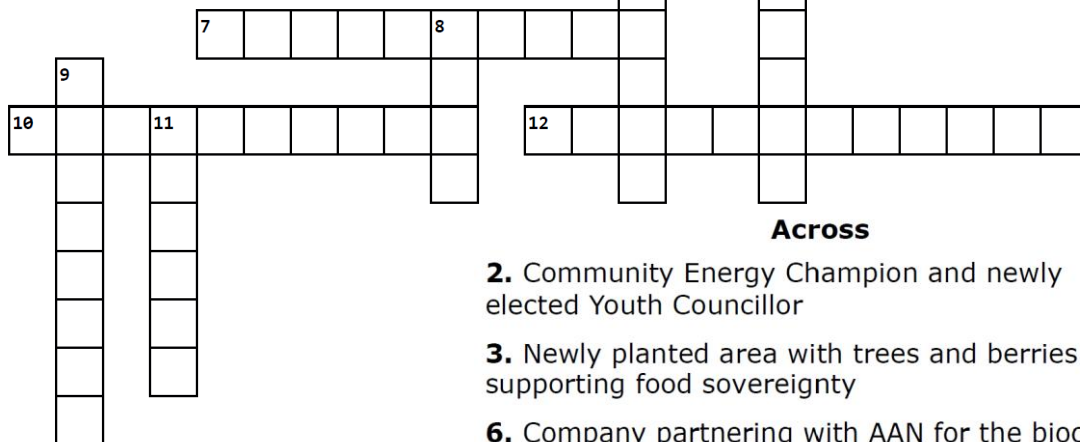
We look forward to welcoming our youth home with new skills, experiences, and inspiration to help shape AAN's growing economy.

**OUTLAND  
YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT  
PROGRAM**  
a dexterra community initiative

# THE BEATDOWN

## Test Your Knowledge!

Get ready to put your community knowledge to the test! In this edition of **BEATDOWN**, we're stepping it up with a brand-new Apitipi Beat Crossword Puzzle.



This fun challenge is packed with clues from across the newsletter—covering our latest projects, community leaders, food sovereignty efforts, and exciting youth programs. Complete the crossword and send us a picture of your finished puzzle to enter our raffle for multiple \$100 gift cards.

Submit entries to:  
[allison.paul@apitipi.ca](mailto:allison.paul@apitipi.ca)

 **Deadline: September 15, 2025**

Let's celebrate our vibrant spirit, share a few laughs, and see who can crack the puzzle first!

### Across

- 2.** Community Energy Champion and newly elected Youth Councillor
- 3.** Newly planted area with trees and berries supporting food sovereignty
- 6.** Company partnering with AAN for the biochar project
- 7.** Nation's major biochar project acronym signed with Airex Energy
- 10.** Structure enabling extended growing seasons for crops

### Down

- 1.** Organic recycling project enriching soil health
- 4.** Campus where the youth retreat was hosted
- 5.** Youth gathering location for energy education and connection to nature
- 8.** Summer youth employment and forestry training program
- 9.** Food Security Champion leading food sovereignty efforts
- 11.** Essential initiative improving efficiency and sustainability
- 12.** Revitalized community garden named after a traditional knowledge keeper



# IN THE PIPELINE

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## AUGUST

|                                      |                                                          |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 <sup>th</sup> to 17 <sup>th</sup> | Apitipi Rising: Elder Youth Gathering 2025               |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> to 17 <sup>th</sup> | AAN Annual Pow Wow                                       |
| 21 <sup>st</sup>                     | Leading Clouds Farmers Market                            |
| 21 <sup>st</sup>                     | AAN Preschool Graduation                                 |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup>                     | AAN Annual Golf Tournament                               |
| 24 <sup>th</sup>                     | Food Preservation Program with Choose Life               |
| 26 <sup>th</sup>                     | Apitipi Anicinapek Nation Chief and Council Inauguration |

## SEPTEMBER

|                                    |                                                    |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 10 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> | Northeastern Ontario First Nations Economic Summit |
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# CLOSING REMARKS

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As we wrap up this edition of **Apitipi Beat**, we want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible progress our community has made together. Every project highlighted in these pages—from advancing food security and renewable energy to strengthening our youth programs and business ventures—represents the dedication and hard work of so many in our Nation. These accomplishments are not just milestones; they are stepping stones toward a future of sovereignty, sustainability, and unity for the next seven generations.

Your voices, participation, and support are the heartbeat of everything we do. It is through your feedback, volunteerism, and collective vision that we continue to grow stronger as a Nation. We encourage everyone to stay engaged, share ideas, and take pride in the achievements we're building together.

On behalf of the Economic Development team, we express our deepest gratitude to all community members, leadership, and partners who stand with us on this journey. Miigwetch for your unwavering commitment to lifting our Nation. Together, we are shaping a vibrant future rooted in our culture, guided by our values, and strengthened by our connection to each other and the land. Let's continue to rise, learn, and build as one.



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