



Pikangikum First Nation Working Group (PWG)

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PWG Report on visit to Pikangikum First Nation: 13 to 17 August 2017 **By: Bob White, David Steeves and Kim Sigurdson**

This is a report on the outcome of meetings held from August 13 to 17, 2017 with Pikangikum Chief Dean Owen and Council and members of the community involved in PWG projects already operating or planned for. Photos of the community members involved in the meetings can be found in the following link created by Dave:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/1t2ejlzas3ps9x/PikVisit_17Aug2017.pptx?dl=0

Itinerary for visit:

- A. Meet with Chief and Council to discuss:
 1. The Pikangikum Youth Lumber Cooperative:
 2. Phase 2 and 3 of Water project
 3. Support for projects requested by the Eenchokay Birchstick School
- B. Evaluate effectiveness of retrofit of 10 homes in Phase 2 with water system
- C. Meet with Whitefeather Elders and Youth for the Pikangikum Youth Lumber Cooperative
- D. Meet with School Principal and OPP Representatives to discuss potential School programs

Outcome of meetings:

A. Meeting with Chief and Council

1. The Pikangikum Youth Lumber Cooperative (PYLC):

The objective of the Pikangikum Youth Lumber cooperative is to enable the youth of Pikangikum and the Elders of the Whitefeather Initiative in Pikangikum to produce and sell housing grade lumber by providing them with the training and equipment needed to start the business.

The total budget for the PYLC is approximately \$400,000 to cover the cost of:

- Training on the safe usage of the portable sawmill, plainer chain saws and skidder;
- Equipment such as the portable sawmill, plainer, chain saws, skidder, truck, snow mobile and boat;
- Safety equipment and outdoor clothing;
- Refurbishing of Quonset hut and storage trailer.

To date Pikangikum has received \$100,000 from the Catholic Church's 'Moving Forward Together' Campaign. They have also obtained funding from the Government of Canada to pay salaries to the youth while they are in training but nothing to cover the cost of the training or equipment or preparation of the site for the PYLC.

The site for the lumber mill has been identified as an empty Quonset hut located on the main road from the airport into town. The hut has lots of space but requires major refurbishing before it is operational. The PWG is getting proposal from contractors to refurbish the hut, expected to be ready for occupancy by November 2017.

Chief and Council have identified the youth and the Project Coordinator for the PYLC.

The PWG has had a number of meetings with the Whitefeather Elders and as a result, 2 of their members have agreed to oversee the development and implementation of the PYLC and provide the youth with training and ongoing guidance.

The first training will be on the safe use of chain saws and the training will take place on November 6 and 7 2017. Additional training on the safe use of the saw mill, planer and skidder will take place when the home of the PYLC has been refurbished and ready for occupation.

Given the limited source of funds to start the project, Chief and Council and the PWG have been contacting organizations that could provide the PYLC with opportunities to generate revenue as soon as possible. As a result, the PYLC has a contract to provide firewood to Pikangikum Elders and other vulnerable families and have been offered access to the trees cut for the power line from Red Lake to Pikangikum by Wataynikaneyap Power, the organization responsible for the design and construction of the power line.

Wataynikaneyap Power is also considering hiring the PYLC crew to work on the power project.

2. Phase 2 and 3 of Water project:

The retrofit of 10 homes in Phase 2 is almost finished. The work was managed by Habitat for Humanity Manitoba with funding provided by the Anglican Church of Canada's Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) and other organizations such as the Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and Atlas Copco Mining and Rock Excavation Technique Canada. The PWRDF will probably have sufficient funds to retrofit another 10 homes in Phase 4 by 2018.

The work has been done by the 5 new young people from Pikangikum, led by 2 of the 6-young people that completed the retrofit of the first 10 homes in Phase 1.

Pikangikum has received approximately \$330,000 in funding from the Governments of Canada and Ontario to retrofit an additional 15 homes with a water and wastewater system in Phase 3. Two of the young people trained in Phase 1 will lead the project which will be implemented by them and the 5 youth that have been working on Phase 2.

Materials for the retrofit of the 15 more homes in Phase 3 cannot be brought in until the ice road opens up in late December. The level of the Barrens Lake and River which is the only means of transporting goods into the community except for the ice road and

airplanes is at an all-time low so that the barges that carry material are not able to operate. Food and fuel for the diesel electrical generating system must be flown in.

While that will have a significant positive impact on the quality of life of the families living in the 45 homes that will have water by the end of 2018, there will still be another 350 or more homes with over 2500 people that do not have water.

Pikangikum First Nation and the PWG want the Government of Canada to provide all of the homes in Pikangikum with safe potable drinking water and upgrade the Water Treatment Plant and Wastewater lagoon.

If the Government of Canada is not willing to provide the people of Pikangikum with water and wastewater services as recommended in the 2010 National Engineering Assessment (NEA) of Water and Wastewater Facilities then it must consider other, less expensive options to PROVIDE ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF PIKANGIKUM WITH WATER, IMMEDIATELY.

The 2010 NEA report indicated that the cost of providing the 430 of the 450 homes in Pikangikum that did not have water and wastewater facilities at that time with water and wastewater facilities would require a capital outlay of \$70,080,000 with an expected life cycle cost of \$82,462,000.

Since the fall of 2011, the Pikangikum Working Group has trained 11 Pikangikum young women and men to install water and wastewater systems in 20 homes at a cost of approximately \$20 to 40,000 per home as opposed to approximately \$200,000 per home that the 2010 National Engineering Assessment (NEA) of Water and Wastewater Facilities says it would cost.

Chief and Council has also requested the Governments of Canada to conduct an engineering assessment to determine the feasibility of connecting homes in a cluster near water outlets to the water outlets and installing raised septic beds to increase the effectiveness of the system and reduce the need for more water and wastewater trucks that increase the danger of an injury to community members walking on the roads. This would provide 20 to 30 more homes with water.

Next steps:

1. Work on Chief and Council on behalf of the people of Pikangikum First Nation that do not have water in their homes to get the Government of Canada to provide all of the homes in Pikangikum with safe potable drinking water and upgrade the Water Treatment Plant and Wastewater lagoon.
2. Follow-up with the Governments of Canada on Chief and Council's request that the Government conduct an engineering assessment to determine the feasibility of connecting homes in a cluster near water outlets to the water outlets and installing raised septic beds

B. Evaluate effectiveness of retrofit of 10 homes in Phase 2 with water system

The PWG along with Jose Zarate, representing the Anglican Church of Canada's Primate's World Relief and Development Fund visited each of the 10 homes being retrofit with a water and wastewater system in Phase 2.

The families that were getting the systems were delighted and already using the toilets and bathtubs even before the walls were in place and the kitchen sink and taps installed. One family with a large number of young children noted that there was a strong smell of overheating coming from the water pump. It turned out that the children had never seen a toilet and kept flushing it to see it work. The constant running of the water pump caused the pump to run continuously.

None of the homes have had the kitchen sink and taps installed at the time of the visit but the installation was planned to start within a week.

The installation of the extensions on the homes for the water and wastewater tanks was well done and designed to withstand the elements and inquisitive children.

The Head Nurse at the Pikangikum Nursing Station, Brian Lepage and his wife have volunteered to visit the 10 families with some of the trainees to ensure that the family members understand how the system works and know what to do if one of the 2 warning lights for the levels of the water and wastewater go on.

The final report on Phase 2 will be prepared in February, after we have had an opportunity to talk with the 10 families to ensure none of them has experienced freezing pipes during one of the frequent power failures expected.

Next steps:

1. Work with Health Canada to ensure continuous monitoring of homes that have been retrofit with a water and wastewater system in Phase 1 and 2 to ensure safety and quality of the water and resolutions of problems identified.
2. Meet with the families in the 10 homes that have been retrofit in Phase 2 to ensure the system is operating as intended and none of the water pipes have frozen.

C. Meetings with Whitefeather Elders and Youth for the Pikangikum Youth Lumber Cooperative

One of the key components of the PYLC is the participation of the Whitefeather Forest Elders who will provide oversight to the development and implementation of the project and provide the youth with ongoing training and development related to the forest and land, the spirit and Sustainable Forestry. In order to get their support, the PWG held 3 half day meetings with the Whitefeather Elders to discuss the Coop and get 2 of their members to agree to oversee the development and implementation of the PYLC and provide the youth with training and ongoing guidance.

The 2 Elders that joined the PWG are Matthew Strang and Joe King.

Since the visit in August, all members of the PYLC have been identified and have agreed to participate in the Coop.

The 3 youth and the coordinator are scheduled to receive training on the safe operation of a chain saw on November 6 and 7. Chief and Council have approved the PWG proposal to provide chain saws and safety equipment for each of the youth.

The portable sawmill has been refurbished and will be delivered to the home of the PYLC as soon as the Quonset hut has been refurbished and the ice road is open.

An insulated and heated trailer has been identified in Pikangikum and it will be moved to the home of the PYLC to be used to store equipment and provide a meeting space for the PYLC members as soon as the purchase has been approved by Chief and Council.

As soon as the youth have completed their training in the safe use of chain saws they will start cutting trees for firewood for the Elders and other vulnerable families in Pikangikum. They will be paid to cut the firewood.

They will spend the winter building a stockpile of trees to be used for lumber using the portable saw mill.

Next steps:

1. Identify additional sources of funding for the youth coop.
2. Identify organizations that can provide the PYLC with education and training on how to operate a business providing contracting services, cutting firewood and producing and using lumber to refurbish existing homes and build new homes.
3. Chief and Council to meet with the Whitefeather Elders to ensure the the PYLC get the cut trees and an opportunity to work on the Wataynikaneyap Power project.
4. Youth to complete the chain saw training and participate in training sessions with the 2 Whitefeather Elders.
5. Chain saws and related equipment to be delivered to the PYLC.
6. Quonset hut to be refurbished.
7. Office and storage trailer to be delivered to the PYLC site.
8. Cut trees to be delivered by Wataynikaneyap Power to the Quonset hut to be cut into firewood.

D. Meetings with School Principal and OPP Representatives to discuss potential School programs

The PWG met with Mr. Kurt Mac Rae, the Secondary Principal of Eenchokay Birchstick School Pikangikum First Nations to discuss the list of new programming that the School would like to offer their students if the funding were available.

The list was generated by the school administration along with some of the students. The ideas are extensions of current programming that is being run and has been very successful. They include:

| | Program equipment | Quantity |
|----|--|-----------------|
| 1. | Used vans: Dedicated Transportation for the School's Youth Programming. We would like to purchase 2 used vans to allow us to increase the number of activities running for our youth. | 2 |
| 2. | Boat and motor: We would like to purchase a boat and motor for many of the land based activities that the school runs for youth programming in remote locations only accessible by boat in the spring and fall. This boat would be dedicated just for this purpose. | 1 |

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|----|---|---|
| 3. | Clothing for the Pikangikum Search & Rescue Team | Jackets & Pants |
| 4. | Equipment for other minor outdoor sports development programs | Soccer Balls, Lacrosse equipment Hockey Equipment |
| 5. | Basketballs for outdoor courts | 5 |
| 6. | Art Supplies to support existing after school programs including for making hand drums and jingle dresses | Variety of supplies (paints, beads, paper, brushes .. etc) |
| 7. | Expand Secondary Music Program in the area of woodwinds, French horn, clarinets, trumpets ... etc. | Trumpets X 5 Trombones X 5 Clarinets X 10 French Horns X 5 Flutes X 10 Saxophones X 10 Drum Set X 1 |
| 8. | A pair of indoor shoes for students in need. Students are required to leave their street shoes at the door and many do not have an extra pair to use at school. | |
| 9. | Gardening: greenhouse, etc | |

Two of PWG's founding members, Fr. Vaughan Quinn and his sister Martha have offered to contribute \$70,000 to the cost of the above school programs. They have already made arrangements to contribute to the cost of the clothing worn by the Rangers. Unfortunately because of the lack of a charitable organization involved, the Quinn's will have to pay taxes on the \$70,000, thus reducing the impact of the contribution.

The meeting also included members of the Ontario Provincial Police who were working with the Principal to develop programs related to Eco Tourism and search and rescue.

The search and rescue initiative is being called the Pikangikum Rangers and it will provide a dedicated team of people ready to respond to emergencies. In early August, shortly after the deaths of 2, 12-year-old children, the Rangers responded to a report that another 12-year-old girl had run-away from home. She was found safe later by the School Principal.

Next steps:

1. Identify additional funding to cover the cost of equipment for the Eenchokay Birchstick School projects.
2. Identify a charitable organization that will participate in the project to ensure donors receive a tax receipt.

Thank you for your ongoing solidarity and support for the people of Pikangikum First Nation
Bob White, Dave Steeves, Kim Sigurdson
Pikangikum First Nation Working Group