



Governance Working Group Overview

Working Groups and the Anishinabek Nation Governance Initiatives

The Anishinabek Nation is currently in the process of implementing two self-governance initiatives to restore inherent jurisdictional rights to Anishinabek First Nations and their people in areas of Education and Governance. The mandates for these initiatives have come from Grand Council Resolutions that are directed by the Chiefs in Assembly, as part of an overall Nation-Building strategy that includes the implementation of the Anishinabek Declaration 1980.

These resolutions, which are implemented by the Leadership and technical staff of the Anishinabek Nation, have mandated initiatives such as the Restoration of Jurisdiction Project, the Constitution Development Project, the E'Dbendaagzijing Citizenship Law, the Anishinabek Child Well-Being Law, and the Education and Governance Agreement Negotiations.

The Anishinabek Nation has been negotiating with Canada for the restoration of jurisdiction in Education for over 20 years, and following a successful ratification in December 2016, the Kinoomaadziwin Education Board is forging ahead with the Anishinabek Education System (AES) start-up and implementation planning, and nearing conclusion of the Master Education Agreement with the province of Ontario. Governance has been in negotiations for more than 10 years and the Agreement is nearing completion and preparing for a vote in May/June 2019. Upon completion, both self-governance agreements will enable First Nations with law-making authorities in the specific areas of Education and Governance.

As part of the on-going negotiations and the development of the two agreements, First Nation Chiefs recognized the importance of having grassroots input into the negotiations, and therefore mandated the Anishinabek Nation to coordinate the development of two working groups.

Upon that direction, the Education Working Group (EWG) and the Governance Working Group (GWG) were created to support the respective agreements. While the EWG's work has concluded, their efforts contributed to the successful ratification of the Education Agreement. The GWG will be continuing their commitment and lending their support to the Governance Agreement to have a successful ratification outcome in the upcoming vote in May/June 2019.

Governance Working Group - Mandate

The GWG is a supportive body for the Governance Negotiations. It is comprised of First Nation members who either have a background in administration, and/or finance and/or are responsible for the governance issues of their individual First Nations.

One of the main goals of the GWG is to provide grassroots input and direction to the Anishinabek Nation negotiators to ensure First Nations issues and needs are addressed within the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement. A Terms of Reference guides the GWG in its activities to assist the Main Table, as well as their First Nations. The Terms of Reference also outlines the scope and intent of the GWG, and the relationship between the Participating First Nations, the Governance Working Group, and the Anishinabek Nation/Canada Main Tables.



Other goals of the GWG include:

- 1) To support Participating First Nations and the members to prepare for Governance under the new Agreement.
- 2) To assist in raising the awareness and understanding of the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement.
- 3) To support the development of Agreement “Champions” in each Participating First Nation.



As the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement is still under negotiation, members of the GWG meet frequently, to advise on and support the negotiating process. After each meeting takes place, GWG members are responsible for reporting back to their Chiefs and Councils, and community members, on the status of the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement.

The communities that are currently represented at the Governance Working Group meetings include:

Northern Superior:

- Art Fisher, *Biigtigong Nishnaabeg*
- Erin Shaw, *Biigtigong Nishnaabeg*
- Kim Peltier, *Fort William First Nation*
- Kyle McLaurin, *Namaygoosisagagun*
- Gimaa Kwe Pat Tangie, *Michipicoten First Nation*
- Evelyn Stone, *Michipicoten First Nation*
- Louis Kwisiwa, *Pic Mobert First Nation*
- Brandon Gandette, *Pic Mobert First Nation*
- Lionel Desmoulin, *Pic Mobert First Nation*
- Melvin Hardy, *Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek*
- Myles Becker, *Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek*
- Cynthia Wynne, *Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek*

Lake Huron:

- Laura Mayer, *Mississauga First Nation*
- Bob Pitfield, *Wahnapiatae First Nation*
- Cory Goulais, *Nipissing First Nation*

Lake Huron (continued):

- Peter Benzi Nahwegahbow, *Aundeck Omni Kaning*
- Sandra Wabegijig, *Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory*
- Noella Jacko, *Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory*
- Kayla Jackson, *Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory*
- Angela Shawanda, *Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory*
- Monica Homer, *Atikameksheng Anishnawbek*
- Chief Dean Roy, *Sheshegwaning First Nation*
- William Diabo, *Magnetawan First Nation*

South East:

- Barbara Sarazin, *Algonquins of Pikwakanagan*
- Deborah Jacobs, *Curve Lake First Nation*
- Chief Phyllis Williams, *Curve Lake First Nation*

South West:

- Chief Roger Thomas, *Munsee Delaware Nation*
- Marley Fisher, *Munsee Delaware Nation*
- Candice Snake, *Munsee Delaware Nation*

If you require additional information about the GWG or how to have your community representative participate in the GWG activities, please contact Esther Gilbank, ROJ Projects Coordinator: 705-497- 9127 / 1-877-702-5200 ext. 2275, or by e-mail: esther.gilbank@anishinabek.ca

The next scheduled Governance Working Group meeting will take place on February 7 and 8, 2017
– Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.