



# BIMOSE

TRIBAL COUNCIL

# NEWSLETTER



**SPRING / SUMMER 2025**

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We're excited to bring you the first edition of our 2025 newsletter, packed with updates and stories highlighting activities across our 10 First Nation communities within Bimose Tribal Council. This quarter has welcomed new faces, launched important projects, and celebrated cultural events that strengthen our connections.

From the arrival of talented team members to traditions and educational milestones, this newsletter showcases our shared journey. We are committed to honoring our rich heritage while embracing new opportunities that lie ahead.

Take a look to explore what's been happening and what's on the horizon.

Thank you for being an essential part of our vibrant community network!

Executive Director  
Fawn Wapioke





### **BEVERLY WILLIAMSON - POLICY ANALYST**

Boozhoo!

I hope everyone is enjoying summer with family and friends. Indeed, it has been a while since our last newsletter. In my work, I have been taking a systematic approach to evaluating and comparing policy options to update our personnel policies. I have assisted Bimose Tribal Council's entities to fine-tune their existing logos to enhance cohesion. These logos will be presented very soon!

In June, Bimose Tribal Council has hired a new Social Media Coordinator, Kim Leduc. She is actively working and collaborating with our Bimose programs and entities with photography work, website management and social media pages.

I always look forward to working with our Bimose team and communities to help progress some of our objectives and willing to work as a positive contributor to the Bimose team.

Projects, Collaborations and Meetings:

- Personnel Committee Meetings: Personnel Policies
- Spring Feast
- Anishinaabemowin Spring Feast
- Monthly Managers Meetings
- Monthly Lodge Meetings
- Quarterly Board Meetings



Miigwech!

### **WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES**

During the first quarter, Bimose Tribal Council had the pleasure of expanding its team by welcoming six new employees. We extend a warm welcome to them, each of whom brings a wealth of experience and a unique set of skills that we believe will contribute significantly to the ongoing success and excellence of our organization. We are excited to see the positive impact they will undoubtedly have in their respective roles!



**BiMOSE**  
TRIBAL COUNCIL

**Patrick Kavanaugh**

Economic Development Coordinator

**Kim Leduc**

Social Media Coordinator



**BiMOSE**  
HUB

**Nathan Copenace**

Operator in Charge



**Kiizhiik**  
EDUCATION  
CORPORATION

**Lyn Williams**

Kindergarten Readiness Coordinator



**ANISHINAABE**  
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Paula Gabryluk**

Anishinaabe Student Mental Health Counsellor  
Beaver Brae Secondary School

**Shawn Kavanaugh**

Anishinaabe Student Mental Health Counsellor  
Dryden High School



**TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT UPDATE**  
**KAZU LAFFIN - TECHNICAL SERVICES ADVISOR**

The Technical Services Department, comprised of engineers, technicians, and officers provides technical support to member First Nation communities on various capital projects, which include; inspections, assessments, and technical advisory services. Below are some of our recent highlights we'd like to share with readers:

**Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation Watermain Replacement Project**

Replacement and expansion to the First Nation's watermain distribution network, the project aims to replace all remaining cast iron piping within the community, and provide over 20 additional housing lots for future development. The project is expected to be completed by Fall 2025.



**Wabaseemoong 63-lot Subdivision Project**

The first block of lots have been completed with modular housing already being installed. The project had been delayed during the evacuation of Wabaseemoong from the threat of encroaching wildfires. Efforts from the community's emergency response team and dedicated first responders ensured the First Nation's safety and values protections program was in large part a success, allowing the construction crew to promptly return to work with an extended completion date of Winter 2025.



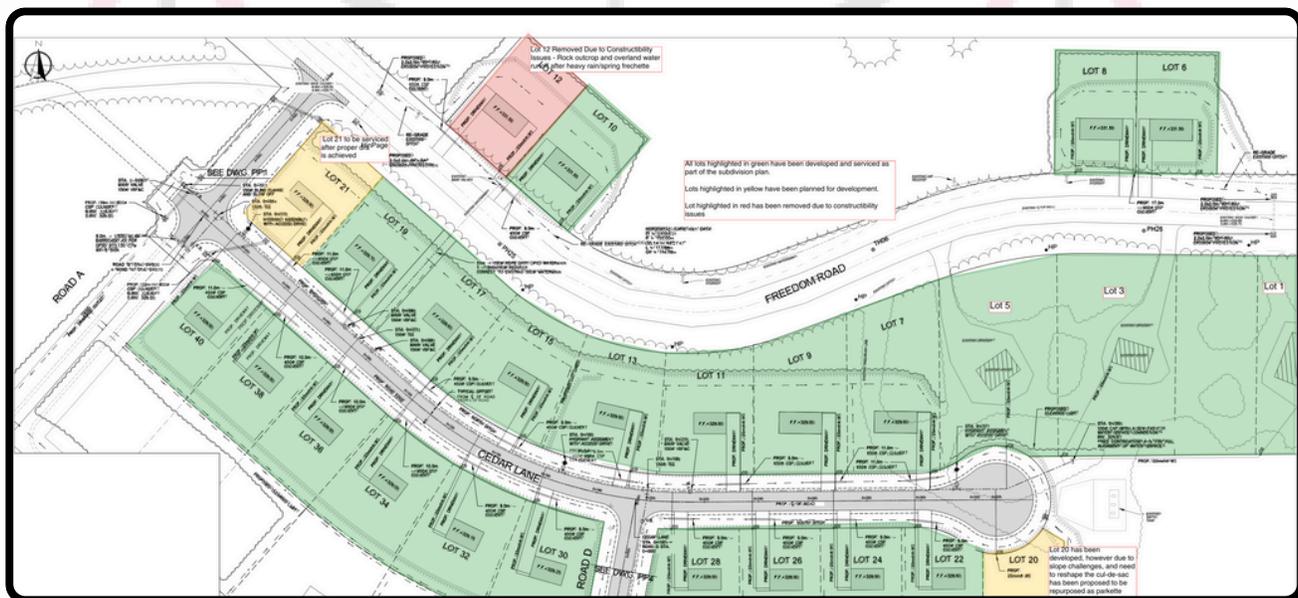


# BIMOSE

## TRIBAL COUNCIL

### Shoal Lake 40 25-lot Subdivision

Pilot program utilizing the First Nation's own construction company and economic development branch Kekekoziibii Development Corporation (KDC), the subdivision is expected to be completed by Spring 2026. Shoal Lake 40, in partnership with First Nation's Engineering Services and KDC had the opportunity to present this project as a case study during this year's Ontario First Nations Technical Services Conference.





# BIMOSE

## TRIBAL COUNCIL

### Housing Inspections

The Technical Services Department's building inspectors continue to support housing construction within First Nations, with over 60 inspections completed last quarter. Below are some examples of new housing construction, which have been recently inspected by our team.



### Fire Department Training

We continue to assist First Nations in developing their fire departments to increase fire fighting capacity. Recently, we have conducted training to assist volunteer fire fighters in operating and maintaining their community fire trucks.



Bimose Tribal Council is excited to announce that the Northern Ontario First Nations Environment Conference (NOFNEC) is coming to Kenora on October 8–9, 2025!

This important gathering brings together First Nations leaders, environmental stewards and technicians, and community members to share knowledge, build partnerships, and explore innovative solutions rooted in both traditional knowledge and modern science. We are proud to host this event on Treaty #3 territory and look forward to welcoming you to Kenora!

This year's conference is hosted in collaboration with Windigo First Nations Council, Wabun Tribal Council, Matawa First Nations, Nokiwin Tribal Council, Keewaytinook Okimakanak Chiefs, Mushkegowuk Council, Waabnoong Bemjiwang Association of First Nations, Pwi-Di-Goo-Zing Ne-Yaa-Zhing Advisory Services, Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC)



*Two-Eyed Seeing:*  
Uniting Traditional Land Stewardship  
with Modern Environmental Innovation



## Mark Your Calendar!

**NOFNEC 2025 IS COMING**

Clarion Lakeside Inn and Conference Centre, Kenora  
**October 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
*Are you planning to join us?*



**SP-100 TRAINING - TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
ELIZABETH BLYTH - EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR**

Members from across Bimose Tribal Council communities were hard at work completing their SP-100 Wildland Firefighter training, alongside chainsaw operation, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), and first aid courses.

These skills are critical for protecting our communities during wildfire season and beyond - and it's inspiring to see so many people stepping up to build their knowledge and strengthen our collective preparedness. Not only does this training equip participants with the tools to respond safely and effectively, it also fosters nation-to-nation support and teamwork across our region.

A huge congratulations to everyone who took part and dedicated their time to keeping our communities safe. Their efforts make a real difference!

We would like to thank Murray Macquarrie at Specialty Services Agency, Fin and Feather Lodge for hosting and the entire team at the Dryden Fire Management Headquarters.



### GICHI-MIKINAAK LODGE

The Board of Directors and management of Bimose Tribal Council visited Gichi-Mikinaak Lodge for a meeting and tour of the camp facilities and lodge property. Howard and Sheila Copenace graciously conducted the Lodge Feast, with participation from children of Kiizhik School. In a symbolic gesture of stability and transformation at Gichi-Mikinaak Lodge, the Executive Director and several staff members were presented with turtle shell rattles.



Our Elders have emphasized the importance of establishing a culturally safe environment for the First Nation communities we serve, as well as our guests. To ensure an exceptional experience, the lodge is currently undergoing upgrades in anticipation of welcoming our guests. Additionally, our boats have been launched to provide opportunities for guests to engage in fishing and practice their cultural traditions.



Looking ahead, Gichi-Mikinaak Lodge will host the Anishinaabemowin Camp from August 11-14, 2025, aimed at promoting the sustainability and expansion of Anishinaabe language knowledge.

**Anishinaabemowin Mamanalotawin**

**August 11-14, 2025**  
Gichi-Mikinaak Lodge  
Vermilion Bay, Ontario

**Who Should Attend?**  
Anishinaabemowin Speakers and Learners

**Registration**  
Submitting your registration form does not guarantee a spot in the camp. You will need to wait for contact from the organizers to confirm your participation.  
Priority will be given to members from Bimose Community

**Accommodations**  
Limited accommodations available onsite. All accommodations are shared. All attendees must fill out a registration form. Tent camping space available.  
Off site accommodations available in Vermilion Bay at participants own expense.

Member Registration      Non-Member Registration

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: July 31, 2025**  
NO LATE REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED



**BIMOSE SPRING FEAST - NIISAACHEWAN ANISHINAABE NATION  
JULIAN JORDAN - ANISHINAABE WIIDOOKAA-GAGEWI**

May 30, 2025 - Elder Judy Da Silva led the Spring Feasting Ceremony for us with Community Host Drum "Giizis Shoomis" rendering the ceremonial songs. During the feasting ceremony, Elder Judy conducted a special water ceremony to help aid communities and people affected by the wildfires.

She emphasized and prayed for more water so that all living things affected by the wildfires including the water, trees, rocks and the animals and beings that reside on the lands could flourish again.



Judy also shared the importance for men, the fire keepers, to pray to the flames of candles, for the fire to take it easy on us living on Earth. A Traditional walleye feast was prepared by cooks from the community of Niisaachewan and a majority of Bimose employees were in attendance.

Miigwech to the drummers for also making the ceremony a success because without them, the ceremony couldn't happen. This event was a great success for Bimose employees to come together and continue our traditional way of life through ceremony.



**BIMOSE  
HUB**

**JON KOCIS - HUB MANAGER - UPDATE**

The Bimose HUB, which moved into its new home in October 2024, was recently honoured with an Anishinaabe name during a naming ceremony led by Elder Phyllis Shaugabay. The name gifted to us is Gaagigegiizhigoo-Biitang Bimose-Agamig.

Gaagigegiizhigoo-Biitang is the name of a spirit who has long inhabited the land where the HUB now stands—his presence predating even the early trading routes of this region. This spirit generously gifted his name to our facility, and we are deeply honoured to carry it. Agamig is a ceremonial word meaning lodge, symbolizing the HUB's role as a place of movement, gathering, healing, and support. (cont'd)



Our opening ceremony was guided by Elder Judy Da Silva, who provided sacred direction for how the space should be cared for and honoured. Following her teachings, we established a Medicine Area for self-healing, created a designated ceremonial fire pit, and were instructed to be gifted with an Eagle Feather.

We were deeply humbled to receive the Eagle Feather during our naming ceremony. It now rests proudly in our Medicine Area, alongside a beautiful copper water pitcher and cup gifted to us by Elder Judy—symbols of healing, balance, and respect for the spirit of water.



**SPRING LANGUAGE FEAST - NIISAACHEWAN ANISHINAABE NATION  
JULIAN JORDAN - ANISHINAABE WIIDOOKAA-GAGEWI**

June 5, 2025 - Elder Howard Copenace led the ceremony portion of the event, with Elders Judy Da Silva, Robert Charles Greene and Tom Favell in support. Drums in attendance were community host drum Giizis Shoomis, Gaagigekiizhik School Drum, and Manidoo Dewe'Igan.

Special invited guest was Donald Kakaygeesick who is the pipe carrier of an original pipe used during the Treaty 3 signing in 1873. Knowledge keeper Lester Kavanaugh was Donald's shkaabewis, which means he assisted Donald as his ceremonial helper.



The day started with opening songs from the drums, followed by the ceremonial feast led by Aakawe'Bines (Howard Copenace) who started with an opening prayer, and welcoming remarks by Executive Director Fawn Wapioke.

Elder Judy Da Silva took care of praying for the water and Elder Sheila Copenace led a group of young girls from the Gaagigekiizhik School to sing a ceremonial water song.

Following the opening ceremony, Donald Kakaygeesick shared a presentation which highlighted how "The Treaty 3 Pipe" was passed onto him to carry and the important responsibilities that come with being a pipe carrier.

Manidoo Dewe'Igan rendered an honour song for Donald Kakaygeesick to acknowledge him. People then had the opportunity to enjoy eating a walleye shore lunch catered by community cooks from Niisachewan.

Anishinaabe Wiidookaa'Gewi Coordinator Julian Jordan took care of carrying out the Traditional protocols and staying on track with the agenda. After lunch Howard led us through a traditional give-away and then closed with a traveling song from the host drum Giizis Shoomis.



## ANISHINAABEMOWIN LANGUAGE BOWL - EAGLE LAKE FIRST NATION PAT COPENACE - ANISHINAABE LANGUAGE & CULTURAL SPECIALIST

May 23, 2025 - The theme for our Language Bowl is Language revitalization. This allows our children and youth to freely speak in our ancestral language, in ways that allow them to feel comfortable and build their confidence in speaking and understanding Anishinaabemowin.

The Language Bowl is an annual event and was held at Migisi-Sahgaigan. They are the retaining holders of the Language Bowl Trophy and the winning school hosts the following year. The Language Bowl is grounded in culture lead by our drum, prayer and song followed by a giveaway. We are teaching children the protocols, the songs and of course, our Anishinaabemowin language.



This event was well-attended and received many compliments from students, teachers, parents and Elders alike. The success of the event would not happen without the support of the community, schools, educators, students. Participants were all awarded for their commitment to speak and read in Anishinaabemowin, even the educators.

We need to support and encourage our students, at every opportunity, to immerse themselves in our Ojibwe Language. Bimose Tribal Council is teaching and the communities' schools are picking up these teachings, and holding their own Language Bowls everywhere now.

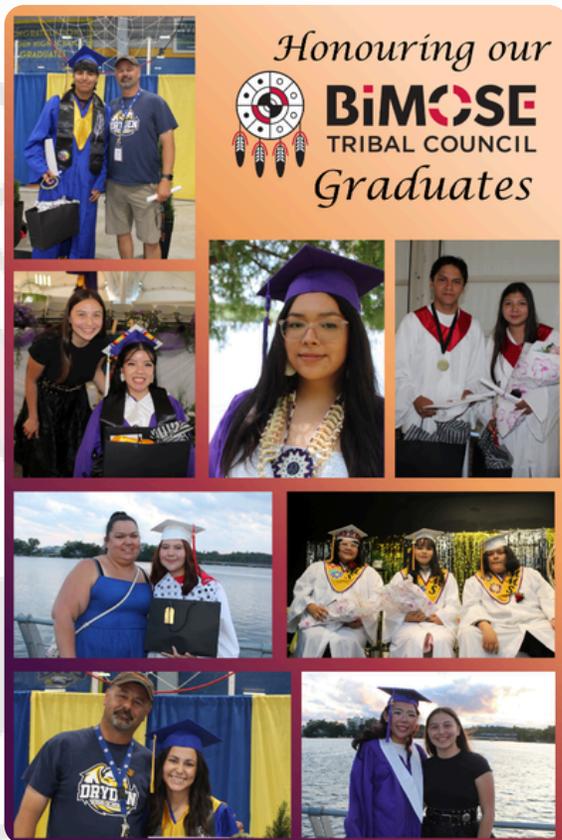


**GRADUATION GIFTS 2025  
EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

We were absolutely thrilled to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our 2025 high school graduates from our 10 Member First Nation communities. The Bimose Tribal Council Education Partnership Program team took great pride in attending various graduation ceremonies to personally congratulate these exceptional students. In recognition of their hard work and dedication, we presented each graduate with special gift bags, symbolizing the community's pride and support for their accomplishments. These gift bags included a watch, a smudge kit, and a cozy Bimose sweater, each item chosen to mark this significant milestone in the lives of our graduates.

We are immensely proud of the commitment and perseverance these students have demonstrated throughout their educational journey. Their achievements are a testament to their hard work and the support of their families, educators, and communities.

As these young individuals embark on the next chapter of their lives, whether it's pursuing further education, entering the workforce, or exploring new opportunities, we want them to know that their community stands firmly behind them, cheering them on every step of the way. The journey they are about to undertake is filled with endless possibilities, and their roots in our community will always provide strength and inspiration!



**GAAGAGEKIIZHIK ELEMENTARY AND  
BIMOSE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL GRAD 2025**

We gathered to celebrate the incredible achievements of our Kindergarten and Grade 8 classes from Gaagagekiizhik Elementary, as well as the Grade 12 class from Bimose Community High School.

Lazarus Constant received a \$500 bursary from the Kenora and Lake of the Woods Community Foundation and a star blanket from Tim Kavanaugh. Kaycee Bunn was honored with gifts, including a monetary gift and a star blanket, from Councillor Carson Benn.

Both high school graduates, Lazarus and Kaycee, also received smudge kits, carry-all satchels, and tablets for their future studies, thanks to Samantha Cameron from Bimose Jordan's Principle.

We are immensely proud of all our graduates and wish them a bright future and a wonderful summer!





## Gaagagegiizhigook Childcare Centre

### GAAGAGEGIIZHIGOOK CHILD CARE CENTRE MICHELLE MEEKIS – SUPERVISOR

Our goal is to bring Anishinaabemowin back into the homes of the Anishinaabe people. One way of achieving this goal is to build Anishinaabemowin knowledge and fluency among children ages 18 months – 5 yrs.

We incorporate the Seven Teachings into our program; Courage, Love, Humility, Honesty, Respect, Truth and Wisdom. Also, by focusing on the four foundations of "How does Learning Happen" using the following philosophical guiding principles; Belonging, Engagement, Well-Being and Expression.

We offer language learning support and educational resources to our children, families, and staff so they can incorporate Anishinaabemowin into their programming and daily routines. We aim to engage parents, families, and anyone interested in learning Anishinaabemowin with their family and using language in their homes.

#### Gaagagegiizhigook Ganawenimaawasowin Team

RECE Preschool, Amelia Thurston  
RECE Preschool, Renee Letander  
RECE Preschool, Sonalben Shah  
RECE Toddler, Crystal Copenace  
RECE Toddler, Nadia Imran  
Support Toddler, Frankie Iverson  
Nutrition, Sierra Keno  
Janitor, Jackie Fontaine



#### This summer we are;

- Planning and securing summer activities/outings with the preschool and toddler programs
- Amelia is starting her JK school readiness activities with the preschool children
- Planning Graduation feast and ceremony – August 29 @2pm
- Planning a medicine picking day for staff – August TBD
- FN Early Years Mentors Gijikendaamin Meeting – August 13 in Fort Frances

Nagamodaa! Let's Sing!  
Agindaasodaa! Let's Read!  
Odaminodaa! Let's Play  
Ambe, Manidoominemsizii! Come on, Let's Bead!

Miigwetch!!!

From all the  
Gaagagegiizhigook Ganawenimaawasowin  
Wiigiwaam staff!!





## **SOCIAL MEDIA / WEBSITE** **KIM LEDUC - SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR**

---

Hello, all!

I began my role in June and it's been a rewarding experience delving into the Bimose Tribal Council's operations and connecting with our fantastic team. I've been traveling to different communities, capturing their events, and showcasing these on our social media platforms and online portals.

What I'm Working On:

- Managing and enhancing the Bimose and Kiizhik Education websites with an eye towards future redesigns for better user experiences. We're also in the process of developing a new website for the GGW Childcare Centre.
- Designing impactful graphics and engaging in photography to highlight important updates and successes.
- Reviving our newsletter (like this one!) to ensure regular communication with our community.
- Monitoring social media channels for engagement and feedback to maintain a responsive and interactive presence.



Since my start, we've seen a notable boost in our Facebook activity.

We've reached over 55,000 views—a 145% jump from the previous month— over 1000 interactions, including reactions and shares. Additionally, we've gained 30 new followers, raising our community count to 2,615.

Thank you for your support, and feel free to connect if you have any feedback or ideas. Thanks for reading and hope you all have a terrific rest of your summer!

