

# Connections

Waasmoowin Opportunities and Consultation Council



Atikameksheng  
Anishnawbek



Batchewana First  
Nation



Mississauga First  
Nation



Sagamok  
Anishnawbek



Serpent River First  
Nation



Thessalon First  
Nation



Wahnapietee First  
Nation



Whitefish River First  
Nation

## About the project

The proposed **North Shore Link** will be a new double-circuit, 230-kilovolt transmission line that will run between Mississagi Transformer Station near Wharnccliffe and Third Line Transformer Station in Sault Ste. Marie.

The **Northeast Power Line** will be a new single-circuit, 500-kilovolt transmission line that will connect Hanmer Transformer Station in Sudbury to Mississagi Transformer Station near Wharnccliffe.

## Did you know?

*Waasmoowin translates to “lightning” or “electricity” in the Ojibwe language.*

## Message from the Waasmowin Board of Directors

**Greetings!** We are proud to present the second issue of the Northeast Power Line and North Shore Link newsletter. Waasmoowin, in partnership with Hydro One, continues to advance these proposed transmission projects, which once built, will deliver reliable power to northeast Ontario and strengthen the region's energy network for a more resilient future. Through Hydro One's **50-50 First Nation Equity Partnership Model**, First Nations have the opportunity to invest in a 50 per cent ownership stake in the transmission line projects, ensuring shared benefits for generations and meaningful decision-making.

The projects are currently in the planning stage, with construction scheduled to begin in early 2027. Environmental and archaeological assessments are ongoing, and we remain committed to engaging with communities to reflect their priorities. Since summer 2025, we have

hosted Early Contractor Involvement Community Open Houses, Community Open Houses focused on environmental work and NSL preferred routing updates, and our first project career fair in collaboration with First Nation partners, Hydro One, and contractors. These events have provided valuable opportunities for dialogue, learning, and career development.

In this issue, you'll also find updates on the introduction of our Council of Elders, highlights from recent engagement activities, and a feature on First Nation archaeological field monitors. Plus, don't miss our colouring contest with prizes to be won! Working together as a collective partnership of First Nation communities helps shape and benefit from these projects.

*In partnership, Waasmoowin Opportunities and Consultation Council Board of Directors*

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# Building together through partnership

The province is facing historic growth in electricity demand. Hydro One is working in partnership with First Nation governments to invest in a system that meets the needs of all Ontarians now so we are ready for future generations.

In 2022, Hydro One introduced a new way of working together: the **50-50 First Nation Equity Partnership Model**. This model gives First Nations an equal share in all new, large transmission projects valued at more than \$100 million. It's about creating real partnerships where decisions and benefits are shared.

## What this partnership means:

- **Shared ownership** – First Nations invest in a 50 per cent equity stake.
- **Opportunities for communities** – Jobs, training and local procurement.
- **Long-term benefits** – Sustainable revenue and investment opportunities.
- **A voice at the table** – Early and ongoing involvement in planning and decisions.
- **Trust and respect** – Building lasting relationships.

Hydro One's approach is rooted in collaboration, shared responsibility and strong partnerships that are based on listening, transparency and trust. Partnerships with Indigenous communities is essential to build a future that reflects Hydro One and its First Nation partners' shared values and supports meaningful actions on reconciliation.



## First Nation Contacts

**Wahnapitae First Nation**  
Lilli Dougherty

**Atikameksheng  
Anishnawbek**  
Robert Paishegwon  
Ashley Nootchtai

**Whitefish River  
First Nation**  
Mike Jacko

**Sagamok Anishnawbek**  
Evan O'Leary  
Michelle Toulouse

**Serpent River First Nation**  
Mathieu Gervais

**Mississauga First Nation**  
Ryan Tessier  
Keith Sayers

**Thessalon First Nation**  
Robert Simon Jr.

**Batchewana First Nation**  
Julianna Lesage-Corbiere

# Waasmoowin update

Waasmoowin Energy Inc. has been reorganized into two entities: **Waasmoowin GP Inc.** and **Waasmoowin Opportunities and Consultation Council.**

The Board of Directors is comprised of the Chiefs or Councillors of the partner First Nations.

Waasmoowin is also comprised of the following:



## WOCC & Waasmoowin GP:

### What they are and why they matter

A simple overview for our Partner First Nation community members

As our eight Partner First Nations work together on the North Shore Link and Northeast Power Line projects, we have created two important organizations to protect our interests and plan for the future:

1. **Waasmoowin Opportunities and Consultation Council (WOCC)**
2. **Waasmoowin General Partner (Waasmoowin GP)**

Each one serves a different purpose—one supports our communities today, and the other supports our communities for generations to come.

## Waasmoowin Opportunities and Consultation Council (WOCC): Our shared community voice

WOCC brings all eight First Nations together to make sure our values, rights and concerns are heard in every part of the project.

WOCC focuses on:

- Protecting our lands, waters and cultural values
- Supporting environmental and archaeological monitoring
- Sharing information and leading community engagement
- Helping create jobs, training, and business opportunities
- Making sure decisions reflect our priorities and teachings

In short: WOCC is the community-focused side of the project—our voice, our stewardship, and our pathway to opportunities.

## Waasmoowin General Partner (Waasmoowin GP): Building long-term benefits

The Waasmoowin GP manages the ownership (equity) that our First Nations hold in the transmission line. This ensures the project creates benefits that support our communities well into the future.

Waasmoowin GP focuses on:

- Managing our collective ownership interest
- Ensuring fair financial returns to each Nation
- Supporting long-term community priorities
- Creating economic stability for future generations

In short: The GP is the economic side of the project—our ownership, our revenue, and our long-term prosperity

## Why we have both

Our Nations created two entities because they serve different but complementary roles:

- WOCC = community involvement, opportunity, protection, and stewardship
- Waasmoowin GP = ownership, financial benefits, long-term economic vision

Together, they ensure the project is guided by our communities, for our communities, with respect for our lands today and planning for the next seven generations.





### First-ever Waasmoowin Council of Elders gathering

**Nelson Toulouse,**  
*Interim Knowledge Keeper*

**Art Jacko,**  
*Project Manager*

**Nishin Meawasige,**  
**Tony Tyson,**  
**Robert Simon Sr.,**  
**Mary Ann Giguere,**  
**Ron McGregor,**  
**Leona Nahwegahbow,**  
**Annie Austin,**  
**Dolores Naponse,**  
**Caroline Barry,**  
**Peter Jones,**  
**Jeff Naponse**

## Waasmoowin Council of Elders

In November 2024, each First Nation Partner invited an Elder to attend the strategic planning session to confirm alignment on project priorities. During this session, the Board of Directors agreed that a Council of Elders is necessary to facilitate general elder engagement on the project and to support a dispute resolution process for our First Nation partners as disputes arise. The Waasmoowin Project team will need to engage with the Council of Elders on what other areas of interest and involvement they would like to participate in for the project.

Waasmoowin held its first-ever Council of Elders Gathering on May 26 and 27, 2025, at the Rainbow Lodge, located on Whitefish River First Nation. The first day began with a warm welcome from Chief Rodney Nahwegahbow and a dinner that provided the Elders and Waasmoowin project team members with an opportunity to get to know each other, enjoy an excellent meal together and learn more about the history of Waasmoowin. On the second day, Interim Knowledge Keeper Art Jacko assisted with the dialogue on how the Council of Elders can support Waasmoowin in the future and discussed the importance of ceremony to this project.

On June 10, 2025, Garden River First Nation formally withdrew from the Waasmoowin partnership. The partnership changed from nine First Nations to eight First Nations.

On October 15 and 16, 2025, Waasmoowin held the fall Council of Elders gathering at the Rainbow Lodge in Whitefish River First Nation. We will be hosting future Council of Elders Gatherings in all the partner First Nations. On the first day, we gathered for dinner and had the joys of listening to Esther Osche, Councillor for Whitefish River First Nation, tell the story of Dreamers Rock. It was a beautiful fall evening, sitting by the fire with the Elders. On the second day, Nishin Meawasige, project manager, provided a general project update since the May gathering. There was discussion about having a knowledge Keeper to assist Waasmoowin with the ceremonies, and Art Jacko spoke about cultural guidance—a round table on the role of the Council of Elders occurred. In the afternoon, Allan Lalonde from Hydro One provided a presentation on vegetation management, and the Elders had fantastic questions for Allan. Nishin Meawasige engaged the Elders in assisting with a Traditional name for a new contracting entity for Waasmoowin and provided helpful advice to the project team on how to properly go about this process.

We will be hosting future Council of Elders gatherings in all the partner First Nations and are very much looking forward to the next gathering in the spring of 2026, where we will have discussions on vegetation management, general project updates and ceremony and culture activities tied to the project.

# Archaeology spotlight

## First Nation archaeological field monitors: Krystal Price's story

**Aanii Boozho!** My name is Krystal Price, and I am proud to be a member of Whitefish River First Nation. I was born in Joliet, Illinois, and throughout my childhood, I moved back and forth between Joliet and the community here in Canada. Ultimately, I chose to make Whitefish River First Nation my home, drawn by its slower pace of life and the adventurous spirit I wanted my children to experience—just as I did growing up.

My career journey took a pivotal turn when I discovered an opportunity with Waasmoowin in Sagamok Anishnawbek. It was mid-summer when I came across a posting for archaeological work. With my background in heavy equipment, I was encouraged by Mike Jacko, who saw my potential and asked if I would be interested in taking on some work for myself. Motivated by the chance to grow and contribute, I submitted my resume and eagerly accepted every opportunity since joining in July.

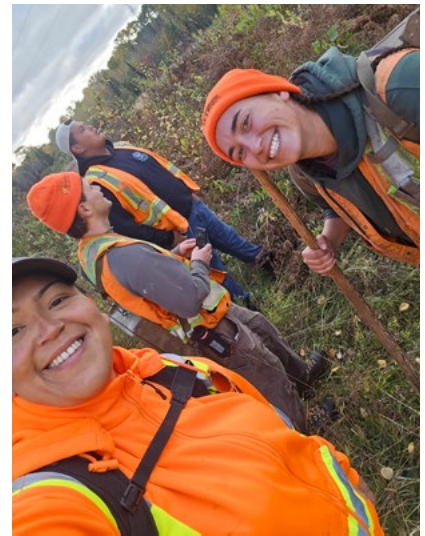
The job has brought both challenges and rewards. I remember my first few days—long hikes, aching feet, unexpected rain showers, and moments of doubt and fear about whether I could adapt and succeed in this unfamiliar field. On one particular day, the trail was muddy, and the weather was bleak. I felt overwhelmed, questioning if I belonged. But with every step, I reminded myself why I was here and drew strength from my surroundings. Overcoming those doubts didn't happen overnight, but with each project stage, my confidence grew. The support of the team and the beauty of the land made all the difference.

Working on archaeological projects along the Northeast Power Line and North Shore Link—from the Mississauga First Nation area to Atikameksheng Anishnawbek near Sudbury—has been transformative. Immersed in nature, I found healing and personal growth. I witnessed wildlife, admired wildflowers and berries, learned about traditional medicines, and marvelled at the multicoloured mushrooms that dotted the forest floor. Every day brought a deeper connection to the land, offering me exposure therapy in the most natural form. Nature became my teacher, helping me to overcome challenges and reaffirm my identity as someone rooted in both land and water.

I believe our communities need more information and involvement in these kinds of projects. There is so much to gain from seeing where we come from and shaping our story with our own voices. No one else can tell our history as authentically as we can.

If you are a First Nations member, job seeker or anyone interested in meaningful work that bridges culture, land and personal growth, I encourage you to consider getting involved. The benefits are immense: personal discovery, new skills and the chance to contribute to our shared story.

Please feel welcome to reach out directly to Waasmoowin's Project Manager, **Nishin Meawasige**, at **1 (705) 227-0676** or **pm@waasmoowin.com**. Together, we can explore our roots and build a stronger future for our communities.



Get  
involved!



# Archaeology spotlight

## Mond Lake site visit – honoring archaeological findings

On November 18, 2025, a site visit was held at Mond Lake to reflect on recent archaeological findings. The day began with a Pipe Ceremony and teachings from Knowledge Keeper Leroy Bennet, emphasizing respect for the land and its history. Attendees included representatives from Atikameksheng, Whitefish River and Sagamok First Nations, alongside partners from ASI Heritage, Waasmoowin and Hydro One. This collaborative effort highlights the importance of cultural protocols in project development. Another ceremony is planned for spring/summer 2026, continuing the commitment to honouring Indigenous knowledge and traditions throughout the process.





# Fall community open houses highlight



This fall, Hydro One together with First Nation partners hosted a series of community open houses across multiple Nations to share project updates and gather input:

## **Batchewana**

September 15–17, 2025

## **Thessalon**

September 18, 2025

## **Serpent River**

September 22, 2025

## **Sagamok**

September 29, 2025

## **Whitefish River**

October 7, 2025

## **Wahnapiatae**

October 8, 2025

## **Atikameksheng**

October 9, 2025

## **Mississauga First Nation**

November 28, 2025

Community members provided valuable feedback on environmental considerations, cultural protection and maximizing local employment opportunities. These sessions highlighted the economic impact of upcoming projects, with construction creating jobs and contracting opportunities for First Nation businesses. Local businesses actively participated, exploring partnerships and procurement opportunities with Valard and Aecon through early contractor involvement engagement.

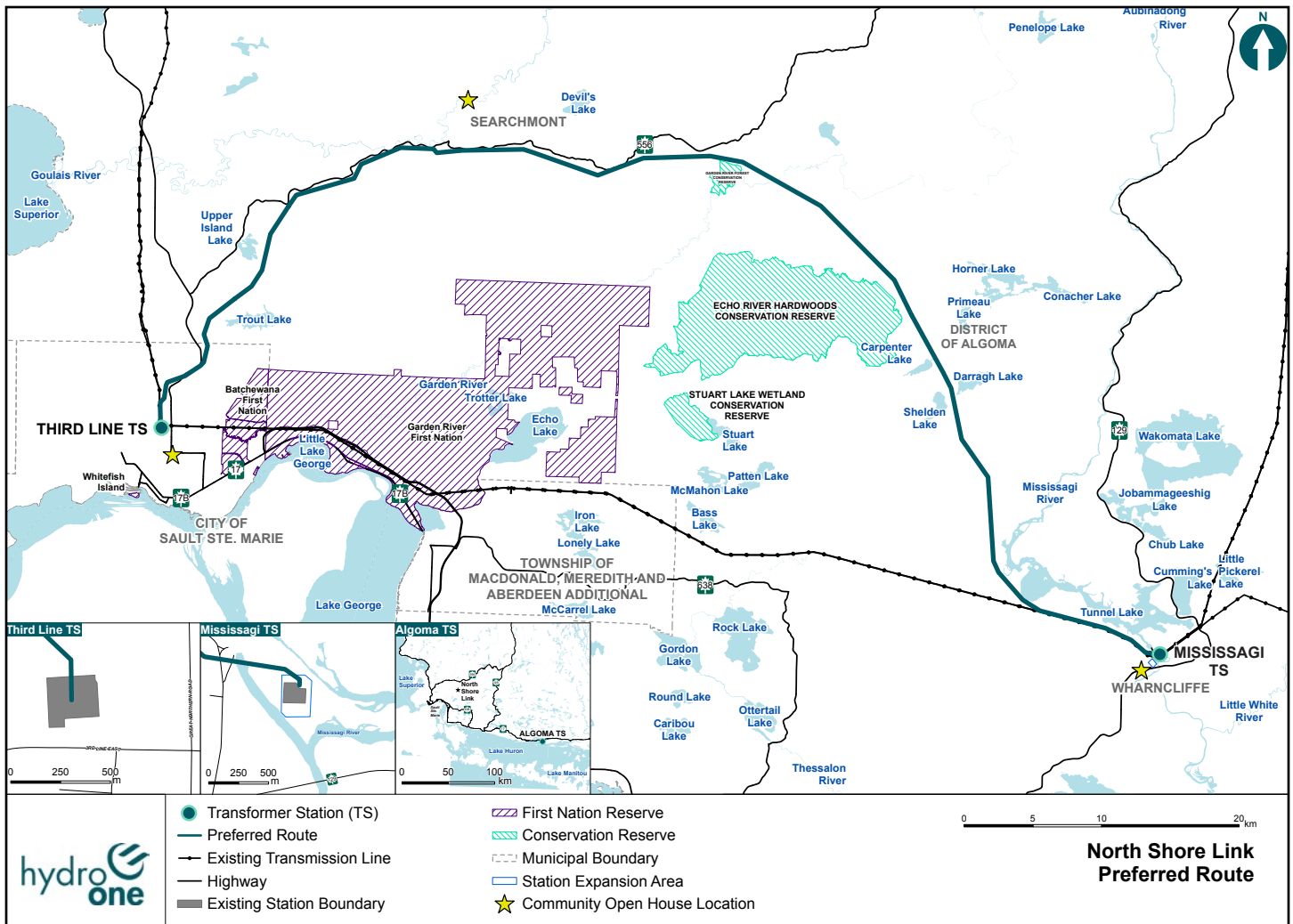
Hydro One also shared updates on the Class Environmental Assessment for North Shore Link and the Environmental Report for Northeast Power Line, including new Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks regulations enacted on Oct 22, 2025. Discussions covered ongoing archaeological work—keep reading for more details!

A heartfelt thank you to all the communities for hosting us and for the amazing meals that were provided. Your hospitality made these sessions truly special.

We look forward to continuing these conversations and working together to create meaningful opportunities. Stay connected for future engagement sessions and updates—your voice matters!

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If you have any additional questions or would like to be more involved, please contact Nishin Meawasige: 705-227-0676.



# North Shore Link project update

The North Shore Link continues to move forward with environmental and technical studies that will guide the design and development of the transmission line. These studies are being carried out in close collaboration with the First Nation environmental committee and the Waasmoowin Opportunities and Consultation Council Board of Directors, ensuring that Indigenous perspectives and environmental priorities remain central to the process.

As part of our commitment to transparency and meaningful engagement, the draft Environmental Study Report will be shared with partner communities for review and comment before it enters the formal public comment period. This approach provides communities with an early opportunity to provide feedback, address concerns and help shape the project in a way that respects cultural values and environmental stewardship.

The North Shore Link project represents a significant step toward strengthening energy infrastructure while creating opportunities for collaboration and economic growth across the North Shore of Lake Superior. Continued engagement and consultation will remain a cornerstone of this work as we move toward the next phases of planning and design.



# Northeast Power Line project update

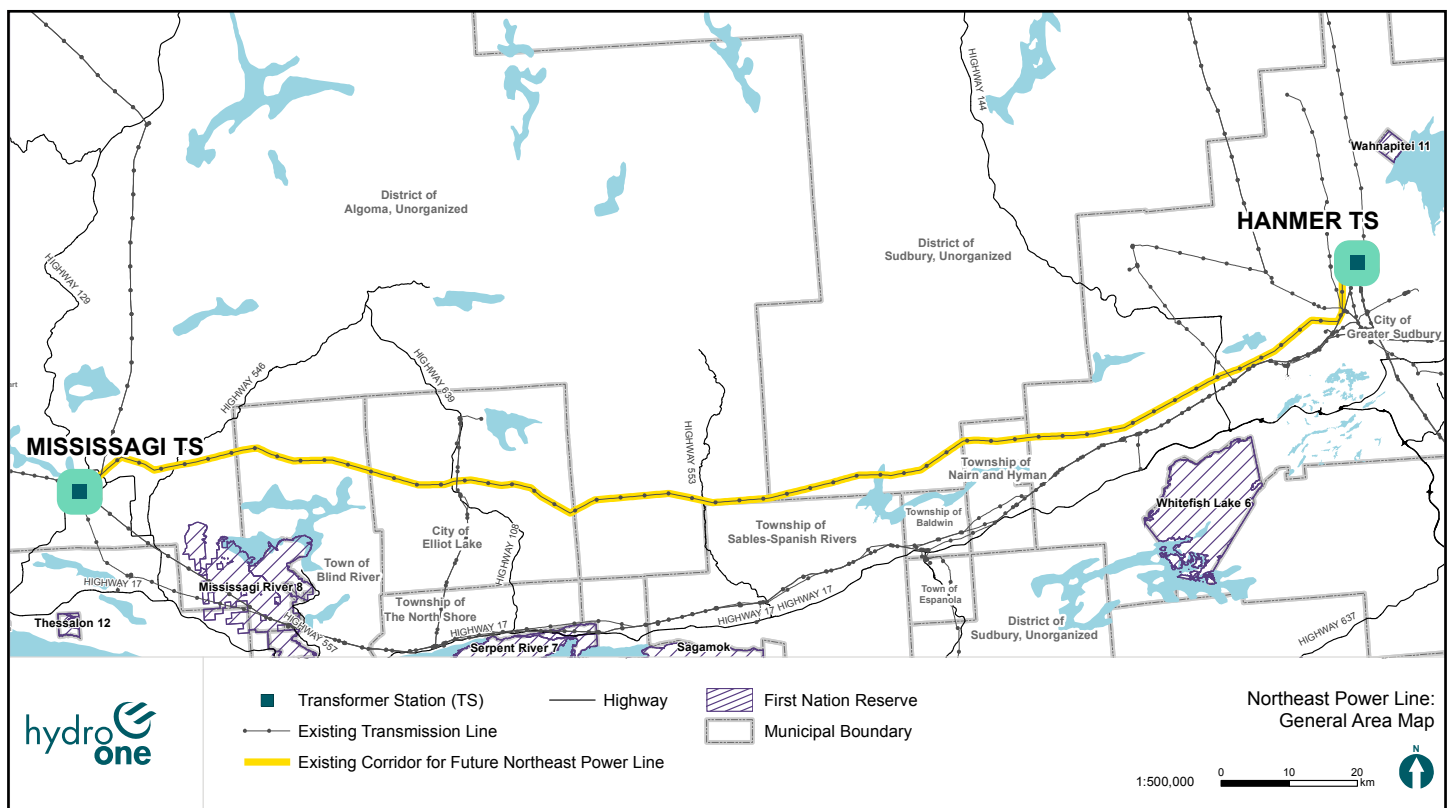
Ontario is facing historic growth in energy demand. To support this need, Hydro One has been directed by Ontario to develop a number of projects to strengthen the grid and build a more self-reliant and resilient energy transmission system. One of the planned projects currently underway is the Northeast Power Line project, a new single-circuit 500-kilovolt transmission line that will run parallel to an existing corridor between Hanmer Transformer Station and Mississagi Transformer Station. This upgrade is essential to improving reliability and meet growing energy needs across the region.

In October 2025, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks published a new regulation specific to the project which requires that Hydro One complete several technical and environmental studies and engage with Indigenous communities, government agencies, interest groups and community members. The efforts undertaken by Hydro One, in partnership with the Waasmowin Opportunities and Consultation Council, will be documented in the Environmental Report and will play

a key role in informing and impacting the design process, ensuring cultural values, environmental protection and technical requirements are integrated.

Environmental surveys have been completed for the Environmental Report and the report will be published for a 45-day public review period between February and March 2025. Archaeology studies, including those at Mond Lake, will continue into spring 2026, with Indigenous monitors from partnering communities actively involved during the field season. These studies, along with ongoing discussions between Hydro One, Waasmowin Opportunities and Consultation Council, and partner communities, will determine actions at Mond Lake and provide insights that influence the NEPL design.

In addition, contractors Aecon and Valard, currently bidding on the work, will continue engaging with communities to identify local Indigenous businesses for subcontracting opportunities—creating meaningful economic participation and partnerships.



# Career gateway session

## Waasmoowin career gateway highlights

The Waasmoowin Career Gateway Event, held on November 6, 2025, at the Serpent River Lifestyle Centre, exceeded expectations with more than 90 participants from partnering and neighbouring First communities.

Organizations present included Valard Construction, Aecon Construction, Hydro One (Forestry and Indigenous Relations), Sault College, Collège Boréal, Kenjgewin Teg, CUSW, NATT, Sling Choker Academy, North Shore Tribal Council and Waubetek. Each offered resources and engaged in meaningful discussions about career opportunities.

The event opened with a poignant prayer by Elder Isabelle Meawasige of Serpent River First Nation, setting a respectful and inspiring tone. You can find this prayer on the last page of this newsletter. Throughout the afternoon, participants visited booths, asked questions and collected information. Presenters shared personal career stories and highlighted how attendees could leverage the NSL and NEPL projects as gateways to future opportunities.

Feedback from participating organizations was overwhelmingly positive. Overall, the Waasmoowin career gateway event successfully connected communities with industry partners, showcased career opportunities and reinforced the commitment to Indigenous participation in major projects.

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For more information on our Employment, Training and Procurement initiatives, please reach out to Chris Johnsen: 705-662-0959





# ECl process (Aecon & Valard)

## Early contractor involvement overview

Early Contractor Involvement is about bringing everyone to the table early, including contractors, WEI, First Nations, and Hydro One, to work together on shaping the final bid for the engineering, procurement, and construction contract.

The goal is simple: collaboration from the start. This process helps us:

- Maximize opportunities for First Nations in procurement, employment and training.
- Build strong working relationships before construction begins.
- Ensure the project reflects shared priorities and benefits for all partners.

## Aecon

The Aecon Power Services engagement work has been grounded in partnership from the very beginning. Aecon Power Services hired two leads directly from the partner communities, Lucy Ann Trudeau from Whitefish River First Nation and Shyanne Jones from Garden River First Nation. The Indigenous Relationship Leads, along with the other members of the project teams participated in both the spring and fall open houses in each community, creating multiple touchpoints for residents, organizations and leadership to learn about the project, ask questions and shape the direction of our work.

In addition to broad community engagement, Aecon Power Services focused on preparing local businesses for upcoming project opportunities. To date, Aecon Power Services has engaged with more than 100 community businesses, offering one-on-one support, procurement navigation and capacity-building guidance. This hands-on preparation ensures community-owned businesses are positioned to benefit directly from the project and that opportunities meaningfully contribute to local economic growth.

If you or someone you know are interested in opportunities associated to the projects, please reach out to: **Lucy Ann Trudeau** [ltrudeau@aecon.com](mailto:ltrudeau@aecon.com) or **Shyanne Jones** [sjones@aecon.com](mailto:sjones@aecon.com).

## Valard

### Strengthening Community Partnerships

Valard's Indigenous Relations team has been connecting with partner communities along the North Shore Link and Northeast Power Line projects. Our fall open houses provided valuable opportunities to meet community members and gather meaningful feedback. We've listened and learned from Elders, local businesses and community members about priorities for involvement.

### Focus Areas Ahead:

- Employment and Capacity Building
- Apprenticeship and Trades
- Subcontracting and RFP Processes
- Sponsorship Opportunities
- Pre-employment Training

We're also collaborating with Waasmoowin and community partners to support new training initiatives.

### Creating Accessible Opportunities:

Valard supports First Nation workers through entry-level roles with no pre-training required, on-the-job training and mentorship, safety and equipment training, and apprenticeship programs with added support. Through continued learning and cultural awareness, Valard strives to build respectful, meaningful relationships with First Nations, honouring traditions and community protocols.

If you or someone you know are interested in opportunities associated to the projects, please reach out to: **IndigenousRelations@Valard.com**

# Elders prayer/teaching

## Walking the path of the Thunderbirds – careers rooted in spirit and land: opening prayer from the November 6 Waasmowin career gateway event

**Boozhoo / Aaniin.** My name is Grandmother Isabelle Meawasige from Serpent River First Nation, Bear Clan.

Today we welcome the partnerships that have gathered here through Waasmowin—the coming together of eight First Nations standing shoulder to shoulder with Hydro One and the companies who wish to build with us.

In Anishinaabemowin, Waasmowin speaks of light, illumination and awakening. It is like the dawn touching the water—a sign of hope and renewal.

In that same spirit, today's career information session is not only about jobs and training, it is about preparing our young ones to carry the light forward—to walk with both skills and spirit.

### Teaching story: the Thunderbirds and the power line

A long time ago, our Elders spoke of the Thunderbirds—spirits of power and purpose who carry lightning across the sky. They are the original bringers of energy, cleansing the Earth with thunder and rain so that new life can grow.

Today, when we see power lines stretching across our lands, we might think of Hydro One—but from a spiritual view, these lines are like the pathways of the Thunderbirds, bringing light and energy to the people.

Our responsibility is great: to ensure that every pole, every wire every project that touches the land is done with ceremony, respect and balance.

The Thunderbirds remind us:

- Power without respect can destroy.
- Power guided by spirit can heal and uplift.

When our youth step into trades, engineering, environmental work, or administration, they are walking with the Thunderbirds—carrying energy for future generations. Their work becomes ceremony when it honours the land, the people, and the spirits.

### Opening Prayer

Creator, Grandmother Moon, and all our Ancestors who guide us,

We thank you for this new day and for the breath of life in our bodies.

We thank the Thunderbirds who travel across our skies, bringing the energy of renewal and strength.

We give thanks for the youth who walk among us today—our future workers, builders, and protectors of the land.

We thank those who bring opportunity and partnership—Hydro One, Waasmowin, and all who stand with our Nations.

May this gathering be guided by kindness, respect, and truth.

May each person here find their purpose, their place, and their power in the circle of life.

# Looking ahead

As we move forward, several key initiatives are underway to strengthen collaboration and prepare for upcoming project milestones:

- **Community Sessions:**  
Winter 2025/2026 focus on right-of-way vegetation management.
- **WOCC Branding:**  
Logo development underway with youth input from partner Nations.
- **Committee Engagement:**  
Continued involvement in environmental, procurement and training initiatives.
- **2026 Milestones:**  
Final year for archaeological work; emphasis on maximizing contracting and employment before construction starts in early 2027.



For more information about these and other projects, please visit:

[www.hydroone.com/about/corporate-information/major-projects](http://www.hydroone.com/about/corporate-information/major-projects)