



**Wahta
Mohawks**

**ADMINISTRATION
UPDATE
APRIL 2020**



Wahta Mohawks

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Introduction

Shé:kon,

I hope this update finds you and your family safe and healthy. During this unprecedented time, we want to ensure you the Administration is doing all it can to continue operations and provide the necessary supports to the community. Through this report, we are hoping to provide you with information on the key supports and services the Administration is providing at this time. We will continue to diligently work to assess community needs and enhance our services and supports where we can.

Throughout the report you will find key contact information for the various services and supports available. Our main contact number, (705) 762-2354, is still being answered as well. If you have any suggestions, concerns or questions please do not hesitate to reach out or to communicate to them to any one of our staff members.

We will continue to provide updates as they become available through our main communication channels; the web page, social media, Chief's Updates, and regular check in calls with members. We will also continue to provide updated versions of this report as needed.

Stay healthy and safe!



Capital Assets

- Staff within the Capital Assets Department are responsible for leading/coordinating the activities of Wahta's Emergency Control Group. The Control Group, which is Chaired by Matthew Commandant, is responsible for:
 - ▶ Guiding discussions on responding to the pandemic
 - ▶ Disseminating information received
 - ▶ Liaising with Community Health Nurse (Sue Siwick) and Environmental Health Officer (George Korzeniecki)
 - ▶ Liaising with the Muskoka Emergency Response Committee (MERC)
 - ▶ Preparing information kits for Seniors and vulnerable members of the community
 - ▶ Assisting in preparation of statements to the community
 - ▶ Assisting with advanced communication to community (infographics and other material related to the pandemic)
 - ▶ Coordinating preparation of signs
 - ▶ Updating the Pandemic protocol for the community

Anyone looking for more information on the Emergency Control Group can contact the Group's Chair, Matthew, at matthew.commandant@wahtamohawks.ca.

- Staff in the Capital Assets Department have been busy preparing emergency protocols for the Administration's operations. These protocols are critical to minimizing any risk of contamination to the community buildings and any materials being delivered to community residences are minimized. For more details on the steps being taken to ensure the



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community's safety please contact Matt at
matthew.commandant@wahtamohawks.ca.

- Staff remain on call for emergency maintenance response requests for all community owned buildings and residential rental units. Any current occupants in these units can contact Harry at (705) 641-0833 or at harry.byrne@wahtamohawks.ca for emergency assistance.
- The Capital Assets Department is also currently managing the acquisition and use of vital items such as masks, gloves, bottled water and essential paper products. Work continues on securing and maintaining an adequate supply of these items and other critical resources.
- The Landfill remains in operation every Wednesday evening and Saturday morning. The reuse bin has been suspended for the time being in order to promote physical distancing at the landfill. Garbage collection is also continuing for seniors in the community on Mondays.
- Staff are continuing to prepare public works equipment (tractors, mowers, etc.) for spring and summer operations in order to ensure no disruption in vital services to the community's roads and infrastructure.
- Monthly water testing will continue, again following strict safety protocols, and is set to take place the last week of April. For more information on this the testing please contact Evan at evan.holmes@wahtamohawks.ca.
- Work also continues on the management of a number of ongoing studies and capital projects, such as; the Water Feasibility Study, work to upgrade of Water Treatment System at Administration Building, the Administration



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Building Roof Repair, Duplex Construction Project, the upgrading to IP phones for the Administration, and the Landfill study. Information on these projects will be released as they continue to progress, in the meantime if you have any questions on the projects underway please contact Randy at randell.sonmor@wahtamohawks.ca.

Education

- Staff have been maintaining ongoing communications with Principals and senior staff of the Trillium Lakelands District School Board. Communications have focused on the Board's move to remote learning platforms and to ensure the board is communicating with Wahta students and families so that issues with this process are being addressed by the Board. Further to this, Education staff have also been diligently advocating to ensure the Board is aware of and addressing the technology needs of students in the same manner they are for all other students of the Board. Any families that have questions on this work and what the Board has been implementing can contact Carol at carol.holmes@wahtamohawks.ca or at (705) 641-1548.
- To assist with education activities in the home, staff have been exploring and sharing on-line resources and activities for parents and students. Families can access these resources through the new public Facebook Group "Sharing is Caring: Connecting Wahta Mohawks".
- Administration of the Post-Secondary Program continues which currently involves; student contact and support, payment of any outstanding



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invoices, exploring options for revitalizing the Post-Secondary Policy, and continuing the implementation of our new software solution DADAVAN. For information on the Post-Secondary Program please contact Carol at carol.holmes@wahtamohawks.ca or at (705) 641-1548

- The Education Department is also coordinating tutoring programs and supports for families looking for extra assistance at this time. If you are interested and wish to find out more about the supports available, please contact Simon at simon.sutherland@wahtamohawks.ca.
- Employment Training supports are still available, with appointments now available virtually. If you are a current client or interested in finding out about the potential supports available contact Simon at simon.sutherland@wahtamohawks.ca.
- The Education Department has recently secured a Mohawk language instructor as part of the work to create an online Mohawk language program for Wahta. Information on this exciting initiative will be shared as it continues to progress. You can also check out our website and social media accounts for online language resources in the meantime.

Finance

- Core Finance Department activities continue such as processing support payments, accounts payable, and purchasing critical supplies among many other critical functions.
- Staff are also working on our financial year end process in preparation of our annual audit completion.



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- The current pandemic has provided insight into business continuity needs for critical functions, as such, Finance is taking this opportunity to document financial processes for cross training to further increase our business continuity ability moving forward.

Health and Social

- We are excited to have connected with an external Registered Psychotherapist, Elke Scholz. She is available to work with adults, families, children and youth needing support or assistance. Elke helps address an identified gap we have had in terms of counselling support specific to children and youth. She is here for Wahta during this crisis period and is available to work with everyone in the future through one on one appointments, family sessions and creative art therapies. Elke lives in Bracebridge and be contacted at 1-705-646-2300, 1-888-522-8770, escholz@vianet.ca, or at www.elkescholz.com. Many insurance plans along with NHIB (Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations) cover the costs of her services.
- Mental Health Home Kits will soon be available to any interested families or individuals looking for resources to assist with their well-being and self-care during these uncertain times. The kits include reading materials, journal and creative art expression therapies, follow up through online exercises and/or group discussions (well-being Book Club) and possible 1 on 1 therapy with Elke Scholz. If interested please contact Rubecka Davidson at rubecka.davidson@wahtamohawks.ca or let a staff member know during any check-in call you are receiving.



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- Our Band Representative services are continuing as we continue to work alongside Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag Child and Family Services. Our focus is on prevention-based measures, family well-being services and supporting ongoing cases. Any Wahta families in need of assistance, please contact rubecka.davidson@wahtamohawks.ca to determine what resources and supports are currently available.
- The Indigenous Healthy Babies Healthy Children's program is being revitalized for Wahta families by providing the best opportunities for healthy development of children from 0 - 6 years of age. The program involves supports for preparing for parenting, prenatal and postpartum. Supports could include, home/hospital visits, traditional teachings, assessments/referrals and participant-based group activities and workshops. You can contact Rubecka at rubecka.davidson@wahtamohawks.ca for more information on the specific supports and services to be offered under this program.
- An enhanced Student Nutrition delivery has been made to all families currently part of the school age program. With the program being disrupted temporarily with the pandemic and regular delivery of the program not possible, a special delivery was coordinated. Staff will continue to adjust the delivery of this program as the current situation continues to unfold. You can contact rubecka.davidson@wahtamohawks.ca for more information on this program.
- The "Gardening at Home" initiative, where homes are provided with seedling kits to instill a green thumb in self sustaining, is currently being



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rolled out. Individuals receiving a kit are encouraged to share your progress and experience with the kits online through Wahta's new Sharing is Caring Facebook group. Kits will also be followed up with a DIY Garden Box instructions and/or online tutorials by staff. If you are interested in a kit please let staff know during any check-in call you receive or contact rubecka.davidson@wahtamohawks.ca directly.

- Staff are working on providing child and youths craft kits, printable activities, exercise programs and outdoor recreation goods to families. The goal is to encourage families to work together through creative arts, engage in physical activity and keep children and youth engaged in fun activities while we all isolate at home. Please contact rubecka.davidson@wahtamohawks.ca for details on these activities.
- Jordan's Principle Navigator work continues through the pandemic. Any families needing assistance with requests and appeals can continue to work with Danielle Neelands at danielle.neelands@wahtamohawks.ca.
- A new Facebook group has been created, Sharing is Caring: Connecting Wahta Mohawks, for the purpose of keeping the community connected and sharing information and resources of interest. The group is open to all to participate and share information with all connected through it. Staff have been sharing information related to:
 - ▶ Government Support Information and Links
 - ▶ Health and Wellbeing
 - ▶ Arts and Crafts Recipes
 - ▶ Gardening/Sustainability
 - ▶ Educational Resources



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- ▶ Cooking and Recipe tips from a Nutritionist
 - ▶ Free events through FB like the At Home Free Paint Nights
 - ▶ Videos/tutorials – No sew face masks
- Regular check-in calls are being made to members of the community, both on and off Territory. Staying connected is important for both our physical and mental health, especially during this time of isolation. Calls also provide staff with an opportunity to share updates on the various supports available and new activities being planned. Requests for assistance can also be fielded and forwarded to the appropriate staff member. If you are not receiving a regular check-in call and would like to be included on the list please contact Skye at (705) 762-2354 or email Christine at christine.cox@wahtamohawks.ca.
 - During this stressful time its normal to be anxious and worried on the happenings around us. Support is available for anyone needing it through B'saanibamaadswin Aboriginal Mental Health. Brad Bowland from B'saanibamaadswin, has continued to provide virtual supports for those in need along with sharing important Mental Health information for our website on issues of potential benefit to the community, such as such How to Talk to your kids on COVID-19. Anyone in need of support can contact Sherry at (705) 238-2871 or by email at sherry.byrne@wahtamohawks.ca who can assist with referrals and general information on the services available. You can also contact B'saanibamaadswin in the following ways:
 - ▶ Office Phone: (705) 746-2512
 - ▶ Toll Free Phone: 1-866-829-7049
 - ▶ Crisis Phone: 1-888-893-8333



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Children in need of support can also contact the Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 or by texting 686868. More information and resources on their services can be found at www.kidshelpphone.ca.

- To help support our community's senior during this prolonged period of isolation, staff are securing various items such as puzzles, Diamond Dots and word finds. These items will be delivered to homes as they arrive. Staff are also looking into items for other age groups as well, as cabin fever can be an issue for all of us. For more information on this initiative please contact Christine at christine.cox@wahtamohawks.ca or inquire with the staff member conducting your check-in call.
- The Meals on Wheels program for seniors in the community has been enhanced during the pandemic. To assist with food security issues, seniors are now being provided with up to 7 meals a week. We have seen some minor disruptions due to vendor supply issues, and we appreciate everyone's assistance while we work through these. Staff are diligently working away to diversify vendors and implement other strategies to avoid these disruptions in the future.
- After a brief disruption with our normal Good Food box program, staff have found a new vendor to supply food box deliveries to community residents. Staff are continuing to work on other initiatives and additional deliveries of food items for community residents as well. If you are a resident on the Territory and not currently part of the Good Food Box program and wish to register, please contact Christine at christine.cox@wahtamohawks.ca.



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Food Security support for those off Territory are currently being developed and will hopefully be announced soon.

- We have been able to set up grocery delivery with the Mactier Foodland. Seniors 60 years plus are able to get the delivery fee covered on a biweekly basis. All households are able to access the delivery service at a fee of \$30 a delivery. For more information on the seniors biweekly delivery fee coverage, or if you're a senior needing assistance placing on order to Foodland, please contact Christine at christine.cox@wahtamohawks.ca.
- A reminder that Ontario Works is available for community residents in financial need. For information on the assistance available, eligibility criteria, and application process please contact Brittany at brittany.decaire@wahtamohawks.ca.

Lands & Resources

- The Lands & Resources department remains available to respond to any questions regarding community lands. Please contact Scott at scott.aubichon@wahtamohawks.ca.
- The department continues to review and approve surveys submitted on behalf of community members for registration with Indigenous Service Canada and Natural Resources Canada.
- The Additions to Reserve (ATR) process is continuing through the pandemic. Virtual meetings are being conducted with Canada and Ontario and required documents to complete this process continue to be



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developed as we work to ensure the Wahta Mohawks interests are protected as part of this ongoing process.