Summer 2026

B'MAAKONIGAN DIBAAJIMOOWINAN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF B'MAAKONIGAN

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B'Maakonigan's bundle continues to grow, featuring inclusions from team members and gifts from partners and signatory First Nations. The deer hide featuring B'Maakonigan's logo was hand-painted by Government Relations Coordinator Shaelyn Wabegijig.

CELEBRATING WAHNAPITAE'S INFORMATION MANAGEMENT LAW

By Hillary McGregor, Policy Analyst

SUDBURY — Citizens of Wahnapitae First Nation (WFN) are celebrating a historic milestone on their self-governance journey following the recent ratification of a new law empowering them to protect their privacy, and paving the way to control their own data.

Passed on May 2, 2026 with 92% support from voters, the success of the Information Management Law reflects strong community confidence in this legislation, which was developed by citizens over several years through extensive engagement and discussion.

This tally also marks an increase in support from the initial ratification vote for this law, which was held in March 2025. Despite 86% of voters in favour at that time, its passage was ultimately thwarted due to Canada's 25% voter threshold.

In response to frustration with this colonial process, WFN officially adopted a simple majority process for ratification in Sept. 2025, following further consultation with citizens. Despite the process of moving away from Canada's colonial threshold, that benchmark was nearly surpassed during the most recent vote, signaling growing momentum and a clear commitment to advancing WFN's self-governance.

The success of this law reflects the dedication of the WFN's citizens who have

CEO'S CORNER

Leslie McGregor | B'Maakonigan E-niigaanziikidaaged

B'Maakonigan continues to move the implementation of the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement (ANGA) forward in close partnership with First Nations. Over the past several months, our work has shifted from early development into active implementation. This progress reflects stronger internal capacity, clearer processes, and meaningful engagement with both member and interested First Nations. Our approach continues to be guided by community direction and by the teachings that remind us to work with intention, respect, and clarity.

Interest in the ANGA continues to grow. Whitefish River First Nation is preparing for its official adhesion on April 1, 2026, following a successful community vote in May 2025. Aamjiwnaang First Nation is moving through the First Nation Approval Process, with a community vote expected in the fall of 2026. Several other First Nations have requested presentations and technical sessions to learn more about the ANGA. Our team continues to support these early conversations and provide clear information that communities can use in their own decision-making. Two additional First Nations have now begun the First Nation Approval Process, and we are hopeful for positive outcomes as they move through their community steps.

Over the past year, B'Maakonigan has strengthened its ability to ensure that Anishinaabe knowledge, Anishinaabemowin, and values guide all areas of our work. This includes governance development, policy work, dispute resolution, and community engagement. Cultural guidance is now intentionally integrated into our planning, tools, and work with member First Nations. This approach supports processes that reflect community teachings and decision-making that honours our practices.

The Intergovernmental Forum (IGF) has also made steady progress. Its Terms of Reference are now finalized, and coordination continues with the IGF Development Committee and the Implementation and Operations Committee. Recent work includes research planning, policy analysis, and risk assessments that will guide the next phase of the IGF. Research is underway on the two issues we will bring forward to the IGF, while a working group continues to explore what is needed for these important topics.

In the months ahead, B'Maakonigan will continue to grow its internal capacity and strengthen the support available to First Nations. Priorities include establishing a Data Governance and Research team and filling two positions dedicated to supporting First Nations as they move through the First Nation Approval Process to join ANGA. We have recently hired a Human Resources Manager to strengthen our internal systems and support staff across the organization.

We have also been working with the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body to explore informal collaboration and to support the Fiscal Harmonization discussions with participating First Nations. Two meetings have taken place so far, in February and May, with a third meeting planned for early July 2026.

B'Maakonigan remains committed to supporting member First Nations as they strengthen their governance systems in ways that reflect community priorities and Anishinaabe worldviews. Our work continues to be guided by the direction of communities and by the teachings that remind us to move forward with respect, patience, and care.

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Wahnapitae' s Information Management Law continued from page front page.

worked hand in hand with staff over the past several years to create space for important conversations on privacy and information rights, B'Maakonigan, and the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement (ANGA).

In fact, the Information Management Law is the first law WFN has passed through the ANGA, marking a monumental step in its implementation of self-governance in the continued realization of their inherent rights. This achievement reflects not only progress in exercising the First Nation's autonomy, but also in its growing capacity to build systems grounded in WFN's own priorities, values, and decision-making processes.

As this work continues, B'Maakonigan and the Governance team remain focused on jointly supporting the implementation of the Information Management Law and building the internal capacity needed to ensure it is carried out effectively. Together, these efforts will help strengthen governance systems, support informed decision-making, and advance the First Nation's long-term vision for self-determination.

GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT UPDATE

By Miskaanakwaad, Dwayne Nashkawa *Governance Development Director*

The Governance Development team has continued to move from planning into supporting more active implementation of governance. Member Nations are drafting and ratifying laws, the Information Clearinghouse has been implemented, and we have many Governance Directors who have signed on to the platform. New First Nations are working toward joining B'Maakonigan, as we move into the second quarter of the 2026/27 fiscal year.

Implementation Efforts

Working with the eight First Nations remains the centre of the Governance Development Team's work. Nations are drafting laws and building implementation plans that will establish working governance models for our nations. These are the systems, processes, and shared understanding that will make Anishinabek governance function in our Nations.

Wahnapitae First Nation ratified its Information Management Law in May 2026 with 92 percent support from voters. WFN's law establishes information rights, a protection regime, and a registry of Council decisions, and requires external dispute resolution from B'Maakonigan. It is the first member law that has been passed and it provides a working foundation for the appeals and redress framework described below.

Implementation means bringing Council, senior administrators, and governance staff around a shared understanding of what each Nation is trying to achieve. That alignment takes time and a significant level of effort. It means building capacity across the governance ecosystem in member Nations, staffing thoughtfully, and developing tools that reduce duplication. B'Maakonigan's role remains to guide and support while the work belongs to each Nation.

Appeals, Redress, and Dispute Resolution

Appeals and redress is one of our biggest areas of focus this year, and it has moved well beyond earlier discussions with the nations. The first phase of research is complete. The team reviewed dispute resolution processes across more than thirty nations and jurisdictions, including Māori processes in Aotearoa New Zealand, and grounded the work in the Seven Grandfather Teachings and Anishinaabe circle practice.

The model taking shape is culturally grounded and flexible. It runs in stages, from conversation, to facilitated circles, to formal adjudication where authority needs to be interpreted. The aim is a single framework that many Nations can use without each one building and funding its own process from the ground up.

Wahnapitae's law already requires external adjudication through B'Maakonigan, and other Nations have told us they want the same independence and distance from community that a shared forum provides. Over the summer the team is consulting directly with Nations and building framework models, working toward an approach Nations can begin to use and a first pilot decision in view for early 2027. We are also working alongside the Anishinabek Nation as it develops its administrative justice work, while keeping our own framework on its own track.

The Information Clearinghouse

The Information Clearinghouse has moved from development into use. It is a shared, secure knowledge base that all B'Maakonigan Nations can access, holding laws, policies, best practices, legal research, and comparative analysis grounded in an Anishinabek worldview. It reduces reliance on outside experts and lets Nations learn from each other and build on shared resources.

Governance directors are now getting access and using the portal to share research and compare approaches. We are running it as a working version and refining it through their feedback before wider release. The Clearinghouse will keep growing as we develop and implement laws and as our collective experience and knowledge base deepens.

Citizenship and Bill S-2

Citizenship is the issue that will shape the year ahead. Bill S-2 could end the second-generation cut-off in the Indian Act and replace it with a one-parent rule. If it passes, citizenship populations will grow substantially over the coming generations, and Nations will carry the administrative and legal weight of that growth.

Several member Nations are already developing their own citizenship laws, and our team is supporting that work directly while coordinating with the Anishinabek Nation. The work centres on a question each Nation answers for itself. What does it mean to be a citizen? We are also helping Nations prepare for the practical impacts, since growth on this scale touches registration, services, and law at once.

Citizenship will be the central issue as we prepare for the Intergovernmental Forum, expected in Ottawa some time in 2027, and the team is doing that background work now.

Strengthening Internal Capacity

We have also been strengthening our own internal foundation. The policy review team completed a comprehensive gap analysis of B'Maakonigan's internal policies, mapping what exists, what is missing, and what needs attention. With that picture in hand, we are sequencing the next phase of policy development under our incoming HR manager, with cultural input from our team.

Policies will be grounded in Anishinaabe values, kept short and usable, and rolled out in phases so staff are not overwhelmed. The goal is internal systems that support staff in delivering our mandate.

Welcoming New Communities

The circle of nations embracing governance keeps growing. Several communities are moving through the First Nation Approval Process on their way to joining B'Maakonigan and the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement.

Aamjiwnaang First Nation is working toward ratification, now targeted for the winter, with adhesion to follow. This would be the first community from the Southwest region of Anishinabek territory to join the ANGA. Red Rock Indian Band is moving quickly and would be the first community

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"We have the ability and the authority to make our own laws."

The Late Anishinabek Nation Head Getzit Gordon Waindubence-baa

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE UPDATES

Aundeck Omni Kaning First

By Sarah Blackwell, Policy Analyst

At the start of the year, the Governance Committee at AOKFN welcomed a new Governance Director, Regan Esquimaux. Regan continues to work with the committee on the draft E'Dbendaagzijig Law.

A Lunch n' Learn session was delivered by B'Maakonigan to AOKFN staff to outline the draft law and provide an opportunity to answer any questions staff had regarding the law and next steps.

The committee has met multiple times in recent months and is awaiting background materials from B'Maakonigan Policy Analyst Sarah Blackwell to review in late June. Next steps will be to review the information provided and begin further community engagement.

Magnetawan First Nation

By Lily Farrell, Policy Analyst

We recently met with Magnetawan's Leadership Selection Committee, Citizenship Committee, and Governance team to begin strategizing the next steps forward. These discussions focused on identifying priorities, clarifying areas where additional information or support may be needed, and ensuring that the different pieces of the governance work continue to move forward in a coordinated way.

The conversations reflected the strong commitment of Magnetawan's committees and staff to approach this work carefully and collaboratively. Together, the group is beginning to map out the next phase of work, with a focus on supporting Magnetawan in advancing its leadership selection and citizenship initiatives in a way that reflects the Nation's priorities and long-term governance goals.

Moose Deer Point First Nation

By Sarah Blackwell, Policy Analyst

During the first quarter of 2026, B'Maakonigan continued its work with Moose Deer Point First Nation across several governance and organizational development initiatives. This engagement included providing fiscal capacity support through briefings on the Anishinabek Nation Fiscal Agreement (ANFA) and ongoing guidance on fiscal management processes that support community priorities.

B'Maakonigan also supported infrastructure planning for governance at Moose Deer Point, working with leadership and staff to navigate community planning resources that can strengthen local governance capacity and create dedicated spaces for governance work.

At the request of Moose Deer Point, B'Maakonigan assisted with CEO recruitment processes, helping to ensure that the community has the organizational leadership capacity needed to advance its governance implementation work.

Looking ahead, Moose Deer Point has requested B'Maakonigan assist with additional recruitment initiatives in April 2026. These sessions will support continued governance implementation and help identify priorities for the coming fiscal year.

This ongoing partnership reflects B'Maakonigan's commitment to providing responsive, nation-specific support that strengthens the governance capacity of member First Nations while respecting each community's unique priorities, autonomy and timelines.

Nipissing First Nation

By Lily Farrell, Policy Analyst

Nipissing First Nation has recently strengthened its internal capacity by hiring both a Senior Policy Analyst and a Junior Policy Analyst to support the next phase of governance development. These new roles will help advance the detailed policy work needed to support citizenship, appeals processes, and enforcement mechanisms. With additional policy capacity now in place, the Governance team will be able to dedicate more focused attention to reviewing existing policies, identifying areas where new policy development may be required, and ensuring that different governance processes align with one another.

This next stage of work will focus on translating the earlier preparatory discussions into more concrete policy and procedural frameworks. As the team continues to move through this process, the goal is to ensure that the systems, policies, and administrative supports needed for citizenship and governance decisions are clear, well-structured, and workable in practice. Strengthening this policy foundation will help position Nipissing First Nation to move forward confidently as governance initiatives continue to develop.

Sheshegwaning First Nation

By Janet Esquimaux, Policy Analyst

Governance Director Drew Patterson was quite busy coordinating the Anishinaabe Giizhigad: Doodemaag Kinoomage celebrations that took place at the Sheshegwaning Community Complex on beautiful Mnidoo Mnising (Manitoulin Island), from June 9 to 12, 2026. Elder Libby Laford introduced the festivities and line-up of speakers that included Chop Waindubence with Anishinaabe Clan Teachings and Mark Seabrook with his Woodland-style painting. Local caterer Pamela Roy prepared the meals over the four days of celebration and learning opportunities, which were well attended.

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Wahnapitae First Nation

By Hillary McGregor, Policy Analyst

Wahnapitae First Nation's (WFN) governance team and, B'Maakonigan have been focused on the development and implementation of Wahnapitae's Information Management Law. Over the past few months, important steps have been taken to move the law forward.

In the coming weeks, Wahnapitae First Nation E'Dbendaagzijig (citizens) will have opportunities to learn more about the proposed Information Management Law and take part in the First Nation's decision-making process.

A formal notice and mailout for the upcoming vote and information sessions was issued on March 6th. To further support community understanding and engagement an information session will be held in mid-April offering an opportunity to ask questions and learn about how the proposed Information Management Law will support Wahnapitae's governance priorities. Voting on the proposed Information Management Law is scheduled to commence on April 18, 2026.

This marks an exciting step in the ongoing implementation of the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement and Wahnapitae's continued commitment to transitioning toward self-determined, community-driven governance.

Whitefish River First Nation

By Hillary McGregor, Policy Analyst

Whitefish River First Nation's official adhesion date to the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement was April 1, 2026. This marked an important milestone in Whitefish River's governance journey and reflects years of leadership and community-driven work to advance their Chi-Naaknigewin and strengthen Nation-based governance.

Since Whitefish River's ANGA adhesion date on April 1, 2026, B'Maakonigan and Whitefish River have worked collaboratively on Whitefish River's new governance development policies. This work includes updates to their Council Procedures Policy and supports the continued implementation of governance systems aligned with Whitefish River's Chi-Naaknigewin.

B'Maakonigan has also supported the onboarding of a new Governance Manager in Whitefish River. The new Governance Manager started in May 2026 and will play an important role in helping to guide and coordinate Whitefish River's ongoing governance implementation work.

We look forward to continuing this work together, supporting governance systems that reflect Whitefish River's laws, values, and vision.

Zhiibaahaasing First Nation

By Janet Esquimaux, Policy Analyst

The community's Governance Team, comprised of Lisa Wabanage, Kaitlyn Sorbara, Andrea Anderson and Marcus Mohr, launched a Cultural Speaker Series earlier this year with an upcoming session with Dr. Alan Corbiere scheduled for August 8, 2026. Plans for the series will see it continue well into the fall season.

This summer, the Governance Team's primary focus is to prepare for the community's Annual Anishinaabemowin (Language) camp this summer, and are in the midst of planning the event.

Also, they have recently acquired a new Governance Manager, Rhonda Williams Lovett, who has an extensive background in the field of Governance.

B'Maakonigan sends their congratulations and looks forward to working with her in the future.

B'MAAKONIGAN SOCIAL MEDIA QR CODES

It's vitally important that the Anishinabek Nation and others are able to contact us and keep up on what we're doing.

Social media is one of the most familiar and accessible routes to enable nearly everyone to do just that.

We've created and provided the QR (Quick Response) codes that you can scan with your phone and get sent to our range of social media platforms.

We hope you enjoy our content!

QR CODE	PLATFORM	TAG
	Facebook	Bmaakonigan
	Instagram	b_maakonigan
	Blue Sky	@bmaakonigan.bsky.social
	LinkedIn	Bmaakonigan
	YouTube	@Bmaakonigan
	B'Maakonigan Website	www.bmaakonigan.ca

AOK'S GOVERNANCE DIRECTOR RETIRES

By Janet Esquimaux, Policy Analyst

AOK Governance Director Peter Nahwegabow announced his retirement at the Governance Director's Meeting hosted in Wahnapitae First Nation in late November of last year. His years of service and dedication were honored and celebrated by Aundeck Omni Kaning Chief and Council and their administration staff at the Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Centre on January 14th, 2026, with an evening of games, dinner, and speeches from the leadership recognizing his contributions to the community.

Peter was an elected Band Councillor of Aundeck Omni Kaning and served as Board Commissioner on the UCCMM Police Services Commission for 13 years. He was also responsible for the Resources Portfolio in the field of Natural Resources and environmental issues. This community development experience paved the way for him to guide the successful ratification vote of the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body (KEB) Anishinabek Education Agreement, which shaped a new role as Governance Director for the implementation of laws under the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement (ANGA). In this role, he led the initial development of Aundeck Omni Kaning's citizenship law and worked closely with the B'Maakonigan Governance Development Team. His achievements included recognizing the need for open and transparent community consultation with on and off reserve band members, and understanding that no law or policy development will be accepted without full community consultation.

The staff at B'Maakonigan wish him well in his retirement, along with the other Directors from the ratifying First Nations where his insight on governance was valued.

B'MAAKONIGAN CHARTS PATH FORWARD FOR ANGA INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM

By Shaelyn Wabegijig, Government Relations Coordinator

B'Maakonigan is steadily moving forward in planning the inaugural ANGA Intergovernmental Forum. This Forum will bring together ANGA First Nation Chiefs, B'Maakonigan leadership, and federal decision-makers to discuss shared priorities. These priorities include how to effectively implement citizenship laws and streamline the processes for more First Nations to join ANGA self-governance.

We have established an Intergovernmental Forum Working Group made up of representatives from B'Maakonigan and Crown-Indigenous Relations to research the possible avenues to address these shared priorities.

This group has discussed how these priorities could be implemented and what solutions may best support our Nations. This includes reducing the red tape involved when new First Nations who want to enter the Governance Agreement.

Currently, it can take 8-12 months for First Nations to have their approvals recognized and funded through the federal Treasury Board process. The Ministry of Crown Indigenous Relations has committed to working with B'Maakonigan to address this.

In addition, we continue to engage experienced thought leaders on citizenship through internal B'Maakonigan think tanks. We are also researching how other Nations have reclaimed authority over determining who belongs to their Nations. Citizenship is often one of the first areas addressed by Nations transitioning to self-government.

We have also begun research to better understand how the machinery of government operates within the Indian Registry system. This work will provide important insight into how we can move away from the colonial Indian Act system and toward the return to our own systems of E'Dbendaagzijig (citizenship).

Now that we are fully immersed in this research and discussions, the Working Group has recommended that, due to the breadth of internal research and preparation required for the Intergovernmental forum, we are now planning for a meeting date to be set for 2027.

Finally, we are envisioning the path ahead grounded in Anishinaabe aadziwin (way of life), guided by our getzijig (Elders). We are confident in our ability to move forward in a good way, from a position of strength rooted in who we are—united as Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe: One Anishinaabe Family.

BUSY B'MAAKONIGAN BODIES

Over the past several months, the B'Maakonigan team has been very busy, hosting and attending meetings, Think Tanks, and planning sessions throughout Ontario. This summer, catch us at one of our signatory Nations' Pow Wows!

Governance Development Director's Update continued from page 3

from the Northern Superior region to join, another important step for the reach of the agreement. Thessalon First Nation has signed a Band Council Resolution to enter the agreement. Sheguiandah First Nation has begun its own approval process with our team.

Each new community stretches our capacity, and a continuing priority is making sure we have the resources in place to support Nations well as they move through their governance journeys. We are grateful and excited to work alongside them.

Acknowledgments
My thanks to the Governance Development team. This is detailed, demanding work, and they carry it with skill and a strong commitment. I also want to commend the leadership, staff, and governance directors across our member Nations. The progress of the past months is due to their hard work and dedication to their nations. Implementation is substantive work, and the dedication shown across our Nations continues to move real self-government forward. We look forward to continuing it together in the year ahead.

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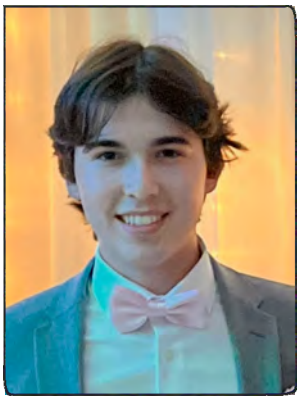
SUMMER STUDENTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Samantha Bean is a Research Assistant (Summer Student) supporting Governance Development at B'Maakonigan. Samantha is currently based in Ottawa, Ontario, on the traditional, unceded, and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Peoples.

Samantha is pursuing an Honours Bachelor of Social Sciences in Conflict Studies and Human Rights, with a minor in Law, at the University of Ottawa.

Prior to joining B'Maakonigan, Samantha held several roles with the City of Ottawa, including Lifeguard, Swim Instructor, and Camp Counsellor.Samantha is a member of Timiskaming First Nation, an Algonquin Anishinaabe community.



Waagosh (Kiigin Bellefeuille) is a Research Assistant (Summer Student) at B'Maakonigan. Kiigin brings experience in First Nation governance and economic policy from previous work with the Anishinabek Nation, including support for the Anishinabek Nation Economic Development Opportunity (ANEDO), governance initiatives, and legislative analysis.

Kiigin is a student at the University of Ottawa, entering third year in 2026, pursuing a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies with a focus on Economics.

A member of Nipissing First Nation, Kiigin is actively involved in community life and plans to pursue studies in Law following graduation.

Joshua McEwen is a member of Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory and Eagle Clan. Joshua has travelled across Turtle Island with family on the powwow trail as a grass dancer and is actively reconnecting with cultural roots, with strong interests in Indigenous history, inherent rights, responsibilities, and governance.

Joshua is a graduate of Sault College, holding a Computer Programmer diploma and a post-graduate certification in Geographic Information Systems Applications, and is currently enrolled in the Protection, Security, and Investigation program within the Justice Studies field.

Outside of studies, Joshua enjoys outdoor activities and creative work, including cycling, snowboarding, camping, travelling, and land-based crafting.

Crystal Semaganis is a student at Nipissing University, a mother to four and a grandmother of two. Originally from Treaty No. 6 and Little Pine First Nation (Battle River Plains Cree Nation), Crystal currently lives in North Bay, Ontario.

Crystal's interests include Indigenous governance and the restoration of pre-contact Indigenous systems. She is also an artist, writer, and poet.

Crystal's research interests focus on enfranchisement, repatriation, and the evolution of Indigenous family systems.