



# **NORTH BAY/FRENCH RIVER ALGONQUINS**

## **Newsletter**

North Bay French River Algonquins (NBFRA) became a Non-Profit Corporation under Federal Articles on 2021-11-10. The purpose of our corporation is for “The establishment and operation of a non-profit for uniting the residents of the North Bay/French River area who are of Algonquin/Nipissing origins”.

NBFRA have recognized that historically, all past petitions from 1794 to 1865 were submitted to the authorities on behalf of both the Algonquin and the Nipissing Tribes, who were great allies and both were Algonkians, meaning they both spoke the Algonquin language.

NBFRA felt that the Algonquin of Ontario’s (AOO) “Proposed Criteria” which was implemented to exclude most of our members from the AOO and Mattawa/North Bay Community based on the Proposed membership Criteria introduced in 2020 was procedurally unfair. The Proposed Membership Criteria was developed and adopted without transparency, or clear explanation without any opportunity from impact members to be heard.

Therefore, for these reasons, and also because the NBFRA’s membership has stronger present-day land and social/cultural ties to the region surrounding North Bay and Lake Nipissing (the “North Bay Region) than any other AOO community. The NBFRA is the proper present-day representative of the Algonquin/Nipissing Nations in the North Bay and Lake Nipissing areas (the North Bay Region).

Our solicitor suggested that the NBFRA takes firm position that the unilateral termination of its’ members was wrongful on the following grounds:

- a) NBFRA members meet the Agreement in Principle’s (AIP) definition of “Beneficiary”;
- b) The AOO unilaterally terminated NBFRA members based on the “Proposed Membership Criteria” contrary to the AIP and common law requirement;
- c) NBFRA is the proper modern-day successor to the Algonquins and Nipissings Nations in the North Bay Region, because its’ members have a stronger presence on the land and stronger social/cultural ties to the North Bay Region than any other AOO community.

Despite the rigorous, transparent and legally sound approach in the AIP, the AOO membership criteria was unilaterally changed by special resolution passed in or around April 2020, introducing the new “Proposed membership Criteria” without a mandate from the membership. Again, the AOO unilaterally terminated the NBFRA members based on the “Proposed Membership Criteria”, contrary to the AIP and common law requirements. There was no resolution passed or mandate given to Chief Bastien to vote in favor of the criteria.

No written reasons for the decisions were provided and no effective appeal process has been established by the AOO, to provide impacted members with an opportunity to challenge the enrollment decision.

Because of all the aforementioned unlawful AOO activities, the NBFRA pursued the assistance of a solicitor, to find a way of re-establishing our rights such as hunting and fishing, and all other rights that we are entitled to enjoy, as indicated in section 35 of the 1982 Canadian Constitution Act, as well as Bill C-15 and the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDRIPA).

Over a period of 3 years, the NBFRA sought legal counsel to re-establish its’ rights, facing challenges with the first two lawyers due to conflicts of interest and the complexity of the case. The third lawyer presented a Statement of Claim that removed the NBFRA as plaintiff, leading to the termination of the contract and a loss of retainer.

### **Now for the good news and a positive future.**

The Board has hired a very knowledgeable, ambitious and serious lawyer who is willing and able to provide the support that we need to bring us towards our success in order to regain all of our rights. I am very confident that with her approach and experience negotiating for our Indigenous rights that we are well on our way towards our goal. Her time and serious representation is very valuable therefore her services need to be recognized by making sure that she is compensated for her fees on a regular schedule.

Our Chairperson for the Membership Enrollment Committee namely, Camille Gaudreault who is doing a fantastic job indicated that we have approximately 550 ± members in the NBFRA organization. Appreciation goes to our Board of directors who are volunteering a lot of their time to per-sue our goal in order to regain all of our rights for our future generations.

At our Annual General Meeting (AGM 2023) a motion was passed by the majority of the members to temporarily charge \$100 for a membership, to help pay our solicitor’s fees until we get funding from the Governments.

At this time we are giving membership certificates which helps to provide post secondary education assistance. I am confident that 2025 should be the last year that the

membership fee will apply and that by then, we should qualify for all our rights as per s35 of the 1982 Constitution Act.

As of now, we will need further financial assistance to help pay for our solicitor. Your annual membership fee of \$100 via e-transfer to [northbayfrenchriveralgonquins@gmail.com](mailto:northbayfrenchriveralgonquins@gmail.com), or cheques to the North Bay/French River Algonquins will also be accepted and be mailed to Camille Gaudreault c/o NBFRA, 924 McIntyre Street West, North Bay On P1B 3A4.

To all members who have already paid for their annual membership WE THANK YOU!

Respectfully,

Rolland Boisonneault BA (Hons)  
Chairperson, NBFRA