

WELCOME TO

Bearskin Lake First Nation



**TEACH
FOR
CANADA**



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Bearskin Lake First Nation

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to Bearskin Lake First Nation! We are very happy that you will soon be teaching and living in our community.

You will soon discover the beauty of Bearskin Lake. The community is surrounded by pristine lakes and nature. You will get to admire this beauty every day, as your home is located right on the lake and has a beautiful view.

Bearskin Lake is a proud Oji-Cree community that is anchored in Christian traditions. There are two hunting festivals organised every year, to which all teachers are invited. We hope you will come out to events, as we want to get to know you.

Education is very important to us. We have a beautiful school and we are very proud of it. We hope you will invest yourself at school during the day but also once classes are over. Students can learn in class, but they can also discover new interests and talents after school. We encourage you to introduce your passions to students by organising extracurricular activities.

We expect teachers to be courteous and respectful of their colleagues and those in positions of authority. Should you have an issue, we ask that you talk to your principal who will help you determine what the next steps are. While you are very welcome, we ask that you respect the way we do things in our community.

Thank you for your commitment to Bearskin Lake First Nation and our children!

Tricia Nothing

Education Director
Bearskin Lake First Nation

Community



A Brief History

1932

Bearskin Lake is one of a number of First Nations established along the Severn River. These communities are linked to the sites of former trading posts built when the Severn River was a prominent river during the fur trade era.

1976

Originally located on Bearskin Lake 50 kilometres to the southwest, the main community moved to its present site on Michikan Lake in the the summer of 1932. Furious forest fires threatened the north western region of Ontario and this would also force the Anishnewac to move east and settle at Michikan Lake some 30 air miles away.

2016

Bearskin Lake broke off from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation (Big Trout Lake) and gains independence. The first chief of Bearskin Lake is elected and the band was recognised by the federal government.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and Minister responsible for FedNor, announced an investment in Bearskin Lake First Nation to help identify and prioritize viable economic development opportunities through enhanced decision-making and planning.

The name of the area that the Anishnewac first came together to trade, socialized and celebrate was called Bearskin Lake. The Hudson Bay company had established a trading post here and also a post office.

The name Michikan is “fish trap” because the people who inhabited this region would block off certain areas of the Michikan River to lure fish into shallow areas and spear or scoop them up for food. The name of the lake they travelled from stuck as the community name, since the post office would only ship mail to an address at Bearskin Lake.

The Land

The community of Bearskin Lake is located 425 kilometres north of Sioux Lookout. The First Nation is accessible only by air or ice road. During the coldest months the road extends from Windigo Lake north through Muskrat Dam. The community is located on Lake Michikan. Three settlements make up the Bearskin Lake First Nation. The main village is situated on the west shore of the lake and all three communities are tied to one another by all weather gravel roads. The reserve also contains a segment of Severn Lake and the Severn River, into which Michikan Lake flows.

Moose, caribou, beaver, muskrat, bears, geese and ducks are common in the area.



Bearskin Lake Community Map



Michikan Lake School



Welcome!

School Population

70

Grades

Kindergarten to
Grade 8

Education Director

Tricia Nothing

Michikan means “fish trap”.

Five elementary school teachers teach at Michikan Lake School. All the classes are split grades and there is a special education teacher. There is also a high school teacher who teaches KiHS classes.

What is the school most proud of...

- Many of the kids are proficient at hockey. Students frequently win all their games at tournaments.

Extracurricular activities

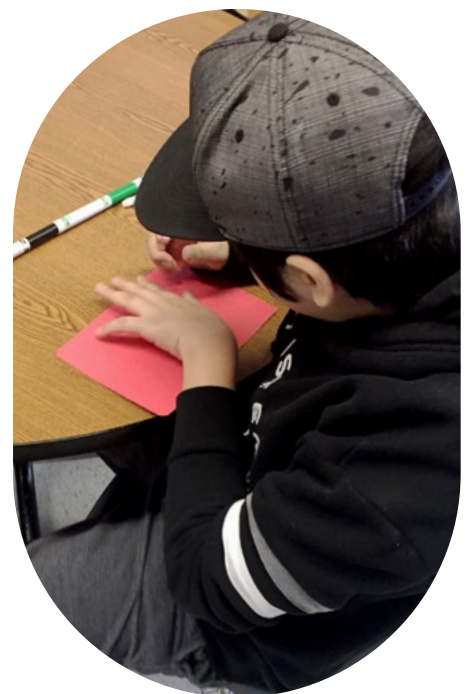
Currently there are few extracurricular activities for students at school. Teachers are strongly encouraged to organise clubs or activities. Floor hockey or arts and crafts would be very welcome additions but the school leadership is also very open to teachers proposing ideas related to their own interests and talents.



A Day in the Life of a Teacher

Teachers are expected to get to school around 8-8:30 am. Students arrive at 8:55. Classes run from 9 am to 3:45 pm. Morning instructional time is from 9 am to 12 pm. Lunch time is from 12:00 to 1 pm. Teachers share responsibility for lunch duty.

There are 175 instructional days in the school year. Teachers also have seven fixed professional days and six floating professional days.



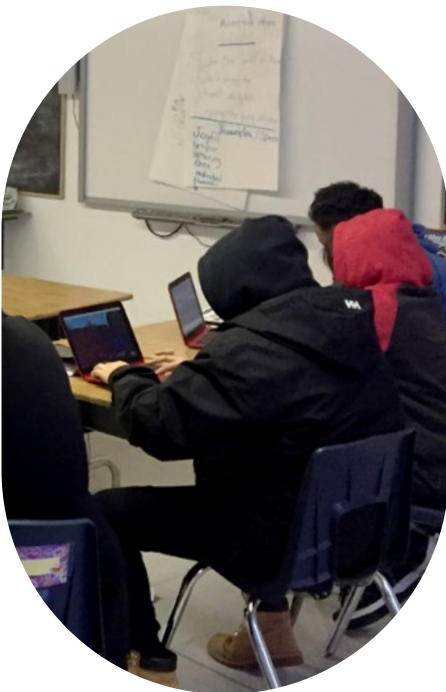


Facilities

Michikan Lake School is thirty years old and the building is very well maintained. There is a gym, library, kitchen, classrooms, playground, and baseball diamond. Teachers are welcome to take their students skating and sliding. They need to take a bus to go to the arena or the sliding hill.

Special School Events

- There are special activities and classes organised for Halloween, Christmas, and Easter. These are important and fun times.
- The third week of September there is a hunting festival. Wednesday and Thursday people go hunting. Friday to Sunday, people celebrate. There is a similar festival the first week of June.
- First week of November is alcohol awareness week.
- Hockey tournaments
- Christmas play
- In March there is a culture week. Teachers are welcome to take part and are encouraged to help organise the activities. Before or after culture week, there is March break, during which high school students return home and kids leave the community to play hockey.





Teacherages

Teacherages are located across the street from the school, which is centrally located in the community, near the band office, two stores, Chester Chicken, and the NAPS police detachment (Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service). The teacherages are in good condition and located right on a lake, so they have a beautiful view. The teacherages are fully furnished, teachers only need to bring linens and towels.

Rent is approximately \$400 per unit. There is the possibility of splitting a house with another teacher and splitting the rent. All utilities, including internet but excluding satellite television, are included in the rent.

Pets are allowed.

Teachers need to bring a router and a satellite box.
Cell phone service is available in Bearskin Lake through Tbaytel.





Life in the Community

Regular Activities

There is an adult hockey league. There are crafts and sewing nights. There is a community kitchen where local people gather to bake. There are bingo nights through the local radio station.

The hockey arena is named in memory of a young hockey player from the community. The arena is open evenings and weekends from December to April. Classes are welcome to go skating at the arena during the day, though they need to drive to get there.

Traditions and Customs

There are three churches in the community: Anglican, Full Gospel, and Pentecostal. Three services are celebrated every week.

Many community members practice hunting and fishing. There are two hunting festivals: a moose derby in the fall and another one the second week of June, during which there is a feast. There is an ice fishing derby in February; the first prize is a pickup truck. There is a culture week in March. Activities take place on the festival grounds.

Services in the Community

- The Canada Post office is located in the Northern Store.
- All airlines ship freight.
- Food is delivered regularly. Teachers can also order food from Fresh Market Food in Sioux Lookout.
- There are message boards in the band office, school, education building, and stores.

Get to Know Bearskin Lake Community Members



MEET PHILIP BOTTLE Education Board

What do you like most about your community?

There are many feasts! There is so much food served at the feasts. Teachers (and everyone else) are completely stuffed when they are done! The feasts happen every week, and teachers are invited to attend. Community members love it when teachers attend.

There is also great wildlife in the area (birds, wolves, and bears). In the spring, there is a goose hunting trip planned.

My favourite thing is that the community brings together youth and Elders at the school. The Elders have their own classroom where they teach beading, sewing, and other traditional crafts, as well as inviting students to speak about their problems.

What do you like to do when you have a day off?

I like to go fishing. But beware! You may need to paddle out to find fish! I also like to go hunting. I am at school every day. I take the time to invest in each teacher who comes to work in Bearskin.

There are lots of other activities in the community—something for everyone. There is volleyball, broomball, basketball (a new court is being built outdoors), and baseball. Taekwondo classes are offered in the evenings.

There are also land-based activities through the Choose Life youth program (e.g. wood burning). There is also a Junior Rangers program in the community.

How would you describe your community to someone who has never been?

It's like meeting a new person. They may look at you with curiosity but they are just trying to figure you out. It takes a bit of time. Be patient. Once they get to know you, it is easy from there.

Around the Community



①

①

Bearskin Church



③

②

Gym at the Youth Centre

③

School playground

④

Sunset in the airport area

⑤

Airport waiting area

⑥

Filleting fish inside the Youth Centre

⑦

Post Office

⑧

Store shelves

⑨

Band Administration Office



④



Quick Facts

Community Name
Bearskin Lake First Nation

Tribal Council
Windigo First Nations Council

Provincial Territorial Organization (PTO)
Nishnawbe-Aski Nation

Population On-Reserve



500

Language Spoken



**Oji-Cree
and English**

Treaty



Treaty 9

Average Yearly Temperature



-23.9°C 16.2°C
January July

Access



Year-round



Jan - Mar



Bearskin Lake Directory

Daycare
807-363-1043

Airport
807-363-1071

Economic Office
807-363-9914

Restaurant
807-363-2581

Michikan Lake School
807-363-2570

Nursing Station
807-363-2582

Michikan Education Authority
807-363-1011

Wahsa Distance Education Centre
807-363-2593

Post Office
807-363-1132

Band Office
807-363-2518

Wasaya Office
807-363-9804

Water Plant
807-363-1115

Tikinagan Office
807-363-9735

Youth Centre
807-363-1100

Northern Store
807-363-2597

Bearskin Co-op Store
807-363-2549

NAPS
807-363-1051

Getting to and from Bearskin Lake

- **Air:** Wasaya, which is partially owned by Bearskin Lake First Nation, and Bearskin Airlines have two flights a day to the community, and Perimeter has one flight a day. North Star Air also flies to Bearskin Lake.
- **Road:** Bearskin Lake is connected to Muskrat Dam, Pickle Lake and Sioux Lookout by ice roads in winter.



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