

WELCOME TO

# Fort Severn First Nation



**TEACH  
FOR  
CANADA**



# wachiyeh

# Fort Severn First Nation

Dear Teachers,

On behalf of Fort Severn, I warmly welcome you to our community. You will soon be living in Ontario's northernmost community, a region also inhabited by polar bears, beluga whales and arctic foxes. You will surely be drawn in by the beauty of this region when you arrive.

As you settle into your new life, I encourage you to listen to your colleagues, your students, their parents, and other residents of Fort Severn. We are a proud Cree community whose place at this particular location near the Hudson Bay is the result of a long history that is connected to the history of our country.

I encourage you to take a very active role both in the school and the community. From our annual hunting and fishing derbies to our regular feasts and picnics, you will be most welcome at all community events. Please come and take part and engage with your neighbours.

Thank you for pursuing this opportunity. I look forward to getting to know you better and helping you settle into your new life in Fort Severn.

Sincerely,

**Moses Kakekaspan**  
Education Director



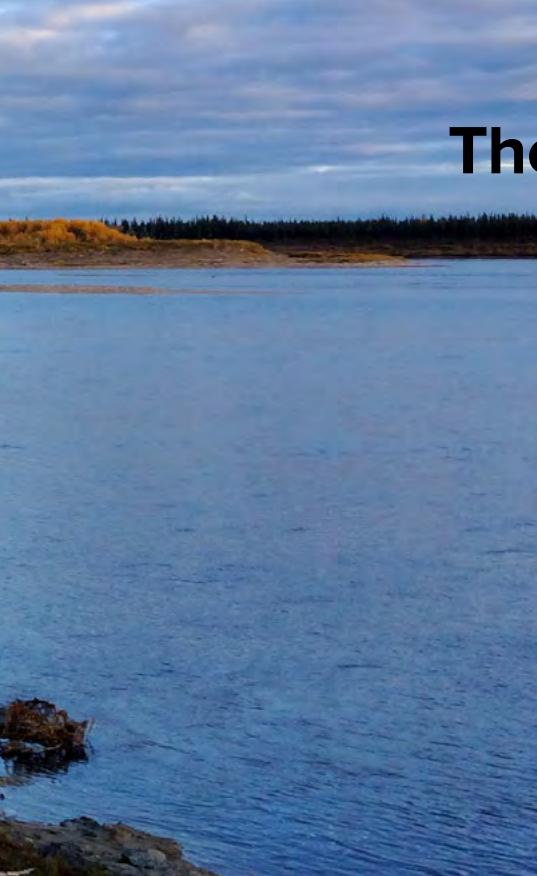
# Community



## A Brief History

- **1680** The original reserve was at Rocksand but further upriver, near the Hudson Bay, because of the Hudson Bay Company's outpost and an abundance of wildlife in the area.
- **1930** The first fort was built in the region for the fur trade. The English and the French then fought for the control of the area until the Treaty of Utrecht.
- **1930** Fort Severn First Nation signs a treaty with the Federal government at Rocksand.
- **1940s** The Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Churches establish themselves in the community (The Roman Catholic Church is no longer present).
- **1940s-1980s** Children from the community are taken to attend Residential schools.
- **1980** Community gains full reserve status.
- **September 2016** The new school building is complete.

Fort Severn's traditional name is Wasaho, which is a word to describe the bend in the river Severn where the community is located (as seen in picture above).



# The Land

Fort Severn is the most northern community in Ontario, located on the edge of the treeline.

The reserve is five miles from the coast of Hudson Bay, located on the north side of the Severn River. Churchill Manitoba is 200 miles north of Fort Severn.

The community is only accessible year-round by air. During the summer months, it can be accessed by water via the Hudson Bay. During the winter months ice roads link the community to Peawanuck to the east and Gillam (MB) to the west. Fort Severn is located in a subarctic region, therefore polar bears, beluga whales, seals and arctic fox inhabit the region. There are also caribou, moose, wolves, foxes, beavers, otters and several other smaller animals. Fish include trout, white fish, pike and walleye. Birds include geese, ducks, eagles, hawks, owls, and many species of summer as well as coastal birds.

## Fort Severn Community Map



# Wasaho Cree Nation School



## Welcome!

### School Population

100

### Grades

Junior Kindergarten  
to Grade 8

There are five split  
grade classrooms.

### Under Grades

K4 have half days,  
K5 have full days

### What is the school most proud of...

Our school offers a gym, library, science lab,  
Special Education classroom, kitchen, and  
cafeteria.

### School vision

"Together we achieve"







# A Day in the Life of a Teacher

Teachers are expected to be at school from 8:30 am to 4 pm.

Teachers' daily schedules vary. Recess duty is expected of teachers. Teachers have preparation time during Native language classes.

There is a Teaching Assistant in every class. In the school, there are Special Education assistants and tutor escorts. Fort Severn teachers are part of the Keewaytinook Okimakanak Board of Education (KOBE). KOBE mentors spend time in the classrooms and provide support and services for literacy, numeracy and speech language.





## Activities and Services

Our school has 5 classrooms.

### Classes

Native language and cultural classes are offered to all students.

### School Events

Special school events include an Ice Fishing Derby, Cultural Days and Feasts, Sports Day, and Christmas activities.

### Extracurricular activities

Reading clubs, books clubs, baking club, fundraising activities such as bake sales, penny sales, raffles and bingo are held regularly. Sports include broomball, skating, sliding, and baseball.





## Teacherages

There are three new apartments for teachers and two trailers plus a duplex. Residences are fully furnished and only bedding and toiletries are required. The teacherages are located across the road from the school.

We have a no pets policy. The strongest cell phone service available is through Tbaytel.





# Around the Community



①

Fort Severn scenery

②

Northern store

③

Health centre

④

Church





## Life in the Community



### Regular Activities

There is a ladies baseball team. Locals play baseball and volleyball. Many members of the community bead and make crafts. Some artists make tamarack birds and T-shirts. The band coordinates a Canoe Restoration Project, involving community youth to help restore historic canoes. Youth can participate in the Junior Canadian Rangers Program (12-18 years) which teaches various skills including first

aid, using rifles safely, hunting and fishing, Native customs and traditions, healthy living, staying in school and drug and alcohol abuse awareness. There is an outdoor rink that anyone can use at any time. Other activities include seasonal dances, flea markets, and bingo.

### Annual Events

Community feasts and picnics are held throughout the year. Annual thanks is given at the Creator feast (1st Monday in June) and Trappers' feast. There is a caribou and fishing derby in the fall and spring. Goose Break is the second week of May. Snow Geese arrive then and the community goes out to hunt. Everyone is welcome to attend.





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### Traditions and Customs

Community members are predominantly Christian. There are no powwows, sweat lodges or any other ceremonies of that nature.

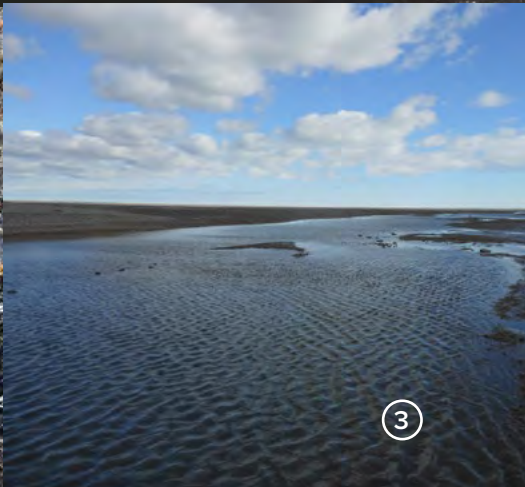
Traditional fishing, hunting and trapping are practiced throughout the year, particularly for geese, caribou and fish.

### What's going on in Fort Severn?

- There is a Facebook site for school announcements.
- There is a radio station
- There is access to cable television with some channels.
- There is a message board on television which announces community activities.



②



③

①

Net fishing

②

Fort Severn Labrador Tea

③

Hudson's Bay with the tide out

④

Muskeg  
(acidic soil type common in Arctic and boreal areas)

⑤

Wasaho Severn River



④



### **Getting to and from Fort Severn**

- Wasaya Airways flies to and from Fort Severn every day. The cost of a regular return ticket to Sioux Lookout is \$1300 but there are seat sales. Tickets are also cheaper if booked in advance.
- In February and March, winter roads connect Fort Severn to Shamattawa to the West, and Peawanuck to the East.

### **Getting goods to and from Fort Severn**

- There is a Northern Store in the community. Some foods, deemed healthy, are subsidised by the government.
- Groceries can be ordered and shipped from the Fresh Market Foods in Sioux Lookout.
- Freight with groceries comes into the community twice a week, on Tuesday and Friday.
- K&M Apowkamik is open in the evenings and sells snacks
- Eat local! There is a variety of local game you can incorporate into your diet.



# Quick Facts

## Community Name

Wasaho (Fort Severn) First Nation

## Tribal Council

Keewaytinook Okimakanak Tribal Council

## Provincial Territorial Organization (PTO)

Nishnawbe-Aski Nation

## Population On-Reserve



**500**

## Language Spoken



**Cree and English**

## Treaty



**Treaty 9**

## Average Yearly Temperature



**-28°C**  
January

**21°C**  
July

## Access



**Year-round**



**Jan - Mar**



# Get to Know Fort Severn Community Members

**MEET MOSES KAKEKASPAN,**  
Education Director

**What do you like most about your community?**

I never like to leave my home in Fort Severn. When I do, I can't wait to get back. It's a unique place and there's no other community like it. It's sub-arctic, so we have the opportunity to live among many animals that other communities don't see, like caribou, arctic fox, whales, moose, geese, and seals. You can't get that anywhere else. That's what I like about it. You're not enclosed anywhere, it's an open space and you can go for miles on the tundra. It may be remote, but there's a lot to do, like fishing and hunting.

**What do you like to do in the community when you have a day off?**

I usually go for a ride out to the coast, on a quad or snowmobile, not that far, about ½ hour away, just to look around and get away from the community a bit. It's nice to drive on the beach and look for a polar bear, or two!

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

It's a remote Cree community - the only Cree community in the Sioux Lookout District. There is so much to do, that sometimes I forget how lucky I am to live here. Once, I took some people out on a walk, and we saw polar bear tracks. I'm used to seeing them, so I just kept moving. Eventually, I realized I had lost my party - they were all back on the beach taking pictures! For me, it was just another day at home, but for them, seeing the polar bear tracks was a new and exciting experience.

People are friendly, but are often shy. Once you get to know them, they'll open up to you.

You can't just live from the Northern Store, you need to supplement your diet - try some caribou meat, or fish. People will take you fishing if you ask them.

Make sure if you go for a ride that you bundle up in the winter, as it's pretty cold, and you have to know your way around.



## Fort Severn Directory

**Band Office**  
807-478-2572

**E-centre**  
807-478-1171

**Education Administrator**  
807-478-2572

**Education Director**  
807-478-9548 ext. 25

**Niska Inn Bookings**  
807-478-2572

**Nishnawbe-Aski Police**  
807-478- 2571

**Northern Store**  
807-478-2517

**Nursing Station**  
807-478-2575

**Wasaya Agent**  
807-478-2680 (home)  
897-478-2517 (work)

**Youth Centre**  
807-478-2623



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