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P.O. Box 250
PARRY SOUND, ONTARIO
P2A 2X4

PHONE:
(705) 746-2531
FAX:
(705) 746-5984

CHIEF
Warren Tabobondung

CHIEF COUNCILLOR
Rebeka Tabobondung

COUNCILLORS
Vince Chechock
Brent Tabobondung
Dave Rice
Theresa McInnes

April 8th, 2020

Dear Citizens of Wasauksing FN:

Chi Miigwetch to the preparatory work of our Health Dept. and their COVID-19 notifications over the past 2 months. Because of these actions our First Nation has been able to be as prepared as possible to face this once a century health crisis.

However the virus continues to grow, move, and is lurking “all around us”. Many members of our community are extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. And our tight knit community makes it very hard to social distance or self-isolate- but we must **stay safe and stay home**. At this time of emergency, an abundance of discipline and self-sacrifice is being called for from each member of our First Nation.

None of us want to disrupt our lives by avoiding the things that we enjoy or by preventing friends and relatives from visiting in close proximity, sharing food and warm company. However even with the advent of Easter weekend, we each must self-sacrifice and follow the following lifesaving social distancing orders to protect our Elders and vulnerable: 2.e) **There shall be no group gatherings of people from different households**, and 2.b) **No person shall make non-essential trips outside the property where the person resides, with the exception of short outings for the purpose of walks, exercise and Culture**.

Because this is a matter of life and death, people not following orders risk a fine up to \$5000. The APS is supporting and enforcing the orders at: **1-888-310-1122**

On March 25th, WFN declared a State of Emergency and issued the following order:

Any person who has not regularly, normally and ordinarily resided on Wasauksing Lands for a period of 180 days as of March 27, 2020, is prohibited from entering or remaining on Wasauksing Lands while this Order is in effect.

On April 1st, WFN refined our messaging to Cottagers with the following order:

All persons are prohibited from entering onto and from remaining on Wasauksing Lands for the purpose of accessing, visiting, staying at or residing within any cottage, lot, area or portion of the properties held by way of head lease by Wasausink Lands Inc.

Chief & Council made exceptions for temporary, “essential” entry that are listed with the full orders at: www.wasauksing.ca The orders apply to **everyone**; both members of WFN and non-members including cottagers. WFN members and non-members must E-mail: **ert@wasauksing.ca** if they are requesting exemption or they risk being fined. We need to know who is in our community if they get sick.

At this moment Council has not established a manned ‘check-point’ because we do not want to jeopardize the safety of community members to ‘man’ it without sufficient protective gear of which there is a global shortage. We are placing our efforts on deterring entry and enforcing the social distancing orders without exposing community members to the virus and potential conflicts. However we are monitoring the situation closely and will increase restrictions if necessary.



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As your leadership we are responsible for putting measures in effect to protect our community's safety and wellbeing. The measures hold **each of us accountable** for doing our part. Chief & Council along with Senior Administration Staff have held teleconference meetings no less than twice per week addressing COVID-19. Many prayers have also been offered and we welcome more expressions of healing.

Communication has been identified as a significant item and WFN will be releasing on-going messages via our website, the Wasauksing Administration FB page, and the newsletter. Please sign up for an electronic copy at: newsletter@wasauksing.ca

Chi Miigwetch to our dedicated WFN staff who have been working hard to ensure the safe delivery of on-going programming and fruit and vegetable boxes to vulnerable members. They are issuing notices about changes in program delivery.

WFN is also looking to determine ways to help alleviate financial stresses caused by the calls to stay home, which will be released once ready. The federal government has an emergency relief plan at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

This new and insidious COVID-19 virus quickly became a pandemic and is now wreaking havoc world-wide. "This enemy is something that you can neither smell, see or feel". We've learned that it is very sneaky, which makes it very deadly, and once it gets a hold of you, it is often unrelenting. Our best defense is "knowing" and our Health Director, Deb has an abundance of knowledge on what we must do to prevent the spread. If you or any of your family members feel symptoms or need support please call our **Health Department** right away for instruction: **705-746-8022** Deb's knowledge is also useful public health information:

- Self isolate if you have or have been around someone who awaits testing and results of the test or has tested positive;
- Social distance of no less than 6 feet (2 metres)-this means outside of your home when gathering the essential items such as food and medications. Wear a mask for extra precautions;
- Hand wash lots and lots, as well as use hand sanitizer;
- If you do have to sneeze, sneeze into your arm or tissue and dispose of it immediately and then wash your hands;
- Don't touch your face, if you do, wash your hands;
- Stay within the confines of your own home, only leaving for a trip to town, to get your essential items, food and medication and exercise;
- Stay safe at home and consider it your safe bubble and protect it.

Miigwetch and remember we will get through this together! We love and care for our community and are grateful it is springtime and the beautiful nature we have.

Chief & Council