

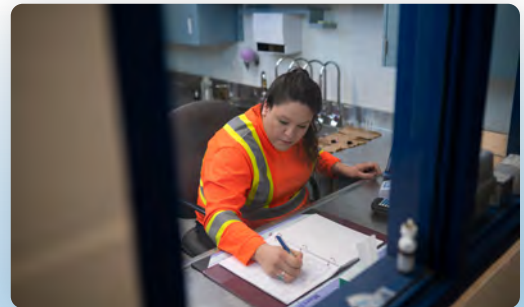


# DRINKING WATER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

**Training the next generation of Indigenous water treatment plant operators with hands-on learning in the classroom, out on the land and in community water treatment plants.**

## Benefits to communities

- 14-20 full time paid positions, lasting 15 months for young adult community members
- 1 full time paid, 18 month local coordinator position
- 2,000 hours in the classroom, at local water treatment facilities, and out on the land
- Including local traditional knowledge, incorporated with community guidance, strengthens the program's success
- Graduates certified as Small Systems Operators and Operators in Training (OIT)\*
- Graduates trained in source water protection
- Increased female participation in the water sciences
- Increased numbers of local, certified water treatment plant operators
- Enhanced sustainability of water treatment plants, local source water and environmental water bodies



“We are extremely excited about the opportunity to partner with Water First and we welcome the support they bring to our member communities’ efforts to provide safe drinking water to residents.

Existing water treatment staff are doing a great job with available resources, and at the same time we all acknowledge the need for more young people to enter the water field.”

**Irvin George, Executive Director  
Waabnoong Bemjiwang Association of First Nations**



## PHASE 1

Partnership Exploration  
& Planning

Community Engagement  
Information Sessions

Recruitment and Hiring  
(Interns and Local Coordinator)

## PHASE 2

- 8+ week-long training workshops
- Drinking water certification exams
- Work placements in community water treatment plants
- Online learning modules
- Online tutorials
- Mentoring

### Beyond the technical skills

Wrap-around supports such as childcare services and transportation ensure the program works for a diverse set of participants. Interns are also supported in areas such as resume writing, interview prep and employment coaching, while increasing their contacts in the Indigenous water field. Graduates of the program become part of the Water First Alumni Network, which provides continuing career development opportunities and an ever expanding professional network.

### Long-term sustainable outcomes

The Internship program helps communities in a meaningful way with sustainable outcomes. Our partners have strengthened capacity in managing and stewarding their water resources for the long term.

**89%**

Operator In  
Training Certified

**38%**

Female  
Participation

**90%**

Job  
Placement

“

The program has been monumental in allowing me to explore the world of water operations. The hands-on experience with skilled operators and other experts in the field, the training opportunities, and just the chance to try something new.

It has opened my eyes from thinking it was simply testing and reading values but understanding the relationship of the water to everything around it.

**Harmony Restoule**, Dokis First Nation  
Graduate, Georgian Bay Internship



# Trust building, meaningful partnerships and lasting results

Water First’s collaborative approach sets us apart. Trust building, meaningful partnerships and lasting results are key strands that are woven together to form Water First’s work. We strive to understand our partner communities’ needs and preferences, and to adapt the design and delivery of our programs to unique community circumstances. This approach is critical to program success and leads to strong partnerships and lasting results.

## Collaborating partners



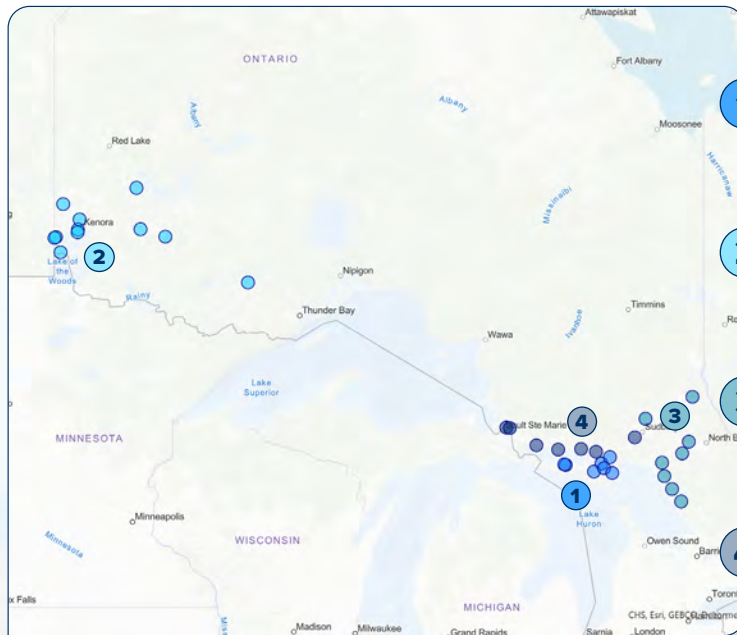
UNITED CHIEFS  
and COUNCILS  
of MNIDOO MNISING



**BIMOSE**



**GEZHTOOJIG**  
EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING  
Those Who Are Successful



### Manitoulin Island: 2017-2018

Partners: United Chiefs and Councils of Mnídoó Mnising, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, Anishinabek Nation, 7 participating communities

### Kenora Area: 2020-2021

Partners: Bimose Tribal Council, 10 participating communities

### Georgian Bay Area: 2021-2022

Partners: Waabnoong Bemjiwang Association of First Nations, Gezhtoojig Employment & Training, Anishinabek Nation, 8 participating communities

### North Shore Area: 2022-2023

Partners: Mamaweswen, The North Shore Tribal Council, 7 participating communities

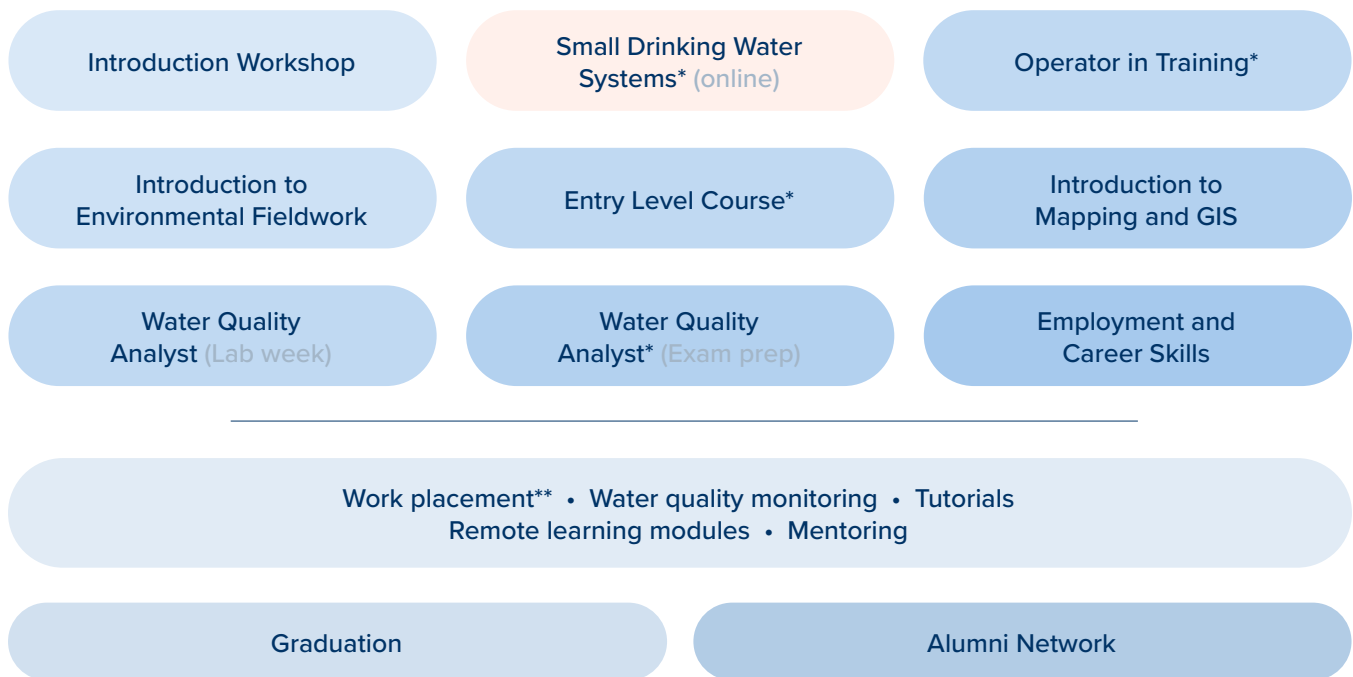


“Water First has demonstrated a clear commitment to a First Nations-led approach to address drinking and environmental water issues, and continues to manage community partnerships with the utmost respect.”

Amy Comegan, Past Executive Director  
Bimose Tribal Council

## Structure of the training program

Interns come together for 8 week-long skills workshops focusing on Water Operator certifications, water science, essential skills development, and education/career development.



\*Ontario Drinking Water Certifications

\*\* At community water treatment plants (WTP) to gain hours required to become licensed under the direct supervision of the WTP operators.

**Water First staff, partner community staff, and local water treatment plant operators work closely together to support interns throughout the program.**

**The close collaboration of all parties is paramount to the success of the interns.**



Founded in 2009, Water First addresses drinking water and environmental water challenges in Indigenous communities in Canada through education, training and meaningful collaboration.

For more information, contact Chris Wolnik, Director of Programs, at [chris.wolnik@waterfirst.ngo](mailto:chris.wolnik@waterfirst.ngo) or 1-800-970-8467 ext. 142



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