

SPRING 2026



NEWSLETTER



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An Update From Chief & Council

Boozhoo, all Bingwi Neyaashi Members and welcome to 2026. We hope you all had a good festive season, we are wishing you all a happy, prosperous, and safe 2026.

We share your undoubted disappointment that settlements are very slow in coming through, we remain confident they are on their way.

While development and growth continue with our First Nation, we are always thinking of ways to offer increased programming and greater opportunities for all members to participate in.

On January 31st, 2026, we held a community information meeting to present information about our Title and Annuity cases to our members. We were very fortunate to have representatives from Canada (David Elias) and Ontario (Zach Gutfreund) and our lands Consultant (David Carruthers) to provide an update to membership. Also having our lawyers, Lucas Jewitt (Edwards Bell Jewitt LLP) and Bob Botsford (Carrel+Partners LLP) to provide legal updates was beneficial.

We have clearly heard membership to have greater communication, and we undertake to improve in this area.

We look forward to the opportunity for greater dialogue with membership.

Chief and Council



An Update From Our Director of Finance

Spring is in the air, almost! As we head into spring, a season of renewal and planning, I want to take a moment to reflect on the last few months as well as some updates on things that will be happening within the finance department over the next few months.

The last few months have been as busy as ever for our team. We have been working on refining some processes internally in order to improve the flow of information between finance and our other departments. Staff took a well-deserved break over the holidays and then hit the ground running once again.

In December, Chief and Council issued the annual Christmas payments. These were paid strictly by direct deposit - no cheques were issued. This is a move that we will be implementing moving forward for all payments to members. If you did not receive your payment, it means that we do not have up to date banking information on file for you. To update your banking information for future payments, please contact Louise Esquega, Governance Coordinator, at lesquega@bnafn.ca.

It's budget season, so myself, the other directors, and members of the finance team are working diligently to prepare for the next fiscal year. This is a long and involved process which is why we start the process early.

Year end is quickly approaching, which means our team will be spending a lot of time making sure our records are ready for the auditors to start their work in a few short months. There is a lot of work that goes into getting prepared for the audit. During the months of April and May, the finance team will work to complete and close off the fiscal year. The auditors will start their work late in May or early in June, and will spend roughly 8-10 weeks on the file. Over the past two years our team has made countless improvements to our year end process, which is reflected in how quickly the audit has been completed over the last couple of years. Our goal is always, and continues to be, to have the financial statements completed early to ensure they can be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

In closing, like I always do, I want to thank the finance team for their continued hard work in supporting me as a director and in the support they give to BNA. I look forward to everything that the upcoming fiscal year has in store for our team and for BNA.

Until next time,



Brandon Favel, CPA
Director of Finance

An Update From Our Director of Economic Development

Hi to all members of BNA! Over the past months, administration and development efforts have continued to move forward across several key areas.

In economic development, planning is underway for both the Commercial Zone and a proposed hotel development. Business plans are being completed with external consultants, and discussions are ongoing with government partners and potential proponents to advance these opportunities. Our goal is to capitalize on the many regional developments that are occurring throughout the region, and ensure that BNA can benefit through commercial developments.

Communications has focused on improving engagement with members, including the January 31, 2026 information meeting on the Title and Annuity cases. Feedback from members is helping shape improvements such as more regular meetings, better information sharing, and additional communication channels. We look forward to improving on our communications related to Title and Annuities in 2026, and providing more relevant and up-to-date information to the membership on both of these processes.

In community energy, several projects are progressing. Lighting retrofits have been completed in community buildings, and insulation upgrades for the Sawmill will be underway soon. Work has also begun on BNA's district biomass heating system, with home retrofits underway and completion expected in 2027. Additional housing retrofits are being supported through the Indigenous Energy Program, and the drone project is nearing completion to support climate and environmental analysis.

Within governance, work continues on key policies, including the Communications Policy and Cemetery Policy. The administration is also transitioning to a new database system to improve record keeping and member information management. Planning is underway for summer student placements, with efforts focused on providing safe, meaningful, and skill-building opportunities for youth.

Regionally, there are several major projects that BNA is a part of, along with our neighbouring First Nation communities. The Greenstone Transmission Line received the designation from the Minister of Energy and Mines. This development will see BNA and its 6 First Nation neighbouring communities serviced by a new 230kV Transmission Line, which will improve reliability and provide significant capacity for on and off-reserve projects. We expect this project to be complete by 2032. Also, the Hurkett Project will see the development of a "Biohub" with the 4 First Nations who manage the Lake Nipigon Forest, with biochar and biogas being produced with underutilized portions of the tree. We expect to be producing biochar – which will substitute coal in the steel plants – in 2027. Finally, BNA has completed its large crushing contract with the MTO in its on-reserve aggregate quarry, and has continued to work with BZA in Highway contracts both north and south of the community.

Overall, these initiatives reflect ongoing efforts to strengthen administration, improve communication, support sustainable development, and build capacity within the community.

The Economic Development Department thanks the BNA membership for their continued support, and look forward to working with you throughout 2026.

Miigwetch,
Jordan Hatton, Director of Economic Development
jhatton@bnafn.ca

Get ready to
create new
memories!

2026 Unity Gathering
August 12 & 13

Fort William First Nation
Anemki Wajiw (Mount McKay)



Nokiiwin
TRIBAL COUNCIL



Economic Development Coordinator

Commercial Zone

Furthering our work on the development of the Commercial Zone, we applied through ISC CORP for a Hotel Business Plan and a Commercial Zone Business Plan. Both plans are underway. Currently, we are working with Atmacinta on our Hotel Business Plan.



Atmacinta is a consulting firm that specializes in supporting remote and Indigenous communities in building their economies. They have worked with other communities and are well-versed in the requirements ISC requires to complete a business plan.

For our Commercial Zone business plan, we are working with NCS (Northern Community Solutions), who have worked with us on various projects. We are having preliminary conversations with MTO and other proponents to understand all the requirements to move forward with this development.

Communications Coordinator

On January 31, 2026, we held an update meeting at the Valhalla Inn in Thunder Bay, Ontario. The meeting included guest presenters Bob Botsford (Carrel + Partners LLP), Lucas Jewitt (Edwards Bell Jewitt LLP), David Carruthers (Lands Technical Expert), David Elias (Negotiator for Canada, RCAANC – CIRNAC), and Zachary Gutfreund (Negotiator for Ontario, Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation).

The morning session focused on updates to both the Title Case and Annuity Case since our last in-person meeting in November 2024. Bob Botsford and Lucas Jewitt led the discussion, while David Carruthers joined virtually to provide additional information on the Title Case, including a presentation of the mapping related to Ontario's most recent Land Quantum offer. A question and answer period followed before lunch.

Following that session, panelists Bob Botsford, Lucas Jewitt, David Elias, and Zachary Gutfreund responded to questions submitted by members through a survey distributed during and after the Annual General Meeting in August 2025. Once those questions were addressed, the floor was opened to additional questions from members

attending in person and those joining via Zoom. After lunch, lawyers Bob Botsford and Lucas Jewitt continued answering questions from BNA members present at the meeting, as well as joining virtually, until after 2pm.

Several questions related to distribution could not be answered at this meeting but will be addressed at a future session.

Overall, we are committed to improving communication with members regarding the Title Case and Annuity Case. Feedback from members has included the following suggestions:

- Quarterly in-person meetings
- Zoom meetings (with French closed captioning)
- Meeting summaries shared by email and mail
- Distribution of prepared information prior to meetings
- Special broadcasts for important updates

If you have additional suggestions or questions regarding the Title Case or Annuity Case, please contact Jake Alfieri, Communications Coordinator at jalfieri@bnafn.ca.

Community Energy Coordinator



Retrofit for Sawmill (Insulation)

BNA received funding from the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) for electricity saving retrofits for commercial buildings within the First Nation. BNA used this funding opportunity to complete energy audits on 5 buildings within the community (Sawmill, public washroom, Health Center, Government Building, and maintenance garage). Overall, benchmarking analysis results confirmed funding will be used for the insulation of the Sawmill roof, with the rest of the funding for other energy saving opportunities within the community for commercial buildings such as lighting retrofits. As of today, the lighting retrofits have been completed, and the Sawmill roof insulation is still to be completed. BNA has completed the modeling with TBT Engineering for best results for heating solutions for Sawmill insulation. We have requested quotes on insulation for the Sawmill building.

District Heating Biomass Facility Project

BNA will be installing a district biomass heating project within community. It is an energy efficient project and will utilize the residual wood from the Papasay Sawmill. BNA has begun the home retrofits to be compatible with the district heating system. The two 4-plex retrofits are almost complete. The contractors are soon to start the retrofits on the 1st set of houses chosen. The construction has started and the estimated completion date of the project is March 2027.

Indigenous Energy Project (IEP)

BNA has funding from the Independent Electricity Systems Operator (IESO) to complete the housing retrofits to be compatible for the district biomass heating project. The first 6 homes are about to commence. BNA was successful in receiving funding through the IESO's IEP program for an additional 6 home retrofits.



Drone Project

BNA over the course of 2025 has been collecting drone footage to capture crown health of trees, soil erosion, and water levels for a climate change analysis. We are in the final stages of collecting drone footage and have started the final report due to funders.

Governance Coordinator

Boozhoo, once again. It has been very busy in the governance department. Here is a small summary of the projects I've been working on.

Communications Policy

I am working on the Communications Policy alongside Jake, our Communications Coordinator. This policy will serve as an onboarding manual for both new and existing employees of Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek (BNA). This one-stop resource will consolidate all essential information employees need to perform their roles effectively, including job descriptions, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and key communication protocols.



Cemetery Policy

This policy is nearing completion, with the remaining work focused on mapping the cemetery to ensure it is accurately and properly plotted. Completing this mapping is essential to ensure that all information included in the policy is precise, consistent, and aligned with existing records and future planning needs. Once the cemetery mapping is finalized, the drafted policy will be prepared for formal review by Chief and Council. Following Council's review and any required revisions, the policy will then be shared with the membership for final review and input before being formally adopted. This process will ensure transparency, accuracy, and community awareness prior to implementation.

Database Training

I am currently receiving training on a new database system as our existing database is nearing the end

of its functionality and is at risk of failure.

I want to assure members that all pertinent information has been securely transferred and is safely stored in the new database.

This transition is also allowing me to develop new skills and improve efficiency in how information is managed. Once I am fully confident in navigating the new database and can do so reliably, the old database will be fully retired. The new system will significantly improve our ability to generate accurate statistics and retrieve mailing addresses and other member information more efficiently.

Summer Students

Each year, Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek applies for funding through a few programs to provide students with summer employment opportunities. These positions are intended to help students build their resumes, strengthen existing skills, and gain valuable new experiences in a supportive work environment. While these programs are important and beneficial, we consistently encounter challenges when it comes to accommodating and supporting our summer students effectively.

These challenges may include limitations in workspace, supervision capacity, and the ability to place students in roles that align with their interests and skills. Please be assured that we are actively addressing these issues, as it is essential to keep our summer students safe while navigating the natural environment. Equally important is ensuring that students have a positive, productive, and rewarding experience during their time with BNA. We are committed to providing meaningful opportunities that support skill development, personal growth, and a strong foundation for their future careers.

To help improve the summer student experience moving forward, I would greatly appreciate your feedback, ideas, or suggestions. Your input will assist us in identifying practical solutions and strengthening our approach so we can continue offering meaningful opportunities to students in future years.

Lands & Environment Coordinator

Food Sovereignty

After a late start due to the cold spring, the garden program at the green space offered another season of learning and sampling fresh produce. Thank you to all those who came out to help in the garden, and an extra big thanks to Shannon Lesperance for her care in supervising the gardens for the season. Shannon and 3 staff members remain involved in the Understanding Our Food Systems working group, hosted by the Thunder Bay and District Health Unit (TBDHU), alongside other local First Nations, non-profits, and Lakehead University. With funding from the TBDHU we have purchased several items to support the processing of both garden produce and wild meat. These items include:

- Vacuum sealer
- Meat grinder with sausage attachment
- Dehydrator
- Meat smoker



Canada-Ontario Resource Development Agreement

On some of the chilliest days this winter, we completed part 2 of our hide-tanning workshop, funded by the Canada-Ontario Resource Development Agreement (CORDA). The group removed the moose hair and stretched a new moose hide donated by JJ Noel. The cold weather was also beneficial, as participants could try frost scraping, which is much less strenuous than the summer methods previously used. Prior to the latest session, we hosted a larger workshop in September. The goals of the workshop are to produce usable hides for repairing the big drum and for programming throughout the year. The hide camps are also a great opportunity to come together as a community, learn from one another and from our facilitator, the talented Jean Marshall. Miigwetch to all who joined and helped with the hides.

Environmental Management Plan

In 2020, BNA developed its first Environmental Management Plan, supported by the Lands Advisory Board Resource Centre, for a 5-year period. We worked towards meeting the goals created through community consultation. In 2026, we are working to establish our second EMP, 2026-2031. The living document is planned for completion later this year, and we are seeking community input from members living on and off the reserve. There will be opportunities to give input at community events. Members are also welcome to contact Jessica Hubbard at jhubbard@bnafn.ca



The food sovereignty program continues to grow every year. In 2026, with funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF), Bingwi Neyaashi will build a growing dome. Heated by passive energy from solar reflectors, the growing season will extend. Placing the dome behind the government building will provide a more accessible space closer to housing, where members and their families can grow food. With rising grocery costs, the primary goal is to reduce food insecurity among members.

Mining Coordinator

Although there hasn't been much mineral exploration in our territory over the past several months, our Mining Coordinator, Kim Rozon, continues to be busy meeting with proponents who are currently active in our territory or who propose to work here in the future. Kim works closely with Animbiigoo Zaaging Anishinaabek (AZA), Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (BZA), and Red Rock Indian Band (RRIB) on projects within our shared territories to ensure proponents are adhering to agreements that they have signed and that they are meeting the environmental, economic, and social needs of the communities.

Indigenous Participation Fund (Ministry of Energy and Mines)

Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek has been approved for funding through the Indigenous Participation Fund from the Ministry of Energy and Mines to support consultation on proposed mining and exploration projects within our territory. This funding will ensure the continuation of the Mining Coordinator position until at least March 31, 2029.

Greenstone Transmission Line

Kim Rozon and Jordan Hatton both work on the Greenstone Transmission Line file, attending meetings regularly with Hydro One, Ministry of Energy and Mines, and the other six First Nation partners on this project: Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek (AZA), Aroland First Nation (AFN), Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (BZA), Ginoogaming First Nation (GFN), Long Lake #58 First Nation (LL#58FN), and Red Rock Indian Band (RRIB). The Greenstone Transmission Line was designated as a priority project on January 28th, 2026.

Critical Minerals Infrastructure Fund – Indigenous Grants (Natural Resources Canada)

We have also received funding from the Critical Minerals Infrastructure Fund (CMIF) to support the participation in and engagement on infrastructure projects related to the development of critical minerals. Specifically, this fund will support BNA to review and participate fully in work related to the Greenstone Transmission line. To read the CBC

article related to the announcement of this funding on January 14th, 2026, please visit: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/federal-critical-mineral-funding-9.7045696>



Above Photo: January 14, 2026 Patty Hajdu's announcement that BNA and other First Nations will receive the CMIF Indigenous Grant.

4-Nations Resources Inc.

We have nearly completed the transition of 3-Nations Resources Inc. (BNA, BZA, and RRIB) to become 4-Nations Resources Inc., to now include AZA. Kim Rozon will now sit on the Board of Directors of 4-Nations Resources as the representative for BNA, along with representatives of each of the other three First Nations.

Community-Led Mineral Exploration Mitigation and Rehabilitation Standards – WWF

Continuing to work with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Mining Coordinator completed the scoping exercise to plan how to develop the Community-Led Mineral Exploration Mitigation and Rehabilitation Standards over the next two years. While the scoping exercise is currently being reviewed, we hope to begin work on developing the standards in the near future, working collaboratively with neighbouring communities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kim Rozon. Miigwetch!
krozon@bnafn.ca or (807) 358-5151

EarlyON Update

Over the winter, the EarlyON Centre has been offering a variety of daily drop-in programs including Children's STEM, Anokaajigan Arts and Crafts, Anishinaabemowin Lessons, Abinoojiinyens and Odamino Play Groups, as well as Songs and Stories. We like to plan our programs based around the seasonal changes and the 13 moons.

Each month, we host a Men's Night for men to bring their children ages 0 through 6 to enjoy a meal, drumming, and playing together. In addition, we offer Kid's Cooking and Kid's Baking programs that alternate monthly.



In January, we made a Creamy Chicken and Vegetable Soup with our families, and we plan to make Sugar Cookies this February!

We also regularly offer registration workshops, such as Tye Blanket and Mitten-Making, where we provide materials, instructions, and refreshments for the parents and guardians to enjoy while their children play at the centre! In the springtime, we will continue to offer a variety of daily drop-in programs, as well as a monthly Men's Nights and Kid's Cooking/Baking.

We are especially looking forward to offering Regalia Making workshops this spring and starting seeds for our upcoming gardening program at the Grandview location!

Miigwetch Aapiji,
Karen and Jade





Child & Youth Worker

September brings a new school year for our BNA children and youth. Our youth attended Wake the Giant festival again this year, the music festival movement started in Thunder Bay in 2019. Wake the Giant is a cultural awareness project aimed at creating a more welcoming and inclusive city for Indigenous people, youth and their communities. The music festival is a celebration of all cultures with a focus on Indigenous artists and musicians.



As the season turned to fall, Jean Marshall and her helpers attended our Hide Tanning Workshop to teach us how to properly stretch and soften the Moose Hide we have been working on for a few years. The children and youth learnt how to scrape the hair off the hides with a variety of tools, different techniques to stretch and soften the hide so that it is closer to the next step. Jean showed us a unique technique to stretch and soften the hide where the children, youth and their family members laid on the hide, while everyone worked together and held onto the hide and then thrown into the air like a trampoline. Everyone had a blast being tossed high into the air!



In October, Juniors Night (ages 7-11) was an exciting one! CYW took eight Juniors for a Halloween Spooky House tour around the city. While we were driving to the next spooky house, the Juniors were singing karaoke and were so excited to tell everyone about their Halloween costumes. Youth Council held their meeting in October, our Cultural worker came to teach the youth about harvesting medicines in the bush and made cedar tea for the youth to enjoy. We all participated in learning about the Medicine Wheel teachings, the youth wrote down what they do in their personal lives to lead a healthy lifestyle in all four quadrants – mental, physical, emotional and cultural well-being.



Liz headed out to Sand Point for Halloween Bingo where the two Juniors who attended won the best costume contest along with many spooky prizes! The Thunder Bay Museum hosted The Phantom's of the Gallery Haunted tour; our Youth (ages 12-29) braved the ghostly tour. To celebrate Halloween, we held a spooktacular Halloween party. The children and youth and their families came in their costumes and danced, played games, created crafts, and played Fear Factor!



In November, we went to an Escape Room for Youth Night (ages 11-17) and used our detective skills to try and escape before the time ran out! Juniors Night at Grandview consisted of creating snow globes, bird seed ornaments, and playing boardgames in the basement. Family Night at the DIY Studio/The Hive was a hit, painting winter/Christmas ceramics and great conversations.

December was a busy month for our Child and Youth Worker program getting into the Christmas spirit. Families gathered to build gingerbread houses and cookies; after eating most of the decorations the children had an impromptu dance party. BNA member Christmas Party was held at the Slovak, Santa and the Grinch surprised everyone with their presence and all the children and youth met with Santa to tell him what they wanted for Christmas and received a special gift from the big man!

To celebrate all the hard work Youth Council has accomplished over the last year, Child and Youth Workers, Chief and Council enjoyed a Christmas Dinner at the Prospector Steak House. The week before Christmas, our families met to participate in Christmas Community Crafting with a delicious dinner. We had many different stations where families could create button cards, teacher gifts/ornaments, wooden signs, ornament wreaths and get into the Christmas spirit!

Miigwetch aapiji to our BNA children, youth, families and Youth Council members! If any youth have an interest in joining Youth Council (you do not need to live in Thunder Bay) we would love you to reach out!

Looking forward to the 2026 year with our programming, so please come out and experience these two amazing groups of Young People! You all should be so proud.

Miigwetch aapiji

~ Liz and Kaitlyn

Dagwaagin (Autumn) Health Team Update

The Health Team has been working with our members in many diverse ways. Your Health Team consists of Tashia Smith-Ennis RN, Manager of Health, Jamie Lavoie RPN/FCN, Leanne Hashiguchi MHW and Vierlyn Lunn DipTRO/CCW.

The team has been working on creating and facilitating programs of interest as suggested by the community members. This includes creating and promoting a Mental Health program to be held consecutively over 10 sessions. Other programs have included Traditional Grieving Support, one on one visits and continuing with supporting our members with respect and dignity.

Foot Care clinics and appointments are still welcomed by Jamie. She also will continue to deliver blood pressure and diabetes check in services. Inquiries can be sent to jmacdonald@bnafn.ca or (807) 344-3055 ext 240



Programs continued with a variety of focuses. These included social connections, crafting evenings, concerts, live theatre, visits to Sand Point and Cultural Teachings.

Please watch for upcoming events and programs that bring us together and foster health, positivity and a nourished spirit.

Education evenings have continued and will continue monthly. The topics that are covered are delivered by some of our community partners like Mushkiki and Nokiiwin. Any suggestions of topics will be greatly appreciated. Feel free to contact any of us.

Miigwetch from your Health Team and Partners



Cultural Advocate

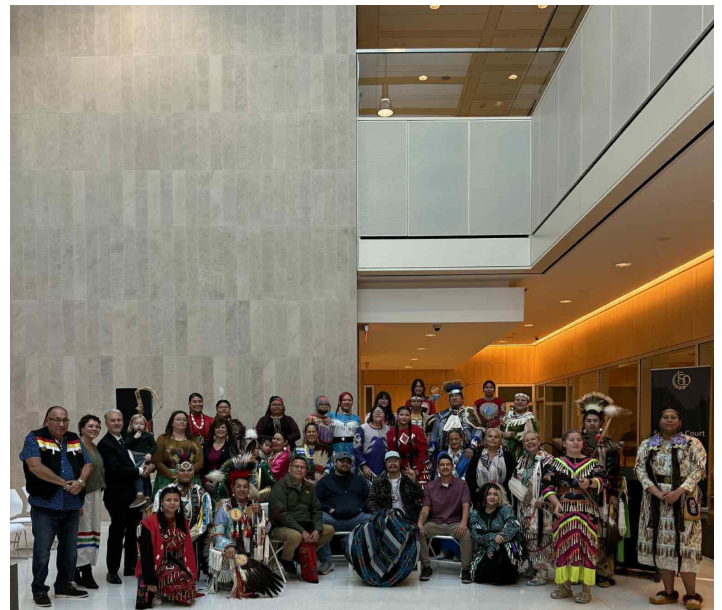
Boozhoo Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek



Through the Cultural Advocate role there has been a lot of programming, outreach, and partnerships. Looking forward we will be hosting Feast Your Spirit nights at the Grandview location. Those nights will be seasonally tied to the land and highlight some activities that would be going on during that time of the year. This is a great chance to come out and be together as community. Before winter we were focused on reestablishing the trail system at the Grandview property and ensuring its safe for land-based programming. The coming year should have a lot of fun planned on the trails.



There have been workshops for birch bark baskets, quillwork, and water teachings. Prior to the Christmas break BNA organized an outreach day and visited the cities various tent city sites. Recently there was cedar bath ceremony held and the teaching of how to work with cedar was passed on. In February and April there will be workshops on the land as well. This spring we have a new teepee going up and this will be open to community to come out and learn to care for this space.



Within the Cultural Advocate role there is the opportunity to work within restorative justice and support with healing circles and criminal justice matters. For any BNA youth who need volunteer hours please come see me as there are opportunities for you. If you have questions regarding smudging, coming of age ceremonies, or teachings and have always wanted to inquire, please reach out or stop by. If you have any programming requests, please let me know as my door is always open.

Miigwetch aapiji
Savannah Upton
Cultural Advocate
Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek supton@bnafn.ca





An Ojibway First Nation dedicated to serving our generations by creating a self-sustaining and healthy community for today and tomorrow.

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