

**RAINY RIVER FIRST NATIONS
2-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
2013 – 2015**



INTRODUCTION

During the winter of 2013, the Rainy River First Nations Chief Jim Leonard and Council Members Shawn Brown, Brian Cochrane Sr., Kim Detweiler, Marcel Medicine Horton, and Robin McGinnis approved a proposal from Northern Sage Consulting to create a 2-year strategic plan. To assist with the plan, Northern Sage Consulting relied on the expertise of the Chief and Council, Manager of Administration (MOA), and Community Communications Officer to provide details and review the document. Without their hard work, this planning process would not have been developed.



PURPOSE OF A PLAN

This Strategic Plan has been developed by the Rainy River First Nations in order to provide a disciplined approach to the development, growth and preservation of the First Nations over the next two (2) years. It is intended to provide a systematic method to address the top priorities as determined by the Rainy River First Nations Chief and Council. It is the framework by which the organization will provide services and programs to the members of the community.

An adopted strategic plan serves as an official community policy document, a “roadmap” for future community decision-making and direction to help the First Nations move towards its goals and achieve its objectives. This plan can help prepare the First Nations for changes the future will bring, along with preservation and enhancement of the community’s quality of life and improve economic competitiveness. Strategic plans can also help answer the questions “Where are we now?” “Where do we want to go?” and “What will be effective ways to get there?” This strategic plan is one of the planning initiatives and can also lead to greater community collaboration.

To allow the community to keep moving forward and address the challenges that will continue to arise, it is critical to recognize the importance of continuing to support long-range planning projects and initiatives. Long-range planning assists in creating an environment that promotes a unified vision and fosters community solutions to overall issues.

Strategic planning is a fluid process that requires periodic adjustments to ensure that community programs remain aligned with the needs and priorities of the community members. The Chief and Council are committed to monitoring and updating this plan annually and will continue to seek membership input. The Chief and Council are eager to expand membership participation in committees and other community activities to assist in program and service improvements. All community members are responsible for assisting the Chief and Council in creating the future for the Rainy River First Nations people. From our community-oriented process, membership can expect the Rainy River First Nations to emphasize the following priorities during the next two (2) years. This plan may also contain additional priorities, goals and objectives that may be explored and implemented within the next three (3) to ten (10) years.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The Rainy River First Nations (RRFN) is an Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) community located in northwestern Ontario, Canada approximately 40 km west of the town of Fort Frances, directly north of the state of Minnesota. The closest communities are Emo, three (3) km to the east, and Barwick, five (5) km to the west. The closest major cities are Thunder Bay to the east and Winnipeg to the west, each about 400 km.

The Rainy River First Nations name originates from the Rainy River, which is located at the southern edge of the reserve and the United States/Canada border. The main part of the reserve is called Manitou Rapids, which is also part of the Rainy River and is spiritually and culturally significant to our membership.

Since time immemorial, the people of the Rainy River First Nations have occupied this area of land. In 1873, seven separate First Nations: Hungry Hall #1 and #2; Little Fork; Long Sault #1 and #2; and Manitou Rapids #1 and #2 (now known as Rainy River First Nations) signed Treaty #3 with the Canadian Government.

The Rainy River First Nations Chief and Council consist of a Chief and five (5) Council Members, all elected by the general membership of the First Nations and serve a 2-year term. The First Nations has nearly 1000 members, with approximately 350 residing on the reserve.



PHILOSOPHY

Rainy River First Nations recognizes the challenges ahead and will facilitate resources to overcome obstacles. Self-sufficiency and self-government can be achieved by working together. We must respect our Elders, we must believe in our youth, and most of all, we must believe in ourselves, as we will be the ones to determine our future. Rainy River First Nations will succeed through dedication, belief and the will of the members to take the challenge to be self-sufficient and self-governing.

NOTE: The Rainy River First Nations recognizes the need to revise and condense the First Nations' philosophy statement and intends to do so at a later date.

KEY BELIEFS

Rainy River First Nations believes that the members of the Chief and Council and staff must commit themselves to the community members. The Chief and Council and staff must at all times maintain close relationships with the community members by making regular home visits in order to listen and acknowledge the issues and concerns of the members they served.

Rainy River First Nations believes that the organization must develop and promote community ownership of the First Nation by the membership and staff.

Rainy River First Nations believes that the organization reflect traditional values in all aspects and its direction by: respecting and recognizing the membership's needs, growth and autonomy; respecting and developing trust among all stakeholders; respecting nature and each other; and respecting the spiritual beliefs of each individual.

Rainy River First Nations believes that – as *First Nations* – we must work together as united people to be successful in achieving our common goals.

Rainy River First Nations believes that we as *First Nations* members are the one and only people, who can determine our future and prepare a path that will bring prosperity and progress to the community, which will assist our First Nation to be self-sufficient and self-governing.

Rainy River First Nations believe that we must support other First Nations and affiliate organizations, as they are important to the growth of our community. Rainy River First Nations believe that the organization as all times must support the needs of the community members to get jobs, long term security and to live in

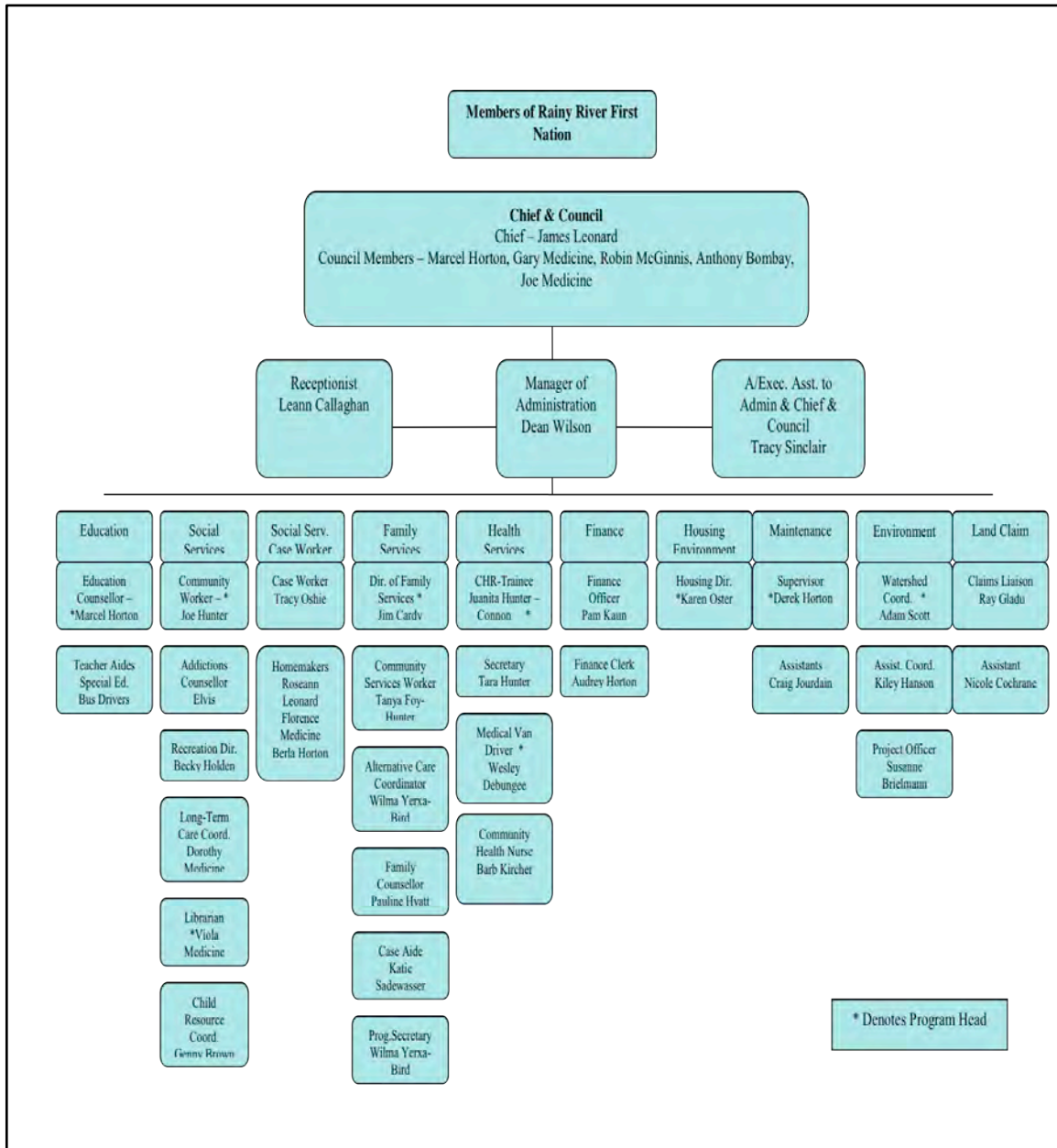
a community that is safe and healthy in order to bring our children and grandchildren to a high standard of living.

Rainy River First Nations is committed to the principle of equal opportunity and treatment for all members and employees. Accordingly, the organization is committed to providing an environment where the dignity, well being, and positive growth of individuals is respected and preserved. Sexual harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated by the Rainy River First Nations and its organizations.

NOTE: The Rainy River First Nations recognizes the need to revise and condense the First Nations' key belief statements and may do so at a later date. In addition, the Chief and Council may remove the word "sexual" as no type of harassment will be tolerated.



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



NOTE: An updated organizational chart will replace the chart above.

GOALS OF THE PLAN

At the beginning of this planning process, predominant goals were established, including:

- Streamline the planning process and make it easy for the Chief and Council and staff members to use, understand, and implement the plan.
- Create a “working” document and templates that can be reused and revised by the Chief and Council.
- Solicit input from the First Nations’ members through community meetings and other outreach efforts.
- Ensure the Chief and Council and staff members review and/or update the plan on a consistent basis.

The initial project list generated was extensive; therefore, the Chief and Council chose to utilize an additional prioritization method to further identify the main goals. Please see the grid below:

	Urgent	Less Urgent
Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capital and Infrastructure Plan ▪ Policy Development Process ▪ Language Revitalization Strategy ▪ Committee Operations ▪ Foster a Planning Culture <p style="text-align: center;">SHORT-TERM GOALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic Development Plan ▪ Human Resources Officer ▪ Improve Meeting Process ▪ Financial Policy ▪ Proposal Writer ▪ Confidentiality Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Election Code ▪ Council Manual ▪ Youth Program <p>CONTINGENT on Capital and Infrastructure Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administration Building ▪ Recreation and Community Complex ▪ Housing and Infrastructure <p>DELEGATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other Human Resources Needs → Human Resources Officer ▪ Economic Development Opportunities → CEO of Economic Development <p>EXTENSION of Language Revitalization Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Immersion Program
Less Important		<p>CONTINGENT on Capital and Infrastructure Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roof Structure at Skating Rink ▪ Fire Hall ▪ Wellness Center ▪ Long-Term Care Facility

As stated on the previous page, the initial project list was quite large, but not all projects or ideas discussed during planning sessions were identified as a priority. It is necessary to realize this plan covers a 2-year time period; therefore, not all projects will be completed and some ideas may not be implemented. However, the plan is a “working document” and projects or ideas generated during planning sessions, not established as priorities, may be included in the next 2-year strategic plan. The following lists are projects or ideas that were discussed throughout the planning sessions:

Policy-Related Goals

1. Implement a policy development component at each BUSINESS meeting
2. Develop a Social Media Policy
3. Adopt a Post-Secondary Education Policy
4. Implement a Daycare Stipend
5. Develop an Office Closure Policy
6. Enhance Student Allowances

Miscellaneous Goals

1. Create and implement Elder programs
2. Purchase heavy equipment
3. Create and implement a Constitution
4. Create and implement a Training Development Program
5. Create and implement a Code of Ethics/Conduct
6. Develop a Membership Code
7. Develop a protocol for trust
8. Implement a Wood Working Program
9. Enhance Healthcare resource for community members
10. Enhance Education Program
11. Develop and implement a Bill of Rights

Capital Projects

1. Construct a Youth Center
2. Construct an Immersion Center/School

Human Resources-Related Goals

1. Review and enhance current day-to-day operations
2. Implement measures to increase staff accountability

Community Enhancement Goals

1. Increase communication between Chief and Council and community members
2. Communication of 2-Year Strategic Plan
3. Enhance “community” feeling
4. Develop community engagement process
5. Hire mediator to assist with community disagreements
6. Obtain advice on whether an Elder can/should “open” for meetings

ACTION PLANS

Specific actions plans were developed for goals located on the grid of page 9. An action plan includes detailed activities listed in chronological order, along with a timeline or deadline to complete the activity and any person that may assist with the activity. A “progress” section is included to enter the date of completion for each activity. In addition, once an action plan is fully completed, it will be implemented to further reach goals established by the Chief and Council.

Capital and Infrastructure Plan			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Review current Capital and Infrastructure Plan to establish a template for NEW plan	2014-01-06	Chief Council Dean	
Review previous Assets Conditions Reporting Systems (ACRS)	2014-01-30	Kathy	
Develop survey to establish needs/wants of on-reserve community members	2014-02-15	Contractor (SCE)	
Conduct survey and compile results	2014-03-15	Contractor	
Determine estimates of cost regarding survey results	2014-03-31	Contractor (SCE)	
Input information from ACRS and “feasible” results of community survey into Capital and Infrastructure Plan template	2014-03-31	Contractor (SCE)	
Input information into Capital and Infrastructure Plan template for 1 st draft	2014-04-15	Contractor (SCE)	
Gain community input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send to community members for 30-day review ▪ Hold Community Meeting to discuss 	2014-05-15	Kathy	
Develop FINAL draft	2014-06-01	Contractor (SCE)	
Formally adopt Capital and Infrastructure Plan	2014-06-01		
Review Capital and Infrastructure Plan on an ANNUAL basis	2015-06-01		
Conduct ACRS every five (5) years	TBD		

Policy Development Process			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Hold Staff Meeting to request ALL policies	2013-12-11	Dean	Completed 2013-12-11
Create list of policies within Excel software program	2013-12-18	Kathy	
Transfer policies to flash drive to hold in a central location		Kathy	
Develop template for policies to ensure a consistent and uniform structure	2014-01-13	Brian Kim	Completed 2013-12-18
Hire Policy Development Officer	2014-02-09		
Develop flow chart for policies	TBD	Policy Development Officer	
Review policies and update with NEW template format and identify gaps in policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal review ▪ Community/Committee input ▪ Formally adopt 	TBD	Policy Development Officer	
Create NEW policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal review ▪ Community/Committee input ▪ Formally adopt 	TBD	Policy Development Officer	

Language Revitalization Strategy			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Commitment statement from Chief and Council	2013-12-17	Brian	
Establish Language Revitalization Advisory Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chief and Council must provide administrative support to the committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure funding for the hiring of an individual to oversee the strategy ▪ Financial resources ▪ Committee will develop broad strategy objectives ▪ Gather research on other Language Revitalization programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whitefish Bay/LLC and Leech Lake ▪ Complete language inventory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Define baseline – Where are we at? ▪ Identify speakers (readers and writers) ▪ Formally adopt writing style (double vowel system vs. phonetic) 	2014-02-01		

Numerous ideas were generated regarding ways to increase the use of the Ojibwe language among membership and descendants of the Rainy River First Nations. The following are recommendations that MAY be taken into consideration after the strategy is established:

- Gain input from membership on ways to incorporate the language
- Word/phrase of the week
- Word/phrase listed in newsletter with spelling, pronunciation, and meaning
- “Talk the Language” Day
- Add language to road, building, and billboard signs
- “Talk with Elders” - Elder and youth group sessions
- Utilize UNFC Headstart Program
- Utilize public opportunities to speak language or just come and listen, i.e. coffee houses, etc.
- Home visits with current speakers in community
- Invite visitors from other communities
- Monthly prizes for trivia
- Incentives for our Ojibwe students to get good grades in Ojibwe
- Language studies at local schools
- Isolated camp/setting for Immersion Center
 - Themed (subject) exploration
 - Utilize Seven Generations Education Institute

Committee Operations			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Write/approve action plan	2013-11-12	Brian	Supported by resolution of Council.
Determine existing committees and gather any/all documentation (i.e. Terms of Reference, minutes, reports)	Three (3) weeks	Kathy	
Select one (1) committee to work to completion	One (1) day		2014-01-08
Interview current members to determine current practices, understandings, and authorities	Two (2) weeks	Existing committee members	
Research best practices models for committees appropriate to First Nations	Three (3) weeks		
Compare/determine propriety of existing structure against best practices models	Two (2) weeks		
Determine/present "new" committee structure (ToR, authorities, reporting lines, etc.)	Two (2) weeks		
Present to Chief and Council for approval	2014-03-24		
Repeat previous five (5) tasks for remainder of committees	TBD		

Economic Development Plan			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Review CEO job description	2014-01-24		
Discuss position salary range	2013-12-17		Completed
Discuss options for office location	2014-01-24		
Contact individuals that applied in July 2013 to confirm interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If limited interest, may need to post ▪ If full interest, shortlist 		Brian Kim	Completed 2013-11-26
Coordinate interviews		Kim	Completed 2014-01-03
Conduct interviews	2014-01-24		
Select candidate	TBD		
Make job offer	TBD		
After CEO is hired, schedule a meeting to discuss ideas for Economic Development Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish “checks and balances” ▪ Prior to committing First Nations’ funds/resources, must obtain approval from Chief and Council 	TBD		

Human Resources Officer			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Propose a hiring timeline	2013-12-17		Completed
Recruit	TBD		
Draft job description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine reporting hierarchy 		Kim	Completed 2013-11-26
Post position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closing deadline 1.17.14 	2013-12-18	Kim	
Collect employment applications	2014-01-17	Dean	
Short list <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dependent on # of applicants and policy of hiring practice 	TBD	Kim	
Appoint Interview Committee	2014-01-13		
Coordinate interviews	TBD		
Conduct interviews	TBD		
Select candidate	TBD		
Make job offer	TBD		

Improve Meeting Process			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Establish schedule for “regular” meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Meeting – 1st Wednesday of each month ▪ Business Meeting – 1st Monday following Community Meeting and two (2) weeks later 	2014-01-07		2014-01-07
Update Band Council Resolution	2014-01-13		
Establish process for development of agenda	2014-01-27	Brian	
Develop template for agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timeline ▪ Structure/format 	2014-01-27	Brian	
Develop template for meeting minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timeline ▪ Structure/format 	2014-01-27	Brian	
Establish notice principles and discuss other items that may improve effectiveness of meetings	2014-01-27		
Follow agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closure of each agenda item, may include “motions” ▪ Ensure understanding of decisions made 			
Present to Chief and Council for approval	2014-02-10		

Financial Policy			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Find “drafts” of policy	2013-12-10		Completed
Review drafts and compile information	TBD		
Update policy based on compiled information	TBD		
Gain community input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send to community members for 30-day review ▪ Hold Community Meeting to discuss 	TBD	Kathy	
Gain staff input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Email to staff for 30-day review ▪ Hold Staff Meeting to discuss 	TBD	Dean	
Develop 2 nd draft	TBD		
Send to legal for review	TBD		
Develop FINAL draft	TBD		
Formally adopt Financial Policy	TBD		

Proposal Writer			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Propose a hiring timeline	TBD		
Recruit	TBD		
Draft job description	TBD		
Post position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closing deadline (ten (10) days or two (2) weeks from posting date) 	TBD	Dean	
Collect employment applications	TBD	Dean	
Short list <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dependent on # of applicants and policy of hiring practice 	TBD		
Appoint Interview Committee	TBD		
Coordinate interviews	TBD		
Conduct interviews	TBD		
Select candidate	TBD		
Make job offer	2014-03-01		

Confidentiality Policy			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Draft discussion paper as a “starting point” for Chief and Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish parameters ▪ Business vs. personnel vs. community ▪ Financial/Child Welfare ▪ Consequences for breaches 	TBD	Kim	
Gain staff input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Email to staff for 30-day review ▪ Hold Staff Meeting to discuss 	TBD	Dean	
Develop 1 st Draft	TBD	Clerical	
Gain community input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send to community members for 30-day review ▪ Hold Community Meeting to discuss 	TBD	Kathy	
Develop 2 nd draft	TBD		
Send to legal for review	TBD		
Develop FINAL draft	TBD		
Formally adopt Confidentiality Policy	TBD		
Provide training to staff regarding Confidentiality Policy	TBD		

Election Code			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Acquire examples			Completed 2013-10-26
Copy material and distribute to Chief and Council for individual review and provide direction on contents of Election Code	TBD	Marcel	
Develop 1 st draft	TBD	Brian	
Gain community input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send to community members for 30-day review ▪ Hold Community Meeting to discuss 	TBD	Kathy	
Develop 2 nd draft	TBD		
Send to legal for review	TBD		
Develop FINAL draft	TBD		
Formally adopt Election Code <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Membership vote 	TBD		

Council Manual			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Acquire examples		Marcel	Completed
Copy material and distribute to Chief and Council		Leann	Completed 2013-12-04
Develop 1 st draft		Marcel	2013-12-27
Chief and Council review and provide direction on contents of manual	TBD		
Gain community input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send to community members for 30-day review ▪ Hold Community Meeting to discuss 	TBD		
Develop 2 nd draft	TBD	Clerical	
Send to legal for review	TBD		
Develop FINAL draft	TBD	Clerical	
Formally adopt Council Manual	TBD		

Youth Program			
Activities	Timeline	Assistance	Progress
Enhance Youth "Council" (Elders) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chief and Council must provide administrative support to Youth Council i.e. oversight ▪ Establish "vision" and realistic goals ▪ Request a member of Youth Council to attend Community Meetings 	2014-03-01	Joe Hunter Tara Hunter Brian	

Numerous ideas were generated regarding youth program(s). The Chief and Council expressed the need for this program to be youth-driven; however, the following are recommendations that MAY be taken into consideration to enhance the program:

- Gain input from community regarding how to increase youth engagement
- Peer counseling, tutoring, and mentoring sessions
- Recognize and reward achievements – academic, arts, extra-curricular, etc.; create a "Wall of Fame" to showcase accomplishments
- Assist with fundraising activities/events
- Provide "life skills" training – budgeting, setting goals, cooking, etc.
- Offer other training to Youth Council; invite inspirational speakers
- Include cultural/language revitalization efforts
- Assist families with registration fees on a reimbursement basis

DELEGATED PROJECTS

During the planning process, some projects discussed were delegated to specific staff members. These projects, along with the person responsible for “leading the charge” and/or completion will be listed within this section.

The Manager of Administration (MOA) will assume the responsibility of reviewing and streamlining current day-to-day operations. There may be instances, in which, new processes or methods may need to be developed and implemented. In addition, the MOA will establish accountability measures for staff members to ensure the duties required of a job are performed, tasks are completed, and staff is present for their proper shifts in order to fulfill or further the goals of the organization. The purpose for these projects is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of staff members, so that services may be offered in a fair and consistent manner, along with implement disciplinary action for staff that do not perform duties or tasks properly or in a timely manner. In addition, it is a priority for the MOA to develop a Records Retention Policy and establish a centralized filing system, with the possibility of utilizing a document-management system.

The Community Communications Officer will assume responsibility for increasing the overall communication between the Chief and Council, staff members, and membership through various channels. In addition, the Chief and Council expressed their desire to enhance the “sense of community” among membership and one (1) recommendation, delegated to the Community Communications Officer, was to foster an environment that allowed membership to provide input regarding issues that impact the community. In addition, there is a need to entice membership to attend community meetings or events that provide community information. The Community Communications Officer was also delegated the project of creating a Social Media Policy to provide staff members with parameters regarding what information may NOT be disclosed utilizing social media; this policy will most likely reference the Confidentiality Policy that will be developed.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN

The purpose of a strategic planning is not to create a document that is going to be filed away in a drawer or lost under a stack of papers, but rather generate a plan that can produce significant changes to an organization, if implemented or “put into action.”

While the goals and projects listed within this document may have been discussed and/or identified as priorities, various factors need to be taken into consideration prior to the implementation stage.

On-going public awareness and education is a key component to communicating the strategic plan to membership and soliciting their feedback. In addition, it will also be a catalyst in organizing community support and feedback. The Chief and Council will be presenting a “draft” of the 2-year strategic plan at a Community Meeting scheduled for January 8, 2014. In addition, staff members will also be provided with this information for review. Membership and staff will be provided a 30-day period to review the plan and offer feedback. Comments or suggestions regarding the plan must be submitted in writing to Kathy Bombay-Lyons by February 8, 2014 via:

- Email to communications.rfn@bellnet.ca
- Mail to P.O. Box 450, Emo, Ontario, P0W 1E0, ATTN: Kathy Bombay-Lyons
- Hand-delivery to Community Communications Officer at the band office

In addition to creating public awareness, feasibility studies may need to be completed to determine the viability of an idea, especially in projects that may require large sums of money. Various factors, such as cultural, economic, environmental, financial, legal, and logistics, may be evaluated during the process of determining feasibility.

While membership feedback may modify projects and/or diverse obstacles prevent the completion of some projects, the Chief and Council expressed commitment to purpose of the plan. Therefore, projects that gain support from membership and staff and are achievable will continue to move forward until fully completed or implemented. As stated throughout the plan, some projects may take more than two (2) years to complete and other projects may not get started during the current period; however, projects or ideas not completed will be reviewed and updated or revised.

REVIEW OF PLAN

In order to continue moving forward with the implementation of goals or projects, it is critical to acknowledge the importance of reviewing and revising the plan on a regular scheduled basis. It is the recommendation of Northern Sage Consulting that the Chief and Council, along with staff members, review the plan on a quarterly basis to ensure timelines are met or revised, if necessary. In addition, progress updates can be provided during this review process and other modifications can be made to the plan, if needed. The following dates have been tentatively booked for review of the plan over the next 12 months:

- April 15, 2014
- July 15, 2014
- November 18, 2014
- January 20, 2015

Furthermore, a formal update or revision should be scheduled on an annual basis to re-assess the goals and objectives of the Rainy River First Nations. Completed projects should be removed from the document and new projects should be added, along with re-prioritization of all goals and objectives. This formal review and update process must occur each year in order to maintain an accurate plan that aligns with the needs of the tribe and its membership. The formal annual update will be scheduled in conjunction with the quarterly review date on the following date:

- November 18, 2014.