



# The Abegweit Update

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KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY INFORMED

September 2026

## Cabinet Meeting at Connects



Provincial Cabinet met with Abegweit First Nation leadership in Scotchfort today to discuss shared priorities, community growth and opportunities to continue working together.

Cabinet members also toured recent and ongoing developments in Scotchfort and heard directly from Chief Junior Gould and community leadership about Abegweit's priorities for the years ahead.



## Truth and Reconciliation Day



In advance of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Abegweit First Nation welcomed elementary students for a special day of learning, reflection and age-appropriate teachings about the history and legacy of residential schools.

CBC joined us to learn more about the event and the importance of learning about our history.

## UPEI Nurses Program



This fall, third-year nursing students at UPEI, will have the opportunity to learn about Indigenous health, healing, and wellbeing directly within a Mi'kmaq community in Epekwitk (PEI).

NURS 3250: Indigenous Health, Healing and Wellbeing, has been designed, developed, and will be delivered by the Abegweit First Nation Health Centre under the guidance of Dr. Terry LeBlanc and other skilled members of the Abegweit Community.

The community hosted a launch event celebrating the new course and its partnership with UPEI's Faculty of Nursing. Since the course itself is a comprehensive response to TRC Call to Action #24, it is noteworthy that this launch comes as we recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Representatives from the UPEI Faculty of Nursing, Abegweit Health, Abegweit Education and Health PEI joined Chief Roderick Gould Jr., Dr. Terry LeBlanc, MP Kent MacDonald and course participants, past and present, who shared their perspectives and experiences.

## Health Updates

### **45 Hard Challenge Begins**

September marked the start of our 45 Hard Challenge, Abegweit First Nation's adapted version of the popular 75 Hard Challenge.

Participants committed to daily wellness goals, including meeting nutrition and hydration targets, staying active, reading, journaling, and building healthy habits. The challenge encourages personal growth, accountability, and positive lifestyle changes while supporting participants on their wellness journeys.

### **Millbrook Elder Meet & Greet**

We were thrilled to welcome approximately 30 Elders from Millbrook First Nation for a special afternoon of connection and friendship.

Elders from both communities came together to enjoy bingo, friendly conversation, and laughter, creating a wonderful opportunity for connection and relationship building between our communities.

### **Little Buds Apple Picking Adventure**

Our Little Buds group enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon of apple picking.

The outing provided an opportunity to spend time outdoors, enjoy the fall season, and create lasting memories with friends and family.

### **Wellness Support Group**

The Wellness Support Group explored healthier dessert options by sampling treats made with sugar alternatives such as Splenda and unsweetened applesauce. Participants also learned how to identify added sugars in common foods and discussed simple ways to make healthier choices without giving up the foods they enjoy.

### **Elder Bingo: Sodium & Arthritis Education**

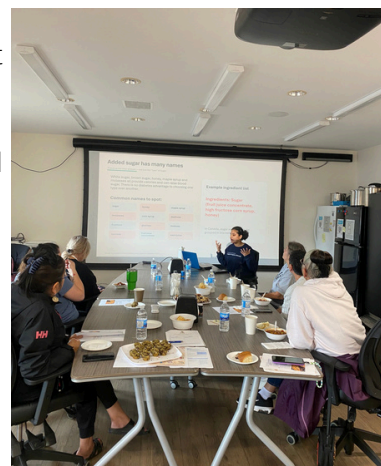
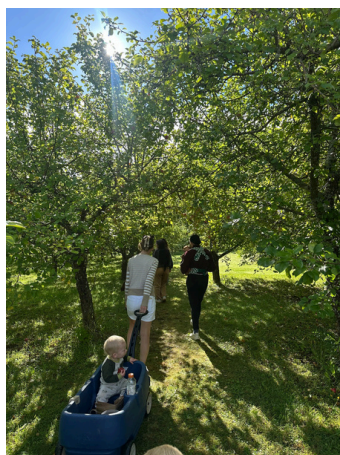
Our Elders enjoyed two bingo gatherings throughout the month, each paired with a lunch-and-learn session. Topics included reducing sodium intake and managing arthritis, with discussions focused on practical strategies to support healthy aging and overall wellness. These sessions provided an opportunity to learn about healthy aging while enjoying good food, great company, and a little friendly competition!

### **Youth Acne Session**

Our youth had the opportunity to learn from Nurse Julie during an informative session focused on acne prevention, skincare, and personal hygiene. Participants gained practical tips and valuable knowledge to help build confidence and support healthy daily habits.

### **Women's Group Activities**

The Women's Group took part in a variety of creative and hands-on activities this month, including designing sublimation puzzles and making fresh homemade salsa. These sessions provided opportunities for social connection, learning new skills, and having fun together.





# Hog Island Update

## **FEBRUARY 2025**

After many years of research, advocacy, negotiations, and community engagement, the Hog Island Specific Claim Settlement offer, proposed by Canada, through CIRNA (Crown Indigenous Relations), was formally accepted by the Assembly, and as required, individual BCR's confirming the acceptance were provided to CIRNA. After Acceptance of the offer, the work between CIRNA and L'nuey officials began to finalize the Settlement Agreement draft.

## **NOVEMBER 2025**

At the November 11, 2025 Epekwitk Assembly of Councils meeting the Assembly approved the "Lennox Island First Nation and Abegweit First Nation 1942 Addition to Reserve (Hog Island) Specific Claim Settlement Agreement" draft as presented. Direction was provided to the Senior Negotiator to finalize the draft with CIRNA legal counsel and to complete a signed Negotiators draft.

## **MARCH 2026**

The draft Settlement Agreement was finalized at the March 16, 2026 Assembly meeting and the Senior Negotiator signed the negotiators' draft. The Settlement Agreement draft is therefore ready to proceed to a ratification vote. However, in addition to the Settlement Agreement the related Trusts for each Band must also be completed prior to the ratification vote.

## **JULY-SEPTEMBER 2026**

After deliberations at the Assembly level and the Band Council level and considering expert advice, the experience of other Bands in the same situation, community feedback and the best interests of all Band members, including minors, it was decided that the Bands would both utilize the following distribution structure:

- That the settlement is to be distributed based on per capita distribution to living Band members registered on the Band list for each Band, as of the date of the ratification vote.
- That each Band will establish their own Trust for the receipt of the Band's total per capita share of the settlement.
- That the individual per capita funds will be distributed immediately to eligible Band members who have reached the age of majority (18 years of age) and for members who are under the age of majority (under the age of 18) their share, along with interest gained on the share, will be distributed when the individual reaches the age of 18. The matter of cost to set up and maintain the Trust will be addressed prior to final determination of the individual per capita payment amount to ensure that these costs are attributed to the settlement and/or any potential settlement interest and not general band funds.

## **NEXT STEPS**

With those final decisions made, the Councils have asked that work necessary to establish the two Trust Agreements be prioritized. Staff have been mandated and requested to ensure this work is completed as quickly as possible. As required by the Settlement Agreement, and once the Trusts are established, information sessions will be scheduled for each Band to review both the Settlement Agreement and the Trust Agreement. Once those sessions are completed the Ratification Vote can be scheduled. If the vote is successful with a simple majority (50% plus 1) and the appropriate notification in accordance with the terms of the agreement is provided to Canada, the process will begin to have the Agreement signed by the Minister and have the funds appropriated for transfer to the Bands. No Settlement funds have been received by the Bands. That happens after a successful ratification vote and the follow up process necessary in accordance with the Agreement. The remaining work before a vote can be organized is the establishment of the Trusts. That work had been prioritized. As soon as it is completed the required information sessions will be scheduled, along with the vote.



# Land Code Timeline

## **2022**

Chief and Council of Abegweit First Nation signed on to begin the developmental process of creating a land code through the Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management. This process allows a First Nation community to decide whether they would like to remove themselves from 44 sections of the Indian Act, taking over day-to-day land management from the federal government. Chief and Council wanted to give Abegweit community the opportunity to decide if a Land Code is right for them.

Environmental Site Assessment #1 was completed. A summary document is available from Courtney at [csark@abegweit.ca](mailto:csark@abegweit.ca)

## **2023-2024**

The Land Code was started, but with staff turnover, the process was restarted. Community engagement took place in 2024 to receive community input on land uses preferred in Morell, Rocky Point, and Scotchfort.

## **2025**

A land use plan was created after community engagement sessions in Scotchfort and Rocky Point. This sets out how Abegweit's reserve land will be designated e.g. commercial, residential, etc. A band council resolution was passed to accept the land use plan. It is a living document and will be updated every 5 years or as needed.

## **2026**

Land code community engagement started on September 23rd in the afternoon and evening in Scotchfort and the evening of September 25th in Rocky Point. This was the first in multiple sessions to share information with community members before a vote takes place in the future.

A land code would transfer day-to-day land management from the federal government to Abegweit - meaning 44 sections of the Indian Act would no longer apply to Abegweit First Nation.

More sessions will be taking place in November that go into more detail - in Scotchfort on November 24th at 12pm and 5pm in the Connects Building, and November 25th at 5pm in Rocky Point at Afton Hall.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Community engagement will continue until members feel they can make an informed decision on whether they believe a land code is right for them. Further engagement sessions will be announced via the Facebook community noticeboard, the Abegweit Lands Facebook page, and the email list.

***Any questions, please contact Courtney Sark at [csark@abegweit.ca](mailto:csark@abegweit.ca)***

