

# Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

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## Reservation Business Committee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Indian Health Director Roselyn Tso Visits Fond du Lac

**Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022** – Earlier this week, Fond du Lac (FDL) welcomed Indian Health Services (IHS) Director Roselyn Tso for a tour – marking the first time that an IHS director has selected a tribal facility in the Bemidji Area for a site visit. The tour consisted of stops at the three FDL Human Services Division facility locations, the Band’s Regional Water Project site, and wrapped up with an in-depth discussion with FDL’s governing body, the Reservation Business Committee.

IHS is the principal federal healthcare advocate and provider of healthcare services for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Throughout the tour, local guides identified areas of need and acknowledged the successes of FDL.

“FDL leaders that came before us had the foresight to identify community needs for healthcare services,” says FDL Vice Chairperson/District III Representative Roger Smith Sr. “We are very honored to carry on that responsibility, and continue the success in services we provide from our Human Services Division. It started in a small house and to see the progress of what it is presently is monumental. This progress could not have been accomplished without the foresight from our ancestors and the partnership with IHS. We look forward to continuing to strengthen our partnership and continuing the advocacy for services to our community.”

The stop at FDL’s Regional Water Project, a facility that was partially funded by IHS, highlighted how the project includes the addition of a new 75,000 -gallon elevated water storage tower, two new wells, 7 miles of new water main distribution extensions and a water treatment plant. Full completion for the comprehensive project is anticipated this December 2023. The new water system was designed to reduce Disinfection By-Product water contaminant levels, provide water for fire protection where none previously existed, and pave the way for potential future expansion of communities that are not currently served by public utilities.

Although the visit was a landmark event, FDL and IHS are exploring new ways in which to collaborate on a routine basis. “I’m honored to visit each of the twelve region sites and the purpose of these tours are to see what is working and what areas we need to improve on,” says Roselyn Tso.

The IHS will use the information gathered from the tour to address challenges and build on progress to support best practices and innovative approaches to health care, strengthen management operations, improve communication and inform leadership as they set priorities for the agency.



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<photos attached: Photo 1: Fond du Lac Public Works Manager Jordan Vandal describes the Regional Water Project to Indian Health Director Roselyn Tso. Photo 2: Indian Health Director Roselyn Tso and staff met with the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee.>

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**About Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa**

Nagaajiwanaang, “Where the Water Stops,” is the name of the homelands of the Fond du Lac Band at the time of the 1854 Treaty. We retained this name in Ojibwemowin for the present-day Fond du Lac Reservation that was established under the 1854 La Pointe Treaty. Nagaajiwanaang (Fond du Lac Band) is one of the six Bands of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. There are three districts that make up the Fond du Lac Reservation: Bapashkominigong (Cloquet), Gwaaba’iganing (Sawyer), and Ashkibwaakaaning (Brookston). Today, our Band includes over 4,200 members. We have always been, and continue to be, a proud sovereign Ojibwe nation. We uphold all of our rights retained and agreed to within the 1825, 1826, 1837, 1842, 1847, and 1854 Treaties.