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Fall 2019 Newsletter
Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership

Boreal Home Builders are Working: Students Design and Build Houses with Their Own Hands in Garden Hill

By: Qinhan Zou



Image 1: Students are getting safety training.



Boreal Home Builders – Wasagamack Update

By: Catrina Sallese

August has been a month of progress that will lead the Boreal Home Builders in what looks to be a very busy fall. Outlined below are August updates from the ongoing work taking place in the Classroom as well as on the Church and House sites.

Classroom:

Daily classes are well underway for the Boreal Home Builders in August and now in September on carpentry (after earlier courses in sawmilling, forestry management, small motors course, job readiness, first aid and logging, etc). Classes focus primarily on mathematics, specifically on the formulas constantly used on and around job sites. Practicing these formulas both in class, as well as on site has made mathematics a hands-on learning experience. In addition to math, students have been completing various safety training courses, becoming certified in *WHIMIS 2015*, *Fall Protection* and *Lockout Tagout in the Workplace*.

During the last week of August and early September the students decided that their large empty storage trailer's function would greatly be improved

Boreal Home Builders students in Garden Hill First Nations are hard at work building two houses this fall. They are two different designs including a D-log and a stick-built house. Seventeen housing trainees are working hard to build houses.

The students took a number of Construction (COR) safety courses as well as a lumber grading courses. The trainees gathered to learn carpentry and construction, and then designed architectural drawings.



with the addition of personal, tool and material storage. Taking what they have learned in the classroom and what they have learned on site, the students came together to design their construction trailer to suit their needs and accommodate their tools and materials. With the design phases completed the students will now mill their own wood to use in the construction of storage units, tables and lockers. The students will use this opportunity to become comfortable with their new tools, mathematics in practice as well as working together as a team.



Image 1: Students designing construction trailer in the classroom.



Image 2 & 3: Students and instructors are gathered at the sawmill site.

Trainees sawed logs they chopped from local forests with Woodmizer sawmill and are building the house with this wood. Recently, the footing was done for one home with the foundation in progress. The flooring will start to be built in early September. Please subscribe to our newsletter to see the house going up.



Image 2: Day one of milling logs.



Image 3: Day one of milling logs.



Image 4: Boreal Home Builders on site working on the D-log house.

In September, the trainees from Garden Hill and Wasagamack will be doing a scaled model competition for the houses. Three teams from each community will participate in this competition and professional experts will pick the best of these models from the two communities to award a prize. The scope is yet to be finalized, but this allows the trainees to work as a team.

Church Site:

Prior to the Boreal Home Builders involvement with the church project, the community was evacuated due to forest fires, which left the church project abandoned. After the site was abandoned a storm blew through the community and caused damages to the interior frames and roof trusses. The Boreal Home Builders then adopted the responsibility of constructing the new church for Wasagamack. Upon the arrival of some much-needed tools, they began piecing the unfinished church back together.

The fixing started with various aspects regarding strengthening the foundation and leveling the floors. In addition, the builders have been salvaging as much usable material as possible from the damaged frames and trusses, then creating new trusses in order to replace what is broken. In these beginning stages, every day on site includes a new tool, a new strategy and a new opportunity to learn.



Image 4: Interior of church.



Image 5: Boreal Home Builders on site beginning the correcting process.

House Site:

Within in the last weeks of August, the hydro and water has been disconnected from the house that currently exists on site. After getting the go ahead, the Boreal Home Builders are now ready to proceed with demolishing the existing house to make way for the first new timber home.



Image 5: Happy students in their outdoor class.

Tayzia Stormhunter, Jide Oni and Shirley Thompson conducted a communication workshop and survey with the Garden Hill First Nation. Garden Hill Boreal Home Builders are shown in their beautiful outdoor classroom.

Image courtesy: Lakisha Barkman and Tayzia Stromhunter.

In order to prepare for this build, the Boreal Home Builders will be creating 1'-0" = 1" scale models of the framing for the home. This exercise not only allows for the students to become more comfortable with the basic measurements and framing codes, but also provides a physical and visual reference for the students. Overall excitement can be felt all over the site, and the builders are now one step closer to home construction.



Image 6: Demo Day 1 – Removing wall panels and insulation.



Image 7: Demo Day 1 – Fully gutting the house.

Kudos to the Excellent Work of Students and Partners:

Certificates are Piling up.

By: A M Rezwanul Hoque

Boreal Home Builders are not only learning in the classroom and on the job to log, forest, saw and build housing these students are gaining lots of certifications. 271 certificates were awarded to all the students involved in the program after completing successfully the following courses: Wilderness First Aid or Standard First Aid Course, Job Readiness, Small Motors Course, Chainsaw Operation Course, Lumber Grading Course, Basic Occupational Health & Safety Training course, Working at Heights Course, Forestry management 1 & 2 course. See figure 1.

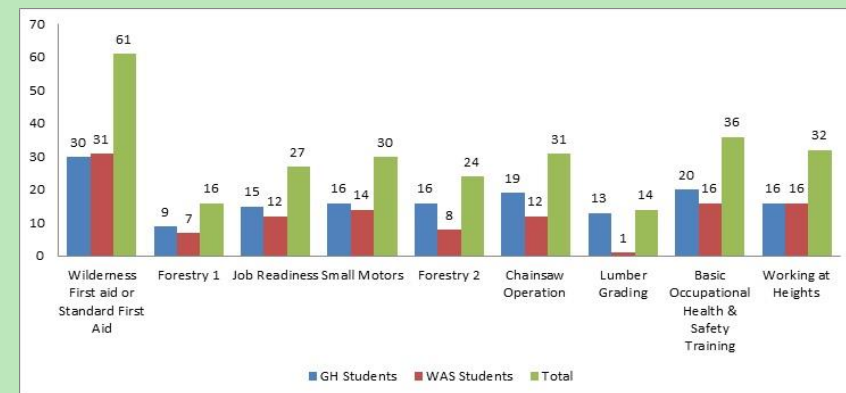


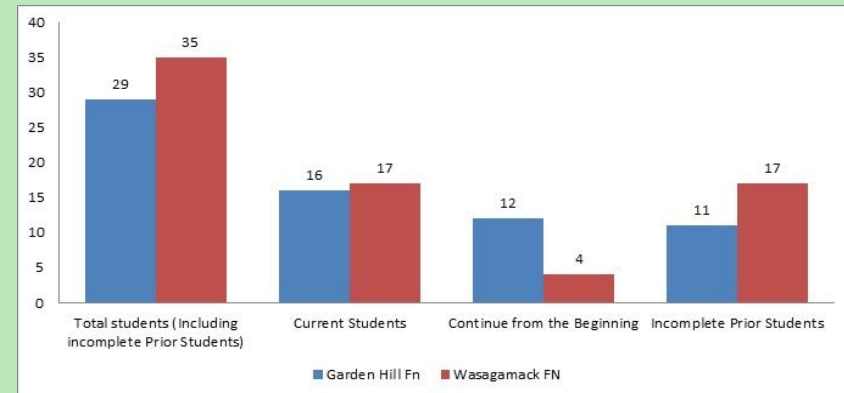
Figure 1: Number of certificates given to the students*

Overall 69 students, 34 students from GH, 35 students from WAS and 5 students from other programs got one or more certificates as part of the Mino Bimaadiziwin's Boreal Home Builders program. Garden Hill has four students who got all the 9 certificates.



Image 8 & 9: Demo Day 2 – Using the Zoom Boom to take down roof and walls.

Image courtesy: Catrina Sallese



The partnership provides students with a training allowance of approximately \$1000/month from October 2018 until the end of March 2020, when students are attending and registered in the program full-time. This training allowance is to help fund costs associated with getting an education including gas, safety clothing, tools and to support their family, while they are going to the class. The training allowance is in addition to their Employment Insurance (EI) or Welfare income, with a special provision to Indigenous Service Canada (ISC) by the Mino Bimaadiziwin project to not deduct from their limited income due to the additional costs that will be borne by the students. Students without children get \$371 in welfare and those with six children get more. Also, that welfare/EI is not cutoff is so important as their housing status in CMHC housing is contingent on their being on EI or Welfare. Thus, Boreal Home Builders students receive more not less for their education and development program, as hard work should be rewarded.

The partnership grant is geared to focus on helping students and so 80% of the grant money goes to Indigenous students. Total of \$557,750 was given as stipend to the students up until August 30, 2019. See figure 3

Welcome to Reanna Merasty, who has been started working in the partnership this Fall.

Reanna Merasty is a Masters of Architecture student in the Department of Architecture, working with Professor Lancelot Coar, has begun to carry out research on Wasagamack and Garden Hill First Nation on a wide range of research topics grounded in local knowledge and histories. Her focus will be in developing approaches and methods that should be considered in the collaborative work with these communities. The research will be compiled into a document to assist with an architecture studio in 2020/2021, that will allow the students to gain insight on the two communities addressing the topic of housing and infrastructure. The research will be focused on the physical conditions of the community and the knowledge offered by the oral traditions of storytelling. Documenting these oral histories of the two communities will be done through audio and visual documentation. Further research will be exploring the artwork produced in these communities, its various forms, both traditional and current. The overall work will be grounded in the teachings offered by the voices of these communities who value Natural Law, and the interrelationship between all things in creation, in establishing an understanding of the interconnectedness of all who inhabit Island Lake.

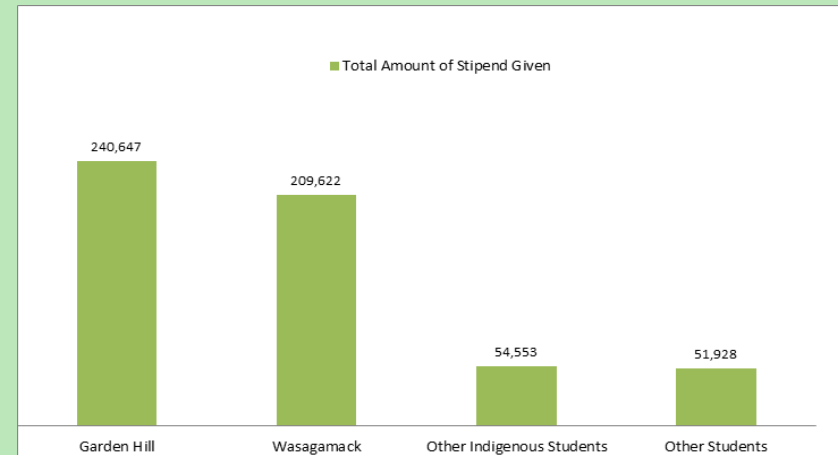


Figure 3: Training Allowance Summary (\$ Canadian dollars).

In addition, \$53,065 was spent on Island Lake students' career developments, travel and conferences. Five students from Island Lake attended a two days Proposal Writing Workshop at the University of Manitoba in March 2019 and learned how to develop funding proposal ([See their presentation](#)). As well, eleven students from Wasagamack also attended a week long program visiting architecture studios, alternative building village, chemistry and sustainable green housing where they gained various house building techniques of 'Net Zero' house. Furthermore, two Boreal Home Builders students, namely Roxanne Harper and Jason Knott were transported to learn how to design and build with One House Many Nation a Muskrat Hut at Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) in April 2019.

The Mino Bimadiziwin Partnership started in 2017 as a response to the National Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action (92. ii) for "equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects." Kudo to all the students and partners for their dedication and excellent work in education and learning with the Boreal Home Builders program.

**NOTE: lumber grading workshop has not occurred in Wasagamack yet but will occur in October but one student went to Garden Hill to get this certificate*

