

# MANITOBA RANGER PROGRAM 2009

## RANGERS WORK, PLAY AND LEARN DURING UNIQUE SUMMER PROGRAM

First Nations youth from across northern Manitoba have come together to experience a summer of work, learning and fellowship as participants in an exciting pilot program. The Manitoba Ranger Program is a five-week experience of live-in employment and training for students aged 16-18. Commenced on July 20, the Program is designed to provide career awareness and work experience in the resource sectors most prevalent in northern Manitoba - primarily the mining, forestry and energy sectors.

The enthusiastic and committed young graduates were acknowledged at a **Graduation Ceremony** at the close of the Program on **Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>**. The 11 Graduates of the Program were Micheal Robinson and Julian Chubb (Bunibonibee Cree Nation - Oxford House), Gordon Shingoose, Stanley Young and Garrett Young (Opaskwayak Cree Nation – The Pas), Elvis Sinclair (Mathias Colomb Cree Nation – Pukatawagan), Edward Miles (Shamattawa First Nation), Chelsea Beardy-Bland and Holden Saunders (York Factory First Nation – York Landing), Harry Caribou (Marcel Colomb First Nation – Lynn Lake) and Sikwun Lynxleg (Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve – Valley River).



Manitoba Rangers and staff with MKO Grand Chief Dr. Sydney Garrioch

Housed at OCN's Egg Lake Camp between The Pas and Flin Flon, youth participants have been introduced to geosciences and mineral exploration and development, forest management operations, hydro-electric generation, and environmental management through a variety of training sessions, field trips, and work experiences across the region. Student wages are earned through introductory work experience that is a key element of the Program. A personal life skills training component has also been a critical part of the experience with an emphasis on education and career pathing.



Delivered by Outland Reforestation Inc., the program was run in the summer of 2009 as a pilot in northern Manitoba. It was based on Outland's successful First Nations Youth Employment and Training Program, which has been run over the past nine years in northwestern Ontario. The 2009 Manitoba Rangers were high school students from a number of northern Manitoba communities including York Landing, Bunibonibee Cree Nation (Oxford House), Shamattawa First Nation, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation (Pukatawagan), Marcel Colomb First Nation (Lynn Lake), Opaskwayak Cree Nation, and the Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve.

The program offered a fulltime, live-in experience in a positive framework of work and recreation routine, learning, good nutrition, and experienced leadership - all in an environment that built friendships with peers. The experienced Outland staff who oversaw the program included a Camp Supervisor, a Crewboss, a Crew Boss-in-Training who is a graduate of the Program, and an exceptional Cook who provided nutritious meals to satisfy big Ranger appetites.



Industry and government participants who contributed program support to this vital youth experience included HudBay Minerals, Tolko Industries, The Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's *Mining Matters* Program, Manitoba Conservation, University College of the North, and Manitoba Hydro. Funding supporters for the program included the Government of Manitoba, the First Nations Forestry Program, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), Opaskwayak Cree Nation, the Northern Manitoba Sector Council, and the home communities of the youth participants.

The ratio of the camp experience was 60 percent educational activities and 40 percent work carried out on mineral exploration properties, mining operations, and forest management operations. Rangers were paid minimum wage, with an additional completion bonus as an incentive for full participation. Participants had a minimum of Grade 10 high school education, and a desire to return to school following the program. Benefits for the Rangers included capacity building through the development of skills and career awareness, while maximizing future employment opportunities.

Industry partner benefits included the fostering of relationships with Aboriginal Youth and their communities through a positive work experience and environment, and the potential development of a skilled workforce.

The Program partners are planning to build on the success of this pilot project, and develop a Manitoba Ranger Program for 2010 that will accommodate more students in a seven-week summer program. Interested parties can receive additional information from the Northern Manitoba Sector Council in The Pas (620-1730).

The Manitoba Ranger Program Graduation Ceremony was held Saturday, August 22 at the Egg Lake Camp. This celebration provided the Ranger grads, and their families, friends, government and industry partners, and community leaders the opportunity to formally acknowledge the achievements of our enthusiastic and committed young participants.

