

August 26, 2026
D/BU #013/2026–2027

Grassy Narrows River Run September 2026

To: Presidents and All Members

From: Gary Fenn, Interim Associate General Secretary – Professional Services

For Action

Asubpeeschoseewagong, the Anishinaabe name for Grassy Narrows, is located approximately 80 kilometres north of Kenora, Ontario. The community has a population of roughly 1,000 members, and its traditional territory spans approximately 2,500 square miles of forested land. For millennia, the community has lived sustainably on this land, relying on its forests, rivers, and lakes for physical, economic, cultural, and spiritual sustenance.

Over time, the Grassy Narrows community has experienced a series of significant and intergenerational traumas which include forced attendance in church-run residential schools, coerced relocation from traditional living areas, hydroelectric damming that flooded sacred sites and wild rice beds, mercury contamination, and ongoing clearcut logging and mining activities within their territory. These cumulative impacts have contributed to widespread social, health, and economic challenges, as well as significant cultural disruption.

Despite these challenges, the people of Grassy Narrows continue to resist ongoing environmental and territorial destruction through land re-occupation, cultural revitalization, and efforts toward self-determination, while seeking support from organizations such as OSSTF/FEESO.

OSSTF/FEESO has signed onto the demands of Grassy Narrows to the Ontario Government, which are:

1. **Compensate** everyone in Grassy Narrows fairly for the mercury crisis,
2. **End the pollution** by stopping the Dryden mill and ending mining and nuclear waste plans that threaten Grassy Narrows, and
3. **Support** Grassy Narrows in restoring their community and way of life from the damage that mercury has done.

In our ongoing actions to support the people of Grassy Narrows, OSSTF/FEESO will support

the 2026 Grassy Narrows River Run in Toronto.

Community members and youth will travel 1,700 km to demand environmental justice and compensation for the ongoing mercury crisis by inviting the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Work Group members to stand with OSSTF/FEESO at the run.

The annual **River Run** and rally for **Grassy Narrows First Nation** (Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek) is scheduled to take place downtown Toronto on **Wednesday, September 23, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.**

Districts and Bargaining Unit members who are interested in attending the River Run must R.S.V.P. for this event or can find out more about the run and Grassy Narrows at freegrassy.net.

For more information about this DBU or the Grassy Narrows River Run, you can contact Tracey.Marshall@osstf.ca, Allison.Cillis@osstf.ca, or Vanessa.Stoby@osstf.ca.

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