



CULTURE, HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN

Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs

May 2015

ASSEMBLY OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ CHIEFS

CULTURE, HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN

Forward

Greetings,

It is with great pleasure that I share with you the *Culture, Heritage and Archaeology Strategic Plan* of the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs. This plan will strengthen our Mi'kmaw Nation and help us achieve recognition as the true and rightful authorities on Mi'kmaw culture, heritage and our archaeological resources. We hope that our partners in other governments and industry collaborators will use our plan to support our Nation in the ways we have identified for ourselves.



This plan has been five years in the making, beginning with the founding of the Assembly's Culture, Heritage and Archaeology Working Group (CHA WG) comprised of experts from Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office, Mi'kmaq Association of Cultural Studies and the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq. In April 2014, the CHA WG expanded the collaboration through a symposium which included Mi'kmaw Elders, Mi'kmaw artists, and representatives of other Mi'kmaw organizations involved in the culture, heritage and archaeology sectors. The result is in this Strategic Plan - five *Strategic Priorities and Goals* that have been defined by Mi'kmaq to bring us closer to our goals for self-determination and a healthy, vibrant, prosperous Mi'kmaw Nation.

We have tremendous capacity in our Nation's individuals, organizations and governance structures. The Strategic Plan is the beginning of what happens when we connect our Mi'kmaw strengths for the benefit of all.

Wela'lioq,

Saqamaw Wilbert Marshall
Lead Chief of Culture, Heritage and Archaeology



Introduction

We, the Mi'kmaq, have been here since time immemorial.

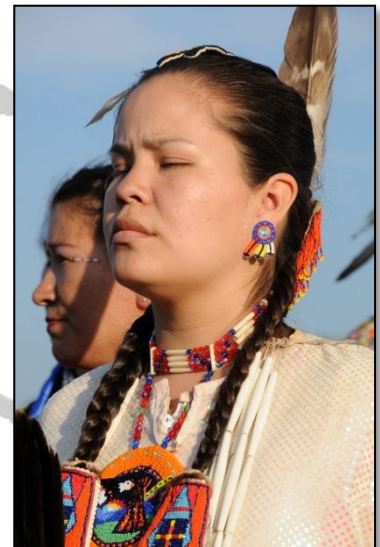
The lands, waters and resources of Mi'kma'ki, our traditional territory, have always sustained, inspired, defined, and protected us – and we them. We are a self-determining people whose heritage, language, spirituality and history are the foundation of our Nation. The future of Mi'kmaq as a distinct people depends, in large part, on understanding, preserving and promoting the value of these elements.

Mi'kmaq are resilient, proud and have intuitively maintained a solid foundation for our children and our children's children through our Mi'kmaw heritage, language, culture, spirituality and history. In Mi'kma'ki, communities and people differ from district to district, but we all hold the foundation of our Mi'kmaw identity in our language, culture, spirituality, arts and our heritage embedded in this place. Ultimately, it is the connection of Mi'kmaw pride and respect for each other, the lands, waters and resources, our Elders and our individual successes that make us who we are.

Although we have a strong culture, many Nova Scotians do not understand the unique position of the Mi'kmaq in this Province, culturally or legally, which leads to stereotypes, misinformation and conflict. It is important that we as Mi'kmaw leadership, actively encourage and promote visibility and understanding of Mi'kmaw culture and heritage within the Province of Nova Scotia.

There is a growing desire by Mi'kmaq to rekindle our language, traditions and culture. Mi'kmaq, young and old, are taking active steps to speak our language, practice Mi'kmaw customs, connect with Mi'kmaw Elders and harvest natural resources according to Mi'kmaw values and traditional Mi'kmaw practices.

Mi'kmaq must lead and control the management of Mi'kmaw heritage, language, culture, spirituality and history. Mi'kmaq are the guardians of our values. Mi'kmaw principles and values are related through stories from the time of our Elders. Mi'kmaq are the rightful authorities on Mi'kmaw culture, heritage and archaeology.



Purpose

This document identifies for us, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs (ANSMC or the Assembly), the Nation-wide goals and priorities for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia as related to Mi'kmaq culture, heritage and archaeology. It will help to support us in our decision-making and relationship building in government-to-government and government-to-industry matters. These actions will strengthen Mi'kmaq capacity to manage our own heritage, language, culture and archaeology. The Assembly's Culture, Heritage and Archaeology Strategic Plan articulates how to negotiate and to realize self-governing rights for Mi'kmaq cultural resources and practices as well as to strengthen and to grow culture and heritage opportunities as determined by the Mi'kmaq Nation.



The purpose is defined by the Assembly's Five Pillars (see Appendix), as well as the following principles:

1. The Assembly looks to Elders, artisans, spiritual leaders, knowledge-keepers, speakers and other members of the Nation to drive the development and implementation of policy content and outcomes; and
2. The Mi'kmaq Nation must encourage Nova Scotia and Canada to recognize and to adopt Mi'kmaq management and decision-making values and involvement; and
3. The Assembly advocates for opportunities for Mi'kmaq to promote our culture and heritage as well as their own work and activities; and
4. The Assembly's decisions respect diversity within the Mi'kmaq Nation in Nova Scotia.



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Developing the Strategic Plan

In February 2010, the Assembly's Culture, Heritage and Archaeology Working Group (CHA WG) was formed to discuss a unified strategy for the Mi'kmaw Nation in Nova Scotia to coordinate and align activities, protect our culture, heritage and archaeology resources and build on our strengths. After several attempts to draft a complete strategy, the CHA WG recognized the need for a clearer understanding of who was involved with Mi'kmaw content in the culture, heritage and archaeology sectors, what exactly they were doing, how and why.

To achieve this understanding, the CHA WG completed the Culture, Heritage and Archaeology Environmental Scan (CHA E-scan). Resources to complete this work were provided by the Tripartite Forum, Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office, the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq and the Mi'kmaq Association for Cultural Studies. The E-scan allowed the CHA WG to consider what activities were taking place, which were Mi'kmaw-led and what parties and individual experts were functioning within the Mi'kmaw Nation.

Using the E-scan, a symposium was held to bring together Mi'kmaw individuals, organizational representatives and community representatives working within the Mi'kmaw Nation in Nova Scotia in these sectors. Resources for this gathering were provided by the Province of Nova Scotia's *One-time Emerging Culture and Heritage Initiatives Program*, the Tripartite Forum and the member organizations of the CHA WG. The symposium generated a network of relationships between these Mi'kmaw experts and organizations and allowed them to discuss their needs, capacities, experiences and goals. The incomplete draft strategy developed by the CHA WG was brought for discussion. The conversations which happened allowed revision of the strategy to better reflect the input these Mi'kmaw authorities shared. The result was the penultimate version of the current document. To ensure that the input provided during the symposium was accurately interpreted and implemented in the document, attendees were provided with copies of the revised draft in Winter-Spring 2015. Comments were used to further tweak the wording and the *Culture, Heritage and Archaeology Strategic Plan* was finalized for review and eventual adoption by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs through resolution in September 2015.



Vision

Mi'kmaq are the true and rightful authorities on Mi'kmaq culture, heritage and archaeology. Mi'kmaq have self-governing rights over heritage, language, culture, historical interpretation, archaeological sites, artefacts and traditional territory. Our stories must be told by us, shared in the Mi'kmaq language, and expressed in Mi'kmaq ways. Mi'kmaq stories continue to be made by Mi'kmaq today. Mi'kmaq should manage and co-manage with Canada and Nova Scotia in areas relevant to Mi'kmaq language, culture, heritage, archaeology and historical interpretation. Mi'kmaq must receive respect and acknowledgement when discussing ownership, involvement and management of Mi'kmaq artefacts, signage and archaeological sites in Nova Scotia and Canada. Mi'kmaq must provide coordinated and aligned heritage tourism and communications activities to deliver Mi'kmaq interpretation and to promote economic development. Mi'kmaq culture, heritage and archaeology must be protected, preserved, celebrated and promoted by the Mi'kmaq Nation in Nova Scotia. The principles, aesthetics and traditions of Mi'kmaq culture continue from yesterday to today and on to the future.



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Strategic Priorities and Goals

In order to achieve noticeable success and to pursue the vision of the Assembly, the following are strategic priorities and goals. This document is intended to be a flexible and growing strategic plan and therefore may be adjusted to adapt to new circumstances or concerns as well as altered to reflect progress made in the various areas.

These are our 5 priorities in the Culture, Heritage and Archaeology sectors:

1. Telling our “Mi’kmaw Stories”

Mi’kmaw communities and individuals are increasingly concerned that the “Mi’kmaq Story” is being told and informed by non-Mi’kmaw sources and influences. Many public exhibitions and interpretations, archaeological works, historical narratives and ethnographic sources that interpret and define Mi’kmaw history and culture are authored by non-Mi’kmaq. Many of the interpretations are influenced by European or Western scientific worldviews, or generalizations of First Nations values and often misinterpret the cultural context. “Mi’kmaw Stories” are defined by our Mi’kmaw language, and many attempts to translate stories and histories from our language have changed cultural teachings. As a Nation and people we need to grow and to strengthen the spaces and resources we have to create and recreate our own stories, guided and informed by our own expertise and experience.



The expertise and knowledge that exists within the Mi’kmaw Nation in Nova Scotia must form the critical piece and basis of interpretive developments, expression of Mi’kmaw narratives and the collective thought that is generated in various contexts emerging from language, experience and Mi’kmaw cultural world views. These are currently underutilized or, in many instances, ignored. We seek to rebalance this situation to the benefit of Mi’kmaq in the culture, heritage and archaeology sectors.

We are working to have Mi’kmaw Stories told and shared by Mi’kmaq in the ways outlined in the *Goals* and *Current Objectives* sections of the Strategic Plan Map (p.8). Other areas of concern that must become part of the plan to achieve the principles of “Telling our Own Mi’kmaw Stories” are listed in the Strategic Plan Map.

2. Mi'kmaq Ownership of Our Own Culture

One of the most important areas for the Mi'kmaq to assume governance over is our own identity. Heritage, language, culture, history and arts are essential components of this identity.

Efforts in support of this priority are currently underway but significant goals such as having all ancestral artefacts from Nova Scotia (archaeological and ethnological) legally repatriated to the Mi'kmaq Nation in Nova Scotia must constitute a major goal under this overall priority.



3. Self-Governance Management and Co-Management

Mi'kmaq heritage, language, culture, history and arts embody culturally-unique and distinctive ideology that Mi'kmaq share with one another. Self-governance of heritage is a building block for self-governance over citizens, land and resources. It defines the way in which Mi'kmaq will structure and operate our governments in the future.

Once Mi'kmaq adopt and exercise jurisdiction over heritage, language, culture, history and contemporary arts, Mi'kmaq governments must create partnerships with other governments and private groups and individuals. Thus, the Mi'kmaq can create expanded opportunities for individual and community expression and bring Mi'kmaq culture to a common audience.



4. Capacity Building

For continued protection, interpretation and promotion of Mi'kmaq heritage, language, culture, history and contemporary arts it is critical that Mi'kmaq continue to expand communities' capacity to meet the values, principles and goals expressed in this strategic plan. By doing so, we can create expanded opportunities for individual and community expression. Working with Mi'kmaq communities, organizations, other governments and the community of Nova Scotia will only assist in creating additional knowledge and provide for correct information about Mi'kmaq culture to be accessible to all Nova Scotians as well as visitors from across the world.



5. Expression, Celebration and Promotion of Mi'kmaw Culture, Heritage and Archaeology



There is great economic value in tourism when it comes to partnering with other cultural institutions and levels of government to promote Mi'kmaw culture, heritage and archaeology in Nova Scotia. Mi'kmaq shall continue to work with others to develop ways that increase the preservation, promotion and implementation of Mi'kmaw culture into the daily life of all Nova Scotians. In order to achieve this, Mi'kmaq need to be directly involved in this effort, both in

partnership with other governments and on our own. Progress in this area has been made through Mi'kmaw parties such as the Unama'ki Tourism Association, Mi'kmawey Debert and Alan Syliboy's Red Crane Studio.



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Conclusion

What unites the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia is the love and respect that each individual Mi'kmaw has for one another. It is said that our people can travel from community to community and find relations, will not be alone and will always be welcome for a cup of tea. Despite geography, we remain connected - in our salites, in the powwow dances at mawiomis, our cultural gatherings, and ceremonies to celebrate achievements and milestones. Our foundation is in the beat of the drum, the language that speaks to individual hearts even if the language is dormant, and the prayers that are carried to the Creator or Nis'kam. We are all different but we are all connected to being Mi'kmaw. These foundations connect us to each other, our land and our resources. They are the basis of family bonds, generational continuity and political unity.



Mi'kmaq need to determine how our heritage, language, culture, history and arts are nurtured, preserved, promoted, and interpreted. A key component of this plan is to bring this dialogue to our Mi'kmaw communities for discussion and input. As part of this plan it is critical that a communications and engagement process with our communities is on-going to ensure that the values and principles contained within this document reflect the views and concerns of Mi'kmaq about how our culture and heritage are protected, interpreted, managed, preserved and promoted.

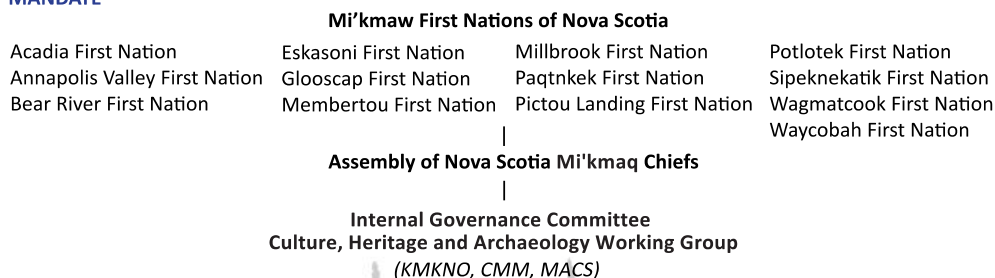


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ANSMC CULTURE, HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN MAP

MANDATE



ANSMC CULTURE, HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN

PURPOSES

The ANSMC Culture, Heritage and Archaeology Strategic Plan seeks to achieve two primary purposes:

- to negotiate and realize self-governing rights for Mi'kmaw cultural resources and practices; and
- to strengthen and grow culture and heritage opportunities as determined by and for the Mi'kmaw Nation.

PRINCIPLES

The ANSMC Culture, Heritage and Archaeology Strategic Plan is guided by the following principles. It will:

- look to Elders, artisans, knowledge-keepers, speakers and other members of the Nation to drive the development and implementation of policy content and outcomes; and
 - seek to rectify centuries of cultural appropriation and colonization;
- respect and support the cultural diversity of individual Mi'kmaw communities and people;
- seek to strengthen resources and to build on existing activities across all Mi'kmaw communities;

GOALS

Mi'kmaw Ownership/Self Governance

- Repatriate Mi'kmaw cultural property
- Protect Mi'kmaw ancestral places
- Gather and protect key cultural knowledge and resources
- Develop and govern tourism markets as a Nation
- Gather and protect such cultural knowledge as is required for treaty-right implementation
- Monitor relevant Provincial and Federal legislation, with dispute resolution as necessary.

Telling Our Story/Expression

- Gather, protect, and share key stories and their resources.
- Promote and protect the Mi'kmaw language
- Increase the public visibility of Mi'kmaw identity and culture
- Promote visual and performing arts
- Promote traditional ceremonies and official customs
- Develop and promote tourism opportunities
- Encourage and celebrate diversity of thought and perspective with the Mi'kmaw community.
- Strengthen cultural educational resources, particularly with MK

Capacity Building

- Identify Nation-level needs and promote strategic development
- Promote mentoring opportunities
- Establish partnerships with First Nation, private, public and government entities which recognize the need and the opportunity
- Support community plans for Mi'kmaq Cultural Centres and projects

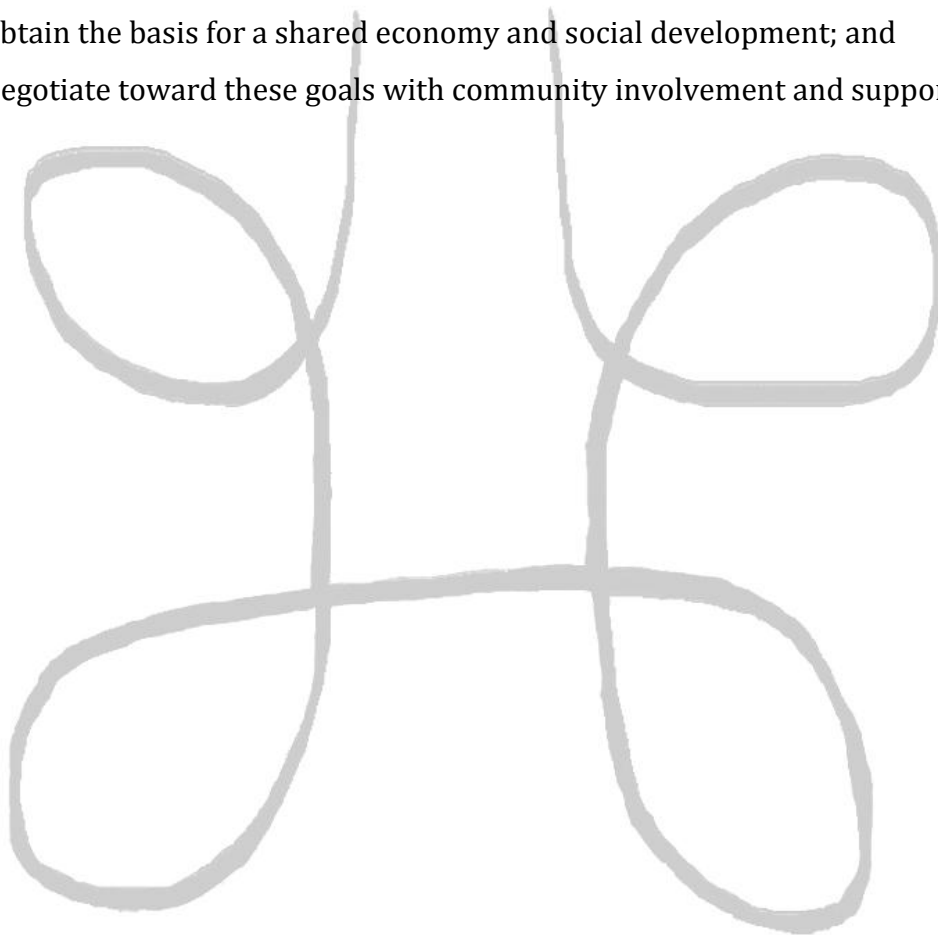
Current **objectives** to achieve these goals while abiding by the principles include: establishing Cultural Centres (such as MDCC) developing culture, heritage and archaeology protocols, Mi'kmaw content in Nova Scotia Parks, supporting Tripartite projects. Objectives would be undertaken by the appropriate organization with resources aligned as necessary.

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Appendix: The Five Pillars

(These direct the work of the Negotiating Team and the Negotiation Office)

1. To achieve recognition, acceptance, implementation and protection of Treaty, Title and other Rights of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia;
2. To develop systems of Mi'kmaq governance and resource management;
3. To revive, promote and protect a healthy Mi'kmaq identity;
4. To obtain the basis for a shared economy and social development; and
5. To negotiate toward these goals with community involvement and support.



Culture, Heritage and Archaeology Symposium



Potlotek Mi'kmaw Community

March 2014

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Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office
Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative

Our Rights. Our Future.