

MEDIA RELEASE

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Maw-lukutijik **Saqmaq**
Assembly of Nova Scotia
Mi'kmaq Chiefs

Communities Working to Revive Ancient Mi'kmaq Customs

Members of the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs (Assembly) will be working with their communities to revive traditional and ancient Mi'kmaq customs by looking to our language for guidance. The Assembly is exploring Mi'kmaq concepts found in *Wmitkik* and *Nmitiknen*.

Wmitkik is an old Mi'kmaq word, not commonly used today, that may hold the Mi'kmaq concept of how the lands and waters that we are connected to (the territory from which we are from and live) is to be harvested (hunted, fished and gathered) in a manner that respects the resources and all our relations who live or harvest there (*Msi't No'Kmaq*). *Nmitiknen* holds the concept of territory and the process of how we make decisions together, and much more.

Chiefs in the Kespukwitk District and their respective communities - Acadia, Bear River and Annapolis Valley First Nations – will begin the development of a Nmitiknen approach to the stewardship of the Kespukwitk district of Mi'kma'ki. These three communities will be working together, alongside the Mi'kmaq Grand Council and other Mi'kmaq communities on this important work. Together they will be looking into developing a traditional approach to managing the resources and recognizing conservation and protection of all the resources.

As recognized and affirmed by s.35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the Mi'kmaq have inherent rights of self-determination and self-government, including the right to self-regulation and to manage our internal affairs and relationships.

“Working together as a district is not meant to exclude anyone, but to empower our people. As we share the waters and resources of this area, it was important for us to come together on how we should exercise and manage our Treaty Rights to harvesting. Working as a collective will be best for our communities, the environment, and the Mi'kmaq Nation,” said Chief Gerald Toney, Annapolis Valley First Nation.

“Relying on ancient and traditional concepts to work together and respectfully share our territory is important for all of us. We are doing this so that we can collectively exercise our right to govern our territory, in accordance with traditional systems of law and governance,” stated Chief Carol Dee Potter, Bear River First Nation.

“The communities of Acadia, Bear River and Annapolis Valley are looking forward to working together with our community members and the various levels of Mi'kmaq government – Band Councils, Grand Council and the Assembly – to manage the resources in our traditional district,” said Chief Deborah Robinson, Acadia First Nation.

By working through a Nmitiknen approach, these three communities will be able to have a broader understanding of what is being harvested in their region and how the resources are being used by the members of each individual community. The Chiefs in Kespukwitk will be working to implement Nmitiknen to better understand how their members are exercising their collective right to a moderate livelihood for a variety of species.

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For more information contact:

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