

Newsletter

FALL 2022



Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn
Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative
Our Rights. Our Future.

ARCHAEOLOGY & RESEARCH

The past summer our team modified our department name from Archaeology Research Division (ARD) to Archaeology & Research, encompassing land and underwater archaeology, historic research, GIS, lands research and a bit of policy research too.

The ARD team was very busy this summer working to ensure that development-driven archaeology better respect Mi'kmaq rights and title and we also provided tools for consultants to do improved fieldwork and reporting for the benefit of the Mi'kmaq Nation throughout Mi'kma'ki (with particular focus on National Parks and Historic Sites).

Repair work on Nova Scotia Power's Trout River fish diversion screens on the Black River Hydro system required archaeological impact assessment and resulted in another Mi'kmaq archaeological site being recorded. The research helped to avoid impacts to the undisturbed portions of the site, and our team keeps visiting the site regularly to discuss the project flow. Other NS Power projects continue under discussion, such as Pasi'tuek, Tusket, Lequille, Roseway River and Governor Lake Dam on the Sheet Harbour Hydro system.

Our team has also been working on the "Dykeland Systems Upgrades Projects" with the NS Department of Agriculture, with the latest discussions and site visits focussing on Starr's Point, where recorded archaeological sites will make for complex discussions as the department seeks to prepare climate change-resilient infrastructure to manage flood risks.

Over the summer, we conducted field work, including an excursion to St. Paul Island creating maps, taking GPS points, and capturing drone imagery of the island. We also upgraded our Wilderness and Remote First Aid Training to increase safety for field work and to further increase the team's safety in the field, our GIS Specialist, Kevin Camp, set up emergency SPOT devices that can be used by field workers.

Our team is also working to map all of the historic use information from archival documents compiled over decades. These archival references will help with the use and occupancy study of the archaeological sites data as well as the formal Consultation Process.

Speaking of strengthening the Consultation Process, in direct support of Mi'kmaq communities, the new Knowledge Holder Portal continued its roll-out to communities, as directed by the Assembly. This portal allows community members, working through their own community-based liaison, to record traditional use knowledge to help the KMK better protect traditional use areas and resources on individual Consultation project discussions.



ARCHAEOLOGY & RESEARCH (CONTINUED)

CMM & UINR have both helped to improve the tool through review and input from their technical team members and we are hoping that work like this will bring our organizations closer together in future technical collaborations as we all work to benefit the Mi'kmaw Nation! We are working with the liaison your Chief has connected us with and we are still seeking liaisons for some communities. All data recorded remains the intellectual and cultural property of Knowledge Holders and remains secured within KMK's internal file system and is NOT shared – it is just used to inform us, internally, where to focus our protection efforts the most.

Finally, our Underwater Archaeology research program had recently acquired some additional gear to help advance the research of the submerged landscapes on which Mi'kmaq have lived since time immemorial.



We will be building on the previous collaborative research with NSCC's Advanced Geomatics Research Group (AGRG) and UINR, among others, and testing out sampling and recording devices to seek out the sites beneath the waters. We will be spending more time in the water this fall and have been checking the shark tracker apps more regularly!

ISLAND PROJECTS

KMK has been approved for funding on a contribution agreement with Environment Climate Change Canada to conduct several studies and projects concerning islands around the province. Three key points have been highlighted by our team: traditional knowledge, biodiversity, and coastal erosion. Our team is working to gain a better understanding of the islands in general, as well as Mi'kmaw connections and ecological knowledge of these lands. We are also developing a clear understanding of what species are present on the islands and their susceptibility to invasive species. Lastly, we are also focussing on costal erosion and developing an in-depth understanding of how erosion is impacting the islands and how that relates to Mi'kmaw archeological sites. These key points will require preliminary and boots on the ground research and surveys on locations as seen in their most recent visit to St. Paul Island.

Our multi-disciplinary team had the opportunity to once again adventure to yet another culturally diverse and significant area, St. Paul Island. These studies allow our team to understand the connection and importance of past and present Mi'kmaw use. As we continue our research, we look to you as L'nu for answers.

Interestingly, our team discovered an unexpected inhabitant of the island! A singular coyote, who by all appearances of scat and tracks, appears to be healthy. The allusive coyote, who did not care to be physically seen, likely became stranded after crossing over ice from Unama'ki.

In addition to "Wile E," our team also noted a number of offshore guests, including whales and seals, and on the island noted a variety of foods and traditional medicines. The team is following up with Unama'ki Indigenous Protected Conserved Areas (ICPA) Committee on the possibility of establishing ICPA Collaboratory with wildlife area for St. Paul Island.

FORESTRY

KMK's Forestry team is working hard to developing a strategy for efficient and effective harvest reviews for both traditional knowledge and archaeological values. In September, we took a tour with the Minister of Natural Resources to review culturally important sites, management proposals and the damage in the province caused by the Hemlock woolly adelgid.

Spruce Budworm & Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

KMK, CMM and UINR have developed a working team and coordinator to sit on spruce budworm working groups. The impact of the spruce budworm may affect Mi'kmaw rights, land and title. We will continue to research and identify what those rights may be. The spruce budworm is the most present and destructive forest pest in North America and damages forests during its larval stage, eating away the shoots of the trees – an impact that can kill a tree in three to five years. Spruce budworm outbreaks are cyclical and can occur every 30-40 years but can last up to 10 years. While their numbers are currently low, the potential outbreak of the pest warranted the creation of a team to sit alongside other working groups to address concerns regarding the spruce budworm. The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid working team is also following up on the proposed biological control methods with research scientists, the Canadian Forest Service and Natural Resources Canada.



Earth Keepers

KMK team members attended the Earth Keepers Committee and helped with the drafting of the Earth Keeper's resolution for designation of Earth Keepers. The team is following up on the Earth Keeper participation within future co-management of Environmental Climate Change Canada islands, as stewards of the land.

SGEM

KMK has also received the latest Silvicultural Guide to the Ecological Matrix - the document replacing the province's previous forest management guide. We are working closely with CMM and UINR to provide comments.

Sporting Mountain Quarry Expansion Project

The Sporting Mountain Quarry is undergoing an expansion and requires an Environment Assessment Approval (EA) and Industrial Approval (IA) from the Province. The consultation team reviewed the Additional Information Request and EA Registration documents and identified shortcomings that will need to be address by the proponent.

AVON RIVER UPDATE

A series of technical meetings are ongoing on the proposed Avon River Aboiteau Structure. At these meetings focus is on how the structure and its operation will allow for unimpeded fish passage during incoming and outgoing tides. Removal of the current structure is a top priority.

These technical meetings have forced the postponement of the Environmental Assessment response from KMK, in order to have a full understanding of the potential structure and its operation.

Several modifications have also been requested by KMK to the Ministerial Order on the Avon River Aboiteau Structure.

CULTURAL TOURISM

Excitement is building with the new *Mi'kmawitasik* (Meeg-maw-wee-daw-zick) brand logo almost completed. This will allow Mi'kmaw entrepreneurs, artisans, performers, and cultural tourism operators to use the logo to market their products and services as authentically Mi'kmaq. *Mi'kmawitasik* means *Mi'kmaw Made* (*Made by Mi'kmaq*).

This logo was a creative collaboration between Mi'kmaw artists Loretta Gould (We'koqma'q First Nation) and Alan Sylliboy (Millbrook First Nation), and Mi'kmaw graphic designer Hailey Isadore (Wagmatcook First Nation).

In August, over a two-week period, Mi'kmaw community members were invited to vote on four logo designs and to provide their feedback. We had a great response. The results are currently being shared with the Assembly, after which time the final logo will be made public. This will begin the next phase of this project as we roll out the logo to communities.



ENERGY UPDATE

Touquoy, located in Bear River, is currently the only mine in operation by Atlantic Mining. Several other proposed projects are in various stages of development, including Fifteen Mile Stream, Beaver Dam, Cochrane Hill, and Pleasantfield Exploration. KMK's Energy Advisor meets with Atlantic Mining regularly to discuss active files and engagement with Mi'kmaw communities.

Transition Metals

Mineral exploration remains paused in the Cape Breton Highlands after a resolution was passed by the Assembly opposing any work done in this area. This is the only spot in Nova Scotia where the Mi'kmaq can harvest both moose and salmon. UINR is assisting in developing a cumulative effects study to assess the impacts that industry would have in the area.

YOUTH

Throughout the summer our engagement and connection with the youth of our communities has grown tremendously! We loved being able to represent KMK at Halifax Pride, the Mi'kmaw Summer Games and other fun events.

Our Facebook, Instagram and TikTok accounts have grown to connect and engage with youth and has become one of our primary resources to reach Mi'kmaw youth. This summer we had a chance to put out resources and information on many files such as fisheries, child welfare and much more.

We intend to continue this exciting engagement throughout the year through in-person gatherings, workshops, learning experiences and content to be used in the communities. This upcoming year will be exciting for us along with the youth.

If you know youth who want to be involved, tell them to follow us on our socials or contact our office and we will add them to our contact list.



MKK

Over the summer the MKK team had multiple meetings on kinship, customary care, adopting parents/caregivers, Mi'kmaw Seven Sacred Teachings in Kinship, legal guides, Prevention and Protection Assessments, and Band Designates. Internally, we've been meeting lots on the Mi'kmaw Child Welfare Law which we're drafting and making changes based on feedback we've been hearing on it. Our team also met multiple times throughout the summer with Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services to discuss our work.

Lots of work is being done to review and edit the prevention and early help and protection assessment, as well as reviewing and revising with the Mi'kmaw Customary Adoption Protocol. In our work we focus a lot on C92 - *An Act respecting First Nation, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families*. We've been looking at Indigenous laws, court decisions, and lots of resources that are being developed on C92 and what it means to Indigenous people.

This Fall, we have continued to work on the Mi'kmaw Child Welfare law, policies and governance structure. We will be looking into Mi'kmaw implementation and the possible development of a sectoral agreement, pursuant to s. 35 Right to self-government and self-determination, for the implementation of this Mi'kmaw child welfare work (much like what was done with Mi'kmaw education in Nova Scotia).

NATIONAL WILDLIFE AREAS

Country Island, Isle Haute and St. Paul Island are all being designated as National Wildlife Areas. St. Paul Island is an important stopover site for birds and consists of critically important coastal habitat for migratory birds in Atlantic Canada. But, it was also an important stopover for the Mi'kmaw when travelling back & forth between Newfoundland and Cape Breton. Currently, this island provides shelter for our Mi'kmaw fishermen during hurricane season.

In Mi'kmaw, St. Paul Island is referred to as Kiwktó'qi-Mnikuk, which translates to Round Island – on the Mi'kmaw Place Names digital atlas. However, there is a book written by Charles A. Martijn, who was a researcher, and he states that St. Paul's Island in the Cabot Strait was called “Tugwegan Meniguk” or ‘temporary goal island’. Tui'kn is referred to as ‘passage’ and mniku – island.

Our consultation team is working to determine the final name of the Island.



NSPI

This summer we did another site visit to **Tusket Hydroelectric plant** and we are coordinating more for this Fall with KMK and Acadia First Nation. DFO, along with NSPI and KMK, want to do another site visit to determine the best way to clean the area and improve fish passage in the future.

We have also had site visits at a number of sites, including Mersey, Tusket, Trout, Gaspereau, Mactaquak Dam, and Beechwood Fish Lift in New Brunswick and Roseway with Acadia First Nation.

Shovel testing started in August at **Pasi'tuek Trout River**. A small artifact was found and documented by archaeologists from Davis McIntyre and Associates. Two additional artifacts were also found alongside the bank, and they will be documented in the archaeologists' final report.



INTERPRETATION FROM A MI'KMAW PERSPECTIVE

Members of the KMK Consultation team attended the national Interpretation Canada conference in Halifax. The conference theme was "Storytelling: Making People Care Since...Forever," and explored the connection between interpretation and storytelling.

One of the sessions explored the story of enslavement. The Fortress of Louisbourg played a part in the global slave trade, and so were successful in their application submission, "interpreting enslavement – the importance of broad-based collaboration.

As a result, a working group has been established with employees from Parks Canada and community members, including representatives from African Nova Scotia Association, Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn, Membertou First Nation, Potlotek First Nation, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources. The mandate of this group is to ensure a community lead initiative and it meets every few weeks (depending on research uncovered, or progress being made).

Enslavement is not just present in African or Indigenous history. The lived experience of being enslaved is unique to everyone, but the history of enslavement in Canada is a history shared by ALL Canadians, and we all have the responsibility of retaining and telling these stories and ensuring the Mi'kmaw perspective is accurately represented in the content of stories.



KMK staff recently participated in a beading workshop by Mi'kmaw artist, Natasha Bernard of Millbrook. We all enjoyed learning to bead a poppy just in time for Remembrance Day.

NEW FACES AT KMK

The KMK Team is constantly growing and evolving! Over the past few months, we have welcomed some new faces to our team! Jennifer Marshall started with us in June as our Justice and UNDRIP Advisor. Laretta Sylliboy joined the KMK team as an Administrative Generalist. Tyler Dunne started as a Communication Specialist in October. And Kalolin Sullivan joined the KMK team in November as Executive Assistant to our Director.

If you see them around in the communities, please help us to welcome them to the KMK Team!

