

KMK Newsletter

Spring 2023

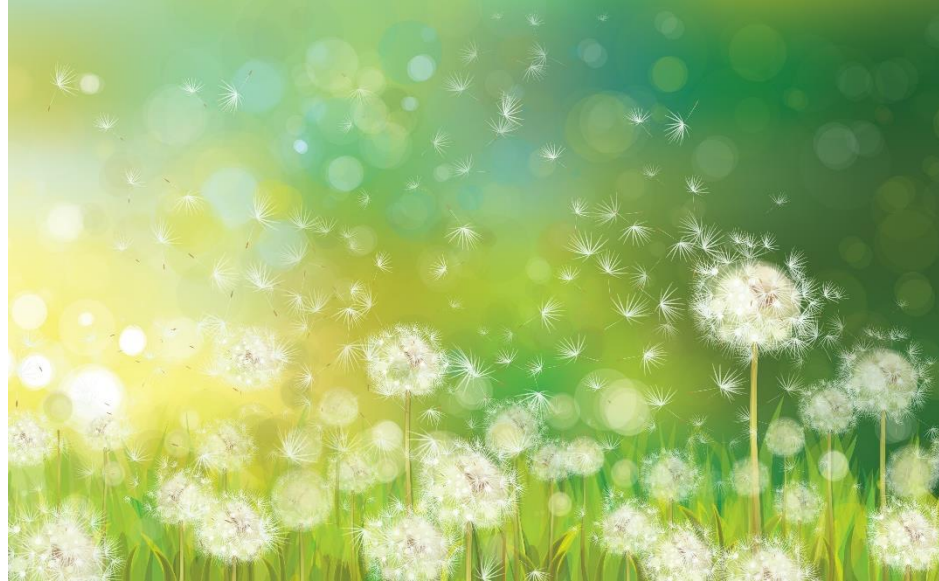


Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn
Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative
Our Rights. Our Future.

MESSAGE FROM KMK

We're working to continue our seasonal newsletters again this year, with our second issue of 2023! As always, this newsletter will provide updates on what our team has been working on over the past few months, so if you see anything that you'd like to learn more about, please feel free to reach out to our team!

Please note that all KMK offices will be closed from July 24 - August 8, 2023 for our summer vacation shutdown.



Sable Island Visit

Earlier this month, members of our team were fortunate to visit Sable Island National Park Reserve. This group was the first to visit the island this year!

The KMK team toured some of Parks Canada's favourite locations, including Bald Dune. They got to see the wild horses, grey seals and experience the unique biodiversity of Sable Island, including a small pond that was found to have pako'si growing. The presence of pako'si reinforces the importance of preserving and protecting the natural environment, as it holds cultural, ecological, and medicinal value for our people.

KMK's ongoing relationship with Parks Canada had allowed us to send another group to Sable Island. Thank you to Parks Canada for facilitating another unforgettable visit!



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Urban Parks Survey

The Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes (BMBCL) area is located on the western edge of the Halifax urban core, with Acadian Forest, wetlands, and a system of lakes and headwaters, offering wilderness hiking opportunities to residents and visitors.

In 2021, HRM signed a Statement of Collaboration with Parks Canada to indicate mutual interest in the opportunities for the BMBCL area as part of the new national urban parks program.

We want to hear from our Mi'kmaq communities and those living in the HRM to help us determine what Mi'kmaq cultural aspects are appropriate to be incorporated into this park.

Complete the survey by following the QR code.



Governance Update

Over the last year, the Governance team has been engaging with community members, advisory committees, and Mi'kmaq leadership to identify priorities, concerns, and perspectives for the implementation of the principles of UNDRIP to federal law.

From these discussions and online surveys, the Governance Team developed a report of what we heard from community and identified 13 key recommendations to make to Canada to prioritize the implementation of UNDRIP.

On April 27, the Assembly approved the draft report and recommendations, and they were shared with Justice Canada for inclusion in the Federal Action Plan on the Implementation of UNDRIP, released on Indigenous Peoples Day, June 21, 2023.

Chiefs Call for Reinstatement of Avon River M.O.

On June 1, the Nova Scotia Provincial Emergency Management Office announced they would be closing the gates at the Avon causeway in Windsor, to re-establish a reservoir (Lake Pisiquid) for possible wildfire suppression. This quickly shifted into concern over dry hydrants located above the Avon causeway. While the Assembly can appreciate the concern regarding a need to ensure resources to fight wildfires, they also raised concerns that alternative solutions were not utilized that could have had much less impact on fish and the ecosystem. The forecast at the time called for significant rainfall for the coming days and over 260mm of rain has fallen in the area since June 2.

“We understand immediate decisions had to be made in response to the wildfires, but we were concerned that this decision would erase all the work that had been done in this waterway. We are now over a week out from this emergency decision, and we can see already how the environment is being severely impacted,” said Chief Gerald Toney, Fisheries Co-Lead for the Assembly.

The recent change in operation of the gates at the Avon causeway blocks fish passage and does not provide consistent and/or adequate flows downstream during low tide, impacting fish habitat and the ability for fish to complete their lifecycles. In 2021, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) issued a Ministerial Order to regulate gate operations to improve fish habitat and passage. To mitigate any impacts brought about by the federal order, Mi'kmaq representatives worked collaboratively with various stakeholders, agencies and levels of government to find solutions that also enhanced the ecosystem, such as seeding the sandbar and installing riffles to ensure Ski Martock could continue to operate.

Avon River cont'd

This work allowed for migratory birds to return to the area, fish habitat and the ability for fish to complete their lifecycles has drastically improved, and wildlife and vegetation has started to flourish.

"The Ministerial Order to open the aboiteau gates had been working and this emergency override is impacting the environment and killing fish. Every day we are getting reports that more and more fish are dying. We need a reversal of the emergency decision now," continued Chief Toney.

The Assembly has called on the Nova Scotia Government to work collaboratively with them and DFO to employ alternative measures to ensure adequate water access that does not destroy the ecosystem, nor infringe upon Mi'kmaw Rights.



Coastal Zone Canada Conference

Members of the KMK team recently attended Coastal Zone Canada, a conference in Victoria BC, the traditional homelands of the Lekwungen People. Emerging themes from this conference included the need to include Indigenous and coastal communities in efforts to prepare and mitigate climate change along Canada's Coastal Zone.

Discussions centered around co-management and co-governance models, cultural heritage and its importance for informing climate science and valuing Indigenous knowledge systems every step of the way to protecting our coastal communities; human or biotic.

We heard stories from Haida Nation about bringing back sea otters, stories of tsunamis and how coastal communities need to be prepared and messages about the need to keep coastal food sources clean and safe.

The conference highlighted steps towards improving Indigenous engagement including long term project funding that is goals based and therefore not limited by colonial timelines as well as making sure data is getting back to communities and that every project benefits community.

Coastal Zone Canada hosted over 600 people to connect Canadians with the coast.

Gathering Perspectives: Canadian Archaeology Association Conference

From May 3-6, the Assembly co-hosted the 55th Canadian Archaeological Association's annual conference in Membertou. This was the first time this national archaeology conference was held by an Indigenous Nation and in an Indigenous community!

This year the Assembly put a cultural twist on the whole event and showed guests what Mi'kmaw hospitality is all about! The annual banquet became a Mawimi filled with Mi'kmaw music, dance and culture!

During the sessions, guests heard from Elder Ernest Johnson, who shared his knowledge, wisdom and stories. Indigenous archaeologists presented on their work and spoke about how archaeology could improve - from a cultural standpoint.

We also held a three-day exhibit where Mi'kmaw artisans and vendors could showcase and sell their beautiful work. The conference built upon the great work already being done with archaeology, provided some new perspectives and added a cultural approach in projects in Indigenous territories.

Thanks to everyone who attended and made this event such a success!



Chiefs Meet with British High Commissioner



In April, some of the Chiefs met with Susannah Goshko, the British High Commissioner to Canada, during her visit to Mi'kma'ki. They gathered at the Millbrook Heritage Centre for their conversation.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the Chiefs and High Commissioner to reflect on history, talk about ways to work together in the future, discuss shared goals, and to talk about working towards reconciliation.

Forestry Update

In May, the Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative team participated in field days to determine archaeological potential, traditional use potential, old growth potential, and invasive insect monitoring.

Sherilyn (right) from our consultation team, is seen counting rings on this old growth Eastern Hemlock. Determining old growth within our forests will ultimately aid in the protection of these stands and further increase the biodiversity of these unique ecosites.



Archaeology Update

One of our archaeologist, Emily, was recently in the field working with Parks Canada on underwater core sample analysis at Kejimikujik National Park.

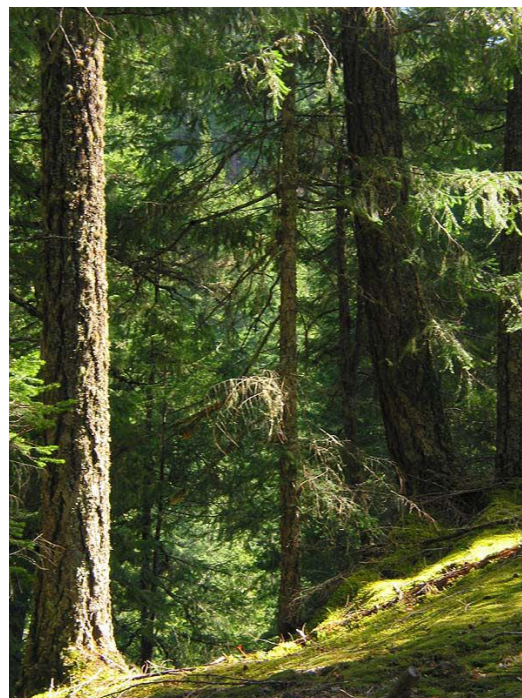
The photos (right) show them on the barge along with the core sample they were studying. This is just one example of collaborative archaeology in action.



Lands Update

The Lands department at KMK continues to focus on consultation with the federal and provincial governments regarding various land transactions, surplus properties, and other land-based projects. In the coming months, efforts will be made to start the process of updating the Assembly's Land Strategy document.

This document acts as a guide to help inform and direct the Lands Department on the priorities, needs, and opportunities of the Mi'kmaw Nation, as a whole. This will help understand which properties to target and prioritize during our Surplus Property and Negotiation Lands Inventory processes.



Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative Updates

The spring season has been a busy one for the Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative (MFI) team! In April, Elizabeth Jessome joined the team at KMK to help coordinate the work happening with our partner organizations, CMM and UINR. Here are some of the highlights of what they have all been working on this past spring.



Species At Risk: The teams at UINR and CMM have been working to design and implement a monitoring program to detect Species at Risk (SAR) birds in areas of forest where tree harvesting is planned. The aim of the monitoring program is to understand what birds are living in the forest and if there are any active nests present. Both audio recording devices and boots on the ground are used to assess sites and detect these SAR birds. Understanding use and occupancy allows the MFI to implement appropriate buffer zones and best management practices to protect these at-risk birds. While the monitoring program is just getting started, recent field work has already detected some nesting Nighthawks! Additional surveys for at-risk lichen and other species are also being planned to ensure respectful forest stewardship on MFI lands.



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid: CMM has been leading the development of a treatment plan for an old hemlock stand in the Digby MFI forest where the invasive alien insect Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) has established itself. HWA is an aphid-like insect that attacks and kills hemlock trees by feeding on nutrient and water storage cells at the base of needles, resulting in death of infested trees in just a few years. While the hemlock in the Digby forest are showing signs of stress and decline, the MFI team is working to plan and implement a treatment program this year to save as many trees as possible. Watch for calls for volunteers in the future to assist with field work!



Archaeology & Forestry: MFI has begun working with the Archaeology team at KMK to develop a Etuaptmumk-based approach to integrating archaeological considerations/ protections into forestry planning. The aim of the collaboration is to develop and pilot best practices to identify and protect current and historical sites for traditional use or archaeological heritage. Through adapted forestry planning—e.g. buffers, special management practices, informed block layout—and post-harvest assessment, the MFI will work to understand and track the impact of forestry operations on the land and to continue to fine-tune a process going forward.



MFI Videos: The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ability of the MFI teams at UINR, CMM, and KMK to meet with communities and host gatherings in the early years of the project. We are still working to spread the word about the MFI in Mi'kmaw communities and to get interested people involved. We developed three promotional videos to introduce the initiative and to share some of the background of the MFI. To learn more about the MFI, visit our YouTube page @NSMikmaqRights or on the Assembly's Facebook page @AssemblyNSChiefs.



2SLGBTQIA+ PRIDE

History & Background in Canada

1969: In New York City LGBTQ people held a riot against police discrimination and homophobia.
1971-1973: Early gay rights activism in Canada included demonstrations outside Parliament. Pride Week '73 was a nation-wide LGBTQ rights event in Vancouver, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal.
1974-1981: Police crackdowns on gay bars and LGBTQ meeting places across Canada led to protesters taking to the streets and demanding to be treated fairly, with the same rights as all Canadians.
1978: Drag performer and Vietnam War Veteran, Gilbert Baker, created the rainbow flag that became a symbol for LGBTQ freedom.
1995-2000: Pride became more popular across Canada, it became less of a protest and more of a celebration of the LGBTQ Community.
2005: Canada was the fourth country in the world to legalize gay marriage.
2016: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau raised the Pride flag in front of Parliament Hill for the first time ever.
2017 and Beyond: Pride became more accepted and the community continued to grow into what we celebrate now.
 Facts were found at: <https://www.cbc.ca/kidsnews/post/timeline-50-years-of-lgbtq-pride-in-canada/>

What Does 2SLGBTQIA+ Stand For?

2S: Two Spirit People
 L: Lesbian
 G: Gay
 B: Bisexual
 T: Transgender
 Q: Queer
 I: Intersex
 +: The plus stands for other sexual orientations and gender identities under the umbrella. The plus also means love and acceptance to some people.



Gender & Pronouns

Preferred pronouns are set by an individual based on their personally choose to use to reflect that individual's gender identity.

Examples:

She/Her
 Him/He
 They/Them

MY PRONOUNS ARE

Common Terms

Two-Spirit: Indigenous people who are gender and/or sexually diverse. Two Spirit encompasses the interconnectedness of one's own cultural identity, gender, and romantic/sexual identity.
Lesbian: A person (woman or non-binary) who is exclusively attracted to women. Historically this term was only used for women who were attracted to women, however today we include non-binary people who are exclusively attracted to women.
Pansexual: A person who is attracted to people regardless of their gender.
Non-Binary: A person whose gender exists outside of the gender binary. The term can be used solely to describe one's gender or can be used as an umbrella term to describe all genders that exist outside of the binary.
Asexual: A person does not experience, or experiences very little sexual attraction towards people. A person who is asexual can have sex and even enjoy it, but they generally do not experience the desire to have sex.
Transgender: A person whose gender is different from the gender they were assigned at birth.
 Example 1. A person who was assigned female at birth and came to understand they are a boy and man is a transgender man.

Definitions were found & more common terms can be found here: <https://www.outsaskatoon.ca/resource-library/queer-terms/>



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2SLGBTQIA+ PRIDE

Resources & Education



Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance: <http://w2sa.ca>
Healing Our Nations: <https://hon93.ca>
Native Youth Sexual Health Network: <https://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com>
Nova Scotia Native Women's Association: <http://www.nsnwa.ca>
Queer Terms: <https://www.outsaskatoon.ca/resource-library/queer-terms/>
Two Spirit Journal: <https://twospiritjournal.com>

What Do The Colours In The Pride Flag Represent?

Red: Life
Orange: Healing
Yellow: Sunlight
Green: Nature
Blue: Serenity
Purple: Spirit



Some Different Pride Flags



Original 8-Stripe Flag



Pansexual Flag



Progress Flag



Two Spirit Flag



Bisexual Flag



Lesbian Flag



Transgender Flag



Non-Binary Flag



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KMK Accomplishments

Our Executive Director, Janice Maloney, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association at their 50th Anniversary Gala in Membertou in June.

The award honours Janice's outstanding contribution and long-standing commitment to Mi'kmaq women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people in our communities.

Congratulations on the well-deserved recognition, Janice!



N'multis aqq Wela'in

To stay up to date, check out our website at www.mikmaqrights.com, find us on Facebook @ Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative or follow us on Instagram @ KMKNO1752.