

KMK Newsletter

April 2026



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

Happy Spring! We're working to continue our quarterly newsletters again this year, with this being our first issue of 2026

Our newsletters 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, as always, please feel free to reach out to our team!



MESSAGE FROM KMK's EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Kwé friends, Chiefs, Councillors, Elders, Grand Council members, and community members. My name is Nathan Sack and I am pleased to provide a message for this edition of KMK's Newsletter, as the new Executive Director. I am excited to have started this role in early March 2026.

I want to begin with a story that has stayed with me throughout my career because it shows the real, practical power of unity. When I was working for my home community of Sipekne'katik, we were preparing to open a gaming room in the HRM. We had completed all the renovations, met every requirement, and were ready to move forward. I called the Province of Nova Scotia and said, "our building is ready. We need 45 machines delivered immediately." Their response was simple: "Yes, sir. Right away. They'll be delivered immediately." No hesitation. No pushback.

Fast forward to my experience working for a community in New Brunswick. Same process, compliance and requirements, except they hadn't yet established the same Nation-to-Nation relationship that the Mi'kmaq of NS had with their Provincial counterparts. However, we built the facility, met every standard and I called the Government of New Brunswick to request the same 45 machines. This time the response was: "No. We'll give you five machines. You need to prove yourself first." That moment was shocking. It was frustrating. But more importantly, it showed me something powerful. When Mi'kmaq stand together, governments respond differently. Unity is not symbolic - it changes outcomes. It changes how the Crown listens, the opportunities our communities receive, and what becomes possible for our Nation.

That is exactly what KMK and the Assembly continue to build, file-by-file, decision-by-decision, gathering-by-gathering, one voice for the Nation.

(continued on page 2)

WHAT'S INSIDE?

PAGE 2

Message from KMK's
new Executive Director

PAGE 3

TRP Fisheries
Bedford Barrens Lands

PAGE 4-5

IBoF Symposium
Position Letter

PAGE 6

PDAC Conference
Youth Assembly

Message from KMK Executive Director (continued)

I joined KMK because I deeply believe in the work they have already done. Whether it's fisheries, justice, lands, energy, moose and conservation, youth development, or nationhood and constitution work – KMK and the Assembly have created momentum that is meaningful, strategic, and respected across governments. My goal is not to introduce a new direction, but to help strengthen, coordinate and advance the direction already set.

I've spent more than a decade in senior First Nation leadership roles focused on governance, strategy, financial management, Nation-building, and organizational change. But beyond the technical experience, what I pride myself on is a leadership style rooted in Mi'kmaw values. I believe the role of a leader is to help people become the best version of themselves – not by authority or pressure, but through encouragement, guidance and lifting people up. Our teachings of respect, humility and honour are not just cultural ideals - they are practical tools for building strong teams. They remind us to acknowledge people for the work they do, give credit where credit is due, celebrate successes together, and support each other's growth.

Throughout my career, I have always worked to motivate and empower teams using these Mi'kmaw values. When people feel valued, trusted and supported, they rise to the challenge, performing better. They contribute ideas. They take ownership, and help build nationhood in meaningful, lasting ways. My commitment as the new Executive Director is simple: lift people up, empower them, celebrate their strengths, and help them reach their potential – because when our people rise, our Nation rises with them.

Vision for the next three to five years:

Looking ahead, there are four areas where we can continue to build on the strong foundation already in place. Advancing Mi'kmaw self-governance and nationhood - the nationhood and constitution work has already set a clear and powerful direction; strengthening Mi'kmaw laws; building culturally grounded institutions; developing accountability systems, rooted in our values of respect, honour, humility, unity, and transparency; and laying the foundations for a Mi'kmaw constitution.

My focus is to help KMK move this work forward through strong community engagement, guidance from Elders, and meaningful participation from youth, families and grassroots voices across Mi'kma'ki. The files this team has been working on matter. My goal is to help them coordinate this work so the Chiefs receive timely and clear information, communities can participate meaningfully, and every decision remains grounded in Netukulimk and Mi'kmaw values.

The next few years should focus on mentorship pathways, governance learning opportunities for youth, deepening Elder-youth connections, and expanding engagement to urban Mi'kmaq. A Nation grows stronger when every generation – Elders, youth, and everyone in between – has a voice.

As KMK's responsibilities grow, so does the need for strong internal systems. I envision improved planning tools, research and analysis capacity, better coordination between portfolios, and clear communication to support Chiefs and Councils in making informed decisions. This is the important, behind the scenes work that allows nationhood to take shape in a stable, unified way. When I look at the work the Assembly and KMK have already accomplished, I see the architecture of an emerging Mi'kmaw government grounded in Treaty Rights, strengthened by culture and identity, supported by strong technical capacity, and unified in purpose.

The story I opened with wasn't just about gaming rooms. It was about the difference between standing alone and standing together. Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of working with Nations all across Canada. But when I travel nationally and hear people talking about the Mi'kmaw Nation – the unity here, the direction, and the strength of the collective voice in Nova Scotia – I feel proud. I look forward to continuing to be part of this process, in a new role and new way. Wela'liq.

TRP Fisheries Social Media Pages



KMK has launched TRP fisheries pages on Facebook and Tik Tok and they're worth a follow!

These pages walk through the community-developed, Mi'kmaw-led work that goes into a Rights-based fishery – the planning, the safety checks, the monitoring, and everything that happens long before anyone hits the water, and all the work after.

If you're curious about how TRP fisheries really work in Mi'kma'ki, these will be a solid place to learn and stay informed.

 [TRPFisheriesGeneralInfo](#)

 [netukulimktrpfisheries](#)

Assembly Purchases Culturally Significant Lands

In January 2026, Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq purchased lands adjacent to the designated National Historic Site which includes the Bedford Barrens Petroglyphs.

"The Bedford Barrens Petroglyphs hold deep spiritual, cultural, and historical significance for the Mi'kmaq," said Chief Leroy Denny, Co-Chair, Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq. "By securing this property, we are safeguarding the integrity of the petroglyphs and ensuring that this sacred place remains protected and accessible for generations to come."

The Bedford Barrens lands encompass approximately 40 acres of forest and rocky ridges located within the urban area of Bedford, NS. While most of the area is provincial Crown land, there are four privately owned lots, totaling approximately seven acres, with one, less than 20 metres from the petroglyph site. In 2025, these four lots, zoned for residential development, went on the market and immediately concerns were raised by Mi'kmaq and non-Indigenous allies about how the sale could impact access to the petroglyph site.

"We are thankful the sellers prioritized giving us the time and opportunity to secure these properties, over a quick sale," said Chief Sidney Peters, Co-Chair, Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq. "Development of these lands, without Mi'kmaw control or input, could have significantly compromised the integrity of the petroglyph sites and the ability for future generations of Mi'kmaq to access such a significant area."

The acquisition demonstrates proactive land stewardship and how relationships can be built in Nova Scotia around the management of culturally significant places. The purchase was supported by Mi'kmaw organizations, Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn and the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, and through funding from the Mi'kmaq Resource Development Partnership of Wskijnu'k Mtmo'taquuow Agency (WMA), an economic development partnership owned by the 13 Mi'kmaw communities.

"We all knew how important it was to the Mi'kmaw Nation that we acquire these lands. We appreciate everyone who came together to help make this happen," continued Chief Denny. "This purchase demonstrates our ongoing commitment to safeguarding Mi'kmaw cultural heritage and honours the relationship we have had with the land since time immemorial."



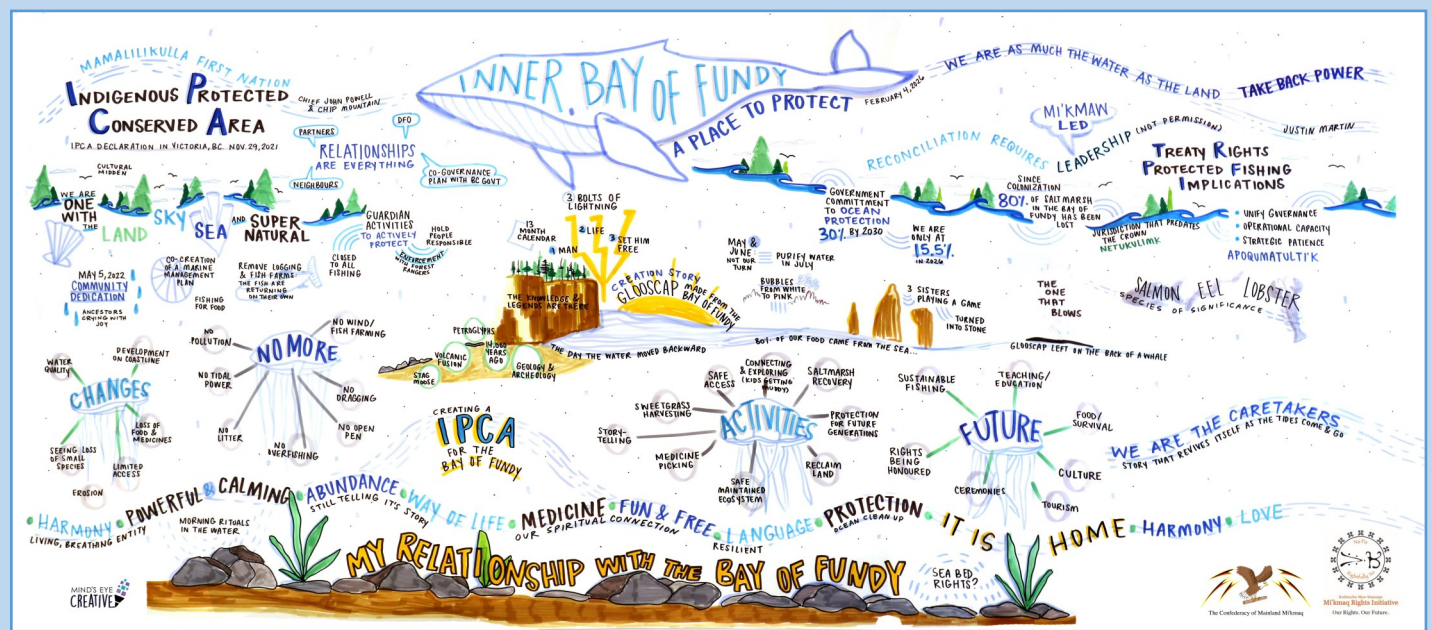
Inner Bay of Fundy Symposium

In February 2026, KMK partnered with CMM to host a symposium at Digby Pines, bringing together community members, technicians, Knowledge Holders, and a visiting Chief to discuss our relationship with the Bay of Fundy and explore a Mi'kmaq-led designation to protect this special place. Participants shared powerful reflections: the Bay of Fundy is home—where the Mi'kmaq come from and live their daily lives. It was described as “a living, breathing entity that needs to move and flow freely,” as resilient, and as still telling its story – one that Mi'kmaq must help shape going forward.

About 20 community members attended, hearing from visiting Chief Powell and Guardian Chip Mountain about how the Mamalilikulla Nation protected their unceded waters through the Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) model. They shared that although their nation has always had a relationship with salmon, only six returned the year they asserted their rights. This year, thousands have returned. Chief Powell also spoke of signing their governance agreement during rainfall, which they understood as their ancestors' tears of joy.

KMK Fisheries Lead, Justin Martin then spoke about a Mi'kmaw-led marine designation as an extension of Mi'kmaw authority – one the Crown is constitutionally bound to uphold. He highlighted key species in the Bay of Fundy, including Plamu (Atlantic salmon), Katew (American eel), and Jakej (Lobster), and emphasized that an IPCA would help ensure access and community well-being for the next seven generations. Gerald Gloade closed by sharing stories that underscored the deep, enduring connection between the Mi'kmaq and the Bay.

Participants also reflected on loss. Since colonization, 80% of salt marsh in the Bay has been lost. Community members spoke about reduced access to food, medicines, and cultural practices—activities like sweetgrass harvesting and medicine gathering that are no longer possible in many areas. There was a shared call to reclaim these spaces and uphold Mi'kmaw Rights to protect the future of the Bay of Fundy.



To those living and working in Nova Scotia,

Since time immemorial, Nova Scotia has been part of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded lands of the Mi'kmaq. Through the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, and binding agreements on consultation and Rights implementation, the Mi'kmaq and federal and provincial governments have committed to work together. However, the Mi'kmaq have jurisdiction over our territory that does not depend on outside recognition or acceptance by other governments. By working together as Treaty partners, we can address shared challenges and seize opportunities.

The year 2026 and beyond will bring many opportunities and challenges to the Province of Nova Scotia. Handling those effectively will be made more difficult by the recent decisions of the Province to reduce funding to important initiatives and staff to departments like Natural Resources. The Province's pursuit of short-term economic gain cannot be to the detriment of the environment of Mi'kma'ki. Although the Province may intend to neglect its duties to our shared lands and waters, the Mi'kmaq do not. We have been caretakers and co-managers of the lands, waters and resources for centuries. Our Indigenous sisters and brothers across Turtle Island share these concerns and have too used their voices, bodies and spirits to protect the resources, when necessary.

Decisions about our lands, inland and offshore waters, and resources cannot be made without us. While provincial rules and regulations may be relaxing, industries that intend to use our resources cannot ignore Mi'kmaw laws or act in ways that only benefit the non-Indigenous population of our province. The provincial and federal governments do not have the unilateral right to dispose of our territory. Decisions must be made collaboratively, with early, meaningful engagement and adequate consultation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

The Mi'kmaq are Rights-holders in Nova Scotia. This status elevates us to a position much stronger than any stakeholder group who also live and work in our territory.

Too often, our ally governments dismiss our concerns or improperly group them alongside those of non-Rights-holding stakeholders. The lands, waters and resources are a shared jurisdiction, co-managed by the Mi'kmaq, and subject to our Aboriginal Title and Treaty claims. In 1725, and later ratified in 1726 in Annapolis Royal, our ancestors signed the first of our Treaties. This marked the beginning of the covenant chain of Peace and Friendship Treaties with the Crown.

The Treaty relationship established then, and continuing today, carried clear responsibilities that are now Mi'kmaw constitutional jurisdictions. Promises of hunting, fishing and trading Rights for the Mi'kmaq were also clearly outlined. Absent from these Treaties was any notion of Mi'kmaq giving up, or ceding, our Title to, or jurisdiction over, these lands and waters. In 1762, the first Chief Justice and former Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Jonathan Belcher, issued a proclamation that described the British commitment to protect the 'just rights' of the Mi'kmaq to their land.

Today, our position remains the same: we have never ceded Rights or Title to the lands, waters and resources of Mi'kma'ki and we have a voice on how they will be used. There are valuable examples in this province where right and honorable conduct by industry, government and individuals, working in collaboration with the Mi'kmaq, has resulted in sustainable success. As the Province pivots and shifts their direction, we want industries looking to build and develop here know that the Mi'kmaq will always assert our position in the protection of our lands, waters and resources. The only way for us to truly live and work together on these lands, is to work as **real Treaty partners**.



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

PDAC Conference

The Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) is an annual mining conference held in Toronto. PDAC brings together mining proponents and supports staff together to network, learn from best practices and discuss opportunities for collaboration. PDAC took place from March 1 to March 4, 2026 this year.

This conference allows KMK to be informed of the mining developments being proposed for Mi'kma'ki and shows how other Indigenous communities are working in the mining sector. St. Barbara's sponsorship and the mining proponent's eagerness to continue working with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia show the importance maintaining industry relationships.



Strengthening our Nation: Youth Assembly Launches

We are proud to share that the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Youth officially launched in March 2026. Representing the NS Mi'kmaw communities, the Youth Assembly members bring passion, commitment and a strong sense of responsibility to their roles. They are eager to contribute to this important work and to ensure that the voices of the next generation are heard and valued.

Maljew'ej Mawi'tajik - Youth Assembly

Pronunciation: Mull-jaw-wedge, maw-wee-da-jig

The concept for a Youth Assembly did not happen overnight. In 2018, we celebrated the launch of the Mi'kmaw license plate in Nova Scotia. With each purchase and renewal of the Mi'kmaw plate, a \$24 fee was set aside in a special purpose fund for Mi'kmaw use. Community members were asked how those funds should be used and it was clear people wanted those dollars to support youth events and activities. Since then, the fund has grown, generating roughly \$20,000 annually, and has been held in trust while the Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq carefully considered how to create the greatest impact for Mi'kmaw youth across the province.

In November 2023, the Chiefs agreed that this fund should support the creation of a Mi'kmaw Youth Assembly. The vision is for the Youth Assembly to function in a way similar to the Assembly Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq – structured, organized, and purposeful – while creating meaningful opportunities for youth to learn from Chiefs and Councils, and understand how our Nation is governed by contributing their perspectives that inform decision-making.



Youth who are part of this Assembly carry an important responsibility to bring information back to your communities, to listen to the voices of their peers, and to share those perspectives with the Chiefs. In doing so, the Youth Assembly will help ensure that the voices of all Mi'kmaw youth are reflected in our Nation's governance and decision-making.

N'multis aqq Wela'lin

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