KMK Newsletter

November 2026

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

MESSAGE FROM KMK

As we wrap up 2026, we're pleased to share another look at the work happening across our team. As always, this newsletter provides 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 us!

Please note that the KMK offices will be closed from December 17, 2026, to January 2, 2027 for the holidays. We had a great year working with and alongside you and we look forward to what 2027 will bring!



MESSAGE FROM KMK's EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Since becoming Executive Director, I have learned more about our relationship with the animals that have sustained our people. Our ancestors ate caribou, but those relatives no longer live here in Nova Scotia.[1] Moose, too, were once lost from Unama'ki. Eighteen were brought back to the Cape Breton Highlands in the late 1940s.[2] That history has stayed with me. We have already experienced the absence of caribou and the loss of moose from these lands. I worry that we could be facing a third loss if we do not take our responsibilities seriously.

We hear a great deal about our rights: our right to hunt, our right to fish, our right to provide for our families. Those conversations matter. My understanding is that these rights belong to us collectively, and I believe the responsibility belongs to us collectively as well. In my opinion, responsibility must come first in deciding how we exercise those rights. Before asking what we can take today, we need to ask what will remain for our children tomorrow.

For me, that is personal. I want my son and his peers to have the opportunity to hunt, to provide for their families, and to carry those experiences forward. I want their children to know moose through a living relationship with the land.

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MESSAGE FROM KMK's EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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That means making decisions today that leave them something to inherit. A right to harvest means little to a young person standing on land where the animals are gone.

The information before us calls for patience. The July 2026 update reports an estimated population of approximately 1,900 moose from the 2025 survey, with more calves and bulls observed. That is encouraging. But the same update identifies approximately 3,000 to 3,600 animals as the population needed for a sustainable harvest.[3] In September, the Nation was reminded that the population still needed time to heal.[4]

I recognize what that asks of families. The July 2024 notice acknowledged the hardship of suspending the harvest. It also described youth camps continuing through conservation, science, education, and cultural teachings.[5] There is something powerful in that: teaching our young people that caring for moose is itself part of the responsibility they will carry as harvesters.

Our September 2026 notice places responsibility to Msɨt No'kmaq at the center of this decision.[6] That speaks to how I understand our Mi'kmaw ways of knowing and doing: our decisions must consider the relationships that sustain life and the generations who will depend on them. I am asking our Nation to honour that responsibility together, support the continued pause, and give the moose the time they need.

I believe we are borrowing from our children. Everything we use today carries a responsibility to those who come after us. That applies to moose, fish, water, forests, and the decisions we make as leaders and community members. Our children cannot participate in every decision that shapes their future.
We must hold their place in those conversations. Before we exercise a right, let us consider what we owe them—and whether what we leave behind will allow them to exercise that same right.

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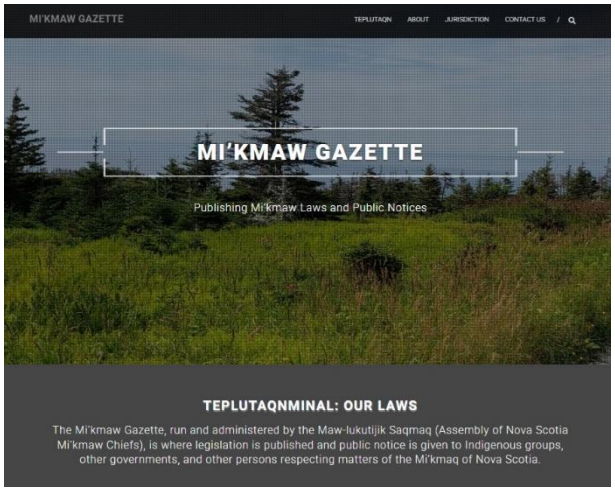
[1] Parks Canada. (2024, May 3). A Mi'kmaw history. Parks Canada. (2022, November 19). The woodland caribou.
[2] Moose science. (2024, May), p. 1. Read the full document.
[3] Moose update. (2026, July), p. 1. Read the full document.
[4] Moose [Community notice]. (2026, September 18). Read the full notice.
[5] Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs. (2024, July 19). Moose [Community notice]. Read the full notice.
[6] Moose [Community notice]. (2026, September 18). Read the full notice.

Mi'kmaw Gazette

Teplutaqnminal: Our Laws

The recently launched Mi'kmaw Gazette, run and administered by the Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq (Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs), is where legislation is published and public notice is given to Indigenous groups, other governments, and other persons respecting matters of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

Learn more at **mikmawgazette.com**



Toqi’maliaptmu’k Arrangement

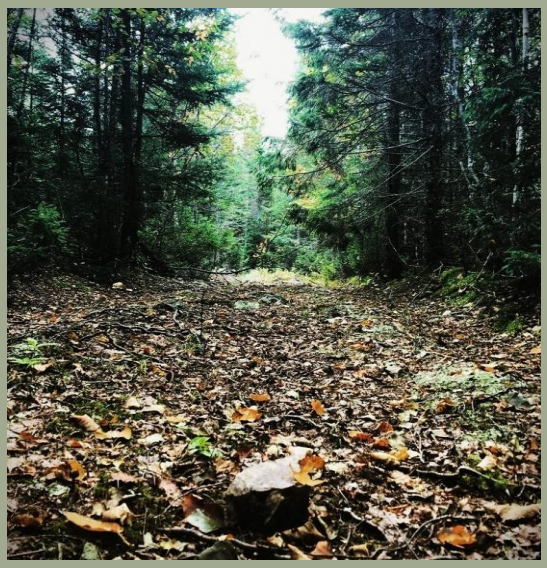
Parks Department

Planning continues for the Toqi'maliaptmu'k Arrangement, with current efforts focused on establishing its inaugural Board.

The Board will be the first of its kind in Mi’kma’ki, creating an important governance body to help guide the implementation of the Arrangement. The establishment of the Board represents an important step in strengthening collaboration between the Mi’kmaq and Parks Canada under the Toqi’maliaptmu’k Arrangement.

In September, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaw Chiefs passed a resolution approving the recommended Board candidates. With this approval, our outreach to these individuals has begun, and work can move forward on establishing the Board and putting the partnership into action.

The Toqi'maliaptmu'k Arrangement is a partnership between the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia and Parks Canada that supports the shared stewardship and co-management of National Parks and National Historic sites across the province.



Turn Over a New Leaf (Or Rather, Don't!)

KMK’s Green Team

Autumn has arrived in Mi'kma'ki. The trees have shown off their very best colours, and now they're letting go in a big way. Which brings us to an important seasonal announcement: please, put down the rake. We're not saying yard work is a bad idea. We're just saying this season, the best plan is to *leaf* well enough alone. (Yes, we went there. We'll be going there a lot.)

Why We're Leaf-ing Them Be

Our Mi'kmaw teachings remind us that nothing in the natural world is wasted. That's the heart of Netukulimk: taking only what we need and giving back, so the land can care for the generations to come. And all Msit No'kmaq (all my relations) includes the little ones. Fallen leaves are Mother Earth's own cozy blanket. They tuck the soil in for winter, feed it as they break down, and shelter the critters who call our forests and yards home. Bees, toads, frogs, salamanders, fireflies, and countless others are snoozing under that cozy layer right now.

The Official "Leaf It to Us" Checklist

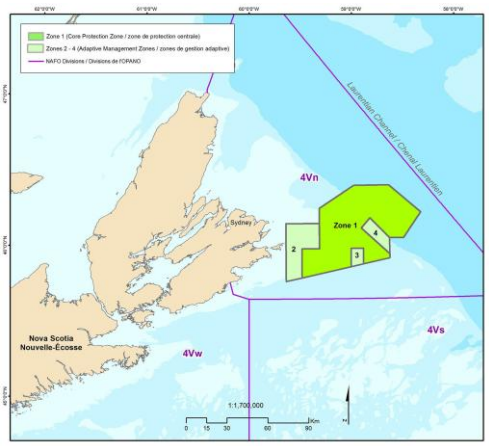
- **Let it lie.** Your lawn doesn't need to look like a golf course. A leafy yard is ever deadly, and honestly, it's un-be-leaf-able how much work you'll save.
- **Rake it into the garden beds.** Free mulch! Your plants get a warm winter coat.
- **Make a leaf pile for the kids.** Jumping in it is encouraged. Consider it fall-tastic physical education but remember to do your tick checks!
- **Mind the paths.** If leaves are blocking a walkway or driveway, sweep them to the side. Safety first. We want you leaf-ing on your own two feet.
- **Skip the leaf blower.** It's loud, it's noisy, and it's no fun for the wildlife.
- **Tell your neighbours.** If they ask why your yard looks so wild, tell them you've turned over a new leaf.

So this fall, let's root for the little guys, branch out from old habits, and give the earth a chance to do what it has done for thousands of years. It's a tree-mendous way to show respect for the land. Nobody will bark at you for it, though the squirrels and birds may thank you.

Wela'lioq for doing your part, and happy leaf-ing!

St. Anns Bank Marine Protected Area

Consultation Department

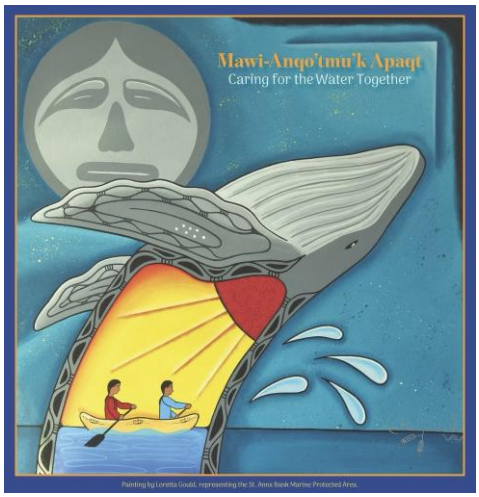


A look at one of the protected ocean spaces off our shores

St. Anns Bank (SAB) is a culturally and ecologically important area for the Mi'kmaq. Located in the Atlantic Ocean, east of Unama'ki. These waters have been an important part of Mi'kmaw life, culture, and stewardship since time immemorial.

In 2017, St. Anns Bank was designated as a Marine Protected Area (MPA) to help conserve marine biodiversity. It covers approximately 4,364 square kilometres of the Scotian Shelf Bioregion, contributing 0.08% toward Canada's marine conservation targets.

St. Anns Bank is currently managed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). KMK is working with DFO toward a co-governance arrangement that would bring Mi'kmaw governance, leadership, and decision-making into the ongoing care and management of this important area.



The MPA is divided into four management zones, each with different levels of protection:

- Zone 1: The core protection zone, where human activities are kept to a minimum to protect sensitive marine ecosystems.
- Zones 2, 3, and 4: Adaptive management zones, where certain lower-impact activities may be permitted.

Chiefs Visit Bedford Barrens Petroglyph Site

Archaeology and Research Department

Saqmaw Wilbert Marshall and Saqmaw Tamara Young, the Assembly's portfolio leads for *Lands* and *Culture, Heritage and Archaeology*, joined KMK staff on November 13 to visit the four parcels of land recently purchased by the Assembly near the Bedford Barrens petroglyphs site.



While there, the Chiefs visited the petroglyphs where Mi'kmaq continue to visit, do ceremony and make offerings.

There is an information panel and the first installed Mi'kmaw Special Place plaque. The plaque, designed by artist Gerald Gloade and selected from three options by the Assembly, was installed several years ago, but this was the first opportunity the Chiefs had to see it in place.

Forestry – Emerald Ash Borer

Consultation Department

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is a tiny jewel beetle with a giant appetite for Wisqoq (Black Ash) and Aqamoq (white ash). In fact, infested trees die within 1 - 4 years, and more than 99% of Ash trees in a stand can be killed within ten years if this insect is left unchecked. Loss of our Ash trees have negative ecological impacts, affect herbivores, and challenge our access to ash trees for traditional practices, including basket making.

It's a little insect that creates a big problem. But, it can't go far on its own with natural spread typically ranging within a few kilometer radius. Most of its long-distance travel happens because we give it a lift, so, respectfully, let's stop doing that.

Tips on how to slow the spread

- Leave the firewood at home. Buy it where you burn it. Firewood moving between regions is how EAB spread across Mi'kma'ki.
- Learn to recognize ash trees, including Black Ash, so you notice when one is in trouble. Top kill, leaves that appear chlorotic, and woodpecker damage, are all indicators that your ash tree is in trouble.
- Look closely, look often. Watch for thinning crowns, epicormic shoots on the bole, sprouts on the base, woodpecker activity, and tiny D-shaped exit holes (3.5 by 4.1 mm).
- Report don't relocate. If you suspect EAB, send a note to our office and tell the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) rather than moving the wood.
- Respect the rules. Check the CFIA website for current regulated areas before moving ash logs, branches or firewood. The only regulated zone in for EAB at present is within the Halifax Regional Municipality County.
- Harvest with Netukulimk. Harvesters and basket makers, remember to only take what is needed, speak with Elders and community leads, and check remember to closely examine all ash trees before transporting.
- Share the story. Talk with kids, hunters, foragers, neighbours and campers. Knowledge passed on protects far more trees than one person can.

EAB may be pernicious, but how far it travels is up to us. By leaving firewood at home, learning to recognize our ash relatives, reporting anything suspicious, and sharing what we know, each of us can help slow its spread and protect Wisqoq and Aqamoq for generations to come. This story doesn't have to end with loss, and the next chapter is ours to write. Wela'liek for helping keep our ash standing.







Photos left to right: Exit hole on tree; Close up of the Emerald Ash Borer; D-shaped EAB exit hole (3.5 by 4.1 mm) alongside a penny.

Mi'kmaw Laws, Treaty Rights and Responsibilities

This was a piece featured in the Chronicle Herald on October 1 from the Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq

Treaty Day is more than a date on the calendar. It is a public reminder of promises that continue to matter. Forty years ago, the late Grand Chief Donald Marshall Sr. proclaimed October 1st as Treaty Day to "commemorate the unique and special relationship between the Mi'kmaq and Her Majesty." Each year, the Mi'kmaq, Nova Scotia, and Canada come together as Treaty partners to honour, recognize and celebrate a Treaty relationship rooted in Mi'kma'ki — the unceded territorial lands, ocean and inland waters the Mi'kmaq have called home since time immemorial.

As we commemorate the 40th anniversary, we reflect on how far we have come and examine the steps needed for the future. As a Nation, the Mi'kmaq have long-held philosophies, responsibilities and teachings that guide how we live within our territory. In our language, these are our Teplutaqnn [Deb-blu-tah-hun]. In English, they can be compared to present-day laws. But, for us, they are more than just written rules. Our Teplutaqnn are grounded in customary understandings, cultural practices and lived responsibilities, developed over generations. While many remain unwritten, they continue to carry authority within our communities and have become part of the constitutional fabric of Canada.

We have always understood that our relationship with others is an ongoing responsibility, grounded in honour, cooperation and respect. In our language, this is Msɨt No'kmaq, which means "all my relations" and focusses on the stewardship over, and wholistic protection of, all living beings, including the plants, animals, lands and waters. Our worldview has been guided by traditional Mi'kmaw understandings and a commitment to maintaining respectful relationships with one another and Msɨt No'kmaq.

The Mi'kmaq hold what is recognized in Canadian Aboriginal law as "Aboriginal Title." Our Title has existed since time immemorial — before and throughout European contact and the Treaty-making processes with the British — and continues to exist today and into the future. Aboriginal Title affirms our Nation's right to decide how our lands, waters and resources will be used, enjoyed, occupied, possessed and managed, including the right to benefit economically from them. With that Title comes responsibility: to protect and steward Mi'kma'ki and its resources for the next seven generations.

The Covenant Chain of Treaties

The Covenant Chain of Treaties did not begin as a symbolic gesture. It began as a solemn relationship. The Treaty of 1725/26 recognized an Indigenous Treaty Right to land exclusivity and established a foundation that later Mi'kmaw Treaties followed. The founding of Halifax in 1749 by the British was thought by the Mi'kmaq to be a breach of the 1726 Treaty promises, leading to intermittent conflict between the Mi'kmaq and British. To seek an end to this conflict, a Treaty was signed on November 22, 1752, in Halifax by Saqmaw (Chief) Jean-Baptiste Cope and Governor Hopson. The 1752 Treaty reaffirmed the Treaty of 1726 and added a truckhouse, or right-of-trade, clause by which the British hoped to draw the Mi'kmaq away from our long-standing trading relationship with the French.

The French and British returned to war in the late 1750s. The Treaty of Paris, 1763 ended that conflict. Meanwhile, the Mi'kmaq and British began a separate Treaty-making process in 1759 to establish peace. The relationship from that point forward continued to involve peace, sharing and fair trade.

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Mi'kmaw Laws, Treaty Rights and Responsibilities

A renewed Treaty process began in October 1759. This set the stage for much of the Treaty-making that followed. During the 1759–61 Treaty-making processes, British Governors made binding promises to protect Mi'kmaw "*possessions, liberty, property"* and other freedoms. In 1761, Father Pierre Maillard was empowered by the Nova Scotia Council to repeat those "*further assurances"* to Mi'kmaw leadership. Together, those commitments, representations and assurances — both oral and written — formed the Treaty relationship. Protection of Mi'kmaw lands and waters had been a priority for the Mi'kmaq with the British since at least 1726 and was central to the Treaty relationship.

Both Treaty parties sought peace, but more than that, they entered into a relationship grounded in kinship, reciprocity and mutual obligation. Friendship requires each Treaty partner to honour its commitments, respect the other's jurisdictions and act in good faith.

"Aboriginal and Treaty Rights" are communal rights. For the Mi'kmaq, this reflects a deeper truth: Rights cannot be separated from responsibilities. Our Teplutaqnn embody stewardship and wholistic protection of plants, animals, lands and waters. In Mi'kmaw culture, Teplutaqnn are passed through generations, shared through stories, teachings and lived experience. They carry inherent authority and are recognized through the Treaties and under section 35 of the Constitution of Canada.

In 1759–61, Mi'kmaw governance extended across our territory and resources.. Between 1761 and 1867, there were two orders of government in present-day Nova Scotia: the Mi'kmaq and the British. In 1867, Britain divided up its authorities into federal and provincial powers under the *British North America Act*. The three orders of government - Mi'kmaw, federal and provincial - continue to exist today. The Treaties established a relationship where Mi'kmaw governance worked alongside federal and provincial governments. In 1982, the Constitution provided further protection for Mi'kmaw governance as part of constitutional order of the Confederation.

Where We Are Today

The United Nations passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007. By virtue of the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UNDRIPA), UNDRIP is now incorporated into Canadian domestic law and is of current legal effect. Together, UNDRIPA and section 35 of the Constitution of Canada protect Mi'kmaw rights, jurisdictions and ways of knowing.

When working with other levels of government – our Treaty partners - the path forward must begin with the truth that Mi'kmaw Teplutaqn have always existed here and continues to exist today. We remain open to governing collaboratively with our federal and provincial counterparts, but collaboration must be more than a word. It must begin with respect for the Treaties, recognition of Mi'kmaw jurisdictions and a shared commitment to honouring obligations. Treaty Day reminds us that these are not just obligations of the past. We – Mi'kmaq, provincial and federal governments – have responsibilities to each other in the present, and the decisions we make today will shape the future we leave for the next seven generations. So, as we come together Nation-to-Nation on this Treaty Day, and everyday thereafter, we call on our Treaty partners to commit to their Treaty obligations and to have open and honest conversations about the state of our province and country, with each respective government involved.

Learn more about Mi'kmaw Teplutaqn at the newly launched Mi'kmaw Gazette - mikmawlaws.com.

Roseway Dam Decommissioning Update

NSPI Team at KMK

Work to decommission the former Roseway Hydro System continues as Nova Scotia Power advances restoration of the Roseway River. Major milestones were achieved with the removal of the spillway and sluiceway structure in 2024 and restoration of the river channel toward pre-dam conditions.

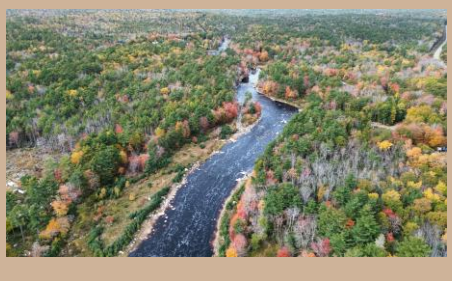
Remaining work includes removal of the intake structure, penstock, and powerhouse, as well as site restoration, environmental monitoring, and management of contaminated materials.

Throughout the project, archaeological assessments and monitoring have been undertaken to help identify and protect cultural and heritage resources. Additional archaeological monitoring is expected to continue during the final phases of infrastructure removal.

KMK continues to monitor the project and participate in discussions to help ensure Mi'kmaw interests are considered as decommissioning activities move forward. Environmental restoration, protection of archaeological resources, and respect for Mi'kmaw cultural heritage remain important considerations as work progresses toward project completion.







Wasoqonatl Transmission Line Site Visit

KMK’s Nova Scotia Power Manager visited the Wasoqonatl Transmission Line (WSL) on November 3. Below are some photos from the site. WSL is a major component of the clean-energy transition, designed to strengthen the connection to the regional grid and support the integration of new renewable energy sources.

Built in collaboration with all 13 Mi’kmaq communities in Nova Scotia and all nine communities in New Brunswick, this project will help the integration of more renewable energy exports, long-term reliability, and energy security for both residents of both provinces.







Staff Spotlight: New Faces, New Roles and Milestones

There have been a few changes and additions to the KMK team, so we're taking the time to welcome or celebrate these awesome individuals!

Matthew Ingraham joined the Communications Team as a Video & Multimedia Communications Specialist.

Lisa MacEachern joined the Fisheries Team as Administrative Support.

Allison Bernard's role and title have been updated to Wildlife Community Relations Senior Advisor.

Charlene Rico recently joined KMK as Finance Clerk.

Crystal Dorey, Communications Director celebrated 15 years at KMK! Thank you for everything you do, Crystal!

Working Together in the Highlands

Wildlife Department

The work we have been doing around logging in the Cape Breton Highlands shows how much can be accomplished when people are willing to listen, learn and work together. These conversations involve more than harvesting trees. For Mi'kmaq, the Highlands are connected to our culture, Treaty Rights and responsibilities to the land. The moose, rivers, medicines and forests are part of that relationship. Decisions made today affect what our children and grandchildren will inherit.

Through our work with Port Hawkesbury Paper (PHP), grassroots community members and Mi'kmaw monitors, we are building relationships that allow concerns to be heard and knowledge to be shared. Protecting moose habitat, waterways, medicinal plants and culturally important places must remain central to discussions about logging.

An encouraging part of this work has been the willingness of PHP staff to learn about our people. Staff have participated in Mi'kmaw cultural awareness training with Robert Bernard and Graham Marshall, and spent time on the land with Shawna, Robert, DJ and Buck. Those shared experiences help people understand concerns in ways that a report or meeting alone cannot.

There is still work ahead. Trust must be supported by meaningful involvement, careful planning and follow-through on concerns raised by the people who know and use the land. Working together gives us a stronger foundation for addressing disagreements and finding solutions. I believe more companies and governments could learn from this approach. When First Nations are involved as partners, we create opportunities to overcome misconceptions and build lasting respect.

We often say, "We are all Treaty people." Our work in the Highlands is an opportunity to put those words into practice through shared responsibility and care for future generations. Respect is earned through actions. Let's keep building on the progress we have made.

N'multis aqq Wela'liek

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