



State of the Lakes

Keeping track of the money

Appointment

Water, water everywhere

Lobster food social & ceremonial

Bras d'Or Lakes are golden

Charlie's welcome

Angela

Oyster garden

Where am I?

Promo video

Staff

Annie's cartoon

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Comments and questions are welcome. Email us at info@uinr.ca

State of the Lakes

The State of the Bras d'Or Lakes Marine Environmental Water Quality Background Report (MEQ), looks into the current state of the Lake's water quality. The report examines the Bras d'Or Lakes and its sub-watersheds.

Marine environmental quality is measured in many different ways. For the purposes of the MEQ report, it is examined in three ways:

1. Bacteriological water quality
2. Chemical, sediment, and biological quality
3. Sedimentation.

The report looks at these factors separately going beyond a simple description to determine current water quality, using the European Environmental Agency's Integrated Driving Force-Pressure-State-Impact-Response approach. Because it highlights cause-effect relationships, this method helps people understand that issues are interconnected, easy to understand, and easily adjusted to include more details while indicating how problems can be alleviated.

The MEQ report has found that the Bras d'Or Lakes are in good condition relative to the numerous types of contamination that may harm it. The report will be released by March 31, 2007 and will be available at the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources office. A condensed version showing highlights will also be available for the public. Check our website for details.

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AFOA

Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada

Keeping track of the money

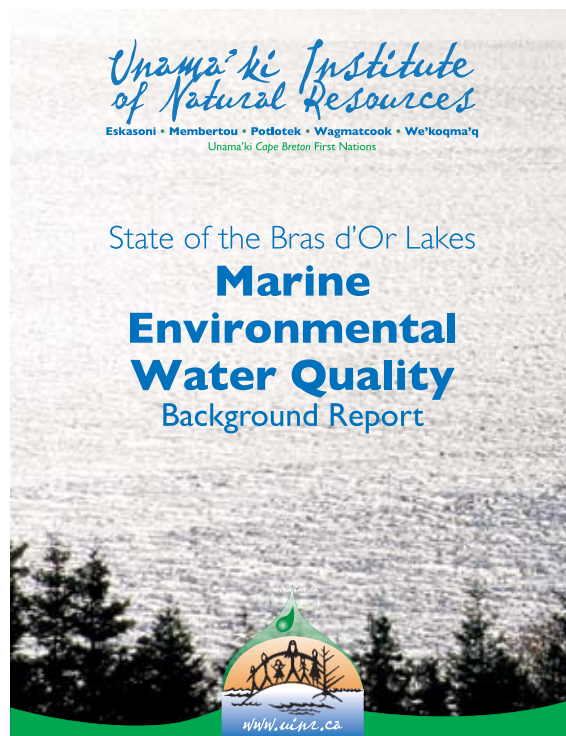
Annie Johnson, UINR's financial officer recently attended the annual Aboriginal Financial Officers Association's (AFOA) conference in Vancouver, BC. Here is her report—"This conference is getting bigger and better every year! There were aboriginal finance employees from all over Canada, and I was glad to see more local people there this year than ever before. Every year, attendance records are broken as more organizations are seeing how strong a force the association is. The organization and the conference is growing in size and popularity as more and more Chiefs, CEO's, CFO's, and band managers are realizing that it is important for their financial officers to know what's going on and it's important that they do too!"

Annie says "As far as conferences go, it was awesome! We were even served Haagen Dazs ice cream bars for snacks! All the material presented at the conference was extremely educational, easy to understand and grasp. The presenters were engaging, the venue was fabulous, and Vancouver is a very pretty city. Next year it's set to take place in Quebec. Maybe I'll see you there!"

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Lobster: food, social & ceremonial

As a result of the difficulties experienced during the 2006 lobster food fishery, the Unama'ki Chiefs have agreed that a lobster food fishery management plan is required. While Mi'kmaq follow similar regulations as the rest of the industry (with the exception of season), the industry fails to realize this. A documented management plan for the lobster food fishery will enable First Nations of Unama'ki to communicate to the government and the lobster fishing industry that a set of rules will be followed as our contribution to local lobster conservation strategies. UINR was given the mandate to work towards the development of a plan.

As a first step, we invited Tuma Young, CEO, Eskasoni First Nation, and Joe B. Marshall, Senior Mi'kmaq Advisor, KMK, to co-present on the topic of Mi'kmaq food fishing rights at the Community Hall in Potlotek. Food fishers, natural resource technicians, Chiefs, Councillors, and interested community members were encouraged to attend.

Initial meetings in the five Unama'ki communities have been very encouraging and productive, with discussions on how we would like to see the fishery managed. Some topics that were discussed include broodstock protection (protecting the larger females from the fishery because they produce more and better quality eggs and the males to mate with them), seasons, minimum carapace lengths, code of practice/handling, and lobster biology, habitat and fishery status. More discussion is required and we plan to meet as a group to discuss all aspects of our fishing to ensure that the lobster resource is there for future generations.

Your participation is essential.

Future meetings will be posted in your community newsletter or community channel. If you cannot attend meetings, please email or call your ideas to: shelley.denny@uinr.ca. 902 379 2024 ext. 229

Here's some points that emerged from our Mi'kmaq Rights Information Session:

- We must reinforce the concept of Netukulimk—with Rights comes Responsibility, take what you need—is an equal part of Mi'kmaq rights, culture, and tradition.
- The Aboriginal Fishery Strategy (AFS) and Marshall are two very separate agreements we have with the government. They are agreements that provide access to the resources and are not Aboriginal or Treaty agreements. We are not exercising our rights when we are fishing under these agreements.
- You cannot sell your catch under the food fishery (AFS) agreement.
- The development of this management plan is very important step toward Mi'kmaq self-governance.

The photo above is from a meeting with Elders on the lobster food fishery. Chaired by Albert Marshall, pictured above from right to left: Dianna Denny, Caroline Gould, Gordon Lewis, Frank Francis, John H. Paul, Bruno Isaac, Annie Isaac, Lawrence Wells, and Leonard Paul. Observers: Lisa Young and Clifford Paul.

Angela

Angela Morris has been working at UINR under a special internship from ECO Canada. Here's what she has to say about the experience— "As a result of the Internship, I learned many new things at UINR. It was an opportunity to use my previous skills and acquire new ones. The training has been very useful and opportunities continue to arise. I am now able to work on laboratory and field studies.

Charlie Dennis Pjila'si

Siwkw

Since Spring is the time of new beginnings, I thought I would take an opportunity to recognize some of the people working behind the scenes at UINR—our Board of Directors. The UINR Board has representatives from our five Unama'ki communities. Traditionally, the five Chiefs have formed our Board. Now that I am Chief, I will continue to be involved with UINR's many projects and initiatives. The UINR Board meets monthly to review progress and plan new projects.

The photograph below shows the five Chiefs of Unama'ki—Chief Lester Peck from Wagmatcook; myself, Chief Charlie Dennis, Eskasoni; Chief Morley Googoo, We'koqma'q; Chief Wilbert Marshall, Potlotek; and Chief Terry Paul, Membertou.

Recently, provincial and federal governments signed an agreement with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs that lays out the framework for 10 years of negotiation to improve Mi'kmaq rights and our access to Nova Scotia resources. The "Made-in-Nova Scotia Process," will work towards designing a memorandum of understanding, developing an action plan and final report. We have waited for this for a long time and there are many challenges ahead. For more information go to www.gov.ns.ca/abor/

Have a great spring!

charlie@uinr.ca

Appointment

Shelley Denny was recently appointed to the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Since 1993, the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council has been a partnership between

scientific and academic expertise, and all sectors of the fishing industry. Together, Council members make public recommendations to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on conservation measures for the Atlantic fishery. Members are chosen on merit and standing in the community, and not as representatives of organizations, areas or interests: 'science' members are drawn from government departments, universities or international posts, and are of an appropriate mix of disciplines, including fisheries management and economics; and 'industry' members are knowledgeable about fishing and the fishing industry, and understand the operational and economic impacts of conservation decisions.

To learn more about the Council, visit its website at www.frcc-ccrh.ca/

shelley.denny@uinr.ca



The Internship has given me new opportunities to expand my knowledge, meet new people, travel to interesting conferences, along with providing many opportunities for hands-on learning while enhancing my ability to work independently on projects."

Funding was provided by ECO Canada through BEAHR (Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources) and UINR.

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The Oyster Garden 7

A Story by Charlie Dennis

I was visiting Uncle Simon Gabriel on one of many evenings after a long day of fishing oysters in Malagawatch. Gabriel lay on his bed next to the warm stove. His mouth was full of chewing tobacco and there was a spittoon nearby.

Often something was said by him or me that would remind him of an episode he experienced in the past. One of his stories that intrigued me the most was about the time he spent several years in Malagawatch without going home to Eskasoni. He told me that one winter he had a craving for eels, but it was February and ice had covered everything. He knew ice was very thick everywhere and it would take hours to make a hole.

He finally got the eels out of his mind but by the next day the craving was back again. Finally, in order to distract himself, he ventured along the shoreline keeping a close eye on nice pieces of dry wood for kindling for his stove. As he walked along the pond, Uncle Simon caught a glimmer of something moving and playing in the channel. He had forgotten about the channel, with water moving constantly because of the tide going in and out of the pond.

He saw what he thought were ducks jumping and splashing, but as he got closer to the channel, he realized that it was not ducks but a pair of otters having a grand time jumping and splashing in the open section.

He loved wildlife and decided to take a closer look, but not too close to scare them off. He positioned himself behind a large spruce tree so he wouldn't frighten the otters away. The two otters did not see Gabriel behind the tree. Gabriel noticed that one of the otters had dragged something onto the ice, played with it for a second or two, and jumped back in the water. His interest increased as the other otter did the same thing. He would play with it and leave it on the ice.

Finally, Gabriel had to find out what the otters left on the ice. The two otters did not run off but started playing at the end of the channel. Meanwhile, Gabriel circled around. As he got closer to the scene, he figured out that it was eels that the otters had left on the ice!

After further investigation he noticed that the tail and heads were eaten while the rest of the eels were intact. He took one last look in the direction the otters were playing, having a grand time. Gabriel thought the two otters would not miss the four eels as he had plans for their left-overs. He pulled a plastic bag from his coat and off he went with a big smile on his face. Eel stew—here it comes!

Shortly, he had the pot boiling and a four-cent cake and fresh tea ready to go. As he watched the pot boiling, he heard a knock on the door. As he opened the door, he heard "My it smells good in the camp and here I was concerned about you being stuck in Malagawatch." It was Roddie Stevens checking up on Gabriel and dropping off fresh supplies. Roddie asked, "How in the world did you get eels this time of the year?" Well Roddie, it was not easy. Because I knew you'd be here for lunch and tea, I worked very hard to get these eels and I think you will enjoy this meal. I'll tell you the story while we are enjoying this feast." Gabriel chuckled to himself while Roddie filled himself.

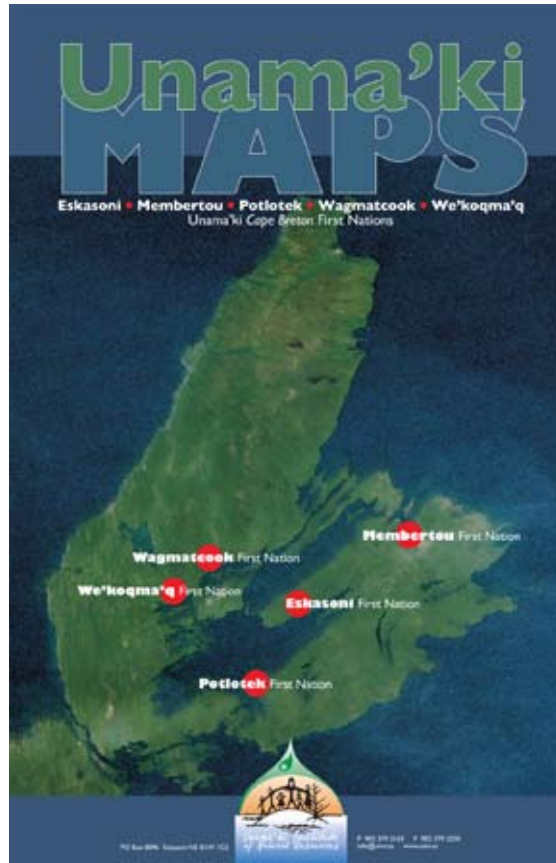
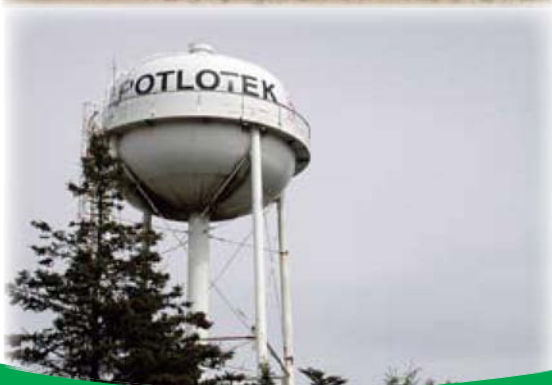
Gabriel never forgot the two otters. "Thank you boys," he thought to himself.

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2 Kiwink

Unama'ki Institute of



Where am I?

The Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Eskasoni Fish & Wildlife Commission, has created an information map for each of the Unama'ki First Nation communities. Using Geographic Information System (GIS), these maps are a valuable resource for long-term monitoring and community planning. The maps contain information on drinking water monitoring sample sites, infrastructure, and land contours in a format that can be easily understood by community members. The maps are available in the band office in each community, or you can see a copy at the UINR office in Eskasoni.

Special thanks goes to Jason Pierro and Angela Morris for data collection and map development; Brian Morrison and Len O'Neill, Health Canada First Nations & Inuit Health Branch Atlantic Region for their comments; and the community members in each of the Unama'ki First Nations for their assistance.

To the left are photographs of our five Unama'ki communities that were taken for this publication by UINR's Director of Communications, Weldon Bona.

Funding for this project was provided by Health Canada First Nations & Inuit Health Branch Atlantic Region.

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Promo video

UINR's first promotional video is now available to view online at our website—www.uinr.ca.

Madeline Yakimchuk, of Gryphon Media Productions, directed this short, two and a half minute video that gives a quick overview of UINR, touching on some of our many projects and partnerships. The video is fast-paced and packed with photos and video from around Unama'ki. Narrated by Lisa Young and Charlie Dennis, the video gives a comprehensive view of UINR.

The video is directed in a fast-paced style, using Mi'kmaq words and phrases to highlight the video's themes. Madeline notes that, "Modern media tools and techniques, when put to the service of the community, are perfectly capable of expressing our hearts and projecting our souls."

The video shows scenes from the five Unama'ki communities and takes the viewer on a short tour of UINR, walking them through some of our initiatives, showing our staff, board, and partners.

"For me, a piece like this is organic, almost alive. It is professional, polished, but I hope its real strength is that it can be felt."

See for yourself at our website!

info@uinr.ca

Kluscap's science

A long, long time ago, the Mi'kmaq people were faced with a dilemma—a situation of great proportion that Kluskap was summoned for a solution. It was at a time in our history when the people told Kluskap that the animals were too big and fierce in the forest. The bear was too big, gigantic in fact, as was the wolf, the beaver, the wild cat. Even the squirrel was too big! The people were in fear of doing what they had to do in the forest—the necessary activities to take care of themselves and their families.

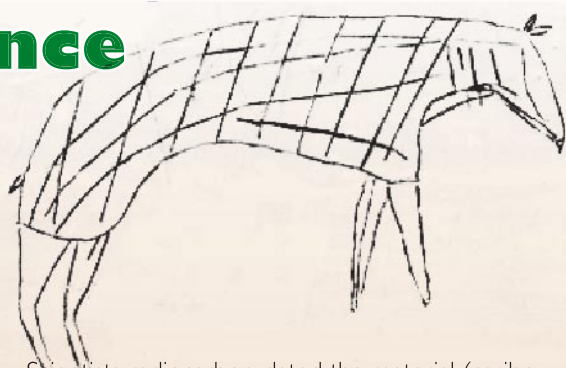
Kluskap recognized the problem and since he loved the Mi'kmaq people, he endeavoured to find a solution. The answer came quick. He told the people that he would stroke the animals, lovingly pet them until they got to the size his people are comfortable and safe with. So he held the bear and petted it until it reached its present size. He did the same with the wild cat, wolf, beaver, and yes—even the squirrel, until all the animals were brought to their present size. They also received instructions from Kluskap to serve the humans and not annoy them to cause fear. It was agreed and all was good. Kluskap, the greatest of all problem-solvers made life well again for the Mi'kmaq.

To many, the legends of Kluskap are merely flights of historic fancy—a way to tell a story using larger-than-life characters. New Englanders have similar stories of Paul Bunyan, a giant logger who worked steadily with his giant blue ox aptly named Blue. Surely, people believed that Kluskap shared that same imaginary realm.

However, the stories of Kluskap are so steeped in the oral history of the Mi'kmaq, they can be interpreted as metaphors of the truth. Perhaps the Kluskap story referred to in this article tells the story of evolution in a colorful way—a way that is best told from elder to adult to youth, generation after generation, for thousands of years.

In fact, an artifact found in Debert, Nova Scotia takes the Mi'kmaq people back to the time of the Megafauna—a time when the bear, wolf, wild cat, the squirrel and other mammals were enormous. Scientists named the bear the Short-faced Bear. They named the ancestor of today's wolf the Dire Wolf. The wild cat—the Sabre-tooth cat. And let's not forget the Mastodons that roamed even this corner of the planet. These animals started to become extinct with the Ice Age.

The artifact in question, a stone hide scraper, places the Mi'kmaq in an era when these animals existed and were on the brink of extinction. Is this a sound possibility? Where is the evidence you may ask. It lies within an organic substance found on the implement.



Scientists radiocarbon-dated the material (caribou blood in fact,) to 10,600 radiocarbon years. This can be translated to some 12–14,000 calendar years—a time when the earth was experiencing rapid change, a natural warming of the planet, and the extinction of the Megafauna.

“The feature of this story that intrigues me,” Clifford Paul notes “is the fact that the stone tool not only supports the science expressed in the extinction of the Megafauna, it confirms the truth expressed in a wonderful Kluskap legend. The evidence supports the Mi'kmaq version of events, plus it supports the Modern western scientific version of events as well. It places both a Mi'kmaq and scientific fingerprint on the implement.”

Eskasoni elder, Albert Marshall, calls this type of understanding: “Two-Eyed Seeing.” This means that the person is interpreting the natural world and events within, with two equal types of understanding—those being the modern western scientific approach combined with the traditional ecological knowledge of the indigenous peoples. Both perspectives have equal merit and equal interpretations of events—even the events of our ancestors some 12–14,000 years ago.

The creation of Five Islands is one of the most recorded legends of Kluskap. The story evokes images of land change that can still be seen today. Gerald Gloade, Program Development Officer with the Mi'kmawey Debert Project, says that science tells us that this land change took place some 6,000 years ago. “If our ancestors were here for 13,000 years, then they were living here when the Bay (of Fundy) opened up. An event of that magnitude would be something that people would record, something that Legends are made of,” Gloade offered. “It gives us a reference point to our ‘Cultural Memory Timeline’ and it tells me that Mi'kmaq culture and heritage have been alive and rich for thousands of years before the arrival of European settlers. Embedded in the Legends of Kluskap are stories of Sacred Places, stones, and Mi'kmaw Traditional Knowledge, and to see these ancient gems of information... you just have to look!”

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Water, water everywhere

A Science Forum on Water Resource Management was recently held at Cape Breton University, sponsored by NS Environment and Labour and CBU. Of special interest was Kim Paul's presentation on Potlotek's Source Water Protection Plan.

In 1999, recognizing the importance of protecting the water source at Indian Lake, the Potlotek Watershed Protection Committee was formed.

Of concern is the fact that 40% of Potlotek's watershed lies off reserve and, in addition, the close proximity of Route 104 to the water source, and the location of the community sewage lagoon within the watershed.

Funding from Environment Canada and INAC was secured to develop the “Potlotek Water Source Protection Plan.”



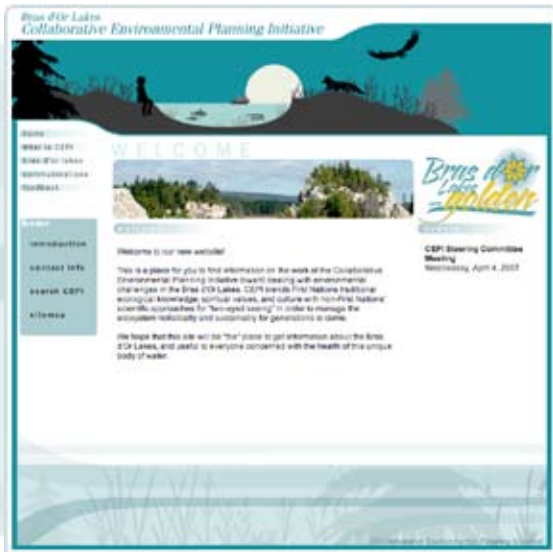
CEPI communications

Website

brasdorcepi.ca is the place to go to learn about the Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative.

There you can learn about the Lakes, contribute to the development and assist in the implementation of a management plan for the Bras d'Or Lakes and surrounding watershed.

The website is new and CEPI is working on it every day to make available reports, scientific studies, traditional ecological knowledge, meeting notices, news, and events. It's a way for you to stay in touch, have your say, and learn about some of the things that are happening on the Lakes we all share.



Bras d'Or Lakes
CEPI
Collaborative Environmental
Planning Initiative



After looking closely at CEPI's history, accomplishments, structure, and goals, CEPI's Communications team, in developing its Communications Plan, came up with two key messages:

Key messages

Working together to create a blueprint for the long-term well-being of the Bras d'Or Lakes and its peoples

Taking action together as a team of First Nations, federal, provincial and municipal governments, businesses, community groups, and other organizations

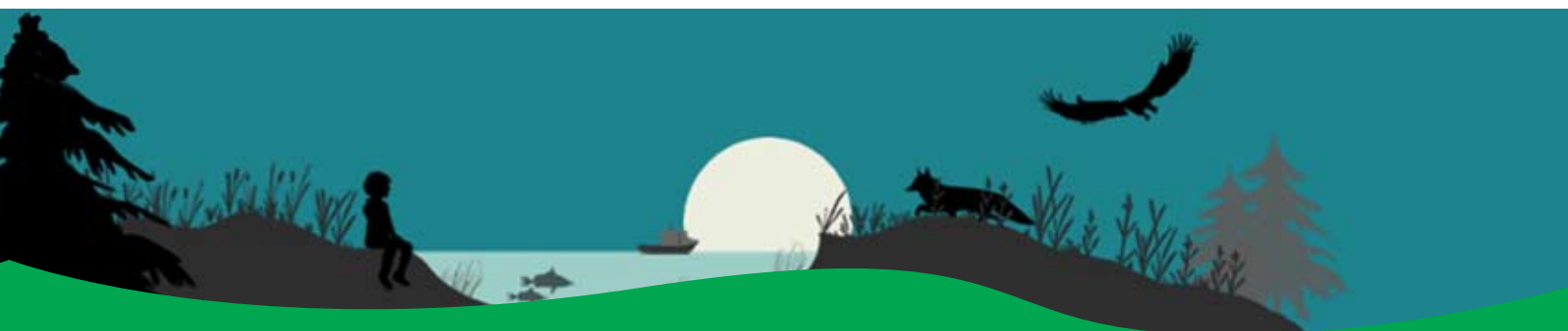
Primary message

CEPI's message is that the "Bras d'Or Lakes are golden."

Arm of Gold is the French translation of Bras d'Or and the eight pointed Mi'kmaq star signifies the importance of maintaining balance in the environment and within oneself. This centuries-old Mi'kmaq symbol of unity—the eight-legged starfish—illustrates the First Nation's involvement in the CEPI process.

A sense of value and importance is inherent in the message. You will be hearing the slogan a lot in the coming years as CEPI brings its message to the general public.

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of Natural Resources

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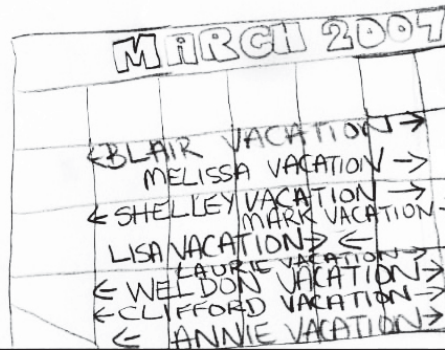
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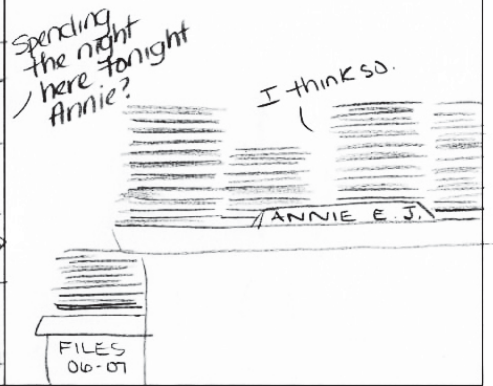
Year-end Procedures At UINR

We've worked hard all year...
Almost too hard!
So at the end of the fiscal year, we're calm, relaxed, generally behaving like it's any other time of year...

Actually, we've worked so hard all year; it seems no one took any vacation time yet, and it's got to be taken by year-end!



The finance department is running more smoothly then ever before at year-end...



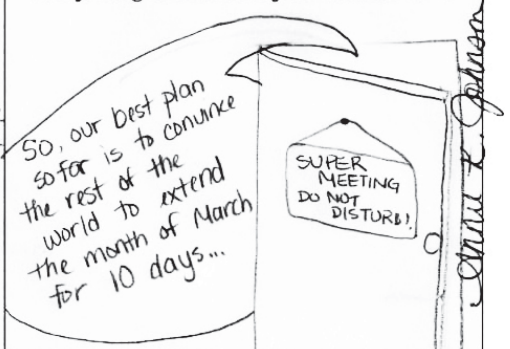
Projects are all on schedule and on budget, of course...



Weldon had no trouble getting this edition of the newsletter out since everyone had so much time on their hands...



Don't worry about us though, we'll be just fine! We already have some power-meetings in progress to make sure everything is settled before March 31st!



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