



10 Years at UINR  
Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources

1999–2009



# 1999



Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (**UINR**) was formed to represent Unama'ki Mi'kmaq communities on natural resources and the environment. On July 20, 1999 the five chiefs signed the official papers to set up UINR.



**Georgia Pacific** and the five Mi'kmaq bands in Unama'ki signed a Memorandum of Understanding recognizing renewable resources in the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed and began a consultation leading to economic benefits.



**Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife Commission** was an early partner in many of UINR's initiatives through the years and to the current day. Over the years EFWC staff has worked cooperatively on many UINR projects.



UINR has been involved in **moose management** from the beginning. Lisa Young worked on the moose committee and on several moose projects with Parks Canada.

# 2000



SIMBOL (Science for the Integrated Management of the Bras d'Or Lakes) conducted **biological surveys** of Bras d'Or Lakes. Two main surveys (bottom trawling and plankton sampling) were conducted each year from autumn 1999–spring 2004.



The Winter Moorings project deployed and recovered **permanent moorings** of oceanographic instrumentation. This was part of the work done on the boat **CCGS Navicula**.



The Bras d'Or Lakes **Sampling for Water Quality and Sanitary Shoreline Survey** was completed in partnership with Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife Commission. The project collected water samples in shellfish growing areas to determine fecal coliform levels. The sanitary shoreline survey identified locations along the Lakes where there were straight pipes or other possible sources of pollution.

# 2001



**10 Commitments** were signed by Pitu'paq, setting the course for cooperative action on issues relating to sewage in the Bras d'Or Lakes.



Bras d'Or Lakes **Gaspereau Management Plan** involved sampling and analyses of the Eskasoni and Waycobah gaspereau fisheries leading to a voluntary management plan.



A **Forestry Management Agreement** was signed between UINR and Stora Enso. The MOU outlined provisions for forest management services for Stora by UINR on Cape Breton crown land.



The **Lingan Bay Smelt Survey** acquired baseline biological data on the Lingan Bay smelt population, and the impact of commercial and recreational fisheries exploiting the resource. The survey also monitored environmental issues related to presumed spawning streams near fishing areas.

# 2002

Unama'ki –DFO **Graduate Award** was given to a Dalhousie University team consisting of a graduate student and a

faculty member who submitted a research project on a topic related to the natural resources of the Bras d'Or Lakes ecosystem. Researchers mentored a high school student from a Unama'ki Mi'kmaq community, including this student in their research activities.



**Bras d'Or Lakes Atlas** was published by Pitu'paq. It mapped sewage contamination and species distribution around the Lakes.

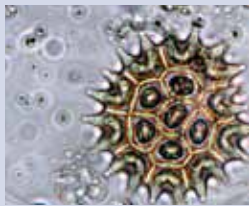
The **River Denys Gauging/Water Quality Monitoring** project set up a hydrometric flow gauge station on the river to monitor its current, dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, conductivity, turbidity and water levels.

# 2003



**Bras d'Or Workshop** was held to lay the groundwork for a collaborative planning and management initiative for the Bras d'Or Lakes and watershed.

# 2004



Bras d'Or Lakes **Phytoplankton Monitoring** project monitored phytoplankton concentration and determined when the spring and fall algal blooms occur. It identified potentially harmful phytoplankton in traditional oyster harvesting areas and some commercial leases around the Lakes and catalogued phytoplankton species.



Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment Canada **Marine Environmental Quality Monitoring** examined water quality and sediment quality in Denys Basin.



A **traditional fish consumption survey** was conducted in the five Mi'kmaq communities that determined risks from consumption of wild fish from the Bras d'Or Lakes and surrounding areas.

# 2004



UINR completed a study on **pipng plovers** in the Bras d'Or Lakes.



The second **Bras d'Or Workshop** was held in Wagmatcook to form the Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI).



Breeding Strategy for **MSX Resistant Oyster** was a project to develop an MSX-resistant oyster that would be made available to enhance the wild population and ensure a sustainable food fishery.

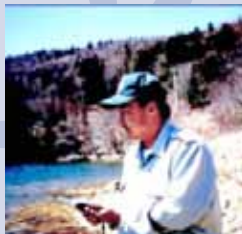


UINR was involved in the live trapping of **lynx** in the Cape Breton Highlands.



## Canada

Environment Canada and UINR sign a **Memorandum of Understanding** to work together on projects to monitor, study, conserve and protect the environment of the Bras d'Or Lakes.



### Hydrometric Monitoring

performed by Natural Resource Officers from Unama'ki recorded temperature and salinity in oyster growing areas in the Bras d'Or Lakes.



**Eskasoni Source Water Protection** was a project with Health Canada that educated school children on where their drinking water comes from and how to protect it.



## Canada

UINR and Fisheries and Oceans Canada sign a **Memorandum of Understanding** respecting research and information exchange and oceans and habitat management in the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed.



## AAROM Canada

The Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management program (AAROM) and UINR sign a **Statement of Intent** to provide ongoing assistance.

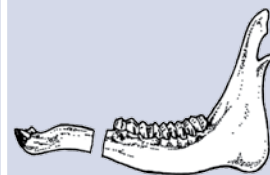


The **Environmental Contaminants in Fish** Project looked for contaminants in traditional foods harvested in customary fishing grounds.

# 2005



Norman Sylliboy and Alyssia Jeddore worked all summer in a partnership with UINR, Pitu'paq and the **Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps** to produce and distribute a brochure on Clean Boating in the Bras d'Or Lakes.



UINR participated in a research project with **Parks Canada** (Cape Breton Highland National Park) and the Department of Natural Resources. Hunters were encouraged to drop off a moose jaw bone and report on the success of their hunt.





The Ichthyoplankton **Identification and Enumeration** project involved identifying and counting fish larvae and eggs.



UINR hosts a **Youth Moose Camp** in which four youths from the five Unama'ki Mi'kmaq communities were selected to experience the tradition.



UINR organized a series of Open Houses to inform the five Unama'ki Mi'kmaq communities of intentions to develop a **management plan** for the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed.



UINR/Georgia Pacific **Scholarships** awarded to Shelley Denny—Chapel Island; Jasine Dennis—Eskasoni; Stephanie Bernard—We'koqma'q and Lindsay Marshall—Membertou.



As a promo for the **Canadian Aboriginal Science and Technology Society** conference, UINR distributed packets of seeds for the Black Ash, an important tree in Mi'kmaq tradition.



Three hundred and twenty-four specially constructed concrete blocks were put into the Bras d'Or Lakes to become **habitat for young lobsters**.

Cape Breton Mi'kmaq Elders added their voices to the many groups and individuals opposed to Texas company Hunt Oil's **seismic testing** in Sydney Bight.

## CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY

UINR signs a Memorandum of Understanding with **Cape Breton University** that provides a framework to participate in future projects.



UINR hosted a **Mi'kmaq Cultural Awareness** session in Wagmatcook for 40 Parks Canada employees in Cape Breton.



UINR was contacted by Fisheries & Oceans Canada to conduct a **green crab survey** in the Bras d'Or Lakes.



Clifford Paul begins community consultations as part of the development of a **moose management plan**.



Building Knowledge of **Species at Risk** in Unama'ki helped develop expertise in Mi'kmaq organizations and communities and built awareness among youth on threats to species at risk. Presentations were made to grade 7s to university students



Monitoring **Community Drinking Water** Quality in Unama'ki—UINR samples drinking water from at least 4 different locations at 4 of the 5 Unama'ki communities on a weekly basis. Results are put into Health Canada's WaterTrax database. If there is an issue with the water, samples are re-taken and, if necessary, Health Canada will place a boil order or take other measures.



A research project with Lobster Science Center, University of PEI, looked at **proteins in lobster**.

# 2006



### A **Traditional Ecological Knowledge**

Workshop was held to collect traditional ecological knowledge as part of the Ecosystem Overview and Assessment for the Bras d'Or Lakes Watershed.



A planning session for a **Mi'kmaq Youth Elder Council** sponsored by UINR and Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (KMK) brought together Nova Scotian Mi'kmaq youth and Elders to respond to issues surrounding land, resources and governance.



### The **Collaborative Salmon Initiative**

brought together salmon fishermen, enforcement personnel from various agencies and some fisheries scientists to identify the components of a management plan for the Atlantic Salmon in Cape Breton.



UINR produced and distributed a poster on **Species at Risk** in Unama'ki. It's available on our website.



A voluntary **gaspereau management plan** where fishers agree to a 20% catch reduction is part of an ongoing study on gaspereau in the Bras d'Or Lakes.



Water Quality News, an **educational DVD** that looks at how drinking water is kept safe in Unama'ki's Mi'kmaq communities, was published by UINR.



Annie E. Johnson was chosen as a representative at the **Traditional Leadership** for Future Generations Conference in Antigonish.



A **Forestry Management Agreement** was signed between Stora Enso and UINR that included forest planning, forest harvesting, silviculture and reporting services.



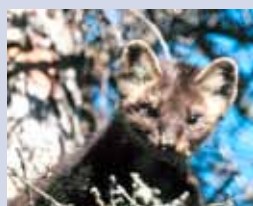
UINR's partnership with Pitu'paq resulted in a major accomplishment—Transport Canada's designation of the Bras d'Or Lakes as a **non-discharge zone for boating sewage**.



UINR published its **Annual Report** to communities and stakeholders.



**CEPI Charter** was presented to Senior Council at annual meeting. Charter was signed by all Unama'ki Mi'kmaq communities, municipalities and provincial and federal government departments.



PAWIS (Pool of **Aboriginal Wildlife Inventory** Specialists) looked at the extent and scope of our communities' Traditional Knowledge on Species At Risk

# 2007



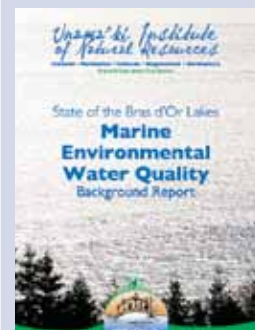
UINR's Forestry Division participated in the writing and publishing of **Awakening: Living with Today's Forest** published by the First Nations Forestry Program of Nova Scotia in cooperation with The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq.



Lisa Young and Shelley Denny from UINR participated in the Banff Centre **Aboriginal Leadership** and Management Development Program.



Bras d'Or Lakes **Traditional Ecological Knowledge** workshop proceedings published.



The **State of the Bras d'Or Lakes** Marine Environmental Water Quality Background Report (MEQ) was published. It looks into the state of the Lakes' water quality. Available at [www.uinr.ca](http://www.uinr.ca)



UINR's first **promotional video** was produced in both English and Mi'kmaq. You can view it online at our website—[www.uinr.ca](http://www.uinr.ca).



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





South Basin **Oyster Reef Creation** is an ongoing project to create oyster habitat in compensation for the destruction of habitat in a nearby area. Recycled scallop shell strings holding oysters were placed in South Denys Basin to increase oyster biomass and other organisms.



**A book of maps** of the Unama'ki Mi'kmaq communities was published. The maps have information on drinking water monitoring sample sites, infrastructure and land contours in a format that can be easily understood by community members.



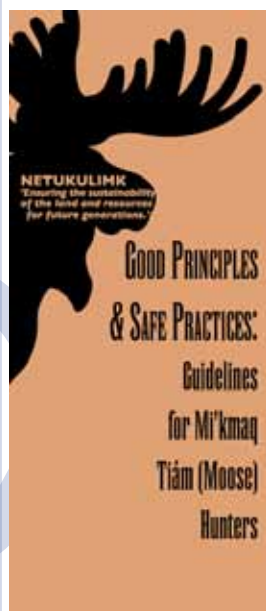
Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative releases new logo for its public promotion campaign—**Bras d'Or Lakes are Golden.**



UINR participates in a significant way to the clean up and recycling program at this year's **Mission** in Chapel Island.



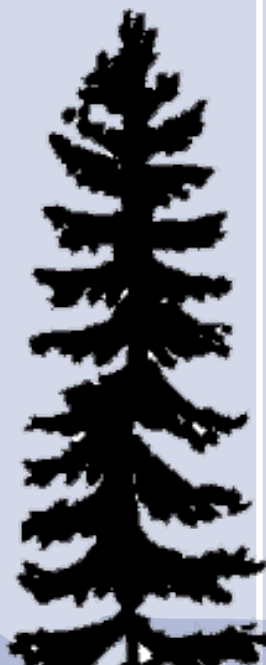
UINR published Unama'ki Jakejue'ka'timk: Food, Social and Ceremonial **Lobster Fishery Management Plan** for Unama'ki.



UINR's Moose Management Initiative published a brochure outlining **Good Principles and Safe Practices for Mi'kmaq Hunters** in the moose hunt. Copies were distributed throughout the Highlands.



Cape Breton University was the host for a full-day workshop on **two-eyed seeing** and UINR was a major contributor for the event. Clifford Paul was the day's MC and a presentation was given by Albert Marshall.



UINR handed out over 300 mekwé'k kawatk (red spruce) seedlings to students at the annual *Kids in the Forest* event in Whycomagh.



A voluntary **gaspereau management plan** this year saw the season reduced to a two-week fishery. Over time, these efforts will help improve size and allow more gaspereau to spawn at least once before capture.



UINR teamed up with **Natural Resource Officers** from Eskasoni, Waycobah, and Membertou to collect data on water temperature, salinity, oxygen and secchi disk readings around the waters of Unama'ki.



UINR participated in the **release of the American marten** with Parks Canada and Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources in an attempt to re-establish this native species to Unama'ki.



Elder Albert Marshall presented at the conference: **Two Countries, One Forest** in Montreal.



**Malpeque disease** was discovered in oysters in the waters of St. Ann's Harbour and Orangedale.



The **Tunicate Monitoring** project placed tunicate collectors in four locations in the Bras d'Or Lakes.

The **Environmental Health Inspection** System project documented houses, Band-owned buildings, businesses and private businesses for Health Canada's Environmental Health Officers.

# 2008



UINR raises serious concern over hydro project in **Lake Uist**.



Phillip Prosper and Tim Cremo were the first to be accepted in the **Unama'ki Mi'kmaq Natural Resources Officers** new pilot program, a collaboration between UINR and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.



The UINR Marten expands its coverage to include **every household** in the five Mi'kmaq communities of Unama'ki.



UINR gave away free **Mimkwonmooseel** (Red Oak, *Quercus rubra* L.) tree planting kits complete with peat pot, acorn and planting instructions.



The Nearshore Benthic Habitat Mapping and the Map of Threats project identified **eel habitat** types in the Bras d'Or Lakes using side scan sonar and bottom classification technology that enabled us to "see" the Lakes' bottom. UINR produced maps showing bottom type and eel grass next to Mi'kmaq communities



The **Eel Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge** project identified threats to eels and, by conducting interviews with Elders and eel knowledge holders, integrated the information into a GIS database.



UINR initiated a new position, **Commercial Fisheries Liaison Coordinator**, Hubert Nicholas whose objective is to increase community participation in the management of integrated fisheries.



A two-day conference—**Sustainable Hardwood Management** in Today's Acadian Forest, a conference on best management practices for sustainable forest communities, was held by UINR and attracted international attendance.



For the second year, UINR, in partnership with Pitu'paq, expanded the clean-up program at the **Chapel Island Mission**. A recycling and garbage program, major clean-up and improved sewage disposal were part of this year's project.



The Wagmatcook Culture and Heritage Centre hosted Mawikwamk Wjit Tia'muk—Mi'kmaq **Gathering on Moose**. The two-day conference brought together representatives from Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq communities to lay the groundwork for a management plan for Unama'ki moose.



UINR received support from the Aboriginal Funds for Species At Risk program for a project looking at the **life history and ecology of eels in the Bras d'Or Lakes**. Information on eel landings in the food fishery was collected and correlated elver abundance with nearshore habitat while assessing the threat of the swim bladder parasite. The project also completed the habitat mapping survey for the Chapel Island area.



Another new initiative at UINR—Tonia Sylliboy is named **Species at Risk Coordinator** and sets up a new UINR office in Potlotek.

# 2009



UINR gets involved in attempts to save the graveyard at **Malagawatch** from erosion.



**UnamaKIDS** participated in the release of the American marten, an endangered species in Unama'ki.



Ten years! This year marks UINR's **10th Anniversary**. We've only just begun!





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