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Kataq—Mi'kmaq Knowledge on Bras d'Or Lakes Eels

After five years of research, community meetings and discussions with Elders and fishers, UINR is proud to announce the release of a new publication on Bras d'Or Lakes eels. At first, five years sounds like a long time but when you consider that the publication summarizes thousands of years of Mi'kmaq ecological knowledge, it doesn't seem so long after all!

Kataq—Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge: Bras d'Or Lakes Eels is written by UINR's **Shelley Denny, Angela Denny and Tyson Paul**, but they are quick to credit the dozens of Elders and community fishers who freely shared their observations, practical knowledge and stories about fishing eels in the Bras d'Or Lakes.

Until now there has been little documentation on Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge (MEK) available for use in scientific assessments, management plans and recovery strategies. UINR is a leading organization in the collection, interpretation and storage of MEK for this region.

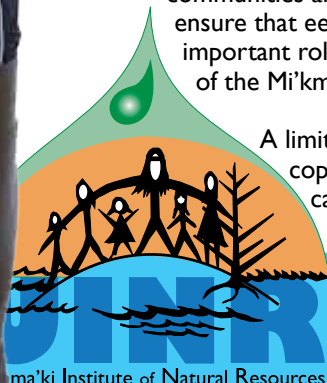
In addition to information on the value of eels and eel fishing and traditional resource management of eels, the publication also looks at the current state of the eel population in the Bras d'Or Lakes. An outline of Mi'kmaq concerns and a call for action conclude the publication with recommendations to communities and governments to ensure that eels continue to play an important role in the day-to-day life of the Mi'kmaq people in Unama'ki.

A limited number of printed copies are available and you can download a free copy at uinr.ca

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We dedicate
this publication to
the many eel fishers
of Unama'ki,
past and present,
who inspired us
with their thoughtful
insights, humour
and passion
for eels.



NEWS

WWW

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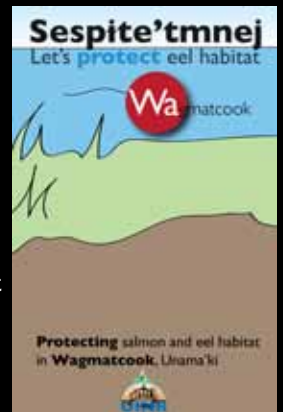
Results of the communications workshops and community survey conducted by UINR for the Eskasoni Source Water Protection Committee will soon be released. The results show the best ways to communicate with the community to make positive environmental changes to protect and preserve their drinking water. Watch the UINR website for details...UINR is holding gatherings of Elders and fishers to collect information on cod and striped bass in the Bras d'Or Lakes...Unama'KIDS will be attending a Project Wet workshop to learn about watersheds, water quality and water conservation. They will also attend a presentation by Parks Canada on coyotes...Our Moose Management Committee is hard at work preparing a moose harvester education program, implementing the feedback from community meetings across the province...Bras d'Or CEPI will be holding its first Speakers Bureau event to celebrate World Water Day in Membertou on March 22. Check out brasdorcepi.ca for details...Once again this spring UINR will be installing our smolt wheel in Middle River to gather scientific information on salmon....Annie Johnson recently attended the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada conference in Saskatoon...We are working on a children's book on eels. Dozay Christmas is doing the illustrations...Mark MacPhail, UINR's Director of Forestry, was a guest speaker at the Aboriginal Forestry Forum in Toronto.

Here's where we keep you up-to-date on new stuff online at uinr.ca

A new publication, *Kataq— Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge: Bras d'Or Lakes Eels* is now available to download from our website. Check out the Publications & Reports section at uinr.ca for a free download.



Protecting salmon and eel habitat in Wagmatcook is the topic of *Sespitemnej* now available on our website. It joins similar publications of other Mi'kmaq communities in Unama'ki and gives practical how-to information on things that you and your family can do to preserve and protect the environment.



Be sure to "LIKE" our UINR Facebook page. It is THE place to go to see photos and keep up-to-date on everything we're doing at UINR.

If you are a Twitter user join the many people who follow UINR's tweets!



Envirothon students from Wagmatcook and Waycobah get together with Envirothon coordinators Debbie Waycott and UINR's Selena Cremo (far right).





Above: Wagmatcook Centre's Robert Bernard shares a laugh with UINR's Shelley Denny and Clifford Paul before their Wagmatcook Lecture Series presentation.



Below: UINR and Parks Canada staff take a field trip to Kluskap's Cave.

Bottom: UINR hosts a gathering of Elders, community members and eel fishers to gather information on eels.



pjila'si

Welcome

UINR is involved in a wide range of activities, from forestry to species management, environmental issues to research, enforcement to community stewardship. At the heart of just about everything we do is education. Whether through our quarterly publication, **UINR Marten**, the many publications that we produce every year, or our activities through our Unama'KIDS project, education is central.

In this issue, we celebrate the long-awaited publication of **Kataq-Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge: Bras d'Or Lakes Eels**. We are really proud of this publication and it is the first in what we plan will be a series of publications on Mi'kmaq ecological knowledge. We are also happy to publish the fifth publication in our Sespitemnej series on protecting aquatic habitat. This time we feature the community of Wagmatcook and, along with the booklet of things to do to protect eel and salmon habitat, we produce large-format posters to place in community locations.

With all the emphasis on education, we recently formed a new organization whose sole purpose is education. **MELC, Mi'kmaq Environmental Learning Centre** is a not-for-profit organization and we have applied for charitable status to allow us to undertake some very exciting projects. We introduce MELC in this issue and give you a peek at our first project: **Nikani Awtiken**, a pilot for the Atlantic Region, National Aboriginal Youth Forestry Employment Training Initiative. Nikani Awtiken is Mi'kmaq phrase for "trail blazing" or "creating a new path." We think it's an appropriate first step for our MELC, don't you?

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NR



OYSTER

garden

by Charlie Dennis

The story I'm about to tell goes back to the sixties, the early days of my life. The information is a tribute to my Elders, relatives, friends, and native and non-native anglers. Most of the information was obtained through traditional knowledge and Elder Dr. Albert Marshall through his concept of two-eyed seeing.

Growing up, I listened to stories my father's friends would tell in the kitchen waiting for their turn to get a hair-cut from my father. Sometimes I would get in trouble for asking questions and being nosy. I don't know how many times I was told to mind my own business and stay out of the way. Of course I would find ways to listen in on their stories, hiding behind the couch or stove. I always kept my ears open to the ways of harvesting plamo (salmon).

In this story I look at snaring the old-fashioned, hard way. Basically it boils down to the newer way of using an eel spearing pole and a coil of rabbit snare. The old fashioned way is using a twelve foot piece of straight tubis (alder), and a tree root, which I don't know the name of to this day.

The other part of my story is about Qamsipuk (Indian Brook) where it runs through Eskasoni where the old iron bridge used to be, later replaced by a new road and bridge. My story begins at the lower end of the river where there used to be two pools—one was called Temikewey (Deep Pool) and the other was called A'qatitemikewey (Half Deep Pool). When I look at the river now I see it has changed a lot! The pools are gone, washed away by ice and erosion or, in my opinion, due to the new road and bridge.

As my story begins, my Grandmother Bridget Joe instructed my uncle, Ekkian Dennis, to fish for salmon in Quesepul. It was a beautiful fall day. We thought that the salmon run was around October 15—"every year the early run" the Elders would say.

As we set off we stopped at Sylliboy's Grocery, it was called Ben'ek, our local supply store. We purchased a roll of rabbit snare wire and there were curious looks from the patrons inside the store. No questions were asked why we purchased snare wire, guess they were wondering because it was too early for rabbits. We were off to Qamsipuk and soon we got to A'qatitemikewey. As we approached our spot there lay a beautiful salmon in the pool; the water was crystal clear in the sun's glare. The salmon was laying there with his tail just moving, trying so hard not to be noticed. You think it looks too relaxed, leave it alone, but all we can think of was my Grandmother's words, "it would be a nice day for a salmon meal." Oh well!!!

We viewed the situation for a minute and my Uncle Ekkian said, "in four feet of water, we need a twelve foot pole or a tupsi." He had a hunter's knife and in seconds he had one ready. Out came the snare wire and if you are familiar with catching rabbits and making a loop and tying it to a small tree, it was the same idea.

Pretty soon, we had the snare tied to the pole as instructed by our Elders. It's not as easy as it sounds. We weren't wearing waders, all we had on were sneakers or BF Flyers. Of course you didn't want to fall in and get wet and you had to be real quiet not scare our precious meal away.

As we got close to the fish, we saw that it was a little nervous, not as relaxed as before. We decided one of us would approach the pool and try to put the loop around the body of the fish and tighten it around its tail and swing it in out of the water. It sounded so simple and my uncle was kind enough to suggest that I would be the one to volunteer for the task. He was older and bigger and I didn't argue or ask any questions. I slid the snare and pole in the water and gently drifted the snare towards the head of the salmon, trying not to touch its body. My uncle kept whispering, "be careful, be careful," he kept telling me.

Suddenly, I pulled the pole in one swing and out flew the salmon onto the shore. My uncle looked like a giant bear struggling with the salmon. Once he got a hold of it we laughed ourselves silly. We realized what we had done and looked around to see if anybody was watching and then we were off with the precious cargo. On our way home we took the woods instead of the road. We didn't want to create any curiosity to anyone watching, especially fisheries officers, or more commonly known at that time as the RCMP.

We finally made it home three hours later. When we brought the salmon to the kitchen, you could see my grandmother's eyes light up. All she could say was, "Oh my God, plamu, plamu, plamu!" that's all we heard. She explained that she didn't think we could pull it off. She told us to get out of her kitchen and out of her way!

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Photos: Ekkian Dennis, Grandfather Joe jjj, and Grandmother Bridget Dennis





Cool, clean water!

Sitting at the kitchen table sharing a cup of coffee or tea with a friend...it's something that most of us take for granted. But not Rosie Sylliboy and some of the other full-time residents of Malagawatch. A boil water advisory has been in place since April 2011 when UINR began testing the wells in Malagawatch.

Health Canada funded a project that allowed UINR staff, Lorraine Marshall, to add Malagawatch to her sites for water testing. What she found was not good. Lorraine explains "While the chemical analysis was within Health Canada's Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, bacteriological results were consistently testing positive for total coliforms and in some cases, *E. coli*. Total coliforms are found naturally in soil and the gut of animals and humans, and in water they can indicate contamination from faecal matter. *E. coli* is found in the guts of animals and plants and indicates a definite faecal contamination."

Drinking water is considered safe when there are no total coliforms or *E. coli*. These bacteria can get into shallow, dug wells from ground seepage or surface water.

UINR was able to redirect funds from chemical testing to provide a solution to the problem of unsafe drinking water for the residents. Six homes now have an ultraviolet light and micro filtration system that will kill all microorganisms and remove particulate matter, including parasites.

Rosie Sylliboy couldn't be happier, "Finally, I can really enjoy my home and not have to worry about someone accidentally having a drink from the tap and I don't have to haul clean drinking water home. After the boil water advisory, I couldn't even take a shower here. Thanks to UINR, I know my water is safe now"

lorraine@uinr.ca

How it works

The system is installed at the head of the home's water system. First the water passes through a filter that takes out particulate matter and then it passes through a glass tube with an ultraviolet light. The light sterilizes harmful microorganisms and the water making it safe to drink and use. The light needs to be replaced once a year, a small price to pay for the piece of mind of having cool, clean water!



Top Photo: UINR's Lorraine Marshall with Rosie Sylliboy
Below: Rosie Sylliboy, Lorraine Marshall and installer Dave duChêne

Nikani Awtiken

is a Mi'kmaq phrase that means "trail blazing" or "creating a new path." This summer, up to 14 high school students from Unama'ki will participate in a week-long camp on forestry, natural resources and employment opportunities in the sector.



Nikani Awtiken

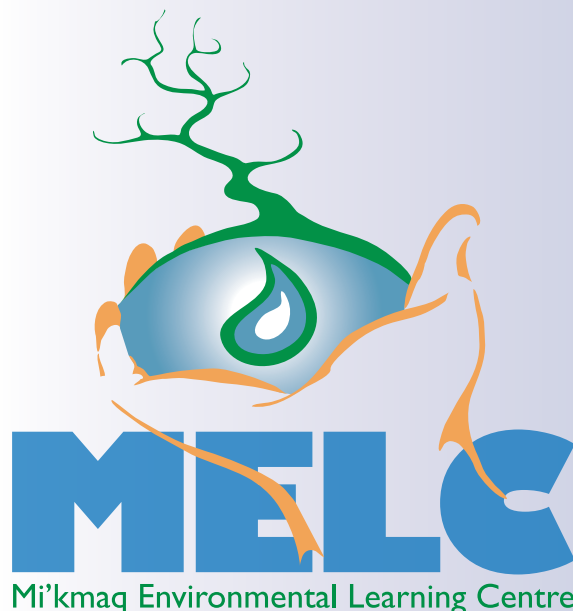
Nikani Awtiken is a project of MELC (Mi'kmaq Environmental Learning Centre), the new educational arm of UINR. Funded by Natural Resources Canada, this pilot project is part of the National Aboriginal Youth Forestry Employment Training Initiative.

Mark MacPhail, UINR's Director of Forestry, is the project's coordinator. *"The aim of Nikani Awtiken is to instill an interest among Mi'kmaq youth in pursuing careers in natural resource management. Access to career opportunities is critical to the future sustainability of our communities and the historical relationship of Mi'kmaq people to the environment creates a natural fit for our youth. It will give them an opportunity to explore career and academic options while gaining practical hands-on experience in natural resource management and traditional perspectives of sustainability."*

The camp will be held July 3-12 at Camp Carter in New Harris and will give participants training in a wide range of skills including forest management, tree and medicinal plant identification, GPS, chainsaw and boating safety, visit to a saw mill, team building, leadership skills, first aid, professional work ethics and traditional Mi'kmaq knowledge.

There is no cost to participants and room and board is provided for the week-long camp. Application details will be available this spring at the MELC website, melcentre.ca

For more information email mark@uinr.ca



MELC is a tribute to Mi'kmaq Elders who generously share their knowledge on our traditional values and perspectives. MELC's objective is to keep these teachings alive in our hearts and through our actions to pass on for the benefit of future generations.

The guiding principle directing MELC is the Mi'kmaq concept of Netukulimk—a Mi'kmaq word that means sustainability. It is about achieving community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing our environment. Mi'kmaq resource management unites people with plants, animals and the environment as a whole. MELC's programs provide education and awareness, enabling us to share our cultural history and knowledge of natural resources.

The goals of MELC are to collect and preserve traditional Mi'kmaq knowledge on environmental sustainability, create and deliver educational programs to promote and share Mi'kmaq traditional knowledge, and partner with other groups sharing the desire to promote environmental sustainability for the benefit of future generations.

MELC is an educational arm of Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources. MELC provides education, leadership and sharing of ideas with groups that have a similar vision and objectives on sustainability, preservation and management.

We need input and knowledge from Elders eager to pass on their stories and experiences. We need partners that can help us meet our objectives and benefit from the experience and partnership.

We need you.

lisa@uinr.ca



it's all about the people **Billy Taylor**

For some of us, things just never add up...but that's definitely not the case for Billy Taylor. As UINR's Finance Officer, it's Billy's mission to make sure that everything adds up to the penny. If things like cash flow statements, account reconciliation and financial forecasts make your eyes glaze over, Billy's light up!

It's Billy's job at UINR to deal with everything that has a dollar sign before it. Budgets, invoice payments, payroll—all fall within his responsibility. For an organization with fifteen full-time employees that are involved in a wide range of projects with multiple funding partners, it's a testament to Billy's time management that he finds time at lunch to grab a soup and sandwich at Brenda's Cafe!

A graduate from Riverview High School, Billy went on to study at UCCB where he received a diploma in Business Technology. This was the beginning of over 15 years of working in the private sector doing everything from computer sales and repair to management. It's here that Billy caught the finance bug and he soon found himself buried in the books and loving it!

Before you think that Billy is all work and no play, on his off time you can find him with his wife Dawn, spending time with their three dogs and cat, camping around Cape Breton in their travel trailer, and golfing as much as possible. In the winter, Billy plays goalie in co-ed hockey.

"All my previous work was in the private sector where the main objective was making money. Coming from a place where there was a constant battle for profit, it is really rewarding to be working at UINR where our main objective is community education and the environment."

billy@uinr.ca

Ten questions

Choose an animal native to Unama'ki.
Eagle.

Favourite season?
Summer.

What is the best part of your work?
The relaxed atmosphere.

Choose a quality you admire in others.
Integrity.

Favourite beach?
Cheticamp Beach.

Last thing you read?
UINR's 3rd Quarter Financial Statements.

What's for supper tonight?
Pork chops, I hope!

What is your favourite website?
eBay and 3balls.com

What did you do in the last week to help the environment?
Composted and recycled.

Chocolate or chips?
Chocolate. It's not safe near me.



Above: Billy reviews financial statements with Annie Johnson.
Right: Molly, Zoe, Calvin and Hobbes

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