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The Mi'kmaq phrase *Nikani Awtiken* translates to "trail blazing" and the participants in Mi'kmaq Environmental Learning Centre's first summer camp spent a week this summer doing just that! Camp Rankin in St. Peters was the home for 13 high school-aged students from around Unama'ki.

Coordinator Mark MacPhail was very pleased with the week's activities, "We really kept the participants busy with everything from emergency first aid training and fire education to hiking to Kluskap's Cave with Elder Lawrence Wells. We gave them a great mix of activities, including traditional Mi'kmaq knowledge and modern forestry practices. We wanted to demonstrate what Albert Marshall calls "two-eyed seeing," the balance of traditional knowledge and western science, and we had them participate in everything from a pipe ceremony to GPS!"

Other activities during the camp included a boating safety course by Transport Canada and a Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources workshop on insects' role in the forest ecosystem. Kerry Prosper worked with participants to make eel spears and John Sylliboy led a medicine walk to identify plants and trees.

A career day wrapped up the week with speakers demonstrating various employment and career opportunities in the natural resources sector.

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Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources



# NEWS

WWW

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UINR and the Moose Working Group are planning our annual Feast in the Highlands on Thursday October 4. Watch us on Facebook (UINRpage) to get all the details...UINR is working on a project to monitor water temperatures in four salmon rivers—Middle, North, Baddeck and Margaree Rivers...To help restore salmon river banks, we are planting native trees this fall to stabilize the river banks...We're collecting information on salmon in Cape Breton and you can help. Data collection kits and information on how to collect the salmon's length, origin (hatchery or wild), and scale samples for age can be picked up at your Guardian office. This will help us tell the salmon's age, its age when it migrated to sea, how long it stayed there and spawning information...UINR has been awarded a contract to supervise the Crown Silviculture crew in St. Peters this fall... There has been some good news on having lead bullets banned in Nova Scotia. The board of Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters passed a motion to take action towards eliminating lead-based ammunition for hunting in Nova Scotia...UINR is a partner in a federal joint fisheries governance project called Fisheries-Western and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (Fish-WIKS). The project theme is "Exploring distinct indigenous knowledge systems to inform fisheries governance and management on Canada's coasts." It is a community-led project to improve fisheries management by incorporating indigenous traditional knowledge.

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

If you haven't visited our website in a while, be sure to pay a visit soon. We have every issue of UINR Marten there and you can do a search on any topic or use the convenient TAGS to find every article we published over the years. It's a great resource for students or anyone interested in everything from eels to medicinal plants to the environment and traditional Mi'kmaq knowledge.



Be sure to "LIKE" our UINR Facebook page (facebook.com/UINRpage). 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!



Studying invasive species in Blackett's Lake: Cathy Munro, NS Fisheries and Aquaculture; George Christmas, Lance Paul and Rosalinde Christmas, Membertou Guardians; UINR Guardian Coordinator Keith Christmas



*Charlie's Angels Lisa Young, Shelley Denny and Annie Johnson ham it up with Charlie Dennis at the launch of the Charlie Joe Dennis!*



*Unama'KIDS on a nature hike in Ingonish with Elder Lawrence Wells and Parks Canada*



*Helene Van Doninck (centre) with Kerry Prosper and Moose Management Coordinator Clifford Paul at a presentation on the effects of lead bullets*

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# W Welcome

It's been a great summer to spend outside enjoying the gifts of Mother Nature! The waters are warmer than usual and we were blessed with sunny days and warm evenings. Climate scientists are predicting a beautiful fall because of the ocean's high temperatures this summer.

This year there were lots of opportunities to spend time outdoors. From MELC's Nikani Awtiken summer camp to the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Games in Eskasoni, to Unama'KIDS tree planting in Membertou, there was no excuse to stay indoors this summer!

At UINR we know how important it is to maintain that connection with nature and the natural resources that have been part of our day-to-day lives for generations. Many things have changed over the past fifty years and how we live today is dramatically different from the lives of our ancestors. One of our goals at UINR is to encourage people to get outside and experience that connection with nature, whether through fishing and hunting or even a long walk in the forest identifying medicinal plants and trees.

The environment is important to us at UINR, and not just for the eels and moose and salmon that we work to maintain and protect. A healthy environment is important to us too! If you look at all the activities that we are involved with at UINR, from community clean-ups to studying invasive species, from planting trees to taking students on nature hikes, everything comes back to enjoying and experiencing the great outdoors!

Try to take some time today to enjoy and appreciate the great gift of nature.

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# Netuku Bras d'Or L

## The Mi'kmaq hold a special relationship with kataq, eels

Eels are a reliable source of food that kept Mi'kmaq alive in harsh times. They were used to sustain a local economy by bartering. Eels convey functional, medicinal and spiritual elements to our people. Ceremonies honouring a young male's first harvest were given by the family to celebrate his first game (L'pa'tuj Wi'kapaluet).

Eel skins were used for healing sprains, ties, bindings and moccasin soles. Eel oil provided nourishment and treatment for ear infections. Eels are often requested to calm the sick and comfort the dying as they transition to the spirit world. Eels are also used to treat insomnia. All parts of the eel are used and what is not used is offered back to Mother Earth. Eels are also an important food for other animals.

Bras d'Or Lakes' eels are at least seven years old before they are ready to be taken by spear. They take between 12 and 19 years before they reproduce. Larger eels are closer to reproducing than smaller ones. *To the best of our knowledge, all eels in the Bras d'Or Lakes are female.*

### Reproductive cycle

Eels all over Canada come from the same population. They start and end their lives in the Sargasso Sea off the southern United States, reproducing only once before they die. There are many stages in the eel's life cycle. Fertilized eggs hatch as leptocephali in the winter, where they resemble a transparent leaf and travel for about a year on the ocean's currents. Next they change into glass eels looking more like tiny eels, but still transparent.

Once eels begin travelling upriver or to other habitats, they become pigmented, spending much of their time hiding from predators. As they grow, they become yellow eels and actively look for food. This stage can last for many years as they slowly transition into silver eels—their reproductive stage. Silver eels migrate back to the Sargasso Sea in late summer and fall to reproduce and die, completing the life cycle.



# ulimk: Lakes Eels

## There are ways to help

### Embrace netukulimk

Netukulimk describes the Mi'kmaq consciousness of how we guide and sustain ourselves without jeopardizing the future of Mother Earth.

The Mi'kmaq recognize that the sustenance we depend on has a physical and spiritual life to which we are connected. All life is equal. Because of this, all that is harvested is used and treated with respect and gratitude.

### Share and be grateful

Sharing is an integral part of Mi'kmaq culture. Spear eels when needed.

Share your eels with others, especially with those who can't harvest.

Use as much of the eel as possible. Give thanks for your eels with an offering of tobacco and return the heads and guts to Mother Earth.

### Practice traditional harvesting methods

The spear is the traditional way to harvest eels. In spring to fall, it lets you select an eel of appropriate size or stage. In winter, eels of all sizes and stages are vulnerable so only take what you need, when you need it. Different types of spears catch different sizes of eels. You can modify winter spears by adjusting the tightness of the wires/strings to capture medium-sized eels.

There are other methods to catch eels such as using eel pots made out of wood or metal.

Rotate eel fishing areas to prevent depletion of eels in one place. Wait a week or so to replenish the area before returning to fish.

### Respect the silver eel

Traditionally, not harvesting eels during blueberry season was common. This coincides with the season silver eels begin their journey to spawning grounds of the Sargasso Sea.

### Preserve eel habitat

Eels were designated by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as a species of Special Concern in April 2006 and re-examined and designated Threatened in May 2012. This means that the eel is likely to become endangered if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction.

Most of our harvesting takes place in the Bras d'Or Lakes.

Rivers and lakes can act as refuge areas where eels are not harvested. Good water quality is necessary for all living things.

Our daily practices must reflect the necessity of water to all life.

Keep garbage, pollution and silt out of the water to preserve water quality and fish habitat.

# Tall ship *The Eagle* visits Eskasoni



The summer games in Eskasoni and all the activities in Crane Cove inspired me to write this story about the visit of the United States Coast Guard vessel *The Eagle* to Eskasoni. The christening of the fishing vessel *Charlie Joe Dennis* made me think of a ship that arrived here back in 1976 for a two-hour visit. While the visit was short, the planning process took much longer and was extremely well-done.

It was in the summer of 1976 that we got a call from the United States Coast Guard in *The Eagle's* home port in New London, Connecticut, USA. It was explained that this visit would be kept a secret, for what reason we didn't know. We asked, "Why Eskasoni?" They answered that it was quiet and has a suitable wharf. Of course I explained there was a perfectly suitable port in Sydney, an hour away but they felt that Eskasoni's harbour was ideal. We agreed to keep a low profile and follow their directions. We were told *The Eagle* was 295 feet in length and we told them our wharf was only 124 feet. That was not a problem because the visit would be short. They asked for the information needed to bring the three-masted ship to Eskasoni. Even the depth of the water was considered as the ship required at least twenty feet of clearance. (Makes you wonder how much change in the Lake's bottom has occurred since then. If you recall, we could not bring the *Dr. Granny* fishing vessel into Crane Cove a few years ago. The *Charlie Joe Dennis* only needs ten feet of clearance.) We were asked if we knew anybody in the community with a nice car to do a pick up at the airport. As it happened Big George Bernard just bought a new car and he agreed to do the task. When he picked up the gentleman at the airport, Big George didn't realize that he was a high-ranking officer with the United States Coast Guard. George said he picked up a gentleman in blue jeans and old sneakers and after making a quick stop at one of the hotels, he changed into an officer's uniform and Big George didn't recognize him until he re-introduced himself.

Apparently the *The Eagle* arrived the evening before and had spent the night moored on the other side of Goat Island, in small cove along Sugar Island. We knew that at exactly 10:00 am *The Eagle* was going to arrive in Crane Cove. All eyes awaited her arrival and at precisely 10:00 am, she slowly turned the point, a magnificent sight to see. The sails were down and you could see its three huge masts with ropes and sails hanging. Slowly *The Eagle* headed to our little wharf. One of our Elders, John N. Paul, asked how would they tie it to the wharf and another Elder, Louis J. Marshall (Jumbo), said the navy sailors could do anything. We all chuckled.

As the ship got closer we could see officers and crew running about on deck, knowing exactly what they were doing. On a normal trip, there would be 230 officers and cadets. The crew prepared a smaller rope and a ball-shaped lead weight to accept a larger rope to tie down on the wharf. What a sight to see *The Eagle* docked on the wharf! The ship was sticking out about eighty feet on each side. After the first sighting off the point, it took about thirty minutes before the walking ramp was installed. When I think about it today, what a day it was for Eskasoni. It was big news for the Bras d'or Lakes, Eskasoni and Crane Cove.

...continued in our next issue....



*it's all about the people*

# Allister Marshall

For such a quiet man, when it came to matters of the environment, Allister Marshall spoke with a very loud voice.

Born in Potlotek, he spent much of his life in the community he loved, working as a Band Councillor and as a Guardian promoting conservation and protection for the community's Fisheries Department, an appropriate career for someone who cared so deeply for the environment. Allister inspired many people to get involved in environmental work and gave them the courage to follow their passion.

Allister was a long-time member of the Nova Scotia Environmental Network and an active member of the First Nations Environmental Network, the Steering and Management Committees of the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability and was Chair of the Potlotek Water Protection Committee. If there was one issue that he was particularly passionate about, it was water. He helped form the Save Our Seas and Shores Coalition and was a member of the CEN Water Caucus.

He spoke from the heart and with sincere earnestness because there was no one else to do it. Although hard of hearing, he still went to meetings and did his best to follow what was being said and to contribute ideas in a positive way. He had no hidden agenda with anyone, with Allister the issue was always the environment. To stay active and involved in environmental work, he would cobble together a vehicle to proudly take him to many meetings to further the cause.



One of his lasting legacies is the Marshall Award for Aboriginal Environmental Leadership. The award is named after Allister and is annually awarded to a First Nations individual or group who has demonstrated environmental leadership in Nova Scotia. Allister was involved with Unamaki Institute of Natural Resources from its beginning and actually was responsible for its name. Over the years he was a regular participant at workshops and traditional knowledge gathering sessions at UINR.

Allister was a gentle, dignified and humble man who understood friendship deeply. His quiet intelligence and sharp sense of humour put everyone he met at ease. He will always be remembered in the hearts and actions of the many people he inspired to care for the environment.

*Allister Coliste Marshall, 67, passed away on May 26, 2012. He was the son of the late James and Mary Ellen (Nicholas) Marshall. He leaves his wife of 36 years Mary Veronica (Vicaire) Marshall, son Coliste, daughter Rhonda, and his grandchildren.*



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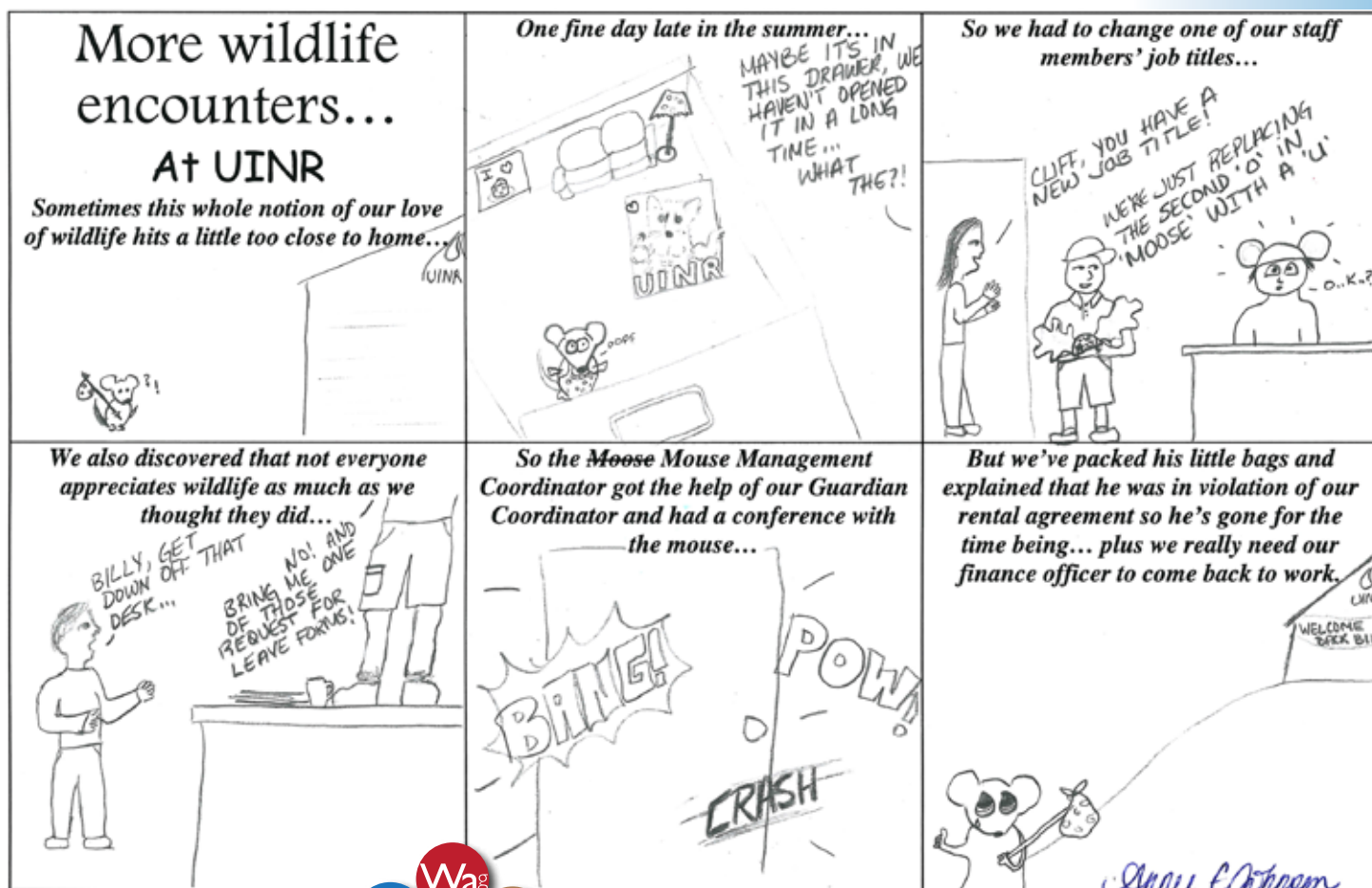
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