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The UINR Marten
is published
quarterly by
the Unama'ki
Institute of
Natural Resources.

Subscriptions
are free and
copies may be
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questions are
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Special Mi'kmaq plants

- Plants have always been an important part of Mi'kmaq tradition, not just for food but as cures and prevention for many common ailments. Today it is not unusual to see Mi'kmaq Elders picking sweetgrass for ceremonies and other plants as cures for everything from stomach cramps to relieving the symptoms of the common cold. UINR recognizes the importance of plants to our culture and are working on a project to improve our knowledge

and understanding of where these important plants are located and how abundant they are. We are using a combination of modern science and traditional knowledge to develop a database that will be used as a conservation management tool. Working with Parks Canada and NewPage, we are mapping existing and new information in a Geographic Information Database (GIS) that will contribute to the conservation of our cultural and ecological heritage.

We have been meeting with knowledgeable Elders to determine what species are important, where they are found and what type of habitat they are usually found in. Using this knowledge, we then investigate botanical literature on local distribution, habitat requirements and if they are endangered. Elders also provided the Mi'kmaq names of the plants they gather.

UINR has hired botanist **Catherine Sneddon** to conduct a field investigation throughout Unama'ki to confirm the presence of medicinal plants and their abundance in the areas we identified this year. The next step will be to develop a list of the locations that will require special protection or other efforts to preserve threatened species. Another meeting of Elders will be held to present our research results and to review our recommended management plans to protect the plants.

The information that will be released to our funding partners and that will be made public will be determined by the Elders and knowledge holders. UINR retains all control over the content of the project. This is a very important project for us at UINR. It recognizes the continuing importance of plants in our culture and ensures that they will be protected for future generations.

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UINR's 2011 calendar features medicinal plants and plants of special cultural importance with their Mi'kmaq names and uses.

We only print a limited number of calendars each year and there is always more demand than we have available calendars. If you'd like to get one, drop us an email with your name and mailing address to info@uinr.ca. Only one calendar for each address.



NEWS

WWW

uinr.ca

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

If you haven't visited us on the web yet, take a look and see what a great resource uinr.ca is. There are videos, reports and every issue of our magazine UINR Marten. All free!

UINR's Tetpaqewanej Jakejk—Let's Take Care of the Lobster is a new publication that shows ways that lobster fishers can minimize their ecological footprint and follow their AFS lobster fishing conservation measures. The new booklet gives a background on the life of the lobster and is well illustrated with easy-to-follow instructions. If you haven't received a copy, you can download it now from the library section at uinr.ca

If you have not yet checked out our UINR Facebook page, be sure to the next time you are updating your status! It's a great way to keep informed about activities at UINR. If you are a Twitter user be sure to follow us for up-to-minute news and resources.

uinr.ca is the first place we post news-breaking stories and information and you can often find stories from our newsletter there before they make it to print. It's a great resource for students too where every story is archived and easy to find.

Two open houses have been held in Potlotek and Eskasoni to release "Sespite'tmnej-Let's Protect Eel Habitat," our brochures and posters on things you can do to make the Bras d'Or Lakes a better place not just for eels but for other fish, birds, animals and us! UINR staff were on hand to answer questions and will be holding open houses in other Unama'ki communities in the upcoming months...Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI) is releasing "Spirit of the Lake", the group's management process plan that outlines a unique collaborative approach integrating the values of the people who live, work and have responsibilities around the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed. Everyone is invited to attend the release on January 21 from 11:00-1:00pm in Eskasoni at the Crane Cove Fisheries building...UINR wants to find out what you feel is harming the brook, reservoir and other streams in Membertou and any ideas that you have to help solve the problem. A drop-in was held in Membertou and our research staff has been meeting with community members to address the problem...UINR is working with partners at Parks Canada, Cape Breton University and Tripartite Culture and Heritage Committee to research the cultural significance of Kluscap to Mi'kmaq people and to identify associated cultural landmarks... UINR offices will be closed for the Christmas holidays from December 20-January 3...UINR was recently featured in two film projects. Eye Steel Film looked at UINR's work in watershed management for a short film for the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources as part of the RCB Bluewater Project. S4C, the Welsh language television channel in Wales, worked with us on a project to explore and understand the culture of the First Nations of Canada and how they have fought to preserve their culture, language and relationship with the natural world for centuries. Both documentaries are near completion and we will let you know when and where you can see them... On more film-related news, the Moose Management Initiative is working with local filmmaker Madeline Yakimchuk on a documentary on the Mi'kmaq moose hunt and the process leading to self-management of the hunt...UINR is working with the Pitu'paq partnership on a major conference on climate change and planning that will be held next spring. We'll be reporting on it in detail as plans develop.



Shelley Denny and staff have been meeting with Elders and fishers to talk about their knowledge of eels and their importance to the culture. The information is being gathered for publication on Mi'kmaq ecological knowledge about eels in the Bras d'Or Lakes

Comings & goings ³



Three new Chiefs have been elected by the people of Unama'ki which means that UINR now has three new members joining Chiefs **Terry Paul** and **Morley Googoo** on UINR's Board of Directors.

We welcome **Norman Bernard** from Wagmatcook, **Wilbert Marshall** from Potlotek and our newest member, **Leroy Denny** from Eskasoni.



Research Assistant **Angela Morris** is back to UINR from her year-long maternity leave.

"After taking a leave to spend with Dion and our children, Bethany and Morris, I'm really excited to be back at UINR. Since my return I've been busy with lab work, field work, community meetings and workshops to help protect wildlife species and their habitats. I'm looking forward to future projects so that I can continue to educate our community members on how to take care of and preserve our natural resources."

The Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative has a new coordinator, sharing the position with **Shelley Porter**. **Anthony Morris** joins us after working with the Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative and he is excited to be working on such an interesting and challenging project. "I am looking forward to working with the Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative which protects the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed. I love working in the diverse workplace and positive environment at UINR."



UINR

Welcome

from **Lisa Young**
UINR's Executive Director

This fall brought a whole new series of environmental events that seem like a wake-up call for us to take climate change seriously. The flash flooding in Meat Cove stranded the community there for a week and made us realize how fragile the infrastructure we take for granted is and the power that nature has to make us stand up and take notice. On the mainland, people were forced to leave their homes as torrential rains flooded their communities, bridges and roads.

UINR recognizes these threats and is actively working on plans to address our changing environment. We are working with Pitu'paq in organizing a major conference on planning for climate change in Unama'ki. Through our continued work with the Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative, we are promoting sensible land use planning and working towards a management plan for the watershed.

UINR saw three new board members join us as new Chiefs were elected in Wagmatcook, Potlotek and Eskasoni. We are looking forward to working together with them on the issues that are important to our people and communities.

Finally, I would like to give a special thanks to our Administrative Assistant **Serena Paul** who is profiled in this issue. Serena really holds the place together us and works tirelessly to keep us all on track.

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Salmon..what we know

Matthew's task was to find out what information was available, who holds it and how accessible it is. This brought him to a wide variety of organizations around Cape Breton including the Margaree Salmon Association, Cape Breton University, libraries at Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada, ADI, Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife, Environment Nova Scotia and Fisheries and Aquaculture Nova Scotia. He also spoke to fisheries guardians in Eskasoni.

Much of the information that Matthew found focused on the Margaree River, "Margaree River is important economically and, as an indexed river, it is the one that others in the area are most often compared to."

Matthew has been impressed on both the amount of work organizations have been doing and the amount of time that salmon has been studied. "I found information going back to the 1930s but generally speaking, the amount of research being done today has dwindled as stocks declined and the economic importance was reduced. There are fewer rivers being monitored today and the amount of monitoring has also been scaled back."

Matthew is working with Membertou Geomatics to set up an online database that will allow researchers to access all of the information that he has found. In addition to the titles of the work and short abstracts of what the research contains, researchers will be able to locate where that information is stored or located.

"Salmon people have been very helpful in sharing their information with me and it is amazing how much work has been done and continues to be done by groups like the Margaree Salmon Association, DFO and CSI Cape Breton. If their commitment to the species is any indication, salmon should have a brighter future in Unama'ki."

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Elder **Albert Marshall** may have said it best: "Plamu was historically one of the staple foods upon which First Nations people depended. It was viewed as a gift from the Creator, and it seemed that it would last forever. That is obviously not the case: the species is threatened on a daily basis. It is our responsibility to ensure that these gifts will be available for future generations."

Several months ago, with funding from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Sage Environmental Program and the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation, UINR hired researcher **Matthew Bryden** to do a study on exactly what scientific information is out there on this important species. His research was led by the findings from the CSI (Collaborative Salmon Initiative) conference Dialogue on Plamu/Atlantic Salmon in Cape Breton, held in June of 2006.

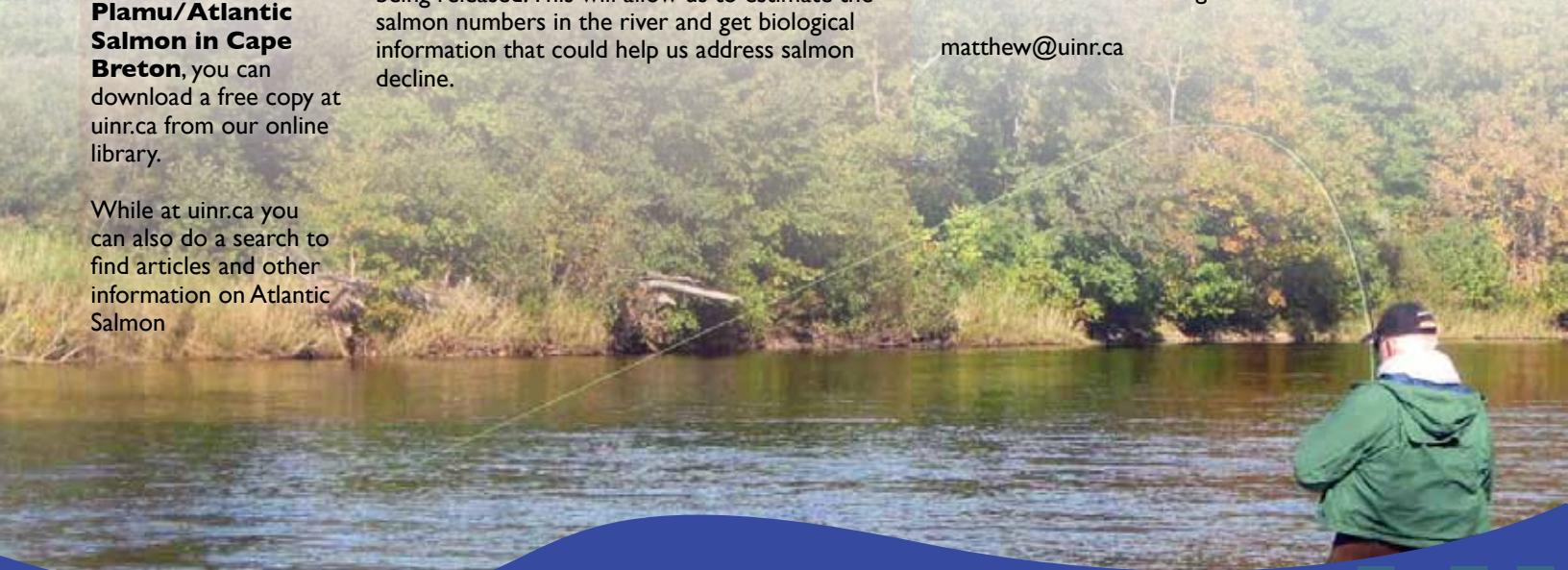


CSI Cape Breton is working on several projects to help plamu in Unama'ki. A Traditional Ecological Knowledge workshop is being planned to gather first-hand accounts of Elders and fishers on what they have seen over the years and their ideas on solutions.

As a further step, UINR is working with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to set up a smolt wheel in Middle River to help estimate the number of salmon smolt making their way downstream. A smolt wheel floats in the river, directing fish into a tank where they are counted and studied before being released. This will allow us to estimate the salmon numbers in the river and get biological information that could help us address salmon decline.

If you would like to read a copy of the proceedings from **Dialogue on Plamu/Atlantic Salmon in Cape Breton**, you can download a free copy at uinr.ca from our online library.

While at uinr.ca you can also do a search to find articles and other information on Atlantic Salmon



UNAMA'KIDS

It's been an unbelievably busy season for Unama'KIDS with plenty of opportunities for the group to get outside and experience nature. We started off the season with a shoreline cleanup of the beach in Malagawatch where we picked up garbage. The biggest item we found was an old rusted car, but we weren't able to move that! A few weeks later we joined the Moose Management Initiative for a feast in the Highlands. It was a foggy day but the food was great and it was nice to see where moose are hunted and to meet some of the people who are working to make sure there are plenty of moose for us in the future.



We spent a great day in Ingonish and did a hike around Round Lake with Suzanne Lambert from Parks Canada. We learned about important plants and animals that are around the area and identified plants that are important for Mi'kmaq medicine. Even though we didn't see any live moose, we did see some moose poop!



Our video conferences have been going well and we have been meeting every month learning about traditional Mi'kmaq knowledge, moose management and coyotes. We have lots of activities planned for the new year and we will let you know all about them!

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Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources Moose Management Initiative



The Moose Management Initiative has been visiting communities across Nova Scotia, holding discussions on Mi'kmaq natural resource management issues that are at the forefront of our self-governance initiative. The community sessions have been going at a productive pace with notable attendance and impressive dialogue. Discussion is the key element for increased Mi'kmaq input into the management of the moose herd. Communication between the communities and the Moose Management Initiative also assist communities towards organizing their own Hunter Advisory Groups.

Communities visited so far include: Potlotek, Membertou, Wagmatcook, Waycobah, Patqneq, Pictou Landing, Millbrook, Bear River, Annapolis Valley, Halifax Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre, and Acadia's five communities in Yarmouth, Shelburne, Milton, Gold River and Halifax. At the time of the sessions, Eskasoni and Indian Brook were busy with their elections so community sessions will be held after the Christmas break to allow their Chiefs, Councils and community members to settle in. Our Glooscap community session will also be held after the break.

As always, discussion is lively and informative, and the opinions and advice from these meeting are an important part of developing an enforceable management plan for Mi'kmaq moose hunters.

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Top: Mark Simon and Hubert Pierro share a lighter moment with KMK's Eric Scheile and UINR's Clifford Paul.

OYSTER garden

by Charlie Dennis

In a previous story (Oyster Garden 8) I spoke of changes in habitat due to climate change and rising sea levels. In that story I spoke of the island in Eskasoni that is no longer there. That island was located just behind the RCMP headquarters as we showed in aerial photos that illustrated that story. Every time I drive by this area, I can't help looking to where the island used to be and think about the fine memories it brings back.

In this story I would like to extend beyond Eskasoni and take you to Malagawatch. There are some stories I would like to tell you about along with a bit of history. Imagine walking along the sand bar heading north. Once, if you walked to end of the sandbar there was an island there. Today it is gone. This Malagawatch island was an ideal location for duck hunters who would place their decoys there and have plenty of places to hide. Community members from Malagawatch used to be pretty annoyed with the early morning shooting and the extra traffic with hunters on their way to the hunting areas. They liked to be in these blinds before 4:00 in the morning. Our people were tired of all the shooting going on but they wouldn't say anything.

Getting back to the island and our story, if you wanted to collect eagle feathers this would be the place to go. The best time I found was in the spring when the herring were spawning and the eagles would feast on them. The feasting involved fighting and shedding of feathers. The island was also an ideal location for other species like fox, mink and otters.

Gabriel Silliboy told me about his nephew **John I. Bernard** and the time he decided to build his camp on the Island. John had come up with an idea just in case the water level or the wind came up and he thought it was a brilliant plan. No one paid much attention to what John was doing until, one day, Gabriel decided to go visit his nephew on the island. When he got there, Gabriel was amazed what his nephew had done. He had cut some trees and used them to build a stilt foundation.

In order to access the camp, you had to climb a ladder. According to Gabriel, it was quite comfortable inside and cosy. It wasn't so easy when Gabriel decided to build a camp close to where his nephew John had built.



Aerial photo 1948 Malagawatch



When you look west of the island, there is a nice grove of poplar trees and Gabriel loved working with poplar to make the fine flower pots he produced and sold to local craft shops. Gabriel started cleaning his little plot where he was going to build his future home.

He started in the morning but in the afternoon when the wind died down, the flies came out and he said had never seen such huge mosquitoes. He just packed up and headed back, never to return again.

Gabriel always commented how tough the late **Lewis Joe** was. He lived about 300 hundred feet away from where Gabriel was going to build his dream home. I'll tell you Louis Joe story on an other day.

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Aerial photo 2008 Malagawatch



it's all about the people Serena Paul

How is **Serena Paul** like Scotch tape?
She holds everything together!

Now if the tape came in pink (Serena's favourite colour), the similarities would be complete. Serena is UINR's Administrative Assistant, a fancy title for someone who does everything around the office from greeting visitors to operating the photocopier, organizing meetings and handling the mail. If you've ever phoned UINR or dropped into our offices, it is probably Serena who welcomed you or directed you to the person you were looking for.

If Mi'kmaq is your language of choice, you don't need to hesitate to use it when you call or drop by. Serena is not only fluent, but we often depend on her to translate words or settle arguments on its correct use. Serena is often called in to take minutes for our various initiatives and her language versatility make her indispensable when the meetings are held in Mi'kmaq.

Serena graduated from Holy Angels High School and studied at UCCB in the B.A. program. She recently completed a business training certificate in "Minutes Made Easy." Before joining us at UINR, Serena worked with the Eskasoni Band Council as its secretary and as receptionist at the Eskasoni Health Centre. Serena joined us at UINR as Coordinator for Unama'KIDS. Never content to sit idle, Serena filled in around the office whenever she was needed and when there was an opening for an Administrative Assistant, she applied and, well, the rest is history!

Whenever UINR is organizing a conference or event, Serena's organizational skills are called into play—from the first planning meeting through to the final wrap-up party. She's worked on scheduling video conferences and events for Unama'KIDS, helped organize our Moose Symposium and in the planning and operations of forestry conferences. Whether its organizing catering, booking facilities or following up with guest speakers, Serena does it all.

We don't want to give the impression that Serena is all work and no play! She loves her weekends and values the quality time with her family spending time in Ben Eoin or at a movie or curled up with a good (preferably scary) book. One of the traits she shares with her sister Annie is a love of shopping...in November you can find her in Maine on her annual Black Friday shopping trip. To fill in the time between shopping trips Serena hones her skills on eBay!

"Not only am I helping the environment and the Bras d'Or Lakes by working for UINR, whatever I pick up along the way I take home to my kids. They love this part of my job, especially the Unama'KIDS program. (We also like the staff's cooking when we have parties, especially Weldon's cookies!)

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Ten questions

Chose an animal native to Unama'ki.

Eagle

Favourite season?

Fall.

What is the best part of your work?

UINR staff.

Choose a quality you admire in others.

Sense of humour.

Favourite beach?

Ben Eoin

Last thing you read?

How the Cougar Became the ghost cat by Michael Isaac

What's for supper tonight?

I'm thinking maybe stew.

What is your favourite website?

ebay.ca

What did you do in the last week to help the environment?

Purchased "green" household products.

Chocolate or chips?

If I HAD to chose, it would have to be chocolate.



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<p>The Best Gift of All... At UINR</p> <p>We have had some wonderful experiences with youth in our Unama'ki Communities... and we hope to continue this in the upcoming year</p>	<p>We have gone with youth to clean up the shorelines of our beautiful Bras d'Or Lakes...</p>	<p>Youth have had the opportunity to join us at our Feast in the Highlands interacting with hunters and Elders...</p>
<p>We had a new staff member helping us out coordinating youth activities this year too, which helped a lot...</p>	<p>Being able to be around these young people and watching them interact with our environment puts a fresh perspective on things...</p>	<p>So we would like to thank the youth we have worked with this year – the Unama'KIDS for showing us a new way to share our knowledge with you guys and for some cool new experiences – and that's the best gift of all!</p>



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