

Union of Nova Scotia Indians

NEWSLETTER

3rd Quarter, 2014/2015



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

For the UNSI Quarterly Report for December 2014, I have decided to write something about the way things are going in Indian Country in general, and specifically, Mi'kma'ki. In Mi'kma'ki, and especially that part now called Nova Scotia, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs (ANSMC) have been working together to rebuild the Mi'kmaw Nation.

There is a much-used phrase that is now in vogue once again: "Self-determination". This buzz phrase is being over-used all across Indian Country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic. But that is just what it is, "a buzz phrase". No Aboriginal group or First Nation is actually expending energy and influence on achieving self-determination. To a lot of groups and First Nations, self-determination only means saying "no" to the government policies and programs.

They do not seem to have alternative plans ready to be implemented; plans that are founded on each group's own culture and language. They are only prepared to apply government policies and programs that are designed to assimilate us all into their society, all on their terms and their plans. The Government has told Canada that they are assisting Aboriginals in Canada to become self-governing. They do that by providing conditional funding. The funding is only given if the group agrees to follow the government's policies and rules for self-government. Self-determination, on the other hand, is self-governing by determining for ourselves how we will govern our people, our land, and our resources. If we are to be self-determining, then we must determine the rules and policies that will operate our self-government. To achieve true self-government (self-determination), then we must incorporate our government into our culture and language. The best foundation

for that is our traditional government, which is founded on our culture and language.

This is why I have stated above that the ANSMC is rebuilding the Traditional Mi'kmaw Government. To do that, the Assembly has to incorporate their traditions, policies, rules, values and customs, laws, and jurisdictions into the Mi'kmaw language and culture. Only then can we say that the Mi'kmaw in Nova Scotia are self-governing.

We have some examples of the Mi'kmaw in Nova Scotia moving in the direction of



self-determination. It is in Education, where the majority of Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia are affiliated with Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK), which is an administrative body whose Board of Directors are the Chiefs of the affiliated communities and which operates programs used by the community Councils to operate their own schools. The Councils have total jurisdiction over their schools and work cooperatively to re-design policies and programs to better education for their children, education that incorporates the Mi'kmaw culture and language at every opportunity. There are efforts being developed in other areas of self-government that the Assembly is looking into, too numerous to explain here and are better left to be explained by experts.

The UNSI is also working in the development of self-determination for our Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. We are currently in the fourth year of a strategy where UNSI assists communities to hold workshops for community members and administrative staff. These workshops are set up to help communities build capacity among members and administrative staff, the capacity to analyze and participate together to build on their community's self-governing capabilities. Among the UNSI staff involved, Diana (Dee) Campbell is the Strategic Development Director. I would like to close by borrowing a quote from Dee's report to the UNSI General Assembly for 2011. It states:

The UNSI understands that building governance capacity within the individual member First Nations is the highest priority over the coming years. To that end, we have delivered a number of workshops that were designed to assist First Nations in developing long term community-based vision statements, drafting strategic planning frameworks to help them realize their vision, and develop priorities and strategic goals to create mandates for enduring change. Workshops were designed to assist leadership in identifying key areas that matter to their community and identify problems in existing law and policies.

This tying together the capacity building of the community members, the administration and leadership in individual communities, should go a long way towards self-determination.

Executive Director

Joe B. Marshall, L.L.B.

FINANCE

Carl Gould, Chief Financial Officer; Lillian Prosper, Finance Clerk

This has been a busy time for us from planning the 45th UNSI Annual General Assembly to 2014 Treaty Day activities and then winding down the Committee's activities for the year.

Recipients of the 2014 Treaty Day awards are as follows:

- Elder Awards – Bernie Francis and the late Libby Meuse
- Youth Achievement Awards – Arden Joseph Bernard and Jaden Nevin MacDonald

We are pleased to report that the Chiefs and Councils as attendees at the UNSI Annual General Assembly accepted the 2013-14 UNSI Annual Audited Report. This report is now available on our website and has been submitted to AANDC.

2014 Treaty Day Celebrations



Grand Keptin Antle Denny & Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy pose with 2014 Mi'kmaq History Month poster



Youth Achievement Award Winners Jaden Nevin McDonald (middle) & Arden Bernard (right)

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

Diana Campbell, BA, MREM, PhD (Candidate), Director of Strategic Development

In October, I attended the *International Network of Indigenous Health Knowledge and Development Conference* held in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The conference brought together community health practitioners and health researchers from Australia, New Zealand, Chile, the United States, and Canada to network, capacity build, and here about health initiatives in over 200 workshops and seminars. Issues ranged from building Indigenous Knowledge frameworks into programming and research, historical trauma, respiratory health, cancer research, environmental health, to mental health, and nutritional research.

The NS Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA), in conjunction with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs held a learning seminar – *Planning for Successful Projects: Integrating Aboriginal Consultation in the Environmental Assessment Process*, with presentations by the federal Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, the Nova Scotia Department of Energy, AANDC and the OAA on the duty to consult, and presentations from project proponents. The highlight of the event was a presentation by Naomi Metallic on the Mi'kmaq Perspective of the Supreme Court of Canada Tsilhqot'in decision out of BC, and the implications this decision has on the government's duty to consult.

I was pleased to have been asked by Dalhousie University to moderate *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Aboriginal Health Research in Canada – A Public Panel Discussion*, hosted by the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre. Drs. Fred Wien, Amy Bombay, and Debbie Martin presented on Aboriginal health research capacity and the implications of recent cuts in Aboriginal health research funding by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The implications this will have not only on the momentum of training new Aboriginal health researchers across Canada, but on the decade of accomplishments by the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health will be devastating for our communities. *Kahwa:tsire: A Response to the Emerging Crisis Between CIHR and the Aboriginal Health Research Community*, has been sent by the Aboriginal Health Research Steering Committee, co-Chaired by Dr. Fred Wien, to the Governing Council of CIHR objecting to the positions taken by CIHR, and the co-Chairs are appealing to the Aboriginal health community and supporters to help them in their efforts to dissuade CIHR from this course of action by writing letters to CIHR voicing objection to what is happening. If you would like more information about this, please email Frederic.Wien@dal.ca for further information.

In December, I attended a By-Law Workshop put on by AANDC to learn more about the requirements and issues concerning the development and drafting, enactment, and enforcement of by-laws. Over the next few months, Doug Brown and myself will develop a workshop that can be delivered to our member First Nations. Keep you posted.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a happy holiday season and all the best for 2015.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Louis Joe Bernard, Community Capacity Development Officer – Economic Development

I will be starting 2015 as the President of the Atlantic Region Aboriginal Lands Association, beginning with the National Aboriginal Land Management Association meeting in Winnipeg to select an executive in late January 2015.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT – ENVIRONMENT

Kim Paul, Community Capacity Development Officer – Environment

Working collaboratively with the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APC) on the Clean Water Initiative, presentations were made with the UNSI Chiefs and Councils. Band Council Resolutions were requested from the Chief and Council to explore the benefits of the First Nation Water Authority.

I attended the Lands and Economic Readiness Summit from September 15-17, 2014 at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre to learn how the UNSI communities can benefit from the Lands Management Act. Topics such as Environment Management, Protection and Environmental Assessments on reserves were presented.

In the New Year (2015), I will be requesting information from the UNSI bands on the status of their All Hazards Plans and will provide support to assist in the completion of the plans.

TRIPARTITE FORUM

Joan Sack, Tripartite Forum Liaison Officer

As an active member of the Tripartite Forum Steering Committee, I attended Steering Committee meetings on July 9, 2014 in Amherst; September 10, 2014 and October 15, 2014 in Millbrook; November 12, 2014 in Paqtnkek; and December 12, 2014 in Millbrook. Furthermore, the Steering Committee is currently working on reviewing Tripartite Forum policies and procedures. A sub-group, which I am part of, met on the following dates to start this important work: September 18, 2014 in Cole Harbour; October 2, 2014 in Halifax; October 9, 2014 and November 3, 2014 in Millbrook.

The following Tripartite Forum Working Committees met: Culture & Heritage Working Committee – September 4, 2014 in Bear River; Education Working Committee – September 9, 2014 in Membertou, November 18 & 19 in Dartmouth, and December 3, 2014 in Cole Harbour; Health Working Committee – September 16, 2014 in Truro; Sports & Recreation Working Committee – August 21, 2014 in St. Peter's and November 27, 2014 in Dartmouth; Social Working Committee – scheduled meeting for November 20, 2014 was cancelled and was replaced by a teleconference with a couple agenda items as opposed to full WC meeting. The Justice Working Committee did not schedule any meetings since the 1st quarter however the Marshall Symposium Sub-Group was busy with the Marshall Focus Groups to prepare for the Marshall Symposium to take place on January 14 and 15 in Membertou. The Economic Development Working Committee also did not meet during this period, as they had to cancel a scheduled meeting due to a funeral in the community.

Approved projects thus far for 2014/2015 from the Tripartite Forum Fund for Social & Economic Change (Project Fund) are: Youth Retreat (Sports & Rec); Marshall Focus Groups & Symposium (Justice); Mi'kmaq Language Tool-kit (Education); NS First Nation Snowboard Team (Sports & Rec); Mi'kmaq Language Recommendation Research (Education); and Training Mi'kmaq Coaches (Sports & Rec).

For more information on the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum and to view the calendar of upcoming meetings and events, please visit the Tripartite Forum website at www.tripartiteforum.com. And I can be reached through email at joansack@unsi.ns.ca or by phone at (902) 401-4421. Happy Holidays Everyone!

NUTRITION

Angela McDonald, Nutritionist

July was busy with youth-focused cooking classes. Balanced breakfast ideas and how to build a breakfast to go were popular cooking class themes. Family based cooking classes helped to give healthy BBQ options. Meat and veggie skewers were a popular menu item as skewers could be adapted to suit the tastes of each family member. Other popular BBQ recipes were homemade burgers, foil packed salmon and mini potato dishes as well as how to make homemade marinades and salad dressings. Many Parenting and Senior groups were given food safety presentations. Food safety chopping mats, covered ice cube trays and cooking thermometers were given as door prizes.

How to build a healthy grocery list with must have items from each of the four food groups were popular sessions over the summer months. The class was followed up with cooking classes and recipes ideas on how to prepare items that may be new to some families. Nutrition Bingo was used as a teaching tool for the healthy grocery list sessions. The prizes for the bingo were must have food items from each of the four food groups. Having the grocery items as door prizes allowed us to use the items to help teach label reading. The grocery bingo was an excellent teaching format to help boost attendance throughout many communities.

School awareness events used a mystery nutrition box to help teach students about the four food groups. The nutrition box worked for all grades as the box could be filled with grade-appropriate items. Having the items hidden helped capture the student's interest. Junior high students were introduced to how eating can affect your body. The goal was for each student to view healthy eating and exercise as medicine in helping to prevent common health conditions. As part of awareness events for diabetes month nutrition bingo was a popular teaching tool. Most health centers were able to offer bingo prizes that promoted physical activity.

Halloween cooking classes continue to be popular sessions each year. Healthy Halloween parties were hosted in many communities. Participants were able to make witch hands out of air popped popcorn, blood smoothies out of frozen berries/yogurt and milk, spooky fruit skewers out of black berries and cantaloupe and were taught how to carve a watermelon to look like a creepy brain. Rooms were decorated in Halloween décor and to help build physical activity into the cooking class Halloween themed carnival games were played. Students played knock over the spooky cans, graveyard dig to win Halloween pencils and erasers, squirt the eyeball to win Halloween stickers and a bean bag feed the monster game to win Halloween rings.

December workshops are targeted to family based learning and helping families build budget friendly menus. Sessions will discuss the responsibilities of adult vs. child to help end food struggles facing many families. The importance of planning and posting a meal schedule are two important components of the workshop. Healthy holiday recipe ideas will be given as well as food safety information on how to properly defrost and cook a turkey as well as how to store leftovers.

If you would like to book a community event please do not hesitate to contact me by email at amacdonald@unsi.ns.ca or via cell 902-577-0575. I want to wish everyone a healthy, safe and happy holiday this season!

HOME & COMMUNITY CARE

Beverly Madill, Home & Community Care Coordinator (NS/NL)

Since our last newsletter, the Elder Care Working Group for the Atlantic region has met in November. Our Elder representatives are Andy Nicholas, Tobique, New Brunswick; Mary (Molly) Pierro, Wagmatcook, Nova Scotia; and Marilyn Sark, Lennox Island, PEI. We do not have representation from Newfoundland and Labrador but there is an open invitation for representation. The HCC Coordinators from UNSI and UNBI also attend these meetings. The focus of this group is to work with the Atlantic Chiefs to better understand the health needs of our community elders.

We would like to acknowledge the hard work and graduation in October of home support staff in Natuashish, Labrador as they further develop their home care program with their coordinator Christiane Henningsen.

Finally, a Home and Community Care Advisory Working Group was funded through First Nation and Inuit Health Branch, Atlantic Region, to bring eight community representatives together to update HCC policies, procedures, and guidelines. There are two community reps from each of the four Atlantic Provinces and they have met on October 28-29, 2014. This work is expected to be finalized by March 2015.

ABORIGINAL DIABETES INITIATIVE (ADI)

Ann Gottschall, Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative Coordinator

This quarter was busy with preparation for the annual month long school Diabetes Education/Walking challenge during diabetes month (November). For the school diabetes month prevention activity, each grade 4, 5 & 6 class in all UNSI schools received an information package! As this is a voluntary school initiative, I am happy to report that all classes agreed to participate.

School Packages were updated to include:

1. Steps Tracking Record for Teacher & ADI Pen (to be used if not participating in the computer based program)
2. Step Record for Students (Large Physical Activity Poster)
3. Permission slip for Walking Challenge
4. Information Pamphlet on Walking Challenge for Parents
5. Pedometers (3 per class), extra pedometer given to teachers in case problems encountered with their functioning. (In larger schools, extra pedometers will be left with the school principal)

Two Mini Diabetes Self-Management Journeys were planned with community health staff, an agenda was developed, and presentations were delivered over 3 days. These mini diabetes self-management journeys are similar in content to the larger Diabetes Journeys that we have had in CB and on the Mainland of NS the last number of years. They differ in that participants remain in their communities rather than being hosted at a hotel, where they can focus on themselves and their diabetes.

Content delivered over the 3 days included:

- Diabetes 101 – What You Need To Know
- Diabetes Management – YOU are the captain of this ship!
 - Meet the captain and the crew
 - Blood glucose monitoring

- Managing highs and lows
- Sick day management
- Your personal choices: Smoking & Alcohol
- Resistance Exercise Bands
- Nutrition & Diabetes (CFG activity)
- Label Reading, Fat & Fibre
- Diabetes & Cholesterol
- Diabetes & Medicine
- Foot care
- Heart Disease & Diabetes

If you should have any questions, please feel free to email me at ann.gottschall@ns.sympatico.ca.

FIRST NATIONS REGIONAL EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SURVEY (FNEEES)/FIRST NATIONS REGIONAL HEALTH SURVEY (RHS)

Mindy Denny, FNREES/RHS Project Manager & Research Coordinator

It's always exciting to report on the progress of the RHS. Since September of this year, the RHS team has met with the e-health unit of Health Canada (Atlantic Region) to discuss ways to collaborate on closing data gaps relevant to First Nations living on-reserve. In the future, we expect to work collaboratively to train First Nations frontline workers and policy writers to use the data in meaningful ways described by their leadership. These sessions will help senior staff and leadership to better understand their populations. Between on-reserve statistics and record level statistics collected by Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), we feel at the UNSI that there are ways to support First Nations to maximize the utility of the data for the benefit the communities. This training will benefit staff at the community level by delivering the necessary set of skills required to use data efficiently. Our new direction at the UNSI is in line with the existing RHS/REEES goals for communities – “use the data we collect in the most relevant and effective approach possible in an effort to support the evaluation and development of programs/services and to support proposal writing”.

At our meetings with the e-health unit of FNIHB in Halifax (September 2014), the UNSI was invited to submit a proposal to the Health Partnership (APC). This proposal outlines a process that supports the development of a combined report of the Atlantic RHS statistics. Since September, the RHS/REEES project manager has worked on the development of the proposal and has submitted it to the e-health manager, Agatha Hopkins. A response is yet to be shared with the UNSI. It is our hope that at this proposed meeting, our First Nations leadership, senior staff and band managers, will become thoroughly informed of our research approach to collecting First Nations data, storing it, analyzing and using it for the benefit of the communities. This meeting of leadership and staff would also provide the RHS/REEES team with an opportunity to display accomplishments, share the concept of OCAP, and inform our leadership of the progress we've made in the past few years. Further direction from leadership into capacity development of First Nations in the Atlantic region, with respect to research relationships and practices, would be sought. Such an opportunity, if accepted and funded, this proposed meeting with leadership would support informed decisions as we seek a memorandum of understanding between the 4 provinces for the development of a combined report of future phases of the RHS.

Earlier in the fall, the RHS team submitted final developments of the RHS for phase 3, and received a positive response from the national RHS team. The recommendations from the RHS advisory capacity in the Nova

Scotia region were highlighted in a document that exhibits feedback from all regions across the county who participate with the implementation of the RHS, and I'm very pleased to report that most of our recommendations we accepted and have been applied to the new RHS phase 3 questionnaires. More recently, the RHS team met with the national RHS team to test the utility of the RHS questionnaires in Dartmouth during the last week of November 2014. 8 Community members of Sipekne'katik (Indian Brook First Nation), participated in the testing of the RHS questionnaires. The respondents can be described as 1 elder male, 1 elder female, 1 younger adult male, 1 younger adult female, 1 male youth, 1 female youth, and respondents for children both male and female.

With respect to FNREEES, we proudly report that data collection has come to an end in Nova Scotia, Tobique and Maiwpukek First Nations, and we are currently projecting a wrap-up in Abegweit (PEI) by January 19th, 2015. As communities completed their data collection the FNREEES team held draws for the iPad Minis (1 per community, and 2 in larger communities). By the next quarter the FNREEES team will be able to report "who", in each community, has won the iPad Mini.

Coordination of an FNREEES Advisory meeting is in the works for January 20th, 2015. At this meeting the group will have the opportunity to view the preliminary dataset by population subgroups; meaning that the group members will view what the dataset looks like (median age etc.). At this meeting we hope to identify indicators (variables) that highlight priority for the base component of the analyses plan. Once these areas of interest and priority are identified the FNREEES team will work on the analyses of the FNREEES dataset according to the plan agreed to by the Advisory members. It is too soon to predict a date where the analyses of the FNREEES dataset will be complete. And are we unable to report with definite clarity if the writing of this report will be done in-house or by a call for writers.

In other plans, the FNREEES team is exploring what other opportunities are available to collaborate with the epidemiology team at FNIHB outside of the RHS, while still building capacity in our region to conduct this work autonomously in the future. Talks about potentially seconding an epidemiologist from FNIHB to assist with the analyses of the FNREEES dataset have not yet formally begun; however, we are hoping that in the near future such a discussion can be initiated.

If you have any further questions, or require further information please contact me at mdenny@unsi.ns.ca or 902-539-4107 ext. 202. Wela'lin.

Gerald Gloade, FNREEES/RHS Data Analyst

This past quarter has been quite exciting for the RHS and FNREEES team. We have made significant steps towards housing our own server, which means that we will be able to exercise the OCAP principle "Possession" to its fullest.

In other FNREEES news, we have developed a logo to further brand the FNREEES in the Nova Scotia. We are also in the works of launching a Nova Scotia RHS/FNREEES website that will be a one-stop source of information to all things related to our research projects and other activities.

Furthermore, the FNREEES is getting closer to completing our data collection, nearing a 90% completion rate. From there we will be working with our advisory committee to work out an interpretation plan and eventually a comprehensive analysis of education, employment and early childhood development among Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia, PEI, Newfoundland and Tobique.

Lastly, the REEES's sister survey the RHS will be launching in the New Year. The project manager and myself had the pleasure of testing the Phase 3 iteration of the Regional Health Survey over the course of two days. Members of Sipekne'katik (Indian Brook First Nation) were kind enough to take time from their schedules and commit to 30-90 minutes of survey testing. With their help, we were able to provide several pages of feedback to the FNIGC to assist with the development of the final survey.

Rachel Paul, FNREES/RHS Administrative Support Personnel

It has been a busy fall season with the staff of the UNSI in all areas of Health, Strategic Planning, Community Capacity Development, Finance and the First Nations Information Governance Centre. We've had another successful year with this year's 45th Annual General Assembly that was held at the World Trade & Convention Centre, September 30, 2014 in Halifax, NS. This year's AGA theme was Aboriginal Title, and Naomi Metallic from Burchell's Law was so kind to take time out of her busy schedule to do a presentation on the recent Aboriginal Title case out of British Columbia, the Tsilhqot'in Case.

Now that Christmas is fast approaching, we are busy tying up any loose ends before we close the office for the holidays. The office closure will begin at 2pm on December 19, 2014 and we will re-open on January 5, 2015.

I'd like to take this time to wish everyone gifts of Joy, Peace and Love this Holiday Season & all year through. I hope all your surprises from Santa have these three wonderful little words written on it: "No Assembly Required!"

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Happy Holidays from UNSI!

