

WEJKWAPNIAQ DAWN

KISKAJO'LTIMK WJIT L'NUI-KJIJITAQNEY
BECAUSE IT'S TIME FOR MI'KMAW WISDOM

A Lesson in Courage

Netukulimk and other
Traditional Teachings

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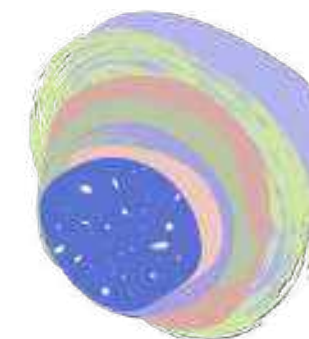
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Editorial

WEJKWAPNIAQ-DAWN

Kiskajo'ltimk wjit L'nui-kjijitaqney
Because It's Time for Mi'kmaw Wisdom

Welcome to WEJKWAPNIAQ - DAWN Magazine! While this magazine is for youth from 12 to 15 years old, readers of every age can benefit from meeting the people through their words in this magazine. This magazine is a great pedagogical tool for teachers, while offering authentic learning opportunities for students. It provides articles and activities for both Mi'kmaw and settler students to learn more about Mi'kmaw culture, values, traditions and history and why these matter today.

In this first issue of WEJKWAPNIAQ - DAWN Magazine, Chief Andrea Paul from Pictou Landing First Nation talks about her journey from being a student to a chief. She talks about environmental racism, and the actions that led to the closing of the mill that was polluting their waters. There are many lessons about courage in Chief Andrea's story. Learn about where she found her strength in order to become a nationally respected leader.

Elder and knowledge keeper Kerry Prosper, of Paqtnkek First Nation, helps us understand the deep connections between people and nature. He introduces the reader to Netukulimk, a Mi'kmaw way of gathering, hunting, and fishing. Elder Kerry invites the reader to reflect on the benefits of living a healthy life, while also ensuring that nature stays healthy.

Knowledge keeper Jane Meader of the Mi'kmaw Community of Membertou takes the reader into the heart of Mi'kmaw traditional

stories. She explains how girls and women were meant to be honoured and respected since time immemorial. She helps the reader understand that the legends hold teachings that are central to live one's life today as a good relation, to oneself, to others and to nature.

April Prosper of Paqtnkek First Nation talks about how she developed her deep connection to the land, and the importance of learning from nature. Like her father, Elder Kerry, April believes Netukulimk must be taught to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students alike. Feeling connected to the land can help young people learn from the land and protect it. April stresses that creating a culturally safe environment in schools is essential for students' success.

In the final section, Chief Andrea Paul, Elder Kerry Prosper, knowledge keeper Jane Meader and April Prosper offer their insights into the importance of the Peace and Friendship Treaties.

We hope that the teachings and activities in WEJKWAPNIAQ - DAWN Magazine inspire your life!



Jacqueline Prosper
Treaty Education Lead



Basil Johnson
Treaty Education Coordinator



A Lesson in Courage

Chief Andrea Paul from Pictou Landing First Nation talks about her journey from a student to a Chief. She explains how she drew the courage and strength from her Mi'kmaw culture to challenge environmental racism.



Chief Andrea Paul is Chief of Pictou Landing First Nation.

PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Everyday heroes accomplish amazing things during their time on earth. Andrea Paul is Chief of Pictou Landing First Nation and has served her community in this role since 2011. During this period she has seen her community transformed under her leadership. She is also a strong

role model for women. Her journey to become such a strong woman and leader began with developing persistence and resilience in the face of challenges.

Chief Andrea Paul holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education from St. Francis

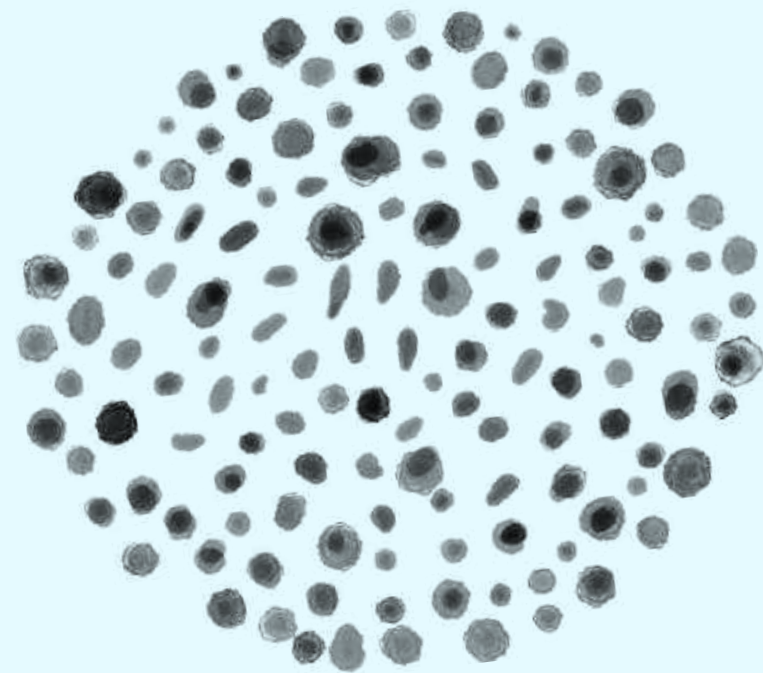
Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. She is currently finishing her Masters of Education in Administration and Leadership at the same university.

Leaving the community to go to university was not easy for young Andrea. She often went home instead of attending

classes or studying. The result? She failed her classes.

It was difficult for her because she had never failed at anything before. But Andrea kept trying until she found a way to succeed. She explains how she realized that the key to her success was her culture:

“ I majored in English and sociology, and I just loved the social sciences. I loved learning about the different streams. I took women courses, I took social justice courses, social justice and community, and they really interested me. And looking through that lens, because I was Indigenous, I was able to grasp it in a different way. I could see things in a different way, and I found myself growing as I took the courses.



As a result of approaching her courses in social justice and women's studies through an Indigenous lens, she became conscious of the changes her community needed.

Andrea knew she was gifted with words. She was able to present ideas to people in ways that they would understand. She felt it was important to use her gift for the well-being of her community. She was attracted to politics because she thought it was a good way to combine her ability with words and her knowledge.

Andrea was in Council for 4 years before she was elected Chief. During those years she became aware of the possibilities of political power to make changes. One of the important files she worked on was the restoration of A'se'k, also known as Boat Harbour. She had grown up with the strong nauseating smell from the effluent in the waters of A'se'k. But now, she was a leader committed to changing that toxic situation.

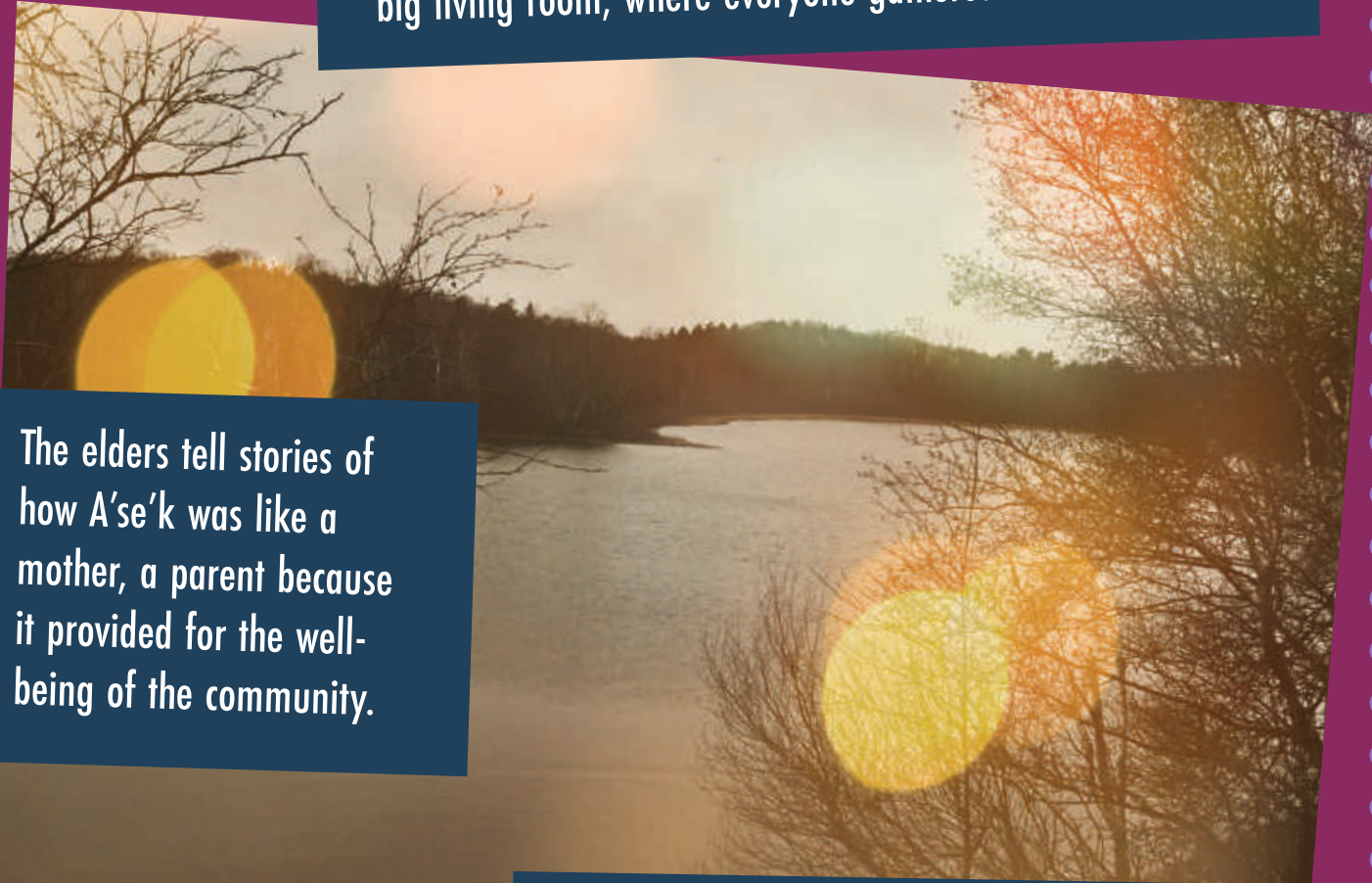
Chief Andrea explains how A'se'k was meaningful to her community:

“ And so, growing up they would go to A'se'k, and it was the place of recreation. When you think of recreation you connect that with well-being, friendships, mental health, all of those things that help you as an individual to live a healthy life. But it also was a place that had food. You could go and gather food there. You could gather traditional medicines there, and it also strengthened you as a Mi'kmaw person, so language and culture was very strong.





For thousands of years, Boat Harbour was called A'se'k which means the other room. A'se'k was considered to be a big living room, where everyone gathered.



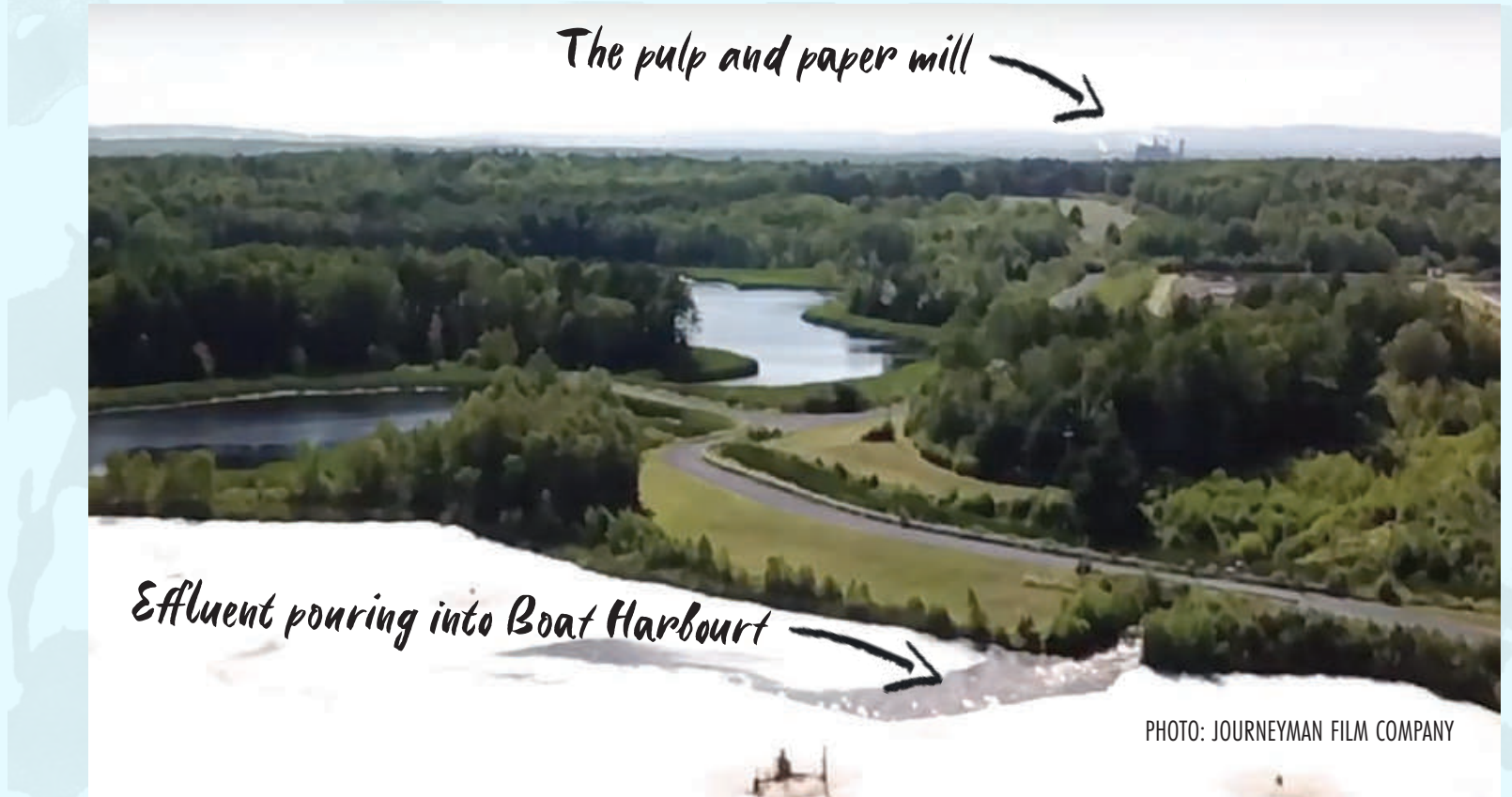
The elders tell stories of how A'se'k was like a mother, a parent because it provided for the well-being of the community.

A'se'k is an estuary: a partly enclosed body of water that has a connection to the sea, while also receiving the flow of one or more rivers.



For many years, a pulp and paper mill had been dumping its wastewater effluent into the waters of Boat Harbour. The mill isn't located in Pictou Landing, but sent its wastewater to Boat Harbour

through underground pipes. As a result, the water was polluted. The fish died, the birds stopped coming and the well-being of the community was in peril. Chief Andrea Paul explains the situation:



The pulp and paper mill →

Effluent pouring into Boat Harbour →

PHOTO: JOURNEYMAN FILM COMPANY

“ In 1967 effluent started dumping into Boat Harbour, and this [was] untreated effluent. There was no treatment to the effluent back then. It was just straight dumping into Boat Harbour. Elders say [that] within a couple days everything died in Boat Harbour. They would go down—and there are actually images of it—they would go down and there would be dead fish, just hundreds of dead fish everywhere. I can't even imagine that devastation for them. This was their food. This is what they ate. And it got snatched away from them that quickly. It's absolutely heart-wrenching to know what they went through. And that beautiful way of being a Mi'kmaw was taken away from them so quickly.

What does the word "effluent" mean?

Effluent is the discharge of water carrying pollutants from an industrial establishment, such as a mill, to a natural body of water. Sometimes, effluent is also called wastewater. When it's untreated, it contains many toxins. Untreated effluent is a major source of water pollution and is a serious danger to all marine life such fish, as well as birds, plants and humans.



PHOTO: JOURNEYMAN FILM COMPANY

The effects of the pollution on people living nearby were devastating. It released a stench that was overwhelming.

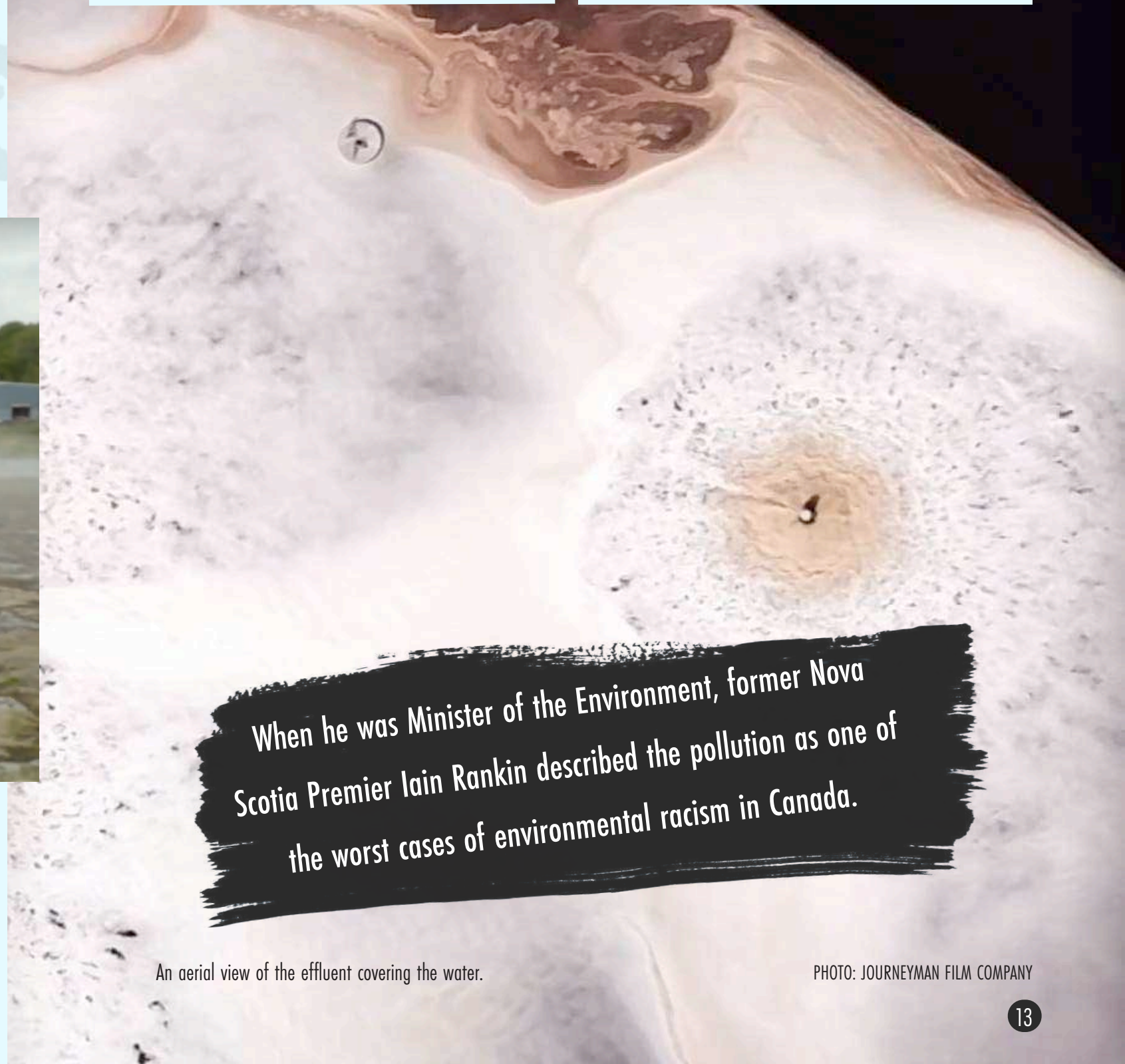
Residents of Pictou Landing described feeling that their lungs were burning when they were near the contaminated

site. A strong unpleasant odour hung over the community. The filthy air was so thick, it blackened their houses.

For decades, Pictou Landing First Nation tried to reclaim

its rights over Boat Harbour. For decades, they tried to close the mill that was polluting their water.

For decades, their efforts to close the mill were ignored by different governments.



When he was Minister of the Environment, former Nova Scotia Premier Iain Rankin described the pollution as one of the worst cases of environmental racism in Canada.

An aerial view of the effluent covering the water.

PHOTO: JOURNEYMAN FILM COMPANY

What is environmental racism?

Environmental racism happens when governments or industries look for a location to dump or release large amounts of toxins. Environmental racism occurs in communities that are not part of the majority group. By damaging their lands, waters, air and plants, environmental racism endangers the health of the people in these communities. Chief Andrea Paul explains:

Environmental racism is when government and industry discharge harmful pollutants on lands occupied by marginalized communities which then leads to harmful health outcomes to personal health, the environment and animals.

Environmental reparation is a way to heal both the land or water, and the people affected by the environmental racism. Reparation can be in the form of waste-site clean-up, for example. A thorough clean-up, which may take many years, would eventually enable people to use the land or the water as they did prior to the environmental damage.



PHOTO: JOURNEYMAN FILM COMPANY



Chief Andrea Paul speaks at the "No Pipe" rally in 2008.

PHOTO: GERARD JAMES HALFYARD

Tired of having been ignored for decades, the Chief and the community concluded that there was only one way to force actions that would lead to environmental reparation.

Chief Andrea and others organized a blockade. She stated that Pictou Landing First Nation would not allow the mill to repair the pipeline but allowed for the cleanup of the raw effluent. They wanted the Provincial government to legislate a closing date for the mill's operations in Boat Harbour. Many non-Indigenous fishermen supported Pictou

Landing First Nation because they recognized the danger of underwater pipes transporting effluent.

In 2015, the Boat Harbour Act was passed. It stipulates that effluent treatment in Boat Harbour must stop by January 31, 2020. This gave

What is an Act?

An Act can be compared to a form of law. It gives the authority the power to make regulations.

the mill 5 years to develop a plan for their water waste. When they didn't come up with a plan, the government ordered the pulp and paper mill to stop operations. In May of 2021, the mill submitted a proposal to Nova Scotia

Environment Department in hopes to re-open. Discussions and environmental assessment process are still on-going.

Chief Andrea Paul keeps a close eye on these processes. The contamination is quite



The waters along the shore today.

PHOTO: PAUL LANG

substantial as the toxins have settled into a thick layer on the bottom of Boat Harbour. Community members are participating in scientific studies to find solutions. It will still take years to restore it. Chief Andrea says the people of her community feel that there has been some improvements since the mill stopped operating. They find that the air is cleaner, some wildlife

is returning, and they can see rocks at the bottom of the water again. The improvements have given the people of Pictou Landing First Nation a sense of pride, a sense of being a good relation to nature by insisting that Boat Harbour be restored.

Chief Andrea Paul says that she was motivated to have A'se'k restored for the sake of the children:



“ But at least the children will have different memories and they [get] to start with a fresh legacy. A'se'k is coming back, and they're going to live a lifetime of opportunities, they're going to live a lifetime of reclamation and bringing things back that were lost. It excites me to know that that's at least something I contributed to, shifting that whole thing into something that's going to be so beautiful. To me, these children. . . Every time I had to go meet with the government or talk, it always reminded me [that] I can't have these children standing here [in] 50 years fighting the same fight. That cannot happen. It was so important to me. No matter how hard it gets, you just have to keep going, you have to keep going for those children.

PHOTO: PAUL LANG

It's been a difficult and long struggle for Chief Andrea Paul. But she is proud of what has been accomplished:

“ It took a lot out of me. It still takes a lot out of me, but we're moving to a new era here, and it's exciting. I'm very proud of that work, very proud of the work that was achieved in Pictou Landing, being the leader at that time and helping with that makes me very proud.



PHOTO: GERARD JAMES HALFYARD



Community support at the "No Pipe" rally in 2008.

PHOTO: GERARD JAMES HALFYARD

Chief Andrea was very happy when non-Indigenous people stood by her side to have Boat Harbour cleaned up. It was a good example of how people of all cultures can stand together and insist that nature be

restored the way it was before pollution.

She sees the restoration of Boat Harbour as healing for her people, especially for the Elders that remember A'se'k before the pulp and paper mill arrived:

“ [h]aving the Elders share their stories and their knowledge is very important, because they're the ones [who will] guide the rest of us in our work.



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Seeing the estuary through Indigenous lens, hearing the Elders talk about a different way of life, she knew it had to be restored.

The cultural teachings allow her to let the ancestors guide her work, and know she is working for every generation to come. Culture and its teachings and

using her gift of words keep Chief Andrea Paul a strong Mi'kmaw woman.

From overcoming her difficulties during her first year at university to standing tall to change her corner of the world, Chief Andrea Paul is indeed a woman to look up to.

Chief Andrea Paul's Headdress



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

When Andrea Paul became Chief, she soon realized she was perceived differently because she was a woman. There were only a few women chiefs at that time and they

didn't wear a headdress like the men Chiefs did. Chief Andrea also noticed that men Chiefs were treated with more respect than women Chiefs. She explains:

“

I remember there would be times when we would all be standing. We were at formal events and my acknowledgement wouldn't be the same as the acknowledgement of the male Chief [who] was beside me or sometimes I'd get skipped over. I don't know if they didn't know I was a Chief [or if] they thought I was an administrative person, [but] it bothered me.



I remember thinking, I need something so people will know that I am a Chief, [so that] people will realize that I am just as important as these men beside me. I'm not saying I'm important, but I'm saying [it's important] to be recognized. To be recognized like these men standing beside me.

That's when Chief Andrea decided to wear a headdress. Her husband got her a traditional headdress. At first, she felt uneasy about wearing it in public but other women encouraged her to wear it. Finally, at an official event, when all the men were wearing their headdresses, Chief Andrea wore hers too. She soon realized that her decision meant a lot to many other Mi'kmaw women:

I was so nervous. I didn't know if I was being disrespectful and they [other women] were like, no. This is such a proud moment for us [Mi'kmaw women]. From that moment on I said, I'm always going to wear my headdress. And it was interesting [because] then things shifted for me. I'd be at events, and you'd have your dignitaries and they'd be like, oh, Chief Andrea! Where before [I didn't get] that same acknowledgement.

Chief Andrea says that other women Chiefs are now beginning to wear a headdress as well. She says it's important for women to be treated with the same respect as men. She believes that women can be great leaders and hopes that many more will step up to leadership roles.

Your turn

1. Practice critical thinking

Find 2 or 3 articles (or videos) about Boat Harbour. Read or look at them with a critical mind. Are there different points of view? Explain what you think about these views. Discuss your analysis with the class.

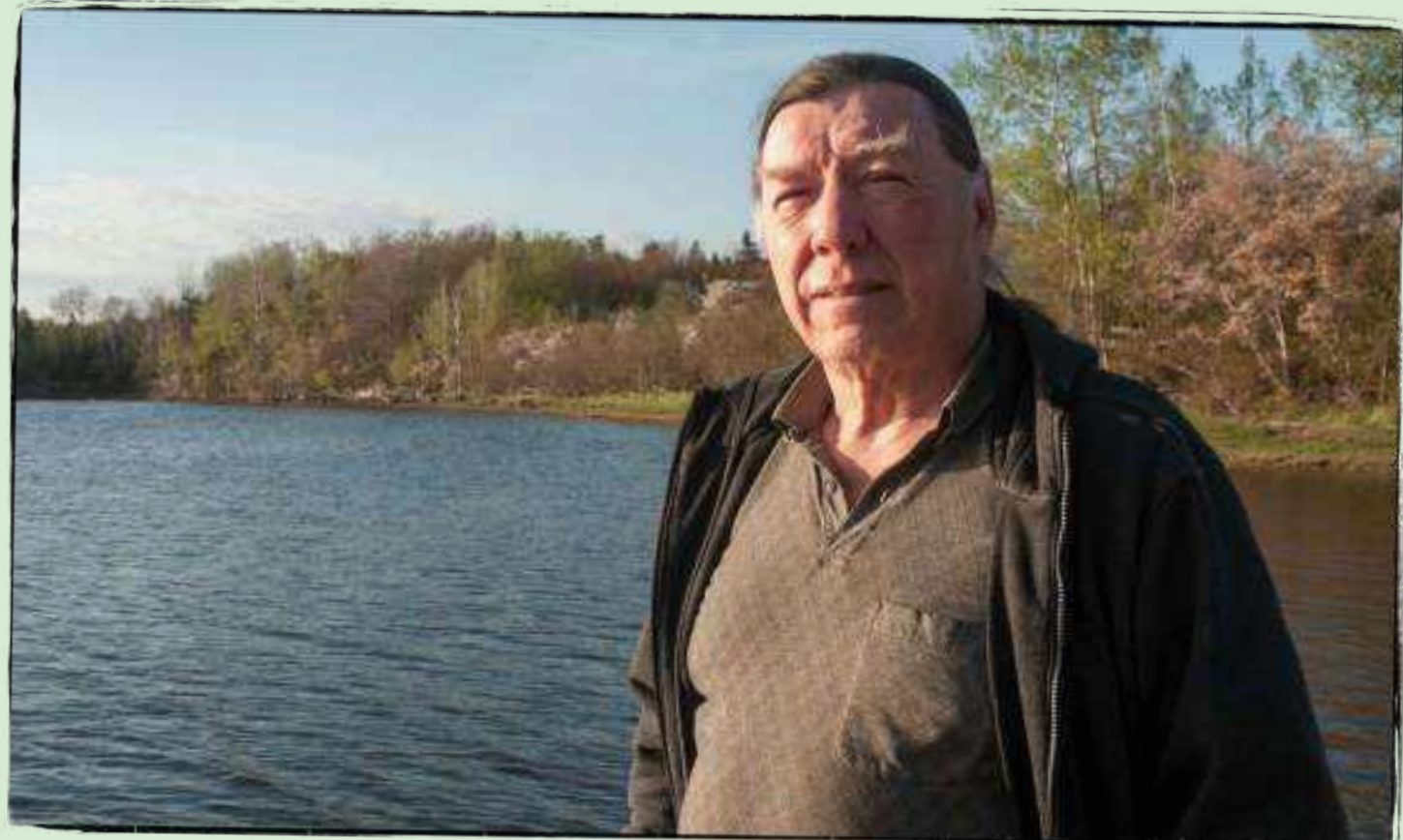
2. What's your legacy?

Chief Andrea Paul talks about the legacy she wants to leave to the children. Her legacy is rooted in nature. What legacy do you want to leave to future generations? Think about a sustainable practice that will protect nature.

Write a short paragraph on the legacy you want to leave, and why you think it is important. What steps could you take to ensure that you leave that legacy? Create a class book with all students' writings. Choose a title, for example, 'Sustainable Practices for Future Generations'. Share your book with other classes. You could also make it an online book with applications such as Book Creator.

Netukulimk and other Traditional Teachings

Former Chief and Elder Kerry Prosper explains the importance of Netukulimk and other traditional practices. These practices are especially important at a time of climate change and diminishing natural resources.



Kerry Prosper is a Mi'kmaw Elder and former Chief of Paqtnkek First Nation

PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Kerry Prosper is a Mi'kmaw Elder and the former Chief of Paqtnkek First Nation. He is currently the Elder in Residence at St. Francis Xavier University, in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

He is passionate about fishing, hunting, and gathering. He describes these activities as being core to understanding the cycle of life on earth and of understanding a human's relationship to nature.

Here is how Kerry explains it:

“

It's that relationship we have with the animal world, the plant world, the fish world, and the birds. Understanding that, no matter what, we are interdependent on each other to live. You know, there has to be death to live.

He explains that taking a life to survive and nourish the body is part of the nutrient cycle. Humans are part of the life and death cycle. Kerry says that when someone dies, the person's body and cells eventually become part of the soil. The soil grows plants that are eaten by animals.

Over time, the cycle comes back to humans, who eat the plants or the animals. A person may die as a human, but the cells and everything that was part of the body is transformed to become part of new life. That nutrient cycle, the life and death cycle, is never ending.

Kerry describes that it's this cycle that connects Mi'kmaw people to the land:

“

That's when you become spiritually, culturally, genetically connected to that piece of land. Live for thousands of years, and you develop that kind of relationship and respect. It slips into your spirituality. And so, hunting - that's where all my good health is. That's where all our medicines are [on the land].



Kerry believes that hunting, fishing, and gathering are probably one of the most important things Indigenous communities can do while living on their lands. It is through

those practices that Indigenous peoples found the medicines needed. One of those medicines is sweetgrass, a tall grass that is gathered, then often burned to smudge. Kerry explains:

“Our people really, really admired that smell [of sweetgrass], and they gathered it for years and used it for smudging. Smudging is [when] you burn it. You can smell the sweetness in the smoke. They used it to cleanse their mind, their thinking, and the air around them, their space. They wanted to clean it of any bad energy or anything like that, just to reset their mind into a situation that they’re going into. If you’re going into a Ceremony or if you’re going to school or if you want to come out of your daily life, [you] could have even [just] had a hard day [and] just want to reset, you smudge and you pray that all this negativity goes, and it resets your thinking, and you’re the person that you really are, type of thing.”

It is through smudging and other traditional practices that Mi’kmaw people maintain healthy relationships with themselves and others, as well as with the plant and animal world, and with land and water.

It is through those practices that they understand life and spirituality. That’s why hunting, fishing, and gathering food or medicines are so important.

About Mi’kmaw medicines

Mi’kmaw medicines are plants or parts of plants that have been used for thousands of years to heal Mi’kmaw people from physical, spiritual, or mental ailments. While Elder Kerry Prosper describes the healing properties of sweetgrass, there are other medicines that are important to him and Mi’kmaw people. Western science is now beginning to appreciate what Mi’kmaw have understood for thousands of years.

In 2019, researchers at Nova Scotia’s Cape Breton University received a 5-year grant to transform maskwiomin (birch bark) into an ointment to treat rashes and eczema. The developing team includes experts in Mi’kmaw studies, chemistry and nursing from Cape Breton University. The team also includes pharmacological medicine experts from Dalhousie University in Halifax. The commercialisation of this cream will be led by community members of Membertou First Nation. This grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research is seen as a recognition of Indigenous knowledge, and the necessity to include Indigenous knowledge in research.

Did you know?

Because of the deep connections between nature and humans, Kerry was taught to embrace Netukulimk while hunting, fishing, and gathering.

Netukulimk starts with being conscious of the homeland and understanding that humans are dependent on the land.



Kerry Prosper wants everyone to understand and respect the deep connections everyone shares with nature. PHOTO: PAUL LANG

A human needs nature to survive, for food, water, air.

A conscious human understands that future generations will continue to need nature. A conscious human understands that the life that dies today will be part of the lives of those

future generations. He explains how traditional rituals help develop this consciousness. For example, a hunter or gatherer gives thanks to the animal or plant that gave up its life to sustain another life.

When practicing Netukulimk, hunters, fishers, and gatherers take only what they need for themselves and their community. They understand that plants and animals also have offspring, and they also need food and shelter. Here's how Kerry explains it:



“Encompassing all of that thought, that they're [plants and animals] just trying to live just like we are, and that we are dependent on each other. If they're overpopulated, they may destroy each other or eat themselves out of house and home, and so we have to take them for our consumption so that they can survive sustainably, and we cut the population down and things like that. You develop quite a repertoire of traditions, customs, ways of giving thanks, determining where you hunt fish, where you have exhausted the resources in one area and have to find another. You develop a spiritual connection to those things and, in times of hardship, when there's nothing to be found, maybe if you offer. . .do some rituals, maybe you will be guided to a spot where there's a moose standing there or berries or a little school of fish you didn't remember. Those were the things that our Mi'kmaq had back in the old days when things were hard.



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Kerry talks of a spiritual connection to all living things, and that includes the ancestors. The connection to all relations is embedded with spiritual resilience that can help one get through hard times. That is why understanding life and death cycle, the nutrient cycle, and the interconnectedness between humans and nature are core to Netukulimk.

Kerry explains that before colonisation, if a member of a community disrupted the

balance needed in nature to thrive, they may run into hardship when it comes to hunting or providing themselves and family. They would have to seek support from the spiritual people of the community to help restore the balance with nature through ceremony so as to not bring more hardship to the whole community. He explains how things are different now, and why Netukulimk needs to be re-learned:

Netukulimk



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Kerry Prosper teaches that Netukulimk offers the best path towards sustainability.

“One of the harshest punishments was getting banned from that community. You were ostracized, and you had to live on your own. Your family and chances of survival were pretty hard because you needed to live with the community and the collective. So, if you did something that could affect the whole community, it was pretty serious. We kind of lost that today. When we talk about Netukulimk and trying to learn back to those teachings and that consciousness, it's quite foreign to us because of our long centuries of colonization. You know, we rely on the justice system to right the wrongs. You pay your dues, and that's it. You can go back to whatever you want. But there's more ramifications to the people in the community and to the Earth that we don't realize or don't want to acknowledge.”

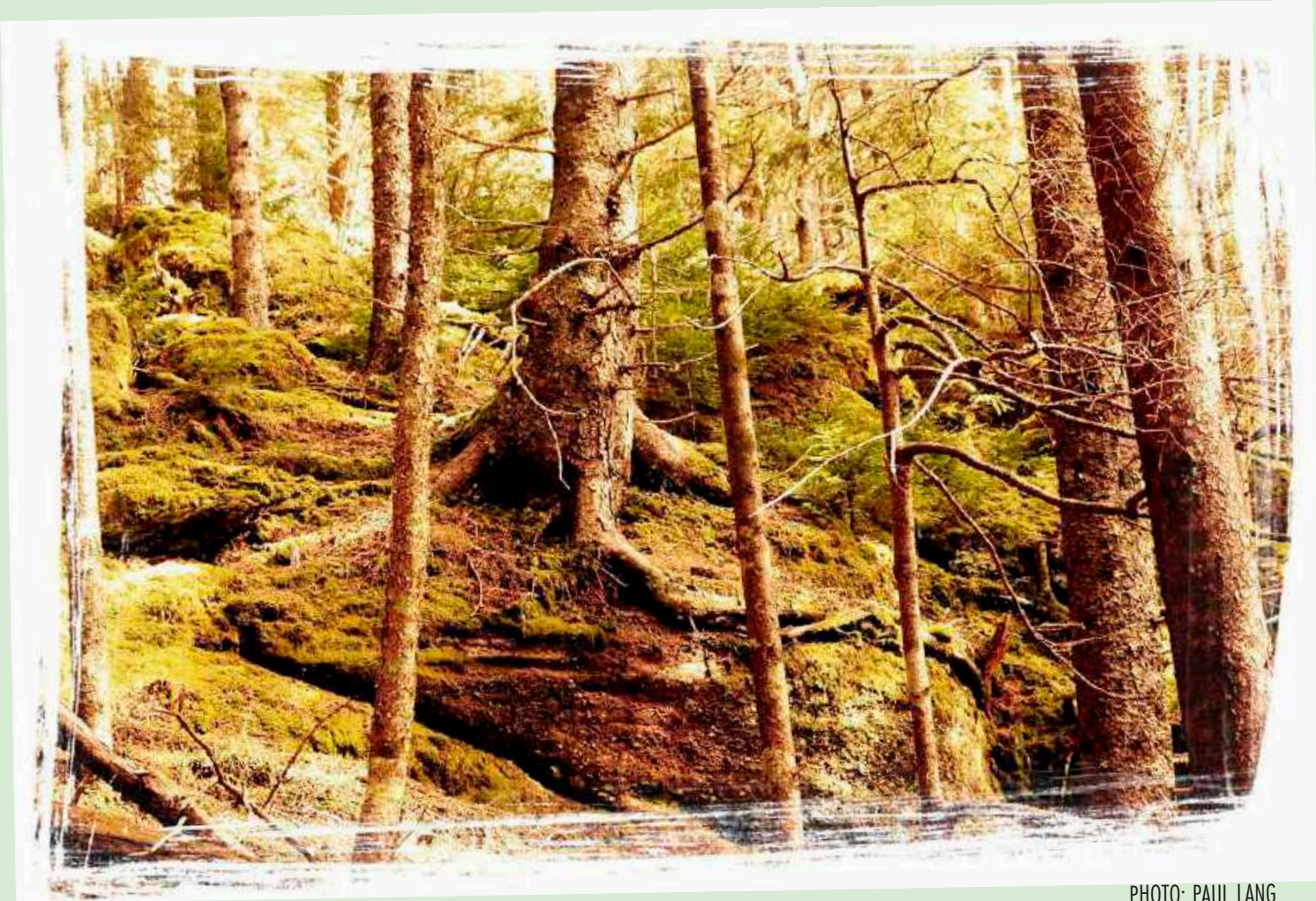


PHOTO: PAUL LANG



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Did you know?

How trees are connected

Canadian forestry ecologist Susanne Simard demonstrated that trees are connected to other trees by an underground system of fungi. That system looks like the nervous system in the human brain.

The trees use these connections to warn each other of danger. For example, a tree could send chemical indicators to other trees to alert them to the presence of a harmful insect. These signals are important to keep the forest healthy. Simard explains that trees also share nutrients during difficult times to keep each other strong. The trees in a forest that are linked to each other are also linked

to an older tree. In the forest, the seedlings will connect to the network of older trees. The old trees will share carbon, nutrients, and water to these seedlings when necessary, helping them to survive and grow. Environmentalist David Suzuki has also spoken about these relationships.

Elder Kerry Prosper says that these scientific findings are aligned with the timeless teaching that Elder Gerald Gloade taught him. He points to the interconnectivity among all forms of life. Netukulimk is being conscious of all life and nature around us, not taking more than we need and being mindful that animals and plants also need shelter, that they too have a family to sustain, that they too have a life that is complex and rich.

Kerry talks about the challenges of teaching and applying Netukulimk.

Mi'kmaw treaty rights have been recognized by Canada's Supreme Court, but he stresses that, along with those rights come responsibilities. He says that, after having been denied the right to hunt, fish, and gather for generations, it's sometimes hard to restrain some people from feeling like they finally have a chance to make a dignified living by taking and taking.

A dignified living should not exceed the sustainability of a resource. A resource can only provide so much and then there's no coming back from that. What is good for one nation should be good for all. Sustainability is not just for Indigenous people but should be a common value for everyone, including settlers, living on the land.

Kerry believes that Netukulimk offers the best path towards sustainability. If not, he believes policies of enforcement and



Kerry Prosper explains that responsibilities accompany the rights in the Peace and Friendship Treaties.

regulations will have to be introduced.

But when these policies or regulations are broken, people must go to court, and there is a lot of money wasted on getting people to obey the rules.

Furthermore, people going to court will probably not learn the wisdom of utilizing natural resources in a responsible way.

Netukulimk on the other hand, teaches responsibilities,

develops consciousness of the deep connections between all living things in this life, and through the life and death cycle.

Netukulimk develops the spirituality to have a strong relationship to oneself, to others and to nature. Kerry teaches the importance of protecting Mi'kmaw rights and exercising them while applying Netukulimk.

“

The status quo going on the earth is just not acceptable to what our [Mi'kmaw] people would accept. I think we've got to embrace a level of quality of life that's sustainable. Nothing that's too extravagant and would hurt the existence of all these things that provide us a livelihood.

Kerry's wise words are a reminder to all humans, that sustainability needs to be at the forefront of our ways of living, now and for the next years.

While sustainability is a fairly new word in today's society, the values behind that word are well known to Mi'kmaw people. Knowing how to harvest

natural resources responsibly, without compromising future generations was taught through Netukulimk for thousands of years.

In addition, Kerry talks about the tradition of sharing resources that still continues today.

He explains that some fishers or hunters respect the tradition of taking care of the community by sharing salmon, moose or other game with elders and single moms. He describes the positive

influence that some fishers or hunters have on young people when they mentor them and help them develop hunting and fishing skills:

“they’re [young people who are] really proud of being able to actually catch something and bring it home and see the look on the person’s face [who] gets it and enjoys that meal. It binds the community together, and it keeps those relationships healthy. Not only physical health through food but mental health, and just keeping a community bound together in a good way. I think that’s really important. I think we have to get back to more of that [tradition] —exchanging and sharing.



Kerry Prosper describes the joy that accompanies exchanging and sharing.

PHOTO: PAUL LANG



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Elder Kerry Prosper teaches the importance of practicing Netukulimk when hunting, fishing and gathering, of keeping the traditions alive. In his teachings he reminds youth that their Mi’kmaw language teaches them that nature is alive. He stresses that traditions and Netukulimk foster both a healthy natural world along with mental and physical wellness in humans.

It is one way, perhaps the only way, to keep both Mi’kmaw and settler communities strong and thriving.

If Mi’kmaw and settler youth are going to survive the effects of climate change and resource scarcity, Kerry emphasizes the importance of embracing Netukulimk.



Did you know that

UINR (Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources) is Cape Breton's Mi'kmaw voice on natural resources and environment. They work with government and First Nations organizations toward equal participation in natural resource management. Natural resources include forest, water, animals, and plants. Traditional knowledge is very important to keeping nature healthy. UINR believes that by integrating Netukulimk and science, they will achieve their goals. There three goals are:

- GOVERNANCE

To provide resources for Mi'kmaw equal participation in natural resource management in Unama'ki and its traditional territory.

- TWO-EYED SEEING

To strengthen Mi'kmaw research and natural resource management while maintaining our traditions and world views.

- PARTNERSHIPS

To partner with other groups sharing the same desire to protect and preserve our resources for future generations.

Unama'ki is the Mi'kmaw word for Cape Breton, and it means Land of Fog.

To learn more about UINR, look at the two short videos at <https://www.uinr.ca/programs/netukulimk/>

Your turn

1. Your thoughts on Netukulimk

Do you think Netukulimk should be part of citizenship education? Why or why not? In groups of 2 or 3, record a short audio explaining Netukulimk and what it means to you. Maybe your audio files could be shared with other classes or a local radio station. Be creative. Add sound effects and/or music to your audio file.

2. Developing strong connections

In groups of 3 or 4, think of ways that you could develop a stronger connection to the land, the forest, the plants, the air, the water or the animals.

Link your suggestions to the responsibilities of being a citizen. Write these suggestions down, then share them with the other students and your teacher.

Make a plan together to apply some of these suggestions collaboratively, throughout the year.

Stories From Yesterday, Teachings for Today

Jane Meader is a knowledge keeper who explains the relevance of legends to daily lives. This includes relations to nature and the reclaiming of women's traditional power.

Jane Meader is a knowledge keeper who teaches Mi'kmaw culture and language. She holds a Bachelor of Education and a Masters of Education from St. Francis Xavier University. She lives in the Mi'kmaw Community of Membertou and is also the Mi'kmaw Language Coordinator for the Membertou Band Council.

Jane's traditional name means First Dawn Woman. The Mi'kmaw Nation, along with the Wolastoqey, Penobscot, Passamaquoddy and Abenaki Nations are members of the Wapna'ki Confederacy, better known as People of the Dawn and come from the Eastern seaboard of North America.

All these First Nations recognize Kluskap as one of the first human beings created and having special powers and responsibilities.

Jane shares the story of Kluskap and the giant animals (Megafauna) as an example of how knowledge has been passed down through generations for thousands of years.



PHOTO: KAYLA AT LIFE WITH FOUR

A long, long time ago, the Mi'kmaw were faced with an enormous challenge. The animals in the forest were too big and fierce and the people were afraid to participate in the activities necessary for their survival. The bear, the wolf, the beaver, the wild cat and even the squirrel were too big.



Creator loved the Mi'kmaw People so much that Kluskap was called upon to help. Kluskap also loved the people and wanted to find a solution to this dilemma. He lovingly pet each of the animals until they shrank to a size that made the Mi'kmaw feel safe and comfortable. Each animal was brought down to their present size.

Kluskap also left instructions for the animals – they were to serve humans and not annoy them or cause fear. The animals agreed to these terms and all was good in Mi'kma'ki.

Jane attributes her knowledge of this Kluskap legend to Clifford Paul and Gerald Gloade. She believes that it's essential to acknowledge teachers and knowledge keepers, especially when transferring knowledge. It is an important aspect of passing these traditional stories down from one generation to the next.

The stories of Kluskap are steeped in the oral history and traditions of the Mi'kmaw and are interpreted as metaphors for the laws of nature. This particular legend is a story of evolution that has been passed on through generations for thousands of years.

“

[The legends] are so important. When we talk about them, a lot of people think they're just these little stories when in actuality, there's so much within them—there's history, there's spirituality, there's protocols, there's our belief system, there's the customs that we have.

**GIANT BEAVER TOOTH FROM LAST ICE AGE
DISCOVERED NEAR THE BAY OF FUNDY**




AN ISOLATED INCISOR TOOTH OF A GIANT BEAVER (CASTOROIDES OHIOENSIS FOSTER) RECOVERED FROM INDIAN ISLAND, A SMALL ISLAND NEAR PASSAMAQUODDY BAY. THIS FOSSIL CAN BE SEEN AT THE NEW BRUNSWICK MUSEUM IN SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK.

When a Giant Beaver fossil was found in the Passamaquoddy Bay in 1998, the discovery proved that the Kluskap story was based on facts.

Clifford Paul notes:

“The feature of this story that intrigues me is the fact that the stone tool not only supports the science expressed in the extinction of the Megafauna, it confirms the truth expressed in a wonderful Kluskap legend. The evidence supports the Mi’kmaw version of events, plus it supports the modern western scientific version of events as well. It places both a Mi’kmaw and scientific fingerprint on the implement.



Jane says this fossil is only one example of extensive Mi’kmaw scientific knowledge:

“They [settlers] called our people primitive. But our people were not primitive. Our people were so advanced that society has not yet caught up with them.

Did you know?

About Giant Beavers

Giant beavers once lived on Turtle Island, including Mi'kma'ki. In the last Ice Age this Giant Beaver (*Castoroides ohioensis*) lived here and could be 2.5 metres tall and weigh up to 100 kg - much bigger than the modern beaver. However, their incisors weren't able to cut wood as well as modern beavers. As a result, it is today's smaller beaver that is building its dams in streams and rivers.



THIS ILLUSTRATION COMPARES THE SIZES OF THE GIANT BEAVER FROM THE ICE AGE WITH TODAY'S BEAVER.



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Many people today, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, think that traditional knowledge and science should co-exist.

Albert Marshall, an Elder from Eskasoni, refers to this type of knowledge as “Two-Eyed Seeing” or “Etuaptmik” in Mi'kmaw.

Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous knowledge is often woven inside traditional stories. These stories, sometimes called

legends or myths, are older than the Ice Age. These stories often go beyond the limits of what science is able to explain.

In addition to their scientific value, they help people make sense of the world and how to live in it. The stories speak to hearts and minds about the deep relationships that exist between people and nature.

This ability to make this deep connection is what gives these stories their own spirit.

Jane Meader explains why legends are important:

“

...they're amazing, when you start to look at them. When you look deeper, there's so much more than just a story. [Those are] some of the intergenerational teachings that I teach my kids. It's about spirituality, the importance of spirituality, and the connections that we have. That we are connected to Creator, but we are also connected to the Earth; and we're connected to each other and our own spirit; and how it's important that we make, that we have good relationships, that we have that special relationship with Creator, with the Earth, with each other, and even with ourselves. I remember listening one day to this young woman and she said, you know, one of the things that we're not taught, [but] that we should know about, is how to be a good relative. She didn't say a good person, she said a good relative.

It brings these teachings back to *Msit No'kmaq* — We are all related. It's that teaching about how we're all related, but we all need to be good to each other. We need to have compassion, understanding, love, respect for each other.

Traditional Stories

Did you know?

Mi'kmaw oral traditions, from what I have learned, were based on some sort of historical or scientific fact. While they take on a bit of embellishment, the core of the message stays the same. What happens is these legends or myths still carry with them the lessons that need to be carried forward. In this way, others pass along teachings from one generation to the next. Some change these traditional stories and make it their own so it is easier to remember them. Most oral traditions have ethics embedded inside them, some have knowledge while most carry both.

- Basil Johnson, Treaty Education Coordinator

Msit No'kmaq

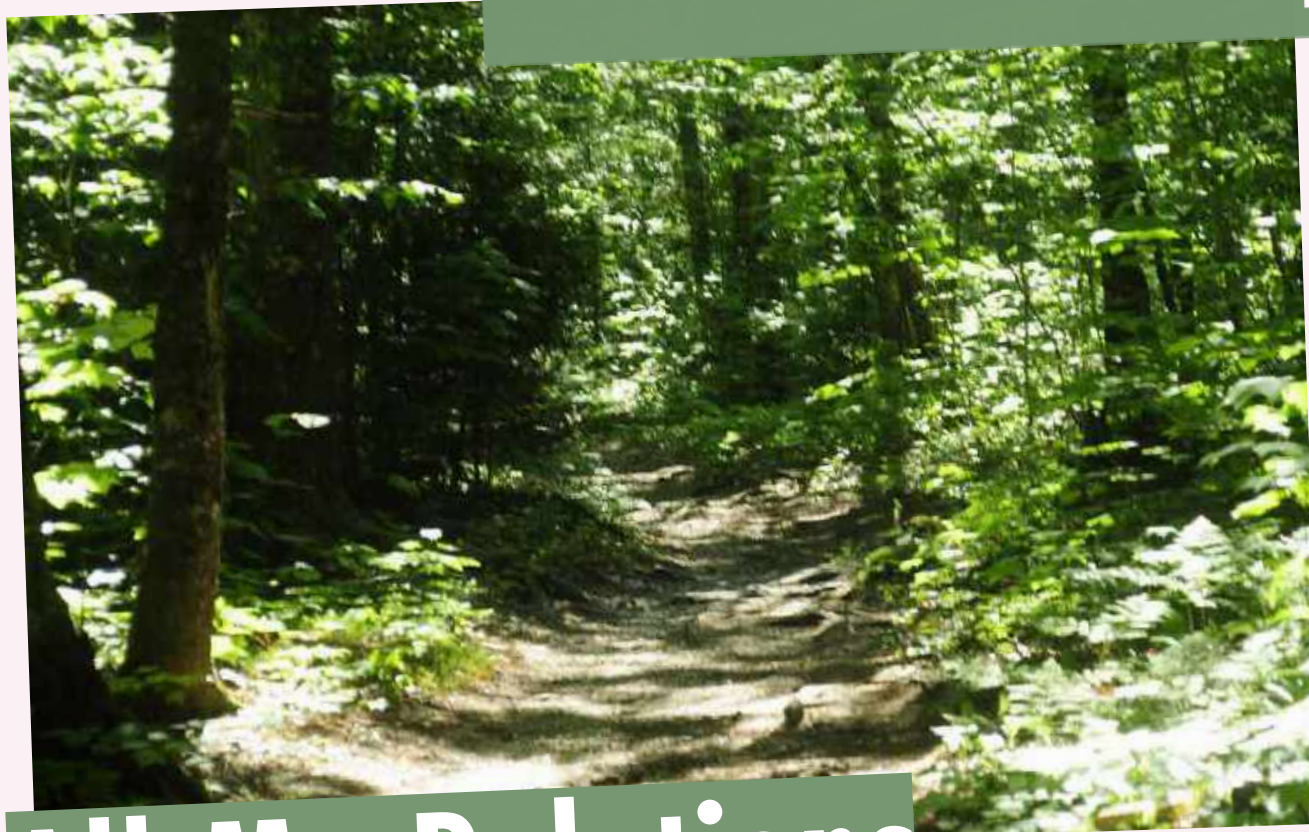


PHOTO: PAUL LANG

All My Relations

Jane explains the difference between being a good person and being a good relative. Some might think that in order to be a good person, it's enough to be kind to others, but Jane says that being a good relative requires much more.

MSIT NO'KMAQ is a concept that is about a much stronger and more profound way to live. It is a recognition of connections to others. It is a recognition of connections to

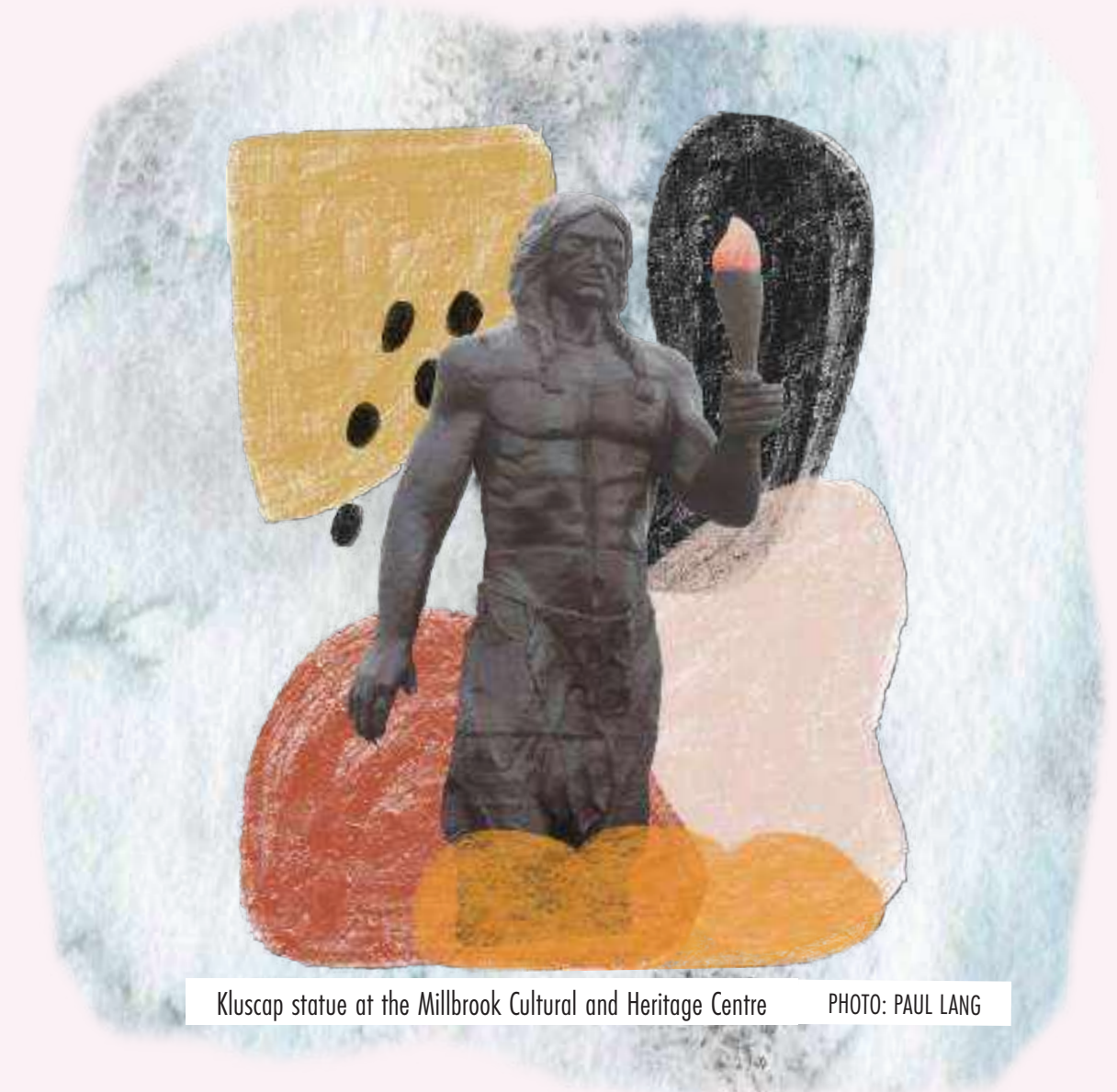
nature – whether that's water, food or air; the four-legged and winged creatures and those of the sea. All of nature sustains human beings' ability to live in this world.

Being a good relative means following a thoughtful pathway of living with respect for oneself, for others and for the natural world. The Mi'kmaw legends are immemorial, but their lessons are needed now more than ever.

With the climate crisis affecting everyone's lives, it is important to draw from the wisdom of the legends. For example, there are animals alive today that survived the ice age. What lessons can humans draw from the way animals either adapted or disappeared?

When Kluskap reduced the size of the animals to create harmony and balance for all, he was also telling people to have compassion, understanding, love, and respect for all forms

of life. By reducing the size of the animals, he was making the world a more balanced place to live for humans. In turn, he expects humans to be a good relative to all their relations. While some humans think they are on top of the food chain, this isn't accurate. In fact, the survival and happiness of humans depends on nature. Kluskap's wisdom in creating harmony and balance in the world is one of the teachings that leads to living as a good relative.



Kluskap statue at the Millbrook Cultural and Heritage Centre

PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Another important lesson that Jane teaches has to do with the power and the role of women and feminine people. She points to the vital need to reclaim the important role women once held. Prior to colonization women held esteemed positions of authority and respect in their communities. It was an egalitarian society where the women walked side by side with the men. They made political and economic decisions and they were honoured.

Colonization dramatically changed the role and rights of Mi'kmaw women. Jane recalls early historical documents that remarked on "the Mi'kmaws' foolish notion of suffrage..." ridiculing women's rights in

Mi'kmaw traditions, including their right to independence.

With colonization, Mi'kmaw women and men were forced to adopt western values and its laws. As a result, women lost their place of honour, their decision-making power and their autonomy. In turn, Mi'kmaw communities lost a core part of their culture.

Today, Jane and other Mi'kmaw women are working to reclaim their traditional place in their communities. She says that they've made great strides in regaining their power. Jane is grateful for the teachings in some of Kluskap's stories that inform their efforts to regain their power:



Jane Meader teaches about the importance of reclaiming the important role of women .

PHOTO: JULIEN STRASFELD

“When Kluskap was first made he was bound to the land. He had to observe the world as it was going on around him. And it was two strikes of lightning that set him free. One of the first things he came across was this woman. It was his mother. She was the first Clan Mother. Our creation story has four beings: Kluskap, his nephew, who provides for his people as he is younger, his mother, and his grandmother, who gave Kluskap his wisdom. A balance of two women and two men. A balance of older and younger.

Women's Rights

Did you know?

In 1848 the first convention for Women's Rights was held in Seneca Falls, New York. The American women organizing this convention were inspired by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The Indigenous women were honoured in their communities. Many ceremonies were specific to women. They also held social, political and economic rights. One of American women organizing the first convention of women's rights stated that Haudenosaunee societies modeled the highest standards possible for a civilization. Before colonization, Mi'kmaw society shared similar values for the role and place of women in their culture.

Jane strongly believes that traditional teachings and legends need to be taught to every generation, especially teachings about women.

She believes it's important to pass on this knowledge. This is how knowledge stays alive from one generation to the next:

“There's a lot that I teach them [youth]. I do teach them ceremonies. We do things like welcoming the baby, we do those traditional ceremonies. We do Rites of Passage, puberty rites for our young girls. There are a lot of ceremonies that we still carry and we still do: Pipe Ceremonies, traditional Naming Ceremonies, and just that reliance on Spirit. Because if you rely on Spirit, you're not going to go wrong because inside here is where the truth is. In our Spirits, here. When something's not right, you can feel it in here. So, it kind of comes back. It's about recognizing what is truth and what isn't.”



Jane doesn't limit her learnings to legends. She says she learns from the younger generation as well. She believes people need to observe and learn from youth:



“I think as older people we need to have open hearts and open minds because our children could teach us so much. I've had two year olds, three month olds teach me because they are the grandmothers and grandfathers that are coming up, they come from the Spirit World, and they come with good teachings... We get the attitude, 'oh, you're young, you don't know anything.' We can't do that to our kids. We need to honour them. We need to respect them and we need to respect their knowledge because there is so much they can teach us.”



PHOTO: PAUL LANG



Jane Meader is a Mi'kmaw woman who is learning both from legends and youth. Her teachings reflect these learnings.

Along with other Mi'kmaw women, Jane teaches how to live as a good relative, and how to reclaim women's power. Jane teaches through traditional stories and through ceremonies. Her teachings are embedded in love, compassion and forgiveness.



PHOTO: KAYLA AT LIFE WITH FOUR



Msit No'kmaq

Traditions teach people how to be a good relative to girls and women. Today's efforts by Mi'kmaw women to reclaim their power is one way to foster harmony and balance in the world.

The Mik'maw stories teach everyone important stories about the homeland, whether you are Mik'maw or not. Everyone living on Mi'kmaki lands should know the stories of the lands and of its First Peoples.

The Mik'maw traditional stories explain what it means to be a human sharing her or his time on earth with others. These stories remind people how to share space with nature that surrounds us. These timeless stories are embedded in the land.

PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Your turn

1. Become a reporter

Jane Meader works hard to ensure that girls and women recognize their power and participate fully in social, political, economic and community activities. Gender equality is also very important for the United Nations. What are signs of gender equality and/or inequality in your school? Write a short article on gender equality. Share your article with your classmates.

2. Social media

Post a short video or a written message on social media about one thing you've learned in this article. Present your learnings in a creative way.

3. Making changes: a collective project

The Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the traditions and cultural values of each people must be taken into account for the protection and harmonious development of the child. This means that Mi'kmaw children and youth should have opportunities to learn about their traditions and cultural values at school.

How are Mi'kmaw values and traditions part of your learnings at school? Think about a way to express your thoughts on learning traditions at school.

For example, you could write to your school district or your Band Council in order to ask them to include mythology and legend stories in the curricula. Your letter should take the form of a short argumentative essay. If your school is already reading and studying Mi'kmaw legends and mythologies, send your letter to a newspaper.

Creating culturally safe spaces

April Prosper explains the importance of making schools a culturally safe space where Mi'kmaw students can learn their culture and be themselves in every aspect of their culture. April also shares how the connection to the land is a vital part of being Mi'kmaw.



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

April Prosper is a member of Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation. She works as a First Nations support worker at the East Antigonish Education Centre. Being Mi'kmaw for April means holding a strong connection to the land and knowing that she is rooted in the land. For her, the connection to the

land is spiritual. April is Kerry Prosper's daughter and she has learned a lot from him. Like her father, she believes Netukulimk needs to be at the core of hunting, fishing, and gathering. She explains that people need to take only what they need and points to why:

“

Because back when Dad was younger, it was bountiful. Hunting was bountiful, fishing was bountiful when he was really young. And nowadays, with my generation coming in and my son's generation, there's not really much there.



April Prosper and her father Kerry gathering fiddleheads.

PHOTO: APRIL PROSPER

April shares how gathering fiddleheads helped her understand how nature can change. She says that her dad had always taken her and her sisters to gather fiddleheads. It was a joyful occasion

and every year they knew fiddleheads would be plentiful in a particular area. A few years ago, when they went to gather fiddleheads at the usual place and time, April was surprised when they couldn't find any.

After looking more closely, her dad noticed the change in the landscape where fiddleheads used to grow. The rain had washed away some of the soil,

transforming the terrain. Because both April and her dad practice Netukulimk, they are very conscious of any changes to the land. April comments:

“It was almost like a loss for us, because we're so used to having that bounty every spring. And then we started thinking, well, did we offer tobacco? Did we remember to do that last year? I mean, it's those little things that just stay in the back of our mind, to always give back. And, so yeah, and I noticed throughout the year [everything] else that was late—the Sweetgrass [was] kind of late. I noticed the salmon run was late as well. And the rains were late too. Usually we get an October, November rain, and we really didn't get it until just now in December. Those kinds of things trigger something in your mind, something so little just from fiddleheads. [Fiddleheads] coming up late is a warning [that] maybe [it's all] going to be late in the year. But those are the things that I've learned from gathering throughout the years.





PHOTO: APRIL PROSPER

April believes strongly that Netukulimk needs to be taught to all students at school. Scientists warn of the implications of climate change. Her dad and other elders talk about the changes in the land and its resources.

While science provides vital data about climate change, Netukulimk provides a

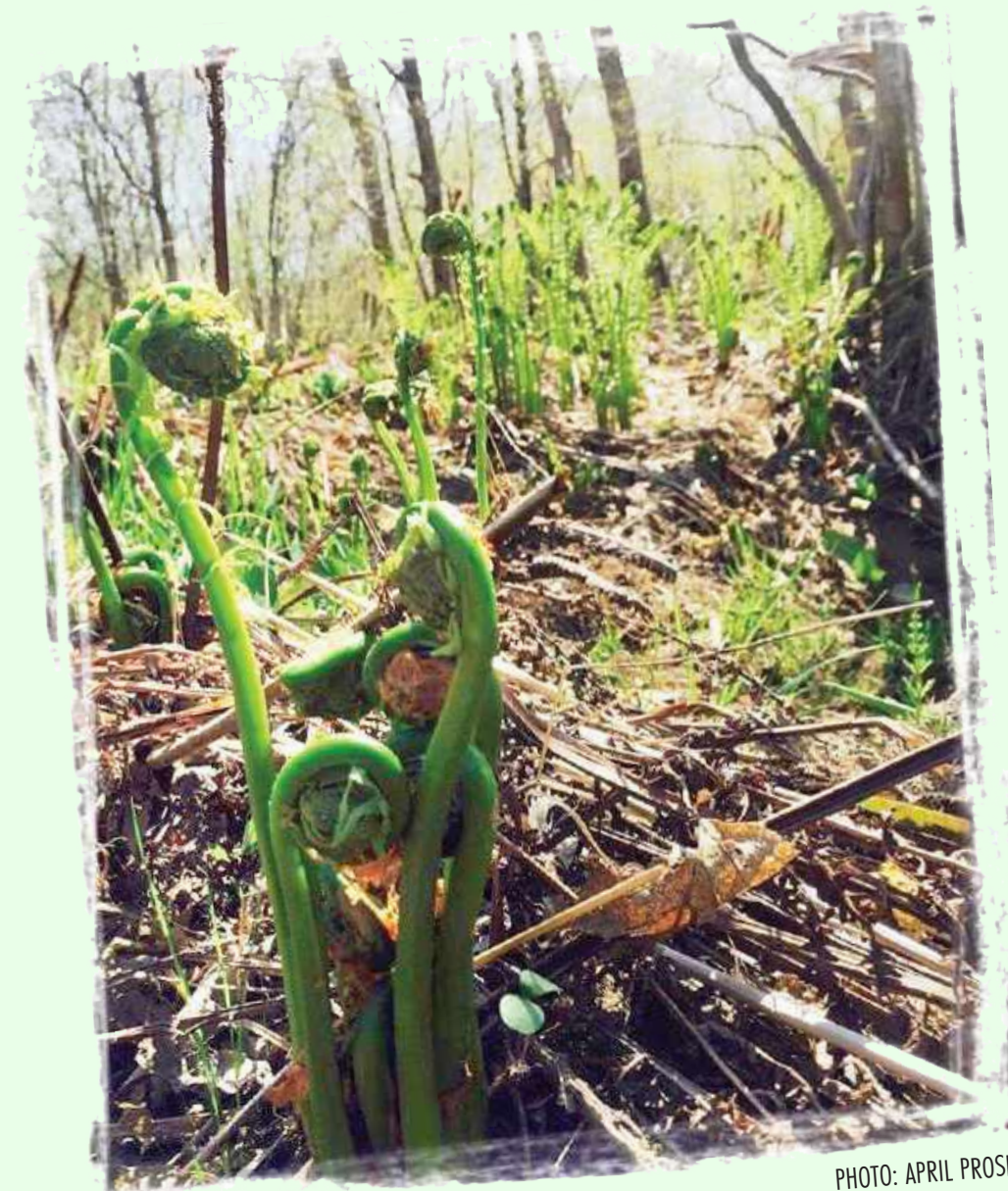
responsible way of living sustainably in response to climate change.

As her father Kerry explains in his article earlier in this magazine, Netukulimk is a practice of being conscious of nature. Netukulimk is the practice of taking only what is needed when one is hunting, fishing or gathering.

Did you know?

About fiddleheads

Fiddleheads are the young shoots of a fern called ostrich ferns. Fiddleheads can only be picked during a few weeks in the spring. They can be found in forests, marshes or by streams and rivers. Fiddleheads are a great source of nutrients but should not be eaten raw.



Fiddleheads in the forest.

PHOTO: APRIL PROSPER



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

April brings her understanding of her culture to her work with students as a support worker in a provincial school. Part of her job is to offer cultural support to Mi'kmaw students attending the school. She has an open-door policy, providing a safe space where students are able to drop in to see her anytime. Students can debrief about a racist experience or ask for a traditional ceremony like smudging when they feel it's needed.

Part of her work is fostering good relationships between teachers and parents, or between administration, students and teachers. As a result of her experiences, April realizes that providing

a culturally safe space is very important to Indigenous youth.

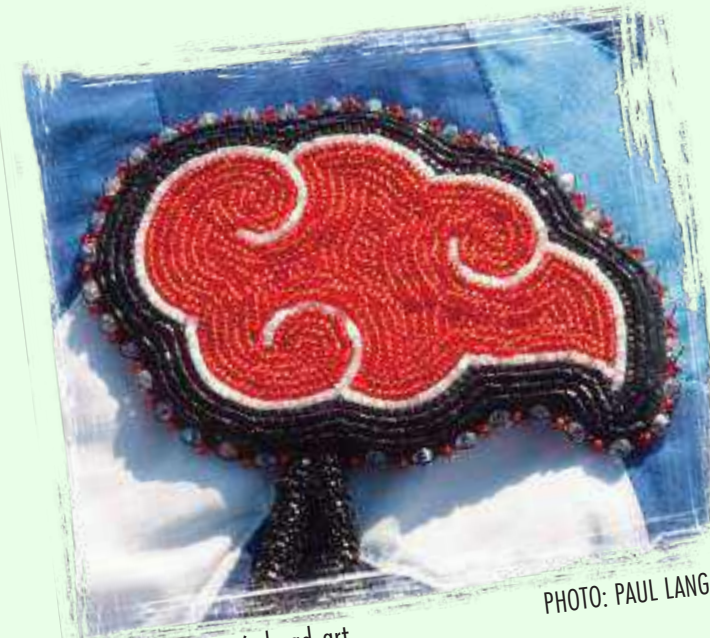
April's views are aligned with research. If Mi'kmaw and other Indigenous students are to thrive, culturally safe spaces must go beyond a support worker's classroom. The responsibility to create a culturally safe school doesn't rest on the shoulders of any one person. Each staff member, each student, whether Indigenous or settler, must be part of creating culturally safe learning environments throughout the school. Indigenous students should feel culturally safe everywhere in the school - from the classroom to the gym to the cafeteria.

Did you know?

About cultural safe spaces

A culturally safe space is an environment where a person feels they can be who they are, regardless of their identity. It is an environment where identity is respected and accepted. It is a space where a person feels spiritually, physically, socially and emotionally safe; a space where there is no need to hide any aspect of one's identity. In a school, it is an environment where values, knowledge, culture and histories of the people of the land, in this case, Mi'kmaw culture, knowledge and histories are taught and respected.

Mi'kmaw youth, like all students, need to feel a sense of belonging to their school to succeed. Creating a culturally safe space is a big step towards developing that sense of belonging.



April Prosper's bead art.

PHOTO: PAUL LANG

When she started working at the school, she knew a lot about Mi'kmaw history and culture. But she wanted to keep learning. She wanted to model that even adults can learn about culture regardless of their age.

One of April's new learnings was beading. She learned how to bead with the help of books and YouTube videos. She took her cultural learning seriously and spent a lot of time beading.

About Indigenous beadwork

Did you know?

Indigenous beadwork is frequently used to decorate accessories and clothing. Before colonization, Mi'kmaw people applied porcupine quills, hair and animal fur to decorate their clothes. Beads became available with European contact because they were trading items. Mi'kmaw people began adding beads to clothing and accessories, using the same traditional techniques. Soon, they mostly used beads to decorate items until today.



She started a beading club at school. Over time, April also incorporated making ribbon skirts with a few students. The beading club, along with creating ribbon skirts have become successful activities, as April describes:



April Prosper shows some of her latest ribbon skirt designs.

“

If the kids [are] having a rough day, they'll calm down, and they'll just kind of bead, right? It's like therapy for them. They're able to focus on something, and when they're finished [they are] like, wow, I made this! It's something to be proud of... And it's the same thing with ribbon skirts too. I incorporated that at work as well. I work with a few young ladies and we've made ribbon skirts, and they really enjoyed that because they felt like, wow, I have something beautiful I could wear! [They] have something that they feel represents them, that they [can] be proud of, and that they feel nice in.



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Sometimes settler students come to visit April as well. She emphasizes that non-Mi'kmaw youth (and educators) shouldn't be afraid to ask questions and learn more about Mi'kmaw culture and traditions.

To live in peace and harmony, everyone must learn about Mi'kmaw history, culture, and traditions. Culturally safe learning environments can be created at schools by integrating traditional ceremonies, by

including traditional activities such as beading and by including teachings such as Netukulimk that connect youth to the land.



Your turn

1. A culturally safe place

Read the description of a culturally safe space one more time. Then think about your school and answer these questions on your own. Keep in mind there isn't only one perspective. Your experience may be different from another student's experience. It's important to share your reflections.

- Is your school a culturally safe space? Why or why not? Be specific.
- What would make your school a more culturally safe space?
- How does a culturally safe school expand the understanding of citizenship?

Give your paper to your teacher. Your teacher can lead a class discussion on any issue(s) in your papers. Try to find solution(s) to any recurring problem(s) that come up in your discussion. Who needs to hear the problem? What could be a solution to creating a culturally safe space? Collectively develop an action plan to present the issue(s) and solution(s) to the appropriate decision-makers.

Your turn (Cont'd)

2. Living with changes

In the article, April talks about changes in the land and in the timing that affects fiddlehead gathering. What changes in the weather or nature have you noticed in your community? Find articles about changes in nature or weather in your region. Share those changes with your classmates. Then, in small groups, answer the following questions:

- How do these changes affect my life now?
- How might the changes affect my life when I'm an adult?
- What are the positive and negative consequences of these changes?

Create a time capsule to explain the changes in weather and nature in your region. Include your written observations, articles and your group reflections. You could also add an object to represent a tradition from each classmate's culture.

Peace and Friendship Treaties



The Peace and Friendship Treaties



The Peace and Friendship Treaties were signed between the Mi'kmaq Nations and the British Crown between 1726 and 1779. Land was never ceded by the Mi'kmaq in the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Treaties are formal agreements that describe promises, benefits and obligations for both parties.

Treaties were not new to the Mi'kmaq. Treaties were made between Indigenous Nations long before the first settlers arrived. The very first treaties on the land now known as Nova Scotia were Wampum Belts.

Jane Meader explains that wampum belts were very practical. They were easy to carry. They were also water resistant, and they could easily be repaired, as opposed to the paper used in the Peace and Friendship Treaties which can easily be lost and forgotten.

At the time of the Peace and Friendship Treaties, Jane explains that the Mi'kmaq were very powerful. The British needed to sign treaties with them not only to facilitate trading, but also to guarantee peace:



Jane Meader explains why the treaties were signed.

PHOTO: JULIEN STRASFEID

“

It was the British who conceded to what we [Mi'kmaq] wanted. And, I think, for a long time, people tended to believe the British said this is what they want, this is the way they should be, and our People went back and agreed. No. It was the other way around because our People at the time were more powerful, and so the British had to concede. They had to find peace, otherwise they were all going to be killed off! So, that's my understanding of them [Peace and Friendship Treaties]. They are our Treaties, we need to take ownership. But we also need to take pride in how strong, how smart, how intelligent our People were. Maybe they were written in a language that wasn't theirs, but boy those terms are laid out clearly.

April Prosper explains the importance of oral history in Mi'kmaw culture. Since time immemorial, Mi'kmaw history, values and knowledge have been passed down through successive generations. So when the Peace and Friendship Treaties were signed in the 18th century, they

were included in the oral history that was passed down. Mi'kmaw communities knew about the promises in these treaties through oral history even though they hadn't seen a paper copy of them for generations. April Prosper explains:

“ [And the way] we know about these treaties, is through our oral history. These things are passed down from generation to generation. ...We knew they were sacred, and we knew we had to abide by those agreements [treaties] that we made. . .the problem with signing the paper, is that papers get lost, papers get stored away, and they get forgotten about. And that's just what I feel happened on the settler side.... Not really [knowledge about treaties] being forwarded on to the settler society for them to understand what those agreements were.



April Prosper explains how oral history has preserved Mi'kmaw knowledge of the treaties.

PHOTO: PAUL LANG



Chief Andrea Paul stresses that the treaties define responsibilities for all people.

PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Settler Society is indeed catching up to the understanding that the province of Nova Scotia, along with Atlantic Canada, is built on lands that were never ceded through the Peace and Friendship Treaties.

These treaties specify the responsibilities and the promises of how all people should live together on the land. Chief Andrea Paul stresses the importance of the relationship described in the Peace and Friendship Treaties:

“ To me it [a Peace and Friendship Treaty] is a relationship, and it's a relationship that we have to continue to work on and have dialogues on. We have to listen to each other. It means that we can't forget where we came from... They [the people that signed the treaties] left us with the responsibility, and we have to look after that responsibility. It's important, right? They wouldn't have signed them if it wasn't important. They have a lot of meaning. This whole movement, I find in the last little while, is definitely strengthening us.



Kerry Prosper draws attention to the spiritual dimension of the treaties.

During the two hundred years since the Peace and Friendship treaties were signed, students haven't learned about them. These students became adults who remained uninformed about the treaties. Over the past few years, awareness and understanding of the Peace and Friendship Treaties has increased.

Kerry Prosper explains that not only do the Peace and Friendship Treaties describe the relationships between Mi'kmaw and settlers, they also have a spiritual aspect to them:

“A man is only as good as his word, and how many of us are as good as our word? Whether it's a Treaty, how we [are expected] to treat one another, and just keep up your [end of the] bargain. Be aware when you sign something and respect one another. I don't know, when I think about the Treaty, it's a piece of paper that was signed, it was done through Ceremony, through smoking of the pipe, witnessed by the Creator, and it's something we as Mi'kmaw and people across Canada and the United States, we can't back out of. Because we are accountable to a higher being, the Creator. [In Canada], in God we trust. . .our dollar bills and the courts are under it's God's ruling, and yet they cannot uphold a Treaty that's witnessed by our God and Creator who was a part of this land.



PHOTO: PAUL LANG

Just like any other treaty, the Peace and Friendship Treaties remain in effect forever, unless another treaty is signed.

If the governments and settler society had lived by the treaties, the issues presented in the articles of this magazine probably would not have happened.

In such a world, Mi'kmaw would not have experienced environmental racism nor racist incidents in schools and in society. Mi'kmaw would have been able to exercise their rights without legal hardship.

The general population of Nova Scotia would have benefitted

from Mi'kmaw knowledge about responsible land management by applying Netukulimk. This might have prevented natural disasters caused by climate change.

What would life be like on this land, both for Mi'kmaw and settlers, had the Peace and Friendship Treaties been honoured?

Moving forward, how can each person keep learning to live according to the treaties?

For more information on the Peace and Friendship Treaties, visit this site:

<https://www.kinu.ca>

WELA'LIN, THANK YOU TO CHIEF ANDREA PAUL, KERRY PROSPER, JANE MEADER AND APRIL PROSPER FOR SHARING THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES.

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