

Pjila'si

TEK Workshop

Moose Management

CSI-Cape Breton

New CEPI Coordinator

NRO Coordinator

Climate Change

Wtisi

Species at Risk

Pitu'paq

Annie's Adventure

Oyster Garden III

Documentary Video

Green in Potlotek

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Comments and questions are welcomed. Email us at info@uinr.ca



Traditional Ecological Knowledge



CEPI Workshop

Inclusion...holistic thinking... history...tradition...survival

The Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative's **Traditional Ecological Knowledge Workshop** is being held to collect traditional ecological knowledge as part of the Ecosystem Overview and Assessment for the Bras d'Or Watershed (2004-05, Mike Parker). When this document went to review, it was criticized for being too Western-science-based and did not contain the "two-eyed seeing" approach that was required. The CEPI TEK Workshop was called in recognition of this shortcoming.

In this workshop, we are bringing elders from First Nations and other communities around the Bras d'Or Lakes. The workshop includes traditional music and ceremony as well as discussions about the natural history of the Lakes. The TEK Workshop's goals are to inform the Ecosystem overview and foster understanding and communication between the cultures.

The TEK Workshop will be held May 3 and 4 at the Sarah Denny Cultural Centre in Eskasoni. For more information, email shelley.porter@uinr.ca

Climate Change in Unama'ki

After our last winter, everyone seems to be talking about how rapidly our natural environment's climate is changing and at such an accelerated pace. We've collected up some of the ecological wisdom that we heard over the last few months; birds early return, seals in Crane Cove in March, early herring spawning, wintertime jellyfish in the Lakes, lack of ice, warmer than usual temperatures.

If you have any that you can add, send them to us at info@uinr.ca.

Mi'kmaq Youth Elder Council Planning Session

Watch for updates on the development of a Mi'kmaq Youth Elder Council. A planning session sponsored by UINR and Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (KMK) brings together Nova Scotian Mi'kmaq youth and elders to respond to issues surrounding land, resources, and governance.

The Youth Elder Council will provide a mechanism by which traditional knowledge of the Elders can be passed on to community and youth, ensuring the transmission of tribal consciousness as First Nations conceive it and the preservation of cultural teachings and complex understandings of our relationship to the creation around us. It will nourish future leaders of our communities and ensure good decision making.

If you are interested in the activities of the Youth Elder Council, watch the next issue of The Marten for more !

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Black ASH

On March 22, 2006, a Black Ash conference was held at the CMM building in Truro, NS. This was a well-attended event with individuals from NB, NS, and PEI participating. This was the second annual Black Ash conference as expert growers and cultivators got together with First Nations and others to communicate their personal experiences with Black Ash. In NB, it was discovered that Black Ash is relatively abundant compared to NS and PEI where the numbers are very low, with approximately 300 individual trees being identified in NS and even fewer in PEI. However, there is concern in NB that the population is decreasing. A basket-maker from a northern NB community stated, "It is harder and harder to find a decent tree," making reference to a concern that is shared by all that attended.

The Canadian Forest Service in Fredericton is in the process of doing DNA testing to determine if there is any significant difference between the trees growing in NB versus NS. A concern brought to the conference last year was

that it would be unethical to introduce a new or different Black Ash into the population in NS. The results of these tests will be known in a year's time.

The germination of Black Ash seeds was also a highly discussed topic as the nurseries told of successes and failures, with reference to "overwintering" and cycles of sunlight and refrigeration that will break the dormancy of the seed in the most efficient manner. Overall, it was a great conference with UINR making many contacts throughout the Maritimes with groups and individuals all joining together to help restore a species that has such great significance to the Mi'kmaq.

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CEPI Coordinator

Shelley Porter has joined UINR as the Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI) coordinator. CEPI was initiated by First Nations to bring partners together to work collaboratively on solving environmental challenges in the Bras d'Or Lakes and to develop comprehensive environmental management plan for the Bras d'Or Lakes. CEPI blends First Nation knowledge, approaches and culture with non-First Nations' approaches for "two-eyed seeing"

Shelley is a great fit in this new role with her interest in ecology and her work with environmental organizations. A unique combination of creative writing and a Master of Science in Biology gives Shelley a truly wholistic understanding of the process involvement in achieving CEPI's goals.

Her writing and research has been published in academic journals, popular magazines and newspapers. Shelley's biology interests are with native plants and rare plant species and she brings her love of nature to the UINR offices every day with her well-attended bird feeders!

As CEPI coordinator, Shelley has overall responsibility for projects as directed by the CEPI Steering Committee and she oversees the organization's day-to-day duties. On Shelley's busy agenda is the organization of the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Workshop and the Salmon Workshop.

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CEPI Coordinator Shelley Porter shares a moment with UINR Executive Director Charlie Dennis and CEPI member Jason Naug, Oceans and Coastal Management Division, Fisheries and Oceans Canada



Bras d'Or Lakes
CEPI
*Collaborative Environmental
Planning Initiative*

Plamu Salmon Workshop

A Plamu (salmon) workshop is scheduled for June 28/29 in Wagmatcook. This workshop will bring together salmon fishermen of all stripes, enforcement personnel from various agencies, and some fisheries scientists to identify the components of a management plan for the Atlantic Salmon in Cape Breton. It is hoped that bringing stakeholders of all groups together will be an educational experience which promotes understanding and cooperation for the good of the Atlantic Salmon, or in Mi'kmaq, Plamu.

In our next issue, watch for a special feature story on Plamu in Unama'ki.

Video

Documentary Planned

UINR is working on a video documentary about oysters in the Bras d'Or Lakes and the MSX parasite. We will not be documenting this appearance as an isolated event. We expect that the documentary may well end up being a lesson for the future about sustainable human economic activity in the Bras d'Or Lakes.

This project has been jointly developed by UINR and Madeline Yakimchuk, who will be joining us as the Documentary Project Coordinator. Madeline is responsible for planning, organizing and coordinating activities leading to the production of the documentary. Madeline is also working with the team at UINR to use video as a part of our communication activities.



Madeline is a producer, director, art director, and editor who has worked professionally in video for more than 15 years. Through the 80's, 90's and into this century, Madeline has been there, producing educational materials, directing documentaries on social themes, incorporating technology in social sectors and training.

Madeline's work has been shown in festivals in Canada, Cuba, Chile, and Brazil. Awards include Best Television Commercial, Cuba, 1994; Best Documentary, Caldera, Chile, 2003; and Special Award for Contribution to Culture, Lebu, Chile, 2003.

Madeline's professional credentials are rooted in two distinct areas of formal study: design and human services administration. These studies were complemented by years of experience with community-based organizations, both in executive roles and in audio-visual communication with emphasis on culture and education. She has lived and worked in Ontario, Cuba, and Chile, and recently returned home to Cape Breton.

Shortly after arriving in Chile in 1997, Madeline began to contribute her skills to projects related to aboriginal cultures. She has produced and/or directed many types of materials including: an investigative documentary defending the pivotal importance of language in the preservation of a culture; a television, radio, and press public service campaign to promote awareness of the Mapuche culture in southern Chile; a promotional video for an international aboriginal roots festival in northern Chile; and a dramatized short educational film depicting a young Mapuche girl's taking consciousness of her culture, produced for the Ministry of Education in Chile for use in aboriginal schools. She is currently working on a project to develop 3D computer animations to depict the Mapuche world view.

In addition to her own projects, Madeline has edited documentaries on aboriginal cultures, issues, and themes including the well-respected "Why We Call Ourselves Mapuche," and a series of four documentaries made for television which depict four Mapuche personalities. She continues her work with the Mapuche and is very interested in facilitating links between them and the Mi'kmaq.

Madeline continues to be profoundly interested in the regeneration and strengthening of aboriginal cultures and looks forward to her project with UINR.

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Charlie Dennis Pjila'si



Siwkw –Spring is in the air!

After all the mild winter weather, it is great to see the pussywillows announcing the return of Spring, the most important season of all. Spring represents a new beginning for all of earth's creations. That is the focus of this, the third issue of *The Marten*—new beginnings.

Of great concern to us are the disappearing plants and animals in Unama'ki. We have been working on a project to educate Mi'kmaq school children about the species at risk in Unama'ki and we produced a poster that identifies eight of the most threatened species. To help you identify them we have included photos and some information on what you can do to help.

All winter, the talk has been on the mild weather we have been experiencing. Everyone has a story to tell and we have collected some of our favourites to share with you. Global warming and climate change are the most important issues facing us today. It is up to each and every one of us to do what we can to reduce the impact of these changes on our environment.

This issue also marks new beginnings for UINR in the form of new staff and initiatives. Clifford Paul has joined us to help develop a management plan for moose in Nova Scotia. Shelley Porter has come aboard to coordinate the Bras d'or Lakes CEPI and Blair Bernard is coordinating a new Natural Resource Officer program for Unama'ki. Madeline Yakimchuk has also joined us to develop a documentary video on the human impact on the change in the oyster fisheries.

Spring's new beginnings heralds more projects from UINR to watch for—CSI Cape Breton (Collaborative Salmon Initiative), Wtisi Science Nest, Traditional Ecological Knowledge Workshops, and more.

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the oyster Garden III

A Story by Charlie Dennis

For many years, my good friend Gabriel, or Kaplie'l in Mi'kmaq, fished oysters in Malagawatch Pond. I met Kaplie'l back in the late 1950's. My grandparents and dad used to go to Malagawatch for a visit or get supplies of white maple and poplar for basket making.

Kaplie'l and his brother Sa'n Denny had been fishing oysters in Malagawatch for a number of years. I still remember their small tarpaper camp. It barely fit two people and you had to bend over so you wouldn't bump your head on the ceiling or door. There were two little beds on either side of the cabin and a small table. There was a spittoon can in one corner of the shack, which they seldom missed when they spit their tobacco, because there weren't any stains on the walls. For heat they had a miniature stove almost the size of a computer. I believe it was called "Little Cod," which was engraved on the front of the stove.

In those days, oysters were plentiful and buyers from New Brunswick and other places would come down and buy oysters from those who wanted to sell. Local buyers were also paying good money for this bountiful shellfish. These activities went on for a number of years until the numbers of oysters started declining since everybody was harvesting and the prices of oysters were increasing. Back in the 1970's, I got involved in the buying and selling trade and it was good to know all the fishermen and their secrets of fishing oysters. Kaplie'l was a good advisor. He fished for so many years; he knew every trick in the book. So and so would do this, avoid them as much as possible the way they packed their boxes, watch out for bridges, watch for old shells, rock, mussels, and dead oysters. He taught me everything, including telling me the areas where oysters were excellent and where to avoid buying oysters.

Kaplie'l always fished oysters in Malagawatch Pond and he seldom fished anywhere else. I used to be fascinated with oysters in the fishery. I would say he always had the best oysters in River Denys Basin. Buyers would approach Kaplie'l at the first chance they got because they wanted his oysters. He would always save good oysters for me and sell the poor ones to other buyers.

At times, when he was fishing in the pond, I would watch him fish here and there. One moment he would be at one part of the pond and in another instance he would be in another. For years, I would study his moves and couldn't figure out what he was doing. Some days, I would take my boat out and go for a quick run out to his boat. His boat was always clean, no mud or dust of any kind. He would always wear his Sunday best. He would wear a belt hat, if that is what it was called, or dress hat. On the floor of the boat was a neat pile of oysters of different sizes and other piles, which are what we called "choice" oysters. We would talk for a while, then he would say "you're losing money for me, move on." I got the hint but, before I moved on, I took a quick glance of the tools he had in the boat. One was a small rake (I later found out why he needed it), the other tool was a scoop net made of a bicycle rim with copper weave webbing, nicely sewn together. The scoop was attached to a 12-foot pole. The scoop was about 10 to 12 inches in diameter and about one foot deep. Those were his basic tools. Oh yes, he always had oil or corn oil in his boat. I would later find out why the scoop was so important to him.

One evening while spying on Kaplie'l, it came to me how he fished oyster in the pond. Of course, I went to visit him that night, which was common practice among fishermen; telling stories, jokes, and sharing a cup of tea.

Well anyway, I confronted him and told him I figured out how he was so lucky with getting oysters. Basically I explained to him that he treated the pond like it was his garden. He was managing this pond and he knew every inch of it and knew exactly where he planted oysters, what size, what grade, and when it would be ready for harvesting. He would take small oysters from one section of the pond where they grew too slow to where it was shallow and, in turn, they would grow faster. He also figured if the wind was too strong he knew where to go where it was sheltered from prevailing winds. When I finished with my spying report, Kaplie'l looked at me, gave a chuckle with his mouth full of chewing tobacco and commented, "it took you long enough to figure it out."

A few months later, I found out through Louise, Kaplie'l's wife and partner for a long time, that Kaplie'l's eyesight wasn't very good. He would use the scoop net to feel his way on the bottom. He would feel the oysters on the bottom and fill the scoop til he couldn't fit any more oysters in it. If his eyes were good, he wouldn't be able to see the bottom because of the black mud that was stirred up when it was disturbed. Before he lifted the scoop onto the boat, he would swoosh it until the mud came off and then he would sort the oysters by size and grade.

Of course, you have to keep the seaweeds in control or they will multiply. It's just like the garden in Malagawatch Pond; seaweed has to be controlled and that was the reason he had the oyster rake in his boat. When Kaplie'l was well and fishing, seaweed was always controlled. But if you go to Malagawatch Pond nowadays, you can barely operate an outboard motor before it clogs up.

When I travel to Malagawatch for a visit, I always stop at the causeway and look toward the channel. It makes me unhappy to see the pond in such a terrible state. At one time, all the fishing camps were full of fishermen of all ages who came to fish for oysters, trying to make some extra money for Christmas. Because of the MSX, I am not sure what the oyster population is in the pond at the moment. If we had a person like Kaplie'l taking care of the Garden, it might be in better condition, but sadly Kaplie'l has moved on to the big Garden above.





FIRST NATION CENTRE
for
Science Nourishment and Growth

Science Nest

In the Mi'kmaq Nation, the wtisi, or nest, is particularly symbolic of the eagle. Eagles are monogamous and the nest is a place for both adult and young together. The nest provides a safe place to be nourished and develop. However, the nest must be strong, with good resources, to withstand the pressures around it. The concept of wtisi embodies a hope for the realization of the Mi'kmaq dream for a "science nest" where learning is truly based on "two-eyed seeing;" the bringing together of Mi'kmaq and Western scientific knowledge and ways of knowing.

Science Wtisi is a project under development with Cape Breton University and UINR. The Science Wtisi could provide space, resources, encouragement, and energy for many things: observations of the sky (via a planetarium), basket making, science camps, tutorial services for all levels K-12 and through university, professional development for educators and diverse service providers, brain-centered learning, summer schools, nature-based learning, medicinal plant instruction, architecture as a manifest understanding of Mi'kmaq culture and science, ecofriendly methods of housing and heating, and cultural continuity.

The Science Wtisi is envisioned as the requisite supportive, nourishing environment in which to encourage and grow a new generation of aboriginal (and other) scientists versed in broad approaches and well placed to tackle the challenges of their age. It is also the environment envisioned as essential and necessary to professionally and culturally assist and encourage those Mi'kmaq people already pursuing a science path in their education or career. UINR very much sees the Science Wtisi as essential for aboriginal success in science today, as well as for the next generation.



5 Greening Potlotek

Chief Wilbert Marshall and Chief Executive Officer Lindsay Marshall of Potlotek First Nations are working on an ambitious plan to put Potlotek on the Green map! And they don't plan to stop there. They intend to share their green vision with other First Nations communities and build their capacity to export their services and expertise.



The winds of change are blowing in Potlotek! In an effort to harvest wind energy, a testing project is underway to analyze the wind regime. If suitable wind exists, they intend to develop a First Nation wind farm to offset use of fossil fuels and earn revenue from Greenhouse Gas credits under the Kyoto Accord.

The Chapel Island Community Waste Collection Service provides garbage service for the community while employing aboriginal band members. It has the capacity to take full responsibility for this service for its community and hopes to provide the service for a fee to others. Potlotek has also conducted a study to establish a Compost Plant that will create new full-time jobs for band members.

In an effort to minimize the amount of waste going to landfill and lower tipping fees, a Waste Diversion Demonstration and Education Project will design educational programs for the community. It will demonstrate the most environmentally friendly practices in waste management as a model to other communities and transfer this knowledge to other Unama'ki First Nations leaders and staff.

The goal of the Chapel Island Mission Health Protection Plan is to design a system to minimize risks from lack of drinking water and handling of sewage and solid waste on Chapel Island. Traditional knowledge will be sought from elders about cultural history to identify special places which must be protected. New features for drinking water, sewage, and waste removal will be designed to be almost invisible and not conflict with use of the site.

Potlotek is developing a plan for climate change that will document the historical status of the natural environment in Potlotek by interviewing community elders and those close to the land. An ongoing community monitoring system will be designed to record changes in wildlife, vegetation, watercourse flows, and natural productivity of the land and waters.

There have been many advances in building trades and Potlotek is taking the best of these to build homes in a Model Energy Efficient Subdivision. This year they intend to build new homes that will minimize future energy costs while reducing fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions. A Potlotek band member was trained to carry out building energy audits and compiled and reviewed data on existing energy consumption, found opportunities for conservation and renewable energy, and estimated greenhouse gas reduction amounts and credits.

Gone are the days of dirty, environmentally unfriendly gas stations. Potlotek intends to build a new, green gas bar, grocery store, and gaming facility, while creating new full-time jobs for band members to operate them. In addition to state-of-the-art construction, the gas bar will also provide biodiesel, an environmentally friendly fuel alternative.

Potlotek is turning **green!**

UINR's resident cartoonist and financial guardian, Annie Johnson, recently attended the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association (AFOA) National Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba (yes, Winnipeg, in February, -45 degree windchill). Although cold, it was a wonderful learning experience, bringing together aboriginal financial officers from all across the country and offering workshops for all levels of learning, from beginner to experienced.

Annie enrolled in the popular beginner sessions and was surprised to be with people that had five years experience in finance. After meeting a ton of nice people and getting lots of new ideas, Annie is back with a bunch of tips and techniques for financial organization. Annie has decided that the next step in her education will be to achieve the Certified Aboriginal Financial Manager designation—wish her luck!

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The Upcoming Chapel Island Mission is the hot button topic with Pitu'paq this spring. From bottled water to port-a-potties, the environmental issues for the

tiny island and the surrounding Bras d'Or Lakes are being addressed. Pitu'paq deals with the most immediate concerns of this year's Mission while planning for a future where there will be sound environmental mechanisms in place. Just supplying clean drinking water to the people on the island is a massive task.

Other issues facing Pitu'paq are concerns about a possible gas leak from an abandoned tank, water quality monitoring, peat moss systems and other unique solutions to waste disposal in sensitive areas.

Of recent concern were reports of cemeteries and burial grounds that are at risk of being washed away due to erosion from the Bras d'Or. Preventative measures may need to be taken.

Pitu'paq is a partnership of Cape Breton's five municipal units and five First Nations of Unama'ki. Pitu'paq's focus is the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed. Pitu'paq is the Mi'kmaq word for Bras d'Or.. to which all things flow. laurie@uinr.ca

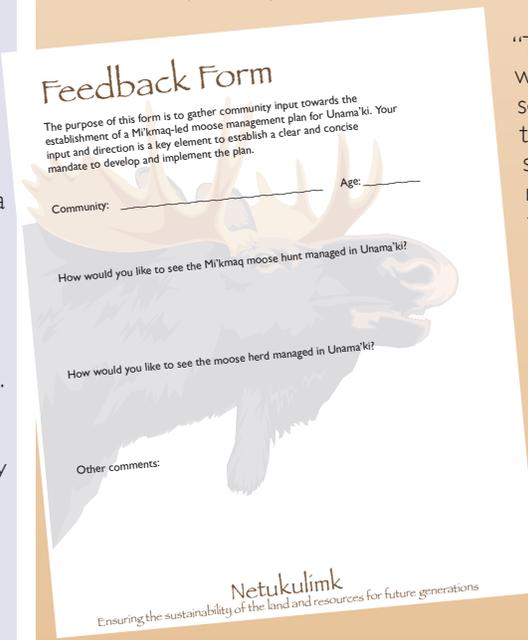


UINR has taken on the responsibility of creating a moose management plan. UINR, representing the five Mi'kmaq communities of Unama'ki, is mandated to implement this plan with the support of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council and the Unama'ki Council of Elders. Further development and long-term acceptance of this initiative is supported by Mi'kmaq leadership and by resolution of the Assembly of Nova Scotia Chiefs, dated March 14, 2005.

UINR will work closely with the Mi'kmaq community and its leadership, along with representatives of the federal and provincial governments, to develop a plan that is supported by the Kwilmuk Maw-klusuaqn, Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative.



To develop this plan, UINR recently hired Clifford Paul of Membertou First Nation. Clifford and members of the KMK Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative team will be visiting the Mi'kmaq communities this month to promote discussion and awareness of moose issues. These visits will offer Mi'kmaq communities the opportunity to express their ideas on moose management. Information and feedback gathered will give us clear and concise guidance towards the establishment of the Mi'kmaq moose management plan.



"The Moose Management Initiative will be a shining example of Mi'kmaq self-determination," Clifford Paul told *The Marten*. "It is really an issue of the Mi'kmaq accepting the responsibilities that accompany our treaty and aboriginal rights. In that regard, we will be seeking information, direction, and the promotion of discussion in the communities."

The Moose Management Initiative developed as a result of a partnership between UINR, the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, and Parks Canada.

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Have You Seen US?

Not likely.



All these species are at risk of extinction in Unama'ki. Species at Risk are animals, plants, and other organisms that are at serious risk of extinction, usually due to human activities which pose a threat to the species or their habitat.

In Nova Scotia today there are over ten thousand wildlife species: 5 are extinct, 47 are seriously at risk, and the list grows.

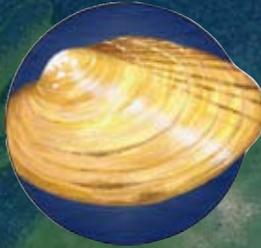


What can you do? Visit our website at www.uinr.ca/speciesatrisk

Teedaze Catherine Paul has been working on a project to educate native students about the new Species at Risk Act (SARA) and how it relates to their aboriginal rights.

Teedaze brought presentations to all schools in Unama'ki where aboriginal students attend.

An informative poster and website were produced to further the educational process.



The species you see here are on the list of Species at Risk in Unama'ki—



- Canada Lynx
- Marten

• Wood Turtle

• Yellow Lampmussel



• New Jersey Rush

• Piping Plover,



• Felt Boreal Lichen

www.uinr.ca/speciesatrisk

Natural Resource Officers

Eskasoni resident Blair Bernard has joined UINR as coordinator of our Natural Resource Officer (NRO) Program. Blair is responsible for establishing the program's goals and setting up an aboriginal food fishery. UINR's goals for the NRO Program are to develop a strong coordination role and regulatory authority, and negotiate strong training agreements while developing meaningful employment.

Our NRO Program is focusing on all areas of natural resources of concern to First Nations including forestry, fisheries, environment, wildlife management, and emergency measures. Staff will consist of Natural Resource Officers and Environmental Technicians trained in the appropriate monitoring and enforcement protocols and procedures.

Blair has a wealth of experience to coordinate this program. He worked with Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife Commission for 15 years both as a Guardian and Manager of the Commercial Fishing Division. As Guardian for the native fishery, he was involved in enforcement and joint patrols with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and was involved with several scientific studies around the Bras d'Or Lakes.

Blair, a graduate of Riverview Rural High School, received his Diploma in Natural Resources from UCCB and has received a wealth of additional training as a Fishery Guardian from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

All Blair's training and experience has led to his position as coordinator of this important program.

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We have a lot of people to thank for this project. The photographs of these species were almost as difficult to find as the creatures in the wild! Special thanks to Samara Eaton, Wildlife Biologist, NS Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division; Pamela Mills, Wildlife Resource, Biodiversity Program, Wildlife Division; Ruth Newell, Curator, E.C. Smith Herbarium, Irving Biodiversity Collection, K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre & Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens, Acadia University, Wolfville; Rob Cameron, Ecologist, Protected Areas Branch, NS Environment and Labour; Mark F. Elderkin, Species at Risk Biologist, Wildlife Division, NS Department of Natural Resources

Spring Calendar

Here are some of the dates we have confirmed for UINR meetings and events. Be sure to check our website at uinr.ca for special notices, job postings and research updates.

April

- 12 Youth Elder Council Workshop
- 19 CEPI
- 21 Pitu'paq
- 22 Earth Day

May

- 3&4 TEK Workshop
- 17 CEPI
- 18 CSI
- 19 Pitu'paq

June

- 13, 14, 15 International Moose Conference
- 15 CSI
- 16 Pitu'paq
- 21 CEPI
- 28, 29 Salmon Workshop

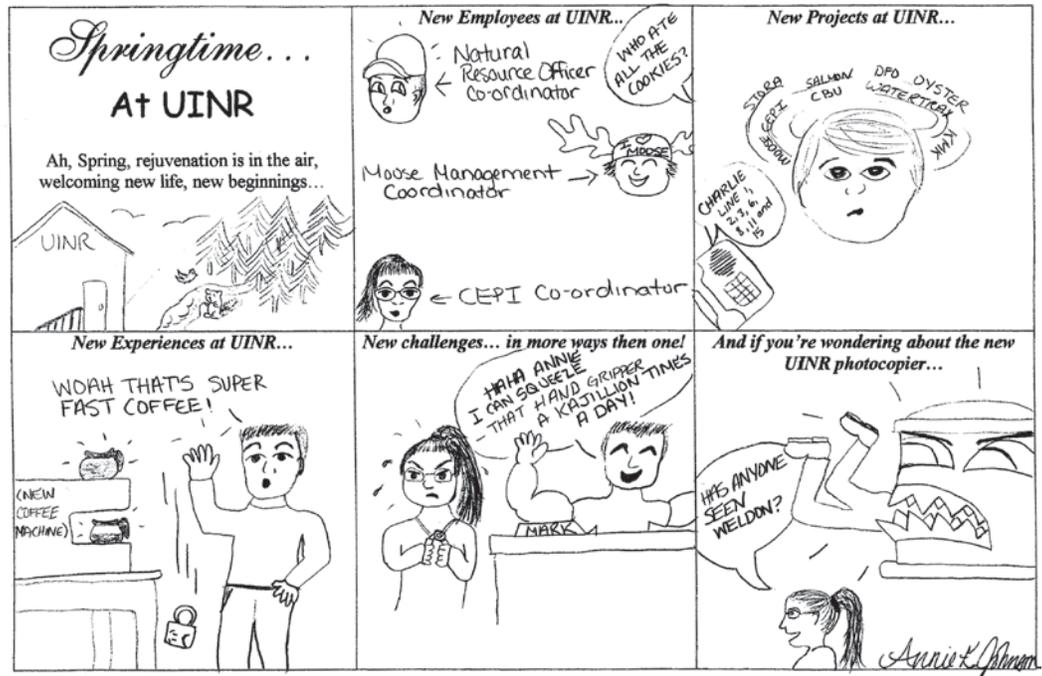


The flower pictured below is Unama'ki's first flower of spring. No, it's not a dandelion, it's Tussilago farfara—COLTSFOOT. Native to Cape Breton, it flowers early before it even gets any leaves. By summer it grows into a large-leaved and distinctive roadside plant. It's everywhere you look in Cape Breton in early April. Take a close look. It's a beauty.



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