



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - June 1, 2021

Kluskap IPCA – Purchase of Land at Cape Dauphin

(Cape Breton, NS) - Protecting our environment is an essential part of addressing biodiversity, fighting climate change and conserving Indigenous cultures.

For the first time in Nova Scotia, land has been purchased to create an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) at Cape Dauphin in Unama'ki. This 20 hectare parcel of land plays a big role in a larger area of interest. The land contains the trailhead to a traditional trail in a sacred Mi'kmaq area, where Kluskap will return one day to restore the relationship between humans and the environment.

IPCAs are lands and waters where Indigenous Nations have the primary role in protecting and conserving ecosystems using Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems. Culture and language are the heart and soul of an IPCA.

Nova Scotia IPCAs are led by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs, and administered jointly by UINR, Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife Commission, and Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq. The Cape Dauphin initiative is led by Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources.

With support from the province and with funding for the project through the Canada Nature Fund from Environment and Climate Change Canada, UINR engaged Unama'ki Mi'kmaw communities to develop guiding principles and a decision-making framework for IPCAs, and the Kluskap site was identified as a priority site due to its sacredness and its foundation in the Mi'kmaw legends of Kluskap.

This site is significant in that it protects both land and water, abiding by the Mi'kmaq principle of *Msit no'kmaq*, that everything is connected. This IPCA is unique as it brings together a large number of partners - three levels of government, private landowners, industry, and environmental organizations. The hope is that the IPCA will eventually include an existing provincial wilderness area, an internationally important bird area, two islands, significant coastal and marine waters, and habitat that supports designated species at risk like the Canada lynx and American marten.

On behalf of the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I congratulate Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) and their partners including the Province of Nova Scotia on its conservation achievement. Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas are an essential step towards protecting more nature and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Jaime Battiste, Member of Parliament (Sydney—Victoria)

This is a significant development for land protection in Nova Scotia. I want to acknowledge and congratulate the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs and Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources on their work developing the guiding principles at this site for land protection, along with the framework that led to the creation the first Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area in Nova Scotia at this important site at Cape Dauphin in Unama'ki.

Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change Minister Keith Irving

We are proud of the work that our Mi'kmaw organizations are undertaking to help develop Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in our territory. Cape Dauphin holds great cultural significance and is an important area to our people. Congratulations to UINR and the Mi'kmaw communities in Unama'ki for taking a wonderful first step to not only protect the natural environment, but also a place that will remain sacred for our entire Nation.

Chief Sidney Peters, Co-Chair, Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs

Quick facts

- The Nova Scotia Challenge Fund will receive \$14.35 million in funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada between 2019 and 2023.
- The project has received approximately \$70 million in in-kind contributions from Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change and partners, along with nearly \$4 million from the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust Fund, \$550,000 from the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, \$290,000 from the Nature Conservancy of Canada
- The proposed area of interest includes 5000 hectares (land and water). The existing Wilderness Area makes up 2,777 hectares of the proposed area.
- Additional sites may be identified for IPCA designation following further community engagement.

UINR is Cape Breton's Mi'kmaq voice on natural resources and the environment, contributing to an understanding and protection of Unama'ki's ecosystem through research, monitoring, education, and management. By integrating netukulimk with traditional and conventional ways of understanding, known as Two-Eyed Seeing, UINR takes the lead on best-management practices in Unama'ki.

Associated Links:

Website for UINR: www.uinr.ca

Indigenous Circle of Expert's publication, *We Rise Together*, 2018
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5ab94aca6d2a7338ecb1d05e/1522092766605/PA234-ICE_Report_2018_Mar_22_web.pdf

Tan Telolti'k Report: a Decision Making Process for IPCAs in Unama'ki: <https://www.uinr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/IPCA-Report-2020.pdf>

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