

Infrastructure Newsletter

Working Together to Support Our Communities



Stanford Phillips and Devin MacAskill in Toronto accepting an award for UNSM's Clean Energy projects in partnership with ReCover



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Kwe' & Welcome

Updates, projects, and progress from the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Infrastructure team

Welcome to our quarterly newsletter! Here, we share highlights and updates from the many projects supporting our **Mi'kmaq communities across Unama'ki and beyond**. From emergency preparedness and clean energy upgrades to shoreline protection, asset mapping, and environmental stewardship, our Infrastructure team is working together with community leadership and partners to build safer, stronger, and more sustainable communities.

With **over 30** projects underway and growing, this newsletter highlights the people, progress, and partnerships helping move our communities forward.

Emergency Services & Community Safety

Supporting preparedness, alerts, training, and emergency planning across our communities



Stanford Phillips - Emergency Services Manager
Dallas Gould - Interim Emergency Service Coordinator

Our Emergency Services team works closely with Mi'kmaq communities to strengthen emergency preparedness through coordinated planning, training, and seasonal safety awareness. From community engagement sessions and safety campaigns to emergency communications, evacuation planning, and response readiness, the team continues to support safer, more resilient communities year-round.

Project Updates & Achievements

Emergency Services has continued to strengthen preparedness across all five Mi'kmaq communities through ongoing coordination meetings and planning support. Seasonal emergency safety campaigns were launched this winter, providing households with practical guidance for cold weather risks, with spring and summer safety materials already in development.

Significant progress was made in emergency communications and response readiness, including the continued use of **Unama'ki Emergency Alert System** for emergency alerts and planning support for community evacuation strategies. Emergency response leadership was strengthened through professional training, including recent Coast Guard emergency communications certification.

“Emergency readiness starts with you. Together, we protect our families and community.”

Looking Ahead

Upcoming priorities include expanding emergency preparedness training, strengthening evacuation planning in high-risk areas, continued seasonal safety outreach, and enhanced coordination between fire departments, emergency management officers, and community leadership.



Winter Safety Tips

- Keep heaters and chimneys in good condition.
- Wear warm, layered clothing to stay dry and cozy.
- Protect your pipes from freezing.
- Make sure your car is winter-ready: full tank, winter tires, emergency kit.
- Keep flashlights and power banks charged for outages.
- Check in on Elders and neighbours during storms.



Environmental Stewardship, GIS & Land Protection

Protecting Lands, Shorelines & Community Assets

John Johnson – Land Steward Coordinator

Jerrylee Dennis – Environmental Steward

Our Environmental Stewardship, GIS, and Land Protection team works to safeguard our lands, waterways, and natural resources while supporting sustainable development across our communities. From mapping assets and tracking environmental projects to leading clean-ups and erosion mitigation, this team combines technology, research, and hands-on fieldwork to protect and strengthen our Mi'kmaq communities.

UNSM Infrastructure's Youth Cultural Survival Camp at Hunters Mountain, October 2025

Project Updates & Achievements

Environmental and GIS initiatives continue to strengthen land management and climate change resilience across Mi'kmaq communities. The **UNSM Asset Management (GIS) project** has conducted asset mapping in all five (5) member communities and UNSM GIS Technician John Johnson is focused on introducing the software to housing and public works teams in Potlotek this winter. Asset Management will assist in community planning, maintenance tracking and emergency response coordination. UNSM has also begun asset mapping recently in Malagawatch.

Major environmental stewardship efforts included large-scale land clean-ups at **Hunter's Mountain**, removing **over seven (7) tonnes of waste** while supporting cultural camps and community involvement.

UNSM supports community solid waste initiatives through the efforts of our Environmental Steward, Jerrylee Dennis. Since joining UNSM, Jerrylee has joined the **National Advisory Committee for First Nations Solid Waste Management Initiative (FNSWMI)**. She attended the National meeting in Saskatoon gaining insight into waste management challenges and solutions at First Nations across Canada.

Environmental Stewardship, GIS & Land Protection

Protecting Lands, Shorelines & Community Assets

Project Updates & Achievements

Jerrylee is also working in partnership with **Circular Materials**, an organization established to administer Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs in Nova Scotia.

Extended Producer Responsibility shifts the responsibility for collecting, recycling, and properly managing packaging and paper products from municipalities to the companies that produce them. This approach encourages producers to reduce waste, improve packaging design, and invest in more sustainable recycling systems.

Through this collaboration, UNSM aims to strengthen waste diversion efforts across Mi'kmaq communities by working closely with local solid waste managers to enhance existing recycling programs and explore new initiatives.

A key focus will be the development of youth-centered education and engagement programs that promote environmental stewardship, recycling awareness, and long-term sustainability practices.

By combining policy advancement with community-based action, this initiative supports both environmental protection and capacity building across communities.



Pictured Above: Jerrylee Dennis at the Saskatoon recycling facility, FNSWMI Conference 2025.

Environmental Stewardship, GIS & Land Protection

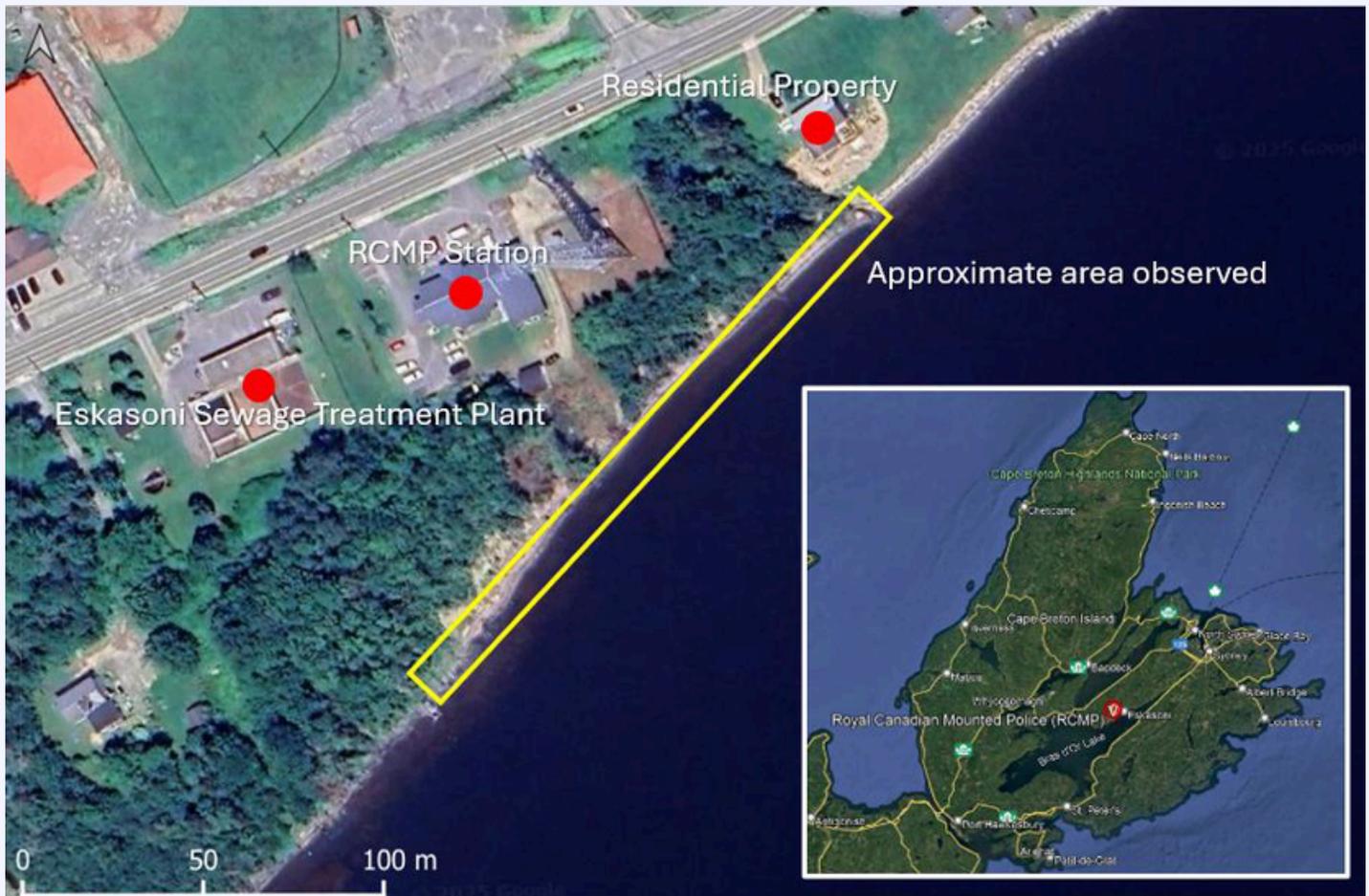
Protecting Lands, Shorelines & Community Assets

Project Updates & Achievements

Shoreline erosion mitigation projects are advancing in both Potlotek and Eskasoni. The Coastal Engineering team at CBCL has been retained by UNSM to design natural infrastructure to protect the vulnerable coastlines from the effects of climate change. UNSM is working closely with federal funders and multiple regulatory agencies to achieve these goals using environmental sustainable approaches to protect these shores. The shoreline locations for the study are shown below.

Looking Ahead

Upcoming work includes expanded GIS training for community technicians, additional land stewardship projects, shoreline restoration construction beginning in 2026, and new environmental clean-up and climate resilience initiatives.



Technical Services, Housing & Clean Energy Projects

*Building Safer, Healthier & More
Efficient Community Infrastructure*

Wasuek Googoo – Infrastructure Program Manager
Devin MacAskill – Infrastructure Projects Manager
Justin Googoo – Housing Coordinator

Our Technical Services team is focused on keeping community buildings and homes safe, efficient, and sustainable. From conducting housing inspections and energy retrofits to mapping community assets and protecting our environment, their work supports healthier homes and greener, stronger communities across Unama'ki.

Project Updates & Achievements

Technical Services has made major strides in housing safety, clean energy, and infrastructure condition assessments. The first **Mi'kmaq Housing Inspector Program** was successfully delivered, graduating nine participants who now support community building inspections and safety standards. Follow-up technical training in HVAC and plumbing is scheduled for the coming months.

UNSM has partnered with The **ReCover Initiative** to deliver two (2) programs from Natural Resources Canada: the **Greener Neighbourhoods Pilot Program (GNPP)** and the **Deep Retrofit Accelerator Initiative (DRAI)**. Both of these programs are designed to promote RETROFIT strategies for both residences and community buildings to combat climate change and maintain community assets for as long as possible.

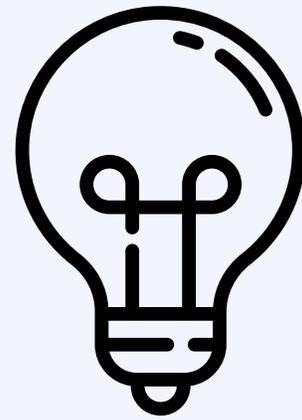
The GNPP is managed by UNSM Housing Coordinator Justin Googoo and is conducting **220 residential energy assessments** across Potlotek and We'koqma'q. The consultant will provide strategies to retrofit community homes in the most efficient ways possible. The DRAI project is managed by UNSM projects manager Devin MacAskill and completed energy assessments at 15 community buildings across all five (5) member communities. The study will identify retrofit strategies to save energy and help important community buildings last in the face of climate changes. This project was awarded the **2026 Clean 50 award** for exceptional contributors to the clean economy.



Pictured Above: Participants taking part in the UNSM Mi'kmaq Housing Inspector Program Training in October 2025.

Technical Services, Housing & Clean Energy Projects

*Building Safer, Healthier & More Efficient
Community Infrastructure*



UNSM delegates visiting the Neweg Energy Wind Farm during the symposium hosted by North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council – a partnership between Natural Forces and Mi'gmaq United Investment Network (MUIN).

Looking Ahead

In 2026, the UNSM will continue its strategic partnership with Efficiency Nova Scotia (EffNS). UNSM works closely with EffNS on a number of initiatives but the partnership also facilitates the sharing of information such as energy consumption records for efficiency studies.

In addition to this partnership, EffNS has been administering the Mi'kmaq Home Energy Efficiency Project (MHEEP) since 2017. During those eight (8) years, EffNS has completed assessments and **upgrades in 1,400 homes** in the 13 Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia.

UNSM and EffNS are planning community engagement events in the five (5) UNSM member communities during 2026. As part of UNSM's Clean Energy initiatives, UNSM attended the 2025 **Atlantic Indigenous-Lead Energy Symposium** hosted by North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council.

UNSM delegates met energy leaders from First Nations and project partners from across Canada. These discussions strengthened relationships and created new opportunities for collaboration on Indigenous-led clean energy initiatives.

Community Support, Training & Program Growth

Supporting Communities Through Capacity Building

Work With Us: Mi'kmaq Translators Needed!

The UNSM Infrastructure team is looking for **Mi'kmaq speakers** to help translate communication materials for several upcoming projects.

We're seeking translators to support work in:

- Solid Waste
- Clean Energy
- Asset Mapping / GIS
- Inspections
- Land Stewardship
- Infrastructure Technician
- Cultural Teachings

If you're interested, please fill out our registration form with your name, contact information, Mi'kmaw proficiency, and standard translation rates.



**Help your community by
sharing your language skills
and supporting important
projects!**

Strengthening Our Communities

Matt Canova – Infrastructure Administrator

Coral Gould-Paul – Infrastructure Intern

Project Updates & Achievements

UNSM Infrastructure has grown to a team of nine (9) staff delivering **more than 30** active projects across member communities. Services now span emergency management, clean energy, asset mapping, training programs, erosion mitigation, environmental stewardship, and technical infrastructure support.

Key achievements include expanded emergency services funding access, community-level training programs in fire suppression, building systems, radon testing, and emergency communications, as well as improved project coordination through new GIS and asset management tools. Administrative and policy support has strengthened proposal development, funding access, reporting, and community engagement, allowing projects to move forward more efficiently.

Looking Ahead

Future priorities include expanded technician training, youth engagement programs, community infrastructure upgrades, enhanced shared resources between communities, and continued growth in clean energy, emergency preparedness, and environmental protection.

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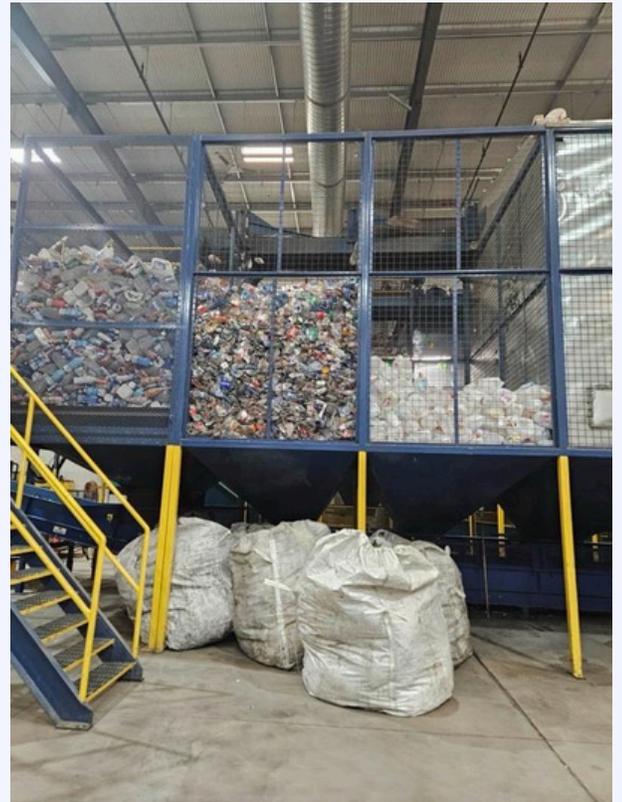
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Pictured Above: Recyclables processed at the Saskatoon recycling facility, 2025.



Pictured Above: Shoreline Erosion Mitigation Project in Potlotek

Have a suggestions or photo to share? [Email us!](#)