

— Spring / Siwkiw 2026 —

Infrastructure Newsletter

Working Together to Support Our Communities



UNSM Environmental Engineer Devin MacAskill attended the AFN Nuclear Waste Management Forum, engaging in discussions on nuclear waste transportation, storage, and Indigenous sovereignty while connecting with First Nations leaders and advocates from across Canada.



CONTACT INFORMATION

90 San'tele'sew Awti
Membertou Place,
Suite 201
Membertou NS
B1S 0A5

PHONE:
902-539-4107

WEBSITE:
www.unsm.org

HOURS OF OPERATION:
Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Kwe' & Welcome

Spring / Siwkiw 2026 Edition of the UNSM Infrastructure Newsletter!

As we welcome Siwkiw, the season of renewal and growth, we are pleased to share updates from across the Infrastructure Team and the many projects, partnerships, and initiatives taking place throughout Mi'kma'ki. This spring has brought continued progress in emergency preparedness, environmental stewardship, housing and clean energy projects, community engagement, and capacity-building opportunities. Through collaboration with member communities and partners, we remain committed to supporting strong, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure that benefits current and future generations.

In this edition, you will find highlights from recent achievements, ongoing projects, training initiatives, and community-focused programs, as well as a look ahead at the exciting work planned for the coming months. We are grateful for the dedication and contributions of our communities, partners, and staff who continue to make this work possible!

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*

Emergency preparedness and community safety continue to be a key focus for the Infrastructure Team. Throughout the quarter, significant efforts were made to strengthen emergency management capacity across Mi'kma'ki through training, collaboration, and community engagement.

The team continued supporting the **Unama'ki Alert System**, including refresher sessions with community incident operators to ensure readiness and effective communication during emergencies. Team members also participated in emergency management network meetings, providing updates and collaborating with regional partners to strengthen coordination and response planning.

Professional development remained a priority, with staff completing a **variety of specialized training and certifications**, including ICS 100 and ICS 200, Restricted Operator Certificate – Maritime Commercial (ROC-MC), Marine First Aid, Basic First Aid, WHMIS, Occupational Health and Safety, and AdventureSmart's Survive Outside and Hug-A-Tree programs. Participation in the Atlantic Emergency Coordinators Conference and regional Search and Rescue prevention workshops further enhanced emergency response knowledge and community preparedness efforts.



Stay aware of changing weather conditions and always practice safe fire habits when enjoying the outdoors!

Senior-level planning and partnership development continued with organizations such as the **Canadian Coast Guard Indigenous Search and Rescue Division** and the **Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR)**. These collaborations support ongoing work in search and rescue readiness, marine response planning, evacuation preparedness, and emergency management planning for the upcoming Minuku 2026 Mi'kmaq Gathering in Potlotek.

Spring / Summer Safety Tip

Keep campfires small and contained in a safe fire pit or designated area. Never leave a fire unattended, and keep water or a shovel nearby at all times. When you're done, fully extinguish the fire with water, stir the ashes, and make sure everything is cool to the touch before leaving.

A little preparation goes a long way in helping keep our communities safe throughout the spring and summer seasons.

Environmental Stewardship, GIS & Land Protection

Protecting Lands, Shorelines & Community Assets

Devin MacAskill – Infrastructure Projects Manager
John Johnson – GIS Technician



The Infrastructure Team continues to make significant progress in environmental stewardship, asset management, and land protection initiatives.

A major milestone was reached in the implementation of **ArcGIS Asset Management software across Unama'ki communities**. After nearly three years of data collection and development, the system is now actively supporting community Housing and Public Works departments. More than 12,000 community assets have been documented, including homes, roads, signs, culverts, playgrounds, and public buildings. This information has been transformed into interactive maps, dashboards, mobile applications, surveys, maintenance schedules, hazard tracking systems, and emergency response tools. Potlotek, We'koqma'q, and Eskasoni are currently utilizing the platform, with Wagmatcook and Membertou expected to follow.

The **E-ACRS program** was successfully delivered in Wagmatcook and We'koqma'q in partnership with Dillon Consulting. In addition to traditional asset inspections, communities received innovative virtual building walkthroughs, updated floor plans, and GIS shapefiles to support long-term asset management planning. Preparations are now underway for the next phase of E-ACRS work in Membertou and Potlotek.

UNSM's Environmental Engineer, Devin MacAskill also participated in the Assembly of First Nations Nuclear Waste Management Forum, where discussions focused on the transportation and long-term storage of nuclear waste. The forum provided valuable opportunities to learn about emerging technologies, environmental considerations, and Indigenous perspectives on sovereignty and environmental stewardship.

Spring / Summer Safety Tip

- Stay updated on weather alerts and avoid driving through flooded roads.
- Keep gutters, culverts, and storm drains clear to reduce flooding risks.
- Secure outdoor items before storms or high winds to prevent damage or injury.
- Follow all burn restrictions and fully extinguish outdoor fires and campfires.
- Drink plenty of water and limit outdoor activity during extreme heat.

Technical Services, Housing & Clean Energy Projects

*Building Safer, Healthier & More Efficient
Community Infrastructure*

Wasuek Googoo – Infrastructure Program Manager
Justin Googoo – Housing Coordinator

Technical Services and Housing initiatives continued to expand through training, project development, and clean energy planning.

Justin and Wasuek represented the Infrastructure Team at the **First Nations National Building Officials Association National Conference**, where they presented on UNSM’s Clean Energy Projects and infrastructure services. Their presentation generated considerable interest from attendees, particularly regarding asset management, preventative maintenance approaches, and training opportunities available to member communities.

Both Justin and Wasuek also successfully completed **Project Management – Site Construction certification training**. Building on this achievement, work has begun on developing a similar curriculum tailored to housing and public works technicians within Mi’kmaq communities.

UNSM also continues its partnership with the ReCover Initiative through two major projects: the **Deep Retrofit Accelerator Initiative (DRAI)** and the **Greener Neighborhoods Pilot Project (GNPP)**. Through DRAI, engineering assessments were completed on 15 community buildings across member communities to identify opportunities for energy-efficient retrofits and climate adaptation improvements. Through GNPP, 220 residential housing assessments were completed, helping identify opportunities for future renovation projects and energy efficiency upgrades.

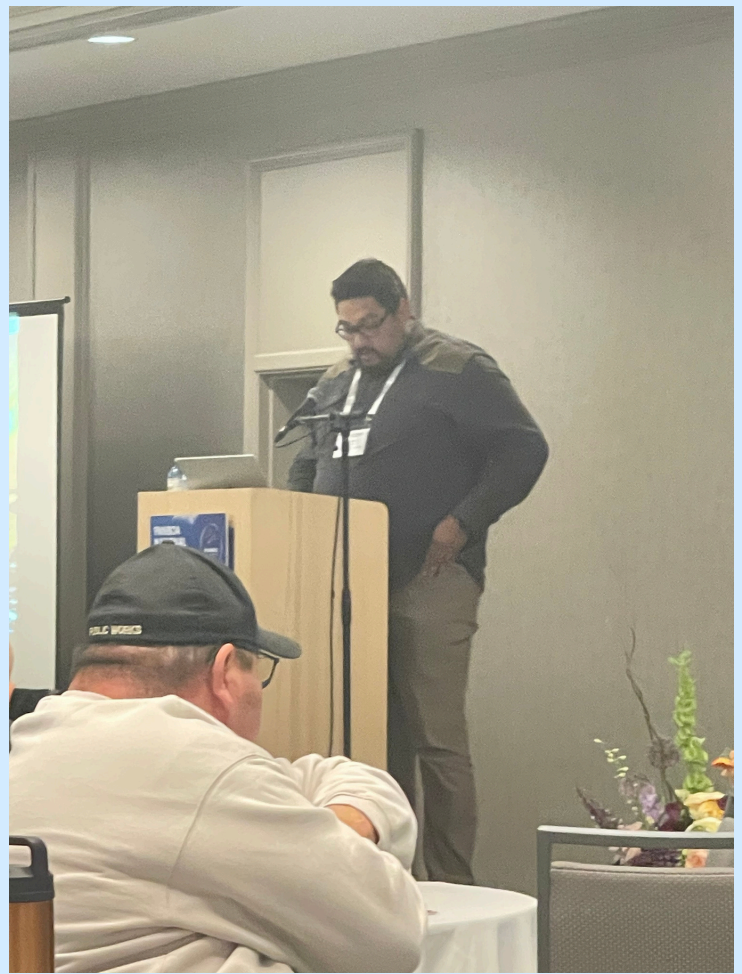


Photo above: Justin and Wasuek presented UNSM Clean Energy projects at the First Nations National Building Officials Association, highlighting training and asset management initiatives.

The **Mi’kmaq Building Inspector Program** completed another successful round of training, focusing on Plumbing and HVAC Systems. Hosted in Eskasoni and facilitated by Dustin Garnett, the training continues to support the development of local inspection capacity and technical expertise. Additional courses are planned for the fall.

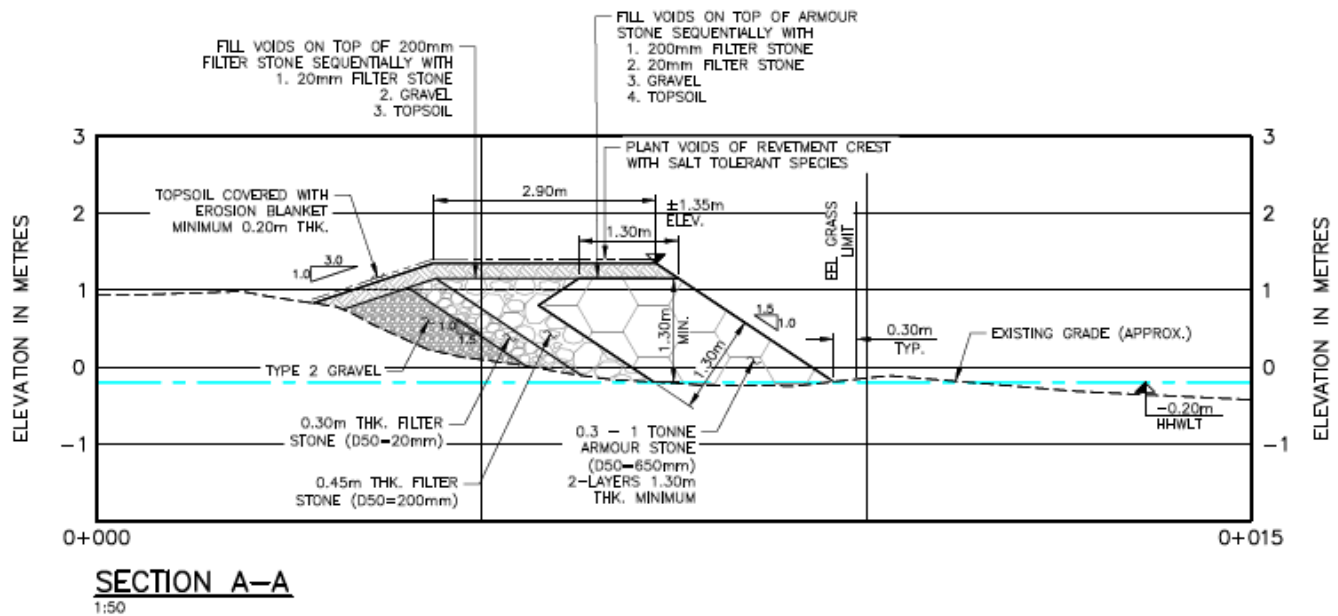
Administrative and operational support has remained essential to these efforts. Significant work was completed to improve data management systems through the organization and migration of shared infrastructure files to cloud-based platforms, improving collaboration and accessibility for team members. Ongoing financial management, procurement, travel coordination, event planning, and administrative support continue to ensure the successful delivery of infrastructure programming.

Environmental Stewardship, GIS & Land Protection

Protecting Lands, Shorelines & Community Assets



Environmental initiatives continued to advance through the **UNSM Erosion Mitigation Project**. In partnership with CBCL, the team has been working to develop and refine natural infrastructure solutions aimed at addressing ongoing shoreline erosion challenges in Potlotek and Eskasoni First Nations. These designs focus on sustainable, nature-based approaches to coastal protection. Permit applications have now been submitted to multiple regulatory agencies for review, and construction is anticipated to move forward following the necessary approvals being received.



Conceptual design illustrated above: UNSM's Erosion Mitigation Project with CBCL is advancing coastal protection designs in Potlotek and Eskasoni, with permitting underway and construction planned for December 2026.

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

Community engagement, workforce development, and capacity-building initiatives continue to play an important role in strengthening skills, relationships, and opportunities across Mi'kmaq communities.

This quarter included a successful engagement session in Wagmatcook, with meaningful discussions and feedback from community members, along with ongoing planning for an upcoming session in Potlotek. Work is also underway on a **callout for Mi'kmaq artists** to design a certificate for the Mi'kmaq Building Inspectors Program, supporting the inclusion of Mi'kmaq culture and creativity in program materials. **Keep an eye on our UNSM Facebook page for upcoming details and announcements!**

The **Youth Job Shadowing Project** continues to develop, with work focused on building program structure, identifying opportunities, and preparing for a participant interest list later this year. In addition, staff continued to prioritize professional development through First Aid training and other learning opportunities, while supporting ongoing operational needs such as maintaining the **Mi'kmaq Translators List** to improve accessibility and communication. Preparations are also underway for the **4th Annual Infrastructure Conference** scheduled for September, with planning in progress to bring together community leaders and partners once again.

Infrastructure Team Contact Information

Wasuek Googoo | Infrastructure Program Manager
Work Phone: 1 (902) 919-1141
Work Email: agoogoo@unsm.org

Devin MacAskill | Infrastructure Projects Manager
Work Phone: 1 (902) 919-4830
Work Email: devinmacaskill@unsm.org

Stanford Phillips | Emergency Services Manager
Work Phone: 1 (902) 919-6185
Work Email: stanfordphillips@unsm.org

Justin Googoo | Housing Coordinator
Work Phone: 1 (902) 919-5043
Work Email: justingoogoo@unsm.org

John Johnson | GIS Technician
Work Phone: 1 (902) 919-4830
Work Email: johnjohnson@unsm.org

Dallas Gould | Interim Emergency Service Coordinator
Work Phone: 1 (902) 919-1587
Work Email: dallasgould@unsm.org

Coral Gould-Paul | Infrastructure Intern
Work Phone: 1 (902) 919-1388
Work Email: coralgould-paul@unsm.org

Matt Canova | Infrastructure Administrator
Work Phone: 1 (902) 919-1398
Work Email: mattcanova@unsm.org



Pictured above and below: As part of emergency management support, UNSM delivered five fire skid units to the five communities in Unama'ki.



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