Nipk / Toewa'q 2026

Infrastructure Newsletter

Working Together to Support Our Communities



UNSM Infrastructure staff gather at the 4th Annual UNSM Infrastructure Conference in Membertou, connecting with partners and supporting collaboration on infrastructure priorities across Mi'kma'ki.

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Kwe' & Welcome

Summer / Fall 2026 Edition of the UNSM Infrastructure Newsletter!

As we welcome the changing seasons of summer and fall, we are pleased to share updates from across the UNSM Infrastructure Team and the many projects, partnerships, and initiatives taking place throughout Mi'kma'ki. This season has brought continued progress in emergency preparedness, environmental stewardship, housing and clean energy projects, youth programming, and community capacity building. Through collaboration with our member communities, we continue working toward meaningful and lasting improvements.

In this edition, we highlight recent achievements, training opportunities, and community-focused initiatives, including the **Mi'kmaq Youth Job Shadowing Project**, **AdventureSmart Youth Survival Camp**, and ongoing infrastructure projects. We also share updates on the partnerships and programs helping strengthen local skills, community resilience, and self-sufficiency. We are grateful to our member communities, partners, and staff for their continued dedication and collaboration in building strong, sustainable communities for future generations!

Emergency Services & Community Safety

Strengthening Emergency Preparedness and Community Resilience

Throughout the quarter, UNSM Emergency Management continued supporting Potlotek, Eskasoni, We'koqma'q, Wagmatcook, and Membertou through emergency planning, training, wildfire mitigation, marine safety, and regional partnerships.

Key activities included **Unama'ki Alert System training,** Mental Health First Aid, Small Craft Basic training in We'koqma'q, and emergency preparedness support for the Miniku Gathering in Potlotek.

UNSM also continues advancing the Resilient Communities through **FireSmart initiative**, supported by Natural Resources Canada. The program will provide funding opportunities for community-based projects focused on wildfire awareness, education, assessments, vegetation management, and emergency preparedness.

AdventureSmart Youth Survival Camp

On September 26–27, UNSM hosted its second annual **AdventureSmart Mi'kmaq Youth Survival Camp** in the Cape Breton Highlands. Nearly 70 applications were received, with 20 youth selected to participate.

Inspired by the television show Survivor, with a Mi'kmaq cultural twist, youth took part in archery, fire-making, emergency shelter construction, moose calling, and trivia focused on Mi'kmaq rights, Treaties, and sacred teachings.

The camp also featured storytelling with Clifford Paul and Allison Bernard, along with **AdventureSmart training** delivered by UNSM staff.

Team Kmtn claimed the overall championship with 260 points, finishing just five points ahead of the competition.



Dallas Gould takes part in a canoe outing during the Ocean Project Gathering in Vancouver, BC, experiencing local culture and learning about the region's connection to the water.

Emergency Services Training and Regional Partnerships

Emergency Services Coordinator Dallas Gould attended the **Atlantic Emergency Management Conference** in October and participated in an **Ocean Project Gathering in Vancouver**, British Columbia, providing opportunities for professional development, networking, and cultural learning.
Dallas also delivered **AdventureSmart Hug-A-Tree** training to youth at the survival camp and supported the training of four new incident operators in Membertou.

UNSM continues to strengthen emergency response capacity through **ICS Strike Force training,** community emergency planning, and regional collaboration.

Wasuek Googoo represented UNSM at the **Indigenous Justice Strategy National Information Gathering** in Ottawa, advocating for community safety, Treaty rights, and meaningful change within the justice system.

In her opening statement, she shared a powerful reminder: ***"The Mi'kmaw word for Ottawa is Ottawa', and it means the place where we go to beg; and look at us, begging for Justice."***

Environmental Stewardship, GIS & Land Protection

Protecting Lands, Shorelines & Community Assets



UNSM's Devin MacAskill participates in Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique training with Environment and Climate Change Canada. Can you spot the new UNSM toque?

Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Training

UNSM participated in **Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique (SCAT)** training delivered by Environment and Climate Change Canada from October 6–9 at the Canadian Coast Guard offices near the Canso Causeway.

Field exercises included simulated oil spill shoreline assessments in Port Hastings, Mulgrave, and Port Hood. Participants included representatives from Mi'kmaq organizations, environmental agencies, the **Canadian Coast Guard**, and marine response companies. The training strengthened regional capacity to assess and respond to potential shoreline impacts from marine pollution.

Erosion Protection and Living Shoreline Projects

UNSM continues working toward the implementation of erosion protection projects in Eskasoni and Potlotek. The team is awaiting the remaining construction permits, with **groundbreaking ceremonies** tentatively scheduled for November.

Construction of the living shoreline will begin following completion of the procurement process.

These projects aim to protect community shorelines while supporting long-term environmental resilience.

Solid Waste and Land Stewardship

UNSM continues working with Potlotek to identify a suitable location for a community transfer station.

Devin MacAskill and Quentin Doucette, Director of Public Works for Potlotek also met with **Indigenous Services Canada** to discuss funding opportunities and project eligibility, supporting continued progress in community waste management and land stewardship planning.

GIS Mapping and Water Infrastructure Partnerships

UNSM was invited to attend the grand opening of the **Atlantic First Nations Water Authority**'s new head office in Millbrook.

UNSM continues strengthening its relationship with AFNWA to support Public Works teams in member communities. GIS Technician John Johnson works closely with AFNWA GIS staff to maintain up-to-date water and wastewater infrastructure mapping, helping communities access important information for infrastructure planning and maintenance.

Technical Services, Housing & Clean Energy Projects

Building Safer, Healthier & More Efficient Community Infrastructure

Community Asset Mapping and Maintenance

UNSM continues to support member communities in strengthening their infrastructure management and maintenance capacity through asset mapping training.

Housing staff in Membertou have begun training, with additional sessions scheduled for Eskasoni, We'koqma'q, and Wagmatcook. These initiatives will help communities better track infrastructure assets, identify maintenance needs, and support long-term planning and decision-making.

Church Repair and Energy Efficiency Projects

Beginning in November, UNSM will work alongside youth participating in the **Mi'kmaq Youth Job Shadowing Project** to support repairs at churches in Eskasoni, Wagmatcook, and We'koqma'q. Planned improvements include replacing doors and windows, installing insulation, and addressing building-related safety concerns. These projects aim to improve building conditions, reduce energy costs, and create safer, more comfortable spaces for community members.

Greenfoot Energy will also be completing clean energy upgrades through the **ReCover initiative**, helping improve energy efficiency and support more sustainable community facilities.

Mi'kmaq Building Inspector Program

UNSM has been approved for an additional two years of training under the **Mi'kmaq Building Inspector Program**. The next four courses will focus on the requirements for code compliance building inspectors, building on previous training and certification opportunities for Mi'kmaq participants.

UNSM is working with our partners to ensure the training is **recognized provincially and nationally.** So that this program continues to create pathways for skilled employment while strengthening building inspection and safety capacity within Mi'kmaq communities.

Strengthening Technical Services Partnerships

UNSM is developing a partnership with the **North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council** to strengthen technical services and explore opportunities to share resources, knowledge, and expertise in support of member communities.

The team is also exploring opportunities related to new water legislation, including independent audit requirements and the development of training for water technicians. By building technical knowledge and supporting local staff, UNSM aims to strengthen community capacity in water quality, infrastructure operations, and regulatory compliance.

Wasuek Googoo and Justin Googoo have also completed **Site Construction Project Management** training through the **First Nations National Building Officials Association**. UNSM is now working toward developing a project management training package for community facility managers to support effective project planning, construction oversight, and facility maintenance.

Through these initiatives, UNSM continues to advance sustainable infrastructure development, improve housing and community facilities, and create opportunities for local training, employment, and long-term self-sufficiency.

Community Support, Training & Program Growth

Supporting Communities Through Capacity Building

Mi'kmaq Youth Job Shadowing Project

UNSM's **Mi'kmaq Youth Job Shadowing Project** continued to provide youth with opportunities to explore careers in infrastructure, clean energy, skilled trades, and technical services. From October 14–16, 16 youth from Unama'ki travelled to Moncton, New Brunswick, for a hands-on learning and mentorship experience. Participants visited **Greenfoot Energy**, where they were introduced to career opportunities in the water and wind energy sectors, toured facilities, took part in activities, and connected with industry professionals.

The trip also included learning opportunities with the **North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council,** where youth participated in activities led by their team.

The project will continue creating opportunities for youth to gain practical experience, mentorship, and exposure to career pathways while supporting future community workforce development.

Infrastructure Conference and Professional Development

The **4th Annual UNSM Infrastructure Conference** was held on September 10, 2026, at the Membertou Trade & Convention Centre. The conference brought together community representatives, professionals, and industry partners to share knowledge, discuss infrastructure priorities, and explore opportunities for collaboration.

Infrastructure Administrator Matthew Canova coordinated the event, supporting presenter arrangements, accommodations, and logistics to ensure a successful gathering.

Building Capacity Through Training and Knowledge Sharing

UNSM continues to prioritize training and knowledge transfer across its programs. Emergency Services staff are expanding their ability to deliver **AdventureSmart, First Aid, and Occupational Health and Safety** services to member communities and organizations.

The Infrastructure Team is also developing opportunities for mentorship, local employment, and skills development through project delivery, technical training, and partnerships.

Growing Our Team and Supporting Community Priorities

Throughout the quarter, the UNSM Infrastructure Team continued supporting community-led initiatives through administrative coordination, project planning, financial processes, technical support, and program development.

By strengthening partnerships and investing in local knowledge and skills, UNSM remains committed to supporting sustainable infrastructure, community resilience, and long-term self-sufficiency across our member communities.

Wela'lin / Thank you to our community partners, staff, youth, volunteers, and everyone who continues to contribute to the important work of UNSM Infrastructure.

Infrastructure Team

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Have questions or want to connect?
Send us a message!



Pictured above:
A youth participant takes aim during the archery competition at UNSM's 2026 AdventureSmart Mi'kmaq Youth Survival Camp in the Cape Breton Highlands.



Pictured above:
Youth participating in the Mi'kmaq Youth Job Shadowing Project tour at a water treatment facility in Moncton, New Brunswick, learning about water infrastructure and career opportunities in the field.