MI'KMAQ

CONFEDERACY OF PEI

2025-2026 Year in Review

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

For more than two decades, the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI (MCPEI) has played an important role in supporting the priorities of Abegweit First Nation and Lennox Island First Nation, as well as the broader Indigenous Community in Epekwitk.

Established in 2002, MCPEI is a Tribal Council that brings together people, expertise, and resources to provide programs and services that strengthen and empower our Communities while supporting meaningful change.

Through its key areas of programming, including health, education, employment, justice, resource management, child and family services, sport, and trusted source, MCPEI works alongside our Communities to deliver services that are accessible, inclusive, and culturally grounded.

Beyond its programs and services, MCPEI continues to build relationships with governments, organizations, and other partners to advance our Communities' interests and ensure Mi'kmaq perspectives are part of conversations that shape policies, services, and decisions. These relationships create opportunities for greater understanding, collaboration, and progress as we find new ways to respond to the opportunities and challenges facing our First Nations.

MCPEI's work is part of the broader structure of the Epekwitk Assembly of Councils (EAC), alongside L'nuey. Guided by the EAC's direction, these organizations each play a unique and important role in serving PEI's First Nations Communities, and each are guided by the aspirations, values, and self-determination of our people.

We invite you to explore the pages that follow and discover the people, programs, partnerships, and initiatives that shaped MCPEI throughout 2025–2026. As we look ahead, we remain committed to building on this progress and working together to create change, while cherishing and preserving our rich cultural heritage for future generations.

With gratitude and optimism for the future,



Chief Junior Gould
Chief of Abegweit First Nation

Co-Chair of Epekwitk Assembly of Councils



Chief Tabatha Bernard
Chief of Lennox Island First Nation

Co-Chair of Epekwitk Assembly of Councils

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Pjila’si | Welcome

On behalf of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI, I am proud to share our 2025–2026 Year in Review. This report details our organization's hard work and accomplishments from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026. It celebrates the people and partnerships that moved our organization forward and reflects the values that drive everything we do: community, collaboration, and culture.

The 2025/2026 year was one of growth and success for MCPEI. We celebrated numerous accomplishments, built new partnerships and opportunities, grew our team, and improved our programs and services. Our work continues to make a significant impact for the Communities and individuals we serve.

I am extremely proud of the MCPEI team and the work we accomplished. It reflects our commitment to building a strong, empowered Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Community.

Our work is guided by the Chief and Councils of Lennox Island First Nation and Abegweit First Nation. We are grateful for their leadership and guidance.

We also wish to recognize the support of our partners, including the Government of Canada, the Province of PEI, and other non-profit organizations. Their support gives us the capacity to deliver services, expand our teams, and respond to emerging needs – turning our mission, vision, and values into meaningful action.

Wela'lioq (thank you) to leadership, our team, partners, and Community members who made this year possible.

KCoade

Kateri Coade
Executive Director

EPEKWITK ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILS

The Epekwitk Assembly of Councils (EAC) is the joint forum that oversees and governs organizations that act in the shared interest of Abegweit First Nation and Lennox Island First Nation. Bringing together the Band Councils of both First Nations, the Assembly currently administers two organizations that are provincial in scope: L'nuey and the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI.









EPEKWITK ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILS

Full Councils of the Abegweit and Lennox Island First Nations





The Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI's role is to deliver shared programs and services on behalf of both First Nations, as well as, serving as a Tribal Council that provides advisory and technical support to each First Nation's administration.



L'nuey's mandate is focused on protecting and advancing the Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq, including negotiations, consultation, and governance development.

ABOUT US

Operating under the Epekwitk Assembly of Councils, the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI (MCPEI) is a Tribal Council that was first established on April 2nd, 2002. As a not-for-profit organization, MCPEI provides technical support, capacity development, programming, and advisory services to its member First Nations – Abegweit First Nation and Lennox Island First Nation.

VISION

Supporting an empowered Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Community in the journey toward self-determination.

MISSION

We work with our partners to respond to evolving Community needs through advisory services and shared programs.

VALUES

COMMUNITY

- Listen, respond, and adapt to diverse Community needs.
- Build community in all that we do.
- Respect each other, Community values, and individual needs.

COLLABORATION

- Collaborate with the Community, individuals and families to best meet their needs.
- Build trust and work as a team.
- Be accountable to the Community we serve and to each other.

CULTURE

- Recognize Mi'kmaq and Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being.
- Acknowledge, respect and incorporate Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and approaches.
- Facilitate culturally safe spaces and environments.





PROGRAMS & SERVICES

EDUCATION

MCPEI’s Education Program supports Mi'kmaq learners from Lennox Island First Nation and Abegweit First Nation, as well as Indigenous students living both on and off reserve across Epekwitk. Through advocacy, relationship building, direct student supports, and strategic partnerships, the program works to ensure that Indigenous learners have equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities and the services they need to succeed.

This program is grounded in Mi'kmaq values and guided by input from our two First Nation Communities. The program strives to strengthen student achievement, well-being, cultural identity, and lifelong learning pathways. In 2025/2026, our work focused on three key areas:

ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Supporting the educational success of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous learners is central to the MCPEI Education Program. Throughout the year, we worked with families, schools, First Nations, and Community partners to address barriers to learning and provide access to educational resources, learning materials, and specialized supports tailored to individual student needs.

MCPEI has facilitated access to services including speech and language support, occupational therapy, and other educational interventions that students need to reach their full potential.

MI'KMAQ-CENTRED CURRICULUM AND RESOURCES

Educators in Band-operated and PEI public schools have consistently identified a need for educational resources that reflect the history, culture, knowledge, and lived experiences of the PEI Mi'kmaq. In response, MCPEI has secured funding to develop and acquire localized, Mi'kmaq-centred curriculum resources for use across the province.

This work includes implementing the Mi'kmaw Studies 801 curriculum, currently being piloted at Westisle Composite High School and Morell Regional High School, as well as developing a new Intermediate L'nuitasimk curriculum. These initiatives are designed to strengthen cultural understanding, promote authentic Indigenous perspectives, and foster learning environments where Mi'kmaq students see themselves reflected in their education.

Grounded in the principles of empowerment, belonging, and student success, these resources recognize Mi'kmaq knowledge, language, culture, and ways of being as essential strengths that enrich educational experiences for all learners.



EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Building strong partnerships is fundamental to advancing Indigenous education in Epekwitk. MCPEI continues to work collaboratively with First Nations, educational institutions, government partners, and Community organizations to promote culturally responsive learning environments and systemic improvements that benefit Indigenous students.

We collaborated with Holland College to create culturally relevant and welcoming learning spaces while supporting efforts to integrate Indigenous perspectives throughout curriculum and campus life. MCPEI also continues to work closely with Lennox Island First Nation, Abegweit First Nation, and the PEI Department of Education and Early Years to advance reconciliation and strengthen Indigenous education across the province.

A significant achievement of this collaborative work is the advocacy for the Reconciliation Education Consultant position within the Department of Education and Early Years. Through ongoing partnership with Indigenous education leaders and stakeholders, this role has supported the development of the Indigenous Education Foundational Guidebook, a key resource intended to guide curriculum development, strengthen Indigenous content integration, and support educators in advancing meaningful reconciliation through education.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

MCPEI's Employment Services Program supports Indigenous people across Epekwitk with employment, skills development, education and training opportunities. Through individualized support and partnerships with employers, training institutions and government, the program helps clients explore career pathways, build skills, access training and connect with employment opportunities. Services are available to Status and non-Status First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples living on and off reserve.

Throughout 2025–2026, the Employment Services team remained committed to delivering individualized, culturally responsive support to help unemployed or underemployed individuals, as well as summer students overcome barriers, build skills, and pursue employment, education, and training opportunities. Our key areas of focus were:

CLIENT-BASED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Our Employment Services team supported clients with individualized career planning, job searches, career exploration, and hands-on work experiences that provided exposure to industries aligned with each client's strengths, interests, and identified career goals.
We helped our clients secure employment with private-sector businesses, government departments, and not-for-profit organizations. We collaborated with more than 50 industry and Community partners across Epekwitk.

Our work created 128 approved Targeted Wage Subsidy placements. Funding was provided through Government of Canada agreements under the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ISETS) and the Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF), as well as through the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) with the Province of Prince Edward Island.







SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

MCPEI Employment Services also supported clients in skills development training, post-secondary education and industry-related activities. This included assistance with tuition, transportation, specialized equipment and other employment- or education-related needs. Clients also completed a variety of pre-employment and industry-recognized certifications, including CPR and First Aid, Marine Emergency Duties (MED) and Traffic Control training. These opportunities aligned directly with each client's career goals and supported their readiness to enter or advance in the workforce.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER PATHWAYS

More than 50 high school students participated in supported summer employment and youth programming, including the Melkiknay Youth Program in Lennox Island First Nation and the SEAM and STAR programs in Abegweit First Nation. These initiatives provide youth—particularly those facing barriers—with opportunities to develop valuable life skills, gain meaningful work experience and prepare for a successful transition from high school to post-secondary education, apprenticeship, employment or entrepreneurship.



PROJECT-BASED EMPLOYMENT

Through the Skills Partnership Fund (SPF), MCPEI Employment Services continued to develop employment and training opportunities for Indigenous peoples living both on and off-reserve. These social enterprise projects give participants practical work experience while building industry-specific skills, workplace skills, and pathways to longer-term employment and entrepreneurship, contributing to the long-term success of Indigenous individuals, families, and Communities throughout Epekwitk.

We continue to work closely with Abegweit First Nation and Lennox Island First Nation, as well as provincial and federal government and industry partners, through the 5-year agreement (ends March 2028). Each SPF project is supported by a Partnership and Business Developer and industry experts who provide guidance, mentorship and hands-on experience aligned with the skills and requirements of each field. The five SPF projects in the current agreement are:

Malpek Oysters (Lennox Island First Nation)
Participants gain hands-on experience in aquaculture and oyster farming, including production, processing, marine operations and farm-to-market business activities.

Malpek Hospitality and Events (Lennox Island First Nation)
Participants work in hospitality, catering, and Indigenous experiential tourism while developing skills connected to food service, events, and Mi'kmaq cultural experiences.

Abegweit Hospitality (Abegweit First Nation)
Participants gain experience in hospitality, culinary services, events and Indigenous tourism, with a focus on customer service, product development, marketing and business operations.

Abegweit Construction (Abegweit First Nation)
Participants develop skills through construction, property maintenance, landscaping and Community infrastructure projects, gaining practical experience alongside industry professionals.

El'taqati'kw Digital Studio (Urban)
Participants develop skills in digital media, content creation, graphic design, social media, website development and technology, gaining experience in the growing digital and creative industries.

FIRST NATIONS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES (PRIDE)

The First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) PRIDE program provides prevention and intervention services and supports to children, youth and families in partnership with Abegweit First Nation and Lennox Island First Nation. The program works to strengthen families, support healthy child development with a focus on early intervention, family support, and culturally responsive service delivery.

Throughout 2025/2026, the Family PRIDE team continued to work directly with children, youth, parents, and caregivers in both First Nation Communities, providing a range of culturally grounded programming, services, and supports, including (but not limited to):

- In-home supports and family strengthening programs
- Well-being services, including cultural and recreational activities
- Clinical therapy for children and families at risk
- Funding for addictions and mental health treatment
- Transportation support for appointments that help well-being and risk prevention
- Advocacy and supports for families who come in contact with Child Protection Services
- Emergency funding for an alternative caregiver to prevent children from being placed in care and support to meet the basic needs of the child
- Emergency funding for food, diapers, and baby food
- Legal support for adoption and mediation
- Parent education and awareness
- Youth mentorship
- Respite support
- Alternative Caregiver supports and services
- Positive Indigenous Parenting Sessions *(new this year!)*
- Family Group Circles *(new this year!)*





In addition to delivering its ongoing programs and services, the PRIDE team focused on several key areas of growth and development throughout 2025/2026:

CAREGIVER SUPPORT

A major success for the PRIDE team continues to be the strength of its Alternative Caregiver program. Alternative Caregivers play an essential role in supporting children and families by providing alternative placements for children at risk of being placed in the provincial child protection system. Their commitment helps children maintain meaningful connections to their families, Communities, and culture while promoting stability, belonging, and positive outcomes. The PRIDE program supports Alternative Caregivers by removing barriers to providing care and helping children remain within family and Community through family-led alternative care plans.

For the fifth year, the PRIDE program, in collaboration with the province, has helped facilitate the monthly Caregiver Circle Gathering, offering support, training, and connection for Indigenous foster parents connected to Lennox Island and Abegweit First Nation. PRIDE hosted its second Annual Caregivers Gathering event this year, providing training and connection opportunities for foster parents and their families. The program has focused on recruitment and retention strategies for Indigenous foster parents connected to Lennox Island and Abegweit First Nation.



GROWING THE TEAM

Throughout 2025/2026, the MCPEI PRIDE Program continued to grow, adding key personnel that will allow us to expand servcies and meet our Communities' needs.

Adding a dedicated Family Group Circle (FGC) Facilitator was an important step this year, improving the program's ability to lead Family Group Circles grounded in First Nations culture and Community. Family Group Circles bring families, Community members, and support networks together to support family-led planning for children's safety and well-being while keeping them connected to their families, Communities, and culture whenever possible.

Overall, the PRIDE team's growth this year helped build a stronger, more experienced program, creating greater capacity to support children, youth, and families and respond to the evolving needs of the Communities we serve.

STRENGTHENING CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

As the FNCFS PRIDE Program continues to grow, expanding the capital infrastructure to house and support FNCFS delivery in each First Nation has become a key priority. Limited space for operations and programming has made it difficult to provide culturally respectful, consistent and reponsive services to children, youth, and families.

In 2025/2026, we continued to work on capital infrastructure projects in each First Nation. With support from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), MCPEI secured a project manager to advance capital infrastructure planning in both Communities. We submitted feasibility study applications, in partnership with Lennox Island First Nation and Abegweit First Nation, to explore the development of dedicated operational buildings and therapeutic care homes. The applications were approved in 2026 and we promptly engaged an architectural firm to help us complete the studies.

These projects will help create the physical foundation needed to support the growing FNCFS PRIDE program and provide children, youth, and families with appropriate spaces to access supports within their Communities.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The past year also provided us an opportunity to focus on long-term planning and future growth. We worked with a consultant to develop a strategic plan which will guide future program development.

In March 2026, we established a new bilateral agreement related to Child Protection Services. The agreement strengthens the strong working relationship PRIDE has with the Province of PEI and will help ensure sustainable service delivery to First Nations children and families. The agreement supports a shared commitment to prevention, least disruptive measures, and keeping children and youth safely connected to their families, Communities, and culture.

HEALTH

The MCPEI Health Program is dedicated to improving the overall health and well-being of First Nations Communities in Epekwitk. We work with health partners, governments, and First Nations Communities to deliver culturally safe health services, improve access to health information and education, and advocate for Community priorities.

In 2025–2026, we saw significant progress across the Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq and Provincial health care systems. Some of our major achievements and projects from this year include:

IMPROVING COMMUNITY-BASED CARE

The MCPEI Health Program continued to support more coordinated, community-based care that responds to the needs of First Nations Community members. This included strengthening Primary Care, Home and Community Care, and Long-Term Care services through:

- Ongoing collaboration and regular meetings with Health Directors and Community Health Staff
- Participation in professional development planning for Atlantic Home and Community Care
- Supporting the implementation of the Patient Medical Home model to improve coordination of primary care services
- The use of Community Health Record data to identify service gaps and guide future health planning
- Working with the Provincial Government to incorporate First Nations priorities into the updated Long-Term Care placement policy

STRENGTHENING HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

MCPEI worked closely with provincial and other health programs to identify and resolve barriers affecting First Nations patients. We participated in numerous bilateral tables in First Nations Communities around shared priorities, including:

- Home, Community, Primary and Palliative Care
- Public Health Nursing
- Diabetes services
- Mental wellness
- Health information and data

ADVANCING CULTURALLY SAFE CARE AND EDUCATION

MCPEI continued to promote culturally safe health care through provincial policy, education and Community-based initiatives. This means Health professionals are gaining a better understanding of Mi'kmaq culture, history and Community needs, helping create safer and more respectful health care experiences. Key projects include:

Nursing Practice Directive: In partnership with the PEI College of Nursing and Midwifery (PEICNM), we engaged Community members and health professionals to develop a practice directive addressing Indigenous cultural safety, cultural humility and anti-Indigenous racism. The directive is now part of annual nursing licence renewals.

Culturally Safe Care Project: We partnered with Health PEI and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC) to deliver educational training to health professionals on cultural safety and humility, including self-directed learning, presentations, and Blanket Exercises.

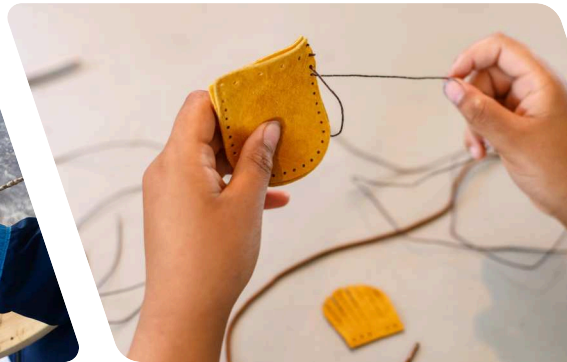
Indigenous Palliative Care: We partnered with Pallium Canada, Abegweit First Nation, Lennox Island First Nation and Provincial Home Care to develop culturally appropriate, trauma-informed palliative care education modules.

Trauma-Informed Care: We provided online training for Indigenous Community helpers and residential school support workers across Atlantic First Nations, as well as ongoing trauma-informed cultural support programs for Indian residential and day school survivors and people affected by Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Community Health Education: We held various Lunch & Learn sessions and educational discussions with Community members on topics including menopause, diabetes and advance care planning to support empowered and informed health decisions.

Community Cultural Programming: We hosted and supported accessible cultural activities that strengthen knowledge, connection and belonging, including drum making, beading, painting, quill art and basket weaving. We offered this programming to Indigenous peoples living both on and off reserve.





EXPANDING PREVENTATIVE HEALTH SERVICES AND SCREENINGS

Community members gained access to new screening and clinical services to support early intervention and empower individuals to manage their own health. Initiatives include but are not limited to:

- Orthoptist Clinics
- Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Clinics
- HPV Screening Pilot Project
- Adult Dental Hygiene Services
- Cancer screenings, including mammography and colorectal cancer testing
- First Nations Health Data Registry to support long-term population health planning

IMPROVING HEALTH DATA ACCESS AND PRIVACY

In response to Community concerns, we began work to strengthen health data access and sovereignty by developing a more coordinated Data Access Agreement framework. Greater access to health information helps Communities better understand their health needs, plan services and make informed decisions while protecting the rights and privacy of First Nations data. This work included:

- Ongoing attention to OCAP® principles as digital health systems evolve
- Advocacy for appropriate access to provincial electronic health records and digital health resources, including implementation of read-only access where appropriate
- Supporting health information policies, the First Nations Client Registry and staff access to relevant provincial charting systems

ADVOCATING FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH PRIORITIES

The MCPEI Health Program continued to participate in provincial, regional and First Nations committees to ensure Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq perspectives inform health policy and system planning across the full continuum of care, from perinatal health to end-of-life care.

Program staff are a bridge between Community health programs, provincial and federal health systems, Indigenous partners, regulatory organizations, educational institutions and regional First Nations networks.

INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The MCPEI Integrated Resource Management (IRM) Program supports First Nations Communities in protecting and carefully managing the natural resources that matter to their culture, heritage, and people. Our team offers expert advice and support in fisheries and aquaculture, farming, forestry, climate projects, and other resource management areas.

Our work reflects Netukulimk, the concept of taking only what you need from nature to sustain the resource for future generations.

The 2025/2026 year has been defined by a commitment to supporting self-determination and expansion of services and training that directly empower Lennox Island and Abegweit First Nations. This year, our major areas of focus included:

CLIMATE ACTION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Climate adaptation is an important part of our stewardship work, and this year focused on bridging the gap between technical research and Community education with two major gatherings.

In April 2025, we partnered with Lennox Island First Nation and Abegweit First Nation to host the Atlantic Regional Climate Change Gathering (ARCCG), which brought together more than 40 people from across Atlantic Canada to build collaborative pathways for climate action. The focus was on sharing monitoring strategies and peer-to-peer knowledge.

In February 2026, we hosted the Youth Climate Gathering in Charlottetown. This two-day event involved more than 60 young people, Elders, and families from Lennox Island First Nation and Abegweit First Nation. The gathering built on the ARCCG and moved beyond theory, letting participants lead talks on environmental issues that are directly affecting their Communities.

These gatherings created vital opportunities for intergenerational knowledge sharing. By combining Elders' lived experience with youth advocacy, we ensure climate adaptation remains grounded in Mi'kmaq ways of knowing and being.





OCEANS MANAGEMENT

Through the Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Ocean Management (AAROM) Program, the IRM Team continued to provide technical and scientific expertise to support decision-making. A key milestone this year was advancing a 5-year funding agreement extending to 2029, which secures long-term technical support for our First Nations Communities.

The team also completed its fifth year of striped bass tagging and tracking research to better understand overwintering patterns and population health. This work marked an important transition, with Abegweit First Nation taking the lead on striped bass research moving forward.

The IRM team also continued to participate in discussions with member First Nations, the shellfish industry, and federal and provincial governments on the future of the shellfish industry and the ongoing impacts of the MSX disease.

In summer 2025, we celebrated two decades of dedicated stewardship of the Basin Head Marine Protected Area through a cultural programming series. The Mi'kmaq Storytelling Series featured performances by the Mi'kmaq Heritage Actors, helping reconnect Community members with Epekwitk's only Marine Protected Area. Local Mi'kmaq artisans also participated in select events, with attendance growing throughout the series and more than 30 people attending the final performance.

FORESTRY MANAGEMENT

As part of the Forested Lands Priority Places (FLPP) initiative, our team supported the Sister Trails project and continued monitoring and protection of Black Ash stands. We held medicinal plant walks in both Communities and at Greenwich National Park, where we identified and documented traditional plant medicine for future educational resources.

Our team also accompanied members of the Natural Resource Departments from Epekwitk's First Nations Communities to Odanak, Quebec, for a multi-day knowledge-sharing workshop with the Odanak Abenaki Band focused on Black Ash research and conservation.



LAND USE RESEARCH

In 2025, the Land Use Interview Program continued. This multi-year project interviewed Community members in accordance with OCAP® principles and updated and digitized the Mi'kmaq land use data.

More than 600 historical interviews have been updated with new transcriptions and secure digital files. Over 7,000 maps were created over the year, with the goal of returning the information to the Community in the form of bound booklets and digital copies for the interviewees.

The team, with the help of a summer student from Lennox Island First Nation also conducted 20 new land use research interviews documenting current harvesting and cultural practices and created 20 Duty to Consult maps to support Community leadership in provincial and federal consultations.

This work ensures that historical Mi'kmaq knowledge is preserved and used to plan research activities with each First Nation.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Within the Solid Waste Management (SWM) program, we continued to promote and provide education on environmental stewardship.

For the third year, we completed comprehensive audits in Lennox Island and Scotchfort to refine waste reduction and composting goals. We also held multiple e-waste collection events in Lennox Island, Scotchfort, and Rocky Point this year.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY-BUILDING

Our team worked with First Nations Guardians on field research and provided specialized Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping and orienteering training at our Communities' Natural Resource Departments. This training strengthens local technical capacity and supports Communities in managing their own geographic data and conservation projects.

The IRM Program also partnered with the Canadian Coast Guard to provide safety and technical training to First Nations members and IRM Staff, including Incident Command System 100 and marine safety training.

Additionally, to support the revitalization of cultural skills, we held skinning and tanning workshops in Lennox Island and Scotchfort to align modern waste management with traditional harvesting practices.

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE

MCPEI's Indigenous Justice Program provides legal support to Indigenous Peoples in Epekwitk. Guided by traditional healing and holistic approaches, our team supports individuals navigating the criminal justice system. We offer services at every stage of the judicial process, including in-court support, case management, Gladue reports and after-care, restorative justice, customary law, and reintegration. We also provide Community outreach, education and awareness and referral services.

During 2025–2026, the Indigenous Justice Program saw a steady increase in referrals and requests for support. The Senior Program Coordinator, Court Worker and Case Manager worked together to strengthen services for Indigenous Peoples living on and off Reserve. This year our team's key areas of focus included:

MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING CRITICAL CLIENT SERVICES

Our Indigenous Court Worker continued to guide and support clients through the court process. They maintained a presence at all court levels in Charlottetown, Summerside, and Georgetown, as well as the newly launched Domestic Violence Therapeutic Court. This year, they have begun streamlining processes for intake and out-of-court service delivery.

Our Gladue After-Care Case Manager continues to identify barriers, support rehabilitation, and connect clients with cultural and Community-based services. They have strengthened relationships with probation services and provincial and Community partners to help address needs before they lead to further involvement with the criminal justice system.

The program also continues to facilitate Gladue Reports. Requested by the Court following a guilty plea or verdict, Gladue Reports provide individuals with an opportunity to share the circumstances and experiences that have shaped their lives. The program connects individuals with a Gladue writer, who works with them and, where appropriate, their families and support networks to develop a report. Each report is reviewed with the individual before being submitted to the Court, Crown, and Defence.

Ongoing after-care planning connects clients with supports such as addiction and mental health services, the John Howard Society, the Mi'kmaq Family Resource Centre, and local shelters.

Indigenous Justice staff participated in professional development and training throughout the year, including completing a Case Management Certificate through UPEI. Team members also attended the National Restorative Justice Symposium in Ottawa and the National Indigenous Court Workers Conference in Vancouver, connecting with justice professionals from across the country and sharing knowledge and approaches that support healing and reduce repeat involvement with the justice system.

These opportunities strengthened the team's professional practice and ability to advocate for clients, while helping inform the continued development and direction of the Indigenous Justice Program.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND HEALING OPPORTUNITIES

This year, the Indigenous Justice Program continued to strengthen culturally based approaches to justice and healing.

The program offered Justice Circles as alternatives to traditional court processes, including pre-intervention, alternative measures (diversion), sentencing, conflict resolution, and healing circles. Guided by Elders and trained Circle Keepers, these circles provide a safe and respectful space and can be accessed through referrals from individuals, Communities, schools, employers, and others.

Approximately 20 Circle Keepers completed Circle Keeper training and refresher courses through the Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network, strengthening the Community's capacity to facilitate culturally based circles. As the program works to expand the use of Justice Circles, we have identified the need for a dedicated Circle Keeper role to support the growth of this service and increase awareness of the cultural role circles can play in addressing criminal behaviour.

Cultural programming also remained an important part of our program's work. Over the year, the team hosted drumming circles with Elders, medicine pouch making, beading sessions, and a Men's Retreat in partnership with support workers from Lennox Island First Nation. These workshops provide a relaxed setting for peer support and cultural learning. Both participants and staff enjoy these sessions, and we've set a goal to host more workshops next year.







COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Building strong relationships with Community and service partners remained an important focus for the Indigenous Justice Program this year.

We provided programming for youth summer camps in both Abegweit and Lennox Island First Nations, creating opportunities to build relationships with youth and strengthen connections between Community, RCMP and Justice Workers.

Partnerships with the Lennox Island First Nation Men's Support Worker and Men's Addiction Worker also continued to grow. They supported the Men's Retreat and worked with the Indigenous Justice team to strengthen case plans and connect clients with additional supports. Weekly men's breakfasts gave the team another opportunity to connect with Community members in a relaxed setting.

The program also continued to work closely with the Provincial Restorative Justice Program to promote awareness and understanding of restorative justice approaches.

Several Lunch & Learn sessions were held in Lennox Island throughout the year, bringing service providers into the Community and creating informal opportunities for Community members to learn, ask questions, and share feedback about the services they would like to see offered. Guest presenters included Legal Aid, Victims Services and the Domestic Violence Therapeutic Court.



INDIGENOUS SPORT CIRCLE PEI

The Indigenous Sport Circle PEI supports the development and delivery of sport, recreation and physical activity opportunities for Indigenous youth in Epekwitk living both on and off reserve.

This MCPEI Program was previously named the PEI Aboriginal Sport Circle and was renamed in spring 2025 to better represent the youth and athletes it serves.

During 2025/2026, the Indigenous Sport Circle PEI (Sport Circle) continued its commitment to increasing access to sport, developing Indigenous athletes and leaders, supporting coaches, promoting healthy active lifestyles, and creating spaces for Indigenous youth to participate, belong, achieve, and thrive. The program's key priorities this year were:

PROMOTING SPORT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) has recognized sport as a tool for social development. It highlights sport's potential to support health, education, employability, positive relationships and Community well-being. The TRC's Calls to Action call on governments to ensure sport policies are inclusive, reduce barriers to participation and improve Community health.

The Sport Circle continued to create opportunities that combine sport and culture while supporting four key social development outcomes: improved health, Improved education, increased employability, and reduced at-risk behaviour.

During 2025/2026, the Sport Circle delivered and supported programming under its Sport for Social Development mandate, including:

- Female Empowerment Camp
- Indigenous Sport Celebration Event
- Elder and Youth Ribbon Skirt Pin Activities

The Sport Circle also supported Community partners in delivering social development events such as the Prince County Boys and Girls Club Stick Together Family Fun Hockey Fest.







CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

The Sport Circle works collaboratively with Abegweit First Nation and Lennox Island First Nation to identify Community sport and recreation needs, then partners with Community organizations, provincial sport organizations, coaches, athletes and families to develop opportunities that reflect those priorities.

By providing safe, supportive environments, we help Indigenous youth build skills, confidence, and connections while discovering activities they enjoy. Through its programming, the Indigenous Sport Circle PEI promotes physical literacy, physical activity, fitness and overall well-being. Examples of the activites offered to Indigenous youth in PEI in 2025/2026 include:

- Female and Male Hockey Development Camps
- Track and Field Clinic
- Volleyball Skills & Drills Clinic
- Baseball/Softball Skills & Drills Clinics
- Badminton Development Clinic
- Come Try Lacrosse Clinic

The Sport Circle team also supported Community-based programming throughout the year, including creating programming for summer camps and March Break activities, and supporting fun runs, bike rodeos and after-school activities.



ENHANCING COACHING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Sport Circle created opportunities for new and experienced coaches and sport leaders to build their skills through the Aboriginal Coaching Modules, a professional development curriculum designed to deepen understanding of coaching through an Indigenous lens.

Originally designed for First Nations, Métis and Inuit coaches, the program has expanded to include non-Indigenous coaches who work within Indigenous Communities and with Indigenous athletes.

During 2025/2026, the Sport Circle presented the Aboriginal Coaching Modules to:

- Holland College Sport and Recreation students
- UPEI Kinesiology students
- Coaches, sport leaders and Community members through public workshops

Public workshops were held in Charlottetown in May 2025, with 12 participants completing the course, and in Summerside in November 2025, with nine participants completing the course.

The Sport Circle also partnered with the Department of Education to coordinate "Lacrosse: The Creator's Game," a professional development session for PEI physical education teachers held in March 2026. The session provided an opportunity to explore the history, cultural roots and significance of lacrosse, and to support teachers in bringing these teachings into their physical education programs.

Our team was proud to support 2025 Regional Tom Longboat Award recipient and Indigenous athlete Kennah Brant, accompanying her to Ottawa for the National Indigenous Sports Gala, where she represented PEI and received the prestigious award that recognizes Indigenous athletes who have made outstanding contributions to sport and Community in Canada.

PREPARING FOR NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES

The North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) is the largest multi-sport and cultural gathering for Indigenous youth across Turtle Island. Early in the 2025/2026 fiscal year, the Indigenous Sport Circle PEI hosted a Road to NAIG 2027 kick-off event at the University of PEI. This gathering brought together young Indigenous youth born between 2009-2014 who are excited to learn more about the Games.

At the heart of the launch was the unveiling of a new design that will serve as the visual guide for Team PEI's journey to the Games. This unique design brings together Mi'kmaq identity and cultural symbols.

Shortly after the kick-off event, the North American Indigenous Games Council made the difficult decision to withdraw the hosting rights previously granted to the Calgary Host Society and announced that the Games would be postponed to 2028. Thankfully, the youth eligible for NAIG 2027 will remain eligible for NAIG 2028. Through it all, NAIG Council remains committed to Indigenous youth and to the ongoing advancement of the NAIG movement.

While we wait for the host of the 2028 Games to be announced, the Sport Circle continues to provide sport, training and athlete development opportunities that support Indigenous youth interested in pursuing future NAIG opportunities. While NAIG is an important and exciting opportunity for Indigenous youth, the Sport Circle remains fully committed to the importance of providing youth with opportunities to play, have fun, make new friends and learn new skills.



TRUSTED SOURCE - SECURE STATUS PROGRAM

The Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI continued its partnership with Indigenous Services Canada to support individuals in applying for, renewing, or replacing their Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS).

As a designated Trusted Source Organization, MCPEI provides free assistance to individuals registered under the Indian Act, including helping individuals complete applications, certifying supporting documents, obtaining required identification and photographs, and and assisting applicants without a guarantor to meet federal requirements.

Throughout 2025/2026, MCPEI supported individuals with their SCIS applications. Assistance was available by phone, email, and through one-on-one appointments. MCPEI also partnered with the Atlantic Indigenous Services Canada branch to offer pop-up clinics, giving Community members more opportunities to access in-person support.

COMMUNICATIONS

Over the past year, the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI (MCPEI) continued to share the work happening across our programs and services through proactive communications and storytelling.

Communications plays an important role in helping Community members understand the programs and services available to them, while also highlighting the impact of our work for partners, funders and stakeholders. Through our communications, we celebrate our Communities, share Mi'kmaq culture and create opportunities for Islanders to learn more about the work happening across Epekwitk.

Throughout the year, we shared stories, updates and information through:

- **Social media** to share timely updates, Community stories, events and program information
- **Website updates** to provide accessible information about programs, services and organizational news
- **Media relations** to highlight key initiatives, partnerships and Community achievements
- **Promotional materials** including program information, brochures and other resources
- **Event communications** and signage to strengthen MCPEI's presence and brand across Community events and activities



HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

APRIL 2025









The Indigenous Sport Circle PEI hosted the Road to NAIG Kick-Off Event at UPEI







The IRM team partnered with Lennox Island First Nation and Abegweit First Nation to host the Atlantic Regional Climate Change Gathering. Forty people from across Atlantic Canada attended to discuss climate change impacts and build pathways for future collaboration among First Nations and First Nation organizations

MAY 2025







MCPEI staff attended the Red Dress Day event and walk in Summerside





The Indigenous Justice Program hosted Circle Keeper Training in Summerside. Training was led by the Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN) of Nova Scotia



The PRIDE team partnered with Lennox Island First Nation to present the KAIROS Blanket Exercise for Child Protection Services staff







Employment Services Counsellors attended Community Job Fairs

The Education team took part in the PEI Provincial Hertiage Fair as judge for the MCPEI Speciality Awards

JUNE 2025





MCPEI staff attended the Abegweit First Nation Mawi'omi

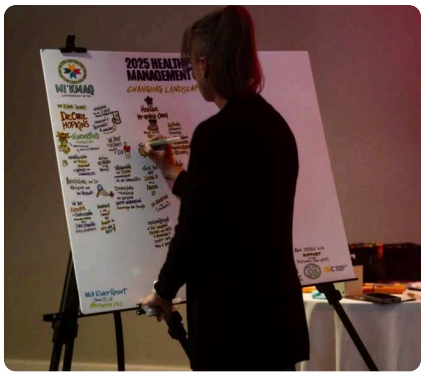






The Indigenous Sport Circle PEI partnered with Lacrosse PEI to offer a technical clinic for young Indigenous athletes interested in trying out lacrosse





The Health team hosted the Health Emergency Management Gathering (HEMG) in Mill River, bringing together Atlantic First Nations Health and Emergency Management Organization (EMO) staff to discuss the changing landscape of health emergency management

JULY 2025





The Mi'kmaq Storytelling Series hosted by the IRM team in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the PEI Museum & Heritage Foundation began its summer run at Basin Head Provincial Park





PRIDE staff supported St. Anne's Sunday celebrations and had a float in the St. Anne's Sunday Parade in Lennox Island







MCPEI staff supported the Stick Together Hockey Fest in Lennox Island, presented by Lennox Island First Nation in partnership with the Prince County Boys & Girls Club

The IRM team hosted a field day for DFO representatives, highlighting the work being done with striped bass in the Montrose River

AUGUST 2025





Summer Employment Students enjoyed their placements





MCPEI Partnered with Abegweit First Nation and Lennox Island First Nation to host Youth Summer Camp activities







MCPEI staff attended the Lennox Island First Nation Mawi'omi

SEPTEMBER 2025







MCPEI hosted its 16th Annual Golf Tournament





MCPEI's Employment Services Program received the "National Visionary Award" at the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Awards Gala hosted by the Assembly of First Nations

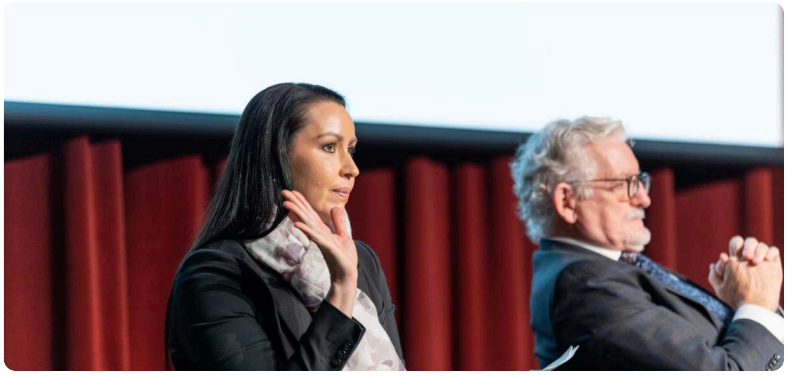






MCPEI staff attended Orange Shirt and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Ceremonies in Abegweit First Nation, Lennox Island First Nation and Charlottetown

OCTOBER 2025





Executive Director Kateri Coade appeared as a witness before the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples, providing testimony on Bill S-2





Kennah Brant earned the prestigious 2025 Regional Tom Longboat Award. The Indigenous Sport Circle PEI supported her at the National Indigenous Sports Gala in Ottawa







MCPEI staff attended the Treaty Day Ceremony and Mawi'omi in Charlottetown

MCPEI supported Abegweit First Nation's Chief's Haunted Barn

NOVEMBER 2025



The Indigenous Sport Circle PEI hosted an Indigenous Girls Volleyball Clinic in partnership with Abegweit First Nation



MCPEI staff attended the Lennox Island Career Expo

Executive Director Kateri Coade was appointed to Hockey Canada's first Indigenous Advisory Council



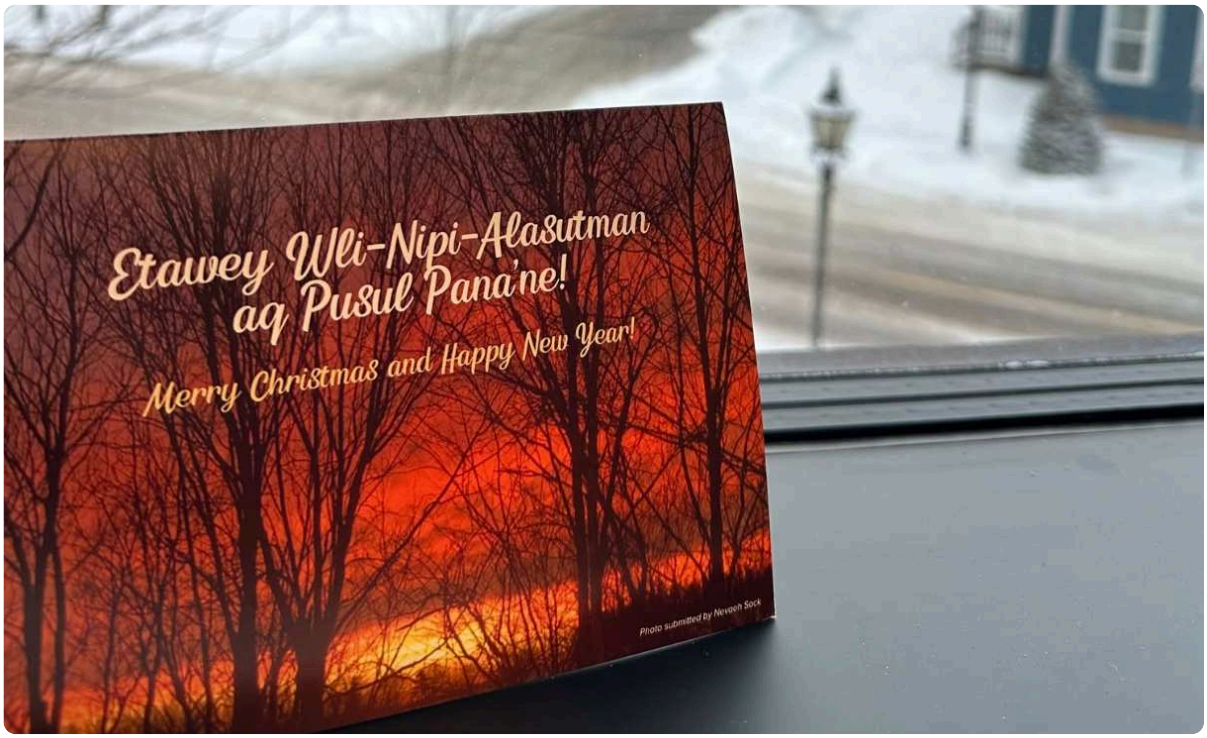
Members of the PRIDE team attended the "Our Children Our Way" National Conference in Vancouver





The Indigenous Sport Circle PEI presented the Aboriginal Coaches Module to Holland College Sport & Leisure students and UPEI Kinesiology students

DECEMBER 2025



Photography by Nevah Sock of Abegweit First Nation was selected as the winner of MCPEI's Christmas Card Contest and was printed on cards distributed to Elders across Epekwitk

JANUARY 2026





Employment Services Senior Program Coordinator Curtis Reilly was awarded the Indigenous Skills and Employment Legend Award, recognizing leaders with more than 20 years of service

FEBRUARY 2026







The IRM team hosted a Youth Climate Change Gathering in Charlottetown. The event brought together youth, Elders, and Community members from Lennox Island and Abegweit First Nations to participate in activities and lead discussions about climate change and its impacts on Communities





The Indigenous Sport Circle PEI hosted an Indigenous Sport Celebration in Summersdie for Island youth and their families

MARCH 2026

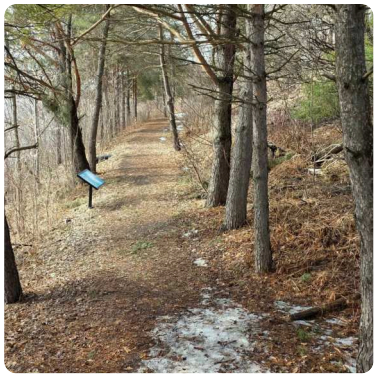




The Indigenous Sport Circle PEI team delivered a Young Women's Empowerment Camp in partnership with Lennox Island First Nation







Members of the Integrated Resource Management team attended the Wabanaki Conservation Black Ash Workshop in Quebec with members of Abegweit First Nation and Lennox Island First Nation

CONNECT WITH US

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200 Read Drive
Summerside, PE, C1N 4N7

Abegweit – FNCFS PRIDE Office
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The Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI would like to thank its Community partners, Abegweit First Nation and Lennox Island First Nation, and Epekwitk Assembly of Councils leaders for their on-going support, guidance, and leadership over 2025-2026. MCPEI would also like to thank its primary funding partners, the Government of Canada and Province of PEI, for their support and contributions.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abegweit First Nation

Lennox Island First Nation

FUNDING PARTNERS

Canada

Prince Edward Island Canada


MI'KMAQ
CONFEDERACY OF PEI