

Annual Report 2011

The 2010-2011 fiscal year started on the welcome note that the Office of Aboriginal and Northern Research had been awarded a \$250,000, three-year, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Aboriginal Research Program Grant. The grant, entitled Pjila'si Mi'kma'ki: Mi'kmaw Place Names Digital Atlas and Website Project, was written on behalf of the Mi'kmaw-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum, Culture and Heritage Committee, Place Names Subcommittee, the initiators of the project. Project partners include the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM), the Mi'kmaw Association of Cultural Studies (MACS), the Traditional Aboriginal Rights Research Center (TARR), Saint Mary's University/Gorsebrook Research Institute's Office of Aboriginal and Northern Research, Parks Canada, and the Nova Scotia Museum, with additional support from KMKMK. The vision of the atlas and website is to raise public awareness and create an authoritative resource documenting more than 13,000 years of Mi'kmaw presence within Mi'kma'ki, the place of the Mi'kmaq.

Five interns have been hired and trained to date to gather place names, conduct interviews throughout Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia, and enter place names into a data base. These names are then translated and transliterated into the Smith/Francis orthography, the formally acknowledged spelling system of the Tripartite Forum for the Mi'kmaw language. The place names are then geo-referenced and form the basis for the development of a sophisticated, digital atlas that will provide a visual display of multiple layers of mapped information to which information can be continually added and updated. The digital atlas will directly support other Mi'kmaw activities including the development of educational products for schools, and the promotion of cultural awareness about Mi'kmaw people. The digital atlas will also form the basis for Pjila'si Mi'kma'ki: Mi'kwaw Place Names Website, a multimedia, interactive, educational website that ultimately will be accessed throughout the world.

To ensure the completion of the website, Dr. Trudy Sable submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI) to SSHRC for a Partnership Grant in January, 2011 on behalf of the project team. The grant was submitted under the "Partnered Research Institution" category, with Mi'kmaw All Points Services (MAPS) as the proposed partner institution. MAPS is an emerging Mi'kmaw research institute centred in the Indianbrook community in Shubenacadie. If successful, this grant would allow for the full development of the web site and also support an ongoing research partnership between MAPS and the Gorsebrook Research Institute/SMU.

The partnership would include joint research projects, student exchanges, and educational programs to enhance research capacity.

A second important project occurred in the final year of our International Polar Year Grant (IPY). For twelve days in June, we conducted an Innu Youth Film Project at the ancient meteoric lake at Kamestastin in northeastern Labrador. Simultaneously, we conducted a Climate Change module, accredited through Saint Mary's University, at the same site as part of our Innu Environmental Guardians Program. The module was taught by Dr. John Jacobs, climatologist from Memorial University of Newfoundland, Andrew Trant, ABT, forest biologist from MUN, and Dr. Stephen Loring, archaeologist from the Arctic Studies Centre, Smithsonian Institution. Five Innu youth participated in the program, successfully learning film production and editing techniques from professional film trainers, Dr. Franziska Von Rosen and Rob Thompson of Pinegrove Productions. We were also joined by two Innu translators and advisors, Nympha Byrne of Health Canada, and Christine Poker from Natuashish, Labrador, and Innu Environmental Guardians Sebastien Piwas and Hank Rich of Nautashish. The youth's work can be viewed at www.kamestastin.com along with a short video of the whole program.

Dr. Sable also attended University of the Arctic's (UARctic) Member's Council Meeting in Yakutsk, Siberia. During the visit, Dr. Sable was invited to present her work at Sakha State University as part of a collaborative program with Finnmark University College of Norway on local and regional development. Dr. Sable is a member of a UARctic Thematic Network on Local and Regional Development, which is coordinated through Finnmark University College. She is

currently working to develop a joint M.A. program on local and regional development with Finnmark University College as part of an MOU with Saint Mary's University. Tor Gjertsen of Finnmark University College and chair of the UArctic network on local and regional development, will be visiting SMU in May, 2011 to discuss the potential for the development of this program in May.

Dr. Sable's chapter entitled, "Legends as Maps" has been published in *Ta'n Westapeksi'k: Understanding from Where We Come* published by Eastern Woodland Press, and her chapter co-authored with Roger Lewis, ethnologist at the Nova Scotia Museum, "Mi'kmakik Teloltipnik L'nuk – How the People Live in Mi'kmakik" in *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, Oxford University Press is in press. Her book, "The Language of this Land: Mi'kma'ki" co-authored with Mi'kmaw linguist, Bern Francis, is near completion. The proposed publication date from Cape Breton University Press Autumn, 2011. Additionally, Dr. Sable has been interviewed by CTV Breakfast Television, CBC Radio International with Bern Francis (http://www.rcinet.ca/english/program/the-link/archives/episode/17-59_2011-04-07-/), and featured in the science section of the Chronicle Herald.