**Ancestral Homelands**

Sydney, Nova Scotia - Mi’kma’ki, Wabanaki (Dawnland Confederacy)

Oxford, Nova Scotia - Mi’kma’ki, Wabanaki (Dawnland Confederacy)

Moncton, New Brunswick - Mi’kma’ki, Wabanaki (Dawnland Confederacy)

St. Martins, New Brunswick - Mi’kma’ki, Wabanaki (Dawnland Confederacy)

Fredericton, New Brunswick - Mi’kma’ki, Wabanaki (Dawnland Confederacy), Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet)

Grafton, New Brunswick - Mi’kma’ki, Wabanaki (Dawnland Confederacy), Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet)

**Whereabouts / Place Names**

***Nova Scotia***

The Mi’kmaq are the founding people of Nova Scotia and remain the predominant Indigenous group in the province. When first contact with Europeans was made in the 16th and 17th centuries, their territory stretched from the southern part of the Gaspe Peninsula, east to most of modern-day New Brunswick, and all of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. This area was divided into seven districts that made up the Mi’kma’ki. Today, there are 13 Mi’kmaq First Nations with populations varying in size. Data from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada collected in 2014 showed 16, 245 registered Indians in Nova Scotia and 5,877 living off reservation. The Union of Nova Scotia Indians tribal councils represents the five First Nation communities within Cape Breton (We'koqma'q, Wagmatcook, Membertou, Eskasoni, and Chapel Island First Nations), as well as Acadia First Nation on the mainland. The remaining seven communities are represented by the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (Bear River, Annapolis Valley, Glooscap, Millbrook, Paqtnkek, Pictou Landing and Sipekne’katik First Nations). Collectively, the 13 Mi'kmaq Chiefs comprise the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs.

***New Brunswick***

Indigenous peoples have inhabited the region for thousands of years. New Brunswick is home to the Mi’gmaq in northern and eastern New Brunswick; the Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) along the Saint John River Valley; and the Peskotomuhkatiyik (Passamaquoddy) in the St. Croix River watershed. The three nations are part of the Wabanaki Confederacy, which also includes the Penobscot and Abenaki nations of Maine. Wabanaki, meaning "Land of the Dawn,” designates a large area including Maine and the Maritime provinces. Today, there are 15 First Nations communities in New Brunswick (Buctouche, Eel Ground, Eel River Bar First Nation, Elsipogtog First Nation, Esgenoôpetitj First Nation, Fort Folly, Indian Island, Kingsclear, Madawaska Maliseet First Nation, Metepenagiag Mi’kmaq Nation, Oromocto, Pabineau, Saint Mary’s, Tobique, Woodstock). According to the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada’s Indian Register System, there are 16,985 First Nations people in New Brunswick as of December 2021.

***Miꞌkmaꞌki or Miꞌkmaq***

The Mi’kma’ki is composed of traditional and current territories of the Mi’kmaq people. The area is divided into seven geographical and traditional districts, and Taqamkuk is now separately represented as an eighth district. Each district was autonomous and headed by a *sagamaw* who conferred with Wampum readers and women’s councils in order to make decisions. Each district’s *sagamaw* was also a part of the Mi’kmawey Mawio’mi (Grand Council). The seat of the Sante’ Mawio’mi is at Mniku in Unama’kik and still functions as the capital of the Mi’kma’ki today.

***Sydney - Kjikank (chi-gank-k)***

Mi’kmaqk word *Kjikank* translates to “town.” It’s home to the Membertou First Nation, a band of the Mi’kmaq First Nation. The Membertou First nation is named after Grand Chief Henri Membertou (1510-1611), a political leader during the early contact period. British settlers inhabited the area in 1785, and it served as the colonial capital of Cape Breton Island until 1820 when it merged with Nova Scotia and the capital transferred to Halifax.North Sydney, where the route begins, has its own name, *Kweso’mkiaq*.

***Bras d’Or Lakes - Pitu’paq***

Mi’kmaq people have lived around this lake for thousands of years and refer to it as *Pitu’paq,* meaning “to which all things flow.” This estuarine body of interconnecting bays, barachois pounds, channels, and islands was formed 10,000 years ago. The two lakes are connected by the Barra Strait and together are considered the Bras d’Or Lakes. The lakes are significant to Mi’kmaq heritage as they have been a reliable food source for generations. A wide variety of fish provide protein for their diet, as do invertebrates such as lobster, oysters, and scallops. The lakes are also a form of transportation between hunting and fishing areas, as well as areas used for spiritual solidarity.

***Mouth of the Margaree River - Wja’tujk***

The Margaree River is a 75-mile (120-kilometer) river that serves as a well-known trout and Atlantic Salmon fishery. The gravel bars in the upper Northeast portion of the river provide spawning grounds for Atlantic salmon, and the steep valleys along the river serve as habitat for American marten and the rare Gaspé shrew. The river head flows from Lake Ainslie and empties into the Gulf of Saint Lawrence at Margaree Harbour.

***Cape Breton Island***

Ancient First Nations encampments have been traced back as far as 10,600 years ago on the island. The people who hunted caribou on the island became the Mi’kmaq. They have called Cape Breton “Mi’kma’ki” for thousands of years. The first French colonists to arrive called the area Acadia. The island is composed of rocky shores, rolling farmland, glacial valleys, barren headlands, highlands, woods, and plateaus. Geologically, the island is characterized by crystalline and metamorphic rock elevations rising from the south to north, contrasting the island’s eroded lowlands.

***Fundy National Park***

This park is located on the traditional territories of the Mi’kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, and Peskotomuhkati peoples. The park lies between the Saint John River and the Petitcodiac River system. Inland portage routes were created and used by Indigenous people in the area to cross between waterways. The area was of initial interest to European settlers due to the large number of trees that were a source of lumber. The forest industry shaped the area, with many people working in winter lumber camps or spring log drives. By the late 1800s, many of the easily accessible forest had been razed, and the sawmills had clogged rivers and coastal areas, preventing Atlantic salmon from spawning and damaging fisheries in the area. In 1948, the area was designated as New Brunswick’s first national park.

***Bay of Fundy***

The Mi’kmaq have fished in the Bay of Fundy and lived in communities around the bay for centuries prior to European contact. The Mi’kmaq have a story about the Bay of Fundy, explaining how the giant Glooscap used the bay to take a bath in the bay. Glooscap went to the beaver, who promised to build a dam in the bay so Glooscap could have enough water to bathe. From the Atlantic, the whale was very upset because he was unable to swim in the bay as he always had. Glooscap had the beaver begin to remove the dam so the whale could swim in the Bay again, but the whale grew impatient and the whale slammed his tail into the dam. The wood from the dam scattered and the water on both sides of the bay began to swell; to this day, the tides of the Bay of Fundy are the highest in the world thanks to the power of the whale.

***Salmon***

Crucial to the lifeways of the Mi’kmaq and other Indigenous people in the area, Atlantic salmon (*plamu*) have always been an integral part of the local diet. In the Mi’kmaq worldview, land and its resources are not commodities to be bought and sold but gifts from the Creator. Developing a relationship with the living and non-living and treating it with respect is a fundamental belief. Harvesting salmon is a tradition that spans many generations and reflects local knowledge and an intimate understanding of salmon ecology within the Unama’ki (Cape Breton) territory. Spearing salmon continues to this day, and it reflects a spiritual harmony and respect for relationships between the Mi’kmaq, plants, animals, and elements on earth. Today, Salmon are caught in rivers using rods, spears, diving, snares, seines, or weirs. Gill nets have also been used to capture salmon in larger lakes, such as the Bras d’Or Lakes.

There are more than 22 locations in the Bras d’Or Lakes traditionally used for harvesting salmon, most intensely prior to Salmon runs, and there are 35 other locations on the perimeter of the island that have been traditionally used for harvesting. The Margaree, Middle, Skye, Denys, Baddeck, Indian Brook, Aspy, and North Rivers are all well-known spawning areas, as are 30 other smaller brooks. Private property laws and habitat destruction, such as fording and clear-cutting, have damaged salmon productivity. Despite being an important food source for the Mi’kmaq, fewer available salmon have meant that general consumption has lessened, and they are now reserved for more special occasions such as feasts, powwows, and celebrations. Historically, salmon have been smoked or baked over open fires lined with heat rocks. Tall grasses from the river side were used to wrap the salmon before cooking them on the rocks. No part goes to waste, with the head and tail boiled and eaten. The salmon itself is stuffed and served with a traditional dipping sauce called *plamuipkl.* Salting, drying, smoking, pickling, and frying are all preparation methods used. Bones are used for garden fertilizer. Organs are offered to the forest and river to feed other animals. Oil is collected and used for medicinal purposes. There is not one correct way to prepare the fish, it depends on the fisher and who they are sharing their catch with.

Traditional forms of salmon management include balancing harvesting efforts based on spawning size, the size of captured salmon (a reflection of the adoption of imposed size restrictions and care for broodstock), and harvesting at different times throughout the year. Today, the main concern of the Mi'kmaq in regards to the salmon population is the deterioration of their habitats. This includes overharvesting trees along the river banks, acid rain, garbage, pesticides, sewage, siltation from gravel banks and eroding banks, and fording. Oil and gas developments in freshwater systems that feed rivers also impact water and sediment quality. Overharvesting from humans and commercial fishing is also a major concern. Habitat preservation, improved management, and education are key aspects to long-term salmon conservation and sustainability.

*Mi’kmaq words for Fish / Invertebrates*

*Agumegw -* herring

*Atoqwa’su* - trout

*Egwitamet* - fish

*E’s* - clam

*Gaqpesaw -* smelt

*Ga’t - eel*

*Jagej -* lobster

*Mntmu -* oyster

*Plamu -* salmon

*Put’p* - whale

*Sasqale’s* - scallop

*Tmtmu -* oyster

*Wisnaw* - perch

***Portobello Creek National Wildlife Area, Grand Lake Meadow***

Part of a large alluvial floodplain next to the St. John River, this wildlife area largely consists of open marshes, shrub swamp, wooded swale, and forest. The National Wildlife Area (NWA) also protects 37 provincially rare plant species. Portobello Creek is the most prominent feature in the park and is roughly 7.5 miles (12 kilometers) long within the park. Its main tributary is the Noonan Stream, which runs into Portobello Creek from the north. Waterfowl, such as the wood duck and common goldeneye, use the area as a staging and migration area and is one of few locations that host significant breeding populations of cavity nesting species. Larger mammals such as moose, white-tailed deer, and black bear also utilize the habitat.

***Hyla Park Nature Reserve***

In 1995, this reserve was established to help protect and preserve the gray tree frog (*Hyla versicolor*), a small arboreal holarctic tree frog native to the area whose color changes in response to its environment and activities. For instance, its skin color changes based on time of day and temperature, becoming lighter in the morning and darker throughout the day. During the winter, the gray tree frog hibernates by producing glycerol to “freeze” itself while still maintaining its metabolic processes at an extremely slow rate. This park is the first Amphibian Park in Canada because of the wetlands and ponds that are home to six additional species of frog that have seen population declines due to negative impacts of habitat loss and climate change. The park is also home to provincially rare plants including redmilkwort (*Polygala sanguinea*), the narrow-leaved gerardia (*Agalinustenuifolia*) and the small-flowered gratiola (*Gratiola neglecta*).

***Tamarack***

The *larix laricina*, commonly known as the tamarack, is an American larch tree species native to Canada. The word *tamarack* is an Algonquin name for the species and means “wood used for snowshoes.” The roots of the tree are slender and have been used by Indigenous peoples to sew together swaths of birch bark for the construction of canoes. Colonizers also used the same roots to join the ribs of deck timbers on ships. The tamarack’s slow growth also allows the wood to develop high resin content, which makes it more resistant to decay. The route’s namesake is Canada’s only deciduous conifer and has needles that change from green to orange-yellow in the autumn and then fall off, leaving the branches empty for the winter.

***St. John River - Wolastoq (*Wolastoqiyik*)***

This 419-mile (673-kilometer) river flows from northern Maine into Canada. It runs along the west side of New Brunswick and empties into the Atlantic Ocean via the Bay of Fundy. This river is the longest in Eastern Canada and is approximately 21,000 square miles. The Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) call the river the Wolastoq, which translates to “bountiful and good.” Many of the waterways in the river’s system retain their pre-European names. The river flow is lowest in the autumn, and can jam and flood in the early spring due to ice. In the spring, the river flows at six times its average rate due to surface runoff, ice jams, high tides, and rapid snowmelt. The river was largely undisturbed prior to European settlement, as Indigenous people tended to practice low-intensity agriculture in the area. The river served as a way for the Wolastoqiyik and Mi’kmaq to hunt, fish, farm, and become extremely mobile. This mobility granted by the river allowed Indigenous people to create economic and cultural ties with other North American tribes. In the 20th century, a hydroelectric dam at Grand Falls (1925) and the Beechwood (1955) and Mactaquac (1965) Dams have gravely impacted the Atlantic salmon that migrate upriver to spawning grounds. In 2011, the entire watershed was designated a Wolastoq National Historic Site.

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Denmark - Sikue’k

Tatamagouche - Taqamiku’jk

Sand Point - Tia’muisukwimk

Malagash - Malikewe’jk

Pugwash River - Ksu’skipukwa’si’sk

Tidnish - Mta’qnejk

New Harris Island - Esitnamkitk

*Kelly’s Mountain- Mukla’qatik*

*Indian Brook - Kaqpese’kaqniji’jk*

*Wreck Cove - Ketapukwesnik*

*Margaree - Wiaqajk*

*Cape Mabou Wilderness Area*

*Mabou - Mulapukek*

*Port Hood - Kekwiamkek*

*Little Judique: Sutikji’jk*

*Judique - Sutik*

*Creignish - Papasepekiaq*

*Low Point - Muinaqnji’jk*

*Point East of Port Hastings - Apatamkiaq*

*Mulgrave - Tui’knek*

*Pirates Harbour - Tepkiso-katik*

*Steep Creek - Ki’taqne’kati*

*Mussel Cove - An’kata’lue’katik*

*Guysborough Harbour - Setapuktu*k

*Guysborough - Se’tta’ne’katik*

*Brown’s Point - Ne’iknejk*

*Pictou - Piktuk / Piwtuk*

The town of Pictou is located on an annual Mi’kmaq summer coastal community that was disrupted by European settlement. The area was part of the Epekwitk aq Piktuk Mi’kmaq District, which also included present-day Prince Edward Island and Pictou.

Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Place Names in New Brunswick

Owls Head (Near Alma at Fundy National Park) - Pugooopskook (Cormorant rock)

Quaco Bay - Google-wah-gah-kwek

Haunt of the hooked sea

Spoon Island - Am-quah-nis

Am-quan means spoon

Long Island (Queens) - Kchee-men-eek, “Big Island”

Sugar Island - So-glee-a-men-eek

Descriptive term for the abundance of sugar maples on the island

Ogden Round Lake Wilderness Area

*Cape Porcupine: Matuesuatp*

A remote point of land on the south east coast of Labrador that juts into the Atlantic Ocean in an easterly direction and forms a protective barrier from northerly gales for the beach of white sands.

*East River (New Glasgow) - Amasipukwejk*

Short, 35 mile river with a watershed of 211 square miles. The river discharges into Pictou Harbour and a subbasin of the Northumberland Strait. The valley is home to Nova Scotia’s early industrialization, with the large-scale coal operations occurring underground in the Pictou Coalfield and Carboniferous Mining Association.