

Talking Trees-Sustainable Narratives of the Logging and Forestry Industries in Nova Scotia and  
New Brunswick and their Relationships with Mi'kmaq Peoples

By

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I would like to dedicate this thesis, my most substantive piece of academic work to date, to my parents, Angel and Kemmel. Your love, and support has gotten me through my undergrad. Your encouragement has never waived, and for that I will always be grateful. I hope one day to be able to return the favour.

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## Abstract

Historically, the Indigenous peoples living in Mi'kma'ki have shared intimate ties to the natural environment, and more specifically trees. This region, now more commonly known as Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, is home to the Mi'kmaq people. This paper examines the longstanding relationship between Mi'kmaq peoples and trees, by examining the past quarter of a century's worth of data. By focusing on local publications such as *Mi'kmaq Maliseet Nations News* and *Micmac News*, it has been possible to formulate an understanding of this type of relationship. As the logging and forestry industries make up such a large sector of the economy in these regions, it has been imperative to comprehend the way in which they view and value trees. As one would expect, their relationships with trees differ greatly from those fostered by Mi'kmaq people, and for that reason these industries and the local indigenous populations have been in conflict. By examining the data collected, it has been possible to see how the two groups differ, and how they are now starting to work together. This paper concludes with possible options for both the Mi'kmaq and the industries moving forward.

Keywords: Sustainability, Trees, Logging, Mi'kmaq, *Mi'kmaq Maliseet Nations News*, *Micmac News*, Forestry Magazines, Environment

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## Trees

“Trees are the greatest witnesses of all,  
they are all truth, good and bad.

It is with truth they utter their stories to us.  
They peer in our houses, made of wood.

They recoil at our shrieking, screaming and rumbling.  
I am wood,  
A tree helped make me.  
My arms are branches,  
and my legs are a hard wood, with marbled markings.

Trees, like us, are bound to earth  
without hope of liberation, save death.

Do they feel? Do they see, have they senses?  
A phenomenal amount more than we.

They house us, we murder them.  
They heal us, we murder them,  
They shade us, we murder them.

They have no means of suicide,  
their fate is in our hands.

Their nations don't fight, and yet we  
attack the armless totems and throw  
seeds and sapling as their defence.

A tree has a voice, whether I'm there to hear it or not.  
Speak to us trees and alert us to what you see coming  
from your vantage points.  
Reach high in the sky,  
and offer your arms for the winged to rest,  
for they too are messengers to us.

The first time I understood the trees.  
they told me there is no greater artist,  
than Mother Earth.

We need to get to our roots.  
Long life to you trees, thank you”

(Rogers, 1998, p.73)

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Statement of the Problem:**

Since the 1960s, issues regarding resource and land use among Indigenous peoples and on territory claimed by Indigenous populations have become increasingly prominent in Canada. It can be said that there are two dominant ways of knowing the land and its resources, that of non-Indigenous Canadians, in this thesis represented most starkly by industry, and that of Indigenous peoples, in this thesis represented by the Mi'kmaq. Although the Indigenous groups share a close and longstanding connection and relationship with nature, it has necessarily been downplayed by those attempting to use or take their land and its resources. This thesis explores representations of resource use in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, specifically in regards to timber. In selecting specific examples, it becomes evident to what extent these two ways of knowing and desiring have differed.

### **Purpose of the Study:**

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which the Canadian people and their elected and appointed representatives have understood and appreciated traditional practices and have shaped policy based on that understanding and appreciation or lack thereof. The research for this study attempts to try and understand why this has been so, and to present a list of recommendations based on a deeper insight into how traditional practices and ways of life have been represented in literature and the media and in some instances misinterpreted and misrepresented by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The recommendations are inclusive and directed to those on both sides of the issues and who possess different ways of knowing.

I also attempt to understand the self-interest of the stakeholders in these issues, including that of non-Indigenous peoples, companies, governments, and Indigenous people as this represents a significant gap in understanding. I explore the desire for this land and its resources. In the Atlantic Provinces it is easy to understand that at times large plots of land were used for farming or timber. Moving forward I devote my energy and research to how this has changed over time, and how the lumber and timber industry became part of the region's distinct identity. I also seek to understand how people's relationship with and perception and use of trees have changed over time. Although it is imperative to keep in mind the variety of perspectives or ways of knowing regarding these issues, it will be evident on which side of the Indigenous/non-Indigenous divide groups stand according to their representation in the media and through legal cases.

Problems concerning the lack of understanding of the historic relationship of the Indigenous peoples of Atlantic Canada to trees have been highlighted in recent court decisions, in particular the 2005 Supreme Court decision in *R. v. Marshall, R. v. Bernard*. The Marshall case originated in Nova Scotia where 35 people were apprehended for taking timber resources from the forest. The Bernard case originated in New Brunswick when a man was charged not with taking logs but rather for having a log from Crown land in his possession. The Supreme Court ruled that Mi'kmaq people should not be allowed to utilize the timber resources on Crown land in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia because they had not done so in 1760-61. Logging was not perceived to be a traditional occupation or need of the Mi'kmaq people, unlike fishing. Fishing was thought to be a traditional need and way of subsistence for those living along the coast or on the water. They were interpreted as having seen fish as a commodity. In the minds of



the Supreme Court Justices, logging was not comparable to fishing as a traditional occupation (Canada, Supreme Court, 2005).

This and similar cases have called into question the validity and usefulness of assessing Indigenous claims to land and resource use based on centuries-old treaties which appear increasingly unrelated to and unable to accommodate the conflicting claims to resources, centuries after early contact and after repeated violation of treaty rights by the non-Indigenous. Following this line of reasoning, this study will not focus on the treaties which have been the basis of legal decisions but on what the legal proceedings can tell us about white settler interpretations of ways of knowing the land and resources. What those proceedings reveal is that the government of Canada and the courts do not understand the ways in which the Mi'kmaq people have utilized trees for centuries. Traditionally Indigenous groups in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia used them for constructing their homes, for the fabrication of baskets, for the creation of tools crucial to activities such as fishing, and for different types of medicine. They also provided the environment within which they maintained their relations with animals. Additional questions that I address include the outcome for the Mi'kmaq people, and how these court cases already have changed their relationship with nature?

**Definitions:**

I have decided to use the term Indigenous peoples when referring to those who have roots in Canada pre-dating the arrival of the colonialists. This is a personal preference, based on the fact that it is the most inclusive term by which to represent not just First Nations but also the Inuit and Metis living within Canada. Also, I am choosing to employ this term because it is most prevalent in the literature that I use, though others may choose to use the terms Native, Aboriginal and/or First Nations. This thesis focusses on the story and situation of the Indigenous

group known as the Mi'kmaq. Although the Mi'kmaq people lived throughout the Atlantic Region, this thesis will focus on those living in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. These are the people who have occupied this territory for thousands of years. They share a very personal and intimate relationship with nature and the environment. Traditionally they lived a life of subsistence through hunting and fishing. They utilized resources sustainability, and respected the land on which they lived. The Maliseet people are another Indigenous group that occupied territory overlapping with that occupied by the Mi'kmaq people. Though they are mentioned over the course of this thesis, they are not the main Indigenous group under analysis. Mi'kma'ki is the land upon which the Mi'kmaq people lived. This vast track of land spanned parts of Quebec, and included the Maritime Provinces as well as Maine (S. A. Davis, 1997). I use the term Mi'kma'ki or New Brunswick and Nova Scotia as appropriate. While the definition of knowledge is elastic, I focus on two primary ways of knowing in Canada which are directly relevant to my study. One is the knowledge of Indigenous people in Canada, which has been passed down for generations and inherited from nature. The other type of knowledge stems from the industry and the science which appears to have informed public policy. I am interested in the points at which these two definitions intersect.

### **Delimitations and Limitations:**

Some of my delimitations include, but are not restricted to, the fact that I am not speaking directly with Indigenous people because of the time restraints that come with completing an undergraduate thesis. I believe that it would be exploitative to conduct interviews with Mi'kmaq people as I have not already established relationships with them. This would allow for large gaps in my knowledge to become evident and disruptive to the process. Because of the fact that I am not having people fill in surveys I am not completing an ethics procedure review. I am focusing

my energy on examining literature generated by the forestry industry and the government, and, most importantly, by the Mi'kmaq people. Identifying Atlantic Canadian literature written by indigenous peoples has been a challenge, primarily because so little has been promoted and produced. However, what has been found offers the most insight and brings me closest to an understanding of traditional ways of knowing and interacting with resources in the natural environment. Although I have decided to narrow my scope to just focus on the situation of the Mi'kmaq people, I do think it is imperative that research also be conducted regarding the Maliseet people. I have also decided to omit research into the treaty system in Canada. This is not something with which I am familiar and a superficial coverage of treaties would add little to my conclusions. More importantly, I do not think that a solution to difficulties in reconciling different ways of seeing lies within the confines of those treaties, for the reasons noted above and because they focus mainly on the wants and needs of the colonialist groups.

This honours thesis is the first substantial research that I have completed within my undergraduate degree. I look at this both as a challenge and as a way for both my writing and research skills to improve. Above all, the one thing that worries me the most is that I may easily be influenced by my personal biases. Although I am trying to be objective and present evidence from the two primary perspectives outlined above, considerable scope for interpretation remains. This is particularly the case because I am relying on qualitative research and only a small amount of quantitative material to provide information concerning the amount of trees and species that have been destroyed and are now extinct, for example. This thesis is alert to the fact that for centuries colonialist and non-Indigenous Canadians have failed to understand the Indigenous peoples' relationship with the land and more specifically with trees. Contributing to understanding, not compounding misunderstanding, is its goal.

**Significance of the Study:**

This study is significant as Canada tries to move past the hegemonic discourses that it has created for itself in the past. Research such as this furthers the reconciliation process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. By looking at specific cases throughout New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, this study demonstrates the continuing need to re-examine past and present ways of knowing. Researching the past of the timber industry in the Atlantic Provinces also makes it easier to understand where it is today. By analyzing the sorts of trees being used, and the techniques and practices that are being employed at present, it becomes easier to make predictions for the future, at least where resources are not depleted completely. I would also like to understand why it has become so important for non-Indigenous Canadians to destroy trees, especially in Atlantic Canada.

This study seeks to demonstrate that the Mi'kmaq people of these provinces have shared and continue to share intimate relationships with nature, and more specifically the trees in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Overall I want to demonstrate that this is but one case of exploitation based on lack of knowledge and meaningful dialogue in Canada. For centuries the Indigenous people of this country have had their rights violated and their land stolen. In order to move forward as a whole, we must understand our past, and take the lessons that we have learned into the future.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature and of Historical Relationships

Over the course of the last half-century study of the Mi'kmaq has benefitted from two particularly significant developments. One is the expansion of social and cultural history and anthropology which has made scholars more alert and sensitive to questions concerning the impact of colonizing peoples on the beliefs and cultural practices of Indigenous peoples both at first contact and during the subsequent years of colonization. The second is the growing contribution of Indigenous peoples to the writing of their own history and the discovery of their own past cultures. This contribution has included the work of Indigenous scholars who have very slowly found a place within formal institutions of learning. More significant has been the work of independent Indigenous writers, scholars, and activists who have tackled not just questions and problems directly confronting their communities today but also the roots of those problems and the answers to those questions which can only be found through an understanding of their past.

Leslie Upton published *Micmacs and Colonists* in 1979. Although this is the work of a scholar not of Mi'kmaq descent, it was one of the early and partially successful attempts to offer an analysis of early contact from two perspectives. Upton understood that there are two very distinct ways of experiencing and knowing relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the Atlantic region. His scholarly work offers readers a way of seeing where and how these two types of knowledge intersect. His focus on the interactions between the Micmac Indians, as he calls them, and the British settlers (Upton, 1979, p.xi) introduces the idea of the “three horsemen of the European Apocalypse: disease, trade goods, and Christianity” (Upton, 1979, p.xi). Throughout his book, he traces a timeline, which offers readers the historical context needed in order to properly understand this very important period in Mi'kmaq history.

Other non-Indigenous writers have also offered a great deal of insight into the collision of cultures, but of particular significance to this study is the work of Indigenous scholar and activist Daniel Paul who brings to his writing a truly deep and lived understanding of Mi'kmaq life. Especially for the period before the arrival of the colonists, Paul uses his longstanding and personal connection to the land to create a level of authenticity and credibility for his work to which non-Indigenous scholars can only aspire. He asks his readers to rethink the stereotypes which have dominated the discourse about Indigenous peoples within our country for centuries. Some of his writing may run the risk of creating new stereotypes; and this study will need to assess his insights in light of the current debate over the tendency to overdraw images of the "ecological Indian". Here the work of Michael Harkin and David Lewis will be important. (Harkin and Lewis, 2007). But Paul asks readers to think about tough issues and prejudices, which are deeply steeped in our country's past. This makes his work invaluable as a jumping off point for studying Mi'kmaq and white settler continuing interactions.

Religion is a subject that Paul tackles early on in his book *We Were Not the Savages* and one that is uniquely important to this study. Although the Mi'kmaq people did not adhere to any one religious denomination before the arrival of the Europeans, this did not mean that they were not spiritual. Nature was the basis of their philosophy and their relationships with nature were incorporated into their decisions and ways of being. The Mi'kmaq were like most other Indigenous groups living in North America in that sense. Also like other groups Indigenous to North America, Mi'kmaq encounters with the established religious denominations of the colonizers were such that they could incorporate new religious teachings into their generations-old spiritual traditions. Those traditions called upon the powers of the Great Spirit, who was the creator of all beings on Earth. According to Paul, these traditions remained strong enough to

protect them from the fear at the core of most religions brought from Europe (Paul, 2006). They also defined a very different relationship with their natural environment, one that put them at odds with white settler communities.

The way in which the Mi'kmaq peoples interacted with the land was two fold. It was both materialist and spiritual, and one type of interaction cannot be discussed without the other. Kinnear explores this phenomenon in her thesis work regarding Bear River. The Mi'kmaq spent so much time in nature that it was an inherent part of them (Kinnear, 2007). A group of researchers wrote a piece for *The International Indigenous Policy Journal* about the longstanding relationship of Mi'kmaq people with nature. They focus on elements of spirituality and stress the importance of these sorts of relationships for these Indigenous groups (Prosper, McMillan, Davis, & Moffitt, 2011). Unlike the settlers who arrived from Europe, the Mi'kmaq did not conceive of aspects of nature as a source of commodities separated from their spiritual significance. They took what they needed from the land, but kept in mind that in order to prosper and continue to live in harmony with their environment they needed to use resources in a sustainable manner. This is something on which both Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers can agree. Their spiritual ties to the land encouraged them to never take too much, for if they did they knew that someday they would have to go without. This was troubling to the white settlers, as their ancestors had forgotten this way of being long ago. This lack of understanding is one of the huge differences between these cultures, and it contributed to acute and chronic conflict. The form animism took among the Mi'kmaq was one of the primary reasons the settlers began to refer to them as savages, among other derogatory terms (Paul, 2006). Andrew Parnaby and Daniel Paul both explore the idea of savagery and how this was often associated with the Indigenous peoples of newly conquered territory. Parnaby does so within the discourse of the

“ascent from savagery to civilization” (Parnaby, 2008, p.75). Not only did the Europeans think less of the Mi’kmaq because of their spiritual beliefs, but they used their spiritual beliefs as justification for their judgment of Mi’kmaq appearance, lifestyle, language, and culture in general. (Paul, 2006). This solidified the us versus them mentality that would emerge, continue to develop, and still exists today within Canada.

The lifestyle to which the Mi’kmaq were accustomed was dependent on seasons and seasonal survival. The land that they roamed was bountiful and Paul states that they rarely went without. This is not the image that emerges from many writers of white colonialist descent, but the difference in perception reflects different interpretations of bounty and want as it related to resource use. The Mi’kmaq typically lived full, long, healthy lives because of their respectful relationship with the land and the environment. Unlike the Europeans, they were not greedy in their acquisitiveness and they did not waste, though their feasts – which were tied to their spirituality and which reflected the cycles of animal life around them – were frequently perceived as reckless (Paul, 2006). Early in his book Paul states that, “another conviction of Mi’kmaq society that strongly highlights the differences between the two cultures was their belief that it was impossible for a mere mortal to own any part of Mother Earth” (Paul, 2006, p.24). This would cause strife and grief between the conflicting cultures for centuries. Again, it just was not customary for Mi’kmaq people to own any track of land, and for them it made much more sense to live and function in a migratory manner, while respecting designated hunting and fishing territories. It was impossible for the Mi’kmaq and the settlers to reach an understanding on this, or agree to disagree, not only because of language barriers which were surmounted relatively quickly, but also simply because they did not think in the same manner. The Mi’kmaq valued the land, and so did the Europeans, but for the latter the land and the natural environment



were much more about development, growth, and prosperity than about adapting to patterns of living self-evident in nature.

Since the idea of personal property in the land was alien to the Mi'kmaq people who lived in a migratory manner in order to survive, they were at a distinct disadvantage when white settlers began encroaching on their territory aggressively. Some Mi'kmaq chose to adopt a more sedentary lifestyle. According to Parnaby, as they came under more and more pressure from the local and provincial governments, some chose to become engaged in agriculture. Paul makes a point of stating that by engaging in the trade of goods and services with the Europeans, "the Mi'kmaq were participating in the destruction of their own traditional means of livelihood" (Paul, 2006, p.40). The way of life that they had known before the arrival of the Europeans would never be a reality again. Keeping in mind this participation of the Mi'kmaq in their own degradation will be crucial to understanding, rather than passing judgment on, the processes examined here.

Paul Robbins expands on the process of degradation and marginalization in his *Political Ecology*, of particular relevance to this study as it seeks to understand the changing relationship of Mi'kmaq to their environment and specifically flora. This theory addresses change which takes place when a person, or group of people, make adjustments to and shifts in a local economy, environment and/or resources. At times this can be for political reasons, but that is not always the case (Robbins, 2012). Robbins states that, "development efforts to improve production systems of local people have led contradictorily to decreased sustainability of local practice and a linked decrease in the equity of resource distribution" (Robbins, 2012, p.159). This is precisely what happened when the Europeans spread throughout Canada, and it is a particularly, hauntingly accurate depiction of the fate that awaited those living in the region

known as Mi'kmaki. One of, if not the most important, points that Parnaby makes in his text is that the sense of balance and responsibility among the Mi'kmaq people shifted soon after the arrival of the European settlers (Parnaby, 2008). This shift can be attributed to the resource dependency and resource heavy system of the British and the French.

The existing literature facilitates discussion of the Mi'kmaq relationship with nature, but there is also considerable merit in exploring the relationship that settlers developed with the land. This is something that Samson discusses at length in his book *Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800-1950*. Throughout Samson demonstrates to what extent the new settlers did share intimate ties with the land and the resources that surrounded them. Many of them proved this by engaged in different occupations that allowed them to come in contact with the environment in which they lived (Samson, 1994). Sherman Bleakney discusses specifically the role of Acadian farmers soon after their arrival. The way in which they used the land was unlike that of many others, and they developed their own system of dykes, which greatly assisted their agricultural endeavors (Bleakney, 2004). Quickly it can be noted that the nature of these relationships varied dramatically, and the literature makes this evident. At the same time, this study cannot assume that the relationships established between humans and their environments within Europe were deliberately or easily replicated in the new world. Exploration of the history of the ways in which groups and waves of settlers adapted to their new natural environment is beyond the scope of this study. However, the study will be sensitive to the decades of adaptation and adjustment which white settlers experienced, and to how that experience of adaptation impacted the Mi'kmaq and relations between the two cultures.

Focus on the concluding decades of the twentieth century and the relationship of white settler society to trees will involve analysis of forestry and the lumbering industry in general,

using as a backdrop the studies provided by Anders Sandberg and Peter Clancy in *Against the Grain: Foresters and Politics in Nova Scotia* (2000). In approaching analysis of the use of trees this study will be guided by the questions posed in Lanna Campbell and Colin P. Laroque's "The Environmental History of Eastern White Cedar in Nova Scotia" (2000). Campbell and Laroque begin their discussion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although the forestry and lumber industry has a very long history in this region (2000). Many such historical and ecological studies have been undertaken; however, this one is particularly attractive because of its clear statement of both problems and solutions and the high standard which it sets for future studies and future action. It argues that "natural resources are resources only because humans rely on them for their benefit" (Campbell, and Laroque, 2000, p.232). Trees, along with other elements in the natural environment, only became perceived as commodities upon the arrival of the European settlers. The way in which they discuss this one specie, the eastern white cedar, is commendable and some of what is being said could even be applied to the fate of the Mi'kmaq populations. They state that "to allow naturally occurring eastern white cedar to disappear from the Nova Scotian landscape would be to allow a piece of living natural history to fall to the way side, removing a significant cultural icon that connects us to the past" (Campbell, and Laroque, 2000, p.233).

Studies have been undertaken throughout Canada to demonstrate the type of relationship that Indigenous peoples have shared with the land. In the majority of cases, authors demonstrate just how important and valuable these relationships are. The Inuit are another group within Canada that share these intimate relationships with nature. For them the landscape may be much more bleak, but it does not make that relationship any less intimate. Claudio Aporta discusses this in an article published about the sea ice found in Canada's Arctic and the way in which the Inuit people for generations have interacted with and have come to depend on it (Aporta, 2011).

Carlson also discusses the relationship of the Cree people with the land and their surroundings as the James Bay Dam was being built. For centuries these relationships have been fostered and they continue to be of the utmost importance (Carlson, 2004). The focus is on mutual respect and compassion for the land. From among these studies, the following two stand out because of their ability to capture in a short time frame the process of resource degradation and Indigenous marginalization which evolved over centuries for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Tina Loo writes about an area in British Columbia which was taken over from the Indigenous people and used for damming and hydroelectric power generation (2007). Her study chronicles the social and environmental devastation achieved in the few brief years in the late 1960s when the Peace River in Northern British Columbia was dammed and the landscape and lives of those living there were destroyed. Loo emphasizes the powerlessness of the people directly affected and the broader issues surrounding land use and development projects, which are often linked to displacement of Indigenous people who lose not only their land but a part of who they were and are. Loo also underlines the difficulty of understanding the loss of what might have been – an alternative way of living with the environment. (Loo, 2007).

Another project worth highlighting because of its ability to capture century-long processes within a few years is the James Bay Project and its effect on the Cree people living in and around that area of Quebec (Carlson, 2004). This project was undertaken during the same hydro-electric power explosion which drove the Peace River project, and here, too, the Indigenous people had little chance of having their voices heard. Their expressions of discontent were ignored and they, too, lost part of who they were and are. This loss cannot be measured, but it has a lasting effect, which will be felt for generations to come. This project was enormous and involved harsh destruction of the land. Again the difference is dramatic between the ways of

knowing of the Cree, on the one hand, and the ways of knowing of those promoting energy and economic development. (Grand Council of the Crees, n.d.).

Returning to the area of Mi'kmakik, a study pursued as part of a Master of Environmental Studies should be noted. The research undertaken by Lacia Kinnear examined the region known as Bear River, Nova Scotia. Kinnear explored the relationship between Mi'kmaq populations and animals. Kinnear spent time within this reserve discussing with the Mi'kmaq how to qualify and quantify their relations with animals. Like many other such studies, Kinnear's found it necessary to include a large amount of historical content to help her define her lament for the lack and loss of connection between the Indigenous peoples and the land (Kinnear, 2007).

Finally, Elizabeth May's book, *At the Cutting Edge: the Crisis in Canada's Forests*, 1998, has been a great source of knowledge and insight. It is relevant not only because of its geographic focus but also because it discusses trees as a separate entity within nature. May is hopeful that if we work hard enough there can be a reconciliation process between ways of knowing. She states in her book that the logging in the Maritime Provinces is harsh, and that the territory has been logged over and over, beginning soon after the arrival of white settlers and cycles of commercial logging on varying scales. Because of this, the forests within Canada have been stripped and purged for over three centuries. The ancestors of the people originally living here had their land stolen to be used in the name of economic growth and development. In order to work towards the sort of reconciliation process that May discusses in her book, there will need to be a general understanding of the atrocities that have taken place – and May would not consider atrocities too strong a word (May, 1998). Two ways of knowing will need to converge and two cultures will need to look back into the past, together, to find lasting change.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

This study compares Indigenous traditional knowledge of and relationships with trees to those of non-Indigenous peoples in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick by systematically analyzing material generated by both groups focussing on the period from the late 1980s into the twenty-first century. The goal is to examine the divergence in representations of trees and forests, identify those issues which have generated tension, and attempt to discover possible points of convergence or common ground during the decades in which the Mi'kmaq people confronted the expanded expropriation of forests and forest products. Primary source analysis will be informed by secondary sources, which provide the historical context in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches to trees and forests have evolved.

Mi'kmaq representations of trees and forests are accessible in their two community newspapers. The *Micmac News* began to be published in the 1960s as Indigenous groups across Canada became more vocal and politically engaged in the struggle over land and resource appropriation and use. More recently *Mi'kmaq Maliseet Nations News* has offered the Mi'kmaq people an outlet dedicated to local and community news stories. *Micmac News* was a weekly publication, and *MMNN* is now a monthly publication. In order to present content and tone systematically, to the extent the availability of sources allows, this study attempts to examine for every second year one issue from each season. This seasonal dimension to the analysis seeks to capture the seasonal nature of the Mi'Kmaq relationship with nature.

For representations of trees and forests by the timber and forestry industry, the thesis analyzes trade magazines, which have been the vehicle for communication across the industry and with stakeholders in individual companies such as shareholders and employees. These magazines have also been made available to the public for promotional purposes by major timber

and logging companies such as Irving and Nova Scotia Pulp and Paper, currently offered as e-journals in accessible language for laypersons. For contemporary publications searchable databases facilitate identification of relevant material. However, both the current magazines and those archived are sampled using the method applied to the Indigenous publications, to the extent the availability of sources allows. Two particularly valuable general trade magazines are also explored: *Logging and Sawmilling Journal/TimberWest Magazine* and *Canadian Forest Industries*. Government publications are also consulted.

Important court cases, such as the 2005 Supreme Court decision in *R. v. Marshall, R. v. Bernard* (Canada, Supreme Court, 2005, *R. v. Marshall, R. v. Bernard*) demonstrate the current legal understanding and representation of the use of forest resources by the Mi'kmaq. In addition, artistic work such as visual representations, film, and poetry are analyzed. These include work produced by the Mi'kmaq material produced by the forestry industry and aimed at various audiences for educational, promotional, and artistic purposes. Such representations can capture the symbolism and hidden meanings often inexpressible by the printed word.

## Chapter 4: Forestry as an Ever-evolving Industry, from 1990-Present

According to C.R. Stanton and R.J. Bouchier, “Forestry can be defined as the science, art and practice of managing and using for human benefit the natural resources that occur on and in association with forest lands” (Stanton, & Bouchier, 2012, para 1). Forestry, including the logging and lumber trade, continues to be one of the largest industries in the Maritimes. Companies in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick harvest thousands of hectares of land annually, and offer employment to a wide range of skilled workers. In 2012, the forestry industry in Nova Scotia<sup>1</sup> employed over 5,700 people (Natural Resources Canada, 2014). New Brunswick more than doubled that and provided jobs to over 12,400 people. These workers harvested over 57,772 hectares of land, and replanted over 18,798 (Natural Resources Canada, 2014). In Nova Scotia, 30,230 hectares were harvested, and over 5,973 hectares were replanted (Natural Resources Canada, 2014).

In order to better understand the industry as it has evolved, it has been imperative to examine trade magazines which have been the vehicle for communication among members of the forestry industries and, increasingly, with members of the public. Different publications which have been particularly useful are *Canadian Forest Industries*, *Pulp & Paper Canada*, and *Canadian Wood Products*. These publications are typically released on a bi-monthly basis, though *Pulp & Paper Canada* was historically a monthly publication and began bi-monthly publication in 2010. These publications, and their corresponding websites provide important

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the in text citations for Natural Resources Canada are identical for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. On my reference list I have included both references and links which help to differentiate the two. When discussing Nova Scotia, please see the reference for Nova Scotia. When discussing New Brunswick, please refer to the other reference.



information about how key participants in the logging and forestry industries have presented themselves in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Although these are national publications, they are the most comprehensive trade magazines made available to the public. Anyone can subscribe to them, and companies operating in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are often highlighted.

This chapter will explore to what extent and in what ways the forestry industries in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have made use of the forests in these provinces since the 1990s. Their relationship with trees will be explored, and it will become evident to what extent trees have gone from being presented and perceived as a commodity, to being appreciated as a part of the ecosystem. Then the industry's relationship with local Indigenous peoples, in this case the Mi'kmaq, will be discussed. Examples will be presented to illustrate the way in which the forestry industry, frequently working with the government, has been encouraging Mi'kmaq people to take an active role in fostering relationships with trees. Finally evidence will explore the way in which the forestry industry has become more sensitive to the environment, specifically trees, despite the industry's continuing use of trees to pollute and upset the balance of ecosystems.

#### 4.1 The Use of Trees

In the past, trees were often simply viewed as commodities throughout Canada. Soon after their arrival, settlers pillaged Canadian forests for their own use, and in order to send the resources back to Europe. Trees and forest products were to be used for housing, transportation and heating. This sort of decision making led to over a century of deforestation and unsustainable use of trees (Wynn, 2013). According to Graeme Wynn, “[t]he government was slow to control this onslaught on the forest” (Wynn, 2013, para 9). This type of resource harvesting brought on enormous anthropological changes in regions throughout Canada, including Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. These sorts of changes have been outlined in a report by Global Forest Watch Canada, an organization devoted to protecting forests. According to their website, “Global Forest Watch Canada monitors the state of Canada’s forests and provides quality information on development activity and the resulting environmental impacts” (Global Forest Watch Canada, 2014, para 1). The report entitled *Recent (1990-2007) Anthropogenic Change Within the Forest Landscapes of Nova Scotia* explains that, “the anthropogenic (human) modification of forest landscapes-via road building, logging, mining, exploration and development, etc.-is an issue of significance for sustainable forest management” (Cheng, & Lee, 2009, p.9).

However, by the 1990s, government and industry were realizing that they could no longer simply use these resources however they chose. They were developing ways in which to plan and manage forestry resources for the future. One of these was replanting. In a speech from the throne, entitled *Nova Scotia in the 1990’s: Building Strength Through Partnerships*, in February 1990, the Lieutenant Governor at the time, the Honourable Lloyd R. Crouse, states that

“As we entered the 1980’s, our Province planted three million trees annually. At present, our reforestation efforts involve planting in the range of twenty-six to thirty million seedlings on an annual basis. My Government’s commitment is to double that figure by the year 2000 ensuring continuation of a healthy mixed forest of merchantable wood fibre for Nova Scotia. This will create significant employment opportunities in the forestry sector” (Province of Nova Scotia, 1990, p.31).

These types of replanting initiatives have also been adopted by logging and timber companies throughout New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Corporation, more commonly known as Northern Pulp, has been present in Nova Scotia for over forty years and over those years has been involved in high profile disputes with the Mi’kmaq Peoples over the expropriation and pollution of their land. Located in Abercrombie Point, Pictou County, this mill is an example of a Northern Bleached Softwood Kraft (NBSK) mill (Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Corporation, 2015, para 1-3). First owned by Scott Paper, the mill was more recently purchased and operated by Northern Pulp, owned by Paper Excellence Canada which is owned by Asia Pulp and Paper, belonging to Sinar Mas (Taylor, 2015, para 13). Northern Pulp uses over a million acres of land in order to carry out their business (Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Corporation, 2015). On their website they outline different pillars which they value. These pillars represent significant changes in the way in which Northern Pulp has chosen to present itself to its shareholders, to the industry and to its public readership. Stewardship<sup>2</sup> is one of them, and they state, “Northern Pulp is dedicated to sustainable forestry and silviculture” (Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Corporation, 2015, para 1). New, young trees are being planted. This is being done to ensure that there will be trees to choose from in the future. Furthermore this is being done to appease the people living in local communities throughout Nova Scotia. They do not want all of

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<sup>2</sup> Again, Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Corporation has various references for this chapter. They all appear in a similar manner in the text, but please refer to the reference about Stewardship, Footprint, or Public Consultation Program when referenced.

their trees to be cut down. In 2012 alone, 3.6 millions trees were planted by Northern Pulp (Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Corporation, 2015). Their website reflects some gaps in their knowledge of the early history of their own operations when it argues that “For Northern Pulp, planting trees is just as important to us as harvesting. For over 40 years, we have been managing forests sustainably, and our regeneration program is an integral part of our operations” (Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Corporation, 2015, para 7). However, their regeneration program is an important signal of changing attitudes. They also have a section of their website devoted to their Footprint and they claim to be “constantly seeking opportunities to provide long-term stability to Nova Scotia's forest industry” (Northern Pulp Nova Scotia Corporation, 2015, para 2).

This type of approach to forestry has been publicly promoted by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources in reports such as the *State of the Forest-Report 1995-2005*, *Nova Scotia Forests in Transition*. This Report argues that the years from 1995 to 2005 represented a major shift in the province’s approach to forestry, “characterized by a significant transition towards ecosystem-based forest management in Nova Scotia” (Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, 2008, p.4). According to the Department of Natural Resources of Nova Scotia, “forest ecosystem based management provides a holistic way of managing resources with emphasis on the natural environment” (Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, 2013, para 2). This sort of initiative reflects a different approach to forest management, and resource use, adopted by logging companies and forestry-related governmental institutions throughout the Maritimes provinces.

J.D. Irving, Limited is one of the largest paper companies in the Maritime Provinces. In addition to employing thousands of individuals at their various plants, they work primarily in the

pulp and paper industry. Since the 1990s they have tried to justify their use of resources to their customers and those living in and around where they operate. One of the ways that they are justifying resource use is by publishing annual reports championing their accomplishments in the field of sustainability. In their 2013 Sustainability Report, they have outlined “five focus areas of sustainability: Healthy Environment, Safe and Efficient Operations, Growing and Engaging people, Strong Partnerships for Business Success, and Vibrant Communities” (J.D. Irving, Limited, 2013, p.3). These are what they are looking to build upon moving forward. It is expected that success in one area will benefit all areas. The following excerpt from the *Healthy Environment* section demonstrates the extent to which they are interconnected:

“Our approach to sustainability is based on investing in the forest and forest communities with a long-term perspective, to ensure a stable, long-term supply of the wood fibre we require to build and maintain equally long-term relationships with our customers” (J.D. Irving Limited, p.7).

By investing in the future of the environment, J.D. Irving believes it will benefit its longstanding relationships with customers. Without these customers their operations would not be profitable or possible. They depend on the customers, so they must listen to their requests.

Both J.D. Irving in New Brunswick, and Northern Pulp in Nova Scotia have emphasized that they are crucial to boosting local economies. They provide employment opportunities for local people, and they contribute positively to these communities. According to an article published in *Pulp & Paper Canada* from February 2015, it is expected that J.D. Irving will hire over 7800 people by 2017 (Pulp & Paper Canada staff, 2015). This will mean a huge boost in the local economy, and it would seem that the company is looking to seek out recent graduates of universities. According to the article, “[r]epresentatives of the J.D. Irving group of companies are

visiting universities and colleges across New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Quebec” (Pulp & Paper Canada staff, 2015, para 1). They promote the important role which they have in allowing recent graduates the opportunity to put their degrees to use in the areas in which they have trained. Both companies also promote the extent to which they donate money to organizations, events and causes which help benefit those living in and around those areas. On the J.D. Irving webpage they state that “[i]mproving the quality of life in our communities, where we live and work, also means supporting the valuable work of organizations that contribute to health and wellness while fostering the spirit of teamwork” (J.D. Irving, n.d., para 1). This sort of monetary donation helps contribute to a positive image of their company among the public.

While the Maritime Provinces continue to benefit from the use of trees as a commodity, it is important to remember that “forestry and forests in Nova Scotia have experienced a considerable transition from 1995 to 2005” (Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, 2008, p.4). Industry and government continue to cut down millions of trees, but it would seem that they do in fact view trees in a different manner than in the past. In 2015, trees are now being viewed as a valuable part of the environment. They are now seen as having not only commercial, but also ecological value. This is demonstrated perhaps most effectively in the recent discontinuation of the practice of harvesting full and whole trees. An article published in 2013 on a website archiving two key trade magazines explained that Nova Scotia was choosing to change harvesting practices in order to ensure the future sustainability of their forest: “Nova Scotians clearly told us they were opposed to both of these practices and we are honouring our commitment to ban them” (N.A., 2013, para 4). This is either an example of the way in which lines of communication are now open, or the Industry’s praise of itself for complying with a new piece of legislature, or both. Members of the public were once again asked to give their opinions

(N.A., 2013). This demonstrates government, public and industry working together to come to a decision that would benefit the environment in the future. Had trees continued to be harvested in the way in which the industry had been harvesting them forests would soon have been depleted. With this sort of research, it has become imperative for the government and industry to look at trees as more than commodities. It was Nova Scotian citizens that pushed for this law to come into effect, and with support from the provincial government it passed (Laforce, 2013).

All of these sorts of initiatives are being undertaken in order to continue to promote the forestry industries and wood and paper product production in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In no way are the government and various companies within the industry being encouraged to slow down their harvesting. They are simply looking to mediate the negative effects of their harvesting as best they can.

## **4.2 Fostering and Strengthening Relationships with Mi'kmaq Peoples**

Those working in the forestry industry have realized over time that the best way for them to maintain their access to forests and the wealth they produce is to partner with groups of Indigenous peoples. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick this has meant the Mi'kmaq. As the industry has evolved, these sorts of relationships have as well, to the mutual benefit of both parties, according to the information published by the forestry industry. The forestry industry has been able to change their image in certain Mi'kmaq communities throughout Mi'kma'ki as a result.

According to both the forestry industry and the federal and provincial governments, programmes which reach out to Indigenous groups have become an important means of supporting those groups throughout Canada. One such programme is the First Nation Forestry Program. According to the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada website, the goal of this program is “to promote forest-based economic development in First Nation communities” (Aboriginal Affairs, and Northern Development Canada, 2010, para 1). Established in 1996, this program is meant to do many things including “increase First Nation cooperation and partnerships” (Aboriginal Affairs, and Northern Development Canada, 2010, para 1). The First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) was envisioned as a way in which the government and industry could work directly with Indigenous people throughout the country. According to Alain Dubois, Nello Cataldo, and Reginald Parsons, all researchers for the Canadian Forest Service,



“First Nations are directly involved in the management of this innovative and highly successful program. The program adapts itself to the various local conditions and levels of development of remote communities. The FNFP supports the unique relationship between forests and First Nations by providing a means to create sustainable communities and economic self-sufficiency” (Dubois, Cataldo, & Parsons, n.d., page 2).

In 2009, the Government of Canada released a lengthy document entitled *First Nations Forestry Program-Success Stories*, which focuses on groups of Indigenous people throughout Canada and how they are achieving success in conjunction with this program. When discussing Mi’kmaq peoples in New Brunswick, the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership Program (ASEP-NB) is mentioned. As noted in the report, their mandate is “to foster, develop, support, train, employ and champion the participation of Aboriginal people in New Brunswick’s forest sector” (Natural Resources Canada, 2009, p.4). This program involves the provincial government, the Mi’kmaq people, and the industry, in this case the New Brunswick Forest Products Association (NBFPA) (Natural Resources Canada, 2009, p.4). Since it began in 2004, it has created over 200 new jobs in forestry for Mi’kmaq people, and has also provided them with skills and training opportunities (Natural Resources Canada, 2009, p.5). Young Mi’kmaq people are also being encouraged to participate in the program, and to study in programs related to forestry. This sort of program is meant to help them gain employment soon after graduating (Natural Resources Canada, 2009, p.5).

Another way in which the forestry industry has contributed to supporting Mi’kmaq communities and students is through the annual Envirothon competitions. This event is also discussed in the FNFP report (Natural Resources Canada, 2009, p.7-8). It is reported that “[s]ince 2002, the program has probably touched the lives of over 150 First Nations students” and “about 60 percent of them have gone on to post-secondary studies” (Natural Resources Canada, 2009,

p.8). According to the Canadian Forestry Association of New Brunswick, the Envirothon competition began in 1979. Just under ten years later, students from across the United States took part in the first national competition. Canadians have been representing their provinces at the international competition since 1993, when Nova Scotia first participated. The province of New Brunswick has been actively participating in the competition since 2000. They are currently still the only province to host bilingual competitions (Canadian Forestry Association of New Brunswick, 2006). The Canadian Forestry Association organizes and hosts this annual competition (Canadian Forestry Association, n.d.). According to their website different partnerships are formed in order “to organize and conduct competitions at the local, regional and provincial level” (Canadian Forestry Association, n.d., para 1). Those fortunate to qualify have the opportunity to compete against youth from throughout Canada and the United States. Annual participation now reaches into the hundreds of thousands (Canadian Forestry Association, n.d.). Each year, students compete in four recurring categories. An additional category is added annually. This competition allows students to learn in a non-traditional manner. Both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick host competitions, and according to the Nova Scotia Forestry Association webpage “this year’s current environmental issues topic for 2015 is Urban/Community Forests” (Nova Scotia Forestry Association, 2014, para 1). Both provinces will host two-day events for students and teachers.

In the past, camps have also hosted youth throughout the province in order to prepare them for their upcoming competition. In 2012 the program was supported by the Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR)-Eskasoni (Waycott, 2012). UINR works in partnership with government bodies, universities, and public and private organizations which include the province of Nova Scotia, Parks Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada at the federal level,

Cape Breton University, Georgia Pacific and NewPage (Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, 2011, para 3). This demonstrates the extent to which the forestry industry, government, public institutions, and various paper companies are working together to foster relationships with Mi'kmaq people, encouraging them to actively participate in the forestry industry. This week-long program was also supported by the Department of Natural Resources as part of the National Aboriginal Youth Forestry Employment Training Initiative. This event was given the name Nikani Awtiken, which when translated from Mi'kmaq means "creating a new path" (Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, 2013, para 8).

An additional example of how the forestry industry is reaching out to strengthen relationships with Indigenous people is the hosting of workshops to discuss the needs and wants of the Mi'kmaq peoples within different sectors. A copy of the FNFP e-news letter from May 2005 highlighted a workshop which had taken place in March to discuss the idea of aboriginal ecotourism. It states that the "goal was to give First Nation communities additional tools to increase success in ecotourism development in Atlantic Canada" (Government of Canada, 2005, p.1). An article on a trade magazine website claimed that the provincial government of Nova Scotia consulted with local groups of Mi'kmaq people in order to see what sort of projects should be undertaken on vast tracks of land within the province (The Canadian Press, 2012). According to the article, "community forestry projects can include small-scale commercial forestry, habitat protection, recreation, tourism and environmental research on Crown lands approved by the province" (The Canadian Press, 2012, para 3). These tracks of land are to be repurposed now that the local pulp and paper mills have closed (The Canadian Press, 2012). This demonstrates the extent to which the forestry industry and the government are looking to partner with Mi'kmaq people working in different sectors, such as tourism.

These sorts of partnerships are concrete evidence that the forestry industry and government are seeking to foster economic relationships with Mi'kmaq peoples. The dialogue necessary to these relationships allow the parties to come together and be heard. Both the Mi'kmaq people and the individuals representing the logging companies and government have the opportunity to voice their opinions, in a respectable manner. But significant gaps still exist between and among the groups, most important of which is the enormous imbalance of power.

### 4.3 The Sensitivity of the Industry

The forestry industry is no longer simply trying to appear more sensitive to the environment; it has become evident that they in fact are more sensitive to the environment, including the health and well being of their country's and international forests. Throughout the industry, government officials, and individual companies have committed to improving, protecting, and educating Canadians about their forests.

In a report published in 2008, David M. Morse, the then provincial Minister of Natural Resources for Nova Scotia, urged

“Nova Scotians to read the report, particularly in light of the upcoming public consultations to develop a new forest strategy for the province, and to express their views in this important process to direct our future efforts to improve Nova Scotia forest” (Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, 2008, p.3)

This message appeared in *State of the Forest-Report 1995-2005, Nova Scotia Forests in Transition*, compiled and published by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources. Minister Morse argued that Nova Scotians should educate themselves on the state of their environment by reading reports and attending public consultations. It would seem that the Department of Natural Resources has many ongoing public consultations. One of the urgent consultations currently mentioned on their website is a steering committee on the Brown Spruce Longhorn Beetle (Natural Resources Canada, 2014). The brown spruce longhorn beetle (BSLB) is a form of invasive species that arrived from Europe via container ships. This form of beetle is particularly harmful to spruce trees (Natural Resources Canada, 2015). This steering committee

is ongoing and looks to bring together representatives from industry including government and private business owners (Natural Resources Canada, 2014). This sort of cooperation is helping to break down the barriers that have been constructed in the past. By encouraging transparency, open and honest communication can take place. No information is specifically targeted towards Mi'kmaq peoples, but they are being asked to participate like all other citizens of the province. Many Mi'kmaq peoples do share very deep connections to the land, and more specifically trees, so it would be in the government's best interest for Mi'kmaq peoples to be sought out, and encouraged to join.

This sort of communication and transparency is being demanded in the hubs of the forestry industry, as these are the communities most affected by environmental changes. The people living in these communities are also demanding accountability in order to keep tabs on government representatives and industry. This is keeping those working in forestry accountable for making the sort of decisions that need to be made for a sustainable future. Northern Pulp is a company often targeted in these sorts of discussions. As a result they have established a Public Consultation Process, which puts the onus on the public. They ask them to participate in the dialogue, after reaching out through different methods. Again, it would not seem as though Mi'kmaq peoples and their opinions are being sought out specifically for these sorts of dialogues. The information collected then gets passed along to a third party organization. Once assembled, it is then sent to Nova Scotia Environment and released to the public (Northern Pulp, 2015).

J.D. Irving, Limited began an initiative in the 1990s known as the Unique Area Program. Over 320 areas have now been identified throughout the province of New Brunswick on land

owned by J.D. Irving, Limited and the government. Prior to coming to Canada this program had been piloted in the State of Maine. It was the company's staff members that reached out to the various owners and government institutes to ensure that measures would be put in place to protect these areas. The sites vary widely in size, and new sites are still being proposed. Some sites are removed from the list if they are deemed less important, while others are added. Consultations take places with scientists; and without this sort of open and honest dialogue the program would not be possible. This initiative originated with J.D. Irving Limited itself, which makes it very interesting. They also request that customers and local people contact them with information about potential new sites. They, too, are trying to involve the communities (J.D. Irving, Limited, n.d.).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has explained how trees have gone from being a commodity, to then actually being recognized as a part of the ecosystem and environment. With this sort of recognition, it has then been possible to observe the way in which the logging and forestry industries' relationships with Mi'kmaq people have evolved. Finally it has been possible to see how the industry has become more sensitive to the place of trees within larger ecosystems. It would seem as though the logging and forestry industries still have a long way to go, but as this chapter demonstrates, at least something is being done. But where does this leave Mi'kmaq people, and can they be expected to work with industries that have wronged them for so long?



## **Chapter 5: Mi'kmaq Perspectives**

This chapter focuses on the Mi'kmaq people and their relationship with trees, beginning with analysis of that traditional relationship as it is represented by Netukulimk, a concept central to this group of Indigenous peoples' interactions in the natural world. It then attempts to confront the problems which have been posed by the local logging and forestry industries in the past, and continue into the present. Evidence from local publications is then used to explain the way in which Mi'kmaq peoples have in the past blamed these industries for their decisions in regards to trees. It appears that most of the Indigenous peoples have blamed industries for the destruction of their local environment. Mi'kmaq people now seem to be more open to establishing relationships and partnerships with industry and government. Initiatives put forth by the Mi'kmaq to foster relationships and highlight the importance of trees will be discussed. Finally this chapter will close by examining the way in which the Mi'kmaq on one side and the logging and forestry industries on the other have been attempting to come together and seek common ground. A growing sense of trust has led to more partnerships between Mi'kmaq peoples and the forestry industry. These further signify that Mi'kmaq people are reclaiming their relationships with trees, and that they are now being afforded the opportunity to do so. In order to properly convey how the Mi'kmaq people define themselves and their relationship with trees an in depth analysis of material produced by them has been undertaken.

## 5.1 Netukulimk, and the Longstanding Relationship with Trees

In 2013, Dr. Martha Stiegman released a film called *Seeking Netukulimk*. This film “is a lyrical exploration of the traditional laws that govern fishing in the Mi’kmaq world” (Halifax Media Co-op, n.d., para 2). Stiegman is originally from Nova Scotia, and has worked extensively with Indigenous peoples (York University-Faculty of Environmental Studies, n.d.). She produced this film in conjunction with Kerry Prosper, a member of the Paq’tnkek Mi’kmaq First Nation. Even though the film is only twenty-two minutes long, it is able to recount more than 13,000 years of history. The film follows Prosper, as he attempts to teach his grandchildren about what it is like to be a person of Indigenous descent. Prosper is a Mi’kmaq Elder who lives near Antigonish, Nova Scotia. He is the past Chief of his community and continues to be actively involved with different projects within Mi’kma’ki (Tepi’ketuek Mi’kmaw Archives, 2013). Although the film is about fishing and fishing rights for Mi’kmaq people, it also poignantly demonstrates to what extent trees are used in this aspect of their interaction with the natural world.

Trees are used to construct the poles in order to fish. Black ash is the type of tree that has been most commonly used, but is now also very scarce throughout Mi’kma’ki. The black ash will be discussed further under the efforts of the Mi’kmaq and other groups to try and repopulate the region with this historically important tree. In the film, when Prosper cuts down the tree, he leaves behind tobacco as an offering of respect to the Earth. The trees are then used to make spears in order to catch the fish. Prosper claims that providing his grandson with a spear is “like a form of initiation, maybe a rite of passage type thing that acknowledges them as an individual that can begin securing food for his family” (Stiegman, McMillan, Prosper, & Davis, 2013, 1:42-1:56). Without the trees, this sort of intergenerational knowledge would be lost, making the need

for their protection even more imperative. Prosper narrates the film, and at one point he asks, “[h]ow do I teach my grandchildren about their ancestral connections to this land? And how do I guide them in sustaining these resources for future generations?” (Stiegman, McMillan, Prosper, & Davis, 2013, 3:51-3:59). This is how Stiegman defines Netukulimk, and how she portrays it in her film.

The concept of Netukulimk is of the utmost importance to Mi’kmaq people, and this way of being has historically been applied to the majority of their decisions though its application has been disrupted by the changing socio-economic and natural environment created by colonization. Two Mi’kmaq organizations central to restoring and fostering traditional relationships between Mi’kmaq people and the environment provide definitions for the concept. The UINR’s definition of Netukulimk is as follows: “[A]t the soul of everything we do at UINR is Netukulimk” (Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources, 2009, para 1). They go on to say that Netukulimk is for all intents and purposes,

“the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community. Netukulimk is achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity, or productivity of our environment” (Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources, 2009, para 2).

The The Mi’kmaq Conservation Group (MCG) provides a slightly different but equally valuable definition of Netukulimk on their webpage. In order to be successful in the work that they do, they must adhere to the meaning of Netukulimk that they define as follows:

“Netukulimk is a way of life; the Mi’kmaq took only what was needed and wasted nothing. It was considered an honor to receive these gifts from Mother Earth and was the foundation of the spiritual connection between the Mi’kmaq and the natural environment which has endured to this day” (Mi’kmaq Conservation Group, 2015, para 3).

These definitions suggest that Stiegman very appropriately named her film *Seeking Netukulimk*, as Netukulimk must always be actively sought in an ongoing relationship with the environment and many Mi'kmaq people are seeking to find Netukulimk in their daily lives.

## 5.2 Attempts to Confront the Problems Posed by the Industry:

Although the scope of this project spans mainly 1990 to the present, it has been imperative to construct an understanding of how things became so tense between Mi'kmaq people and the local logging and forestry industries. *Micmac News*, and *Mi'kmaq Maliseet Nations News (MMNN)* have been indispensable tools and resources for this. Particularly during the early years of its publication, *Micmac News* reflected the lingering sense of historical injustices still being played out in relations with members of white settler society and the industries they fostered and promoted. By examining articles written for these publications, it has been possible to see the way in which Mi'kmaq people, young and old, have described and defined the disruption of their traditional relationships with nature, relationships which have evolved over time, for very specific reasons.

When the settlers first arrived in Canada, it quickly became apparent to what extent this land was rich in resources. The Maritimes, known as Mi'kma'ki by the Indigenous peoples living there, soon became a hub for the fishing and forestry industries. This changed the lives of the local Indigenous peoples forever. The Mi'kmaq experienced hardships such as they never had before. Both the forestry and the fishing industries grew quickly, and continued to do so over the next century. As a result of the changes in their lives, the Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick soon grew to resent these industries.

During the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s the Mi'kmaq then Mi'kmaq and Maliseet press were filled with stories of attacks on their natural environment which were all the more distressing because they were accompanied by the alienation of portions of what little land remained to them

in the interests of the forestry industry.<sup>3</sup> The distress and frustration of the Mi'kmaq was reflected in and reinforced by their relationship with the developing environmental groups in the Maritimes during these years (Leeming, 2013). By the 1990s, this resentment was still apparent. The Mi'kmaq people often solely blamed the Industry for the changes that they were seeing. Therefore much of their discontent has been directed outwards even in celebrations such as Earth Day.

Earth Day is an annual celebration in which Mi'kmaq people are able to show their affection for the Earth, but they are also given the opportunity to show their discontent with what has happened to their environment and the land. According to the Earth Day Network, Earth Day has been celebrated each April 22<sup>nd</sup> since 1970 (Earth Day Network, n.d.). In both *Micmac News*, and *MMNN* there is annual coverage of the Earth Day events throughout Mi'kma'ki. In 1991, there was Mi'kmaq representation at the Earth Day Environment Fair held in Sydney. In an article published by H. David Brown, Duncan Gould is highlighted as being one of the Indigenous representatives at the fair. Brown states that, "Duncan believes that coalitions are a good way to organize people to struggle for a common goal, in this case, against those who are contaminating our waters and desecrating our forests" (Brown, 1991, para 6). This demonstrates the extent to which Mi'kmaq people were unhappy with the way in which their land was being used. Brown goes on to quote Gould saying that "[i]f government and industry are allowed to rape, pillage, and pollute our lands and waters, then our legal fights in the courts regarding treaties will have all been for nothing!" (Brown, 1991, para 8). This type of discontent reverberated throughout Mi'kmaq communities across Mi'kma'ki. The Mi'kmaq people took this discontent and anger and channelled it into educating their youth to make better choices.

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<sup>3</sup> See issues of Mi'kmaq News and Mi'kmaq Maliseet Nations News, 1965 into the 1990s, *passim*.]

In the edition of *MicMac News* from May 3, 1991, Louis Googoo published an article called *Earth Day Celebrated*. Most of the article seemed very upbeat while recounting what sort of activities took place, until a caption under a photo reads, “Children these days mean business when it comes to saving their world. These young environmentalists want their world to be green and healthy, not polluted and dirty” (Googoo, 1991, p.7). Two photos accompany the article, and young Mi’kmaq children can be seen holding garbage bags outside and amongst trees. The author goes on to say that “Mother Earth must be proud of the environmentally aware students of the Whycomagh Federal School” (Googoo, 1991, para 11). The message was that these children were just learning about the misfortune that had come upon the Mi’kmaq, and they wished to help in any way that they could.

More recently, Margaret Poulette, in *MMNN*, has published an article entitled Potlotek-Earth Day 2013. Very similar photos to those featured in the article from 1990 can be seen, showcasing how these grade one and two students are celebrating Earth Day. When prompted by Poulette, students are quick to explain the importance of trees. Joshua Martell states “that trees are very important because they help you breathe” (Poulette, 2013, para 2). Faith Martell, Joshua’s sister, then explains, “the trees are still here!” (Poulette, 2013, para 2). By inspiring their youth to make better decisions and to speak up, Mi’kmaq people have raised their children to be more sensitive to the changes in the environment. They are also remaining true to their belief that the focus must be on the actions of the group, in this case a generation, not on individuals since the group is necessary to achieving their vision of harmony.

Even as cooperation and partnerships between the Mi’kmaq and the forestry industry have developed, the Mi’kmaq have remained vocal in their discontent with some decisions being made by Industry. Many Mi’kmaq people now reside in communities where logging and forestry

initiatives are taking place. In many cases, this is taking a toll on their health and daily lives. In June 2014, after a substantial wastewater spill, an article entitled *Mi'kmaq Chiefs in Nova Scotia Stand Behind the Community of Pictou Landing* was published. Millions of gallons of pollution flooded into Boat Harbour, an area of cultural and spiritual significance to the Mi'kmaq people which had been the site of special medicinal plants used in spiritual ceremonies. This spill put the Mi'kmaq peoples' health at risk. Community members and Chiefs spoke up and demanded that Northern Pulp, the company responsible for the spill, take measures to properly ensure its clean-up (N.A., 2014).

Although the Mi'kmaq people are not happy with what has happened in this situation and with the way it has been dealt with by both industry and government, they have established a record of negotiations with outside parties from which they can now speak their minds with confidence. The article published in *MMNN* states: “[T]he purpose of these negotiations and consultations is to implement our Aboriginal and treaty rights from the treaties signed by our ancestors in the 1700s” (N.A., 2014, para 6). This powerful statement explains the fundamental value in this type of discussion, and demonstrates how far the Mi'kmaq people have come in their dialogue with the local logging and forestry industries.



### 5.3 Mi'kmaq Led Initiatives:

Given how fundamentally estranged the Mi'kmaq people have been from local industries in the past, it is no surprise that since 1990, many Mi'kmaq led initiatives have emerged. These are events, programs, and opportunities for Mi'kmaq people, young and old, to spend time in nature and to develop and redevelop their relationship with the environment, and more specifically with trees. In many cases, Mi'kmaq-led programs receive governmental and institutional support which further expands opportunities for cooperation. One important element of these organizations and events is the way in which they are encouraging the fostering of relationships between youth and elders. They also involve Mi'kmaq people immersing themselves in nature, surrounded by trees and having the opportunity to learn from the knowledge of their ancestors. The UINR stands out among these organizations for its encouragement of Mi'kmaq people to use resources in a sustainable manner (Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, 2011).

In the summer of 2014, Mi'kmaq youth were encouraged to participate in a summer camp in Nova Scotia. For a week, they learned from the elders of their communities who took an active role in their learning on a wide range of subjects. This allowed for youth to fully immerse themselves in the natural world and the knowledge of their ancestors. The project was organized and funded by the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources and has now run for two consecutive years (N.A., 2014). In an article entitled *Mi'kmaq Youth in the Great Outdoors*, published in the *MMNN*, Nadine LeFort the organizer for the event, explains that the goal is that “participants develop new confidence and skills that we hope will lead to careers in natural resources or conservation” (N.A., 2014, para 8). Support for this sort of project comes from a wide variety of

sources such as “Nova Scotia Departments of Natural Resources and Education, UINR, Cape Breton University, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Georgia Pacific, Little Narrows Gypsum, United Church of Canada, Port Hawkesbury Paper, Premium Seafoods, Membertou, Eskasoni, Parks Canada and Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps” (MMNN, 2014, para 9).

The same can be said of the Mi’kmaq Conservation Group (MCG). They too are supporting and representing Mi’kmaq people by providing funding and support to various events and programs, and they too receive external support and funding. Although the mandate of the MCG is heavily focused on the wellbeing of the Bay of Fundy Watershed, they do support other projects for the Mi’kmaq people. For example, in 2013 various community members participated in a tree-planting project. Outlined in an article by Kate Nelson for *MMNN*, the project allowed youth, Elders, and Community Knowledge Holders to communicate and learn from each other (Nelson, 2014). Nelson states that “[t]ogether with the help of funding partners and some great summer students, MCG planted up to 9 black ash and several hundred white spruce trees in six communities” (Nelson, 2014, para 1). The local youth were able to see how these trees could be used as they have been for centuries. The MCG was looking to collect this sort of information, as well as personal statements in order to create a type of anthology of Mi’kmaq knowledge. Elders were asked to contribute their stories in order for them to be shared with Mi’kmaq youth. Elders from throughout Mi’kma’ki participated in this project which will be developed into an educational tool by the MCG (Nelson, 2014).

Specific trees, such as the black ash, have been identified and targeted by Mi’kmaq communities as they are thought to have special value and significance to the Mi’kmaq people. The black ash, also known as wisqoq in Mi’kmaq, is a traditionally used tree in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In the past, Mi’kmaq women used to create baskets out of these trees, and while

some Elders still make baskets out of ash, this is now typically considered a recreational activity. Although there are not many black ash trees left in the province of Nova Scotia, the Mi'kmaq people are trying to change that. According to Pryor, it would seem “that industrial practices - first introduced by European settlers - have made the greatest impact” (Pryor, 2013, para 1). While Pryor's usage of the term “industrial” might be disputed, he points to an important revival of Mi'kmaw handicraft and art which has been made possible by the interpretation of Mi'kmaw treaty rights. Pryor notes that

it is now illegal to harvest black ash in the province. According to the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act, anyone caught harvesting black ash could face a \$500,000 fine, six months in prison, or both. However, aboriginal peoples are exempt from this law (Pryor, 2013, para 5).

This demonstrates the extent to which these are unique and special trees to the Indigenous people of Nova Scotia. There are countless examples of events in which Mi'kmaq people are planting trees within their communities. The MCG is one of the organizations hosting such events. According to an article written by Anthony Pryor, during 2013 the MCG “introduced forty black ash saplings throughout five different First Nations Communities across the province, while promoting conservation and cultural awareness with educational activities involving local youth” (Pryor, 2013, para 7). This type of initiative helps youth learn in a hands-on manner, which seems to be making a lasting impact.

Tree planting has gained much popularity in Mi'kma'ki as a way to educate youth about their local environment. National Tree Day is celebrated each year during National Forest Week, typically at the end of September. Canadians have been celebrating National Tree Day since 2011. (Tree Canada, 2014). Communities all over Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick celebrate

National Tree Day in their own way, but it is fascinating to see how some local Mi'kmaq communities have participated. Eskasoni and Millbrook have both been recognized for their participation in the annual festivities. Eskasoni is mentioned on the National Tree Day webpage, while Millbrook has been highlighted in the *MMNN* for their participation in National Tree Day. In October 2013, Clayton Coppaway published an article for the *MMNN* entitled *National Tree Day in Millbrook*. Coppaway states “this event was organized as part of the MCG’s and Millbrook Fisheries efforts to plant trees and shrubs along the banks of Lepper Brook and McGlures Brook to help increase the number and kinds of tree species in those areas” (Coppaway, 2013, para 1).

Two months earlier, Charlie Marshall and Clayton Coppaway published another article entitled *Growing Trees will bring Trout*, in *MMNN*. This article explains the partnership between the MCG and the Millbrook Fisheries. The authors state that “[t]hese events will involve planting 5000 trees and shrubs and removing garbage along Lepper Brook and McClures Brook in Millbrook First Nation” (Marshall, Coppaway, 2013, para 2). These trees are considered essential to the local ecology because they offer benefits to the shorelines and the fish. It took the participation and partnership of the whole community in order to make this event successful. The trees were to be planted beside the site of the annual Pow Wow, making them even more special (Coppaway, 2013). These sorts of events raise awareness for the community and highlight the importance of the tree themselves.

## **5.4 Converging Paths-where Industry and the Mi'kmaq Peoples Meet**

In the twenty first century, it is not unusual for Mi'kmaq peoples to be working alongside and with those in the logging and forestry industries. It would seem that to some extent they have been able to move past their differences and work together in a respectable manner. These sorts of partnerships are encouraging for both parties, and seem to be mutually beneficial.

As explained above, many Mi'kmaq youth are now actively participating in Envirothon competitions throughout Mi'kma'ki. This participation is based on encouragement coming from elders, parents, community members, and local publications. These competitions allow the youth of Indigenous and non-indigenous descent, governmental organizations, such as the Canadian Forestry Association, and companies within the forestry industry, such as Northern Pulp, to come together in welcoming outdoor classrooms. An article from April 2012 explains that “Envirothon is a high school program [in which] teams work collaboratively to develop their knowledge of ecology and natural resources management along with their problem solving skills” (Waycott, 2012, para 1). Throughout Mi'kma'ki, people want their youth to participate and become representatives of their home communities. This has encouraged and ensured the longevity of the program.

Additionally students participating in these competitions also have the opportunity to plant trees. Northern Pulp, one of the region's most prominent forestry companies, has donated trees in order for youth to have the opportunity to learn how to plant them. The seedlings have all been planted in Northern Pulp's nursery, and allow youth to see Northern Pulp as not just taking away but also giving back to the local community (Waycott, 2012).

These are but two examples that demonstrate the way in which Mi'kmaq peoples and the local logging and forestry industries are choosing to come together and support each other. With this sort of encouragement, partnership and cooperation, both parties are able to experience and benefit from the true value of trees.

## 5.5 Conclusion

By understanding the concept Netukulimk, it has been possible to see how deeply the Mi'kmaq, and the groups that represent them, believe in a way of life which respects the natural environment and attempts to live in harmony with it, without wasting what it offers. This chapter has discussed the tension which this way of life has created between the Mi'kmaq people and the logging and forestry industries, but also the extent to which the Mi'kmaq people have been open to cooperation and even partnership with those industries. Though still prepared to confront those decisions and actions of the industry which they consider detrimental to their local ecosystems, the Mi'kmaq people have chosen to educate their younger generations concerning the importance of trees, so that in turn they can voice their discontent and make change when necessary. This Chapter has demonstrated that in the process of seeking Netukulimk the Mi'kmaq people have led initiatives and organizations which have independently, and in cooperation with the forestry industry, worked to protect the trees in Mi'kma'ki.

## Chapter 6: Recommendations and Conclusions

Throughout this paper, it has been possible to see the way in which the logging and forestry industries are appearing to want to cooperate and reach out to Mi'kmaq people. They are doing this by offering them job opportunities within their companies, and by working with governmental institutions to help in educating their youth in programs such as Envirothon. These sorts of examples which have been outlined throughout this paper demonstrate the way in which Industry is looking to move forward and form stronger bonds with Mi'kmaq people in order to mutually benefit both parties.

It has also been possible to demonstrate the way in which Mi'kmaq people have formed relationships with trees. By understand how organizations in Mi'kma'ki have put into action the idea of Netukulimk, it has been possible to understand the deep meaning of these sorts of relationships. Also, by examining the way in which the Mi'kmaq people have viewed trees since 1990, it has been possible to understand where they might be headed in the future. By reading local news publications throughout Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, it has been possible to gain insight into the issues that affect them the most. Both the *Micmac News*<sup>4</sup> and *Mi'kmaq Maliseet Nations News* have been instrumental in revealing the way in which the Mi'kmaq see their relationship with trees. Examples of Mi'kmaq led initiatives have been presented, and it has also been possible to see where the Mi'kmaq and the local logging and forestry industries are able to come together.

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<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately copies of *Micmac News* were only made available in the last month of this research. Some of the information from this publication was used, but it would have been ideal to have more time to look through their archives of this publication.



As we move forward in the twenty-first century it is possible to see how the forestry and forestry industries and the Mi'kmaq people might come to depend on each other. This coming together has been facilitated by local people and business owners putting pressure on the government. These governmental institutions have then put pressure on the companies within the logging and forestry industries. This sort of pressure is making them react, and this is an important part of what is driving change. This change is improving the lives of people living in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but more importantly this change is helping individuals, groups and companies to reevaluate their relationship with trees.

The stories and skills of Mi'kmaq Elders deserve to be shared, and preserved for future generations. In only a couple of centuries, the world in which the Mi'kmaq live has been completely turned around. Living with these changes is not an easy thing to do, but this group of Indigenous people have done so while continuing to move forward. It is up to both the logging and forestry industries to acknowledge the worth in their relationships with nature, and to respect them. It is unrealistic to hope that Industry will from now on simply take what they need or redefine what they need in a way which respects the preservation of ecosystems. But in order to move past what have been distrustful and destructive relationships in the past, the forestry industries need to continue and expand their attempts to reach out and find common ground with the Mi'kmaq. After completing this research it is possible to outline recommendations on how best to proceed.

Firstly, it is recommended that the role of citizen groups be strengthened when shaping legislation governing the harvesting of forests and trees. It has become apparent that the logging and forestry industries are looking to consult groups and individuals before making changes to

their businesses. The next key step is to give these groups, and individuals within these groups, a clearly defined degree of power. It is one thing to consult with citizens, but it is completely different to engage with them in a way which recognizes their power to shape change. Giving these individuals and groups not just the option of offering advice but the power to influence decisions would acknowledge the importance of their perspective. Providing them with seats on special Advisory Committees or on the governing Boards of forestry companies would ensure the forestry industry benefitted from their opinions.

Secondly, it is also recommended that the logging and forestry industries start reaching out to Mi'kmaq people specifically. It would be highly beneficial to these companies to have Indigenous peoples sit on their Boards of Governors. These sorts of positions would give Mi'kmaq people real clout and power. This would empower them, and encourage them to personally remain involved. It would also address the current power imbalance in any dialogue and consultations and allow each side to communication from a position of strength. It would prove that companies in the forestry industry are genuinely looking to act upon the knowledge of the Mi'kmaq people.

Thirdly, it is recommended that the logging and forestry industries accept that they have much to learn, and that this process will take time. It would also be beneficial for these companies to strengthen the role of experts in ecology, biology, and silviculture by giving them positions which ensure their advice is taken seriously. These sorts of partnerships and dialogues would ensure that people are being heard, and that positive changes are being made.

Fourthly, it is recommended to that the government be bound by similar standards of consultation and power sharing with Indigenous peoples. New standards for tapping Indigenous knowledge should be upheld throughout government and industry. This would mean that the

Mi'kmaq people would be accorded the same types of opportunities for input by both government and the logging and forestry industries. This would allow Mi'kmaq people to take an active role in managing the state of their forests.

Lastly, it would be beneficial to all parties to have Mi'kmaq Elders educate youth of Indigenous, and non-Indigenous descent throughout Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. For generations Mi'kmaq people have had to fight for their rights, and it is time for them to be heard. It would be highly beneficial to equip Mi'kmaq Elders with the resources to go into schools throughout Mi'kma'ki to discuss the importance of trees, and explain the way in which Mi'kmaq people have depended on them for centuries. At the very least this sort of dialogue would educate youth on the type of changes that have taken place. This knowledge could empower these children to make change in their communities and become stewards for the forests and the trees.

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