

# MMS

**GESPI'SIG**

**SPECIAL 20th  
ANNIVERSARY ISSUE**

**2000 - 2020**



# Contents

3	Political Accord Signing
4-5	Tanya Barnaby-Williams, Executive Director
6-7	Signatory Chief, John Martin - Gesgapegiag
8-9	Signatory Chief, Richard Jalbert - Gespe'g
10-11	Signatory Chief, Allison Metallic - Listuguj
12-13	Brenda Gedeon-Miller, Executive Director (1999-2010)
16-17	Troy Jerome, Executive Director (2010-2016)
18	Traditional Elder, William Jerome - Gesgapegiag
19	Signatory Councillor, Carole Chicoine - Gespe'g
20-21	MMS Doors Open / First Gespi'siq Issue
22-23	MMS Staff looks back / Milestones
24-25	Elder Tributes / Jack Wysote's History Song
26-27	Something Old / Something New



“On that day, it really was a historic moment, it was a turning point in our history in terms of the much-needed connection between the three communities. We now could start talking together and looking at the possibility of actually regaining and strengthening our rights on the territory. It also led to another historical moment a few years down the road, with Brenda Gedeon-Miller as the Director at the Secretariat, as at that time she helped us coordinate the Statement of Claim and it was the first time we brought all the elected Chiefs from the 7th District (Gespe'gewa'gi) together to sign the Statement of Claim on behalf of the entire 7th District. There were also many other important things that have happened, for example economic wise, we can look to the windmills that were built, it's a major initiative. Hopefully, we will see other initiatives that will generate capacity for our communities. I think that on that day, when we came together to create the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi, it became a historical moment, that's for sure, along with all the progress that has happened since that day.” - Gesgapegiag Chief John Martin



# 2000

## Political Accord Signing

On August 4th, 2000 - at the Listuguj Traditional Gathering Grounds, a historical event gathered Leadership, Elders and community members of Gesgapegiag, Gespe'g and Listuguj to take part in and also witness the signing of a Political Accord between the 3 Mi'gmaq communities.

Through the Vision and Leadership of the People, a strategic alliance was formed to recognize the unique social, linguistic, cultural, political, governing and geographic relations existing since time immemorial.









# Tanya Barnaby-Williams, MMS Executive Director

It's hard to believe the organization is 20 years old! I want to thank you all for reading through this very important milestone version of the Gespis'ig. As I reminisce back to my early days at the organization, I can't help but think of the many milestones we have reached.

I remember sitting in my apartment in Fredericton, ending my last days at St. Thomas University, wondering what I was going to be doing with the rest of my life. I had gained so much useful knowledge about being Indigenous. I had such a pride and confidence in what I was taught and was so excited to share my knowledge with my community. There was never a doubt that I would return to my community to work for my people, for the Mi'gmaq. My father raised me, groomed me almost, to be part of the solution for our people.

With only one day left before I was to move from Fredericton to Listuguj, the MMS Executive Director of that time, Brenda Gedeon-Miller, called me and asked me to apply to work with her at this new organization, the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi Secretariat (MMS). That's how I started my 20-year journey with MMS.

I was in for a rude awakening though when I did begin my work with the MMS, as it was only then that I realized how much lateral violence, from the decades of injustices and mistrusts of the governments, that had damaged our worldview. I soon realized that our work at MMS would be necessary - but it would never be easy.

As hard as it was, I managed to hang in there all these years. I worked hard every day, doing the tough work for our people. In fact, there were many times, I was seen as the enemy by my own people. It would take a huge personal toll on me to think that my own people would even assume we were doing anything else, other than to be fighting for their rights. After all, I'm Mi'gmaq. I'm raising a Mi'gmaq girl. I would never do anything that would sacrifice her future.

The words of the former Executive Director before me (Troy Jerome), continue to echo in my ears, "...it's not them, it's the Indian Act". So I continue to soldier on. Now, I'm leading the administrative arm of the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi. I continue to work hard. I believe today in the need for the organization even more than I believed in it 20 years ago. One thing I always tell my staff about the work we do - "Don't give up if you don't see immediate results. Change is generational."

We are making a difference and I am so proud of all my entire team, also of the Leaders that came before me and the ones coming up, and our Elders - including those who've shown and given us the support throughout the past 20 years.

My final thought is: "You'll never be wrong if you're working with a positive heart and in a communal direction."





# Signatory Chief's Words



# John Martin Gesgapegiag



*The following is based on an interview conducted over the phone.*

For me, I guess the thought of a formation of an alliance between the three Mi'gmaq communities on the Gaspé coast was something that was around for a very long time. I remember in the late '70s when I first started working with former Gesgapegiag Chief Bernard Jerome, who had actually mentioned something about doing that, that there was a discussion to begin that initiative - but it didn't go anywhere at the time.

That was something that always stuck with me over the years, and when I became Chief of Gesgapegiag, I had continued that discussion with (former Listuguj Chief) Allison Metallic. I also discussed this with Gespe'g, where it was Linda Jean who was Chief in the '90s, followed by former Chief Richard Jalbert.

Those discussions proved helpful, as over time we found ourselves as Chiefs working with a team out of Listuguj, which included Brenda Gedeon-Miller, Victoria LaBillois, Troy Jerome and others who were working hard to help put this alliance together.

With them, we saw the importance and the relevance of working together, to stand united, take stronger positions in terms of gaining access to our territory and trying to address the issues of poverty along with the number of things that our communities have been experiencing while being overlooked by the Governments.

Of course, getting there was a long process, with many meetings and discussions, but it would eventually lead to the completion and signing of the Political Accord on August 4th, 2000. Our Elders were always a big part of that process, and we had Alma Vicaire who at the time was really happy about it - saying that 'finally, people are working together'. She came with us to the signing ceremony in Listuguj and so did a couple of other Elders along with our Council members.

The signing of the Political Accord was really a milestone and here we are 20 years down the road where a lot has happened since the signing, and where I've been in and out [of Politics] - but I'm happy to see that the MM (Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi) continues, and that the Secretariat continues to support and work on the mandates given to them. I'm also proud that the Political Accord has sustained itself to this day and we still understand and believe in the need for such collaboration between us.

August 4, 2000 was a day of celebration and ceremony, and that is key in terms of sustaining our vision and looking towards our horizon and where we want to go as a people. And today, revisiting the Political Accord is just as important to do during our celebrations and ceremonies, where in fact, we sometimes actually do read the Political Accord aloud, as it contains very important articles. It speaks to why we brought the three communities together; it was about collaboration, respecting our rights, building capacity in our communities, and strengthening our governance, those kinds of things, which are the building blocks of any Nation. The dialogue on what we want to see for our future needs to continue, so we can continue to move forward together towards it. Our Youth need to keep that going.

I think more than anything it's important that the youth be proud of their heritage - we have a great history as Mi'gmaq people - and part of that history as Mi'gmaq people includes the signing of these treaties, which are treaties that are signed Nation-to-Nation. We are sovereign people who have never given up this land and I think it's important that the youth understand this, because everything stems from a good understanding of our heritage, and they can take pride in who they are as Mi'gmaq - and working together will only help build a stronger Mi'gmaq Nation.





# Signatory Chief's Words





# Richard Jalbert Gespe'g



*The following is based on an interview conducted over the phone.*

Gespe'g was officially recognized as a Mi'gmaq community in the early '70's - and our Elders worked very hard on getting that recognition, which is a proud achievement and we've always been striving to connect and bond with our Mi'gmaq brothers and sisters throughout Gespe'gewa'gi and Mi'gmagi, and also working towards bringing back our traditions, culture and language - as this was lost amongst the Gespe'g population.

Our preoccupation in the early 70's was to develop our economic and social development so that we could gather and be our own community - the Gespe'g community.

When I became Chief, there was great work that was already being accomplished, and I was going to do my best to continue that great work in building our community and connections throughout Gespe'gewa'gi.

Looking back, the signing of the Political Accord was a symbiosis of 3 leaders that had worked together to ensure the wording was carefully thought out - and I'm proud to have worked with Chief Allison Metallic and Chief John Martin, as they both will have my utmost respect for the rest of my life. We initially worked together after the announcement of the Marshall Decision and bonded while sitting together at the table with Governments, institutions and businesses in the fishing industry. The word "solidarity" comes to

mind from working together more than 20 years ago, and this led to the beginnings of what we see today as the Political Accord.

The signing of the Accord was the result of many discussions, some easy and some not so easy, but we worked it out - and on August 4th of 2000, we came together to sign this agreement. It was such a positive day, and throughout it I felt the sense of inclusion and also the feeling of 'finally finding our way home'. I had a deep feeling that day that this is where I belong, where we belong, and I knew it would be a historic moment for all 3 communities, both politically and personally.

I was also privileged to have had Elder Albertine Chicoine by my side to sign the Political Accord. She was an elder who never forgot her traditional roots or identity of being Mi'gmaq, she kept that in her heart and in her soul. She told me once that "the Government may try to take away our culture, land and rights; but they can't take away the Mi'gmaq inside of us."

After we signed the Accord, a picture with the other 2 Chiefs was taken of our handshake together, and this not only showed our strength together as leaders, but respect for one another, as this was a snapshot of a winning combination for our communities to be joining together with an open heart and an open mind in doing our best for the future and well-being of the Mi'gmaq in Gespe'gewa'gi.



# Signatory Chief's Words





# Allison Metallic Listuguj



*The following is based on an interview conducted over the phone.*

First of all, time seems to fly as here we are celebrating 20 Years of the Political Accord signing – where I can specifically remember that we weren't the first to try to get this alliance of the 3 Mi'gmaq communities together, and for whatever reasons through those past discussions it didn't occur. With conversations happening with Gesgapegiag and Gespe'g around the Marshall decision, there was that sense of friendship and understanding one another, it was easy to sit and talk about our shared interests.

Many months went by and soon things started to come our way that allowed us to start exploring ways of forming some sort of Tribal Council or Union for the Mi'gmaq communities in Quebec. Of course this led to conversations with our respective Council, Elders and staff on how to do this – and that was not always easy – but with perseverance and hard work by everyone involved, we finally had a Political Accord that was agreed by all and was going to be signed on August 4th, 2000 at the Powwow Grounds in Listuguj.

That day began with us at a Sunrise Ceremony that set the tone of respect, honor and pride for the now-historic events that followed – with it ending by having myself, Chief Jalbert and Chief John sitting in the teepee and I remember saying to them, “Well, we just accomplished the first step of bringing our 3 communities together, and we don't know what may happen from this day on, but let's work at our best to protect our rights and have one voice for the Mi'gmaq of Gespe'gewa'gi.”

Having my Aunt Eva (Mitchell) there to sign the Accord was also very special - because I grew up hearing stories about our Mi'gmaq past from her and some of the hardships that they went through – and more stories were shared after my Mother

had passed away too. Her stories reminded me of how we, as Mi'gmaq, survived through the hard times, the injustices, misappropriation of land and overall mistreatment – and through it all, we stuck together and she reminded me that by sticking together, good things can only happen.

One of the conditions for signing the Accord was to strengthen our position as Mi'gmaq on territory, and by doing so, we were about to let the Government know that we're coming after them with our Comprehensive Land Claim – and this continues today with the help of the Secretariat (MMS). We need to be treated better than just as a registered number, we need to keep reminding them that they are on unceded Mi'gmaq territory - and we need to keep voicing this – don't let our collective voice fade.

There's much yet to be gained through our Alliance, so much potential to tap into from Natural Resources on our unceded Mi'gmaq territory – and we need to keep encouraging our young educated members to get involved or become an entrepreneur from all that our land has to offer. Self-sufficiency is very important for us in the future, and I think we need to start doing more today to achieve that, we need to take that opportunity.

As a former Chair of the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi, I'm very honoured and proud today to be celebrating 20 Years of the Political Accord signing, as should the many Leaders, Elders, MMS Staff and community members who have given their support and dedication on continuing the pursuit of our Comprehensive Land Claim to Gespe'gewa'gi that we set out to do 20 years ago.



# Brenda Gedeon-Miller

## Executive Director 1999-2010

*The following is based on an interview conducted over the phone.*

I recall it was Victoria Labillois who was hired by the Listuguj Band (LMG) on this new program to create a Tribal Council, with the budget offered by the Department of Indian Affairs, so she started doing the paperwork and research for this and posted the position for the Executive Director of this upcoming organization – and that’s how I came into the picture, as I applied and was hired for the position.

The next steps were focused on the Political logistics, as there were certain criteria to be met to secure future funding from the Department of Indian Affairs with creating a Tribal Council – and one has to read up and do the initial research – which I did at my kitchen table back then, as we didn’t have any

office space anywhere in the community. Eventually, I managed to set up office space at the Woodpile (in Listuguj).



After settling in there, we then went to work on developing a communication strategy on how to get Listuguj thinking about a Tribal Union, how do we get Gesgapegiag thinking

about it, and eventually bringing Gespe’g in it too – we didn’t have a name for it, we didn’t have any concrete plans at that point – as we never thought of becoming one political body. Each community had their own priorities of developing their own administrative and social programs; and this would be one of the challenges, as some Council members felt they already had their services and programs,



so what more would this collective union bring to their communities.

There were many meetings and discussions held over many months, along with drafting many documents about the goals, the objectives, the vision, and on the dynamics of working together as a collective – and remember, at this time, we hardly had a notion of treaty rights – of course we knew we had them, but they were not subscribed anywhere, nor were they fully prescribed for us – so we had to build upon that, and that all came later.

With a sound strategic plan and seeing the role they would play in the larger scale of things through an Organizational Chart that focused on the Political level, they started to see that perhaps it’s time to politically come together to address larger issues other than local issues – they could see that we needed to pursue bigger goals such as our rights, Constitutional issues, land and resources, and so on – and this would be a positive gain for the communities.

Once we were on the same page, we soon established that there should be an Administrative function in there somehow (which would later become the Mi’gmawei Mawio’mi Secretariat), and the other was the Legislative function (and that would become the Mi’gmawei Mawio’mi Assembly). But getting there, it was very slow, very methodical, very strategic, but finally everyone put their effort into it.







This was still in the late '90's, so they started to globalize their ideas and give vision to this new body of a Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi Council – and we started to get in touch with other Tribal Councils, like the Nova Scotia Mi'gmaq, to connect and provide one another with political information based on the issues on which the Chiefs wanted to discuss with the Governments. This helped us determine what issues we were going to pursue. One was 'Land Rights', another was 'Treaty Rights', and we also wanted to address 'Human Rights' meaning the rights of the First Nation people in the Gaspé coast - and this soon made us aware of where do these rights extend to on the territory, so that's when the knew we needed some type of Research Council to determine the claim area and also to look into the issues on what we got undervalued for and overlooked towards over all these years.

By the time the words were finally put on paper, and the signing was to happen on August 4th, each community had clearly understood what it contained and what their roles and responsibilities were under the Accord – and I might add that the Accord, lends to the thoughts, the intentions, and the political and community position on rights. It became the mantra for everything that followed, for all the actions and mandates of the Chiefs and Councils.

Of course, now all of this had to be done through some sort of Legal process, so we got Legal Counsel to legitimize all these supportive arguments that the Research Council was bringing forward – and the three Chiefs knew that this was the direction to go, that this was now beyond the local Band level.

The process leading up to that day was very organic, very Mi'gmaq. We didn't borrow anything from anybody else, and in doing so, we found the truth – we found our story, and that's what we based the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi Assembly on – our story, our truth.

Everything started to come together, and the Chiefs understood that they needed some type of testimony of their priorities and strategic steps to address these long overdue issues – and so the Political Accord was something that was needed – so the Chiefs, along with many other individuals started to put that narrative down on paper. We workshopped many months to carefully craft what the collective voice and content would be, as this was going to be an important manifesto. At this point, the Elders from each community were also very much involved in this process – it was very collective and cyclical.

On August 4th 2000, standing there to witness the signatories signing the Accord, along with the events surrounding it was mind-blowing – I saw it also as a quiet and educated revolution. It was a day to reconcile the differences between the non-native world and our world, and it was such a pleasure to see the dignity, pride and respect everyone had while witnessing this, to be part of such a great achievement.

Over the 20 years that has past, I need to say that the work that has been done is probably our best work put forward, where we built a structure with legitimate objectives and values - so in my mind, these are our proudest legacies – the Accord, the Office of the Secretariat, the Nutewistog (Speaker), and the way the Chiefs pursued the collective strategies in reaching our objectives. Even though we're not done, we did make some headway over those years, where the Governments now acknowledge that we do have these rights, and we will see the light at the end of the tunnel, but we still have more work to do and more years ahead.





# Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi





# One People, One Vision





# Troy Jerome

## Executive Director 2010-2016

*The following is based on an interview conducted over the phone.*

*Gespi'siq: Take us back 20+ years ago when the discussions were at a level of joining the three communities together. How did it evolve?*

Troy: Prior to August 4th, for a number of times, the communities had an indication that they should be working together, as one nation of Mi'gmaq people. There were a couple of attempts, but they were not able to bring it together for whatever reasons, that I'm not aware of.

Then in 1999, the Marshall Decision was handed down and while we (Listuguj) was talking with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), the discussion of what was happening down the coast in regard to our brothers and cousins in Gesgapegiag and Gespe'g came up, where they (DFO) said Gesgapegiag were having chats with them and that Gespe'g were still in question as whether they were signatory of the treaties. We were taken aback with that comment. How could they pick and choose who is Mi'gmaq and who is entitled to treaty rights? So we had no choice, we had to get together with Gespe'g and Gesgapegiag, as it could have been us on the other side of that uncertainty. They could have said Listuguj was not to be included because of whatever reasoning.

So, we started reaching out to Gespe'g and Gesgapegiag to advise them of what DFO was saying and that we felt it was a pivotal time to get our communities together as one, then we would have this unified strong voice and we could put pressure back on the Federal and Provincial governments.

This began our discussions where we wanted to bring a simple document forward, something that was clear, that we were all one and that we were going to work together and were going to do things together.

One thing we had to be mindful of, was the wording, where it had to include that each of the communities remains autonomous no matter what and that decisions would be done by a consensus whenever possible. That was the feeling from all the communities, that we are better together, that we would work together, we would be stronger together and it just makes sense that we are together. We are only apart because of the Indian act separating us into these tiny communities and taking our land around us. So if we are ever going to be back in the territory, we will only be able to do it if we are all together. That is what led to drafting of the Political Accord.

Before the signing day, I would remember going to different meetings and I would see maps of different nations who had made claims to their territories and when you looked at the places where we were, we hadn't done that yet. We knew that we now will be in a position to gather together and say this is our territory and that we were actually becoming stronger as we entered into the 20th century because we were kind of stuck and held back for centuries. So having the leadership, Elders and community members there, along with the drumming, the medicines, and all these cultural and ceremonial components, it was all part of the picture that's embedded in all of us who were there.

After the signing event, the three Chiefs met inside the Powwow teepee where they raised and shook their hands together. That's the moment when we knew that we made history and will change our future for the better. I'm not sure if there was a spirit in the room - but it felt like a spiritual thing happening. I will take that moment with me until the end of my days.





*Gespi'siq:* There's a new generation that will be coming up and taking over the work that many have started 20-plus years ago and that we continue today. What would be your message to the new generation on the importance of what this Accord means and the works of the three communities under the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi.

Troy: When I look at the generations to come, I think we need to spend way more time talking and learning more about our own history; as when I went to school I learned about issues that were so irrelevant to us as Mi'gmaq people.

We need to remind them, that they are able to do anything. We can manage and build off the resources on our territory, Gespe'gewa'gi, and translate those into funds and revenues for programs such as language and history so that when they're going forward they won't be shy or intimidated by the federal or provincial governments, to know that this land that we are on is our land, its ours, its always been our land. They should be aware that they are able to build a system of self government where we are able to have our people freely enjoying the benefits of our land.

They should know that, we can go in our territory of Gespe'gewa'gi and use it for whatever we need too, with respect to the resources, and that you don't need to check in with the provincial or federal government. So, if we could spend some time changing our thinking to that of "this is his Mi'gmaq land, we were put here by the Creator to take care of the territory, the territory will take care of us and we're one in together." They are in a position today to ask "How do we want to manage the territory?" Well that's for them to get together and talk about it. Think big and break strides. We made achievements every five years as an organization - we did something that broke new ground that changed our Mi'gmaq Nation. We need to continue to make big steps forward - and the Youth need to know that this territory is ours. There are no questions about it.

*Gespi'siq:* With that, is there anything you'd like to share, a closing thought perhaps.

Troy: The thought that comes to mind is 'Family', as a lot of the things that got me into this field of work, was family. I'm always thinking of my grandfather standing on the highway with "This land is our land" - going out there as the only person saying that; then I look at my father, who worked his life on this land where he could; then I think back to my great-grandfather, Senti, who I named my company after. It's the image of us as Mi'gmaq people, as Mi'gmaq families, being strong. I think for many of us in this type of work (language, history, rights...) - family is what propels us to go forward. If I could get my son to work within that way, I would encourage him to go that direction. Of course, I would like him to be an entrepreneur too, that's for sure. But always think about 'Family', that's the closing message I like to share.



# William Jerome Gesgapegiag



Back on August 4th, 2000 – it was something very special to see the three Elders from each community sitting there with the Chiefs and the councilors to sign the Political Accord, we became a bigger family with our brother and sisters from each community that day and that was a very strong bond that still exists today.

I was also deeply honored in seeing my Mom (Late Alma Vicaire-Jerome) being a part of signing the document along with the Elders from Listuguj and Gespe'g. If you go back in our history and our teachings, our Leaders would very often seek advice and knowledge from the Elders. They were always there for us, giving us advice, teaching us about the territory, sharing their knowledge to build a stronger community. That shared knowledge, it goes back to more than 500 years, these were passed down throughout the years and they still are as important and useful to us today as they were back then.

When someone mentions my Mom, I tell them that I can still hear the advice she gave us (her children) from all those years raising us, but not only to the family, but the community. We still remember and use that today. We never forgot how important our elders are.

Our Mi'gmaq Elders have so much to share: stories from our communities' past, wisdom about the territory and what it provides us, our traditions, the language, and so much more. We need to respect and communicate with our Elders, as their knowledge is very important. As in the past, today if we need something or if we are stuck or we are having problems, we will go see an Elder and sit and talk to them

and ask questions and advice or help and they always have an answer. They always have a good answer for our community, especially about our community because they all cared about the well-being of our community. Every one of them cared. Listuguj Elders care about their community. Gespe'g Elders care about their community. I think the best thing of that day was having the three Elders sign the Accord.

Over the 20 years, I saw our strong three communities sitting down with the Government and discuss our Statement of Claim and treaty rights. They now had to listen to the three communities talking as one – as before, they used to laugh. When the three communities came together and bonded together, the government finally took us seriously on our shared vision for the three communities in Gespe'gewa'gi.

As an Elder today who speaks Mi'gmaq, I was proud to see our language placed into the Accord. We can't forget that the language was almost lost, but it's coming back very strongly and we're working so hard to help our own community and other communities to keep speaking the language, along with our traditional ways of living on the territory. Once you know a little bit of your language and your culture, you know who you are. You know that you are Mi'gmaq, and we are very strong in this territory, we've always stuck together, hand-in-hand with other brothers and sisters and this is what we are doing today. I'm proud to have been there that day, and to still be part of the events of the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi and Secretariat.



Traditional Elder

Based on an interview conducted over the phone.



# Carole Chicoine

## Gespe'g

August 4, 2000 - that day was very special for me and my mom (Albertine Chicoine, Gespe'g Elder Signatory to the Accord), we were both very proud to be part of the Political Accord signing because it was joining the 3 Mi'gmaq communities together - and many people worked hard leading up to this moment - and we finally were able to sit together, surrounded by members from all 3 communities, and sign this important document. It was the linking of 3 voices, and when you have 3 strong voices talking together as one, you get heard faster - and from then on we stood up for what we believed in - and having been a part of the start of the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi was very important to me and my mom. We both felt like we were with family that day, with our Mi'gmaq brothers and sisters from Gesgapegiag and Listuguj.

After that August 4th event, we spoke quite often about that day, and for my Mom it was a feeling of being complete. Growing up, my Mom didn't speak too much about our Mi'gmaq heritage, for the fear of us being ridiculed in school. But as time went on, she slowly shared stories with us about our Mi'gmaq ancestry - that was the extent of what we knew, until when Gespe'g was recognized as a Mi'gmaq community in 1973 and she became more involved in making baskets and other traditions that were so

natural for her to do. She was very proud of her heritage and culture, and she passed that pride onto us.

Our Elders have a lot to share, as does our Mi'gmaq history. Today, and for our future, our Mi'gmaq youth need to learn - learn all about your history, culture and language. Once you have that knowledge, you'll have pride in living and asserting our rights of being Mi'gmaq.

My mother would always remind me to remember where we came from, who we are, our unique connection to Gespe'gawa'gi - never forget the hard work our Ancestors fought for to keep our traditions and culture alive. We've had too many people stand in our way, but we're not silent anymore - and I believe we're much stronger today having the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi continuing the vision from 20 years ago and that we did the right thing with signing the Political Accord on August 4th, 2000.



Signatory Councillor

Based on an interview conducted over the phone.



# 2001

## MMS doors open at 2 Riverside West



THE TRIBUNE, CAMPBELLTON, NB, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12th, 2001

**MI'GMawei MAWIOMI SECRETARIAT**  
 2 Riverside West, Listuguj (Above the Museum)  
**OFFICIAL OPENING**  
 DECEMBER 13, 2001 10:30 am (NB time)  
 Welcome • Bienvenue • Weltsualuleg



### Schedule of Events

- Master of Ceremonies: Michael Jerome - Gespegagieg
- Offering of Prayer
- Mi'gmaq Honour Song: Eagle Spirit Singers - Alaqitew Gitpu School
- Welcoming Song: Mark Morrison - Listuguj
- Welcome Remarks: Chief Allison Metallic - Vice Chairperson - Listuguj  
 Chief John Martin - Chairperson - Gespegagieg  
 Chief Richard Jalbert - Vice Chairperson - Gespeg  
 Indian Northern Affairs Canada: TBA
- Introduction of Board of Directors
- Introduction of MMS Team
- Mi'gmaq Social Song: Simon Dedam - Listuguj
- Traditional Dance: Alaqitew Gitpu Dancers
- Ribbon Cutting Ceremony: Brenda Gideon Miller - Executive Director - Listuguj
- Special showing in the Listuguj Arts and Cultural Center
- Noon - Lunch & Social
- Merry Christmas Uninuelwutigw

### Mi'gmaawei Mawiomni Secretariat Profile

The Mi'gmaawei Mawiomni Secretariat is a Tribal Council representing the Mi'gmaq people of Gespe'gewa'gig comprised of the three communities of Gespeg, Gespegagieg and Listuguj. After two hundred years, our own Tribal Council is servicing our people in critical areas. Although we intend to assist and advise our member communities in a number of areas, our present focus is dealing with our Aboriginal rights and title to the land that our ancestors have occupied since time immemorial. The challenge that this poses is daunting and will have a dramatic impact on the future of each and every person throughout our territory. With your support and your commitment to this challenge, together, we can see the revitalization and reclamation of our great nation.

Our name, "Mi'gmaawei Mawiomni" was chosen as a means of designating the representative body of the Mi'gmaq Nation. The first part of our name, "Mi'gmaawei" refers to the Mi'gmaq people and the second part, "Mawiomni" refers to the "Gathering of the People" Together it means "A Gathering of the People of the Mi'gmaq Nation".

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Post Office Box 23  
 River Road, Kahaawake  
 Quebec J0L 1B0  
 Telephone (514) 620-7094  
 Fax (514) 620-6420  
 E-mail: edtwoaxe@aol.com

*May you chart a new course for the Mi'gmaq Nation that will insure their prosperity for the next seven generations and may you be successful in redressing the wrongs of the past two hundred years. Congratulations on your rebirth!*

Ed Two-Axe Early, BA  
 Marketing/Management Consultant

**Listuguj Community Health Services**

**CONGRATULATIONS**

The Listuguj Community Health Services Directorate would like to congratulate The Mi'gmaawei Mawiomni Secretariat on their GRAND OPENING. We wish the Secretariat and its staff the very best in their endeavors for the advancement of the Gaspe Peninsula Mi'gmaq!

3 Pacific Drive  
 Listuguj, Quebec

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**Imagine-Ere** Consulting & Training

is proud to contribute to the success of the *Mi'gmaawei Mawiomni Secretariat*.

We congratulate the Mi'gmaq people of Listuguj, Gespegagieg and Gespeg on their Vision and with them Success...

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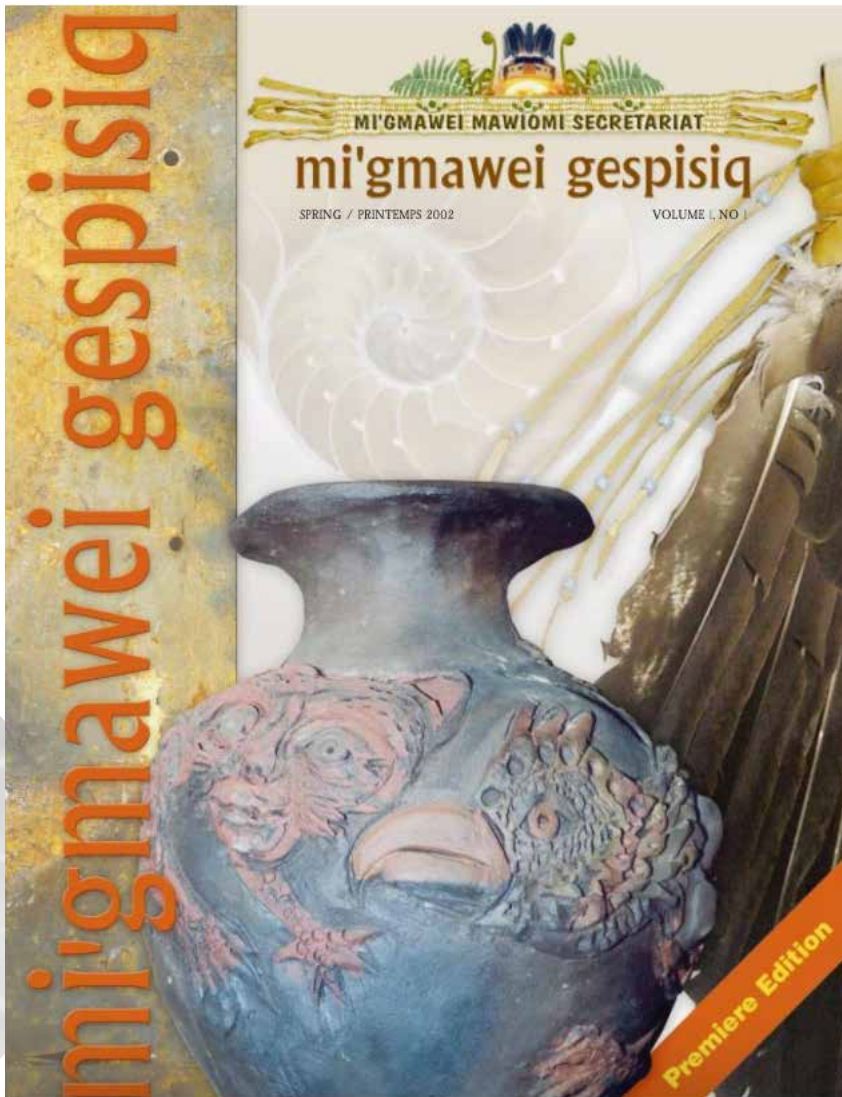
Tel.: (506) 753-4481  
 Fax: (506) 753-2446





# 2002

Our first Gespi'siq was published in the Spring of 2002.



From 2002

## EDITOR'S WORD / NOTE DU RÉDACTEUR



Brenda Gedeon Miller  
Executive Director of Mi'gmawei Mawiommi  
Directrice générale de Mi'gmawei Mawiommi

On behalf of the Migmawei Mawiommi Assembly and the first Secretariat Editorial Board, I want to introduce you to the GESPISIQ Newsmagazine. This is the first publication intended and designed to communicate with all of our relations in Gespe'gewa'gi. It is our goal to deliver the results of all the research in the many academic disciplines that would be germane to our cause as well as the historical information on important developments that are of interest to us respecting treaties and land claims issues.

Our commitment is to print all the information that we gather on the issues in an unbiased manner so that you will be able to make your own analysis and evaluation of the information that is disseminated in each of our future editions. We hope that the GESPISIQ Newsmagazine will become an important part of your life and a unifying force for our communities.

It is culturally and traditionally appropriate for me to express my thanks to each person who contributed to the making of the Migmaq voice of the Gespe'gewagi. And as speaker and Mi'gmaq linguist, Manny Metallic of Listuguj explains, the Mi'gmaq doo-appropriately have the "last word in the last land".

Au nom du Conseil Tribal Mi'gmawei Mawiommi et du premier comité éditorial du secrétariat, je désire vous présenter le magazine GESPISIQ. Il s'agit de la première publication conçue pour communiquer avec toutes nos relations au Gespe'gewa'gi. Notre objectif est de présenter les résultats de toutes les recherches, dans divers domaines académiques, qui ont trait à notre cause, ainsi que l'information historique sur des développements importants en matière de traités et de revendications territoriales qui nous touchent.

Nous nous engageons à publier de manière objective toute l'information que nous recueillons sur ces questions afin que vous puissiez procéder à vos propres analyses et évaluer les renseignements publiés dans chacune de nos éditions subséquentes. Nous espérons que le magazine GESPISIQ deviendra une partie importante de votre vie et une force unificatrice pour nos communautés.

Il est de mise, selon la culture et selon la tradition, que j'exprime mes remerciements à chacune des personnes qui ont participé à la concrétisation de la voix micmaque du Gespe'gewa'gi. Et, à titre de conférencier et de linguiste micmac,

Brenda Gedeon Miller  
Editor-in-Chief / Éditeur en chef

2 SPRING / PRINTEMPS 2002

VOLUME 1 # 1

## NAMING THE MI'GMAWEI GESPISIQ -- Brenda Gedeon-Miller

When we wanted to communicate on paper of the work being done by the MMS and the Assembly, but we didn't have a name for this new publication. It just so happened that one of the Elders that we were working with, the Late Manny Metallic, who was a Mi'gmaq Language Linguist, was eager to work on finding a suitable name for it.

So, Manny worked with an Elder's Council, where they eventually created this new word: Gespisiq, where 'Gespeg' meant "the last one, the last district" - and 'isiq' meant "to speak" - so this newly created word meant "it speaks for the Gespe'gewa'gi area" and also that "it has the last word" ... and Manny was very particular, where he could break down a word and give you the specific meaning of each syllable. So that's how this publication became entitled "Gespisiq".

*[Editors Note: The above is taken from an interview conducted over the phone. Over the publication years, the name has been shortened and is now referred to as: Gespi'siq]*

# Looking Back

BELOW ARE A FEW THOUGHTS FROM STAFF MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING AT MMS SINCE 2001-2002.



## Chastity Mitchell - October 2001

One may ask me what has kept me working here for 19 years, and I think it's the cause and the vision. We're always moving forward and with the growing opportunities for the Mi'gmaq of Gespe'gewa'gi from the work we do - that is what keeps me motivated. The years has been very enriching, not for just myself - but I'm sure for all those who've also worked in some capacity within the MM & MMS. As the times change, so perhaps does the shared interest, but there's always motivation behind the different mandates that come from the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi leadership.

While working here, I had a son, who will be 16 years old - and I just try to remind him of "who you are as a Mi'gmaq" and how we have rights over the territory, and to live by some of those rights while setting good examples of respect and responsibility.

## Andrew Lavigne - December 2002

It was shortly after joining MMS in late 2002, I came to realize that our Mi'gmaq history was missing from my education while attending the neighbouring schools in New Brunswick in the mid-80's.

By working the past 18 years with the 3 communities, and learning from our Elders, Language speakers, and from community members - I'm proud to have had the many opportunities to visit and become a 'teacher of Mi'gmaq History' in classrooms and organizations to share key moments of our History and also the meaning and values of our Treaty relationships with one another (Mi'gmaq and non-Mi'gmaq).

The sensitization to our Culture, and to other cultures, and the sharing of our shared History needs to continue to maintain respect with one another throughout Gespe'gewa'gi.

## Donald Jeannotte-Anglehart - February 2002

Back in 2002, I knew I was the first Gespe'g member coming to work in Listuguj, so it was a mixture of feelings, but mainly all good. Since then, my work here has included doing research on our historical presence in Gespe'gewa'gi including our use and occupancy on territory, our Treaty relationships, our place names on the territory, the impact of colonization and encroachment, along with other vital information - and we have since shared all that research in our book "Nta'tugwaqanminen - Our Story: Evolution of the Gespe'gwa'gi Mi'gmaq".

This MMS-published book was written through the alliance of the 3 communities, along with our Elders and a group of researchers with the aim of reclaiming our history, our story, both oral and written. I'm very proud to have been a contributing writer in this invaluable book of our people.

## Juliette Barnaby - October 2002

When I moved from Gespe'g back to Listuguj in 2002, MMS was the the first place where I began working and I didn't really know what the future would hold, for myself in the organization.

Among many things over the past 18 years, I'm most touched by the fact that MMS introduced me to our Mi'gmaq culture and to our resilience as a people.

I've had the privilege to meet with Chiefs, dignitaries, and amazing Elders who have impacted my life in a profound way.

The greatest honor though, is that I've been able to work with an amazing team of individuals that have enriched my life more than they will ever know.



# Milestones

BELOW ARE JUST A FEW OF OUR MILESTONES OVER THE YEARS.

**2002**

Wesgijjina'luet project begins

**2005**

Sagamawuti Proclamation

**2007**

Nm'tginen: Statement Of Claim

**2008**

Niganita'suatas'gl Ilsutaqann

**2012**

Niganiljoga'tagan

**2016**

Mesg'ig Ugju's'n Wind Farm &  
Nta'tugwaqanminen: Our Story

# Elder Tributes

The voices of the Elders are important, along with the experiences that can be drawn from that. Their input into the Political Accord was also their endorsement on what was being put together – and you come to realize that the Elders’ voices were invaluable in this process, because they recall very openly on how things were – on forestry, on fishery, on hunting and gathering, on how they could travel freely throughout the land, so their voices were the crux of what was being done.

Shortly after MMS had opened its doors, we knew that we had the Elders supporting the vision of the Assembly and the MMS, so we decided to start recognizing them, and that their stories and their truth must be heard, as it should be. Our first Tribute was to Joe Gray. This then would become an institutional process within the MMS. -- Brenda Gedeon-Miller



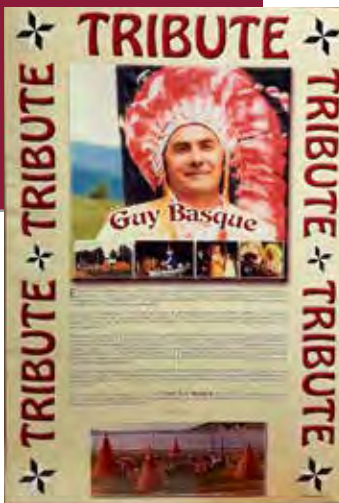


# JACK WYSOTE'S HISTORY SONG

Jack Wysote was a legend, maybe more in Listuguj, but he had a personality and character that was well known all throughout Mi'gmagi territory, including New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and of course all of Gaspé. You mention "Jack Wysote" and everybody knew who this man was and he was probably one of the early leaders that understood the battle and the challenges for the Mi'gmaq, as he had faced them during his term as Listuguj Chief. He was man of vision too, and after working with the Chiefs of Quebec and the National Chiefs, he could see that the fight was real, not only here in Listuguj, but everywhere in the country.

He was also gifted with song writing and entertaining, so when his song "The History Song" started to come back into the peoples minds, as by then, he had passed away for some years – that song was so appropriate and so exact in the work that the Chiefs were trying to do – that it became a song of the times, not only to create this harmony but to remind us that we still have this challenge today, but it was a fact and reality for years, and the song reminds us that we cannot sell out, we need to be proud, we need to be confident, we need to be our own people – and it's still very prevalent today. -- *Brenda Gedeon-Miller*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *The articles on these 2 pages were from an interview conducted over the phone. We have re-published The History Song in Mi'gmaq with no translation as per the first issue of the Gespi'siq, in hopes that the reader will take the initiative to engage with a Mi'gmaq speaker. For more about the song, visit our website: [www.AboutOurLand.ca](http://www.AboutOurLand.ca)*



## NGGI' GWINAQI'G TELSUTAQATIPNIG



Gaqisipunge'g nige' gisgug  
ge's mu wape'g wa'qi pegisinugweg  
Gngi'gwinaqi'g alsusultisni'g  
Mu negmow wejintultigusnig  
geitu'tisneg ta'n teli mimajunsi'tis

Wape'g wa'qi pegisingeg  
getuapemasnn wiji lnu'l  
Enmi e'wasnn glapis  
gisipugua'l'teg

Ta'n tujiw gisipugua'lateg  
gemutmtl aq egs'pugua'l'tl  
Mu gujjinaqi'g nestua'tigusnig  
ta'n gogwei weji tl qamigsultisnig

Gnjanji'jinaq gina'muanej  
me' megite'tmnew teli lnullti'gw  
Mut ntago'ltinew me meluij  
megitelsultinej

Geggunmi'tij ta'n telo'lti'gw  
Aggi'tu'tij ta'n telo'lti'gw

Negmow gisi ila'tutaaq  
wape'g wa'qi ma' we' gwa' muagwi  
Gisi apajattaq ta'n goqwei  
gemutumugsi'gup

Gina'muanej gnjanji'jinaq  
mut ntago'ltinew teli lnullti'gw  
megitelsultineq muta tel te'pmu'g  
ta'n gujjinaqi'g gup

No'q gnjannaq mlgito'ltitaaq  
gisi gilja'titaaq, ma' gisguamugwig  
Apaja'tutaaq ta'n goqwei  
gisi gemutumugsi'gup

Ita'tutaaq ta'n mu weltenug  
wap'g wa'qi ma' nugu' gisguagul  
Apaja' lata ta'n ugwisunmual  
gisi msaqanwi'gmi'tipni'gl

Negmow ma' ignmua'tigul  
wijei tli awanta'sultinin  
Stige' nige' te's gaquisi  
gasgmtlnaqanipune'g

Awanta'suatmi'titl g'plno'lewaq  
aq ta'nig niganpugua'tijig  
Mu getu' nemitu'tigus  
gatu negmow musga'tuataq

Gi'gajita'tij ma' gespu'teu'gw  
gnjanji'jinaq gina'mug nige'  
Apaja'tutaaq ta'n goqwei  
gisi o'ola'tugsi'gup

teliaq gisgug  
apajattaq ta'n goqwei  
gisi ugsua' tugsi'gup



# Something Old...



The familiar Wampum logo that was used over the 20 years to represent the Secretariat, will now represent the Mi'gmaWei Mawio'mi (MM), the Political body or the Leadership. The Logo consists of a traditional Mi'gmaq headdress, the rising Sun over Gespe'gawa'gi, our nourishing fiddleheads and ferns, and the Wampum belt - all representative of our continued use and occupancy on our traditional territory.

## A look back at some Gespi'siq covers:





# ...Something New

We're proud to introduce the 'NEW' logo that will represent the Administrative office of the Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi Secretariat.

# MMS

## Our Story



The Nta'tugwaqanminen: Our Story book speaks of the evolution of the Gespe'gewa'gi Mi'gmaq along with our relation to the territory, past - present - and future. The books are available in English & French to members of Gesgapegiag, Gespeg and Listuguj. If you have not received a copy and would like one, please contact our office by phone or email with your name and mailing address. MMS contact info is on the back cover of this Gespi'siq.

For all other inquiries, please visit the publisher's website: [www.fernwoodpublishing.ca](http://www.fernwoodpublishing.ca)

ACCORD POLITIQUE ENTRE LES CONSEILS GOUVERNANTS DES  
MI'GMAQ DE LISTUGUJ, GESGAPEGIAG ET DE GESPE'G

- ENTENDU QUE les Mi'gmaq de Listuguj, Gesgapegiag et de Gespe'g sont les descendants des Mi'gmaq qui ont habité le territoire nordique Mi'gmaï (le septième district Mi'gmaï) depuis des temps immémoriaux, incluant les terres et les eaux environnantes plus communément appelées la Péninsule gaspésienne.
- ENTENDU QUE nous n'avons jamais cédé nos terres et nos eaux et nous n'avons jamais éteint nos droits autochtones, nos droits issus de traité et notre titre aborigène, lesquels droits nous exerçons sur l'ensemble de notre territoire.
- ENTENDU QUE nos leaders se sont toujours rassemblés pour traiter de sujets d'intérêt commun, y compris la distribution des terres et des ressources ainsi que la conduite de nos relations externes.
- ENTENDU QUE les présents Chefs et les Chefs précédents, ainsi que leurs conseils respectifs, ont discuté et ont jugé qu'il était nécessaire d'établir un accord formel pour guider les relations entre les Mi'gmaq de Listuguj, Gesgapegiag et de Gespe'g.
- ENTENDU QU' une telle relation servira à encourager le développement économique et social des Mi'gmaq, accroîtra notre accès aux ressources, améliorera les services et augmentera les moyens de nos communautés.
- ENTENDU QU' une telle relation permettra aussi l'action politique commune ainsi que les entreprises et projets communs.
- ENTENDU QUE ces objectifs peuvent être poursuivis en discutant et en allant de l'avant lorsque des questions d'intérêt commun ont été unanimement acceptées par chacun des trois Chefs et des Conseils respectifs de Listuguj, Gesgapegiag et Gespe'g.
- ENTENDU QUE les Mi'gmaq jouissent et exercent leur droit inhérent à l'autonomie gouvernementale, le fait d'être partie à cet accord ne portera atteinte, en aucune façon ou sous aucun prétexte, à la gouvernance autonome des communautés de Listuguj, Gesgapegiag et Gespe'g par leurs Chefs et Conseils respectifs.

IL EST DONC ACCEPTÉ QUE :

1. Les parties rassemblées et dûment représentées en assemblée, établissent le Mi'gmaï Mawio'mi, comprenant les Chefs et Conseils de Listuguj, Gesgapegiag et Gespe'g.
2. Le Mi'gmaï Mawio'mi aura l'ultime autorité quant à la constitution, la structure, les politiques et les priorités du Mi'gmaï Mawio'mi dans le cadre de la réalisation de cet accord. Les décisions seront prises par consensus unanime de Listuguj, Gesgapegiag et Gespe'g tels que représentés par leurs Chefs et Conseils respectifs.
3. Par la présente, le Mi'gmaï Mawio'mi mandate les Chefs respectifs de Listuguj, Gesgapegiag et Gespe'g, ensemble avec deux conseillers de chaque conseil respectif, à mettre en vigueur le présent accord politique.
4. Cet accord pourra être annulé par l'une ou l'autre des parties, laquelle annulation prendra effet 30 jours suivant l'avis écrit aux autres parties.

## GESPI'SIG

Mi'gmaï Mawio'mi Secretariat  
Office Address / Adresse du bureau  
2 Riverside West • P.O. Box 135  
Listuguj, (Qc) • Gespe'gwa'gi, Canada  
G0C 2R0

TEL/TÉL: (418) 788-1760  
TOLL FREE: SANS FRAIS: (800) 370-1760  
FAX/TÉLECOPIEUR: (418) 788-1315  
E-MAIL/COURRIEL: STAYCONNECTED@MIGMAWEI.CA

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BY ANDREW LAVIGNE  
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INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED BY:  
ANDREW LAVIGNE

AGNUTMAQAN UGJIT NUJINS'TMASSEWA'UTIJIG MI'GMAQ  
WEITA'JIG LISTUGUJG, GESGAPEGIAG AQ GESPEG

TOQO TUJIW Mi'gmewa'q Listuguj, Gesgapegiag aq Gespeg. Na Mi'gmaq wetepegultiig ta'n weglá eimu'tipnig gis ta'neg tujiw ula oqoatnugewei maqamigew Gespe'gewa'gig. Wijel stige' maqamigal aq ta'n samuqan pemitig giwgtaw tel nenas'g gisgug stige Gespeg Gwesa'we Penunsila.

TOQO TUJIW Mnaq puna'tuegl maqamigeminal aq ta'n pemitig samuqan aq wela'suatmegi Inueic'l aq gisagnutmaqam ta'n me' nige' e'umegil ula teligi'g ntaqaminen.

TOQO TUJIW Appjiw mawita'jigniganpugulijig ugjit usgu'tmnew ta'n giwnaqa wetmite'tas'g, ma'w'iga'tmgewei maqamigeminal aq gina'masutiminen aq ta'n teliwgwa'tas'gl se'g wejiaqal agnutmaqam.

TOQO TUJIW Ta'n nige'telo'ltimig, lugwetew ugjit apoqonmatm Mi'gmawei, ugjit lita'nen, me' msnminen apoqonmati, unjig lita'nen ag lugowaqamigug, munsugitmn migigno'ti aq me' ewe'ga'tun ta'n etli mawo'ltieg.

TOQO TUJIW Glnwaqajewei alsusimigewei liapt'ten aq wijei lugowaqam.

TOQO TUJIW Wegla pewetas'gl gisi majulgwaten pas'g usgu'tmn ta'n goqwe'l wetmite'tas'gl pas'g tliulte'tmnew mis't weglá Lnu'saqamaq aq Nujins'tmassewa'utijig tle'g Listuguj, Gesgapegiag aq Gespeg.

TOQO TUJIW Mi'gmaq gesatmi'tij aq e'umi'tij ta'n teligtiamsutaltijig ugjit nuijeiatultinew, aq pisiw'igugisnew uls gisagnutmamgewei; ta'n getu'tllaq, ma' a'jela's'gtmug ula eimu'tieg Listuguj, Gesgapegiag aq Gespeg ugjit Lnu'saqamaq aq Nujins'tmassewa'utijig newgti lisusultinew.  
NA GLAMAN ULTE'TAS'GT'

1. Tanig mawita'jig aq gisagw nenu'jig ta'n etl Nutmang ugjit pgwatunew Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi epulitijig Lnu'saqamaq aq Nujins'tmassewa'utijig tle'g Listuguj, Gesgapegiag aq Gespe'g.
2. Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi gu'guntew mujajewei alsusiti ugjit ta'n goqwe' weji gisistas'g, pitaqapesgisigewei, ta'n telusatas'gl ag t'an goqwe'l piamite'tas'gl ugjit Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi. Ilsutas'gt'tal ula welte'tas'gl Listuguj, Gesgapegiag aq Gespe'g stige t'an Lnu'saqamaq aq Nujins'tmassewa'utijig niganpugu'tm'tij.
3. Mi'gmawei Mawio'mi iga'tu'tij t'plutaqan ugjit Lnu'saqamaq tle'g Listuguj, Gesgapegiag aq Gespe'g, wijewgwi'tiji tapusijig Nujins'tmassewa'utijig ta'n wet'pigultijig, ugjit lugwatmnew ula Saqamawei Gisagnutmaqam.
4. Ula Gisagnutmamgewei tma'tuten ta'n tujiw wen menwi'gusij wegla nuji mawagnuma'tijig aq lugwetew ge'smu nesigegipuna'q ta'n telipigje'g gegnu'a'tuj igtigig niganpugua'tijig.

POLITICAL ACCORD BETWEEN THE GOVERNING COUNCILS OF THE MI'GMAQ  
OF LISTUGUJ, GESGAPEGIAG AND GESPE'G

WHEREAS the Mi'gmaq of Listuguj, Gesgapegiag and Gespe'g are the descendants of the Mi'gmaq who have inhabited since time immemorial this northern territory of Gespe'gewa'gig, including the lands and surrounding waters of the area more commonly known today as the Gaspé Peninsula.

WHEREAS we have never ceded our lands and waters and have unextinguished Aboriginal rights and title and treaty rights which we exercise throughout our territory.

WHEREAS our leadership has always gathered to deal with matters of common concern, including the allocation of lands and resources and for the conduct of external relations.

WHEREAS the present Chiefs and the Chiefs prior to this day including their respective Councils have discussed and deemed it necessary to establish a formal accord regarding the relationship amongst the Mi'gmaq of Listuguj, Gesgapegiag and Gespe'g.

WHEREAS such a relationship would serve to foster Mi'gmaq economic and social development, enhance access to resources, improve services and build the capacity of our communities.

WHEREAS it would also permit common political action and joint ventures.

WHEREAS these goals may be pursued by addressing issues of common concern unanimously agreed upon by each of the three Chiefs and Councils of Listuguj, Gesgapegiag and Gespe'g.

WHEREAS the Mi'gmaq enjoy and exercise the inherent right of self-government and the entering into of this accord will in no way, shape or form hinder the communities of Listuguj, Gesgapegiag and Gespe'g in being autonomously governed by their respective Chiefs and Councils.

IT IS THEREFORE AGREED THAT:

1. The parties gathered and duly represented in Assembly establish the Mi'gmaï Mawio'mi comprised of the Chief and Councils of Listuguj, Gesgapegiag and Gespe'g.
2. The Mi'gmaï Mawio'mi shall have ultimate authority regarding the constitution, structure, policies and priorities of the Mi'gmaï Mawio'mi with a view to the carrying out of this Accord. Decisions shall be taken by unanimous consensus of Listuguj, Gesgapegiag and Gespe'g as represented by Chief and Council.
3. The Mi'gmaï Mawio'mi hereby mandate the respective Chiefs of Listuguj, Gesgapegiag and Gespe'g, together with two councillors from each respective council, to implement the present Political Accord.
4. This Accord may be terminated by withdrawal of any of the parties, which shall take effect within 30 days following notice in writing to the other parties.

www.migmaïwei.ca