

## Annual Report 2011

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

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

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

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

A second important project occurred in the final year of our International Polar Year Grant (IPY). For twelve days in June, we conducte

currently working to develop a joint M.A. program on local and regional development with  
Finmark University College as pa