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Mi'kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmntemuow Announce Inaugural Co-management Boards for Pituamkek National Park Reserve and PEI National Park and Historic Sites

Two new boards bring shared governance to nationally protected places across Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island)

Today, the Mi'kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmntemuow (the Mi'kmaq Nation Government of Epekwitk) announced the establishment of two inaugural co-management boards on Prince Edward Island. One co-management board will provide shared governance for Pituamkek (“Bee-DOO-um-gek”) National Park Reserve (NPR), Canada's newest national park reserve, established under [the Pituamkek Establishment Agreement](#). The other co-management board is for PEI National Park and Historic Sites, established under [the Toquktmekl Co-Management Agreement](#). Together, these two boards bring Mi'kmaw leadership, knowledge, and perspective into the governance, planning, protection, and operation of all nationally protected places across PEI. These include the newly established Pituamkek NPR as well as long-standing national park lands and protected landmarks, including Green Gables Heritage Place and Skmaqñ–Port-la-Joye–Fort Amherst National Historic Site.

Pituamkek National Park Reserve Co-management Board

The appointees for the Pituamkek National Park Reserve Co-management Board include Drew Bernard, Fiep de Bie, Charles MacKay, Jean Stillway Tuplin, and Jamie Thomas. Charles MacKay and Jamie Thomas will serve as co-chairs of this inaugural body.

The Co-management Board is instrumental in the shared governance of Pituamkek and provides strategic advice on management planning; incorporation of Mi'kmaw culture, language, and traditional knowledge; support for ecological integrity; and promotion of economic and employment opportunities for Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq.

Pituamkek is comprised of a chain of barrier islands in northwestern PEI and includes one of the most ecologically significant coastal dune systems in eastern Canada. Pituamkek, which means “At the Long Sand Dune”, is home to ongoing Mi'kmaw land-use traditions, important cultural and archaeological sites, unique geological formations, and sensitive ecosystems. The area is one of remarkable natural beauty due to its dune complexes, old-growth forests, and PEI's only igneous rock incursion.

L'nuey and Parks Canada are working together to implement the Pituamkek Establishment Agreement. These steps include developing a management plan, incremental staffing, and ongoing land transfers. There are currently no services or infrastructure to receive visitors and park operations planning will be implemented over time in a phased approach.

Prince Edward Island National Park and Historic Sites Co-management Board

The appointees for the PEI National Park and Historic Sites Co-management Board include Sharon O'Brien, Alexia Riche, H  l  ne Robichaud, Andrew Sark, and Courtney Sark. H  l  ne Robichaud and Courtney Sark will serve as co-chairs.

This board provides strategic advice on shared governance of PEI National Park and Parks Canada-administered national historic sites, including Dalvay-by-the-Sea, Ardgowan, Province House, and Skmaqn–Port-la-Joye–Fort Amherst National Historic Site, as well as Green Gables Heritage Place. Its work includes management planning, ecological integrity, cultural heritage, visitor experience, and economic opportunities for Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq.

Distinct Mandates, Shared Purpose

In contrast to the Pituamkek Co-management Board, which is guiding the establishment of a new Mi'kmaw-led national park reserve that is still being assembled, the PEI National Park and Historic Sites Co-management Board supports shared governance with the Mi'kmaq in long-established destinations that have welcomed visitors for generations, with day-to-day stewardship, resource protection, and visitor experience as its central concerns.

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Quotes

"With these agreements, Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq now have a role in shaping how these places are protected, presented, and shared. Having a seat at the table in the governance of our traditional lands is a significant milestone – one that our communities have long worked toward. Pituamkek has been central to the lives and traditions of our people since time immemorial, and it is deeply meaningful to see that connection formalized through shared governance. The appointees to these inaugural boards bring extraordinary knowledge, experience, and dedication to the work ahead. We have full confidence in the leadership they will provide."

Chief Tabatha Bernard

Lennox Island First Nation

Epekwitk Assembly of Councils Co-Chair

"These boards mark a meaningful step forward for Mi'kmaw governance – ensuring that the Mi'kmaq of Epekwitk have a real and lasting voice in decisions about lands we have stewarded for thousands of years. These boards will work in the spirit of Etuaptmumk – Two-Eyed Seeing – bringing Mi'kmaw knowledge and ways of knowing together with Western science to steward the lands, waters, and stories of Epekwitk. The appointees bring broad experience across many fields, deep roots in our communities, and an unwavering commitment to this work. Their guidance will help carry this work forward for the generations who follow."

Chief Junior Gould

Abegweit First Nation

Epekwitk Assembly of Councils Co-Chair

“I welcome the appointment of these inaugural co-management board members—a significant milestone which will support the strong collaboration between Parks Canada and the Epekwitnewaq Mi’kmaq. Their leadership will advance reconciliation and help guide the stewardship of Pituamkek National Park Reserve and existing protected places on PEI for the benefit of current and future generations.”

*The Honourable Julie Dabrusin,
Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature*

“Protecting nature requires strong partnerships and shared stewardship. Together with Parks Canada, these co-management boards will guide the protection of ecosystems across PEI/Epekwitk, bringing Mi’kmaw values, knowledge and leadership to support long-term ecological health. They will also help incorporate Mi’kmaw culture, language and traditional activities in Pituamkek National Park Reserve, while advancing long-term economic opportunities for future generations.”

*The Honourable Nathalie Provost,
Secretary of State (Nature)*

Quick Facts

- The Mi’kmaq Nation Government of Epekwitk/PEI has led the way in championing the establishment of a national park reserve at Pituamkek for more than 20 years.
- The Pituamkek area, located in northwestern Epekwitk near Lennox Island First Nation, constitutes a vital living link between Mi’kmaw culture, history, and the environment. For this reason, the Mi’kmaq have a strong and enduring connection with the Pituamkek area and have recognized the area as a Mi’kmaw Heritage Landscape.
- On July 4, 2024, the Mi’kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmntemuow and the Government of Canada [signed an establishment agreement](#) that formally created Pituamkek National Park Reserve, the 48th National Park in Canada. On this same day, the same parties also signed the Toquktmekl Co-management Agreement for Parks Canada-administered places on PEI/Epekwitk.
- The work on assembling the park reserve lands is supported through partnership with L’nuely, Parks Canada, Island Nature Trust, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and the Province of Prince Edward Island.
- Pituamkek National Park Reserve is Canada’s first national park reserve to contribute to the Government of Canada’s commitment to establish ten (10) new national parks by 2030, as outlined in [A Force of Nature: Canada’s Strategy to Protect Nature](#).
- Toquktmekl (doh-gook-t-may-gul), Mi’kmaw for “tackling projects together”, provides the framework for Parks Canada and the Mi’kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmntemuow to continue to work together and share resources. The agreement embodies the shared commitment to ensure ecological integrity and the Epekwitnewaq Mi’kmaq Way of Life are maintained and promoted for the use, benefit, education, and enjoyment of future generations.
- Epekwitnewaq Mi’kmaq and Parks Canada have been working collaboratively for many years, and through the Toquktmekl agreement, will cooperate in the planning, management, operation, and in the monitoring and evaluation of Parks Canada-administered lands on PEI.

Related Links

- [L'nuey](#)
- [L'nuey: Co-management](#)
- [Pituamkek National Park Reserve](#)
- [Prince Edward Island National Park](#)
- [Skmagn-Port-la-Joye-Fort Amherst National Historic Site](#)
- [Toquktmekl Agreement](#)
- [A Force of Nature: Canada's Strategy to Protect Nature](#)

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