

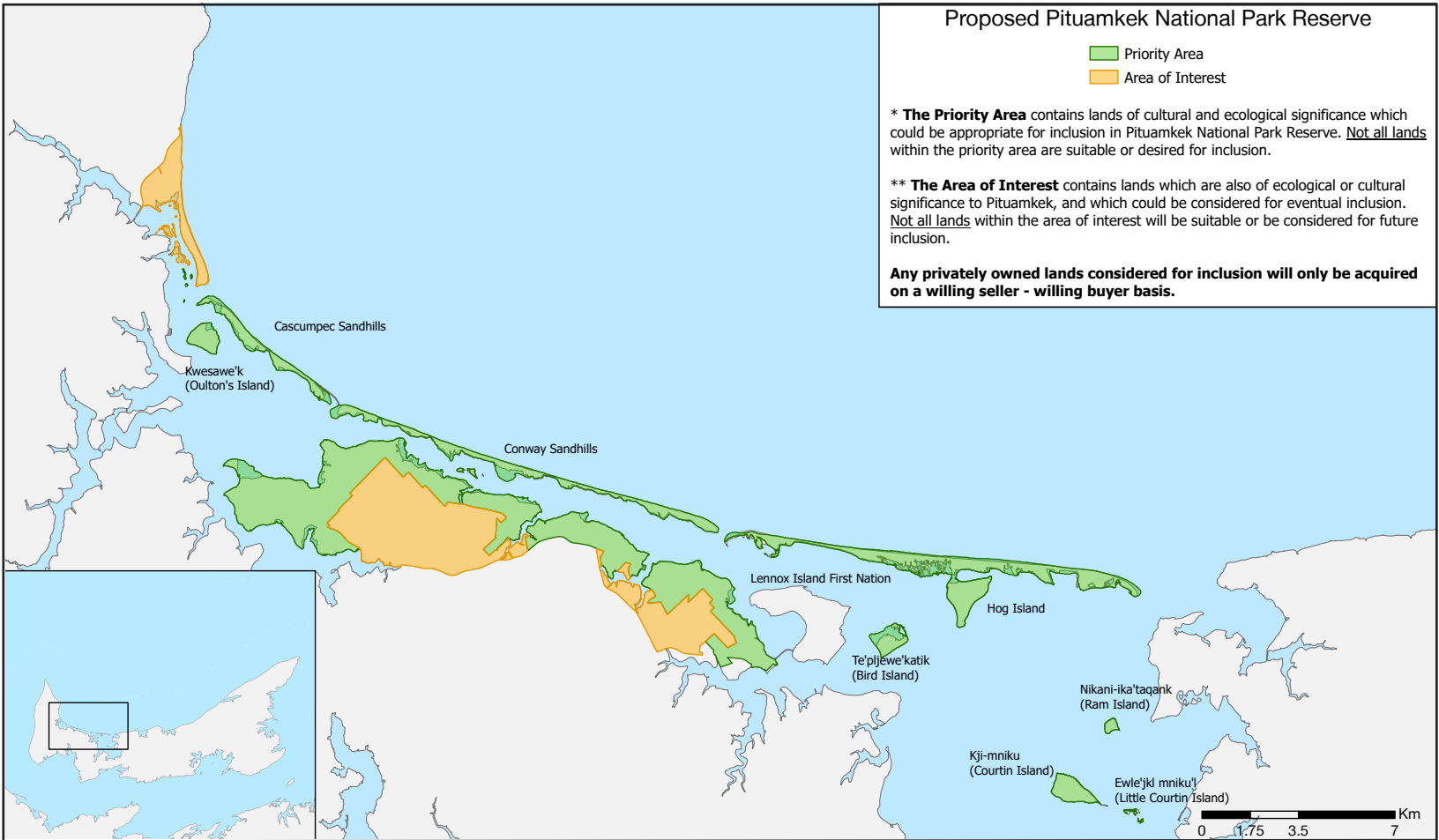
Pituamkek National Park Reserve

**Epekwitk
(Prince Edward Island)**



Parks Canada
Parcs Canada







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Guests in attendance during Establishment Agreement signing, July 4, 2024.
Photo: © Parks Canada



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**Maliaptmu'kw u't kepme'k
wesasi-klu'lk maqmikew**

Preserving this important and beautiful place.

Photo: © Parks Canada



Mi'kmaq quillwork, nineteenth century, from the collection of the Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation.

Pjila'si / Welcome to Pituamkek!

On July 4, 2024, Pituamkek National Park Reserve became the 48th national park in Canada. Since 2006, the Mi'kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmntemuow has led the way to establish Pituamkek as a national park reserve.

Located in northwestern [Epekwitk](#) (Prince Edward Island), the Pituamkek (Bee-DOO-um-gek, “at the long sand dune”) region has been a treasured and vital landscape for the [Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq](#) for thousands of years. The archaeological record in Pituamkek shows Mi'kmaw use dating back millennia. In this place of deep cultural, historical, and spiritual importance to the Mi'kmaq, these traditions continue today.

Also known in English as Hog Island and the Sandhills, Pituamkek's stunning landscapes feature coastal dune ecosystems, old-growth forests, and unique geology. Protecting this significant region strengthens biodiversity, contributing to Canada's commitment to conserve 30% of lands by 2030.

While Pituamkek isn't yet ready to receive visitors, the creation of a new national park is an exciting time. The [Mi'kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmntemuow](#) and the Government of Canada are working together to protect this iconic natural and cultural landscape for generations to come. In future, these lands will provide new opportunities for all Canadians to experience Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq culture in this beautiful place.

A team conducts archaeological excavations at Hog Island, in Pituamkek.

Wejkwat'aneq teko'tmi'tij u't tleyaulti'tij kniskamijinaqik

A long-time home of the L'nu'k, our ancestors.





Iron Rock, Prince Edward Island's only igneous rock incursion, at Hog Island, Pituamkek.

Protecting This Treasured Place

“The landscapes of Pituamkek are home to living Mi’kmaw land-use traditions, which need these lands to continue to thrive. These landscapes are home to endangered and rare species and ecosystems, ancient Mi’kmaw archaeological sites, living Mi’kmaw culture, rare geological formations, and precious natural beauty. These lands and landscapes constitute a natural and cultural treasure for the Mi’kmaq, all Canadians, and for humanity.”

– *Pituamkek National Park Reserve Establishment Agreement*

Pituamkek is a vital living link connecting Mi’kmaw culture, history, and the environment.

The sandhills of Pituamkek form one of the most ecologically significant coastal dune ecosystems in Eastern Canada. The barrier islands to the north of Malpeque and Cascumpec Bays stretch more than 40 kilometres from east to west, protecting the area’s rich fisheries. These islands also shield many communities, including Lennox Island First Nation, from potential wave and storm impacts.

Common mammals such as Red fox, Eastern coyote, and Beaver make their home in Pituamkek. Several threatened or endangered plant and animal species can also be found, such as the Little brown bat, Piping Plover, Bank Swallow, and Maritime beach pinweed.

Pituamkek also protects Prince Edward Island’s only igneous rock formation Iron Rock, a volcanic incursion which is more than 240 million years old.

Respect and support for Mi’kmaw traditional activities are a priority, and the Epekwitnewaq Mi’kmaq have designated Pituamkek as a [Mi’kmaq Heritage Landscape](#). Traditional activities will continue to be practiced and celebrated here, ensuring that community connections to culture and the land are maintained and passed down to future generations.



Ramah chert found in Pituamkek.

Nature, Science, and Culture

In Pituamkek, fostering ecological integrity is a priority: this means supporting an ecosystem where native species and natural processes are intact and in balance.

Science and conservation work follows the guiding principle of [Etuaptmumk](#) (eh-doo-ahp-duh-mumk), or “Two-Eyed Seeing.” Etuaptmumk encourages viewing the world through the lenses of Indigenous knowledge and modern science. This provides a more complete understanding of the interconnectedness and significance of the environment of Pituamkek.

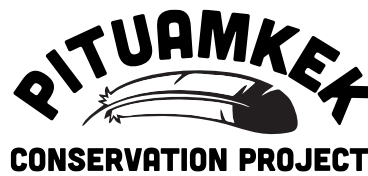


The Pituamkek Conservation Project

This project is a collaborative initiative of L’nuéy and Parks Canada which undertakes a wide variety of conservation projects and activities within Pituamkek. Operating since 2023, the field team monitors and documents many aspects of the natural and cultural history of the area and shares its findings with local communities and the public. Much of this work is done in close collaboration with other conservation and community organizations. The team also helps provide training, development and leadership opportunities for Mi’kmaw community members.

Recent projects include restoring two traditional birch bark wigwams using traditional techniques and material. These are on display at [Skmaqñ-Port-la-Joye-Fort Amherst National Historic Site](#) and at [Greenwich in PEI National Park](#). A smaller-scale, new wigwam is also on display at the [Greenwich Interpretation Centre](#).

There are many Indigenous Guardian programs in protected areas across Canada. While each program is unique, Guardian programs support [Indigenous stewardship](#) and co-management of Parks Canada-administered places.





A juvenile Northern Goshawk is perched atop a tree in Pituamkek.



Plants of Pituamkek

Pituamkek is home to a wide range of habitat types, and is a place of important biodiversity. Some 160 plants have been identified so far by the Pituamkek Conservation Project, including an inventory of edible and medicinal plants. Names are documented in the Mi'kmaq language where available.

Selected Plants of Pituamkek

English Name	Latin Name	Mi'kmaq Name
Beach Heather	<i>Hudsonia tomentosa</i>	–
Black Ash	<i>Fraxinus nigra</i>	Wisqoq
Gold Thread	<i>Coptis trifolia</i>	Wisawtaqji'j
Maritime Beach Pinweed	<i>Lechea maritima</i>	–
Sweet Grass	<i>Hierochloe odorata</i>	Weljemajgewe'l

Birds and Bats

With its numerous islands, Pituamkek is home to many species of colonial nesting birds, including Common Tern, Double-crested Cormorant, and several species of gulls. It is also home to many nesting pairs of Bald Eagles—a bird of deep cultural and spiritual importance for Mi'kmaq.

26 species of songbirds have been identified to date, and the Little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) is confirmed on Hog Island.

Select Nesting Bird Species of Pituamkek

English Name	Latin Name	Mi'kmaq Name
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Kitpu
Bank Swallow (<i>Threatened</i>)	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	–
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	Jiklueëkej
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	–
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum auritum</i>	Mqatawapu
Greater Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	–
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Gloqontiej
Piping Plover (<i>Endangered</i>)	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	–

Woolly beach heather (*Hudsonia tomentosa*)
Photo:
© Kate MacQuarrie





Bank Swallows
(Photo: © Island Nature Trust) and Bank Swallow colony, Pituamkek.



Creating a National Park

How are National Parks Established?

For two decades, the Mi'kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmntemuow has championed the establishment of Pituamkek as a national park reserve. In general, establishing new national parks can take many years. Once a potential site is chosen, project partners examine cultural significance, biodiversity, landscape connectivity, and representation in the [national park system plan](#). The support of Indigenous governments and communities, provincial or territorial governments, and local municipalities is required. Consultation with area residents, stakeholders, and the public is an essential part of the process. If determined to be possible, agreements are made between project partners. Once a national park is established under federal legislation, it is protected for present and future generations.

What is a 'National Park Reserve'?

A national park reserve is an area designated for protection under the *Canada National Parks Act* but subject to ongoing Indigenous land claims. These areas are managed similarly to national parks and have the same protections. In most cases, the 'reserve' designation is removed from the name as land claims are resolved. Indigenous peoples continue to use the land for traditional hunting, fishing, and trapping.

What are the Benefits For Communities?

The Mi'kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmntemuow and the Government of Canada will work together to co-manage Pituamkek National Park Reserve. This commitment is set out in the [Pituamkek National Park Reserve Establishment Agreement](#), a shared commitment to respect and foster Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq ancestral and contemporary connections to the land.

Local Mi'kmaq and neighbouring communities on P.E.I. will benefit through further opportunities for research, tourism, local jobs, and businesses. Pituamkek provides opportunities to protect, study, and share the natural environment, and cultural heritage of the area, ensuring that this special place is protected in a manner that promotes, incorporates, and respects Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq way of life and traditional knowledge.



Coyote pup in Pituamkek, 2025.

Timeline

2005–2019

Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq leaders advocate for the protection of Pituamkek lands for future generations. They wish to see Pituamkek protected as a national park reserve.

2005–2019

Collaborative work by the Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq organizations, Parks Canada, and partner organizations for land protection and conservation, archaeological and geomorphological studies, and various other projects in support of the advocacy and planning efforts.

2019–2020

Public and Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq community engagement and consultation related to the project.

2019

Parks Canada announces feasibility study for consideration of Pituamkek as a National Park Reserve.

2022

A Memorandum of Understanding is signed between the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and the Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq Chiefs, formally committing to negotiations toward a National Park establishment agreement for Pituamkek.

July 2024

Pituamkek National Park Reserve Establishment Agreement is signed by the Mi'kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmntemuow and the Government of Canada.

Next Steps for Pituamkek

2025

Appointment of the Pituamkek National Park Reserve Co-Management Board.

2025–2026

Management staffing begins for the Pituamkek National Park Reserve.

2025–2027

Management, conservation, and visitation plan development.

2027–2032

Development of operations and visitor infrastructure. Pituamkek National Park Reserve opens to visitors in a phased approach.

2026–2030

Pituamkek National Park Reserve staffing.



Mi'kmaq quillwork, nineteenth century, from the collection of the Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation.



Looking Ahead

The Pituamkek Mi'kmaq – Parks Canada Co-management Board, created in 2025, is instrumental for the shared governance of Pituamkek. It provides strategic advice to the Mi'kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmtemuow and Parks Canada. The co-management board will advise on the development of Pituamkek's first management plan, which will outline the direction for future programming and initial staffing. Board members will have a unique responsibility and opportunity to influence the development and management of Pituamkek from its inception.

The first management plan will be the subject of extensive research, public engagement, and consultation with Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq, and will take time to develop. It will help inform the long-term resource conservation and visitor experience vision for the protected area before any development takes place, and provide a multi-year model for future park operations.

At this time, there are no services nor infrastructure to receive visitors in Pituamkek. Planning for park operations, and any necessary development, will require time to implement and will happen in a phased approach. Please reach out to the Pituamkek project team with any questions or to discuss this exciting development period. pituamkek@pc.gc.ca / 902-672-6350

Stay tuned for developments and opportunities to meet L'nuey, Parks Canada, and Pituamkek Conservation Project team members on the road or in your community!

Eel grass left by the tide along the Pituamkek shoreline.



For much of the 20th century, the Sandhills were home to seasonal fishing communities which included fish canneries, dwellings, barns and lighthouses. These structures, all of which have since disappeared, were found in the area of Hardy's Channel. Photos: © Allan Graham



Learn More

Discover Epekwitk (PEI)

- **Indigenous PEI:** <http://indigenoupei.ca/>
- **Lennox Island First Nation:** <http://lennoxisland.com/>
- **Abegweit First Nation:** <http://abegweit.ca/>
- **PEI National Park:** <http://parks.canada.ca/pei>
- **Island Nature Trust:** <http://islandnaturetrust.ca/>
- **Nature Conservancy of Canada (PEI):** <http://www.natureconservancy.ca/pei>

Mi'kmaw Translations

- **Kwe' (gway):** hello
- **Epekwitk (eh-buh-gwihd):** Prince Edward Island
- **Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq (eh-buh-gwid-neh-wah meeg-mah):** the Mi'kmaq of PEI; specifically, the Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq of Lennox Island First Nation and Abegweit First Nation
- **Etuaptomuk (eh-doo-ahp-duh-mumk):** Two-Eyed Seeing
- **Mi'kmaq Epekwitnewaq Kapmntemuow (meeg-mah eh-buh-gwid-neh-wah gahb-ment-dem-wow):** the Mi'kmaq Nation Government of PEI, made up of Chiefs and Council from Lennox Island First Nation and Abegweit First Nations
- **Pituumkek (bee-DOO-um-gek):** at the long sand dune
- **Pjila'si (ip-jill-ah-see):** welcome



**Anko'tmu'kw aq mui'watmu'kw maqmikeminu
tujw ta'n aq wjit me'j teli-tko'tmu'kw kiskuk**

*To preserve and celebrate the ancestral and present
connection to the land.*

Old growth forest at Hog Island, Pitumkek