



Pituamkek
National Park Reserve

Proposed National Park Reserve in Pituamkek

Prince Edward Island



Parks Canada
Parcs Canada





A juvenile northern Goshawk is perched atop a tree in Pituamkek
– Photo Credit Parks Canada.



Landscape photos © Epekwitk Assembly of Councils.

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

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



Pituamkek (Hog Island Sandhills)

Located in northwestern Prince Edward Island (Epekwitk), the area known by many people in English as Hog Island and the Sandhills is rich in ancient Mi'kmaq history. It is also home to an ongoing tradition of Mi'kmaq land and resource use.

Known as Pituamkek (Bee-doo-um-gek) in the Mi'kmaq language, Pituamkek means 'At the Long Sand Dune.' Working with linguists and Elders, the Mi'kmaq of PEI have discovered this word and uncovered its meaning.

The shores and forests of Pituamkek (the Hog Island Sandhills) have been home to Mi'kmaq People for thousands of years. Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island), is an important part of the Mi'kmaq traditional territory and has played an important role in the culture and history of the Mi'kmaq.

A new national park reserve presents an opportunity to strengthen the nation-to-nation relationship with the Mi'kmaq of PEI, and will contribute to Canada's growing network of protected and conserved areas.

These protected areas help safeguard Canada's biodiversity, the Island's unique coastal wilderness, and provide unprecedented opportunities for Canadians to experience the outdoors, learn about our environment, and significantly contribute to the protection and preservation of Canada's most vulnerable ecosystems.

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

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

Grass dunes on the shorelines of Pituamkek.



The Goals of Establishing a National Park Reserve

- To protect the ecological integrity of wildlife habitat, plant and marine life by working cooperatively with local residents, First Nations communities and conservation groups;
- To ensure First Nations' communities are able to preserve and celebrate their ancestral and present connection to the land;
- To blend science and traditional knowledge in order to protect and celebrate the diversity of flora, fauna and landscape features of the area; and
- To help provide First Nations communities with opportunities for visitor experiences which include the presentation of natural and cultural heritage.



An archaeological team surveys an area of Pituamkek.





Iron Rock, Prince Edward Islands' only igneous rock formation, rests on the shore of Hog Island.

Why Here?

Pituamkek is home to numerous archaeological sites, sacred sites, and an ongoing Mi'kmaq land use tradition. Evidence discovered at the sites shows a long-standing use of the area by Mi'kmaq People, dating back more than 4,000 years.

The area constitutes a vital living link between Mi'kmaq culture, its history and the environment. For this reason, the Mi'kmaq First Nations of Prince Edward Island have a strong and enduring connection with the Pituamkek area and have recognized it as a Mi'kmaq Heritage Landscape.

The location known as Iron Rock is home to a rare geological feature: Prince Edward Island's only igneous rock formation – a volcanic incursion which is more than 240 million years old.

The sand dunes of Pituamkek form one of the most ecologically significant coastal dune ecosystems in Eastern Canada. The islands stretch for 50 kilometres from east to west and form a protective barrier to the north of Malpeque and Cascumpec Bays, which are known around the world for their rich fisheries.

The area is home to a number of threatened or endangered species. Some of these plant and animal species include the little brown bat, northern long-eared bat, the piping plover, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence aster.

The collaborative efforts in this establishment process by Parks Canada, L'nuey (the Mi'kmaq rights-based initiative), and Prince Edward Island demonstrate the parties commitment to working collaboratively on Aboriginal rights-based initiatives.

From both national and provincial perspectives, this is an area of high conservation value and it presents an excellent opportunity for the Mi'kmaq, federal and provincial governments to work together with the Island Nature Trust and the Nature Conservancy of Canada toward a shared and important goal. This makes the Pituamkek area a strong candidate to contribute to Parks Canada's representation and protection goals in a cooperative manner.





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

Climate Change Impacts and Resilience

Canada's network of protected areas plays an important role in helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change by protecting and restoring healthy, resilient ecosystems and contributing to the recovery of species at risk.

In addition to the geological, cultural and historical significance of Pituamkek, this chain of barrier islands protects many Prince Edward Island communities from the wave and storm impacts of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

As the effects of climate change continue to evolve, it is important to take protective measures to safeguard this significant and diverse region of coastal Prince Edward Island as a national park reserve. In collaboration with the Mi'kmaq Community and academic institutions, Parks Canada will continue to conduct important research within our protected areas that contributes to our understanding of climate change.

Yellow grass dunes beside the ocean in Pituamkek.



The Potential Benefits of a National Park Reserve in the Pituamkek Region:



Conservation and Protection

- The conservation of one of Eastern Canada's most unique coastal habitats – one which has played a significant cultural role for Mi'kmaq communities for thousands of years;
- Increased protection of federally and provincially listed species at risk and their habitats including, but not limited to; the little brown bat, northern long-eared bat, the piping plover, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence aster;
- Protection of a significant and diverse region of our country facing the effects of climate change;
- The protection of natural and cultural resources of the lands through Parks Canada's management program and mandate to foster public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment; and
- The management of activities within the proposed national park reserve in an ecological and holistic manner.



Relationships

- Strengthen the relationship between the Government of Canada, Prince Edward Island, and the Mi'kmaq People of Prince Edward Island through a new partnership;
- Help to preserve Mi'kmaq cultural land use traditions; and
- Consult on the park concept development process with a different focus aligned to organizations' priorities all leading to a common goal – the protection of the Pituamkek area.



Economic opportunities

- Encourage sustainable economic opportunities in the region.

Anko'tmu'kw aq mui'watmu'kw ta'n wetapeksulti'kw u't maqmikew

To preserve and celebrate our connection to the land.

Timeline

2006–2007

Prompted by a long history and cultural traditions of the area, the Mi'kmaq First Nations, led by the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island and others, conducted an archaeological survey in the Pituamkek area (Hog Island and Sandhills). With support from the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now known as the Canadian Museum of History), the survey recorded several important archaeological sites, which have since been the subject of detailed archaeological work done in partnership between the Government of PEI and PEI's Mi'kmaq First Nations. The findings of this work have painted an increasingly detailed picture of the lives of the Mi'kmaq of millennia past.

2008

The Government of Prince Edward Island and the Mi'kmaq First Nations first contacted the Federal Minister of the Environment to make the case that according to Parks Canada criteria, the Pituamkek area is of national significance and merits consideration for protected status.

2009

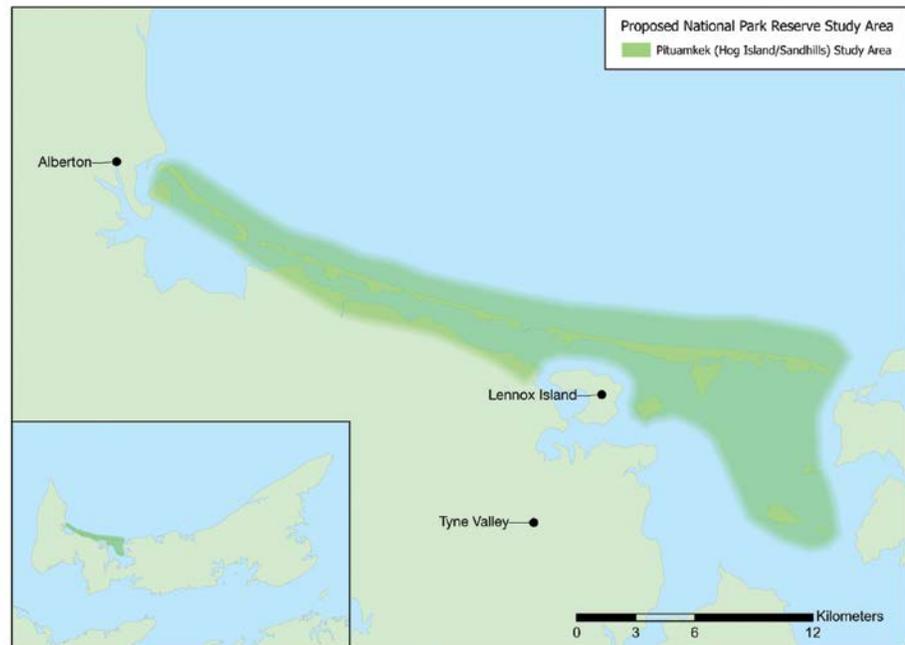
A tripartite group made of representatives from the federal, provincial and Mi'kmaq governments began a dialogue aimed to find mutually acceptable ways to protect the Pituamkek region. At this time, the Nature Conservancy of Canada began to acquire land for conservation purposes on Cascumpec and Conway islands.

2010–2018

During this time, important foundation work was continued by the Mi'kmaq First Nations, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Island Nature Trust, and Parks Canada.

Two boats sail away from the Pituamkek dunes.





2021

2019–2021

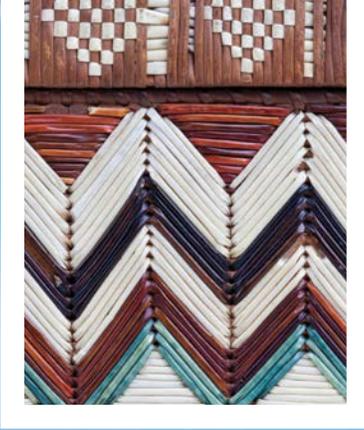
L'nuey, the Epekwitk Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative, was launched in September 2019 and was mandated to lead discussions and negotiations related to the feasibility study on behalf of the Mi'kmaq First Nations of PEI.

In response to several years of advocacy from the Epekwitk Mi'kmaq, in August 2019, a historic tripartite announcement from the Government of Canada, the Government of Prince Edward Island and the Epekwitk Mi'kmaq formally launched the feasibility assessment on the establishment of a proposed national park reserve in Pituamkek.

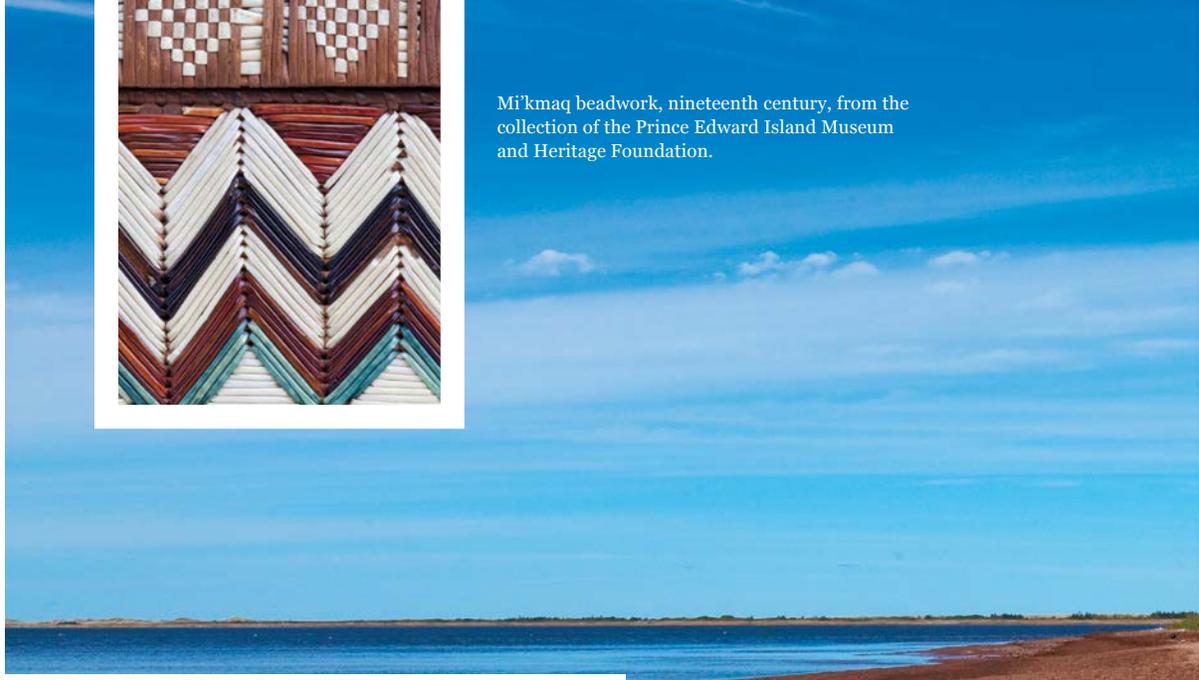
The collaborative efforts of this establishment process by Parks Canada and L'nuey demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to working with Indigenous communities to increase the Indigenous voice in all aspects of the establishment and management of heritage places administered by Parks Canada.

The public consultation process was scheduled to begin in early 2020, but was delayed by emergency orders surrounding the novel coronavirus.





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



Next Steps

Establishing a new national park reserve in the Pituamkek area will involve ongoing public consultation and work to address priorities and concerns identified during the consultation process.

The information gathered during the feasibility assessment will frame the discussions and assist the parties in finalizing a national park reserve concept.

Community consultations, including local First Nation communities, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Island Nature Trust, will play key roles in the feasibility assessment for the proposed park reserve concept. Parks Canada will release a report on the findings once all information gathered during public consultations has been compiled and analyzed.

Once the feasibility assessment is complete and there is agreement on a formal park concept, the next step is negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), before moving to negotiations of a formal establishment agreement.

Sea-grass left by the tide along the Pituamkek shoreline.



The rocky shoreline of Pituamkek.

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

Preserving this important and beautiful place.

Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq maw-lukuti'tiji ktiki menaqa klo'tmnow

PEI Mi'kmaq working with partners in conservation.



Old-growth forests still cover much of Pituamkek's Hog Island.

Learn More

- ◉ www.parkscanada.gc.ca/pituamkek
- ◉ www.lnuey.ca/



Special Note

All parties are following the advice of public health experts and implementing measures to support efforts to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and reduce the risks to Canadians.

Under normal circumstances stakeholders and the public would be invited to partake in a series of in-person open houses and public information sessions. While there may be opportunities for social distancing compliant in-person meetings through this engagement process, the majority of public input will be gathered online.

Pituamkek's shoreline.

The shores have been home to Mi'kmaq People for thousands of years.

