

## Mi'kmaw Decision-Making

# Ancestral Places

### Scenario

It is the 1940s and you live along the shoreline of a beautiful river with your sukwiskw (aunties) and klamuksiskw (uncles) and many nikma'j (cousins). Ever since you were a child, people have told you not to play on the opposite riverbank because that is where the old people are buried. Everyone in the community respects this guidance. Along the shoreline by this area, ancient hunting tools also have been found.



There is news that a new dam is about to be constructed downstream by the power company. The damming will flood the ancient area and disturb the place where the ancestors are buried. Everyone is concerned about how the flooding will impact the sites.

### Group Resolution

Within your groups, you must decide what steps you can take to protect the ancestral area.

Use Mi'kmaw values as you make decisions: work together to reach a decision, honour humility, respect each other and include everyone. Remember that in Mi'kmaw worldview, decisions consider all living beings and the land, not just people.



## Ancestral Places

### Historical Notes

This scenario is built on a real historical experience along the Mersey River in the district of Kespukwitk. The flooding of Mi'kmaw ancestral places along rivers also happened in other areas of the province. While this was important for providing power to people, the flooding caused great harm in terms of habitats and ancestral sites.



### What did the Mi'kmaq decide?

In most instances the Mi'kmaq did not have the power to halt damming across the region. The reality is that ancestral sites were drowned and damaged during these processes.

Today, many individual Mi'kmaw as well as several Mi'kmaw organizations are working to protect ancestral sites. These efforts include building partnerships with community organizations, working with provincial counterparts and ensuring all people know the damage that might be caused by certain activities such as construction.

