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April 30, 2024

Press Release: For Immediate Release

Qalipu First Nation, Nature Conservancy of Canada sign Memorandum of Understanding

April 30, 2024, Glenwood—Today, Qalipu First Nation (QFN) and the country's leading land conservation organization, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), formalized a partnership around their common goal to protect and conserve a wilderness area near Gander.

The area, known as Charlie's Place, is 11,000 hectares of predominantly forested public land located between Northwest and Southwest Gander Rivers. It is recognized by both parties for its cultural and ecological significance. Representatives from the organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the overarching goal to conserve biodiversity and preserve cultural ties to this land.

Chief Jenny Brake was on hand to sign the MOU on behalf of Qalipu First Nation.

“For generations, both Beothuk and Mi’kmaq people have occupied Charlie’s Place. Our traditional land use spans thousands of years and we are highly motivated to continue to work collaboratively with partners such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada to support us in our conservation efforts for this special place and others across our traditional territory.”

The Band, with support from NCC, has been moving toward the establishment of Charlie’s Place as a Future Protected Area. The MOU outlines this goal along with the pursuit of other opportunities that will result in conservation outcomes.

Piers Evans, Newfoundland and Labrador Program Director with NCC who directs NCC’s work across the province commented on the importance of partnering with Indigenous - Peoples in working toward solutions around climate change and loss of biodiversity.

“Working alongside the local community members who shared their vision of a protected Charlie’s Place has been exciting and humbling. NCC and QFN have enjoyed a great working relationship for years, and so it was natural to shift into supporting this effort that began as a grassroots initiative and has become a movement within the First Nation. I’m



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quite proud of the work NCC does, but the protection of Charlie's Place would, to me, be an act of reconciliation with the Mi'kmaq community through conservation, which makes this project particularly special."

Following the signing, the group which also included QFN local Ward Councilors Calvin Francis and Frank Skeard, Band Manager Charles Pender, Ian Sullivan, Director of Environment and Natural Resources, NCC Regional Vice President Faith Flemming, and NCC Atlantic Director of Conservation Laurel Bernard, toured the area with Charlie's Place Land Monitor Justin Hodge.

To learn more about Charlie's Place and future plans, contact: Ian Sullivan, Director of Qalipu Environment and Natural Resources at tel. 709-634-0998 or email isullivan@qalipu.ca

Facts:

- Charlie's Place is home to several species at risk including birds such as olive-sided flycatcher and rusty blackbird. The wilderness area contains two scheduled Atlantic salmon rivers and the only instance of white-rimmed shingle lichen in the province.
- Lichen surveys conducted by researchers from Qalipu First Nation, Memorial University, Provincial Wildlife Division, Canadian Forest Service, New Brunswick Museum and Canadian Museum of Nature throughout 2023 resulted in observations of 177 species of lichen, including many new to the province, several new to Canada, and an abundance of rare blue felt lichen.
- In 2023, the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council (WERAC) submitted their recommendation for Charlie's Place to become an Emergency Reserve to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. An Emergency Reserve is a form of protection under the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act. The WERAC recommendation was initiated by Justin Hodge, who initially nominated the area for protection to WERAC in 2021.

About:

Qalipu First Nation

Qalipu First Nation (QFN) is part of the Mi'kmaq Nation whose territory extends from Maine to Quebec, through the Maritime Provinces and into Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland). This territory is also known as Mi'kma'ki. QFN exists to achieve the advancement of its people and is at work within the province at 6 office locations. QFN is focused on the environment,



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health, education and training, tourism, small business support, culture, heritage and economic development. To learn more, visit qalipu.ca

Nature Conservancy of Canada

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is the country's unifying force for nature. NCC seeks solutions to the twin crises of rapid biodiversity loss and climate change through large-scale permanent land conservation. As a trusted partner, NCC works with people, communities, businesses and government to protect and care for our country's most important natural areas. Since 1962, NCC has brought people together to conserve and restore more than 15 million hectares. In the Atlantic Provinces, NCC has protected 40,750 hectares. To learn more, visit natureconservancy.ca

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