

2012

Economic Development  
2011/2012



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*As 2013 approaches there is a major focus on business diversification, partnerships and leasing opportunities with our existing businesses and the future development of the Hammonds Plains property.*

*The Additions to Reserve (ATR) process for this property is coming to a close and reaching reserve status is in the near future. This property has huge development potential from an economic view point with the potential formation of corporate partnerships for leasing and business development.*

*Phase I that includes engineering, design and infrastructure is currently in a stringent assessment process with funding partners. The economic outlook for the property is promising with the engineering and design potentially being funded and based on the outcomes further to the development of the infrastructure for Phase I. There continues to be extensive planning and review of investment potential through corporate partners such as Subway and Tim Horton's.*

*Business diversification for our existing businesses has also become a focus with the proposed expansion to AFN Medway Entertainment Ltd. to include additional retail space and the expansion to the Kespuwick Eats 'n' Treats take out.*

*In addition, the development of a partnership with Wilson's Fuel Company Ltd. to offer furnace oil at our current three fueling locations of Your Winner's World, The Gold Nugget AFN and AFN Medway*

*Entertainment Ltd. is underway with a financial commitment of Wilson's that demonstrates the value of our business and AFN reputation with the company. The diversification will estimate an additional 4-6% increase in fuel and ancillary service sales for all three locations.*

*Moving forward in 2013 the Acadia First Nation Economic and Corporate Development Policy and launch of the new community and corporate website will be introduced to our First Nation members, families, interested readers and potential partners. Positioning Acadia First Nation in a corporate context requires substantial commitment to branding, marketing and promoting towards growth of our communities. As I move forward in promoting Acadia First Nation economically at conferences, trade shows and networking events the newly developed corporate package will demonstrate our work towards a sustainable economy and commitment to doing business in the corporate world.*

*In summary I have prepared the following report in a best effort basis to capture the major economic activity that I currently am presiding in hopes of providing a snapshot moving into 2013.*

*Lisa Francis, PAED*

*Economic Development*

# INTRODUCTION

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## 1.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As an economic development officer for the past eleven years I have ascertained a holistic approach to development that realizes a sustainability model that includes social, cultural, environmental and economic development aspects that together will create growth of strong, integrated, healthy communities.



*"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> (The 'Our Common Future' Report, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43).

The following information pertains to the vision, mandate, guiding principles and strategic goals that I currently strive to achieve and abide by with regard to economic development. This information was established within the Strategic Economic Development Strategy in 2009 during community meetings and working sessions with the consultants and the economic development department.

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## 1.1 VISION<sup>2</sup>

Acadia First Nation is vibrant, self-sufficient, and sustainable. The population supports and values its small businesses, arts, culture and heritage, education, and social and health services.

Acadia First Nation protects and carefully utilizes its natural assets by protecting its waterways and its lands, understanding their importance for sustainability, jobs, culture and recreation.

Acadia First Nation is a community that meets the needs of its members and is a welcoming, inclusive, multigenerational community where children, youth, elders and families feel valued, respected, safe, and have opportunities to be part of the community.

Acadia First Nation members value education for themselves and their families. Members know the importance of developing skills for the future while at the same time honoring their heritage and traditions.

Development of Acadia First Nation is diversified and builds on its connection to land and water, to its heritage and culture and at the same time, takes advantage of technology to enhance the lives of community members.

## 1.2 MISSION<sup>3</sup>

*“Enhancing the quality of life for Acadia First Nation and their families through community and social development while creating cultural awareness.”*

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<sup>2</sup> Acadia First Nation – Strategic Economic Development Strategy 2009, Page 3

<sup>3</sup> Acadia First Nation – Strategic Economic Development Strategy 2009, Page 3

### 1.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES<sup>4</sup>



The Strategic Economic Development Strategy is built upon the culture and traditional roots of Acadia First Nation, respecting and honouring its sacred spaces and heritage.



The strategies and activities of the Strategic Economic Development Strategy are based on respect for the natural environment and its resources.



Economic Development is successful when good governance, transparency and accountability to the community and partners are in place.



Initiatives developed from the Strategic Economic Development Strategy will continue to draw on knowledge and guidance from the Elders.



The Strategic Economic Development Strategy is built upon research and best practices in First Nation and Aboriginal economic development.



The Strategic Economic Development Strategy fosters the development of the skills and knowledge of our community members.



The Strategic Economic Development Strategy is built on the assets and strengths of Acadia First Nation and its people.



The Strategic Economic Development Strategy is based on a holistic approach that takes into consideration all the factors that influence the well-being of a community. A strong economy depends on affect on healthy communities, healthy families and healthy individuals. The strategy considers the determinants that affect overall health.



The Strategic Economic Development Strategy is built on Acadia First Nation's value of protecting, maintaining and sustaining the socioeconomic progress and growth of its communities to ensure stability for now and the future.



The Strategic Economic Development Strategy will be adaptable, reflecting changing circumstances. It will be reviewed, as required, by the Strategic Economic Development Strategy Steering Committee.

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<sup>4</sup> Acadia First Nation – Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan, Page 12

## 1.4 STRATEGIC GOALS<sup>5</sup>



To preserve and protect the Mi'kmaw culture and heritage of Acadia First Nation



To work collaboratively and build relationships and partnerships with agencies and organizations outside Acadia First nation for the betterment of its communities



To increase tourism opportunities for the communities of Acadia First Nation



To preserve and protect the Mi'kmaw culture and heritage of Acadia First Nation



To enhance the commercial, business and industrial development for the communities of Acadia First Nation



To increase the skills and capacities of the members of Acadia First Nation



To strengthen the governance and organization of Acadia First Nation's social and economic development initiatives



To increase Acadia First Nation land ownership



To improve the physical infrastructure of the communities of Acadia First Nation

<sup>5</sup> Acadia First Nation – Strategic Economic Development Strategy 2009, Page 6



# Economic Development 2011/2012

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## 2.0 INITIATIVES

- Gold River Mawiomí 2012: “Youth Spirit” Following in the Path of Our Ancestors
- Gold River Mawiomí Grounds – Expansion to Cookhouse
- Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan Phase I – Expansion to Mawiomí Grounds
- Hammonds Plains Commercial Development Strategy – Phase I: Engineering and Design/Infrastructure
- Acadia First Nation Economic and Corporate Development Policy/Website
- Acadia First Nation Geomatics – partnership with Membertou First Nation
- Gold River Western Shore Elementary After School Program – Evaluations/Contracts
- Gardner’s Mill Land Use and Development Plan – assistance as required
- Gold River Recreation Park and Outdoor Rink
- Business Diversification: AFN Medway Entertainment Ltd. The Gold Nugget AFN and Your Winner’s World – Furnace Oil partnership with Wilson’s Fuel Company Ltd.
- Partnerships/Leasing – Renewable Energy, Subway, Tim Horton’s, etc.

## 2.1 COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

- Kespuwick Resources Advisory Committee
- TEDWC – Tripartite Economic Development Committee: NS EDO Representative
- TEDWC NS Mi’kmaq Economic Development Strategy: Lead
- AAEDN – Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Network
- AAEBE Executive – Atlantic Aboriginal Economy Building Strategy Executive Board Member
- CANDO – Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers
- KMK Benefits Committee

## 2.2 FUNDING 2011/2012

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES (estimated)</b>
<b>Gold River Pow Wow 2012</b>	\$ 30, 000.00 AFN Recreational Funds, RRFB, Heritage Canada
<b>Gold River Mawiomi Grounds Expansion to Cookhouse</b>	\$9, 999.00 Ponhook Trust
<b>Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan</b>	\$ 25, 000.00 ACOA and First Nation Economic Development Fund
<b>Hammonds Plains Engineering and Design/Infrastructure</b>	\$4, 518, 554.00 (in assessment) \$320, 309.60 AANDC
<b>Gold River Recreation Park</b>	\$14, 000.00 Province of Nova Scotia \$54, 000.00 ACOA (pending ministerial approval)
<b>Acadia First Nation Economic and Corporate Development Policy and Website</b>	\$ 94, 700 AANDC
<b>AFN Medway Entertainment Ltd. Business Diversification – expansion</b>	\$200, 000 (submitting for assessment in December 2012)
<b>AFN Business Diversification:</b> AFN Medway Entertainment Ltd., The Gold Nugget AFN and Your Winner’s World – Furnace Oil partnership with Wilson’s Fuel Company Ltd.	\$160, 000.00 Wilson’s Fuel Company Ltd.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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## 3.0 GOLD RIVER POW WOW 2012 “YOUTH SPIRIT” FOLLOWING IN THE PATH OF OUR ANCESTORS

### DESCRIPTION

The Gold River Pow Wow 2012 theme was “Youth Spirit” Following the Path of Our Ancestors where activities, workshops, demonstrations and special competitions and ceremonies were focused around our youth. It is the encouragement for our youth to engage in the culture and traditions, learning and becoming excited about whom they are, reconnecting them with their heritage and empowering them with “spirit”.

The gathering was set up in a series of large circles. The center circle being the **Dance Arena**, outside of that circle is an outer circle that consists of the Master of Ceremonies tent, Drummers Tents, and that Elders Tent that provided tables and seating as well as hospitality. Outside this area is a space for spectators around the arena and on the outer ring is space for the **Cookhouse**, and **Artisan Market, Hospitality Table, Demonstrations** and **Vendors**.

### *Funding*

The event was jointly funded by Acadia First Nation Recreational Funds, Canadian Heritage Building Communities through Arts and Heritage Fund, Chester Municipality, and the Resource Recovery Fund Board.

### *Timeframe*

The gathering was hosted from Friday September 14, 2012 to Sunday September 16, 2012. The Sunrise Ceremony Thursday September 13, 2012 opened the gathering for the weekend with the lighting of the Sacred Fire and the gathering commenced with the Closing Ceremonies and Giveaway Blanket on Sunday September 16, 2012.



5:00 – 6:00 pm	Feast	Cookhouse
7:00 pm	Closing Ceremonies	Dance Arena
7:00 – 8:00 pm	Retiring of Flags	Dance Arena
8:00 – 11:00 pm	Social Event – cancelled due to rain	Mawiomi Grounds

## Sunday September 16, 2012

Time	Activity	Location
Sunrise	Sunrise Ceremony Special Honoring for Youth	Sacred Fire Area
8:00 – 10:00 pm	Breakfast	Cookhouse
11:00 – 12:30 am	Registration	Registration Booth
11:00 – 4:00 pm	Artisan Market/Demonstrations	
12:30 pm	Drum Roll Call	Mawiomi Grounds Traditional Arbor
1:00 pm	Grand Entry	Dance Arena
1:00 – 4:00 pm	Opening Remarks – Lisa Francis Invocation – Elder Rose Morris Intertribals Youth Games Intertribals Men and Women’s Specials Honoring Ceremony Team Competitions Finals Intertribals	Dance Arena
4:00 pm	Closing Ceremonies Special Giveaways – Youth Spirit, and Adult Outstanding Volunteer Giveaway Blanket	Dance Arena
4:30 – 6:00 pm	Feast	Cookhouse

## OPENING

The gathering began on Saturday September 15, 2012 with the **Grand Entry**, where all dancers line up by style and age, then enter the Dance Arena while the host drum group sings a special song. The first in are the veterans, flag carriers and eagle staffs, followed by the head dancers, junior head dancers, then dancers in specific order:

Men's Traditional, Men's Grass Dance, Men's Fancy, Women's Traditional, Women's Jingle and Women's Fancy.

The junior dancers including teens and small children follow in the same order. The co-host drum group Kiju Boyz followed with the Flag Song during which the flags and staffs are posted at the Drummers Tents. The flag song is a dedication to the men and women that have served during war and conflict. During this song all individuals stood in silence and removed head gear out of respect.

### ***Invocation***

The invocation or opening prayer is done after Grand Entry and begins the Pow Wow after all dancers, drummers and participants are in the dance arena. Elder Rose Morris, IRS Survivor, Elder and community member was presented with tobacco and asked to give an opening prayer. Acadia First Nation Chief Deborah Robinson and Councilor Andrew Francis followed the invocation with opening remarks followed by a welcoming from the Pow Wow Coordinator.

## **DRUM GROUPS**



The Host Drum group Eastern Eagle was responsible for providing music for the dancers to dance while praying and paying respect to the ancestors. Drum groups that participate at Pow Wows and enter competitions play a large specially designed drum and sing traditional songs.

The host drum provides the singing and songs at the beginning and end of a Pow Wow session, specifically a Starting song, Grand Entry song, and a Veteran's or Victory song at the beginning of the Pow Wow and a Flag song, Retreat song, and Closing song at the end of the Pow Wow.

The Co-Host Drum group Kiju Boyz assisted the host drum group in providing this music and can relieve the host drum group when needed as the “vocables” sung are very strong and high pitched and can be very tiring on the vocals of the members.

Invited drum groups also participate in the rotation of drumming and singing to assist in relieving the host and co-host drum groups and provides much variety in the songs and style of music at the Pow Wow.

## DANCES

### *Head Veteran*

The Head Veteran, Al Oakley of Eskasoni First Nation was responsible to ensure that the Pow Wow was conducted with respect and that all participants are safe.

The Head Veteran lead the Grand Entry, usually leading in other Veterans carrying staffs or flags honoring the nations flags under which warriors have fought to protect community and freedom.

### *Head Dancers*

Being chosen as a head dancer is of the highest respect and honor. The Head Male Dancer **Armando Lucio** and Head Female Dancer **Courtney Pennell** were highly visible and active in leading other dancers throughout the pow wow. It is not an honor to be taking lightly as the responsibility remains to encourage other dancers to participate, provide advice and guidance to the coordinator in preplanning and throughout the pow wow. The MC and arena director also depend on the head dancers in keeping the dancing going throughout the pow wow.

### *Honoring Ceremonies*

Honoring Ceremonies are done by the host drum and are special songs dedicated to honor a person or persons. Honor Songs are announced by the MC prior to being sung at the pow wow. It is custom to stand in silence and hats to be removed to show respect, no photographs and or videos are permitted during these special songs.

There was one Honoring Ceremony done during the pow wow in respect for those band members lost over the years in Gold River, to bring much love and respect to their

memory and the healing for family members.

### ***Round Dance***

The round dance is also referred to as a social or friendship dance. Everyone was welcomed to enter the arena to join in this dance with people moving in clockwise side step movements in harmony with the rhythm of the drum. The head dancers may break the circles in to two depending on the number of people, with one outer circle and one inner circle. The round dance is used as an ‘ice breaker’ that encourages the spectators to become pow wow participants.

### ***Specials***

Pow wows are a demonstration of several different styles of dancing and types of regalia. During specials, the MC will call for each type of dancer to “Dance Their Style”. The most common styles include grass, fancy shawl, traditional, jingle, and men’s fancy.

As a special is announced by the MC only dancers of that style may enter the dancer area as that type of dance is being showcased.

### ***Intertribals***

Intertribals are a time during pow wow that everyone is able to dance native and non-native of all ages and genders. You do not have to be in regalia to dance during this time. Joining the dancing at this time shows thanks to the community for hosting a pow wow and for the invitation to participate.

### ***Men’s Traditional***

Head Traditional Male Dancer **Armando Lucio** movements depict a dancer’s quest for game. He is known as the protector and preserver of the traditional ways. A large eagle feather bustle is worn on the back shaped like a U, extending up past a shoulder and points upwards. They wear loud bells on the ankles, a beaded breastplate over their shirt and carry a variety of sacred objects including the eagle wing fan. The dancer takes two steps with one foot and then two steps with the other and moving his body and head as though he is hunting for game.

### ***Men’s Fancy Feather***

The male dancer is adorned with brightly colored regalia with twin feather bustles worn on the back. The regalia is adorned with bright ribbons and brightly colored cloth with great amounts of beadwork including the headband, medallions, armbands and cuffs.



The roach consists of two feathers worn on the head moving freely as the dancer moves. He has fast and intricate foot work combined with up and down spins.

### ***Men's Grass Dance***

The Head Male Dancer **Armando Lucio** also is a grass dancer and his movements are of a swaying dance style which has loose and flowing movements along with emphasis on shoulder shaking. Usually a grass dancer opens the Pow Wow during Grand Entry as the grass is stomped down allowing other dancers to have a smooth surface for dancing. The regalia is very colorful with yarn and ribbon that allows the dancer to move their fringes in as many places as possible, creating a style which flows as the wind.

### ***Women's Traditional***

The women traditional dancer's movements are in a stately and poised manner, moving slowly and gracefully to the beat of the drum, dressed in elaborately decorated regalia with Eagle plumes worn on the back of the head and an eagle fan in the right hand. Buckskin regalia with intricate beadwork designs, fringed shawls folded over one arm and a dance style with slow and poised movements as she bobs to the drum.

### ***Women's Fancy Shawl***

Fancy shawl dancers have high stepping footwork and a whirl of beauty, agility and grace as she keeps time with the music. Their style mimics butterflies in flight and the shawl imitates the wings. The regalia is brightly colored and the shawl is outstretched with the arms and worn over the shoulders and is decorated with ribbon fringes, elaborate designs and appliqué.

### ***Women's Jingle***

Women's Head Dancer **Courtney Sue Pennell** and Junior Head Female Dancer **Emerald Wells** dance a healing dance originated from the Ojibway tribe. The dress is covered in tin cones and bouncy dance steps create rhythmic jingling in time of the beat of the drum. There are 365 jingles to represent each day of the year. The footwork is similar to the fancy shawl dancer.

## **SUNRISE CEREMONY**

The sunrise ceremony takes places each morning at sunrise with the host Elders at the pow wow. Sunrise ceremonies are held to mark the beginning of a new day and to

thank the Creator for that day. Each Sunrise Ceremony during the event is focused on special honoring for our youth, instilling “spirit” and Following the Path of Our Ancestors.

## SACRED FIRE

The sacred fire is the spirit of the pow wow and acts as our doorway into the Spirit World. Fire is one of the most sacred elements of life and *niskam* (sun) the biggest fire reflects to us the symbol of the Creator. When a Sacred Fire is lit brings *niskam* very close to us and lights the doorway to the Great Spirit.

The Sacred Fire at a pow wow is lit before it begins and kept burning throughout the duration. The Fire Keeper is knowledgeable in the traditions and teachings of the Sacred Fire and has apprenticed to learn the ceremonies and practices necessary to build and maintain it.

When a Sacred Fire Keeper(s) is chosen he/she is presented with an offering of tobacco to take care of the fire for the duration. The Fire Keeper(s) are responsible for making sure the fire stays lit and people visiting follow certain protocols. Everyone is welcome at the Sacred Fire; however it is not a place for socialization or a place to sit and get warm and eat. The Sacred Fire is a place of Smudging and Ceremony.

People enter the sacred fire area through the eastern direction; smudge themselves usually with sweet grass or sage smoke, and offer tobacco containing their prayers and move around the sacred fire in a clockwise direction exiting through the eastern doorway.

## SWEATLODGE

The sweat lodge conductor **Earl Sack** of Indianbrook First Nation will be offered sweats Friday September 14, 2012 through to Sunday September 16, 2012 up until closing ceremonies.

The lodges are circular in nature which represent the cycle of life and are designed for cleansing the mind, body and spirit, through the use of heated stones (grandfathers). The stones are sprinkled with water that creates the steam needed to cleanse.

The sweat lodge is used for general prayer and/or specific healing and during this time a *Youth Sweat* will take place on the evening of Friday September 14, 2012 where they

were encouraged to take this time to pray and heal as the ceremony teaches respect, patience, endurance and to speak the mind freely. It is considered a rebirthing process one of purification, spiritual renewal and of healing and education of youth.

## **ARTISAN MARKET**

The Artisan Market boasted artists and artisans working in a variety of media from traditional art and craft of quillwork, beadwork, and basketry to non-traditional jewelry, photography, textiles, and painting.

The market provided a rent free space to artists and artisans to market their products, increase their advertising and promotion to multiple disciplines, and an opportunity to return profits and costs of goods and services sold.

## **DEMONSTRATIONS/WORKSHOPS**

Demonstrations and workshops planned for the event included Parent/Youth Theme Night with Storytelling by Bear River First Nation author Theresa Meuse. Theresa shared her story of The Eagle Feather, a collection of seven stories about First Nations culture and spiritual practices: The Sharing Circle, The Dream Catcher, The Sacred Herbs, The Talking Circle, The Medicine Wheel, The Drum, and The Medicine Pouch. In addition, Pow Wow Committee member Terri Pennell hosted a youth bookmark workshop on Saturday September 15, 2012.

## **GIVEAWAY BLANKET**

The giveaways at the end of a pow wow are to give thanks to those who participated. Following the giveaway is the Giveaway Song or Thank You song whereas participants dance in the dance area with their gift.

Special giveaways at a pow wow can be out of honor or respect for an individual, memorialize the death of a dancer, or coming out of a new dancer to the pow wow family. This year included special giveaways for 1) Youth Spirit – youth that demonstrated the most “spirit” throughout the event and shows a real keen interest and

dedication in Following in the Path of Our Ancestors, 2) Adult Volunteer - adult that demonstrated the most dedication, time and effort towards assisting with the pow wow.

### 3.1 GOLD RIVER EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM PLAN

In 2009 in association with Griffith's Muecke and the Gold River Project Management Group the Gold River Land Use and Development Plan was developed. The plan introduced a number of recommendations with regard to commercial and residential development, recreation, culture and heritage. As a result in 2011 I purposed to have a plan developed for tourism for the Gold River Reserve as a direct result of these recommendations.

The Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan was completed in December of 2011 and further updated in March of 2012 to include an additional business case to accompany Phase I. The purpose of the tourism plan is to ***“develop core visitor experiential aspects which Acadia First Nation can implement for the Gold River Reserve...which can further position the community for success through viable business opportunities and partnerships.”***<sup>6</sup>

The plan at its core elements included the following goals and objectives:<sup>7</sup>

#### GOALS

1. Creation of a Tourism Plan which incorporates community feedback provided through a consultation process completed during the development of the Gold River Land Use and Development Plan
2. Incorporation and synergies of existing strategies completed by Acadia First Nation
3. Incorporation of Provincial Tourism Plans [Governmental and Aboriginal Organizations]

#### OBJECTIVES

1. Identification of Tourism Offerings for the 4 Phases
2. Market and Feasibility of Phase 1: Gold River Mawiomi Grounds
3. Implementation of the Tourism offerings

<sup>6</sup> Acadia First Nation-Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan, Page 15

<sup>7</sup> Acadia First Nation – Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan, Page 15 and 16

Throughout the development of the plan a four phased approach was established.<sup>8</sup>



## PHASE 1

Gold River Mawiomi Grounds



## PHASE 2

Traditional Medicine and Plant Gardens



## PHASE 3

Healing Lodge



## PHASE 4

Medicinal and Interpretive Trails

The identification of these four main concepts was developed to demonstrate the correlation between the Nova Scotia Tourism Plan for 2011 the Mi'kmaq Association of Cultural Studies main objectives, Nova Scotia Museum Master Interpretation Plan and the Heritage Strategy for Nova Scotia (2008-2013). It is essential to envelop the spiritual, traditional, and historical aspects of the Gold River Reserve that will demonstrate its significance through art and craft, medicinal gardens, culture, language and spiritual aspects.<sup>9</sup>

The tourism plan through the correlation of these strategies and plans can provide a unique authentic Mi'kmaw experience through:

1. Demonstration of the rich Mi'kmaw heritage and culture through stories and knowledge of previous generations.
2. Tangible cultural heritage experiences such as demonstrations and artifacts
3. Intangible cultural heritage experiences such as folklore, language, oral history, music and skills
4. Natural heritage through guided nature tours, history and festivals
5. Celebration of diversity of heritage places, objects, stories, music, dance, drum demonstrations, Mi'kmaw language and traditions
6. Partnerships

<sup>8</sup> Acadia First Nation Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan, Page 16

<sup>9</sup> Acadia First Nation Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan, Pages 17, 18, and 19

7. Sustainability
8. Management of strong heritage infrastructure, skilled workforce, programs and services to accommodate change
9. Public education to increase understanding and awareness
10. Immersing tourists in the culture without compromising traditions and overexploitation of culture and heritage

## PHASE I GOLD RIVER MAWIOMI GROUNDS

Phase I includes the expansion to the Mawiommi Grounds as depicted in the following conceptual:<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup> Acadia First Nation – Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan, Page 41

The desired expansion accommodates:

- Improvements that take into consideration the retaining of a comfortable buffer from the grounds to the residential areas
- Traditional drum arbor
- Infrastructure - power, vendor power outlets, lighting
- Expansion to the existing structure to include a kitchen facility
- Food Service area
- Covered seating area
- Area for retail tents for vendors
- Camping facilities with water, sewage and washrooms /showers
- Expansion to the Dance Area
- Relocation of the sacred fire and sweat lodge
- Parking and signage<sup>11</sup>

The business case demonstrated three types of product offerings for development within Phase I Gold River Mawiomí Grounds that included:

1. Campground
2. Experiential Tourism Offerings
  - a) Traditional Crafts
  - b) Maple Harvest Experience
  - c) Traditional Food and Medicine
  - d) Nova Scotia History Experience
  - e) Canoeing on Gold River
  - f) Aboriginal Dwelling Exploration
  - g) Traditional Fishing
  - h) Wildlife Tour
3. Acadia First Nation Pow Wow

Throughout the 2011/2012 fiscal year funding was sought to complete Phase I, however funds for cultural related projects are minimal. Knowing the demand for the expansion eminent to an expanded event for the Gold River Pow Wow 2012 a proposal was submitted to Ponhook Trust to assist in realizing a portion of Phase I. In addition the Gold River Recreation Fund also assisted and in totality a number of the initiatives were undertaken including power, expansion to the cookhouse, signage, lighting, and vendor power outlets, relocation of the sacred fire and sweat lodge.

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<sup>11</sup> Acadia First Nation, Gold River Land Use and Development Plan, Background Report, November 2009, Pages 97 and 98

As we move forward into 2013 there may be the development of new programs or new avenues that may present itself for the continuation of the expansion to the grounds for the completion of Phase I.

## PHASE II TRADITIONAL PLANT AND MEDICINE GARDENS



An existing traditional plant and medicinal garden had been developed in the summer of 2010 in conjunction with Laurie Lacey, a well-known author and enthusiast of Mi'kmaw plants and medicines. A Traditional Plant and Medicinal Garden Manual also has been fully established, developed and written by Laurie Lacey and Jill Francis. In addition, during the development of the Gold River Forestry Management Plan Laurie Lacey established an inventory of the plants and medicines within the reserves boundaries.

Building upon the concept of the garden and the inventory that exists along with the manual, Phase II looks at the potential of utilizing the garden to offer teachings in the identification of medicinal plants, preservations, planting and cultivating, safe and unsafe usage and sharing uses with others. It would be essential to build the knowledge and capacity of our people, to in turn empower them to be instructors and



building upon that to further develop a Mi'kmaw experience where stories and knowledge can be trans versed to tourists and future generations.

### PHASE III HEALING LODGE<sup>12</sup>



The Healing Lodge was a concept that was initiated and recommended during the development of the Gold River Land Use and Development Plan in 2009. It has been reiterated as part of this plan as potential economic development opportunity while maintaining the natural beauty within its location along the river.

Its utilization could serve a multiple purpose as a meeting space for other first nation organizations, for retreats and training sessions, small weddings, various activities and functions of the community. A number of offerings could be developed as well such as such as swimming, walking trails, fishing and picnicking, as well as accomodations for tourists and meeting groups. This space could work in conjunction with the campground suggested in Phase I as part of the Mawiomi Grounds. Programming, workshops and experiences could also be developed as well as partnerships with other tourism attractions in the area to offer packages to potential tourists.

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<sup>12</sup> Photos provided through Acadia First Nation-Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan, Pages 46 and 47

## PHASE IV MEDICINAL AND INTERPRETIVE TRAILS

In the identification of potential areas for a series of trail systems the community, through focus groups and sessions identified areas of significance and importance that have been considered sacred and protected and demonstrated as such in the Gold River Land Use and Development Plan. Also during these discussions and an Elder's Circle the concept of developing trails for recreational, medicinal and interpretive use was realized.

These sacred areas include<sup>13</sup>:



### Gold River



### Pine Hill



### Mawiomi Grounds

The potential revitalization of existing trails and walkthroughs as well as the development of new trails based on the background and research conducted during the Gold River Land Use and Development Plan in 2009 would serve as the background in developing a business case for this phase.

There are a number of offerings that could be associated with the trails including self-guided tours, guided tours, combination tours in association with plan and medicines,

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<sup>13</sup> Acadia First Nation-Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan, Page 45

canoe trips on Gold River, fishing packages in association with the Healing Lodge as well as the development of a traditional village.

The concept of a traditional village immerses the visitor in a total experience in traditional form. Visitors “can experience traditional medicine and interact with villagers as they hull canoes, make pottery and masks, weave baskets and beadwork, and participate in their daily activities.”<sup>14</sup>

The Chester Connector trail is also in close proximity to a number of the identified old trails and walkthroughs of the reserve boundaries and could serve as a potential opportunity for partnership with the Chester Municipality as they are in current development of a program that enhances the trail system to tourists referred to as the Rails to Trails experience. The experience includes connections through signage along the trail of local attractions and venues for individuals such as cyclists and ATV users for the duration of their journey. It is an opportunity to promote our offerings as they develop in Gold River.

### **3.2 HAMMONDS PLAINS COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**



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<sup>14</sup> Acadia First Nation-Gold River Experiential Tourism Plan, Page 49

## DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

### ***The Hammonds Plains Commercial Development Team***

The Hammonds Plains Commercial Development Team was established to assist the development of the Hammonds Plains Commercial Development Strategy. The team had a mix of credentials in economic development, construction, architectural, planning, development, and business management.

### ***Planning Process***

In June of 2010 St Mary's Business Development Centre began work with the Hammonds Plains Commercial Development Team. Over the course of the next ten months from June 2010 – March 31, 2011 St. Mary's concluded to develop the strategy through two phases: 1) Consultation, Asset Mapping and Research and 2) Feasibility Study.

Phase I included facilitated sessions, conducting interviews and focus groups, distributing mail in surveys to AFN residents, conducting a SWOT analysis, asset mapping and some secondary research.

### **Visioning Workshop**

In September of 2010 a visioning workshop was facilitated. The purpose of the workshop was to develop an overall vision for the Hammonds Plains property, develop a strategic focus and establish evaluation criteria that would be used in measuring and scoring development opportunities.

### **Vision:**

*“Acadia First Nation Hammonds Plains aims to achieve a welcoming atmosphere that benefits the community through viable commercial opportunities creating sustainable development.”*

Based on the background research and analysis conducted throughout the project St. Mary's in conjunction with Ekistics Planning and Design developed a conceptual site

plan for the Hammonds Plains land. The plan was broken into three phases for implementation purposes including 1) Gas Station and Convenience with Franchise, 2) Multi-Use Facility, 2a) Restaurant and Market, 3) Business Park or Seniors Complex.

## **MARKET FOCUS**

The primary market for the study included Hammonds Plains Residents, First Nation members and families, and flow thru traffic. The local Hammonds Plains population being considered includes Bedford, Hammonds Plains, District 23 (Tantallon and upper Tantallon, Stillwater Lake, Glen Haven, Lewis Lake, Head of St. Margarets Bay, Boutilliers Point, Black Point, Queensland, Hubbards, French Village and Seabright), Lower Sackville. The total population for these areas combined is 19, 267.

The average individual income is \$49, 642 with a family income of \$105, 503. Of those families there are only 4.3% in a lower income bracket. Employment rates for the area are 56.7% with age range of 15-24 and 76.7% of people over the age of 25. The majority of the population according to 2006 census is between the ages of 35-54 and are married families.

Traffic counts for 2011 were estimated between 15, 887 to 21, 090 cars daily with an anticipated count in 2021 of between 26, 643 to 35, 369. The study clearly demonstrated through population, demographics, income, spending patterns that it is a great location for future development and provided a clear focus in assisting with determining the best business approach to this property.

## **PHASED APPROACH**

Phase I, after completion of the preplanning would be the development of a Gas Station/Convenience Store with a small franchise restaurant. Phase II is for a multi-use facility to be utilized as a bingo hall, hall rentals and for concession sales during events. Phase 2a and Phase III require further research and analysis of the market and developing a feasibility study and business plan for each phase. Acadia First Nation will be seeking funding sources for implementation of these future phases as identified at a later date.

## CONCEPTUAL



## IMPLEMENTATION - PHASE I INFRASTRUCTURE

Currently, an assessment of an application to AANDC is underway with headquarters for approximately 5.3 m for planning and the infrastructure to implement phase I. A request for proposal was established to provide services for planning and development including the following:

**Engineering Plans - including** street system for Phase I to III, storm system, sanitary system, earth works and water system for Phase I and in preparation for Phase II and III. This will also include the design and costing estimates for implementation and the turning lane intersection to be negotiated with the Halifax Regional Municipality based on the approval of the traffic impact study.

**Architectural Plans-** includes site plan, foundation plan, floor plan, framing plan, roof plan, mechanical plan, elevations, cross-sections, details and schedule for Phase I

construction.

**Environmental Assessment**- to adhere to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-15.2/> and screening reporting requirements of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC)

**Traffic Impact Study** – follows the guidelines established by the Halifax Regional Municipality <http://www.halifax.ca/traffic/documents/TISGUIDE8.pdf>

The call rendered a number of proposals for evaluation and EXP was chosen as the successful proponent. EXP has a background in working with First Nation communities with projects of this size and scope and is known for the work done for Millbrook First Nation.

## CONCLUSION

The 2011/2012 fiscal year has been productive and the extensive planning throughout 2009 through to 2011 is now ready for implementation. The challenges ahead are the current programs and anticipated cuts to budgets and the impact on Aboriginal Economic Development provincially and federally. A focus on funding matrixes with a mix of partnerships, joint ventures and key corporate investors is the path moving forward as federally funded programs become more stringent and non-existent.





