



Union of Nova Scotia Indians
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On October 21 and 22, 2017, all five (5) Una'maki Chiefs, in partnership with Potlotek First Nation, along with Union of Nova Scotia Indians Executive Director Doug Brown, Eskasoni Councilor Dion Denny, traditional knowledge holder Richard (Buddy) Young of Eskasoni (the grandson of respected elder, the late Sarah Denny), and two fire-keepers from Potlotek - all spent the night in traditional wigwams on remote Alick Island, located off the shores of Potlotek First Nation. Joining the crew during the first day were Grand Council Kji Keptin Antle Denny of Eskasoni, and Elder Stephen Augustine, who served as a knowledge keeper. Respected elder Lillian Marshall of Potlotek First Nation opened the journey with a prayer in Mi'kmaq, and respected elders Valerian Marshall of Potlotek, and Roger Stevens from Eskasoni, were on hand to wish then Chiefs a safe journey to Alick Island. Respected elder Joe Googoo Sr. from We'koqma'q First Nation, delivered seven (7) moose hides for the Chiefs to use during the night. Chief Deborah Robinson from Acadia First Nation sent her prayers and thoughts to her fellow dignitaries as they endured the elements for the night.

The purpose of this ceremonial exercise was to provide a humbling experience for the Chiefs as they performed customary governance practices. The night was spent in prayer, knowledge sharing, and singing traditional Mi'kmaw chants with a hand-held drum. The discussions from the evening proved to be organic and many discussions centered around issues such as housing, employment, social assistance, language and governance.

Through the ceremonial exercise the Chiefs were provided with an opportunity to live off the land as their ancestors did over 100 years ago, while practicing customary governance. The last time a pipe ceremony took place was over 88 years ago on a remote island off Potlotek First Nation.