

## 2009 ABORIGINAL PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS ED OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER GESPE'GEWAQ MI'GMAQ RESOURCE COUNCIL, NB



The Gespe'gewaq Mi'gmaq Resource Council is a vibrant company located on the Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation. It is built on a solid foundation currently shared by three Mi'gmaq communities benefiting from our services are Listuguj, Eel River Bar, and Pabineau.

The Organization provided services in the area of natural resource and oceans management. Its core services are aquatic and resource oceans management under the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource Oceans Management Program (AAROM). The Organization is committed in providing First Nation communities with the highest quality of service available.

The Organization is structured under an ISO 9001-200 recognized quality management system and operates in these four primary areas: Service Delivery, Collaborative Management, Sustainable Resource Management & Stock Enhancement, and Economic & Strategic Planning.

The vision of the organization is to assist First Nation communities within the traditional district of Gespe'gewa'gi by creating awareness and understanding and gathering support to further sustainable natural resource management. We see a future where we can work together in the bay, managing our resources and having a greater say in how they are managed, at the same time building cultural bridges with the common goal of effective natural resource management practices.

GMRC has partnered with the Charlo Fish Hatchery Inc. and Homarus Inc., to enhance the trout, salmon, and lobster stocks in the estuaries of the Restigouch and Bay of Chaleurs. At the same time, building awareness, building capacity, and creating opportunities for Aboriginal people. The new partnership also gives GMRC a seat on the Board of Directors, in turn giving our communities a voice in sustainable management of the natural resources.

The groundbreaking element was the partnership between the aboriginal communities and the non-aboriginal fishermen's union. One of GMRC's bigger challenges was to build its credibility among aboriginal communities and also to build its credibility with industry. They addressed this challenge by attaining ISO certification, by focusing on communications, by building awareness through workshops and presentations, and by achieving buy-in from its stakeholder's communities. Another challenge was building the internal capacity of GMRC. They addressed this by ensuring sustained growth of the staff and by hiring the right people.

In two and half years of operation GMRC has; undertaken 6 environmental research projects, achieved ISO certification in only 9 months, established good relations with local schools and user groups, donated much of its time and resources to others, and has helped to build capacity within our communities. GMRC also conducts itself in a manner that is conducive to Mi'gmaq philosophies, and to utmost professionalism.

The GMRC management team has worked diligently for the past five years to build a solid fiscal foundation accompanied by superb management systems. The most exceptional accomplishment for this young organization is its certification as an ISO compliant organization. The efforts by the management team to maintain their high level of professionalism and ISO certification has and continues to attract business. I am certain GMRC will grow at a steady pace over the years adding new employees and building capacity as a provider of environmental services.