

## *Aboriginal Heritage Gardens Inc. at Eel River Bar First Nation, New Brunswick*

*The Aboriginal Heritage Garden is currently under construction and when complete will be operated by Aboriginal Heritage Gardens Inc., an arm of the Eel River Bar First Nation. It will be a heritage-based signature tourist attraction for New Brunswick that showcases the rich ancestral heritage of the Mi'gmaq culture while contributing to its preservation.*

*At the Garden the Mi'gmaq use of plants and sustainable development principles will be interpreted through a combination of site features and facilities, programs and services.*

### **Initiative**

#### **Objectives of Project:**

- To operate a provincial icon, cultural heritage-based, tourist attraction, unique in the Maritimes and across Canada.
- To re-build the economy of the Eel River Bar community through the creation of meaningful jobs and sources of revenue generation.
- To re-build the spirit of the Eel River Bar community through the discovery of their cultural identity and heritage.
- To highlight the contributions that Aboriginal people have made to society in terms of medicines, foods, and spirituality and material cultures.
- To create a repository of Aboriginal knowledge and contribute to the growing, world-wide body of information about medicinal uses of plants.



- To create an icon for First Nations in Atlantic Canada and to lead the way for other First Nations who want to undertake similar projects.
- To draw attention to the new role and increasingly positive image of native peoples in Canadian society.

The following general principles guide the program development:

The Gardens will reflect the native world. It will be first and foremost a native project with natives making the final decisions about the content and overall direction, including;

- Ensuring that the exhibits, demonstrations, and programs, indoors and out, reflect a Mi'gmaq world view.
- Basing interpretive message on Mi'gmaq language and terminology, to bring out the full expressive power of the Mi'gmaq language.
- Striving for authenticity in the cultural as well as the natural experience.
- Incorporating a high degree of "accompanied experience" for visitors.
- Providing hands-on learning opportunities as the primary medium.
- Demonstrating how sustainable development principles are being used at the site while establishing a connection to the Mi'gmaq's historic sustainable use of the land.

## Lessons Learned

A dedicated project champion and a champion of community development is an essential resource for progress. Without that person momentum forward is halted.



Interpretation center

Support of Chief and Council is paramount in the development of high profile community-based projects. Overall community support is another essential component in the whole process.

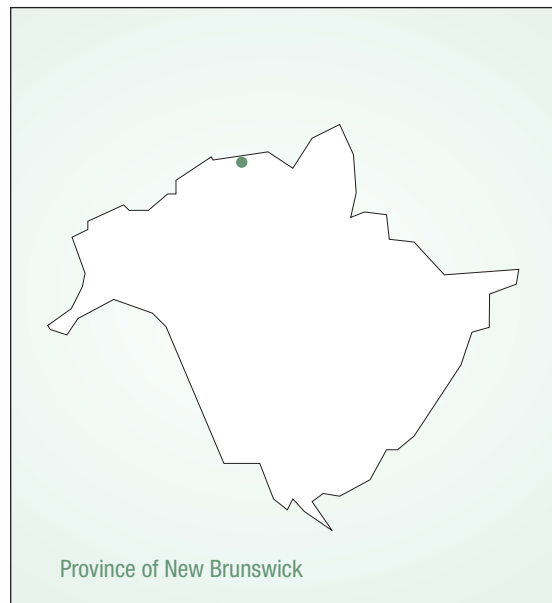
## Conclusions

The Aboriginal Heritage Garden is anticipated to open in Summer 2008 on June 21st—National Aboriginal Day.

### *Projected Economic Impact:*

- Average operating cost: \$533,000 over 5 years;
  - \$164,500 operating surplus after 3 years.
- Employment: 516 Person years
- Additional economic activity: \$2.5M in Federal taxes and \$1.4M in provincial taxes and \$686,000 in municipal taxes

## Aboriginal Heritage Gardens



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