First Nations Water Workshop
15-16 July 2010, Toronto; organized by:
• Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER)
• Simon Fraser University’s Adaptation to Climate Change Team (ACT)
• Bob Sanford, Chair of the Canadian Partnership Initiative of the United Nations International “Water for Life” Decade

Two-Eyed Seeing:
water … our life blood

Albert Marshall
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Unama’kik
“Land of Fog”
(Cape Breton Island)
Water is our life blood.

Water is in the Sacred Realm. As the Cradle of Life, water sustains everything.
Our Mi’kmaq culture is built on long term vision and our decisions were made with the next Seven Generations in mind.

Water is our life blood.
Mi’kmaq Traditional Knowledge was never meant to be static and stay in the past.

Rather, we must bring it into the present so that everything becomes meaningful in our lives and our communities.

*words of:* Elder Murdena Marshall, Eskasoni community, Mi’kmaq Nation

artist Basma Kavanagh
As Elders in Our Time

We seek to be a conduit for wisdom of our Ancestors. We seek to see with “TWO EYES” ... to take the accomplishments of the white man’s ways further by blending it with the wisdom of our Ancestors.
Our Guiding Principle

Etuaptmumk – Two-Eyed Seeing

Indigenous

Western
Two-Eyed Seeing

It is not enough to go through life with one perspective. Rather, we must embrace all the tools we have ...
Two-Eyed Seeing

LEARN ... to see from one eye with the best in our Indigenous ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the best in the Western (or mainstream) ways of knowing ...

... and learn to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.
Two-Eyed Seeing
Hard to convey as does not fit into any particular subject area or discipline ... is about life ... what you do, what kind of responsibilities you have ... is a Guiding Principle for how one lives while on Earth that covers all aspects of our lives: social, economic, environmental, etc.

Advantage:
Because you are always fine tuning your mind into different places at once, you are always looking for another perspective and better way of doing things.
Two-Eyed Seeing

Our language teaches us that everything alive is both physical and spiritual.

The onus is on the person to look at our natural world with two perspectives.

Modern science sees objects, but our language teaches us to see subjects.
Everything that we do to our natural world ... we also do to ourselves.

Artist Basma Kavanagh
If pollution exceeds the natural cleansing capacity of our ecosystems ...
If consumption of resources exceeds the carrying capacity of our ecosystems ...
If species become extinct, some of our relations are gone forever …

Eels (Kataq) are now a *Species of Concern.*

Artist Basma Kavanagh
If people are starving, they will not care about environmental sustainability ...
We have to dissociate ourselves from the “Myth of False Security” that the industrial revolution has instilled in our minds.
We need to come together as one where all these things can be taken in.

Our Mi’kmaq culture is still very much alive ... and we can extract those principles of how one can sustain oneself without compromising abilities for the future.
Through utilization of the Gifts from Creator we can become whole. We can take care of our needs: living, dwelling, physical, and spiritual.

All these things that Creator has given us are sustenance in both the physical and spiritual sense.
Is this all just philosophy?

TWO-EYED SEEING is not going to be salvation but rather through these things termed “philosophy” … … if only we would spend a few moments to determine if there are possibilities for change … to hear the stories from cultures other than our own.
MI’KMAQ LANGUAGE

Our language is the key to how our actions will unfold. Each word is much deeper than only taking care of an object. Animacy brings personal connection ... such that actions fit actions (everything is in the picture) and we are always mindful of the First Sacred Gift of Life: LOVE

EXAMPLES
1) pekajo’tmnej = consider all aspects ... action is harmonious
2) wulo’tmnej = love some one ... action is care
3) sespite’tmnej = worry about what you do ... action is guided
Netukulimk
“sustaining ourselves”
yes ... but really is a
much richer concept;
it is wholistic.
... takes you into a place where you are very conscious of how the human two-leggeds are interdependent and interconnective with the natural world ... this philosophy / ideology is so ingrained in your subconscious that you are constantly aware of not creating an imbalance.
Humans possess responsibilities.
Other species possess rights.
**Consciousness of Knowing**

*Co-existence  
Interrelativeness  
Interconnectiveness  
Community Spirit  
... with each other and  
with Mother Earth*

All people must learn **Two-Eyed Seeing** so that knowledge of the physical is not separated from wisdom of the spiritual.

artist Basma Kavanagh
Can we fathom how our way of life would be ... if we could really humble ourselves to truly work together for the benefit of all?
Wela’lioq
Thank you