

## **IKANAWTIKET (Joshua McNeely)**

### **ARISES Aboriginal Peoples participation in Species at Risk**

IKANAWTIKET is the environmental respect organization for the Traditional Ancestral Homelands (off-reserve) Aboriginal Peoples in the Maritime Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. IKANAWTIKET promotes the preservation of the natural environment by educating and informing the public about environmental issues and biodiversity in the Maritime Provinces, and Aboriginal culture, worldviews and knowledge in relation to the environment.

On June 8-10 2007, IKANAWTIKET held ARISES 2007 in Sackville, New Brunswick. ARISES 2007 was the first ever opportunity for the Traditional Ancestral Homelands Aboriginal Peoples in the Maritimes to gather with lead government officials, scientists, and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge holders in the region and nationally to discuss Aboriginal Peoples participation in Species at Risk. From this gathering of over 100 participants, IKANAWTIKET expanded its work with Aboriginal communities, government departments, academia and ENGOs to provide additional biodiversity education and participation opportunities for Aboriginal Peoples in biodiversity policy development, recovery planning and educational initiatives.

ARISES 2007 participants made three recommendations to IKANAWTIKET to better engage Aboriginal Peoples in biodiversity issues. Since then, IKANAWTIKET has focused efforts to advance those recommendations:

1. additional information – Aboriginal Community Reference Library CD-ROM (2008)
2. community level discussions – IKANAWTIKET Connecting with Communities (2007-2008)
3. more Aboriginal Youth involvement – Youth ARISES 2009 (ongoing)