



ATLANTIC REGION ABORIGINAL LANDS ASSOCIATION



Annual Report
2024 + 2025

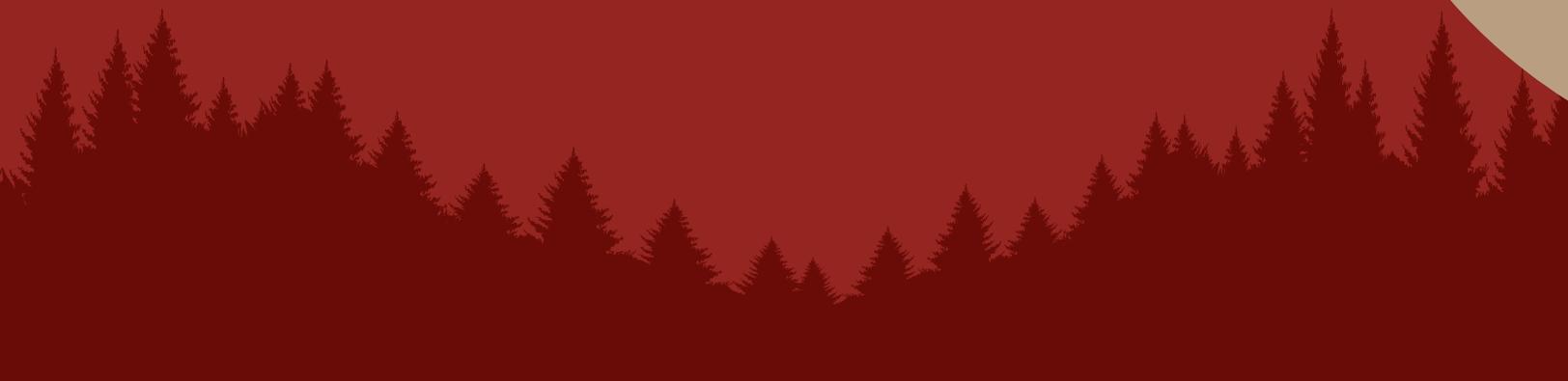
+ VISION

Stewardship of our traditional territories that honours our traditional values, Nation-to-Nation relationships and the vision of Indigenous peoples.

+ MISSION

Professional and sustainable land management using a balance of cultural and technical knowledge on behalf of First Nations in the Atlantic region and future generations.

ARALA is comprised of Land Managers from Indigenous Communities across Atlantic Canada.



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GROWTH COLLABORATION PROGRESS



+ MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Members and Friends,

On behalf of the Officers, Directors, and the Executive Director of ARALA, I am pleased to present our 2024-2025 Annual Report. I'm proud to reflect on the strides we've made in strengthening our organization's foundation and expanding its impact. This year has been marked by a renewed focus on leadership development, governance excellence, and strategic capacity building.

One of our key achievements was the delivery of five targeted training opportunities designed to build capacity for you, as members of ARALA. These training sessions covered areas such as land designation, how to build lands department, estates management, commercial leases on reserve and Indian the Indian Land Registry System.

In our commitment to board excellence, we launched a comprehensive Board Governance Training, equipping our board with the tools and insights needed to lead with confidence and clarity. This initiative was complemented by the development of a Board Governance Manual, a living document that outlines roles, responsibilities, and best practices to guide our board's work with consistency and transparency.

To ensure a smooth transition for incoming board, we also introduced a robust Orientation Package for newly elected Board members. This resource provides essential onboarding materials, organizational history and relevant documents to setting the stage for informed and engaged governance from day one.

These efforts reflect our belief that strong leadership is the cornerstone of sustainable impact. As we look ahead, we remain committed to fostering a culture of learning, accountability and innovation.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are building a future rooted in purpose, and innovation.

Wela'lin-Woliwon-Thank you,

Audrey Ward BOARD CHAIR



+ ABOUT ARALA

The Atlantic Region Aboriginal Lands Association (ARALA) was established in 2000 as a non-political, not-for-profit organization to serve as a technical land management advisory body for First Nations in the Atlantic Region. In 2019, ARALA became incorporated under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act and now represents 19 First Nations communities across New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

ARALA's member communities operate under a range of land management regimes, including the Indian Act, the First Nations Land Management Act (developmental and operational stages), and the Reserve Land and Environment Management Program (RLEMP).

ARALA's mandate is to support First Nations land management by providing capacity-building, training, and expertise.

The organization works to develop and enhance communication among First Nations land management professionals, foster networking opportunities, and promote the successes of First Nations land managers. Through its training programs, ARALA has supported land management staff in member communities, and provided opportunities for non-members to attend training and workshops. ARALA remains committed to expanding its membership and welcoming participation from additional First Nations communities across the Atlantic region.



+ MEMBERS TRAINING



Land Designation Toolkit

TRAINING WAS HELD MAY 28th TO 30th, 2024 AT THE CROWN PLAZA IN MONCTON, NB. THE TRAINING WAS PROVIDED BY DARRELL LOYER, A CERTIFIED NALMA LANDS INSTRUCTOR FROM ALBERTA.

This training offered a step-by-step guide to the reserve land designation process, with strong focus on the importance of the role of First Nations' staff in the preparation, referendum, and the approval phase was also discussed.

Participants gained foundational knowledge of land management and explored how designations are initiated, amended, or terminated. The course provides practical insights into legal frameworks, community engagement, and governance responsibilities essential to effective designation.



The participants consistently noted the training's relevance especially for those actively preparing for land designation. The practical insights and clear breakdown of responsibilities helped with understanding the process.

The instructor was well prepared, knowledgeable, approachable and highly effective in delivering complex material with clarity. Interactive exercises and prepared handouts enriched the learning experience, making the session both engaging and practical. Overall, the training was described as informative and well executed for those involved in lands management.



How to Build a First Nations Lands Department Workshop

THE WORKSHOP WAS HELD JULY 24th & 25th, 2025 IN DARTMOUTH, NS AND WAS GIVEN BY DEBRA CAMPBELL, MASTER TRAINER, NALMA.

This workshop provided participants with resources and tools for lands staff and the fundamentals of managing a lands office. The key components of the workshop included an overview of office equipment, software, record keeping, and finance, communications and records management.

The workshop successfully provided 20 participants with the tools and knowledge to initiate or enhance their lands office. Including gaining practical knowledge of office setup, equipment, software, importance of records management, finance and communications.

The feedback received from participants was very positive, the key areas mentioned were the workshop significantly improved their understanding of land-related policies and procedures, practical focus related to the content of the training that supports their work, and the resources provided.



+ ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held on September 24th & 25th, in Prince Edward Island at the Holiday Inn. The focus of the meeting was approval of the audit, and minutes. Introduction of new members and motion was passed to accept Mataya Godin, Pabineau First Nation as a new ARALA Member.

Nominations and voting for a vacant director position on the board took place, Cyrus Lambert from Miawpukek accepted his nomination and was voted in by acclamation.



National Aboriginal Lands Association

Leona Irons, Executive Director, NALMA

Founded in 2000 by First Nations Lands Managers, the National Aboriginal Lands Managers Association (NALMA) is a not-for-profit, non-political organization dedicated to advancing excellence in First Nation land management. NALMA's strength lies in its eight Regional Lands Associations (RLAs), each represented on the Board of Directors. Together, they bring diverse regional perspectives and experiences from communities under RLEMP, FAFMLM, and Comprehensive Self-Governments land regimes.

In 2025, NALMA will mark 25 years of leadership, learning and collaboration. This milestone will be celebrated at the 13th National Gathering, proudly hosted by the Atlantic Region Aboriginal Lands Association.

Professional development remains at the primary focus of NALMA's mission. Through the Professional Lands Management Certification Program (PLMCP) level II, 243 lands managers have achieved certification to date. Over the past year, NALMA delivered 24 in-person and 10 virtual training sessions, including seven new courses, ensuring lands managers continue to build strong skills and community capacity.



Understanding Financial Statements for Non-Financial Directors,

Sarah Doyle, CPA

Participants with a comprehensive overview of the board's fiduciary roles and responsibilities. The session explored the distinct roles and responsibilities of management, the Board, and the auditor in maintaining financial accountability and transparency. Participants gained a stronger understanding of key accounting concepts and financial reporting principles, including the interpretation of core financial statements. The training session covered essential elements such as assets (resources owned by or owed to the organization), liabilities (amounts owed to other), revenues (increases in economic resources through grants, contributions, or membership fees) and expenditures (costs such as salaries, rent, and office supplies. This session equipped directors with the foundational knowledge needed to effectively oversee the organization's financial health and decision-making processes.

The training is offered through the Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA) of Canada, under Professional Development. **For more information visit: <https://www.cpacanada.ca/>**

Indian Land Registry System: A Guide for First Nations

*Provided by Colleen Brant,
Registration Officer, OALA*

Overview of OALA the guide is especially useful for First Nations that manage their own lands, as it helps ensure proper documentation and legal compliance in land transactions.

The training provides knowledge and resources of the ILRS and how to complete necessary instruments & applications (Web-based Citrix). However, does not include approval of instruments registered in ILRS.

This pilot applied to First Nations whose lands are administered under: The Indian Act, or participating in the Reserve Lands and Environment Management Program (RLEMP), or the developmental phase under the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management (FAFNLM) Guide was

developed to help First Nations land technician with understanding various instruments (application pages & registering instruments).

Understand the purpose of the Indian Land Registry System and become familiar with the different terminology and be able to communicate with other land technicians in the office more effectively or outside organization such as ISC. To gain a better understanding of how to use ILRS as a research tool to gather current and historical information on any parcel of land.

This 2.5-days training provides the basics operation of the ILRS, and how to complete the necessary instruments and applications through the web-based Citrix Portal. For example, how to complete applications, Instruments and MRP forms from start to finish.

Laptops and having access to the system are required prior to training (applications can be provided prior to training) to allow access. Plans are underway for ARALA training which will take place March 18th to 20th, 2025.

Abegweit Community Visit

On September 25th the members had the opportunity to visit the Abegweit community through a specifically organized hospitality tour. The visit began with a welcome at the Abegweit Connects building, where members were introduced to the community's initiatives and an insightful presentation on economic development initiatives with a particular focus on land management strategies and their impact on community growth.

The community tour also included a visit to the Abegweit hatchery, offering members a firsthand look at the local aquaculture efforts and sustainable practices in action. The community tour concluded with a workshop called Connecting with Beads, the activity was a hands-on experience while creating personal keepsakes guided by local elder.

Links to Learning Conference

An opportunity was provided for ARALA members to attend the Links to Learning Conference which was held in Vancouver from December 2nd to 4th, 2024 at the Westin Bayshore .

Interest was expressed by two members to attend the conference, and sponsorship was provided to Sydney Paul and Courtney Sark.

The conference provided technical training and learning opportunities for participants and networking with First Nations across the country. The training is designed to support both First Nations economic development officers and land managers.



Estate Management Toolkit

Training was held on January 21-23, 2025, was provided by Alison Irons-Cummings, Estates Coordinator, Ontario Aboriginal Lands Association (OALA)



The Estates Management training was offered to equip First Nations communities with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively manage estates on reserve. The training provided a structured, step-by-step approach to estate administration, grounded in legal framework and culturally informed best practices.

Supplementary resources were provided including estate related forms and templates, relevant sections of the Indian Act (sections 42-52), Indian Estate Regulations and FHRMIRA clauses.

These resources were designed to help communities understand the legal context and procedural requirements for managing estates.

Key insights and challenges were addressed as issues in managing estates. For example, intestacy was explained and the implications when an individual dies without a will. The other issue highlighted was appointment of an administrator, particularly in cases involving family disputes, lack of eligible candidates, or unclear successions plans.

Commercial Leases on Reserve Toolkit Training

Training provided by Debra Campbell which was held on February 18th to 20th, 2025

An overview of managing commercial leases on reserve, designation processed, benefits of a land use plan, and strategic considerations for developing commercial leases on reserve lands.

The benefits of commercial leases on reserve lands presents an opportunity for economic

growth. A lease provides a legal agreement that allows businesses to operate on reserve lands under terms that respects First Nations governance and federal law.

Provides tools and knowledge including steps, legal considerations and strategies to enhance community development

Participants included eight members, four non-members and two ISC staff.

Indian Land Registry System: A guide for First Nations

March 18th to 20th, 2025 by Colleen Brant, Registration Officer, OALA

The ILRS training designed specifically for First Nations to explore the Indian Land Registry System (ILRS). This comprehensive session will help you navigate and manage land registry records effectively, covering topics such as system navigation, updates, and ensuring accuracy in land records.

Detailed instructions were provided to ensure participants were fully prepared for the training, whether they have access to Citrix to the Indian Land Registry. Information was provided on how to access the training site and ISC access forms Indian Act Bands including RLEMP and FANLMA Bands (land code). The seats available for ILRS training was limited to 10 participants at the request of the trainer, however, plans are underway to offer the training after March 2025.

Board Updates

During the board meeting held on June 11th the board appointed moved a motion to accept Audrey Ward as President and Melissa MacDonald as Vice-President effective immediately.

Development of Board Governance Manual

The Board Governance Manual

The ARALA Board Manual will serve as a guide to help to navigate the role and responsibilities of the board. This manual provides key information on ARALA's mission, governance structure, board policies, decision-making processes, and expectations for board members.

It is a foundational document that outlines the roles and responsibilities, policies, and procedures that guide the board of directors in fulfilling its governance duties.

It is designed to be a useful reference, ensuring that the information provided will help to actively participate in discussions, make informed decisions, and contribute meaningfully to ARALA's initiatives.

Orientation Session -

A guide to effective governance

The orientation provides an overview of ARALA's governance framework, board structure, and director responsibilities. The orientation session will reinforce the best practices and principles essential for effective board service.

Key governance topics include roles and responsibilities, fiduciary duties and ethical governance, strategic planning and risk management, board and executive director relationship, ARALA policies and operational structure, board meetings and decision-making processes.

Policy Review

The ARALA Employment Policies & Employment Handbook was completed and reviewed by the ARALA Board in March 2025.

UPCOMING EVENTS



AI - Masterclass

Thursday, November 13

Hilton Garden Inn
40 Highfield Street Moncton, NB



Cumulative Effects on Climate Change

March 25th & 26th, 2026

Delta Fredericton
225 Woodstock Road, Fredericton, NB





Acknowledgments

ARALA extends heartfelt

thanks

to its members, facilitators, and partners for their continued support and dedication to land management excellence. Together, we are shaping a future that honors our past while building sustainable systems for generations to come.



THE ATLANTIC REGION ABORIGINAL LANDS ASSOCIATION

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+ arala.ca



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