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## **SOI Foundation Renews Partnership with Innu Nation**

**GATINEAU, QC - June 19, 2024** — The SOI Foundation and Innu Nation are thrilled to announce the renewal of their partnership for the upcoming Innu Nation Uinipek<sup>u</sup> Expedition set to take place from July 1 to July 19, 2024.

The Innu Nation Uinipek<sup>u</sup> Expedition is an initiative of Innu Nation to create exposure for Innu youth in marine science and to gather data for management of Innu Nation's waters. The experience will combine both Innu environmental knowledge and western marine science.

The expedition will take place aboard the MV Polar Prince and helps support the Innu Nation's inshore monitoring and stewardship efforts in the marine zones near the communities of Natuashish and Sheshatshiu. This expedition aims to collect and share knowledge required for evidence-based decisions on best-practice for marine management.

Innu Tshenut (Elders), Guardians, leaders, and community members from Sheshatshiu and Natuashish Innu First Nation Reserves and researchers and educators will collaborate to deliver hands-on experiential programming. Innu youth will learn how interdisciplinary research is conducted. Activities will include water sampling, deep sea surveys, beach and coastal environment surveys, seabird and marine mammal observation, among others. This data collection is crucial to the Innu Nation's efforts in recording long term environmental changes in its priority marine areas.

"This expedition represents a significant step towards our shared goals of marine management, community empowerment, and Indigenous-led guardianship," said Grand Chief Simon Pokue of the Innu Nation. "This is a meaningful relationship for our people. We are excited to embark on this journey once again to empower our youth and communities."

As an Innu-led capacity-building research program, the expedition provides a unique and innovative model for a two-eyed seeing approach to ocean management. Building on the experiences and learnings from 2023, which gathered more ocean science data than has ever been gathered in these areas, the Innu Nation will continue with its marine stewardship priorities. The specific focus for 2024 is on young Innu coming together with a

vibrant group of western scientists and Innu knowledge keepers to forge an interest in and understanding of the lands and waters of Nitassinan (the Innu homeland).

"SOI Foundation is honored to continue our partnership with the Innu Nation for another important and successful expedition," said SOI Founder, Geoff Green. "This year's focus on youth engagement and skills development underscores our commitment to fostering leadership and stewardship for our coasts and ocean."

The expedition will explore two marine zones in central and northern Labrador. Leg 1 will take place from July 1st to July 10th and Leg 2 from July 10th to July 19th.

The Innu Nation Uinipek<sup>u</sup> Expedition is made possible through a collaborative effort between Innu Nation and Students on Ice and with the support of federal and other Indigenous partners: Uluooweg, Mamu Tshishkutamashitau Innu Education, Mushuau Innu Natuashish School, Sheshatshiu Innu School, Canada Goose, the Canadian Museum of Nature, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the Canadian Wildlife Service.

For more information and updates on the expedition, please visit [soifoundation.org/en/innu-2024/](https://soifoundation.org/en/innu-2024/) and follow [Innu Nation](#) and the [SOI Foundation](#) Facebook pages.

### **About Innu Nation**

The Innu Nation is the organization that formally represents the Innu of Labrador, approximately 3,200 people, most of whom live in the two Innu communities of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. The Innu Nation's mandate is to protect the interests of the Innu people and to oversee all its political and business affairs, including the fundamental principles of working towards sovereignty and self-government and the physical, emotional, and spiritual healing of its membership.

### **About the SOI Foundation**

SOI is at the forefront of expeditionary education, offering transformative experiences to diverse youth worldwide. Our expeditions to the Polar Regions and places in between unite youth and educators, foster lasting connections, and encourage global citizenship. Our mission is to provide transformative experiences that educate, inspire, connect and empower youth. For more information, visit [soifoundation.org](https://soifoundation.org).

### **Media Contacts:**

Donna Paddon, Innu Nation Communications  
Phone: (709) 899-5799  
E-mail: [donna.paddon@kashkuan.ca](mailto:donna.paddon@kashkuan.ca)

Justin Sadler, Sr. Writer, SOI Foundation

Phonel: (613) 807-7132

E-mail: [justin@soifoundation.org](mailto:justin@soifoundation.org)