



## Introduction to the Toolkit

### ◆ Welcome

Welcome to *Finding Your Voice, Environmental Toolkit for Aboriginal Women*, developed in conjunction with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). This Toolkit was designed to empower, assist, and engage Aboriginal women when dealing with environmental issues affecting their communities.

### ◆ Background

The groundwork for this *Environmental Toolkit for Aboriginal Women* resulted from an NWAC Environmental Roundtable meeting in July 2008. Graduate students in the Master's of Resource and Environmental Management (MREM) Program at Dalhousie University volunteered to produce this Toolkit. Throughout the creation of this Toolkit, guidance was provided by NWAC members and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO).

The Toolkit is meant to provide relevant information and provide Aboriginal women with the tools they may need to ensure their issues are being addressed and their perspectives are being heard when looking to effectively participate in any environmental decision-making process.

The goals of this Toolkit are to:

- Provide Aboriginal women with information on how to proactively get involved in an environmental issue;
- Provide Aboriginal women with skills on how to research information about their environmental concerns;
- Bring Aboriginal women together to help promote sustainable development in their communities;
- Focus attention on the various processes, procedures, and important decisions that accompany environmental projects;
- Offer suggestions on how to bring Aboriginal women together to help create an environmental vision for their communities.



## ◆ **Scope of the Toolkit**

The information found in this Toolkit is broken down into sections. Each section contains valuable information to help you deal with a wide variety of environmental issues.

## ◆ **Structure of the Toolkit**

- Section 1: Introduction to the Toolkit
- Section 2: Getting Started
- Section 3: Being Proactive
- Section 4: Traditional Ecological Knowledge
- Section 5: When to ask for help? How to ask for help?
- Section 6: Environmental Assessment Basics

Each section can be used independently of the other sections. The Toolkit is meant to guide the user towards asking the right questions, it is not intended to answer questions.

Additional resources are recommended within each section and also in the Appendix of this Toolkit.

## ◆ **Table of Contents**

A table of contents is provided to allow the user to find topics quickly.



## ◆ Glossary and Acronyms (*in brochure*)

A glossary contains definitions for terms used in this Toolkit.

Throughout this Toolkit numerous acronyms will be used as short forms of the word. For example, Native Women's Association of Canada will be shown as NWAC. The first time the word appears it will be written out in full, after the first appearance of the word the acronym will be used.

## ◆ Additional Resources

At the end of each section additional resources are recommended for use in your environmental discussions. In most cases, the guide will direct you to relevant websites and research documents.

## ◆ Handouts

At the end of each section (if relevant) a one-page handout is found. The handouts provide valuable information covered in each section.

## ◆ Checklists

Additionally, at the end of some sections checklist(s) can be found. The checklist(s) provide key information, questions, and important aspects to consider when you are addressing that specific topic. The checklists are meant to be used as a general guide and may be used for variety of environmental issues. Checklists are meant to be generic and may not be applicable to every environmental issue.

## ◆ Notes

To encourage you to take notes blank pages are inserted throughout the document.

