



Fish-WIKS FEATURES

the newsletter of Fish-WIKS, Fisheries - Western & Indigenous Knowledge Systems

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WHAT IS Fish-WIKS (FISHERIES -WESTERN AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS)

Fish-WIKS is a five-year collaborative partnership project funded by the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada in 2012 comprising partners from the Assembly of First Nations, BC First Nations Fisheries Council, Unam'ki Institute of Natural Resources, Vancouver Island University, University of Guelph, University of Toronto and Dalhousie University. The research looks at understanding indigenous knowledge systems and how they can be used to enhance fisheries governance and management in Canada. **The research aims to identify the commonalities and differences in**

indigenous knowledge systems in four distinct regions and communities across Canada (Tla-o-qui-aht, BC; Repulse Bay, Nunavut; Nipissing, Ontario; and Eskasoni, Nova Scotia) and **to understand western knowledge systems currently used in governmental decision making**. Working with both users and decision makers, key research questions will focus on examining the extent to which western and indigenous knowledge systems influence fisheries governance and understanding how distinct indigenous knowledge systems can improve current efforts.

Knowledge Systems in a Nutshell

Stephanie Boudreau, Fish-WIKS Post Doctoral Fellow

Western and indigenous knowledge systems are key components of our fisheries governance research here at Fish-WIKS. If the concept of a knowledge system is not immediately clear to you, I was in the same boat. A knowledge system is, in essence, the process by which we acquire, value, control, and share knowledge. More simply it can be thought of as how we know what we know and how we use what we've learned.

The scientific method, for example, is a western knowledge system used to systematically test questions about what we think we know or want to know. It is a series of steps, or a process, beginning with observations of something you find curious, leading to a research question (or a hypothesis), followed closely by making predictions of what you expect the outcome will be, formally testing your question, then analysing and interpreting your results, and finally communicating your findings and re-evaluating the work to begin the steps again when you have something else to test.

An example of an indigenous knowledge system would be traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). TEK is experiential, most often orally transmitted, and passed from generation to generation. This knowledge is based on traditional belief systems, relationships to the environment, and community practices, and takes place on the 'land' rather than in the 'lab'.

When I first started asking Aboriginal partners and TEK practitioners what the essence of an indigenous knowledge system was, unanimously the reply would be, "everything is connected". As an ecologist interested in ecosystems, this explanation made me pause. I could argue that the same is true in my field of research, and yet, I had a feeling that I was missing something very important (and that perhaps my scientific "roots" were showing).

After attending a seminar series focused on traditional knowledge where Dr. Deborah McGregor, from the University of Toronto (Fish-WIKS steering committee member and Anishinabe from Whitefish River First Nation), was a speaker, I learned that when setting research objectives, Dr. McGregor not only takes the present into account but considers those who have gone before her, and those yet to come. Mr. Henry Lickers, Director of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (Department of the Environment), helped me to understand that the scientific method does not include the knowledge of spirit(s). One of his examples was burning tobacco in the morning for a successful hunt, equating this practice with the ceremonial ribbon cuttings of highways for the safe passage of travellers. These two insights, (1) taking past and future generations into account and (2) including the spiritual element in daily life, really brought

home what is meant by “everything is connected” and its influence on the process by which traditional knowledge is acquired, valued, controlled and shared, as distinct from the western scientific process.

At Fish-WIKS, our research is a collaborative effort with western and indigenous partners from across Canada (north, south, east, and west). We are seeking to understand the processes by which knowledge is gained from each of these different perspectives, so as to enhance our decision making with respect to the sustainability of our fishery resources for all Canadians, now and in the future.

Coordinator’s Corner



Terry (Seit-Cha) Dorward
Tla-o-qui-aht: Terry joined the Fish-WIKS team in January 2013 as Community Liaison Coordinator for the Tla-o-qui-aht research area. Terry is the Tribal Parks Project Manager for Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies and a History Minor from Vancouver

Island University and has worked at developing Tribal Parks aquatic and terrestrial resource management programs. Terry is from Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations and is currently living in the newly-developed village of Ty-His-Tanis.

Fish-WIKS Research Group Visits Tla-o-qui-aht

As a national project focussing on four distinct locations in Canada, the Fish-WIKS project group plans to conduct group sessions and visits in all four locations. In late August 2013, the group met in Tofino, British Columbia, located centrally in the BC project site, Tla-o-qui-aht. The Fish-WIKS group has grown during its first year and, along with the project Steering Committee, now includes four Community Liaison Coordinators, one Post Doctoral Fellow and four PhD students. Members of the group got together to advance project planning including research activities, knowledge mobilization and community support.



Members of the Fish-WIKS group gather around the Tree of Life during a hike guided by members of the Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks.



Freshly-caught salmon cooked traditionally on the beach near the Esowista First Nation Community



The Fish-WIKS research group heads out for a tour with Captain Shawn Quick, Tribal Park Guardian, at the helm.



Some members of the Fish-WIKS research group are working on the revitalization of the gooseneck barnacle industry in the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation. A just-harvested specimen is shown above.

BC PhD Student Begins Work with Community

On April 17, 2013, Saul Milne, PhD student at University of Victoria and recipient of a Fish-WIKS study grant, met with Fish-WIKS Community Liaison Coordinator Terry Dorward, Tla-o-qui-aht Education Coordinator Tammy Dorward, and Dr. Grant Murray at the first team meeting for the British Columbia Fish-WIKS group.

Tla-o-qui-aht provided cultural/linguistic research materials and outlined how they currently structure their fisheries governance. Saul was introduced to current members of Tla-o-qui-aht's administration, elected Chief and Council and a member of their ha-wiith (chiefly or wealthy one in terms of material and spiritual sense) (Atleo, 2011, p. x).

The team discussed the objectives of the Fish-WIKS project and began to identify potential areas of application with Tla-o-qui-aht Ha-hoolth-ee (land and its resources owned by a chief) (Atleo, 2011, p. x). The group identified several areas for development including key community research participants, Nuu-Chah-Nulth academics and other communities that could be collaborators in the research project. Next steps for Saul's Phd studies were also outlined.

Watch a Video

"The Ocean is our Garden – Fishing Rights for Nuu-chah-nulth" (www.vimeo.com/70894693)



Nuu-chah-nulth Nations Celebrate BC Supreme Court Ruling

Amended from: <http://uuathluk.ca/wordpress/litigation/fishingrights>

After more than a decade of legal preparations and 123 days in court, Nuu-chah-nulth Nations celebrated a major legal victory in November 2009. That's when BC Supreme Court Justice Nicole Garson ruled that Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations have an Aboriginal right to harvest and sell all species of fish found within their territories.

"At contact, the Nuu-chah-nulth were overwhelmingly a fishing people," she wrote in her 307-page judgment. "They depended almost entirely on their harvest of the resources of the ocean and rivers to sustain themselves." She added that Nuu-chah-nulth people were able to prove a long history of trading and selling fisheries resources in their case against Canada and British Columbia.

"Today this decision confirms what we've known all along. We have been stewards of our ocean resources for hundreds of generations, and the Government of Canada was wrong to push us aside in their attempts to prohibit our access to the sea resources our people depend upon," said NTC President Cliff Atleo, Sr.

How the Case Began

Since time immemorial, Nuu-chah-nulth people have built our societies, economies, and culture around fishing. After Confederation, Canada encouraged our ancestors to remain fishing people by allocating small fishing stations as reserves, while denying the larger land claims of our Nations. Over the next hundred years, regulations by Canada diminished and excluded Nuu-chah-nulth participation in the West Coast fishery.

Attempts to reach negotiated settlements through the treaty process produced few results. In June of 2003, Nuu-chah-nulth plaintiff Nations filed a Writ of Summons against Canada and British Columbia seeking reconciliation.

The claims of the Nations were based on Aboriginal rights to harvest and sell sea resources, Aboriginal title to fishing territories and fishing sites, and the unique obligations of the Crown arising through the reserve-creation process.

The Result

Six years later, Mme Justice Garson ruled that Nuu-chah-nulth Nations have a right to fish and sell fish within our territories. While Mme Justice Garson's decision was a clear victory for Nuu-chah-nulth, she was also clear in her ruling that this right to harvest and sell fish is not an unrestricted commercial right. Implementation will require negotiations with the governments of British Columbia and Canada.

Today Nuu-chah-nulth Nations involved in the case are attempting to engage Canada (through the Department of Fisheries and

Oceans) in meaningful negotiations to implement the rights based fisheries. To date progress has been slow, focused on a small chinook fishery in the summers of 2012 and 2013. For Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, these fisheries have been a step to re-building their fishing economies. Currently more than 30 fishers from Tla-o-qui-aht participate in T'aaq-wiihak fisheries.

For more information, please check out : <http://uuathluk.ca/wordpress/> or contact the T'aaq-wiihak Fisheries Coordinator Alex Gagne at taaqwiihak@gmail.com or 250-266-1071

Student Profiles



Saul DH Milne is the Fish-WIKS PhD student at the University of Victoria in the Department of Geography where he has been enrolled since 2013. Saul is working with Dr. Grant Murray, Fish-WIKS partner in BC. Saul has completed his M.A. at Royal Roads University and his undergraduate studies at the University of British Columbia. His research

interests lie in the area of applied indigenous epistemology and metaphysics, qualitative research methodologies, natural resource management and multi-party decision-making. In his spare time, Saul can be found reading, bicycling or enjoying good food and movies. Saul lives with his wife, Arden.



Nicole Latulippe completed her BA in Geography of Regional Planning and International Development at Nipissing University, her MA in Geography and International Development Studies at the University of Guelph, and is currently working on a PhD in Geography at the University of Toronto. Nicole has

had the privilege of doing research, volunteering, and working internationally, but her experience with a regional First Nation organization in Ontario has been most profound, rooting her understanding of and commitment to social and environmental justice back home, in Robinson Huron Treaty territory. Nicole is from North Bay, Ontario, and for her dissertation research she is excited to work in collaborative partnership with Nipissing First Nation. With guidance from her thesis advisor, Dr. Deborah McGregor, Nicole is inspired by the two-row wampum to bring western qualitative and Indigenous research methodologies together in a critical and constructive way.

East Coast Logo Winner



Lenita Denny, second from right, accepts a cheque from Leon Denny in recognition of her winning design for the East Coast portion of the Fish-WIKS project logo. Also in the photo, far left, Shelley Denny, Fish-WIKS Steering Committee member and Tyson Paul, far right, Fish-WIKS Community Liaison Coordinator for Eskasoni.

East Coast winning logo by Lenita Denny



Visit to Eskasoni

Stephanie Boudreau, Fish-WIKS Post Doctoral Fellow

Somewhere in between listening to Chief Leroy Denny drum and sing, sharing a lobster (jakej in Mi'kmaq) lunch on board Eskasoni Cultural Journey's vessel Kaplie'l, and speaking with Elder Albert Marshall, I looked up and appreciated the beauty of where we were and the significance of the Bras d'Or Lake to the community of Eskasoni. On Tuesday, July 16, Lucia Fanning, Chris Milley, and I travelled to Eskasoni for a meet and greet expertly organized by community coordinator Tyson Paul and Fish-WIKS partner Shelley Denny of the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources.



Chief Leroy Denny on board the Kaplie'l near Eskasoni, NS



Eskasoni Elder, Dr. Albert Marshall, and Chief Leroy Denny

After meeting Lenita Denny, our young and talented logo contest winner, and taking part in a smudging ceremony, we boarded the Kaplie'l shortly after 10 am and set off for a beautiful day of conversation and connection on the estuary. Also joining us were Thomas Johnson (Executive Director of Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife Commission), Charles Blaise Young (Eskasoni Band Councillor), and guides Kenny Stevens, Richard Denny and our Captain Lindsay Paul. We learned much about the importance of Atlantic salmon and the American eel to the



In traditional dress after the smudging ceremony in Eskasoni

community of Eskasoni and experienced firsthand an important goal of the Fish-WIKS project; to share our knowledge to better understand how best to manage the fisheries. Thank you to the community of Eskasoni for hosting us, to Tyson and Shelley for such a wonderful event, and to Eskasoni Cultural Journeys for providing the experience- the Captain, guides, lu'skinikin (traditional bread), and gatherers at the shore. We all look forward to our next opportunity to visit.

Launch of Fish-WIKS Website

Visit our new website at www.fishwiks.ca



Contact Us

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