

SFU

ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FACING BC'S FIRST NATIONS:

**A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE INDIGENIZATION, DECOLONIZATION
COMMITTEE (IDC) FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENT**

10AM - 3PM October 30, 2024
Halpern Centre, Simon Fraser University,
Burnaby Campus
Hosted by SFU's Faculty of Environment



ATTENDEES

Facilitator

Anne Solomon – Professor, School of Resource & Environmental Management, Faculty of Environment

IDC Members

Cliff Alteo, IDC Chair – Associate Professor, Graduate Program Chair, School of Resource & Environmental Management, Faculty of Environment

Naomi Krogman – Dean, Faculty of Environment, and Faculty in School of Resource & Environmental Management, Faculty of Environment

Zoe Todd – Associate Professor, Department of Indigenous Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Governance and Freshwater Fish Futures

Vicki Kelly – Associate Professor, Faculty of Education

Barbara Hilden – Director, Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Environment

Joanna Ashworth – Research Associate, Special Projects, Faculty of Environment

Dana Lepofsky – Distinguished Professor, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Environment

Regrets:

Rudy Reimer – Associate Professor, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Environment

Kevin O’Neill – Counsellor, Tsleil-Waututh Nation

Invited Guests/Nations

Leigh Joseph, Squamish – Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Faculty of Environment

Jessica Lukawiecki, Research and Resource Management Sto:lo Nation

Julie Nielsen, Cultural Wood Access and Forestry Technical Advisor, Nanwakolas Council Society (representing six member First Nations)

Tanner Timothy, Heritage, Referrals and GIS Manager, Kwantlen Lands, Resources and Stewardship Kwantlen First Nation

Jessica Blesch, MA. Archaeology & Guardian Manager, Kwikwetlem

Francesca Fogliata, Environment & Stewardship Manager, Referrals and Stewardship, Kwikwetlem

Andrea Lyall, RPF PhD T'Se'kame' Forestry LP, Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation (KHFN)

Morgan Ritchie, Heritage & Environment Manager Sts'ailes Nation Sts'ailes and Post Doctoral Researcher, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Environment

Kira Sawatzky, Aquatic Biologist, Sumas First Nation

Regrets:

Willie Charlie, CEO, Sts'ailes First Nation

Natasha Youngchief, Sumas First Nation

Additional Guests

Dorothy Christian – Associate Director, Indigenous Policy and Pedagogy, Graduate Studies

Chris Lewis – Indigenous Executive Lead, President's Office

Stuart Poyntz – Professor and Associate Director, School of Communication, Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology, and Director of Community Engaged Research Centre (CERi)

Jonathan Boron – Instructor/PhD Candidate, School of Resource & Environmental Management, Faculty of Environment

Shawn Chartrand – Assistant Professor, School of Environmental Science, Faculty of Environment

Laurie Wood – Director, Communications and Marketing, Faculty of Environment's Dean's Office

Elyna Foong – Executive Assistant, Faculty of Environment's Dean's Office

Donna Dove – Director, Student Affairs, Faculty of Environment's Dean's Office

Melissa Kendzierski, Graphic Recorder

1. WELCOME AND CONTEXT SETTING

We understand “environment” to encompass issues related to stewardship, health, food sovereignty, heritage, title and rights. –Dana Lepofsky

Land Acknowledgement - Cliff Atleo, Professor and IDC Chair

Cliff acknowledged that we are invited guests on the ancestral and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the səliłwətəl (Tseil-Waututh), kʷikʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations, on which SFU Burnaby is located.

As the Chair, he welcomed all to the special meeting of the Indigenization and Decolonization

Committee (the IDC) of the Sea, Land and Sky (SLS) initiative and highlighted some of the ways the members are intended to provide insight, input, and recommendations on the SLS activities within the Faculty. Cliff also critically challenged us to think about the ways that we are truly doing decolonizing work within the context of the university. Are we doing this work in material ways? E.g., through land back or providing tuition waivers to Indigenous students? He asked us to consider this seriously.

As an advisor to the Faculty of Environment's Dean, Naomi Krogman on Indigenous issues, Cliff reflected on their good working relationship and the way the Dean listens and is actively making progress on programs, hiring practices, curriculum innovation and other efforts to Indigenize the Faculty.

Context Setting - Naomi Krogman, Dean Faculty of Environment

This is a special day for me as it is a way to practice collaboration - to find ways to work together. – Naomi Krogman

The Dean clarified that the aim of gathering is to listen and learn from the invited First Nations who will share the pressing environment issues they face. Additionally, the aim of the meeting is to build a foundation for partnerships with First Nations who, she says, are true leaders in environmental stewardship. “Through working together we can learn different ways of doing our work – of teaching, learning and research in this place that we live in.”

Through a dialogic process, the Dean pointed out that we will listen for commonalities and synergies among the communities. In terms of follow up, SFU will seek to find ways to collaborate with Nations on some of these issues through an initiative called the Knowledge Exchange.

The Dean thanked all for attending, saying that meeting in person with members of the newly formed IDC and invited community members and other guests is particularly meaningful. She went on to provide some context for the meeting and briefly described the Faculty as relatively small with 60 faculty members and approximately 932 undergraduate students and 214 graduate students with four academic units: Geography, Resource and Environmental Management, Archaeology and Environmental Science. She also shared some of the

activities of the Sea, Land and Sky initiative, work that has focused on key actions including: Hiring more Indigenous faculty; supporting curriculum innovation; hosting staff and faculty learning circles; forming an Indigenous Advisory Committee, (the IDC); promoting and supporting more land-based learning such as the course offered this year for Undergraduates; strengthening the Indigenous student recruitment strategy; partnering with Tsleil-Waututh Nation on a learning exchange/community engagement initiative; developing and implementing a Graduate land-based learning field school with Sts’ailes Nation and; developing an Indigenous-led research “knowledge exchange” in collaboration with SFU CERi (Community Engaged Research Initiative). A description on related activities in the Faculty of Environment can be found in Appendix 1.



2. INTRODUCTIONS

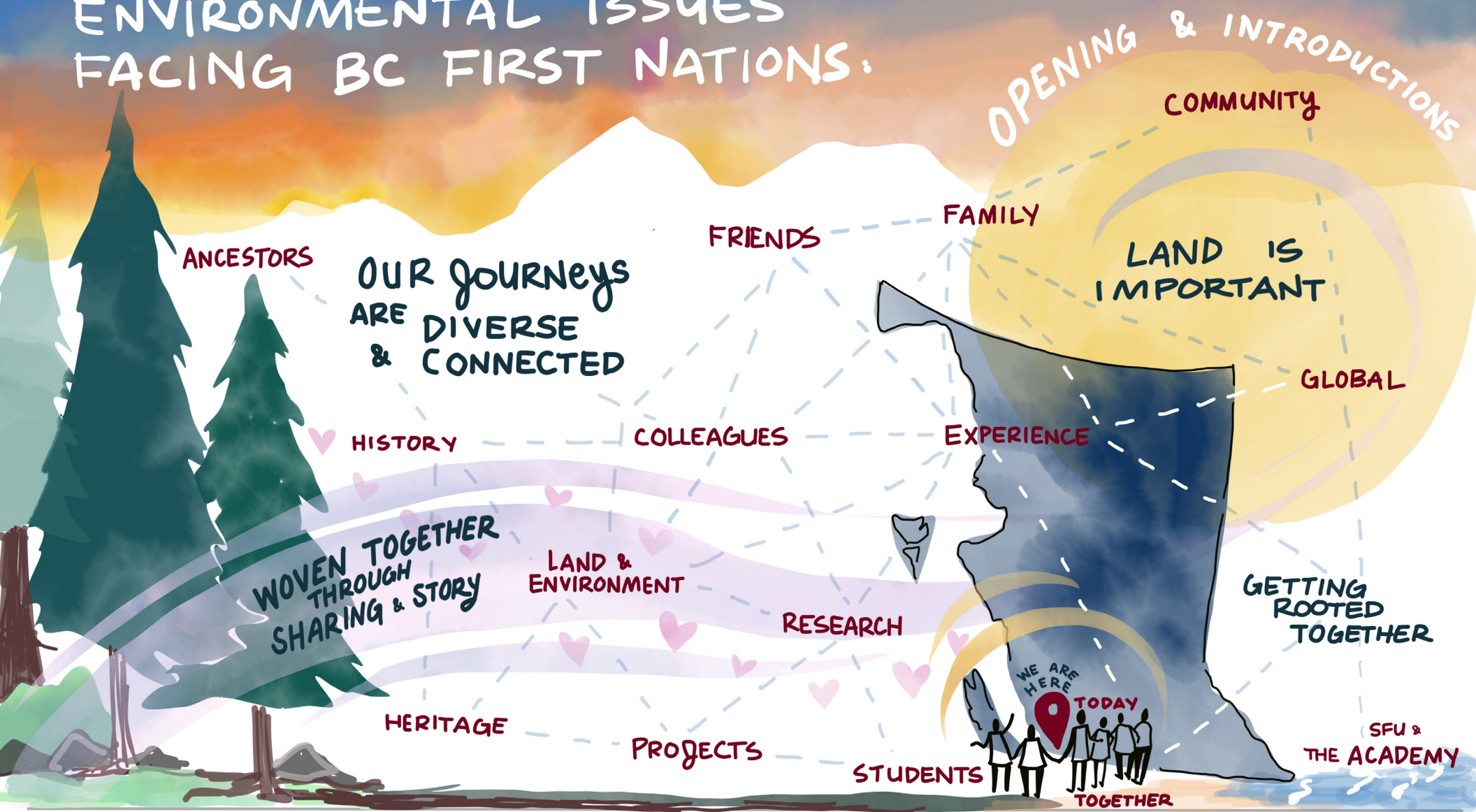
I am a person, rooted in place. We are all connected. – Chris Lewis

Anne Solomon, a professor in the School of Resource and Environmental Management, facilitated the session and introduced herself as “someone who loves to listen to communities and learn about their projects.” While trained as a marine ecologist, Anne has learned to facilitate through working closely with Indigenous teachers and knowledge keepers.

The opening round of introductions invited all 25 participants to share something about themselves and to mention one relationship they have with one other person in the room.

The introductions were deep and meaningful and the web of connections that arose was significant. This process also helped the group begin to understand each other’s connections to land, learning, lineage, research and work.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FACING BC FIRST NATIONS:



3. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FACING BC FIRST NATIONS - ROUND TABLE

First Nations representatives were invited to discuss and brainstorm ways in which research can help tackle some of the environmental concerns facing their Nation. The challenges identified flowed freely and it became quickly apparent that there were many shared concerns as well as opportunities for collaboration, not just between the Nation and the university but among the Nations. What follows is a brief summary of the issues identified and potential foci for research.



Leigh Joseph, Assistant Professor, SFU Faculty of Environment and member, Squamish Nation

- Focus on community-led processes to reacquaint members with plant knowledge and food systems
- Examine the impact of colonial erasure on traditional knowledges
- Focus on sovereignty and creating safe spaces to access foods and plant medicine
- Foster / find a site for land-based learning and community-based experiences including restoration projects through an Indigenous lens
- Identify a site in Squamish for Indigenous-led

research, economic development and agriculture – i.e., the Yukon College model with local First Nations was cited as an example.

- Study the industrial activities and toxic impacts on the Squamish Estuary and land
- Focus on community-led, long-term learning with traditional knowledge vs short term research projects.

Jessica Lukawiecki, Research and Resource Management, Sto:lo Nation

Sto:lo takes a watershed approach to planning.

Some concerns and priorities include:

- What is the impact of the Sumas Lake drainage on salmon?
- Issues with research – e.g., Research framing and work plan of a government funded research project looking at Species at Risk does not account for the wholistic approach to all species, not just those at risk. Indigenous understanding of species and how well they are doing.
- Impacts of mining on Skaggit Headwaters
- What is the role of government and Sto:lo in IPCA areas? (Note: Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) are lands and waters where Indigenous governments have the primary role in protecting and conserving ecosystems through Indigenous laws, governance, and knowledge systems).
- Transmountain and Enbridge – need to bring archaeological perspective, would like to see collaborative stewardship
- Indigenous Guardian programs – interested in exploring ways to expand this group
- Currently involved in collaborative research with levels of government on climate change and development
- There are many projects and not enough capacity. We need help leveraging the funding we do have.

Julie Nielsen, Cultural Wood Access and Forestry Technical Advisor, Nanwakolas Council Society (representing six member First Nations)

The Nations within the Council are focused on regional forestry planning that includes using ecological and cultural values.

Main concerns include:

- The impact of forestry, climate and other factors on salmon populations and habitat indicators (e.g., stream water temperature and biological communities)
- Enhancing regional forestry planning (to develop new strategic and operational forestry practices and stewardship approaches to important cultural values/resources within the member Nations' territories)
- Landscape Reserve Design (which involves the identification and designation of areas off limits to harvesting in the Great Bear Rainforest based on ecological and cultural forest values and targets from policy-- the Great Bear Rainforest Land Use Order)
- Research needs are, in part, driven by the community members of the member Nations and talking with them surfaces priorities shared by different Nations
- Priorities of the member Nations drive search for specific funding for research proposals
- Wildlife monitoring to understand species movement and occupancy, e.g., grizzlies, elk and salmon
- A need to understand the effects of forestry practices (including those implemented under ecosystem-based management in the Great Bear Rainforest) through targeted experimentation (as opposed to simply baseline monitoring)
- Use of Indigenous plants, developing a forest food garden. Forest food and medicine gardens are not just about producing food/medicines, but are grounded in peoples' relationship to land and can stimulate the reinvigorating of cultural practices and support food sovereignty.
- Great Bear Rain Forest – studies for policy implications

General research needs:

- Studies that provide a context/feedback for adaptive management strategies
- Studies with policy implications/applications

Projects that focus on cultural needs of communities (e.g., forest food garden and food sovereignty)

Tanner Timothy, Heritage, Referrals and GIS Manager, Kwantlen Lands, Resources and Stewardship (KLRS) - Kwantlen and Tla'amin

- Legacy issues and adjacent territories
- Remediation of natural resources
- Transportation corridors
- Impacts of agricultural run-off which includes the 6PPD chemical compound from tires used to help tires from wearing down and is known to cause damage to fish.
- Impacts of highway stormwater pollution on salmon
- Upstream and downstream impacts on fish and fish habitat
- Ways to support/advocate for the resurgence of traditional foods and plants
- Woodlot management – what are more ethical forestry practices?
- Climate change impacts to environment
- Flooding
- Invasive species

Jessica Blesch MA. Archaeology & Guardian Manager & Francesca Fogliata, Environment & Stewardship Manager, Referrals and Stewardship, Kwikwetlem

- Need for baseline data (today and pre-contact)
 - Vegetation, wildlife, salmon populations, hydrology and geomorphology
- Forest watershed and cumulative impact of dam on salmon runs, water flow and spawning habitat (eulachon, salmon), nutrient levels of lake. Physical damage to fish going through dam outlet.
 - Outmigration passage
 - Outmigration survivability
 - Increase nutrient levels in Coquitlam Lake to support sockeye restoration. What level of nutrients can be added yet maintain water quality?
- Community Education methods to educate residents about storm drains draining into creeks and share best practices to protect salmon and their habitat
- Study drinking water regulations and determine possible impacts of fertilization (e.g. introduction

- of salmon carcasses into the reservoir).
- Impact of concrete mining in close proximity to the Coquitlam River
- Nation's access to Coquitlam watershed which is a protected area
- Dam effects on river
 - Flushing flows for sediment accumulation
 - Researching the effectiveness of different solutions to issues caused by the dam ex., sedimentation at the mouth, gravel recruitment
- Studying alternative methods (non-ground disturbing) to manage invasive species in sensitive areas (reed canary grass/blackberry)
- Research needed on how vibration (from construction or railway) affects fish and wildlife.

**Andrea Lyall, RPF PhD T'Se'kame' Forestry LP
Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation (KHFN)**

We are the most researched people in the world!
Starting with Franz Boas

- Big focus on rebuilding housing
- Salvage logging, beach salvaging current activities, looking into buying forest tender in the territory
- IPCA programs
- Removal of 12 Fish Farms in the regions
- Notes that research with communities takes extra time and yet also recognizes that for some research projects timing can be short and specific and does not always have to be labour intensive. For example, think watershed level vs project level. What makes restoration projects successful?
- We want to know 'is the work we are doing effective?' 'Where we going to be 10+ years from now? Can we rank projects and impacts in terms of the effectiveness? This particularly relates to the restoration of fish streams
- There is a lot of research conducted in the watershed areas and it would be helpful to have a lit review of all the research that has been conducted in the territory
- Indigenous methodology – curriculum for teaching students about the legacy of colonialism
- Data sovereignty is a huge topic and of great concern – there is an ongoing need to continue to recognize the impact. For example, the Province uses drones to survey the territory and it may be accessed through Freedom of Information. It may reveal sensitive information such as cultural

- cedars, etc.
- We need good LIDAR information and that is often hard to come by
- Forestry input into land use planning with protected area within two watershed areas
- Protection of large cedars
- An example of a powerful knowledge exchange project is a Master's student project that was presented to the Society of Ethnobotany session on Indigenous Conservation Policies. The peer review paper was cited 137 times.
- We need to formulate research questions – the projects don't have to be large
- Focus on praxis-based research – that is, to ask, 'what does the community think is useful?' E.g., a study of the estuary and Indigenous plants and their role in water purification
- Focus on "Roll-Up" projects that help the community, e.g., most Nations are concerned with cumulative effects, project based work, overload of information - it seems simple, but a lit review / or an assessment by territory / watershed would be helpful.

**Morgan Ritchie, Heritage & Environment Manager,
Sts'ailes Nation**

- Wildlife management area and governance of it – assessing a values driven approach
- We will work with the Province on re-developing the Wildlife Management Area (WMA), and this time around it'll be co-developed and co-managed.
- How can the area be utilized in a way that considers PEOPLE and wildlife?
- Forest management practices and policies in the territory
- Interested in waterways (i.e., restoring systems, building resilience)
- Connected impact to waterways including the Harrison River fishery
- Food sovereignty connected to social services
- Drug and alcohol treatment – new facility that is Indigenous-led health
- Traditional foods initiative led by Angela Paul
- Main issue is information overload and an over reliance on consultants and not enough capacity to manage information.
- We are reflecting on how we respond to government relationships regarding territorial rights
- How do we make sure levels of government

(Province, municipal and federal) are working cooperatively but also looking to the Nation BEFORE plans are developed and that plans are complimentary

- How do we ensure that our land-use plans are complementary?

Kira Sawatzky, Aquatic Biologist, Sumas First Nation.

- Food sovereignty, return to the land. Have a medicinal and cultural plant access.
- Habitat Connectivity, both terrestrial and aquatic. Address salmon passage issues throughout the

valley and improve infrastructure (i.e., culverts & pump stations) to be fish-friendly.

- Water Quality and identifying baseline data for testing specific contaminants (ie. 6PPD Quinone). Developing a long-term water quality program.
- Biodiversity & Species/Habitat at risk.
- Long-term effective flood mitigation. Methods that venture away from dredging and diking and implement more Indigenous knowledge into designs. Let the land inform the design and let the water do the work.



LISTENING CIRCLE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FACING BC FIRST NATIONS

STS'AILES NATION

HARM of MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
 UNDERSTANDING VALUE
 HUMANS AS PART of THE ECOSYSTEM
 FOOD SOVEREIGNTY + CONNECTIONS TO SOCIAL SERVICES
 DATA MANAGEMENT
 → GOVERNANCE
 → TRAINING

SEMÁ:TH

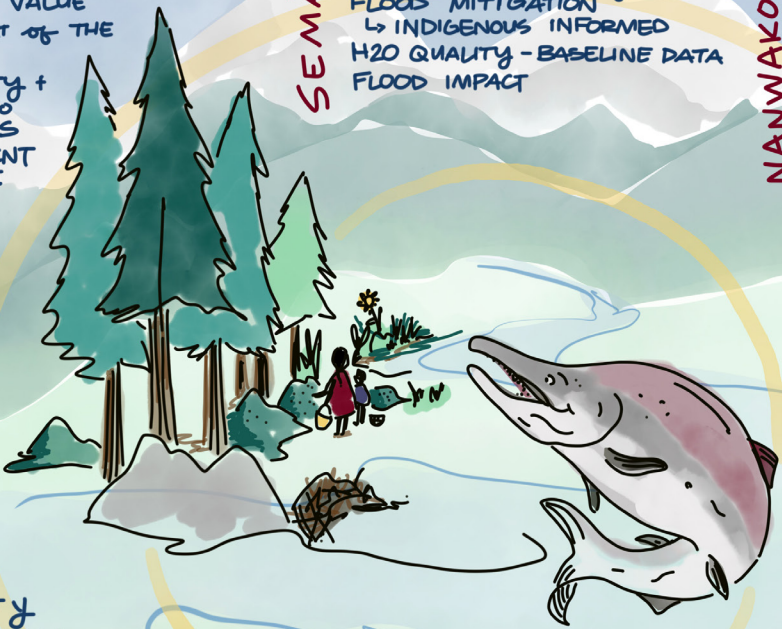
FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
 LAND CONNECTION
 HABITAT CONNECTIVITY
 FLOOD MITIGATION
 ↳ INDIGENOUS INFORMED
 H2O QUALITY - BASELINE DATA
 FLOOD IMPACT

NANWAKOLAS

FOREST MANAGEMENT, STEWARDSHIP
 LANDSCAPE PRESERVE
 IMPACT ON SALMON HABITAT
 EFFECTS of FORESTRY PRACTICES
 → BASELINE DATA COLLECTION
 - WILDLIFE MONITORING
 CULTURAL PLANTS + TRADITIONAL PRACTICES + FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
 STUDYS for ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES + POLICY

KWIKWASUT'INUXW HAXWA'MIS

BEST PRACTICES for RESEARCH
 WHAT IS GOOD DATA
 DATA SOVEREIGNTY
 HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THE RESTORATION PROJECTS - RANK
 FISH STREAM RESTORATION
 FOREST GOVERNANCE



STÓ:LO

DRAINAGE of SUMAS LAKE
 TERRESTRIAL SPECIES AT RISK
 SKAGIT HEAD WATERS
 GOVERNANCE & IPCA
 CULTURAL AWARENESS + TRANSMOUNTAIN GUARDIANS PROGRAM
 COLLABORATIVE STEWARDSHIP FORUM

SQUAMISH NATION

FOOD SECURITY
 FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
 INDIGENOUS RESEARCH SITE
 SOCIO-ECONOMIC EXPLORATION of FOOD
 HISTORICAL IMPACT of INDUSTRIAL SITES
 ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION from AN INDIGENOUS LENS

KWIKWETLEM

IMPACT of DAM ON FOREST WATERSHED & SALMON
 RESEARCH ON PIPED WATER & URBAN IMPACTS TO FISH
 DRINKING WATER & IMPACT of SPECIES RE-INTRODUCTION
 IMPACT of CONCRETE PRODUCTION

KWANTLEN & TLA'AMIN

LEGACY ISSUES ON THE LAND
 RESTORATION & REMEDIATION
 IMPACT of RUN-OFF ON SALMON HABITAT
 → TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS
 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS ON FISH HABITAT
 → GATHERING BASELINE DATA
 INVASIVE SPECIES
 RESURGENCE of TRADITIONAL FOODS
 CLIMATE CHANGE

4. SHARED RESEARCH INTERESTS AND SYNERGIES

What are we building in this room? We are working to build knowledge together.

– Jonathan Boron

University representatives Chris Lewis, Director of Indigenous Initiatives and Reconciliation; Zoe Todd, Associate Professor; Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Governance and Freshwater Fish Futures and Jonathan Boron, Instructor/PhD Candidate Resource & Environmental Management (REM) were invited to provide reflections on what they heard with regard to shared themes and synergies that arose from the roundtable presentations.

Zoe Todd noted that many Nations struggle to restore their lands while dealing with the material **impacts of colonization on land use**, including industrial pollution, farming practices that in turn impact water quality, and salmon populations. Zoe referenced Alberta for thoughtful and cultural models of how farming and forestry can be managed to address the impacts by urban development and in turn impact Traditional territories.

She noted too that the state may have different **terms of reference when it comes to Indigenous rights, title, and sovereignty**. For Indigenous Protected Areas, the Province still expects nations to compromise. This needs to change. They should be acknowledging that nations have been great stewards and then exploring with nations ways for improvement.

Jonathan Boron - Jonathan opened his remarks saying: “What are we building in this room? We are working to **build knowledge together**. Our hearts and minds are in this work.” The ideas and priorities identified by the Nations are also themes that Jonathan explores in his classroom – and he seeks to critique **colonial methods of impact assessment**; governments’ need to demand of documented **baseline data** since contact required by Nations to demonstrate how places change over time.

IPCA’s that are co-managed need to acknowledge rights and title as a way for Nations to maintain control and have leadership over their territories.

The people gathered today – this is a network. It is important we work together. We are trying to solve the same issues. Let’s share ideas, strategies and knowledge.

– Chris Lewis



Chris Lewis - Remarking on the rich array of issues, concerns and research topics presented by the Nations, Chris thanked all for being ‘runners’ and ‘translators’ of the community and sharing what you see ‘on the ground.’ He began by reflecting on salmon saying that “we are all Salmon People and that **salmon are a keystone species**”, and in this way vital to the survival of other species in their ecosystem, and their removal can cause dramatic changes to the ecosystem. He observed that many Nations presented on the importance of ecological protection of the salmon.

Another noted theme arising is **food sovereignty**, that before colonization food sovereignty was a reality and that fixing our food systems is a priority.

Cumulative effects of industrial activity and urbanization (e.g., LNG, pipeline expansion, etc.), are challenging to demonstrate and yet each of the Nations feel the impacts to different degrees. Chris also observed that **knowledge needs** are not often shared with other Nations and asked, could we find better ways to work together? Researchers, working collaboratively with Nations, can be a way to connect the information needed, but so can Nations think together about how we can support each other’s research needs. We can share the good work that is already being done.

5. CLOSING REFLECTIONS

To take ownership and control of our territories, sharing information and ideas as a network is a valuable way to deal with common issues. – Jessica Blesch, Referrals and Stewardship, Kwikwetlem

After these insightful remarks, a dialogue evolved and many participants wove in their perspectives on how to move forward in a good way.

Dorothy Christian, Secwepemc-Syilx - Academic research, Dorothy observed is often lagging behind what is happening in the community. The Indigenous knowledges are inherently interdisciplinary. The stories each Nation holds, relating to the lands they are born to convey the teachings about how to live on the land, how to be in relationship with each other as human beings and with all the other beings on the land. “Everything we need to know comes from the land.” Dorothy referenced the ground breaking work of Sto:lo artist, historian, knowledge keeper (and more) [Ronnie Dean Harris](#) and whose work is deepening the understanding of story sovereignty, which is vital to his Nations bioregional identity. Dorothy warned of the dangers of extractive research and how critical it is to recognize that Indigenous stories belong to their Nations. “We all must be aware and careful to treat these knowledges with respect.”

Vicki Kelly - Vicki urged the group, as it considers what research to take on, “to put the relations in the centre of the work.” We take that to mean, let’s bring our knowledges, differences and shared and unique concerns together, but keep the community and its priorities central to the work.

Naomi Krogman - Reflecting on the implications of Indigenous methodologies for teaching, learning and research, Naomi asked, what should we be teaching and how can we learn from the guests today about how to do a better job of offering education?

Leigh Joseph – In response to this question Leigh expressed that community-based learning is one way universities can improve their approaches to teaching and learning but that community-based learning must be guided by community members and **the land**. Land-based learning can have so much impact for students, she added, but this needs to be aligned with community needs (i.e., reciprocity of benefit) and in

a format that allows for immersive experiences. “We need to remove the structural barriers and find the needed supports for this to become a reality.”

Andrea Lyall - Andrea noted that:

As Nations we often struggle to understand what other Nations have dealt with and we need to learn from each other. Let’s make connections between Nations. In terms of learning from the land, from Indigenous knowledges, we must think relationally about how land-based and applied science training can co-exist as ways of knowing. When we go back to our stories, we are able to weave together ancient wisdom and honour knowledges across disciplines. As well, it is helpful to Nations to have access to reviews of references with regard to impacts of interventions and to find ways to develop and assess good projects that work.

Tanner Timothy- In terms of Nations working together, Tanner shared an example of the [Salish Sea Indigenous Garden](#) organization that monitors impacts on water systems and restores traditional waterways. This and many other examples of the use of research and data that allow Nations to back up claims and provide baseline data. In terms of education in response to Naomi’s question, Tanner advocates for all students being required to learn about Indigenous history as many Canadians are misinformed about this history and that racism can be linked to lack of education. Universities can help to change this.

Stuart Poyntz - In terms of facilitating collaborative, Indigenous-led research, we need institutional structures that allow for collaboration to happen. We seek to form a model for collaborative research that is based on working the community requests for research and who wish to have their research request matched with university researchers. SFU’s Community Engaged Research initiative (CERi) has a [‘Research Shop’](#) Model that provides a platform for Indigenous-led Knowledge Exchange research.

6. CONCLUSION

While Nation representatives provided information on research needs specific to their community, there were commonalities in many of the ideas offered. Most people emphasized that any research **projects should be driven by the values and needs of the community** and that for many, this involves upholding traditional knowledge and governance systems.

To that end, there was interest in examining the effects of colonialization on traditional knowledge with the goal of collating, honoring, and reconnecting with traditional knowledge systems, as well as the governance systems in which they are nested. Relatedly, there is interest in exploring co-management/collaborative stewardship models (e.g., ICPA's, Wildlife Management Areas WMAs) that uphold cultural values. Additionally, many raised the idea of establishing land-based learning centers and/or traditional food gardens. Support for Guardian programs was also of interest as was commitments to "Landscape Reserve Designs" among communities within the Great Bear Rainforest.

Several participants recognized the disconnect between short term funding and/or research projects and long-term learning and relationship building. Similarly, there was discussion about how government funding is often species specific (e.g., species at risk) and does not address whole ecosystems, or other species that are important but may not be "at risk". For instance, there is considerable value in conducting "basic ecological research" like wildlife monitoring, baseline studies bringing past and current socio-ecological data, or studies on corridors among ecosystems.

Many Nations are concerned about the cumulative effects (immediate and legacy effects) of mining, construction (run off and vibrations), forestry, agriculture, invasive species, damming, and toxic waste on their fish, and aquatic and terrestrial health more broadly. Not surprisingly, several representatives are concerned about the effects of climate change on ecosystems and species of cultural importance, as well as the physical threats like flooding.

There was significant interest in addressing how best to coordinate land-use research and planning among the Nations without compromising internal discussions. Relatedly, the question was posed about how best to ensure that different levels of colonial government coordinate so that they work with the Nation BEFORE land use plans are developed. There is the related issue of how to respond to government relationships/discussions with Nations that don't encompass the concerns of all Nations who are connected to specific places of concern. Understanding the relationships among Nations and between Nations and colonial governments is a requirement if outside researchers are to work with Nations.

Finally, several Nations pointed out that there is no shortage of worthwhile research projects or even funding for those projects. Rather, there often just isn't enough capacity to complete the projects or to assemble all the information already collected so that it can be used most effectively. Some Nations suggested that a literature review of research conducted within their territory – i.e., collating all the research and knowledge that has already been gathered – would be hugely beneficial. One representative noted that it would be especially valuable to have projects that have a policy component – which could be included in this collation of knowledge. In all cases, issues of data sovereignty must be considered early on in the research relationship.

7. NEXT STEPS

This meeting allows me to feel more connected to the focus I want to be involved in. – Leigh Joseph, newly appointed Assistant Professor, Geography.

In closing, Dana Lepofsky, professor of Archaeology at SFU shared more details about the Knowledge Exchange that is currently in development in the Faculty of Environment and CERi. The **Knowledge Exchange** supports a partnership development between First Nations of BC and SFU researchers. Through an online matchmaking portal and direct one-on-one research facilitation, the Knowledge Exchange aims to act as a hub for building meaningful research partnerships with Indigenous communities to produce research that has a direct and positive impact. More details will be made

available to all the Nations present as soon as the portal for inquiries and applications is open in the new year.

Naomi Krogman thanked everyone for attending and observed that after our opening introductions, sharing research priorities from the Nations, identifying and listening to both broad and specific interests, we are venturing forth to launch with partners, a research knowledge exchange.

Harvest bags were distributed to all attendees prepared by Dana Lepofsky from foods grown on Lasquiti Island including crabapples, raspberry jam, acorns, garlic and bay leaves.

Meeting Adjourned at 3pm

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FACING BC FIRST NATIONS

WISDOM CAPTURE & CLOSING



SFU ENVIRONMENT



SEA, LAND AND SKY INITIATIVE

Environmental Issues Facing BC's First Nations: A Special Meeting of the Indigenization, Decolonization Committee (IDC)

October 30th, 2024
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM



BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

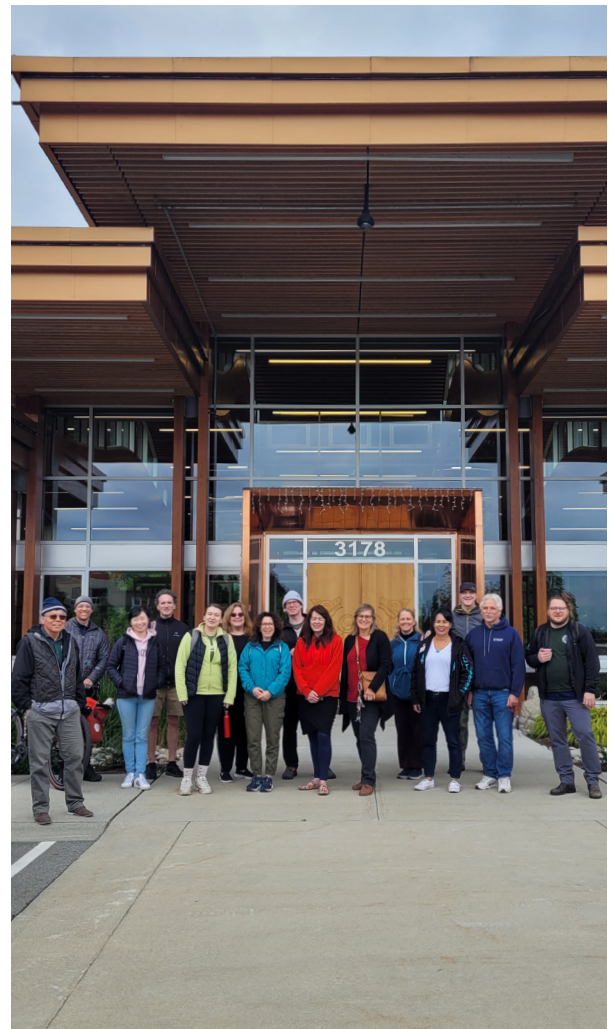
In 2022, The Faculty of Environment (FEnv) launched a project called the Sea, Land and Sky (SLS) initiative that supports active learning about and with Indigenous knowledge keepers on a range of issues. These include environmental stewardship, Aboriginal Rights and Title, UNDRIP, the TRC recommendations and more. Informed by a vision of reconciliation, an integrated, staged plan for Indigenizing FEnv's teaching, research and community engagement is being implemented.

SLS activities seek to foreground Indigenous, land-based learning and knowledges for teaching, learning and research within the Faculty. Through a range of actions, we aspire to deepen the appreciation and understanding of the complexity and significance of Indigenous Knowledges of the land and as such, the environment, as a source of knowledge as well as the history and impacts of colonization on First Nations.

KEY ACTIONS

SLS has focused on key actions including: Hiring more Indigenous faculty; supporting curriculum innovation; hosting staff and faculty learning circles; hiring an Indigenous Research Associate; forming an Indigenous Advisory Committee, (the IDC); developing and teaching a land-based learning field course for Undergraduates; strengthening the Indigenous student recruitment strategy; partnering with Tsleil-Waututh Nation on a learning exchange/community engagement initiative; developing and implementing a Graduate field school with Sts'ailes Nation and; developing an Indigenous-led research "knowledge exchange" in collaboration with SFU CERi (Community Engaged Research Initiative).

Additionally, great effort is being demonstrated and shared by each of the Faculty's units to support reconciliation work, and Indigenizing teaching, learning and research. In the coming semester the Dean's Office will make funds available to support honoraria for Indigenous guest presenters or other related teaching activities (applications forthcoming); provide San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety training to faculty and staff; and offer cultural training and Indigenous research protocol for graduate students and faculty.



PRIORITIES FOR 2024-2025

Support the consolidation of the Indigenization Decolonization Committee – IDC

The IDC provides insight, input, and recommendations on the SLS activities within the Faculty. Members of this committee are from diverse units within the Faculty and university. Responsibilities of members include: to advise and/or provide input to naming, Indigenous ceremony, and protocols for initiatives of the IDC; to assist in the recruitment and selection of FENV-IDC staffing as required; to provide input and direction regarding potential and ongoing Indigenous partnerships for projects, field sites, field schools, and curriculum; to provide input on faculty learning circles and student learning circles; to provide input into FENV events and forums with Indigenous themes; to provide input into the recruitment, retention, and success of Indigenous students within FENV; and to connect with other Indigenous governance committees and provide information and input to the larger SFU community.

Launch an Indigenous-Led Knowledge Exchange – In Development

The Knowledge Exchange is a collaborative project between SFU's Faculty of Environment and SFU's Community-Engaged Research Initiative (CERi) that aims to facilitate meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities by matching institutional research support with community-identified needs and strengths.

At a time of reconciliation and transformation, the resurgence of Indigenous-led research by BC's First Nations is helping communities create their own archives, recover and protect their languages, and document their histories and ways of knowing. These efforts contribute to advancing action and policy priorities related to land, water, food, ecosystems, health, climate solutions, and more.

The Knowledge Exchange supports a partnership development between First Nations of BC and SFU researchers. Through an online matchmaking portal and direct one-on-one research facilitation, the Knowledge Exchange aims to act as a hub for building meaningful research partnerships with Indigenous communities to produce research that has a direct and positive for Indigenous communities.



Indigenous Land-Based Learning Field School

In Spring 2024, the Faculty's SLS initiative launched a Land-Based Field School called Connecting People and Place in Sts'ailes Traditional Lands. The Sts'ailes Nation invited Graduate and advanced Undergraduate students to come to their territory on the Harrison River to learn about a range of land-based topics of importance to the Nation. This four-week, land-based field school, included SFU students from diverse disciplines who lived in the Sts'ailes community on the Harrison River from May 7 - 24 followed by four days of course work on SFU's Burnaby campus. Together they explored a range of social and environmental issues that are important to the Sts'ailes people. Field studies involved active learning about Sts'ailes' history and culture, and the complex relationships connecting them to the lands, waters, plants, and animals in their traditional territory.

The class format included a combination of presentations in a ceremonial longhouse and field studies with Sts'ailes community members, knowledge keepers and leaders as well as invited guest speakers. In collaboration with Sts'ailes' CEO, Willie Charlie, Dr. Morgan Ritchie directed the program. Dr. Ritchie works with Sts'ailes as the Heritage Research Archaeologist and is also a post-doctoral fellow with the Department of Archaeology at SFU. The Field School will be offered again in Spring 2025 and open to high-level Undergraduate and Graduate students from the Faculty of Environment and other faculties upon application.



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