

Rapporteur notes – Kate Bigney Wilner

Tuesday June 28 3:15-4:30

Plenary session: The current state of Aboriginal Resource Management

Panelists: Ana Minerva Arce Ibarra, Walter Bayha, Alice Martin, [Brian Gabirel?replacement for Brian Wadhams]

Intro by Randy Angus

Randy: Randy gave an overview of aboriginal resource management on the east coast of Canada. He discussed lobster, snow crab, tuna (separate fleet), rock crab, herring, mackerel, soft shelled clams, oyster and silversides. He also discussed issues such as unused licenses, VMS, PMSS, in house repairs, issues in the processing and buying sectors and in aquaculture, as well as research on lobster quality, contaminants, blood proteins and CAMP. Next he discussed the impacts of climate change, like saltwater intrusion and storm runoff including the monitoring work that is being done, and the impacts of SARA. MCPEI is at work on watershed management, which includes river restoration, watershed protection, the co-management of 800 acres of land. They also have a salmon hatchery and conduct training such as on electrofishing and silvaculture.

Walter: I've seen a lot of changes. Why co-management? We knew they wouldn't give us power, so with co-management, at least half the voice is aboriginal. [With co-management we have] decision-making powers, quasi-judicial. [We have] relationships with ministers from the provincial and territorial governments. But co-management boards need information. The Joint Review Panel (JRP) panel is a big project. All voices have to be there. First Nations don't have capacity – it's a challenge even for me to understand all First Nations. So we still have capacity issues, need to get info to people until they understand it. How many of us live on the land? We've changed. I want to be out on the land, like my grandfather. Speaking here makes me realize the challenges I am faced with. There are management issues across Canada – in Alberta versus Northwest Territories there are oil companies to deal with.

Alice: I am present here as a grandmother. Raised in Fort Chipewyan in the Athabasca Delta. I was sent to residential school at 6 and went to high school in Fort McMurray. Saw changes on the land. Its very hard to think about all these changes. (Pause) I was always a rebel, always had issues with decision-making that never involved us. What can I leave for generations after? I've spent 40 years trying to work at grassroots – there is hopelessness and despair. I reflect on our traditions as Cree people on the land. My brother asks, why would we want to be part of a system that destroyed our way of live? But I still have hope for people who have done this to us. There is no forum for us – yes for our leaders, but not for the grassroots – we fall on deaf ears especially for women. [Fear] comes from behind, walks with our leaders. Our traditions have eroded because of residential schools. When I try to teach the younger generation about our philosophy and traditions, I sound like a preacher. Some youth want to fight. Some see me as in their

way. I say walk with integrity, say were are true First Nations, the true people, we want to share our stories, believe in land, mo matter what colour.

Minerva: I have been a researcher for 15 years with indigenous communities in Mexico. There are two forms of land tenure – ajedo (sp?), or individual, and comunidad. On comunidad land there is community-based management of agriculture, where communities can decide what to plant, when to harvest. Some have commercial logging permits, if they are less than 5000 ha, for non-commercial forest products. Yet they do not participate in regional development, aren't consulted, are sometimes invited to tables but have no capacity to interpret data. There are some alliances with research institutes, for example mine is with with indigenous communities in Chiapas. Scholars provide advice for self-management, called autogestion. Some help communities get funding. Sometimes International NGOs, from abroad, come to work with communities. Communities are aware of that, sometimes researchers go along with it.

[Brian Gabriel] We are located on the North of Vancouver Island in Alert Bay. The island is 400 ha. There are 900 members of the Namgis First Nation and 500 non-First Nation residents. The traditional territory of the Namgis is 2800m², which includes Vancouver Island's largest watershed. There are sockeye and huge trees. The area has been abused; for example 60 million m³ forest products have been taken out. Our Natural Resource Department's goal is to reverse the trend, and to regain control of the area. We have 156 employees, 16 in the environment department, 11.5 of which are Namgis and the rest are non-First Nation, brought in to transfer skills to First Nations. Between 1980-2005 we built the social network in community. The goal is to restore to our community to health, before we occupy the [extent of the traditional] territory. The services we provide include health centre for elders, child care, quality infrastructure. Now we have stepped off the island. We have developed a natural resource department plan at terrestrial and watershed levels and a community referral system including a cultural resource mapping program. Our tree crew looks for legacy trees, and has the authority to stop logging when they find those trees. We have co-management of 2800 ha of parks. We have a campground, AFS fisheries, 4 boat patrol. In the future we are developing nearshore habitat management. We have 20 fishing licences, for halibut and other species. We cry a lot, but there is also laughter. It's addictive, it's real work. We're bringing power back to place.

Questions:

Q.: You mentioned underutilized licences - how to address that?

A.: With Marshall, we got 10 lobster licences and linked licences for example for bait, softshelled clams. We cherry picked those that made more money, but then asked ourselves why aren't we using them all? Were we lacking capacity, training? There is a disconnect with youth and others with wild resource harvest. We needed to do training, generate business plans. With these licences we can add 5-10 K/season, and get to a good income. Youth is an expanding demographic, and are getting their hands dirty.

Q.: Alice's experience is very different. What are conditions keeping co-management participation happening in some contexts and not others?

A.: Minerva: 53% of Mexico is common holding. In 1992 president decided to open land for market transactions. Government wanted to privatize. Government spends extra money at the end of the year without formal programs.

Walter: In our area, grassroots people have a say in land and water, oil and gas. First Nations have a say. If they don't go along, we can call for an EI for example in the JRP. There were 4-5 years of public hearings on Mackenzie Valley. The big difference between our areas and Alice's is that in her case there is no public process.

Alice: there is a differences in cultures. When elders tell a story, the answers are in the story. Walter deciphered my story. People like me are saying enough is enough. Former chiefs go to media, Suzuki came with the same message, but we didn't hear anything after he left. People like me come in 10-15 years later, saying enough is enough. We have to reach the souls and spirits of people of the same mind.

[Brian]: we're dealing with second rate multinationals, whereas the tar sands, those are immensely powerful companies. Alice's issue is our issue. Enbridge is proposing a pipeline to Kitimat, along with that would come increase in tanker traffic We stopped them in the 70s, here it is again. We should work on an alliance of the west coast with Northern Alberta.

Q.: Cliff Atleo: The government doesn't want any part of "joint management" - they call it co-management and recognize only advisory processes. I don't think it exists, co-management. They treat us like a junior government! And they're the newcomers! Clayoquot sound is joint management. Not because it's the right thing but because of our threats. They tapped our phones during that deal. So we switched to our language. With respect to rights, title, the government of Canada wants no part of it.

A.: Minerva. We have to keep working together to show our governments. The example of the south Africa presentation, that's the next step.

Q.: Nancy Doubleday: I visited Fort McMurray and tried to get my writing published. The Shell Continental energy plan included 7000 ha of significant land in Southern Ontario. They wanted to take access to father's grave. I tried to intervene. I didn't get an answer, but shell decided not to ahead with refinery. Speaking out, because we're all in this together. This is about social and environmental justice. We aren't the government of Canada but the people of Canada that's a place to start.

Q.: Mel Wiber: What role can academics play in facilitating or advocacy for example in the tar sands? What are the opportunities?

A.: Alice: The question has to be posed to the Canadian public. There are academic people who are interested, but the expectations of mine are too great to deliver and design something meaningful to our people. Partner with non-First Nations, we have our own process, there are two roads. One road is science, justice, education; one traditional knowledge, experience – but there is no road for this, no process. We need to build this road. The Wampum belt has two lines for two nations. Need people within the system to say we believe in this, this road needs to be built.

Q: Battles in St Mary's Bay around aquaculture are about stats/data; both sides provide an equal amount of science. Where we can advance is through the political process. Partnerships. People in this room who can mobilize and lead the charge.

A.: In our area there are 30 farms with 1 million fish each, 2.5 kg of poop over their lifetimes. Fills clam beaches. Mooring buoys keeps people away from where they've fished for thousands of years. We support science – we are also pursuing a class action lawsuit versus Marine Harvest (Norway) regarding blocked access. The case has been certified. Assembling 7 million dollars for a closed containment salmon pilot to show we can do it, grow Atlantic salmon on the west coast, out of the water. Walking the talk. Pursue multiple paths of action.

Q: Mel Wiber: We had program funding for aboriginal projects, but now some programs are redesigned to make it harder to do that. How do we finance these battles? Looks like its getting harder to do that.

Q.: Jeff Leboutelier: The next four years will be lean and depressing. We need to create political alliances to reverse the tide in the next federal election.

Q: Cliff Atleo: We dead end at government sources of money. In Haida Gwaii, we emulated the Alaska native Brotherhood. They charged 50 cents a head. We won lots of rights – education above 8 years, pension, right to vote in 1949 provincially 1960 federally. BC Indian Chiefs focusing on land question – belongs to government, not a question in his mind. We were independent, raised our own funds. 1989 we charged 350\$/yr. We had such an influence in the 1980s influence invited to interviews with Sr DFO. How much should we expect if use their money to change laws?

Q: Evelyn Pinkerton: I have never seen such a united front as now in coastal and interior BC versus the Enbridge pipeline and oil tankers. Lots of allies in the nearby territory.

Q: Deb Simmons: Around NAFTA there was a moment in history of North America, a cross boundary solidarity among indigenous peoples with Zapatistas. I see a germ of this in the climate change justice movement - are there echoes in a new internationalist moment? There are Canadian mining companies in Peru and in Mexico.

A: Minerva: The Mexican revolution didn't come to Chiapas. It's the only state without common holdings. Indigenous peoples still struggle with government, asking for land rights. Zapatista movement disappeared, some of the leaders died of illness. Still struggling compared to Quintana Roo, where the Maya are relatively wealthy. Mining, which is very polluting, came under NAFTA, so there is not much we can do.