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CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

Mapping of Orans in the Indian Thar Desert

By Aman Singh & J.P. Singh of Krishi Avam Paristhitiki Vikas Sansthan (KRAPAVIS)

Orans, commonly known as CCAs (community conserved areas) or sacred groves, are woodland areas preserved in honor of local deities, goddesses, community heroes, or saints throughout the Indian Thar Desert. These patches represent a testament to the wisdom and foresight of our ancestors in preserving woody perennials in the natural ecosystem. They serve as repositories of rich biodiversity, housing native climax or sub-climax species that represent a natural silvopasture system. KRAPAVIS (Krishi Avam Paristhitiki Vikas Sansthan) is actively involved in a comprehensive study of the Orans in the Indian Thar Desert, Rajasthan, India. KRAPAVIS, as a partner organization of CICADA/McGill University, initiated mapping of Orans in different districts, namely, Nagaur, Churu, Jodhpur, and a few other districts, with twin objectives: (i) to identify, map, and collate information including area, ownership, and management practi-



On site interview of a shepherd by the Oran Mapping Team. Photos Courtesy: KRAPAVIS

ces of 40 major Orans spread across the Thar Desert in Rajasthan, India, and (ii) to develop a research base on 'Orans' and their ecosystem services, including social-ecological systems for developing adaptation options against impacts of climate change in the desert area.

KRAPAVIS's findings indicate that these Orans face a range of threats, including high levels of grazing and browsing, encroachment on Oran lands for agricul-

tural, settlement, and other purposes, a decline in socio-cultural norms, and proliferation of invasive species, among others. If we can somehow restore these pristine woodland resources to their full productive potential, it would help bridge the gap between the supply and demand for the livelihood resources of local Indigenous communities, while also offering added benefits to the arid environment. To achieve this, several helpful steps are required, including:

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(i) reviving traditional water storage structures in the Orans to provide a water resource for village livestock and wild animals, (ii) enhancing vegetation cover, which involves removing undesirable bushes, planting suitable indigenous trees/shrubs based on the habitat, and reseeding with desirable species of perennial fodder grasses, (iii) creating awareness within the community, with a particular emphasis on engaging the younger generation in active participation in Oran activities, and lastly (iv) advocating for improved management and conservation of Orans in light of global climate change.

Following the mapping exercise, KRAPAVIS has taken the initiative to carry out restoration work. This includes traditional water harvesting structures within the Orans, such as talab (pond), through community participation. Kunds (water storing tanks) have been rehabilitated, serving as a



On site interview of pastoralist women in a Oran.

vital water resource for livestock and wildlife. Furthermore, indigenous species like *Prosopis cineraria*, locally known as *Khejri*, a crucial tree species in the Thar Desert, have been planted. Perennial grass seeds have been sown within the Orans, and efforts are underway to remove invasive species like *Prosopis juliflora* from around the water harvesting structures and other areas, with the active involvement of the Oran Samiti (Committee) or community members.

To raise awareness in the community about the significance of Orans for their livelihood security in this harsh climatic environment, several training programs were organized for community members from respective Orans. Additionally, community members associated with various Orans in the Thar district visited KRAPAVIS headquarters in Alwar. During this visit, they interacted and shared their views with community members associated with Orans/Devbani of the Aravali hills and other stakeholders. Thus, KRAPAVIS's work on Orans could stand out as a model that others can adopt and adapt. Scaling up their efforts is required if these traditional community conserved areas are to be sustained and if the well-being of these fragile communities is to be secured under a rapidly changing climate. ●



View of an Oran in the desert.

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"Nothing About Us Without Us"

Indigenous Jurisdiction Over Mining and Marine Territories

By Viviane Weitzner (McGill University)

British Columbia's First Nations are on the cutting edge globally in terms of pushing the possibilities of recognition of Indigenous Jurisdiction over their territories both on land and in the sea. This was strongly evident in the diverse presentations showcased at the Pacific Business and Law Institute's conference "Nothing About Us Without Us: Indigenous Jurisdiction Over Mining and Marine Territories," which I attended on October 31 and November 1 in Vancouver, representing CICADA.

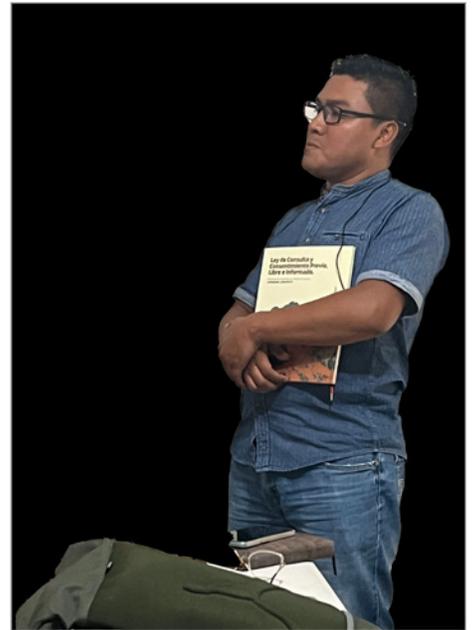
The region's First Nations are a reference across Canada and globally, because they did not sign treaties with the Crown, leaving them arguably at a distinct advantage in terms of negotiating recognition for their unceded, unsurrendered lands. Despite this, their resource-rich territories have gone through waves of dispossession, including through the 'free entry' system where mining companies can stake claims to ancestral lands through the click of a mouse from miles away, without even contacting the original inhabitants of these lands—let alone ob-

taining their free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC).

Not anymore. The Gitxaala and Ehattesaht First Nations took British Columbia (BC) to the province's Supreme Court to challenge BC's mineral tenure regime. Pointing to provincial legislation passed in 2019 upholding the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the First Nations argued, among other things, that UNDRIP confirms the right of Indigenous Peoples to their traditional territories, including their resources, and to both consultation and free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) prior to mineral grants.

"Our laws were written far before colonization," Hereditary Chief Need Hiwaas of Gitxaala Nation told conference delegates, "and our land was treated as sacred. Our laws protected it, never abused it. In the decision one month ago, the Nation is owed a duty to consult. Our laws are our inherent responsibility – we know we need more than consultation. Giving away our land without our consent is against our laws!"

Indeed, the Decision (*Gitxaala v British Columbia* [Chief Gold Commissioner], 2023 BCSC) declared that BC's mineral tenure regime breaches the Crown's duty to consult and set a timeframe of 18 months for BC to redesign it. As Chief Hiwaas underscores, while the Decision may represent one step forward in requiring consultation prior



Embera Chamí lawyer holds the Free, Prior and Informed Consent law of the Resguardo de Origen Colonial Cañamomo Lomapieta, an Indigenous Nation in Colombia – A potential tool for BC First Nations? Photos Courtesy: Viviane Weitzner

to registering mineral claims, it falls short of the minimum standard upheld in UNDRIP—namely FPIC. Disappointingly, the Decision did not halt mineral claims from being registered in the meantime or quash those that have been issued without consultation.

This case is a litmus test for UNDRIP in domestic law. BC's Supreme Court held that the provincial legislation (DRIPA) does not implement UNDRIP into BC law, but it requires BC to consult with Indigenous Peoples on a plan to address UNDRIP. Another disappointment.

The next 18 months will be an important time to push the potentials of BC's mineral tenure regime so that it aligns with UNDRIP's minimum standards and Indigenous jurisdiction, despite the Court's interpretation. And alongside this, it will be a critical time for Indigenous Peoples to strengthen their own laws.

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Mesa redonda sobre jurisdicción indígena y minerales críticos en la Columbia Británica.

Protecting Boreal Plant Species is a Critical Part of Reconciliation Efforts

By Janelle Baker (Athabasca University) *First published by The Conversation on August 10, 2023

Labrador Tea, fireweed, chokecherry, and raspberry are some of the boreal plants classified as weeds by the Canadian Weed Science Society. These plants are targeted with herbicide by logging companies across the Canadian boreal forest.

However, these boreal plant species are important traditional plants for many Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world. In addition to their use as food, these traditional native plants hold tremendous medicinal, ceremonial, and material value.

These plant species thrived before the arrival of Europeans and are respected and cared for by Indigenous communities, in ways that help increase biocultural diversity.



Muskeg (or Labrador) tea (*Rhododendron groenlandicum*): popular for medicine and pleasure.

As a cultural and environmental anthropologist, I have been working for and with First Nations communities in the boreal forests in Alberta since 2006. In my recently published paper, I reveal how the misappropriation of these plants from traditional territories is grounded in colonial bias for the economic value of plants.

Boreal Forests Under Threat

Over recent decades, boreal forests in Canada have faced numerous threats, including attempts to extract plants for economic gain or eradicate them using herbicides.

The issue lies in what gets referred to as “merchantable timber” versus the abundance of boreal forest plants that cover the ground below the trees.

When government agencies and logging companies follow their Duty to Consult First Nations, they tend to overlook expressed concerns about the destruction of traditional plants that grow in abundance.

For example, balsam and aspen poplar trees, birch trees, Labrador Tea, blueberries, and wild mint are all plants that grow in abundance in the boreal forest and have high cultural value.

In the consultation process, when an Elder or community member identifies these plants for protection, company representatives often respond by saying that these plants grow throughout the forest, so their destruction has no significant impact on inherent rights protected by treaty.

This outside ruling can affect First Nation members’ access to their particular familial stewardship area.

The loss of access to seemingly abundant plants is exacerbated by the use of the herbicide glyphosate in the reforestation process, and along roads,



Fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*): edible when the shoots are young, and when they are in seed they indicate moose are fat and ready to be hunted. Photos Courtesy: Janelle Baker

pipelines, and power lines.

Plants with great nutritional and medicinal value, like Labrador Tea, are sprayed so that they do not compete with monocropping reforestation practices that focus on timber. This reflects a bias toward merchantable timber rather than a biodiverse and healthy forest.

Boreal Destruction Impacts Indigenous Communities

When people lose their collecting areas, they have to search larger areas for the same plants, request access to other people’s areas, and risk collecting plants contaminated by volatile organic compounds, heavy metals, or herbicides.

Research in the boreal forest has revealed that glyphosate remains in plant



Soil collected for a glyphosate seed banking project with the ECCC (Environment and Climate Change Canada).

tissues for at least a decade. The communities I collaborate with during my research continue to be very concerned about the use of herbicides in their territories, and with good reason. Elders from First Nations communities are also concerned about the impacts of bioaccumulation — the gradual accumulation of substances such as pesticides or other chemicals through the food chain. These concerns are based on Elders’ own systems of natural law, oral traditions, and enacting respect and reciprocity in the forest.

Reconciliation Includes Plant Species

As Canada attempts to reconcile with Indigenous communities through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, the recognition of species of traditional value is critical in this process.

Calls to Action for improvements in Indigenous-centered education, youth programs, language and culture, and health supports are connected to people’s abilities to participate in land-based activities. Plant species must be available for these activities to be possible.

The availability of these species means that they need to be respected and conserved based on Indigenous approaches and ecological knowledge.

Not caring for plant species in the context of Indigenous natural legal systems ignores the ancient and ongoing

stewardship by Indigenous Peoples living within the boreal forests. Ignoring native species results in the continued misappropriation of traditional territories, one plant at a time. ●



Soil collected for a glyphosate seed banking project with the ECCC (Environment and Climate Change Canada).



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One key tool I brought to the discussion is the potential for Indigenous Peoples to develop their own FPIC laws. This is where there could be some exciting exchanges involving CICADA’s Indigenous partners, such as the Embera

Chamí of the Resguardo Indígena de Origen Colonial Cañamomo Lomapieta in Colombia. The Embera Chamí developed their own FPIC law as a direct result of mining concessions being granted over their territory without their consent. And importantly, in the legal action the Embera Chamí brought to Colombia’s Constitutional Court, the magistrate upheld this FPIC law in its Decision T-530 of September 2016. This is a living law that the Embera Chamí recently revised in 2023.

Indeed, BC First Nations’ representatives at the conference were intrigued by the idea of developing their own FPIC law

and asked me for copies of Cañamomo’s law – currently available only in Spanish. More powerful than that would be direct exchanges among Peoples, an idea in the works for the near future.

Aside from the bubble of urgent discussions flowing from Gitxaala, the conference showcased some exciting cases of revitalization and development of Indigenous law and practice, including the Haida Nation’s Oceans Act and the strengthening of the Coastal Guardian Watchmen that monitor Haida waters. Asserting and clarifying Indigenous jurisdiction over the sea will become increasingly important globally as traffic of dangerous and other goods increases in these spiritually important seascapes. ●



Haida Coastal Guardian Watchmen showcase cases of Indigenous law and practice.

What Would a Truly Decolonial Mapping Project Look Like?

The Kahnistensera vs McGill University in the search for unmarked graves of children at the Royal Victoria Hospital

By Léa Denieul Pinsky (Concordia University)

On April 20, 2023, Quebec's Superior Court approved a settlement allowing the Kahnistensera (Mohawk Mothers) to investigate their assertion that there are unmarked graves at the former Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) in Montreal. This decision establishes a precedent for self-represented Indigenous plaintiffs across Canada. The RVH, vacant since 2015, was slated for an \$850 million redevelopment project led by the Société Québécoise des Infrastructures (SQI) and McGill University. This summer, human remains detection dogs detected the scent of human remains at the old RVH site, further substantiating the Kahnistensera's claim.

Given the emotionally taxing and physically draining task of investigating children's deaths and forced disappearances undertaken by the Mohawk Mothers, many of whom are in their 80s, one might expect that McGill and the SQI would do everything in their capacity to support their efforts. This has not been the case. On September 13th, the Kahnistensera found themselves in court again, having called an emergency hearing because McGill and the SQI had disbanded the court-appointed panel of Indigenous archaeologists that was set up under the April 2023 settlement agreement and started construction on the RVH site.

At the Montreal Courthouse on the day of the hearing, the key point of contention regarding the potential breach



The Mothers in the media. All Photos Courtesy: Justin Heritage

of the settlement agreement revolved around the definition of "mapping". According to section 11 of the settlement agreement, "The mandate of the Panel is to assess and identify the appropriate archaeological techniques to be used on different areas of the site to detect whether there are unmarked graves (also known as "Mapping")."

In court, McGill Lawyer Doug Mitchell argued his interpretation of section 11: that "Mapping" meant making a map with points or zones where different archaeological techniques should be applied to find human remains. When all the zones were drawn, the panel could be disbanded, he reasoned, as the mapping was over. Construction on certain parts of the site could resume and the Indigenous panel of archaeologists would be made aware if anything was found.

Mitchell's interpretation distorts and extensively reduces the complexity of the phenomena mapped. It allows

McGill to claim that the mapping work undertaken by the panel is over, and that McGill no longer needs to consult or share results with them during the excavation phase. In other words, McGill's approach to "mapping" equates it to a mere checklist item, detached from the ever-changing reality on the ground.

Moreover, disbanding the panel gives McGill and the SQI exclusive authority in interpreting the excavation results. In the press, the Kahnistensera have indicated their dismay at being completely sidelined. They point to evidence that McGill and SQI have disregarded the recommendations of the panel, neglected key evidence, and refused to share findings with the Canadian Archaeological Association (CAA) Working Group on Unmarked Graves for peer review. This is what an "Indigenous led" investigation and being "bound by the panel" means to McGill.

The Kahnistensera stood up to the lawyers and explained that mapping is a continuous process, not a one-time event. While this initial mapping serves as a starting point, the dynamic nature of the process implies that it must continue beyond this initial stage. The panel's responsibilities don't end after creating an initial map. They should remain involved as the map evolves with new evidence uncovered during excavation.



Technicians from the Quebecois archaeological firm *Ethnoscop*.

The clash that day between McGill and the Kahnistensera is not the first time the definition of “mapping” and its implications for Indigenous land rights has been debated in Canadian courts. In the 1970s, the Inuit demonstrated in court that mapping, as a process, was more effective in conveying their lived realities. Through the Inuit Land Use and Occupancy project, they meticulously developed “map biographies” to document hunting, fishing, trapping, and other activities, showcasing each of the 34 Inuit communities’ longstanding use of their land. These maps played a pivotal role in their land claims negotiations, ultimately leading

to the Nunavut Land Claims agreement in 1993. On the other hand, the Gitksan and the Wet’suwet’en faced racism and denialism in the Supreme Court of British Columbia when they presented their map in the form of a song and were told by the Chief Justice that “to have witnesses singing songs in court is, in my respectful opinion, not the proper way to approach the problem”.

As a cartographer observing the courtroom proceedings, I was struck by the enduring presence of colonial assumptions about cartography in our contemporary context. The debate at the Montreal courthouse around the definition of “mapping” represented a direct and inherently adversarial clash between colonial and decolonial perspectives, despite McGill and the SQI presenting themselves as willing collaborators, ostensibly working toward reconciliation. The crucial distinction here lies in how the map, as perceived by McGill, functions merely as a task to be completed before moving onto the next, without necessarily reflecting on the sensitivity and the complexity of the task at hand. In their haste to expedite the mapping as fast as possible, they seem to forget that this process is to search for unmarked graves of children. In contrast, the Kahnistensera’s vision of “mapping” aligns the mapping process with

the reality it seeks to represent, making it a valuable tool.

Just because the Indigenous panel of archaeologists has made a map doesn’t mean they are done mapping. A truly decolonial mapping project cultivates a cartographic culture that centers and respects Indigenous geographical knowledge, protocols, and the active involvement of Indigenous communities in the mapping process. From this standpoint, protocols are not cumbersome paperwork but an opportunity for celebration. Will McGill and the SQI rise up to the challenge?

On October 31st, 2023, the Kahnistensera appeared in court and successfully reached a deal that the Indigenous archaeological panel should be reinstated, as per Justice Gregory Moore’s decision. ●



Archaeologists employing Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), a standard non-invasive mapping technique.

More information can be found at:

<https://mohawknationnews.com/blog/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.7035290>

Call for Papers: PECS (Programme for Ecosystem Change and Society) Conference, Montreal, 12-15 August 2024

CICADA members are organizing a session on digital mapping and spatial stories for Indigenous People and Local Communities in the context of ecosystem change and Indigenous storytelling. For more information and how to submit a paper, visit: <https://event.fourwaves.com/pecs2024/pages/e63f326a-cfa5-4a0f-870e-9999f2e426f7>

Tshakapesh Institute's Cultural Exchange Between Quebec and McGill

By Peter Johansen (McGill University)

On October 15th, 13 members of the Institute Tshakapesh and 8 McGill student volunteers raised a traditional Innu Shaputuan on the Lower West field of campus beginning a week-long Indigenous education program focused on Innu knowledge and culture at McGill. The event was sponsored by CICADA and McGill's Indigenous Studies and Community Engagement Initiative (ISCEI). The Shaputuan program was founded in 1995 as a response to the 1990 crisis at Oka, a dispute that involved Kanehsatà:ke resistance to the proposed expansion of a golf course and housing on an Indigenous sacred site. The program's objectives are to promote a clearer, fairer and more accurate perception of First Nations' peoples and communities in Quebec and Canadian society by educating settler communities about Innu culture, lifeways and life worlds. The program offers a lively pedagogy and exceptional experiences to students and other participants and aims to develop an open-mindedness, especially among young people, towards cultural differences and opposing racism and other forms of



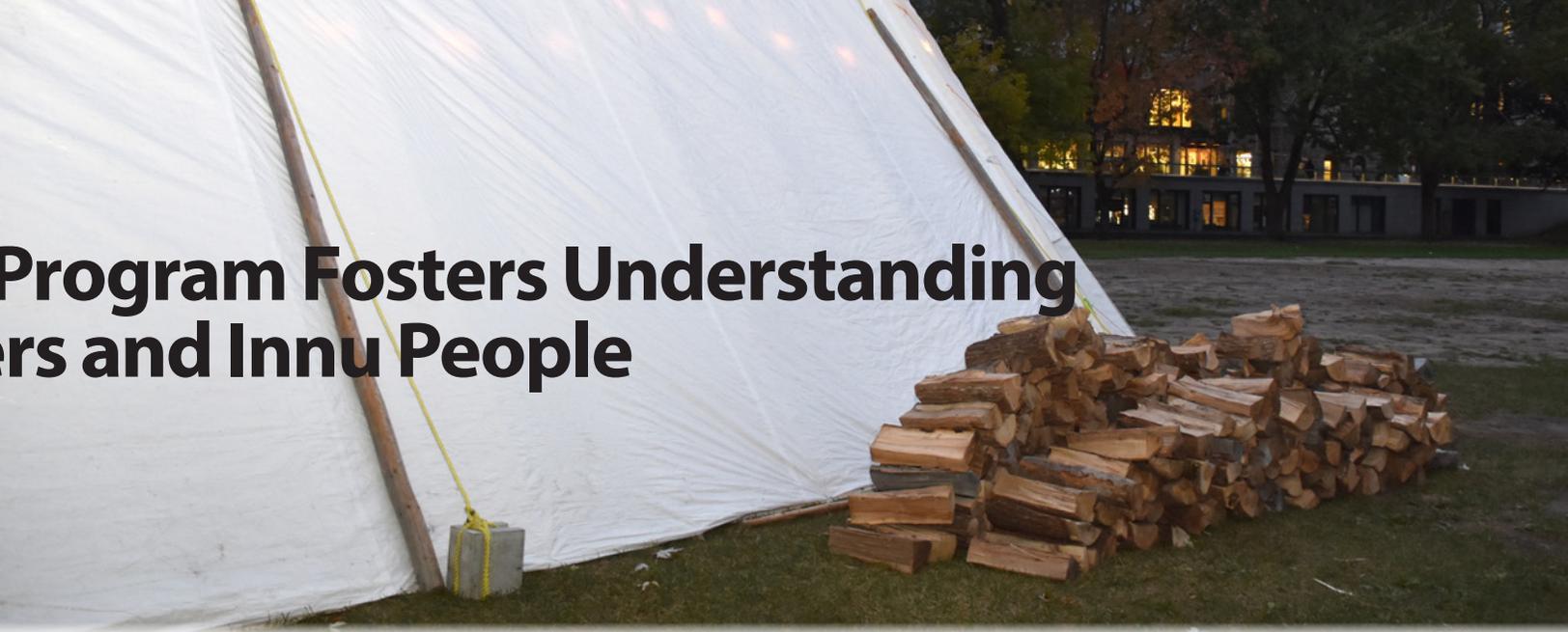
Innu Elder Evelyne St-Onge presents at a ceremony in the Shaputuan. All Photos Courtesy: Steven Schnoor

prejudice. The Shaputuan program offered participants the opportunity to step out of their urban routines and immerse themselves in an Indigenous environment to bridge closer ties between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

The Shaputuan program includes knowledge keepers from Innu communities from Essipit, Pessamit, Uashatmak Mani-utenam, Matimekush/Lac-John, Ekuanitshit, Nutashkuanit, Unaman-shipit, and Pakut-shipit. The

week-long program gathered participants from the McGill community within the Shaputuan, a traditional Innu camp that serves as an educational tool to introduce participants to Innu culture. The prominent white canvas and pole tent hosted groups of as many as 40 people for interactive learning and discussion sessions on a range of topics about Indigenous Nations in Quebec, including Innu culture and language, stories and oral history, plants and traditional medicines, Innu health and healing, Innu spirit-

Program Fosters Understanding of Innu People



quality, Innu history, landscape and sacred sites and Nitassinan. Visitors to the Shaputuan were seated on long benches set on a thick, soft bed of fir boughs with a wood stove creating a warm atmosphere transporting participants to an Innu camp set in the forest.

Shaputuan activities opened on Monday, October 16th, with a ceremony led by Elder, and founding member, Evelyne St-Onge, and spiritual specialist and presenter Gary McFarland with the drumming and song of Steve Vallant. The Shaputuan visit to McGill witnessed the final presentations of Elder, and knowledge keeper, Evelyne St-Onge and the transfer of that role to Vanessa

Vallant. Evelyne, who holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Laval, has been teaching the Shaputuan program for 23 years. Several McGill classes were held in the Shaputuan and hosted by Evelyne, Vanessa and Gary. Two significant learning sessions on Innu sacred sites were hosted by members of the Uapashkuss (Guardians of the Sacred Sites), Evelyne St-Onge and Dolores Andre, who discussed the importance and sacrality of the land to Innu communities and the active and ongoing role taken on stewardship, protection and conservation of their unceded lands. Participants also learned about many of the historical and ongoing threats to the land from

a range of resource extraction activities and the history of Innu community protective strategies and resistance—including those of the Uapashkuss, to the destruction and damage to the land from settler economic activities. One of the most impactful learning sessions was held late in the afternoon on Thursday October 19th when students from the Quebec Studies Program course: Introduction to the Study of Quebec joined the Shaputuan for an open conversation forum with presenters and staff. Students learned firsthand about the ongoing effects of systematic racism, the Indian Act, and unwanted government interventions into the lives of Innu communities, as well as community resilience and resistance used to defend against such actions.

Throughout the week students, faculty and other visitors participated in a variety of other Shaputuan learning sessions. Participants interacted directly with Innu elders, learned some basics of Innu language, experienced traditional and contemporary Innu culture, and worked towards developing critical thinking skills about First Nations people. In learning about Innu plant use and traditional medicine, participants interacted with plant



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"It's Not Climate justice, it's Climate Injustice!"

Indigenous Voices on Climate Justice and Action Research

By Viviane Weitzner (McGill University)

"As Indigenous Peoples, we don't see climate justice; we see climate injustice. If you use the word 'justice,' it's because justice exists! But there is no justice at all... there's injustice among Indigenous Peoples." Varoi Ika, Rapa Nui (presenting small group discussion analysis)

"It is not acceptable that the green transition be at the expense of suffering, of forced displacement, of Indigenous Peoples' territories." Francisco Cali Tzay (UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)

As our planet burns, floods, and extreme weather events increase, there is growing recognition that solutions to the climate catastrophe may be found in upholding the knowledges and ways of life of ancestral peoples whose territories of life are home to 80% of the world's biodiversity. Yet, at the same time, global headlines make it increasingly clear that these same territorial stewards are suffering the greatest impacts of extractive development, often risking their lives on the frontlines of territorial defense. Their homelands are filled with the minerals and metals required for new technologies fueling the 'green energy transition,' resulting in a perverse tension where there is a push to conserve these ancestral lands, while on the other hand, a powerful pull to extract 'clean energy' and other resources.



Restoration Bay with KEPO and Cody Diabo, chief of Kahnawá:ke.



Group shot of participants outside McGill University. Photos Courtesy: Viviane Weitzner

In this context, concepts such as climate justice, territories of life, and ethical action research have emerged as potential tools to help navigate complex and uncertain times, with a view to upholding Indigenous rights and self-determined outcomes, while bringing about transformative change. But what do these concepts mean from diverse Indigenous perspectives? How are they analyzed through Indigenous gendered and intergenerational lenses? And what else needs to be considered to rein in climate catastrophe and safeguard our planet's life systems?

These were among the critical questions examined by participants at the retreat "Indigenous Peoples, Climate Justice and Action Research in the Americas: Exchanging Knowledges and Building Alliances for Territories of Life," held from September 28 to October 2, 2023, at McGill University. The retreat gathered some 50 Indigenous Peoples' representatives and their academic and non-governmental allies from across Turtle Island and Abya Yala. The retreat's objective was to exchange knowledge on political, legal, and other strategies toward climate justice grounded in Indigenous perspectives; and to identify lessons learned on ethical participatory action research approaches and methodologies, while deepening relationship- and alliance-building.

Co-hosted by the Centre for Indigenous Conservation and Development Alternatives (CICADA) and the Mohawk Council of Kahnawá:ke (MCK), the elected government of the Kahnienkehá:ka Indigenous People whose territory McGill University stands on, the series of events comprising the retreat was supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.

We met in the lead-up to the international conference “Adaptation Futures” taking place in Montreal right after (Oct 2-6), with the intention of facilitating knowledge exchange between Indigenous delegates attending that event, and Indigenous and academic partners involved with CICADA and its sister initiative, Leadership for the Ecozoic (L4E). The conversations were grounded in the history and realities of the Kanienkehá:ka (Mohawk) People stewarding the land where the retreat took place, and were imbued with additional significance as we gathered before, on, and after Canada’s National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30.

We began our retreat by crossing the river to visit Kahnawá:ke, hearing about the ongoing dispossession of Kanienkehá:ka territory and the devastating impacts of the building of the St. Lawrence Seaway. But also, we witnessed how the Kahnienkehá:ka People are restoring to life the mounds of clay and damage left behind by the building of the seaway, and the biological diversity that has resulted—outcomes that have recently made national headlines.



Roundtable discussions with perspectives from Ecuador and Peru.

Ceremony was an important component guiding our gathering, with this gift offered each day. Josie Auger of Bigstone Cree Nation led us in a smudge ceremony upon our arrival in Kahnawá:ke; Kanienkehá:ka Elder Otsi'tsaken:ra and his assistant Niiioie:ren opened and closed our two days of retreat at Thomson House, with Manari Ushigua of the Sápara Nation, Ecuador offering a tobacco ceremony; and finally, Cody Diabo, elected chief of Kahnawá:ke, offered words of thanks to open our hybrid seminar with UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples Rights, Francisco Cali Tzay, that closed our series of events.

The conversations were rich and deep, gathering perspectives from homelands located in Rapa Nui, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Mexico, the United States, and Canada. Select highlights from the diverse key messages offered by participants include:



UN Special Rapporteur, Francisco Cali Tzay, in discussion.

- The concept of climate justice is foreign to Indigenous Peoples, who mostly experience climate injustices fueled by the ongoing legacy of colonialism and structural racism. The term may be useful to consolidate thinking internationally, but it belies Indigenous realities.
- Transforming ways of thinking so we can come to one mind and one heart by upholding the 5 Rs – respect, reverence, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationship – is the catalyst needed to move away from the extractivist, capitalist model fueling the climate crisis.
- Indigenous legal orders that weave together the natural law of sentient and non-sentient beings need to be revitalized to strengthen pathways towards vibrant territories of life mitigating the climate crisis.
- As keepers of the culture and life-givers, women have a special role to play in finding solutions to the climate crisis, and their voices must be heard and incorporated into decision-making.
- Youth will inherit the legacy of catastrophe and need to be heard. However, many Indigenous youth across the Americas face grim realities around economic opportunities and employment in their homelands, and increasingly join the ranks of illicit armed groups engaging in narco trafficking and other activities.
- Climate solutions vary with the particularities of each People and place. Efforts should not be restricted to investments in forests when other ecosystems are equally important for preserving life-systems and territories of life, such as oceans, rivers, and mangroves.

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foods and medicines, sharing forest teas with the Shaputaun team. Further object-based pedagogy included wearing and holding Innu clothing and exploring a variety of plant and animal raw materials used to make clothing and tools. Elders discussed the how the importance of human-animal, human-plant, and Innu-land relationality in contextualizes, social, ritual and environmental practices. A highlight of the event was the dinner hosted by the Shaputaun program on the evening of October 17th. The dinner was attended by students, friends and faculty including CICADA Director Colin Scott. Guests enjoyed a traditional Innu meal prepared by Tshakapesh chef Colette Fontaine, music that featured the TEUELKAN drumming and songs of Steve Vallant, together with dance and games.

The Shaputuan program was developed by the Institute Tshakapesh which serves eight Innu communities and is staffed by experienced Innu educators and knowledge keepers from each community. Established in 1978 in partnership with the Commission



Innu Elder Evelyne St-Onge in the Shaputuan, with McGill anthropologist Peter Johansen seated to her immediate left.

des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ), the Institute Tshakapesh develops sensitivity programs in Quebec's secondary schools and colleges. CICADA would like to thank the Institute Tshakapesh and the Shaputuan program for their kindness and generosity in providing the McGill community with this unique and important opportunity to learn about Innu culture and lifeworlds. We would like to thank all of the members of the

Shaputuan team who delivered the program: Evelyne St-Onge, Karine Regis, Vanessa Vallant, Gary McFarland, Steve Vallant, Colette Fontaine, Sophie Vallant, Jacques Gregoire, Jean-Yves Pilot, Jonathan Moreau, and Sebastien Demers. We would also like to thank Uapashkuss Chargee de Projets, Dolores Andre for taking time from her busy schedule to join the Shaputuan to discuss sacred Innu sites and the work of the Uapashkuss. ●

Continued from page 11

- Current international efforts result in very little funding pledged for climate mitigation going directly to Indigenous communities; instead, the benefits go to governments and other organizations. Likewise, international talks are fraught with problems around Indigenous Peoples' representation, with voices from the grassroots missing, and non-governmental organizations competing in capturing Indigenous organizations to bring to the table.

Finally, there was a call for all humankind to unite to combat the climate catastrophe. In the words of Manari Ushigua of the Sápara Nation in Ecuador:

"We are seeing from the forest that climate change is already here – it is already happening. We can no longer talk about future adaptation, but we have to talk about adaptation in the present, now... As cultures, as humans, we must unite

to face this climate change. And the concepts being used—like sustainable, or sustainability—are not going to work, because the world is already changing. We need to look for other words to align ourselves in this new change we are living as humans, and to start taking care of our living space—each one of us in the world—to face what is going to come."

Look out for the retreat's summary report soon to be published and uploaded to the CICADA website! Watch out also for the beautifully rendered short videos profiling Indigenous participants produced by McGill students linked with the Anthropology Department's Critical Media Lab. ●



Notcimik Pimatisiwin

Inter-Nations Meeting on Territorial Pedagogies

By Adam Archambault (UQAT) and Benoit Éthier (UQAT)

The Notcimik Pimatisiwin Inter-Nations Meeting on Territorial Pedagogies, part of the Indigenous Knowledge and Education Partnership, welcomed delegations representing the Mapuche (Chile), Maya (Mexico), P'urhépecha (Mexico), and Anicinabe (Quebec) Nations. They were hosted by the Atikamekw Nehirowisiw Nation (Quebec) on their territory during the traditional Wemotaci Pow Wow from September 1 to 3, 2023. Participating in the Pow Wow provided the groups with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with Atikamekw Nehirowisiw culture, exchange ideas with its members, and showcase their own cultures, notably through traditional Mayan and Mapuche dance demonstrations during the ceremonies.

The group from various Nations then proceeded to Club Odanak, located on the ancestral lands of the Nehirowisiw Atikamekw Nation near La Tuque (Capetciwotakan) in the Mauricie region, for workshops on ter-

ritorial education from September 4 to 6, 2023. The workshops commenced with a welcome from the Grand Chief of the Atikamekw Nation Council, Constant Awashish, and the Chief of the Wemotaci

Atikamekw Council, Viviane Chilton. Representatives from each participating Indigenous Nation presented their political, social, and cultural contexts and shared their perspectives on territorial education. A key issue raised by several Nations was the importance of preserving heritage and archaeological sites for cultural transmission. As all participating Nations view the territory as central to their culture, preserving these sites provides a geographical and concrete anchor to their oral traditions, countering erosion due to colonial pressure. Another critical aspect

of territorial pedagogies identified was the role of language, inseparable from the territory, in transmitting traditional knowledge. Participants gained insight into the territory's importance to the Nehirowisiw Atikamekw Nation with an afternoon on Masko Cimakanic Aski, the territory of the Coooco Nehirowisiw Atikamekw family, which is central to a protected area recognition process.

The final day of the workshops focused on sharing circles and subgroup discussions led by teacher and master's student Janis Ottawa (UQAT). Students from grade 12 at Nikanik School in Wemotaci also participated in these discussions. Two general observations emerged: firstly, Indigenous nations in different countries often face similar issues despite diverse contexts; secondly, resistance is vital to maintaining pride in Indigenous identity, which must be passed to younger generations. By collaborating, it's possible to unite and implement concrete solutions for transmitting indigenous knowledge on an international scale. ●



Participant group photo. Photos Courtesy: Adam Archambault.

This event was funded by CICADA (Small Grants), CRDT (New Initiatives), and SSHRC (Connexion; Partnership Development). The summary report of the event will be available on the website of the UQAT's Laboratoire de cartographie participative: <https://www.uqat.ca/recherche/laboratoire-de-cartographie-participative/>.

To the Rhythm of the Waters

By Geneviève Marion-Séguin (Laval University)

From August 5 to 25, 2023, Laurent Jérôme and Anne-Marie Colpron organized a field seminar for UQAM's Graduate Programme in Religious Studies, titled "Au rythme des eaux: Anthropologie comparative des cosmologies et des sociétés autochtones au Québec et en Amazonie". This seminar took place in the state of Pará in the Brazilian Amazon. We met with riverside Indigenous peoples to discuss the significance of water in their cosmologies.



Josenildo Dos Santos da Cruz, Cacique of the aldeia Munduruku São Francisco Da Cavada sharing his community's territorial realities.

Our group of 21 students included five Indigenous individuals from Quebec: one Innu from Mashteuiatsh, two Innus from Ekuanitshit and Pessamit, and two Atikamekw Nehirowisiwok from Manawan. These inter-nation meetings led to discussions on territorial and environmental challenges faced by communities in both regions, Quebec and Brazil. At the time of our visit, a major concern for Brazil's Indigenous peoples was the "Marco Temporal" bill. This legislation, which sought to prohibit territorial demarcation for Indigenous communities initiating recognition processes after October 5, 1988,

was ultimately rejected by the Supreme Court with a 9 to 2 vote on September 21. Regarding environmental issues, the impact of climate change was at the heart of concerns. Climate change directly affects the territories and, consequently, the lifestyles of Indigenous communities in Quebec and the Brazilian Amazon. Discussions on this topic fostered connections that participants hope will endure. These meetings between Indigenous peoples facing common challenges facilitated the sharing of local initiatives implemented by the communities and prompted reflections on the importance of continuing our exchanges.



Cortar Peixe Diablo.

As a vital component of local life, Amazonian waters are an integral part of the area's ontologies and cosmologies. During the seminar, my colleague Ulysse Rémillard and I focused on everything related to fish and fishing in the communities we visited, including songs, dances, stories, knowledge, practices, markets, and more. Following the fish



Olivia Ott-Quitich, Atikamekw from Manawan, and Val, a Munduruku aboriginal from Alter do Chão, During a discussion on women's issues with the Suraras do Tapajós association. All Photos Courtesy: Geneviève Marion-Séguin

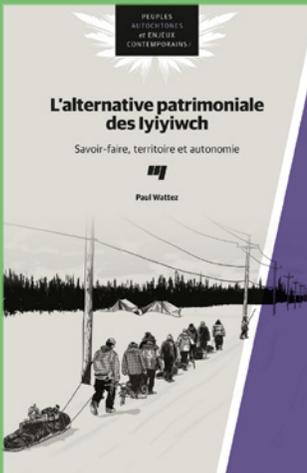
also brought us to issues connected to the agri-food industry and resource exploitation, including gold and timber. This exploration provided insights into the resilience and assertive strategies of the people we met who are striving to preserve their territories. ●

I would like to express my gratitude to CICADA for its financial support of this project.



Dom and Émilia Arapixuna.

Recent publications by CICADA partners



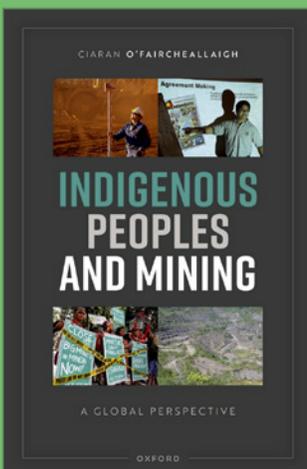
L'alternative Patrimoniale des Iyiyiwch : Savoir-faire, territoire et autonomie (The Alternative Iyiyiwch Heritage: Know-how, Territory and Autonomy)

By Paul Wattez

This book examines the relationship between a First Nation, the Iyiyiwch (Cree of Quebec), and the concept of heritage and the process of heritage designation of its culture. It shows that the Iyiyiwch have put in place a strategy of self-patrimonialization at the level of the Cree Nation Government in the context of their discussions with the Government of Quebec, and exposes its expressions at the level of one community, Waswanipi.

The Iyiyiwch heritage alternative highlights the choices made by elected politicians, administrative officials, families, hunters and ceremonial practitioners who favour this approach and participate in the definition of what heritage is or can be in the Iyiyiw world, based in particular on the concept of iiyiyiw iituun ("iyiyiw way of doing things"). One of the fundamental lessons of the Iyiyiwch is that, over and above knowledge and practices, it is relationships that need to be protected and passed on.

This specific portrait of the Iyiyiwch provides an alternative approach to what heritage can be today in Indigenous worlds and, more broadly, in Quebec, Canada and internationally. The book is aimed at researchers in the humanities and social sciences, but is also accessible to a wider audience.



Indigenous Peoples and Mining: A Global Perspective

By Ciaran O'Faircheallaigh

This book seeks to understand the political, social, economic, and cultural dynamic that is created by the relentless expansion of mining into Indigenous territories. Contributing to such an understanding involves a task of global significance. Indigenous peoples embody a large part of the world's linguistic and cultural diversity; their lands cover an estimated 25 percent of the world's land surface, intersect with about 40 percent of all ecologically intact landscapes, and contain a large proportion of the world's mineral resources.

Recent publications by CICADA partners

Denieul-Pinsky, L. 2023. (Re)purposing cadasters: When ecclesiastical archives advocate for Indigenous land rights. *Canadian Geographies / Géographies canadiennes* 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12883>

Baker, J. M. 2023. CBC Radio Interview: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-31-labrador-morning/clip/16005038-plastic-identification-workshops-civilian-led-police-oversight-board-a>

Torres, A., Patterson, C., **Jaeger, J.A.G.** 2023. Editorial: Advancing the consideration of ecological connectivity in environmental assessment – Part 2 of the special issue. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 41(5): 330-332. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2023.2239586>

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