

Making Modern Treaties Work – LCAC
Breakout 4C: Food Security

Moderator: Roy Francis, Community Development Officer, Tla'amin Nation

PANELIST 1: Serge Larivière, Director General of Cree Hunters and Trappers Economic Security Board

(Hunting and Fishing as a Viable way of Life for the Crees of Eeyou Itschee (Quebec, Canada))

- The environment of Eeyou Itschee is a mix of boreal forest and the tundra. The land is desolate with large mammals such as black bears and caribou.
- In the 1970s, there was approximately 400,000 Cree people living in northern Quebec. Late 1970's there was the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement. This agreement established the hydro-dam and re-managed their rights with regards to culture, language, hunting, and natural resources.
- The Cree Hunters Economic Security Program attempts to achieve secured harvesting activities as a way of life. This program pays a daily rate (75\$) for every day in the bush (hunting fishing or trapping). There are additional amounts for people who may need to travel long distances, large families, Elders, and youth. These are payable after quarterly interviews with beneficiaries on self-declaration of hunting activities.
- Upon creation of the program in the 1970's there was approximately 1000 families. Now it encompasses 1500 families (roughly 15% of the population). The participation fluctuates due to different jobs opportunities that are available in the region.
- The average amount payable to every family is \$17,485.
- The annual cost of the program is \$30 million with most (\$28 million) going to hunters and \$2 million to administration costs.
- The program is only administered by 18 members.
- Since 1976, over 700 million has been paid to hunters. This is all made possible by the agreements made in the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement.
- The benefits of hunting and fishing aside from food security (e.g. beaver, moose, geese, black bear), is the sharing of knowledge traditions, language (inland Cree and coastal Cree) strengthening family bonds, and physical exercise.
- All portions of the animal are used, including for fur. Every part contributes to food security.
- The battle has been to maintain interest in hunting and fishing for youths. Modern day program that originates out of a treaty. Many health benefits to eating locally hunted food (Meeyoumeechum (Goose)).
- Since 2007, we started the Cree Hunter and Trapper magazine.
- "The magazine is 100% devoted to hunting trapping and fishing".
- This is a good initiative to inspire Crees. In addition to the paper the website has been updated to include videos to provide more information and motivation to hunt, fish, and trap.

PANELIST 2: Gregor Gilbert, Director of the Dep. Of Environment Wildlife and Research, Makivik Corp.

- Gregor describes his first meeting of the Hunting Fishing Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC), which is comprised of Cree, Inuit, Naskapi, and Quebec and federal government parties. The HFTCC is established under Section 24 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement
- There is rotating chair between the 4 groups.
- In 1975, with the signing of the JBNQA wildlife management was re-defined.
- Section 24 of the Agreement - “Co-management” did not include balanced decision making where Cree Inuit and Naskapi was disadvantaged.
- On the question of caribou, the population of the George River Herd had plummeted to approximately 74,000 animals in 2010. 15 years earlier there was 700,000 more.
 - o Sports hunting and profitable use of resources was promoted by the Quebec government.
 - o These packages were sold off to wealthy Southerners at the expense of Nunavik Inuit
- Subsistence harvesting was not understood as profitable and did not suit southern interests. Some hunting licenses offered guaranteed hunts and established mobile camps that expanded their temporary sport hunting territory.
- 30 years later there are over 300 “mobile” camps that have proved to be sedentary and proved harmful to the caribou population.
- We have been pushing for decades to conduct a proper census of the caribou population. The JBNQA refused to make concessions on sport hunting.
- In 2010 there was 8343 sport hunting licenses on caribou hunting. Because sport hunting targeted large males, they were reduced to 2% of the George River population.
- “Quebec reaps the profits of trophy fees”.
- The dysfunction of the coordinating committee resulting in violent and hostile discussions. Outfitting industry lobbyists drastically influenced the Quebec Government.
- A second consultation is necessary with a co-chair representing the Native communities. In 2011 the Minister made the decision around a number of new caribou hunting licenses without proper consultation. The Cree Inuit and Naskapi appealed this ruling - and won.
- Shockingly, the minutes from 30 years prior apply exactly to modern conditions.
- Also, it was disappointing to go to court due to a technicality to ensure food security with a government that prioritized “Mise en valeur” over Indigenous rights.
- There was no official federal government response on the matter.
- The future of food security in George River has an amount of 5,000 caribou. The ability to locate them is incredibly low.
- Leaf River herd is around 187,000 animals down from the peak of around 600,000 in the early 2000s.

- In 2018 sport hunting on the Leaf River heard was finally terminated after their injunction.
- Indigenous harvesters are advised to stop harvesting their herds even though there is a lack of pressure on outside hunters who have paid for their ability to hunt.
- Section 24 of JBNQA (1975) is more challenging than ever as it is used to override the interests of Indigenous peoples. Section 24 should be abandoned.

PANELIST 3: Kevin Bayne & Lloyd Lintott, Carcross/Tagish First Nation Farm

(Food, Place and Identity: Sustainability, Food Security, and Cultural Practice of the Carcross Tagish First Nation)

- Statement from Elders: “We will look after our land as our Elders have told us to do... We who are the Tagish and we who are the Tlingit will protect our land... We are part of the Earth and water.”
- Colonization through food is understood as replacing traditional food. The residential school system restricting the availability of food, therefore acting as an additional driver for food sovereignty.
- Food sovereignty is “feeding our people through the land we belong to and which we are responsible to”.
- Being part of the land and water influences our spirituality and relationship with the earth. This is to uphold the responsibility of our Elders who came before.
- Our department is implementing the final agreement regarding the Indigenous Land Relationship Plan. We are people of the caribou, though country foods are becoming increasingly difficult to harvest. The HLNR is working diligently to preserve cultural knowledge.
- Agro-forestry is in our history to manipulate the landscape to grow food (ex. Tlingit potato). We donate 80% of our produce to vulnerable peoples in our community.
- “A dream of the Elders is to be more self-sufficient in food production”.
- Food security programs are also in demand due to transportation challenges that arise from natural disasters - increasingly more due to climate change.
- The Porcupine Farm has starting seeding and canning as a financially sustainable social enterprise. They sell turkey, pork, chicken.
- In 2019 they produced and distributed into the community 1800 pounds of pork, 5000 dozen eggs, 5000 pounds of chicken, thousands of pounds of vegetables (beets, carrot, rutabaga ect.)
- We also encourage youths in elementary school to introduce skills in harvesting. This started with a small community garden and expanded to large fields and greenhouses.
- Last year was exceptional for the warm weather in Yukon our “greenhouse was a jungle”.
- Every Friday there is a community pot luck and BBQ with our own salads and meats and there is always a good turnout.

- There is also an extensive flower bed with many diverse plant species. Many volunteers collect plants and make medicinal medicines. We also make tobacco and teach courses on canning every Thursday. One popular canning workshop was on salsa. Canning is important for preservation and passing knowledge to the community.

Questions:

1. I worked at the Department of Agriculture and Department of Indigenous Affairs. Did you require any assistance from the Department of Agriculture?

Kevin Bayne & Lloyd Lintott:

- We applied for some assistance recently, but have not received any as of yet.

2. What kind of pork and chickens do you breed?

Kevin Bayne & Lloyd Lintott:

- Pigs are born and raised in the Yukon.
- Chickens are heritage breeds

3. Do you provide compensation for purchasing harvesting equipment and how do you monitor?

Serge Larivière:

- The Cree Trapper's association oversees equipment, but mostly provide subsidies (ex. Snowmobiles at a lower price every 3 years). Self-declaration was evident in the past because it was evident that the family was gone.
- Today it is a small portion that fake this information and the community is growing, and it's impossible to know where people go. Facebook is a tool to monitor by local administration. But we remind participants that it undermines the whole system.
- We tried to implement journal keeping. We try to find a good compromise to encourage others but not to be that ankle bracelet.

4. What about tanning hides and snowshoes? Is this difficult to implement seeing as how they are not in the bush.

Serge Larivière:

- Our program includes all bush activities and crafts.
- Although if people are paid for their crafts, we do not compensate them.

5. The eco management board is not directed towards self-determination, what are their goals?

Gregor Gilbert:

- One major issue with co-management is that the Minister that has the final say for processes, and there is no recourse unless using the courts to challenge the Minister's decision.
- The JBNQA has a different co-management regime than is seen in later Land Claims Agreements.
- But the buck stops with the implicated Minister.
- Indigenous self-determination will include Indigenous peoples with the final say. We need improved dispute-resolution mechanisms.

6. How would harvesters be selected? What's the application process?

Serge Larivière:

- You must be at least an 18-year-old Cree with a beneficiary number.
- They apply in July; the start of the hunting season and they must report 4 times a year to update us on their activities.
- The program pays from 120 -240 days.
- Every 3 months they meet the local administrator to summarize their harvesting.
- It is a little unusual given that the program pays in advance and provides bonuses for large families and distances.
- The program is fairly stable and for economic security, and not available to wealthy families (\$90,000+ income). Some families are in the program but need no support.
- The money arises from the JBNQA and Cree also have the option to hunt and be on Quebec social assistance, though ours is more beneficial and prestigious