

**Building Biosphere Capacity to Achieve
Sustainable Development Goals Through
Indigenous Partnerships**

A Review of Canadian Experience



EuroMAB Brockville

October 15th-19th, 2013

Opening Ceremonies

Elder and Ambassador
Larry McDermott, Shabot
Obaadjiwan First Nation
(Algonquin) / Executive
Director, Plenty Canada



Recommendations

- EuroMAB Indigenous Working Group in Brockville, Ontario



Discussion Paper EuroMab 2013: Indigenous Participation in Canadian Biosphere Reserves

In part, the rationale for including Indigenous People stems from a strategic vision articulated by UNESCO. In 1995, the Statutory Framework for BRs explicitly included the function of sustainable development and subsequent documents indicate that maintaining cultural diversity and local livelihoods by involving local people were significant elements of the rationale for creating BRs (UNESCO 1996; 2000; 2002; 2008).

The present strategic plan, the Madrid Action Plan 2008-2013 (UNESCO 2008), also includes understanding and enhancing cultural diversity as part of the function of sustainable development. One of the 11 priority action items was that every BR should carry out a planning process that assures participatory management, “especially for traditional, local and indigenous communities.” (UNESCO 2008: 5).

Discussion Paper EuroMab 2013: Indigenous Participation in Canadian Biosphere Reserves

All 16 BRs in Canada are in treaty or non-treaty traditional territories, suggesting that these obligations are relevant to all participants in the BR program.

Through the support of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and the Community Conservation Research Network, representatives from the Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife Commission, the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Fisheries Department, the Abenaki First Nation, the Mohawk Nation of Akwesasne and the Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation shared with a wider circle of participants their advice and remarks on success factors for collaboration with First Nations in the context of Biosphere Reserves. The discussions culminated in the establishment of an Indigenous Collaboration Working Group (co-led by three Canadian Indigenous representatives involved in Biosphere Reserves) and a set of recommendations to guide on-going engagement. This was a positive development, sorely needed, as Canadian BR managers reported relatively little real action related to the engagement of Indigenous peoples in Canadian BRs.

Collaboration with Indigenous/Traditional Users of the Land

- ① Make more **time** for this kind of dialogue and relationship building at all levels (local, regional, etc.). Continue to invite indigenous voices to the conversation – and gather / act on their recommendations.
- ② Maintain **flexibility and patience**. Give conversations the time they need to breathe, hold space and time for cultural practices, understand that community and family matters are priorities, and understand community members are very busy.
- ③ Engage Indigenous communities as **rights holders** and the **hosts of biosphere reserves**; recognize that sites are located within their territories.
- ④ Add **meaningful indigenous representation** as a **criteria** for biosphere reserve **designation**.

- ⑤ **Base your approach to collaboration on an indigenous model**, such as the *Great Way of Peace: equity, respect, empowerment*.
- ⑥ Approach **capacity-building** as a **two-way** activity. What can you learn from one another?
- ⑦ **Value indigenous/traditional knowledge** as on-par with other forms of expertise in decision-making. As a start, learn and use local concepts/language.
- ⑧ **Speak from your heart** about your work, and about what you can do – and *not* do?
- ⑨ **Hire community members**. Individuals that have a long, rich history and relationship with the land, resources, and people have a lot to offer and can help build bridges.

Establishment of New Networks

- EuroMAB Indigenous Advisory Committee
- Canadian Biosphere Indigenous Working Group

Developing Relationships

- The real science is social science
- Leave your briefcase closed
- Keep your ears open



credit: photo Toomas Kokovkin, <http://foto.pelagis.eu/>

A 1700's Cross-Cultural Agreement

For forty years, he was the Holder of the sacred *Three Figure Welcoming Wampum Belt* from 1700, the one he sometimes also described as the sharing belt. Created out of the purple and white shells of the quahog in the distant past, the ancient wampum belt relics of the First Peoples recorded history, agreements, served as mnemonic devices, and integrated sacred in the *way of life*. This belt was particularly important to him — it was created before there was a Canada, when his ancestors, realizing newcomers were arriving in their lands in increasing numbers, sick, bereft and fighting old battles, made their statement.

The Indian in the centre drew the hands of the French and English together to entrench friendship, agreeing to share the vast land, the grand natural resources and their values in equal parts, and to forge a new and strong nation as envisioned by the prophecy of the Seven Fires. The fact that it was a sacred agreement was signified by the symbol of the Vatican on the side of the belt.



Empathic Traditions: How Indigenous Knowledge and New Media can save the Earth

“The unborn generations’ faces come toward us from our Mother Earth, still part of her flesh and spirit. They are the community of human beings whose welfare our actions today affects, and it is they who will judge the life that we who are living now leave to them”

(Thinking in Indian: A John Mohawk Reader 2010, editor Jose Barreiro)



Chelsey Johnson, Oneida Nation
M.A. Communication and New Media

Youth Empowerment Program



- Six Nations Waste Less
- Youth Reconnecting With Nature
- Our Traditions Our Future
- Implementing Traditional Indigenous Knowledge to Restore Our Wetlands
- Canadian Roots Exchange
- Growth Beyond the Garden (Swaziland, South Africa)

Earth Summit Treaties



STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020 AND THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

Strategic goal E. Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity-building

Target 18: By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.

UNDRIP: A Commitment to Improvement

Article 43

The rights recognized herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.

Article 37

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.

Article 27

States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to indigenous peoples' laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous peoples shall have the right to participate in this process.

Article 8

1. Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

Lima Action Plan : Are We Making Progress?



**Statement from members of the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association and the Canadian-MAB Committee and a Co-Chair of the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples
March 15 2016**

p. 9 B7 under "outcome"

Change from

An active and open interdisciplinary network of scientists sharing MAB vision and mission

to

An active and open interdisciplinary network of scientists **and indigenous and local knowledge holders** sharing **the** MAB vision and mission

Accepting the proposed amendments helps to eliminate the exclusion of Indigenous communities, empowering all BR participants to play an integral role in the development, implementation and governance biosphere reserves.

*"Dear Larry,
After taking into consideration the comments about many types of knowledge holders, the Outcome you were concerned about will refer to establishing a network of scientists/knowledge holders."*

"We scientists don't know how to do that"

"I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change.

I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address those problems.

But I was wrong.
The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy...

...and to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation

- and we scientists don't know how to do that."
Gus Speth



Two-Eyed Seeing

A Scientist Who Understands That We Need
To Work Together



Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation
la science et la culture
UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization

Building Biosphere Capacity to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals Through Indigenous Partnerships

Recommendations For Lima Action Plan

UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals Adopted September 25th, 2015

Strategic Action Area A. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves Consisting of Effectively Functioning Models for Sustainable Development

Recommendation 1: Align the Lima Action Plan with the United Nations Standards expressed in MEAs and SDGs, as well as Human Rights Instruments. Specifically, effective Indigenous participation in the planning, implementation, and governance of BRs. Traditional Indigenous knowledge and cultures shall be present in all Biosphere Reserve Models in Nation States with any Indigenous population(s). All Outcomes, Actions, Outputs, Primary Responsibilities, and Performance Indicators in the Lima Action Plan should reflect effective Indigenous participation.

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Strategic Action Area B. Inclusive, dynamic and result-oriented collaboration and networking within the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

Recommendation 2: Align the Lima Action Plan with the United Nations Standards expressed in MEAs and SDGs, as well as Human Rights Instruments. All Outcomes, Actions, Outputs, Primary Responsibilities, and Performance Indicators in the Lima Action Plan shall reflect effective Indigenous participation, including the respectful utilization of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in all Biosphere Reserve Models in Nation States with any Indigenous population(s).

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Strategic Action Area C. Effective external partnerships and sufficient and sustainable funding for the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

Recommendation 3: Align the Lima Action Plan with the United Nations Standards expressed in MEAs and SDGs, as well as Human Rights Instruments, including Article 39 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. All Outcomes, Actions, Outputs, Primary Responsibilities, and Performance Indicators in the Lima Action Plan shall reflect full and meaningful Indigenous engagement.

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Strategic Action Area D. Comprehensive, modern, open, and transparent communication, information and data sharing

Recommendation 4: Align the Lima Action Plan with the United Nations Standards expressed in MEAs and SDGs, as well as Human Rights Instruments. All Outcomes, Actions, Outputs, Primary Responsibilities, and Performance Indicators in the Lima Action Plan shall reflect Indigenous viewpoints and utilize communication instruments.

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Strategic Action Area E. Effective governance of and within the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

Recommendation 5: Align the Lima Action Plan with the United Nations Standards expressed in MEAs and SDGs, as well as Human Rights Instruments. All Outcomes, Actions, Outputs, Primary Responsibilities, and Performance Indicators in the Lima Action Plan shall reflect Indigenous involvement in the governance of the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

A Special Miigwetch



Community Conservation
Research Network

The CCRN is a partnership of indigenous, community, university, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, with a base at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Canada.