

Field Journal Summary
May 20-27, 2003

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May 20, 2003 – Tuesday

We arrived in Ucluelet this afternoon and immediately met with Mr. Stan Boychuk, the Executive Director of the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve. Stan spoke to us about the 1999 UNESCO designation of Clayoquot Sound as a Biosphere Reserve. There are currently 425 biosphere reserves across the globe. Three main purposes of the biosphere reserves are, conservation, sustainable development, and to support research, education and training. The CBR is committed to finding balance between people and the natural environment. The guiding principle, *hishuk ish ts'awalk*, is a Nuu-chah-nulth value, meaning, “everything is one.”

Stan mentions the breakdown of the Long Beach Model Forest Society. I'm surprised when I hear this.

May 21, 2003 – Wednesday

This morning we met with Nadine Crooks. She is the First Nation Program Manager at the Pacific Rim National Park. Nadine led us through the new interpretative trail that is currently being finished. She introduced us to the Nuu-chah-nulth culture. She shares some traditional knowledge about the Nootka Rose attracting a distinct insect that was useful for birth control. She tells us about one of her favourite treats in the forest, thimble berry and salmonberry shoots (bark peeled off).

Nadine tells us that the English translation of Nuu-chah-nulth is *people along the mountains*. This leads to a discussion about the difficulties around translating a language that is steeped in oral tradition. Nuu-chah-nulth is a language meant to be spoken. This has made it rather difficult to translate the interpretative signs along the trail. When Nuu-chah-nulth is translated there is a loss of meaning. So much is contained within a culture's language. The Nuu-chah-nulth language has an inherent ethic embedded in it. An intrinsic value for the natural world is so much a part of the Nuu-chah-nulth language. Nadine explains, “it is time to stop recreating the wheel. There is an inherent value for the natural world already present here.” I understand what she means. The *ha hoolthe* management principles of the Nuu-chah-nulth comes

to mind when she says this. Nadine continues to tell us another Nuu-chah-nulth principle, “everything begins in the spiritual world and moves into the physical world.” When she says these words I feel honoured to be listening to her.

This afternoon we went to visit the “Supreme Director” of the Tofino Botanical Gardens, George Patterson. George began his talk by telling us about the OTS (Organisation of Tropical Studies). The gardens do not receive any government funding despite the number of visitors that visit the gardens each year (approx. 25,000 over the next five years). George is hoping to hire a full-time horticulturalist in the near future and is looking at the research opportunities that the gardens offer.

Before we begin the walk through the gardens George highlights the four garden themes. The first is the native plants of Clayoquot Sound garden. The second, a comparative “pocket garden” focuses on plants of different regions. The third theme is perhaps most intriguing to me. It is a garden that acts as an “interface between culture and nature.” When we are on our walk we find “Elements of the Social Contract,” an evocative sculpture by Michael Denis in this garden. George explains, “we are all held within our own self constructed cage.” I see the cage representing our social contract with society, ourselves, and most certainly the environment. The final theme that we didn’t actually get a chance to see is the “hippie garden.” George mentions the role that hippies have played in the aesthetic of today’s gardens. I certain George was, perhaps still is a hippie.

Both, Nadine Crookes and George Patterson inspire me.

May 22, 2003 – Thursday

This morning we met at the Raincoast Interpretative Centre to speak with Sylvia Harron. She has done an amazing job organizing a research archive and database comprised of research that has been done on the region. This is an invaluable resource for any one interested in the Clayoquot sound region.

Sylvia explains “grey literature” to us. (I’ve never heard the term.) Grey literature can be market research (ie. tourism research). It can be consultant work done by environmental organizations like the Sierra Club. It can be an environmental

assessment. Essentially grey literature is non-conventional research done outside of the realm of academe. Sylvia raises some very interesting points surrounding “grey literature.” How do we catalogue and make available the research that is considered to be grey literature? How do we validate grey literature within academe?

Shortly after Sylvia’s talk we meet Jenn Pukonen the co-ordinator at the Raincoast Interpretive Centre. Jenn has a pretty amazing job at the RIC. Her role is to raise awareness of the natural environment through community outreach programs (ie. slide shows, educational walks, school educational programs). Jenn stresses the importance of researchers presenting a clear and honest representation of themselves and the role they intend to have while in the community. She mentions the need for researchers to be sensitive to the surroundings and the community culture. Appreciation and respect for place and people that is discussed in the Protocols Project comes to mind.

This afternoon nine of us are off on a “Cultural Mystery Trip” with Gisele Martin and her cousin Dwain. Gisele and Dwain run Tla-ook Adventures out of Tofino. When we get into the canoe Becs sits beside me and shows me how to hold the paddle. The canoe, brought to life by Gisele’s father Joe Martin, is so steady. We glide across the water, paddling in sync with each other. Dwain sings softly at the front of the canoe. We head to Opitsaht first. We sit about a half mile from shore and listen to Gisele and Dwain tell us about their family and themselves. Dwain tells us how he enjoyed his time at the missionary school he attended. I imagine this must be a rare experience to have enjoyed the missionary school. Gisele explains that it was much better to be away from home at that time. We talk about language again. Gisele tells us about the confusion surrounding the translation of Nootka. It is clear to me now what Nadine meant when she said so much is lost when an oral language is translated.

After visiting Opitsaht from afar we head over to Big Tree Trail, anchor the canoe and go for a hike. Gisele peels a thimble berry shoot and shares it with us. Nadine was right it is a delicious treat. The trail is magnificent. The trees are enormous. The forest canopy shelters us from the rain. I feel honoured to be here.

When we come out of the forest at Lemons Inlet there is a bald eagle resting about fifty feet from where we stand. The strength and power of the creature is so apparent

to us that we freeze. Justine speaks low, “I’ve never seen an eagle so close before.” I haven’t either. When the bird takes flight I can almost hear the wind move around its body.

We begin to head back to the canoe after a few moments on the mud flats. We get lost, but find our way after a little bush whacking. The canoe ride back to Tofino is calm. Dwain sings low and we glide quickly across the ocean surface. I’m certain this has been one of the best experiences in my life. I think about Nadine saying to us, “everything begins in the spiritual world and moves into the physical world.”

May 23, 2003 – Friday

Today is our day off. We head in different directions. Some of us stay in Tofino, some of us head to Chesterman Beach and the Rainforest Trail. Despite my uncertainty about my course project, I decide to go to Chesterman Beach. It is a magnificent beach. Excitement, like a small child, fills my body when I find a sand dollar. I’ve never seen one before. Wow!

May 24, 2003 – Saturday

Today we met Dr. Barb Beasley. She took us on a walk through the Willowbrae Trail that led to Half Moon Bay. We discussed the differences between old growth and second growth forest structure. Barb tells us about slug sex, hemlock dwarf mistletoe, sphagnum moss. She shows us a large amphibian egg mass. Barb is patient and answers all our questions about plants. She shows us the difference between red and evergreen huckleberry.

Barb raises some very interesting questions about how to utilize the forest to enable economic sustainability. Non-timber products, such as salal and alder bark are discussed. I begin to wonder about the concept of a community forest. The Harrop-Proctor community forest comes to mind. They have created a sustainable business in the Kootenay area by coming together as a community to manage the resources of the region. I’m curious to know if there are similar opportunities here in the Clayoquot Sound region. It seems so logical to combine the Nuu-chah-nulth principle, *ha hoolthe*, with a community forest.

This afternoon we met with Gerry Schribner at the LBMF/CLARET office. Gerry is the Stewardship coordinator of the Nuuchahnulth Aquatic Management Society. He discusses the Protocols Project and the break down of the LBMF. There was so much more potential for the LBMF to continue operating, but interpersonal conflicts have grinded things to a halt. I'm disappointed to hear about the LBMF, but realise there is still a tone of opportunity here. Gerry discusses some standards of conduct when doing research. Respect and acknowledgement of people and place are stressed. He explains, "assume they [community] know nothing, but treat them in a manor that reflects they do." After our talk with Gerry we all head to the intertidal zone in Ucluelet at Big Beach. Barb resumes her talk about the importance of biodiversity. She shows us various different organisms found in the intertidal zone. Sea anemones, gooseneck barnacles, sea asparagus, sea stars. I love to touch the sea anemones. It feels like sticky velvet. Barb speaks about the opportunity and need for research and education on the tidal area. I'm surprised to hear that there has not been more research already conducted.

The waves crash in against the rocks as the tide moves in. We all head for the Wild Pacific Trail to finish off the day. It has been a long rainy day. We're all pretty soggy and tired. We finish the day discussing the tree that has been chained in Tofino. (I've forgotten the name of it.) It is a haunting image each time you see it. I see it as a representation of man and nature. We are so very disconnected from the natural processes of life.

May 25, 2003 - Sunday

This morning we didn't travel far. Dr. Barb Beasley came to the community centre to speak to us about her current project. It is called the SPLAT Project. The project is focusing on highway mortality of ambience. Barb is collecting data to determine where efforts are needed to reduce highway mortality. Also to identify key breeding and winter habitats, to track species diversity and relative abundance over time, and to learn more about dispersal behaviour. I'm once again inspired by Barb and her dedication to the community.

This afternoon we head over to Clayoquot Island Preserve on Stubbs Island. It is an annual community event that just so happens to be occurring alongside our visit to

Tofino. The afternoon is beautiful and the Preserve is like a fairytale land. We take a boat across from the Tofino dock. It is about a three minute trip. We all sit and enjoy lunch together before splitting up. Barb has given us one assignment for the day. We are to meet at least one local while exploring. This makes me nervous because I'm not very outgoing. A good challenge though.

The preserve is well taken care of. There are gardens with badminton, croquette, and volleyball set up. There is a small pond within the garden. In the pond a large turtle is sunbathing. Children race around and scream to one another about seeing a "naked frog" in the pond. I head to the beach immediately after lunch. I don't want to waste any time. I want to take it all in before it's time to leave.

After meeting about half a dozen tourists, I finally meet someone local. Her name is Magdalena and she is ten years old. I ask her if she has been here before and she replies, "oh ya, I've been here about a hundred times. My dad made the benches that everyone is sitting on." She continues speaking with me for a few more minutes, telling me about Chesterman Beach (where she lives) and introducing me to her best friend, Ariel. I attempt to ask her about her father, but get about three words out and she tells me, "sorry lady I'm gonna go see that naked frog. Bye."

May 26, 2003 - Monday

This morning we met with Barb just outside of Tofino. We are going to collect some data for her along the highway between Tofino and Ucluelet. We split into groups of two and get dropped off along the road to investigate the ditches. Kelty and I are on a stretch that is mostly dry and amphibian free. At one culvert there is one single red back frog that we spot, but fail to catch. Apparently some of the others find up to half a dozen egg masses in some of the ditches. I'm glad we have had a chance to help Barb out with the SPLAT Project. It has been very enlightening, in that I have almost zero knowledge of amphibians, but it is also great to be involved with local research taking place in the area.

After lunch we meet with Mr. Jur Bekker at Chesterman Beach. Jur is a Clayoquot Area Supervisor of the Environmental Stewardship Division. He speaks to us about the Tofino Mudflats Wildlife Management Area. The area is a stopover for migratory

birds. The mud flats are important for their abundance of crustaceans and invertebrates that provide food for the travelling birds.

Jur raises some issues surrounding the management areas. The dominant issue involves finding a balance between public use of the area and simultaneously valuing the natural use of the area (ie. migratory stopover). It is a difficult issue to solve as the tourism industry is so much a part of the local economy, yet at the same time the tourists are coming to the area to experience the natural beauty. Jur also stresses the importance of finding research that benefits both the researcher and the community.

May 27, 2003 - Tuesday

This morning we met with Josie Osborne at the Raincoast Interpretive Centre. Josie works for the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Fisheries. She has done some great work studying the gooseneck barnacle industry within the region. She spoke to us about the history of the gooseneck barnacle fishery, as well as the difficulties the fishery has encountered over the years. Perhaps the most significant issue Josie spoke to us about was the closure of the fishery in 1998. The fishery closure was done without local input and solid research. Essentially the decision was made by a far removed government official. Josie also spoke about the opportunity for research and education involving the gooseneck barnacle fisheries.