

“The Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training”

Dialogue Session 4

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Coastal Community Network Conference 2002

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Abstract: A major research and community engagement initiative in the Clayoquot Sound region is the “Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training”. This is a partnership of the University of Victoria and the communities of Clayoquot Sound, through the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust as a conduit. The partnership is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada under its Community-University Research Alliance program. Several projects are in progress or under development with community partners as key contributors. Some of these include: studies on sustainable resource management, creation of learning materials for Nuu-chah-nulth language training, extension of the Clayoquot archives for community access and use, expansion of the Long Beach Model Forest Society’s sustainable forestry research inventory and database to include human and ecosystem health. In addition, a major project to develop consensus on protocols and guidelines for community-based research with local community groups and the central region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations is in progress under the guidance of a local working group. In this dialogue session, community and university representatives will provide an overview of the Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training and briefly describe some of the projects for discussion, feedback and identification of participatory opportunities.

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**SUMMARY OF THE PANEL PRESENTATION
“THE CLAYOQUOT ALLIANCE FOR RESEARCH EDUCATION AND
TRAINING”**

1. Introductory remarks and overview by Dr. Rod Dobell, Professor of Public Policy, University of Victoria; Principal Investigator for the Clayoquot Alliance

Dr. Rod Dobell provided the following opening remarks to set the context for the more detailed panel presentations in this dialogue session:

The two basic ideas underlying this project are simple. First, there is a tremendous amount to be learned through systematic reflection on the experience of people in the Clayoquot Sound region over the last few decades. Second, there is a tremendous amount to be gained by mobilizing university resources in support of community initiatives in the region. So there is clearly great potential for a two-way partnership promoting better linkage between coastal communities and academic communities.

This opportunity to promote more direct relevance in academic work in the social sciences and humanities became a priority for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) towards the end of the 1990s, and one result was an imaginative concept of Community-University Research Alliances (CURA). Under this funding competition, grants would be awarded to support partnerships of university research groups with non-government community groups outside the universities, with the goal being precisely to link community interests more effectively with academic resources.

Three years ago, working with the Biosphere Reserve Nomination Working Group, Ross Macmillan and I developed a letter of intent and ultimately a full proposal to the CURA competition for creation of the Clayoquot Alliance, a partnership of the University of Victoria with the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust. This proposal was favorably reviewed, but in the end not funded.

The following year, working with what by then had become the Transition Working Group and the interim Board for the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, we prepared a revised proposal that was approved and funded for a three-year period to begin early in 2001.

This proposal envisaged a very simple partnership structure. Through the University, the Clayoquot Alliance reaches out to academic resources nationally and internationally, directly and virtually. Through the partner in the community, the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, it reaches out to First Nations, non-governmental organisations and community groups throughout the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere reserve region, an area that extends beyond the reserve itself to include Ucluelet and the northern portion of Berkely Sound as well as Clayoquot Sound.

But this is a novel undertaking in an academic setting. We want to do this work, both academic and community-based, right. So we are beginning with a few projects that will clear some ground and help to set the stage constructively for future work to come. A few of these will be introduced in our dialogue session today.

First, Kelly Bannister will describe the Clayoquot Alliance Protocols Project, a project to establish explicit understanding and consensus on guidelines, protocols, principles and tips for community-based research. The goal here, in part, is to capture the expectations that members of communities have for the conduct of researchers who come to their region to pursue their own academic or corporate research interests. More generally we see these discussions as aimed at negotiating agreement among at least three distinct broad communities, each with its own cultures, traditions and expectations. In Clayoquot Sound, the rules of the community-based research game have to reflect and respect the interests of the Nuu-chah-nulth people, the non-aboriginal communities in the region, and the research communities that come to assist community initiatives or to explore greater understanding of developments and experience in the region.

A successful model in Clayoquot Sound may be of immense value much more broadly across the country. Universities themselves already have formal guidelines for research involving human subjects; the premise underlying our Protocols Project is that all community-based research involves the interests of all the humans (and other creatures) in the region, and such research should be conducted in a way that respects their established norms and expectations. Effective community-based research rests on enduring good relationships, and good relationships rest on scrupulous attention to norms, traditions and expectations of respectful reciprocal concern. Through an extensive and inclusive process of discussion with a working group in the region, the Protocols Project aims to articulate the foundations for fruitful community-based research in this sense. We see this as a starting point for all the rest of our work.

Second, the Clayoquot Alliance Database Project, headed by Sylvia Harron, is developing an inventory of document and data holdings in the region, with the intention of creating a metadatabase that would provide not only a guide to documentary and data resources in the region, but also a keyword-searchable access to identify where the

materials can be found. We definitely want to avoid re-inventing work that has already been done, and we are working both on the updating of an inventory of research completed to date as well as an updated inventory of monitoring activities.

Third, Anne Morgan will briefly comment on our initial ideas for the Clayoquot Alliance Language Project and in particular an educational initiative involving Nuu-chah-nulth language awareness and traditional knowledge.

Finally, so far as activity responding directly to needs identified in the region are concerned, Gerry Schreiber will say a few words about hopes for some training activities that might be centered on the ongoing needs for criteria and indicators, monitoring and reporting in areas of local level indicators, community health, ecosystem integrity and sustainable resource management. Following the loss this year of federal government funding for the Long Beach Model Forest, the Clayoquot Alliance has arranged to maintain the Long Beach Model Forest Society office in Ucluelet as a temporary base of operations while longer term plans for the Long Beach Model Forest Society and the Clayoquot Alliance itself are worked out. One goal is to see whether support can be mobilized for a series of training activities mounted from this location, and ultimately for the establishment of the offices as a resource centre, or “science shop”, for ongoing community-university connections and research or training initiatives.

On the other side of the community-university linkage, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at the University of Victoria (and in future, potentially other institutions) are pursuing a survey of background theoretical and conceptual work around community-based research, participatory policy formation and barriers to implementation of collective decisions through individual action. This theoretical work may be reviewed in a workshop this Fall that we hope to organize in conjunction with a renewal in Clayoquot Sound of the Science Symposia held five years ago.

After this brief introduction, we'll now hear a few words from the Executive Director of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Stan Boychuk and then move along to the people actually doing the work—Dr. Kelly Bannister, Sylvia Harron, Anne Morgan, and Gerry Schreiber,

2. Opening comments by Stan Boychuk, Executive Director of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust.

Stan Boychuk made some opening comments from his perspective as the new Executive Director of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust as follows:

I am new on the job at the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) and have spent the last 30 years in community and organizational development. The CBT has a significant role in the Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training, as it was a supporting partner organization in the funding application with the University of Victoria and will continue to provide on-going support and guidance to the Clayoquot Alliance projects.

As Rod noted already, there is a very important distinction to be made in that the Clayoquot Biosphere is a region that includes more than just Clayoquot Sound. All communities in the region have been impacted and the proposed alliance with University would provide grounding and practical application within the Clayoquot Biosphere region communities. This alliance can provide research, training and further understandings on how we can live in the area and move forward. The Clayoquot Alliance projects need to provide benefit to the people who live in region. The CBT can be a very important facilitator of these benefits as it provides a touch-stone to the community.

3. The Clayoquot Alliance Protocols Project by Dr. Kelly Bannister, Research Associate with the POLIS Project on Ecological Governance and Managing Director of Community-University Connections, University of Victoria.

Kelly Bannister explained her role in the Clayoquot Alliance and gave a summary to date of the Protocols Project as follows:

As Rod Dobell explained earlier, the Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training is a partnership between the University of Victoria and the Clayoquot communities through the CBT. My involvement in the Clayoquot Alliance at the university end is through a new initiative at UVic called “Community-University Connections”, which is sponsored by the POLIS Project on Ecological Governance (formerly the Eco-Research Chair of Environmental Law and Policy).

The broad objectives of Community-University Connections are three-fold:

- To link community groups, First Nations and university researchers
- To identify ethical and policy issues in community-based research
- To establish a mutually-beneficial process for community-university collaboration, based loosely on a successful model from the Netherlands called “science shops”.

Through my work with Community-University Connections, I was asked to be involved with the Clayoquot Alliance, particularly to facilitate development of protocols for ethical and equitable research that would benefit both the university and community partners. As Rod noted already, the concept of community-university collaborative research is still a relatively new one for the university and there are numerous practical and policy-related challenges that need to be addressed. The Clayoquot Alliance provides a valuable opportunity to work through some of these, we believe for local and wider benefit.

What kind of issues in community-university collaborative research do I mean? In essence, I refer to things like inadequate time, funds and/or processes within the academic system to build the relationships and trust that community-university collaborations realistically require. Successful community-university collaborations need time to grow and build operational and social structures that mature and can support mutually-beneficial projects. For example, time is required to develop an informed community and build consent for the research process and outcomes. Time is also needed to clarify data use, ownership and control as well as define intellectual property rights before research begins. Researchers need to become acclimatized to local expectations,

capacity and knowledge bases and to also to refine their research objectives, methodologies and priorities based on these. Once research commences, researchers need to know how to share data and results in locally-useful forms, both during the research and after it is completed.

The Clayoquot Alliance Protocols Project is an opportunity to explore some of these general issues in collaborative research and hopefully find useful solutions for the projects in the Clayoquot Sound region. We think the process will also be of wider interest to other communities and researchers who are experiencing similar challenges in their collaborative work elsewhere.

The specific goals of the Protocols Project are:

- To develop agreed guidelines for collaborative research (envisioned as both a set of principles and a set of practical suggestions or 'tips' specific to the region).
- Use the guidelines as the basis for project-specific agreements and university Letters of Consent (required by universities in Canada for all research involving humans).
- Make the guidelines available as an example for other universities and communities.

But research protocols or agreements are usually not synthesized out of the air. That is, there are already existing obligations at both the university and community ends. So the first task of the Protocols Project is to identify and understand what already exists and use this as the initial basis for agreement.

The main starting points for the Protocols Project are:

- Respect for the well-being and interconnectedness of individuals, communities and ecosystems, which is embodied by the Nuu-chah-nulth principle of *Hishuk ish ts'awalk* or "Everything is connected".
- Consistency with existing University policies such as ethical guidelines for research involving humans and intellectual property policies.
- Consistency with existing First Nations protocols.
- Support for non-aboriginal community needs and interests.

So far, the process has involved meetings with the university administration; community groups and interested individuals; and First Nations chiefs and councils through the Nuu-chah-nulth Central Region Leadership. To involve the broader public in the process, we have had two open public workshops where we asked for feedback and guidance on specific issues. These workshops resulted in a set of summary notes (available at <http://web.uvic.ca/~scishops/protocols.htm>), the formation of a local Working Group to guide the on-going process and the establishment of an email listserve to facilitate further discussions outside of personal contact.

As Rod explained earlier, we also are seeking to develop new understandings on how universities, First Nations and non-aboriginal communities of a region can work together toward a shared social and ecological ethic in collaborative research that respects the cultures, traditions and expectations of each of the contributors. We see the Protocols

Project very much as a collective learning opportunity and we are certainly interested today or in future in any feedback, suggestions and recommendations you might have.

4. Clayoquot Alliance Research Inventory and Database Project by Sylvia Harron, Community researcher.

Sylvia Harron summarized progress to date on the Research Inventory and Database Project as follows:

In 1999 the Long Beach Model Forestry Society (LBMF) in Ucluelet compiled a database summarizing research, inventory, and monitoring projects related to sustainable forestry in Clayoquot Sound. The subject areas included a broad range of topics such as climate, hydrology, geology, biology of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, First Nation's values, recreation and tourism. Dr. Warren Magnussen at the University of Victoria compiled a database related to the politics of Clayoquot Sound at the same time. Neither of these databases has been formally updated since 1999 nor posted on the web. More recently, Dr. Derek Shaw, a researcher in Tofino, completed a survey of research inventory and monitoring projects as part of LBMF's Coordination of Monitoring Project.

A library of research projects conducted in Clayoquot Sound has been identified as a priority by the LBMF and the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) for several reasons. A researcher should not have to "re-invent the wheel" every time one comes to the area. Knowing about the research that has been conducted in a community could help prevent repetitive requests to the citizens to participate in similar studies. If a researcher came to the area and then left without sharing the data or results, the community could lose out on acquiring valuable information.

The original database compiled by LBMF focussed on issues related to sustainable forestry. The Research Inventory and Database Project will update and expand the existing database to include research that deals with a variety of issues related to human and ecosystem health in the Clayoquot Sound region. The updated inventory will be in a format suitable for posting on LBMF's and the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust's (CBT) websites.

What exists at the moment are a couple of basic databases of Clayoquot Sound regional research that need updating. One of the databases is linked to a physical set of collected papers, while the other is not. Locating copies of the reports, making the information available for distribution and long-term maintenance of the databases are the main challenges facing this project. Since the reports exist in a variety of formats and are the property of different organizations, no one person has been responsible for the upkeep of a central database or library. Some organizations have folded since the database was last updated and their collections of reports, data, and reference materials have been put in storage or donated to other organizations. Most organizations that have been contacted with regard to their own library collections have identified updating and cataloguing their libraries as a priority, yet few have been able to allocate resources or personnel to do so. As the years pass with more information being variously produced, discarded, or

misplaced, the task becomes an overwhelming one. With a variety of users with varying levels of skills and interests, a user-friendly, yet systematic database needs to be developed that can serve a long-term vision and use.

As well, a protocol concerning access to First Nations communities, their culture and information is very important, so that researchers know what is appropriate behavior and how to access community resources. As this project is in the beginning stages of development, hearing of any success stories or pitfalls to avoid on this road would be appreciated in our discussions today.

5. Language Project by Anne Morgan, Toquaht First Nation; Steering Committee member of the Clayoquot Alliance.

Anne Morgan emphasized the importance of language as an essential part of community and cultural identity. Language is important in all communities, even the non-native communities. It is especially important that people in their communities work together as a unit to bring language back.

Anne is involved as a key advisor in the Clayoquot Alliance Language Project, which is an educational initiative involving Nuu-chah-nulth language awareness and traditional knowledge. An outline proposal for initial activities has been reviewed with the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth Leadership and under discussion is launching of the 'Central Region CD-ROM Project' as a demonstration project. Consultations will be pursued about possible designs for this program as an ongoing activity in the region, perhaps with continuing work on elder-youth camps and other forms of intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge along with contemporary learning resources and curriculum materials.

6. A community perspective on Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training by Gerry Schreiber, Community Liaison for the Clayoquot Alliance Protocols Project

Gerry Schreiber shared his perspective on the Clayoquot Alliance as follows:

I was recruited for the Clayoquot Alliance at the beginning of February 2002 as a community representative/liaison for the Protocols Project. This was part of the Clayoquot Alliance partnership to build capacity and create closer partnerships to see that projects included local people and their perspectives.

I would like to make a few observations about why I think this is such a great connection for the community. As we all know, there are many small resource-based communities that are going through some rather dislocating transition right now. Perhaps the disturbing thing is that this has been a trend for some time now and it appears to me that we have to think in new ways to overcome our issues around these transitions. This is especially important in more geographically isolated locations with limited alternatives

currently in place. It is perhaps a bit simplistic to say that we have, in a sense, had lots of warning and by now should have been prepared and have these other things in place. It was Einstein that suggested that a problem cannot be fixed by the same thinking that created it. While there are many parts to the problem I think part of it lies in the isolation of modern economics, where we are all thought to be operating in a self-interested way always competing with one another. I see millions of hours of volunteer time put into communities without any monetary remuneration – this is not the act of a totally self-centered people.

I really believe that if we cannot, and perhaps even if we can, raise ourselves to a state of near self-sufficiency we need to begin looking for other ways to enhance our community's viability. The only real way I see this happening, short of some miracle, is through cooperation and collaboration with our neighbours, which I guess is what the Coastal Community Networks is all about – learning from others and offering support and encouragement where possible. Partnerships are a bit of a buzzword these days, but I do believe that they are the way to success for us all.

The Clayoquot Sound area has had the good fortune to attract a partnership that I think will be very valuable to us. That is specifically the application of the CURA grant money to our region. The University of Victoria has recognized the value to both our “communities” (academic and local) of collaborating on many fronts. They have offered their services and we have now been working together for several months discussing ways to make the partnership beneficial to both.

During my previous time as program coordinator for the Community Skills Centre in Ucluelet and Tofino, I saw a great need to increase peoples' skills to make the transition to the new economic realities. In small isolated communities it is not always easy to find opportunities to do so, nor is it necessarily easy to access them when you do. There was a lot of research going on in the region, but local people were often left out of the mix. Researchers would come in, bring their own people, do their thing and leave with the results. Often the community did not really know it was happening, so they didn't even know there were results that they may find interesting or useful in making related decisions. There was little chance for input by the community and little opportunity to make use of the resulting information. There have been some notable cases where successful attempts were made to correct this. The Long Beach Model Forest Society (a local partnership oriented organization) provided many opportunities for local employment and capacity-building and a few individual researchers made great efforts to ensure that the community knew what was taking place and that the information stayed in the community.

As Kelly mentioned, through the Clayoquot Alliance, we are developing protocols that we hope will encourage all researchers to include the community in as many aspects of the research as possible. This should help provide some immediate capacity building in terms of skills, help the communities get involved in the research, and make sure the research is relevant to the community with new information about its resources or about itself to improve on decisions over a wide array of issues. So far I been very impressed

with the dedication and sincerity of the people like Rod and Kelly in helping us identify what we might do, how opportunities can be created or “exploited” and how it will benefit both parties to create the proverbial “win-win”.

For example, the Clayoquot Alliance is also looking into how it might expedite the establishment of a high-speed wireless internet connection – a project that was begun by the Community Skills Centre but, for various reasons, never became a reality. At this point we are not quite sure how that will play out, but from my perspective having the university’s name connected to this can only raise the profile of this potential educational and business tool.

From the community perspective, I see this partnership as a great opportunity to better understand the potential in forging partnerships that are mutually beneficial. I believe that small communities need those broader connections to outside resources that they may not otherwise have ready access to. I think this is a great example of establishing more positive relationships, connections and community networks that will help us through trying times.

The Clayoquot Alliance is a great example of spreading our network beyond the local sphere to make use of the greater resources available and for which we generally pay anyway. I think we all need to be creative, flexible and innovative in our search for solutions to the real problems faced by our communities everywhere – and networking is what this conference is all about. Thanks.

Comments from attendees (without attribution)

- It appears to be important to the region to articulate a common vision. There has been a lack of common vision in the Clayoquot region. Perhaps this grouping could begin to develop a common vision here. Build on existing understandings and develop new ones. This is quite exciting working across cultures and with people from very diverse backgrounds! Common visions are built on many perspectives. Having so many perspectives in the region makes it unique.
- It is very important that the vision is reflected on-the-ground, the project needs to be well-grounded not intellectually abstract. There is much work in the Northern regions that might offer guidance here.
- A communications plan for this project is very important. The CBT should be the main communication/dissemination vehicle for information to the communities and the necessary communications devices should be in place such as, the Chamber of Commerce, websites and newsletters. However, the CBT should not be the only organization involved because if the CBT folds, a back-up is required. There are a lot of meetings in Tofino and people's tolerance of going to them is decreasing.

- The 26 Islands Trust trustees recently decided to reinvent their organizational culture and become more leaders than regulators. It is necessary to engage in a principle-based discourse. At the beginning of this process the first question is: are there some things we can agree on before we begin? The Island Trust has negotiated protocol agreements with local First Nations and they are process-based protocols. All parties agree on how to engage. They have developed a new set of first principles including respect, understanding, compassion.
- There is incredible potential for linking with universities, perhaps with the potential of creating an Aboriginal Institute. There is already a successful example of working with academia, it is the management for Living Hesquiaht Harbour. There are also differences. Academia must recognize that First Nations are also losing our “PhD holders”, i.e., our elders. They just don't necessarily have the same “letters” behind their names, but they are our experts. Many people have incredible knowledge of the environment not just the Aboriginal community. Part of the vision is that First Nations be at the management table.