

WORK REPORT ON SPRING 2003 CO-OP TERM AT THE CLAYOQUOT ALLIANCE FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

17 April 2003
Mark Kepkey

1. The Employer

The Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training (CLARET) is a partnership of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT¹) and the University of Victoria. It ~~is~~ was funded for a limited term by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). See Figure 1 for a depiction of these relationships. The partnership was founded with the goal of forging creative links and making the educational and training resources of the University more accessible to Clayoquot First Nations and other communities². The partnership brings real and meaningful benefits to both sides, and these benefits are mutually supporting. Projects that CLARET has initiated or supported since its establishment in 2001 include ~~its tasks. Projects the CLARET has been involved~~ ~~include:~~

- the Broadband Project to bring high-speed Internet access to the region
- the Protocols Project for interactions between external researchers and local communities and First Nations
- the Database Project to compile and organize existing data and literature in the region
- the Isaak Forest Resources Project to develop criteria and indicators for monitoring performance
- the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Central Language Group
- various university research projects, ~~(e.g.;~~ eelgrass, whales, multi-party governance, social capital, property rights)
- support for CBT-funded projects, ~~(e.g.;~~ Educational Initiative, Waste Reduction and Recycling, Green Economic Opportunities, Return of the Salmon Festival, and Goosebarnacle Harvest ~~from CLARET)~~
- various community workshops, regional conferences, and science symposiums
- other local activities, ~~(e.g.;~~ stream restoration and salmon enhancement)

Several projects ~~listed indicated~~ above are still under ~~the way, and t~~ They need continuing supports from ~~the~~ CLARET. ~~However, current~~ SSHRC ~~Since the~~ funding ~~to~~

¹ The CBT was established in 2000 through a \$12 million endowment by the Canadian federal government. The function of CBT is to “Fund activities in the spirit and intent of the U.N. Biosphere Reserve designation which are beneficial to the communities and the ecosystems of the Clayoquot Biosphere Region and to local communities including Ahousaht First Nation, Hesquiaht First Nation, Long Beach, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, Tofino, Toquaht First Nation, Ucluelet and Ucluelet First Nation, specifically by funding the following activities.” (CBT Consitution)

² For more information about CLARET and CBT, see the websites: <http://www.clayoquotbiosphere.org/> and <http://www.clayoquotalliance.uvic.ca/>.

~~the CLARET~~ will ~~be ended~~ this year. Therefore, CLARET is preparing an application for a “project completion grant” that would (1) ~~to~~ extend the project for another two years at its current scale, and (2) preparing the ground for an possible application for a new five-year grant.

HOW DOES CLARET FIT INTO THE BIG PICTURE?

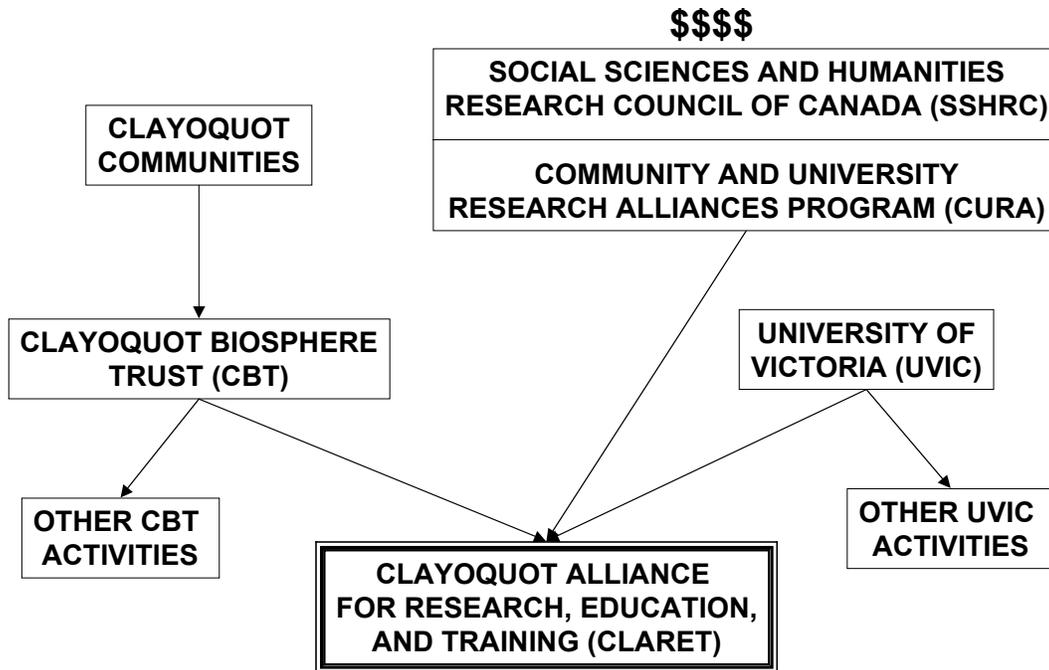


Figure 1.

2. My project involvement and learning objectives

CLARET recruited me to work on several new projects, including:

- an initiative to develop more coordination, credibility, and local benefit from the various research activities occurring in the region of the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (CSUBR).
- investigation of the potential for extending the boundaries of the CSUBR to include additional communities, forest lands, and park areas.
- other initiatives that may emerge over my work term.

I accepted this work position in order to pursue the following learning objectives:

- gain experience in conflict resolution for ecosystem management.
- learn about the ecology of British Columbia coastal temperate rainforests.
- learn about First Nations issues in ecosystem management.

3. Project outcomes

3.1 Research Coordination

This project has taken up the majority of my time so far at CLARET. The project has also evolved rapidly. My first assignment in this area was to carry out discussions with various individuals and organizations in the region, in order to determine opportunities, requirements, and constraints on developing an umbrella organization provisionally called the “Clayoquot Institute for Sustainable Ecosystem Management” (CISEM). CISEM would serve to coordinate, support, and link research activities to community information needs and resource planning initiatives.

After approximately 5 weeks of these consultations, I circulated the following findings to the various interested parties:

Preamble: Our work around CISEM work has now dovetailed with another movement around research in the region. Quite independently of anything I've been doing, the Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education, and Training (CLARET) has recently become focused on filling two new permanent positions. The new positions would be locally resident. They are: (1) a Senior Researcher -- who would focus on planning research projects and implementing some research of her/his own; and (2) a Community Coordinator -- who would serve a lot of the communication linkages discussed in Point #1 below. These job descriptions have a lot in common with the needs that I have heard expressed by all of you. We should take advantage of the opportunity.

A summary of specific findings and recent turns of event follows. Please feel free to call me (726-7263 Ext 22) or email me for more details on any of this.

1. The list of specific functions that need fulfilling under the "research" heading is long. Different individuals among us emphasize different functions, but few people dispute the serious need for all of these:
 - funding capture for specific research projects and and monitoring programs.
 - developing joint proposals for specific research projects and monitoring programs.
 - presenting research findings and new operational approaches to the general public.
 - attracting research interest in the region for the sake of both improved understandings and spin-off economic benefits.
 - identifying knowledge gaps and research needs.
 - linking research and monitoring efforts for efficiency and mutual benefit.
 - supporting researchers logistically by facilitating lodgings, supplies, equipment, etc.
 - establishing ethical protocols for interaction of external and local parties to research projects.
 - developing a clearinghouse of information about research activities and databases.
 - improving use of local knowledge in research activities.
 - using research and monitoring activities to train and build capacity in local residents.
 - providing input of research and monitoring findings to planning processes.

** Perhaps conspicuously absent from the list is the actual performance of research projects themselves. While this is obviously a part of the picture, most seem to feel that we need to focus on taking better advantage of the resources and activities that already exist, both locally and in Universities that do research in the biosphere reserve.
2. I have also heard frequent questions about what substantive fields of research we should be organizing around -- forest ecology, marine ecology, linking TEK with science, ethics, governance for sustainable development . . . ? The answer is an almost unanimous "all of the above". We do not want to limit ourselves in advance.
3. Various specific projects, in various stages of development, each attempt to fulfill a number of the above functions. Some of them are:
 - The Protocols Projects of various First Nations and CLARET
 - The monitoring programs of Iisaak and Interfor
 - The Rainforest Interpretive Centre (RIC)
 - The Aquatic Management Board Stewardship Centre initiative
 - CLARET science shop initiative
 - various CLARET projects to develop libraries and databases of past research activities and findings
 - Clayoquot Community Forest Centre
 - An as-yet-un-named research consortium to attract external research interest
 - Central Region Board Watershed Plans
4. Very few people are interested in creating yet another formal, consensus-based, multi-party society. The recent demise of the Long Beach Model Forest (LBMF) looms large in the minds of most of us, and we shrink away from the risk of repeating

it. Similarly, very few people are interested in yet another top-down strategic planning process. We want a lean, mostly informal form of organization.

5. At the same time, we need a way of bringing more continuity to the level of organization between (a) CBT's Board-level processes and (b) the various research projects occurring around the region. We need to "fill in the middle" with ongoing resources that bring clear benefits.
6. It is also important to establish a physical "storefront" in the region, where both external researchers and local community members can come to gain access to databases, services, and other resources. There have been many ideas about where this storefront should be located. Over the long term, the planning-stages Central Region Chiefs Administration Building seems like a good location. Over the short term, the old LBMF house in Ucluelet or the Rainforest Interpretive Centre in Tofino have been suggested. It is also possible that the in-progress Community Forest Centre at the junction will eventually provide a home for this storefront.
7. Eventually, the time may ripen for a CISEM-like idea -- that is, a more formal institute that does some rather grand strategic planning. However, at this moment the concept and name of "CISEM" is best left aside. The generic term I'm using right now is the "CBT research initiative".
8. As noted in the introductory part of this message, CLARET is now beginning to develop job descriptions for two new positions -- a Senior Researcher and a Community Coordinator. These permanent, locally resident positions appear to be an ideal way to address the research and communication functions and organizational preferences discussed in the preceding points.
9. Therefore, our further work around the CBT research initiative should focus on preparing job descriptions for these two positions that, as a whole, will cover the functions listed in #1 above. The CLARET Steering Committee is aiming to fill these positions by April 1st.
10. In order to develop the CLARET job descriptions, I will continue to consult the communities of the region. This includes asking each of you to contact me (if I don't get to you first) if you have suggestions for the job descriptions or would like to know more. I will also be working more closely with Maggie Zhang (another co-op student) to prepare an application for two more years of funding for CLARET -- also due April 1st.
11. Finally, I will also continue to fulfill some of the coordinating functions that eventually will fall to the new CLARET positions. I have recently aided the Community Forest Centre in compiling tourism data to support its business plan. Future activities will include things like talking to Bamfield people about the possibilities of working together to achieve some of the functions in Point #1 above. I will also be pulling together a presentation of the research-related resources in the region -- not a library or database of past research ACTIVITIES (which has already been done), but rather of research POTENTIAL. That is, what accommodations are available for external researchers, what libraries and databases exist in the region, what local organizations are interested in doing research, what university departments might be interested in partnering to develop a research consortium, and so on.

Following circulation of the above update, I continued consultations on behalf of CBT and CLARET, focusing especially on visiting the smallest and most remote communities of the region and on initiating discussions with municipal and First Nations councils. This was a more formal phase of initiating discussions around CLARET's new focus on research coordination. I also worked with the CLARET Steering Committee to develop the job descriptions mentioned above. We now expect to hire the Senior Research Associate by the end of April. Funding for the Community Coordinator has been redirected to other projects, and instead I myself will continue into a second co-op term with CLARET and fulfill some of the functions of the Community Coordinator.

3.2 CSUBR boundary extension

I have spent much less time on this project. The question of a boundary extension is very sensitive politically, and so this project must proceed by slowly spreading the idea and building trust with parties affected by the proposal. After review of formal program documentation and preliminary consultations with community members, governmental authorities, and UNESCO-related staff, I produced a brief report in April. An excerpt of some key findings follows.

Major Challenges

“The current boundary of the biosphere reserve is the *only* thing that *everyone* agreed on, right from the start. Both Clayoquot Sound communities and Barkley Sound communities. We all had our own reasons, but we all agreed to exclude the Barkley Sound areas.” – negotiator of the original CSBR nomination.

While the quote above suggests that there are many important reasons for maintaining the CSBR boundary at its current extent, discussions to date have identified two major specific challenges that face proposals to extend the boundary. Both challenges issue from local and provincial parties. Other major challenges will probably emerge in future consultations.

First, the Tla-o-qui-aht and Hesquiaht First Nations continue, as they have since 1999, to withhold formal support for and participation in the CSBR. Both of these nations are based *within* the current CSBR boundaries. Although there is potential for relationships with Hesquiaht and Tla-o-qui-aht to improve over time, these conflicts must be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties before any serious attempt is made to *extend* the CSBR boundary.

Second, the current CSBR boundary is coextensive with that of the 1993 Clayoquot Sound Land Use Decision (LUD), the study area of the Clayoquot Sound Scientific Panel's (CSSP) 1995 recommendations, and the management authority of the Central Region Board (CRB). These policy frameworks do not apply formally to the proposed extension area. Furthermore, the original 1999 nomination of Clayoquot Sound for biosphere reserve status also was keyed to the LUD in its zoning and its boundaries (Nomination Form p. 16). Thus, the question arises: must the relevant forest tenure holders commit to implementing the CSSP recommendations in the extension area? If yes, how formal and complete must this commitment be?

There is considerable difference of opinion on the issue of extending the CSSP recommendations. Some parties believe that without a congruent extension of the CSSP recommendations, a boundary extension would be meaningless and in contradiction of CSBR's mission to promote conservation. Others believe that the CSBR's mission to act as a laboratory for developing sustainable practices implies working with a wide range of approaches, both CSSP-style and otherwise. In addition, the British Columbia provincial government and the Ministry of Forests have made it clear that they do not intend to extend the CSSP recommendations beyond the area of the LUD.

The above two major challenges alone make it clear that there is much relationship-building and negotiation to be done before a decision is made to extend the CSBR boundary. Further explorations will probably uncover a number of additional contentious points. We can expect the movement towards boundary extension to be slow. Some of the barriers may depend heavily on processes – for example, treaty negotiations – that are quite beyond the control of the CBT. Thus, the “CSBR boundary extension project”, such as it is, can only proceed as a combination of fact finding, option generation, and patient waiting for the right time.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing discussion, the following actions are appropriate.

1. Continue to hold informal discussions with local First Nations and other community members, provincial agents, and UNESCO staff in order to determine the requirements of each in the event of a boundary extension.
2. Seek advice and information from representatives of other biosphere reserves that have completed a boundary extension.
3. Complete a detailed report of the formal process requirements for boundary extension.
4. Seek opportunities to demonstrate the benefits of the CSBR designation for all communities within the service area of the CBT – especially the Hesquiaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, and the extension area communities. Clear understanding of these benefits may help to develop comfort about inclusion in an extended CSBR.
5. Be patient in allowing required relationships and policy processes to mature.

3.3 Emergent projects

Two additional projects have emerged for my participation over the course of the Spring 2003 work term.

The first project, alluded to in Section 3.1, was a minor project to provide data collection and data compilation support for a business plan for a local “Community Forest Centre”. The objective was to determine the potential for tourist revenue to support the Forest Centre's operations. In total, I contributed about ten workdays to this project.

The second project was identified in late March, and will form the major focus of my work during my extended co-op workterm in Summer 2003. This project is to develop community capacity, information, and direction in preparation for a coastal zone planning initiative. Many parties, including the provincial government, the Alberni-

Clayoquot Regional District, and the Central Region Board, have a strong interest in coastal zone planning. I will be partnering with these various bodies and other local organizations to ensure that any such initiative addresses the full range of community needs in coastal zones. More concretely, my activity will include:

- preparing a “Coastal Zone Planning Scoping Report” for the CBT Board meeting on April 25, 2003. I will identify key players for collaboration, data needs, opportunities and constraints, and options for the approach.
- developing a series of workshops to address specific topics falling under the umbrella of coastal zone planning – for example, eelgrass mapping and monitoring methods, advice from other communities with experience in coastal zone planning, and so on.
- discussion alternative approaches and terms of reference with other interested parties.

4. Learning objective outcomes

4.1 Gaining experience in conflict resolution for ecosystem management

Anyone with any knowledge of natural resources issues in British Columbia knows that Clayoquot Sound is a fascinating and extreme case of conflict over alternative land use options and innovative institutions to resolve such conflicts. Values associated with the ecosystems of Clayoquot Sound include (1) one of the world’s areas of temperate rainforest with the least disturbance by European-descended development activity; (2) entirely unceded traditional territories of five different First Nations; (3) very high timber values; (4) very high tourism values; (5) very high wild finfish and shellfish values; (6) very high aquaculture potential; and many others.

The long experience of the local communities in sustained efforts to resolve acute conflicts among the above values has produced an extremely valuable source of wisdom and lessons. There is little patience in the communities for external professionals that claim to have “the solution”. The issues are complex and arise from a long history of interactions; solutions will have the same characteristics. There is no magic bullet, but rather a messy, constantly shifting landscape of efforts and forums. Success comes in fits and starts.

The challenge is to conduct broad discussions around property rights, ethics, values, and so on, while simultaneously moving forward with on-the-ground activities that respect the higher-level agreements yet also seek innovative and productive practices that can inform the higher level. It is easy to go too far in either direction – for example, moving forward with activities that compromise First Nations treaty options, or spending all of one’s resources in endless process that yields no on-the-ground improvements. The local communities include a number of individuals with an amazing talent in the art of finding the right balance. I have learned crucial lessons from working with these people.

4.2 Learning about the ecology of British Columbia coastal temperate rainforests

Success in this learning objective has been rather small. My knowledge of the ecology of the local forests, which was quite sound before I came here, has not increased appreciably. I have had almost no opportunity to study specific areas of forest.

However, an unexpected area of learning in the general field of ecosystem functioning has come from my work (and play!) with coastal ecology. My previous knowledge of marine and intertidal ecosystems was limited to salmon species and general theory of population dynamics. My work at CLARET, and local events like the Whale Festival and public walks led by local naturalists, have provided many opportunities to deepen my understanding – for example, what is eelgrass good for, why sea otters make it possible for kelp beds to flourish, what all those weird-looking things in the tidepools are, and so on. In my future work on coastal zone planning (Section 3.3), I will be pursuing these ecological topics further.

4.3 Learning about First Nations issues in ecosystem management

The questions of First Nations rights, title, and community development have received a lot of attention in Clayoquot Sound over the past few decades. As Section 1 indicates, CBT and CLARET are among the many organizations concerned with these issues. Researchers, both local and external, have studied First Nations communities for their traditional ecosystem uses, traditional ecological knowledge, traditional governance structures, and their strategies in finding an appropriate interface with non-aboriginal structures of governance and development.

Yet despite all of this attention and research, First Nations communities continue to struggle with high unemployment rates, marginalization in economic activities, social and spiritual dislocation, risk of language loss, and poor health. The attention and research have obviously not provided sufficient benefits to the communities. Data generated through the research often becomes the property of external parties, and sometimes the communities do not even receive copies of the project reports. Research topics frequently have little to do with priority information needs of First Nations. Research teams generate little employment or economic activity in the communities.

At the same time, higher-level issues, such as treaty negotiations and federal policies for fish allocation, continue failing to meet First Nations needs. The effects of these failures are felt throughout both aboriginal and non-native local communities. In my own work experience during the Spring 2003 term, these lower-level effects have manifested particularly in First Nations' reluctance to participate in any process of planning or research that has the potential to constrain their options in future treaty negotiations. At the same time, the rights and title they have conclusively established so far provide enough power for them to halt any projects that arouse suspicion or fear. In addition, even those projects that are "allowed to proceed" without strong First Nations support and participation will suffer from the absence of these communities' unique perspectives and knowledge. Similar conditions threaten projects in a wide range of other areas of activity.

Thus, I have become convinced that the top priority for British Columbia, an issue that affects the entire socio-economic fabric of our communities, is the conclusion of treaties to the satisfaction of First Nations. While this level of negotiation is beyond my own sphere of activity, I have also learned that efforts to engage First Nations in lower-

level initiatives must (1) be constantly beware of higher-level pitfalls, (2) respect existing protocols for interaction with First Nations, and (3) be prepared to proceed at the pace dictated by First Nations needs for capacity-building and trust-building. Such cultural interactions are frustrating and personally enriching in about equal measures.

5. Reflections on the work term and advice to future co-op students

Having previously studied the politics and ecology of Clayoquot Sound both in the classroom and as a distant but interested community activist, I thought before the work term that I understood quite a lot about the situation here. In fact I knew very little. Most of my Spring 2003 work term could be described as “an excuse to talk to people and explore the social landscape as a foundation for eventually becoming an effective participant”. While I have certainly helped to move certain initiatives forward, I think the real product so far has been my better understanding of the problems facing communities. There is so much happening in the region, there are so many different perspectives, and there is such a long history behind every issue, that a co-op student must conscientiously avoid premature conclusions and take a “beginner’s mind” to the work. The alternative is simply to be discounted and ignored by the communities.

My supervisors at CLARET, Stan Boychuk and Rod Dobell, have given me plenty of room to either demonstrate my sensitivity and responsiveness to community dynamics or to shoot myself in the foot. I have been quite free to propose the direction of my work and to take on significant responsibilities. At the same time, I have learned that the advice of Stan and Rod, as well as the advice of many community members, is not to be taken lightly. The learning opportunities are very rich in this position for those who listen carefully to what others are telling them.

Since the main product of my Spring 2003 term work has been to lay a *foundation* for effective work, it has become obvious that for me to depart the scene after four months would be a waste of this foundation. Therefore, CLARET and I have agreed to extend my co-op term through to the end of Summer 2003. The area of work for this new term is described in Section 3.3. My new learning objectives are listed below.

- gain experience in coastal zone planning.
- learn about the ecology of British Columbia coastal and marine ecosystems.
- attempt to apply alternative resource valuation techniques for use in coastal zone planning.

If CLARET continues to receive funding (see Section 1), co-op positions will probably continue to be offered. I highly recommend these positions to students that meet the criteria of the advertised job descriptions. It is extremely challenging but extremely rewarding.