

B2 - Ecosystem Management In First Nations Communities

Presentation title: The Lil'wat Nation: Charting a Course in a Changing Landscape

Presenters:

Rahul Ray - Westland Resource Group

Daniel Sailland - Lil'wat Nation

Abstract

Stunningly beautiful, ecologically unique, and rich in natural resources, the Traditional Territory of the Lil'wat Nation has provided a home to the Lil'wat people since time immemorial. The presence of both coastal and interior influences in the Territory is reflected in the diversity of plant and animal species, and the rich cultural history that exists across the land. However, many of the resources that have provided for this community have also garnered tremendous interest from industry and other forces in the past century. In the recent past, the Territory has been the focus of intensive resource extraction and other economic activities that rely on the natural landscape. Some of these activities are concentrated in the tourist destination of Whistler, while other more dispersed activities include commercial recreation, logging, mineral exploration, and hydroelectric power projects. In the past, the Lil'wat community has made headlines through their aggressive opposition to specific developments, particularly in the form of road blockades. With the growing level of economic development interest in the Territory, Lil'wat decision-makers are often forced to balance cultural, environmental, and economic interests. As a proactive step in 2005, the leadership of Lil'wat Nation supported a community-based, territory-wide land use planning process for Lil'wat traditional territory. The resulting Phase 1 Lil'wat Land Use Plan (LLUP) serves as a strategic level planning tool to guide future use of the territory, and describes the Lil'wat relationship to the land, resources, and their neighbours. This presentation will briefly outline the process that was undertaken to develop the Phase 1 Lil'wat Land Use Plan, and describe the key components of the document. The presentation will also describe the negotiations with the Province of British Columbia that followed the completion of the plan, focused on integrating components of the LLUP with the provincially-led Sea to Sky Land and Resource Management Plan. The discussion will discuss the positive aspects of the planning process, as well as the challenges and lessons learned throughout. The Land Summit, in May 2009, will occur one year after the signing of the Land Use Planning Agreement between the Province of British Columbia and the Lil'wat Nation. The presentation will discuss the gains made by the Lil'wat Nation since the signing and the opportunities that have arisen, but will also highlight the elements that may not be proceeding as planned. The presentation will discuss the benefits of positive Lil'wat engagement for all people in the region, and describe the initiatives that are being undertaken by the Lil'wat Nation to build relationships with their aboriginal and non-aboriginal neighbors. With the Land Summit being held in Lil'wat Nation Traditional Territory, less than a year before the 2010 Olympics, there is no better time to share the steps that have been and continue to be taken by community leaders to move the Lil'wat Nation in a positive direction.

Speaker Biography

Rahul Ray is an Environmental Planner with Westland Resource Group, an environmental consulting firm, based in Victoria, British Columbia. Rahul has extensive experience working with First Nation communities in coastal and northern regions of British Columbia. His work has involved collaborating with Chief and Council, staff, and community members in developing territory-wide land use plans and watershed plans, reviewing environmental assessment applications for major projects, preparing implementation strategies, and supporting multi-stakeholder land and resource discussions. Many of the initiatives in which he is involved include identifying information needs, gathering existing information, designing data collection processes, convening community working groups, and preparing the results in an approachable format. Rahul has worked closely with the Lil'wat Nation for the past four years. During that time, much of his work with the Lil'wat has focused on coordinating the development of the Phase 1 Lil'wat Land Use Plan, supporting Lil'wat negotiations with the Province of British Columbia on the Sea to Sky Land and Resource Management Plan, and helping to implement components of the land use planning agreement.

Daniel Sailland has been Senior Administrator for the Lil'wat Nation for the past three years. He oversees many of the strategic initiatives that are undertaken by the Lil'wat Nation, including the recent On-Reserve Land Use Plan, and planning for the Whistler Legacy lands, and Community Forest License. He works closely with Chief and Council as they make important decisions for the community. Daniel participated in the negotiations that lead to the signing of the Land Use Planning Agreement between the Lil'wat Nation and the Province of British Columbia in April 2008, and remains engaged in implementation projects designed to ensure the benefits of the agreement are realized.

Presentation # 2 title: Ecosystem-based Management Case Study: Cheakamus Community Forest

Presenter:

Heather Beresford - Resort Municipality of Whistler

Abstract

In 2008, the partnership of the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW), Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation submitted their application to receive a community forest tenure from the Ministry of Forests and Range. With the 2010 Olympic Games, the two First Nations and the RMOW find themselves becoming more involved in a variety of initiatives that are building understanding between the communities. The community forest venture provides an opportunity to co-manage a shared land base in line with local cultural and sustainability values. It is an ongoing learning process that is allowing the communities to explore alternate methods for harvesting wood, managing non-timber forest products, and protecting important ecosystems, while incorporating cultural and recreational objectives. A fundamental goal of the Cheakamus Community Forest is to manage the land in accordance with the best current thinking for Ecosystem Based Management (EBM). In British Columbia, EBM was pioneered a decade ago for coastal forests in Clayoquot Sound under the Clayoquot Sound Science Panel Recommendations. The Whistler EBM strategy has been developed to be consistent with, and supported by, the Lil'Wat Land Use Plan; Squamish Land Use Plan, Whistler2020 Vision, and the Sea-to-Sky Land and Resource Management Plan. EBM is defined as "an adaptive management approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities". An important new concept in this definition is the direct connection between ecological function and human well-being, while the inclusion of the term "fully functioning ecosystem" is a subtle, yet markedly important departure from standard forest industry practices in B.C. The Cheakamus Community Forest takes a broad, holistic approach to EBM, which includes consideration of land management beyond forestry, and it is intended that the principles and criteria within the Cheakamus Community Forest EBM plan will be applied to all developments within the boundary.

Speaker Biography

Heather works for the municipality on issues related to environmental stewardship and management. She and her team plan to implement a diverse slate of environmental initiatives that move Whistler toward its environmental goals as defined in the overarching Whistler2020 plan. With respect to the Community Forest initiative, Heather and Registered Professional Forester, Peter Ackhurst, have been actively working toward attaining a community forest tenure since the Minister of Forests and Range extended the opportunity in 2003.