

Traditional Land-Use and Land-Based Heritage Resources

Presentation Highlights

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1) First Nations Heritage Values & Heritage Program Priorities

- Heritage is broadly defined, including all aspects of culture and language; Heritage departments often part of or linked with Lands & Resources departments
- Land-based heritage resources includes both material and non-material values
- Heritage is the relationship between land and people through time, creating a *cultural landscape*
- Heritage programs and stewardship are hands-on vs. hands-off (i.e. “living heritage” as opposed to documentary and static)
- Management processes reflect First Nations values (traditional laws, active community involvement, role of Elders, value of stories)
- First Nations are experts at managing their own resources in culturally appropriate ways
- Heritage and culture permeates all aspects of all First Nations self-government

2) Land-Based Heritage Resources

- includes both material values (archaeological sites, old cabins) and non-material values (story sites, sacred places)
- Heritage resources are to be used, not preserved in stasis; First Nations relationship and cultural identity is intertwined with active stewardship and use of heritage resources
- Heritage values overlap with those often categorized as “renewable resources” or “habitat”, because heritage is manifest in on-going subsistence use of plant, animal and fish resources
- non-material values are equally (if not more) important; stories give material remains their meaning
- *Cultural Landscapes* are the relationships between a cultural group and the land they inhabit through time, as manifest in things like stories, traditional use areas, habitation sites, place names, etc.; this relationship must be viewed holistically, rather than as discreet locations, events, or time frames

3) Community Lead Research

- Why? Because First Nations communities have the expertise to properly manage their heritage resources in accordance with complex beliefs, values, social relationships, traditional laws, etc.
- First Nations know the right questions to ask, i.e. they are aware of potential cultural impacts that others may not think about (e.g. consequences of disturbing a particular area)
- Creates opportunity for transfer of cultural transfer of knowledge between generations
- Management of cultural knowledge and documented information has become increasingly sensitive in the digital age; many First Nations have developed policies and procedures on traditional knowledge information management

4) Opportunities and Challenges in Mitigation of Cultural Impacts

- Nature of a pipeline makes it difficult to mitigate
- Cultural Landscapes are sensitive to contamination and fragmentation
- Impacts to Cultural landscapes are difficult to mitigate because they cannot be easily delineated and buffered
- It takes time, effort, and funding to engage communities in a an effective and successful way
- Opportunity to employ non-standard mitigations as defined by First Nations communities (e.g. prayer ceremonies, clan-specific measures)
- First Nation will support initiatives that they feel will enhance their communities; opportunity to offset impacts to cultural landscapes through initiatives like research and public programming