



APCFNC ELDERS PROJECT

HONOURING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AAEDIRP) is a unique research program on Aboriginal economic development formed through partnerships among the member communities of the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APCFNC), the Inuit of Labrador, and 15 Atlantic Canadian universities.

In August, 2010, the AAEDIRP brought together a group of 23 Atlantic Region Elders to participate in a project called “Honouring Traditional Knowledge”. The intention of this project was to bring together a group of Atlantic Region Elders to develop protocols, ethics, and guidelines to inform the integration of Traditional Knowledge and Aboriginal world views into community economic development research. These protocols, ethics, and guidelines may be used to inform areas outside of research as well.

PROJECT PROCESS

An Elders Mawio'mi (which means “*gathering*” in Mi'kmaq) brought together Elders from four Aboriginal cultures of the Atlantic region—the Mi'kmaq, the Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet), the Innu, and the Inuit. Elders gathered in Millbrook First Nation at the Glooskap Heritage Centre from August 12th to 14th, 2010. The processes and outcomes of the project were determined by the Elders. The project was supported by the APCFNC and Aboriginal community members.

KEY OUTCOMES

A key area explored was consultation protocols for engaging Elders. As part of the project, the Elders made eight recommendations concerning how they would like to be consulted when sharing Traditional Knowledge.

Having reviewed the eight recommendations at their 16th Annual General Meeting on September 29th, 2011, the Atlantic Chiefs supported the recommendations put forward by Atlantic Region Elders as an All Chiefs Resolution #2011-14.

PROJECT RESOURCES

The Elders directed that all research products from the Mawio'mi be released for educational purposes.

Honouring Traditional Knowledge Video

The Elders asked for the Mawio'mi to be videotaped. This video highlights the roles of Elders and Traditional Knowledge. Under the Elders' guidance, the video was produced from footage taken at the Elders Mawio'mi.

Honouring Traditional Knowledge Transcript and Report

At the request of the Elders, a transcript of discussions of the Mawio'mi was made. A full report based on the discussions has been completed.

Elders Recommendations Based on discussions, the Elders made eight recommendations on how they would like to be consulted on sharing Traditional Knowledge.

All research products can be accessed at: <http://www.apcfnc.ca/economic-development/aaedirp/>

ELDERS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of recommendations from the APCFNC Elders Project: Honouring Traditional Knowledge. It is an initial list concerning how Elders would like to be consulted when sharing Traditional Knowledge. Reading and acknowledging this list of recommendations should not be considered a form of consultation with Atlantic Aboriginal communities.

1. It needs to be recognized that Atlantic Aboriginal communities are losing their Elders, their languages and their cultural knowledge very rapidly. Therefore, Aboriginal communities and leadership need to recognize the urgency and importance of working alongside Elders and learning from their Traditional Knowledge immediately.
2. It is imperative that Elders be involved in all aspects of the territorial, cultural, linguistic, ecological, economic development and social affairs of Atlantic Aboriginal communities. Elders are in a position to help prioritize what is most important because of their collective cultural knowledge.
3. Traditional Knowledge should be woven into all aspects of Aboriginal community life, including economic development, fisheries, health, social, law, environment and education etc.
4. Elders should be consulted in meaningful ways and have advisory roles for all Aboriginal community planning, development, implementation and evaluation taking place. Meaningful involvement would include being members of steering committees and advisory committees so that Elders have input into decision making.
5. Traditional Knowledge must be shared and passed on before it is lost. The ways in which Traditional Knowledge is passed on needs to be directed by the Elders from each territory.
6. An Elders Council, appointed by Elders, that would advise on matters related to the sharing of Traditional Knowledge, should be formed for the Atlantic region. The Council would advise on matters related to protocols and/or ethics and the best practices for the sharing of Traditional Knowledge as well as the best practices for working alongside Elders. This would include working alongside Elders in all areas of community life and development including research.
7. Elders should be involved in developing and approving educational curriculum related to Traditional Knowledge for Aboriginal community schools, provincial and post-secondary institutions in the Atlantic region.
8. Each Aboriginal community needs to encourage the use of traditional practices, which are products of Traditional Knowledge. This would encourage younger generations to learn about and respect traditional practices, such as traditional laws, cultural and spiritual practices, language learning and practices related to hunting and fishing, food gathering, medicine, ecology, science, arts and education.



The Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program
(AAEDIRP)

<http://www.apcfn.ca/economic-development/aaedirp/reports-and-publications/>

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