

**Pípsell & the Trout Children Stseptékwll:
Foundations in Indigenous (Secwepemc) Environmental Assessment**

Sunny LeBourdais
svlebourdais@gmail.com

Research Background:

Canada's recent full adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (<http://www.un.org>) and implementation of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (<http://www.trc.ca/>) provide foundational challenges to Environmental Assessment processes in Canada. These processes are known for their inadequacy of respecting Indigenous jurisdiction and sovereignty and Aboriginal Title and Rights (2016). In response to these inadequacies the Stk'emlúpsemc te Secwepemc Nation developed its own Environmental Assessment Process for the proposed KGHM Ajax Project. This process facilitated informed decision making consistent with Secwepemc jurisdiction, laws, customs and protocols and assessed impacts in a way that respects Secwepemc knowledge and perspectives.

This research will describe and critically analyse an Indigenous (Secwepemc) Environmental Assessment process and the use of oral tellings / stories as theoretical frameworks relative to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

Research Questions:

1. **Trout Children Stseptékwll Telling:** How was the Trout Children Stseptékwll Telling utilized as a theoretical framework in Secwepemc Environmental Assessment (UNDRIP Indigenous Decision Making Institution Article) to assess impacts? How does Trout Children Stseptékwll Telling expand understandings of 'Environmental Assessment'?
2. **Informed decision making:** How was the Indigenous Process developed to respect and support Secwepemc jurisdiction, sovereignty and to support informed decision making? What does this suggest about the meaning of 'informed decision-making' in environmental assessment?
3. **Storytelling:** How was storytelling utilized to affirm and test Secwepemc laws in the process? What does this suggest about the role of storytelling in Environmental Assessment?
4. **Environmental Assessment:** How was the Indigenous Environmental Assessment Process utilized to confirm the presence and protection of a Secwepemc Cultural Keystone Area (Garibaldi & Turner)? What does this suggest about meanings and practices of 'Environmental Assessment'?

Methodology:

This research will conduct a case study of the SSN's Environmental Assessment Process for the proposed KGHM Ajax Project at Pípsell. I will utilize methods including

storytelling (Archibald, 2008) / conversational method (Kovach, 2010) through small focus group and individual interviews with Panel members and other Secwepemc and non-Secwepemc members involved with the review process. Document analysis of the Review Process reports including the Pipsell Report, Panel Recommendations report and Panel Hearing Transcripts.

References

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- Kovach, M. (2010). Conversational Method in Indigenous Research. *First peoples child and family review*. 5:1, 2010, pp.40-48.
- Garibaldi, A. & Turner, N. (2004). Cultural keystone species: Implications for ecological conservation and restoration. *Ecology and Society*, 9:3. Retrieved from <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol9/iss3/art1>. 16 September 2017.
- Seymour, F. Kup7, & Ignace, R. Kup7. (2016). *Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation & environmental assessment process review*. Correspondence to Hon Minister McKenna, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. Retrieved from https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/themes/environment/conservation/environmental-reviews/079-Stk'emlupsemc_Te_Secwepemc_Nation.pdf. 16 September 2017.