
IMPLEMENTING DELGAMUUK'W

*Biography of Peter Douglas Elias
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I'll be fairly brief. I know that we are under some time constraints and if there are questions, I'll be pleased to deal with them.

I am going to address more generally the question of why bother using best practices to do your research? This question I think arises, for me, out of the last panel, especially, what Russell [Collier] and Donald [Bain] were saying in expressing some suspicion that their data and information would be misused or used inappropriately or, even worse yet, used against the interest of their communities. Actually if you look in the package you got when you registered for the conference, page forty-five in the consultation guidelines that the British Columbia government put out in September 1998, there's a list there of methods of consultation. It says that the methods of consultation can include meetings, exchange of information, development and negotiations on consultation protocols, site visits, participation in local advisory bodies, correspondence with aboriginal groups, and traditional use studies. The way I read this is that, from the government perspective, a forty-nine cent stamp -- sending you a letter say they are going to clear cut one of your sacred areas -- is about the equivalent of all of the research products you will come out of T.U.S. [Traditional Use Study] study, which kind of makes me wonder why they are not sending me a packages of blank envelopes and postage stamps rather than the \$300,000 or so that Donald Bain was talking about to produce real T.U.S. information. I, being a little bit of a cynic -- and maybe I have been talking to Russell Diabo too long, as well, which doesn't help -- it could very well be that at the end of the day the most important use that will ever be made of your T.U.S. study is that the government is going to be able to say, "well, we gave you \$300,000. We consider that to be top-drawer consultation and we're betting that the court is going to agree. If you take us into court, we'll simply argue that we've invested heavily in consulting with you people. Now piss off," if I could put it so boldly as that. However -- now I don't want to put words in Russell's mouth, since he is perfectly capable of doing that himself -- but you can go much beyond that. I mean, any of this research should be directed at something that stands outside of, above, or beyond anything that the government will require of you, namely that you have your own development objectives and goals, community development, economic development, and you have a vision for where you expect your people to be in one year, five years, ten years, five generations. Again, we are looking at Donald's picture there showing... in one corner he has a photograph of ancient times and in the other corner he has a newborn baby on his mother's arms. I mean this is what we're talking about, is producing information for long term planning and strategizing. That is going to require the very best information that you can get, the best information that you could afford, and the best information that you can produce.

As Dennis [Sheppard] pointed out, research and information is equal to power, and what you want is power. You don't want participation in local advisory bodies. Well give me a break. That doesn't sound like power to me. What you want is power, and if you want power you're going want to be able to back that up with information that you could use to manage your own affairs. If you extend it far enough -- now we're talking about self-government here; the ability to not just have your voice heard in an advisory body, but in fact take decisions, make decisions, implement them, and carry them through for your benefit. You will benefit from accurate, reliable, useful information and data just as much as any other of your resource competitors do. And Marty Weinstein enumerated and listed who these people were; other industries, other governments, things like that. Furthermore -- and I use this advisedly -- if somebody actually takes the notion of information-sharing seriously, so that it is not just a flow of your traditional use information going into the hands of government -- which is, I gather, what they would like to pretend all of this means -- and you start seeing useful information coming back to you from industry and from government, you would like all of this information to mesh as closely as possible so that you're confident that, when you marry your traditional use information, for example, to the 1:20,000 maps that's used in forestry, that you know that your information is every bit as reliable, accurate, and useful as the information produced by M.O.F. [Ministry of Forests] or by the resource companies. You want to use the best practices, because in my experience the scientists who are operating at the ground in the M.O.F., or Department of Fisheries, or Department of Natural Resources or whatever else, they are accurate, reliable, conscientious people. I myself have very little argument with the scientists who are doing the work on the ground. It's when they hand it up to their

political masters that all of a sudden this information becomes warped and distorted to meet the political ends of government and the political ends of shareholders in companies. Believe me, if my grandmother said that she tries to live a godly life, by the time that statement -- something that simple -- reached the level of the deputy minister of this and that, she would sound like a practitioner of witchcraft. But the information that is elicited at the front line of the researcher and the source of information, this should be and can be very reliable and accurate using best practices for your own purposes. Eventually, yes, under the T.U.S., you'll get around to handing something over to the government. But we've heard of some strategies and techniques for disguising, generalizing the information to the point that, really, there's not much that your competitors can do with this information without really looking foolish. A 1:250,000 map isn't useful for much at all, as Dennis pointed out. Operational plans are one thing, presentation of information is quite another.

I think that if you're doing this kind of research for whatever reason, you should be starting off with the development of strategies -- and this is probably going to be done at the political level, certainly will be done at the community level. What is our long term vision and where does reliable and accurate information help us implement and achieve our long term visions? So you are doing this work not for the Ministry of Forests, you are doing this work for your own benefit. And that is why you want to use the best practices, not because the government wants you to use best practices, because I suspect at the end of the day they don't care what practice you use because they're going to be able to say, "we forked the money, we have now consulted, good bye." And with that I'll end. Thank you.