

Executive Summary

International Workshop on Indigenous Communities and Government Partnerships for Protected Area Management

ʔaʔkʷustəŋáwtxʷ House of Learning, Peninsula College Longhouse
Port Angeles, Washington, U.S.A. | September 9-12, 2022

The event, hosted by the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, gathered approximately 55 Indigenous and government representatives from the U.S., Chile, Canada and Mexico. Most of the participants represented Indigenous communities, organizations, and/or Tribal governments (Indigenous communities) involved in marine and terrestrial protected areas, and government representatives were carefully chosen based on their existing relationships with the Indigenous communities represented and the associated protected areas involved. The workshop, the first of its kind, was organized to facilitate dialogue among Indigenous community representatives to share their unique experiences, address concerns, and identify collective recommendations to advance shared governance and collaborative management with respective government agencies. With respect for Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, the summary should not be viewed as a reflection of all Indigenous Participants perspectives but instead as a high level synthesis of key points and concepts shared.

Over the 3-day workshop, the Indigenous-led agenda included customary ceremonies, presentations of case studies, and culturally-responsive group exercises that helped to identify existing and future opportunities to include Indigenous communities in management processes of protected areas. During discussions, Indigenous participants shared their perspectives on resource conservation, use of Indigenous knowledge, protection and promotion of cultural heritage, and active and equitable participation in the management of protected areas.

The workshop's agenda was co-developed with participants' input, through pre-workshop exercises and personal engagements in the months prior to the event. The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe established the cultural context for engagements and participation, and offered local insights which inspired a place-based format for discussions. Based on this input, the organizers developed questions and activities that responded to the participant's concerns and interests, and addressed the needs of co-management from the perspective of the participants' own realities. The workshop's format and welcoming environment encouraged the participants to freely express their concerns and share their experiences.

As this process begins, it is worth keeping in mind several ideas from the workshop. Some of the most salient messages captured from the dialogue among participants at the workshop to pursue long-term collaborative management in protected areas between Indigenous communities and governments included the following:

- We must create spaces and devote time for healing and reconciliation. Every Indigenous community is in a different “place” in the overall grieving process and each individual and

collective community is undergoing their own unique healing journey, which sometimes requires government representatives to participate in the healing process through reconciliation. Together, we must recognize the past injustices and the negative impacts that colonizers forced on Indigenous communities. We must acknowledge the intergenerational trauma and resentment due to past experiences with government policies and actions, which have resulted in the inherited mistrust of government representatives and government-led activities. This includes truth-telling and not shying away from discussion of painful historical events.

- Participants acknowledged the need to collaboratively develop cooperative management and partnership frameworks to manage protected areas. These arrangements require the invitation for full participation and engagement with Indigenous communities to involve them in the decision making process, and recognition of these communities as full and equal partners in the management process.
- Indigenous partnerships require more than just consultation. Developing trust requires long-term meaningful relationships. Both Indigenous communities and the government must commit to doing everything necessary to build mutual trust, respect, and understanding.
- Government partners must devote resources to strengthening their own capacity for equitable engagement with Indigenous communities, including ongoing training for staff. Resources and support for Indigenous communities would also help build strong partnerships.
- We must develop strong community and government relationships and move towards institutional transformation that will have the momentum to continue despite political transitions.
- Indigenous peoples bring intergenerational knowledge and cultural and heritage values to protected areas, which government agencies cannot provide. Government agencies can provide technical management. Protected area management plans and activities should ensure that Indigenous communities play an integral role and are able to bring these values, solutions, and other unique contributions to protected area management.
- Protected areas should help to preserve and support Indigenous cultures, communities and sovereignty, as well as community efforts to revitalize ancestral practices and languages . This must be a benefit to communities associated with protected areas. Government agencies responsible for protected areas could use Indigenous languages, such as Indigenous place names, within interpretation, outreach, and education initiatives.
- Cooperative management can serve as a foundation for sharing the benefits of protected areas with Indigenous communities and addressing the environmental, economic, social and cultural needs of these communities.

- Participants acknowledge that this workshop is a good start to address best practices and build capacity for collaborative management of protected areas between Indigenous communities and government agencies. However, additional resources and actions are necessary to build on what the workshop has started, such as building an international network to support Indigenous communities.

The workshop organizing team is currently working on summarizing and systematizing the information and recommendations resulting from the working group activities during the workshop. A more detailed report of the workshop will be available in the next few months.

Participating Indigenous governments/organizations/communities:

U.S.: Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe; Makah Tribe; Quileute Tribe; Skokomish Tribe; Quinault Indian Nation; Hoh Tribe; Yurok Tribe; Hoonah (Tlingit) Indian Association; Northern Chumash Tribal Council; Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government; St. George Traditional Council; Native Hawaiian Community.

Chile: Rapanui; Kawésqar; Lafkenche; Mapuche-Huilliche; Yagán

Canada: Haida Nation

Mexico: Maya

Background

The workshop was an activity organized under the umbrella of the current U.S.-Chile MOU on Collaboration for the Conservation and Management of Terrestrial and Marine Protected Areas (signed by the National Park Service, NOAA-National Ocean Service, and Chile's Ministry of the Environment, Undersecretariat for Fisheries and Aquaculture, and the National Forest Corporation). The workshop addressed a priority activity identified by the partner agencies to learn from Indigenous communities about how to improve collaborative management of protected areas with national and local government agencies.

The workshop was intended to broaden this bilateral protected area partnership to engage Indigenous communities of the U.S. and Chile (and Indigenous representatives from Canada and Mexico) to share, develop, and advance solutions that support greater involvement of Indigenous communities in the management of protected areas. This includes recognition of cultural values and knowledge, heritage of Indigenous nations, and use of traditional practices in the management of protected areas.

The workshop provided an opportunity for Indigenous community representatives to come together to share their knowledge and recommendations on how to be more effective in including native heritage and culture into the conservation of nature. The meeting facilitated a dialogue among Indigenous representatives working on protected areas, and for participating national government agencies provided an opportunity to support, listen, and learn: USA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Park Service, Department of State; Chile: National Forest Corporation, Undersecretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of

Foreign Affairs; Mexico: National Commission of Natural Protected Areas; Canada: Parks Canada.

The workshop was funded with resources provided by the U.S. Department of State through a grant under the U.S.-Chile Environmental Cooperation Agreement. The organizers also secured support funding from NOAA-ONMS, NPS, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, the Government of Canada, and the Government of Chile. The workshop was hosted by the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, and facilitated and co-organized by NOAA-ONMS, NPS, and the George Wright Society. The workshop activities were held at and with the support of the Peninsula College's House of Learning (Longhouse).



Photo: Workshop participants. Peninsula College's Longhouse.