

Notes from Traditional Knowledge Focus Group

June 25-26, 2003

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Discussion:

- We should aim to identify what would be good use of TK, and identify how TK can help us understand specific issues
- We should try to collect as much as possible from Northern Manitoba, Western Hudson Bay and Sanikiluaq. Hardly any bodies are working toward a collection to be preserved and used.

TEK, Science and Decision-Making

- Elders are disappearing—a lot of knowledge of wildlife, of lands and rivers and sea mammals and protecting the environment is being lost. In 10 to 15 years the elders will be gone. We have information about the Western Hudson Bay region that could be used today and in the future for decision making. We are not interested in political issues. Rather let's aim at working together to protect this valuable knowledge.
- There should be more consultation with elders by scientists. It would help scientists do their job better. For example we have information about past and present migration routes. I will give you an example where a consultation would have saved money and provided valuable information. CWS has put up a watchtower to study what are thought to be unusual overpopulations of snow geese. Yet this is not unusual. We know from TK that there used to be many snow geese. We heard their noise from our campground. The large numbers of snow geese is explained by their food-chain. The high tide marks have moved from the 1960s. Science says there was food there in the '60s for sea geese. TK says no. This is new land. The vegetation is salty. In time the salt will be washed away. When the salt is washed away, there will be food here for sea geese. This type of knowledge is valuable for scientists. It can be used to help them evaluate knowledge of that area. There is no need for the watchtower.
- Science could use TK as a shortcut to understanding. TK knows exactly what was before. What was, and what is now. TK cannot make predictions though. We need to identify categories for a lot of things--urchins, clams, river systems, traditional camping grounds, the waterline 50 years ago, vegetation past and present. These should be documented for scientific purposes.
- Another example of where TK can provide understanding to help Science answer questions relates to ship traffic. Maybe in 20 years there will be bigger ships. What effect

will they have? TK knows that 48 hours before a barge arrives in Arviat from Churchill you see beluga whales beaching on the shoreline. The barge is 200 miles away but the whales know it is coming. We wonder if it is the sound of waves, motor noises or other mechanical sounds that are scaring them away. TK may provide a shortcut into understanding environmental effects of ship traffic.

- Sometimes scientists don't understand how important their information is. If we can talk about it together we can help each other fill in missing bits of information. For example, I have noticed a decrease in small birds when I go hunting. As well, I have seen four new birds that I've never seen before. Government doesn't believe me. Our voice needs to get stronger so it will be heard. Scientists must participate in the interview process with TK holders. **Minnows vs. pond scum – missing link is the language.** We need to have a research protocol to establish a way for science to consult with TK holders. At least we would be there to tell what we know.
- Another example of how TK can be used for decision-making is the proposed Nunavut-Manitoba road. Manitoba and Nunavut are planning \$1M for environmental studies to evaluate the environmental impact of a road from Northern Manitoba to Kivalliq. Maybe they don't need to spend \$1M. Government will take 10 years to study which part of the lakes never freeze etc. They could get a lot of that information from people who already know the area, i.e., TK.
- The government should have a policy approving funding for the collection of information such as the examples given. We need to convince funding agencies such as CWS, WWF, NWMB etc. that we need to consult elders and communities. A lot of projects such as mining for example, come and go. Developers ask me "do you know this area? What effect will this activity have?" There will be many more developers. No one else gets the information they have collected.
- TK should have emerged as a major tool for the betterment of governments and private people. I don't like to go slow in pursuing something good for people. Where can we use TK (includes lifestyle of people)? We need it in more than written reports and proposals. We also need IQ (refers to what it is when we want it. It will always be there).
- In the Late '50's we started working with the newcomers. They were there to set up new communities, administration, and implement government policy. We taught southerners how we deal with the snow, ground, wildlife and respect for the animals. Then after two years with us they moved from Coral Harbour. They knew enough then that they could go and work where they were supposed to work. Looking back, a lot of TK was being used without our knowing it. It has helped modern people living in the north. We never thought of it as one of the major tools for managing the NWT. Even today, when government runs into problems in the community doing landscaping, building roads, they go to the elders for their IQ to break through the problem.
- *Should we integrate science and TK? If so, how?*
- Should we encourage W. science to suck up the TK? Or, should we BRIDGE understanding? Come up with a balance between them. Use the concept of a bridge to lead to an understanding between the two worlds. It will vary where on the bridge they will meet. Not all can cross over. At least there's the opportunity to exchange information Bridge – it will vary where on the bridge they will meet. Depends on what you're doing: building a road, studying pollutants, climate change.
- Not all can cross over. At least there's the opportunity to exchange information
- Agree to ask all the committees to develop a statement of how they will bridge TK-Sci
- TK has been better tested than science. It is tested based on the need for it. Our survival has depended on it.

- The format and language of the two are different. A lot gets left out when they are brought together. TK does not really get integrated. When integrating you have to identify who said it, not just the references.
- TK is used to back up science arguments and vice versa. It's always like that. It's got to be equal.
- Why verify what is known. Rather ask what you don't know. Physical scientists don't have social science skills. The more TK we have the better job we can do of science.
- Reframe the question? Can science and TK both be used to better understand a question or problem. Use one to fill in the holes of the other and build on the local information.
- Agreed that we need to push government agencies to have more TK in all aspects of the project and activities in order to have more community input.
- Agreed that we wish to form a TK expert referral committee (or body of association) with semi-permanent or permanent committee members from Northern Manitoba and Kivalliq and maybe the Baffin Region. ...NWMB; DSD; DFO.

Scientists and others have no place to go to for assistance for input for projects and activities. This committee could be eligible for funding from government. This body could start developing and documenting the required information for projects.

TK and Parks

- Wapusk is consensus based and in the last phase of completing a management plan. TK knowledge is incorporated into the Wapusk Management Plan more and more. TK is not fully documented but planners must consult with the “management board” i.e., traditional peoples) if there are alterations such as walkways. Trails are documented. To get TK on a part of the park, or on a cabin you would go to Board members with the question and they will take it to a board meeting. MKO did a land-use study. Science alone could not possibly answer the question. Future planned activities are in the management plan. Wildlife management will be regulated by the management group. Aboriginals are allowed to do traditional activities in the park.
- It would be good to document TK in parks. I didn't see much in Wager Bay about using TK for management. For example, planting trees could alter migration routes of animals. TK could answer here and now whether that would be likely to happen.
- There are parks all over Nunavut. We haven't seen much documentation of TK into management of parks. TK and science are slowly starting to work together. Values of parks are the same as our Traditional values. We've always had our own sense of park—you've just put boundaries on it.
- Send copy of M'Lot's thesis to David Alagalak
- TK is not being used in management processes partly because awareness is lacking, and most people don't know what it is.
- The Thelon Game Sanctuary is a good example of how TK will be integrated into park planning. It will be reviewed every five years. Elders will be approached for input. At least 90% of questions related to park uses will be answered by TK. Furthermore, things that are known about a park are what make it interesting to visit. So TK can make the parks more interesting. To do that you have to document the TK to attract interest. Wager Bay has not been TK documented. Doing this would increase the value of the park.
- They are trying to use TK in Cumberland Sound—FM, Bowhead Study, Repulse Bay – beluga and narwhal. But it is not being applied to its full potential. These are OUR

- principles and values. They are not being used. The Agreement requires IIBA, but NU parks don't use TEK. Even if it is at the table it's not being used.
- Agreed that this group could benefit from work done on the Conservation of Biological Diversity.

Politicization of TK

- TK has been politicized. There are problems and benefits with this. It is a problem if politicization is used as an excuse not to use TK. On the other hand, politicizing of TK is ok because we need our leaders to get funding and this helps them do that. After that it will enter the technical sector. Then the social-cultural, and then again the political arena. It's one step. SARA is an example of how it is useful. We got better species-at-risk-legislation out of this process; MB Hydro can't ignore it, nor oil and gas in the Western Arctic. Hydro Quebec did.
- Nunavut is trying to incorporate TK into the political process. It will happen.
- Ocean resource development in the north does not have a lot of TK associated with it. Traditional values should be incorporated into resource development in the north.
- Frequent changes of federal ministers is a problem. NWMB chair couldn't be heard because the Minister was preoccupied with closure of cod fisheries in the Atlantic region. Nunavut is losing out.
- Elders need to educate governments to document TK. To pass it on to younger generations. Where will you go in 10-15 years to get TK if they don't pass it on? The foundation for TK is needed.

Benefit Sharing

3.6: to share equitably in benefits derived from the disclosure and use of traditional knowledge

- Take what you can use, when you're hunting. Don't take payment. Passing on information is a duty. Does a parent ask for payment for bringing up children? Pay honorariums: we thank you—here is a gift. Payment is a slap in the face. I don't think anyone has a right to own it.
- Case-by-case review is necessary. We can't trust academics for example.
- Benefits could be other than money. For example, it could be participating in decision-making.
- We are fearful of misinterpretation of our TK. The information we provide can be used against us.
- Benefits of TK have to go to the community. TK is tied into self government, and very tied in with the fabric of the community. IT is bigger than we think. It is not a single issue. It is tied to the aspirations of the community. Any initiative here or at the political level matters the most in the community. There is so much poverty, and dependence on a system that is foreign to us in aboriginal communities. We are so cut off from our traditional resources. The system of one-hole-transfer payments with benefits from mining, tourism, hydro-electric development not coming into the communities. The benefits are going south. The situation in aboriginal communities is survival. Just surviving though, is not where people want to go. They want to grow and develop. Not just survive or live in this model or formula cooked up elsewhere. TK is one of the things we still have control of it. That includes who benefits from it and how it's used.

Which term (TK, TEK, IQ, LK) should the HBOWG use?

- We have the practice of using TK.

- Local Knowledge is tied to an area. A traditional territory. Local Knowledge can tell you what kind of bottom is under an area.
- Each term is relevant in a particular context.
- In TK everything is connected—even the past to the present. It's the land, the animals and the human life. It is holistic.
- Have a term (saying what it includes) for HBOWG. Practically we have to use all the terms. In part because the different regions will use different terms.
- Indigenous Knowledge refers to everybody
- If you ask about TK you get referred to elders.
- Definitions don't capture the spiritual aspect of TK. If the Dene come into the group we'd have to ask them if they agree.
- Change the definition of IK to include the past, present future.
- Agreed to use IK term for HBOWG. A description of what it encompasses will also be drafted and included in the Protocol.
- Agreed to ask each of the HBOWG committees to document how they will apply the protocol in their work.

Ownership, Access and Intellectual Property Rights

- How you give credit to holders is not clear cut. Information may be confidential. It can be cited as personal communication. In a report a researcher can include pictures and names. The author(s) should be elders committee rather than an organization. However, this can raise issues of liability for what is in the document.
- In Nunavut NTI might have ownership of TK. Agree to verify this.
- How to define ownership of TK – we learn from our parents and I have the full right to use, benefit and distribute it. I inherited it from my ancestors. But if a court orders us to share it...
- Agree to learn how these questions are being addressed at the Convention on Biological Diversity and discuss it at the next HBOWG meeting.
- Put a value on TK. If you take something out, put something back. Status and recognition is one way of doing this. Another way is to provide training to increase technical capacity in the community while conducting research. There is a middle ground between that and not sharing. That is where we are going.
- The Canadian Museum Facilitation of the Solomon Islands has given me a copy of their guidelines for intellectual property rights. It can serve as a model.
- A lot of our people don't know the value of this knowledge. Once you leave the community you realize how important it is. We need to create awareness among the people that we do have something valuable. DIAND has an environmental capacity development initiative program – you can get funded to collect TK. But do you have a policy—intellectual property rights
- Trust is needed.
- Ask elders how they solved problems in the past. You have to know what you're talking about before you start asking questions
- Elders are a resource for hydro development. They are involved in all community meetings, and boards. Sometimes they go on the radio.
- Giving information to the schools and the goose camp, are examples of where TK should be freely shared.
- Need funding for small permanent communities in Northern Quebec, N. Manitoba and Nunavut. These communities can't document their knowledge in book form. It has to be done by voice.

- IQ is personal and closely guarded. It's a way of life. There is fear that TK will be used to limit stock assessments, i.e., hunters don't want beluga hunting rights taken away from them if government changes population estimates based on TK they provide.
- NWMB – and other boards—how well is TK being used?
- Ecological knowledge – where are the animals.
- If you're not sure about your questions it is hard for elders to answer. Government wants to do it their way. This makes elders uncomfortable so they won't open up. Nunavut government experts expect something written down. They will get it if they ask specifically about it. In a respectful way.
- It needs to be an evolving thing with documentation of TK, but it also has to be community-driven. It cannot be driven by outside consultants. Specify why it's being collected. Say what it can be used for. For example: fire suppression; environmental management; cultural designation etc. If it is not safeguarded then it can be exploited. There are Community guides on the INAC website.
- A lot of studies have been done for development interests. From this we learn that people are interested in TK. It is pretty expensive work. It is important to have transcripts. It is not organized by interest. Language is an issue. Open access to a database becomes confusing over time.
- Some important information has already been collected in Hudson Bay. This includes the TEKMS study. All the meetings were documented and stored in SMARTTEXT where they are organized by keywords. They were also audio-recorded. The study was based on meetings of experts with peer to peer discussions. It was started in response to hydro-electric development that was occurring at the time and which led to concerns for health of the HB. The HBOWG is preparing a document called an Ecosystem Overview of Hudson Bay. We are incorporating TK on a number of themes as part of a pilot project: polynyas; permafrost; rivers; and identifying gaps in the scientific literature on these subjects. References are 20 years old and cover a 50 year span.
- More modern scientific research is needed to correct information. Prior to approval of the Ecosystem Overview recheck the contents. When information is several times removed from the original text it may drift away from TK. Try to stay on the original concept. In the example provided the last researcher has mixed up bearded seal and walrus. Rope made from a young walrus couldn't be used for harpoons etc, as is written. It might be used to tie up a Kamitik. The rope described came from a bearded seal. Original science reports it correctly.
- Have to be objective and hear what people are saying. This is a skill. You have to ask the right question or you don't get the information you want. There are problems with reducing rich databases to simple sentences. The deductive process leads to a loss of meaning.
- I really want to see people's own words. I also need to see that it has been verified. Original words give more life to the report. Communities like it better too.
- It would be good to have an indigenous (IQ) draft of the Hudson Bay Ecosystem Overview.
- In the ISR there are two jurisdictions: 1) private land: ILA; difference screening process – 1 person and land commission 2) Crown land: ENV Screening Committee (elders; youth and science). The provider of TK has the right of informed consent and what is done and can make a decision.
- People w authority should adopt these – e.g., NTI, CLEA is hiring a IQ person
- CLEA is trying to identify what is in IQ. It becomes property of the government and it's hard to get it back. We are 1 minute late but we should try to proceed anyway. Inuit will

have conflict giving away their knowledge to fellow Inuit if there is possible revenue for someone. I won't tell u unless u pay me.

- Make a good set of ref guidelines and work directly with the community
- If any docs...industry etc. do not have .. if it mentions names its not recognized. The "provision for individual w TK have the right to use it for his fellow Inuit people w/o cost"
- Agree to discuss the HBOWG IK Protocol with Nunavut Research Institute which has research licencing responsibilities. Maybe they should be on the TK committee. How does this fit w the Research Inst
- Ownership and access should stay with that individual. However, s/he might not be able to manage the physical form of document. Consider using a legal process for entering into a trust or trustee relationship clarifying responsibilities? The standard term included in published reports stating that "the documents and information collected shall be held under her majesty and the right of Canada" won't work.
- How will permission be obtained? It is jointly held by the FN and Queen. Raw data is owned and exclusive use of raw data.
- You should have all this laid out before you talk to an elder or community. Chief and Council; NU Research Institute
- How you're going to use it – no idea how it will be used down the road. Does TK have an expiry date? i.e., can I use it just for this project?
- The first and foremost authority of this knowledge is the provider. If they pass on, then the trustee is responsible. In the York Factory oral history project it was agreed that after the death of the TK holder a user would ask the family for permission first, and then the FN.
- Without anything in place it's up to the integrity of the individual. EC has become a custodian. This was a commitment made to those who provide info. How do you use this knowledge should be keeping true to your commitment..
- Don't put up roadblocks that will make developing this protocol too difficult. It's part of the duty of an elder so we can carry on. There is no way someone won't misinterpret something. Lawyers will twist it around and should not have access. Schools should have access.
- There is not respectfulness in the youth in communities. It needs to be rebuilt – continue the investment. When we are creating an assoc. keep it alive – aware of all the aspect of TK, make recommendations to continue to collect it and pass it on. If incentives are not provided there's a danger TK will not be passed on. We do want to share it; to encourage people to share it; to give youth a hunger for the TK; for youth to find work in TK when they graduate
- Agreed to have a teleconference in early August to plan for proposed "body of association of TK experts" including timeline, budget etc. and to have this proposal presented to September HBOWG meeting.
- Agreed that Miriam and Steve would prepare a final draft of the HBOWG IK Protocol for the September HBOWG meeting.