Circulating, Disseminating and Sharing Environmental Knowledge in the Arctic

Two Cases Studies

Hudson Bay Program

Overview of the Project

The cumulative effect of the exploitation of the waters of Hudson Bay over the course of the last fifty years, essentially due to thirty years of hydroelectric development, has raised a number of ecological, social, cultural and economic concerns amongst the Cree and Inuit communities of the region. In 1992, partly in response to these worries, the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee (CARC), the municipality of Sanikiluak situated in the Belcher Islands, and the Rawson Academy of Aquatic Science (RAAS) launched a three-year research project, entitled the Hudson Bay Program, to study the cumulative impact of different development projects.

Communication and Consultation Activities

Workshops, bringing together experts from all levels of government, electrical company representatives, and academic and private research institutes allowed for various interveners to discuss the scientific data, to develop hypotheses concerning the potential cumulative impact and to choose important subjects requiring the production of scientific papers. Such papers served as a basis for a subsequent follow-up workshop. In the course of these activities, a document summarizing the workshop discussions was drafted. The second workshop permitted:

- An updating of the description of the biophysical characteristics of Hudson Bay.
- An evaluation of the relevance of scientific understanding of the assessment of the cumulative impact.
- The identification of critical ecological components at risk of disturbance by the cumulative effects.
- Reaching consensus on which key species, serving as indicators of change, to monitor.
- The development of a list of pressing research needs.

To gather traditional ecological knowledge about environmental changes from the communities, various workshops were again organized in concert with the Cree and the Inuit of the region. All these activities combined allowed for a unique understanding of the region and the building of bridges between the two different types of knowledge. (CARC- Canadian Arctic Resources Committee 20 (2) Fall-Winter 1992, OKRAINETZ Glen, Towards a Sustainable Future in Hudson Bay.)

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Pingualuit Park

Overview of the Project

In the interior of the most elevated terrain in Ungava, within a crater, a lake named Pingaluk can be found. This crater, of meteorological origin, is situated a hundred kilometres west of the village of Kangiqsujuaq. In the 1970's, the community of Kangiqsujuaq formally indicated in Annex 6 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA) their intention of guaranteeing its protection, and of designating this site, considered unique due to the purity of its form and its waters, a conservation area.

In 1992, the Québec Wildlife and Parks Corporation (la Société de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec –FAPAQ), in partnership with the various committees born of the JBNQA and the community of Kangiqsujuaq, commenced the necessary steps to create a Crater Park of New Québec (Parc-du-cratère-du-Nouveau-Québec), also called Pingualuit Park.

Communication and Dissemination Activities

- Composition of the Pingualuit working group, consisting of representatives of diverse interest groups , whose mandate is to encourage interaction amongst the various parties affected by the park's creation, to ensure the circulation of information through keeping their respective organizations abreast of new developments, and to participate in the resolution of some logistical problems, as well as certain projects related to topynomy, the occupation of the territory and traditional knowledge.
- The citizens and organizations of Nunavik concerned by the project were kept informed through periodic meetings and publications. In fact, three information documents were produced: L'État des connaissances, (The State of Knowledge) which profiles the territorial resources, Le plan directeur provisoire (The Provisional Master Plan), in French and in English, which details the development proposal, and a series of summary files, L'œil de cristal du Nunavik (The Crystal Eye of Nunavik) which provide a condensed version of the content.
- Texts were distributed through the Internet site of the FAPAQ, as well as by mail, to all the municipal councils, land corporations and public organizations of Nunavik.

  Media coverage of the project was guaranteed by the regional press of Nunavut and Nunavik, as well as the local radio of Kangiqsujuaq during the weeks preceding public hearings.
- The hiring of liaison officers, trained in various aspects related to the creation of a park, with a mandate to publicize any relevant information through radio broadcasts and translations into Inuttitut, published minutes of the Pingualuit working group's meetings, and interviews with the regional media. Through raising public awareness about the project, they were working to encourage the local population's participation in the hearings.
- From the start of the preparatory work leading to the creation of Pingualuit Park, public hearings, information meetings and considerable consultation gave the public a major role. The Inuit's comments led to significant improvements in the master plan.
- Exchanges between visitors and members of the Kangiqsujuaq community (elders, artisans, etc.), in addition to the circulation of information and traditional knowledge, were facilitated by exhibitions, meetings and demonstrations of expertise by community members.

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2005 Annual Scientific Meeting

T. 2.5 - Cultural Self-Determination, Endogenous Development and Environmental Changes

2.5.1 - Local Perspectives on Development, the Environment and Social Change in Nunavik, Québec

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