

Our food



6th Annual Traditional Foods Conference

2013 FINAL REPORT

September 27th & 28th

Quw'utsun Cultural
& Conference Centre

Duncan, B.C.

workshops • discussion
culture • drumming
speakers • demonstrations
teachings • language



Herb Rice Storytelling

Herb had the audience captivated and charmed with his interactive storytelling. His detailed story about the wicked lady who would kidnap and snack on young children certainly did not lack suspense. Although the story might sound frightening, it had an important message of safety and knowledge of one's surroundings. Incorporating audience participation and the use of large sized masks for the participants to wear, audience members watched a dramatized version of the story as Herb told his story with enthusiasm. The story focused on young children who are determined to go out in the bush and do some berry picking and harvesting all on their own. They best be careful that they know which berries to pick and which direction to go—for if they don't, the lady on the prowl will draw them into her own 'children-picking' basket with her glowing charm. Herb emphasized the importance of repetition in storytelling and its effectiveness. As this story was told to him many times, he continues to practice repetitive storytelling and this particular audience at the Traditional Foods Conference was lucky enough to be a part of it.



Herb Rice

Day One Agenda

Shakw'um - River Bath

Men's - Jared Williams

Women's - Stella Johnny

St'i'w'ulh - Morning Prayer

Ron George

St'ilum - Welcome Songs

Welcome from VICCIFN

Bringing our Voice Forward

Healthy Oceans and You

Peter Ross

Traditional Medicine

Della Rice-Sylvester

Medicine Women Food is Medicine

Dr. Daniele Behn-Smith

NTC Fishing Rights

Norine Messer, Simon and Julia Lucas

Traditional Food Plants

Tim Kulchuski

First Nations Wild Crafters

Anne Robinson and Keith Hunter

Prenatal Nutrition and the

Role of Traditional Foods

Dorothy Jack, Jen Cody

What's Happening in Western

Canada's Indigenous Food

Sovereignty Movement?

Tabitha Martens

A Year of Living off the Land

John Rampanen and Nitanis Desjarlais

The Importance of Wild Salmon Panel

Simon and Julia Lucas, Nick Claxton, Peter Ross

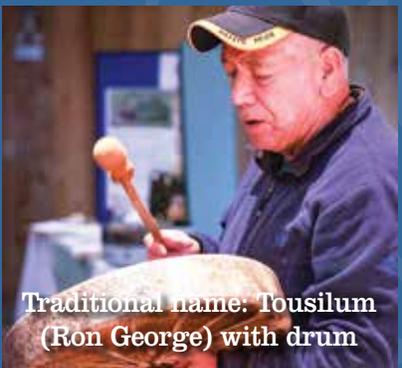
Aboriginal Cuisine and Culinary

Business

Annie Watts, Dolly (Watts) McRae

Digital Harvest Film Feast

Digital Harvest Youth Leaders



Traditional name: Tousilum
(Ron George) with drum



Della Rice-Sylvester

Day Two Agenda

St'i'w'ulh - Morning Prayer

Ron George

St'ilum - Welcome Songs

Traditional Marketplace

Food Programs, Traditional Crafts, Foods,
Tools, and Trade Goods

Medicine Walk on the River #1

Della Rice-Sylvester

Pi'kwun Making 101

Jared Williams

Tour and Outing

Philomena and Ron George -

Salmon Smoke and Deer Hide

Canoe Tour #1

Smoked Clams, Mussels

Earl Claxton Jr.

Medicine Walk on the River #2

Della Rice-Sylvester

Storytelling

Herb Rice

Canoe Tour #2

Youth and Elder Foods - Fear Factor

Networking/World Café

Opportunity - "Moving Forward"

VICCIFN Working Group

St'ilum - Farewell Songs

Thank you from VICCIFN

St'i'w'ulh - Closing Prayer

Ron George

The Vancouver Island & Coastal Communities Indigenous Foods Network (VICCIFN) is a collective of passionate and dedicated members with a shared vision of a healthy future based upon reconnecting with First Nations cultural teachings and practices. Our membership is open to anyone who is interested in issues around traditional food access and food security. We are a grassroots network of community members from across Vancouver Island and surrounding communities, including culturally knowledgeable food harvesters and gatherers, health professionals, community development workers and members of the scientific community.

Our vision is that Indigenous food systems on Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities are recognized, protected, maintained, enhanced and celebrated in a holistic way. Through our activities we strive to honour cultural knowledge and values, nurture people and communities, and sustain future generations.



2013 Traditional Foods Conference –

Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Indigenous Food Network would like to thank the people and leadership of the Cowichan First Nation for being so welcoming and generous. Our hands are also raised to the many people, from so many places, who helped make this conference an amazing experience. The territory is so beautiful and rich with so much culture, knowledge and traditions.

VICCIFN could not have done this event without an amazing group of people. Philomena Spudman, Tsolium (Ron George), Jared Williams, Sheila Gabrielle, Sharon Henry, Erin Rowsell, Erin Hemmens, Douglas Headworth, Vanessa Goodall, Norine Messer, Michelle Colyn, Fiona Devereaux, Kimberley Black, Robin Hood and many others who helped any chance they could.



First Nations Wildcrafters: Keith Hunter and Anne Robinson

Keith and Anne their knowledge around current forestry practices. They are working towards changing the language in forestry to include Indigenous knowledge – Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). Sustainability is defined differently by the Ministry, who uses it to think about protecting what already exists, where TEK defines sustainability as meeting the needs of the next seven generations. Keith wishes he could come up with a different vocabulary that is not so divisive. Principles of TK include spirit, love and culture; how do you fit that into the science of forestry management? What does it mean for the forest floor, the animals, the neighbouring trees and the community to speed up tree growth? Where to start: instead of trying to get everyone to agree, try to understand the people who disagree with you. Start with people, build the language together rather than using it to disarm your opponent. Moving forward: Recognizing that the two ‘sides’ of this both contribute to change but that the hierarchy which places TEK lower than scientific knowledge must be changed if we are to truly protect the living forest.

Dr. Peter Ross: Ocean Health and You: Balancing Health Benefits with Pollution Risks

Much of Peter’s work, done in partnership with graduate students and DFO technicians as well as with First Nations community members, was looking at toxicity levels of various traditional foods e.g. salmon, seal, clams, crabs; and measuring consumption rates of these foods. The Traditional Foods Conference stemmed from a community research project of Dr. Ross. Governments

understand numbers and graphs better than they do traditional knowledge. Healthy oceans = healthy people. Everything is connected, everything in the food web. The health of birds, bears, salmon, whales, and people is connected to the health of the oceans. Ocean creatures are exposed to thousands of pollution types and sources throughout their range. Ghost nets, derelict fishing gears, tsunami debris, and oil spills are some examples. We can each commit to stop using pesticides; we can each commit to growing and/or eating local organic foods; we can each support the planting of plants and shrubs along streams and shorelines. Article 204, 1994, of the International Law of the Sea obliges countries to observe, measure, evaluate, and analyze ocean pollution. Canada is a signatory to the Law of the Sea. Is Canada now in violation of that Law since it has virtually eliminated these monitoring programs from the work of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans? There is no healthy alternative to traditional foods. Learn, teach, share, and celebrate traditional foods.

Dr. Daniele Behn Smith: Food Is Medicine

Dr. Behn Smith is a family doctor in the Cowichan Valley. She is Western Medicine trained, and although she is Eh Cho Dene/Metis/French Canadian, when she was growing up with her mother in Winnipeg she knew little of her First Nations heritage and traditions. She did a residency at the hospital in Winnipeg, and it was while she was there that the homeless Aboriginal man died in the Emergency Room after not being treated for over 30 hours. After finishing her training, she did locums in rural reserves and felt overwhelmed by the huge problems faced by her patients and by the anger they carried within them. She was then hired to travel the world and meet Indigenous traditional healers, and create a 13-part television series called “Medicine Women.” She traveled to 10 countries in 8 months. In her Western medical training she learned that we are

in battle with disease, and that as a doctor she was a) always right; b) entitled to give orders; c) has power; and d) could get all the information she needed to do her job. From the Indigenous healers, she learned: respect, gratitude, humility, balance, ceremony and that We Are One. She knows that we can't have reconciliation and move forward together, we can't forgive and forget, until the injustices stop e.g. the injustices of lack of access to clean drinking water and the lack of access to traditional food. We can each make a commitment to bring teachings and lessons back into our own individual lives.

Tim Kulchuski: Traditional Food Plants

Tim is active in the Cowichan program "Aluxut", which means to harvest food, medicine, and knowledge. Tim emphasized that one needs a cultural background and knowledge and respect to meaningfully use traditional medicines. There are base teachings everybody should know when harvesting, the most fundamental of which is Respect. He spoke of Elders having seen an impact on every species (plant and animal) in the Cowichan Valley, since the influx of non-indigenous peoples. Tim demonstrated photos of many local plants and spoke of how their traditional names may indicate their usage. Tim reiterated that one has to have good intent, good spirit, before harvesting a plant or killing an animal, and think of for whom the food or medicine is intended. He told of a traditional FoodSafe practice, that of not having meat touch the ground (it was put on a bed of bracken).

Tabitha Martens: Food Sovereignty

Tabitha, who is completing a Master's degree with the Department of Environment and Geography at the University of Manitoba, presented highlights from her thesis research which explores Indigenous food sovereignty projects in western Canada. Her presentation commenced with an overview of her research methodology and process, which was followed by an overview of

several of the 20 initiatives over 20 communities in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba the programs and projects that participated in her research project. Identifying that she has framed her research project through the lens of Indigenous food sovereignty as opposed to food security, as she stated the food security does not imbue the cultural lens or sensitivity required when addressing Indigenous food access/rights in Canada, the research framework she presented works to be both inclusive of and respectful to the discussion and sharing of traditional food knowledge, stories, histories and experiences between the research participants and the researcher.

Notes: How do communities define success within food security vs. food sovereignty projects?

Project examples:

- Nelson House Country Foods Program - <http://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/#les/FSinMBABCommunities.pdf>
- Flying Dust Cree Worker Cooperatives, SK - <http://northernprideml.com/2013/04/02/growing-for-the-future-construction-begins-on-market-garden-facility/>
- Ladybug Garden and Greenhouse, T'Sou-ke Nation, BC - <http://www.tsoukenation.com/index.php/tsou-ke-community/community-Garden>
- the Peguis Back to the Land Camp:
- the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty
- the Earth Boxes program of the Alexander First Nation
- the Flying Dust Cree 8 Workers Co-op
- the Fort Chipewyan/Mikisew Cree First Nation's Community Based Monitoring Program;
- the Ladybug Garden and Greenhouse program of the T'Sou-ke Nation
- the Canoe Creek Community Garden
- the Muskoday Organic Growers Co-op
- BEADS Program at Anim Lake, BC.

Tabitha's research has led her so far to a number of recommendations for those engaging in food sovereignty programs, as follows:

- * Involved Elders
- * Incorporate Traditional Knowledge
- * Start small and emphasize quality over quantity



Stq̓eeye S-uli'tun Drum Group



Our Partners

- * Foster teamwork * Build Community capacity
- * Encourage hands on education * Have patience and be persistent
- * Support your local champions * Communicate successes to community members
- * Focus the program on the workers and participants * Promote, network and share.

Elder Simon Lucas, Elder Julia Lucas, Dr. Peter Ross and Nick Claxton: The Importance of Wild Salmon Panel Discussion

Simon and Julia both spoke of the knowledge that salmon have and how central they are to their lives. Simon spoke of how salmon are moving their entire lives, as is the ocean. They know the tides, the wind, the weather, and rainwater. Julia spoke of how she had time off school to process salmon, and of how they ate the whole fish including the bones and organs. She spoke of how you can identify the type of salmon by the way they jump, and of how you can tell a storm is coming by the way the gulls are acting. Dr Peter Ross encouraged us to push governments at every level to do better, and he feels that the federal government is failing all of us in regards to ocean health. The first human victims of reduced attention to pollution will be First Nations people. We must focus on the power of individual action and community action to effect change. We must take care of our own backyard as well as letting Ottawa know how important wild salmon are. Nick spoke of how salmon are us and we are salmon, that it's about relationship and a different world view, that salmon are our relatives. Fishing is more than just catching fish, it is also about the teachings passed down orally. The "Saanich" People means were often referred to as the "Salt Water People". and His people's territory is defined the Saanich place names of land and water, language, and relationships and this expressed their relationship to it. He spoke of how Coast Straits Salish language speakers all reef net fished until it was outlawed by the government and then overrun by commercial fisheries. He reminded us that the Douglas Treaties established the right of Vancouver Island First Nations to fish as formerly. He concluded by calling for us to re-establish our relationship with salmon.

Prenatal Panel

Health and food are closely interconnected. Elders play a vital role in teaching Moms how to eat traditional foods. Elders are mentors and have key life experiences to share with Moms. Traditional Teachings were shared during discussion. During pregnancy and while breastfeeding the baby "knows" what Mom is eating. What we eat in the womb we will always love. Traditionally many varieties of fish as well as clams, mussels and urchins were eaten by pregnant women belonging to the Cowichan tribes. Learning appropriate timing and parts of the seafood to eat is important traditional knowledge. Discussed how increasing food skills and passing on traditional knowledge can help to maximize use of food resources. E.g. how to use all of the fish. The importance of women coming together in groups to support each other during pregnancy was acknowledged. There is need for more groups where traditional knowledge can be shared and Moms can ask questions in a safe environment.

John Rampanen, Nitanis Desjarlais and Family: A Year of Living Off the Land

Time, days of the week and holidays lose their importance sometimes. John and Nitanis explained how it took them years to prepare for living off the land on their traditional territory on the West Coast of Vancouver Island with seven of their eight children. The concept that everything is connected definitely became apparent on the land. They spoke of how some fears of nature (bears in particular) turned to respect, and how there came to be an understanding that we must give back more than we take from the earth. They have observed protocols and traditional teachings while living there and are very mindful of what is brought to the land. "Not everyone should move back to the land, then there would be no room for the animals".



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness



Rose Henry, Urban Homelessness activist