

Highlights Report

Indigenous Environmental Justice Symposium
York University, May 26 2016

Written by: Peter Mangaly, Salisha Purushuttam and Nicole Latulippe
(2017)

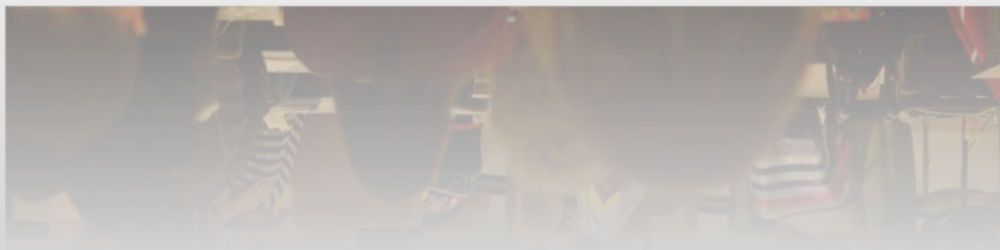


Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Executive Summary	4
Background	5
Key Themes	6
Presentation Highlights	7
Women, Water Justice, and Law	7
Josephine Mandamin, Sue Chiblow, Autumn Peltier and Lynzii Taibossigai.....	7
Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequality, and Community Health	8
Dr. Ingrid Waldron, Doreen Bernard, and Annie Clair	8
Honouring My Grandmothers & Grandfathers and Deshkan Ziibing, Our River	11
Nancy Deleary	11
Climate Change, Traditional Knowledge, and Environmental Justice	12
Kyle Whyte.....	12
Youth Roundtable on Environmental Justice	13
Natashia Bebonang, Julie Panamick-Ense, Sydney Nolan and Jayce Chiblow.....	13
Pipelines and Sacred Sites	14
Chief Arvol Lookinghorse and Dalas Goldtooth	14
Haudenosaunee Concepts of Environment and Justice	16
Dr. Dan Longboat	16
Conclusions	17
Appendix: Agenda and Speaker Biographies.....	18

Cover photo: Water Justice Panel (Left to Right): Lynzii Taibossigai, Autumn Peltier, Susan Chiblow, Josephine Mandamin

Acknowledgements

The Symposium took place on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, and the Métis. It is now home to many Indigenous peoples. Symposium organizers and participants acknowledge the current treaty holders and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This territory is subject to the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an Indigenous agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

Chi Miigwetch to all attendees, panelists, collaborators, and sponsors, including York University, Osgoode Hall Law School, Faculty of Environmental Studies, Institute for Feminist Legal Studies, Centre for Feminist Studies, Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, Faculty of Communications, Art & Design, Seneca College, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. We would like to acknowledge the following project team members and collaborators – Dr. Deborah McGregor, Dr. Brenda Murphy, Dr. Dayna Scott, Dr. Martha Stiegman, Dr. Mary Ann Corbiere, Nancy Deleary, Kathleen Padulo and the Chiefs of Ontario, and Sue Chiblow. We would also like to acknowledge the following York University students for their contributions to the event – Anupama Aery, Nasreen Husain, Michael Joseph, Salisha Purushuttam, Peter Mangaly, Kelly King, Morgan Johnson, and Oonagh Butterfield.



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada



Executive Summary

This report presents the highlights from the Indigenous Environmental Justice Symposium (IEJ), a one-day symposium that took place on May 26, 2016, at York University's Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The first of its kind in Canada, the IEJ knowledge sharing symposium was held to advance the theory and practice of Indigenous environmental justice. This was achieved by engaging Indigenous peoples to develop the concept of justice and the policies and laws necessary to enable just relations.

The IEJ Symposium brought together activists, youth, women, artists, Elders and Grandmothers, scholars, leaders, environmental practitioners, advocates and community members to share their perspectives and experiences in hopes of developing the concept of Indigenous environmental justice. The goal of the symposium was to invite and initiate dialogue in and around the following themes:

- The meaning of Indigenous environmental justice
- The process of achieving Indigenous environmental justice
- The role of Indigenous law, justice and knowledge in understanding Indigenous environmental justice
- Determining success criteria for the achievement of Indigenous environmental justice

Knowledge was shared via presentations, storytelling, teachings, panel and round table discussions, a reflections and summary session, and creative expression (art). The Symposium served as a platform to share ideas, knowledge, and experiences of Indigenous peoples towards developing an understanding of environmental justice.

Several key themes emerged in most, if not all, presentations during the Symposium. First, actions tend to prove more effective than words at promoting and creating positive change. Words in general, and the English language specifically, can limit effective communication between different groups of people. Action, including art, can transcend these barriers and limitations. Second, presenters stressed that each and every person has a role to play. Despite our differences, everyone shares some common ground: we all live on Mother Earth and it is in us to protect her.

Background

Indigenous justice inquiries and commissions in Canada, including the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Ipperwash Inquiry, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, have revealed that Canadian conceptions and practices of justice have routinely failed, and continue to fail, Indigenous peoples. Environmental justice is no exception. Indigenous peoples and people of colour in Canada experience disproportionately high levels of environmental harm, while at the same time receiving relatively low levels of environmental protection when compared to non-Indigenous communities. This has adverse impacts on the lands, bodies, and communities of Indigenous peoples, on a daily basis. Therefore, the field of environmental justice forms an important and practical framework for addressing environmental issues of concern to Indigenous peoples in Canada and elsewhere. However, the literature on environmental justice seldom includes the laws, knowledges, principles, and values held and practiced by Indigenous peoples. This symposium was intended to provide an important step towards addressing this gap, as it included the voices and experiences of Indigenous peoples as they engaged directly in knowledge sharing.

The Symposium is part of a larger Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) Project, a five-year initiative funded by the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The York University-based project was created by Osgoode Hall Law School's Professor Deborah McGregor, Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Indigenous Environmental Justice, cross appointed to the Faculty of Environmental Studies. More information about the project, including key resources for community members, students, activists and scholars, can be found at the project website, which can be accessed here: <http://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/>

The Symposium was facilitated by Dr. Deborah McGregor and Dr. Ruth Kozelar Green.

Key Themes

Talking is not doing. One can talk for as long they want but they will never see any change until they support their words with actions. This was a common message that was directly, and indirectly, communicated by the various panelists at the Symposium. To further reiterate the importance of doing, one of the panelists stated that regardless of whether one thinks they know something, if their actions fail to support that knowledge, then they do not know anything about it in the first place. Sharing and acting on knowledge is key.

Many panelists expressed frustration with the confines of the English language. There are many words and phrases in Indigenous languages that do not have an English translation, which constricts effective communication between various language speakers. This is where art, amongst other forms of expression, can work to transcend communication barriers, pointedly expressed for instance by Anishinaabe artist, Nancy Deleary. Deleary's work on display, *Honouring My Grandmothers and Grandfathers*, depicts the historical trauma experienced by her ancestors due to the residential school system. It equally acknowledges and honours the Indigenous intellectuals and knowledge holders from whom she has learned of the sacred relatives we have in all of creation (Mother Earth and Father Sky), our original instructions and responsibilities. Art exceeds language barriers. It can convey different thoughts and opinions while still being open to interpretation.

Everyone moves differently in the world on account of upbringing, relationships, and so on. Yet everyone has a role in the protection of the Earth and the many beings. Grassroots organizing matters. Community organizations matter. The youth are engaged. Prayers are still needed. Actions are needed, not just by activists or environmentalists, but also by each and every person.

Presentation Highlights

Women, Water Justice, and Law

Josephine Mandamin, Sue Chiblow, Autumn Peltier and Lynzii Taibossigai

In this presentation, Anishinaabe kwe (Anishinaabe women) focused on water (nibi) justice and law. They stressed the importance of drawing on Indigenous teachings (i.e. the Seven Grandfather Teachings) to defend the water, and applying them to grassroots community initiatives to address regulatory gaps and other forms of environmental injustice.

Grandmother Josephine Mandamin asserted that the roles and responsibilities for Anishinaabe people including using the language and spirits that have been given to them to defend the water. It is essential to think about water first because water is the one that gives us life: water enables women to carry life within their bodies; the water that we carry within our bodies gives us life; and Earth is a woman, because, like women, she carries life within her. Josephine encouraged the audience to start listening to the environment and to the waters, the wind and the trees; like humans (especially women), they all sustain life, which makes us fundamentally connected. As women, sustaining life is an invisible gift carried within. Women carry the gift of the womb; therefore, women have to consider how to live their lives, as they carry and bring life into the world.

Reflecting on her work with First Nations communities, Sue Chiblow noted that the Canadian government and their environmental laws aren't working. If they were working, we would have clean water and clean air. Sue has worked extensively with Elders in an effort to combine Indigenous laws prior to colonization with current efforts to sustain the Earth. The Elders asserted that the first law is that *nothing* goes in the water. Given that Canadian environmental laws don't work, Sue wants to continue bringing Indigenous laws to the forefront so we can continue to have a beautiful Earth. Sue concluded that our water carries memories and we carry that inside of our systems; if our bodies are made up of 70% water, we can transform ourselves with the water that we drink.

Autumn Peltier offered a personal reflection on water justice and law, arguing that we all need to work together to do something about climate change before we can't do anything about it. If we just stand by, our water is going to become sick and we're not going to be able to drink our water. Climate change isn't just an Indigenous or Canadian problem; it's affecting our whole planet.

Building on this, Lynzii Taibossigai spoke of her grassroots initiative called the "Love Mother Earth Project" in her community to help raise awareness about the negative effects of the environment in her First Nation community and all across Mother Earth. Through the course of the project, Lynzii noticed that the communities nearby all had recycling facilities but hers didn't, marking her introduction to environmental racism and environmental injustice.

Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequality, and Community Health

Dr. Ingrid Waldron, Doreen Bernard, and Annie Clair

Dr. Ingrid Waldron spoke about environmental racism in Canada in her capacity as Director of the Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities & Community Health (ENRICH) Project. Working with affected communities, faculty, environmental justice organizations and health agencies, among others, ENRICH works to address environmental racism in both Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities. It is a community based, participatory action, research project that is collaborative and interdisciplinary. It focuses on investigating both the socioeconomic and the health effects of environmental racism in the aforementioned communities. ENRICH is engaged in a number of activities to create awareness of environmental racism in Nova Scotia, educate the general public, build capacity in Mi'kmaq communities and African Nova Scotian communities, create legislation, build student skills, and conduct research.

Dr. Waldron discussed three components of environmental racism. First, is the disproportionate siting of polluting industries and other environmental harms in close proximity to communities of colour and Indigenous communities. That these communities are unequally, unjustly burdened by environmental hazards has a lot to do with policymaking and decision making at the government level. The second component of environmental racism is a lack of power – including resources, skills, capacity, and political clout – at the community level to resist these industries and other environmental activities. Thirdly, these communities face uneven impacts of environmental policies, including ineffective or absent regulation, monitoring, service provision and other resources that contribute to environmental health and sustainability.

To address these gaps, Dr. Waldron worked with Member of the Legislative Assembly in Nova Scotia, Lenore Zann, and the East Coast Environmental Law Association to introduce Bill 111, An Act to Address Environmental Racism. The first Bill to address environmental racism in Canada, it proposes a province-wide public consultation with priority placed on Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, and Acadian communities affected by environmental racism and collaboration with government to devise strategies and solutions for addressing the issues. At the time of her presentation, Bill 111 was in its second reading and was being debated at the House of Assembly in Nova Scotia.

Grandmother and residential school survivor Doreen Bernard focused on the importance of Indigenous women's role in protecting water and Mother Earth for future generations. Reflecting on her experience as a Grandmother and residential school survivor, Bernard noted that the cultural teachings many have received as adults should have been learned as children; these teachings include but are not limited to our connection to our Creator and our Earth, water, food, and medicines. As Indigenous women continue to awaken their ancestral memories to water, medicine and the land, they heal as survivors and as women. Bernard asserted that not only are we all fundamentally connected to the water that runs through our

land, like all other groups in Canadian society, Indigenous peoples have a right to clean water, clean air, medicines and food. In protecting these rights, we *all* have a shared responsibility to protect the water and Mother Earth for the next generations to come.

Emphasizing the need to take action to protect vulnerable and marginalized groups on Mother Earth whose basic human rights are threatened, Doreen reiterated the importance of working with and reaching out to these marginalized communities. The Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1752 did not cede any land or water to settler communities; however, the rights of Indigenous communities remain threatened, including those related practicing a way of life, culture, and activities on the land and water, such as hunting, fishing, and gathering. Inspired by David Suzuki's inclusive approach of involving Indigenous peoples in the Blue Dot movement as well as Grandmother Josephine Mandamin's water walks, Doreen organized water walks in Nova Scotia. She reached out to the ENRICH Project to raise awareness of the sacredness of water as well as to inform communities of the threatened state of the water.

Doreen stressed that there is strength in solidarity: fighting to save the water is a shared responsibility. If one community suffers, we all suffer. When the Nova Scotia government approved the Alton Gas Project seven years ago, Doreen's community lost all of their water. As the company mined for sand and gravel, they drained the only water well in Doreen's community, which remained dry for four months. Even as water began to reappear, the company's 'safe' disposal of fracking waste poisoned the little water that was available. As Doreen connected with other communities, she learned that her community was not the only one enduring a water crisis due to government-approved fracking. Doreen continues to collaborate and stand in solidarity with Indigenous people across communities, planning grassroots initiatives to save the water.

Annie Clair, an Elsipogtog First Nation band member, shared her personal experiences, including in the anti shale gas fracking protests. Many people recognize Annie Clair as an activist, but she identifies herself as a protector of the land. Annie discussed the struggles and challenges involved with protecting and defending the land from resource exploration (shale gas) without the consent of the Mi'kmaq. She detailed her encounter with the RCMP, the fear and terror she experienced watching a large force of police officers disrupt a peaceful protest with the use of guns and physical force. Despite the terrifying encounter with the RCMP, Annie noted in her presentation that prior to the disruption, marching along Highway 134 surrounded by fellow protestors of all ages, races and backgrounds was a truly uplifting and joyous experience.

Land, air and water: the three most important things that any individual needs in order to survive. Without land, one does not have a place that they can call a home. Without air, one cannot breathe. Without water, one does not have clean drinking water. Despite the importance of these three things they are often overlooked. If one were to take the first letter of each of the three words, it would spell L.A.W. Annie stressed the importance of Indigenous and non- Indigenous people standing up and protecting the environment. Ultimately, "we breathe the same air and drink the same water".

Annie emphasized that the protection of the environment is not an Indigenous issue but rather, a human issue. And it requires action. She asked: what would our future children and grandchildren be left with if we do not protect our environment? What needs to be done should not be done tomorrow but instead, it should be done now. It is important to talk about these issues and bring exposure to them but the next step should be taking action. Talking about these issues will not solve anything, Annie emphasized. Instead, people must take responsibility and protect the land, the air and the water: “When we stand strong together to protect the environment for the future generation, don’t say that you’ll be there in spirit. We need you, there; your spirit right there beside ours on the front of the lines. What matters are the people and the children, and the elders. I’m going to stand strong and I’m going to keep fighting for our water, and for your children and our grandchildren because that is what matters”.

Honouring My Grandmothers & Grandfathers and Deshkan Ziibing, Our River

Nancy Deleary

Independent artist and member of the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Nancy Deleary focused on the importance of articulating and sharing Indigenous realities, particularly through art. Beginning with an Anishnaabeg migration story, Deleary recounted how Anishinaabeg were originally from the Eastern seaboard but migrated inland approximately 1000 years ago. Prophecy stated that another race of people were coming to the land. Deleary then offered a timeline of generations of mothers affected since residential schools were established. Although the trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples goes beyond Residential Schools given that Indigenous lands have been fought on, taken away, and destroyed, generations of mothers suffered from the atrocities of forced family removal and genocide. The removal of language and history or generations, Deleary asserted, are the causes of Indigenous peoples' social anxieties, which makes it challenging to articulate their realities.

As an artist, Deleary has struggled with articulating what's in her heart because she is confined to the English language. When she was a candidate for the Masters of Fine Art at the Vermont College of Fine Arts, Deleary found it to be an incredibly difficult process because she had to not only identify her issues, but articulate them to non-Indigenous people unfamiliar with her lived reality and that of her ancestors. As an artist, Deleary is helping the nation advance its ability to visualize and see reality so they can meaningfully engage in dialogue and talk about realities that were previously unknown to non-Indigenous peoples.

Regardless of the difficulties inherent to articulating Indigenous realities to non-Indigenous peoples, Deleary stressed that there is hope as scholars and youth persevere and speak about Indigenous realities here on this land through art. Indigenous women in particular must find their voice and be part of this important conversation. Colonization has created the situation that Indigenous peoples currently face: not only is the land disrespected and appropriated, but it is directly related to the missing and murdered Indigenous women, because *we are the land*. Deleary proceeded to commend and encourage scholars to continue examining Indigenous methodologies to further children's education. However, in doing so, Deleary cautioned that scholars must speak to the Elders who live(d) on the land, for the Elders know both the language and Mother Earth.

Deleary concluded that this conversation is important because Indigenous realities must be articulated and shared with everyone because of the crisis facing Indigenous communities – in particular, the suicide crisis amongst Indigenous youth. History is an important component of Indigenous reality: acknowledging the ancestors and the trauma that they went through, and praying for them and their waterways are fundamental to moving forward.

Climate Change, Traditional Knowledge, and Environmental Justice

Kyle Whyte

Dr. Kyle Whyte's presentation concerned climate change, policy issues, and knowledge sovereignty. He discussed the forced migration of the Potawatomi in the United States as an early experience of his people with climate change. He demonstrated that settler colonialism and associated capitalist economic activities are major sources of climate change and a determinant to communities' resilience and ability to adapt. For instance, the Treaty of 1836 protects Indigenous people's right to fish in treaty area waters; however, if the fish population moves due to climate change, the Indigenous people that rely on those fish cannot move beyond the area currently recognized by the state as a treaty fishery.

There is a direct link between settler colonialism, climate change, and environmental injustice. The very same policies that removed Indigenous peoples from their lands and reduced their lands to tiny reserve areas, Whyte explained, were also designed to clear a path to allow industries, which has since brought on anthropogenic climate change. Today, policies continue to limit Indigenous peoples' ability to adapt. Thus, Whyte argued that climate justice is actually about knowledge sovereignty and decolonization. Knowledge sovereignty has two parts: first, the restoration of internal Indigenous knowledge and governance structures and second, the establishment of ethical relations between Indigenous communities and scientists, government agencies, and other outside bodies. From a knowledge sovereignty standpoint, Indigenous ways of knowing and relating in the world would be the frame of reference from which other science and management frameworks are considered and drawn in, as appropriate – and not the other way around. Not just adding 'Traditional Aboriginal Knowledge' to established, dominant ways of doing things, Indigenous knowledge holders would guide environment and resource-based decision. As such, decolonization is central to dealing with climate change. Otherwise, Indigenous communities will continue to suffer disproportionately the impacts of harmful environmental change.

Youth Roundtable on Environmental Justice

Natashia Bebonang, Julie Panamick-Ense, Sydney Nolan and Jayce Chiblow

Moderated by Kathleen Padulo

Youth participated in an open discussion in which they reflected on their personal experiences as a youth in today's society while placing an importance for the environment. All four youth have a rich, diverse experiences and perspectives, which they generously shared.

Natashia Bebonang, a high school student, expressed the importance of clean drinking water; a necessity that many take for granted each and every day as it is not available to the majority of First Nation communities. To illustrate this point, Natashia explained that only one hundred and twelve First Nation communities out of the six hundred and thirty-three First Nations communities in Canada have access to safe drinking water. Natashia further explained that the onus is on us to create a safer and better community by doing little things such as recycling and reducing our waste consumption.

Julie Panamick-Ense noted that Mother Earth is and should be an important figure in one's life, as she enables us to survive each day. It is our responsibility to help protect her, to be her voice, her protector. Julie stressed the importance of giving thanks for all that we have. Julie concluded by leaving the audience with the following invitation: Mother Earth has given so much to us, now it is our turn to give back to her.

Sydney Nolan shared how she first started caring for Mother Earth when she was in Grade 4: picking up a wrapper that her fellow friend dropped on the ground. Sydney's thought process for her action as she explained was due to the fact that Mother Earth gives us everything; from the precious water to the beautiful flowers. The least Sydney could do is pick up a small piece of garbage. Consequently, she further explained that the wonderful bluffs and water that her parents used to swim earlier in the years are now no longer available due to the companies that continue to pollute those waters near Sault Ste. Marie. Sydney concluded with some proactive actions that people could take such as boycotting the companies that continue to pollute.

Jayce, a university student majoring in biology, gave the audience a glimpse of her unique personal experience of what is like to be a First Nation student in a university environment. Jayce expressed her frustration with the current education system. In her experience, it removes the connection between students and the land and replaced it with scientific theories and hypotheses. Jayce explained that in one of her ecology classes, rather than go outside and listen to the birds or observe the trees, the students were instead required to listen to the sounds of the birds through an audio clip and view trees through a textbook. She concluded that despite the importance of experiencing the earth directly, students were compelled to view and analyze the earth through textbooks and other indirect methods that limit one's connection to the land.

Pipelines and Sacred Sites

Chief Arvol Lookinghorse and Dalas Goldtooth

Moderated by Dr. Dawn Martin-Hill

Chief Arvol Lookinghorse became the 19th Generation Keeper of Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe at the age of 12, the youngest in Sioux history. Chief Lookinghorse grew up in an era of religious suppression, with ceremonies being outlawed in both the United States of America and Canada from the early 1900's to the 1970's. His work to keep our environment safe includes advocacy work at the United Nations, and has been recognized by the former President of the United States of America, Barack Obama.

Chief Lookinghorse grew up in Cheyenne River Reservation, the same place where his grandfather and grandmother lived as well as others for over one hundred years, a 100-year span. The reason why the area is maintained is because people make sure to visit the location where they grew up and take care of it. Even After ceremonies are completed, people will return to the location where they held their ceremonies, for example at Black Hills, and pray on that land. It is the "cycle of life" as he eloquently puts it.

Chief Lookinghorse emphasized ceremonies such as the Vision Quest and the importance of these ceremonies for his people. Since the age of 12, Chief Lookinghorse participated in ceremony and would pray from the heart. He was taught that everyone is a part of Mother Earth and that everyone came as a spirit: everything is related to Mother Earth, who constantly takes care of us, and everything has a spirit, so it is our duty to respect that. He continued, "Everything is all related and we hold everything sacred".

Pipelines, specifically the Keystone Pipeline, are sacrificing these sacred sites and sacred lives. Chief Lookinghorse spoke about the devastating effects it has had on the environment as well as the people who live in close proximity. The pipeline has affected the quality of drinking water. People have developed sickness, viruses and further to the point, a lot of young babies are being born sick. Because everything is related, it is our duty to maintain and take care of the environment.

Dallas Goldtooth, Mdewakanton Dakota & Diñe, is the Keystone XL Campaign Organizer for the Indigenous Environmental Network. Working at national and international levels, the organization works with front-line communities and also with the United Nations, ensuring that Indigenous peoples' voices are present and engaged at these international discussions. The aim is to protect not only traditional ways of life and Indigenous knowledge, but also Mother Earth overall.

As the climate changes, the planet gets hotter, and delicate systems are thrown out of balance, the question remains, What are we going to do to address that, to help Mother Earth get back into balance? Goldtooth provided some prime examples of communities, such as Lubicon Cree,

that are working to resist destructive projects in their own communities, including fracking, pipelines, and tar sands. He stated: “There is a necessity for us to respond and shut this down and stop this development but the big picture here, is to get Mother Earth back in balance”.

Goldtooth touched on the statement of Former President of United States, Barack Obama: it was the strong the voices and actions of the grassroots communities – of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples –that rejected the pipeline. Recognition needs to be afforded to these groups and organizations. Goldtooth further mentioned that we should use what we have learned from our previous fights and experiences and move on ahead. Goldtooth concluded with a very positive message: “we have proven that Indigenous peoples can stop pipelines and so we just have to keep on pushing forward and encouraging our Tribal leaders to understand that”.

Haudenosaunee Concepts of Environment and Justice

Dr. Dan Longboat

Dr. Dan Longboat, Director of the Indigenous Environmental Studies program at Trent University and a Mohawk from the Six Nations of the Grand River, is renowned for his traditional Haudenosaunee knowledge and perspectives on the environment and justice, which he readily shared among all those present at the IEJ Symposium.

Dr. Longboat stressed that Indigenous people living in Ontario are not the only ones faced with environmental injustice; Indigenous peoples in a global context are going through the same processes. Referring to Dr. Ingrid Waldron's talk and the theme of powerlessness, it is not only Indigenous people, but people of colour also face this challenge: "We are put in a position of powerlessness. We are fighting a system ...that the amount of wins that we are going to have are going to be limited".

Dr. Longboat detailed the strong correlation between environmental justice issues and Indigenous justice issues. They are intertwined and in both situations, the 'wins' are very short-term and limited, meaning that a continued process is needed. One may be able to win a court case today but will have to do it again in another three or five years. The battle, Dr. Longboat stated, is never done with just one or two wins. It is an ongoing process that can never be measured by the number of wins, but rather, by the impacts.

In a constructive tone, Dr. Longboat reminded Symposium participants, "when you are putting yourself on the line, when you are working for Creation and for the continuation of life, you are doing the Creator's work". Longboat called out each and every person in the audience, stating that all of us have a particular purpose to fill. "When you destroy the earth, you destroy yourself" – thus, these are not Indigenous issues, not Indigenous environmental issues; these are human issues. He continued, "Until we change the mindset, principals and values of society at large. Until we begin a process of sharing knowledge and engaging with them [society], to help change and illuminate them, these issues will continue to exist". Longboat further specified that a revitalization of human spiritual integrity is needed: "If you want to be a real human being, revitalize yourself spiritually in however you understand that concept to be".

Conclusions

The Indigenous Environmental Justice Project is intended to bring awareness and change to issues that are experienced by many. Centering Indigenous perspectives, the symposium facilitated the sharing of teachings and stories by Elders, women and youth, with knowledge disseminated through panel discussions, roundtables, formal presentations and creative expression.

The Symposium was an important first step in this five-year project. It provided a strong foundation, a foundation that can be built upon and strengthened through each subsequent initiative. The symposium brought a wide range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples together, providing unique, invaluable perspectives to the many environmental justice issues they face daily. Elders, Indigenous artists and youth, among others, shared both their struggles and hope for change.

Appendix: Agenda and Speaker Biographies

8:00am	Registration
9:00am	Opening Pray & Welcoming Remarks Debby Danard, Lorne Sossin (Dean, Osgoode Hall Law School), Noel Sturgeon (dean, Faculty of Environmental Studies)
9:15am	Introduction to the Symposium Professor Deborah McGregor & Professor Ruth Koleszar-Green
9:30am	Water (Nibi) Justice and Law Josephine Mandamin, Sue Chiblow, Lynzii Taibossigai, Autumn Peltier
10:30am	Morning Break & Networking
10:45am	Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequality & Community Health Project Professor Ingrid Waldron, Grandmothers Dorene Bernard, Annie Clair
11:4am	Honouring My Grandmothers and Grandfathers & Deshkan Ziibing, Our River Remarks from artist Nancy Deleary
12:00pm	Lunch & Networking
1:00pm	Climate Change, Traditional Knowledge & Environmental Justice Professor Kyle Whyte
2:00pm	Young Peoples Roundtable on Environmental Justice M'Chigeeng Lil'Sisters (Julie Panamick-Ense & Natasha Beonang), Sydney Nolan, Jayce Chiblow Moderated by Kathleen Padulo
2:45pm	Injustice of Alberta's Blood Oil Bernard Ominayak and Cynthia Tomlinson (Lubicon Cree of Northern Alberta) Chaired by Professor Dawn Martin-Hill
3:15pm	Afternoon Break & Networking
3:30pm	Pipelines and Sacred Sites Arvol Lookinghorse and Dallas Goldtooth Chaired by Professor Dawn Martin-Hill
4:00pm	Round Table on Indigenous Environmental Justice and Law Moderated by Professor Dayna Scott
5:00pm	Reflections & Summary Discussion led by: Professor Kristie Dotson, Quinn Meawasige & Taryn Bobbiwash
5:30pm	Reception & Networking
6:30pm	Haudenosaunee Concepts of Environment and Justice Professor Dan Longboat
7:30	Closing Debby Danard

Susan Chiblow



Chiblow has worked extensively with First Nation communities for the last twenty years in environmental related fields and has made numerous First Nation

contacts. Her work included providing environmental information to the First Nation leaders in Ontario and their communities on environmental initiatives such the waters, forestry, contaminants, energy and species at risk.

Annie Clair



Annie Clair is a grandmother of four and mother of four. Annie is a Mikmaq land defender from Elispogtog N.B. She also does a Mikmaq and English Podcast

which can be found on her website:<https://pjilasimikmaki.wordpress.com/> This September, Annie will be going to Queens University to pursue a degree in Culture Studies.

Debby Wilson Danard



Debby Wilson Danard, PhD (candidate), Anishinaabekwe, is a traditional knowledge keeper, teacher, water ambassador, academic and Life promotion activist. She currently

works as a Youth Suicide Prevention Coach with communities in Ontario to plan and mobilize evidence-informed practices for youth suicide prevention and life promotion. Living and teaching from a traditional knowledge perspective is how she envisions LIFE sustainable communities. She brings her vision of Indigenous worldview to participants in the WHRI, hosted in Toronto on traditional First Nation lands.

Nancy Deleary



Nancy Deleary is an Independent Artist and a member of the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation. She earned her Bachelor of Fine at The

Institute of American Indian Art and finished her Masters of Fine Art at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her goal is to build a place of learning and creativity through an artist's studio and gallery on the First Nation. [See Nancy's art and artist](#)

Dallas Goldtooth



Dallas Goldtooth (Mdewakanton Dakota & Dine) is the Keystone XL Campaign Organizer for the Indigenous Environmental Network. He co-founded the

Indigenous comedy group The 1491s and is a Dakota culture & language teacher. He is also a poet, traditional artist, powwow emcee, comedian, and proud father.

Ruth Koleszar-Green



Ruth Koleszar-Green is a Mohawk woman and a member of the Turtle clan. As a teacher, Ruth utilizes Onkwehonwe pedagogies including storytelling, experiential learning,

and reciprocal relationship building. She has engaged multiple Onkwehonwe communities in research projects that include HIV/AIDS, food security, and education.

Dawn Martin Hill



Dawn Martin Hill (Mohawk, Wolf Clan) holds a PhD in Cultural Anthropology and is one of the original founders of the Indigenous Studies Program at

McMaster University. She recently accepted a position as the Paul R. McPherson Indigenous Studies Chair. Her research includes: community health research, Indigenous women and spiritual traditions, traditional medicine and well-being, Indigenous Knowledge, methodologies and pedagogy. She continues over two decades of research documenting and publishing the impact of oil development on the Lubicon Cree culture and health in northern Alberta . She is a PI of CIHR catalyst grant titled, *Tehtsithwa: kenrotka: we (together we pull it from the earth again) – The Ohero:kon youth Health Intervention*”, a female Haudenosaunne research team from Akwasasne and Six Nations focused on rites of passage for youth as a prevention strategy drawn from IK holders. And is just finishing as PI of SSHRC grant for the Digitization of Ceremonies in the Hewitt collection in partnership with Six Nations Polytechnic. Most recently the PI of a CIHR-IAPH funded NEAHR grant (Network Environments in Aboriginal Health Research), the Indigenous Health Research Development Program. Most recently, the Co-PI for the Aboriginal Health Research Network for Aboriginal Knowledge and Ways of Knowing (AHRN-AKWK) which is a national network of regional hubs/teams. The goal of the three year network catalyst project (2014-2017) is to

meaningfully engage Indigenous knowledge holders, practitioners, researchers, trainees and knowledge brokers to collaborate and advance health research that foregrounds Aboriginal knowledge and ways of knowing in all aspects of the research process. This network builds on the strength and capacity of the CIHR-funded Aboriginal Capacity and Development Environments (ACADRE) and Network Environments for Aboriginal Health Research (NEAHR) program (2001-2013).

Arvol Looking Horse



Chief Arvol Looking Horse's vast knowledge of the Lakota language, history, ceremonial songs and prayers, protection of the Sacred Black Hills, was recognized by

the University of South Dakota with an honorary Doctorate He is Lakota, born on Cheyenne River Reservation, South Dakota. His primary responsibility is as the 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe - at the age of twelve, the youngest in Sioux history, the spiritual leader to the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people. He grew up in an era of religious suppression, ceremonies were outlawed in both the US and Canada from the early 1900's and repealed in 1970's. His family was forced to hold Sundance, sweatlodge, vision quests and healing ceremonies underground for fear of arrest by the restoration of their rights to the Black Hills. As the founder and leader of World Peace and Prayer Day/Honouring Sacred Sites Day, has been advocating, helping and supporting all Indigenous people to protect land, rights, language, ceremonies and Indigenous knowledge. Arvol has, and still continues to facilitate healing to all people and cultures such as the Bigfoot Memorial Ride mending the Sacred Hoop broken during the Massacre OF wounded Knee the Unity Ride from B.C. to Six Nations from 2000-2004 on horseback to heal historical trauma through the land and animals.

Arvol's advocacy of environmental and Indigenous rights and issues has been recognized globally as a recipient of the Wolf Award of Canada, Juliet Hollister Award, a Non-Governmental Organization with Consultation Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. He is the author of White Buffalo Teachings and a guest columnist for Indian Country Today. Fighting to keep our environment safe through advocating at the United Nations warranted acknowledgment from President of the United States of America, Barrack Obama.

Dan Longboat



Dan Longboat is Mohawk from the Six Nations of the Grand River. He is Director of the Indigenous Environmental Studies Program at Trent. Longboat is known for his

Traditional Haudenosaunee knowledge and has taught Mohawk culture at Trent in addition to his work in Indigenous Environmental Studies. He is co-editor of the book Contemporary Studies in Environmental and Indigenous Pedagogies: A Curricula of Stories and Place (Sense Publishers, 2013).

Josephine Mandamin



Josephine Mandamin is a First Nations elder who has "walked the equivalent of half the earth's circumference" to build awareness about pollution,

laws, fracking, and the selling of the water. In February 2016, Mandamin received the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation at a ceremony held at Queen's Park. Mandamin is one of seven recipients of the award for volunteer contributions to the conservation of community heritage over a period of more than 25 years.

Kathleen Padulo



Kathleen Padulo is from the Oneida Nation of the Thames and has 15 years working experience in planning, developing and coordinating programs with

Aboriginal organizations and First Nations communities. She holds an honors degree in Indigenous Studies from Trent University and a Masters in Environmental Studies from York University.

Kyle Whyte



Humanities and is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Community Sustainability at Michigan State University. He is a faculty member of the Environmental Philosophy & Ethics graduate program and serves as a faculty affiliate of the Indian Studies and Environmental Science &

Lynzii Taibossigai



Lynzii Taibossigai is Anishinaabe kwe from M'Chigeeng First Nation and Manitoulin Island. She is the proud Auntie of three nephews and one niece and has over

160 cousins! She has a diploma in Hotel & Resort Administration from Georgian College and she has studied Modern Languages at Laurentian University and Indigenous Environmental Studies at Trent University. She is also trained in Rediscovery and Outdoor Adventure Leadership and a certified Canoe Instructor.

Ingrid Waldron



Ingrid Waldron is an associate professor and health researcher at Dalhousie's School of Nursing studying environmental racism in Nova Scotia. Her recent projects focus on how the location of

African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw communities near environmental hazards affects the health of citizens in the community.

American Policy programs. His primary research addresses moral and political issues concerning climate policy and Indigenous peoples and the ethics of cooperative relationships between Indigenous peoples and climate science organizations.