

Mountains that See, and that Need to Be Seen:
**Aboriginal Perspectives on Degraded Visibility Associated with
Air Pollution in the BC Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley**

A Traditional Knowledge Study
Prepared for Environment Canada

By Keith Thor Carlson, PhD

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1. Executive Summary:

The Aboriginal people of the lower Fraser River form a cultural continuum with a shared culture and worldview. They are part of the broader Coast Salish community occupying the Georgia Basin (or what is increasingly referred to as the Salish Sea). As such, while the evidence cited is specific to the individual speakers and their communities, the broader cultural patterns are generally reflective of the belief systems of this broader region:

- The Indigenous people of the study region have distinct concerns over declining visibility associated with increased air pollution (smog), and these concerns are not shared by the non-Native newcomers to their territory. These concerns stem from their ancient connection to the land and territory, their oral histories that explain how many mountain features were once human beings who were transformed into stone but who retain the living Shxweli (spirit) of their original human. Sharing knowledge about the culturally specific history of these creatures/features is regarded as important by contemporary Aboriginal people. They express concerns over the culturally specific dangers and risks associated with not being able to see these features; of not being able to explain the features' significance to younger generations, to neighbouring tribes, and to outsiders. Impaired viewsapes, therefore, threaten to disrupt the flow of knowledge transfers across generations, tribes, and cultures – the full impact of which we can only speculate but which all interviewees regarded as serious. For example, Aboriginal children may not properly learn stories that their elders feel help to make them distinct Indigenous people; people in neighbouring tribal communities might not develop a shared sense of geographic placement and connection; Indigenous people who offer cultural tour programmes to non-Natives (such as the Charlie family's "Sasquatch Tours" company, or Sonny McHalsie's "Aselaw Tours") might find their financial fortunes impacted and their efforts at generating cross-cultural dialogue thwarted.
- In addition to the transformer stories, there are additional culturally specific reasons that Aboriginal people feel the need to see these features. These stem from a long history of sharing information about the mountains and celestial features during times of travelling to meet for inter-tribal gatherings. The landscape features served as geographic markers to assist in orientation, but they also served to help the residents of the region develop a

shared sense of the environment. This helps build a sense of shared identity. But for this to work, people need to be able to see and discuss the landscape features.

- Viewscapes are also important to the maintenance of the region's hereditary leaders. High status families are those who "know their history". Knowing one's history includes knowing the stories associated with the creation and transformation of key landscape and celestial features. Decreased opportunities to see, discuss, and share information about these features within and among hereditary families threatens to undermine the integrity of a key feature of Coast Salish society.
- Stó:lō people have traditionally learned by watching and listening. That is to say, that the regional Aboriginal pedagogy emphasizes face-to-face communication while "showing things", or "showing how to do things". For this tradition to continue in its fullness, people need to be able to see and describe storied mountain features.
- Not only do Stó:lō people need to see mountains, they also need to be able to see *from* mountains. Cyril Pierre, for example, explained that in the past hereditary leaders used to make journeys around the perimeter of their territories, and also surveyed their territories from prominent peaks (such as Golden Ears mountain). Today, smog prevents leaders from seeing the extent of their territory and therefore undermines leaders' ability to fulfill ancient obligations in the eyes of their communities. In a similar fashion, Dalton Silver observed that certain tribal territories are defined by viewscapes. Smog potentially restricts one tribe's ability to assert its control over a region vis a vis neighbouring tribes.
- In addition to the impact of smog on daytime summer and autumn viewscapes, there is also concern over the effects of light pollution on Aboriginal people's ability to see certain celestial features (ie, those understood to be transformer objects). With increasing urbanization, the night-time light pollution problem steadily grows worse.
- Finally, lower Fraser River Aboriginal people are not only concerned about the impact viewscapes have on their ability to see landscape features, but on the features' ability to see them. Mt. Cheam, in particular, is known as the "mother mountain," and the oral histories explain that she was a woman who was turned to stone with the mandate of watching over the Stó:lō people and the returning sockeye salmon. Her inability to see due to smog is regarded as impairing her ability to fulfill her ancient mandate. Likewise,

her inability to watch over people due to smog was raised as a possible cause of social problems within Aboriginal communities – people speculated that perhaps some people were behaving in an unhealthy manner due to the fact that Mt. Cheam was unable to watch over and guide them due to smog reducing her visibility.

- This report recommends creating opportunities for Aboriginal people to begin playing a more direct role in helping monitor and maintain air quality in the Georgia Basin so that their unique Indigenous concerns will be heard. It recommends building direct lines of communication between Environment Canada and First Nations organizations and individuals. It also recommends further research to assess the specific impact degraded viewsapes is having upon Aboriginal economic ventures such as cultural tourism (eg. with both “Sasquatch Tours” and “Aselaw Tours”) and upon educational opportunities (ie. public school fieldtrips where Sonny McHalsie takes teachers and students to sites to view landscape features and to learn about Stó:lō culture).

2. Background/overview of Project, and Rationale:

The Government of Canada commissioned this traditional knowledge study to gain insight into the specific cultural perspectives of the Aboriginal people of the lower Fraser watershed concerning viewsapes, and the impact of air pollution or smog on those viewsapes. This initiative emerged as part of the process that Federal agencies are currently involved in that examines the issue of visibility management in BC with an emphasis on the lower Fraser Valley. This study draws upon the traditional knowledge of individual Aboriginal people to identify important aspects of the unique values of Aboriginal people associated with visibility in the lower Fraser River watershed. This information is meant to provide a comprehensive introduction to the issues associated with visibility degradation. This in turn may help strengthen government initiatives related to air quality management, in general, and visibility protection, in particular, while it offers avenues for future communication between government and Aboriginal people.

The Government of Canada is responsible for managing air quality and (in the Georgia Basin) does so in partnership with agencies such as the BC Ministry of Environment . the BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley Regional District and others. This effort is primarily to protect human and environmental health, but is also associated with protecting the quality of life offered by the relatively clean air quality and clear vistas historically

associated with this area. In addition, the federal government also has a mandate related to visibility protection through the 1991 Canada-US Clean Air Agreement, in which Canada committed to “develop and implement means affording levels of prevention of significant air quality deterioration and protection of visibility.”

Particular landscape features and “viewsapes” have special meaning for Aboriginal people. This is recognized by the federal government, for example, through such agencies and initiatives as the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, which identified the need to increase the national recognition of the history of Aboriginal peoples and by the federal Minister of Environment who signed the 2000 Joint Statement of Cooperation on the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound Ecosystem with the Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency. The 2000 Statement identifies the importance of viewsapes and the important role of Aboriginal culture in this transboundary region. The Statement of Cooperation begins by articulating a vision for the region:

“We see a special place...

...where people of all ages can breathe clean air, drink clean water, swim on clean beaches, and enjoy unparalleled vistas of mountain, ocean, and shore.

...where the integrity of wilderness is protected and the future of forests, wildlife, fish and marine mammals is secure.

...where the traditional values and knowledge of the Indigenous People of the Salish Sea are honoured and applied to new challenges.

...where our common goal of sustainable communities – embracing human well-being, economic opportunities and environmental quality – can be realized by today’s generations and by those yet to come.”

With these factors in mind, this project had two specific goals:

- 1) to gather, synthesize, and report on issues related to Aboriginal values in the lower Fraser River watershed region of the Georgia Basin area associated with visual features (or “viewsapes”) and the effect(s) on these values from degraded air quality/visibility.

- 2) To document key landscape features that are important (to be seen) for the Aboriginal people of the lower Fraser River watershed in the context of visibility management associated with deteriorating air quality.

3. Methodology:

This project utilized three research methodologies. The first involved reviewing primary documents (ethnographic and archival records) and secondary publications relating to the Aboriginal people of the lower Fraser River watershed. In particular, interview transcripts, unpublished reports, and fieldnotes were reviewed for what they might reveal about the way local Aboriginal people regard viewscapes. The second methodology involved conducting semi-structured interviews with Aboriginal people in the Lower Fraser Valley. Semi-structured interviews have specific research questions in mind, but do not restrict interviewees to answering those questions. The questions are intentionally broad and open-ended, and interviewees were not dissuaded from following trains of thought that were related to the topic even if they were not directly answering the questions. The strength of semi-structured interviews is that they allow interviewees to get comfortable and start talking, which helps to trigger additional memories, and likewise, they are well suited to soliciting unanticipated relevant answers. And indeed, the latter occurred during the research process on this project. The third methodology, which seeks to link the first two, is that of ethnographic “up-streaming”. This technique uses contemporary sources and oral histories to provide context for the earlier archival information. Up-streaming is premised on the notion that certain continuities exist within Aboriginal culture over time that allow contemporary sources to speak to and inform older sources with the aim of providing a richer and more nuanced discussion of the past.

Ultimately, seventeen interviews were conducted for this project between September 2008 and April 2009. Each interviewee was asked to speak about air pollution and its impact on their ability to see features in the landscape (see questionnaire and interviewer guide – Appendix #1 this report). They were reminded that the purpose of the project was to identify specific cultural concerns about viewscapes that would not apply to non-Native settlers in their territory and which might, therefore, have been overlooked by government agencies in their earlier efforts to identify issues for their air quality management plans.

Despite the focus on viewscapes, each of the interviewees spent considerable time speaking about their concerns over the physical and spiritual impacts of air pollution. Some of these concerns would be identical to non-Native newcomers in the region, but some are uniquely Aboriginal. Readers interested in these non-viewscapes issues should consult Section 15 of this report as well as the transcripts / digital recordings. For full transcripts see Appendix #2.

4. Indigenous (Traditional) Knowledge

Indigenous Knowledge (sometimes referred to as Traditional Knowledge, or Indigenous Traditional Knowledge) is an intimately local knowledge that has deep temporal dimensions. It is the knowledge of a people about a location that is informed by repeated generations of close engagement with the local ecosystem in all its expressions – biological, physical, spiritual, etc. As such, Indigenous Knowledge is reflective of a distinct epistemology or worldview. There is, in this author's opinion, no overarching indigenous knowledge shared among all indigenous people the world over. Instead, there are a plethora of local indigenous knowledges. **This study looks at the indigenous knowledge of the Aboriginal people of the lower Fraser River watershed as relates to viewscapes. More specifically, it is a study of the local cultural response to air pollution or smog.** Some attention is also given to the effects of light pollution on viewscapes.

The past two decades have seen a marked increase in interest in Indigenous Knowledge. This interest has risen, in large part, from a growing awareness of the negative impacts of globalization on local small-scale cultures, and in particular, cultural communities living within colonized geographies. Just as certain biological species have disappeared in the face of deforestation, urbanization, industrialization, and pollution, so too has the economic determinism of globalization resulted in the disappearance of an alarming number of indigenous languages; and with these languages the knowledge that anchored certain people to a particular geography and provided them with keen centuries-old insights into the functioning of ecology has vanished or been significantly reduced. The significance of this loss to human kind is impossible to calculate, and moreover, impossible to restore. As a result, there is a desire to preserve the remaining unique Aboriginal understandings of places and ecological systems.

But beyond wanting to salvage and document indigenous knowledge as though it was an endangered species for a zoo or a rare artifact for a museum, there has also arisen an awareness of the real, practical, and immediate value of indigenous knowledge to contemporary

non-indigenous society. There is a growing awareness that despite the strengths of certain culturally informed perspectives (such as natural science) no single epistemology has a monopoly on useful knowledge; and that we are all enriched by exposure to different ways of thinking; different ways of knowing; different ways of living.

A few decades ago it would have been unheard of to suggest that traditional Aboriginal values might have something to contribute to government environmental management systems that were based on natural biological and meteorological science. Despite Canada's western-most province's long running slogan touting the wonders of "Supernatural British Columbia," there was little openness to suggestions that Aboriginal people's understanding of the "supernatural" might have something to contribute to other Canadians' understanding of the natural.

Today, while science retains its hegemony over most aspects of Canadian environmental planning, there is recognition among government policy makers and implementers of the value of considering other forms of knowledge. Aboriginal interests in the economic, social, and physical development in their territory is reflected not only in Aboriginal political assertions but in federal and provincial legislation and policy mandating consultation with Aboriginal communities and the conducting of impact assessments where developments might infringe upon Aboriginal rights and interests. Additionally, an increasing number of First Nations communities now have Heritage Policies of their own in place – many of which include research registries such as the one that the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre administers, and which was used in this study. Many First Nations are also working to establish their own Environment Policies and to have these recognized by newcomer society either through Treaties or less formal reciprocal protocol mechanisms.

Despite the advances in documenting and protecting Indigenous Knowledge, and parallel advances in finding ways to enable Indigenous Knowledge to speak in meaningful ways to those Aboriginal and non-Native people and agencies charged with protecting the environment, there remains disquiet among indigenous people about the wisdom of sharing knowledge across the cultural divide. Bertha Peters, a Stó:lō Elder living in the central Fraser Valley in the mid-1990s, shared a story that illustrates the concern many Aboriginal people have that the knowledge they share may be used inappropriately or exploitatively by non-Natives:

This man came to see me and he told me the Indians have a lot to be proud of because there are twenty-eight different types of medicine they use in the

hospital which came from the Indians. That knowledge of medicine was taken away from the Indians by the white people....¹

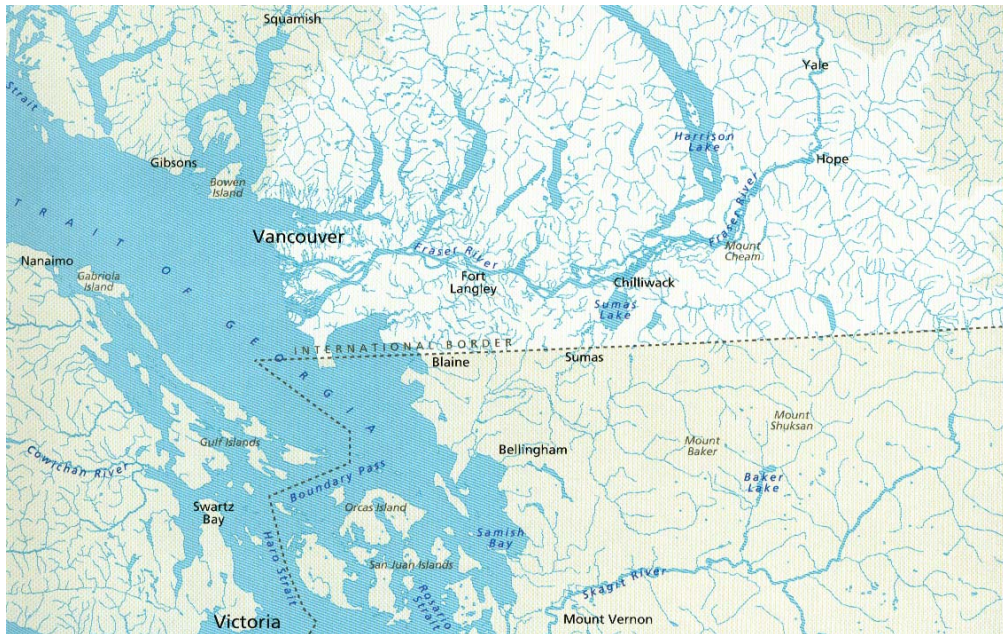
This study, therefore, has sought to ensure that whatever knowledge was shared by interviewees will not be considered “taken away”. Indigenous knowledge, as Skagitt Coast Salish Elder Vi Hilbert so often and forcefully reminded people, cannot be learned from a book. It can only be learned through long-term face-to-face human interaction.² This report will provide its readers with insights into Indigenous Knowledge concerning viewsapes, but it will not teach its readers Indigenous Knowledge of viewsapes. Rather, it will hopefully provide non-Native readers with sufficient information and interpretation to allow them to recognize that the indigenous knowledge of viewsapes in this region is informed by significantly different assumptions than their own, and that it is worthwhile to work with local Aboriginal people in order to better learn about and incorporate their traditional perspectives in order to enhance the protection of their unique viewscape interests.

Additionally, to help eliminate concerns over knowledge theft and appropriation, each of the interviewees was told what the project was about, who was funding it, and how the information would be used and stored. They were then provided with their own personal digital copy of their interview, along with a typed transcript or interview summary. A second copy of the interviews and transcripts were likewise archived by the report’s author and interviewees were told they could contact the author for additional copies at any time. A third copy of the interviews and transcripts were deposited in the archives at the Stó:lō Resource and Research Management Centre in Chilliwack where they will be accessible to Aboriginal community leaders, community members, and future researchers. And finally, copies of the interviews and transcripts were provided to Environment Canada.

¹ Bertha Peters in conversation with Sonny McHalsie, Keith Carlson, and Heather Miles, 20 September, 1995.

² Vi Hilbert to the members of the Salish Art Advisory Committee (including Keith Carlson), Seattle Art Museum, 22 May, 2008.

5. Cultural Region / Study Area:



Cultural /study area highlighted.

Because Indigenous Knowledge is most fundamentally an expression of local knowledge, it is important to define the study region and to provide a rationale as to why the interviewees' views are representative of indigenous beliefs and attitudes within that region.

This study looks at the region encapsulated by the lower Fraser River watershed of southwestern British Columbia as far upriver as Yale. The indigenous people of this region are often referred to as the Stó:l̓ō or "river people," although not all the indigenous people of the region self-identify that way. Indeed, there is some question about the antiquity of the concept of a shared collective Stó:l̓ō identity, and there are regional differences with regard to people's acceptance of the appropriateness of the signifier. While the term Stó:l̓ō did not enter the written lexicon until the late nineteenth century, ethnographic, historical, and archaeological evidence all suggest that the idea and expression of a broader Stó:l̓ō regional identity has considerable antiquity – even if it has sometimes competed with other smaller tribal collective identities within the region.³

Contemporarily, the people who most closely identify with the Stó:l̓ō name are those affiliated with First Nations located between Hope and Langley BC – most of which are members of either the Stó:l̓ō Nation or the Stó:l̓ō Tribal Council. Those on the geographical extremes of the study region are less likely to identify themselves as Stó:l̓ō and are more inclined to self identify with

³ Keith Carlson, "The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: A Study of History and Aboriginal Collective Identity" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2003).

their tribal or village settlements – for example, the Yale First Nation in Yale, the Chehalis First Nation on the Harrison River and Lake, and the Musqueam, Tsawwassen, Coquitlam, Katzie First Nations of the greater Vancouver region are all politically independent of the Stó:lō Nation and Stó:lō Tribal Council.

Regardless of these contemporary political affiliations (or lack thereof) a social, cultural, and economic continuum exists along the lower Fraser River, even if the strength of the continuum has fluctuated in intensity over time.⁴ And while federal government policies concerning band membership eligibility, elections, and governance have since the 1860s tended to reinforce the idea that each First Nation is an independent entity,⁵ in the pre-Indian reserve era the indigenous inhabitants of the region travelled frequently within the region for economic, social, and ceremonial reasons and in so doing created a powerful sense of shared identity.⁶

Historically, the region was united primarily by the economic influence of the lower Fraser canyon fishery and the resulting web of marital alliances forged among and between the leading families of the region. This system was cemented by a system of ceremonialism anchored around the potlatch, the winterdance, and the s̓xwó:y̓x̓wey masked dance – all of which was overlaid with a shared sense of common history stemming from origin stories that told of the work of the great transformers who travelled throughout the lower Fraser region making the world permanent and “right” by transforming people and things into their permanent and predictable forms.⁷

6. Economic Linkages, Travel, and Viewscapes:

Historically, people travelled throughout the study region at all times of year, but the summer and fall were the periods of the most intense movement. Each summer literally thousands of downriver people travelled upriver to the region between the contemporary town of Yale and Sawmill Creek (seven kilometers upriver from Yale) to participate in what was one of indigenous North America’s largest trade centres. The lower Canyon provided ideal climactic and biological

⁴ Carlson 2003, Schaepe 2009

⁵ Keith Carlson, “The Indians and the Crown: Aboriginal Memories of Royal Promises in Pacific Canada,” in *Majesty in Canada*, ed. Colin Coates (Edinburgh, Scotland: Dundurn Press, 2005); Henry George Pennier, *Call Me Hank: A Stó:lō Man’s Reflections on Logging, Living and Growing Old*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson and Kristina Fagan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

⁶ Carlson, “The Power of Place, the Problem of Time: A Study of History and Aboriginal Collective Identity.”

⁷ Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, et al., “Making the World Right through Transformations,” in *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, eds., Keith Thor Carlson, David Schaepe, Sonny McHalsie (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001).

circumstances for catching and wind-drying migrating salmon.⁸ For this reason people from as far away as Vancouver Island and Puget Sound travelled to the canyon with trade goods to exchange for canyon-dried salmon.

Getting to the canyon required an intimate knowledge of the Fraser River, its inhabitants, and regional resources. To acquire this knowledge, people familiarized themselves with regional landmarks, the most important of which outside of the context of the river itself were mountains. Travelling up and down the Fraser River in the summer provided unparalleled opportunities for seeing the mountains, and people learned their names, and the stories associated with them.



Long after late nineteenth century government regulations curtailed the significance of the lower Fraser Canyon as a trade centre, its centrality as a place for people to gather to catch and wind-dry salmon remained. Stó:lō woman and wind-drying salmon, just above Yale, c. 1936. (original image in Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre – SRRMC— archives)

7. Transformer Stories, Flood Stories, Travel, and Viewscapes:

The mountains, however, were more than simple geographic markers. For lower Fraser River Aboriginal people, these mountains continue to be understood as either transformed ancestors with living spirits within them, or locations associated with important community-forming events (the most well known of which are mountains associated with myth-age floods).

⁸ Keith Thor Carlson, “Expressions of Collective Identity,” in *A Stó:lō Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, ed. Keith Thor Carlson (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2001).

A complex series of interconnected stories explain how near the beginning of time two series of transformations occurred that caused what had formerly been a chaotic world to become predictable. In the chaotic era animals could talk to people, and people to animals, and nothing seemed to have a permanent form. Moreover, the world was filled with dangerous shamans who themselves had powers of transformation. Into this world the Creator, Chichel Siya:m, sent some of the original people of the various tribal settlements. These people who fell from the sky are known in English as “Sky-born heroes.” Each of them had the power to transform people and things into a permanent form, but the Creator decided that additional changes were required and so he sent the children of Red-headed Woodpecker and Black Bear, three brothers and sister who collectively were known as Xe:xa:ls, to finish the process of making the world right. Starting at the head of Harrison Lake the transformer siblings traveled throughout the lower Fraser River watershed conducting numerous transformations. At the south end of the lake they transformed an owl and a bear into stone on the cliffs of what is now known as Echo Island (see photo). Then they headed down to Harrison River and then to the Fraser River where they turned eastward and journeyed up river until they eventually went beyond Coast Salish territory and reached the rising sun. There they caught a ride with the sun through the sky – and in the process acquired even more enhanced powers of transformation – until they reached the sunset. At the sunset they boarded a canoe and made their way back to the mouth of the Fraser River and from there back upstream, continually transforming people, animals, and plants, until they eventually completed their work and passed again toward the sunrise, never to be seen again.⁹

⁹ Boas, 1896, Jenness, 1936, McHalsie 2001



Chitemxw, the Owl. A transformer figure on Echo Island, Harrison Lake. Photographed on a clear summer day from a boat. (Photo SRRMC archives)

Because they are transformed ancestors, the named mountains of the region are understood to contain the living spirit (“Shxweli”) of their original human life forms. The mountains, and indeed all transformer sites, are regarded as ancestral relatives of living lower Fraser Aboriginal people. As Elders have explained, and ethnographers have recorded for more than an century now, all things have Shxweli:

“Every object had its own soul or spirit”¹⁰.

“...and their perception of its (Nature’s) laws is to endow every object and agency in their environment with conscious power and being”¹¹.

“We drink the water; it’s alive. We breathe the air; it’s alive too. Respect it!”¹².

Within the lower Fraser River Aboriginal cosmology, mountains, and indeed the air surrounding mountains, are regarded as sentient, caring, and concerned. Even some of the stars in the night sky are likewise understood to have been ancestors who were transformed and so to have

¹⁰ Charles Hill-Tout, *British North America: I. The Far West, the Home of the Salish and Déné* (London: A Constable and Company, Ltd., 1907), 166.

¹¹ Hill-Tout 1902:10

¹² Imbert Orchard, *Floodland and Forest: Memories of the Chilliwack Valley* (Victoria, BC: Sound and Moving Image Division, Provincial Archives, 1983), 5.

Shxweli, as are the sun and moon. Mountains and animals, in particular, provide advice and spirit power to contemporary humans who are properly trained and who seek it.¹³

Dave Schaepe, Co-Manager and Senior Archaeologist with the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre consented to be interviewed for this project and emphasized the significance of sustaining a broad balance in Shxweli to Stó:lō epistemology. This was a major theme emphasized in a Traditional Use Study that Schaepe and his colleagues produced in 2004 studying the cultural impact of the proposed SE2 power station¹⁴. That report drove home the Stó:lō view that all elements have a Shxweli (spirit power) that informs and interacts with the Shxweli of others. Air has a spirit, as does water, stone, and plant life. These entities' spirits must be in balance in order for human and plant Shxweli to be healthy. Introducing air pollution into the system initiates the beginnings of system imbalance and eventually breakdown. In his interview, Schaepe reiterated information he had acquired in his earlier interviews with Elders: "If you start to disintegrate those elements, you become sick. You become mentally sick, emotionally [and] spiritually sick; any number of factors, biologically sick. I think spiritual sickness is a pretty particular... cultural factor of air pollutants that's not taken into consideration by other people in the region and Stó:lō neighbours."

Sonny McHalsie, a Stó:lō intellectual and published ethnohistorian, has spend countless hours reflecting upon the relationship between transformer stories and Stó:lō cosmology. He has concluded that one of the stories principal historical functions was to bind the people of the region together – or phrased another way, one of the principal outcomes of the transformers' actions was to bind the lower Fraser River people together. Knowing these stories, and by **extension being able to see the features being discussed, described, and referenced, was central to building and sustaining the metaphysical underpinnings of cross-tribal Stó:lō identity:**

Solh Temexw is as much a mythological universe as a biological world. The Stó:lō walk simultaneously through both physical and spiritual realms of this landscape connected to the Creator through the land itself as transformed by Xex:als. Metaphorically, transformer sites are akin to Catholic stations of the cross, each a unique and integral feature of a larger narrative, each physically embodying the Creator's existence, actions, and relationship to mankind. To the Stó:lō, simply existing in S'olh Temexw can be a religious experience realizing the mythological structure of the land manifest in

¹³ Wayne Suttles, *Coast Salish Essay* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), chp 1.

¹⁴ David Schaepe, et al., *Reviewing Sumas Energy 2, Inc. Traditional Use Study – Phase Two: Stó:lō Cultural Relations to Air and Water*, prepared for: Sumas Energy 2, Inc. by Stó:lō Nation with Arcas Consulting Archeologists Ltd., February 2004.

transformer sites.... Some transformer sites have been alienated, infringed upon, and in too many cases destroyed through urbanization and other development initiatives, yet **many remain visible throughout the local landscape.** ¹⁵



Mt. Cheam (aka Lhihleqey, “the mother mountain,” as well a peak associated with the Great Flood story) partly obscured by clouds on a mildly hazy autumn day, 2006. (Photo taken from Seabird Island looking south - by author).

Elder Herb Joe, while being interviewed for this project, explicitly linked the stories of the transformers to the future health of the lower Fraser Aboriginal community. Referring to a conversation he had had with Steven Point (a Stó:lō cultural leader and current Lt. Governor of British Columbia) Joe pointed out that the “the constitution of the Stó:lō is written in stone in all of the transformer sites. Teachings are in stone so that they will be remembered forever. All the stories are interconnected and interrelated. We can’t take any one story separately from any other. All the stories together make up the constitution.”

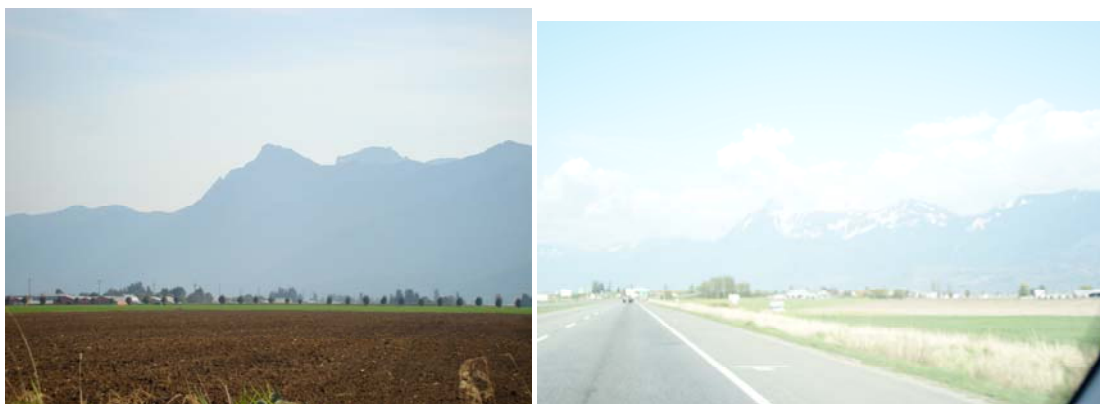
Not all mountains are transformer sites, of course, but even many that are not are still regarded as historically and culturally important **and therefore important to see**, especially those connected with stories of the “Great Flood”. According to oral traditions, following the era of the

¹⁵ McHalsie, et al., “Making the World Right through Transformations,” emphasis added.

transformers there was a second tumultuous period in Stó:lō history when again mountains featured prominently in the Creator's vision for his people. According to Old Pierre of Katzie, as recorded in the mid-1930s:

The Lord Above looked down and saw how they crowded upon the land, and one summer, after the Indians had dried their salmon, He sent the rain. It rained and rained without ceasing until the rivers overflowed their banks, the plains flooded and the people fled for shelter to the mountains, where they anchored their canoes to the summits with long ropes of twisted cedar-boughs. Still it rained until every mountain-top was covered except Mount Golden-Ears, on which the Indians of the lower Fraser had taken refuge, and even on this mountain many Indians drowned when their canoes crashed into one another and upset. Higher up the Fraser River, Mount Cheam also rose above the flood and sheltered many Indians on its summit, while on Vancouver Island Mount Tzuhalem, near Cowichan, floated upward on the rising waters.

The Lower Fraser Indians riding the flood on Mount Golden-Ears lived on their stores of dried salmon until the water subsided. Several canoes, however, broke away and were carried by the swiftly flowing current far to the southward. The Kwikwiltam Indians in Washington are descendants of the Coquitlam Indians who drifted away from Golden-Ears, the Nooksack are descendants of Squamish Indians, and the Cowlitz are some Cowichan natives who were swept away from Mount Cowichan¹⁶



Two other views of smog-obscured Mt. Cheam. Image on left taken in late September 2008 from near downtown Chilliwack looking south-east. Image on right taken from trans-Canada highway near Chilliwack in mid-April 2009. Photos by author

¹⁶ Old Pierre, February, 1936 (Jenness, 1950, p.33)



Golden Ears Mountain (one of the lower Fraser mountains associated with the “Great Flood” story) on a hazy October day, 2008. (photo taken from trans Canada highway near Langley, looking north – by author)

Old Pierre’s 1936 description of the fate of people swept away from their Fraser River homelands by the great flood is just one account of flood-induced relocation. Ethnographers working in the region in the late nineteenth through the mid twentieth century collected several such accounts. In 1902, early local ethnographer, Charles Hill-Tout, reported that one of his Kwantlen consultants had described a “great flood [that] overwhelmed the people and scattered the tribes. Then it was that the Nooksack tribe was parted from the Squamish, to whom they are regarded as belonging”¹⁷. Hill-Tout learned that a branch of the Kwantlen became the northern most Coast Salish speakers, the linguistically isolated Bella Coola (Nuxalk). Elder Bob Joe at Chilliwack described to the mid-century anthropologist Wilson Duff how “rafts holding people from Chehalis and Scowlitz on the Harrison River were tied to a peak on Sumas Mountain that broke off. The rafts floated southward, and the people became the Chehalis and Scowlitz tribes of Washington”.¹⁸ Yet another version provided by Cornelius Kelleher to folklorist Norman Lerman in 1950 describes how upper class members of the Chehalis tribe were able to return to their home

¹⁷ Hill-Tout, “Ethnological Studies of the Mainland Halkomelem, 70

¹⁸ Wilson Duff, *The Upper Stó:lō Indians of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, Dept. of Education, 1952), 23.

after the flood, whereas those people on the other raft were swept away and “never heard of again”.¹⁹ Lerman also heard from Harry Uslick a more detailed version of the flood story that had been related through the generations from at least as far back as Harry Uslick’s great-great-great-grandfather. The story spoke of people being swept away and never heard from again while others found themselves stranded in different parts of the broader territory, struggling to return to their devastated homes after the waters receded. The Uslick narrative describes how a traveler today passing through the Fraser Canyon will notice a big mountain behind the town of Yale that looks like a “pointing thumb.” It was on Pointing Thumb Mountain, Uslick explained, that the one raft eventually landed²⁰.

In a similar way, other stories about mountains continue to be regarded as central to communicating cultural communication from one generation to the next. Sonny McHalsie, for example, regularly takes Stó:lō people and non-Natives alike on cultural tours around Yale where he tells stories such as that describing a giant whirlpool known as “the Protector”. In the past, this massive whirlpool (that appears and then disappears every few minutes in a fashion reminiscent of the Yellowstone geyser, Old Faithful) was depended upon to waylay coastal raiders bent on attacking Stó:lō communities in the canyon. Likewise, one Stó:lō man who was caught in the tunnel was miraculously transported through a mystical tunnel to a cave on a mountain near Yale.



Mountain near Yale showing caves connected by mystical tunnel to whirlpool in Fraser River. Photo taken from boat on river by author, May 2009.

¹⁹ Norman Hart Lerman, “An Analysis of Folktales of Lower Fraser Indians, British Columbia” (M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1952), 245-247.

²⁰ Norman Hart Lerman, *Legends of the River People*, ed. Betty Keller (Vancouver: November House, 1976), 23-25.

Collectively, the Great Flood narratives and stories like that of the mystical tunnel connecting the Fraser River to caves on a mountain near Yale complement the stories of sky-born heroes like Swaniset and the transformers Xe:ǰá:ls. They explain how certain clusters of affiliated people came to be where they are, and as such knowing these stories and the mountains they describe is important to helping Aboriginal people understand their physical, historical, and spiritual place in the world.

Sharing these stories was (and is) important to the Aboriginal people of the lower Fraser River watershed, and sharing them in a manner that allows people to visibly look at the features has long been a central part of the indigenous means of conveying history and identity. This happened most commonly during the summer and autumn months as it was then that people traveling in canoes to various trade and resource gathering sites and to visit relatives. Being able to see the mountains, and in the evening the stars and other celestial bodies was integral to becoming a fully integrated member of lower Fraser Aboriginal society. In the winter, days were shorter, people travelled less, and cloud regularly obscured the mountains and sky. It was during the warm months, therefore, that viewscapes were of particular interest to people as they navigated the lower Fraser River watershed's physical and metaphysical geographies, and in so doing reinforced the links between themselves and their ancestors, themselves and their spiritual teachings, and themselves and their living relatives and the resources of their tribal territories.

Thus, learning the mountains' names and stories did more than teach people practical navigational landmarks. It also enabled people to know the people who lived adjacent to the transformer sites. These stories not only taught people who lived where, but what the people of the region were like, for as Sarah Nickel has determined in her study of contemporary political activism, each tribal community is believed to have been imbued with certain personality characteristics as a result of the transformers' work. Being able to see the mountains of the region was essential to knowing whose tribal area one was entering and whether those people were friendly or not.²¹

²¹ Nickel, Sarah. *The Politics of Activism: A Discussion of the Understanding and Implementation of Stó:lō Political Activism*. 2007. Available at <http://web.uvic.ca/vv/stolo/reports.php>

8. An Introduction to Aboriginal Perspectives on the Links Between History and Viewscapes:

The history of the region's Aboriginal people, unlike more recent settlers, has not until recently been recorded in, and accessible through, textual form in portable books and on computer screens. Rather, they are anchored in place through the stories of transformations and floods and other similar great events. To be part of the social/cultural continuum – ie. to participate in the region's social, economic, spiritual, and political sphere – requires knowledge of the local and the regional stories, and knowing stories involves knowing where on the landscape they are anchored – **and to do that you need to be able to see them.**

Until they were banned by federal legislation and discouraged by Christian missionaries, potlatch ceremonies were the primary public and formal forum for exchanging across generations and between families the stories that had been learned in large part through viewscapes while travelling during the summer and autumn seasons. There is a common misconception that the potlatch was primarily a forum for redistributing wealth. In reality, while wealth was redistributed through potlatches, the underlying function of the feasts was to publically transfer hereditary property rights. As such, the potlatch was a central mechanism of governance. Hereditary names, validated by and associated with ancient origin stories, were transferred across generations at potlatch feasts. Typically, this occurred at a potlatch naming ceremony where prominent hereditary title-holders of one generation oversaw the transference of hereditary names to members of a following generation. These names were hereditary, but what is more, they were linked to specific resource sites (eg. fishing sites, berry patches, potato bogs etc...). They were also linked to transformations from the beginning of time, and therefore to transformer sites. At a potlatch the gathered community members from diverse settlements learned which name, associated with what privileges and rights, was being transferred. Wealthy families had a range of names to draw from, and names were assigned to people who had demonstrated to their Elders that they were worthy of names carried by individuals from generations passed.

In the spiritual world of transformations, and the potlatch system of governance and property ownership, knowledge of history as much as history itself, was highly valued. Indeed, high status families, known as "smelalh" were known as "worthy people" and fluent Elders have explained that to be worthy was to know one's history. "Stexem," or worthless people, were considered to have lost or forgotten their history. Knowing one's history referred to knowing one's genealogical tree – knowledge of prominent ancestors who owned prime fishing spots, berry patches, and

potato bogs, etc.... But it also referred to knowledge of the stories of one's transformed ancestors. **Being able to see the mountains and sky features that are part of one's family history was an important part in coming to know one's ancestors, relatives, and history.** A question raised by the research for this report, therefore, is 'can there be high status hereditary families in a world of increasingly smog-veiled storied places?'

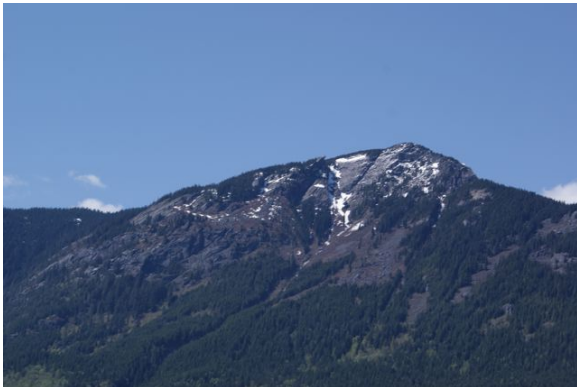
9. The Importance of Being Able to See Mountains and Features in the Landscape:

Many of the people interviewed expressed concern over the impact that air pollution was having on their ability to communicate important aspects of their history and spiritual beliefs to others. In the past, as discussed above, the transferring of knowledge by direct reference to visible mountains was a central part of Stó:lō pedagogy associated with summer travels. Today, these concerns remain the same, with the added worry that air pollution was not only impacting people's ability to share knowledge across generations, but across cultures. Sonny McHalsie, in particular, signaled his concerns over the difficulty he had explaining to non-Native newcomers in his territory the historical and spiritual significance of mountains to Stó:lō people. Sonny offers special cultural tours where school children, university students and faculty, government officials, and the general public are taken on bus or boat tours and told the stories of Stó:lō history and cosmology as revealed through storied features on the landscape. These tours are generally scheduled for the summer and autumn months when the weather is better and there is less chance of clouds obscuring mountain features. But the smog is now so thick that there are times when Sonny cannot adequately see the mountains he wants to speak about: "I first really noticed it in late 1980s. I climbed up Mt. Cheam. It was a really clear day, but the smog was really thick...." (Sonny McHalsie).



Looking north across the Fraser Valley from the ridge of Elk Mountain (adjacent to Mt. Cheam) on a moderately smoggy day in early May, 2009. Photo by Megan Harvey.

McHalsie went on to explain that “There are times when I do placenames tours and the smog is so thick it limits the visibility of the mountain tops that I discuss... With limited visibility you have trouble sharing this with the younger generation. Behind Chawathil is “Howling Dog,” east of Hope is “Thunderbird,” “Heart mountain,” “Tomtemiyk” at the mouth of Hunter Creek. “St’ámya” right behind Hope. As soon as you pass Hunter Creek the valley opens up and there are mountain features all around you. But smog creates limited visibility. Its hard to get Elders out on days when they can see the mountains clearly, because in the winter there is too much cloud and rain.



Howling Dog mountain (left) behind Chawathil as seen from a boat on the river. St’ámya “hermaphrodite” (right) as seen from a boat on the Fraser River approaching Hope from Yale. Photos by author; taken in late May 2009.

McHalsie explains that during his cultural tours “I like to joke, ‘there is a mountain up there, you can’t see it, but I’m gong to tell you about it anyways!’ Some of the features are small and difficult to make out on the mountain tops as smog settles in. For example, the older sisters on Mt Cheam. Also the silhouette of the “Howling Dog” is hard to see. You have to be at right angle to see it and it can’t be a smoggy day.... Stamia is fairly easy to see, but some features are difficult.”

As McHalsie’s comments indicate, **the impact of restricted viewscapes on the transference of knowledge and the building of cross-cultural relations is significant.** Elder Joe Aleck raised similar concerns. As an Elder he sees it as his responsibility to share stories of the past with the youth, and that involves asking youth to look at some of the mountain features described in the Transformer stories. Mt. Cheam, in particular, is the mountain immediately above his home community of Cheam and he finds it frustrating because “its hard to show people when the parts of the mountain [being described and discussed] can’t be seen.” Katzie First Nation Elder Mel Bailey made the same point, stating that “it is important to see mountains when you tell the stories.... But sometimes the smog is so thick it’s even hard to recognize Golden Ears.”

Similar concerns were also raised by other interviewees, such as Carol Peters, who described the difficulty she has seeing certain mountain features due to air pollution, and the effect that has on education:

...if there’s a forest fire, then it gets really smoky and stuffy and it gets really ugly around here.

...for some reason, we get a lot more smog and you can really see it on the skyline, especially when you look towards Vancouver, ‘cause we’re, apparently we’re the place that everything gets funneled to so we feel it twice as hard as anywhere else.

... Mountains! There’s times where we can only see about half of the mountain and it’s just like this grey cloud that covers it. So, it’s the mountains, it’s the worst part. And sometimes we can’t even see the river because it’s just so murky.

...Mt. Cheam – we’ve got the story of the mother and the sisters and the dog. If we’re talking to somebody about it, we can’t really show them the features

because they wouldn't be visible and Mt. Cheam is quite high so when there's a lot of smog it really messes things up there. That would probably be the biggest issue that I would have.

...there's so many people that are visual, that learn best by seeing. So when you're wanting to tell a story or talk about a medicine, it always makes a difference when you can say, "Hey, okay, over there is..." and you can show the faces, you can show the animals, you can show the areas where, okay, this is where the wild strawberries grow or that's where the mountain goats are, this is where the little wooly dogs reside, and be able to just like look up and show and there's so much more that you can do when you've got it right there and available and visual. It just makes it that much easier, rather than saying, "Well, behind all those clouds is..." It's just – it doesn't have the same effect as when everything's clear

Carol Peters also emphasized that there are styles of learning that are particular to cultures. Western European culture has for numerous generations emphasized abstract learning from printed text in books. Carol reminds us that **the Aboriginal people of the lower Fraser River come from a culture where people have historically learned by watching and listening. For this tradition to continue, people need to be able to see and describe storied mountain features.**²²

Mike Kelly was also concerned about the impact of smog on viewscapes, only his concerns were less about the stories associated with mountains than with the ability of Elders living in the Valley to be able to direct youth to the correct locations on mountains where they were supposed to conduct their puberty rites:

In the smoggy season here, you can't even hardly see the mountains.... That's all the mountains around, yeah. The smog gets boxed in here from, when the west wind is blowing, from Vancouver, Bellingham

Right above Hunter Creek, it would be the east side, about three-quarters of the way up there, there's a plateau and you can see it, there's a rock face in

²² In a parallel vein, Stó:lō educator Gwen Point has long emphasized a System of Intellect (SOI) evaluation process that she uses to assess the learning styles of contemporary Stó:lō children. Her results show a profound propensity and preference for visual and hands-on learning over abstract book learning (personal communication, January 2000).

front of it. And that's where our girls went when they went through their puberty rights.... Right up on top there, there's a rock face, you can see it, and on top of that flat was where the girls went for their puberty rights. And down below that there's kind of another ledge, few hundred feet down and that's where the boys went to – when they had their voice change and stuff like that, when they went through their puberty rights. And below that there's a [...] there's kind of cave, an indentation in the mountains and that's where the parents and all the caretakers camped while the girls and boys were going through their puberty rights up there.

Question: Do you think because of smog it would be hard to kind of give directions on where those spots are, the traditional spots, like they tried to show a grandfather where it was – or a grandson from here to get directions, do you think smog would impact your ability to tell them where those areas are?

... I know it's hard to give directions with the smog in the valley here.

Ray Silver, an Elder from Sumas near Abbotsford, was visibly angry when he spoke at lengths of the negative impacts that pollution had caused and the effects of what he characterized as western greed upon Aboriginal society. Ray spent most of his time speaking about the physical and spiritual impacts of pollution, but he did note that the smog “was worse when the SE wind blows and comes up from Seattle, Bellingham, Vancouver and New Westminster” and that the smog was impacting his ability to see features of the natural environment. Farther down river at Kwantlen (Ft. Langley) Farley Antione noted that when he started fishing on the Fraser 30 years ago he could clearly see the mountains, whereas now he has trouble on some days even seeing the most prominent peaks like Mt. Golden Ears. Similarly, Grand Chief Archie Charles noted that the smog was so thick on his reserve of Seabird (near Aggasiz) that he sometimes has trouble clearly seeing the elementary school from his home – a distance of only several hundred meters.

Viewed from the Aboriginal perspective, visible air pollution acts as a barrier between Stó:lō people and a feature of their culture – the visible storied places on the terrestrial and celestial landscape. Indeed, “barrier” is the word archaeologist David Schaepe uses when he discusses the topic, concluding that the effect of the smog barrier “almost triggers a sense of panic” in Stó:lō people who feel visually disconnected from viewscapes of their territory.



The view from Grand Chief Archie Charles front porch to the Seabird Island elementary and high schools – a view often obscured by smog. Photo by author, mid May, 2009.

10. Landscape features that are Important to See:

Interviewees identified several prominent landscape features that they felt were important for people to be able to see so knowledge of their sacred and historical significance could be shared. In addition, the ethnographic literature identifies other mountains that were not specifically mentioned by the people interviewed for this project. These stories include Transformer and Flood story mountains. They are:

“The Face-Changer”²³

- mentions a man who wants to win a beautiful maiden
- the maiden will only marry a handsome man and rejects him
- he goes to the mountains for find a spirit woman who has many faces*

“Zalock”²⁴

- Zalock has two daughters, one very beautiful and the younger very plain
- the eldest wants to marry *Slalekkwal, the spirit of the east, who controls good weather*
- the eldest rejects many suitors who appear instead of *Slalekkwal*
- when *Slalekkwal* appears he marries the youngest daughter instead

²³ Diamond Jenness, *The Corn Goddess and Other Tales from Indian Canada* (Ottawa: National Parks Branch, 1956), 83-87.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 88-91.

- Zalock is enraged and tries to kill Slakekkwal in various ways, including in a storm, but *Slakekkwal (who is after all the spirit of the east and controls good weather) calms the waters*
- Slakekkwal* finally has enough and kills his father-in-law, whose body is changed into a rock that grows a spruce tree
- now every rock from which a spruce tree grown is called *Zalock*

"How the Siwashes First Got Fire: a Fraser River Legend of Mount Baker"²⁵

- long ago only wolves had fire
- the wolves kept it behind a fence of trees on the top of Mt. Baker (this is why Mt. Baker still smokes today)*
- the people keep asking the wolves for fire, but the wolves refuse to give them any
- back then all creatures spoke the same language, so the people gathered all the animals together
- Mowitch*, the deer, volunteers to steal the fire while the people distract the wolves
- the wolves kill *Mowitch*, but not before he sets the forests on fire and people get the fire (there is evidence of a great forest fire long ago in the areas described)
- the Creator is angry and causes snow to fall on Mt. Baker so that many of the people die on their way down the mountain (this is why Mt. Baker's summit is always covered in snow)*

"Cheam Peak"²⁶

- Mt. Baker comes to Fraser Valley looking for a wife and takes Mt. Cheam (Lhilheqi) back to his country*
- they have three boys: Mt. Hood, Mt. Shasta, and Mt. Shuksahn*
- they also have three younger girls
- after her sons are grown, Mt. Cheam returns to the Fraser Valley with her daughters*
- she stands guard over the Stó:lō people*
- the three points on Mt. Cheam are her daughters*

²⁵ First heard at a potlatch on Seymour Creek, Burrard Inlet in December 1883; collected by Robert E. Darrall in 1891, pp. 1-4

²⁶ Told by Mrs. Cooper in Oliver Wells, *Myths and Legends of South Western British Columbia: STAW-loh Indians* (Sardis, B.C.: Frank Coan, 1970), 12.

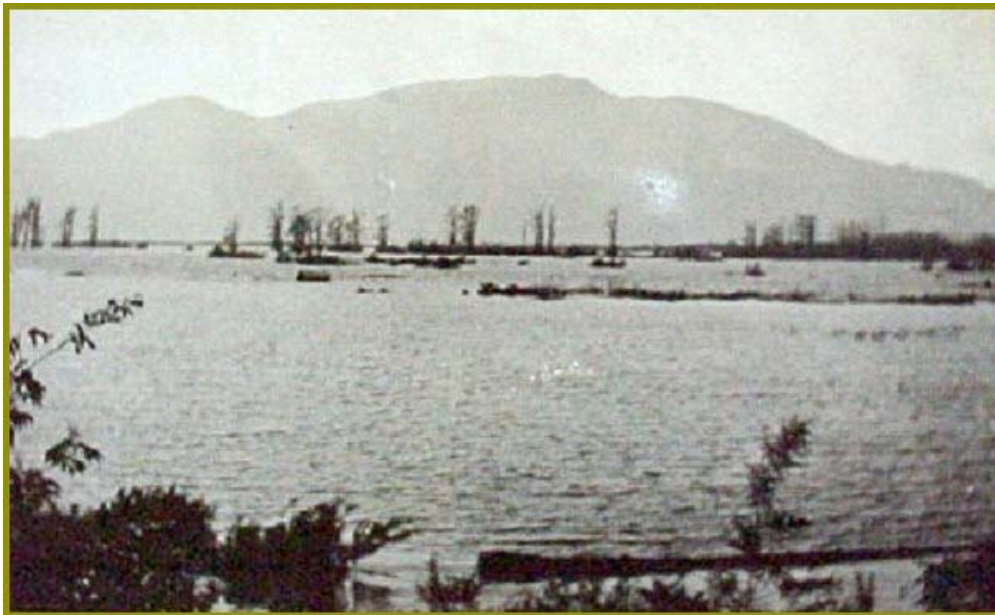
- *Lhílheqi hold the youngest (lo-oh-wat)*
- *behind them stands the dog that followed them from Mt. Baker's country*
(you can see the shape today)

"Story of the Flood"²⁷

-when Fraser Valley floods some of the people build canoes so they can escape

-*there are only three canoes which escape and they tie onto tuhk-KAY-uhq [Sumas Mountain?], which is the only mountain not covered with water; one of the canoes breaks free and is lost*

-when the water was half-way down the mountain the people in the other two canoes find a cave, where they stayed until the land dried



Archival image of Sumas Mountain as seen from across the now drained Sumas Lake. Photo c. 1910 (Esther Epp Harder Collection -- <http://www.yarrowbc.ca/other/sumaslake.html>)

"The Transformer Story"²⁸

-Transformer travelled down the Fraser and transformed people into rocks

-at Cheam are two gigantic twins and their family; the family are rocks on the cliff and the twins are at the base of the cliff

-*at Chehalis is another man smoking; he was transformed as a rock in the river; if people pass by him and leave offerings there will be no wind, but if*

²⁷ Told by Dan Milo in Wells, 19.

²⁸ James A. Teit, "Tales from the Lower Fraser River," *Folk-Tales of Salishan and Shaptin Tribes, Chapter VII* (New York: The American Folk-Lore Society, 1917), 129.

people laugh at him a storm will suddenly erupt; the wind can be heard blowing in this rock

"The Deluge"²⁹

- a flood comes and covers all the earth; most people are drowned
- only the peaks of very few of the highest mountains remained above the water
- Xāls, his wife and their daughters escape in a canoe and drift against the top of Qotse'lis Mountain, where they tie their canoe until the waters recede
- when they come down from the mountain they find they're in the Fraser Valley

"Mount Baker Tale" (Matsqui version)³⁰

- Mt. Baker is a male mountain and Twin Sisters Mountain is his mother
- Chilliwack Mountain was Mt. Baker's second wife
- after Chilliwack Mountain had her first child she returned with the child to where she stands now (that's why Chilliwack Mountain looks like a woman with a child on her back)
- Twin Sisters Mountain was Mt. Baker's wife

"Flood Story" (Kilgard version)³¹

- people from Kilgard went up Sumas Mountain to escape the flood and they tied their canoes to the mountain with cedar ropes
- the people at Yale went up Pointing Thumb Mountain to escape the rising water
- the people on Pointing Thumb Mountain left salmon sticks there which turned into rock and can still be seen today

"Flood Story" (Matsqui version)³²

- when water rises people are forced to move up the mountains
- the Chief's raft was blown to a peak on the east side of Harrison Lake
- the cedar planking of the raft can still be seen on the top of the mountain

²⁹ Ibid., 132.

³⁰ Told by Agnes James in Lerman, *An Analysis of Folktales of Lower Fraser Indians*, 242.

³¹ Told by Mrs. Harry Uslick in Lerman, *An Analysis of Folktales of Lower Fraser Indians*, 243-244.

³² Told by Cornelius Kelleher in Lerman, *An Analysis of Folktales of Lower Fraser Indians*, 245-247.

-people on the raft return to their homes, but everything had been destroyed and the geographical surroundings had completely changed



Mt. Baker, as seen through a smoggy haze from the trans-Canada highway near Abbotsford in September 2008. Photo by author.

"History of a People" (Sardis)³³

-four brothers (tsimts, alacittl, yubxoylum and wililuk) founded and governed the first Chilliwack tribes

-a mountain slide forced the families to move to a place called aiy'l just above Anderson Flat where they carved three large basins into the side of the mountain to use for cleaning and cooking food; these can still be seen there

"The Katzie Book of Genesis"³⁴

-three brothers and their twelve servants come to the Lower Fraser from the west and transform people along their travels

³³ Told by Bob Joe in Lerman, *An Analysis of Folktales of Lower Fraser Indians*, 268-275.

³⁴ Told by Old Pierre of Katzie; in Diamond Jenness, *The Faith of a Coast Salish Indian*. Collected February 1936, Chapter II, "The Katzie Book of Genesis. Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1955. In, Wayne Suttles, *Katzie Ethnographic Notes*. Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1955, pp. 21-31.

-at the mouth of the Pitt River xéls [the transformer] turns another warrior into a rock called xwti'tos ("look up the river toward the mountains")

"The Katzie Book of Genesis"³⁵

*-during the flood the people from the Lower Fraser survived by tying their canoes to the top of Mt. Golden-Ears with ropes of twisted cedar boughs
-up the Fraser, some people clung on to the summit of Mt. Cheam
-on Vancouver Island people took refuge on the peak of Mt. Tzuhalem near Cowichan*

"The Flood" (Sardis)³⁶

*-flood covered everything except a peak near Sumas and another one near Yale, where people and animals took refuge
-as the water subsided the rafts rested in a big hole at the top of Mt. Cheam
-the people collected the sticks they had used to keep salmon split when they were being dried and deposited them into this hole
-until recently people could still see these at the top of the mountain, but now they have all crumbled into dust*

"Slelakan"³⁷

*-there is a slelakan like a bear in Cultus Lake under a high cliff
-on the cliff face are markings, one resembling a human figure
-at night flashes of light shoot from this figure across the lake
-many people seeking medicine-power bathe beneath this cliff*

"Qäls" (Harrison Lake)³⁸

*- as Qäls travels people are transformed into stone and other things
-K'ã'iq (Mink) gets his hand bitten off by Leqyiles's toothed vagina; K'ã'iq's footprints can be seen in the cliff face on the Harrison River, and Leqyiles's*

³⁵ Ibid., 33.

³⁶ Told by William Sepass in Diamond Jenness, "Coast Salish Mythology," Unpublished Collection, 1934-35, UBC Special Collections, 20.

³⁷ Ibid., 52.

³⁸ Franz Boaz, *Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast of America*. Berlin: A. Asher and Co., 1895. Translated by Dietrich Bertz for the British Columbia Indian Language Project, pp.29-36

toothed vagina is transformed into rock and can still be seen in the cliff face close to mink's footprints; if water is sprinkled on Leqyiles it will rain



Leqyiles, “always teeth” the toothed vagina on the Harrison River near Chehalis. Photo by author, May 2009.

11. Celestial Objects that are Important to See:

Not all the features associated with ancient transformation are fixed to terra firma. Some are scattered through the sky. The importance of seeing these features is no less important to Stó:lō people than the stories discussing mountains:

“Stars”³⁹

-háhotsok (the Pleiades) were seven women who were sitting around a pot of boiling grease

-keyeitc (the Dipper) was an elk

³⁹ Told by William Sepass in Jenness, “Coast Salish Mythology,” 9-10.

-the evening/morning star is the brightest star in the sky with another star beside it; they are men who marry women from earth and take them into the sky to become stars



The Pleiades – Stó:lō transformer stars.

“Adventures in Sky Land”⁴⁰

-a young man marries the daughter of Sun, but Moon becomes angry because the man didn't marry his daughter
-Moon tries many different ways to kill the young man
-Moon asks the man to bring him a young bear to play with, and the man brings him a vicious one
-the cub scratches Moon furiously and that is why Moon's face has so many scars

The Big Dipper⁴¹

-at K'ōāle's, Qāls transforms a young man and his dog into rocks; the moose they were hunting is thrown into the sky where it becomes the four bright stars of the Big Dipper
- Qāls also transforms a group of abandoned children into the Pleiades

⁴⁰ Ibid., 24-25.

⁴¹ Franz Boaz, *Indian Myths and Legends from the North Pacific Coast of America*. Berlin: A. Asher and Co., 1895. Translated by Dietrich Bertz for the British Columbia Indian Language Project, pp.29-36

12. The Importance of Being Able to See *From* Mountains:

While the majority of interviewees spoke of the importance of seeing mountain features, some spoke of the cultural significance of being able to see *from* mountain vistas. For instance, at least one of the people interviewed for this project questioned not only the impact of air pollution on people's ability to see mountains, but people's (and community leaders in particular) ability to go to mountains and to look down on the people and resources of their territory. Elder Cyril Pierre of Katzie explained that his grandfather Peter Pierre used to walk around Katzie territory as part of his leadership responsibilities "just to see if his land was ok – 'this is my land and I need to make sure its ok for my people.'" It used to take Peter Pierre fourteen days to walk through the entirety of Katzie territory, and one of the important locations he was required to visit was the height of Golden Ear's Mountain, for from there he could see all of Katzie territory. Cyril Pierre lamented that leaders tend not to do that today, but he noted that even if they could it would be difficult for them to see the land and people from the top of Golden Ears due to the smog. He also noted that the air pollution made it difficult to breathe at high elevations. Ethnographer Oliver Wells, in describing a prominent Chiliwack leader from the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth century named William Sepass used terms reminiscent of Pierre's: From the peak of Mt Cheam, Sepass was "monarch of all he surveyed."⁴²



View from Elk Mountain overlooking Chilliwack on a moderately smoggy day in mid-July, 2009.
Photo by Megan Harvey.

⁴² Wells, "Introduction" to Street's *Sepass Tales*, 19??

13. Viewscapes and Tribal Territories:

Cyril Pierre spoke eloquently of the importance his grandfather placed on being able to traverse his tribal territory and gaze upon it from the heights of Golden Ears Mountain. Chief Dalton Silver of Sumas raised a related point when he discussed how ancient inter-tribal agreements stipulated the extent of one tribe's territory according to boundaries defined by viewscapes:

There is a word in our language that we use when describing territory. When grandfather showed me around Sumas territory. The border to north of our territory for hunting goes as far as the eye can see. Now today that territory might be smaller because we can't see as far with the pollution....

Dalton Silver's concerns over the possible impact of changing viewscapes upon tribal territorial boundaries reminds us that **in lower Fraser River Aboriginal society, where laws and agreements were communicated orally through potlatch ceremonies and not through printed maps and surveys, the link between history, culture, and viewcape is intimate and very real.**⁴³

14. The Importance of Mountains Themselves Being Able to See:

Interestingly, while all transformer histories are important for lower Fraser River Aboriginal people to learn and know, and while being able to view the mountains and celestial objects is an important part of coming to know these places, some of the ancient transformer stories are specifically about being viewed and viewing. That is to say, some refer to transformations that were designed to enable a transformed person to be seen, or for the transformed person to be able to see. While reviewing the extant recorded *sxwoxwiyam* (ancient transformer stories) and during the course of interviewing, **several stories were identified that reveal the importance of viewscapes to the Transformer's intentions. Summaries of these stories are provided below.** Each has a citation so the full version can be consulted where desired.

⁴³ See also Wilson Duff's discussion of Chilliwack territory as defined by Robert Joe (Wilson Duff, Unpublished Fieldnotes, 4:37, Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre archives.)

Mt. Cheam (*Lhílheqi*) is often referred to by Stó:lō people as the “mother mountain.” The transformer story associated with Mt. Cheam as related by Dalton Silver tells of how at one time Mt. Cheam was a beautiful woman who, through an arranged marriage, was sent to marry Mt. Baker (a man named Kullshan). She lived with Mt. Baker for several years and had children by him, but as time passed she found herself increasingly lonely for the people of the lower Fraser River watershed. To console her, she and Mt. Baker agreed that she could travel home for a visit. She took her three daughters and her dog with her. When she arrived she met Xe:xa:ls who decided to transform her, the daughters, and dog, into stone. As he transformed her he said that she would become a large mountain, so large that she would be able to see all the way to the canyon and all the way to the ocean. As a devoted mother, her fate would be to watch over all the Stó:lō people and the salmon as they returned to the river each year. And to ensure that she wouldn't be lonely for her husband, Xe:xa:ls transformed her husband into Mt. Baker and made each so tall that they would be able to see one another for all time.⁴⁴

In a similar vein, ethnographer James Teit recorded a story about a transformation that occurred near Yale where a man who was smoking was turned to stone in that particular place so that people could see him and talk to him, and he could see them. Nearby, the Transformer found a woman on a mountain hunting goats. She wanted to be turned into a rock on the mountain so she could see all the people below her.⁴⁵ What these stories reveal is that in **from the Aboriginal perspective certain mountains not only are part of a human viewscape, but are sentient beings who themselves have viewsapes. The Stó:lō take these stories very seriously, and indeed one Stó:lō person consulted during the course of this research project wondered if some of the social problems facing Stó:lō communities might be in part the result of mother mountain Mt. Cheam (*Lhílheqi*) being unable to fulfill her mandate from the Transformer of looking over the Aboriginal people of the lower Fraser; and that perhaps the problems facing the salmon industry were likewise a product of her not being able to watch over the salmon people due to excessive summer smog.**

15 Special Aboriginal Spiritual Concerns Over Pollution not Specifically Related to Viewsapes: There are Consequences for Actions:

Although not necessarily specifically related to viewsapes, several of the interviewees raised specific cultural concerns about pollution in their environment. **Joe Aleck, for example, spoke**

⁴⁴ There are many versions of this story and they continue to be shared regularly. While the versions differ in terms of some specifics, the essential components of the story are consistent.

⁴⁵ Teit, 129.

about the role of spiritual forces causing physical consequences in people's lives. He noted that the great landslide that had fallen from Mt Cheam several thousand years ago may have been a warning to Stó:lō people that "something wasn't right." He raised this point in connection with a discussion of **his fears over what might happen in the future as a result of the pollution that was damaging the regional and human geography.** In Joe Aleck's mind, **the risks of pollution today were reminiscent of the ancient days of Transformation when people were transformed "because they weren't taking care of people and the land."** Sonny McHalsie was also concerned about the spiritual effects of smog and air pollution stating that "we have a Shxweli. The spirits are real and there. The transformations really happened. It's disrespectful to the spirits living in smog. Clouds are natural, but smog is disrespectful to all the transformer spirits. That's the way I feel about it anyways." Cyril Pierre likewise noted that "The spirits know what's happening to their land." Concern over what the spirits might do after being disrespected was something that **Mel Bailey worried about: "Mother nature is going to get mad pretty soon. She'll start kicking ass."**

15. Concerns about Air Pollution and Smog Relating to Physical and Biological Health:

While viewscapes were the focus of the interviews, those being interviewed had other things that they wanted to discuss about air pollution as well. Many of these are concerns that would be shared by non-Aboriginal residents of the study area, but that does not diminish their significance. The following are synoptic notes concerning those matters. Readers wishing to consult the full transcripts should turn to Appendix #2.

Agnes Charlie

-smoke getting trapped over Chehalis like a cloud over the reserve

Ray Silver

-can't see mountains because of smog – looks like there is a big fire burning

Sonny McHalsie interview #2

-smog effects all living things on mountains (plants and animals; trees breathing)

-has an effect on dried salmon

Patricia John

- purity of air and water didn't need to be questioned before; can't drink water from rivers anymore or catch rainwater; wind dried fish tastes different because of pollutants
- kids have allergies and asthma
- pollution having negative effect on water and water babies
- need clean air and water in sweatlodges to communicate with spirits and across generations and to teach drumming, canoeing, etc.
- smog can't stop ability to carry messages if one is a messenger
- no more ducks and grouse because of pollution – used to be food for people
- used to wind dry everything – can't do that anymore because wind is bad
- when animals and insects start to leave it's a sign that something is wrong

Mel Baily

- smog will get worse once the bridge [between Langley and Pitt Meadows] is finished – mother nature is getting pretty mad
- oolichans disappeared once garbage dump was put in next to Portman bridge
- sturgeon dying off – sign of how bad the river is
- smog is worse in summer
- going to mountains for herbs and medicines

Herb Joe

- smog effects health, especially if immune system is weak; asthma problems
- pollution in river killing sturgeon
- water ways used for travel no longer usable; all the water ways filthy now
- need to respect river – old lady – she will take people who don't respect her
- need trees to keep environment healthy but they're struggling to survive
- when Sumas Lake was drained, heart of people was drained too
- smog really bad in summer for everyone – have smog alerts

Farley Patrick

- notices smog when he has to use puffer; more of an issues with youth and Elders and in longhouses
- used to be able to drink Fraser River water

- can't wind dry salmon in some places where they used to because of changing wind currents; now you have to travel far to access clean food sources
- salmon are disappearing and changing
- want to stop eating store-bought food to stop diseases, diabetes
- everything people do effects environment – very serious issue
- smog worst June-August – trying not to overstrain Elders but puffers come out because air is bad
- concerns about trees and CO2
- noticing negative effects on trees and animals – when they suffer people suffer too

Dalton Silver

- high rates of respiratory problems
- smog really bad in summer months – problems with asthma and allergies

Cyril Pierre

- smog and pollution impact all Katzie territory
- concerns about impact of pollution on people's health
- smog worse in summer – can see it better
- watching family water skiing on Pitt Lake and seeing smog roll in.

Archie Charles

- something in the ground – berries not growing the way they used to
- summertime best for pollution (?)
- can't drink water from creeks anymore – have to buy it
- lost wild tea because of bad air
- if you change the water you change the atmosphere – ruining everything
- there's something in the air – apples and fruit rust on the trees

Ana Sonny McHalsie

- smog worst in early summer

Cheryle Gabriel

- importance of trees to replenish earth and waterways – effecting livelihood

- problems with air quality – more people getting allergies and asthma
- some people are not healthy enough to work because of the environment
- breathing in pollution from ferries
- May/June-September is the worst – air makes chest tight and hard to breathe, more tired
- river is also warmer, no air movement

Joe Aleck

- a lot of pollutants in Fraser River – fish can't live there
- many sacred sites being destroyed by pollution
- animals disappearing because of pollution

Agnes Charlie

- can feel smog from Vancouver; problems with asthma
- hunting isn't what it used to be – less game, can't drink mountain water; problems with fishing and drying as well; a lot of wild berries are gone
- smog effects animals as well – they can't breathe

Mike Kelly

- smog hard on breathing – hard for people with allergies and asthma – more people are getting sick than before
- smog wouldn't really bother spirits, has more of an effect on humans
- a lot of medicinal plants are dying; small animals are disappearing
- trees aren't as green as they used to be

Carol Peters

- trouble breathing, feeling sick when the air is hot and muggy
- can't really go to mountains, see the sites, because it's hard to breathe
- smog is poisoning environment, killing mountains, plants, animals
- smog makes it difficult to hold outdoor gathering like powwows because elders have a hard time breathing outside
- everything needs fresh air to breathe – transformer sites, rocks, plants, animals, etc., poisons in the air are killing the spirits of all these things
- everything is interrelated – when one part of the world isn't health, other parts suffer too

Ray Silver

- fruit trees are exposed to rain that carries poison, leaves turn brown
- taught to respect river, not contaminate it
- went to Sacramento in 1970s but had to return home because of smog and humidity; went back to California in 1980 and a lot had been cleaned up – clearer than Fraser Valley
- smog destroying Native medicines
- smog affects spirits

16. Conclusions and Recommendations:

This report provides an overview of the unique cultural perspectives and concerns that the Indigenous people of the Lower Fraser River watershed have over the effects of smog on their ability to see important features in their landscape (especially mountains and celestial objects). The report represents an effort on the part of the Canadian Government to better equip itself to fulfill its mandate to protect the environment and in particular, the air in the Georgia Basin – a responsibility it shares with agencies such as the BC Ministry of Environment, the BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley Regional District, various First Nations, and others. It draws directly upon the traditional knowledge of individual Aboriginal people as well as older historical and ethnographic sources. Ideally, this report will be regarded as setting the groundwork for future government initiatives related to air quality management in general, and visibility protection in particular, while it simultaneously offers avenues for future communication between government and Aboriginal people.

It is the intention of the author of this report that Canadian government officials use this report as a launching point for future direct communication and discussion with Aboriginal people and their representatives. The report is designed to give government officials sufficient insight into the specific cultural perspectives of Aboriginal people that they will feel motivated to learn more, and more deeply. It is not meant to be a comprehensive account of all Aboriginal people's concerns relating to decreased visibility associated with smog.

The findings presented above make clear that Aboriginal people of the lower Fraser River watershed do have culturally specific, and unique, perspective on viewscapes that are not shared

by more recent non-Native settlers to the region. These attitudes and beliefs are part of a firmly geographically anchored and temporally deep local Indigenous knowledge. In particular:

- a) Contemporary lower Fraser River Indigenous people are concerned about the impact that smog and air pollution have on their ability to see those features of the landscape that are associated with their ancient histories of creation and transformation, sites relating to accounts of great climactic disasters (such as floods), and sites associated with geographic orientation needed for movement on the landscape. Sharing such stories across generations, across tribes, and across cultural groups is regarded as important to the preservation and protection of their unique cultural traditions.
- b) Regional Indigenous people feel there is an important link between being able to see certain geographic features and being able to communicate knowledge about those features to members of the next generation; to members of neighbouring tribal communities; and to members of non-Native newcomer society.
- c) In a related fashion, there is a special expectation that the hereditary elite of Stó:lō society will be well versed in tribal history – including transformation and flood stories. Reduced visibility threatens to undermine leaders' ability to learn these stories and therefore to live up to the expectations of their community members.
- d) There are traditions that emphasize the importance not only of people being able to see particular mountain features, but of being able to visit those same mountain features and see the landscape below. That is to say, prominent family leaders in the past visited mountain ridges in order to survey their tribal territories. There is concern that as this tradition becomes better known that people will want to revive it but that smog will prevent people from fully participating in this important traditional activity.
- e) Regional Indigenous people feel that not only is it important for them to be able to see certain geographic features, but that it is essential for certain geographical features to be able to see them. Mt. Cheam, for instance, is regarded as being a transformed woman who was mandated by the transformer with the task of watching over the Stó:lō people and the returning sockeye salmon. Such sentient mountains' inability to fulfill their mandate due to pollution-reduced visibility is regarded as creating a potentially dangerous social and environmental situation.

- f) Relatedly, Aboriginal people expressed concern that sentient entities in the spirit world (including transformer figures such as certain mountains and stars) will feel disrespected by their inability to see through polluted air, and that this could cause dangerous things to happen to people.
- g) There are potential economic impacts on First nation communities associated with degraded visibility – especially as pertain to new cultural tourism companies that depend on being able to show and describe storied landscape features to tourists and others (eg Sasquatch Tours and Aselaw Tours).
- h) Finally, there are a range of concerns about the impact of smog that go beyond the issue of viewsapes and which are therefore beyond the scope of this report. Readers interested in these matters should consult the transcripts and interviews summaries in Appendix #2.

The local Indigenous knowledge discussed in this study must be understood in light of certain cultural contexts. Namely, that the viewsapes discussed are largely warm season viewsapes, and that historically as well as contemporarily, it was the summer and autumn that lower Fraser River people most frequently traveled and shared histories about the mountains and other storied features of their environment. Travel did, and does, occur in the winter months, but with colder weather, shorter days, and cloudier skies, the winter months were less conducive to viewsapes and to discussions of features in the viewsapes. Moreover, in the past, as with today, the summer months are the times when people from down river make special trips upriver to the Fraser Canyon to participate in the salmon fishery and the traditional wind-drying of sockeye. Thus, the seasons of the worst visibility conditions are the seasons when visibility was most important to the lower Fraser Aboriginal people.

Related to this, it is important to note that lower Fraser River Aboriginal people have an ancient tradition of measuring people's worth against their historical knowledge. To know one's family history is to be a worthy member of a family, and the worthiest families have the most elaborate and illustrious histories. Sharing knowledge of family history includes transmitting knowledge about the ancient genealogical ties that link living humans to what might to outsiders be considered inanimate object in the terrestrial and celestial landscape, but that to Stó:lō people are considered transformed accentors; ancestors with living sentient spirits (Shxweli). As viewsapes deteriorate there is a risk that hereditary knowledge and customs will be compromised; the effect of which is uncertain but may undermine the foundations of traditional authority.

Viewscapes are also associated with important aspects of defining a community's geographic extent. As Dalton Silver explained, the extent of Sumas territory was defined as being "as far as the eye can see" from a certain fixed point. This raises concerns that in such cases neighbouring tribes might challenge certain long-held agreements based on a diminished modern viewscapes due to air pollution.

Agencies charged with monitoring and regulating air quality should attempt to take these unique Aboriginal cultural concerns into account. Toward that end, workshops could be organized where local Aboriginal spokespersons knowledgeable about these matters are invited to speak to agency officials, and where agency officials are encouraged to ask how their work might better take Indigenous concerns into account.

Finally, future work that might build upon this report and further reveal and communicate Aboriginal concerns over viewscapes might include:

- 1) An assessment of the economic impact of smog on Stó:lō cultural tourism initiatives such as those associated with Sasquatch Tours and Aeslaw Tours.
- 2) An assessment of the pedagogical impact of degraded viewscapes on opportunities to teach public school teachers and students about Stó:lō culture through fieldtrips to view culturally significant landscape and celestial features.

Appendix 1

Guidelines And Questions For Researchers/Interviewers

Viewscape Research Project

This project seeks to understand whether smog and air pollution are having an impact on Stó:lō culture. Or, phrased another way, it seeks to determine whether the Stó:lō people have specific cultural concerns about smog and air pollution that are different from those of other non-Native residents of the Fraser Valley.

It is important that you avoid asking leading questions, and that you try to minimize questions that result in a simple yes or no answer. For example, DO NOT ask questions like this: QUESTION: Is one of the reasons that you oppose air pollution because it makes it difficult to see mountains? ANSWER: yes. Rather, ask open ended questions that encourage the Elder to answer in full sentences and paragraphs. Ideally we want them to tell stories in their own words. For example, DO ASK questions like this: QUESTION: Can you think of ways that smog and air pollution have impacted your ability to see features in your territory, and if so, what are some of the effects of this?

Doing the interview:

- 1) At beginning of interview state your name as researcher, the name of the person being interviewed, the location of the interview, and the date of the interview.
- 2) Next ask the interviewee to state their name, birth date, and their place of residence.
- 3) Briefly outline and explain the research project. Explain that the project was commissioned by Environment Canada to assist them develop better ways of protecting the environment that would better account for Aboriginal culture. It is specifically interested in the impact smog and air pollution have had on people's ability to see important cultural features of their environment -- such as transformer sites like Mt Baker and Mt Cheam, sites of the ancient flood story sites like Golden Ears Mt and the mountain behind Yale.

Explain that copies of the interviews will go to Environment Canada, to Keith Carlson (as principal researcher), and to Stó:lō Nation archives. A copy will also be given to the interviewee (and of course they can make copies for members of their family). Should the interviewee ever want a second copy they can contact either Keith Carlson or the Stó:lō Nation Archives.

4) QUESTIONS: (Ask open-ended questions that will encourage the Elder to answer in full sentences, and will encourage them to begin talking freely about the topic. Allow the Elder to direct the conversation as much as possible, but be sure to bring them back to the issue if they wander away too far from the subject. Remember too, that this project is less concerned about the physical and medical threat of air pollution (that's the subject of a separate study) than upon the visual impact of smog and air pollution.)

a) Have you noticed air pollution in your territory?

b) Is air pollution worse at certain times of the year than others? If so, what times of year are the worst, and what times are less bad?

c) What, if any, landscape features (ie. mountains) are sometimes obscured from your view by smog?

d) Do you know any stories about these features?

ie. Transformer stories, flood stories, sxqoy:xwey stories...

e) Can you think of any impacts the inability to see some of these features due to smog has?

f) Does the smog have an impact on yours, or other people's, ability to share stories about these features?

ie. If an Elder can't see the mountains due to smog does this impact her/his ability to share the stories with younger people?

ie. If an Elder uses these stories to transmit knowledge, does the smog impact Elder's ability to share history or language information?

g) Elders have said that some of these mountains were once people who were transformed to stone. Some Elders have said that these mountains still contain the spirits of the people

who were transformed to stone. DO you think these spirits might be impacted by smog and air pollution?

le. Do these transformer sites need to see you?

le Do these transformer sites need fresh air to breathe?

h) Can you think of any other impacts that smog might have on your culture?

Appendix 2

Interview Transcripts / Summaries

Agnes (“Aggie) Charlie

Chehalis First Nation

Interviewed by Fern Gabriel

Tuesday, 8 October 2008

Born: 9 December 1936, Westbank

-originally from the Okanagan, Vernon

-father-in-law is Jimmy Charlie

-has noticed a lot of changes in the Chehalis area

-feels smog from Vancouver, esp. on certain days

-there is asthma now, which she hadn't noticed before

-the burning of waste timber up hill at Canfor or anywhere in the Valley brings smoke to Chehalis

-the smoke gets trapped in Chehalis like a little cloud over the reserve

-some days are better than others for how much smog there is

-there used to be a lot of hunting and fishing, but not as much anymore

-maybe this is because there's not as much now, but also because younger people not as interested in old foods and culture

-people have to travel farther and farther to hunt

-too many people are up in the mountains now and game is being scared away

-people who go up on weekends with their trucks and drive around and scare away the animals

-when they went hunting they used to just bring dried fish and got their fresh water up there from creeks, but now they pack a full lunch and water to take with them

-lack of game and fish has to do with the pollution in the water

-some years are better than others for hunting

-everything has changed for a new, more modernized generation of young people

- also changes in the interior for drying salmon
 - can't fish in certain lakes and creeks in the Okanagan now because they're too polluted
 - have to watch which creeks you drink water from in the mountains or you can get sick
 - when she was younger nobody worried about pollution when they fished
 - *people from Interior came south to get fish and people from the Valley went up for hunting
-
- most of the wild berries gone too (blueberries, salmon berries, wild strawberries)
 - almost everybody in Chehalis worked at Canfor logging company (for example all the Charlie boys)
 - logging has probably affected the wild berries because they have cut down too many trees
 - used to get big baskets of wild berries up the mountain
 - cutting down trees also affected wild animals and now they come down to the reserve (bears, cougars, bobcats) instead of staying in the mountains
 - as more animals come down to town people on the reserved don't feel safe anymore, but before game stayed in the bush
-
- the smog might be affecting animals because they can't breathe
 - the smog moves around and affects birds and animals
 - eagles don't stay up in the mountains anymore because there are no trees and more pollution
 - if smog and pollution bothers people it bothers the animals too

VIEWSCAPE RESEARCH PROJECT

Archie Charles

Seabird Reserve

Interviewed by: Tim peters

Friday, October 24, 2008

Born: 29 August 1922

- everything that moves now run by diesel and gas
- at one time wood burning was the only pollution
- at one time we didn't have electricity and gas.
- ships that used to go upriver as far as Yale used to burn wood for steam power
- now trees are knocked down and left to rot
- he says this is going against nature

- the orchard on Seabird used to be really good
- now there's something in the air that causes apples and fruit to rust on the trees
- he sees airplanes flying back and forth everyday and something is being dropped out of their motors that is ruining crops

- berry pastures would be burned each year to produce fresh crop the following year
- but now there's something in the ground so that weeks can't even grow

- used to run cattle and manure used for fertilizer
- when Seabird took over the farm here they asked people at the [UBC] farm in Aggasiz what they crushed into powder made things grow
- most of that [fertilizer] came from the prairies and there wasn't any close by
- it came from beyond the Rockies and they're still drilling over there

- the school is heated it with gas and that's wrong
- it's spreading pollution all over
- our houses are heated with gas
- need to find something else
- can't go back to using wood because pretty near used up
- we've followed the white man and felled all the trees down

-they told us the trees would all grow back in 25 years, but after we did it we figured it would take much longer than that, so there's something wrong there too

(Tim) -is air pollution worse certain times of year?

(Archie) -summer time is best because the air flows in every direction, but different today than tomorrow

-whatever is here is getting blown out of here

-whatever they produce in Vancouver pollutes air here in the valley, and no way of solving it

(Tim) -does smog block your view of mountains and such?

(Archie) -sometime you can barely see the school from here [just a few city blocks]

-can't drink the water today, you can't drink it

-have to go buy it when before you just went to the creek.

-still drinks from a creek running by his fish camp at Yale

-finds the taste of city water awful

(Tim) - does he have any flood and transformer stories

(Archie) -had two big floods here: one in '32, and another in '48

-had to go across the border to get away from the water

-dams have created issues

(Tim) -has smog affected ability to share stories with younger generations?

(Archie) -there was a transformer site above Yale, but they blew (dynamited) that off

-it was supposed to have been an old lady who was lost while gathering roots for basketry

-best guy to ask about that story would be Lawrence Hope at Yale (it's their story anyway)

-the culture is changing and you have to change too

-started with residential schools

-couldn't put up a [winter]dance or they'd shut it down

-the [winter] dancers used to use the song from thunder

-took years, but now starting to come back

-doesn't follow the dances anymore, but they bring people together and families get along better

-all busted up now

-supposed to be 28 bands in the valley, but only 8 left in the tribal council keeping it together

-the main guy who kept the group together has passed on

-now there's individuals trying to do their own thing

-about a month ago there was a winter dance at Sechelt, but it turned out to be a break up

-they [Sechelt] had taken a name that belonged to [Archie's] family and were trying to give that name to their children

-he imagines all our wild tea has been lost on account of the bad air

-railways are closing up channels (which they're not supposed to do)

-they're tearing up bridges and putting in pipes that ruin the water

-if you ruin the water then everything gets ruined

-used to be cranberries up at Yale, but gone

-was a way to paddle from here to Chehalis, but all dyked off

-change the water and atmosphere changes too

-everything goes with it.

VIEWSCAPE RESEARCH PROJECT

Carol Peters

Skam Reserve, Hope

Interviewed by: Tim Peters

Sunday, 5 April 2009

Born: 15 October 1959

(Tim) - explain about what you might know about air pollution in your territory

(Carol) -works in Chilliwack so every spring has to deal with the smell of cow manure
-in the summer time gets really hot and muggy, and air seems to get heavier
-a lot more trouble breathing
-some days just walking outside makes her feel sick
-if there's a forest fire, gets really smoky and stuffy and gets "really ugly" here
-just a lot of problems with allergies, things like that from things floating around in the air

(Tim) -what are the worst times of the year and what are less bad for air pollution

(Carol) -spring and summer [are worst]
-work on the highways [redoing the asphalt] makes reserve smelly, dusty and dirty
-other part of summer gets more smog and can really see it on the skyline, especially when you look towards Vancouver
-the place that everything gets funneled to, so feel it twice as hard

(Tim) -what landscape features might sometimes be obscured from your view by smog?

(Carol) -mountains!
-times when we can only see about half of the mountain
-a kind of grey cloud covers them
-sometimes we can't even see the river because it's just so murky

(Tim) -do you know any transformer, great flood stories that you'd be able to share?

(Carol) -just know the story about Xexá:ls and the battle at Harrison Lake
-know a little bit about the sxwó:yxwey story that originated here, around Kawkwa Lake, just up the Coquihalla River

-how this guy went into the lake and found the little people and was given the mask, and took three times trying to bring it up before they succeeded

-was brought to four different places, so there are four different areas where the mask supposed to have originated

-through the canyon can see the places where Xexá:ls was doing his work and where he transformed people

-transformed them into rock monuments

-scratches on the rocks where he sat [and left marks]

(Tim) -any impacts from the inability to see some of these features due to smog?

(Carol) -brings us to Mt. Cheam

-story of the mother and the sisters and the dog

-if we're talking to somebody about it, we can't really show them the features

-Mt. Cheam is quite high, so when there's a lot of smog can't see them

-can't go into the mountains when it murky and smoggy because hard to breathe without getting dizzy

-can't walk to the places used to be able to because everything is covered with roads and deadfall

-getting a lot trickier to get to places and to be able to actually see the sites

(Tim) -if an elder uses these stories to transmit knowledge, does the smog impact the elder's ability to share history?

(Carol) -so many people that learn visually and can't share if they can't see

-when wanting to tell a story or talk about a medicine, always makes a difference when can show the faces, show the animals, show the areas where wild strawberries grow or where mountain goats are, where the little wooly dogs used to reside

-so much more that you can do when able to just look up and show it right there, have it available and visual

-easier than explaining what is behind the clouds

-doesn't have the same effect as when everything's clear

(Tim) -Elders have said some of mountains were once people who were transformed

-some Elders have said that mountains still contain the spirit of those people who were transformed to stone

-how do you think these spirits might be impacted by smog and air pollution

(Carol) -along with the mountains is everything that resides on the mountains (trees, plants, animals)

-if you feel like you're being crushed or smothered [by the smog] then your spirit feels it as well

-it's like we're ripping the heart out of mother nature

-thinks that when things get really bad then the earth starts to crumble

-a fear a lot of us have: so much of what's been there is being destroyed

-smog, acid rain poisoning our whole environment

-we're killing our mountains, plants, animals with what's in the air, in the wind, in the rain, just stuck up there

(Tim) -any other impacts that smog might have on culture?

(Carol) -even though borrowed powwow dancing from the Prairies, it's a gathering where everyone can get together to share

-most of the powwows are outdoors, and when really smoggy, it causes a lot of problems with breathing

-Elders that can't handle it and can't be out there

-they get stuck indoors and can't go and can't share

-can't be there to guide and support their family members

-they can't tolerate all the smoke and the garbage that's in the air

-has a big impact because those people who are leaders, guides, healers can't physically handle what's out there

(Tim) -if Elders have trouble breathing, do you think transformer sites need to have fresh air to breathe?

(Carol) -thinks everything needs to be able to breathe

-there's life in every single thing (plants, trees, rocks, water, air) and need fresh air because it's the poisons that are in the air that destroy what's out there

-those chemicals can destroy the rock, the sites, the soul, the spirit that's around there

(Tim) -anything you'd like to add? any sort of topic?

- (Carol) -thinks really important to work towards keeping the land clean and clear
- for the people, but also so can have those sites, plants, trees, medicines, water, fish
 - everything works together; if one part of our world is not healthy then the rest of our world is going to suffer
 - need to do something about the air pollution or it's going to start breaking down everything else in our land
-
- going to lose out on a lot if don't start getting things in order
 - have to push for better air quality measures and have sacred lands protected
 - not going to happen by itself when there's of all this progress and consumerism
 - have to keep talking about it and working towards it
 - doing studies like this are good start.

Cheryl Gabriel

Kwantlen First Nation #6, McMillan Island, Fort Langley

Interviewed by: Fern Gabriel

Monday, 29 December 2008

Born: 22 August 1956

- had record winter weather this year
- had noticed more trees breaking than ever before
- snow was deeper in 1964 and they had to chop the ice to access water
- now there is more dirt on the ice out on river and there are pockets of black dirt
- there was no ferry this winter, so it was nicer to open the windows
- when cars running on the ferry the exhaust blows onto the reserve and can't leave windows open
- the waters have changed and channels are changing
- there is less water and more brown on land than green
- people on the reserve are luckier because they have more trees, especially compared to other developed areas with no fresh air

- people think so much about environment now because it's talked about so much on tv, advertisements, school, but we're still finding ways to destroy it than help it
- we're cutting down trees that clean the air when need trees to replenish earth and waterways (riparian zones)
- affecting livelihood (fishing)
- in April, 5-6 years ago would go looking for mushrooms
- when she was young she used to pick with grandparents because this was a tradition
- Natches family still trying to do it

- there was a big field out back cleared by grandparents
- there is a stream from the pipeline area there that has coho fries, but even though the fish are still trying to go up the stream, the stream does not connect with any other waterway anymore because it ends before it gets to the river
- there is nowhere the fish can go and so the fish population can't get replenished

- East Langley wharf parking is on the outside now

-they need to dredge now because the dirt is being built up and the dog salmon are getting blocked out because of development

-weather, water, everything is changing where habitat is supposed to go

-the air quality is different

-there are more and more people getting allergies and asthma

-car pollution is affecting the health of people on the reserve

-the air better at her Mom's because they don't have the carbon monoxide from the ferry traffic

-but people don't replant enough trees to take the place of the ones falling

-swamp lands are drying up so trees depending on water are falling

-used to go hunting with dad when young for deer and geese, but the pollution has changed how to get to the islands where they used to hunt

-waterway have changed and there are more sandbars, so it's dangerous for boats on the water

-there used to be companies that dredged to keep waterways clear, but because of environmental rules can't do that anymore, which leads to people hitting sandbars

-people used to use trees that were falling over for their wood fires in the homes

-people would walk the land and find where the trees are going to fall and clear them before they cause damage

-would take the trees and make some money, but was also environmentally helpful

-now nobody is allowed to take the falling trees, so when they fall they hit the healthy trees and more trees are lost

-health is also changing and some are not healthy enough to work

-this has to do with the environment

-people are always working in an inside environment

-the outside environment needs help, but nobody notices because they're always inside

-if people go out more then might notice more

-she misses being out on the water

-being outside helps people recognize and appreciate the environment

- there are oral tradition stories about people who had different positions in their community for taking care of different parts of the environment
- there were those who looked after how much fish could be used each year so there would be something for everyone
- this was the same with hunting
- took care of the land and water
- now there is a lot of garbage in the water, even old boats
- in the past, instead of just throwing everything into a waste dump people used to compost
- in the old ways they used to replenish the environment, like using fish bones for fertilizing trees, and so on

- maybe could find some traditional stories that would teach ways to help the environment now
- make sure Stó:lō are strong enough and have strong minds to look after the land

(Fern) -Elder Herb Joe talked about how the trees are supposed to replenish the air, but are struggling themselves

(Cheryl) -believes that's true

- more and more trees are dying, especially those that need more water
- as trees die there is less oxygen
- special people who take care of plants say that the most important plants for you are those closest to your home , for example berries
- need these plants as well as trees

- it's hard to measure how much pollution comes from the ferries, but people notice because they're breathing it
- as more big trees are lost, the little trees are having to do more work of converting pollution into oxygen and they're not enough to get rid of all that pollution
- believes that all the trees that fell in Stanley Park was because those trees got sick from too much carbon monoxide and they were starving for oxygen
- all the buildings around Stanley Park are getting taller and taller because everyone is trying to get a view of the water, as if people are all starving for a view of the water

-Katzie reserve is also going to suffer because the new big bridge being built there is too close to the reserve

-their trees are going to deteriorate too because of all the pollution from the cars

-May/June-September is worst;

-the air makes chest tight and hard to breathe, and people get more tired (asthma)

-the air is clearer on the river, but it's still hard on the hottest days even on the river because there's no air movement

-the water in the river is also warmer

(Fern) -she was at a UBC meeting with "Gateway"

-there were engineers, First Nations, environmentalists

-Fern made the comment that after a bridge is built the engineers and private corporations can go back to their nice homes, but on the reserve a grandparent will look at that bridge and ask how they can teach their grandchild to fish and live off the land, because their fishing spot will be gone

-his is the difference between working the environment in the non-Native society vs First Nations culture and traditions.

VIEWSCAPE RESEARCH PROJECT

Cyril Pierre

Barnston Island, Katzie IR3

Interviewed by: Fern Gabriel

Monday, 17 November 2008

Born 28 December 1947

Son of Francis and Minnie Pierre

- environmental impacts on all parts of Katzie territory
- smog and other forms of pollution severely impact all the Katzie reserves

- family was water skiing on Pitt Lake but toward evening level of smog rolls in
- not fog, but like a film that lowers itself over lake
- drops like a blanket and settles onto all of them as they sleep
- what does this do to the water, plants and forests?

- government ignores Katzie when they enquire about impact of pollution on people's health
- need to extend lives of Elders and make them comfortable
- whole breathing system being impacted by pollution
- invisible chemicals.

- new bridge not going to be good
- in near future legal system will start to tend to problems of environment.
- strong presentations need to be made to governments about pollution

- stories told to him by brothers and Dad
- grandfather Peter Pierre passed away before Cyril's time
- heard stories about his grandfather, who was a determined man
- checked the health of streams and air in territory
- would take him 14 days to walk around the Katzie territory, including going to top of Golden Ears and looking around. Just to see if his land was ok. "This is my land and I need to make sure it's ok for my people."
- you need to go around and look at your territory.
- with smog today Old Pierre wouldn't be able to see territory from the top of Golden Ears

-harder to breathe up there

-smog worse when hot in the summertime, but there all year

-can see it better in the summer

(Fern) Does smog affect spirits as well?

(Cyril) -spirits know what's happening to their land

-spirits come from the mountains and to longhouse to help the Indian dancers

-Simon Pierre brother of Cyril's Dad

-Uncle Simon was gifted with strong tongue and educated ear, and could understand many languages, was translator and great speaker, but not as spiritual as his father Peter Pierre

-Simon Pierre sent to England to be speaker of the Indian people

-made a speech to the Queen and somewhere a document with that speech exists

-when Cyril needs to speak in public he tries to be like uncle Simon.

VIEWSCAPE RESEARCH PROJECT

Dalton Silver

Sumas Reserve

Interviewed by: Fern Gabriel

Tuesday, 30 September 2008

Born Feb 6, 1960

(Fern) What are effects of smog on your ability to see features?

(Dalton) -can see Sumas from Mt. Baker most of the time

-that mountain known as Kullshan and is very sacred place

-stories of Lhiheqey (Mt. Cheam) and how Kulsha used to be beside her

-she moved over to where she is today with her dog and children

-she watches over the people and the salmon

-when telling stories can't always see the peaks and features of the mountains because of the haze

-flood story goes with Sumas Mountain

-may be difficult for people in neighbouring tribes (ie. Kwantlen) to see mountain

-wonder what's in air when can see haze

-have high rates of respiratory problems (asthma)

-never used to be a problem, but today many people with inhalers and puffers

(Fern) Does smog and haze affect the spiritual part of these mountain entities? Does the smog affect them and how they oversee us?

(Dalton) -has more of an effect on people than on mountain spirits

-doesn't think would affect mountain spirits the way it effects people

(Fern) Lhiheqey has to watch over people and salmon. Does smog impact her ability to do this?

(Dalton) -hard to answer, but thinks has an effect

-Lhihelqey watching how Stó:lō interact with the salmon as a resource

-need to ask if have done a good job when look at state of the fishery

-as Xwelmxw people, I don't think we've done a really good job

-face problems from DFO and non-Natives, but doesn't think have done the best job could

-story about Kullshan (Mt. Baker):

-Sumas people used to face Kullshan and say prayers

-Chief Richie Malloway told me this, and he learned this from a Sumas leader

-Kullshan will get angry if people do not treat land, water, air, and wildlife with respect

-Kullshan always covered in glacier

-all four elements (earth, air, fire, water) come off Kullshan

-smoke and air can sometimes see coming out of volcano

-glaciers melt to give water to wildlife

-fire from its eruptions

-if all elements not respected Kullshan will get angry and erupt again

(Fern) -few years ago was fishing and could see Mt. Baker from where she was

-in one year most of glacier had melted away; never seen that before

Can you tell me something about what you've learned about global warming?

(Dalton) -hard to imagine that one day maybe all snows will melt; will be disastrous

-creeks dry up and will be like a desert

-water needed year round

-bottles of water all around; we pay more for bottles of water than for gas

-have water in mountains, but something wrong with bottling it up and selling it

-guilty of buying bottled water too

-if glaciers melt Stó:lō would need to look for different way of surviving

(Fern) Does smog effect people's ability to transmit knowledge?

(Dalton) -Yes

-pretty hard to look around on smoggy day and try to point out features

-wouldn't even be able to see Kullshan or Lhiheqey

-definitely an effect.

(Fern) Do you know anything about Golden Ears mountain?

(Dalton) -has heard is vegetation and incredible wildlife that scientists wouldn't believe are there (behind Pitt Lake and in region)

-around a small lake brother has seen some small plants that look like Venus flytraps

-others have described animals that don't exist in any books

-Katie Elders might have more stories about this

-wants to go back there sometime

(Fern) Do you notice certain times of year when smog has a greater impact?

(Dalton) -mostly in summer when hot

-when a really bad day can actually feel it in throat

-goes into mountains as much as he can when he gets free time

-notices air quality is different up in the mountains

-allergies and asthma are in our communities in a way they never were before

-kids can't enjoy the sweet smells in spring because of the bad air quality

(Fern) Can you think of other impacts of smog on culture? Are there stories you learned when you were young that may have changed because of pollution?

(Daton) -grandfather showed him around Sumas territory

-border to north of territory for hunting goes as far as the eye can see

-today that territory might be smaller because can't see as far with the pollution

-a lot more to the Mt. Baker and Cheam story

-see Sonny McHalsie who has more of story; some of it has been written down I - has a book great-grandfather's that talks about flood story

-great-grandfather told him more to the story than has been written down

-was lucky to have had grandfather around to talk to him as he grew up

-was being groomed to be a chief one day; didn't believe it, but now he is

-used to be a photographer for old Stó:lō News

Sonny McHalsie once told me "knowledge is nothing if you don't share it."

Dave Schaepe Viewscapes 2009 (Unformatted)

Interviewed by Keith Carlson

April 9, 2009

Keith Carlson: So as you're aware, this is a project that's with Environment Canada and they've been working on the larger Puget Sound, Georgia Basin environmental issues regarding Canada-U.S. treaties for some time and I guess Canada's quite far behind the U.S. in terms of living up to some of those obligations. So over the past few years they've been trying to get local input into issues around air and water quality so I guess part of that was some of the studies that they did with you on wind-drying and that kind of stuff.

Dave Schaepe: Right.

KC: And so I think they feel they've got a fairly good handle on the actual physical, biological, chemical threats that the air pollution poses. What they're curious about is, are there certain cultural concerns about air pollution and smog in particular that would stem from visibility issues so you know that the typical non-Native living in the suburb in the Lower Mainland or Fraser Valley sees the smog and doesn't like it so they're aware of that obviously but they're wondering, do Aboriginal people have certain concerns about their ability to see things because of smog that might not be captured in the general public?

DS: Right, right.

KC: So with that – that's what the project's been about. Tim Peters has been interviewing people in the Upper Valley area and Fern Gabriel in the Central and Lower Valley and one of the people that I asked him to interview was you but Tim didn't quite come through with all the interviews so that's the purpose of today's phone call, kind of filling some holes there. So do you have any thoughts on that? I mean, I guess anything that you've heard people in the communities talk about and/or anything that you as a scholar and a manager of the Stó:lō office would have put together through your own sort of analysis and making connections?

DS: Yeah, I think that...I would draw from work we've done over the past few years, way back to 2003 where we asked questions about Stó:lō cultural relationships with air, water and are there specific cultural relationships, are there cultural relationships specific to the Stó:lō around air and water that aren't shared by the broader population and would those relationships be affected by pollution and if so, how? And that came from...concerns about...what was at that time a potential power plant...that was proposed...Sumas, Washington.

KC: Right, yes. SE2, right?

DS: SE2 project, exactly. And that was going to potentially pump all kinds of pollutants into the air and there was quite a...concern about that...a lot of time and study directed to that project and...and I think...the more biological work that we did, biologically-founded work that we did and looking at air quality, measuring air quality and looking at the effect of – potential effects of pollutants on wind drying salmon and one of those sort of specific cultural features of the Stó:lō that relates directly to air and is affected by air quality.

KC: Right, yeah.

DS: And that's...available...from the biological grounds in a sense. So that showed that there are pollutants in the – moving through the area, there's a huge amount of air pollution coming out of Vancouver and the way air currents work here and the way...cultural foundation...wind currents moves pollutants up the valley, they kind of back up the Central Fraser Valley but they're also making their way all the way through the lower Fraser Canyon above Yale and that's measurable now and has an impact on the wind-drying and measurable differences in the level of pollutants accumulating on wind-drying salmon, the week or so that they're on the rack.

KC: Yeah, yeah.

DS: But even that, what's carrying the pollutants in that case is – the point is the way the wind is – the wind patterns are influenced by a rock formation around Ruby Creek. Xals transformed people who are blowing, who are actually moving the wind, the air through that area at that point.

KC: Okay.

DS: They're blowing air and actually there's a series of blowing men, I don't know their names.

KC: Okay.

DS: They're all factors of transformation, from bringing back...origins of the present world...

KC: Yup.

DS: That can actually move the air through that section of the valley and it's really, really windy between there and Hope so I guess...pollutants are having an impact on air pockets moving what would ideally be clean air.

KC: Yeah.

DS: The addition of pollutants to these cultural foundations from the air patterns is –

KS: Yeah.

DS: Blowing it up in from the canyon...

KC: Right.

DS: So it's a negative impact on that cultural – natural plus cultural system of air patterns within that system, the air shed, which is ...cultural foundation.

KC: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So I don't think I know any of those stories. Which are the blowing men?

DS: You know the one where the, right by Ruby Creek and it's the home of [...] it's where – I can't remember his name, one of the prophets went up there...vision, prophecy...

KC: Okay, yeah.

DS: You know, it's right between [...] and [...].

KC: Yeah.

DS: Right so there's a big rock bluff that comes right down to the highway, route seven...

KC: Yup.

DS: And if you're heading west, it's great, if you're heading west on route seven from [...] to Ruby Creek, you'll see this profile of a big stone man and it's very, very clear, he's got pursed lips and his nose and he looks like he's blowing. It's really interesting.

KC: Oh, okay.

DS: When you see it, it's just suddenly it's there, you'll see it forever after that...before that point along the highway...a huge blowing man behind and how to use the caution, strong cross wind signs along the road there, it's just great...that wind is coming from that huge blowing man right behind them.

KC: Yeah, yeah, okay.

DS: [...]

KC: Is that story recorded somewhere that I can go see in any of the publications or ethnographies or is it one that you don't know –

DS: It's in...plate in the Atlas.

KC: Okay.

DS: ...stories associated with it and I'm not sure, don't know one that's recorded, I mean that would be...in terms of it's that man and having brothers on both sides of the valley.

KC: Okay.

DS: ...they were transformed and breathing wind. We don't know their names...

KC: Okay, sure.

DS: The name of the mountain, I mean, the name, the place name we have refers to the home of [...].

KC: Oh, okay.

DS: Which is also in the same location.

KC: Yeah, yeah. That's interesting. So you have all three of these interesting stories converging, the blowing man, the prophet story and the home of [...] all in one sort of highly –

DS: Yeah.

KC: - highly...yeah, yeah. Neat.

DS: Yeah. So there's that point, which then leads into another cultural relationship with air that people talk about and sort of the life force. So health is a factor of [...] My understanding of health... understanding about health as a factor of mental, physical, emotional and spiritual –

KC: Yeah.

DS: - elements of people, plus [...] is another – is a fifth factor of health and [...] is, as you're aware of, a form of spirit that connect all things, all people, things, including air.

KC: Yeah, yeah.

DS: Including water, so everything, all elements have [...].

KC: Yup.

DS: And that's where we, in the profession, which we – people ask that question, what is [...], is there [...] of air? Is there [...] of water and consistently Joe Aleck and Gwen Point and many, many people, we've heard a number of people we talked to certainly said, yes, there is, there is [...] Sonny and so on...it can be impacted by the addition of pollutants into the air or water, yes it can. So what happens is the result of that? Well, it weakens [...] as the life force and do you have that final study, the SE2 Report?

KC: Ana photocopied some pieces of it for me but I don't have the entire thing. Is there a digital version anywhere that I can –

DS: Yeah, I can send you a pdf because there's lots of good interview information in there...

KC: Thank you, yeah.

DS: I'll send it to you. I've been looking at one from Joe Aleck where he said, you know...relationship between air and water – the water quality is being affected by pollution and if we don't make the right choices and do the right things in a good way – he's referring to the...foundations we have here, proper behaviour.

KC: Yeah.

DS: All of us will be affected in our lives and our [...] so it's [...] very important for the health of our water and even our air.

KC: Yeah.

DS: When you think of maintaining...can get into it and all these forces around here that affect air quality, it affects [...] and when it affects [...]...elements of human health.

KC: Yeah.

DS: That's integrated and starts to disintegrate and the important parts in Stó:lō...integrated so if you start to disintegrate those elements, you become sick.

KC: Yeah.

DS: You become mentally sick, emotionally, you know, spiritually sick, any number of factors, biologically sick and I think, again, spiritual sickness is a pretty particular affect on Stó:lō – cultural effect, cultural factor of air, air pollutants, that's not taken into consideration by other people in the region and Stó:lō neighbours.

KC: Yeah.

DS: The other thing is, and this particular understanding of health...relationships is quite uniquely Stó:lō I think.

KC: Yeah.

DS: And air, the [...] of air – the [...] is a factor of all things, being affected by reduction in air quality is certainly a significant concern as a health factor...the level of pollutants that are affecting the relationship in the Valley.

KC: Yeah, yeah.

DS: So, I guess there's that and then the second major point...

KC: Yeah.

DS: [...] issue.

KC: Yeah.

DS: Another thing would be...uniquely Stó:lō but it would be part of a cultural dynamic...understanding of relationships, the natural, biological, physical relationships between things, very holistic in the sense of – there's not a clear separation between air and water.

KC: Okay.

DS: Or ground. You know, air and water are two things that, when people mentioned over and over again was that, what's in the air moves into the water, what's in the water moves into the air...very close relationship so that as stuff is brought into the air, it's going to end up in the mountains, in the snow, in the berry patches, it's going to work its way down through the streams, the watershed, sneak into the rivers, right?

KC: Yeah, yeah.

DS: So it's not just air that's the issue in terms of air quality or smog. It's – smog becomes a factor of, director of pollutants as well and that comes back into the waterways.

KC: Yeah, yeah.

DS: It's really quite pervasive in terms of its affect on the landscape as a whole, in terms of water, land and air and recognizing those relationships is a very, very systemic sort of ecosystem.

KC: Yeah, yeah. In fact, that's very much what Cyril Pierre down in Katzie said in his interview was just that thing – the connection between the air and the water, how you can't separate them that way.

DS: Yeah and that comes without – said over and over again in these interviews, especially on the SE2 project.

KC: Okay.

DS: ...as well as, it seems like there's no...taking care of our air and water, by taking care of the air and water, we're taking care of human beings.

KC: Yeah.

DS: It's a very close connection between the...separation between air and water as a factor of the elements...individuals and people, if we let our...responsible for maintaining cultural teachings...all of that starts to disintegrate...a very broad sense of, or scale of, the potential impact on Stó:lō culture.

KC: Yeah.

DS: People are sick so then that's going to affect...culture, education and so on...

KC: Yeah, yeah.

DS: We have a route to overall health.

KC: Yeah, yeah.

DS: And cultural well-being. What else? What else? Let's see – it's kind of – the visual aspect of it as well, I think it...some of these cultural landscape features as a fourth point. The smog is an addition as a non-natural...and that's the difference. Smog is a...barrier to seeing significant points in the landscape that...Stó:lō people to...and situate themselves within a cultural landscape.

KC: Yeah.

DS: Factor in identity...smog is visibly, you know, comes up visibly as blocking that view.

KC: Yeah, yeah.

DS: ...places like Mt. Cheam. A lot of the big – a lot of the major transformations are sort of large-scale cultural features that can be seen as they move up and down the valley, basically from Sumas Mountain up to...

KC: Right. Yeah.

DS: And it may be an expectation that some parts of the area can't see some of those peaks because obviously this place is rainy and cloudy –

KC: Yeah.

DS: - naturally but I think it's disturbing when it's not a rainy, cloudy day, it's a bright, sunny, dry, summery day when you see - these peaks should be gleaming with snow caps and very, very ...at that time of year and they're not because the whole place is grey and blanketed with this cloud of smog –

KC: Yeah.

DS: It's really disconcerting and I think it triggers...sense of panic, almost, when, you know, you gauge the level of your air quality by – not by a lack of but by its impact on your visual landscapes.

KC: Yeah.

DS: And it becomes really apparent at those times – at certain times of the year, especially dry weather, it's impossible to see...can't see the other side of the valley...

KC: Yeah.

DS: It's bad news and I think it's triggered that sign of this is bad news and if it were a flat plain, you wouldn't have the same sense of this horrific kind of air quality conditions...you wouldn't have those mountains near-by to gage...

KC: Yeah, that's right, yeah.

DS: It's a factor of visual contact.

KC: Yeah, so it's really a valley-people feature, right? If you're right on the coast, it's probably not – because it's blowing inland so –

DS: Exactly.

KC: Yeah, yeah.

DS: Yeah, and the smog is different – it's not the same as, it doesn't look the same as clouds.

KC: Yeah.

DS: It's a rainy day –

KC: Yeah, it's more like a screen than a block, right, it just gets...

DS: Yeah, it's sort of a ...has a different look, a different colour...

KC: Yeah. Yeah.

DS: So, I think those four points are what I can contribute.

KC: Yeah, that's excellent and some of these resonate really clearly with things that have come up in interviews already and some of them you placed in a nice situation too that's distinct from that I can pull some more out of so this is really helpful. I appreciate that.

DS: Great.

KC: I'll – it's probably easier, if you don't mind, just filling out a consent form there.

DS: Sure.

KC: And then, you know, faxing or emailing it to me and then I can sign it as the witness or whatever here but if you do it on your side and then there is an honorarium that goes too, to anybody who participated so I can get a cheque for you and send it off.

DS: ...we'll put that in the language fund, we're creating a language fund for [...]

KC: Oh, fantastic. Okay.

DS: Yeah, it's a [...] Halkomelem Language Education Fund.

KC: Oh, fantastic.

DS: It's part of the Stó:lō heritage...

KC: Yup, yup. Oh, that's a great –

DS: So that'll go in there as a contribution.

KC: Okay, that's a great initiative, thanks Dave. I really appreciate this. If I have any questions I might give you a call back 'cause I'm working through my notes so –

DS: No problem. And I'll send you a copy of the pdf...

KC: Yeah.

DS: It's really, really interesting.

KC: Yeah.

DS: ...asking people...what is...what is Halkomelem? What are these things, you know? And there's some really great commentary in some of the interviews here...in this report, it includes huge parts of texts from the interviews.

KC: Sure, yeah.

DS: ...you might find it interesting...

KC: I'm looking forward to it, thank you. Yeah.

DS: Okay, no problem. I've gotta run.

KC: Yeah, good luck on your meeting for the fundraising, yeah.

DS: You bet. I'll let you know what happens after that...

KC: Sure. And I'll get that letter together for you for support.

DS: Great. Thanks, Keith.

KC: Okay, thank you.

DS: Okay, bye.

Farley Patrick Antoine (Unformatted)
Kwantlen First Nation and Chehalis First Nation
Wed December 17th 2008
Interviewer: Fern Gabrielle.

Viewscape Research Project

Farley Patrick Antoine

Fathers side from Chehalis

Sept 29, 1951 Mission

Mother is Kwantlen. Filardeau family, from HBC. George Filardeau.

Father is Johnny Leon from Chehalis.

Gave me name Likatum – from big island on Harrison lake. Likatum's family buried there.

Raised in Chehalis before coming back to Kwantlen.

Oldest Son Brandon, Natasha, and Tony Gabriel. Two other daughters from former marriage.

Live in Hope and ??

Glad to be sitting here talking to you. I've never done an interview in this magnitude before. I know there is a lot of stuff that will be discussed, and I hope I can give you what you are looking for. I hope a good balance of learning. I hope the project goes well for everyone involved.

Thank you for including me.

Q Do you notice smog and pollution?

In summer it is becoming more and more smog. Notice it in Abbotsford. We here in Kwantlen get wind from all directions. We are central to Fraser Valley. I notice when I have to use puffers and when I don't. And it is more and more of an issue with youth and Elders. Even in the longhouses/big houses.

Q Do you notice smog and pollution obscuring mountains?

Fishing on Fraser River for over 30 years. Used to fish at 7:00am on a clear day and I could see outlines of everything. Now, over the last 10 years you can barely see mountains. Even Golden Ears, which is close.

Even water. We used to even be able to drink Fraser River water.

Q do you have stories that your father may have shared about mountains, or culture that may now be effected by smog and pollution

He used to talk of how people used to go not only up the Fraser Canyon to wind dry salmon, but also to a site up the Pitt River. That changed over the years because the wind currents were not as hot and warm as they were supposed to be. Things changed.

Chehalis people used to come over range to the Stave to wind dry too. Now they have to go up to Boston Bar.

People have to travel great distances now to access clean food resources.

Newcomers have destroyed the resources. It's hard to find hunting territories now that are good.

We have strong family structures. Emphasis on sharing. Today, we are told we are breaking laws when we try to take care of family. Hard to survive on our own land. We need to get our documents in order so we can get our own forestry. This is close at hand in some cases.

We're always told that all First Nations People are all environmental people. You hear it from Dr. Suzuki. You hear it from other people who talk on environmental issues: if you want to anything about the land you go and talk to First Nations people. They know about their land and people and history and culture and how we're supposed to be living. And so these people are happening to our people. We have to learn to change and adapt, but at the same time get ready for the next three generations.

Salmon were so huge in the past. Now we have to change our ways because salmon runs have disappeared and changed. Very few species are surviving now, and many are being done through hatcheries.

We need to change our whole way of living to get our old ways back. We need to say, from now on we are only going to eat first nations food. I've seen some people in Chehalis who have said

no to store bought food. They want to get back to being healthy. Stop diseases, stop diabetes. We're having a real struggle with getting this.

We used to have our own Indian justice system. We know how much of the resources we could take. (ref to Chief Seattle). Our family structures are changing. Younger people are raising children now. It's hard for us to teach them the old ways. They've never been through it. The new generation.

Everything we do effects the environment. We need to make sure that we have five year plan. Say enough is enough. We need to watch that watershed, etc.... So these issues you bring up are very serious. Some of our Elders look back and can pass down stories of the old days. They know that when children listen to them they will pass these stories down.

I remember David Suzuki saying to his son that he was part of the Sun Derby. But one year the Sun Derby ended because the big salmon were gone. So Suzuki took responsibility for this. He was part of the humans that erased the salmon run.

Fish hatcheries are changing us. Tributaries are disappearing because of new housing developments. Remembers father putting away salmon, deer and other meat for winter. You don't see this much anymore. Sad. But I know we can still do this. But here we can't shoot a gun to hunt or else the cops will come. So we have to go far away. And if we are not careful we'll need to go far away to get our salmon too.

Salmon fishery is not like it used to be.

We are doing great things with our language programmes, but we need to go outside each day to be part of environment. I hope I'm answering your question.

Stó:lō Nation is working harder. But the federal prov policies are hard to change. We need good negotiators on both sides of the table. Hard to get.

Q: Do you notice smog and pollution are worse in certain times of year?

Late June, July, and August. When the heat. That when you see the smog. Winters are warmer now. We don't get five feet of snow anymore. June-August time is when air quality is very very bad. That time of year everyone is on the freeways, airplane travel, you can taste the bleach in the water because water levels are low.

We have to be careful not to overstrain the Elders. But during those months the puffers come out because air is bad.

Certain time of the year when people say we should plant more trees. We didn't used to have to worry about this. When they have housing developments they say they will plant trees but they don't. I remember sitting with environmental people, including David Suzuki: There is a point when the trees giving off oxygen reaches a certain level they switch and give off CO2 instead of oxygen. Studies in the forest sectors now. We are truly the environmental people.

If you listen to the stories of the Elders you pretty much know what has to be done.

The teachings we get from our teachers. Diversity we need to live in. Hard to stay on track because we need to feed families. But when you get to take a rest you notice that trees are not as bright as they used to. Not as many animals and they are smaller. When they suffer, that's part of us suffering too. Our nations have to recognize the importance of life must come first. We have to always remember that the next millennium is in care of great grandchildren. They need to know what is right and wrong. We need our own FN people in government , and policies. We need to become our own bosses in our own territories. Need strong leadership and Chiefs. Need people to stand behind Chiefs.

When we learn our language we learn how to take care of our culture and land.

Thank you for allowing me to be here.

Herb Joe (Tixwelatsa) (Unformatted)

Tzeachten First Nation

Monday, 22 September 2008

Born: 23 January 1944

Significant smog in upper valley.

Yes, it affects health. Particularly those who don't have strong immune system. Asthma problem for him enhanced by smog. Gotten worse over past five years. Three grandchildren have severe or significant asthma caused by smog.

Remembers an old story. A grandfather and grandson from Cheam. On nice day took walk. Walked up mtn side. Very early in morning. Stopped mid-day for lunch. Sat facing valley. Young man noticed something. What are those black things moving in river? Old man smiled – grandson, that is your legacy. That is what is being left to you. Those black spots are schools of salmon moving up river to spawn.

This story tells a number of things. You could see from the mountains in those days to see into the river's water. Air and water were cleaner.

Today if you walked up mountain and at noon stopped to look at valley you would see mountains across valley above the smog, but you couldn't see the valley floor or river clearly.

Pollution in river is killing sturgeon. Cancerous sores on bodies today. Three or four years ago a number of large sturgeon found dead on bank of river. Killed by pollution.

All the backwaters that were once the travel routes of tribes (sloughs and back waters) are no longer usable because of dyking and highways. Natural flow ended. Now water stagnant and filthy. He wouldn't allow dog to bath in them, let alone his children and grandchildren. As a child he swam in lucka kuck creek. Caught trout there. Now not enough water to swim or fish. Used to be a big stink in school when salmon spawned in Luckakuck creek. Now a subdivision.

No water running through. Historically people preferred the sloughs and backwaters for canoe travel, not main river. Today, that would be impossible.

People need to respect the river – an old lady. If you don't respect her, she will take you. Herb has lost hundreds of relatives to the river over the lifetime of his family. Even in his lifetime he has seen many die in river; the Fraser does not always give them back if they are disrespecting the river.

River is a little more angry now than it was years ago. The river gives life.

Story of him being asked to fetch the galvanized bathtub and pots and pans. That night they took them down to the Fraser River and saw the whole sandbar covered in oolichan. We had a ball running up and down catching oolichans. The good healthy relationship with the river has been broken and she doesn't provide the oolichan anymore.

Industry, machines are part of the contemporary world, but creates the unhealthy world we live in with its pollution.

Need the trees to keep environment healthy. Instead, the remaining trees struggle for survival.

Wonders what will happen to us. What will happen to our people?

Ray Silver, Xayteluk, carries great knowledge. It's good that you interviewed him. He must have told you similar things to what I'm telling you.

Tixwelatsa stone story. Not directly impacted by pollution. But indirectly it would, because it's about taking care of people. A long and convoluted story. Story belongs to his family, and all of Stó:lō people. A time when things were not in balance and harmony. Discord existed. Chichel Siya:m saw that the world wasn't in balance and as a benevolent Creator he would try to make it better. So he took three bears who had special gifts. He transformed them into one human being called Xe:Xa:ls or Xa:ls in singular form. He had task to walk through land and make it right. Things not in balance and harmony were to be changed. He made a number of journeys through our land. One day he walked through Chilliwack river valley. There he came across a village with a man and woman who were fighting. He intervened to get them to resolve their

conflict. But the man got upset with Xa:ls for interrupting. Started a confrontation with Xa:ls. People had learned to resolve conflict without physical force. So they had a contest. A transformation contest. Xa:ls tried to turn him into salmon – unsuccessful. Tixwelatsa tried to turn Xa:ls into a root or twig – unsuccessful. Xals tried to turn Tixwelatsa into a mink – unsuccessful. Back and forth they went, until Xa:ls had had enough and turned Tixwelatsa into stone. Instructed wife to put stone Tixwelatsa beside door of house to remind others to live together in a good way. Responsibility for looking after stone Tixwelatsa still rests with women. Grammas tell people what to do with Tixwelatsa. In about 1890 a war almost broke out between Chilliwack and Sumas. To prevent death they had a gathering. Decided to have a marriage between tribes to make tribes brothers and sisters. Woman chosen was the one from Chilliwack with responsibility to look after Tixwelatsa stone. She took statue with her as part of dowry. Settled in village a SW side of Sumas Lake. About that time Louie Sam was lynched. Later they tried to Lynch Jimmie Pool, one of leaders of Sumas. People got scared and moved to main village, but couldn't carry the 800 lb Tixwelatsa right away. Then Ward brother farmers came upon statue. Thought it was abandoned. So took it and sold it. Ended up in the Burke Museum; 1991 discovered in catalogue by Gordon Mohs. Was told by Nancy Philips and other Elders that he should bring Tixwelatsa home. Dave Schaepe helped to repatriate the statue. People understanding the significance of ancestors; statue now housed in Chilliwack Museum. Stone Tixwelatsa has even been to conferences and has been teaching; been to MOA (UBC Museum of Anthropology); currently in the Chilliwack gallery; moving to youth healing centre in Chilliwack River Valley (close to the site where he was originally transformed) – will stay there permanently and will continue with his job as this is transformed into a family healing centre.

There are ladies who carry the female version of the name; teachings and responsibilities that go with the name continue. Historical teachings coming back stronger and being used more and more so that people can understand who they are by learning who they were.

Steven Point says that the constitution of the Stó:lō is written in stone in all of the transformer sites. Teachings are in stone so that will be remembered forever. All interconnected and interrelated. Can't take any one story separately from any other. All the stories together to make up the constitution.

Pollution has to do with the historic land. People part of that world. World is no longer healthy and pollution, smog is impacting people, so people no longer living the way they used to.

Elder from Sumas (Albert Kelly or Hughie Kelly?) tells story of when Sumas community in distress (series of suicides and suicide pacts that young teenagers had made). Parents and relatives got so scared got in touch with the Indian Health Programs and as many programmes as they could get – came across suicide prevention and awareness. Created a programme for the community. People had to be taught over and over again through workshops. Elders were asked why young people were committing suicide in the community; Elders said that when Sumas Lake was drained, the heart of the people was drained away too. The youth have no future because they have no past to connect to, and people are lost. Still being impacted by it today. Such a negative way of thinking in the past generations; humour was very dark and people didn't laugh unless we shooting barbs against each other. Was not funny, but was hurtful. People learned to laugh even at the darkest of things in order to survive. Even nicknames were negative. Things are changing now and learning to heal the pain of the past. Negative impacts of contemporary societies on the people. Lake had provided a lifeline for the people since the beginning of time: trained warriors on the lake; lake provided food and maintenance; trained their hunters and fishers on the lake in so many ways. Story is painful to a lot of people.

Changed the environment for the Sumas people; ecological, emotional, psychological, physical and cultural effects on the people almost resulted in the loss of the whole Sumas tribe over that draining because the spiritual strength was drained with the lake.

Medical impacts are not just on the First Nations people, but for the whole upper Valley. Even have medical alerts for when the smog is particularly bad so that people with respiratory problems can't go out. Usually worse in the summer time with the Western breezes off the ocean blow into the Valley. Mountains act like funnel and smog concentrates and packs into Chilliwack, Hope, Yale. From the top of the mountains smog looks like a thick brown blanket. A horrible condition in the summer for all the people in the valley. Also impacts all living things and beings in the valley whether we see them or not. All of the animals part of the ecosystem and the atmosphere are being negatively impacted.

Joe Aleck (Alexander Joseph Aleck) (Unformatted)

(Siamalalexw - Mother gave him Great-Grandfather's name; Great-Grandmother gave him pet name Chu'i've)

Cheam First Nation

Thursday, 13 November 2008

Born: 24 December 1931 (registered as 2 December 1931 in Census) in Cheam

-Great-Grandmother, Lucy helped raise him

-clouds would cover Mt. Cheam like a hat and people would know that it was raining up there — now it rains all the time and the top of the mountain is always cloudy

-weather blows off the Pacific Ocean up to the Valley and gets stuck in upper Valley and Cheam until wind blows hard to blow it away or it rains

-the smog from cars, trains looks like smoke and getting worse

-heard there are 119 pollutants in the Fraser River (from sawmills, farms, and so on); “fish don't survive in sewers”

-many sacred sites in territory (transformation rocks) are being affected and destroyed by pollution

-on Cheam reserve itself the landfill is not healthy even though are making revenue from it; sacrificing people's health

-tells stories about Mt. Cheam that people can see as well as hear so that can visualize what story is about; hard to show people when the parts of the mountains can't be seen

(Fern)-could Mt. Baker get angry or upset because of pollution and can't breathe just like people?

-believes that Mt. Baker (the *siam* and leader of his family -- Mt. Rainier, Mt. Cheam -- and the Stó:lō) has extended families; could Mt. St. Helen's as part of the line of his family have been upset because of the environment, land, people and did what she had to do; upset a lot of people; like a warning that need to take care of land

-big slide in valley 1,000 or so years ago may have been a result or warning of something that wasn't right

-smog worse in late-Spring, summer and early-Fall; Valley and Vancouver seem always covered in smog; direction of the wind blows the smog up the valley; worse too if there are forest fires and smoke makes things even worse

-had more snow in the past, but pollution making snow disappear and now are getting more rain – places are flooding from the warmer weather, rain, the way people build, not taking care of the environment –development is more important than taking care of the land

-transformations happened because people weren't taking care of the people and the land

-hard to find some game (pheasants, ducks) because of pollution that is getting put into the ground or being spilled into the river, but also because there are so many people taking over their land

-animals are disappearing because of crowding and pollution, and once the animals are gone then the people will be next

Mel Bailey – Viewscape interview, part one. (Unformatted)

Interviewer – Fern Gabriel 2008

Tape log summary:

Smokehouse and winter dancing

Genealogy at Musqueam

Masked dancers

12 min: – need to consult about names and masks

Man from seabird shut down ceremony when people used his family name

13 min: Grandfather gave him name when born. Lost that name. Was working in bush. Martha Washington from Lummi took name away because I was drinking too much. Hurt him. Like a shell – something gone from me. Then ten years later hey gave it back to me. Felt good again. Xa kl ten. Means “Thunder. ” had big voice.

Doctor powers not inherited. Had to get from mountains. Had to earn it. That's the old way.

Quit drinking in 1992 when he went in smokehouse. Don't miss it.

1993 working at Indian Arm. Had first heart attack.

Had four strokes since then. Would be dead if it wasn't for smoke house. Has power of smoke house parents behind him.

22min: Herbal medicine.

24 min: Rick had trouble with pancreas.

Go to the mountains for herbs and medicine.

Frank Malloway calls him to let him know when someone has passed away. Lots of people last year.

27 min: Need to know who your relatives are.

28 min: old pictures can be good. Mel's mom had photos. Teach him who his relatives were.

31 min: burning ceremonies.

33 min: asks question about viewscape.

Smog around Golden Ears Mountain? Heard story about the peaks. All the rocks have stories behind them.

Fern fishes with her own boat at Ft. Langely. Most of her siblings have boats.

Spirits on the other side direct conversations

39 min: Smog will get worse now that bridge is almost finished.

Mother natures going to get mad pretty soon. She'll start kicking ass.

41 Oolichans disappeared once they put in the garbage dump beside Portman bridge.

Mel ate 24 oolichans in one sitting. 7 oolichans make a pound.

Looks forward to the first spring salmon.

46 min: Sturgeon are dying off too. River must be pretty bad to kill the garbage eating sturgeon.

49 min: smog is worse in summer.

51 min: is it important to see mountain to tell story?

Sometimes the smog is so thick its hard to recognize Golden Ears.

You should talk to Sonny Mchalsie. He has all the stories. He knows all the stories. Probably learned from his grandmother.

53 Big snakes

Mike Kelly Viewscapes Interview (Unfomatted)

Interviewed by Tim Peters

Shwohamil

April 5, 2009

Tim Peters: Hello, my name is Tim Peters. I'll be interviewing Mike Kelly at his home in Shwohamil and the date is April 5, 2009. Mike, I was wondering if you'd be able to state your name, birth date and your place of residence.

Mike Kelly: I'm Mike Kelly from Shwohamil, born September 2, 1946.

TP: And this is your place of residence, kind of where you grew up, I guess.

MK: Shwohamil, most of my life, yes.

TP: Okay, thank you. As I mentioned the project was commissioned by Environment Canada and through Stó:lō Nation on air pollution and impacts of smog on Stó:lō culture. I was wondering briefly what you might know about air pollution.

MK: I do know it gets bad in the summer over here. [Laughs] When the west wind is blowing we get – 'cause the smog gets all boxed in over here.

TP: Do you know what types of pollution that is?

MK: Mostly pollution from the city, the buses, trucks and cars.

TP: So you said the summer is bad that for pollution, that time of the year. Is there any other seasons that you notice where it's not that great?

MK: Not really. We get the wind in the spring time, it's just when the west wind is blowing in the summer time and the smog gets all blocked up here in the east end.

TP: And what season would you think would probably be the least kind of air pollution?

MK: Probably fall and winter and spring.

TP: Fall, winter and spring. So 'cause of the heat in the summer. Is any landscape features like mountains that are obscured because of the smog?

MK: In the smoggy season here, you can't even hardly see the mountains.

TP: Really? Is that all the mountains directly around?

MK: That's all the mountains around, yeah. The smog gets boxed in here from, when the west wind is blowing, from Vancouver, Bellingham.

TP: Do you know any transformer stories or flood stories or anything, any traditional stories at all?

MK: I was just two years old in the '48 flood. We were living down [...] me and my dad. They used to have pictures of my uncle paddling the canoe right down the highway.

TP: Yeah?

MK: Yeah. All I know is that we all, I think we all were escorted over to Rushmore, there used to be a motel there and I think that's where they housed a lot of our people back then.

TP: Do you know any transformer stories at all?

MK: Transformer stories I know a little bit but I just got out of a sweatlodge so my mind's not there right now. Sometimes I think of them and I remember, the one thing I learned about the mask, and they said the mask come from a lake in the river and they look for that lake in the river for a long time and what it was, when the river's high you can't see the lake but when the river goes down then there's a lake that forms there. And so that was where the mask comes from. I know there was another one about – am I in the right line there?

TP: Yeah, that's good.

MK: The one with – in Kawkwa Lake where that guy – I can't remember that one right now either. But the only thing I can think of right now is our fasting grounds.

TP: Yeah.

MK: Right above Hunter Creek, it would be the east side, about three-quarters of the way up there, there's a plateau and you can see it, there's a rock face in front of it. And that's where our girls went when they went through their puberty rights.

TP: Yeah.

MK: Do you know that story?

TP: No, I don't know that story.

MK: Oh, okay. Right up on top there, there's a rock face, you can see it, and on top of that flat was where the girls went for their puberty rights. And down below that there's kind of another ledge, few hundred feet down and that's where the boys went to – when they had their voice change and stuff like that, when they went through their puberty rights. And below that there's a [...] there's kind of cave, an indentation in the mountains and that's where the parents and all the caretakers camped while the girls and boys were going through their puberty rights up there.

TP: Do you know how long of a hike it would have took to get up to those spots?

MK: It was a good hike because they had to go up the bluffs over there unless they had a trail back then to get up there and it was quite a hike. And maybe one day when you're around I can show you that and there's other things around there that – they're pretty interesting. Even on this rock face over here when I was about six years old, seven years old, used to walk up there and go around those bluffs and there's the alter where somebody did their fasting 'cause when I got up there, there was rocks around like that and a deer skull facing, it would be north-west, this way.

TP: Yeah.

MK: I was going to go back out there again and I never did make it back up there but that's what I saw up there and these fasting grounds right back here, we had four ladies, about eight, ten years ago, eight, nine years ago, went up there and re-opened that for fasting.

TP: Yeah.

MK: We went up there for four days and that was kind of a big freeing of the – I guess re-opening that place there because we had took some of the guys built a trail up there and re-opened that place up there.

TP: Do you think smog would be hard to kind of give directions on where those spots are, the traditional spots, like they tried to show a grandfather where it was – or a grandson from here to get directions, do you think smog would impact your ability to tell them where those areas are?

MK: From ground level, yeah, from here but if we walked up there, we could show them where the trail is and how to get up there.

TP: Okay. Does smog have an impact on yours or other people's ability to share stories about features like that?

MK: It's always hard on our breathing. [Laughs] But, summertime, children are usually busy out running around anyway so – but I know it's hard to give directions with the smog in the valley here. A lot of our people that have asthma and allergies, it's hard, a hard season for them.

TP: Yeah, so the elder knowledge of these areas, do you think the smog has impacted their ability to share the history or the language, that information?

MK: Yes it would.

TP: Yeah, 'cause they're not able to go up to the...

MK: Mhmm.

TP: Elders have once said some of these mountains were transformed to stone. Some elders have said that these mountains still contain the spirit of the people who were transformed so do you think their spirits might be impacted by smog and air pollution?

MK: The spirits?

TP: Yeah.

MK: I don't really – I don't think it would bother them, it bothers us in human form. But the spirit has far more knowledge and ability to get around. Like when you're talking to spirits we could have our grandfather here one minute when we're talking and someone could be in New York talking about the same man and he'd be in both places at the same time. So there's no here and there, there's no now and then and there's no before and after in the spirit world. Everything is now. Like, he could be in two places at the same time, here and in New York. In the spirit

form, the work that I've done, and the experience that I've had is the only thing that bothers them is – a lot of our old people have never seen or touched alcohol and that's one place I have a problem with, them using, doing stuff with alcohol involved because a lot of our old people have never heard of it and they let us know. [Laughs]

TP: Can you think of any other impacts smog might have on your culture?

MK: Culturally, our medicine plants I know are dying around here in this area. Like in the springtime we used to be able to go up and pick the wild rhubarb and we don't have that around here anymore. On the riversides we used to be able to have wild onions and I don't see that anymore. There's a lot of things that are today that – not here today as they were when I was a child. One thing I've been talking about last couple of years was we used to catch trout with legs on them, and we used to try to make them go from, we used to put them up on land and make them try and walk back to the creek but that comes in their time, not ours, when they want to move. I heard stories from my uncle Ralph, if you ever interview him, he could tell you a lot more than I could about a lot of that stuff and he said, when the water gets low in one place they'll get up and they'll – whatever they do to the lakes, they walk from one creek to the next creek, or from creek to the lake or whatever. What else was there? The lizards – I don't see very many lizards, as many as we used to have. A lot of the small animals and a lot of the small, like smaller birds, a lot of things are starting to disappear, they're becoming extinct with all the smog and the pesticides that are spread through the mountains. Like when they use the pesticides they try to kill the alders on the mountains, and not realizing that alder is a food plant for the evergreens. White man, they don't know that. You know, lots of things that they don't understand and know about, the valley and the life of Native people, how we interact with the animals, and the fish and the birds, you know, they don't understand that. And when they do make mistakes, they don't realize it till what, thirty, forty years later.

TP: And just recalling kind of the history of your life, what do you think, you know, of this air pollution around your home?

MK: Air pollution...

TP: What do you think, like the air's starting to get bad?

MK: The air quality is getting bad and I believe that's why a lot of our Native people are more sick than used to be. More allergies and, you know asthma and all those things that are foreign to our body.

TP: Is there anything else you might want to add on air pollution and that or are you [...] already?

MK: Air pollution...I know we're going to be running out of gas pretty soon so that's going to be a big fuss. And in the almanac, in the long run they say that mother earth is going to be running out of gasses pretty soon so that's going to force the people to go back to horse and buggy [Laughs] and canoes [Laughs] which is good for our people because that's what we do all the time. I think that's about all I can tell you right now. I can tell you a lot about fasting grounds but that's got nothing to do with pollution. But pollution, yeah, it's killing a lot of our – you notice it even in our trees, our trees aren't as green as they used to be when I was younger. Yeah, that's the pollution. Yeah, they say [...] pollution but I don't know, it still goes back to mother earth and it just recycles. In my view I can't see where a wood stove is more harmful or as harmful as an automobile. Because automobiles, the particles, they don't disintegrate and they're not biodegradable like wood is and smoke is. Wood smoke, you know, it goes [...] mother earth and it goes back into mother earth. I think that's pretty much [...].

TP: Okay, thanks a lot Mike.

Patricia John (Unformatted)

Viewscape Interview

Interviewed by Tim Peters

January 16, 2009

Born July 4th 1942.

Resident of Chawathil since 1974

Matriarch and grandmother in her Coast Salish culture

Quinalt and Stó:lō

Air is one of the Creator's gifts. All the four directions, and the four elements, air, land, water. Knowing where man has went over the generations. We need teachings to cross generations.

Pollutants are impacting culture. Two or three generations since completing of railroad and highways. The pureness of air for hanging clothes and water packed from base of mountain were without question. But since I've showed up there have been concerns. It is a hardship if people listen to what life was like, yet I can't go and drink water from river. Elders used to catch rainwater in barrels, but no longer. Even the wind dried fish taste different now because of the pollutants.

Disastrous effects from contrails from planes. Plus the railway lines and coal dust. Went skating with grandchildren about 20 years ago. It was cold so she put Vaseline on them. They came home like 'little blackies,' covered in coal dust from passing coal trains. Now all these kids have allergies and asthma.

Logjam project. They start burning the wood in spring and summer. That's when the heat in valley. It causes things to get worse.

I feel held captive to railway pollution.

We're such a tight canyon here. Mt Ogilvie is often obscured. Pollution is having effect on living creatures.

East of Ruby Creek is a tall place. Spopetus (windblowing) used to be able to see, but now the rock clearing is destroyed by freeway. Used to be a place where you could see from – [lookout?]

Howling Dog Mountain behind Chawathil. Albert Philips used to talk about that site. He had ropes and tried to reach the bottom of the cave on cracked mountain, but he couldn't make it. It might have been work of Xa:ls that made that.

Holy Cross Mt. (called by white people) but it is "heart of the nation" At Alla (heart of people). A giant whistling; parts sent to different places. Peter Denis story.

Water is cleansing. Honeycombs of water under the land. Housing subdivisions are now on top of sacred places. Water babies are important in traditions and teachings. New magnesium mine might damage water babies

When searching for clarity and healing in sweatlodges and places we need clean air and water. So our ability to communicate [with spirits] and across generations is being impact by pollution. I think wireless is also a concern.

Drumming training, canoe training, sweats, longhouse, all these things are being pointed out by teachings and teaching involve clean water and air.

Smog can't stop the ability to carry messages if one is a messenger. It can make things difficult, but it can't stop it.

There are people with protective instructions of how our healthy function can still remain, and should maintain, and it's becoming difficult for people who carry those instructions. Pollution is having an effect. What used to be right here in this territory. There was such a clarity, and the land was worked with hand tools. And they did it far better than what we are doing today. Ducks that used to be here in the 1940s have flown away because it's not healthy. The low grouse and high grouse are not here anymore. They used to be regular food for our people, now no one puts grouse on the table. Pollution did that. These special creatures are given to us for special messages. Now they are not here. Certain animals are not here anymore. It's not healthy to be here. Animals don't want to come here to eat here. Something is wrong.

We didn't use to have refrigerators. We windried things – wild celery, onions, etc from edge of banks. Now that doesn't occur. The air isn't good.

When the animals and insects have moved away that says something.

Ray Silver, Sr.

Sumas First Nation

Monday, 22 September 2008

Born: 1 March 1929

Has noticed a lot of air pollution

Story 20 yrs ago:

Married Imelda (2nd wife) and went to California and Oregon for honeymoon 20 yrs. ago
Proud of BC for clean air and environment, but looked like a big fire; couldn't see mountains for smog; looked like there was a big fire burning and smoking

Should respect Mother Earth and blood vessels, which are streams, Fraser River

Fraser River, Dewdney, Vedder so polluted now; used to be able to paddle up them, but now are so shallow and silt and mud in bottom

Sumas marshes polluted from farms

Story:

Wife and he are gardeners; lots of fruit trees
Two suits ("Do you people believe in God?" "Do you people go to Church?" "Do you people believe in Jesus Christ?") – yes, believe in Mother Earth, this is our God
Mother Earth provides everything needed to live, especially her blood vessels
Said, "You white people – your fancy cars, global warming" "Native people see."
Too many "God-damned people"
Use Longhouse to teach young ones about respecting environment and each other.
From you people we learn greed and hate and how to destroy one another and everything.

Make fires to warm up longhouse because cold; after 500 people or so gets really warm in there and gets so hot have to open a door

That's what's happening to Mother Earth; Canada and US pay people to have more people (family allowance)

People are swarming into this country

He and his wife have travelled all over the world; Rhine River about the size of the Fraser River, but a hundred times cleaner; Fraser River full of silt and poison and accelerating

People who have just come into country don't know, but people like him (Native) know because have lived here all their lives who have seen the change

Trapper and fisherman, hunter, brick manufacturer; has seen destruction

As trapper know how many to catch so don't catch too many; "vegetarians" are getting sterile (vegetarian animals) because eat the vegetables that we eat from the fields that grow food, but fields are being saturated with poison and going into streams as well as the food -- saw that happening starting about 30 yrs. ago

Happening to fish as well as fur-bearing animals

Air pollution has seen that too; fruit on trees exposed to rain that carries poison; when it rains hard the leaves on the trees turn brown and even though there were lots of blossoms in the spring on the trees and berries (berries transplanted from the bush); it could be dry for a week and then rain for a week and the berries and fruit die – leaves turn brown, limbs dying from the acid rain – goes into the ground and we drink it

Everything is being poisoned because government calls it progress; flood the country with people that they bring in here, build houses

Went to every city in Germany with his wife, but only saw two houses being built from scratch; all the other houses were being renovated; nothing like what's happening on Sumas and Vedder Mountain where raping land

Pity his grandchildren and great-grandchildren; even pities the little white kids and kids of all nationalities; will never see and remember the country the way he did

Grows his own fruit and vegetables himself to see things grow and not just destroy

It's a joke that Canada, BC is supposed to be the "greatest place on earth" or "beautiful British Columbia" – who are the politicians trying to fool? Only the Native people know what has actually happened and can see the destruction. Only old people remember how the world used to be.

The white man says that brush growing close to the river (blackberries along the banks) is good for the fish, but he doesn't believe it; when he was a kid there were no blackberries like that

Along the banks of the Sumas where the blackberries were growing he and his son found dead chicken, dogs, cats, young calves hanging among the branches of the blackberries rotting; farmers were throwing the dead animals into the Sumas, but they were getting hung up in the blackberries; that's how good the blackberries are for the fish

When he was a kid would go fishing with a home-made pole; would catch some of the millions of small salmon, trout, hooligans in buckets, but now can't even get to the water

White man calls it progress and if don't keep building houses will go into a depression

European countries seem more prosperous, more wealthy and have all that they need, and they're not building houses and destroying their country

Shame that the richest countries in the world have to bring in people by the hundreds of thousands to be rich; can't just keep the amount of people they already had and be rich among ourselves; we used to have everything here, but now everything being destroyed by progress

Traditionally the symbol of wealth in the Native communities used to be the size of the family

Used to be 10,000 people lived on the lake at Sumas; only 60-70 people left when he was a boy; now about 300, but no land for them (reserve once had 13,000 acres and ran from Nooksack to Lake Erock); Sumas Reserve was the heart of the Sumas Tribe (now only about 600 acres today)

Still shrinking because white man wants more and more of it for destruction and progress

Was the only Chief who ran off an Indian Agent who wanted them to do what they didn't want them to do (I.A. Letcher) in the 50s; no I.A. ever came back, but he hates those Indian Agents, even though Indian people are taught not to hate or to dislike one another

Learning too much about greed; greed = success; "grab everything and anything can get today and to hell with tomorrow;" don't save anything for tomorrow

No need for the world falling apart if we have respect for one another and for Mother Earth

Maybe in Europe and Germany where they have forests with no fences, great big fields and lots of everything that has been there for years; Berlin used to be bombed out, but has been restored; had hope after he saw the Rhine River and realized the work it must have taken to bring that back from the war and everything that was in that water; Germans are smart and cleaned up the environment; if can be done in Germany then can be done in North America

Letting too many into the country and they are greedy people; taking advantage of everything (people, land, government, laws); they're brought in by the thousands and paid for having children

(Fern) Has noticed that in Abbotsford more corporate farming rather than individual farming, and so there would be more pollution and not given any thought of the run-off into the tributaries of the Fraser River. Does Ray see any effects of that?

(Ray) Everything runs off into the Fraser.

(Fern) Taking everything into account, does Ray notice that the air pollution is worse during certain times of the year?

(Ray) Worse when the SE wind blows and comes up from Seattle, Bellingham, Vancouver and New Westminster. Settles into Langley, Abbotsford and all the way up the valley. Hard to get through the traffic in those areas. Even on Sumas Mountain Rd. it's hard to cross the street or find any room because "they're moving thousands of people up the hill here. And they're going to have more." They don't care.

(Fern) So, it's worse in the summer?

(Ray) The summer and the fall. When the NE wind it's not bad, blows back to where it's from, but worse when the SE is blowing.

(Fern) Sumas people have stories about Mt. Baker. Are people adding the smog and air pollution that covers Mt. Baker into the stories now? Is the smog in the stories when stories are told to people now?

(Ray) No. Tells the stories of elk hunters going up into the mountains to hunt. They would spend days tracking. There was no smog there, only clouds.

(Fern) I notice now when looking at Mt. Baker (when she's fishing) there's a haze of smog.

(Ray) All the mountains are the same and can't see them because of the smog. When he and his brother went to school at Coqualeetza all they learned was to steal food. They were sent to Port Alberni and his brother died there. Ray thinks that his brother was poisoned when he was looking for food. They didn't tell Ray. On the ferry Ray was looking for his brother and when he asked the preacher, the preacher said that his brother was going home with Ray, but he didn't tell Ray that his brother was dead until they got into Vancouver. Then, the preacher said, "Your brother's downstairs in a box. He died." That was the end of Ray's schooling. Went home and worked.

One of the only Native people there that never learned the "white man style," but learned the "Indian style," how to survive by working, trapping, hunting, fishing, paddling his canoe, to Devil's Run, or walking over the mountain to go to Ridgedale to fish in the winter time (sometimes with Clarence Ned). No more of that anymore. Used to smoke salmon and live in Devil's Run in the fall to smoke salmon for the winter. Grandfather told him not to pee in the Fraser River because they make tea from the water, and they get fish out of the water, so don't contaminate that water. They were very strict about the environment even then.

(Fern) That's showing respect for the river. She was told by a healer (a blackfoot pipe carrier) that they should keep respect for the river. Fern told her that she prays there and thanking the

River for giving life, but it also takes life, so need to respect it. There were lots of deaths on the river this year, and non-native people had drowned.

(Ray) Lots of young people died up the Vedder.

California in 1970s, went to Sacramento with his boxing team. Told his wife he was going home soon because of the smog, heat and humidity. Went to California with Millie in 1980 and amazed how cleaned up there and cleaner now than the Fraser Valley.

Europe and California cleaned up and so gives him hope about the Fraser Valley.

In California saw Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and other community organizations cleaning up and picking up garbage. Don't see that in Fraser, but has seen convicts once in a while along the highways.

(Fern) Do you have any other stories? Transformer stories or flood stories that may be affected by smog or air pollution when telling story?

(Ray) No, but smog destroying a lot of native medicines and herbal medicines, and the air pollution. Is killing everyone, white people and native people. Not much time. Everyone has to pitch in. White people need to have longhouses so that they can talk to their young ones like natives do, and tell them how to respect Mother Earth.

(Fern) Some Elders have told stories about people transformed into stone. Some of the mountains still contain the spirits of those people. Do you think that the smog and air pollution affect those spirits?

(Ray) Yes.

(Fern) Do these transformer sites need to see you when you're telling these stories? Do they need to see us as well?

(Ray) Believes the spirits are with them all the time. The stone that used to be there (Tixwelatza) that is now with Herb Joe, was like the Jesus Christ story. If he was lazy or lied might be turned into a stone. That's where he got the ambition to work.

(Fern) Mom told her that laziness is bad and causes "heaviness." Would turn into a "rock" and feel heavy inside and be heavy.

(Ray) The stone was taken by the white guys at the turn of the century when "Sam" was hung out there. The reserve reached all the way to Nooksack and Lake Eroc. Sams, Commodores, Welicks lived out there. When the "Sam boy" was hung by vigilantes (KKK) the families got scared and moved up to the Vedder. Only Gus Commodore was left and moved to Sumas. They were in a hurry and they might have left that rock and the white guys took it, or they might have sold it. Herbie got it back. Ray could feel the power and spiritualism in that rock. He wasn't the only one. The spiritual dancers felt all that in the rock, especially his nephew.

(Fern) Told the story by Gwen Point about Herbie's name (can't remember the name). That rock watched over the Sumas people?

(Ray) I don't think so. Was never told that. The reptiles looked over the Sumas. Big lizards, snakes.

(Fern) What do the snakes represent?

(Ray) Were just protection and no evil could come there. Will see some of the sxway:sxway masks have reptile design on them. From when the Sumas lake was there.

(Fern) Any other impacts that the smog is having on our culture? It's destroying us.

(Ray) Will have to think about it. Lots coming back to him now from when he was a little boy. Elders used to gather at houses and tell stories and share a meal (his grandfather, the old Neds, Old Jimmie Poole, Louie Philips, and all the old people). Told him stories before he was named. They don't tell stories anymore. Only told that your ancestor was named such and such, and give the name, but don't tell the history of the name. Before would have been told what that name represented, what that person used to do. That rock that Herbie is named after

(Herbie know the history behind that rock) is some kind of a god. White man has Jesus Christ and if they do something bad then Jesus will punish them. That rock is the same thing. A lot of native people don't understand that. Told his nephews up in Skowkale that rock is a god and that name means Jesus Christ, but the nephews didn't like that because they didn't understand what he really meant. That if you did something you would be turned into a rock. Now in the white man's way if you do something bad you'll be punished by Jesus Christ. Native people had that before, for many years.

Saw a program about an archaeologist who found that in Oregon there is a rock cave with carvings in the rock of three native guys carrying gifts. Are thousands of years old. Archaeologist studied that (are they the three wise men that natives had before the white man had the three wise men?). Archaeologist got a phone call from Anaham that there is a cave up there with carvings in the wall, and they were the same thing as those in Oregon. Couldn't figure out how both Oregon and Anaham would have carvings of three wise men with gifts. The archaeologist native from Oregon. Natives have been around for a long time and have had many things. The white man has his Bible, our people had that before the Bible. Yet, when the white man first saw us he had no respect for us. He doesn't believe that many of them have respect for them now. Lots of them that don't have respect for anybody, not just Native people. That's what native people have been talking about for hundreds of years.

What killed the older people was when they drained the lake (Sumas). There was nothing left for them. Just like what's happening to the environment now. People used to paddle overland through the sloughs. Smallpox killed thousands of people; white men came and wanted to drain the lake. People had come from everywhere to talk about the draining of the lake. Chiefs said the white people were crazy and didn't think they'd be able to drain the lake, people were told not to even worry about it. But about a year later the lake was going dry from the water being pumped out. Sturgeon and salmon were all over dead after they drained the lake. The native people felt awful after they saw that. Ducks, geese, fish in the millions were all killed. That was why all the native people had lived there (10,000 of them) because of the resources there. People had come by canoe from everywhere to have "pow-wows" in two big longhouses. "One was across the lake toward Sumas, another over here." The lake was central and people came by canoe from Nooksack, Musqueam, Lummi, Chehalis, Langley, Mission, all over. There was lots of food and many stayed over the whole winter. No hardship because there was lots of

food, and overnight that was all taken from them. Before that there was the disease brought in that killed them.

Gus Commodore lived out there and his wife was dying from smallpox. Gus, his grandmother and grandfather, and all the people were all there and Gus was holding his wife and told her in front of everybody that he would never marry again because he loved her so much. Smallpox killed native people everywhere.

When the white people drained the lake they took away the last resource. The longhouses were all going, culture was going down the drain, not allowed to talk their language or have big gatherings. Were worried that people would all gather and talk and form a little army that would "do away" with some of the white people; that they would bring lots of people together and would get smart and would be hostile. White men knew that and didn't want that to happen, so condemned culture, language, everything and re-educated them in residential schools. He didn't learn anything from residential schools except he saw starvation and his brother died.

He learned how to live as a native person on mother earth. He worked hard and still tries to live that way, and now with his extra money he goes gambling. Doesn't like gambling in Nooksack, but goes there for big gatherings. They have lots of food there: clams, crabs, fish.

Will try to think of other things that were told to him and will try to talk about masks and other things.

Herbie's dad ("Happy" Louie) related to Ray's grandfather (Wilson). Grandmother's name was Sarah Vedder. Her tombstone across the road.

Native people wise on the environment. The white man wants them more involved in the environment and glad to see that. "Need to get some kind of direction to save our children."

Next big cultural meeting next year, maybe in Chiilliwack. Last one was in Tilalep (?) there were native people, white people, government people (American and Canadian). He and Millie went down there. Why are those people doing that [having meetings like that]? They want the native people's knowledge about the environment. Maybe they'll have it at Whatcom Rd. and use the longhouse as well.

Can't fish for sturgeon anymore, there's a moratorium. Only the "Chinaman" can fish them. Sometimes they die on the net and can take them home, but only small ones now. He caught big ones before.

Had 11 kids (8 daughters, 3 boys). Good to have big families back then, but now he's against it. He has lots of grandchildren that are "pretty white."

Environment Canada Agnes Kelly Interview summary

Agnes ("Aggie) Charlie

Chehalis First Nation

Tuesday, 8 October 2008

Born: 9 December 1936, Westbank

-originally from the Okanagan, Vernon

-father-in-law Jimmy Charlie of Chehalis

-notice lots of changes in Chehalis area

-feel smog from Vancouver, esp. on certain days

-asthma which hadn't noticed before

-burning waste timber up hill at Canfor, or anywhere in the Valley, brings smoke to Chehalis

-smoke gets trapped in Chehalis like a little cloud over the reserve

-a lot of hunting, fishing, but not as much anymore, maybe because there's not as much now, but also because younger people not as interested in old foods and culture

-have to travel farther and farther to hunt

-too many people on the mountains and the game are being scared away

-lots of people who go up on the weekends with their trucks; drive around and "bum around" and scare away the animals

-when they went hunting they just used to just bring dried fish and knew where to get fresh water; now they have to pack a full lunch and water

-lack of game and fish has to do with the pollution in the water

-some years are better than others

-everything has changed; new generation, more modernized

-changes in the interior for drying salmon

-can't fish in certain lakes and creeks in the Okanagan because too polluted; have to watch drinking water from the mountain can get sick

-when she was younger nobody worried about pollution when they fished

*people from Interior come south to get fish and people from Valley go up for hunting

- picking berries toward Canfor; most of wild berries gone too (blueberries, salmon berries, wild strawberries)
 - Canfor logging company; almost everybody in Chehalis worked at Canfor (all the Charlie boys)
 - logging probably affected wild berries; cut down too many trees
 - used to get big baskets of wild berries up the mountain
 - cutting down trees also affected wild animals and now they come down to the reserve (bears, cougars, bobcats)
 - there are more animals coming down to town and not feeling safe anymore; game stayed in the bush
-
- smog might be affecting animals because they can't breathe; smog moves around and affects birds and all around; animals and birds, eagles don't stay up in the mountains anymore – no trees, more pollution; if it bothers people it bothers them too

(look at pictures...)

Environment Canada Sonny McHalsie Interview Transcript (Part 1) (Unformatted)

AN: So this is Ana interviewing Sonny McHalsie on August 28th and this project was – it's for Environment Canada and what they're interested in is the way smog and air pollution impact people's ability to see some of the really important landscapes in the area that have cultural significance. So that's the general question so what I wanted to ask you first of all was have you noticed smog and air pollution in the area around here a lot?

SM: Yup, there's quite a bit in the last few years and when the wind isn't blowing it gets pretty bad.

AN: Are there any particular times of the year when it seems to be worse than others?

SM: It seems mostly early summer I guess.

AN: Okay.

SM: When it's pretty warm.

AN: Alright. So, which – do you notice that any of the features, I guess especially the mountains, that your view of them is obstructed by smog or air pollution?

SM: Probably the most prominent one would be Lhilheqey, when you're heading out from Chilliwack up to Hope and it's the very first one – it's like one of the most prominent, probably one of the most important ones as well. You get around – yeah, when you're just pulling out of Chilliwack and then you can just see the smog off in the distance. You almost kind of see it like it seems like it's thicker towards the Hope way than towards Vancouver. It doesn't make it's way up the mountains, I don't know, it seems like it just kind of bottlenecks there [unclear]. Especially where the mountains kind of close together that's pretty well around where Cheam is or Mt. Cheam – you know it as Mt. Cheam but our name for it is Lhilheqey. Yeah, so especially the higher ones like Lhilheqey and I noticed as well with the one up in Hope, Q'aw (the Howling Dog) it's all the way up at the top of the mountain too and sometimes the smog, you can see the smog further up the mountain slope. Other ones don't seem too bad but I mean you still can't help but notice the smog. Especially when I'm doing the tours, up at the part where I know more than others because I do place name tours. I take people out and try to show them the features. I mean you can still see it, it's not like the smog – the smog doesn't completely block it [unclear].

2:45 AN: So I'm assuming you know a number of different about these features that [unclear] like Mt. Cheam and Howling Dogs, did you want to share any of them or...?

SM: Well, the story about Lhilheqey, Lhilheqey, by the way, means to resoak something. A couple of different stories about the source of the name, about why it's called to resoak something and I'm, when I spoke to the late Edna Douglas and the late Henry Douglas back in the late eighties, asking them, you know, why it's called to resoak something, they had said that on the northeast slope of that mountain there was a little lake and that lake is still there and [unclear] comes down right by [unclear] power station there but the – they said that at that lake is a berry picking place where many people would go up there to pick berries and they said they would leave their smoked salmon and their dried salmon to soak in the lake for the day and then at the end of the day, it was just a matter of cooking their salmon and it would be ready and they did that so that's probably why it's called to resoak something. But also the late Bob Joe from Chilliwack, well known historian from the Chilliwack tribe, he said that – this is a – I think it's an interview with Oliver Wells that at the back of that mountain there's a quarry where our people used to obtain brown salt to salt their salmon and that, before the Europeans arrived, it was iodized salt and I'm not sure if you're familiar with eating salted salmon, you have to soak it. And I understand, I was told the other day on a tour that people do that with salted pork as well, they soak it to try to get rid of the salt flavour. Salt is a preservative but then it's very strong as well so you soak it to try to get rid of the salt flavour so the name then – Lhilheqey it seems like it's associated with an action of the use of salt. But Dan Milo, an elder from Skowkale he says that Lhilheqey is often referred to as the mother mountain and he says that because Lhilheqey was a woman from here, from that area, and she had married a man and moved down south and she had a husband and three sons and her – she wanted to come back up this way so she left her husband down there and I guess he was transformed into Mt. Baker and her sons were transformed into Mt. Shasta, Mt. Hood, and Mt. Ranier and somehow [unclear]. And so she took her three daughters up here and her dog and she went back to where she came from so when she got there she was transformed into that mountain to watch over the river, to watch over the people and to watch over the salmon and her three daughters were also transformed into three little peaks as part of the mountain and her dog was transformed into the mountain peak right behind her so if you look up there you can see her and you can see the dog's nose, the bridge of his nose, his eyebrows, forehead, two little ears in the back of his neck and the three daughters then, two of the oldest ones were transformed into two peaks there in front of her Óyewot and Séyewót. Those are the very high ones so when it's kind of smoggy you can barely see them up there and then the youngest one, Xomo:th'iya, down low, kind of a little off to the side, a little bit to the west of Lhilheqey and her name Xomo:th'iya originates from the word for "cry" so she's the crying one and she's crying because she's down low and she doesn't have

the same view as the two of her sisters so Óyewot and Séyewót are way up there and they have a good view but Xomo:th'iya is down low so she's crying. So there's that creek – that waterfall that comes off there is the source of the creek and that waterfall represents the tears of the youngest daughter, crying because she wanted to be up with her older sisters.

7:30 AN: So when you are out doing tours or really sharing these stories with anyone, does that smog and, you know, [unclear] prevent you from seeing all these features, does that impair your ability to tell these stories or share them with people or educate people?

SM: Doesn't really impair it that much, like to say you can still see it but yeah, to me it's kind of frustrating. I think I've made comments about it here too, like jokingly about [unclear]. Yeah, it's just kind of frustrating, I guess, that it's there and knowing that it's pollution that's causing it, you know. But no, it doesn't seem to – you can still tell the stories. I mean, well there are cloudy days when you can't even see it at all [unclear]. It just would be nice to be able to see it and some days it's too cloudy to see it and some days it's clear but you still got the smog [unclear]. And it seems to me like – it seems like it's getting a little bit thicker too. But I know quite a few years ago, I think it was back in 1988, I climbed Mt. Cheam, or Lhilheqey, went to the peak, it was a nice clear day thinking I was [unclear] when I got up there and of course looking over the valley you could see all the smog and that was, yeah, twenty years ago.

9:10 AN: So for a lot of these, like the peaks, that were people who were transformed, do you think it affects them negatively to have the smog there. Do you think there's the view that they also need to be able to see the people down below or they need to be able to breathe clean air?

SM: I have that feeling, like I feel bad about them, you know, because there is, we have connections called Shxweli. There's a connection we have with them through our stories, the Shxweli of our people are still there. Yeah, I've often wondered, especially with Lhilheqey because she was supposed to be watching over the river and watching over the people and watching over the salmon and yet she's way up there and all the smog that's impairing her vision to watch over people.

10:20 So I think those are pretty much all the questions that I have. Do you have any other thoughts on the issue about smog and air pollution and the way it affects the cultural landscapes around here?

SM: I can't think of anything right now. I know there's a lot of other places like up in Hope that are all mountain peaks. One mountain is right behind Hope and it seems like right where the smog gathers up there and the mountain is shaped like the breast of a mountain goat. And there is another one up near Hope. The smog doesn't seem so bad once you get past Hope up towards Yale. I don't recall seeing a lot but I know, like I said earlier, that it seems like when I'm

here in Chilliwack [the smog is] right there impairing Lhilheqey. When I make my way up and notice it up there – you can even see it from here as you're going up, you can look up and see the smog when you drive around the corner towards Hope. But, yeah, once I get up past Hope then it doesn't seem that bad. When I think about it, I don't notice it [unclear].

AN: Alright, that sounds great. Thank you so much.

Sonny McHalsie (Part 2)

Smog from Vancouver funnels its way to Vancouver. The majority of the city's smog passes through our communities as it concentrates its way up the valley. First really noticed it in late 1980s. Climbed up Mt. Cheam. Really clear day, but the smog was really thick.

There are times when I do placenames tours and the smog is so thick it limits the visibility of the mountain tops that I discuss.

Smog is less noticeable in fall and winter. But summer it is bad.

Lhilheqey, Séyewót, Óyewot, Xomó:th'iya, and dog Sqwema:y.

A lot of Stó:lō people are familiar with mother mountain story. Parents like to tell story to children.

Flood stories are associated with mountains. Mometus, finger that represents finger telling us to be good. Also associated with the flood. With limited visibility you have trouble sharing this with the younger generation. Behind Chawathi is howling dog, east of hope is thunderbird, heart mountain, Tómtomiyeqw at mouth of Hunter Creek. St'ám'ya right behind Hope. As soon as you pass Hunter Creek the valley opens up and there are mountain features all around you. But smog creates limited visibility. Hard to get Elders out on days when they can see mountains clearly, because in the winter there is too much cloud and rain.

I like to joke, there is a mountain up there, you can't see it, but I'm going to tell you about it anyways. Some of the features are small and difficult to make out on mountain tops as smog settles in. eg older sisters on Mt Cheam.

Eg. profile of the howling dog is hard to see. Have to be at right angle to see it and can't be a smoggy day.

St'am'ya is fairly easy to see, but some features are difficult.

Hunting area behind Hope. But difficult to see due to smog. Pat ?? garden.

Q: Are spirits in Transformer stones impacted?

Yes, I think so. We have a Shxweli. Their spirits are real and there. The transformations really happened. It's disrespectful to have them in smog. Clouds are natural. Smog is disrespectful to all the transformer spirits. That's the way I feel about it anyways.

Would be best if there was no smog. Ancestors are having to put up with this.

Smog is affecting deer, bear, berries, and all the living things on the mountains. The trees have their own way of breathing, and the smog is having some effect on them, for sure.

We did our air quality study focusing on dry salmon and looked at impacts. There must be some sort of impact that smog is having.

End of interview.

Appendix 3

Appendix 4

Bibliography

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