

# COMMON GROUND: 64<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NORTHWEST ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

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This year's Northwest Anthropological Conference was held at the Best Western University Inn in Moscow, Idaho. Over the course of this three-day event, expertly organized by the hosts from the University of Idaho, knowledge and ideas were shared, old acquaintances revived and new friends made. What follows is not a comprehensive conference report but rather a sampling of some of the talks that I was able to attend. With such a varied offering of thought-provoking papers in simultaneous sessions, it was impossible to cover everything.

The first session that caught my attention was the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) symposium. Camille Pleasants and Mary Marchand (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation), Dennis Lewarch (Suquamish Tribe), Keith Patrick Baird (Nez Perce Tribe) and Jill Maria Wagner (Coeur d'Alene Tribe and symposium organizer) presented about the activities of their respective offices and what they look for when dealing with outside researchers. I was completely oblivious to how consultative archaeology is done south of the border and was satisfied to learn that Native American Tribes (as First Nations are called in the U.S.) have a say in the research conducted in their territories through government-to-government consultation. It is a little disheartening, however, to learn that THPOs are often underfunded and understaffed. The services and resources they offer, ranging from research permitting through GIS databases to unpublished ethnographic and tribal archives, are surely worth as much to outside archaeologists as to tribal members.

Two further symposia stood out for their emphasis on tribal initiated research: a session by Grande Ronde and Quinault scholars, and another by colleagues from the Colville Confederated Tribes. A subject that came up in these sessions and many others was the Dawes Act of 1887, which allowed the U.S. government to cut up and privatize reservations (the U.S. term for reserves), allotting some land to individual tribe members and selling off the remainder to Euro-American settlers. Nora Pederson, in particular, described how resistance to this land alienation was eventually successful in reinstating tribal governments at Grand Ronde. David Lewis and David Boxberger went on to discuss how the Southwest Oregon Research Project helped the Grand Ronde conduct research into the history of land alienation by bringing ethnographic documents back to the communities where they originated from. Boxberger and Larry Ralston revisited an incident in which some Spanish sailors were killed by the Quinault, providing a Quinault point of view that was missing from the official histories which thus hindered reconciliation. The Spaniards appear to have encroached on a female initiation rites site, and the Quinault—having had bad experiences with a previous Spanish expedition that kidnapped some of their women—took no chances this time around. Finally, Boxberger, Pederson and Justine James Jr. described a Quinault ocean fisheries oral history project which brought to light the irony that the Boldt Decision of 1974, which reinstated Washington tribes' treaty rights to fish commercially, actually restricted where the

Quinault could fish.

Elder Mary Marchand opened the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) symposium, which I found to be among the most informative, with a Good Friday prayer. Amelia Marchand illustrated the workings of the CCT interdisciplinary team for traditional cultural properties and archaeological sites with a discussion of efforts to record and preserve a sweatlodge that has been in use for more than a hundred years. Jon Meyer presented on the problems caused by the U.S.-Canada border for Lakes and Okanagon people to access traditional use areas on the other side of the border and the THPO's efforts to rectify this infringement on traditional land use rights. Brenda Covington exposed the alarming destruction of archaeological sites by the annual spring draw-down of the Grand Coulee Dam Reservoir, while Donald Shannon revealed how CRM archaeology and tribal-initiated place name research can go hand-in-hand with case studies of transformer rocks. Lawrence Harry described in great detail the duties of a traditional cultural property technician, from protocols for conducting and transcribing interviews through curating historic photographs to transferring older media to newer formats. It was fascinating to learn such specifics of how a THPO functions and to listen to tribal members share the results of their research. Mary Marchand's message—that one must not forget one's ancestry and keep learning—is significant for all formerly and currently colonized people. History *is* important.

In a general session on American Indian identity, rights, resistance and implications, Charles Luttrell provided evidence that the Spokane were not only farming for subsistence but for a market economy prior to 1887, Rebecca Wood described her planned dissertation research on Pend d'Oreille language use, Emma Jean Mueller reported on her undergrad thesis on Native art appropriation in Puget Sound, and Christina Heiner spoke about everyday forms of resistance to the Dawes Act on the Flathead reservation. I was particularly absorbed by Mueller's discussion of the complications caused by ideas of "authenticity" and the emphasis on aesthetics in understanding art, causing a disengagement from the art's social context and the Native artists' social roles. Rodney Frey ended the session with a wonderful explanation of Tom Yellowtail's conceptualization of the wagon-wheel, the hub and rim of which represent our shared humanity and the spokes the diversity of our roles. Understanding that the spokes need to be kept separate yet equally moving allowed Yellowtail to be equally at ease in apparently exclusive roles, as Baptist and Sundancer, as self-serving trickster and self-effacing elder.

The general session on Northwest Coast archaeology began with Kathleen Hawes' description of environmental reconstruction through charcoal macro-remains analysis, illustrated with examples from her work at *Qwu?gwe*s and Sunken Village. I presented work that attempted to understand shell middens as more than mere garbage dumps and proposed instead considering them also from an Eliadean perspective of the sacred. Dale Croes discussed how tribal affiliation of archaeological remains in the Salish Sea can best be achieved through basketry. James Holmberg reported on

the analysis of clam digging sticks made of ocean spray that were recovered from the Qwu?gwes wet site, while James Chatters and colleagues added to archaeological understanding of the Olcott cobble tool tradition. Colin Grier and Meghann Stevens spoke about the 2010 excavations at Dionisio Point on Galiano Island, and Jacqueline Cannon argued that precontact Nuu-chah-nulth fishing was both intensive (based on ethnographic accounts) and extensive (based on archaeological accounts). Finally, Kenneth Ames and colleagues presented the results of chemical analyses (portable XRF, SEM) of contact-era copper artifacts from Cathlapotle and Meier, which turned out to be made of trade copper alloys.

In other talks, Alexander Stevenson and colleagues presented results of tribal initiated research in support of a salmon restoration project in the Upper Klamath Basin. The combination of ancient mitochondrial DNA, geochemistry, and the presence of head elements in archaeological fish remains indicates that anadromous salmonids were indeed caught prehistorically. Astrida Blukis Onat spoke on "The Art of Archaeology," describing the practice of a collaborative investigation of a historic homestead that brought together members of the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe and artists from the Earthwatch Institute for a culturally more complete project. Julia Altman discussed the so-called shield-bearing warrior rock art of southern Idaho, while George Poetschat, James Keyser and David Kaiser introduced their database of Bear Gulch and Atherton Canyon rock art in Montana. E.S. Lohse made one of the most provocative arguments of the conference when lobbying archaeologists to share their data: we need to standardize the recording of artifacts in the field so that we can cut down on curatorial costs by keeping only artifacts from well-defined behavioural contexts.

Furthermore, because archaeological interpretation is not a science, we should share data in order to beef up our stories. Let's do it! Describing the curatorial crisis in museums and repositories, Bethany Hauer Campbell further urged archaeologists to take into consideration the needs of future researchers. Lourdes Henebry-DeLeon discussed problems encountered in documenting NAGPRA repatriable material on the Columbia Plateau, particularly tracking down objects that had been moved from their original repository. It is ironic that NAGPRA doesn't require institutions to list material that they're supposed to have but don't have any more.

There were many other interesting talks that I couldn't attend, including Adam Rorabaugh's modelling of demographic impacts on social learning and Patrick Dolan's analysis of lithic debitage from Dionisio Point in a symposium on technological organization and social complexity, as well as a plethora of presentations on Idaho archaeology. Regardless, what impressed me the most about NWAC 2011 was (1) the willingness of researchers from diverse walks of life to share ideas and experiences, and (2) the emphasis on tribally initiated and locally relevant investigations. If this is the future of archaeology in the Northwest, and I certainly hope it is, then we are in very good and able hands indeed.

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*A complete list of NWAC 2011 presentations and posters is available here: <http://www.class.uidaho.edu/nwanthconference/schedule%20final.pdf>.*

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#### **(Archaeology in the News: continued from Page 5...)**

and because of the impact on archaeological sites. Tony Hardie, a local artifact dealer, features particularly in Nagel's (2011) piece, questioning the security now in place at these sites and the "secrecy" surrounding what is being found and where it will go. He defends his beachcombing practices as "preservation." Most recently, a lawsuit has been filed against the government by two Indigenous women, Tsawwassen and Cree Sioux.

A steady stream of comments—some more thoughtful than others—have also been flowing on Quentin Mackie's blog (<http://qmackie.wordpress.com/2010/10/02/glenrose-cannery-under-threat/>) since last October. In particular, criticism seems now to be falling not on the government, the private industry that is driving development, the archaeologists who have all signed confidentiality agreements, or even the consumers whose appetites are fed by the trucks that will use these roads (in other words, us). Instead, blame is being directed at the local First Nations who are involved in the project. On Quentin's blog (17 Aug. 2011), Richelle wrote: "Seems to me the only people NOT trying to stop the road are the only people that really could have: the First Nations. Instead, the Nation in charge of this project worked hard to silence those who had the courage to speak out." In her view, "This isn't just about local First Nation history and artifacts. This is about the evolution of mankind, and is of global significance."

Of course, the First Nations have been in negotiation over

this project for years and have come to their own arrangements. In Nagel's (2011) article, Tsawwassen Chief Kim Baird defends her Nation's participation in the project: "We're very diligent in trying to do the best we can for those sites against all odds—especially in the Lower Mainland, which is constantly under development pressure." The SFPR development has also been shifted to avoid most of the archaeological sites, and a plan is in place for a First Nations-designed interpretation area to acknowledge and celebrate the historical and ongoing connection of Aboriginal peoples with these (unceded) lands. If local First Nations are satisfied with the process, why isn't anyone else?

Nagel (2011) suggests that home-owners and environmentalists are simply appropriating the archaeological cause to bolster their own agenda. Indeed, far less press coverage was paid to the Katzie wapato farmlands, which were destroyed by the construction of the Golden Ears Bridge (Jeff Nagel, *Maple Ridge News*, 17 June 2008), and there were no sit-in protests. Archaeological sites are destroyed every day in this province. Where is the public outcry over these losses? Where is the media?

Whatever the motivations, it remains to be seen whether this media attention will help or hinder public attitudes towards heritage and archaeological practice in B.C.

**Marina La Salle, Editor**