Contemporary & Desired Use of Traditional Resources in a Coast Salish Community: Implications for Food Security and Aboriginal Rights in British Columbia

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Abstract

In 2001 the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group (an organization which represents the Cowichan, Chemainus, Penelakut, Lyackson, Halalt and Lake Cowichan First Nations) commissioned a study of contemporary harvest levels for traditional foods and the levels desired by community members. A detailed list of over 200 traditional foods was created in consultation with community elders. From this list, a survey was implemented in a randomly selected, statistically significant number of households in the community. The survey showed important differences between actual harvest and desired harvest, and some interesting differences between types foods known about and types foods popularly used. Members articulated reasons for these differences from their own perspectives. We suggest that important food security questions can be raised when the results of this survey are seen in context of current poverty and medical census data and the communities own analysis of barriers to harvesting. These questions underscore the importance of being able to continue to exercise aboriginal rights.

Introduction

Indigenous relationships to the land are based in cultural practices. Harvesting of traditional foods is a central, material part of this relationship. A key problem for indigenous peoples occurs when, because of the practices of competing world views such as those often held by colonial states, practising these material connections becomes difficult. Problems ensue. These problems include issues related to health and well-being, and a disruption of well-established life-ways. We argue that the recognition and accommodation of aboriginal rights in Canada, is a serious solution for these important problems. Reconciling Aboriginal and mainstream Canadian connections to the land and resources by privileging the indigenous material practices with respect to traditional food can provide food security, alternatives to market-based poverty, self-affirmation in valued cultural life-ways. Such benefits for Aboriginal people in Canada would be important ones to make for the country as a whole.

Aboriginal people have argued to have their traditional practices protected in Canadian society. They have had a recognition and affirmation of aboriginal and treaty rights in the *Canadian*

Constitution Act (1982). They have had many important court decisions which have ruled in favour of having these relationships recognized as a priority among competing interests (*Vanderpeet*). However, many Aboriginal people in Canada, and in particular the communities of Coast Salish people living on Vancouver Island, have continued to express significant barriers to harvesting.

Historical Use of Resources by Coast Salish Communities

Hul'qumi'num people have always heavily relied on marine resources for food. Salmon as central to Coast Salish culture is overwhelmingly evident from its abundant use through antiquity, shown in the archaeological record. The developed Coast Salish cultural pattern has existed for at least 3,500 years (Ames 1981, Matson & Coupland, 1994) and has since been highly developed in their management and use of resources, with sophisticated fishing technology adjusted accordingly to varying environmental conditions. Throughout this time and possibly as far back as 6,000 years, salmon has been the most important food resource (Deur 1999:135).

Known as the 'saltwater' people by the Fraser River Salish, the Vancouver Island Hul'qumi'num relied heavily on salmon (dog, spring, coho and sockeye from the Fraser River) year round, herring and herring roe (March), cod (lingcod, red snapper, rockfish), steelhead (winter), halibut, seals, sea lions, and beach foods from February through the summer months. Salmon, deer, basket cockles, horse clams and butter clams were staples in the diet and were preserved in large quantities for future food, ceremonial, social and trade purposes, whereas many of the other marine resources were eaten immediately (Ham 1982:252, Suttles 1974, Stern 1934).

Food could be indirectly or directly converted into wealth (Suttles 1987:22). An essential part in Coast Salish culture was the harvesting of surplus food. Surplus food increased a family or group's ability to access other resources through reciprocity and allowed time to be devoted to activities that produced wealth. A household with excess food could attract more people who could produce food or wealth (Suttles 1987:22). Items of wealth included material items such as baskets, blankets, canoes, arrows and slaves.

For a great part of the year Coast Salish people visited their in-laws in other villages, bringing surplus food to share. These in-laws might bring gifts of surplus food at other times of the year or might thank these gifts with blankets with camas root or sturgeon (Suttles 1987:23). For example, canyon fishers might take wind-dried fish to those relatives in areas where this practice was rare, and could expect a return visit with gifts of other local foods, like cranberries or smoked salmon or halibut. Coast Salish potlatching was one extreme of this system, where hosts would give away large quantities of food to mark important 'life-events' and could expect to be likewise given gifts (according to their status) at future potlatch events. Trade in surplus fish and other goods would also happen outside the realm of family as side events of potlaches at annual events of trade fairs and during longer voyages such as between Chilliwack River and Vancouver Island. In sum, this diverse range of economic practices ensured a fairly wide ranging diet. People weren't restricted from food immediately available to them but had access to a wide range of diet items regardless of the restrictions in local micro-environments. Food was not directly equated with wealth but in a system in which giving away surplus was extremely important, "wealth was good credit for food received" (Suttles 1987:23).

Pre-Contact Diet

There is little information as to pre-contact per capita consumption of food (Suttles 1987: 51). From his work with the Coast Salish and ethnographic accounts that do exist, Suttles estimates that no more than 10% of the Central Coast Salish diet was derived from gathering (vegetables and fruits). Carbon isotope measurements indicate that coastal people obtained 90% of their protein from marine sources (Chisholm *et al.* 1983).

Consumption estimates on a per capita basis for marine resources have been found for salmon only. Among the Central Coast Salish, annual per capita salmon consumption ranged between 600-700 pounds (1.65 - 1.9 pounds per day) (Hewes in Boxberger 1989:13, Hewes in Bennett 1975:8). This translates to approximately 100 salmon/per capita/year. It is difficult to say, how much on top of this would have been used for social and ceremonial use including trade.

Based on the evidence and other studies of Aboriginal communities in Canada (Rabinowitch & Smith in Foote 1967, Borré 1991, Hewes in Boxberger 1989;13, Hewes in Bennett 1971;8), some gross calculations can be made with respect to a daily diet. It is conceivable that a minimal daily consumption of marine and land animal sources of protein and fat ranged between 2.2 - 4.4 pounds per day (803-1,606 pounds/person/year). This is based on the assumption that a minimal level of energy needed to sustain an adult and a growing child would be approximately 2500 calories and 90% of this energy would have been derived from marine protein and fat. The range of poundage given reflects caloric differences between marine resources and different preparations (cooked or half-smoked salmon, clams, smoked salmon). If we take the proposed range of 2.2 - 4.4 pounds per day of marine and land resources and subtract the estimated salmon consumption of 1.65 - 1.9 pounds per day, other marine and land resources would have contributed an additional 0.3 - 2.75 pounds per day.

Contemporary Traditional Food Use: Context from Aboriginal Communities in Canada

Over the last 50 years, there has been a significant shift in diet among the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada from heavily dependent on traditional food to market food. Traditional food consumption studies in Canada are primarily limited to the NWT and Nunavut. In the Yukon, where Aboriginal Peoples have little restrictions on use and access of traditional resources and less competition with commercial interests, direct frequency of consumption of traditional foods occurs 1 - 2½ times per day (Wein 1994). This frequency of consumption is equal to approximately ¼ - ½ pounds per day of traditional food). When Wein asked Yukon participants to indicate how many times/day would people like to have traditional foods, participants said between 2 - 4 times per day, or ½ - 1 pound per day. In Alaska, subsistence hunting contributed 1 pound per day per person in the 1980s (Wolfe & Bosworth, 1990).

Although there have been no dietary surveys/consumption studies conducted in the Hul'qumi'num area, a few dietary surveys have been done among other cultural groups in British Columbia. A dietary survey report in the Naas Valley (1981) found that First Nations consumed on average ¾ pounds of fish and seafood weekly (Waddell 1981). Melvin Lee *et al.* (1971)

found during their dietary survey at Ahousat and Anaham in 1968 that the frequency of consumption of traditional food was 1.17 times/day which worked out to an average consumption of 2/3 pounds of fish/seafood weekly and 1 ¾ pounds of traditional meat weekly. These numbers reflect a strong shift towards market foods and reduction in reliance on traditional foods, possibly due to restricted access.

Among the Coast Salish population, Trinita Riviera recorded during summer field work in 1945 on Seabird Island Band (one of the Stó:lō communities), that one family harvested at least 300 fish, which would have corresponded to a poundage weight of 2300 pounds (assuming 6 - 14 pounds per fish) (Riviera 1949:25). Some of this was to be used for sharing with extended family members. Another survey of salmon use by Coast Salish communities living along the Fraser River was conducted in 1970. Marilyn Bennett (1971:23) estimated, based on answers from 14 Stó:lō informants, that adults consumed approximately 1 ½ pounds of salmon on a weekly basis or 75 pounds/per capita/per year. Based on a review of her methods and harvest data obtained from the DFO for Stó:lō catches for the years 1956 - 1999 (Canada 2000), we believe that her estimates of salmon consumption significantly underestimated the real use of fish for that Coast Salish community. While she might have adequately calculated how much individuals ate in a year, her figures probably neglect uses of fish for extended family, sharing, social, ceremonial purposes. During this time period Stó:lō took on average 115,000 fish per year. This would amount to a potential per capita annual use of 55 fish (60% sockeye, 5% chinook, 10% coho, 20% pink, 5% coho) with an edible weight of 253 pounds. In a study conduced by Thom in 1995, one practising traditional fisher estimated that his family consumed a yearly average of 396 lbs (42 fish) per person based on his tallies of the number of fish that his family caught and ate frozen, raw or dried (Thom, 1995).

Current Health and Food Security

Nationally, average individual income is $20,000 per year although for First Nations on reserve it was $8,800 per year (Canada 1991). With traditional economies badly displaced, Hul'qumi'num people find themselves poorly situated vis-à-vis mainstream society. Grinding poverty in this

community like in many other communities has negative health effects. Hul'qumi'num communities are not significantly different from the national average.

Table 1. Total 1990 income for adults in Hul'qumi'num communities

under $2,000	$2,000-$9,999	$10,000-$19,999	$20,000-$39,999	over $40,000
22%	17%	39%	16%	3%

In British Columbia, only 57% of First Nations adults reported eating meat, fish or poultry everyday and 12% recorded eating meat, fish or poultry only once per week (Canada 1991), a clear sign of the inadequate access to traditional resources, deep-seated poverty and food insecurity.

While some adults may be meeting part of their protein requirements through the use of alternate sources (eggs, beans, tofu), it is highly questionable whether First Nations adults are meeting current recommendations of having 2-3 servings of foods from the meat and alternate group daily (6-9 oz of protein). Additionally, food security implies adequate access of affordable, high quality foods that are culturally acceptable. These protein substitutes are not equivalent cultural, spiritual or nutritional replacements for traditional foods. Results from a recent study which looked at anaemia in infants in one Hul'qumi'num community, provide further evidence of the deficient intake of good sources of protein. Gray-Donald *et al.* (2002) found that half of infants aged 7-11 months were at high risk for developing anaemia due to inadequate intake of iron rich sources. Iron rich food sources that are readily absorbable are found in the meat and alternate food group. Mothers surveyed said that they would feed their infants more traditional foods if they had access to them. The situation of infants reflects the poor diet of their parents.

The 2001 Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group Harvest Study

The Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group (HTG), is an organization which represents about 6,000 members of six bands on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, including the Cowichan Tribes, Chemainus First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Lyackson First Nation, Halalt First Nation and Lake Cowichan First Nation. In 2001 the leaders of the HTG expressed a concern that the current harvest levels were lower than those actually desired by the communities, but they had little hard

data to support this assertion.

In 1991, Statistics Canada conducted the Aboriginal Peoples Survey across Canada, where 20% of community members were interviewed on a wide variety of subjects (Canada 1991). On the subject of traditional harvesting of resources, Hul'qumi'num community members reported in the survey having obtained only a small portion of their meat, fish or poultry from hunting or fishing.

Table 2. % of adults who obtain meat-fish-poultry by hunting/fishing

none	some	half	most	all
11%	50%	11%	5%	0%

Other than this, the chiefs had few facts to support their claims in treaty negotiations, but they knew intimately the state of their communities - - that harvesting practices were dramatically different today than they were in the generations that came before and that there were a number of important barriers to this harvest that went beyond the immediate decisions of their community members. They knew also, that ensuring that harvesting could continue into the future is an important principle that needs to be entrenched in the treaty they were negotiating. To get a more clear picture of harvesting in their communities, they commissioned a harvest study (Fediuk 2001).

Our study involved 191 household (19%), selected at random to get a significant picture of the resources harvested in 2001, the resources desired and the barriers to harvesting. Of these 77% were households on-reserve and 23% were off-reserve (close to the actual distribution of 72% and 28%).

In spite of there being a large non-Native population (ca. 95,000) in Hul'qumi'num territory, with little Crown land and several large industrial and commercial developments, most households are engaged in using traditional resources. Almost every household (*n*=180) reported having a harvester for the house, with the largest cohort of harvesters being between 19-35 hears

old. 58% of harvesters were men and 42% were women. 79% of the households reported having harvested in 2001, with 96% of household reported having used at least one traditional species in 2001.

Extensive work was done with Elders identifying a list of 188 culturally relevant species that have been traditionally harvested. This included:

- 27 species of fin-fish
- 16 species of shellfish
- 10 species of other marine foods
- 3 species of marine plants
- 31 species of birds
- 16 species of land and sea mammals
- 22 species of berries
- 43 species of food and medicinal plants
- 16 species of trees
- 4 'other' species

Adequacy of Current Access to Traditional Resources

The survey asked respondents to identify quantities of these foods and material consumed in 2001, and what they felt would be adequate for their needs on a yearly basis.

For the top 10 species in each category, the percentage of people wanting to use traditional foods was very similar to the percentage of households experiencing inadequacy of traditional foods. In other words, levels of available traditional foods fall far short of levels desired by almost all Hul'qumi'num people who wish to engage in traditional harvesting/use practices. This will be illustrated in figures 1 through 5 below. The only two species that approach adequacy abundance, shown by the difference between desire and inadequacy, are butter clams, which were desired by 85% and which were thought as in inadequate supply for 25% and blackberries, which is desired by 85% and thought as adequate by 45% of the respondents.

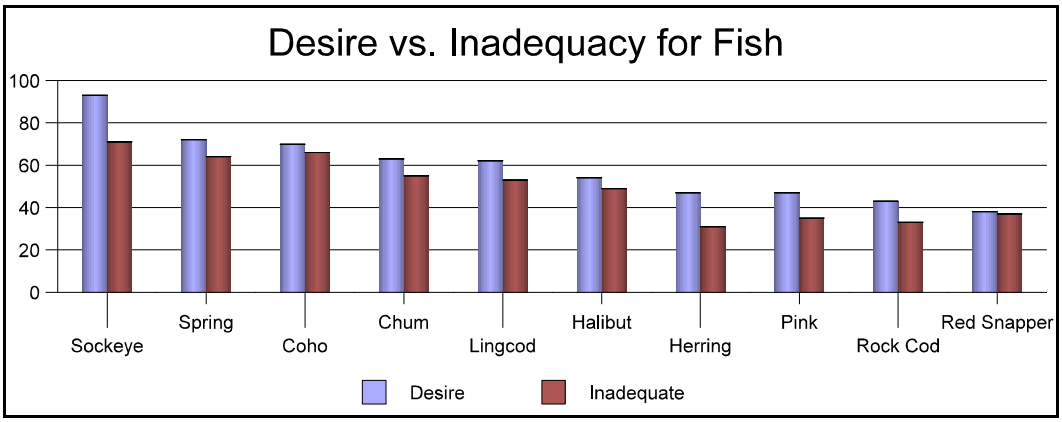

Figure 1. Desire vs. Inadequacy for Fish

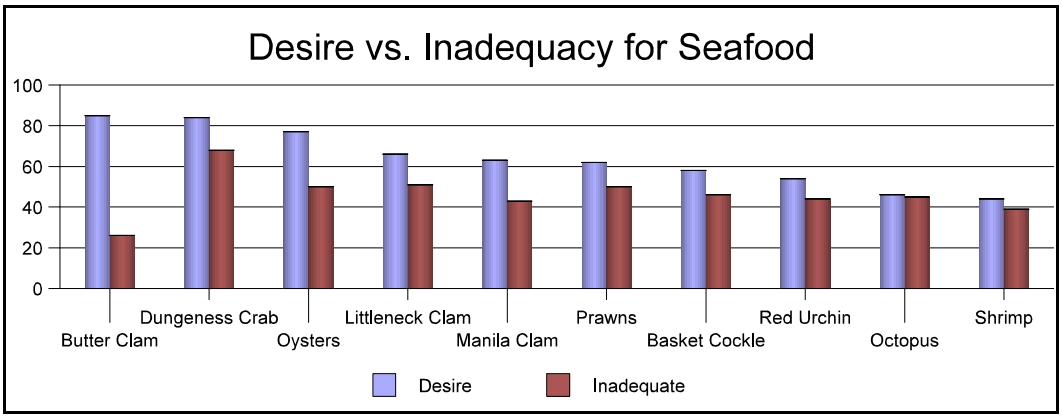

Figure 2. Desire vs. Inadequacy for Seafood

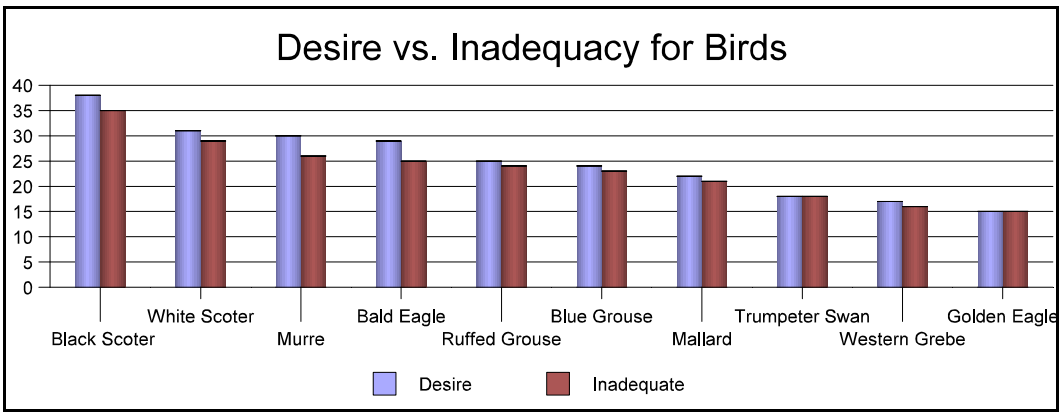

Figure 3. Desire vs. Inadequacy for Birds

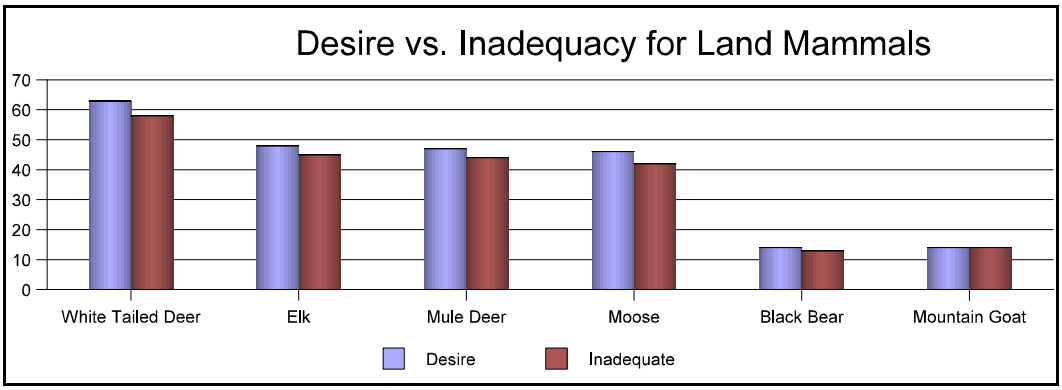

Figure 4. Desire vs. Inadequacy for Land Mammals

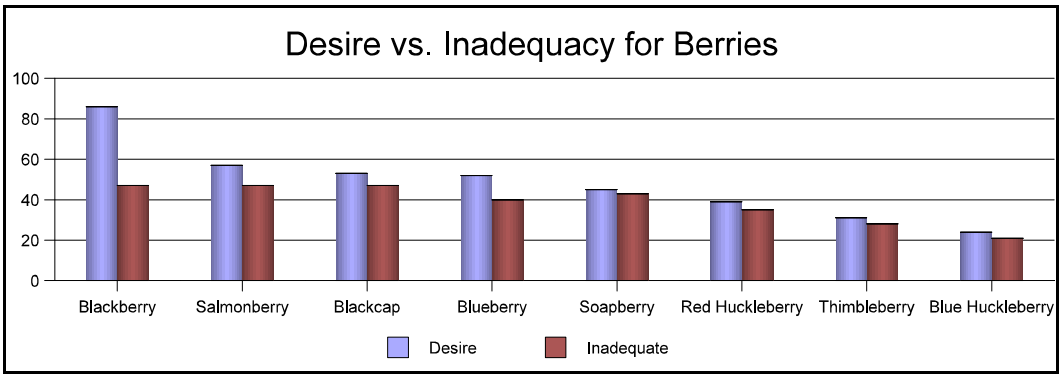

Figure 5. Desire vs. Inadequacy for Berries

It can be seen from these survey results, that for almost every species, Hul'qumi'num community members have felt that they have inadequate supplies.

Barriers to Harvesting

The Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group was interested in identifying what community members perceived to be the primary barriers to harvesting. The final question of the study was the open-ended question "What are the barriers that prevent members of your household from obtaining adequate traditional resources for household needs?" We left the question open because we did not want to pre-judge what the barriers to harvesting might be. The results that emerged represent clearly Hul'qumi'num views from their own perspectives. There may indeed be other important reasons that we not mentioned, however, we feel is useful to articulate the perspectives of the people themselves on this important issue.

Answers to this question were varied, but can be placed into six distinct categories, as shown in Figure 6. As this was an open-ended question, these categories immerged from the information that was provided by the people being interviewed. Their answers were summarized and grouped into these analytical categories to guide our thinking about the barriers to harvesting that they were concerned with.

In the next section, we will review the kinds of answers provided in to the barriers to harvesting questions by providing some specific quotes from Hul'qumi'num community members about the barriers faced, and by examining the specific concerns within each category.

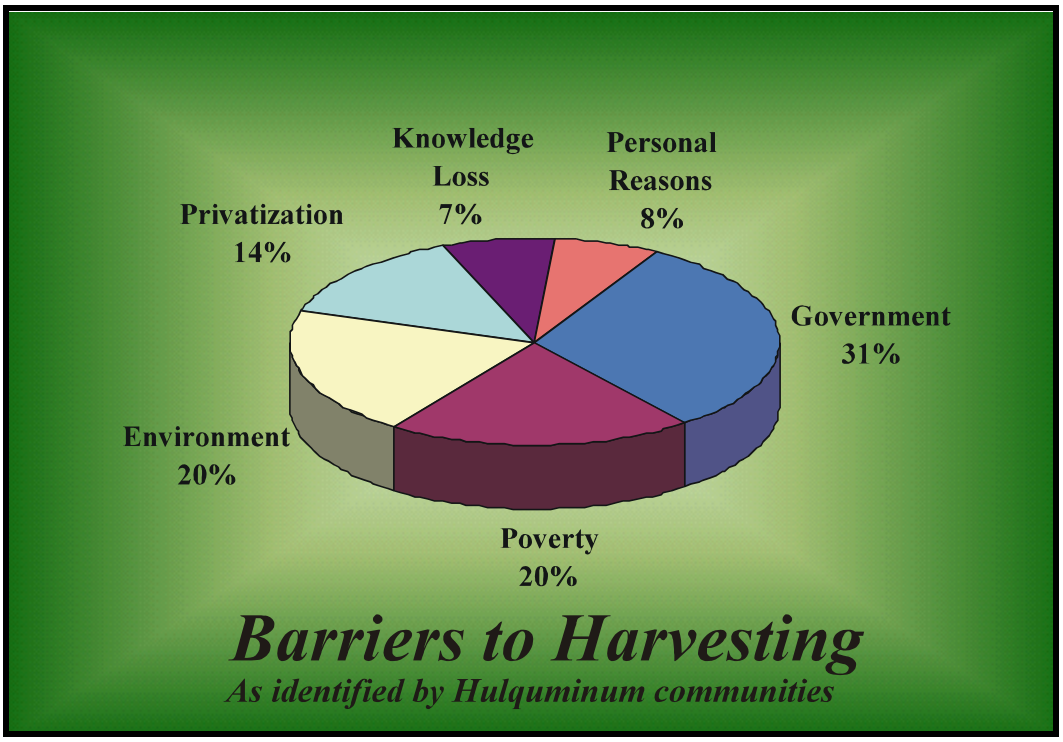

Figure 6. Barriers to Harvest for Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group Member Communities

<u>Government Imposed-Barriers</u> (31.1% of all responses)

Big House representative: We used to rake urchins in Cowichan Bay. They came right up to [the beach]. Now if you want to get some for your grandmother, your grandmother needs to get a license before we can get it for her.

* * *

Big House representative: When I was a young boy, I was always out for clams and oysters...If I try to go out by myself or our boys encounter DFO, and they give us a list, you are allowed 12 clams, 4 crabs and maybe 6 oysters per person....Our people aer scared to go and get it. They are scared to lose their boats and equipment. I've know some of our people have lost their boats, their clam rakes, crab rakes. They take their crabs, clams and sea eggs. ..If we knew that we could go out there and get it I think a lot of our young people would go out and do more harvesting. But we have to go to our band office and sign a paper and say how many in our family and they say you are 4 so you're allowed 24 clams...anymore and they'll take your boat away and take whatever you got away and you'll go to court and you'll end up paying 1000 fine for maybe 2 clams extra. This is what our people are scared of.

* * *

Big House representative: I went around and talked to the elders. (They said) I would have enough if my grandchildren and my kids could go out and get it..but they're scared of losing their canoe. Our people used to go down to the Bay and dig clams and everything but they can't do that no more....My uncle is well know for going out and getting seafood for elders. He got his boat taken away because he was out getting food for elders.

* * *

Fisherman: sometimes if you go get an extra few hundred fish to help a family, it's pretty stressful and it deters people from doing it.

* * *

Fisherman: My cousin has been in jail for 6 months for digging clams, right on the beach. The D.F.O. were pulling guns on our people for digging clams right in front of our house. When we were growing up that was a mainstay.

* * *

Band fisheries officer: The bands don't have the resources, the funding we have to buy our fish, our crabs, our prawns, ...it's inadequate

* * *

Band biologist: DFO won't let charters be paid in fish. You can't pay in fish. Again, it's not being able to use the resource as an economic means to gain more access to food fish ..is a barrier.

Clearly there is an overwhelming concern in the community that the management and enforcement structures of Government prevent them from harvesting traditional foods. These barriers are particularly true in the harvesting of fish and seafoods, though is also true for some with respect to hunting. The table below shows the different kinds of barriers imposed by Government on harvesting that community members gave. These themes are ranked by the percentage of government-as-barrier answers.

The largest response were more general comments that government restrictions and legislation were a major barrier to harvesting. This general feeling was often followed by discussions of particular issues that have come up for individuals.

Types of Government Barrier	%
Government Restrictions and Legislation	27.5
Need for Permits and Licenses	16.0
Firearm Restrictions	15.3
Harvesting Restrictions	12.9
Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)	6.3
Commercial Over-harvesting	5.2
Mismanagement of Resources by Government	3.1
Fear of Arrest	2.1
Commercial Licenses	2.1
Feeling of Restriction	1.7
No Treaty	1.4
Wildlife Department	1.0
No Co-management of Available Harvest and Use Areas	0.7
Lack of Control over Land and Resources	0.7
Government Taking Away Rights	0.7
Must Go off Reserve to Harvest	0.3
Band Bylaws	0.3
Lack of Support to Re-establish Traditional Trading Economy	0.3
Forest Companies Over-harvest from Crown Land	0.3

Particularly problematic for Hul'qumi'num people has been the requirement for licences and quotas. These do not fit in with the social organization of the Hul'qumi'num people. They feel that they can not get food for their Elders without fear of loss of their boat or equipment. If they get a fine, they often can not afford to pay it. These licences and quotas have prevented people from engaging in their traditional economy. Licencing and commercial fisheries management has reduced the once large Hul'qumi'num fishing fleet to a single individual with an active commercial licence. Traditional fish weirs on the Cowichan Rivers are prohibited.

<u>Poverty as a Barrier</u> (20.3% of all responses)

Big house representative: A lot of it is we don't have boats and a lot is polluted.

* * *

Informant: And when [traditional foods] are available ...such as clams...they're expensive. They're just a treat . A bucket of clams [1 gallon] can cost $20.

* * *

Elder: a lot of our people don't have freezers [so some couldn't take the whole food fish] and we don't have a smokehouse.

* * *

Informant: When I say poverty, sometimes it's like poverty of some skills. and so you see that. I used to do cooking in the multi-purpose room and we'd use a hot-plate, a frying pan to do some things [electric] and whatever else we had [microwave]. And with the cut backs, from the Liberal [Provincial] government, changes [for people on social assistance] even the loss of 50 or 75 dollars, which is coming up as a loss to their budget each month, people are getting worried ... what would they do, and so now they want to sort out how could they preserve extra stuff around. So we quickly had women sign up for community kitchens annual workshops for canning for this fall.

Issues of poverty were related by over 20% of community members as a barrier to harvest, the second largest category of response. Harvesting traditional foods is no longer able to be done under the terms and conditions of traditional economies. Money is needed to be able to gain access to these resources. Recreational fishers and hunters, by way of comparison, spend significants amount of capital to be able to engage in these activities. This kind of disposable income is frequently difficult to come by in First Nations families with above-average unemployment and dramatically below-average household earnings.

Types of Poverty Barrier	**%**
Lack of boat	36.9
Lack of car	26.7
Lack of equipment (smokehouse, tools, etc)	17.1
Affordability	11.2
Adequate storage	5.3
Need to buy resources	2.1
No cannery for food fish	0.5

Environmental Problems as Barrier (19.8% of all responses)

Elder: The inside waters are scarce for halibut.. Today you have to go to the west side [of Vancouver Island].

* * *

Big house representative: Cowichan Bay... we used to dig clams, now it's all polluted [sewage, farms, saw mills].

* * *

Health professional: and the issue around clams and oysters is that you can't tell that it's clean Lots of clam-diggers go and harvest from closed beaches. Beaches are closed due to contamination such as raw sewage, pulp mill contaminants and red tide. That's an issue. You often don't know where clams are coming from... pollutants.

* * *

Community member: For butters... the harvester told me to remove the neck cause that's where all the pollutants are.

* * *

Informant: Elk is protected [the 2001 quota was 4 for a First Nations population of over 3500]. So if you're a young family with 3-4 kids and you're going to school or working part-time jobs or living on social assistance....you're not doing those things [traditional activities].

The area around the southeast coast of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands has been heavily impacted by urban and industrial development. Outside the Lower Mainland, this is the most densely populated and long settled region of British Columbia. With this has come some significance consequences on the Environment. Nearly as much as poverty, community members noted that environmental concerns kept them from harvesting traditional resources.

Types of Environmental Barriers	**%**
Sewage/contaminants	38.3
Red tide	30.6
Scarcity/availabilty of resources	30.1
Conservation	1.1

Contamination of marine resources is the most critical problem in Hul'qumi'num Territory. Most beaches are closed permanently due to a host of toxins - from algal blooms to sewage. Highly significant and productive areas such as Cowichan Bay are heavily impacted by farming and industry. The Chemainus River estuary is poisoned by the effluence of the Crofton Pulp mill. Ladysmith Harbour is largely closed for harvesting because of the town's sewer outfall, leaky septic fields and farms, as well as the impact of several mills and log sorts around the harbour. Most of the beaches on the Gulf Islands are unavailable for harvesting because of poor septic fields of the upland owners. Finally, over-harvesting of resources in the traditional territory has

dramatically reduced the overall amount of available resources.

Privatization of the Land and Resources as a Barrier (13.6% of all responses)

In 1884 the E&N Railway Grant was made by the Crown to land baron Robert Dunsmuir. With this grant, and the pre-emptions made by colonial setters for the 30 years previous, almost all the Crown land in Hul'qumi'num territory was alienated to third parties. Other than a few small areas that came back through non-payment of taxes, this is still largely the state of the territory today. Privatization has been a critical long-term factor in alienating Hul'qumi'num people from their traditional foods and resources.

Types of Privatization Barriers	%
Urban Development and Zoning	22.4
Lack of accessible or available harvesting areas	53
Sports hunters/fishers	9.7
Private Property	5.8
No 'pure' places left	5.8
Locked gates on forest road	3.9

Our of 334,00 hectares in the core Hul'qumi'num traditional territory only 14% is Crown Land. A whole 59% is owned by five large forest companies. Smaller private land owners make up the bulk of the rest of the territory with 24%. 2% has been designated as park or protected areas, while only 1% are Indian Reserves. The distribution of these private lands over the territory is also a confounding factor for traditional harvesters, with the most densely settled areas being the areas along the waterfront and river valleys that are ecologically productive and supported intensive collection of traditional foods. Hul'qumi'num people who continue to harvest, attempt to carve out a place in this landscape to continue their cultural traditions.

Personal Reasons as Barriers (7.7% of all responses)

Personal reasons were occasionally given as barriers to harvest. Many of these can be expected -

age, health, demands of jobs and families, and living in the city were all factors that some people sited as keeping them from harvesting traditional foods and resources.

Types of Personal Barriers	%
Age	25.3
Health	23.9
Time restrictions/work	14.1
Living off reserve/in town	12.7
Distance	8.4
Caregiver duties	7.0
White husband	1.4
Population	1.4
taste changes	1.4
All white people	1.4
No one to harvest with	1.4
weather	1.4

It is interesting that these personal reasons are a relatively minor reason for being unable to harvest traditional foods in contrast to the more social and political reasons provided earlier.

<u>Lack of Traditional Knowledge as a Barrier</u> (7.5% of all responses)

> *Fisherman: When I'm out fishing, I don't see any young people. My dad taught me how to fish. I'm teaching my sons how to fish, but that way of life has been disrupted so when the sockeye are running, there's very few guys that know how to catch them. If you put the wrong lures down, you are not going to catch them. If you go too fast, you are not going to catch them. You have to know what to do. Same with herring. I bet if the boys learned how to gill-net or rake them the smokehouses would puff up with herring. It's a real healthy food. Once you learn how to use it.*
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> * * *
>
> *Community member: a lot of young men don't know even know how to clean fish*

Traditional Knowledge is often seen as the key to First Nations people's unique adaptations to their local environments. This special knowledge represents generations of learning and teachings about the place and resources that an indigenous community dwells within. It is well known that

First Nations people across Canada have been the brunt of intensive assimilation policies of past governments. This included residential schools, resettlement, banning potlatching, forbidding certain methods of harvest and control over resources

Hul'qumi'num people are no different. A particularly notorious residential school was located on Kuper Island on the reserve of the Penelakut First Nation. Elders who attended have recalled being beat for speaking their language, being forbidden contact with their parents and family, and being indoctrinated with lessens in agricultural labour. This schooling perhaps had the most direct long-term impact on Hul'qumi'num traditional knowledge. Being so close to the centre of Government in British Columbia, the Hul'qumi'num people have also long been targets of this authority. The potlatch ban was strictly enforced, deeply affecting traditional economies. Cowichan River fish weirs - - efficient and productive means of control of the local salmon resource - - were banned and dismantled by the DFO a generation ago. This systemic dismantling of the indigenous economy resulted in Hul'qumi'num people not living their life on the land, but rather being engaged in the wage labour economy. Once families started to supplant their own economies with these new practices, some of the nuanced knowledge that comes with living on the land stopped being passed down. These issues, among others, has resulted in loss of traditional knowledge being identified as a barrier to harvesting.

Types of Traditional Knowledge Barriers	**%**
Lack of Traditional Knowledge	47.8
Lack of family harvester	23.2
Lack of harvesters	11.6
Lack of knowledge re: good harvest areas	11.6
Lack of skills	4.3
Family practices	1.4

It is encouraging, however, that this was the least frequently cited reason for why Hul'qumi'num people don't engage their traditional resources. Clearly, not all this knowledge is lost and given

the opportunity, would be able to flourish in a re-invigorated cultural context.

Conclusions - Creation Solutions Through Treaty

It is clear from our findings that the Hul'qumi'num people feel that they currently get a dramatically lower amount of traditional food than they desire, and that this, when combined with poverty, has serious implications for health and food security for these communities.

Fortunately, there is presently a historical opportunity to find sweeping political solutions to these important social problem in treaty negotiations. The Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group is currently engaged in negotiations with Canada and British Columbia to settle land claim & create a new governance relationship. The subject of these treaty negotiations are wide ranging, and chart out a new basis for the relationship between the Hul'qumi'num First Nations communities and the Canadian state. The Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group is currently on an accelerated negotiating schedule and hope to reach Agreement-in-Principle within a year.

In this treaty, Hul'qumi'num community land & foreshore base will be dramatically increased from their current reserves. Work is being done to recognize a form of Hul'qumi'num land tenure, which will provide access to key traditional lands and resources throughout the territory. Negotiations. HTG is drawing on the discourse around traditional ecological knowledge to inform innovative co-management agreements in the areas of fisheries, protected areas, wildlife and land use planning. These exciting developments in the negotiations are bouyed by a cautious optimism from community members, who see the opportunity for a recognition by the state of their important social and cultural relationship with their traditional lands and resources.

These negotiations will work out new relationships with government that recognize, affirm and accommodate the continued exercise of Hul'qumi'num aboriginal rights. This, we hope and believe, will help address food security for Hul'qumi'num communities, which will have long-term health and social benefits for the people.

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