

PROJECT SUMMARY

Using Local Knowledge to Manage Coastal Environments: A Case Study in Change Islands, NL

The residents of coastal communities are primary stakeholders in fisheries management but continue to have little input into what are currently top-down, and often ineffective management strategies. Local people have valuable knowledge to share about the marine environment and the problems with current practices and regulations. We believe that they should have a louder voice in how the fishery is managed. This project aims to help make their voices heard.

The overall goal of this one-year project is to generate a dialogue about how local knowledge can be used to develop sustainable fisheries management that responds to the needs of coastal communities of Newfoundland. Our aim is to work closely with the residents of the community of Change Islands to review existing research and identify key issues that affect fish harvesters and other people whose livelihoods depend on the marine environment. Together we will develop policy briefs for federal and provincial agencies on specific topics in an effort to reshape policies to make them more effective. An interactive, multimedia web site will also be developed to provide an opportunity for local residents, interested organizations and agencies, and other people far and wide to learn about the distinct heritage and way of life of fishing communities, and the role local knowledge can play in the sustainable use of coastal environments. We are very excited to have an opportunity to continue our work and hope that we will be able to have a positive impact.

The main source of funding for this project is a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant (about \$42,000), with some additional funding from the Ocean Management Research Network and Canadian Fisheries, Oceans, and Aquaculture Management, both located at the University of Ottawa. The current project builds on community mapping research that was undertaken in 2008 with support from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. One result of this previous project is a detailed community map with over 200 new place names – a clear example of the importance and value of local knowledge.

The three researchers working on the project are Dr. Derek Smith, a geographer from Carleton University, Dr. Maureen Woodrow a sociologist at the University of Ottawa, and Dr. Kelly Vodden, a geographer at Memorial University. Two graduate students will also be working on the project as research assistants. The Town Council is a key partner in this project and we will be asking several local residents to help out as community advisors. We have just completed the planning phase of the project, and we will soon be starting work in the community. Maureen is a seasonal resident and will be in Change Islands until late August. Derek will arrive on July 18 and stay until August 12. Kelly will be in Change Islands from August 3-7. Special focus group meetings to examine visions for future fisheries management are being planned for August 6 and 7. We hope that the policy briefs will be mailed out and the web site will be launched by March 2010. We also plan to share our findings in *The Main Tickle*, *The Pilot* and possibly other media outlets, including national radio and magazines.

We would be happy to answer any questions you might have about this project. We can be contacted by telephone or email as shown below.

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