

Good morning/Tansi

1) It is a pleasure to be here today to participate in this important conference in such an incredibly beautiful place.

As an indigenous person from Saulteau First Nation, through my mother Marlene Cameron/Desjairlas, in the the northeast Treaty 8 region of BC, I want to recognize that I am a guest on the unceded ancestral lands, the lands of Plenty, of the *K'òmoks First Nation*. *I would like to acknowledge Elder*

I would also like to thank Jane Watt and the BC Historical Federation for inviting me here today to share and learn from you all. (hands out)

My presentation today is titled **Not just Stones and Beads** because I would to explore the concept of Indigenous Cultural Heritage and the multiple layers of values and meanings and why it is unique, important to everyone and in a critical state right now, in need of safeguarding.

2) I will be doing this by talking about three subject areas:

1. The definition of ICH and why is it different than Settler heritage. There are glaring differences between Euro-Western and Indigenous heritage interpretation and recognition priorities.

For example, although Indigenous communities do have similar concerns as Western institutions for preserving and recording material culture, it is not limited to the static notion of heritage or big events. “[W]e don’t really think in terms of those big commemorations, because for us it’s a live, active thing that we do year round. We have a calendar of ceremonies and activities for each season, so it’s an ongoing, living thing. In addition, many of our sacred objects, such as medicine bundles and pipes are considered living entities and must be caretaken in the same manner and treated respectfully, as an ancestor.

2. Innovative or collaborative approaches to including Indigenous cultural heritage through projects that I have been involved with as a private consultant and Indigenous heritage planner, and under my roles with the national IHC and FPCC.

3. Lastly, I would to suggest to you alternative or additional ways that you may include ICH in your work to offer a richer, diverse and more inclusive and accurate narrative of artifacts and local histories.

3) I started my career as an archaeologist and have worked as an archaeologist all over northern and central BC. But my passion for heritage really began on my grandmothers land near Moberly lake BC, where every summer she would have the teepee set by the water for us to sleep in and my large group of cousins, siblings and I would spend our time exploring the land, spying on Elders making dry meat and collecting thousand year old artifacts and other

remnants of the past.

Archaeology in the Treaty 8 of BC and most of Canada is focused heavily on documenting and studying lithics or tools as part of the EA assessment process for resource development projects. There are thousands of small arch. sites scattered all over the Treaty 8 territory because people were travelling in small family groups following large mammal herds.

I truly enjoyed my work, but after practicing archaeology for several years, I realized that I wanted to understand the connection between the people, land and animals; traditional land tenure and governance practices; migration routes and shared areas; indigenous legal traditions and protocols; sacred areas; ceremonies, cultural landscapes; genealogy; and passing of traditions between generations.

But at the time, archaeology was a narrow and structured field and did not recognize the living descendants – those who were and are biologically, culturally and spiritually linked to the creators of the items/the artifacts.

I quickly realized that there was more to heritage than artifacts, the stones and beads, and I needed to think about how I could expand and change in the heritage field in general.

It happened in 2012 I was presenting at a NT conference in Ottawa at the Chateau Laurier with 2 other Indigenous Women and it was that first time that ICH had been included in this national conference. Basically, due to frustration, these woman (Mayor Madeleine Redfern and Metis Senator Yvonne Boyer) decided to form the IHC. A non profit organization dedicated to advocating and creating voices for Inuit, Metis and FN people by providing a center for dialogue, expression and learning in hopes of finding solutions, celebrating strengths, and promoting knowledge embedded in Indigenous lands, languages, ways of living, and communities.

We now have a large Board of Directors who are all expert and advocates in the ICH.

What I have learned through the four national roundtables on Indigenous Heritage is that Indigenous Peoples define “heritage” according to their own perspectives, traditions and languages. There often isn’t a direct translation for ICH except for a sacred space or something that is kept.

And after much wordsmithing, the Indigenous Heritage Circle came up with a general definition for Indigenous heritage that includes ideas, experiences, worldviews, objects, forms of expressions, practices, knowledge, spirituality, kinship ties and places valued by Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous heritage is critical to Indigenous well-being and held for all generations.

4) For Indigenous Peoples what is valuable or essential to their cultural heritage is anchored not only in their material objects, but also in our intangible aspects of culture.

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH), or non-material culture, can include systems of knowledge, oral traditions, relationships, rights and responsibly associated with objects, sites and

landscapes.

It is often expressed through storytelling, music, dance, dramatic re-enactment, art forms such as carvings and paintings, ceremonies, rituals, social practices, festive events, protocols and practices for caretaking and transmission of culture and knowledge,

5) In general, Settler or Non-Indigenous heritage is seen and defined as the tangible, something that is inherited from the past, such as artifacts, buildings, sites, and archives.

Heritage BC states that there are no hard and fast rules, no binding legal definitions, that determine what is, and what is not, heritage. Of course, everyone thinks of heritage as old. “Heritage”, however, is best understood when joined to another word, such as conservation. In this sense, heritage conservation is clearly understood to mean something worth keeping, preserving, and protecting. For much of its history, heritage conservation has in fact been largely concerned with “old” buildings.

From the definitions shared, you must recognize that many governments and other organizations have extremely diverging viewpoints and understandings of cultural heritage and history. And the challenge and reality for Indigenous Peoples is that Indigenous heritage does not fit into colonial silos of “property” and “culture” which means that our concerns intersect with multiple government departments and programs. Some agencies see this as a problem; but I see the bridging of these silos as both necessary and beneficial. In fact, it’s what the courts are asking of governments, museums and heritage practitioners – don’t define heritage in a sandbox – listen to the Indig. Peoples of the territory and then adjust accordingly.

6) The next topic that I am going to discuss is innovative and inclusive and collaborative approaches to safeguarding and sharing ICH.

Recently I have observed a more inclusive attitude in the heritage field, which celebrates Indigenous heritage as central to Canada’s historic narrative.

As a result, I believe that ‘Heritage’ is now being recognized as a more fluid and dynamic term, displaying that cultural history is complex, taking on many forms and concepts; this arguably can include Indigenous connection with landscapes, and TEK as intangible cultural heritage by supporting the understanding that “landscapes, the places where people and nature meet, are shaped by the inter-relationships between humans and their environment. In turn, the natural setting has shaped how people live, their settlement patterns, livelihoods, cultural practices and beliefs – indeed their way of life. Landscapes encompass history and the present, the physical as well as the intangible”.

In the last few years, I have been fortunate to participate in quite a few projects with Indigenous groups that are believe show a new and more inclusive approaches to recognize, include and respect Indigenous CH.

7) One such project was the 2017 Secwepemc Cultural Heritage Study for which I as the project coordinator. This community based project was led and directed by a committee of Knowledge Keepers and language speakers. Community members were trained in conducting interviews, mapping, using GIS, research, setting up archives and field work.

8) Over 1 year, my team of over 20 conducted oral history interviews with 75 people, transcribed and mapped those interviews, created an extensive digital archives, conducted archaeological studies, knowledge keepers training and field studies, genealogy research and focus groups with the 13 family groups, environmental research, ethnographic studies and cumulative impact research.

There were over 1300 CH sites recorded. All of which were multilayered – such as trails traversing village site, next to a pictograph and fishing area. And all of the sites were continuously used for thousands of years.

Inspired by the cultural landscapes model developed by UNESCO we identified areas where unique cultural and environmental values co-exist and must be managed together in order to ensure the long-term health of both people and the land.

9) Data gathered from the field studies, interviews, genealogy focus groups and other research revealed distinct seasonal patterns of use throughout the study area, and connections to other areas of Secwepemcúlew.

These specific cultural heritage values and general seasonal use patterns on the lands and waters within the study area were used to map 10 areas referred to as Secwépemc Cultural Landscapes (SCLs). Here is a graph that we put together of the seasonal rounds that were documented on each of the cultural landscapes.

10-11) N/A

12) The IHC is an Indigenous-led organization dedicated to Indigenous cultural heritage in all forms. IHC recognizes the importance of full recognition, inclusion, support and respect for cultural heritage in building healthy and vibrant Indigenous communities.

The IHC is a non-profit

Then in November 2018, with the Indigenous Heritage Circle, I help coordinate two national roundtables on Indigenous heritage with Parks Canada in Calgary and Gatineau Quebec.

The IHC's work and mandate were brought to the attention of Parks Canada through multiple channels and highlighted in an IHC presentation to the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Environmental and Sustainable Development (ENVI) in 2017. The resulting report titled *Preserving Canada's Heritage: The Foundation for Tomorrow*, included recommendations consistent with the IHC's position that a national Indigenous heritage organization is needed to give voice to the concerns, ideas, and energy of Indigenous

communities and knowledge-holders. The presentation was also the beginning of a deeper conversation between the IHC and Parks Canada about how to move forward to address specific ENVI report recommendations relating to Indigenous heritage.

Parks Canada (PC) invited the IHC to a meeting in July 2018 to discuss Parks Canada's ongoing efforts to address the needs of Indigenous communities more effectively and to share Indigenous heritage and knowledge.

IHC advised Parks Canada to begin this important work through a national engagement project centred on two engagement sessions in different parts of the country, with an Indigenous Council of Advisors selected to guide the process who could contribute to identifying potential participants, and provide input into the topics and structure of each engagement session.

13) In November 2018, the IHC collaborated with PC on two national Indigenous cultural heritage engagement sessions in Calgary, Alberta and Gatineau, Quebec. The focus of these sessions was to:

Develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous perspectives on CH;

Understand how PC can better include Indigenous Peoples and their histories, values and memory practices in PC's history and commemoration policies and programs;

Build stronger and more collaborative relationships for future PC initiatives; and,
Identify key individuals who can contribute to PC's strategies and relationships with Indigenous cultural heritage practitioners and organizations.

Altogether, the gatherings assembled 66 Indigenous participants, many of whom were cultural heritage experts and knowledge keepers in their communities or Nations, and 33 government representatives from regions across Canada.

This policy paper follows the style guidelines of Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and Altogether, the gatherings assembled 66 Indigenous participants, many of whom were cultural heritage experts and knowledge keepers in their communities or Nations, and 33 government representatives from regions across Canada.

In March 2019, Parks Canada completed its final report that summarizes the views and recommendations expressed by participants and sets out PC's future strategies for creating a more inclusive, collaborative and equitable space and opportunities for Indigenous Peoples at these national sites.

14) The third and final example that I would like to share with you of new approaches is the work of FPCC's.

It was my pleasure to join the FPCC in November 2018 as Heritage Manager.

15) Since 1990, the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) has been a leading organization in

efforts to protect and revitalize Indigenous languages, heritage and arts in British Columbia. It is a crown corporation and we also have a foundation that supports our efforts. It is the only organizations of this kind in Canada.

Our goals are to see:

- Indigenous languages, arts, culture and heritage in B.C. documented; with the data is in hands of Indigenous communities
- To support the development of tools, technology and resources that build community capacity and support language, arts and cultural revitalization are developed and distributed
- And ultimately that Indigenous languages, arts and culture are thriving in communities in multiple domains: home, school, ceremony, work places

16) The revitalization of heritage has always been a part of FPCC's mandate but until recently, we have not received funding to achieve this vision. A few days ago, FPCC signed a MOU with the Heritage Branch to collaborate on a few projects and to begin the process of developing a strategic plan for a Heritage Program.

17) If sustainable funding is achieved, FPCC envisions a Cultural Heritage program that will work directly with communities to:

- Increase in Indigenous heritage experts actively working in their communities
- Develop a strong network of Indigenous heritage experts
- Provide training opportunities available for best practices in Indigenous heritage programming stewardship
- To ensure that programs are in place for CH revitalization and maintenance

18) Lastly I would like to suggest ways that you may improve your work with ICH and help support a more inclusive and accurate historical account for BC and Canada.

Input from Indigenous communities has evolved in many positive ways recently, but it has often has been constricted to the avenues of engagement and consultation.

In Canada, as in other colonial nations, the role of Indigenous cultural heritage in the narratives of colonialism has been systematically been ignored or relegated to an accessory in the overall Canadian historical narrative. It has not received little or no financial support or opportunities to be presented and shared publicly and in schools as that of Settler heritage.

There are alternative or additional ways that you may offer or work towards a richer, diverse, collaborative and more inclusive perspective of heritage.

- Considering conducting a simple audit to research, understand and account for an authentic history and past mistakes of your organization or region has made in it work and interpretation or exclusion of IH.

- Open the door to incorporate information about cultural landscapes and intangible heritage. That means moving away from the “research ‘on and for’ communities towards research ‘by and with’ Indigenous Peoples. Many historical research projects fail to include Indigenous community members as ‘experts’ in their personal experience, history, and I believe that they should play a central role in how their heritage is recognized and conserved.
- Even for our own communities, collecting Indigenous CH is often a challenging, particularly because we “lived in an oral tradition –we didn’t write our teachings down and now we are at a point where we are able to piece our histories together in a way that will combine oral traditions with histories written by the explorers and later by the ethnographers, archaeologists and others. This brings a unique and notable urgency to the work of many Indigenous heritage practitioners who must record the Indigenous voices to their histories. In some instances, this knowledge is being unearthed and recorded for the first time ever. This means many hours “sitting with the Elders and starting to make that connection to the old way” and connecting with different communities
- There are opportunities to support this effort either through collaborative projects or by provide financial and other supports to rewrite histories; protect sacred areas/landscapes; develop educational materials; develop exhibits; create tools for transmission of culture, and advocate for funding for programs such as FPCC.
- I also want to emphasis, if you begin a collaborative effort, please do not repeat some of the past mistakes. Take time to build relationships, conduct that audit, listen and learn, and show gratitude and humility. There is no need to argue points.

19) I believe that we need to redefine what we think of as heritage – moving beyond looking at Indigenous heritage as simply artifacts or stones and beads - and recognize that there are different worldviews and that heritage values are relative to what people think is worthy of recognizing. Moreover, we need to expand the western understanding of heritage to support cultural resurgence and revitalization. Cultural resurgence and revitalization will require a deeper foundation, community support, long term funding and commitments, collaborations and a cultural understanding.

In conclusion, I have left you with some questions to consider in your work with ICH.

How can you make your museum and work with heritage more than just focused on objects (tools and beads)?

What can you do to support the revitalization and safeguarding of IHC?

Are these some good examples locally for you to learn from?