

A Layered Homeland: History, Culture and Visions of Development

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Summary. Authority over resource management and development has historically been viewed as a state responsibility. However, many indigenous peoples and local communities have practiced community based management systems “legitimised” as part of their own culture and history. Development theory recognises the importance of such systems but state initiatives have tended to privilege their own objectives in place of community interests and practices. In Ardoch (Ontario Canada), different culture groups have collided and evolved over several generations, each developing a sense of attachment to place based on their own cultures and interpretations of history which are at once contradictory and shared making it a *layered homeland*. Yet, while cultural difference sometimes results in a conflicting narrative at the local level, when faced with an external threat, solidarity between these different culture groups can also emerge. At the hamlet of Ardoch, a 1979 state initiative to manage and develop wild rice collided with a long standing community based management system with roots in its indigenous cultural heritage. While this conflict was overtly about access and control of wild rice, it was also about different attitudes toward the role of communities in resource management decisions and the implications this has for resource use and conservation, community and economic development, and cultural identity and survival. In the end, local community management was able to continue under official provincial authority. However, no benefit that could have resulted from cooperation was achieved. This conflict demonstrates that when states make management decisions without consultation with communities they risk damaging environmental, economic, and cultural linkages. They also risk loss of access to traditional knowledge, damaging human and cultural capital, and generating considerable hostility, which undermines potential opportunities achieved through more cooperative approaches.

Historically in western conceptual thought, and in legislation arising from this perspective, authority and control of resource management and development have been viewed as a state responsibility. However, all over the world, indigenous peoples and local communities have practiced long standing community based management systems based in culture and history that implicitly assume locally based authority and control. There is an inherent potential for conflict between these two systems, but also a potential for cooperation and mutual strengthening.

Current resource development theory has recognised the importance of community based management systems and that com-

munities are often more conscious of socio-environmental interconnections than are the state agencies that assume responsibility for regional and resource development initiatives.¹ If state approaches seek to draw on local knowledge and expertise, and to formulate development plans in cooperation with local partners, benefits can be maximised. Historically, however, state initiatives have failed to involve local communities, and have tended to privilege their own objectives in place of community inter-

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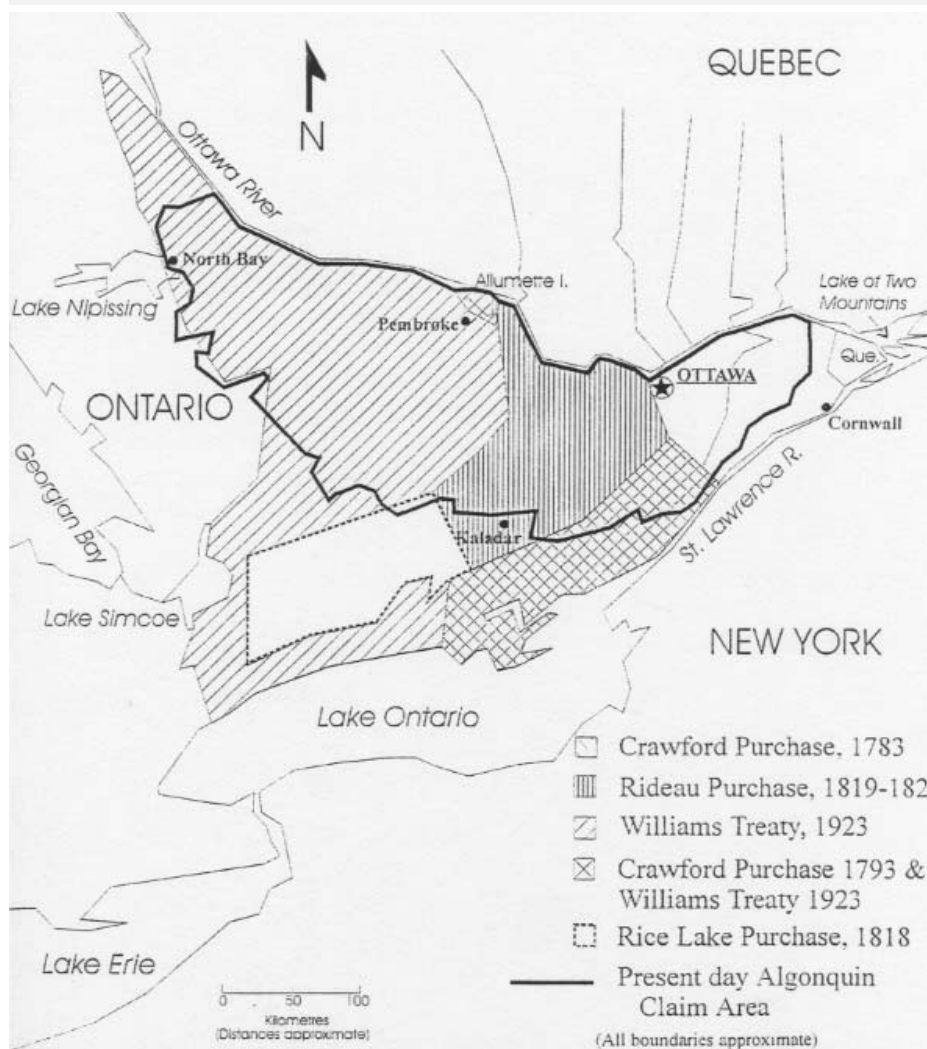
In 1979, at the hamlet of Ardoch (Ontario, Canada), a state initiative to manage and develop a particular resource (wild rice/*Manomin*) collided with a long standing community based management system with roots in the cultural heritage of the area. It began when the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) issued a wild rice harvesting license to a private harvester without consulting with local peo-

ples. This simple event drew together local residents into an alliance of culture groups in opposition to this state initiative, set in motion a conflict that would not find resolution for four years, and would completely fail to meet the state objectives of resource and economic development it had sought to achieve.

This conflict touched on a number of themes: divergent concepts around what constituted development; different values associated with the conservation and management of wild rice; conflicting perspectives on the effects of wild rice development on the local economy; and diverging ideas about community and indigenous rights to local resources.

The residents of Ardoch were (and are) a community of different culture groups living as neighbours. In communities like Ardoch, where different culture groups have collided² and then evolved over several generations, each group can develop a sense of attachment to place based on their own culture and their own interpretations of history that are at once contradictory and shared making it a homeland layered with meaning – a *layered homeland*.³ Thus, at a local level differences in cultural heritage sometimes play themselves out in a conflicting narrative. Yet, when faced with an external threat, the mutual history of struggle for survival can provide a basis for solidarity between

Map 1. Mississauga Land Cessions and the Contemporary Algonquin Claim Area (Courtesy Huitema, 2000)



Source: Huitema, M., 2000, "Land of which the savages stood in no particular need": Dispossessing the Algonquins of South-Eastern Ontario of their Lands, 1760-1930, Queen's University M.A. (Geography)

these different culture groups.

'Indigenous rights' and who qualifies

In Canadian law *indigenous rights* are based on British Common Law which states that "the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada should retain, under English law, those property rights they possessed prior to colonisation that have not been expressly extinguished by specific legislation and/or for which compensation has not been paid".⁴ This position was directly applied in North America through the *Royal Proclamation* (1763) which reiterated this position and provided that the purchase of indigenous lands was to be undertaken by state agents exclusive. Once the federal government had treated for enough lands to consolidate its interests, the Canadian state was established through the *British North America Act (BNA) 1867*. Through this act the federal government took responsibility for Indians and lands reserved for Indians while provincial governments were given responsibilities for natural resources. Further clarification through the *1889 St. Catherine's Milling* court decision granted ownership of all ceded lands to the provincial governments. This made any interest in resources outside of reserve lands extremely difficult to pursue.

Status Indians are those who are recognised as 'Indians' under the Canadian Constitution. While the history of inclusion is somewhat complicated, status was primarily achieved through the treaty making process. Once a treaty had been signed, the state took the position that any prior right of ownership had been forfeited in exchange for small areas of land reserved for indigenous use (reserve lands), and certain rights defined within the Treaty and various Indian Acts. By the end of the 1800s, Indian status, *not indigenous heritage*, came to be seen as the means

through which a person was deemed eligible for special consideration.

Non-status indigenous peoples are either individuals who have lost status through a number of revisions to the 'Indian Act', or they are descendents of those who were never formally recognised through the treaty making process. Non-status indigenous persons were excluded from any special right held by Status Indians. Rather, they were considered to be 'local' peoples along with other non-indigenous residents despite their considerable differences in perspectives and expectations. In effect, non-status Indians became *white by definition*⁵ and their ownership of any 'special right' which may have flowed from their indigenous heritage and original occupation of the land was considered to have been extinguished.

The post-WWII years dramatically altered the social climate in Canada leading to a critical reinterpretation of social policy, providing a climate for the reconceptualisation of indigenous policy. In this time frame, the Calder case (1973), comprehensive claims policy (1973), and the repatriation of the Constitution (1984) changed the legal position of indigenous peoples and reopened the debate surrounding indigenous rights in Canada.⁶ However, at the time of the Mud Lake conflict (1979-1982) non-status indigenous peoples were denied recognition of any special right, while status Indians had little recognition of rights to lands outside of reserve lands.

Settlement of the lower Ottawa valley & development of the Ardoch community

The historical record shows evidence that Algonquin peoples inhabited both sides of the Ottawa valley in the 1600s. By the 1700s they were frequenting the Lake of Two Mountains in Quebec to undertake business with the then colonial administra-

tion during the summer and would return to their hunting grounds in various parts of the Ottawa watershed in late summer.⁷ During this timeframe, Mississauga peoples expanded south from their homelands northeast of Lake Huron and were living in the region north of Kingston Ontario (south of the Ardoch region) at the time of the loyalist settlement in the late 1700s.⁸ The exact nature of the boundaries between the Mississauga and Algonquin nations during this time are not known, however relationships surely existed between members of these groups and it is likely that the boundaries were fairly porous.⁹ The historical record consistently defines the Algonquin territory as lands whose waters flow into the Ottawa River on both sides of the river, and there is ongoing evidence demonstrating that Algonquin peoples continued to reside in the region. However, despite ongoing

a female ancestor of the Algonquin community planted wild rice at Mud Lake some time around the 1900s... stewardship was handed down within the family... and became part of the community heritage of living on and with the land.

claims by Algonquin peoples, the Crown chose to engage in a treaty process with the Mississauga to lands on the north shore of the Ottawa River and to exclude claims by Algonquin peoples (Figure 1).¹⁰

Settlement activity began in the region surrounding Ardoch Ontario in the 1840s.¹¹ The

crown, having considered indigenous interests extinguished, granted European settlers title to lands in the region free of charge under the condition that certain settlement requirements were met (e.g. land clearance and the construction of dwellings). Algonquin peoples found themselves faced with an influx of non-indigenous settlers, backed by the crown, taking possession of lands regardless of Algonquin occupation.¹² The progressive evolution of this process marginalised Algonquin Peoples and effec-

tively dispossessed them from their lands.

Many Algonquin peoples fled the territory. However, evidence shows that scattered groups remained in the region. At the start of the 1900s Algonquin peoples (specifically the Whiteduck family) lived in and around the area now known as Ardoch. Both settler and indigenous peoples made use of hunting and trapping, leading to competition for increasingly scarce resources. Because settlers were recognised as legitimate inhabitants of the area, indigenous inhabitants were pushed to the margins for survival, and forced into adaptive strategies.¹³

Local oral history acknowledges the planting of the wild rice at Mud Lake some time around the 1900s by a female ancestor of



Figure 1. Wild Rice growing at Mud Lake, Ontario. (Courtesy Susan DeLisle)

the current non-status Algonquin community. Stewardship of the wild rice was handed down through the Whiteduck family to the current steward, Harold Perry. By 1979, the wild rice growing in Mud Lake at Ardoch was part of the community heritage of living on and with the land. It was harvested annually by Algonquin residents from the area along with their Alderville Mississauga relatives, and by some of their non-indigenous neighbours. Out of the areas indigenous cultural heritage, the local inhabitants' relationship with the wild rice had evolved

into a community based management system, and a community resource.¹⁴

Indigenous Peoples relationship with wild rice/*Manomin*

Wild rice is known to indigenous peoples as *Manomin* – the “gift of the Creator”. Being easily stored, *Manomin* was known historically as an invaluable commodity for trade, and a critical food in times of scarcity.¹⁵ Contemporary *Manomin* use has a role in maintaining a link to the history and culture of its indigenous users. Harvesting is a ritualised activity learned, taught, and practiced in

culturally specified ways.¹⁶ Children harvest in lakes seeded by their grandparents and

It is an implicit understanding that a portion of the seed will be allowed to fall into the water, or be sowed on the water, for fish and other animal users, as well as for the regeneration of the plant for the future.

great grandparents; they learn how to harvest and process *Manomin* from their elders; and they continue to share in the communal practice of protecting, nurturing and harvesting the plant. As Thurston states, “for traditional harvesters, ricing is a

kind of spiritual holiday, a time for families and friends to come together.¹⁷

In Aboriginal communities, *Manomin* is subject to a system of Aboriginal management. This process includes a ‘steward’ who monitors the crop and decides when it is ready to harvest. The steward also decides who should be invited to participate in the harvest so that all community needs are met. The quality of rice beds are considered and, if poor, are left to rest in order to replenish. It is an implicit understanding that a portion of the seed will be allowed to fall into the water, or be sowed on the water, for fish



Figure 2. Wild Rice plants in August - these plants need a few more weeks to ripen. (Courtesy Susan DeLisle)

and other animal users, as well as for the regeneration of the plant for the future.¹⁸ In this way, there is an implicit recognition of themselves - the indigenous users - as members of an ecological community. It also implies respect for *Manomin* and its contribution to the well being of the whole ecological environment.

The 1970s saw a movement to open up tracts set aside for indigenous people to non-indigenous commercial operations. At Ardoch Ontario, this movement precipitated a four year struggle by the local community to protect what was seen as a local resource. This conflict took place between two major groups: a community action group vs. the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) and Lanark Wild Rice (LWR). The community action group was formed through an alliance of a number of different parties: the non-status Algonquin residents of Ardoch headed by the Perry family, their status Mississauga relatives from a nearby Mississauga reserve, non-indigenous permanent and seasonal residents, and a number of regional representatives (i.e. the local conservation authority, two regional municipal councils, the local

hunter and angler association, and the federal and provincial member of parliament).

The 1979-82 Mud Lake wild rice confrontation

In 1979, a license to harvest wild rice at Mud Lake in Ardoch Ontario was granted to LWR by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR). This brought provincial policy objectives to develop a viable wild rice industry squarely into conflict with a long-standing local traditional authority and management system. Evidence suggests that the community had no knowledge of the Wild Rice Harvesting Act (WRHA) 1960 which required users to make application to the OMNR for a harvesting permit. Rather, a long-term local authority structure was in place. The Perry family had always functioned as the recognised stewards of the wild rice. This local authority structure governed wild rice use and management and had done so for several generations. In addition, primary evidence suggests that local area OMNR staff were unaware of, or considered extraneous, the long time community practice that was in place.¹⁹ Thus, a local system of authority and management existed in parallel to provincial structures, with both parties presumably unaware of the other. The Mud Lake conflict represents a collision of these two systems.

The conflict came to light when a local (non-indigenous) resident discovered a commercial harvester harvesting wild rice on Mud Lake and tried to make a citizens arrest. The operator produced the OMNR issued harvesting license granting him harvesting privileges. Community members contacted the local OMNR office in protest and a large number of residents attended a meeting called to address the issue. Following local objections, the local OMNR office decided not to issue a harvesting license for the following year.

In response to this decision, LWR requested

a hearing under the WRHA 1960 which was held in July of 1980. The hearing was attended by large numbers of community members. Presentations were given by community members detailing the planting of the wild rice by a community ancestor, reseeding initiatives by the Perry family to maintain the crop over time, their concerns regarding the amount taken by commercial harvesters, the potential effect on the long term conservation of the wild rice bed, and potential related effects on the local economy. They also expressed their belief that commercial harvesting was contradictory to the principles of wild rice harvesting. They spoke to the needs of the fish, the birds, and the regeneration of the crop. Finally they argued that the wild rice belonged to the Perry family and should be left to the local community.

LWR detailed their experience with wild rice harvesting indicating that, in their experience, commercial harvesting did not represent a threat to the long term viability of wild rice beds. LWR also proposed sharing the wild rice harvest on a percentage basis with the local community, and proposed building a processing plant in the area producing local area jobs.

After consideration of the hearing report the Deputy Minister of the OMNR decided not to issue a license to LWR for the 1980 harvesting season. This prevented a commercial harvest in the 1980 season. Mr. Perry harvested a small amount of rice in order to reseed areas which he felt had been damaged by the previous year's commercial harvest.

Due to the community's non-violent protest LWR was unable to gain access to the lake before the end of the harvesting season. As a result, the community succeeded in preventing another season of commercial harvesting.

In response to the 1980 decision LWR met with the Minister of Natural Resources in November of that year and the previous

decision was overturned. The local office was ordered to issue a harvesting license to LWR for the following harvest season. The local community was not notified of this decision. When Mr. Perry went to apply for his personal use harvesting permit in September 1981 he was notified that the lake had been segmented and that he would have access to a portion of the wild rice crop only.

Mr. Perry submitted a letter of protest indicating that he would use any means – political, public and legal- in order to protect the wild rice from exploitation. The community took an adamant stand against commercial harvesting and prepared to block the commercial harvester from reaching the lake. They engaged in a media blitz through which they provided documentation of their position.

On Aug 30th 1981 community members set up road blocks and took up positions to block access to Mud Lake. LWR was given support by the OMNR and by the regional Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), who indicated that because LWR had a valid license to harvest; it was their duty to uphold that right and to protect LWR from harassment. Due to the community's non-violent protest LWR was unable to gain access to the lake before the end of the harvesting season. As a result, the community succeeded in preventing another season of commercial harvesting.

A second hearing was held under the WRHA 1960 on November 30th and December 1st, 1981. At this time, the terminology of the dispute shifted heavily towards a dialogue of scientific management, economic development, and Ministry control. Community legitimacy came under heavy attack, and the traditional knowledge held by Mr. Perry was described as lacking a scientific methodology, and as being intuitive, naïve and unsophisticated. The OMNR declared that all resources belonged to the province through the Constitution Act 1867, and stated its leg-

islated mandate to manage wild rice through the WRHA1960. They argued that they were the only agency having the necessary expertise to make appropriate management decisions. Finally, they maintained an absolute position that commercial harvesting must take place; that the sale of wild rice was a priority; and that this would benefit the community through money spent maintaining the industry, as well as the development of local jobs.

LWR engaged in a detailed discussion of scientific methods, results found in paddy wild rice experimentation, and pointed to Ojibwa communities that were engaged in commercial harvesting elsewhere. In response to community arguments regarding the potential conservation risks associated with commercial harvesting, LRW argued that the wild rice bed was too thick and was choking itself out. They argued that more effective harvesting would improve the quality of the wild rice bed. Finally they reiterated a commitment to share the harvest with the local community, again on a percentage basis, and proposed building a processing plant that would produce local economic development.

In response, community members once again put forth their position. They vehemently opposed commercial harvesting of any kind, including opposition to the sale of wild rice which went against their cultural relationship with it. They argued that that their traditional knowledge, hard won through years of relationship, demonstrated a commitment to conservation expressed through their reseeding efforts in response to years when the wild rice was threatened or weakened. They further argued that their long term relationship with the wild rice established them as the only party who could justifiably claim a right to benefit from the harvest. In contrast, they argued that the OMNR had no legitimacy to manage the wild rice because they had no history, and no relationship with it, and criticised the OMNR for failing to assess the effect of the 1979 harvest, thereby challenging their commitment to conservation of the resource.



Figure 3. Dancers at the celebratory Pow Wow following the unveiling of a plaque commemorating community opposition to commercial harvesting of the Mud Lake wild rice at the 25 year 'Manomin Victory Celebration' - August 21, 2004. (Courtesy Susan DeLisle)

Furthermore, in response to statements regarding economic development, they discussed their local economy based on the abundance of wildlife in the region and stated their concerns regarding the potential damage to their local economy should commercial harvesting prove detrimental. They argued that financial benefit is not restricted to the sale of resources, but is part of the benefit that comes from the interrelationship between the local economy and the conservation of resources. They also expressed concern that financial profit was the primary motivation of any commercial enterprise, suggesting that LWR had little incentive to place a priority on conservation, and that the local community stood to lose culturally and economically if the wild rice bed was destroyed.

However, in an effort to address the concerns expressed by the OMNR regarding effective use and management of the resource, the community proposed a community organisation under the title IMSet (the Indian, Métis and Settler Wild Rice Association) to keep harvesting records and

to study development potential. In April 1982, a further significant concession was made involving limited commercial harvesting for seed only, on 30% of the lake, if the commercial license was granted to IMSet only, and the remainder of the lake was reserved for local access and control. It was argued that LWR should seed lakes for its own use rather than taking advantage of the hard work of others.

In July 1982 the OMNR informed the local community that their organisation, IMSet would be considered for a commercial license to harvest on 30% of the lake allocated for commercial harvesting.

They further noted that the remainder of the lake would be reserved for community use but that harvesters would be required to sign a book and pay a \$1. fee to harvest. However, the decision maintained the absolute authority over the wild rice by OMNR and did not allow for harvest quotas and decisions to be made by the local community. The OMNR failed to recognise the community's right to manage the wild rice through their generations-long relationship and traditional management practice – a position which failed to acknowledge community conservation concerns.

In the community's response they rejected the OMNR's decision and informed the OMNR that they would continue to exercise their indigenous right to control and use the wild rice at Mud Lake. They detailed the community's efforts to accommodate the concerns of the OMNR, as well as the failure of the OMNR to do the same in exchange. They challenged the OMNR indicating that they (the OMNR) "do not have a legitimate right to the wild rice at Mud Lake and can-

not arbitrarily declare that it has a responsibility and right to determine its use". They indicated that they would "passively resist any force which attempts to diminish our members rights to peacefully harvest wild rice on any part of Mud Lake"... and that they were "dedicated to a strengthened union between native and rural people to ensure that their rights to this particular resource and the accompanying cultural values and traditions are not surrendered".²⁰

In August 1982 another meeting was called where a final resolution was reached, preempting yet another harvesting season conflict. This agreement stipulated that the community would apply for a harvesting license (thereby preserving the authority structure of the OMNR), and in exchange, the OMNR would withdraw from management decisions on Mud Lake (thereby maintaining the community's functional authority). Both agreed that the issue of jurisdiction was disputed and would be left for another time.

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While the community action alliance did present a common challenge to the OMNR's objectives during this struggle, they did not do so without cultural differences in position. The different values expressed in the following statements show the significant differences in cultural perspective, representing a significant potential to incur conflict among different segments of local society from time to time. However, faced with an external threat, the mutual history of struggle for survival provided a basis for solidarity between these different culture groups in order to protect the long standing management and use of a locally significant resource.



Figure 4. Allen Roy, Bob Lovelace and Harold Perry - three of the original defenders of the Mud Lake Wild Rice. (Courtesy Susan DeLisle)

Indigenous community perspectives

- Mr. Perry and the Algonquin non-status community were primarily focused on their family and cultural relationship with the wild rice. They felt that the rice was a part of their identities and their very beings. They felt that the rice belonged to them, and that they had a responsibility to continue to protect it. They also expressly declared that they were the only ones with the knowledge to properly manage the wild rice based on their long experience, and noted that it was their duty, out of respect for their ancestors, and on behalf of their children to continue to do so. They also had concerns that the values of use and sharing providing for the long term survival of the crop and respect for other users – birds/fish/others – would continue. They utterly opposed management by the OMNR.
- Status Mississauga positions focused on their long term history of harvesting at Mud Lake, a confirmation of the Perry family as the recognised stewards, and the significant cultural importance and protocol in the process of harvesting. They expressed the importance for continuing the traditional practice in the tra-

ditional manner in order to pass on their heritage to their children, and argued that harvesting was a matter of indigenous right, and that wild rice belonged to its indigenous users. A further point of significance was that wild rice was never harvested for sale, and that both harvesting and sharing of wild rice was to be undertaken in culturally specified ways.

Non-indigenous community perspectives

- The *non-indigenous Ardoch Residents* were primarily concerned with the lack of consultation with and respect for local people. They also felt deeply that the wild rice was tied up with the economic well-being of the region, and thus played a role in the lives of everyone in the region, whether they harvested rice or not. They felt that the benefits of the wild rice belonged to the local people and should not be risked. They did however approve of seeding other lakes for other users, including LWR.
- As with other local residents, the *Association of Hunters & Anglers* expressed concern regarding the potential effects on harvestable species if the rice crop was threatened. They had no specific opposition to OMNR control so long as local access was protected, and expressed that community and waterfowl interests should take priority, followed by commercial needs. They were not averse to commercial harvesting but felt that new beds should be seeded for the purpose.
- The *Mississippi Conservation Authority* noted their involvement in conservation and reseeded initiatives of the wild rice over time. They felt strongly that the wild rice on Mud Lake should be left for traditional and domestic users, and that no commercial harvesting should be permitted on this site.

Perspectives of the government representatives

- *Mr. McEwen* (MPP) and *Mr. VanKoughnet* (MP) both expressed concern with the lack of local consultation, and with the cost of fighting the community (e.g. the standoff and hearings) vs. the \$1 cost of the harvesting license issued to LWR. Mr. VanKoughnet also expressed that the rice should be left for the local community since they had planted and nurtured it.
- *Mr. Gorham* (Conservative Candidate) felt that access should be granted to the Perry family and local residents. He felt that commercial harvesters should seed new sites to accommodate their needs. He also expressed that the Perry family had 100 years of management experience on Mud Lake and had proven their ability to conserve and manage the wild rice. He also expressed that the local community had the greatest interest in maintaining its survival.
- *Bill Flieler* (local Reeve) expressed that the OMNR/community relationship used to be good, but deteriorated when the local office was moved to another area, and that the wild rice dispute was only the most recent example of their indifference to local interests. He supported the Perry family's indigenous rights to the wild rice, and felt that they should retain their authority over the crop because of their history of establishing and maintaining the wild rice for generations.

Clearly, the perspectives expressed by the different members of the community are significant. Indigenous representatives are primarily concerned with maintaining the Perry family's authority and the cultural protocol associated with the harvest whereas non-indigenous representatives are more concerned with local consultation and the continuation of local access - though some do express their belief that the Perry family's involvement with the wild rice should be

recognised as a right of long time use. However, while differences existed between the various groups constituting this *community*, commonality and cooperation were achieved and presented as community statements, especially regarding the need for community involvement in decision-making, the belief that the Perry family should retain their right to harvest due to their history of seeding and maintenance of the wild rice crop, and their concern regarding protection of the wild rice and their local economy.

Communities are rarely uniform and may be comprised of significantly different value systems held with equal vigor. Likewise, state agents also have assumptions and values that influence their perspectives. It is critical that consultation be broad enough to clarify different perspectives, and meaningful enough to ensure communities are active agents in shaping their environments. In this way, the power of local will can be harnessed to make development plans meaningful, productive, and successful. Failing to do so means failing to accomplish these aims.

Conclusions

The evolution of events in the provincial context suddenly took form on Mud Lake through the OMNR's initiatives to further wild rice production in Ontario. This initiative came squarely into conflict with a local reality which had evolved over several generations producing a sense of attachment—informed by different cultural perspectives—to a significant local resource. It was this sudden collision between local and provincial realities that led to the 1979-82 Mud Lake wild rice confrontation.

This conflict demonstrates how regional policy objectives have historically taken shape—without local participation or any meaningful recognition of local peoples' attachment and commitment to their environment. This lack of involvement with local contexts failed to take account of the relationship between

local environments, local economies, and local cultural realities. It represented policy and implementation strategies that ignored local values, interests, access to, and authority over locally significant resources.

The community of Ardoch and the wild rice in Mud Lake was a significant site of meaning for the Algonquin residents. However, it was also a site of meaning to its local non-native inhabitants who had migrated to the area and worked to build a life in this new environment. These overlapping meanings were based on a history that was at once conflicting, and shared. The sudden presence of outsiders representing a threat to their sense of a hard won local autonomy drew forth a sense of unity in adversity which had not been articulated to any great degree prior to this conflict.

As much as this conflict was about access and control of a particular resource, this conflict was far more about different attitudes regarding the role of communities in resource management decisions and the implications this has for resource use and conservation, community and economic development, cultural identity, and cultural survival. For instance, this conflict demonstrated that when a state government makes decisions based on policy objectives without consultation with local communities, it runs the risk of damaging environmental, economic, and cultural linkages. Furthermore, it risks losing access to traditional knowledge and practices, damaging human and cultural capital, and generating considerable lack of cooperation and even outright conflict.

This study generates a number of further

because the provincial government failed to consult the local community, and because they thoroughly lacked any desire to engage with community perspectives in an open manner, the potential benefits that may have been possible through cooperation and alliance were never achieved.

questions. Could the province have used its resources to expand and enhance the value of wild rice in the region? Could the community have benefited from an open alliance of all parties? Could additional community revenues have been generated by rethinking the provincial development strategy? Could provincial residents as a whole have benefited from seeding initiatives to increase the availability of wild rice? The answers to these various questions are most likely yes. Unfortunately, because the provincial government failed to consult the local community, and because they thoroughly lacked any desire to engage with community perspectives in an open manner, the potential benefits that may have been possible through cooperation and alliance were never achieved.

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Notes

- Berneshawi, 1997; Artibise and Stelter, 1995; DCI, 1995; Cizek, 1993.
- Collision connotes the arrival of Europeans in the homelands of the indigenous peoples and the often less than harmonious nature of initial periods of transition and adaptation as each group came to terms with the presence and effects of the other.
- DeLisle, 2001.
- Asch, 1984.
- DeLisle, 1998.
- Brock, 2000.
- Trigger and Day, 1994.
- Osborne and Ripmeester, 1995.
- Huitema, 2000.
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- Huitema, 2000.
- DeLisle, 2001.
- Jenness, 1977.
- Ratkoff-Rojnoff, 1980.
- Thurston, 1992:27.
- Richardson, 1993; Moodie, 1991.
- KWS, Aug.22, 1981.
- Lovelace, 1982.