

Clayoquot Alliance

for Research, Education and Training: Exploring Borderlands, Bridging Boundaries

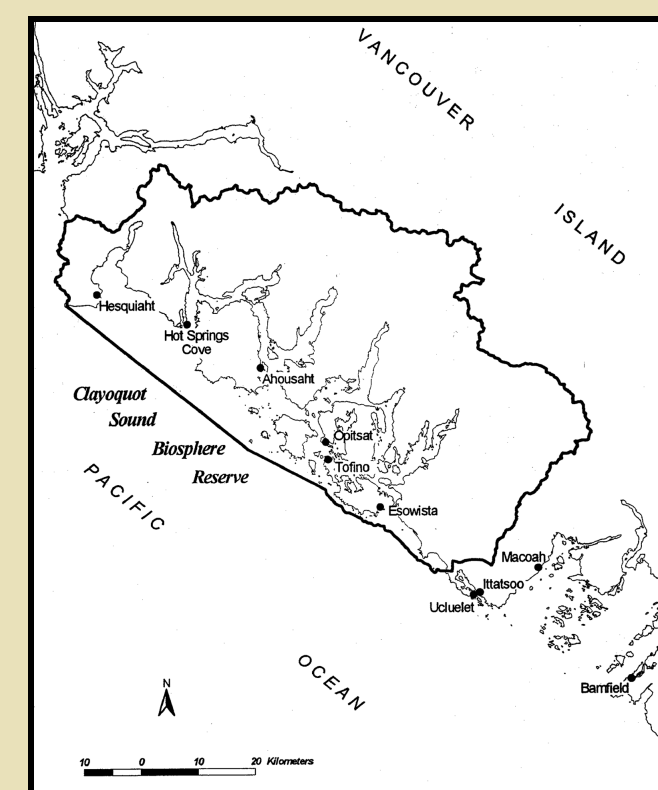
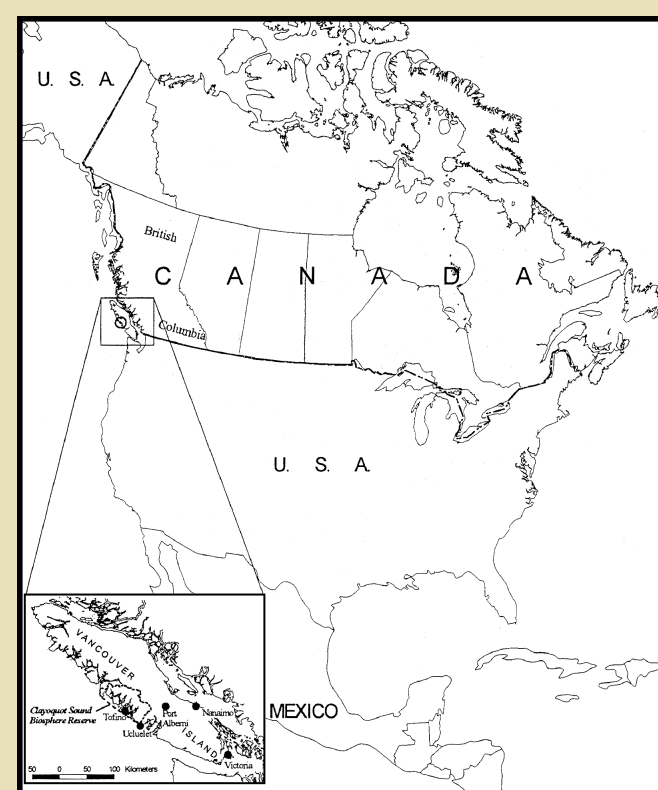
by Kelly Bannister, Towagh Behr, Stan Boychuk, Nadine Crookes, Rod Dobell, Sylvia Harron, Sean LeRoy, Anne Morgan, Gerry Schreiber and Jennifer Yakimishyn

Introduction

MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATIONS are now in place in the Clayoquot Sound region on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. Fundamental social transformations are under way. We all need to examine and reflect on how they are going and where they might take us. The Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training is a unique partnership, founded with the goal of understanding and facilitating these adjustments by forging innovative links between the University and the communities of Clayoquot Sound. Through such links, community interests and needs become academic concerns, and the education and training resources of the University become more accessible in the region. Concretely, this work aims to establish a resource centre, or “science shop”, for ongoing community-university connections designed to foster continuing collaborative research, education and training initiatives.

Who are we?

THE CLAYOQUOT ALLIANCE is a Community-University Research Alliance funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The Alliance is a collaborative partnership of the University of Victoria and the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, which was established to promote conservation and sustainable development in the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Direction for the Clayoquot Alliance is provided by the Principal Investigator at the University of Victoria (Rod Dobell) and the Executive Director of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (Stan Boychuk), in consultation with a Steering Committee that includes representatives from the academic community and the communities of the Clayoquot Sound region.



Borderlands and boundary work

WITHIN COMMUNITIES OF PLACE like those in the Clayoquot Sound region, the processes of economic structural adjustment, institutional innovation and social transformation, and evolving understandings of humanity’s relationships with uncertain and complex natural systems, are all lived experience. Within academic communities, they are topics for inquiry, motivated in many cases by a concern for the contribution that research might make to greater resilience and increased wellbeing in communities, but in all cases by a search for knowledge and strong convictions about the importance of increased understanding of these issues.

The need to better understand the way in which research and knowledge can support policy formation, decision-making and action—in communities as well as in governments—has led to increasing academic interest in such processes of boundary work, and in boundary organizations serving as the structures within which those processes are carried out. Two strikingly different fields of study address the social borderlands that set the larger context. Within *literary theory* there is work on cultural borderlands seen as places where diverse cultures come together to trade, negotiate and attempt to build shared understandings. Within *administrative theory* there is a growing literature on organizational borderlands—cross-border and cross-scale institutional settings that must bridge divergent jurisdictional and cultural traditions.

The lived experience within Clayoquot Sound offers a record that can be brought to bear in developing theory and testing the extent to which that lived experience resists or appears to validate hypothetical frames and conjectures. On the other hand, the needs of communities within the Clayoquot Sound region challenge academic commentators to demonstrate the relevance of their conceptual frameworks by showing how they contribute to greater capacity within those communities to participate effectively in governance and management pursued in an array of new institutions from local to global scale.

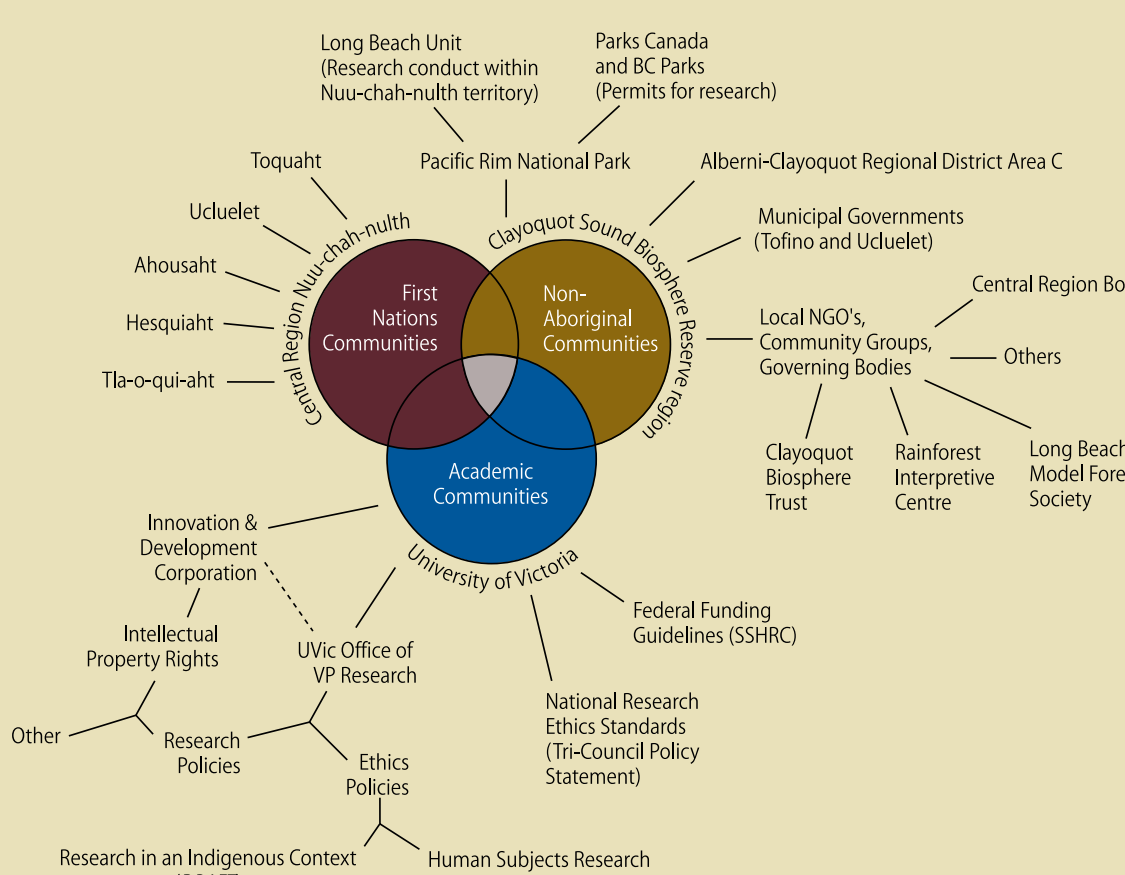


Sample projects

Protocols Project

THE PROTOCOLS PROJECT IS A COOPERATIVE EFFORT begun in Fall 2001 as a response to local interest in and concerns about conduct of “outside researchers” working in the Clayoquot Sound region. An initial emphasis has been to build a foundation for community-university research collaborations and avoid misunderstandings among people of different backgrounds. A participatory process guided by a community working group was set up to identify and understand local research-related issues and develop consensus on how to address them. Agreement was sought among three broadly defined communities—local Nuuchahnulth First Nations, local non-Aboriginal communities, and academic researchers working in the region—each with its own cultures, traditions and expectations. A *Standard of Conduct for Research in Clayoquot and Northern Barkley Sound Communities* was completed in May 2003.

The cornerstone of this collective effort is respect for the well-being and interconnectedness of individuals, communities and ecosystems, consistent with the Nuuchahnulth principles of *lisaak* (Living respect) and *Hishuk ish ts’awkw* (Everything is one, everything is connected).



Research & Document Database



EXTENSIVE COMMUNITY AND ACADEMIC LITERATURE about the Clayoquot Sound region already existed but much was in the form of “grey literature” and largely inaccessible to communities or universities. A systematic inventory of social and environmental research materials was undertaken on contract by community researcher, Sylvia Harron. An initial database and holdings catalogue has been created to serve as an important starting point for community members and outside researchers contemplating work in the Clayoquot Sound region.

Language Project

Huʔaciiyukʷ ap Ciqʷyak
(Bringing Back the Language)



LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION IS A KEY CONCERN of First Nations in the Clayoquot Sound region. The Clayoquot Alliance has provided support for the establishment of the *Nuu-chah-nulth Central Region Language Group*, an initiative of the Central Region First Nations of the Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council. The support of the Clayoquot Alliance has centred on the production of a multimedia CD-ROM documenting the Nuuchahnulth names and cultural knowledge of selected native plants, animals and marine resources. This is the first of a planned series of CD-ROMs highlighting the traditional language and culture of the Central Region First Nations. A second CD-ROM will be released soon.

Eelgrass ecology

EELGRASS BEDS IN CLAYOQUOT SOUND cover hundreds of hectares of nearshore habitat. Many local industries, such as crab fisheries, sport fisheries, whale watching and tourism rely on healthy eelgrass habitat to support them. The Clayoquot Alliance provided support to Jennifer Yakimishyn, a Master’s student in geography at the University of Victoria, to help youth



in the Clayoquot Sound region gain invaluable work experience in marine biology through hands-on scientific research. By assisting in beach seining and eelgrass sampling activities, local youth gained an appreciation and understanding for local marine habitat, and awareness which will facilitate environmental stewardship in their community.



Social Sciences and Humanities
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