Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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BSc (University of Alberta, 2009)

“Monitoring Expertise: A perspective on environmental impacts monitoring in northeast British Columbia”

School of Environmental Studies

Monday, August 31, 2015
10:00AM
David Turpin Building
Room B247

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Karena Shaw, School of Environmental Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Jessica Dempsey, School of Environmental Studies, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Michele-Lee Moore, Department of Geography, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Randy Scharien, Department of Geography, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

The shale gas industry in northeast British Columbia is rapidly expanding and is promoted by the provincial government as a promising economic venture for the entire province. However, the industry is having impacts on the traditional territory of the Fort Nelson First Nation although they have protected rights to continue to use the land to meet their subsistence needs. These impacts are not fully understood and continue to be under-explored on issues of importance to the Fort Nelson First Nation. I conducted this research to support the work being done by the Fort Nelson First Nation Department of Lands and Resources as well as to critically assess the challenges they face for the benefit of a wider audience. This research revolves around determining how the Fort Nelson First Nation can assert their rights and title by taking control of, or inserting themselves in the data collection and monitoring activities of the shale gas industry. Utilizing a theory of knowledge politics, this research analyses two strategies that challenge what knowledge should count, and on what terms: (1) the Fort Nelson First Nation's participation and appropriation of the professionalized science regime and (2) the development of the Fort Nelson First Nation’s community-based monitoring program and its ability to impact decision-making. Drawing on primary research, participant observation, literature reviews and document analyses, I argue that these strategies are crucial and can create but do not guarantee links to affecting natural resource management decisions.