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

of

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BA (University of Guelph, 2012)

“Eating Our Culture”: Intersections of Culturally Grounded Values-Based Frameworks and Indigenous Food Systems Restoration in Secwepemcúlecw”

School of Environmental Studies

Friday, December 4, 2020
10:00 A.M.
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Darcy Mathews, School of Environmental Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Brian Thom, Department of Anthropology, UVic (Outside Member)
Dr. Kelly Bannister, Department of Environmental Studies, UVic (Additional Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Dorothy Christian Cucw, Department of Indigenous Initiatives, Simon Fraser University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Jean-Paul Restoule, Department of Indigenous Education, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Culturally grounded values, epistemologies, and indicators have always been ways of measuring and adapting to social and ecological change in Indigenous frameworks. Indigenous food systems are central capacities supporting social-ecological resilience, however settler-colonialism and environmental degradation are two drivers of rapid cumulative change over the past century that are at the root of health challenges experienced by Indigenous people. Indigenous food sovereignty is a framework many Indigenous communities have been working within to support the restoration of Indigenous food systems, knowledges, and relationships to land in this time of resurgence. Recent scholarship highlights the urgent need for understanding the role of biocultural and culturally grounded values frameworks, aligning with Indigenous cultures and priorities, for measuring adaptive capacity and resilience. Indigenous scholars and communities are also calling for more respectful and meaningful research practices in alignment with Indigenous worldviews (Peltier 2018; Wilson 2008).

The Neskonlith Band’s Switzmalph community, near Salmon Arm, British Columbia, has been working towards restoring Secwépemc plants and food systems through land-based education, restoration of Secwépemc culture, land-based pedagogies and knowledges, as well as through collaboration in multi-scalar partnerships. This case study highlights four emergent values related to food systems restoration in Switzmalph, and Secwépemc territory more broadly, and the ways in which these values inform future pathways and multi-scalar relationships supporting Indigenous food systems restoration. This study also highlights the importance of process-oriented approaches to research for demonstrating how Indigenous ways of knowing can guide ongoing and embodied applications of ethics frameworks. The results of this work highlight the vital importance of participatory and community-led research throughout all stages of research design, and respect and value for Indigenous ways of knowing in research.