

4.6 Conservation, economic development and community values: legal, policy and ethical perspectives

Summary

Project Leader(s)

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This project will examine the legal, policy, administrative and ethical framework within which an economically-important sustainable use of wildlife, namely sport hunting, is practiced in Nunavut and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. The term 'conservation hunting' is now increasingly applied to sport or recreational hunting where those hunts result in demonstrable conservation and social benefits. Conservation hunting, most commonly for polar bear (but also for muskox and caribou) began in the early 1970s in the Canadian Arctic, and today provides a number of Inuit communities in Nunavut and the NWT with seasonal employment and a significant source of new income. Conservation hunting requires communities to reallocate scarce (quota-controlled) culturally-valued (subsistence) resources to non-resident hunters. This reallocation is sometimes a matter of intense debate reflecting changing cultural values, changes that may coincidentally affect various other customary beliefs and practices relating to, e.g., wildlife management/stewardship, Inuit entrepreneurship, and interpersonal community relations. This project will investigate these potential changes and their implications, and how the impacts of any adverse impacts are being mediated. The research program involves a number of Inuit organizations as partners, and will: (1) document and analyze variations in the practice of conservation hunting in the Canadian Arctic, (2) critically assess the conservation and social benefits and costs associated with this type of resource use, (3) examine the legal and policy framework within which these conservation-hunting programs operate, and (4) examine the future of conservation hunting in light of predicted environmental changes affecting the Canadian Arctic. To the extent that such predicted environmental changes in the Arctic may adversely impact these economically, socially, culturally and nutritionally important wildlife populations and hence people depending upon these resources, greater understanding of evolving human-wildlife relationships in the North should contribute to formulating enlightened policy responses directed to mitigating any negative consequences of such environmental changes. An important goal of the project is to contribute to building capacity in northern communities and indigenous organizations so that northerners can fully participate in policy and program developments affecting their present and future wellbeing.

People

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Publications

Articles Published in Refereed Publications

Foote, L. and Wenzel, G.W. , 2007, Conservation hunting concepts, Canada's Inuit, and polar bear hunting. , Tourism and the Consumption of Wildlife: Hunting, Shooting and Sport Fishing (B. Lovelock, Ed) , 188-212, Published

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Freeman, M.M.R., 2008, Challenges associated with assessing cetacean population recovery and conservation status, Endangered Species Research, 1, Accepted

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Freeman, M.M.R. , 2006, Symbolism, subsistence and modernity in the Canadian Arctic, International Symposium Towards an Anthropology of Resources. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 1, Published

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Keith, D. and Arqviq, 2006, Taima'na uqamaqattangitlutit: the polar bears can hear: the consequences of talking carelessly about polar bears in the Central Arctic, Paper presented at the 15th Inuit Studies Conference, Paris, 1, Published

Freeman, M.M.R., Sheikh, K.M., Bankes, N.D., Clark, D.A., Keith, D.E., Lee, D.E., and Wenzel, G.W., , 2006, Conservation Hunting, Sustainable Development and Community Values in the Canadian Arctic, poster, 2006 ArcticNet Annual Conference Proceedings, pp.60-61, Published

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Dowsley, M.G., 2007, The development of multi-level governance for the management of polar bears in Nunavut Territory, Canada, PhD Dissertation, Geography Department, vii + 188 pp., Published

Slavik, D, 2008, 2007 Polar Bear Hunter Survey: A Survey of American Sports Hunters who hunted Polar Bear in NWT in 2007., Report prepared for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Government of the Northwest Territories, 1, Accepted