



The Ecology of Food and Medicine Plant Gathering Sites as Defined by TI'azt'en Nation

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of Indigenous peoples has increasingly become a major focus of attention over the last twenty years (Turner et al. 2000). TEK is known to play a crucial role in aboriginal management of land resources and the sustainability of indigenous lifestyles. It is passed down orally from generation to generation and is in danger of being lost due to western influences and culture.

Plant resource use was (and is) infused with ecological knowledge and may take many forms (Turner et al. 2000). The flowering of certain plants, seasonal signals, and production of certain berries all act as indicators for people to know when to gather/harvest particular resources.

TI'azt'en Nation and UNBC are partnering on this research, which focuses on TI'azt'en traditional territory, located in north-central BC and consisting of 6500 km² of forestlands.

(Turner, N.J., M.B. Ignace, and R. Ignace. 2000. Traditional ecological knowledge and wisdom of Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia. Ecological Applications 10(5):1275-1287).

OBJECTIVES

- To collect information about the ecology of food/medicine plant gathering sites;
- To gain an understanding of the criteria for gathering individual plants for food/medicine use;
- To understand why traditional food/medicine plant gathering sites may fall out of use;
- To assess the impact of current land management practices for the validity of protection of traditional food/medicine plant gathering sites;
- To provide a framework for the protection measures that will be necessary for the continuation of plant gathering activities and sites.

METHODOLOGY

Introduce project and establish participants

Meeting to generate a list of plant species that are considered to be important food/medicine plants

Development of a survey focusing on the 15 plants (plant and site characteristics)

One-on-one interviews (using surveys) with each of the 10 participants

Field studies to gather samples of the 15 plants and collect ecological field data

Verification of transcribed interviews and determination of plant and site characteristics important for each of the 15 plants



RELEVANCE

The intent of this study is to consolidate information relevant to protection of traditional gathering sites, which can be formulated into policy for the TI'azt'en Nation's continued management of their traditional lands.

Perpetuation of this traditional knowledge is important to TI'azt'en Nation. Information gathered may also be used to develop teaching materials which TI'azt'en Nation will use in their TEK educational programs.

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Jack/Lodgepole pine
Chundoo
Pinus contorta



Labrador tea
Ludi musjek
Ledum groenlandicum



Devil's club
Hoolhghulh
Oplopanax horridus



Alder
K'us
Alnus tenuifolia



Kinnikinnick
Dunih t'an
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi



Balsam Fir
Tsootsun
Abies lasiocarpa



Juniper
Dats'an angut
Juniper communis



Yarrow
Latalba
Achillea millefolium



Soapberry
Ningwus
Shepherdia canadensis



Huckleberry
Duje
Vaccinium membranaceum



Poplar
T'ughus
Populus tremuloides



Raspberry
'Ut' ankal
Rubus idaeus



Cranberry
Tsalhtse
Viburnum edule



Red Willow
K'entsi
Cornus stolonifera