



Traditional Ecological Knowledge

◆ **What is Traditional Ecological Knowledge?**

TEK is a sophisticated knowledge possessed by a group or individual about an environment as a result of having lived in and observed an environment for generations. It is both evolving and current, and incorporates an historical, cultural and spiritual perspective of our existence in that environment. It is a requirement in Canada that TEK be considered and incorporated into Environmental Assessment. The unique challenge is learning to see the strengths of Indigenous knowledge with the strengths of western scientific knowledge.



Tool: PowerPoint "*Traditional Ecological Knowledge*"

Slides #2 to 4

◆ **Using Traditional Ecological Knowledge?**

Documentation and communication of TEK requires the support, cooperation, and involvement of the community. Groups differ on who holds TEK, how it is shared, and who has authority to pass it on. You will need to know if there are ethical standards in place for the collection, use, and distribution of TEK. What are the confidentiality requirements?

In the scoping phase of an Environmental Assessment, it is important to present how TEK is collected, who collects it, and how it is used and distributed. One example of how you might influence the process of collection and presentation of TEK data is to require the presentation of your TEK knowledge by someone within your community to an Environmental Panel during the review process, rather than handing it over to the proponent.



◆ Legal Considerations

Is there an ethics approval process or protocols in place for the collection, use and distribution of TEK? Who owns the data? This has implications under intellectual property rights. How can you control how this information is presented?

The use of TEK can have legal implications when it is used in a regulatory process or for purposes of government/Aboriginal consultations and can also have impacts on the decision of land claims or treaty negotiations.

◆ Protecting Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Conventional Intellectual Property Right laws offer very limited protection of TEK, because it generally grants protection to an individual. TEK tends to be held collectively by a community. It is important for communities to seek protection of their TEK through agreement with the proponent.



Suggestion:

For additional information on TEK check out the following websites:

- Aboriginal Canada Portal Traditional Ecological Knowledge
www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/en/ao27021.html
- Alaska Native Knowledge Network
www.ankn.uaf.edu/lks/tek.html
- Canadian Arctic Resources Committee
www.carc.org/

