

HEALTHY LAND, HEALTHY PEOPLE:

NCCAHA-sponsored research gathering to forge international connections
– with Integrative Science participation

Institute for Integrative Science & Health: www.integrativescience.ca

• October 2011, Vancouver, BC



Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall of Eskasoni First Nation attended the "Healthy Land, Healthy People" Gathering in Vancouver, BC, on 3-5 October 2011 hosted by the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (ACCAH). Canada Research Chair in Integrative Science Dr. Cheryl Bartlett was invited but unable to attend and asked that Dr. Heather Castleden of Dalhousie University, an AAHRP (Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program) colleague replace her.

The Gathering was to build upon the momentum from a number of eco-health events in 2010 and move that collaboration from general discussions about common research interests to the development of an international collaborative research agenda. Thus, the purpose of the Gathering was to discuss the relationships between and amongst each other about Indigenous knowledge(s) of environment and health as the basis for developing a collaborative research agenda.



Read about how the Gathering went ... information on the next page is from the NCCAHA website:

http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/264/Healthy_Land_Healthy_People_-_International_Gathering.nccah

"The land is speaking, and we need to listen," said Joseph Thompson, of the Tuhoe tribe of the North Island of New Zealand.

Maori peoples from New Zealand and Aboriginal participants from Canada gathered at the Squamish longhouse on traditional Salish territory in Vancouver, BC, for an NCCAH-hosted "Healthy Land, Healthy People" meeting on October 3 to 5. Together, they highlighted the role of Indigenous knowledge in addressing links between the health of land and the health of people.

"We need to see that the well-being of Indigenous peoples centers on the critical health of water systems and ecosystems - and that Indigenous knowledge is key to how we go about effecting meaningful and urgent change," said Dr. Margo Greenwood, Academic Lead of the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. The NCCAH is supporting a wholistic ['ecohealth'](#) approach to Indigenous well-being as an emerging priority that can link community, research and policy.

"For years we have been struggling in working with institutions in Canada to integrate our knowledge and ways of seeing," Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall told the gathering. He pointed to an [integrative science program](#) offered at Cape Breton University as one small example of a new approach to science education that blends Western-oriented sciences and a Mi'kmaq conceptual world view rooted in a reciprocal relationship with nature. The program was [recognized by the Canadian Council on Learning](#) in 2008 as a leading and effective learning practice.

Marshall noted that, in the context of global rates of consumption threatening to exceed the carrying capacity of the ecosystem, "we strongly feel our knowledge must be accepted as equal, that our ways of life and knowing have to be part of where we are going in future."

