



Indigenous Conservation in Canada

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AP/GEOG 4000 Honours Thesis

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Thesis: I argue that the integration of Indigenous-led conservation methods and ideologies into Canadian conservation models is not only feasible but also provides an equitable and robust model for conservation in Canada.

Abstract

This literature-based paper will examine the state of Indigenous-led conservation in the context of conservation in Canada, historically and presently, and how Indigenous-led conservation philosophies differ from Canada's conservation philosophies. The results demonstrate that Indigenous-led conservation is a healthier and more sustainable conservation model than Canada's which privileges scientific methodologies and ideologies. In particular, Indigenous-led conservation models focus more centrally on the interconnected systems of land and water as well as nature and people, but the model is not solely a holistic model that excludes scientific methods. Further, Indigenous-led conservation models ultimately support and build reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples. I will close by exploring three successful examples that will illustrate the feasibility and efficacy of Indigenous-led conservation.

Methodology

Secondary research that is literature-based.

The *We Rise Together* report (2018) written by the Indigenous Circle of Experts is privileged - this is due to (1) the report being written by Indigenous Peoples, and (2) it is a recent and thorough overview of Indigenous worldviews on conservation.

Conclusions

- Canada lacks commitment in a more holistic model that involves human activity
- Canada lacks commitment in making amends with Indigenous Peoples
- Indigenous-led models are premised on:
 - collaboration (both scientific & holistic methodologies)
 - mixed ideologies (economic development & sustainability)
 - human involvement
 - responsibility for the environment and future generations
- Ultimately, Canada's conservation model should incorporate INTERCONNECTEDNESS as a framework (interconnections of systems, of people, and between nature and people)
- Indigenous-led models are healthier, more sustainable, and a more just framework for conservation

Philosophies of Indigenous Conservation

