It is with great pleasure that we share with you today the A SHARED Future Infographic! (see next page). Originally conceived of at the A SHARED Future Annual Gathering in 2020, project teams agreed that we needed an image that represents the uniqueness of each project, while also acknowledging the interconnectedness between them under the A SHARED Future umbrella.

We teamed up with Claire and Simon Bracoupé, Kitigan Zibi Anishnabeg artists, to develop this incredible graphic. Project teams told Claire and Simon a little bit about their projects and provided them with a vision of the ethos guiding their work. Sometimes, this includes the plants, animals, waters, and medicines that are intrinsically connected to the territories on which these projects take place. In others, the relational aspects of the projects is emphasized, with the ethics and politics on which the project is built captured in the image. We asked each project team to tell us a little bit about how their image in the infographic is representative of their project.

Thank you Claire and Simon for creating a breathtaking image that captures the vibrance and dynamism of A SHARED Future!
The A SHARED Future Infographic
Art by Claire and Simon Brascoupé
Kitigan Zibi Anishnabeg
The image depicts the Bras d’Or Lakes watershed eco-system located in the middle of Unama’ki/Cape Breton Island, the focus of the Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative.

The watershed, includes the rolling hills covered in kuow/pine trees, and a canoe featuring a Mi’kmaw double curve symbolizing mother earth and nature.

Our research project in NunatuKavut is grounded in Inuit worldviews. It recognizes that self-determination, and our enduring relationships with the land, ice, water, and air must guide our efforts to transition towards sustainable energies. Our graphic represents Inuit self-sufficiency, demonstrating the full spectrum of relationships and resources that are central to our communities.

The infographic depicts the Wolastoqiyik (people of the beautiful and bountiful river) relationship to the Wolastoq (Saint John River), the heart that runs through the traditional lands of the Wabanaki (the People of the Dawn).

The Wocawson Energy Project, in the distance, is the foundation for future success for the Negotkuk (Tobique) First Nation and serves as a reminder about our connection to Mother Earth and our responsibility to our future generations.

The land and waters of T’Sou-ke Nation represented in this illustration reflect the notion that Indigenous food environments are sustainable in nature. Increasing accessibility to knowledge and plants like the Blue Cama pictured here, encourage community members to initiate and partake in life sustaining practices reflective of pathways towards Indigenous food and energy sovereignty.

Our image represents the Four Directions, and the Four Elements/Energies arising from the Sun, Wind, Earth, and Water. The hand facing the Southern Direction holds an Eagle feather, Inukshuk, and the Métis symbol, which represent the Indigenous Peoples who are engaged in the Working Toward Energy Security, Autonomy, and Self-Determination project.

The unique form of each hand also signifies the autonomy that Indigenous Nations are striving for as they champion renewable energy projects, which are meaningful and beneficial to their communities and homelands.

Our image of the Indigenous Women in Renewable Energy (I-WIRE) project highlights the interconnectedness of all women, and those involved in this project. The linking of arms signifies the solidarity and support shared amongst Indigenous women as matriarchs in their homes, communities, and champions/leaders in the renewable energy sector.

The Four Elements that serve as sources of renewable energy are at the centre of this image, which are at the core of the connection that bring these women together.

The Exploring Ways of Knowing infographic is inspired by the A SHARED Future logo designed by Claire and Simon Brascoupe in 2018.

The image features a reworking of the four elements and directions in a way that captures the spirit and intent of the A SHARED Future research program, calling attention to the circular, interconnected nature of each autonomous project.
For this segment of ASF Connect, we spoke with Derek Kornelsen, former Research Manager of the A SHARED Future project, *Working Towards Energy Security, Self-Determination, and Reconciliation: A Collaborative Analysis of Natural Resource Canada’s Off Diesel Initiative*. We spoke with Derek about his role on the project, its objectives and goals, some of the strengths and challenges of the research, as well as its overall impacts. Thank you Derek for taking the time to speak with us!

Hi Derek! Tell us a little bit about yourself and your role in the ASF IODI project

I am the owner and operator of Rootstalk Resources. My work is as an independent consultant working directly with First Nations communities on land-based initiatives, land protection, and building governance relationships with other stakeholders that conduct activities on or near First Nations land. When I got involved with A SHARED Future and the Indigenous Off-Diesel Initiative (IODI) project, I was an Assistant Professor at the University of Manitoba in the Department of Community Health Sciences. I became interested in the project because of its focus on the connections between clean energy, healthy land, and healthy people. But I was also interested in the project because it focused on assessing whether the federal government is actually able to effectively make strides towards reconciliation and what are the policy barriers to that happening.

My role was to organize interviews, collect data, and develop relationships with the IODI participants. It has been slower since COVID has been impacting things, but now we're ready to move into the second phase of the project, which involves engaging with the institutions directly involved with delivering the program. This would be NRCan, Indigenous Clean Energy Social Enterprise, and Pembina Institute as the three key bodies associated with program delivery.

The second phase also involves engaging with the IODI Champions who are accessing the fund to see what their experiences are like and what sort of challenges they're facing. There has been a lot of focus on the initial development and rollout of the program, how it was received, and what were some of the strengths and challenges participants faced. Now as IODI Champions are implementing their projects, we're going to start asking participants about implementation and how that's going.

What are some of the objectives of this research, and have they evolved over time?

The core idea has always remained the same: whether programs like the IODI can reflect commitments to reconciliation and Indigenous rights. I'm thinking back to one of the very first meetings before we had even drafted the proposal. We were in Edmonton discussing Alberta's utility policies. One of the things that came up was about ATCO, a major utility provider in the province, and that their policies do not allow for Indigenous Nations to own infrastructure on reserve or to benefit from establishing their own clean energy systems within their communities. So, it seemed clear that we need policy change in that area. Many of these policies date back to the 1960s and don't consider Indigenous rights and articulations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, never mind the 1982 Constitution Act where we have Aboriginal treaty rights enshrined. So, kind of pushing back on the utilities and that their policies need to be updated to reflect the TRC Calls to Action and claims to Indigenous rights got the conversation going at that meeting.

I think we've had a little bit of a rocky road because we've been critical of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), especially during the initial development and rollout of the program. I think this may have been something that NRCan was not anticipating—that we would be shining the light more on Provincial and Territorial utility policies around clean energy, not so much about the actual development of the program itself. But that program analysis is a big part of it. This first step was looking at how the program developed and how rollout of the program itself reflect these commitments to Indigenous rights and reconciliation, and we found some shortcomings there that created a little bit of tension off the bat.
What do you think are some of the biggest impacts of this work?

On one hand, I see little victories, like the feedback we have been able to provide in regard to program delivery and how the Initiative was rolled out. Some of this has been informal, but to see that things have changed is a pretty major plus regardless, and to have the Champions who are participating in the research share positive responses with us as a result of these changes has been really impactful. To hear that changes have been made based on our recommendations, and that these changes have had a positive impact on the Champions and their communities makes it all worthwhile right there.

On the other hand, there are the bigger picture impacts, which are still sort of an open question. We’re adding to a conversation, and I don’t know that the outcomes of this research will instigate policy change, but we are contributing pieces that we can add to the conversation. There was a piece we published through the Yellowhead Institute in 2019 that talks about the lack of any discussion around Indigenous rights and the lack of community engagement in all these clean energy policies that are directed towards indigenous communities. That piece provided empirical findings on, which adds to the larger ongoing conversation. It’s one more thing policy makers, academics, and communities can point to when you’re trying to pressure government to meaningfully engage with communities. So, we’re building towards a critical mass is the way I see it.

With a big project like this—one project within an even larger research program—I think it’s those little victories that are the biggest because you see the impacts of those wins with the people you have established a relationship with.

Thinking about this project within the larger research program of A SHARED Future, do you still see the project aligning with the programmatic theme of healthy lands, healthy people?

Virtually every time we talk to the IODI Champions, we hear that the program creates the opportunity for community funding for clean energy projects. In some instances, this is about things like fuel savings, but more often than not, the conversation comes around to how these projects mean cleaner energy, healthier lands, and healthier communities. It is usually the civil servants and policy makers that speak about the program in economic terms and about things like capacity and skill development. You can build the capacity and skills to develop projects that save and earn money within your community, which is great, but when you talk to community members about it, it’s so much more than that. That isn’t to say the money isn’t important, it definitely is, but the funding is just a degree or two away from the actual fact that the funding not only enables employment opportunities, or even that it gives folks access to income to buy quads and get out on the land—it is that being able to be out on the land and revitalize traditions and establish some sort of self-determination within the community. I think that aspect of being on the land and having healthy land to be out on in the first place has come up consistently.

Thank you Derek for your important contributions to this work. It has been wonderful to have you as part of the team. We miss you and wish you well!
The A SHARED Future project teams held their annual gathering of the Programmatic Steering Committee and Community Co-Leads December 1-3, 2021. While the hope was to meet in person for the first time since 2019, COVID-19 continued to thwart our plans, resulting in a virtual gathering of the teams from local ‘hubs’ in their respective homes. Despite the circumstances, the Gathering was productive and successful, allowing project teams to provide highlights from the past year, as well as discuss knowledge outputs and a work plan for 2022. The Gathering was also an opportunity to begin organizing A SHARED Future’s Summer Institute, slated to take place July 2022. We wish to thank Elder Albert Marshall for joining us on the first day of our meeting to start our Gathering off in a good way. We would also like to thank the Community Co-Leads and ASF trainees who were able to attend for taking the time to share their research findings and provide guidance on A SHARED Future’s programmatic outputs.

ASF Summer Gathering
July 18-22 2022
Mi’kma’ki

The A SHARED Future team is thrilled to host *Global Interconnectedness Beyond an Energy Future*, a summer gathering taking place at Windhorse Farm, located just over an hour away from the Halifax airport on the unceded territories of the Mi’kmaw. We held our first Summer Institute on Wolastoqiyik Territory in Fredericton, New Brunswick in 2018. Our objectives for this Institute were to together develop a richer understanding of the relational ethics that drive our research together and generate synergistic opportunities for co-learning across projects. As we enter year five of A SHARED Future, with the urgency of the climate crisis being felt across the globe, our focus falls to the future. As such, we are bringing together Indigenous leaders and champions in renewable energy to share research findings and knowledge outputs, as well as to generate synergistic opportunities for co-learning across projects. The gathering will also promote trainee professional development through research presentations, workshops, and networking opportunities.

Travel and accommodations will be arranged for attendees. Invitations and further details will be circulated in early April so stay tuned! You can reach out to Heather, Mary Beth, or Marc if you have any questions about attending.

2021 Winter Retreat

Heather and Naato’Ilkpiakii (Melissa Quesnelle) joining the PSC & Co-Leads Retreat virtually from ləkwəŋən speaking territories in Victoria, BC. Photo by: Marc Calabretta
In the News

Serena Mendizabal: Named Top 25 Environmentalist Under 25

Our very own Serena Mendizabal, Cayuga Ngabe Panamanian Wolf clan and youth member of our International Advisory Committee, has been named one of Canada’s top 25 environmentalists under 25 by Starfish Canada, an organization that celebrates young environmental leaders by connecting them with a platform for storytelling and a community of change-makers. Serena is a Master’s student in the Geography and Environmental program at Western University with a focus on Indigenous environmental health governance. Congratulations Serena! You can read more about her nomination here.

Margo Greenwood: Appointed Officer of the Order of Canada

Margo Greenwood (University of Northern British Columbia, Northern Health Vice-President of Indigenous Health), member of our International Advisory Committee, was recently appointed as Officer to the Order of Canada. Governor General Mary Simon announced this reward for Margo’s over 30 years of work to transform the health and well-being of Indigenous children, families, and communities. You can read the full article here. Congratulations Margo!

Heather Castleden: Elected to the Royal Society of Canada College of New Scholars, Artists, and Scientists

It is with great pleasure that we announce Heather’s nomination to the Royal Society of Canada, one of the highest academic honours for Canadian scholars. Heather now sits on the council of distinguished scholars and leaders that are selected for their academic excellence and remarkable contributions to research and Canadian public life. You can read more about Heather’s nomination here. Congratulations Heather!

Wocawson Energy Project: Neqotkuk First Nation Featured on CBC

The Wocawson Energy project in Neqotkuk (Tobique) First Nation was recently featured on the CBC to share how the renewable wind energy project is powering 5000 homes and providing income for other community development projects. The segment features an interview with Neqotkuk First Nation Chief Ross Perley, as well as Tanna Pirie, team member of the ‘We Lived This Way Before’ research project. You can watch the feature and learn more about the Wocawson Energy Project here.

Upcoming Events

Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA)

The NAISA conference is taking place across a number of global regional gatherings throughout the spring/summer of 2022. Although calls for proposals and abstracts are now closed, you can register to join NAISA and attend the regional gatherings virtually or in person. You can find out more about the conference here.

International Medical Geography Symposium, June 19-24, Edinburgh

The annual meeting of the International Medical Geography Symposium is being held in Edinburgh, Scotland. Registration is now open and more information can be found here. An abstract has been submitted on behalf of the A SHARED Future team. If you’re headed to Edinburgh in June, reach out to Heather and Dee!

All-in: Co-Creating Knowledge for Justice Conference, October 26-28, Santa Cruz

The All-in: Co-Creating Knowledge for Justice Conference, co-presented by the Institute for Social Transformation at UC Santa Cruz and the Urban Research Based Action Network, brings together community-based practitioners and researchers, undergraduate and graduate students, community members and organizations, foundation program officers, artists, and activists to share stories, strategies, practices and solutions for action. The conference is organized in part by Ron Glass, member of our International Advisory Committee. You can find out more information about the conference and register here.