

Lore. Capturing Traditional Environmental Knowledge. Martha Johnson (Editor). Ottawa, Ontario: International Development Research Centre, 1992. \$14.95 Can. (softcover). Pp. X; 190. ISBN 0-88936-644-6.

Lore presents the results of an international workshop which was held in July 1990, at a camp situated along the MacKenzie River near Fort Good Hope, British Columbia. The purpose of the workshop was to study the documentation and application of traditional environmental knowledge through community-based research. This book is intended as an educational device for people interested in developing ethical and culturally-sensitive research methods for documenting traditional knowledge. Throughout the preamble and the discussion of five case studies, insightful recommendations are provided, applicable cross-culturally and world-wide, for indigenous communities and researchers.

Both the workshop and the book were a joint project of two Canadian organizations, the Dene Cultural Institute and the International Development Research Centre, and represent an aboriginal and scientific concerted effort towards amalgamating different approaches to knowledge and resource management. *Lore* is a

result of these efforts and is an honest appraisal of the cultural and political realities embedded in traditional knowledge research.

In a brief preamble, editor Martha Johnson reviews the history of traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) research and, in basic point form, gives a comparison of the values, principles, and paradigms of TEK and Western science. Readers will not only find Johnson's evaluation of the difficulties inherent in integrating TEK and scientific knowledge refreshingly concise, but they will appreciate her candid summary of the conditions necessary for a successful blend of the two.

The first case study describes and evaluates a one-year pilot project which took place during 1989–1991, in the Denendeh community of Fort Good Hope. The project's purpose was to develop a participatory action research methodology to document TEK and to further understand Dene TEK within the context of their land and resource utilization practices. The authors, Martha Johnson and Robert Rutten, demonstrate a good comprehension of the components of Dene TEK and clearly recognize the number of variables involved in gathering information. Step-by-step, the reader is led through the community-based research process and is brought, not only to the realization of the necessity for a flexible and innovative research approach, but to the conclusion that, for successful documentation, the initiative must come from the local people themselves.

The second case study, written by Miriam McDonald Fleming, provides a report on the Belcher Island Adaptive Reindeer Management Project in Canada's North. This paper describes the methods employed for documenting and using TEK within a cooperative management context. The author relays Inuit perceptions of the arctic environment to emphasize the need for arctic wildlife management to assume a broader ecological perspective. She demonstrates that an enhancement of arctic ecological knowledge can ultimately be achieved by the recognition and incorporation of the values, beliefs and practices of the Inuit communities into management strategies.

The Marovo Lagoon Project, initiated by the Marovo community of Western Province in the Solomon Islands, is the third case study discussed in *Lore*. This paper, written by Graham Baines and Edvara Hviding, describes the research reciprocity which occurs within the context of information exchange rather than formal interviewing. While investigators apply their expertise to the project, they simultaneously take a hands-on approach in learning traditional knowledge, which in turn promotes feedback from local informants. In their conclusion, the authors provide a helpful description of the investigators' obligatory research "returns" to both the community and government. These include interim and final written and verbal reports, seminars, workshops, and copies of any published academic articles arising from information gained throughout the research.

In an abbreviated paper on documenting oral history in the African Sahel, Rhiannon Barker and Nigel Cross describe how traditional knowledge regarding past agricultural practices, conservation techniques, and ecological change are imperative for the success of development projects. Here the authors provide a good look at the interviewing methodology, selection and training of interviewers, interview problems and the process of recording, translating, and transcribing information. In a frank discussion of the constraints involved in docu-

menting indigenous knowledge, the authors uniquely prompt the reader to analyze how such constraints could be hereafter overcome.

The two final papers in *Lore*, written by Lio Alting von Gesau, Sanit Wongprasert, and Prasert Trakansupakon, examine Northern Thailand and the project efforts of the Mountain People's Culture and Development Educational Programme (MPCDE). The first paper examines traditional environmental knowledge and its adaptation to social change. The second describes efforts to document and apply the traditional environmental knowledge of the highlanders of northern Thailand to projects involving animal husbandry, agriculture, water resources, forestry management, nutrition, medicine, and handicrafts.

The style of the book is straight-forward. It is unpretentious, easy to read, and clear in its approach. With its honest revelations regarding TEK research, *Lore* offers the reader a wealth of experience to draw upon and gives solid advice for investigative advances.

Judith D. Mitchell
Environmental Studies Program
University of Victoria
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 2Y2