



University
of Victoria

Department of Anthropology

Candidate presentation for Indigenous Scholar position

Oceanic Murk: Climate Change, Local Knowledge, and Ominous Blooms



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Movement brings stability to coastal communities in southeast Alaska. For generations, Alaska Natives and other settlers have trusted intimate knowledge of the flux of ocean currents and seasons to survive, harvest, and profit from the diversity of ocean resources available just off the shore. For instance, knowing certain seaweeds are at their best when devil's club starts to bloom can mean the difference between a bountiful harvest and missing the resource entirely. For many Alaska Native people, conceptions of place and resources are inextricably intertwined which often convey vital information about available resources.

Changing global currents, oceanic and economic, have always impacted local knowledge, but rarely to the extent seen in the current era. In this talk, I describe the impact of climate change in southeast Alaska through an examination of a natural event and look at the ways lay people interpret environmental signs and reconfigure their plans and understandings of place in the face of an ambiguous threat like climate change

Everyone welcome.