

Building Language Habitats:
Connecting Language Planning and Land Planning for Sustainable Futures
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This paper draws on my experiences working with two Canadian First Nations - the Loon River Cree First Nation, located in north-central Alberta, and the Taku River Tlingit First Nation, located in northwestern British Columbia. In both communities, I volunteered on language projects while simultaneously researching native language planning and policy. With the Taku River Tlingit, I helped to create a Tlingit language board game based on traveling through their traditional territory, and with the Loon River Cree, I helped to edit Cree language storybooks, which are based on interviews conducted during their communities' traditional land use study. Of interest to this paper is the fact that each of the language projects were being organized out of the lands and resources departments in the communities, and not, as one might expect, out of the education or cultural heritage departments. To me, this indicated that part of the communities' language ideologies was that language was a natural resource, which had developed in a particular landscape, and that language planning and land planning needed to be closely linked in order to be successful. As my research drew to a close, I presented a paper on this topic in May of 2008 at the Northwest Anthropological Association's annual conference. A fellow session presenter refuted my argument that traditional land use studies could be used to help maintain and revitalize languages stating that as these studies are often used in land claims and court cases they should not be used for collecting information that is extraneous to this purpose, such as language vocabulary, traditional stories, songs and place names. In this paper, I will argue that, in fact, one of the ways in which both indigenous languages and lands *can* be sustainably managed is through the inter-weaving of language planning and land planning.