

Tues. June 27, 2011.

Plenary Session 3:15 – 4:30

Integrated Approaches to Coastal Community Survival and Development: The Fogo Island Experience

Presenters: Bonnie J. McCay, Gordon Slade, & Carol Penton

Chair: Sheena Young

Bonnie J. McCay

- Start off with a song because of the integrated nature of the fisheries and music
- Song – Lucky Girl from Carol Penton. Written when she was deciding whether to move from Fogo Island, off the coast of Newfoundland. Survive off the history and culture of the island. Decided not to move, but felt for those who were forced to by necessity (economic or otherwise).
- Topic of integrated approaches – fogo has something to say
- 11 different named communities amalgamated into one town of fogo island
- Long harsh winters with ice that comes in and clogs up the Harbour
- Serviced by ferry
- On the Labrador shelf
- Largest offshore nfld island
- 5000+ years of human presence
- Survival based on land and sea. Open land for berry picking, wood gathering, hunting, fishing, wildlife. Much of it based on the principle of the Commons
- Commons has been and is very important to coastal communities, fogo included
- History of trading, fisheries – poverty and exploitation that led to the Antigonish movement and then to the foreign fisheries.
- Cod often talked about as the tradegy of the commons but there is also comedies of the commons.
- Fogo process and the cooperative started in the 1960s. Used documentaries with NFB and local leaders to aid in community development
- 1992 – June – cod fishery closed – tragedy of the mismanaged ocean commons
- Period of difficulty for the people of the island – used their heritage to help them through this time and as ideas for survival. Crafts, salt fish, etc. Other crafts. Appreciation of the wildlife. Art and artisans. Local talent – music, square dancing.
- Island has gotten lots of attention for films, the lost great ark.
- Diversifying allowed for continuance – crustaceans rose after the moratorium on the cod. Have experienced the risk of over reliance on one species and different sizes of boats have appeared. Snow crab important before and after. Rise in shrimp led to new gear and knowledge. Opportunities for the plant workers – sea cucumbers are brought in and processed locally even if not caught locally

- New era – new fisheries happenings, future of the island, participation of new people and new ideas.

Gordon Slade

- Shorefast Foundation
- Remarkable story of fogo island.
- Shorefast = cod traps that are tethered from the trap to the shore.
- Shorefast org also contains Change islands.
- Registered charity
- Cod is the reason we all came to Nfld in the first place
- \$16M project to create geotourists – finding new ways with old things...
- Led by the arts – bring the geo tourists to the island
- Become a destination with culture food and nature. Destination that is built on the past.
- Goals – cob – philanthropist and social entrepreneurs. Want to partner, invest and become a catalysts so that when the \$ leaves, the economic future of the community will still thrive
- Has a strong social purpose
- Everything run as a business, even though it is a charity – profits go back into the community
- To do this, had to know who we are, be true to who we are, and understand what is going on in the world. Must find our niche.
- In the past, the merchant of the day determined the price of the fish, because they didn't know what else was happening elsewhere.
- “what's that got to do with the price of fish?” common interruption/phrase in Fogo
- Culture has to be lived – an ad that suggests people come to Nfld and see major sites is not culture.
- It has to be lived, not trivialized in this matter
- Have an arts corporation and a 5* Inn, and a \$5M businessness fund for people of fogo. Not replicated anywhere else in
- Have an ocean literacy program through the maritime interpretive centre
- Traditional boatbuilding – lost art. When we started only 2 people who were able to build a boat from scratch. Identified these artisans and get them involved.
- Great fofo island punt race is in it's 4th year – 15 ft boat used for squidding, no motor.
- World's |Eng theatre Company that reflects diversity and change of life on the island
- Partridgeberry Festival – get going on agricultural products to get people involved in creating their own veggies.
- Important community relationships with many groups such as the co-ops, artisans guild, the school, etc.
- Build on the assets and make it a high end destination
- Geotourism – sustains and enhances the character of a place (env., food, aesthetics, etc).
- Doing something bold makes things happen – have to transform economy
- Matches with Nfld's other initiatives
- Strategy 1 –

- Strategy 2 – use culture to save traditional way of life
- Strategy 3 – create center of international arts excellences. Showcase local cultural heritage. Artists from around the world come and live in traditional homes and work with artists in the community.
- Strategy 4 – best Inn in the country, and possibly in the world
- Strategy 5 - Support and stimulate small business. Go and get a loan, a soft loan, to help people get started. Get trained on the island by bringing in experts
- Strategy 6 – use the media to reach key audiences. Get wealthy individuals who come to experience something difference. Interested in culture, the arts, and food.
- Have studios that are built like towers. “looks like kinda an outhouse to me, so it will fit in very well” – designed by Todd Saunders (also building the inn)
- Icelander is helping with a residency program and production program for the arts. Have an open call for artists of various disciplines
- Have micro-finance funds for individuals to expand businesses as well as larger loans
- Inn will have a strong sense of place – all pieces will be locally sourced and produced. Worldclass but not pretentious – place where locals and guests can come together, meaning its good for both groups. Guests will have seen it all and want to learn, have a deep experience
- All of us together are smarter than the individuals. The inn should tell this story
- Punt – accessible to all, part of history, poetic and pragmatic, both simple and complex
- Surplus churches are going to serve the community – used to house designers and replications.
- Must hire locals.
- Guests are invited, not tourists who are travelling for sightseeing. Can have a local person to be with the guests when they would like a local person with them. Invite them into their home
- The birds have come back to places they had previously left after a few years of the memoratorium

Questions:

- Have to offer people a life, a vibrant place to get people to stay and to come back
- Population of 2706, down from 5000
- How is transportation factored into the plan? This is a story of cohesion, and could you comment on any challenges? Amalgamation was a challenge from what I understand.
 - o Wealthy people will fly to the air strip or take a helicopter.
 - o Amalgamation – difficult because there was lots of history on the school/hospital being established in the middle of the island. There are 11 communities, and people have the impression that when you get off the island you are on fogo island, but there was a isolation as an artist between the other communities. The people who made it such a big deal are really smaller numbers. Amalgamation has been an amazing achievement that may have been sensationalized.
- with the drop in population, homes must have been left vacant or uninhabited. Witht he changes coming, will these homes be kept for the people of fogo island or will they be allowed for the cfa (come from aways).

- CFAs are coming to buy a home because Fogo Island is up and coming. These homes are revived, but the people aren't contributing to the community. You want young people and families to give vibrancy to the community. It is extremely important. Fogo Island is very much a Fogo Island place, in that people who go and work in Alberta still hold on to and keep up their homes. If people come with enough money, then some of them are sold, but it is a huge risk and we are concerned about it.
- What has been the reactions of artists to coming and contributing to a place that isn't their own?
 - There are more than we can accommodate who are interested in coming. For artists in Newfoundland who are interested in coming, how do they fit? We need to incorporate the wishes of local artists for who comes. It could be a really productive tension, but the artists who come are modern, worldclass artists.
- What types of international standards are you looking at meeting? UNESCO considerations? We're looking at that. We've looked at other places that we want to benchmark ourselves against. We are up against the Wickanoinn on Vancouver Island. We have to identify that niche.
- Another song by Carol – join in. Wrote a few years ago, never intended for the song to be in tune with the whole conference but it is! The title is "I love where I'm from". Childhood in a fishing community on Fogo Island and how we took care of each other, shared what we had. I was adopted to Fogo Island, and my mother became ill when I was young, about 2 years old. And I moved in with my grandparents. Had tea and talked about taking care of me and make sure I stayed safe and out of the sea watch. If the social workers had found out I was all alone, newly adopted to the island, that could have been a bad situation. I am such a lucky girl. One of my treasured memories is about my grandmother brushing out these long silver threads of her hair each night. She'd ball up the hair busted up in a ball and burned it in the stove. I watched her once and asked her why it burned up so fast. And she said "it means I'm not going to be alive much longer."