

THE POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF CULTURAL REVITALIZATION:
A TRIBAL ECONOMIC POLICY ANALYSIS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION AND
ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION FOR THE SOUTHERN UTE TRIBE

By

Christine Myers

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Thesis Supervisors: Dr. Nichlas Emmons
Dr. Rebecca Austin

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Abstract

Native Americans are the original land stewards of North America. Historical devastation brought on by colonization had major impacts on Indigenous communities, like the Southern Ute tribe in Southwestern Colorado, creating issues which linger unresolved to this day. Attempts were made to disconnect the Southern Utes from their traditional homelands, restricting them to reservations, and subjecting them to assimilation policies meant to eliminate their language, culture, and traditional economics. Actively recreating connections to landscapes, through language and culture, by developing analog modern economies provides opportunities for resolution.

Often, chronic underfunding of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and tribal programs hinders adaptation of innovative approaches to address social, ecological, or economic issues. I propose that to achieve the goals of cultural revitalization and resiliency, the Southern Ute (or Tri-Ute intertribal collaboration) develop a demonstration project for outdoor recreation under 25 U.S. Code § 4305 - Intertribal tourism demonstration projects. Under available Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants for tribal adaptations to climate change the Southern Ute could initiate environmental restoration business cooperative ventures that tie together private and federal contracting for ecological restoration planning and implementation incorporating experiential cultural teachings. The path to economic stability, social equity, and dignity depends on the recognition of human interdependence with the ecological community.

A new generation of Southern Ute educated in the sciences, natural resource management, and cooperative business skills will be able to relate their traditional teachings, language, and values to landscape stewardship strategies. This approach compliments oil and gas development and gaming in current economic development strategies. Federal mitigation policies use the landscape-scale approach in management decisions allowing tribes to collaborate across private and federal land management agencies required to consult with tribes. Synergizing tribal policy to the indigenous Human-in-Ecosystem framework with the landscape-scale approach to land management encourages ecological and cultural resiliency. This benefits tribes, helping to address climate change challenges in the ecological community, while providing benefits to the broader American society.

Introduction

Composed primarily of the *Mouache* and *Capote* bands of Ute (*Nunt'zi*) Indians, today's Southern Ute Indian Tribe once claimed quite a large territory encompassing "the mountainous areas in eastern Utah, Colorado, and northern New Mexico."¹ The *Nunt'zi* practiced a largely hunter-gatherer lifestyle. They participated in a seasonal migration pattern accompanied by land and forest stewardship practices intended to exploit ecological disturbance patterns which encouraged game animals and nutritious edible forest products. A series of events led to the *Mouache* and *Capote* bands settling on a reservation in what is today within the political boundaries of southern Colorado.² Historical attempts to assimilate the Utes into American culture by making them farmers had mixed results.³

Mining, timber, and grazing interests inhibited their ability to manage their own resources during the United States allotment and assimilation policy era. During this same policy era, the Southern Ute lands were allotted to individual members and then the "surplus" was sold to homesteaders. Many acres of allotted lands were held in trust and leased to non-Ute farmers and ranchers. As a result of these historical policies natural resource stewardship largely passed out of Southern Ute hands, as did much of their reservation land base. Allotment produced an effect known as checkerboard, leaving a mix of land ownership status. Some lands are held in trust by the Department of the Interior (DOI) and managed by the BIA for tribal members and some land

¹ Southern Ute Tribe. *Living in La Plata County*. Jan 26, 2013. <http://www.southernute-nsn.gov/natural-resources/lands/living-in-la-plata-county> (accessed Jan 26, 2013).

² Quintana, Frances Leon. *Ordeal of Change: The Southern Utes and Their Neighbors*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2004.

³ *Ibid.*

is held in fee by American settlers. This has complicated issues of tribal jurisdiction, sovereignty, and economics to this day.

The Southern Utes have made great strides towards achieving what the Harvard Project defines as the Four Broad Goals for Native nations.⁴ They control their own natural resources operating a very successful group of business enterprises in the oil and gas development sector.⁵ The tribe operates the Sky Ute Casino Resort, they preserve and revitalize their heritage through the Cultural Center and Museum, and they direct their own administrative services and social programs through “638 contracting”.⁶ In many ways the Southern Ute are a model for other tribes in the self-determination era of United States Indian policy.⁷ They have advanced toward diversifying their reservation economy by “overcoming challenges” and “creating new opportunities.”⁸

Rationale

Political Ecology is an interdisciplinary field of study which incorporates a broad range of methodologies in order to explore:

...the power relations between society and nature which are embedded in social interests, institutions, knowledge and imaginaries that weave the life-worlds of the people. It is the field where power strategies are deployed to deconstruct the unsustainable modern rationality and to mobilize social actions in the globalized world for the construction of a sustainable future in the entwining of material nature and symbolic culture.⁹

In the context of the discipline of political ecology, I will conduct a policy analysis as an interdisciplinary effort building towards implementing frameworks for tribal public policies

⁴ The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. *The State of Native Nations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

⁵ Southern Ute Tribe. *Living in La Plata County*, 2013.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Harvard Project, 2008.

⁸ Harvard Project, 2008.

⁹ Leff, Enrique. "Political Ecology: A Latin American Perspective." *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*. EOLSS Publishers. 2012. <http://www.eolss.net> (accessed April 4, 2014).

which plan for outdoor recreation and environmental restoration across tribal governmental departments and in partnership with other governmental and private institutions as a means for cultural revitalization which addresses climate change challenges for tribes and society at large. A successful policy framework will give the Southern Ute (and other tribes) the ability to enhance, preserve and revitalize their culture and language through modern forms of traditional economics while exercising the liberty of applying their traditional philosophies to social, ecological, and economic issues.

Even with modern success in exercising their sovereignty, the Southern Ute, like most tribes, continue to make every effort to retain and revitalize their language and culture within a modern context. With almost half of their 1,400 tribal members under the age of 30 years old, the media effects on the cultural image of the youth appear to hinder continued interest in learning and practicing cultural traditions past the 8th grade.¹⁰

Adaptations to changing circumstances over time have provided the Southern Ute with amazing economic success. Yet, a gap still exists for incipient cultural resiliency to adapt traditional practices or occupations--within the context of place—using the language and producing traditional foods and arts. Past federal Indian policies attempted to disconnect traditional Southern Ute economic and social constructs from their ecological communities. By working with the youth, the tribe can collaborate across tribal government agencies, to utilize or reclaim, their indigenous ecological knowledge and generate a cohesive strategy for internal and external economic development objectives that perpetuate resilient socio-ecological economic development, transforming any structural constraints which may still persist.¹¹

¹⁰ Southern Ute Tribe. *Living in La Plata County*, 2013; and personal communication.

¹¹ Sherman, Kathleen Pickering, James Van Lanen, and Richard T Sherman. "Practical Environmentalism on the Pine Ridge Reservation: Confronting Structural Constraints to Indigenous Stewardship." *Human Ecology* (Springer Science and Business Media) 38 (July 2010); 507.

That ecological communities interrelate across artificial political boundaries is an essential part of the understanding the landscape-scale approach is developing. Historically, federal land use planning was based on three principle philosophical assumptions; federally managed lands could be bounded and isolated “from the surrounding landscape,” the connection to the broader ecological community was unimportant, and that political boundaries had “ecological meaning.”¹² Part of developing the landscape-scale approach has been gathering data and applying specialized GIS tools to help land use managers plan for wildlife habitat conservation across these borders.¹³ This trend is significant because it shows that public land administrators are finally confirming long-standing assertions culturally embedded in traditional Native philosophy, spirituality, and traditional economic approaches to managing landscapes.

Significance

Bringing culture alive in a modern context and providing a more diverse economic base for Southern Ute tribal members are important nation-building elements for developing self-determination and long-term tribal sovereignty. Outdoor recreation and ecological restoration are viable modern occupations that also bear significant potential as practical venues to learn, teach, practice, and revitalize Southern Ute culture within their community. This is particularly important in helping the tribal youth overcome the ‘museum Indian’ portrayal so typical of the media images of Native cultures. Designing tribal economies to utilize outdoor recreation and ecological restoration in the cultural education process for the youth in particular, can develop a more positive relationship within the context of the American socio-economic structure, giving tribal citizens healthy tools for developing positive identities.

¹² Trombulak, Stephen C, and Robert F Baldwin. "Introduction: Creating a Context." In *Landscape-scale Conservation Planning*, edited by Stephen C Trombulak, & Robert F Baldwin, 1-16. London: Springer, 2010; 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1.

Southern Ute tribal members may not see themselves as having participated in what we call outdoor recreation today. Outdoor recreation is generally defined as mental, physical, and spiritual refreshment taken by way of being outdoors.¹⁴ Examples of mainstream outdoor recreation activities which may be crucial to revitalizing Southern Ute culture in the modern context can be applied by training Southern Ute students in outdoor guiding principles alongside their culture and language. These include archery, back packing, bird watching, boating, canoeing, rafting, river floating, camping, canyoneering, caving, falconry, fishing, hiking and walking, horseback riding & equestrian hunting, kayaking, mountaineering, outdoor photography/filming, rock climbing, snowshoeing, and many more.

Outdoor recreation generates \$646 billion of revenue in American each year, creating 6.1 million “highly sought-after jobs” in the tourism industry.¹⁵ With the recreational opportunities available in the Four Corners region, guided outdoor recreation training could serve to revitalize Southern Ute culture in a modern context and provide needed economic diversity to the reservation economy. The economic impact of outdoor recreation is much more far reaching than most economic sectors because outdoor equipment or actual recreation services purchases are only one part of the total expenditures made on travel and recreation activities.¹⁶ Developing outdoor recreation industries on, over, and near the Southern Ute lands could bring in additional revenues for their casino and for other local business in the surrounding community.

Ecological stewardship is a sensible adjunct to outdoor recreation. Training and encouraging youth in ecology and the biological sciences, as well as their language and culture,

¹⁴ Oxford English Dictionary, *Recreation*.

¹⁵ Southwick Associates, Inc. *Take it Outside for American Jobs and a Strong Economy*. Economic Impact Study, Boulder: Outdoor Industry Association, 2012.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

will build important capacity for future tribal resource management personnel to emerge from within the tribal membership. Ecological restoration is generally understood to be “the practice of reestablishing the historic plant and animal communities of a given area or region and the renewal of the ecosystem and cultural functions necessary to maintain these communities now and into the future.”¹⁷ Many such projects are conducted every year on federal and private lands but Southern Ute engagement in these projects can produce a dual benefit because plants can be chosen for their importance to Ute culture and the rest of the ecological community.

Seasonal outdoor recreation and ecological restoration cooperative businesses are not only external market opportunities but will reinforce treaty rights to traditional hunting and gathering activities, serve to reconnect tribal members to traditional landscapes, and also provide a new framework for developing an internal subsistence and trade economy for Southern Ute tribal members.

There are two development layers that might be considered when bearing in mind these concepts. First there is the external level where indigenous and local ecological knowledge can be utilized to build cooperative tribal businesses for guided outdoor recreation activities and ecological restoration services to an external market. This may also be considered from the vantage of on-reservation tourism and off-reservation tourism within the traditional homelands.

These economic options also offer internal opportunities to provide community cultural enrichment and generate healthy internal subsistence economies through encouraging outdoor activities and local ecological stewardship-based cultural and language initiatives, particularly for youth, both on and off reservation. Participation in these activities can be an important

¹⁷ Human Dimensions of Ecological Restoration: Integrating Science, Nature, and Culture, Dave Egan, 1996

intermediary step for encouraging emerging leaders to learn business skills as yet another facet where tribal member-owned recreational guiding businesses and horticultural enterprises could be put into action. These ideas are viable options it is important to assess awareness, interest, coordination, and planning in the community to assure success.¹⁸

Research Questions

This research seeks to examine how cultural revitalization can be vivified through outdoor recreation and ecological restoration, based on applying the Indigenous Stewardship and the Dwelt-in-Ecosystem models from Native American Indigenous Studies to tribal economic development within the context of the Landscape-scale approach to land management being utilized by most federal, state, and conservation land management authorities. Looking at the current issues of socio-ecological resilience and the need to diversify tribal economic development, are there structural hindrances in the Southern Ute policy paradigm which potentially inhibit tribal members from utilizing outdoor recreation and ecological stewardship for external and internal socio-cultural economic development? Are there policy alternatives or policy trajectories that can be further researched which might serve to connect Southern Ute youth who are being trained in traditional culture and language to practical livelihoods in analog economies in the present day?

¹⁸ For more information on options for developing these ideas please see: Mosely, Cassandra. *A Survey of Innovative Contracting for Quality Jobs and Ecosystem Management*. General Technical Report, Eugene: Research and Policy, Ecosystem Workforce Program, Institute for a Sustainable Environment, August 2002; Office of Tribal Relations. *Tribal Relations Strategic Plan*. Strategic Plan, Washington D.C.: Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2010 – 2013; Atkinson, Karen J, and Kathleen M. Nilles. *Tribal Business Structure Handbook*. Washington, D.C.: The Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, 2008.

Methodology

Public Policy Analysis

This study will attempt to define perceived hindrances to Southern Ute cultural revitalization and cultural-based economic development and present some ideas for policy alternatives based on the policy analysis process outlined in (Kraft and Furlong, 2013). An effort will be made to initially define and analyze how the Southern Ute might implement cultural revitalization in economically viable terms. This will be done by researching land use policies across tribal departments within the Southern Ute's current reservation boundaries and within the Brunot treaty area generally. By looking at land use regulations promulgated by their own government, the federal BIA land office, the town of Ignacio, La Plata County, and the State of Colorado a better picture will emerge of potential strategies the community might take to reconnect their cultural revitalization efforts to the ecological community in their traditional homelands.¹⁹

In constructing policy alternatives, this study will look at options for the economic viability of utilizing outdoor recreation and ecological restoration as a medium for cultural revitalization. This will be examined at two levels: externally, what are more than often non-consumptive uses of natural resources through cultural tourism either on/off the reservation, and internal subsistence economies that promote community well-being by connecting tribal members with the ecological community. This requires research into relevant case studies of tribes who may have implemented similar projects, ongoing initiatives which the Southern Ute

¹⁹ Davis, Thomas. *Sustaining the Forest, the People, and the Spirit*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000; 114.

may participate in, and economic impact reports on outdoor recreation activities at state and national levels.

Data Collection

By focusing on the connection between the land, the environment, and Southern Ute culture we can come up with ideas which will assist the community in developing a plan to revitalize Ute culture and provide ideas for future livelihoods.²⁰ I will gather and analyze documents for current Southern Ute tribal and BIA policies governing land use; study the tribal governmental structure as outlined in the tribes constitution and other sources; identify and analyze the effects of existing tribal partnerships and State compacts; review Southern Ute tribal codes; and identify the layers of land use classification systems used within the boundaries of the tribe's jurisdiction and in the Brunot treaty area in order to discover the scope of current policies.

The rules governing land use already in place within the designated boundaries of the Southern Ute Reservation will be identified in the tribal code and through the BIA. Jurisdiction over land use management at tribal, federal, and state levels will be identified and considered.

Once jurisdictional issues have been identified, the study will look at the authority of any layer of forestry and land use management which is applicable by determining what BIA rules govern and which Southern Ute Tribe administrative departments manage Ute land, and within their traditional Brunot treaty area what lands fall under federal or state management. The goal here is to very briefly summarize these findings or reference specific reports.

Finally, a brief survey of programs which may be useful in developing a tribal economic plan for outdoor recreation and ecological restoration as a venue for revitalizing Ute culture will

²⁰ Davis, Thomas. *Sustaining the Forest*; 114.

be synergized to this information. A listing of these programs and opportunities will be provided with a brief summary of each.

My research methodology will also utilize both informal questions addressed to administrators and employees of various agencies in the Southern Ute tribal government on the Southern Ute Reservation, in various other government offices, and other public organizations. No Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is necessary when asking for information from public officials.

Theoretical Frameworks

Socio-Ecological Resiliency: The Human-in-Ecosystem Framework

The Human-in-Ecosystem framework builds off of the monumental work of Tim Ingold in his *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. In “Practical Environmentalism on the Pine Ridge Reservation: Confronting Structural Constraints to Indigenous Stewardship” Sherman, *et al*, define resilience as “the capacity of both social and ecological systems to absorb and adapt to change.”²¹ The concept of resiliency views “ecological systems as inherently dynamic, continually changing in content and function across” time and space rather than being linear and static systems.²² A central idea in this model is that human beings are viewed as being an important part of the ecosystem where indigenous ecological knowledge systems are “cultivated through practical, everyday hands-on experience with an ecosystem.”²³ In this way then human beings participate in the continual process of stewardship and ecological transformations occurring in their environment. In this way, a living culture “encourages the generation and transmission of ecological knowledge relational networks

²¹ Sherman, Kathleen Pickering, "Practical Environmentalism," 508.

²² *Ibid.*, 508.

²³ *Ibid.*, 508.

and local institutions.”²⁴ By engaging in “practical activities,” community members know, learn, and grow with the land and carry on the “ethical and cultural beliefs” derived from this process.²⁵

The Indigenous Stewardship Model connects subsistence lifestyles in a practical way to the ecological community and natural resources.²⁶ Outdoor recreation and ecological restoration can be utilized both internally for rebuilding a strong subsistence economy and externally for building a tourism based economy that supports diversity in the Southern Ute economic base.

Within this framework tribal, state, and federal land policies have to be analyzed in order to determine if there are any structural barriers that reduce tribal member’s access to land or

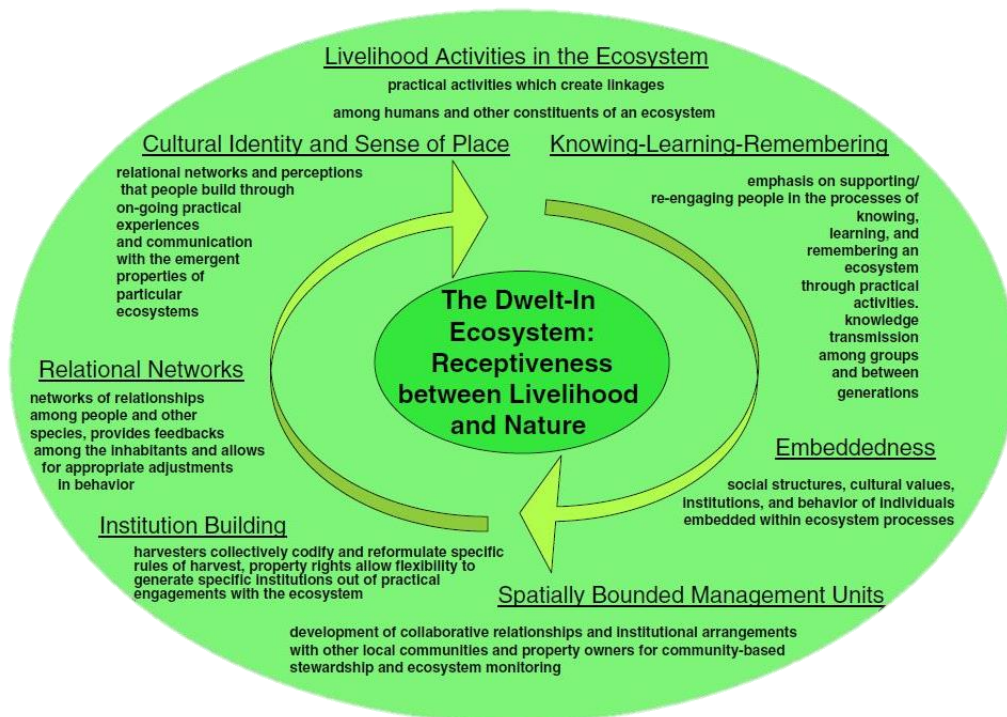


Figure 1: The Dwelt-in-Ecosystem model, a practical livelihood-based concept for applying indigenous ecological worldview to tribal economics.

(Adapted from Sherman, Kathleen P, "Practical Environmentalism," pg. 509).

²⁴ Sherman, Kathleen Pickering, "Practical Environmentalism," 508. See also “Indigenous Stewardship Model: A Traditional Strategy to Restore Ecosystem Balance and Cultural Well Being Utilizing Values, Philosophies, and Knowledge Systems of Indigenous Peoples” (Sherman, 2007).

²⁵ Ibid., 508.

²⁶ Ibid., 509.

involvement in natural resource management with a vision to achieve three main goals: local stewardship of natural resources, intergenerational transfer of knowledge, and a re-establishment of social and cultural relationships within the ecological community.²⁷ These goals are to be particularly focused on tribal programs which work with youth to synergize science education and indigenous epistemologies to create tribe-specific, regionally-based models for natural resource stewardship.²⁸ The anticipated outcome is a state of socio-ecological resiliency perpetuating a harmonious relationship with economic development.²⁹ We have to recognize that unyielding global-scaled economic structures may not only be unwilling but unable to respond to ecological crisis at the local level, therefore it becomes important to focus our planning building the human capacities within our communities to address these issues.³⁰

Literature Review

In 1868, roughly one third of the Western part of what is now the state of Colorado was reserved for the Ute people.³¹ By 1873, with the discovery of gold in the region, the Brunot Cession “carved” the San Juan Mountain range out of their land holdings. Congress passed legislation in 1880 and 1895 to allot the Southern Ute lands in severalty. Four years later in 1899 a Presidential proclamation “opened the lands remaining after allotment to entry under the public land disposal laws.” For 35 years the land was open to white settlement and agricultural homesteaders filed for patents under a number of public lands laws.³²

²⁷ Sherman, Kathleen Pickering, "Practical Environmentalism," 507.

²⁸ Southern Ute Tribe. *Living in La Plata County*, 2013.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

During this same time, the Utes like other hunter-gatherer cultures across the country, were forced onto reservations and prohibited from leaving the boundaries of the reservation for fear of execution. As a result of colonization this has led to a great loss of culture and a systemic dependency only recently countered by the Southern Ute's great successes in managing their own natural resources.³³

Anders discusses the theories of economic underdevelopment in American Indian communities as stemming from the dependency which United States Indian policies fostered. While many restrictions are no longer in place, some structural mechanisms may still constrain tribal members intellectually as to what types of enterprises it may be possible for them to create for their communities.³⁴ There may be culturally relative knowledge which can be applied in the modern context, which tribal leaders can utilize for generating more interest in their community for revitalizing their indigenous knowledge. Anderson discusses some sources of these "systemic organizations" which guided community activities and management of natural resources.³⁵ What has not been explicitly preserved of previous laws and customs that once existed, can be recalled or regenerated once the relationship with landscape is re-established as explained in Basso's work on Apache place-names.³⁶ In fact, part of the strategy would be to locate traditional place names on GIS maps to connect the landscape to traditional stories.

Learning culture could be more relevant to the youth if it is framed by providing the mechanism for its transmission through a fun, active lifestyle that runs analog to the traditions once practiced. Berkes discusses how scientific ecology can be a powerful adjunct to utilizing

³³ Southern Ute Tribe. *Living in La Plata County*, 2013.

³⁴ Anders, Gary C. "Theories of Underdevelopment and the American Indian." *Journal of Economic Issues* 14, no. 3 (1980), 680.

³⁵ Anderson, T. L. (1997). *Conservation - Native Style*. *Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance*, 37(4), 769.

³⁶ Basso, Keith H. *Wisdom Sits in Places*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

traditional ecological knowledge because knowledge is more a process than an object or abstract goal. In traditional societies this would have indeed been the way we acquired knowledge and learning, through living life engaged in healthy community activities.³⁷

While much knowledge may have been lost to some tribal members, or aspects of tribal knowledge may only have persisted through certain bands or communities, the Northern Ute preservation of their traditional ethnobotany stands out as one important element that may be applied to the Southern Ute cultural revitalization.³⁸ Perhaps in exploring the many possibilities, a connection to the land for ecological restoration can bring about a flowering of community horticulture projects, both on and off reservation, to enhance wildlife habitat and provide traditional subsistence foods at the same time.³⁹ Corntassel, et al discuss cultural restoration and revitalization relies on direct connections to cultural activities on the land, including subsistence relationships. Biological diversity is connected to indigenous land practices. By “reclaiming and regenerating” the relationships to place true self-determination can be realized.⁴⁰

Developing the knowledge-base for propagating the traditional plants in itself could be a viable vocation as well as a hands-on expression of culture in the modern context, in action, outside of the museum or culture camp context.⁴¹ Researchers, like Emmons, have found that tribal members typically have a strong feeling of connection to the land and a longing to engage in cultural activities on the land but that a lack of applicable venue to engage in those types of

³⁷ Berkes, Fikret. *Sacred Ecology*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

³⁸ Chapoose, Betsy, Sally McBeth, Sally Crum, and Aline LaForge. "Planting a Seed, Ute Ethnobotany: A Collaborative Approach in Applied Anthropology." *The Applied Anthropologist* 32, no. 1 (2012).

³⁹ Corntassel, Jeff, and Cheryl Bryce. "Practicing Sustainable Self-Determination: Indigenous Approaches to Cultural Restoration and Revitalization." *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 18, no. 2 (2012): 162.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 162.

activities or access to the land itself are often impediments.⁴² These persistent traditional community values for a connection to the land could be an important element in manifesting viable options for economic development in the Southern Ute community.

The Prairie Island Indian Community collaborated with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to do a \$3 million dollar restoration project for their traditional wild rice stands on some islands found between the Vermillion River and the main channel of the Mississippi.⁴³ The tribe worked with the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program as a key component of the tribe's strategy to restore native ecosystems as a way of putting cultural heritage into practical application.⁴⁴ This project shows the type of collaboration that occur when tribes work with outside land managers off the reservation. The program's regional manager commented that wild rice would not be typically used in the seeding mix for restoration projects.⁴⁵ This is a prime example of a demonstration project showing how it is possible to connect "restoration with cultural issues and food sources."⁴⁶ Other aspects to this project include mapping cultural and medicinal plants, invasive species, and habitat assessment through birding surveys to formulate a holistic conservation plan.⁴⁷

According to the Tribal Relations Strategic Plan for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Forest Service (USFS), part of their mission is to promote "collaborative natural and cultural resource management" and use "traditional knowledge in

⁴² Emmons, Nichlas. "Understanding Cultural Revitalization among the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians." Muncie, Indiana: Ball State University, Dec 2012.

⁴³ Army Corps of Engineers. "Tribal Culture Takes Center Stage in Innovative Restoration Partnership." *Our Mississippi*, Winter 2014: 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁷ Fraizer, Brad. "Ecological Restoration and Conservation Activities of the Prairie Island Community, Minnesota." *National Tribal Science Forum*. Peshawbestown, MI: National EPA-Tribal Science Council, 2010. 4.

combination with the best Western science and technology.”⁴⁸ Joseph Flood examined Pacific Northwest tribes who use the National Forest for outdoor recreation participation and looked at beliefs and policies connected to those uses.⁴⁹ In order to plan out how best to implement priorities, the tribal government might develop a survey of aptitudes and interests looking at Southern Ute relationships with the Brunot treaty area and their assertion of their rights to hunt, fish and gather in these areas will bring to light important information to help pursue this idea.

Data

Southern Ute Tribe

A review of Southern Ute tribal department regulations showed that no structural hindrances existed per se to outdoor recreation or ecological restoration business enterprises. The Natural Resources Department has a wildlife management division website which has information on the permitting process for conducting hunting, fishing, guiding, and outfitting activities on the reservation and within the Brunot treaty area. A discussion with the Superintendent of the BIA revealed that outdoor recreation activities are not generally promoted for individual business opportunities because of the already limited land-base the tribe possesses and a cultural stigma against individual ambition.⁵⁰ The Superintendent also mentioned that conservation and restoration projects have been conducted on the reservation and that these are reported in the Annual Reports, which are only available to tribal members.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Office of Tribal Relations. *Tribal Relations Strategic Plan*. Strategic Plan, Washington D.C.: Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2010 – 2013; 2

⁴⁹ Flood, Joseph P., and Leo H. McAvoy. "Voices of My Ancestors, Their Bones Talk to Me: How to Balance US Forest Service Rules and Regulations with Traditional Values and Culture of American Indians." *Human Ecology Review* (Society for Human Ecology) 14, no. 1 (2007): 76-89.

⁵⁰ Waconda, John, interview by Christine Myers. *BIA Superintendent Southern Ute Agency* (April 16, 2014).

⁵¹ Waconda, interview, 2014.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

The BIA still manages Southern Ute tribal trust lands which include assignment lands for housing and agriculture. BIA Superintendent Wanconda confirmed that agricultural assignments within the Southern Ute Agency do not have conventional agriculture only restrictions but that mentioned that tribal members may be unaware of market possibilities for growing native plants for seed or conservation/restoration stock.⁵²

The Landscape-scale approach to conservation and mitigation of infrastructure development policy has recently been adopted in the Department of Interior across the entire agency. As the Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell stated in DOI Order 3330:

Federal lands (including "withdrawn lands", e.g. refuges and parks), waters, and natural resources are critically important for ensuring the long term survival of native plants and animal species and ecosystems; support hunting, fishing, and other types of recreational opportunities; are essential sources of drinking water; sequester significant amounts of carbon; and showcase important cultural, historic, scenic, and natural wonders.⁵³

This change in DOI policy is a result of a Presidential Memorandum entitled, "Modernizing Federal Infrastructure Review and Permitting Regulations, Policies, and Procedures" which was issued May 17, 2013 to all the heads of executive agencies and departments.⁵⁴

Federal Agencies Land Use Management

It is federal policy to conduct consultation with Indian tribal governments for any policies which might have "tribal implications."⁵⁵ President Obama's Memorandum, "Modernizing Federal Infrastructure Review and Permitting Regulations, Policies, and Procedures" applies

⁵² Waconda, interview, 2014.

⁵³ Secretary Sally Jewell, Order 3330 "Improving Mitigation Policies and Practices of the Department of the Interior, October 2013.

⁵⁴ President Barack Obama, Presidential Memorandum, "Modernizing Federal Infrastructure Review and Permitting Regulations, Policies, and Procedures", May 17, 2013.

⁵⁵ President Barack Obama, Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments", November 6, 2000.

directly to this analysis because it focuses on local and regional ecological planning goals which may also effect Native American treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather in certain areas. In the case of the Southern Utes it also effects their oil and gas development enterprises because of state and federal regulatory requirements imposed on that industry.

The Presidential Memorandum “modernizes key regulations, polices, and procedures” in order to streamline and modernize the permitting process for infrastructure development but at the same time it appears to place a higher value than previous policies on the socio-ecological results of these polices as crucial factors in the overall economic implications of development.

Section 1. Modernization of Review and Permitting Regulations, Policies, and Procedures.

(b) (ii) (9) identify improvements to mitigation policies to provide project developers with added predictability, facilitate landscape-scale mitigation based on conservation plans and regional environmental assessments, facilitate interagency mitigation plans where appropriate, ensure accountability and the long-term effectiveness of mitigation activities, and utilize innovative mechanisms where appropriate;

(c) Infrastructure sectors covered by the modernization effort include: surface transportation, such as roadways, bridges, railroads, and transit; aviation; ports and related infrastructure, including navigational channels; water resources projects; renewable energy generation; conventional energy production in high-demand areas; electricity transmission; broadband; pipelines; storm water infrastructure; and other sectors as determined by the Steering Committee.⁵⁶

Various federal executive agencies have been implementing this modernization process into their policies. On April 10, 2014 Secretary of the Department of the Interior Sally Jewell released a report outlining the department’s key strategies to implement the landscape-scale approach under this Presidential Memorandum.⁵⁷ The DOI policy strategy is “to advance landscape-scale, science-based management of America’s public lands and wildlife” by implementing “mitigation policies and practices” in order to be more effective in encouraging

⁵⁶President Barack Obama, Presidential Memorandum, May 17, 2013.

⁵⁷ Secretary Sally Jewell, Order 3330, October 2013.

development of infrastructure but also protect “natural and cultural resources.”⁵⁸ The strategy outlines four priorities for “ongoing and future work” with the most notable being the implementation of the landscape-scale approach. This approach has been developed at the state level and applied by other federal agencies coordinating with state agencies on land use management issues that have sought to minimize conflicts between development and crucial wildlife habitat conservation priorities.⁵⁹

State Policies

Incipient Landscape-scale Approach

The Secretary of the Interior’s press release on landscape-scale approach policy implementation in the DOI mentioned that this approach developed over time from initiatives which began with the Western Governors Association (WGA) and their work on the Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT).⁶⁰ Land use managers are just now officially acknowledging what Native American cultures have known all along, that ecological landscapes do not necessarily recognize artificial political boundaries and that humans actively alter these landscapes for better or worse.

The WGA is an association of 19 Western States plus 3 U.S. flag islands that develops bipartisan policy and serves as an organization through which information on issues concerning western states can be exchanged and acted upon in the policy arena.⁶¹ The WGA develops and promotes public policy initiatives for the western states it represents, serves as an information exchange to develop “best practices,” collects decision-making data through research, and works

⁵⁸Secretary Sally Jewell, Order 3330, October 2013.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹Western Governors Association. *Western Governors Association: The WGA Mission*. Jan 01, 2014. <http://westgov.org/about/how-wga-works> (accessed April 26, 2014).

to influence public opinion in areas of concern to the organization membership.⁶² The landscape-scale approach being adopted by federal agencies has largely emerged from the research conducted and presented in the WGA Wildlife Corridors Initiative Report (2008).

WGA Policy Resolution 07-01, *Protecting Wildlife Migration Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West*, created the Western Wildlife Habitat Council because the research findings overwhelmingly indicated that “healthy ecosystems and abundant wildlife are an important economic driver” for western states.⁶³ Other important considerations that have played into the creation of this collaborative approach is the requirement that all levels of land use managers comply with federal laws protecting the environment, endangered species, and provide for mitigation of any potential impacts development projects may have across political boundaries and land use management jurisdictions.⁶⁴

The Western Wildlife Habitat Council developed the CHAT tool in order to give a “high level overview of important wildlife habitat” that can be used to minimize impacts of infrastructure development on important habitat areas in the 16 western states included within the database.⁶⁵ The overall goal of mitigation in the landscape-scale approach centers on the understanding that land use management policies have to take into consideration that lands are connected ecologically and literally embedded within the context of larger landscapes that have had a mixed history of ownership and use.⁶⁶ This approach focuses on using both natural and

⁶² Western Governors Association. *Western Governors Association: The WGA Mission*. Jan 01, 2014. <http://westgov.org/about/how-wga-works> (accessed April 26, 2014).

⁶³ Western Governors Association. *Wildlife Corridors Initiative Report*. Feasibility, Denver: WGA, 2008; 3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁵ Secretary Sally Jewell, Order 3330, “Improving Mitigation Policies and Practices of the Department of the Interior, October 2013.

⁶⁶ Trombulak, Stephen C, and Robert F Baldwin. *Landscape-scale Conservation Planning*, 2010; 2.

social sciences to develop planning tools at greater spatial scales based on collaborations between the different land management jurisdictions, across public and private lands.⁶⁷

Colorado's Governor John Hickenlooper is the chair of this organization.⁶⁸ The CHAT tool utilizes state data collection on crucial wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors. The Colorado Division of Wildlife gathers data for this regional network of statewide data systems which seeks to use this data to balance the demands of "urban growth, energy development, and transportation infrastructure" with the needs of fish and wildlife for a variety of contiguous habitats in order that they might thrive.⁶⁹ CHAT is what is known as a decision support system (DSS) which allows state wildlife agencies to create a common set of tools with up-to-date data on wildlife habitat for planning and collaboration with local, state, federal, tribal, and private land management decision-makers.⁷⁰

Other WGA reports are pertinent to this study but cannot be included here.⁷¹ Further research should be conducted to tie Southern Ute interests into the ongoing conversation at the level of their existing enterprises like casino operations for tourism and oil and gas development for environment mitigation strategies, as well as developing the ideas which I am proposing they pursue to complement those enterprises in this policy analysis.

⁶⁷ Trombulak, Stephen C, and Robert F Baldwin. *Landscape-scale Conservation Planning*, 2010; 2.

⁶⁸ Western Governors Association. *About WGA, Governors*, April 26, 2014.

⁶⁹ Colorado Division of Wildlife. "Colorado Fish and Wildlife." *Crucial Habitats and Corridors*. June 01, 2010. <http://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/LandWater/Energy/CrucialHabitat/CO-NMhabitatscorridorshandout.pdf> (accessed April 24, 2014).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ See WGA website under Reports: The West's Competitive Advantage: Landscapes, Open Lands and Unique History; Managing the Region's Recreation Assets; Western Governors' Association Forest Health Advisory Committee: Forest Health Landscape-scale Restoration Recommendations; Climate Adaptation Priorities for the Western States: Scoping Report; Collaborative Conservation Strategies: Legislative Case Studies from Across the West; and Creating a Drought Early Warning System for the 21st Century.

Conclusions

Developing a tribal outdoor recreation economic sector can be approached from two levels, internally and externally. Internally the focus would emphasize developing the tribal member interest and ability to do the work both as a seasonal service industry for tourism and more importantly as a community service to tribal youth meant to facilitate cultural learning experiences. Outwardly, work needs to be done to investigate the possibility of utilizing the office in the Department of Commerce in implementing an Intertribal tourism demonstration project in the Southwest or perhaps as a Tri-Ute project which could draw upon the different interests and strengths the three Ute tribes have and develop a tourism project. Research should be done to determine if there is a way to create an indigenous cooperative business model for an outdoor recreation enterprise. The Office of Native American Business Development (ONABD) was created in the Department of Commerce under 25 U.S. Code § 4305 - Intertribal tourism demonstration projects. Given the limited time frame of this study I was unable to find more information on if any demonstration projects had been implemented “for Indians of the Four Corners area located in the area adjacent to the border between Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico.”⁷²

Recent reports show that ecological restoration contributes not just to increasing the beauty and integrity of landscapes or as investments against the volatility of climate change, but according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service habitat restoration programs have pervasive economic impacts creating “3,973 new jobs” and 327.7 million dollars flowed into local economies from “on-the-ground habitat restoration projects” in 2011.⁷³ Habitat restoration is a

⁷² 25 U.S. Code § 4305(a)4A.

⁷³ Shire, Gavin. "Pacific Region News Release." *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*. April 22, 2014. <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/news/news.cfm?id=2144375319> (accessed April 25, 2014).

subset of the green jobs sector known as the “restoration economy.”⁷⁴ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released a report on April 22, 2014, *Restoration Returns: The contribution of Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and Coastal Program Restoration Projects to Local U.S. Economies*.⁷⁵ The results of this economic analysis shows that this sector is actually producing an impact on local economies at approximately a ratio of 1:16, which means that for every one dollar spent on these projects, \$16 is generated in local economies.

The Southern Ute have already conducted a number of restoration projects on reservation lands which can provide ideas for future projects. One idea for off-reservation lands restoration projects is to strategically participate in projects like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partnership process by first getting assistance in starting a cooperative of Southern Ute native seed and plant producers on BIA tribal agricultural assignment lands.

A list of historic plant and animal communities recorded in conjunction with Southern Ute culture can be found in the *Handbook of North American Indians* and “Planting a Seed, Ute Ethnobotany: A Collaborative Approach in Applied Anthropology.”⁷⁶ The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project is an established collaborative ecological initiative established within the traditional Southern Ute homelands and the Brunot Treaty area.⁷⁷ For plant conservation and restoration models in the local region there is the Uncompahgre Plateau Collaborative Restoration Project which has already undertaken pilot projects for restoring “native grasses and

⁷⁴ Shire, Gavin. "Pacific Region News Release." *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*. April 22, 2014.

⁷⁵ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. *Restoration Returns: The Contribution of Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and Coastal Program Restoration Projects to Local U.S. Economies*. Economic Impact Analysis, Washington, D.C.: Division of Economics: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2014.

⁷⁶ Callaway, Donald, Joel Janetski, and Omer C Stewart. "Utes." In *Handbook of North American Indians*, by Smithsonian Institution, 336-367. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986.

⁷⁷ Linking Colorado's Landscapes, Executive Committee. *Linking Colorado's Landscapes: A Statewide Assessment of Wildlife Linkages*. Collaborative Report: Phase I, Denver: Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project, 2005.

forbs” by growing crops of native seed. Participants in that project have already done a great deal of work to determine appropriate seeding, harvesting, collection and cleaning techniques for numerous species.⁷⁸ Specifically, the Uncompahgre Plateau Collaborative Restoration Project may provide the Southern Utes with a viable model which they can adapt to their own ecological restoration and propagation program development. All of these groups and projects have GIS data which could be used for collaborative purposes.

The EPA Office of Research and Development National Center for Environmental Research Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Program, “Science for Sustainable and Healthy Tribes” funding opportunity is part of the EPA’s Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Under Climate Change Impacts area of research, developing an ecological restoration cooperative business would provide a way to cultivate appropriate “adaptation/mitigation strategies that can lessen the impacts of climate change on health risks for tribes, and still honor cultural practices or activities.”⁷⁹ This grant also encourages intertribal applications and applications that include tribally serving institutions of higher learning. One idea would be to apply for this grant under a Tri-Ute collaboration with Fort Lewis College and Utah State University. These institutions may be able to provide a certificate to tribal members under the grant provisions which would give them the practical skillsets to succeed in the non-culturally specific aspects of organizing the project. The Human-in-Ecosystem framework utilized at the tribal level works well with the landscape-scale approach developed by state and federal agencies to achieve cultural and economic goals for the Utes and the larger socio-ecological community.

⁷⁸ UP-CFLRP Project. *Uncompahgre Plateau Collaborative Restoration Project*. Jan 01, 2014. <http://uplandscape.org/2011/03/05/266/> (accessed April 8, 2014). Note that this site contains a listing of species which this group has currently under cultivation so this may be a great source for seed stock.

⁷⁹ Environmental Protection Agency. *Environmental Protection Agency: Extramural Research*. Feb 25, 2014. http://epa.gov/ncer/rfa/2013/2013_star_tribal.html#ref4 (accessed April 21, 2014).

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<http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/secretary-jewell-releases-landscape-scale-mitigation-strategy-to-encourage-dual-objectives-of-smart-development-and-conservation.cfm> (accessed April 10, 2014).
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