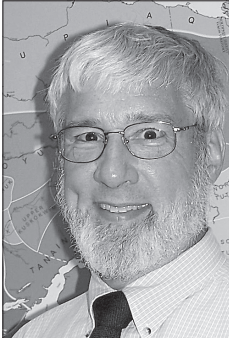


ENGAGING *INUPIAQ* VALUES IN LAND MANAGEMENT FOR HEALTH THROUGH AN ACTION RESEARCH APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS



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Objectives. The investigation identified organizational system processes, which allow indigenous cultural values to be formally incorporated into planning and sustainable caring of traditionally used landscapes that promote healing and well-being. This community-based participatory research was based on a two-year effort to identify research needs within the Maniilaq Association's Tribal Doctor Program in Kotzebue, Alaska. Information was requested on the processes required to utilize places of ancient traditional healing (PATH) that are now on public lands managed by the federal government.

Design and methods. Ernest T. Stringer's Community-Based Action Research of 1999 was utilized to engage 27 stakeholders from 14 interest groups, which included six traditional healers and one Alaska Native medical doctor. Appreciative Inquiry was employed to solicit information, insights, ideas, and innovations for how best to assure that a well-known place of ancient traditional healing can be used in a sustainable manner. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in a naturalistic process after archival research and preliminary discussions yielded a foundation for the inquiry. Information was placed into a case dynamics matrix to assess thematic content. To provide for meaning-making, all participants reviewed all of the comments and provided their own written or oral interpretation of what was being said. These results were synthesized to include the multicultural worldviews of the participants through the use of their direct interpretations and recommendations for action.

Results. The participants told personal stories that reflected the contemporary spiritual and healing attributes of this ancient site. They repeatedly requested that its solitary and rustic nature be preserved. The primary indigenous values identified with the place are: respect for nature, spirituality, knowledge of the language, sharing, respect for elders, respect for others, and cooperation.

Conclusions. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) provides for traditional cultural practices to be discussed under formal agreements with tribal bodies and the federal government. The process being proposed for future application is the one used within this dissertation: Multicultural Engagement for Learning and Understanding (MELU) through Action Research and the use of Appreciative Inquiry. To assure the sustainable utilization of these PATH the process must employ geopiety, a respect for the natural healing quality of place.

Keywords: Inupiaq, Alaska, Health, Traditional Healing, Geopiety, Action Research, Appreciative Inquiry

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