

Draft Prospectus

Support for the

Indigenous Aquaculture Network:

Community Education, Empowerment and Capacity Building

Background

At the 2002 Native Food Summit, organized by the First Nations Development Institute, a landmark fisheries and aquaculture workshop brought together diverse practitioners of fish culture from Indigenous communities within the United States (Native American communities). Three key workshop findings emerged:

- (1) For some Indigenous Nations, communities and bioregions, fish and other aquatic resources were overlooked in terms of contributing to community food security and sustainability.
- (2) That fish culture and harvest was embedded in cultural and traditional practices, knowledge, and spirituality that underscored community well-being and life-ways. At the same time, many of these traditional aquatic practices were threatened by a number of Western developmental factors.
- (3) Various fisheries, aquatic and cultural resource specialists from Indigenous Nations and communities were often isolated and had little opportunity to share their extensive knowledge of fish-cultural practices with others from different bioregions.

Building on these findings, the “Indigenous Aquaculture Network” (IAN) was launched through two small grants from the Homeland-Marisla Foundation over the period 2003-2005. The IAN provided US-based Indigenous Peoples Native American practitioners a mechanism vehicle to exchange and share information through web-based technology, information gathering on tribal fish cultural practices, and to have face-to-face meetings that were held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2004 and at Camp Indianola, Washington in 2005. A total of 40 US-based Indigenous fish-cultural specialists attended these two sessions. Wavering funding commitments by non-indigenous donors and organizational realignment by key nonprofit organizations that hosted the IAN resulted in a period of inactivity despite strong continuing interest in the activities of the network.

Parallel to these early efforts of the IAN, Heifer International and the USAID-supported Aquaculture Collaborative Research Support Program (A/CRSP) based at Oregon State University initiated a joint “Eagle-Condor Aquaculture Exchange Project” (Attachment I) in 2004. The project planned for two groups of US-based Indigenous fish-cultural practitioners (called the “Eagles”) to visit and share information with South American Peruvian Indigenous counterparts (called the “Condors”) in Peru. After the Peru exchange, the project plans to initiate an exchange in and Mexico with Indigenous communities engaged with aquacultural activities. Heifer International financially supported the North American component while A/CRSP supported Peru in-country activities. Subsequently, Heifer International (through the Indian Nations Program) sub-contracted the Bemidji, Minnesota based Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) to arrange all planning, logistics and travel of the Eagle delegation. The first exchange was recently completed as an Eagle delegation spent April 22-28th in the Pucallpa region of Peru. (A separate report is available on this Peru exchange) The Mexican trip has been tentatively scheduled for November of 2006. The remainder of this prospectus outlines and proposes a set of next steps for continuation of the Eagle-Condor in light of Heifer International’s “Indigenous People’s Initiative”, Strategic Plan 2007-2011.

The Indigenous Aquaculture Network

The Indigenous Aquaculture Network (IAN) is primarily envisioned as a semi-autonomous partnering organization under the direction of an Independent Advisory Board to be administered under the auspices the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) within its Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI). IEN recognizes and supports the potential for IAN to eventually “spin-off” and form its own autonomous and separate organizational structure. The IAN will work with Indigenous communities to enhance traditional aquatic resources through education, empowerment and capacity building. The means for doing this are through North-South cultural exchanges, information dissemination and small village based seed projects. The IAN will have as its mission statement:

Strengthening food security, health and community development in a way that reflects Indigenous standards and sovereignty as related to the Water World and its interlinked natural resources through education, empowerment and capacity building by Indigenous Peoples.

Objectives that the IAN will focus on pertain to answering the following:

- How can the IAN and its partners create *sustainable local support for* aquatic resource management by indigenous communities?
- What *obstacles* are faced by indigenous aquatic resource practitioners and communities?
- How can aquatic resources *contribute* to Indigenous peoples’ wellness and health?
- What are the local and sustainable linkages between aquatic resources and other indigenous community based activities?
- How can this network *assist* with the above?

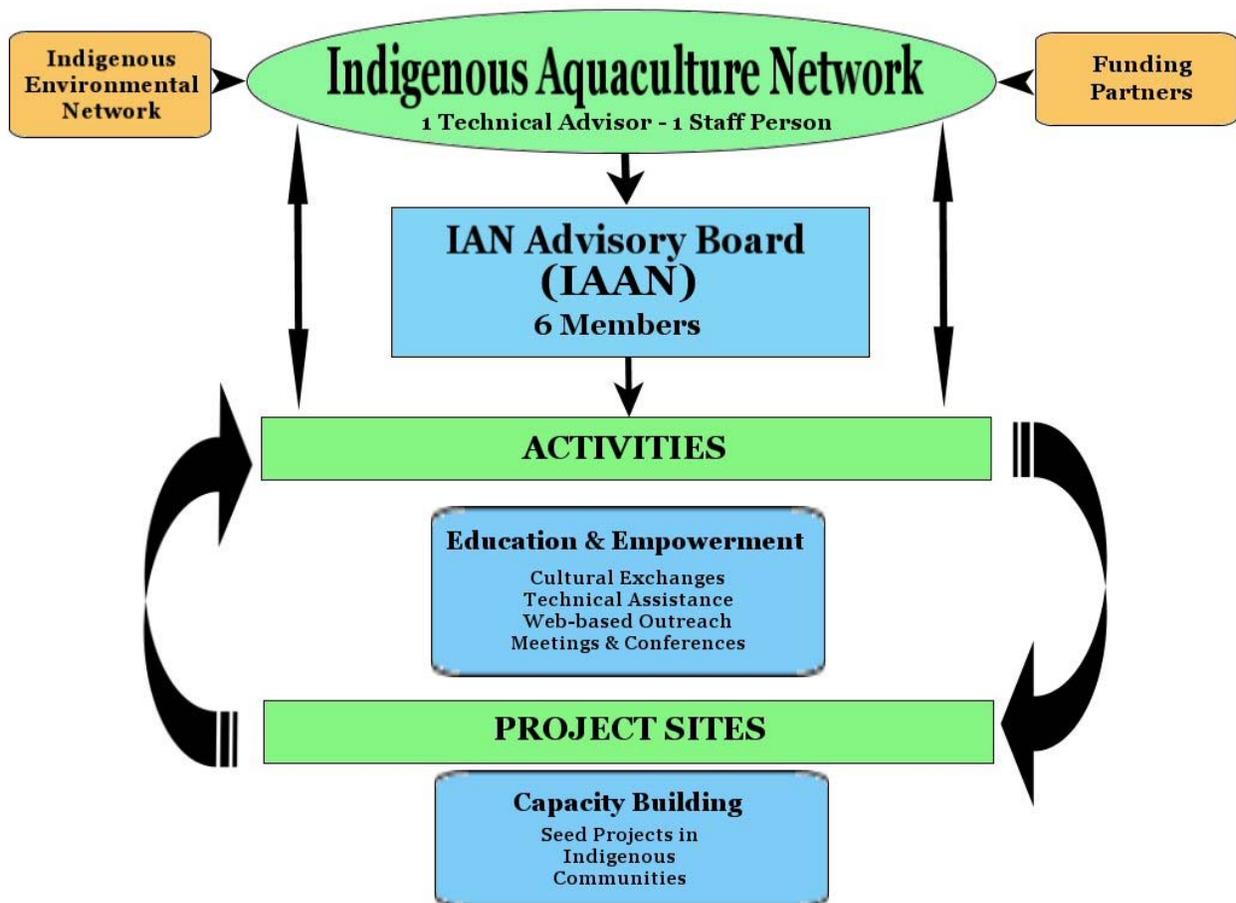
(Note: This IAN initiative regionally defines indigenous communities as from throughout the Americas – North America and the Latin American countries. As the need is further justified and capacity is developed, expanding IAN to other Indigenous communities in other global regions has long-range potential. In 2008, IAN wants to do outreach to SE Asia.)

Organization and Activities

The IAN’s point of departure is aquaculture, “*the controlled cultivation of aquatic organisms*”. In this sense aquaculture however must be envisioned as linked and directly related to how Indigenous Peoples view aquaculture as part of a broader perspective of the *Water World and Circle of Life*. While Indigenous People can be considered the “first aquaculturists”, the onslaught of modern Western-based Aquaculture/Fisheries development must be balanced in a manner that adheres to natural law governing traditional aquatic resource use, practices, and knowledge.

A reconstituted and formally derived organizational scheme, web-based information dissemination, cultural exchange activities and community/village-based seed grant project activities are proposed to build on the early IAN and Eagle-Condor initiatives as follows:

1. Formally constitute the Indigenous Aquaculture Network as a clearinghouse, facilitating, and coordinating entity under the direction of an independent Indigenous Aquaculture Network Advisory Board (IANAB), administered by the Indigenous Environmental Network. Overall, the reconstituted IAN and organizational relations are depicted below:



2. The IAN is envisioned as an entity that will be directly managed, supervised and staffed by the Indigenous Environmental Network through its Sustainable Communities Initiative, and overseen by an Indigenous Aquaculture Advisory Board, whereby:
 - The IAN will consist of 2 FTE staff responsible for ensuring that information, coordination, logistics, outreach communications and documentation requirements are updated, on-going, relevant and accountable to its constituent members and partnering organizations.

- The IAN will be overseen by an independent aquaculture advisory board, comprised of indigenous fisheries-cultural resources specialists, who will advise the IAN on attaining the goals of its mission statement and achieving its objectives.
- The IAN will primarily foster partnerships with other funding, non-profit and Indigenous Peoples Organizations (Including North American Indian Tribes) in terms of supporting continuing education, community empowerment, and local capacity building *as decided upon, undertaken and directed by indigenous peoples themselves*. The direction that this will take pertains to (1) continuing North-South; South-North cultural exchanges, (2) web-based information gathering, dissemination and outreach, (3) a series of convenings by IAN participants, (4) technical assistance in support of project development and outcomes, and (5) accountable and timely documentation. These directives are designed to ultimately foster small seed grants-projects related to indigenous aquatic resources.
- Specifically, the IAN in agreement with partners and community-based indigenous people and project holders will support small seed grants related to aquatic resources. Criteria will be set that complements IAN's mission statements, goals and objectives that will result in demonstrable attainment and documentation of the above.

ACTIVITIES-PROJECTS OUTLINE 2006-2010:

2006: Eagle-Condor Cultural Exchange Project (ongoing)

- June: finish Cultural Exchange Reports for Heifer/A/CRSP – Oregon State University.
- August-October: logistics and plans for Mexico Eagle-Condor Exchange
- November: Eagle-Condor Exchange (Mexico)
- December: Cultural Exchange Reports for Heifer/A/CRSP – Oregon State University.

The IAN: Education, Empowerment and Capacity Building: (proposed)

January-March 2007:

- Upgrade Web-based Information Outreach (in Spanish and other languages).
- Create an Indigenous Aquatic Resources Catalogue
- Communications – list serve and conference calls

March-May 2007:

- Condor educational tour to the Pacific Northwest re: fisheries management and aquaculture.
- Approximately 10 days.
- Hosts: Pacific Northwest Tribes.

June-August 2007:

- Eagle/IAN Technical Assistance Scoping Trip to Peru; re: Fisheries Enhancement, Aquaculture, Policy, and Technology

September-December 2007:

- Development of 2 pilot seed grant projects in Peru/Mexico
- Annual Meeting of IAAB

January-June 2008:

- Joint Eagle-Condor study tour of SE Asia 2 weeks

The Network proposes that an intensive two-week study tour of Southeast Asia be undertaken by IAN members. This tour would involve study of millennia old indigenous aquaculture practices in the Red River Valley of North Vietnam, and examining traditional community-based integrated argri-aquaculture operations in Laos and Thailand, one of the world's aquaculture leaders. The IAN has contacts with some of the leading academics and practitioners in the region, situated at the Asian Institute of Technology, a regional post-graduate educational institution. They have expressed support for the cultural exchange. For IAN (both Eagles and Condors) members, the tour would be invaluable in allowing for broader conceptualization of ongoing Indigenous North and South American aquaculture/fisheries resources practices.

- Annual Meeting of IAAB: Focus Seed Grants and Projects. Some tentative criteria are listed below whereby the IAN, IEN and the IAAB would frame funding criteria for disbursing small seed grants-projects that have been developed through discussion with Indigenous communities themselves. Some suggested areas to explore are:
- Support efforts to develop appropriate aquaculture/aquatic resource models and technology that complement Indigenous economic and community development life-ways (*e.g., traditional fisheries enhancement*).
- Support Aquaculture's/Aquatic Resource roles and contribution to biodiversity, sustainability, food security and community wellness (*e.g., Investigating promising new technologies from an indigenous perspective such as aquaponics, indigenous species enhancement, fisheries restoration, aquatic plants, marketing of aqua-products*).
- Support Aquaculture/Aquatic resources and traditional ecological knowledge (*e.g., conduct trainings, workshops and gatherings with traditional indigenous aquatic resource practitioners such as fishers*).
- Support Aquaculture/Aquatic Resource information transfer and network building between the North and the South (*e.g., develop web-based and printed materials for distribution between IAN members and other interested parties, these will include historical indigenous fisheries knowledge as shared and gathered as the network expands through solid relationship building and mutual respect*).

- Support organization of aquaculture/aquatic resources in indigenous communities (*e.g., traditional production, distributional and post-harvest ways and means for community development*).
- Planning for aquaculture/aquatic resources development in the context of traditional knowledge (*e.g., foster traditional decision making processes*).
- Expanding educational, training and funding opportunities by seeking interested partners (*e.g., Synthesizing and harmonizing related food and natural resources activities from an indigenous knowledge basis that is directed toward addressing community food security issues, distribution and social and cultural well-being*).

July-December 2008:

- Seed Grant Projects
- Annual Meeting IAAB

January-June 2009

- Seed Grant Projects
- Seed Grant Projects (Evaluation)
- Annual Meeting IAAB

Through applying the components listed above, the IAN can fully advance its overall objectives of addressing community-based food security through aquaculture/fisheries that strengthens the centrality of indigenous sovereignty, needs and standards in sustainable indigenous development.

Attachment I

The Indigenous Eagle - Condor Aquaculture Exchange Project

Introduction

All Indigenous peoples within the Western Hemisphere of the Americas maintain a strong cultural and spiritual relationship to water and the water world. Water and the biodiversity connected to water have supported Indigenous peoples for all time. In many Indigenous translations, water is life. Many Indigenous peoples of the Americas – from the North to the Global South – recognize aquatic life, such as fish, turtle, and whale as their tribal totem or clans. Fish, shellfish and other aquatic life remain an integral part of Indigenous peoples life-way and culture.

Today the water life is threatened. There are many reasons, including industrial development, urban expansion, agriculture, and colonial-western forms of governmental laws and regulation. These developments have negatively affected fish and shellfish species that have been a source of food security for Indigenous peoples, from the North to the South.

Aquaculture, the controlled cultivation of aquatic organisms, offers promise for expanding upon Indigenous peoples' health and sustainability of the water world. Properly developed, aquaculture enhances core cultural objectives such as protection of biodiversity, sustainability, food security, community wellness and economic benefits.

While Indigenous people have practiced aquaculture for thousands of years, the modern science of aquaculture is relatively recent. In North America there are about 50 active aquaculture projects being undertaken by Indigenous peoples, primarily as projects through tribal government initiatives. These projects are primarily economic development oriented (providing jobs) with some traditional cultural values incorporated into aquatic rearing practices. The potential for further integration of the controlled cultivation of aquatic organisms (aquaculture) into Indigenous culture can directly address biodiversity, sustainability, food security, community wellness and economic benefits. Further exploration of these issues has not been pursued to any great degree in the North (United States and Canada) as well as the South (Mexico, Central American and South America). Indigenous aqua-culturists work in relative isolation from each other and other non-Indigenous aquaculture-oriented organizations.

The Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), with support from the Indian Nations component of Heifer Project International (HPI) has initiated a collaborative relationship with the Collaborative Research Support Program (CRSP), headquartered at Oregon State University (OSU) and the Instituto de Investigaciones de la Amazonía Peruana (IIAP) in Iquitos, Peru. This collaborative work is to serve as an emerging link to Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations that work with aquaculture and the broad water world community with strong emphasis on Indigenous culture. It is the intent of this collaboration to create an opportunity for Indigenous individuals representing tribal government projects, universities/colleges, Native organizations, tribal community-based groups and Indigenous traditional practitioners of water

knowledge, fishing and shell fish cultures, to participate in an exchange program in regards to aquaculture. Because this exchange takes place in the Western Hemisphere between the North and South, this project is called the “*Eagle-Condor Aquaculture Exchange Project*”. It is with the hope that this exchange reinforces Indigenous knowledge and the cosmivision of Indigenous Peoples as a foundation towards finding a balance in the new emerging world of the aqua-cultural industry.

Objectives

The exchange program builds the initial foundation to further explore the following components:

- Appropriate aquaculture models and technology.
- Appropriate Indigenous economic and community development pathways.
- Aquaculture’s role and contribution to biodiversity, sustainability, food security and community wellness.
- Aquaculture and Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge.
- Aquaculture information transfer and network building between the North and the South.
- Organization of aquaculture in communities.
- Indigenous aquaculture and the non-indigenous world.
- Aquaculture in the context of aquatic resources management.
- Planning for aquaculture development.
- Expanding educational and training opportunities.

Why an Exchange Program is Important

The Eagle-Condor Aquaculture Exchange Program is important for a number of reasons. They are:

- Creates an initial organizational framework to evaluate aquaculture in terms of Indigenous culture and development.
- Allows for balance between more economically-focused and more community-based projects.
- Brings together Indigenous People from the North and South to learn from and share with each other in a comprehensive manner and share Indigenous knowledge.
- Provides in-depth learning experiences and an opportunity to help envision aquaculture practices in a manner that can benefit Indigenous people, provide models for sustainability development and respect the biological dynamics of the water world.

Criteria

The Eagle-Condor Aquaculture Exchange Project proposes that approximately 10-12 participants from the Northern hemisphere travel to meet and exchange information with

Southern Indigenous aqua-culturists in Peru and Mexico. Six (6) individuals would be selected for the Peru exchange and another 4-6 persons for the Mexico exchange that would be later in the year. These participants will be selected by the following minimum qualifications:

- Active work, career goals in aquatic resources management/aquaculture.
- Active work, career goals in health, nutrition, and community development related to food production.
- Active work, career goals in Indigenous planning/development with communication and leadership skills.
- Holds a valid passport (U.S., Canadian and other – different visa requests may apply).
- Is a tribal member of a U.S. and/or Canadian Indigenous tribal nation.

In addition to selecting participants that match the criteria above, there is a commitment to select Indigenous participants that are familiar with culture and spiritual ways. This may include participants that are traditional practitioners of fishing and shellfish cultures, etc.

Timeline

Spring 2006 – Schedule Peru visitation

Fall 2006 – Schedule Mexico visitation

Winter 2006 – Prepare report