

## Îethka Museum Project – Guiding Lodgepoles

Tyson Crawler, Tina Fox, Cherith Mark, Duane Mark, Pauline & JR Twoyoungmen  
With contributions from Charlie Rabbit and the late Buddy Wesley  
Summarized by Amanda Foote

### Research Lodgepoles:

These lodgepoles should give structure to research projects that are undertaken with Îethka community members. They can be actualized through different parts of research, such as writing and analysis, methods, community engagement, and reporting back.

#### - Personal responsibility

Anyone looking to undertake work with Îethka people will have responsibilities related to their positionality. Whether they be community members, non-Indigenous relations, or outsiders. They should act on what they learn in community, and be aware of their obligations.

#### - Knowledge protections

It is important to use knowledge in the correct ways, and to get permissions for knowledge that is used. Each person researchers talk to will have knowledge of how their knowledge can and should (or shouldn't be shared) and researchers will have to listen. There are real consequences (including physical and spiritual) for misuse of knowledge, because it also protects itself. Everything should be checked over by those who contributed before it's published.

#### - Elders Guidance

Like many other Indigenous communities, Îethka revere and respect Elders as knowledge keepers and the wisest of community members. Elders are to be approached with great care and respect. In order to learn from them, a reciprocal relationship must be developed.

In Îethka communities, Elders are also individuals who validate knowledge, and are primary decision makers in collective concerns. In Îethka communities there are several councils of Elders that are depended upon for specific tasks. These councils operate in diverse ways, and with varying degrees of institutional and political involvement. If researchers spend time serving Elders, visiting with them, helping them meet their needs, and getting to know them as individuals, a pathway forward with their help will emerge.

#### - Co-Mentorship

In order to learn, we must watch and listen. Researchers should work with youth or young adults as an opportunity to both learn and teach. In a Îethka practice, knowledge is not owned by one person, but it can be controlled (handled, yielded). Through the controlling process, responsibility is demonstrated, and more can be learned. This implies that keepers of Îethka knowledge have responsibilities to share that knowledge (in responsible ways) with the community, and to activate that knowledge in service of the community. This is also implied through kinship.

- Ceremony & Protocol

Offering tobacco is part of getting consent, but it also honors ceremonial and protocol expectations, and puts us into a type of relationship together. Tobacco protects the giver and receiver when it is offered and received. Researchers should keep working with Elders to learn protocols and ways to show respect. These will keep researchers from causing or coming to harm. Respect for ceremony and protocol will also make the research stronger because it will be built on values and relationships.

- Language

Researchers should make attempts to learn the Îlethka language in order to engage with the community in a meaningful way. Îlethka individuals often express the importance of their language to their overall cultural context. Thinking in Îlethka is different than thinking in English. As such, it is important that in attempts to learn from Îlethka people, the process be grounded in the language that Îlethka people use. Researchers can learn from resources available online or from lessons. Even learning greetings and some key phrases is a good start.