

Life on the Hardened Border [Abstract]

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The many Coast Salish groups distributed on both sides of the United States-Canada border on the Pacific coast today face significant obstacles to travel across the international border, and in some cases are denied passage or intimidated into not attempting to cross. The current situation regarding travel by Aboriginal people reflects the "hardening" of the border by United States officials following the events of "9-11." A bureaucratic environment has become increasingly hostile to the interests of Aboriginal groups in favor of security. In addition, the problems encountered by individual Aboriginal travelers at the border reflects a transformed American impression of Canada, now commonly treated politically and administratively as a state from which enemies of America are positioned to harm American interests. These new perceptions create an environment that enables Homeland Security officers to regard Aboriginal peoples seeking to cross the border (under legal conventions which allow passage of Aboriginal peoples) as suspect. Officers then act on their own received, stereotypical notions of what a "real Indian" looks like, and deny passage to those they consider to be fakes. These border issues reflect a larger pattern of the denial of Aboriginal rights and challenges to tribal sovereignty by the American state and its citizenry. Data for this work comes from interviews with Coast Salish people and the case of a Coast Salish man who was detained and prosecuted for attempting to cross the border. A justice summit held in 2003 provides direct insight into official American approaches to the border as they concern Aboriginal people and reporting by the *Seattle Times* reveals local responses to 9-11.

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