

## **Collaborative Conservation and Contexts Of Resistance: New (and Enduring) Strategies for Survival [Abstract]**

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Living with legacies of unjust land and resource policy, coping with side effects of industrial production systems that threaten the continuance of land-based subsistence and culture, and weighing options that are largely limited by external political, economic, and legal frameworks, Native North American leaders have become adept at following multiple paths toward the same ultimate goal—the survival of their people. How, I ask here, have indigenous boreal forest residents worked to promote the land-based self-determination upon which their identities as culturally distinct and politically-autonomous peoples depend? How have strategies shifted over time in response to changing opportunities and circumstances? Even as it presents a paradox by simultaneously empowering and disempowering indigenous participants, involvement in collaborative conservation initiatives extends and transforms well-established patterns of indigenous resistance. Positioning First Nations at the center of their own worlds rather than at the peripheries of worlds imagined by others, I demonstrate that indigenous participants envision collaborative conservation as a strategic opportunity for advancing their peoples' prospects through practical engagement with the surrounding settler society's environmental decision-making processes. Substantiated by narrative case studies of three First Nations participants in a multi-sector coalition called the Boreal Leadership Council, I argue that collaborative conservation can be constructively approached as a productive and pragmatic strategy for long-term physical, cultural, and political survival.

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