

## **An Expression of Self-Determination: Incorporating Alaska Native Knowledge into Community-Driven Energy Sovereignty**

**Joseph P. Brewer II**

Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) systems continue to demonstrate that they play a significant role in developing working relationships between Indigenous communities and the world. By narrowing TEK's application to ecologically distinct regions, we begin to understand that Indigenous peoples' local knowledge of a place is experienced and observed over time, and how the incorporation of these knowledge systems can strengthen community initiatives. The study of Alaskan Native knowledge (ANK) that is the focus of this article is specific to cultural regions of Alaska and to areas where certain communities live. To better understand the importance of this "Local ANK," the author explored its incorporation during a timber harvest in Fort Yukon, Alaska and completed first-person interviews with project personnel of the wood-to-energy project. Local ANK is paramount in the planning and implementation of industrial projects that move Alaskan Natives towards self-determination.

**Keywords:** Traditional Ecological Knowledge; Local Knowledge; Alaskan Native Knowledge; Biomass