

Weighing the Consequences:

*Engaging British Columbia
Communities in Offshore
Petroleum Assessment*

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Question:



How can, and why should, communities become more meaningfully involved in the impact assessment process?

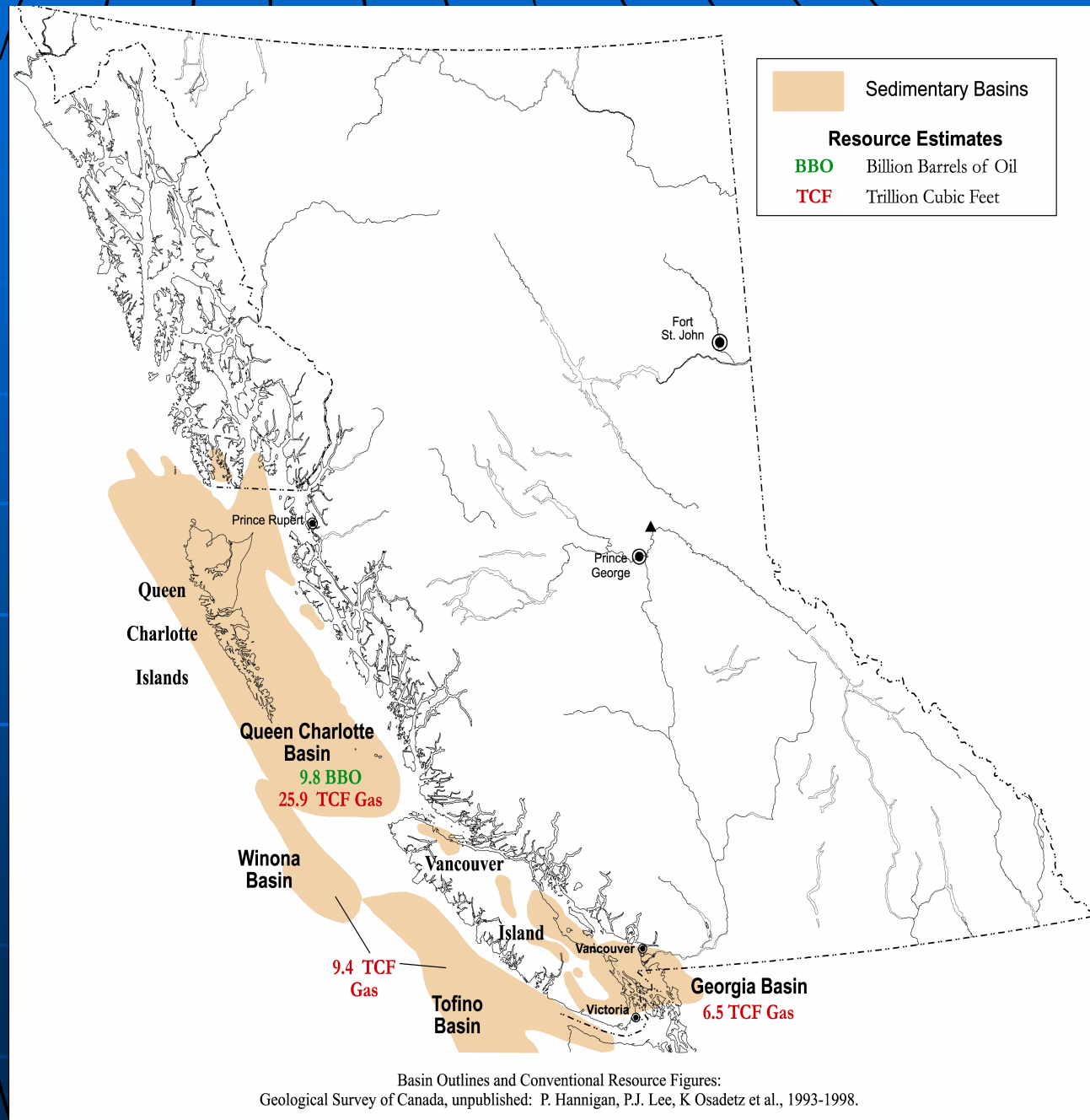
IA and CED: Shared Principles

Public Participation	Sustainable Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Active and welcome involvement■ Diversity■ Cooperation■ Respect & understanding■ Efficient, well planned■ Open and transparent■ Fair and just■ Building capacity and “social capital”■ Local knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Building positive solutions■ Multiple objective, holistic■ Cumulative, long-term, precautionary approach■ Future generations■ Community development & empowerment■ Adaptive, reflexive■ Human rights■ Quality of life in harmony with nature
Source: IAI A Principles Documents	

The BC Situation

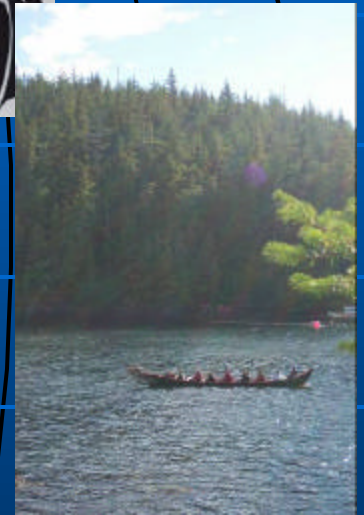
- Established industry in Northeast BC
- Offshore oil and gas potential identified on the BC coast since early 1900s - the 50+ year debate!

Location of BC Offshore Reserves



Complexity of Context

- First Nations
- Ecology
- Urban-rural dichotomy
- Divided communities, entrenched positions
- History of failed attempts
- Resource depletion, economic decline
- "Business driven" prov'l government



Timeline

1940s 1960s 1970s 1980s 1990s 2000s

Exploratory drilling

Leasing

Jurisdictional debates

Fisheries concerns

Environmental
Assessment
Panel

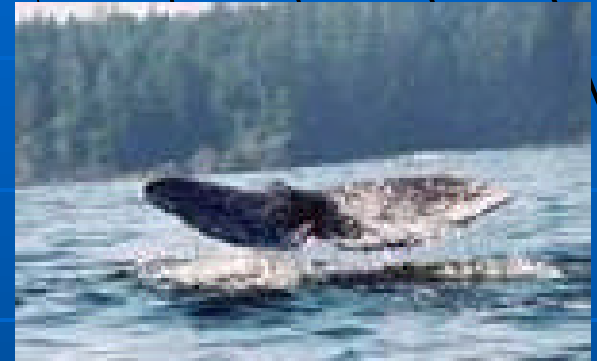
Federal
moratorium

Renewed
interest

Multi-party
action

Key Issues

- Seismic impacts
- Fish and wildlife risks
- Land claims
- Royalty arrangements
- Employment and economic potential
- Impact distribution
- Regulatory framework



** Information **

Public Involvement

1980s:

- West Coast Offshore Exploration Environmental Assessment

2000s:

- Review Panels, conferences and workshops
- UNBC research program: site visits, cooperative research (limited), outreach officers
- Community and NGO efforts, provincially supported



The Community Research Continuum

Research
In/About
Community

Research
With
Community

Research By
Community



Participatory, community-based
research

Research, Education and Information Management

- Commissioned studies
- Scientific Panels
- Provincial website and Task Force
- UNBC program (+ other universities)
- Community and NGO programs
- Federal Aboriginal Engagement

Limitations

- Uncoordinated approach
- Unrealistic timelines
- Fostering polarized positions
- Uninformed rural public
- Uninvolved urban interests
- Expert-reliance
- Unanswered questions

Designing an Information Management System for Impact Assessment:

A Nested, Cooperative,
Strategic Approach

Solutions

- Create an information network
- Identify key questions through multi-level dialogue
- Design a collaborative research program
- Use experts where needed, local researchers where possible, mentoring
- Plan for dissemination and outreach
- Create a nested system of information repositories

Benefits of the Nested Approach

- Information is a foundation for good decisions
- Limitations of expert-based knowledge
- More proactive, holistic approach
- Conflict resolution and creative solutions through dialogue

Benefits Continued ...

- Long-term monitoring capability
- Process memory
- Capacity building
- Local benefits
- Willingness and desire to be involved
- Legally protected rights
- IAIA Marrakech Declaration

Challenges

- Collaborative work is difficult and messy
- Political will
- Capacity
- Time and money

