



Newsletter

The Canadian-Iraq Marshlands Initiative and Participatory Processes by Maureen Maloney

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I have had the privilege over the last four years of being one of three directors of the Canadian-Iraq Marshlands Initiative (CIMI), a five million dollar project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) which entailed designing and implementing a dialogue process to allow a number of interested groups to come together and prepare a Management Plan for the Marshes over the next few years. This has been one of the most exhilarating and immensely rewarding (albeit at times extremely frustrating) projects that I have had the opportunity to undertake.

The Iraqi Marshlands have been referred to as the cradle of civilization and are thought by some to be the site of the 'Garden of Eden'. They were home to about 500,000 Marsh Dwellers who had lived in this ecosystem for about 5000 years. The Marsh Dwellers had their homes on reed mounds built up over the millennia and relied on boats for transportation. The Marshes were the largest wetlands in southwest Asia and were a unique ecosystem. In the 1990s, the Iraqi regime drained the Marshlands using a series of canals, dikes, and ditches and the water was degraded by the dumping of waste and chemicals. This led to total ecological and cultural devastation. By 2000, the Marshlands had been reduced to about 9-14% of their original extent and most of the flora and fauna had disappeared. Without water, reeds, fish and other wildlife, the Marsh Dwellers could no longer survive and about 80% migrated to nearby cities like Basra and to Iran.

In 2003, after the removal of the former regime the people remaining in the Marshlands began to break down the water diversion system and according to satellite imagery from the UNEP Iraqi Marshlands Observation System, about 58% of the Marshes were re-flooded. However some Marshlanders wanted to keep traditional lifestyles; others wanted hospitals, schools, electricity and sewage systems. There are also vast oil reserves under the Marshes. So, conflicts over cultural, economic, social and ecological issues arose among a broad array of interested parties including the Iraqi Federal Government, the three Governorates (or provinces), Tribal and Religious leaders and Iraqi universities and research institutes. The CIMI project brought these factions together in safe forums in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon to devise a management plan for the revitalisation of the Marshes paying attention to economic, social and cultural imperatives and resulted in a plan, Managing for Change: Tools for Effective Decision Making.

This fascinating process highlights the importance of ensuring that all the interested groups are at the table and the necessity of creating a safe atmosphere to build trust. Technical assistance and capacity building also played a pivotal role in ensuring that all parties were privy to the same information. CIMI produced ground breaking scientific data such as the most comprehensive mapping and GIS system that has been conducted on the Marshes. Overall CIMI illustrates the importance of carefully planned inclusive participatory processes to enable sustainable public policy decision-making on issues that will affect the lives of people for many generations to come.

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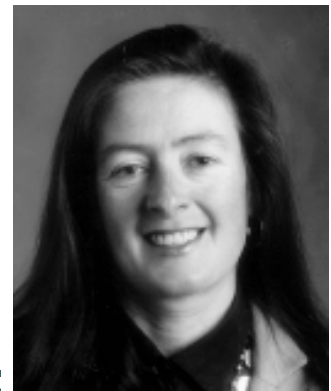
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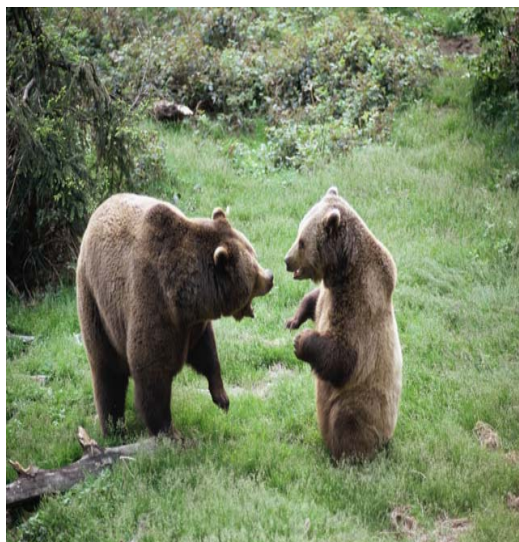


Maureen Maloney is a faculty member in the School of Public Policy. Her research interests are international human rights law, peace building, and good governance. She is also researching the design of dispute resolution systems especially in Indigenous communities.

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A Research Co-op by Anthony Hamilton and Brian Brauer (MPP 2011)

Our co-op term was spent working as research assistants on the issue of human-bear interaction in BC. At the outset, we knew little about this particular topic; however we had great success in reaching and speaking with many community based advocates and educators, as well as municipal government contacts, and officials from the



From Co-op

To Capstone

BC Ministry of Environment, who shared their knowledge with us.

During the project we had the opportunity to apply many of the skills learned in MPP. Sorting through the various stakeholders' opinions, and analyzing the

province's current program for reducing conflicts, allowed us to use many of the skills learned pertaining to policy problem definition and criteria selection. We were also able to test out our freshly-honed skills from the research methods class by designing and administering a door-to-

door survey in the communities of Kaslo and Squamish regarding attitudes towards living in 'bear-country'.

Our co-op was different from most in that we were not in an office environment. We spent most of our time working from home. Like with any work environment there were pros and cons; however, having a research partner proved invaluable. We spent a great deal of time talking about how to approach the issue, and without interaction, the work would have been considerably more difficult. The heavy focus on group work in first-year MPP no doubt benefitted us here. This research continues in the form of a MPP capstone; and this co-op opportunity will no doubt benefit us both over the next year as we enter the policy profession.

Career in Public Policy by Linsay Martens (MPP 2010)

Prior to beginning the MPP program, I was quite involved in the political scene in Saskatchewan. While I had plenty of first-hand experience with politics, I lacked a solid foundation in policy analysis and development. When considering my post-MPP plans, I realized it was important to combine my personal interest in politics with my newly acquired policy skills. It was for this reason that I accepted a job back in Saskatchewan to serve as the Issues Management and Research Coordinator in the Official Opposition Caucus Office.

In March 2010, after completing my courses and defending my capstone, I began my new job

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just in time for a hectic spring legislative session. My job is varied: I coordinate the Official Opposition's legislative agenda, I prepare briefing packages, I provide advice on what positions the opposition should take on government policies, I develop communication materials, and I assist with media relations. Because of our relatively

small staff, I have the opportunity to work on policies that span the provincial government – from energy, mining, forestry, agriculture and environment to social services, labour, education and health. I also serve as a member of the NDP Policy Review Task Force, helping to lead a comprehensive policy renewal process in the lead-up to the next provincial election in 2011. I know that without my time in the MPP program, I wouldn't be nearly as effective in each of the varied roles I play. Every day, I draw on the skills I learned to properly define and frame policy problems and develop and analyze policy options. There's no doubt that SFU's MPP program prepared me well for this job.

Workshop on Tax Compliance by Rod Quiney



**Valerie Braithwaite
(Australian National
University), Canberra**

The School of Public Policy at Simon Fraser University and the National Centre for Business Law at the UBC Faculty of Law co-hosted a one-day workshop on tax compliance on September 23, 2010. The workshop brought together researchers from different disciplines (economics, law politics, and public policy) as well as officials from the Canada Revenue Agency to discuss different perspectives on tax compliance and consider possible opportunities for future research and collaboration. Academic participants included Valerie and John Braithwaite (Australian National University), David Duff (UBC Faculty of Law), Jon Kesselman and Rod Quiney (SFU School of Public Policy) and Jack Knetsch (SFU Department of Economics). The discussions centered on Valerie Braithwaite's latest book, "Defiance in taxation and governance: resisting and dismissing authority in a democracy" and some of the implications of Jack Knetsch's extensive work on behavioural economics. The discussions recognised that the essential work of securing compliance with tax legislation is growing increasingly difficult as social and ethical standards drift, and as national economies become more open. Increased Canadian research into this complex and culturally sensitive issue offers the prospect of improving compliance fairly and effectively.

Congratulations

- ◆ Prof. Dominique M. Gross has a forthcoming article with Nicolas Schmitt, Simon Fraser University in **Applied Economics**: "Why do Low and High-Skill workers Migrate? Flow Evidence from France."
- ◆ Prof. Jon Kesselman's research on "Expanding Canada Pension Plan Retirement Benefits" presented at conferences in Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Toronto and published in the run-up to the December pension policy deliberations of the federal-provincial finance ministers (www.policyschool.ca).
- ◆ Prof. Doug McArthur was awarded this year's **Simon Fraser University President's Award for Service to the University through Public Affairs and Media Relations**. The award recognizes a faculty or staff member who has demonstrated outstanding service to the university by sharing his or her expertise with the larger community through the media and other public relations activity.
- ◆ Kora DeBeck, MPP 2007, PhD student at UBC, who was awarded the **National Collaborating Centres for Public Health Knowledge Translation Graduate Student Award** from the Canadian Public Health Association. The purpose of the award is to recognize the work of graduate students (current or within 12 months of completion) regarding knowledge translation (KT) in public health in Canada. Once she has completed her PhD she will do post-doctoral studies at John Hopkins University.
- ◆ **2010 MPP Cappa prize and 2010 CAPP National Student Thought Leadership Bronze Award Recipient**
Stephen Healey: Putting the "Stone" Back in Capstone: Concrete Solutions for Reducing Mineral Aggregate Consumption in Ontario.
- ◆ **2010 MPP Capstone Prize**
Mark Beaty: Driving Mad: Public Perceptions of Road Pricing and the Costs of Congestion in Metro Vancouver.

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