

Synopsis

In the Same Boat?

two films about fishing / by martha stiegman

(Canada / 2007 / 38;37 minutes)

In the Same Boat? tells the story of two neighboring fishing communities – one Mi'kmaq, the other non-native - both struggling to defend their ways of life. Shot on Canada's east coast, the two-part documentary explores the common ground between Mi'kmaq and non-indigenous fishing communities in a way that honors the very different role fishing plays in both cultures.

Part one, *In Defense of our Treaties* follows members of Bear River First Nation as they stand up



to Canada's Department of Fisheries (DFO), who is pressuring them to sell out their treaty rights for a ticket into the commercial fisheries. For the Mi'kmaq, fishing is a right that comes from the Creator, and is protected by the Treaties. In 1999, the Supreme Court recognized those rights, and DFO has since signed agreements with 32 of the 34 First Nations in the region. The deals offer money to buy into the commercial fisheries, as

long as the Mi'kmaq fish under DFO's jurisdiction. That's not good enough for Bear River, one of two communities refusing to sign.

The End of the Line, is a portrait of Terry Farnsworth, the last handliner on the Bay of Fundy. Handlining is the most ecological fishing technology around; for Terry, it is a vocation. But as fish stocks plummet, and most fishing licenses are being bought-up by big companies, will Terry be forced off the water?



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Why two Films?

**The End of the Line
+ In Defense of our Treaties
= In the Same Boat**

The End of the Line and **In Defense of our Treaties** can be viewed separately; but those of us who have been involved in the making of the film - on both sides of the camera - feel the stories have a special power when screened together.

I first met fishers from Southwest Nova Scotia in 2002. The Supreme Court's Marshall Decision had come down about two years before, recognizing the Treaty Rights of the Mi'kmaq's to fish commercially. Tensions on Canada's east coast were running high; but around Bear River First Nation, Mi'kmaq and non-native fishers had begun working together.

I wanted to show the grounds for solidarity between Mi'kmaq and non-native communities, but in a way that honors the very different role fishing plays in both cultures. Two parallel shorts seemed a good way to connect both points of view without glossing over their differences.

For non-native fishers like Terry Farnsworth, saving what's left of the in-shore fisheries means fighting the corporate take-over of their industry. For Bear River First Nation, fisheries privatization is a threat; but resistance is connected to the much older struggle of having the Treaties honored, and the Mi'kmaq's Inherent Rights respected.

The End of the Line and **In Defense of our Treaties** show the determination of each these communities to hold on to their livelihoods and traditions. Once the films were finished, it was obvious to all of us involved that the films were two halves of one larger story told in a way that lets audiences make the connections between two sides that are not so different after all.

Exhibition Format and Credits

Exhibition Format:	MiniDV, DVD, Beta SP
Sound Format:	Stereo
Director, Cinematographer, Editor:	Martha Stiegman
Co-Producers:	Martha Stiegman & Sherry Pictou, Bear River First Nation
Editing Consultants:	Frédéric Moffet, Liz Miller, Gwynne Basen
Audio mix & Color Correction:	Anthu Vu
Addition Sound Editing:	Andrea-Jane Cornell
Story Consultants: For <i>In Defense of our Treaties</i> :	Wanda Joudry-Finigan, Bubby Harlow, Robie McEwan, Chief Frank Meuse Jr., Dusty Meuse, Sherry Pictou.
For <i>The End of the Line</i> :	Arthur Bull, John Kearney, Terry Farnsworth
Title Design:	Mél Hogan
Music: For <i>In Defense of our Treaties</i> :	“The Twilight in Your Eyes” used with permission of Aaron White and Burning Sky “Kwanute, The Mi'kmaq Feast Song" performed by Wanda Joudry- Finigan
For <i>The End of the Line</i> :	Music recorded live and performed by Terry Farnsworth and friends
Archival materials used with permission of:	Christian Peacemaker Team in Canada & Esgenoôpetitj / Burnt Church community members Mi'kmaq-Maliseet Nations News Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management Nova Scotia Museum The Toronto Star World Forum of Fisher Peoples
Additional footage from <i>One More Dead Fish</i> :	Used with the permission of Stefan Forbes & InterPositive Media
Produced in collaboration with:	Bear River First Nation Vidéographe Production, Montréal Bay of Fundy Marine Resource Centre Ecology Action Center Concordia University's Communications Department and the School of Community & Public Affairs

Director's Statement: the making of

In the Same Boat? is the product of an exciting collaboration between myself, and community leaders and fishers in Bear River First Nation, and their non-native allies in the neighboring town of Digby.

Like most city folk from Halifax, I grew up knowing nothing about the fisheries. The Mi'kmaq were a people I learned about in History class. All that changed the winter of 2002. Chance brought me to a weekend-workshop full of Mi'kmaq and non-native fishers, who less than two years prior, had been on opposite sides of what had been a very, *very* tense stand off.

The fisheries are in crisis; they have been for more than a decade. Stocks have all but collapsed, and thousands of small-scale fishers have been bought out by a handful of big corporations.

The fisheries have also been a battleground. The 1999 Supreme Court Marshall decision recognized First Nations' rights to fish commercially in the area. It sparked violent confrontations between non-native fishers and First Nations – from Esgenoôpetitj Burnt Church, NB, to Yarmouth, NS.

That crisis had barely faded from the headlines. But at this workshop, these two groups were building the ground for solidarity. Both were threatened by the Department of Fisheries corporate agenda, and both wanted local control over fisheries management, based on democratic self-governance - or in the case of First Nations, self-government. I was blown away.

With time I became more involved, first as a writer, then as a masters student, and now as a first-time filmmaker and doctoral student at Concordia University in Montreal. *In the same boat?* is part of my doctoral research.

I began shooting in the summer of 2005 after having spent a month getting to know people in Bear River First Nation. I returned the following spring to screen initial sequences with people directly involved with the film, to get their feedback about the direction the stories were taking. We agreed a second round of shooting was necessary; this took place in the summer of 2006. A full-length rough cut was screened in February of 2007 at the Bear River band hall for community members as well as local non-native fishing groups. The event was a chance to talk about the different issues facing both communities; it was also a chance to start talking about how to incorporate the film into local organizing work.

A Community tour brought *In the Same Boat?* to 15 First Nations and non-native fishing communities across the Maritimes in the fall of 2007. Spokes people from Bear River First Nation, the Bay of Fundy Marine Resource Center and the Halifax-based Ecology Action Center were with me at the screenings, to meet audiences and talk about the issues. Keep your ears to the ground in 2008: there's more to come!

Filmmaker Martha Stiegman

Martha Stiegman is a Maritime-bred, Montreal-based filmmaker, academic and activist. Like most city folk from Halifax, she grew up knowing very little about the fisheries. All that changed with her first film project, *In the same boat?*, a documentary exploring the grounds for solidarity between Mi'kmaq and non-native communities fighting to save the fisheries. She is currently a PhD candidate at Concordia University, where her research examines that same topic.



Co-Producer Sherry Pictou



Sherry Pictou is a Coordinator of community programs and the former Chief of the Bear River First Nation, a Mi'kmaq community of 150 people on Canada's East Coast. She is the North American representative for the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), and co-chair for the WFFP Coordinating Committee. She is associate staff of the Bay of Fundy Marine Resource Centre and holds an MA in Adult Education from Dalhousie University.

Reviews

Stiegman lets local people tell their own stories and, in the process, provides us with a deep insight into the struggles they face-- their stubborn refusal to abandon their traditional ways of life despite intense pressure from governments and corporations. These are valuable stories, full of insights and inspiration, that will be of use to people around the world.

--**Devlin Kuyek**, author, activist and researcher with GRAIN, and international organization promoting local control over biodiversity and knowledge

These films are an excellent exploration of the deep frustration within coastal communities given the current situation in the Canadian fisheries sector. They weave together both native and non-native perspectives, and document a wonderful story of cooperation between the two communities in the Annapolis Basin area. I look forward to using these films in my undergraduate and graduate teaching in order to address issues of command and control resource management and of community struggles to deal with the resulting stock degradation and distributional issues.

--**Melanie G. Wiber**, Department of Anthropology,
University of New Brunswick

In the Same Boat would appeal to students from grades 7 - 12. It's local; the photography is well done; the vocabulary is accessible to students in that grade range; the content is curriculum relevant. The film could be used in the following classes: Economics - XI, XII; Atlantic Canadian Studies- IX; Canadian History-VII, VIII, & XI; Mi'kmag history classes-X or XI; and possibly in Law-XI and XII.

Another plus is the length of each segment, ideal for shorter classes, allowing time for viewing followed by group(s) discussion and/or reaction/comments. The David vs Goliath aspect of the two segments would, I think, appeal to a lot of students, as would the story of the local native and non-native fishers ability to resolve long standing tensions over the fisheries in district 34.

It shows how collaboration, cooperation, willingness to negotiate, and being willing to listen to other points of view, can lead to an amicable and productive resolution of long standing divisive issues. It demonstrates, and models, the problem solving, responsible citizenship, community service EGL's emphasized in the provincially mandated curricular/PSP guidelines. I would have no reservations showing both segments to students in either junior or senior high school.

-- **Carmon Stone**, Department of Education,
Mount St Vincent's University

News Coverage

The Coast. November 15, 2007.

Blood work

Martha Stiegman's two-part documentary *In The Same Boat?* examines the complex struggles facing Nova Scotian and First Nations traditional fishing communities. Carsten Knox is reeled in.

"People make a lot of parallels between the stories of privatizing of public resources, downsizing of government services and off-loading of responsibilities to community...we're all in that boat. This is the same agenda that's hitting health care, education. People, even if they're not fishing, they see the themes resonating in their own lives." That's Martha Stiegman, talking about audiences' reactions to her pair of documentaries, *In The Same Boat?*

Full article: http://www.thecoast.ca/Articles-i-2007-11-15-151081.113118-Blood_work.html

Art Threat. June 6, 2007.

Fishing for Answers: An Interview with Video Activist Martha Stiegman

By Mél Hogan

Martha Stiegman's two short documentaries are currently featured on the National Film Board's CitizenShift website *United We Fish*. Her works tackles the fisheries in Nova Scotia's Bay of Fundy and in Bear River First Nation. As a videomaker, Stiegman's work connects community and activism. Martha is presently working on her PhD at Concordia University where we met to talk about her amazing projects.

Full article: <http://www.artthreat.net/2007/06/255>