

This research is part of  
**The Churchill Storywork Project**

For more information, please visit [churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com](http://churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com).

This research project was co-created by Katharina M. Miller, Georgina Berg, The Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill, and Michael Spence, with guidance from Dr. Michael Lickers, Adjunct Professor & Indigenous Scholar in Residence at Royal Roads University and Dr. Dominique Henri, Research Scientist at Environment and Climate Change Canada.

This research project was approved by the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Board and followed the Principles of OCAP®—the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession—asserting that First Nations have control over data collection processes, and that the research participants in this study granted permissions for all aspects of this study and own and control how this information can be used now and into the future.

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This research project was made possible with funding from Polar Bears International and Environment and Climate Change Canada.



## References

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Miller, K. M., et al. *Indigenous Knowledge of Human-polar Bear Coexistence in Churchill, Manitoba: Churchill Storywork Project*. <https://www.churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com> (2023).

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# Transcript: Supplementary Video Podcast 1

Podcast episode one shares knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence in the distant past through Indigenous voices. The distant past is defined by this project as intergenerational knowledge prior to 1957, when the Cree and Dene were relocated to present-day Churchill, and the fur trade was the primary economy on the shores of Hudson Bay.

**THUMBNAIL:** Distant past refers to intergenerational knowledge prior to 1956-1957, when the Swamp Cree and Sayisi Dene were relocated to present-day Churchill.

1

00:00:01,634 --> 00:00:08,875

You're listening to an episode of *The Churchill Storywork Project* about Indigenous knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence.

2

00:00:08,875 --> 00:00:22,822

This is a storywork research project where we explore Indigenous knowledge through storytelling with Inuit, Métis, Sayisi Dene and Swampy Cree knowledge holders in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada.

3

00:00:22,822 --> 00:00:34,401

In addition to producing academic research about Indigenous community members' knowledge of coexistence, we also created podcasts in the voices of the knowledge holders themselves.

4

00:00:34,401 --> 00:00:43,043

We primarily created the podcasts by and for the community. However, we hope others learn from and enjoy them as well.

5

00:00:43,043 --> 00:00:50,050

My name is Kt Miller, and this work was part of my master's in Interdisciplinary Studies at Royal Roads University.

6

00:00:50,050 --> 00:01:01,728

I had the great honour of working with Cree Elder, Georgina Berg, as a co-researcher on this project. We met over a cup of tea and, as they say, "the rest is history."

7

00:01:01,728 --> 00:01:12,505

The Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill provided guidance and advice throughout all phases of this research, beginning with research design all the way through the dissemination of results.

8

00:01:12,505 --> 00:01:29,756

Knowledge holder and graphic designer Nickia McIvor made significant intellectual and graphic contributions to this work, and if you haven't checked out the timeline on our website or in our supplementary material, it is Nickia's artistic and intellectual creation, and it is amazing.

9

00:01:29,756 --> 00:01:43,937

I also want to acknowledge and thank my supervisors, Dr. Michael Lickers, who is an Indigenous scholar in residence at Royal Roads University and importantly suggested I use the Indigenous method of storytelling in this work...

10

00:01:43,937 --> 00:01:54,781

and Dr. Dominique Henri, a research scientist with Environment and Climate Change Canada, who provided support and guidance through the technical and emotional journey of this project.

11

00:01:54,781 --> 00:02:01,988

We are also very grateful to Polar Bears International and Environment and Climate Change Canada, who funded this research.

12

00:02:01,988 --> 00:02:07,894

More information about this research can be found at [churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com](http://churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com).

13

00:02:10,964 --> 00:02:15,902

This series includes four podcast episodes that explore four different time periods.

14

00:02:15,902 --> 00:02:21,975

The distant past, prior to the relocation of Indigenous people to present-day Churchill.

15

00:02:21,975 --> 00:02:29,682

The past, which was sort of the transition from more of a traditional lifestyle to a wage economy.

16

00:02:30,750 --> 00:02:36,422

The present, which is defined in our research as the tourism era.

17

00:02:36,956 --> 00:02:39,959

And the future.

18

00:02:42,529 --> 00:02:53,506

In episode one, we explore the distant past, which we define as intergenerational knowledge prior to 1957, when the Cree and Dene were relocated to present-day Churchill.

19

00:02:54,407 --> 00:03:04,384

At this time, the fur trade was the primary economy on the shores of Hudson Bay. Polar bears were not often seen, and when spotted, they were usually killed.

20

00:03:04,384 --> 00:03:09,255

The meat was used for dog food, and the hide was sold to a Hudson's Bay Company trading post.

21

00:03:10,523 --> 00:03:22,135

Through our research, we found that significant intergenerational knowledge was lost when people were relocated to Churchill. Where, to quote a Cree knowledge holder, "It was all about a new life."

22

00:03:23,236 --> 00:03:28,708

We hope you learn from and enjoy episode one of our podcast series.

Text on screen: Distant past refers to intergenerational knowledge prior to 1956-1957, when the Swamp Cree and Sayisi Dene were relocated to present-day Churchill, and the Hudson's Bay Company trading post at York Factory was closed.

23

00:03:35,481 --> 00:03:47,727

Maybe I could start. Our dad used to talk about his experiences trapping. He would always talk about the time that he was checking his traps.

- Michael Spence

24

00:03:47,727 --> 00:03:56,869

This was in April, I think, eh Morris? Early April, I think? Must [have] been... probably March, maybe, eh? End of March. Early April. You talking about that bear? Yeah.

- Michael Spence, Morris Spence

25

00:03:56,869 --> 00:04:15,288

He came across a mother and two cubs. He was checking his traps and, you know, as a hunter, as a trapper, he shot the mother and took the hide and the two cubs to the depot in York Factory, eh?

- Michael Spence

26

00:04:15,288 --> 00:04:22,595

He was talking about his experiences trapping. That's what they did.

- Michael Spence

27

00:04:22,595 --> 00:04:39,479

When he shot the polar bear, it wasn't intended to eat it or anything, it was just for the fur? I think it was a combination of both. Dog food. Dog food and... Oh, dog food, okay. And then providing for his family, eh?

- Georgina Berg, Michael Spence, Morris Spence

28

00:04:39,512 --> 00:04:49,756

There were some [bears] in York Factory, they used to kill them. Yeah. They used to kill them for the dogs' [food] and that, but that was it.

- Georgina Oman

29

00:04:49,756 --> 00:05:06,439

I guess you could poison wolves back then, eh? Yeah. And he had, at Klone Lake, that's not that far out that way... they were out there, so Simion, he put poison on our caribou, and he got some wolves, but he also got one bear that time.

- Morris Spence, Saulie Spence

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00:05:06,439 --> 00:05:17,216

So I imagine, with that poisoning going on, probably a few bears died. Well, let's see, that animal died of poison, another animal [would] eat it, and he'd get [into] it and whatever... stuff like that.

- Morris Spence, Saulie Spence

31

00:05:17,216 --> 00:05:29,696

You could see where they put a gun [on a stand] there and they would bait the bear, and the gun goes off by itself, but probably nobody knew about it, just because they had dogs and for safety, I guess. I don't know.

- Morris Spence

32

00:05:29,696 --> 00:05:36,202

So your question was about bears back then, so they would have shot a bear, eh? That was common.

- Michael Spence

33

00:05:36,202 --> 00:05:49,682

Yes. Well, in those days, I used to see [one] or your dad and them would tell us... you'd be travelling [on the land], if a bear came across close to your track, he's gone! [The bear would run away.] Yeah. Now they come to you.

- Michael Spence, Saulie Spence

34

00:05:49,682 --> 00:06:01,694

No, you don't walk around out there [on the trapline] without a rifle, or something [to defend yourself]. You never know where [the bears] are, they could be sleeping in the grass or someplace... there's tall grass out there.

- Saulie Spence

35

00:06:01,694 --> 00:06:18,177

We know for a fact, because we have archeologists who have come for many years now doing various digs, and they found a lot of pre-contact tools and rocks with unique markings on them.  
- Heather Spence-Botelho

36

00:06:18,177 --> 00:06:30,757

With these findings, they are able to send them out for further testing. On some of the rocks that they actually cooked with, so they did heat that [polar bear] meat, they found bear fat.  
- Heather Spence-Botelho

37

00:06:30,757 --> 00:06:37,296

So we know that the pre-Dorset and Dorset, Thule people, were hunting and harvesting polar bears.  
- Heather Spence-Botelho

38

00:06:37,296 --> 00:06:51,978

It would have been in the early 1600's. It would have been around 1620, I believe; the Indigenous were doing their hunting and harvesting from spring to early winter by then; they would have been in the tree line at that time.  
- Heather Spence-Botelho

39

00:06:51,978 --> 00:07:11,030

There wasn't contact with the Indigenous and Jens Munk's crew. So Jens Munk sailed into the Churchill River exploring, right? Not knowing the environment and where they were, the climate, they actually got iced in.  
- Heather Spence-Botelho

40

00:07:11,030 --> 00:07:30,550

So they were iced in on the west side of the river, and they had to find a way to survive. So there was a party of 60, I believe, and they sent their men out to find food. This is when they harvested a polar bear. They killed a polar bear.  
- Heather Spence-Botelho

41

00:07:30,550 --> 00:07:47,567

Not knowing how to properly prepare the polar bear meat, as everyone knows in this day and age, it needs to be prepared a certain way, because there are risks to consuming different parts of the polar bear. The Inuit have that knowledge.  
- Heather Spence-Botelho

42

00:07:47,567 --> 00:08:03,115

So the polar bear was hunted and harvested and not prepared properly, and Jens Munk's men consumed it, and many of them ended up dying from what they believe was trichinosis.  
- Heather Spence-Botelho

43

00:08:03,115 --> 00:08:22,902

That was all due to ill-prepared meat and the hunting of polar bear by non-Indigenous in this area. Those who did not die from the consumption of that ill-prepared meat, they died from scurvy or malnourishment, and obviously exposure due to the very cold winters that we have here.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

44

00:08:22,902 --> 00:08:37,783

Out of 60 men, 3 left and were able to return back to Denmark, and those who did not didn't get a proper burial because they couldn't be buried in the frozen ground.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

45

00:08:37,783 --> 00:08:47,426

So when the Indigenous came out of the tree line to start their spring harvest, they stumbled upon these men with strange clothing and strange-coloured skin.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

46

00:08:47,426 --> 00:08:59,605

That's where the Churchill River gets its nickname, the River of Strangers, because of Jens Munk's dead men. That's the story. That's such an important story of polar bears, right?

- Heather Spence-Botelho

47

00:08:59,605 --> 00:09:13,853

See, part of this is that, the relocation, like closing the depot in 57... I think we were part of the last families leaving, Georgina's family and our family.

- Michael Spence

48

00:09:13,853 --> 00:09:28,434

So you're basically... that was pretty much the loss of the culture when you think about it, 'cause you were relocated here, and then, so now it's, it's different, eh?

- Michael Spence

49

00:09:28,434 --> 00:09:49,455

Instead of trapping for a living, you're employed now, and then, so you lose some of that, and then like Morris was saying after he [our father] was 65, then it was time to go [he retired], and his interest was trapping again to show his boys how to trap.

- Michael Spence

50

00:09:49,455 --> 00:10:11,944

I come from a generation where, uh, my mom, my granny, they experienced the traumas of forced relocation off York Factory. So I lost out on a lot of traditional knowledge, but so did they. So right now, I'm just like reclaiming that research and that, and grasping at anything I can.

- Heather Spence-Botelho



51

00:10:11,944 --> 00:10:20,586

We lost all of that when we came here. Yeah. It was all about a new life.

- Michael Spence, Saulie Spence

52

00:10:20,586 --> 00:10:42,975

You were born on the Flats? Yeah. Is that right, eh? Yeah. Wow. Mom couldn't make it to the hospital. Oh, wow. And my uncles, the ones that was driving the dog team. Well, I guess though he brought her across [the river], but he couldn't make it. Well, here, you had Fort Churchill; [it] was still quite a ways for her to go, eh?

- Eva Yasse, Georgina Berg

53

00:10:42,975 --> 00:10:56,088

No, but I was born premature. I'm lucky to be alive. I was only like four pounds, I think. Three and a half pounds. Wow. I was in an incubator for about four or five months. Oh my gosh.

- Eva Yasse, Georgina Berg

54

00:10:56,088 --> 00:11:17,009

How many brothers and sisters do you have? Oh, there was, there used to be nine of us. Oh wow. Now there's only three. . . Yeah. Did you all grow up in the same little cabin on the Flats? No, we're all separated. Residential school, which I hate. Foster homes. Adoption. Yeah.

- Eva Yasse, Kt Miller

55

00:11:17,009 --> 00:11:44,070

Hardly ever talked about polar bear. And then, growing up, they used, the elders used to tell us to, we can't talk about, like, don't talk about eagles, don't talk with ... they didn't like people talking ... about animals or being mean to them and stuff like that, because they're spirits, eh? ... Yeah, native people used to be able to turn themselves into almost any animal they wanted to.

- Eva Yasse

56

00:11:44,070 --> 00:12:11,063

And you know, back in the day, I'm not saying it's not like that now, but, it is, but it was more powerful. Like it was more, I guess then they depended more on the medicine person, you know, than they do nowadays. When they were able to practice their... yeah. Yeah, freely, yeah. Spiritual practices more freely. Yeah.

- Eva Yasse, Georgina Berg

57

00:12:16,769 --> 00:12:29,415

Thank you for listening to episode one of *The Churchill Storywork Project* about Indigenous knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence. In episode two, we will hear stories from the past.

58

00:12:30,249 --> 00:12:36,856

Our thanks to the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill who co-created, provided guidance and contributed throughout this research:

59

00:12:37,223 --> 00:12:43,596

Florence Hamilton, Patricia Kandiurin, Katherine de Muelles, and Georgina Oman.

60

00:12:43,696 --> 00:12:50,069

This work would not have been possible without the blessing and contributions of additional knowledge holders and elders in the community:

61

00:12:50,269 --> 00:13:03,749

Nikki Clace, Dave Daley, Wyatt Daley, Brian Gulick, Jill Larkin, Antonina Kandiurin, Heather Spence-Botelho, Michael Spence, Morris Spence, "Saulie" Norman Spence, Leroy Whitmore, and Eva Yassie.

62

00:13:04,483 --> 00:13:09,622

Our thanks to the entire community of Churchill for their support of and engagement with this project.

63

00:13:10,222 --> 00:13:16,162

Fundamental direction during the initiation of this research was provided by Geoff York, Evan Richardson, and Helen McEwan.

64

00:13:17,163 --> 00:13:22,835

Our gratitude to the Polar Bears International team for providing significant logistical and technical support.

65

00:13:24,170 --> 00:13:30,309

Once again, my name is Kt Miller, and this research was part of my master's in Interdisciplinary Studies at Royal Roads University.

66

00:13:31,110 --> 00:13:35,181

I am so deeply grateful to the many people that made this project possible.

67

00:13:35,981 --> 00:13:42,321

Our coauthors on this project include: Georgina Berg, the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill, Nickia McIvor,

68

00:13:42,688 --> 00:13:51,530

Dr. Micheal Lickers, an Indigenous scholar in residence at Royal Roads University, and Dr. Dominique Henri, a research scientist at Environment and Climate Change Canada.

69

00:13:52,531 --> 00:13:57,837

A big thank you to Polar Bears International and Environment and Climate Change Canada for funding this work.

70

00:13:58,871 --> 00:14:04,343

More information about this research can be found at [churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com](http://churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com).

## Transcript: Supplementary Video Podcast 2

Podcast episode two shares knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence in the past through Indigenous voices. This project defines the past as the time period between 1957 - 2005 when Indigenous people in the region transitioned from a subsistence lifestyle, supplemented by the fur trade, to a wage economy and new era of tourism.

**THUMBNAIL:** Past refers to Indigenous knowledge from 1957, when the Cree people were relocated from York Factory to Churchill, up until 2005, when the open dump was closed and moved into an old military warehouse building.

1

00:00:01,626 --> 00:00:08,883

You're listening to an episode of *The Churchill Storywork Project* about Indigenous knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence.

2

00:00:08,883 --> 00:00:22,814

This is a storywork research project where we explore Indigenous knowledge through storytelling with Inuit, Métis, Sayisi Dene and Swampy Cree knowledge holders in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada.

3

00:00:22,814 --> 00:00:34,409

In addition to producing academic research about Indigenous community members' knowledge of coexistence, we also created podcasts in the voices of the knowledge holders themselves.

4

00:00:34,409 --> 00:00:43,043

We primarily created the podcasts by and for the community. However, we hope others learn from and enjoy them as well.

5

00:00:43,043 --> 00:00:50,050

My name is Kt Miller, and this work was part of my master's in Interdisciplinary Studies at Royal Roads University.

6

00:00:50,050 --> 00:01:01,728

I had the great honour of working with Cree Elder, Georgina Berg, as a co-researcher on this project. We met over a cup of tea and, as they say, "the rest is history."

7

00:01:01,728 --> 00:01:12,489

The Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill provided guidance and advice throughout all phases of this research, beginning with research design all the way through the dissemination of results.

8

00:01:12,489 --> 00:01:29,756

Knowledge holder and graphic designer Nickia McIvor made significant intellectual and graphic contributions to this work, and if you haven't checked out the timeline on our website or in our supplementary material, it is Nickia's artistic and intellectual creation, and it is amazing.

9

00:01:29,756 --> 00:01:43,937

I also want to acknowledge and thank my supervisors, Dr. Michael Lickers, who is an Indigenous scholar in residence at Royal Roads University and importantly suggested I use the Indigenous method of storytelling in this work...

10

00:01:43,937 --> 00:01:54,781

and Dr. Dominique Henri, a research scientist with Environment and Climate Change Canada, who provided support and guidance through the technical and emotional journey of this project.

11

00:01:54,781 --> 00:02:01,996

We are also very grateful to Polar Bears International and Environment and Climate Change Canada, who funded this research.

12

00:02:01,996 --> 00:02:07,877

More information about this research can be found at [churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com](http://churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com).

13

00:02:10,964 --> 00:02:15,885

This series includes four podcast episodes that explore four different time periods.

14

00:02:15,885 --> 00:02:21,975

The distant past, prior to the relocation of Indigenous people to present-day Churchill.

15

00:02:21,975 --> 00:02:29,691

The past, which was sort of the transition from more of a traditional lifestyle to a wage economy.

16

00:02:30,733 --> 00:02:36,406

The present, which is defined in our research as the tourism era.

17

00:02:36,948 --> 00:02:39,951

And the future.

18

00:02:42,203 --> 00:02:52,839

In episode two, which we defined by this project as 1957 to 2005, the era of the fur trade came to an end, and a new era of tourism began.

19

00:02:53,715 --> 00:03:01,598

Knowledge holders recalled the military shot a lot of polar bears and kept the hides, hanging them on their walls or using them as rugs.

20

00:03:01,723 --> 00:03:06,144

They also recalled seeing large numbers of bears eating burning garbage at the open dump.

21

00:03:06,895 --> 00:03:12,275

Concurrently, tourism began, and polar bears started to become more valuable alive than dead.

22

00:03:12,692 --> 00:03:19,908

In 2005, the open dump was closed and moved inside an old military warehouse, known locally by the name of L5.

23

00:03:21,034 --> 00:03:27,123

Once the military left and the open dump closed, people started to see a lot more polar bears coming through town.

24

00:03:27,916 --> 00:03:37,258

Most contributors' first memory of a polar bear occurred during this time period, outside of a cabin at the Flats, by a house in town, or at the dump.

25

00:03:38,259 --> 00:03:49,103

Even though all knowledge holders had encountered polar bears many times, they did not speak of polar bears fearfully, but rather with respect and sometimes even humour and joy.

26

00:03:50,188 --> 00:03:55,485

We hope you learn from and enjoy episode two of our podcast series.

Text on screen: Past refers to Indigenous knowledge from 1957, when the Cree people were relocated from York Factory to Churchill, up until 2005, when the open dump was closed and moved into an old military warehouse building.

27

00:04:03,660 --> 00:04:30,603

Yeah, they killed lots that year. Oh, seventies. In the seventies? Yeah. That was, they shot 38 that time. Yeah. Right. Yeah. Yeah. They ... were averaging, I think, about 20, 22, maybe 38, and then... Because old Jimmy Spence was skinning them, and then he got my dad to help him. Yeah. And then I went with my dad that time, he was getting \$40 to skin one bear. Wow. Good day. [That was] good money in those days. It was, that was a lot of skinning that time. Yeah.  
- Saulie Spence, Michael Spence, Morris Spence

28

00:04:30,603 --> 00:05:08,016

[There was] the Old Bay house, that's the Northern Store manager's place that used to be behind the store there, and I remember there were two cubs in there in the porch in a cage. Remember that? Yup. And the mother's skin was on top, I think, eh? We would go in there after school and ... the little cubs would come up to you, but I don't know how long they were there, a couple of days or maybe longer than that, but they kept them in the porch there in a cage.

- Michael Spence

29

00:05:08,016 --> 00:05:35,376

Oh, the trap line started when [our father] retired or [was] just about retiring, and my uncle Jim, that was his brother, my dad's brother, he told my dad there was trap line eleven opening up, and he knew my dad was going to retire soon. It was not to make a living on trapping, it was just that when he left York [Factory] that's what he did, and when he came here, he was already into his ... fifties, you know?

- Morris Spence

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00:05:35,376 --> 00:05:59,734

When [our father] moved here, so he did a lot of stuff on the land, and I guess having young kids, that's what I'm thinking now anyway, he liked to trap, and he dragged us along. Showed us that it was not for money, that's for sure. He [trapped at] the barren land, you'd get the odd fox, but that is what that was all about.

- Morris Spence

31

00:05:59,734 --> 00:06:37,397

And so Morris and I got looking at the idea of taking people out there. So we just, I guess, transitioned it, right? In a sense, to do that. So basically, you're transitioning a trap line to, in this case, viewing mothers [polar bears] and cubs in February and March. So it's using the tool in the other way, right?

- Michael Spence

32

00:06:37,397 --> 00:06:57,166

So at the time, too, the fur price really dropped, eh? It wasn't that good, and Conservation [Provincial government] said any buildings that you could use on the trap lines—not just us everybody, all the trap line holders—you could somehow use it to your advantage, being whatever [you liked].

- Morris Spence

33

00:06:57,166 --> 00:07:27,613

So they used to travel from here to Owl River, and they used to haul fuel for the following year. [We] used to come across mother and cub tracks that time of year in March, and of course, the tourism started with the bears here, and that's when we thought we'd give it a try 'cause [the mothers and cubs] were there, but we weren't sure, you know? We knew it wasn't [going to be] easy.

- Morris Spence

34

00:07:27,613 --> 00:07:49,469

Over time, it's a little different, eh? Morris and I are doing something different with bears on the trapline, eh? We're showcasing them, you know, so that's different, isn't it? You go from one generation to the next, you know, you're trapping in a different way, if you think about it.

- Michael Spence

35

00:07:49,469 --> 00:08:17,330

I think when the Sharcheys started doing polar bear tours out west and then Len Smith started The Tundra Buggy and all that stuff, then conservation [of polar bears] came to the forefront, right? Our dump was a big conservation thing. Back in those days, they'd go paint a great big green thirteen on the bear and all that stuff, eh? All the tourists used to go to the dump to see the bears, and, you know, it wasn't very good for tourism.

- Dave Daley

36

00:08:17,330 --> 00:08:43,314

Well, one of my first memories is [bears] were always around town when we were growing up, and Polar Bear [Alert], Conservation at the time, was killing polar bears because they used to say—I remember listening to the radio way back in the day—and they'd say, that was the 21st polar bear shot in Churchill. And if you want to see it, go run down to the RCMP garage, and the bear would be splayed out on the floor in there, and you could go see a dead polar bear.

- Dave Daley

37

00:08:43,314 --> 00:08:54,200

A lot of people say that the military would take polar bear hides home. Interesting. When they left here, and that's probably why.

- Patricia Kandiurin, Kt Miller

38

00:08:54,200 --> 00:08:58,913

Yeah. They had them on their walls. We don't remember, we don't remember a lot of bears.

- Patricia Kandiurin, Georgina Oman

39

00:08:58,913 --> 00:09:05,253

I think it was just... I think it might have been the military. 'Cause you hear stories of those guys killing bears, eh?

- Michael Spence

40

00:09:05,253 --> 00:09:11,926

I used to hear the stories too, like when a big shot from the army was time to move on, he would take a [polar bear] hide with him.

- Morris Spence

41

00:09:11,926 --> 00:09:21,644



But then those days, you know, there was 5,000 people here. You have to understand, there wasn't too many polar bear encounters in those days. When the military was here, every major and every colonel went home with a polar bear rug.

- Dave Daley

42

00:09:21,644 --> 00:09:35,032

We had an actual pit of garbage that was constantly being burned, and if you wanted to see a bear, that's where you went, and it wasn't really good for pictures.

- Katie de Muelles

43

00:09:35,032 --> 00:09:56,053

When I was younger, I remember they were just black, maybe just like, almost looked like panda bears sometimes, because they were just covered in charcoal and soot. And numbers... Singed hair. Yeah. And that's when they used to actually, literally paint a great big, huge number on their butts.

- Katie de Muelles

44

00:09:56,053 --> 00:10:13,195

And I think it was work with Dan Guravich and that team, when they started out, that they wanted that stopped [the dump closed]. He was saying, you know, we're trying to bring guests here to view [polar bears] and it's not a pretty picture.

- Katie de Muelles

45

00:10:13,195 --> 00:10:31,547

Well, if you're gonna go throw garbage or whatever, you'd always have to look around. Sometimes, more so as a teenager, just going to go look for bears, drive around. That's [the dump] pretty much where all the bears were. It's like the dump kept them there.

- Leroy Whitmore

46

00:10:31,547 --> 00:10:35,718

We'd go there, like—that was our family drive, was to go see the bears.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

47

00:10:35,718 --> 00:11:16,550

There was still, like, a big fire pit that was pretty much constantly burning. It kind of gives me, like, Scar from *The Lion King* vibes. Yeah. Exactly like that. It's weird. ... Even going out with my friends as teenagers, we all started driving and we had different people's parents' vehicles, and going out there and having the bears come crawling up out of that dump with the fire going in the background, it really gave like a, [the bears] became black. I was a teenager, so I'm like, oh man, that's like Scar from *The Lion King*. I just love that visual. But that's pretty accurate, you know, about how it was.

- Nikki Clace, Antonina Kandiurin, Kt Miller

48

00:11:16,550 --> 00:11:52,586

Every time we would go to the dump, in my head as a kid, I could picture fires there all the time and dirty bears, and every time you would go there you would see a bear, if not, like, five of them. It would be a challenge to just get out of your car and throw out garbage. I think that's probably my earliest memory [of a polar bear] I don't think I was ever really scared, just being that young, being exposed to bears, it was kind of just normal to go to the dump and see bears there. I didn't really know anything different.

- Antonina Kandiurin

49

00:11:52,586 --> 00:12:02,513

I think the most I've ever counted at the dump one time was about 33 bears. Yeah, that's lots.

- Michael Spence, Saulie Spence

50

00:12:02,513 --> 00:12:13,107

Yeah, the dump was huge. I remember going for a ride at night and seeing anywhere from 10 to 15 bears on the road, no problem.

- Brian Gulick

51

00:12:13,107 --> 00:12:38,632

One time too, I went to throw [out] my garbage. I was with my daughter and Shirley, and then [we] got to the dump and I got out of the truck, took my garbage out, and I was walking towards the garbage, you know how it was piled, and you know, just threw it over, and then I was walking, not even looking around, and then, honk, honk, honk, they were tooting [the car horn] at me.

- Georgina Oman

52

00:12:38,632 --> 00:13:08,704

Vivian yelled out the window, Mom, there's a bear coming over there! It was just coming over one of those smokey piles, and then I happened to look up, threw my garbage ran back. We were just laughing weren't scared or anything. [We] didn't expect... oh goodness.

- Georgina Oman, Georgina Berg

53

00:13:08,704 --> 00:13:24,512

There's a lot. Count how many, eh? Sometimes there'd be 16, and sometimes somebody would say, oh, there was like 40 out there. Everybody would count and see who had the highest number of bears they had seen.

- Georgina Berg

54

00:13:24,512 --> 00:13:47,660

I remember [my] mum made artwork. She used to make bears with numbers on them. So one Christmas we got one to five. It's like, what? She had five kids. So mine had a two on it. It's like, what? She had a garbage can and it was... It's like only a local from back in the day would understand that.

- Katie de Muelles

55

00:13:47,701 --> 00:14:16,438

But yeah, a lot of people did think because of the garbage dump, but you never know? Maybe the army was involved some way too? Maybe they were leaving food for them or whatever, you know? 'Cause once they find that food, they're not gonna forget. They'll come back to the same spot.

- Eva Yasse

56

00:14:16,438 --> 00:14:41,630

It really slowed down after they shot 38. At first, you never had to control the bears, I guess that was the only thing they had, they didn't have the bear jail yet. So you have got this problem now, so what can you do? 'Cause [the bears] were really adapted to man, now they were coming in. I think that's when the Polar Bear Alert program came together. That was the start of...

- Morris Spence, Michael Spence

57

00:14:41,630 --> 00:15:08,407

There's one thing about those bears, like, all those years they went to the dump here. As soon as that ice freezes, from the youngest bear to the oldest bear, there's no garbage bag that will hold them. Once the ice freezes, they're gone. That's how they must do well out there [on the ice, because] that time of year comes they're gone.

- Morris Spence, Saulie Spence

58

00:15:08,407 --> 00:15:45,277

They know what it's all about out there. It must be easy for them, I mean. I don't know it, it must be. Because they go right away. They go, look, our restaurant's open, let's go! Yeah. When you think about it, [if] they get one seal, that's lots. Little ones [cubs], they have a good time with that one [a seal]. Yeah. And the foxes chase them around, eat their scraps and that. So they do well out there, that's for sure. Yeah.

- Morris Spence, Saulie Spence

59

00:15:45,277 --> 00:16:19,645

Like for the seals, like, I think they come here more for the seals, you know? In the spring. Because that's what they live on, eh? But they... I watch when the seals in the springtime... I've never ever seen a bear, like, but Bobby was saying that he seen one sneaking up to the seal hole. So I guess they do, like, maybe they're sneaking they do it at night? I don't know. You never know. Yeah, yeah, yeah. They seem to like to roam around at night.

- Eva Yasse, Georgina Berg

60

00:16:19,645 --> 00:16:43,085

And I know where there's dens all the way up the river. I know where there's at least five dens... over the years. When you drive up there, when the bank erodes after those forest fires and stuff, you can see those holes, eh? Where they are. So you always gotta be aware, even, I've seen bears 60 miles up the river, you know? They're all over this country, and I've seen them in every month of the year.

- Dave Daley

61

00:16:43,085 --> 00:17:13,949

Well, even in the fifties, in that school holidays, four or five of us [would go] way down there, all almost to camp, or along the rocks, no bears or nothing. Nothing. We'd eat capelin, find little pair, clean as much as we could, boil them up a little bit there, or a nice flat rock, fry 'em on there. Oh yeah. Me, John, Bernard, Dan, Bones, a whole bunch of us. All day long we'd be gone.

- Saulie Spence

62

00:17:13,949 --> 00:17:33,552

Yeah, that's the way it was. You run around and play all over the place and that's right. I don't remember being... There wasn't that many bears then. No, because I think it was the military that was keeping them at bay, eh? Could be, you know? ... And then all of a sudden when the military starts leaving, all of a sudden that fence goes down and then the bears are coming through.

- Morris Spence, Michael Spence

63

00:17:33,552 --> 00:17:44,688

The rocks were the place to go play. And it sounds like people didn't really have problems with bears? Well, I'm thinking the reason why we didn't have problems is because we had a dump.

- Florence Hamilton, Katie de Muelles, Kt Miller

64

00:17:44,688 --> 00:18:02,873

You know, as a youngster, uh, walking down the Flats every night, walking through the willows, eh? We weren't afraid of that. That was our trail. And now, you would never think of doing that now. How many bears have been coming out of those willows towards the train station? It's lots.

- Florence Hamilton, Katie de Muelles

65

00:18:02,873 --> 00:18:17,012

I enjoyed picking berries along that way. Oh, yeah. And you never worried about if a bear was gonna come? I never did. No. Well, when I was young, like I said, when we were younger, we didn't have to worry about polar bears.

- Eva Yasse, Georgina Berg

66

00:18:17,012 --> 00:18:25,354

But we used to go all over the place, everywhere in those bushes, up on rocks, everywhere. Yeah. And way down there. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

- Georgina Oman, Patricia Kandiurin

67

00:18:25,354 --> 00:19:05,602

But anyways, we moved to town. We used to take, in the summer, take a pack of wieners, pack of bread, marshmallows, matches, toilet paper, and go up on the rocks, and go way past, um, Ericsson's, The Boreal Gardens—way past there—and be there all day, and not see one bear. And be roasting hot dogs? Swimming in the little pools. We'd be gone all day. No parents with you? No parents, yeah. They knew where we were. We just had to be home sometime...

- Patricia Kandiurin, Kt Miller

68

00:19:05,602 --> 00:19:12,276

We used to run around three, four o'clock in the morning. Yeah. We weren't afraid of bears.

- Georgina Oman

69

00:19:12,276 --> 00:19:30,919

I think that was a big difference, though, when my mom tells stories of her childhood. Like, she would just be all over the town. She tells me stories like walking uptown from the Flats or running around on the rocks or staying out, like, late, just not even caring about bears. Like, it wasn't even a thought in her mind.

- Antonina Kandiurin

70

00:19:30,919 --> 00:19:56,403

We had a whaling factory down on the Flats. We didn't have bears kicking around there. The odd one, and he come too close. Not many. He was gone about two looks after that. But that didn't go to waste, it went to his dogs. They had dogs. Everybody had dogs those days.

Surprising, the whaling plant there stunk. Remember how it used to stink? Yeah. It didn't attract bears, I don't know. There were just not many, I guess. Yeah.

- Michael Spence, Morris Spence, Saulie Spence

71

00:19:56,403 --> 00:20:31,813

My mom would say, don't go to the whaling plant, and we'd always say, okay, no, we won't, we won't, and we'd go there and we go home and she says, you were at the whaling plant, eh? No, we weren't there. We didn't go there. And then we finally caught on because she would smell our clothes. It had a very strong smell. Yep. So if she can smell it after we, you know, make our way home playing and everything, then a bear can smell it from probably across the river. Yeah. Especially when a wind blew from that way. It was smelly.

- Patricia Kandiurin, Georgina Berg, Georgina Oman

72

00:20:31,813 --> 00:21:10,644

But even before that, we were younger, we used to have a Beluga Motel over there, eh? Down the Flats. And they used to capture beluga whales, put them in this big tub, and it was like a zoo. You could come down and see them, and you could touch them, and they had them in this big [tank], and there was hardly any... I don't remember bears bothering it. One time, I remember when a bear dragged a whale out of that [pool]. Oh, my! Out of the pen? Yeah, out of the pen. Yeah.

- Georgina Oman, Georgina Berg, Kt Miller

73

00:21:10,644 --> 00:21:35,377

We used to burn our, you know, scraps and garbage in a bin, in a garbage bin. Yeah. That was a thing down the Flats, eh? We had a big metal bin and we just put all of our garbage in there and burned it. Burned it up. So you never had garbage laying around anywhere, and...

- Georgina Oman, Georgina Berg, Patricia Kandiurin

74

00:21:35,377 --> 00:21:45,721

I think they would do it daily... You always grew up with the idea that you cannot have garbage around. Yeah, you can't have garbage. Yeah. You have to burn it.

- Georgina Berg, Georgina Oman

75

00:21:45,721 --> 00:22:15,417

But one [time], your uncle John, right? He was attacked when he was hunting, right? Yep. And that was, you know, he came out of the tent or whatever and startled [a bear]. Well, they probably startled each other! Yeah, startled each other. Yeah. And then the bear just swiped and took his arm [off] and... Yeah. That didn't happen very often, eh?

- Georgina Berg, Patricia Kandirun

76

00:22:15,417 --> 00:22:32,392

Right! What happened with Sunny? He was in a bush or something? Yeah, they were out setting nets across the river. Okay. Probably, maybe the same thing. They startled each other because he was in the bushes and the bear was out there.

- Georgina Berg, Georgina Oman, Patricia Kandirun

77

00:22:32,392 --> 00:22:50,827

All of a sudden we heard some commotion, and they said there was a bear running. So they came running, and then we, all of a sudden, we seen that bear. We didn't know it was bear, but then my mom was running around, gathering everybody up, throwing us in the house.

- Georgina Oman

78

00:22:50,827 --> 00:23:09,471

She missed my sister, and my sister was around the corner where the bear was coming. Oh, man. She ran around there. She just grabbed her and dragged her inside. But everybody, all the Elders that were there, they were chasing that bear with their guns.

- Georgina Oman

79

00:23:09,471 --> 00:23:28,156

My first [memory] was, we were playing outside, and it was winter, and the [Churchill] River was frozen. Oh yeah. Like I said, they didn't get excited about, like, they didn't tell us, don't go over there 'cause there might be a bear. We just went all over the place.

- Georgina Berg

80

00:23:28,156 --> 00:23:55,976

I remember one time, [a bear] was coming across the [Churchill] River, and the river was frozen, and mum got all crazy, yelling and getting us in the house. I think we even got a whack on the head because we weren't fast enough, you know, and she got us all in the house, and she was looking out—we had a little, wee tiny window. She was looking out there and worried that the bear would come and bust the window.

- Georgina Berg

81

00:23:55,976 --> 00:24:32,137

The one earliest memory that sticks out is we were living on Simpson Street. I was a child, and I lived there from '81 until '87, so I would've been seven or eight years old. I remember one afternoon, it was daylight because I remember the sun being out, and there was a lot of commotion outside, and then, all of a sudden, there was a lot of commotion in the kitchen, and my mom was all hysterical, and there was a bear literally on the steps right at our door.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

82

00:24:32,137 --> 00:25:08,423

And so, yeah, but the neighborhood was already aware, so there was a bunch of commotion going on outside and [the bear] was darted, and it just kind of laid there, right there, right on the step and I remember, once it was tranquilized, we were allowed to go outside and just watching it being handled by the men, put in the back of the truck to be transported to the, back then, and I still call it to this day, the polar bear jail. But yeah, being able to see that bear in the back of the truck and touch it and seeing its size, that is my most favourite memory.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

83

00:25:08,423 --> 00:25:24,147

I was always out on the land, and I was always running into polar bears, so I don't exactly remember the first time I ran into a polar bear, but my story from when I was a kid, when I was about 12 years old, I remember that my sister worked at the S and M at the Shaggy Bear Shop.

- Dave Daley

84

00:25:24,147 --> 00:25:46,836

I was getting my breakfast ready, and my sister had to get up and go to work. So I watched her going out [the door] to work, and we had to shed in the back and the honey pit where we dumped the honey bucket, and there were garbage cans there, where the garbage man would come and pick up our garbage. And I was watching her walk, and, you know, in Churchill, when the wind's blowing from the north, you always walk with your head down, eh?

- Dave Daley

85

00:25:46,836 --> 00:26:06,273

So she was walking with her head down, with her hood [up], and she was walking, looking at her feet, and then all of a sudden this polar bear came up from behind the shed where the garbage was, and I went, oh good, he's going to eat her. No, I didn't. I was banging on the window, trying to get her attention to tell her that a polar bear was there, and she was walking up and she actually bumped into the bear.

- Dave Daley

86

00:26:06,314 --> 00:26:34,009

And then she looked up and seen the bear, and the bear looked at her. And she screamed, and she turned around and ran back into the house. I think that was the first real polar bear encounter that I ever seen, eh? She was pretty shaken when she got in the house. She was shaking and she didn't end up going to work that day. She was so traumatized. But the good

thing is that she screamed so loud, she scared the bear. He took off one way and she took off the other way, but that was my earliest encounter.

- Dave Daley

87

00:26:34,009 --> 00:27:26,728

There was one time my sister Giselle got her allowance, and my mom gave her allowance, and right away she used to go to the steakhouse. So there used to be, Bill Sr. had a kind of convenient store where the kids used to always go. You could go there with 25 cents and just woohoo, you know, leave there with an ice cream and a whole bunch of candy. So we used to always go, and we were on Fox [Street]. So Fox, I don't know if you... you see in between Button and Tamarack [Streets]? There's this space there, ... our house was right behind the town garage. So we were the closest to... open area.

- Katie de Muelles

88

00:27:26,728 --> 00:27:53,338

Plus, we had an attraction because of the Shermans. [The Shermans had dogs.] They were just dog lovers, but literally 30 to 40 dogs, and they were all over the place. And she would feed them, like go out there with slop pails and feed them. So it was an attraction for bears to come in there.

- Katie de Muelles

89

00:27:53,338 --> 00:28:31,292

So she had her, her allowance money, and she was going. I was probably maybe five, so she was six, seven, eight years old. So she got all bundled up, and she was going over to the steakhouse with her allowance, and then my mum, she said, I don't know, I was just watching her. I used to watch them walk over there just to make sure everything was okay. And then [my mum] opened the window in the bedroom to look and see if she was going. And then right beside her, [my mum] seen a bear coming.

- Katie de Muelles

90

00:28:31,292 --> 00:29:01,990

And then [my mum] was just panicking. What do I do? Do I alert her? Get on the phone? She's telling my dad, get on the phone, phone the steakhouse, and tell him to grab her as soon as she walks in that door. And literally, my mom was just standing at the window, praying. Praying, please don't... She thought of alerting her, but then drawing attention like that is probably not a good idea.

- Katie de Muelles

91

00:29:01,990 --> 00:29:27,557

So [the bear] was probably about from you to the wall, right behind her walking. Oh my gosh. So as soon as she came around the corner, I guess Bill got the message, grabbed her, and [the bear] was just like coming around to the steakhouse door. Then, of course, he just kept her there until mum could go and retrieve her.

- Katie de Muelles



92

00:29:27,557 --> 00:29:36,441

I think the only people that are really terrified of bears are the ones that have been in close contact, like have had trauma with them.

- Katie de Muelles

93

00:29:36,441 --> 00:29:55,126

Actually, one time they did, they broke into my neighbor's house, the next house to the left of me, and [the bear] stuck his head through the window and—his name's Mark, my neighbor—and he whacked [the bear] in the nose with a frying pan, and [the bear] ran out.

- Antonina Kandiurin

94

00:29:55,126 --> 00:30:00,632

First thing I was told, you aim for its nose. It's the most tender part on its body.

- Katie de Muelles

95

00:30:00,632 --> 00:30:41,798

Right under the underpass, they were going this way to daycare, and the bear was coming this way from the church, and, just her and Gloria, Adam, and Aurora. Adam was like five. He was in kindergarten, and every morning I'd say, good morning, Adam. How are you? And he'd say, I'm good, but we just about got eaten by a bear. Because he has always had these stories, I said, oh yeah. Later on I find out that, he said, yeah, my mom had to hit him in the nose with the backpack, and then he took off. And I'm thinking, okay, I'm gonna have to check with his mom on this one.

- Georgina Berg

96

00:30:41,798 --> 00:31:02,443

Sure enough, she comes at lunch. I said, Adam said you guys met up with a bear? She goes, yeah, I had to hit him in the nose with the backpack. She said it was just an automatic thing, grab the backpack and whack him over the nose, and then he took off, spun around, and took off towards the church again. But lucky thing, eh?

- Georgina Berg

97

00:31:07,031 --> 00:31:17,500

Thank you for listening to episode two of *The Churchill Storywork Project* about Indigenous knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence. In episode three, we will hear stories from the present.

98

00:31:21,421 --> 00:31:28,011

Our thanks to the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill who co-created, provided guidance and contributed throughout this research:

99

00:31:28,386 --> 00:31:34,767

Florence Hamilton, Patricia Kandiurin, Katherine de Muelles, and Georgina Oman.

100

00:31:34,851 --> 00:31:41,232

This work would not have been possible without the blessing and contributions of additional knowledge holders and elders in the community:

101

00:31:41,441 --> 00:31:54,913

Nikki Clace, Dave Daley, Wyatt Daley, Brian Gulick, Jill Larkin, Antonina Kandiurin, Heather Spence-Botelho, Michael Spence, Morris Spence, "Saulie" Norman Spence, Leroy Whitmore, and Eva Yassie.

102

00:31:55,663 --> 00:32:00,793

Our thanks to the entire community of Churchill for their support of and engagement with this project.

103

00:32:01,377 --> 00:32:07,342

Fundamental direction during the initiation of this research was provided by Geoff York, Evan Richardson, and Helen McEwan.

104

00:32:08,343 --> 00:32:14,015

Our gratitude to the Polar Bears International team for providing significant logistical and technical support.

105

00:32:15,350 --> 00:32:21,481

Once again, my name is Kt Miller, and this research was part of my master's in Interdisciplinary Studies at Royal Roads University.

106

00:32:22,273 --> 00:32:26,361

I am so deeply grateful to the many people that made this project possible.

107

00:32:27,153 --> 00:32:33,493

Our coauthors on this project include: Georgina Berg, the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill, Nickia Mclvor,

108

00:32:33,868 --> 00:32:42,710

Dr. Micheal Lickers, an Indigenous scholar in residence at Royal Roads University, and Dr. Dominique Henri, a research scientist at Environment and Climate Change Canada.

109

00:32:43,711 --> 00:32:49,008

A big thank you to Polar Bears International and Environment and Climate Change Canada for funding this work.

110

00:32:50,051 --> 00:32:55,515

More information about this research can be found at [churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com](http://churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com)

## Transcript: Supplementary Video Podcast 3

Podcast episode three shares knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence in the present through Indigenous voices. Beginning with the closing of the open dump, the present time period is defined as 2005 - 2022 (the time of this study). During the present most knowledge of polar bears came through daily life, tourism and land-based activities.

**THUMBNAIL:** Present: From the closing of the open dump in 2005 to the time of this study in 2022.

1

00:00:01,626 --> 00:00:08,883

You're listening to an episode of *The Churchill Storywork Project* about Indigenous knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence.

2

00:00:08,883 --> 00:00:22,814

This is a storywork research project where we explore Indigenous knowledge through storytelling with Inuit, Métis, Sayisi Dene and Swampy Cree knowledge holders in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada.

3

00:00:22,814 --> 00:00:34,409

In addition to producing academic research about Indigenous community members' knowledge of coexistence, we also created podcasts in the voices of the knowledge holders themselves.

4

00:00:34,409 --> 00:00:43,043

We primarily created the podcasts by and for the community. However, we hope others learn from and enjoy them as well.

5

00:00:43,043 --> 00:00:50,050

My name is Kt Miller, and this work was part of my master's in Interdisciplinary Studies at Royal Roads University.

6

00:00:50,050 --> 00:01:01,728

I had the great honour of working with Cree Elder, Georgina Berg, as a co-researcher on this project. We met over a cup of tea and, as they say, "the rest is history."

7

00:01:01,728 --> 00:01:12,489

The Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill provided guidance and advice throughout all phases of this research, beginning with research design all the way through the dissemination of results.

8

00:01:12,489 --> 00:01:29,756

Knowledge holder and graphic designer Nickia McIvor made significant intellectual and graphic contributions to this work, and if you haven't checked out the timeline on our website or in our supplementary material, it is Nickia's artistic and intellectual creation, and it is amazing.

9

00:01:29,756 --> 00:01:43,937

I also want to acknowledge and thank my supervisors, Dr. Michael Lickers, who is an Indigenous scholar in residence at Royal Roads University and importantly suggested I use the Indigenous method of storytelling in this work...

10

00:01:43,937 --> 00:01:54,781

and Dr. Dominique Henri, a research scientist with Environment and Climate Change Canada, who provided support and guidance through the technical and emotional journey of this project.

11

00:01:54,781 --> 00:02:01,996

We are also very grateful to Polar Bears International and Environment and Climate Change Canada, who funded this research.

12

00:02:01,996 --> 00:02:07,877

More information about this research can be found at [churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com](http://churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com).

13

00:02:10,964 --> 00:02:15,885

This series includes four podcast episodes that explore four different time periods.

14

00:02:15,885 --> 00:02:21,975

The distant past, prior to the relocation of Indigenous people to present-day Churchill.

15

00:02:21,975 --> 00:02:29,691

The past, which was sort of the transition from more of a traditional lifestyle to a wage economy.

16

00:02:30,733 --> 00:02:36,406

The present, which is defined in our research as the tourism era.

17

00:02:36,948 --> 00:02:39,951

And the future.

18

00:02:41,035 --> 00:02:49,127

In episode three, we explore the present, defined as 2005 to 2022 for this study.

19

00:02:49,127 --> 00:02:55,008

During this time period, most people's knowledge of polar bears came through tourism and land-based activities.

20

00:02:55,425 --> 00:03:01,306

Of the knowledge holders, 83% were connected to tourism through their job in some way.

21

00:03:01,306 --> 00:03:10,481

Unlike their parents, children are now told not to play in the rocks along the coastline or walk on a local landmark frequently visited by polar bears known as "The Pipeline."

22

00:03:11,733 --> 00:03:17,780

Many parents now drive their kids around town, especially at night, and raise their kids to always be bear aware,

23

00:03:18,198 --> 00:03:24,454

including having an exit plan when they're walking around town and utilizing buildings and vehicles to stay safe.

24

00:03:25,455 --> 00:03:34,297

Contributors generally shared that living with polar bears is a normal part of life, and emphasized that if the bears are respected, they will reciprocate that respect.

25

00:03:35,048 --> 00:03:49,687

The Cree, Dene, and Métis knowledge holders expressed that they have the utmost respect for Inuit culture related to polar bears, and specifically Inuit rights to harvest polar bears for cultural, economic, and subsistence purposes.

26

00:03:50,772 --> 00:03:56,069

We hope you learn from and enjoy episode three of our podcast series.

Text on screen: Present refers to the time period from the closing of the open dump in 2005 to the time of this study in 2022.

27

00:04:04,744 --> 00:04:27,308

And you know, people always ask us, like, why do you live here? Because we run a [bed and breakfast], and we always talk about bears there, and people always ask us, why do you live here? Well, first of all, it's my home, our livelihood is here, like the bears are part of my livelihood running a B&B, and I said, they were always here before us.

- Patricia Kandiurin

28

00:04:27,308 --> 00:04:53,668

Go back twenty years, whatever, we were younger, go look around, drive around, and I don't do it as much anymore. If you look for bears in the fall time, you're sort of in the way. If you go cruising around now, if there's a bear, you got all these new tour operators, and I understand they're trying to satisfy their customers. I don't [go for drives] as much in the fall anymore because everybody's out there: every Tom, Dick, and Harry's out looking for a bear.

- Morris Spence

29

00:04:53,668 --> 00:05:08,516

I tell my people, my... the guests... [laughter]. I tell the guests on the boat, I'm just like, keep your volume a little lower here when we're near the bear, we don't wanna stress them out. We're here to observe, not to interact or influence.

- Nickia Mclvor

30

00:05:08,516 --> 00:05:18,026

I like to explain when people are, you know, everyone gets off the plane like, am I gonna see a bear today? Well, you know, you kind of came to the right place to start trying.

- Nikki Clace

31

00:05:18,026 --> 00:05:44,469

I've had people try and take pictures of bears. Like, they'll sit there at the edge of the Fort on Eskimo Point, and this is at least around ten, maybe ten-ish kilometers away, and they're trying to take pictures of white little dots. You can't even tell the difference between a bear and a rock, and they'll stand up there zooming as far as they can go trying to get a good picture, and they just get so amazed, and it looks like literally a white dot.

- Antonina Kandiurin

32

00:05:44,469 --> 00:05:58,608

Yeah, and it's crazy. For them, that could be a moment they carry for the rest of their lives. We forget because we live here, but for them, they'll be like, it was amazing, I saw this bear, and it could be something they tell their kids, and, kids, and kids.

- Nickia Mclvor

33

00:05:58,608 --> 00:06:17,919

I think, like, a lot of times this day and age, I'm gonna say it, some people are just out there for the 'gram, and they could care less about their surroundings and what the implications of their actions could be because they're just so gung-ho on getting that perfect picture for their Instagram.

- Nikki Clace

34

00:06:17,919 --> 00:06:33,101

Especially, like, how many stories I've heard of people taking out photographers, out on the land to take pictures of bears, and when the guide says, get in the car, you should get in the car, but some people try and push it.

- Nickia Mclvor

35

00:06:33,101 --> 00:06:54,122

I also had a close encounter, not me, but two tourists in a vehicle at the corner of Polar Bear Alley. So I was just turning on Polar Bear Alley, and they had their truck just off that road, not going through Polar Bear Alley, but had it just sitting there.

- Katie de Muelles

36

00:06:54,122 --> 00:07:11,806

They were both out of their vehicle and taking a picture of a bear coming at them, right? They were fair ways away, but both vehicle doors were closed. Their tripods were set up on the other side of the truck, and they were snapping away.

- Katie de Muelles

37

00:07:11,806 --> 00:07:29,449

Then when I went to turn like this, I looked over this way, and there's a bear coming over the road from [the other direction] that little pond or whatever, eh? Like you don't know, in a second. You have got to watch, especially if you don't have a bear monitor with you.

- Katie de Muelles

38

00:07:29,449 --> 00:07:50,219

So I stopped and I said, get in your vehicle, now! There's a bear, right here! And by then, he was already on the very front of my bumper, coming around my vehicle. Then I just started, it's like, okay, I need to get that bear away because he's on a mission.

- Katie de Muelles

39

00:07:50,219 --> 00:08:06,986

Literally just honking on the... these guys scrambling. Never mind your cameras, just get in your vehicle! You know? So they got in the vehicle, and then this one, he was a big male too, eh? And I'm thinking the one over there was an adolescent.

- Katie de Muelles

40

00:08:06,986 --> 00:08:19,373

Because then next thing you know, he came over the road, went right in front of their vehicle, sniffed their tripod or whatever, and then kept going to that other, next thing you know, they were sparring.

- Katie de Muelles

41

00:08:19,373 --> 00:08:35,014

But he said, thank you, and I said, if I wasn't here, if I didn't see that bear, I'm sorry, you guys would've been goners. You always have to be on high alert. You always make sure you know all your surroundings.

- Katie de Muelles

42



00:08:35,014 --> 00:08:45,483

Churchill people are always thinking that quick, but tourists, they're always just looking for an opportunity, you know? Or ... a moment.

- Katie de Muelles

43

00:08:45,483 --> 00:08:54,867

[You have to watch] the behavior of the polar bear. It could be laying down, is the weather hot? Where, you know, is the polar bear in those bushes getting shade? You know?

- Florence Hamilton

44

00:08:54,867 --> 00:09:01,749

It's just, [tourists] don't think. They just want the bear to get up and perform for them, you know? So they can get their pictures.

- Florence Hamilton, Katie de Muelles

45

00:09:01,749 --> 00:09:18,641

They just think, oh, they're so cute and cuddly. You know, you have these women standing beside you, you're taking pictures of bears too, but then you have a woman standing beside you saying, oh, they're so cute and cuddly, and I said, yeah, and rip your head off in a second if you give them half a chance. So I said, you have got to be very careful.

- Katie de Muelles

46

00:09:18,641 --> 00:09:45,209

That's why I think professional photographers, sometimes they take too many risks to a point that, you know, just for a shot or they're doing something that's hazing the bear, you know? And I don't think that's right. I've seen it quite a bit where people have, you know, they're all looking for that tip and then they'll come really close to a bear.

- Katie de Muelles

47

00:09:45,209 --> 00:10:06,230

They're going in places where they shouldn't really be driving. We love the way the land is, and if you start making your own trails, it's, it's an eyesore. So you shouldn't be where the trail isn't, and they'll go right in nooks and crannies to get their shots.

- Katie de Muelles

48

00:10:06,230 --> 00:10:27,877

I think that with the tour companies, maybe they are good at [staying safe], but it's more the individuals. The couples, the small little groups travelling together and renting the vehicles. Those are the ones that are... because usually with the groups, the guide kind of can control that.

- Florence Hamilton, Kt Miller

49

00:10:27,877 --> 00:10:35,843

Or inform... Yeah. Those groups are never without a guide, you know?

- Georgina Berg, Katie de Muelles, Florence Hamilton

50

00:10:35,843 --> 00:10:50,608

I'm surprised how much money, like, back in the day, I never thought the community would make like a business out from polar bears. A lot of people are making lots of money off them.

- Eva Yasse

51

00:10:50,608 --> 00:11:09,919

I don't think we should police the bears as much as the people trying to interact with the bears, because you have all these tour companies and everything, they're trying to do the roadside thing and there's people, like, I guarantee I counted 50 people on the side of the road for one bear.

- Brian Gulick

52

00:11:09,919 --> 00:11:24,517

And that was... five vehicles? How many doors is there to get back in that vehicle? That bear's gonna pay the price for somebody's stupidity of trying to get a picture, and I don't think it's fair.

- Brian Gulick

53

00:11:24,517 --> 00:11:43,119

I was at one of those meetings when they wanted to close the dump and put the garbage at L5, and they said that someone had asked that question, will the bears come to town? and they said, no, we will have more patrols.

- Patricia Kandiurin

54

00:11:43,119 --> 00:11:55,005

We have bears in town. More what? Patrols. More patrols. I mean, the bear guys are good, like, they're quick, but still there's a lot of bears in town.

- Patricia Kandiurin, Georgina Oman, Georgina Berg

55

00:11:55,005 --> 00:12:14,316

And then they also said that no bear would ever get into L5 [the dump] because the walls are so thick. Well, they've had to dart how many [bears] in there and send them out [relocate them]. Oh man. So [the bears] got in there, they did everything they said they wouldn't do.

- Patricia Kandiurin

56

00:12:14,316 --> 00:12:26,871

Even still, you can sometimes find bears just in that exact same area [the old dump], but not quite the numbers and volume as before, and not as dirty...

- Nikki Clace, Antonina Kandiurin

57

00:12:26,871 --> 00:12:52,021

I'm so glad that's changed nowadays, because, I mean that was normal back then, but, I'm just glad it's closed off and the bears aren't hanging around there eating and all dirty and... that was just such an unnatural environment for them. I mean, yes, I was happy to see bears, but as I got older I'm like, yeah, that was pretty ugly.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

58

00:12:52,021 --> 00:12:59,403

So you have to be careful in terms of how you're handling bears, because you're going to change behaviours, and that's what's happening now.

- Michael Spence

59

00:12:59,403 --> 00:13:17,838

It's just so important that we realize, just like the generations of people, there's generations of bears too. As quickly as we are evolving and changing, so are the polar bears. Polar bears are being habituated in ways like never before.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

60

00:13:17,838 --> 00:13:43,697

Living in a community where, you know, the bears come through, the one thing that I can really appreciate is that I think our community has really learned how to keep our community clean, and people don't have garbage around their houses. That's something that has really helped ... to keep the community clean of garbage.

- Florence Hamilton

61

00:13:43,697 --> 00:14:02,633

People have just learned you don't put your garbage outside, or it's in; now we have those cool bins. So that fixed a lot of issues, especially on our street. I'm pretty sure it's on everybody's street now. We have those closed bins that [bears] actually can't get into.

- Katie de Muelles, Florence Hamilton

62

00:14:02,633 --> 00:14:40,379

Well, you know, that's how [my husband] is now, if our garbage bag is full, he'll take it out and he'll take it to the bin, he won't let it sit in the porch. We'll never have more than one bag of garbage in the porch, 'cause then he'll take it on his way out to the bin. Same with our dog food. It's in, you know, one of those totes? It's sealed, so that a bear does not ... get any ideas. You really have to watch your garbage, eh?

- Patricia Kandiurin, Georgina Berg, Georgina Oman

63

00:14:40,379 --> 00:15:18,042

I'm pretty sure that the town is really good at, if somebody complains about somebody keeping, you know, like carcasses or even not keeping their garbage on their back deck or stuff like that, that they're, they're told about it right away, and I believe that the town during polar bear season actually has extra days working now picking up garbage. You know, it's really a community that has really come together and just really, we live with the bears, so this is what we need to do.

- Katie de Muelles, Florence Hamilton

64

00:15:18,042 --> 00:15:42,858

We haven't had one [bear at our dog yard] in three years. It showed up right at the end of the [dog] yard here, right in the bush, there. But, you know, we just haze them, like, this isn't where they typically hang out, so we don't feed seal meat, we don't feed beluga whale and we, you know, we don't feed bear stuff and my food is all in a steel container, and if [the dogs] don't eat it, they lose it, you know? We don't have food lying around.

- Wyatt Daley, Dave Daley

65

00:15:42,858 --> 00:16:00,000

Yeah, that was a huge thing. Guaranteed. The slushy tube [wastewater drain] kept them drawn in quite a bit. There's always something there that always coming in licking the aluminum there, and that from the kitchen. I mean, we, we dug a hole and tried to make it go into the ground instead of it coming out, but I mean.

- Brian Gulick

66

00:16:00,000 --> 00:16:18,978

[Someone] said it was a huge difference too when the slushy tube went away. Bears didn't stick around at camp as long, they kind of passed by, didn't camp out there for days at a time. Yeah. It was huge change there, I think.

- Brian Gulick

67

00:16:18,978 --> 00:16:41,792

When mile five [dog yard] used to be there, and we had the same, we have the same truck as late, uh, Brian [Ladon]. We drove in there, and Brian was way at the end there. So we drove around him and that, and we were looking at the bears. We were coming out as we were driving, the bears were following the truck.

- Georgina Oman

68

00:16:41,792 --> 00:17:04,023

Oh, they're following us, I said. That was so scary. And they would get so close. You know, they, you know, looked. Oooooo. But then Brian would come driving, get away, go away, yell at them. They send them back.

- Georgina Oman

69

00:17:04,023 --> 00:17:19,621

We were out there one day with our guests and I didn't usually go, because I get too scared when the bear would come too close. I wouldn't usually go, but this one time I went and the bear comes walking along and, you know how the dogs would run around like this?

- Georgina Berg

70

00:17:19,621 --> 00:17:39,683

That one bear, he goes walking over there and he steps on his chain, and so the bear, the dog can't do anything, and then [the bear] starts kind of petting him, you know? Yeah, playing with

them, petting his head, but he stepped on that chain until he was done with him, and when he was done with him, he let the chain go and the dog.

- Georgina Berg, Patricia Kandiurin

71

00:17:39,683 --> 00:18:00,829

Well, his relationship with those bears was special, right? Um, the same big bears came back every year and I remember, uh, Brian and I were great friends, and we talked about this at length all the time, but ... that was his security system from the young bears, right? So he had all those old bears that came there and he fed them, and they stayed around there and they kept the young bears away.

- Dave Daley

72

00:18:00,829 --> 00:18:31,276

And remember that one year that Conservation [Polar Bear Alert] came in and took all those old bears out of there, and then all the young bears moved in and started killing his dogs. You know, so he... those bears had been seeing Brian for years and years and years. So they never went and took those old bears again because it was a big controversy at the time. So his relationship with those bears was special. I don't know if it should be allowed, but that's what he had with them, right?

- Dave Daley

73

00:18:31,276 --> 00:18:55,300

Some of these people, some of these tourists, when you see Conservation [Polar Bear Alert], you know, we know to stay back from Conservation But tourists will go drive around them, cut in front of them, and park there, and get out of their trucks and get their cameras and everything while they're trying to haze a bear.

- Patricia Kandiurin

74

00:18:55,300 --> 00:19:12,276

I've seen [Polar Bear Alert] trying to move a bear towards Cape Merry and literally film crews and tourists blocking their, their path to get out. I have rolled down my window and said, hey hey, no, don't go behind them.

- Katie de Muelles

75

00:19:12,276 --> 00:19:36,341

You need to stay back because he needs to be able to come back outta there at the drop of a dime. Then they're looking at you like, what? No, I'm just gonna do this, you know? Film crews, I find are the worst. They don't listen to a lot of direction and they will literally, like, chase [Polar Bear Alert].

- Katie de Muelles

76

00:19:36,341 --> 00:20:06,496

Working with Jack and Donald, they've talked about that too, about how the bears are learning and how there's always buses out and people who want to go see the bears. So [the bears] are becoming desensitized to vehicles just being there and then they're becoming desensitized to

the car horns. So every single time, or not every, it's more likely they have to get out and bear banger than before [when] they could just honk their horn and chase it off.

- Nickia Mclvor

77

00:20:06,496 --> 00:20:32,397

And one time [our dog] was barking and we woke up and [the bear] was actually at the front of the house and it was trying to get into the dumpster at the apartment block, and we realized after that it was like an older, like, experienced bear because we'd called Polar Bear Alert, they drove by and that bear hid from Polar Bear Alert, they recognized the truck, they like tucked back into the dark.

- Antonina Kandiurin

78

00:20:32,397 --> 00:20:56,171

Once the truck passed by, they went to look for it somewhere else, he came out and we called them back. We were like, it's hiding right there, it was right in between the apartments and the dumpster. It's just cool to see how smart they are in that way, to just know, like, recognize a vehicle and be able to make that assumption and associate it with [Polar Bear Alert] and hide.

- Antonina Kandiurin

79

00:20:56,171 --> 00:21:08,558

My mom would just wag her finger at me and she'd be like, no, you can't walk home on The Pipeline. That one's the scary spot for bears. Jack and Donald are always parked up on there some mornings.

- Nicki Mclvor

80

00:21:08,558 --> 00:21:09,518

Just call Jack and Donald...

- Nickia Mclvor

81

00:21:09,518 --> 00:21:10,435

Jack and Donald...

- Antonina Kandiurin

82

00:21:10,435 --> 00:21:11,395

Jack and Donald.

-Nickia Mclvor

83

00:21:11,395 --> 00:21:23,240

You see Jack and Donald, I was walking one day and Jack had heard something down, like, farther down the road, but he stopped me and he's like, hey, get in, I'll drive into town real quick and then I gotta go chase this guy out.

- Nikki Clace

84

00:21:23,240 --> 00:21:53,687

It's crazy because as much as we've dealt with bears, that, that second, you're just in panic mode. You're screaming and I was literally screaming on the phone talking to Jack, and Jack basically said, he knew who I was, and he's just like, calm down, Katie, I can't understand a word you're saying. Where's the bear? It's like, okay, sorry Jack.

- Katie de Muelles

85

00:21:53,687 --> 00:22:16,501

Yeah, because my last year of teaching, 2018, we were looking out the kindergarten window and there's Jack, he's got a bear in the ball diamond and there's, like, fence all around, eh? Except one way out, and there's Jack walking around all calmly and this guy, and he is saying, you get outta here, you get outta here.

- Georgina Berg, Patricia Kandiurin

86

00:22:16,501 --> 00:22:47,240

The bear is running around doing the bases, and then a home run, and then away he went! Jack is so calm. He's like, this is just his everyday thing. It was so cute. It must have been a young bear because it went to first base and second base and third base and then home and then out. It was so cute.

- Georgina Berg

87

00:22:47,240 --> 00:23:18,605

Do you remember the bear that was... the mum that was killed at the [Churchill Northern] Studies Centre? Eli was the cub, and he went to the Winnipeg [Assiniboine Park] Zoo and he ended up dying, and they brought him, they brought his ashes back here, and, I think Michael took some back to Wat'chee, because that's where Eli was born, and some of the ashes are buried beneath the Inukshuk.

- Patricia Kandiurin

88

00:23:18,605 --> 00:23:47,217

We had a ceremony for that because, you know, they head out onto the ice to eat. So this one will always be facing the ice. Yeah, but they didn't do it with the other one, eh, Aurora? No. I think they just made a big stink over Eli because it was the first one to die.

- Patricia Kandiurin, Georgina Oman

89

00:23:47,217 --> 00:23:54,724

It's interesting that we've been doing it for so many years and with all this polar bear studying they've been doing...

- Morris Spence

90

00:23:54,724 --> 00:24:13,493

But then after our season is done and their season is done, because everybody banks on their information, right? So after the season is done, there are times when they get seven families and they've been travelling, you know, the length of time we're there...

- Morris Spence

91

00:24:13,493 --> 00:24:43,482

They have to watch; they can't fly and put bears out when it's really cold, eh? But still, the amount of area they cover compared to what we do at the end of the season, I'm surprised that the numbers that they show compared to the little area we cover. There are times we come across more bears than them, and that shouldn't be because they got the advantage of flying with a helicopter, right? And they cover a lot of area .

- Morris Spence

92

00:24:43,482 --> 00:24:53,408

The bears are out there for sure. 'Cause we've been doing it for a long time, and the little area we work, the bears are still pumping out the cubs.

- Morris Spence

93

00:24:53,408 --> 00:25:11,593

These bears that come off the ice now, that hang around Churchill along the coast, they're not gonna eat the seal. So they're not gonna eat July, August, September, October. They'll get out there in November and they're probably, they should be reasonable, good shape now coming off, right?

- Morris Spence

94

00:25:11,593 --> 00:25:25,690

So now you look at the female, now she come off the same time as every other bear this time of the year. Now she's gotta go in and that's the experience, like I say, we have, that people don't see, don't even know about.

- Morris Spence

95

00:25:25,690 --> 00:25:44,584

Now she goes in. Now she's, she's not gonna eat now until July, August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, and she's pregnant and she's giving birth. And then mid, uh, December, probably around Christmas time, I'd say, that they give birth.

- Morris Spence

96

00:25:44,584 --> 00:26:02,102

The only reason why I say around Christmas time, because, um, there's around that time you'd, um, the female, you'd track a female leaving going out, that means she lost her cubs. So that tells you they're born around that time.

- Morris Spence

97

00:26:02,102 --> 00:26:19,995

So anyway, she, uh, like I said, she never ate for eight, nine months, and they say the bears are starving? I don't think they're starving. You know, some of the females we've seen, they don't look in that bad of shape, eh? No. They look, yeah.

- Morris Spence, Michael Spence



98

00:26:19,995 --> 00:26:45,395

See, the thing is it appears ... that what we're doing, we're seeing a lot of mothers and cubs over time, but the biologists, they're all coming in there putting the mother down, doing their testing, getting their results, off they go.

- Michael Spence

99

00:26:45,395 --> 00:26:52,402

We're seeing them and watching and observing them over a period of time.

- Michael Spence

100

00:26:52,402 --> 00:27:05,707

Those ones with three [cubs]. I wonder how far, how many make it out there? Three, three cubs. Probably not too often. [It's] pretty hard, something will happen to one of them.

- Saulie Spence, Morris Spence

101

00:27:05,707 --> 00:27:15,258

We're lucky they like the seal or we'd be in trouble. That's their main meal.

- Morris Spence

102

00:27:15,258 --> 00:27:21,139

When you think about it, their entire existence relies on them being sneaky.

- Nikki Clace

103

00:27:21,139 --> 00:27:42,327

There was a time a few summers or during that kind of summer period, where we would just kind of go rock jumping on the rocks, but this is where like I learned that bears find these crevices nice and cool and they sometimes seek shelter in there just for a nice cool nap on a hot day.

- Nikki Clace

104

00:27:42,327 --> 00:27:53,546

There was a big giant crevice, and it was small where we had jumped over, but when you stopped and you looked at the bottom of it, it actually got really open towards the bottom and there was a bear just kind of resting in there.

- Nikki Clace

105

00:27:53,546 --> 00:27:59,803

Um, just like people, you know, they kind of want to find a cool place to chill out in the summer. Who likes being hot?

- Nikki Clace

106

00:27:59,803 --> 00:28:12,982

They're usually trying to stay cool and out of the heat, so they usually just lay around. They're reserving their energy for when the ice actually gets there, so most of the time they're relaxin'.  
- Antonina Kandiurin, Nickia McIvor

107

00:28:12,982 --> 00:28:46,182

I just think like the younger guys [bears] are a little more curious of like, what the heck is that over there? What's that smell coming from over there? Where maybe an older, more battled bear isn't interested in what might happen in town. He's like, been there, done that. Yeah. You guys are not even cool. I'm leaving. You chased me away. Yeah. Like, ugh, I'm just gonna go over there just to go run away. I don't think so. But then the young bears need to come towards town, to learn, to not to.

- Nikki Clace, Nickia McIvor108

00:28:46,182 --> 00:28:53,898

There's a lot of bears, it's safe to say there's a lot of bears when we've got Churchill problem bears, and you've got Arviat problem bears.

- Morris Spence

109

00:28:53,898 --> 00:29:15,462

My experience going to the Cape, when we got to the Cape, the big bears were at the Cape. The big ones, like, we're talking dinosaurs. I remember them sticking their heads in the windows of the [Tundra] Buggies and their heads so big that they could only get their snout in, and yeah, there's big guys like I've never seen a bear like that anywhere this way [near town].

- Brian Gulick

110

00:29:15,462 --> 00:29:37,066

But you know, that at one time I thought that just by listening to people there was more bears, now you hardly, hardly hear. Oh, that's interesting. That's what I mean. Because maybe they're being scared away, too much tourists, I don't know.

- Eva Yasse, Kt Miller

111

00:29:37,066 --> 00:30:02,050

I have a picture that was on camp before of like 30 bears in one picture, in the kelp bed beside camp, and you don't see that anymore. You're lucky to catch a picture of three in there now, that's usually a mother and two, well, what are they? COY [cubs of the year]?

- Brian Gulick

112

00:30:02,050 --> 00:30:22,445

Uh, as much as I don't like to say it, I don't think there's going to be too many bears here, like, the numbers have declined here for what we see all the time. I dunno what science is saying, but guaranteed for what we see here all the time, just driving around and that, I don't see anything like I used to.

- Brian Gulick

113

00:30:22,445 --> 00:30:30,411

But I've always told [my kids] right from very young age to be bear aware.

- Patricia Kandiurin

114

00:30:30,411 --> 00:30:53,893

Exactly. All you really need is like a little bit of fog and a little bit of dark and it's perfect weather for creeping around and that's what my mom and my granny always called it, polar bear weather. When it's, you know, dark and maybe it's smoky also from like nearby fires, but there's also fog in the air and it's just like perfect conditions for a bear to like sneak around undetected.

- Nikki Clace

115

00:30:53,893 --> 00:31:14,956

Well see, the thing is with bear weather too, uh, the people should be hunkering down. That's when the bears are moving, right? They don't wanna move when it's plus 30 when we wanna move. Well, most people wanna move around and do stuff, but it's the opposite for the bears. They wanna start kind of prowling around because it's cooler out and quieter out.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

116

00:31:14,956 --> 00:31:20,920

Don't put yourself in the situation. There'd be no situation to be had.

- Brian Gulick

117

00:31:20,920 --> 00:31:31,639

If I go and it's still bear season I take a gun. Okay. But if it's after like end of November and the Bay is frozen, I don't carry a gun.

- Jill Larkin

118

00:31:31,639 --> 00:31:50,241

So I don't carry a gun at all from beginning of December, end of November until kind of right about now, like mid-July. Unless I'm responsible for people, right? But if it's like just me and my kids, or me and my friends, then I don't.

- Jill Larkin

119

00:31:50,241 --> 00:32:11,721

Yeah, see in bear season I'm not where the bears are most of the time, not in the touristy areas. I'm out at Goose Creek walking and in bear season I'll carry a gun. So I guess you could say I spend most of my time avoiding bears.

- Jill Larkin

120

00:32:11,721 --> 00:32:28,571

[My husband] takes his gun everywhere. If we're going for a ride, he'll take it. If we run into a bear, if we stall, whatever. I always tell 'em, you don't need that darn gun. Keep it at home. You never know though.

- Patricia Kandiurin, Georgina Berg, Georgina Oman

121

00:32:28,571 --> 00:32:35,328

Yeah. The whistle is more to let bears know that you're in the area so you don't startle them.  
- Jill Larkin

122

00:32:35,328 --> 00:33:10,154

Well, if you see a bear run to the nearest house, you know, most people's houses are unlocked in Churchill I think. I know that mine always was, and I never locked my vehicle. Don't play on the rocks. Don't play on the rocks. When you're biking home and if it's dark outside, check every alley. Yeah. Every, every opening. Get home as quick as you can. Yeah. Yeah. Don't go anywhere... don't be stupid. Yeah. Yeah. He went, you play stupid games, you win stupid prizes. That's right.

- Dave Daley, Wyatt Daley

123

00:33:10,154 --> 00:33:35,805

Even me, I raised him to be bear aware. You know, 'cause you always worry about your kids when they're growing up here, right? Like, look around corners, you know? Don't walk with your head down. Look around, be aware. All the time. You know, you see a bear go the other way. You know what I mean? A safe bear is a distant bear and that's... how we live, but sometimes they can surprise you.

- Dave Daley

124

00:33:35,805 --> 00:33:56,075

He must have thought I was a crazy woman. I just said, get in my vehicle, now! Now! I said, there's a bear, right? Or first of all, I didn't say bear. I just said, get in my vehicle now. And he's like looking at me, like, why? And then I said, there's a bear. And as soon as I said bear, they were, like, jumping over each other to get in my vehicle.

- Katie de Muelles

125

00:33:56,075 --> 00:34:14,177

And then of course he said, bear? Bear? Where? Where? Where? Can we see it? I said, safety first I have to phone Polar Bear Alert. It's really too close to Churchill, but I will take you there. So I took them within 20 feet and [the bear] just started walking along the shore right behind the complex, two o'clock in the afternoon.

- Katie de Muelles

126

00:34:14,177 --> 00:34:34,614

I do have a course that I think anyone outdoorsy and enjoys the outdoors, and it's a polar bear [course]. I actually have it in my wallet. Oh, you get like a certification? Yeah. I think it's the best course ever. Polar bear guard. Holy. Look at that. I'm a guard. I didn't even know it.

- Heather Botelho, Kt Miller

127

00:34:34,614 --> 00:34:49,462

I took it for the chance because I wanted to build my confidence, taking my family out on the land. Yeah. That was important to me. That was the best course, and I recommended it to everyone, because they talked a lot about polar bear behaviour.

- Heather Botelho

128

00:34:49,462 --> 00:35:04,435

Yeah. And then also, they talked about, polar bear guards not, like, taking down the bear as soon as you've seen it. A bear guard is, like, taking your people to safety and respecting that bear, letting it do its thing, you know? Usually a bear just wants to go from one end to the other.

- Heather Botelho

129

00:35:04,435 --> 00:35:31,254

When I go out with my dad hunting, I was talking about like, the young male bear, but during that same day, where we had to pass by that young male bear, and it didn't want to leave us. So we kept going towards Knights Hill after we had passed it, and we had shot four caribou and we're getting ready for a lot of work to do.

- Nickia Mclvor

130

00:35:31,254 --> 00:35:48,146

Um, I didn't even think of this, but my dad did, and he had put ropes around their antlers to pull them onto the top of the ridge at Knights Hill, so that way we can have the advantage view. I can see very far that way and very far that way.

- Nickia Mclvor

131

00:35:48,146 --> 00:36:04,662

And I didn't even think about that at first, but he had that in mind, where we got four lovely caribou that probably smelled great, and he had put us in a vantage point where we can have at least a warning if there are bears nearby.

- Nickia Mclvor

132

00:36:04,662 --> 00:36:34,609

I think because we always had talks in school from Conservation [Polar Bear Alert], it's just like burned into your brain to be aware. I live in Winnipeg right now for university, and after I moved to Winnipeg, I would, I lived in residence my first year, and I would walk across to the little back lane to get to the library, and I found myself looking around in the willows that were on the side of the street for polar bears.

- Antonina Kandiurin

133

00:36:34,609 --> 00:36:59,425

My biggest fear was running into a bear right beside, not at the castle, but at the other road that connects to Hearne or, yeah.. That spot where it's that four-way on the gravel. I don't know why, but I always, in my head, when I think of running into a bear, it's right there and at nighttime, but then I think, what would I be doing there at night anyways.

- Nickia Mclvor

134

00:36:59,425 --> 00:37:21,906

That's a really sparse populated corner. No one really lives in those housing houses, and that's why, right at the corner. That's why I think it scared me. It's like a far stretch to Donna's house,

and I guess Robert's house is right there, and you know what's his name from the Port? He's only there seasonally, and same with the house next to him.

- Nikki Clace, Antonina Kandiurin, Nickia Mclvor

135

00:37:21,906 --> 00:37:28,204

Wow, that's an awful corner to be in! That's why I always thought of it!

- Nikki Clace, Nickia Mclvor

136

00:37:28,204 --> 00:37:35,753

I don't know in my plan, I was going to, you know how they say drop mitts and hats, and that was my plan.

- Nickia Mclvor

137

00:37:35,753 --> 00:37:51,936

I need enough clothing to go from that four-way to get to, in my head I was like, Jill's house. I go to Jill's and I just need enough clothing. I've been mentally preparing this for years now for when I run into a bear at that four-way.

- Nickia Mclvor

138

00:37:51,936 --> 00:38:02,863

Yeah, I've also thought about before, like what would be the smelliest thing that would, like, maybe hold them off the longest? Would it be your hat? Maybe a shoe, like maybe a neck warmer. Yeah, if you're breathing on it...

- Nikki Clace, Antonina Kandiurin

139

00:38:02,863 --> 00:38:28,139

We say if it's daylight, they can walk, like, wherever they need to go, and then in bear season, basically the same thing. If it's daylight, like we know, yes, there has been bears on our street, there was a bear sleeping behind our house once Well, not even behind, like in between our house and the neighbor's house one morning.

- Jill Larkin

140

00:38:28,139 --> 00:38:47,950

So we know there always is a risk, but we still let them walk to school and stuff. In bear season, we say don't take back alleys, stay off The Pipeline, stay aware, and then if you do see a bear, go to somebody's house or vehicle or whatever.

- Jill Larkin

141

00:38:47,950 --> 00:39:20,566

Do you know why I get that though? Exit plans, like walking, when you lived on Bernier, and then I was on Orcade or sometimes Hendry, depending on the time of year and, well, exit plans were the main one, but then also I was like if I see a bear, I see one, but I just don't want to stress out. So I just sing myself songs and sometimes sing it louder when we're going, or when

I'm going in between the back lanes. That way, I'm like, if I sing, they know I'm there and they can maybe run away.

- Nickia Mclvor

142

00:39:20,566 --> 00:39:39,835

Antonina didn't... No, if anyone knows my dad, he's like number one safety. He won't let me walk anywhere if it's dark out, makes me walk around with a stick like kind of guy.

- Nikki Clace, Antonina Kandiurin

143

00:39:39,835 --> 00:39:56,477

And it's funny, you know, the bears are almost like our family. They're here, we just live with them, and we just know how to, and we just have to respect them and stay away from them. You know, if you see a bear, you know?

- Georgina Berg, Georgina Oman

144

00:39:56,477 --> 00:40:33,931

I just feel like I have to go outside and I'm not gonna stay inside being worried about bears, and I feel like there are times when it's more dangerous to have a firearm around. Like, sometimes the firearm risk is greater than the bear risk, and when the Bay is frozen, like I, I do know that you could see a bear any time of the year, but I'm chancing it basically.

- Jill Larkin

145

00:40:33,931 --> 00:40:42,648

I just kind of find 'em more of a nuisance than anything now, just so many years with them trying to work around them.

- Brian Gulick

146

00:40:42,648 --> 00:40:51,866

Like I said, if you give him the wide berth and that, usually you're pretty good. It hasn't failed me yet. I'm still here, so...

- Brian Gulick

147

00:40:51,866 --> 00:41:17,558

There, there was one time, after I moved into an apartment, my car was parked like across the parking lot from my door, and I stopped at like, A&W or something on the way home, and I had my food with me. I was like, maybe I shouldn't walk outside with food right now, because it was dark out. And then I was like, I'm not in Churchill. And anyways, I still grabbed my food and bolted across to my door.

- Antonina Kandiurin

148

00:41:17,558 --> 00:41:32,031

It's kind of funny because, saying all this stuff out loud, it doesn't sound normal, but in your everyday life it feels normal, almost like second nature. I've noticed that a lot living in Winnipeg, because people obviously always ask about bears when they hear Churchill.

- Antonina Kandiurin

149

00:41:32,031 --> 00:41:54,595

And they're always like, oh, have you seen a polar bear before? I'm like, yeah, lots. And then I'll just casually slip out, oh, my brother's been chased by one, and then I'm thinking this isn't normal. People pay tons of money just to see one bear, and we just all adapted to living with them.

- Antonina Kandiurin

150

00:41:54,595 --> 00:42:19,370

You know, it's not that it's not exciting to see them, but you can only sit and watch the polar bear for a couple hours so many times. Like, they're exciting to see their activities and stuff like that, but when they're just lounging... like, respect, leave me alone when I'm lounging at home too.

- Nikki Clace

151

00:42:19,370 --> 00:42:39,014

We're right smack dab on this little peninsula, right at the little inlet there, and I mean, you have seals and whales along our beach that we swim in when it's plus 30. That's just the way it is, and I mean, there's safe ways of doing it, so...

- Heather Botelho

152

00:42:39,014 --> 00:43:02,288

So the young girls pointed out to us that we have this built in us, you know? And we don't even notice it. We don't even know that it's not normal, because you know, the first time I went to BC, we went to Parksville, and there's a huge beach there, and what is the first thing I do? I look this way for a bear. I look this way for a bear...

- Georgina Berg

153

00:43:02,288 --> 00:43:24,101

And he is like, whenever I'm out on the land, they don't bother me. They don't get into my cooler and into my tent and all that stuff. So it just seemed like he really respected the bears, and then because he respected them, they respected him back.

- Jill Larkin

154

00:43:24,101 --> 00:43:38,824

With my Inuit friends, they said you should never say anything bad about bears, because then you'll have problems with the bears, and don't say anything outside because the bears will hear it.

- Jill Larkin

155

00:43:38,824 --> 00:43:58,177

And if somebody killed a bear, it's because they did it with respect, and if they didn't respect the bear and they went out for a bear hunt, they would never be successful hunting. So it was like a mutual respect kind of thing.



- Jill Larkin

156

00:43:58,177 --> 00:44:29,458

And the bears, I heard them say that if the bear didn't think that that hunter was a good hunter and didn't respect, the bear would let itself get killed. You know what I mean? It wouldn't, like, kind of give itself to anybody, like it had to be a respected hunter. That's very cool. I don't know if I made sense explaining that.

- Jill Larkin

157

00:44:29,458 --> 00:44:43,055

I find that really amazing that, as long as the bear knows you're not bothering him, he won't bother you, which is that total respect, eh? Between animal and human.

- Georgina Berg

158

00:44:43,055 --> 00:44:54,400

Just going back now and so many bears... but then why wouldn't there be? You live right with them, you know.

- Heather Botelho

159

00:44:54,400 --> 00:45:01,281

It's like, yeah. You don't realize until, you know? Especially, we see how many bears?

- Katie de Muelles

160

00:45:01,281 --> 00:45:05,494

Thousands of bears in our lifetime.

- Katie de Muelles

161

00:45:05,494 --> 00:45:20,509

It's just always been a part of my life. It's just like when you talk to people up here about the Northern Lights, it's just something that I was so used to that, you know, with the polar bears and the belugas and everything, it's just, when you grow up here, it's just what you know, right?

- Wyatt Daley

162

00:45:20,509 --> 00:45:35,315

To be honest, I've been here, it'll be 60 years this February coming up, and I've never killed a polar bear. You know, I've just hazed them away. I've come close a few times, don't get me wrong, but I mean, but I always give them the chance.

- Dave Daley

163

00:45:35,315 --> 00:46:08,223

A real good analogy of that is like people from New York City and that, and they go, oh, you grew up here. Like how did, how did you stay safe? And I said, well, it's because it's our culture. We're raised from this big to adulthood about how we live around here. I said, if I went to New

York City, I'd be in trouble, you know where to go and where not to go, and you know all the rules to living in New York City that you teach your kids. Well, it's the same way with us here in Churchill. It's just, it's not like it's a formal education kind of thing. It's just a way of life.  
- Dave Daley

164

00:46:08,223 --> 00:46:35,959

We're on their turf. I can't say how we live. They were probably here way before us, you know? Maybe it's, what? This town has been here for, 300 plus years? So, yeah. They've been here longer. They've probably been here longer, yeah.

- Eva Yasse, Georgina Berg

165

00:46:42,382 --> 00:46:48,430

Thank you for listening to episode three of *The Churchill Storywork Project* about Indigenous knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence.

166

00:46:49,056 --> 00:46:55,354

In episode four, we will hear visions for human-polar bear coexistence into the future.

167

00:46:57,105 --> 00:47:03,695

Our thanks to the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill who co-created, provided guidance and contributed throughout this research:

168

00:47:04,071 --> 00:47:10,452

Florence Hamilton, Patricia Kandiurin, Katherine de Muelles, and Georgina Oman.

169

00:47:10,536 --> 00:47:16,917

This work would not have been possible without the blessing and contributions of additional knowledge holders and elders in the community:

170

00:47:17,125 --> 00:47:30,597

Nikki Clace, Dave Daley, Wyatt Daley, Brian Gulick, Jill Larkin, Antonina Kandiurin, Heather Spence-Botelho, Michael Spence, Morris Spence, "Saulie" Norman Spence, Leroy Whitmore, and Eva Yassie.

171

00:47:31,348 --> 00:47:36,478

Our thanks to the entire community of Churchill for their support of and engagement with this project.

172

00:47:37,062 --> 00:47:43,026

Fundamental direction during the initiation of this research was provided by Geoff York, Evan Richardson, and Helen McEwan.

173

00:47:44,027 --> 00:47:49,700

Our gratitude to the Polar Bears International team for providing significant logistical and technical support.

174

00:47:51,034 --> 00:47:57,165

Once again, my name is Kt Miller, and this research was part of my master's in Interdisciplinary Studies at Royal Roads University.

175

00:47:57,958 --> 00:48:02,045

I am so deeply grateful to the many people that made this project possible.

176

00:48:02,838 --> 00:48:09,177

Our coauthors on this project include: Georgina Berg, the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill, Nickia McIvor,

177

00:48:09,553 --> 00:48:18,395

Dr. Micheal Lickers, an Indigenous scholar in residence at Royal Roads University, and Dr. Dominique Henri, a research scientist at Environment and Climate Change Canada.

178

00:48:19,396 --> 00:48:24,693

A big thank you to Polar Bears International and Environment and Climate Change Canada for funding this work.

179

00:48:25,736 --> 00:48:31,199

More information about this research can be found at [churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com](http://churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com).

## Transcript: Supplementary Video Podcast 4

Podcast episode four shares knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence for the future through Indigenous voices. The inclusion of future visions embodies intergenerational learning, and demonstrates that Indigenous knowledge and worldviews are relevant, reemerging, and continue to be recreated.

**THUMBNAIL:** Future: Visions from the time of this study in 2022 into the future, mobilizing Indigenous knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence in Churchill and the surrounding region, gathered from knowledge holders.

1

00:00:01,626 --> 00:00:08,883

You're listening to an episode of *The Churchill Storywork Project* about Indigenous knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence.

2

00:00:08,883 --> 00:00:22,814

This is a storywork research project where we explore Indigenous knowledge through storytelling with Inuit, Métis, Sayisi Dene and Swampy Cree knowledge holders in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada.

3

00:00:22,814 --> 00:00:34,409

In addition to producing academic research about Indigenous community members' knowledge of coexistence, we also created podcasts in the voices of the knowledge holders themselves.

4

00:00:34,409 --> 00:00:43,043

We primarily created the podcasts by and for the community. However, we hope others learn from and enjoy them as well.

5

00:00:43,043 --> 00:00:50,050

My name is Kt Miller, and this work was part of my master's in Interdisciplinary Studies at Royal Roads University.

6

00:00:50,050 --> 00:01:01,728

I had the great honour of working with Cree Elder, Georgina Berg, as a co-researcher on this project. We met over a cup of tea and, as they say, "the rest is history."

7

00:01:01,728 --> 00:01:12,489

The Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill provided guidance and advice throughout all phases of this research, beginning with research design all the way through the dissemination of results.

8

00:01:12,489 --> 00:01:29,756

Knowledge holder and graphic designer Nickia McIvor made significant intellectual and graphic contributions to this work, and if you haven't checked out the timeline on our website or in our supplementary material, it is Nickia's artistic and intellectual creation, and it is amazing.

9

00:01:29,756 --> 00:01:43,937

I also want to acknowledge and thank my supervisors, Dr. Michael Lickers, who is an Indigenous scholar in residence at Royal Roads University and importantly suggested I use the Indigenous method of storytelling in this work...

10

00:01:43,937 --> 00:01:54,781

and Dr. Dominique Henri, a research scientist with Environment and Climate Change Canada, who provided support and guidance through the technical and emotional journey of this project.

11

00:01:54,781 --> 00:02:01,996

We are also very grateful to Polar Bears International and Environment and Climate Change Canada, who funded this research.

12

00:02:01,996 --> 00:02:07,877

More information about this research can be found at [churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com](http://churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com).

13

00:02:10,964 --> 00:02:15,885

This series includes four podcast episodes that explore four different time periods.

14

00:02:15,885 --> 00:02:21,975

The distant past, prior to the relocation of Indigenous people to present-day Churchill.

15

00:02:21,975 --> 00:02:29,691

The past, which was sort of the transition from more of a traditional lifestyle to a wage economy.

16

00:02:30,733 --> 00:02:36,406

The present, which is defined in our research as the tourism era.

17

00:02:36,948 --> 00:02:39,951

And the future.

18

00:02:41,536 --> 00:02:44,539

In episode four, we explore the future.

19

00:02:45,248 --> 00:02:55,383

Knowledge holders had many visions for the future of human-polar bear coexistence in Churchill, Manitoba, which synthesized into the five main themes includes:

20

00:02:56,301 --> 00:02:59,846

protect tourism as an important industry and economy,

21

00:03:00,471 --> 00:03:03,892

support proactive management and less invasive research,

22

00:03:04,642 --> 00:03:07,645

elevate Indigenous knowledge in research and management,

23

00:03:08,646 --> 00:03:12,275

improve bear safety, education, and awareness,

24

00:03:12,358 --> 00:03:15,361

and cultivate a culture of coexistence.

25

00:03:17,030 --> 00:03:24,245

We hope you learn from and enjoy the final episode: episode four of our podcast series.

Slide: Future refers to visions for the future of human-polar bear coexistence in the region, informed by Indigenous knowledge.

26

00:03:32,503 --> 00:03:54,609

It was really cool today, actually, I was starting to notice at work that we will be going across [the river] with our full crew: the boat driver, the bear monitors, the tour guides, and everyone is local. I've known them my whole life, and it's a really nice change. This is my fifth summer [working] with Parks Canada. It's a really nice change seeing that over the years, because there would have been times [before] where I might have been the only one from Churchill that went across [the river].

-Antonina Kandiurin

27

00:03:54,609 --> 00:04:14,963

That's what I really, like, I noticed that a lot too. When I was serving and bartending during bear season, it was also always a lot of out-of-town staff that were leading the groups and sharing the stories, and now you are getting to see more local people in any kind of aspect of tourism.

- Nikki Clace

28

00:04:14,963 --> 00:04:22,679

Having that knowledge there adds a whole other level of conversation that you can have with guests.

- Nikki Clace

29

00:04:22,679 --> 00:04:38,903

I give tours of a stone Fort from the 1700's, and half the time people come over and they don't ask a single question about the Fort [Prince of Wales], they literally just want to know what it is like growing up here, what I did for hobbies, and stuff like that.

- Antonina Kandiurin

30

00:04:38,903 --> 00:04:43,449

Tourism needs to be looked at more as an opportunity for young people, especially.

- Wyatt Daley

31

00:04:43,449 --> 00:04:47,370

I've always been asked by people, when am I gonna get a real job?

- Wyatt Daley

32

00:04:47,370 --> 00:04:55,670

You know, putting yourself out there and getting involved for your community and for your career, and you could make a really good living.

- Wyatt Daley

33

00:04:55,670 --> 00:05:03,761

We know the value of polar bears to Churchill. We know it's significant.

- Michael Spence

34

00:05:03,761 --> 00:05:13,479

So that's why it is important when we say, what's the value of tourism to Manitoba, right?

- Michael Spence

35

00:05:13,479 --> 00:05:21,487

Tourism is big business, and it is part reconciliation that can bring us back.

- Dave Daley

36

00:05:21,487 --> 00:05:48,556

Respect meaning that the bears were here before all of us, you know? They were here before Fort Churchill was here, before this modernized version of Churchill that we sit on is here. So we built in their way, right? So there is no reason why we cannot coexist, and I believe that it can be done respectfully.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

37

00:05:48,556 --> 00:06:07,325

And that means that the bear always gets the right of way from one end of town to the other. Let it do its thing. Let it cross its path. Unless of course, it is a juvenile bear looking for trouble, then of course there needs to be some kind of management.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

38

00:06:07,325 --> 00:06:26,094

One of the things that we've noticed over time is that with Conservation [Polar Bear Alert], they just seem to be overly aggressive sometimes in terms of how they're handling bears or steering bears out.

- Michael Spence

39

00:06:26,094 --> 00:06:52,245

Sometimes you gotta do things differently and improve on how you manage bears. So, for instance, when you're using a chopper [helicopter] to move bears, sometimes it can affect or injure the bear, how they move bears. You always gotta be careful with that.

- Michael Spence

40

00:06:52,245 --> 00:07:08,386

But I still think we have a long way to go with promoting tourism in this town because, a few years ago, I had this guy who was a South African, filmographer or whatever, and he was on the back road and he was taking pictures of the bears along the coast.

- Dave Daley

41

00:07:08,386 --> 00:07:24,944

And he said, Conservation [Polar Bear Alert] came up and said, get out of here! Get in your car! And he has had a lot of experiences in Africa with all the wild animals over there, and he found out I was the president of Chamber of Commerce, and he came to my shop and he said, can I have a talk with you?

- Dave Daley

42

00:07:24,944 --> 00:07:39,041

And I said, yeah. He goes, you know, this is not cool what is happening here in Churchill. And I said, well, what? He goes, well, wildlife, he says, I was out there taking pictures and I was a safe distance from the bear. I'm not going to endanger anybody, the bear or myself.

- Dave Daley

43

00:07:39,041 --> 00:07:52,346

And he said, Conservation [Polar Bear Alert] came up and they basically threw me in my car and told me to get out of there, and then it was 30 degrees [Celsius] and they come over with a helicopter and they start chasing that poor bear, and that poor bear was so hazed that he said, that bear was staggering.

- Dave Daley

44



00:07:52,346 --> 00:08:05,902

It couldn't run in the heat. They were chasing him. He said, there has got to be a better way to have Conservation [Polar Bear Alert] here and have people monitored so that they can have a safe viewing [experience] and leave the animal alone.

- Dave Daley

45

00:08:05,902 --> 00:08:09,780

So I think it's very important that we still work on those things today.

- Dave Daley

46

00:08:09,780 --> 00:08:25,505

...causing more stress, and knowing the way people react to stress: it can affect the way we sleep, the way we eat, the way our day-to-day life continues. I can only assume that it is probably the same for different types of animals and species around the world.

- Nikki Clace

47

00:08:25,505 --> 00:08:50,154

When we came together as a working group... it was to improve on the coexistence with bears. So making sure that Conservation [Polar Bear Alert] and how they're handling bears is improved and acceptable.

- Michael Spence

48

00:08:50,154 --> 00:09:05,753

But then the bears too, they're flown this way [points north], and Wapusk Park is that way [points south]. What do you mean by that? Why don't they fly the bears back to Wapusk Park?

- Georgina Oman, Kt Miller

49

00:09:05,753 --> 00:09:14,929

Yeah, why are they flying them between here and Arviat [the next community north]? They probably end up in Arviat. Fly them back to where they came from.

- Patricia Kandiurin

50

00:09:14,929 --> 00:09:57,096

How the problem bears, when they take them out of jail [the Polar Bear Holding Facility] and then they fly them North. I would like to know, like, is that really the best idea? Because, I remember when Arviat didn't really have a bear problem and now they have a bear problem. Is it because we're putting all of our bears there? Maybe there's a better spot to take them, like maybe into the National Park, because that's a big area where people don't live. I don't know what the rationale is for taking them north versus taking them east, southeast.

- Jill Larkin

51

00:09:57,096 --> 00:10:26,500

On the Polar Bear Smart Working Group, one of the recommendations is that if you're moving bears, move them south. Right? You move them north, you continue that, like Morris said, [the

bears] are heading to Arviat, they know there is a dump there now. They know what's there. It is just repeating what happened with the old dump that was here, right?

-Michael Spence

52

00:10:26,500 --> 00:10:41,182

I know the next community north of us tends to blame Churchill for any bad bears that they get, because they do ship the bad bears out that way, I guess.

- Leroy Whitmore

53

00:10:41,182 --> 00:10:46,771

We need to protect our tourism and get those bears flown south.

- Dave Daley

54

00:10:46,771 --> 00:11:06,666

I think it is important to remember that even though Conservation [Polar Bear Alert], like Jack and Donald, have been doing this for so many years, they are still basically risking their life every time they go to chase a bear to keep the community safe, and it's important that we're able to give them the space to do their job safely.

- Antonina Kandiurin

55

00:11:06,666 --> 00:11:32,733

It is important to tell tourists and guests to Churchill that we set boundaries for Jack and Donald [Polar Bear Alert staff] and for the bears, rather than people thinking this is a show for them to keep taking photos of. [Tourists need] to know that it is serious business and there are boundaries that need to be known.

- Nickia Mclvor

56

00:11:32,733 --> 00:11:42,576

I wonder what it's gonna be like when Jack and Donald [Polar Bear Alert staff] actually retire. It kind of makes me worried.

- Nickia Mclvor

57

00:11:42,576 --> 00:12:12,231

I was actually just talking with my coworkers that they should have some sort of apprenticeship program for the next Jack and Donald [Polar Bear Alert staff], it should be local, young people following in their footsteps because realistically we see Conservation Officers rotate through here like a revolving door, and out of [all the Conservation Officers] they are the two that stayed. Realistically a local is probably someone who will stay like they have for so many years.

- Antonina Kandiurin

58

00:12:12,231 --> 00:12:27,830

I also think ... it is a local invested interest. This person would most likely have the invested interest of their community knowing how they need to keep safe.

- Nikki Clace

59

00:12:27,830 --> 00:12:44,680

Sometimes I call [Polar] Bear Alert and I'm like, I'm at [insert local name]'s house. I don't say, [XX] Bernier Street and I can tell when it's not a local who answers the [phone] line, because then they say, where? And I'm like, [XX] Bernier. I say, they'll know. Just tell them.

- Antonina Kandiurin

60

00:12:44,680 --> 00:13:08,996

I do not know about environmentally wise if it is going to, [change] with the ice conditions. Tourism's probably just only going to get bigger and bigger. I do see a lot [more] people from down south putting a group together, coming up, renting a van, going out and there's somebody I've never seen before carrying a shotgun [bear guarding].

- Leroy Whitmore

61

00:13:08,996 --> 00:13:28,057

Or a group of photographers will get out there, and they get super, super close, and then you are almost kind of watching them too. Or somebody sees you with a gun and they say, oh, this guy's got a gun, I'm gonna keep going a little closer.

- Leroy Whitmore

62

00:13:28,057 --> 00:13:40,903

I think they should try to regulate that a little more because someone is going to get hurt if they just [go] free-for-all out there. [We need] some sort of regulation.

- Leroy Whitmore

63

00:13:40,903 --> 00:13:58,754

They do a good job of keeping us safe, but I think sometimes it's the bears that are at risk now because they're being exposed to people.

- Georgina Berg

64

00:13:58,754 --> 00:14:06,095

Tourism is blown up so much. It's crazy.

- Patricia Kandiurin

65

00:14:06,095 --> 00:14:33,038

And then I guess also, a lot of my friends eat polar bear meat, I've eaten it too. It's very important for people up north, as part of their diet. So I do recognize that some bears do have to be drugged, but I think that it should be minimized.

- Jill Larkin

66

00:14:33,038 --> 00:15:05,613

And then the mark-recapture work... My background is all in science, right? So I think that probably is important work and [radio] collaring can give you a lot of information, but does it

actually have to be done every year or could it be done every five years instead? Because that is a lot of [polar] bears being drugged.

- Jill Larkin

67

00:15:05,613 --> 00:15:18,417

The collars and the tranquilizing and taking samples of, you know, like putting them down to sleep, to take more samples, year after year after year they do that. How many years they've been doing that?

- Florence Hamilton

68

00:15:18,417 --> 00:15:35,601

And there are a few advocates out there that say, okay, my people still eat polar bear, that's our culture, you know? Not for you to discriminate about it but, what you're putting into those [bears] is also being transferred to us.

- Katie de Muelles

69

00:15:35,601 --> 00:15:45,277

What haven't they found out in 1970 that they're still trying to find out today? I don't understand that.

- Florence Hamilton

70

00:15:45,277 --> 00:15:52,660

Yeah, I find that the researchers aren't really approachable.

- Katie de Muelles

71

00:15:52,660 --> 00:16:03,879

Meaning, that they have their minds set already on their research and they are kind of tunnel vision. They do not really want to hear what other people have to say about it.

- Katie de Muelles

72

00:16:03,879 --> 00:16:22,439

They see a mum and two cubs, so they tranquilize the mum. Now the mum... and they're not totally asleep! Now, those two babies have not been tranquilized yet, and they're traumatized. What happened to mum? You know?

- Katie de Muelles

73

00:16:22,439 --> 00:16:37,830

They are probably like, okay. She is waking up thinking, where's my babies? What happened? To me, it's still trauma, and of that trauma, what actually did you get from it? What information was so vital?

- Katie de Muelles

74

00:16:37,830 --> 00:17:02,521

When you do see collars, it stands out. It's not natural. You would think that nowadays, with all the technology, right? They tag their ears. Why can't that tracker be in its ear? You can track a dragonfly. They can put a tracker on a dragonfly, that small. Why can't a tracker go on a polar bear that small?

- Katie de Muelles, Florence Hamilton

75

00:17:02,521 --> 00:17:27,713

You know what my dream problem solver would be? To have a sanctuary in Churchill where orphan cubs can go. You have a little area, I don't know where, but just a little area where your orphan cubs can go until they're old enough to survive on their own.

- Patricia Kandiurin

76

00:17:27,713 --> 00:17:47,399

Because it's gonna go out onto the ice and do what the polar bear does. It will get it; it's instincts. It's gotta grow up just like us, just like a child. A child learns how to walk, falls down, and gets up again and continues.

- Patricia Kandiurin, Georgina Oman

77

00:17:47,399 --> 00:18:16,762

Rather than sending them to a zoo where they are stuck in a little compound all day. Or, you know, the bears in Winnipeg are so close to the seals, that's like dangling a carrot in front of them, you know? I'm sure they smell them. I don't know if they know they're supposed to hunt them because they've grown up in

- Patricia Kandiurin

78

00:18:16,762 --> 00:18:40,911

...in the zoo, but they must smell them and wonder what smells so good. Who's cooking that cheeseburger? They are fed vegetarian food there, lettuce, and... yeah. Have they ever tasted what they're supposed to be eating?

- Patricia Kandiurin, Georgina Berg

79

00:18:40,911 --> 00:19:04,685

It's just basic. If you think about it, it's just like taking a child from their home, and basically, here, this is your new home. This is where you're gonna stay, and everything's foreign. Yeah. Everything's foreign. Nothing's going to be the same. You know, you can relate to it, you know, residential school...

- Katie de Muelles, Georgina Berg

80

00:19:04,685 --> 00:19:16,822

Here's a piece of wildlife that was free, and you know, everybody's saying, oh yeah, but they're giving those bears a fighting chance. Well, I would rather nature take its course.

- Katie de Muelles

81

00:19:16,822 --> 00:19:33,422

What it comes down to is really thinking things through, getting the right people around the table, and being proactive instead of reactive. Because the end all is, the polar bear always pays the price.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

82

00:19:33,422 --> 00:19:46,476

So if you look to the future for the bears, what do you think it's gonna look like? Well, with global warming, like they're always talking about on radio, don't look good for anybody, not just the polar bears, you know, a lot of other animals, you know?

- Georgina Berg, Eva Yasse

83

00:19:46,476 --> 00:19:56,820

I'd like to see that they are still here, and we are still seeing their beauty.

- Katie de Muelles

84

00:19:56,820 --> 00:20:33,190

Making sure that with research and science and laws that the province puts in place, all these Acts, make sure that the Indigenous are around the table because we have traditional knowledge from our grandparents, our great grandparents, our ancestors. That is knowledge that you are not going to find in books. You have to come to the community, you have to talk and engage with the community.

- Heather Spence-Botelho

85

00:20:33,190 --> 00:20:58,840

Even in the school, I don't know how much information they do in the school on polar bears. Not just for our visitors, but for our children, who like to play outside in the evening, and you just never know when that polar bear will saunter through town.

- Florence Hamilton

86

00:20:58,840 --> 00:21:17,109

Just to have that information for our children. So they do [safety talks in the school] once a year, and they usually do it in October when it's safety month, but they should be doing it once a month. Talk about what are the bears doing now? Repetitious, eh?

- Florence Hamilton, Georgina Berg, Katie de Muelles

87

00:21:17,109 --> 00:21:33,750

So I think kids don't hear stuff the first time they're told. So maybe it should be something that's done at the beginning of the year in September, and then maybe again once more right before bear season.

- Jill Larkin

88

00:21:33,750 --> 00:21:50,559

I think that tourists need to be educated more. They do. They need to learn. Well, they used to have those bear [safety] talks for newcomers, and I haven't heard of any since before COVID.

- Georgina Oman, Patricia Kandiurin

89

00:21:50,559 --> 00:22:09,870

[Safety talks] for tourists, for construction workers that come into town, for anybody really. Even if we just wanted to go have a refresher, maybe there is some new information that they could share with us, but I haven't heard of any of those in a long time.

- Patricia Kandiurin

90

00:22:09,870 --> 00:22:31,892

If they think that they are big and clumsy and they can't run, they can run, they can run real fast. My nephew found that out. We were watching a bear outside our house when we stayed by Willow Park, and [my nephew and son] were upstairs watching the bear, and Conservation [Polar Bear Alert] scared it and it just bolted.

- Georgina Berg, Patricia Kandiurin

91

00:22:31,892 --> 00:22:44,821

And [my nephew] is like, holy smokes, Auntie, did you see how fast that bear can run? I said, that's why I always tell you, don't ever think you can outrun a bear, because you can't. They're fast, and they can climb. They are really good climbers.

- Patricia Kandiurin, Georgina Berg

92

00:22:44,821 --> 00:22:50,911

So those polar bear [safety] talks should probably be happening more often, you know?

- Georgina Berg

93

00:22:50,911 --> 00:23:07,427

Part of that naturally is the whole aspect of education. That factor is important so that you minimize bear attacks. What is Churchill gonna look like 30, 40 years from now?

- Michael Spence

94

00:23:07,427 --> 00:23:32,994

I just think education and safety for visitors [is important], you know? Some people come not purposely ignorant, but there are not a lot of resources ahead of time to teach them things like, please don't go walking out on these random roads by yourself, you know? Cape Merry is not a walkable road, although it seems very close on the map.

- Nikki Clace

95

00:23:32,994 --> 00:23:38,500

Even if there was, like, plane announcements during the busy tourism seasons.

- Antonina Kandiurin

96

00:23:38,500 --> 00:23:50,220

More general [safety information], not only just about polar bears, but about this entire place. There are so many dangerous things about [Churchill] that we unknowingly have just, like, adapted to living with.

- Nikki Clace

97

00:23:50,220 --> 00:24:11,283

I think a lot of visitors get kind of sidetracked by the beauty of everything. They don't realize the danger that can come with it, and... knowing that the water here has taken lives before, even recently, just a few years ago, it can be scary.

- Antonina Kandiurin

98

00:24:11,283 --> 00:24:32,137

One of the safety things could be that you don't lure a bear with food or leave food somewhere, you know? It's scary too because in that moment [the person that baits a bear is] thinking about tourism, but they're not thinking about, say the security guard at the Complex, who works till whatever time in the morning and has to walk home from work after, alone in the dark.

- Georgina Berg, Antonina Kandiurin

99

00:24:32,137 --> 00:24:52,866

Or the bears that are getting conditioned [to think] that, if I go near town, there could be food or there could be that. That's why they don't feed the bears in the bear jail [Polar Bear Holding Facility]. Someone had asked, do they feed them in there? No, or they would get conditioned to love Jack and Donald [the Conservation Officers] and love town, when they should be scared of them.

- Nickia McIvor

100

00:24:52,866 --> 00:25:05,921

Those [safety] signs have become a souvenir. That's what that is. Oh, I want one of those. I can get a badge over here with that same... They've become a souvenir and to me it doesn't look serious.

- Florence Hamilton

101

00:25:05,921 --> 00:25:11,801

Nobody's taking it seriously anymore.

- Florence Hamilton

102

00:25:11,801 --> 00:25:22,270

When are they gonna take it serious? When there is something fatal that happens? Because it's coming. It's definitely gonna come with one of these tourists one of these days.

- Katie de Muelles

103

00:25:22,270 --> 00:25:36,451



Why couldn't we hire somebody? Hire two people, one at the train station and one at the airport. So everybody that comes off the train, you give them a safety briefing, you give them all the information that they need  
- Katie de Muelles

104

00:25:36,451 --> 00:25:48,004

...to do their tour, and then it is a welcoming too. To have somebody there, like an ambassador to Churchill, you know?  
- Katie de Muelles

105

00:25:48,004 --> 00:26:19,160

This day and age, you can do a little video on TikTok, social media. You know, pump out a one, two-minute video and play it all the time. If you see it on your phone all the time, it will eventually start sinking in. Maybe a little more social media stuff on it, I think, polar bear safety.  
- Leroy Whitmore

106

00:26:19,160 --> 00:26:41,141

We always think, what are we leaving our children, our grandchildren? Just like there's seven sacred teachings, it's been said that you're always thinking seven generations behind you knowledge-wise, where you are present, and what it looks seven generations moving forward.  
- Heather Spence-Botelho

107

00:26:41,141 --> 00:26:52,736

We are kind of [going] in a good direction now, better than before, but definitely incorporating more locals and local knowledge is key.  
- Antonina Kandiurin

108

00:26:52,736 --> 00:27:23,183

I think a big emphasis is not only local, but Indigenous knowledge as well, especially the people who have lived here for years and years, and different generations of families and even people, like the Inuit, who have a totally different relationship with polar bears than, say the Cree might have, and just learning from the different perspectives. That really ties into knowing what's dangerous and what's not, around town.  
- Antonina Kandiurin

109

00:27:23,183 --> 00:27:34,277

I believe all animals need to be treated with love and respect, you know? Even though we eat them, right? We harvest them. So we harvest our animals as quickly as we can, and we share, because Indigenous culture is sharing.  
- Dave Daley

110

00:27:34,277 --> 00:27:48,750

But with polar bears, I think that they are a real spiritual animal, and they're part of our ecosystem... For Indigenous people, the connection to the land is through the animals, right?

- Dave Daley

111

00:27:48,750 --> 00:27:54,047

We have watched these animals, and we have watched the polar bear rise, and we're all concerned about their future.

- Dave Daley

112

00:27:54,047 --> 00:28:11,481

I think that it's up to us to make sure that we are doing our part, to make sure that the conservation continues, and that these animals are around here for my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren and my great-great-grandchildren. Churchill is so special.

- Dave Daley

113

00:28:11,481 --> 00:28:35,088

The coexistence thing is pretty critical, and it's quite unique. I think the community is pretty proud of being dubbed, you know, the Polar Bear Capital of the World. Again, we have got to do our part to make sure that we're improving on it.

- Michael Spence

114

00:28:39,342 --> 00:28:49,394

Thank you for listening to the fourth and final episode of the Churchill Storywork Project about Indigenous knowledge of human-polar bear coexistence.

115

00:28:50,228 --> 00:28:56,818

Our thanks to the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of Churchill who co-created, provided guidance and contributed throughout this research:

116

00:28:57,193 --> 00:29:03,575

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117

00:29:03,658 --> 00:29:10,039

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118

00:29:10,248 --> 00:29:23,720

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119

00:29:24,471 --> 00:29:29,601

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120

00:29:30,185 --> 00:29:36,149

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121

00:29:37,150 --> 00:29:42,822

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122

00:29:44,157 --> 00:29:50,288

Once again, my name is Kt Miller, and this research was part of my master's in Interdisciplinary Studies at Royal Roads University.

123

00:29:51,080 --> 00:29:55,168

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124

00:29:55,960 --> 00:30:02,300

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125

00:30:02,675 --> 00:30:11,518

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126

00:30:12,519 --> 00:30:17,816

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127

00:30:18,858 --> 00:30:24,322

More information about this research can be found at [churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com](http://churchillpolarbearcoexistence.com).