

Bioprospecting and Traditional Medicines: Legal and Quasi-legal Mechanisms for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge (TK)

Join the Intellectual Property (IP) Club and our 3 distinguished speakers to explore the following issues:

- What is bioprospecting and how does it affect ownership of TK?
- What role does university research play in appropriating TK?
- What are some legal/quasi-legal mechanisms to protect TK?
- Can IP law be applied to protect First Nations' TK?

**Thursday, February 8th
12:30-2:00
Room 101**

Dr. Kelly Bannister is Director of the POLIS Project on Ecological Governance and Adjunct Professor in the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria. She holds B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in Biochemistry/Microbiology from the University of Victoria and a Ph.D. in Ethnobotany/Medicinal Plant Chemistry from the University of British Columbia. Her current focus is on ethical and legal aspects of research involving biodiversity and Indigenous cultural knowledge, and the potential of emerging governance mechanisms (e.g., codes of ethics, community research protocols) to address power relations and facilitate equitable research practices.

Mr. Merle C. Alexander is an Aboriginal lawyer from the Tsimshian community of Kitasoo-Xai'xais Nation located on the north coast of BC. Merle has worked extensively with Indigenous peoples both domestically and internationally to protect their traditional knowledge. In particular, Merle has: (1) drafted/negotiated traditional knowledge protocols; (2) negotiated Heritage Resources Chapters in modern day treaties; (3) incorporated traditional knowledge/eco-tourism non-profit corporations and societies; (4) participated as an Indigenous advisor and lobbyist under the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly the Article 8(j) and Access and Benefit Sharing to Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge Working Groups; and (5) appeared on behalf of Aboriginal groups before the World Intellectual Property Organization. Mr. Alexander is an associate with the firm Boughton Law Corporation.

Mr. Thomas W. Bailey is a partner in the IP boutique firm Oyen Wiggs Green & Mutala. He has drafted numerous patents for clients in the pharmaceutical and natural products industries. He is an adjunct professor of law at the University of British Columbia where he lectures on patents and industrial designs. He is a member of the Biotechnology Legislation Committee of the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada and has published numerous papers on intellectual property law topics, including the patents chapter in the Continuing Legal Education Annual Review of Law & Practice. Mr. Bailey is also a trademark agent and has worked with First Nations clients to protect their rights to traditional names and symbols.