

# Collaboration between indigenous and non-indigenous people in the context of a wildfire



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## Collaboration in forest management...

- “Collaboration between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian forestry industry: a dynamic relationship”  
*Wyatt S. et al.*
- First Nations of Canada involved in all kind of collaborations for forest management, natural resources management, etc.





## ... and in context of a wildfire ?

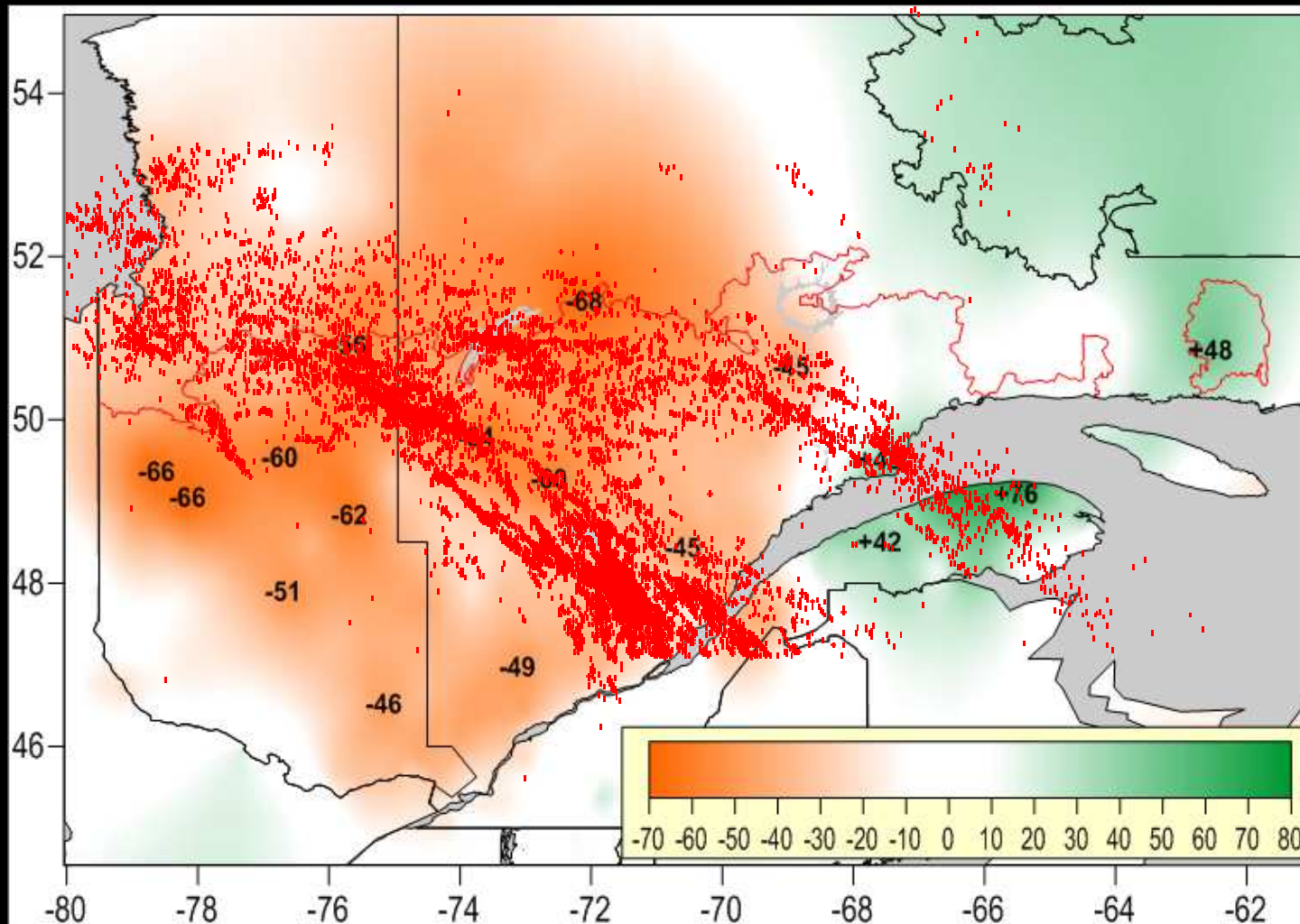
- Few papers about collaboration in the context of emergency
- Case of fire management planning by a first nation. *Miller & Davidson-Hunt, 2008, 2010*
- Case of fire crews fighting against same fire. *Carroll, Cohn et al., 2004.*

## 2010's fire in Quebec

- Dry spring + lightening → lots of wildfires early in the season
- Ex : May 25th, 2010



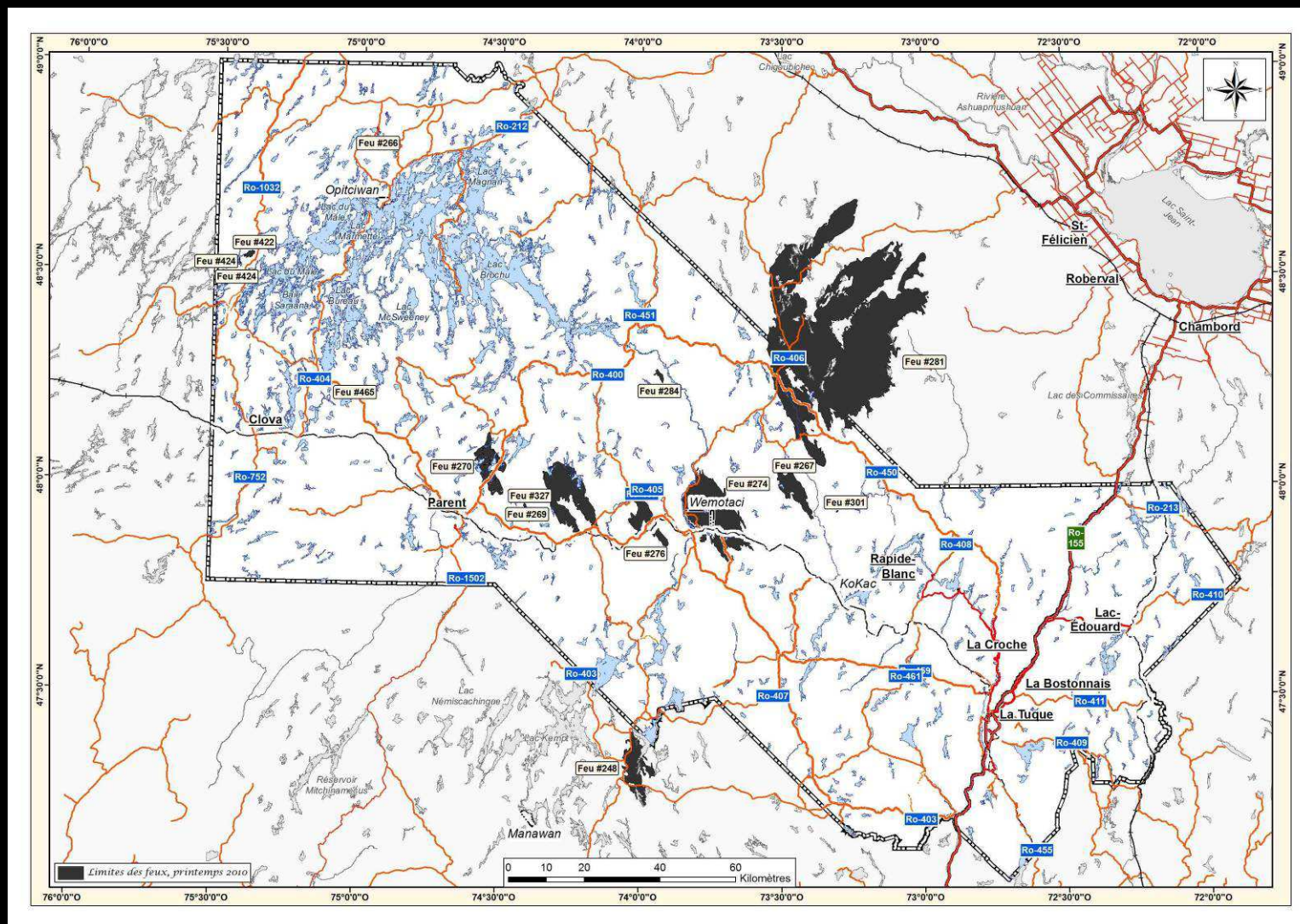
# 17 288 strokes of lightning, 05/25/2010



Source : Sopfeu, 2010



# Contour lines of principal wildfires in Mauricie during spring/summer 2010



Source : Ville de La Tuque, 2010

# Atikamekw First Nation

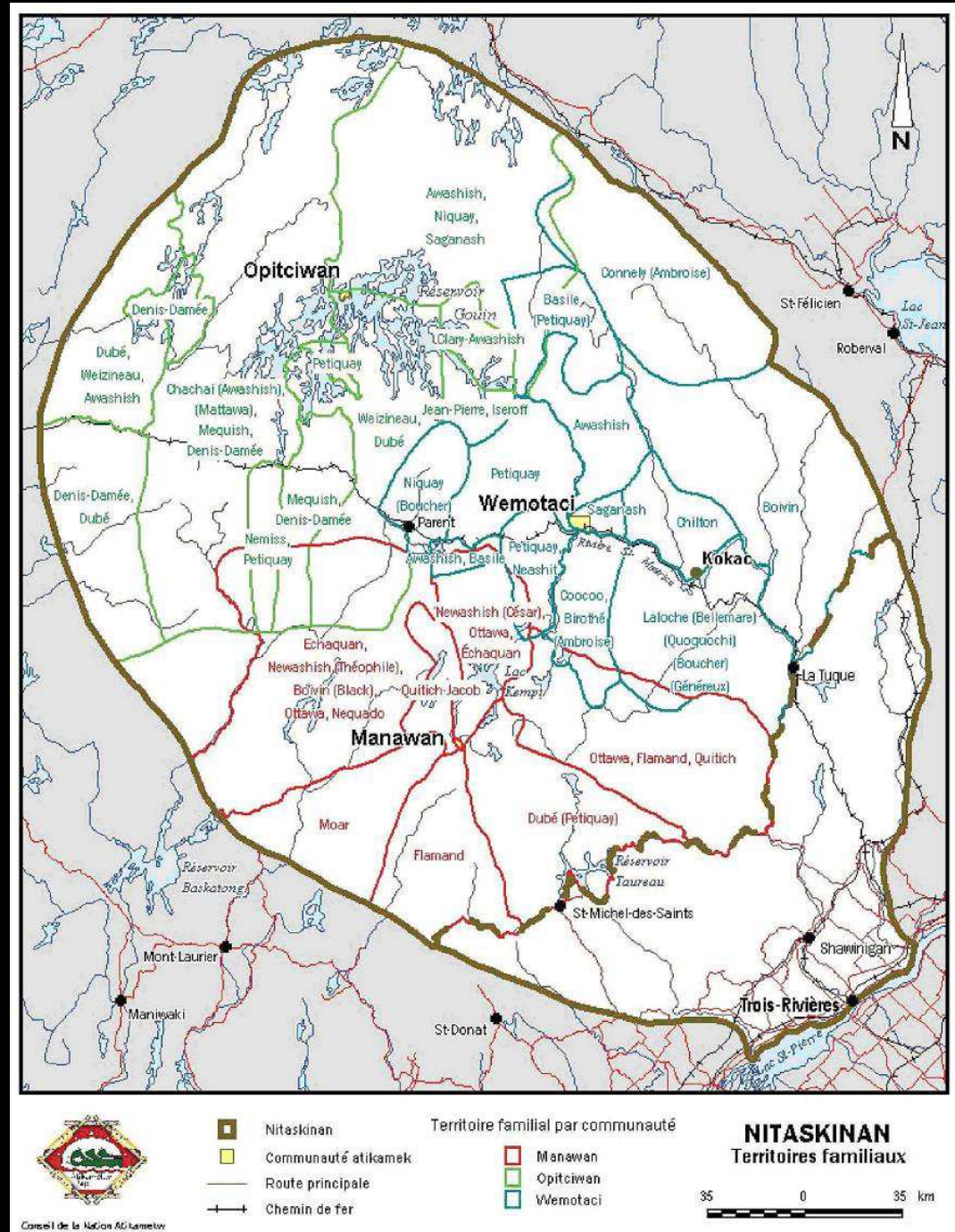
- Algonquian language group
- Nitaskinan, Mauricie, Québec ■
- Limit between the continuous boreal forest subzone of the boreal zone and the mixed forest subzone of the Northern temperate zone.
- Identity = territory





# Nitaskinan

Source :  
Atikamekw  
Sipi, 2006



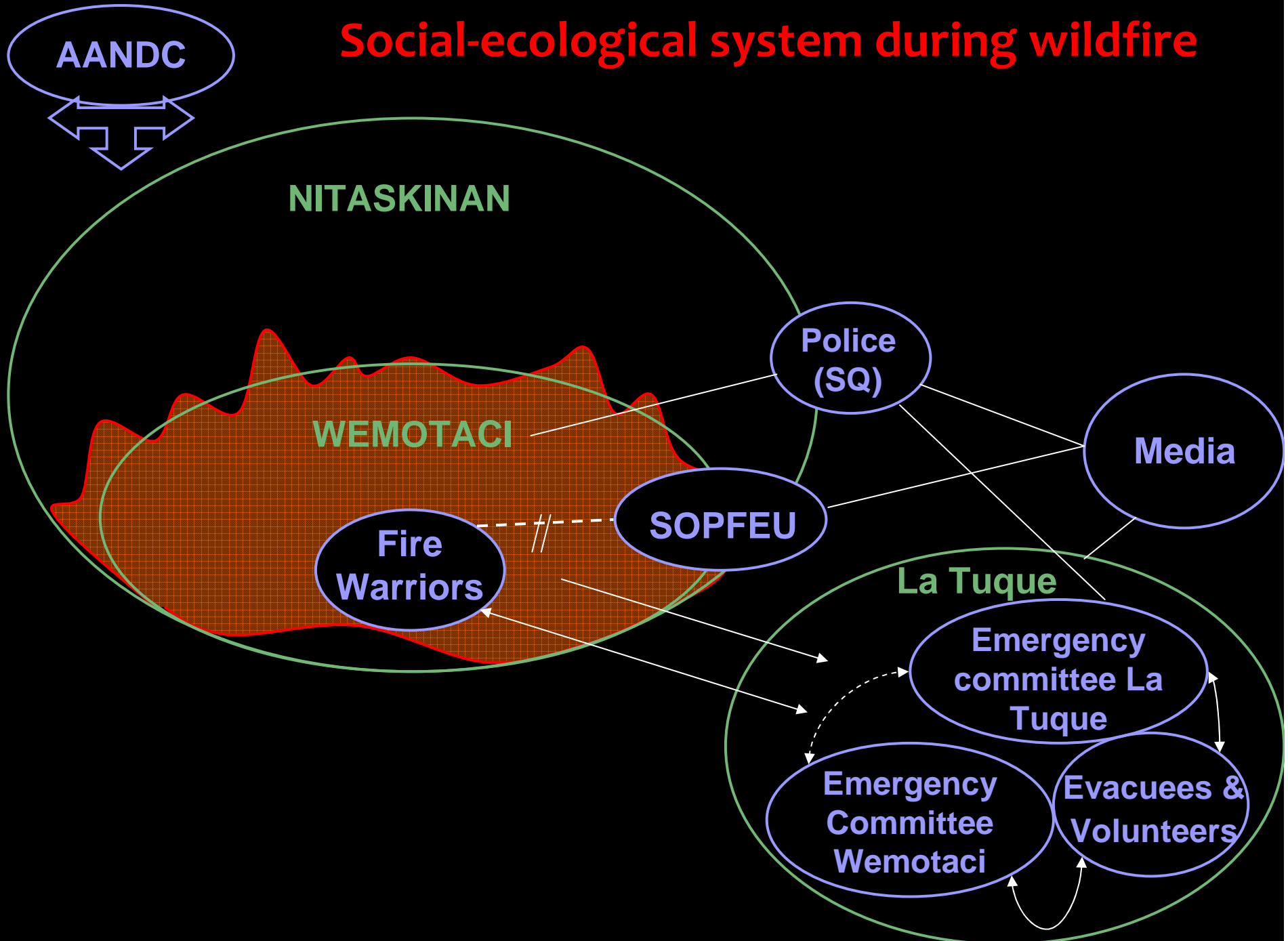




# Methodology

- Study of the social-ecological system (Berkes, Colding & Folke, 2003)
- Review of the literature in anthropology and resource management.
- Review of the media
- Semi-directive interviews (24) with individuals from different groups affected by the fire. From may to july 2011.

# Social-ecological system during wildfire







# Evacuees management

- Collaboration between atikamekw and non-atikamekw volunteers
- Dialogue
- Understanding



## Emergency committees

- Emergency committee of La Tuque at one end of the town / emergency committee of Wemotaci at the other end.
- No communication.
- Both efficient.





# Firefighters vs Fire Warriors

- About 100 atikamekw stayed to fight the fire → Fire Warriors (« Guerriers du feu »)
- When SOPFEU 's firefighters arrived, fire was already near the village ■



Photo credit : Chanook Newashish, may 2010.





# Firefighters vs Fire Warriors

1/ Two groups working, no communication

2/ A leader to represent the Fire Warriors  
→ Sopfeu transmits instructions, each group works on its side


3/ Conflict

→ Village saved, no injury, no death.



# Collaboration between indigenous and non-indigenous people

- Common problems in collaboration between indigenous and non-indigenous people :
  - Different world views, different ways of knowing
  - Inequality in power distribution, framework provided by the ruling system, hegemony of science



## What's interesting about this case study ?

- 2 types of « collaboration ».
- Communication *before* emergency and work with each group on its side during emergency could be a solution.
- Use of common imaginary (Goldstein & Butler, 2009 and Taylor, 2004).



**Thank you !**



**Ickote (Feu dévastateur, créateur, purificateur) - Jacques Newashish.  
Acrylic on cardboard from the territory, 2010.**

*On coverpage : Niskwa (Chant qui annonce la chaleur), Jacques Newashish. Acrylic and collage on wood, 05/25/2011.*