

Straight talk about the Bering Strait

By Jim Windle

Scientists can be almost religious about their theories. Once they get their minds made up on a hypothesis, it is hard to get them to think outside of that box, even in the face of new scientific evidence.

For generations now, learned scholars have preached that the ancestors of the modern-day North American Indigenous people, migrated to North and South America by way of the Bering Straight land bridge between northern present day Russia and what is today Alaska.

But as global warming exposes land that has been buried under miles of ice and snow since the last ice age, a few more intrepid scientists have dared to question that

long accepted theory.

They have even named the land bridge as a landmass they now call Beringia and have evolved a new hypothesis that the early ancestors of Onkwehon:we peoples settled in this land for a thousand years before venturing onto Turtle Island (North America).

For others, it's a long stretch theory given that there has not been any archaeological proof of that ever happening. The idea is only a hypothesis, since they have discovered evidence of rich vegetation in core samples deep under retreating glaciers, that it could have supported human life. Flimsy evidence indeed, but enough to protect the beloved Bering Straight crossing theory being taught to today's youth as scientific fact.

A scholarly view of the "out of Beringia" theory in Past Horizons, an archeology magazine, noted, "the weakest link to the Out of Beringia theory is the lack of archaeological evidence."

It goes on to say that there is absolutely no sign that humans lived in this region during this time. In addition, although the study showed that the area had "surprisingly mild temperatures" during the summer (for an ice age), it was still cooler than the area is now, which is not particularly hospitable.

According to a recent review of the Beringia theory published in Scientific American, "This kind of vegetation would not have supported the large, grazing animals - woolly mammoth, woolly rhino,

Pleistocene horses, camels, and bison."

Besides, as the timeline of the Bering straight theory goes, the migration of humans into North and South America came between 13,000 and 15,000 years ago. If so, it is hard to reconcile recent archaeological finds of stone tools in the New Mexico region dating back 30,000 years or better.

Since the early 1990s, the genetic evidence has indicated that Onkwehon:we, as distinct peoples, are at least 30,000 years old, and likely much older. Linguistic evidence has also pointed to Indigenous peoples of North America being at least 35,000 years old, and possibly 50,000 years old.

According to Alexander Ewen, a member of the Purepecha Nation

who holds a B.A. in History from the University of Virginia, "New evidence, especially from South America, is rapidly changing our understanding of the ancient past, making it hopeful that a century and a half of long-held dogma may be overturned, and other views about Indian origins will finally see the light."

The "Topper" site in South Carolina is estimated to be 30,000 years old, even by the most conservative estimates.

There is also a long

held theory taught by the Indigenous tribal people of Japan, saying that Japan and the Far East was the eventual destination of migrating people who came across the Bering Strait, from North America to Siberia.

There is still a lot to learn and maybe over the next few years as the Glaciers recede; more evidence either supporting or refuting the Bering Strait land bridge theory will come into view.

