

Strengthening Aboriginal Capacity in the Forest Sector

WORKSHOP REPORT



NAFA

National Aboriginal
Forestry Association

**Vancouver, British Columbia
February 28–29, 2008**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction and Opening Remarks

FRANK BROWN opened the workshop with a prayer and a welcome from First Nations of British Columbia.

Opening Remarks

HARRY BOMBAY, Executive Director of the National Aboriginal Forestry Association (NAFA), said this workshop's goal was to work towards strengthening capacity. "We have been stewards of the forest for centuries," he said. In the contemporary sense of "capacity," traditional knowledge must be used in a modern context to build sustainable First Nation communities across the country. To address this in terms of programming is difficult, since many important issues come from within the First Nations communities themselves. Bombay said he hoped the ideas from the workshop would speak to this.

In looking at capacity in the national context, Bombay said British Columbia (BC) is the province to watch, since this issue is more visible there, and is the source of many innovative initiatives. BC provides the example to follow in creating a broad national framework, and in working out local and provincial partnerships.

DR. MARC STEVENSON gave a presentation on behalf of the Sustainable Forest Management Network (SFMN).

At first the Network did not have an Aboriginal focus, Dr. Stevenson said, but it shifted over time, and now their research program focuses on Aboriginal-related forest issues.

The Aboriginal program of the SFMN has four research priorities:

- The accommodation of Aboriginal and treaty rights
- The incorporation of Aboriginal values, knowledge, and management systems into sustainable forest management
- Aboriginal engagement in sustainable forest management
- The development of criteria and indicators to assess performance in other areas

This third priority, said Dr. Stevenson, is the focus of his research partnership with Pamela Perreault. Although the SFMN has only one more year before they "fold their tents," they intend to leave documents and reports as lasting legacies in each of those four research priorities. Dr. Stevenson added that the SFMN seeks input and direction on how best to proceed. "When we shut down," he said, "we won't just stop looking at this issue."

Perspectives on Aboriginal Capacity Needs in the Forest Sector—Short- and Long-Term Views

PRESENTERS

Garry Merkel

Treaty Negotiator and Advisor
Ktunaxa Nation Council
Principal, Forest Innovations
British Columbia

Frank Brown

First Nations Liaison
First Nations Forestry Council
Vancouver, British Columbia

Shawn Gabriel

In-SHUCK-ch Nation
British Columbia

George Jennings

Timberline Natural Resource Group
Vancouver, British Columbia

GARRY MERKEL talked to the group about his vision of capacity. Merkel is a principal in Forest Innovations, a forestry consulting firm, and a treaty negotiator and advisor to the Ktunaxa Nation Council. Merkel described his background, and joked that in his current job, the closest he gets to actual forestry is the six-inch pile of paper on his desk.

Capacity is the ability to plan and then to make those plans happen, Merkel said. "You have to see it, write it down, and have a system in place to make it happen," he said. "There's no mystery to it." Keep the definition simple.

In the day-to-day business world, capacity means governance, regulating, evaluating, administering tenure, and protecting interests, all the while trying to generate wealth from the land through working businesses.

Forestry is a difficult industry on which to build an economic backbone in these times, Merkel said. He said he sold his forestry company, because he could own half a dozen businesses in other industries for the same amount of effort it took to build a forestry business. Those businesses would also make 10 times more money. Yet he recognized that First Nations people must be in this business because of their relationship to the land. "We don't manage the forests; we manage the way we live on the land," he said. "Our capacity is making sure that the forests are taken care of in a way that allows us to live as a community." Why do we want to be involved in forestry? "Because we have to."

Merkel explained how the woodlot tenure in BC enabled Bands to own and cut timber on a piece of land. While this is not especially lucrative, it offers a huge opportunity for people to find and maintain entry level jobs, and to learn valuable life skills. Merkel emphasized the need for more Aboriginal land managers and Aboriginal professionals in the forestry field. Merkel asked how this land ethic could be integrated into the way land is managed.

He explained that there are two sides to manage: business and economic development, and the government. The government side provides more secure and stable employment for the community than the business side does, Merkel said. "Where I'm working now, it's hard to integrate those values, but we have a business to run, and we have to make money," he said. "We try to run a business and work with government at same time, and it's difficult."

Merkel's environmental consulting business works hard to achieve excellence by blending local knowledge with scientific knowledge, in the belief that these are of equal value. Elders are paid the same for their work as biologists and other outside workers.

FRANK BROWN presented some information about the BC First Nations Forestry Council's First Nations Forestry Value Added Program. He told the group that he used to work in the eco-tourism field; in his efforts to build a large house for one of his projects, he became involved in the forestry industry.

Brown said there are 155 First Nations in BC that have access to more than 30 million cubic metres of wood. Accommodation agreements were a commitment made through the province to reconcile Aboriginal titles and land titles. "But with mills shutting down," Brown said, "and the fate of forestry in the global economy, we have to ask why we are joining a system that doesn't work and doesn't support us or our life values." These accommodation agreements were necessary to make money and for short-term gain, he said, but now there's a need to look into the long term and give people the jobs and opportunities they require. Brown said that the spirit of entrepreneurship is alive and well in First Nation communities, even though this is micro-economics by mainstream standards. In putting together a project for his own community, Brown realized that the scope of the work could be much larger, and this led him to his work with the First Nation Forestry Council (FNFC).

The FNFC responds to the needs and visions of First Nations communities, as well as their desire for jobs and economic opportunities. FNFC has raised \$3 million over three years to address this issue, and created a set of 20 deliverables. Brown said, "This isn't about what I think; this is community based. It reflects how we do business." The value added component of the FNFC is administered in partnership with FPInnovations, but the work is community driven at all levels. Despite the challenges of the value-added program, "we need to build on our own mistakes and grow," said Brown. "Outsiders, despite their good intentions, can tend to take over."

SHAWN GABRIEL from the In-SHUCK-ch Nation offered his perspectives on developing capacity at a community level. There are three communities within In-SHUCK-ch: the Samahquam, the Skatin, and the Douglas First Nations. Gabriel said that part of capacity building is to understand "who we are and where we come from." In his community, lack of infrastructure is a serious barrier to capacity building. But the community has taken an active role and made real strides in nation building, including the creation of the Seven Generations plan, the writing of their Constitution, and the conception and implementation of In-SHUCK-ch Days.

The In-SHUCK-ch Land Stewardship plan is the key element of the region's resource-based economy. Land stewardship involves each community and provides opportunities and directions for economic development. It allows communities to protect and defend their lands and their lands' uses while developing effective government.

GEORGE JENNINGS from Timberline Natural Resource Group presented the In-SHUCK-ch Land Stewardship Plan as a capacity-building case study in progress. Timberline is a partner in the Land Stewardship Plan, and its role is to provide technical and business support as the community develops its own capacity, and to offer necessary support services.

Jennings said that the In-SHUCK-ch approach is a successful model, actively involving people in communities. Although they face many roadblocks, including the remote location, lack of infrastructure, and experience, they work together to improve the community, protect the land, create jobs, and use resources by applying traditional knowledge. "The key is to start small, include everything, and think long term," said Jennings.

Overview of BC Capacity-Building Initiatives Relative to First Nations and the Forest Sector

PRESENTER

Albert Gerow

Director of Operations
First Nations Forestry Council
British Columbia

ALBERT GEROW spoke about the BC First Nations Forestry Council (FNFC). The BC First Nations developed the “BC First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan” in response to the mountain pine beetle infestation, which is now recognized as the worst ecological and economic natural disaster in BC history.

The infestation is now estimated to cover 13 million hectares of land, approximately four times the size of Vancouver Island. Gerow noted that newly attacked trees turn red one year after infestation, and stay in the “red attack stage” for one to two years before turning grey and losing their needles. The area affected by the mountain pine beetle extends to Fort St. John in the north, the United States border in the south (although it extends into 13 states), the Alberta forest in the east and Terrace in the west. The Mountain Pine Beetle has been found in Alberta and the boreal forests in Saskatchewan.

The FNFC vision is “A healthy forest that continues to sustain the cultural, spiritual, economic and social lives of BC’s First Nations and is managed through respectful government-to-government relationships.” Its mission is to support First Nations communities in managing the mountain pine beetle epidemic, through the implementation of the BC First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan, which also addresses development and capacity issues at the community level.

The FNFC mission includes additional aspects:

- Working with governments and others to ensure that First Nations needs, values, and principles are factored into forestry-related policy and program development
- Promoting forestry-related opportunities for First Nations. (Gerow noted that 133 First Nations communities have some form of forest tenure)
- Providing effective communications regarding forestry-related matters and the Mountain Pine Beetle Infestation
- Working with partner organizations to increase efficiencies and benefits to First Nations communities
- Advocating on forestry matters on behalf of First Nations communities

Initiatives undertaken by the FNFC include mountain pine beetle programs, fuel management, land use planning and ecosystem stewardship planning, relationship building, Wood Products Technical Support Program, research extension, joint policy development, traditional knowledge, and a program for retraining older workers.

Regarding the Mountain Pine Beetle Program, the FNFC conducted a review of First Nation communities to determine the level of impact to their community, and reported on what they had seen. Among issues noted was the impact of the beetle on community economic development and fuel management. One hundred and thirty-three communities have been affected by the mountain pine beetle, and they face a serious risk of fire as a result.

Gerow noted that the FNFC's vision of relationship building is to develop government-to-government relationships, in which policies and information directives are developed in Victoria, with First Nations providing information to policymakers so they can work jointly.

First Nation communities have told the FNFC not to develop another unwieldy bureaucracy. Gerow noted that while the Ministry of Forests in BC employs around 5,000 people, the First Nations Forestry Council has four employees, so there does not seem to be a danger of creating a bureaucracy.

The FNFC's goal is to ensure that maximum funding goes directly to First Nation communities. Gerow noted that the FNFC would like to see 90% or more of the resources received given to communities for capacity building. He said capacity can be defined as "the ability to perform or produce, the maximum production possible, the power to learn or retain knowledge, or the amount of coffee that can be held in your cup."

Capacity building occurs in societies that need to develop a certain skill or capacity in order to accomplish or resolve a problem. These societies use community or industry approaches to address social or environmental problems. "When you look at capacity building, it is gaining an understanding of what your core skills and competencies are, and identifying gaps in the community—what you need to do to fill those gaps," Gerow said.

However, there are some challenges to capacity building. One challenge includes identifying First Nations individuals to fill senior positions. These require people with entrepreneurial skills, knowledge about marketing and distribution, and an understanding of the global market. Gerow noted that the market for a particular product in BC might be only a dozen people. Overseas, however, the market may be huge. Furthermore, each of the approximately 130 communities with a forest license may be able to provide only a limited amount of fibre to customers, but the communities as a collective would have greater capacity to provide fibre.

Other challenges exist. Time pressures create difficulty with mentoring and personnel development. Capacity building in the community must include grassroots levels. Gerow said First Nations must examine trades and training, and determine how to increase the success rate. He noted that First Nations consider different issues and differ from the Ministry of Forests in their vision of the forest.

Gerow said that a data system is needed to allow First Nations individuals to access information such as tenure and provincial data, as well as information about archeological sites. If a company wanted to harvest an area, First Nations could inform the company about any issues with that site.

Discussion

Gerow opened up the workshop to questions from the floor. One workshop participant asked how to destroy the mountain pine beetle. Gerow responded that he was not sure if even the scientists could answer that question right now. He noted that the devastation from the Mountain Pine Beetle extends to economics, and is compounded by the US recession and the rise of the Canadian dollar. As a result, First Nation communities with wood fibre must look at other opportunities for their product.

Another participant asked how the mountain pine beetle arrived in BC. Gerow noted that the beetle has always been in BC, but cold winters kept its population in check. To prevent the spread of the beetle, a region must have temperatures of -40 degrees Celsius for at least three weeks. Currently, the average temperature in some regions of BC only reaches -29 degrees Celsius, and that happens only for a few days. The warmer weather resulted in a skyrocketing of the Mountain Pine Beetle population.

Someone asked whether there have been negative effects on the FNFC resulting from politics. Gerow responded that in BC, First Nations need a government-to-government relationship to produce an impact on policy. The Action Plan grew not only from the mountain pine beetle, but also from other forestry-related issues throughout the province.

The last questioner wanted to know whether there has been discussion about consulting areas infested by the spruce bark beetle to learn how this problem has been handled elsewhere. Gerow said that he was not aware of any such discussion.

Harry Bombay closed the discussion by noting that, in the international discussion on climate change, the most often cited example from Canada in proof of climate change is the mountain pine beetle infestation in BC. He noted that something should be done about the impact of this infestation on First Nations from a climate change perspective.

Existing Capacity-Building Initiatives Through Federal Programming: ASEP in New Brunswick and the First Nations Forestry Program

PRESENTERS

Gary Anka

Senior Policy Advisor, Environmental Affairs
Canadian Forest Service
Ottawa, Ontario

Carol Labillois-Slocum

Assistant Coordinator
Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership
Fredericton, New Brunswick

GARY ANKA spoke about issues that the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) is addressing. He discussed his work at CFS in the Environmental Affairs office, managing environment and regulatory affairs as they pertain to First Nations people. Specifically, he spoke about the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) and the Forest Communities Program.

Anka noted that the CFS undertakes FNFP jointly with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Since 1996 they have undertaken almost 2,000 projects in the areas of business development, forest management, skills training and access to forest resources. Of those areas, business development has been the most prominent in BC, and forest management skills training have been central areas of activity for CFS. Approximately 150 community capacity-building projects are undertaken annually.

Anka noted that Aboriginal people have experienced a high growth in the number of young people up to age 24. This demographic segment is growing at an accelerated rate beyond the Canadian average. Anka suggested that this was a demographic that should be built upon in terms of capacity building. He also noted that logging and forestry is a principle sector that speaks to the symbiotic relationship between First Nations and forestry.

Anka said other questions must be asked about significant trends and events in demographics and possibilities with the government, in terms of FNFP. "What do we want to see today or take note of in terms of capacity?" Anka asked. "Do we want to keep on doing the same?"

He noted different levels of capacity. Limited capacity involves of lack of access, lack of partners and funding, no management plan, and a lack of interest. Growing capacity involves a community vision, a developing management plan, and band support. Advanced capacity involves a plan that is implemented, dedicated staff, good governance, partners, and funding.

Anka said that First Nations and forestry have become a recognized undertaking with respect to the CFS. Commitments and resources are needed to make it work. "It really says that this is a commitment that is important; funds are there and people are committed to it," Anka said. "This is long-term and we are committed in the long-term to these outcomes."

A capacity-building program must respect the First Nations' vision for Aboriginal forestry, resonate with Government of Canada and CFS funding priorities, have measurable outcomes, be cost-effective and partnership-based, and build on sustainable economic opportunities.

The Forest Communities Program is a \$25 million program that will help communities deal with transformations in the forest sector and with other transitions. Eleven communities, including some in BC, have been selected based on responsive programming mechanisms.

Harry Bombay noted that the FNFP is requesting a one-year extension for the year 2008–2009, and is the only program that has capacity building as an objective. A process will be in place in 2008–2009 to develop a new program. Currently, the national budget is \$3–\$4 million per year. There is a \$1 million supplement for the mountain pine beetle infestation in BC; however, the average project funding from FNFP is small, at around \$22,000. Some issues important to capacity building are not currently funded, for example; education, governance, traditional land use.

"As we go forward into another year, the idea of capacity building, and how this program might address that issue, is something that we should focus on and try to see the program enhanced in different ways," Bombay said.

CAROL LABILLOIS-SLOCUM spoke about capacity building under the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership in New Brunswick (ASEP-NB). She noted that the goal was to train Aboriginal people and place them in jobs in the forest industry. She said that Aboriginal people have around 5% of the allocation, so there is a potential for jobs, especially given the large placeholders and the number of mills.

ASEP-NB fostered a partnership to increase cooperation in the natural resources sector between First Nations people, their organizations, industry, and both levels of government. The goal was to create 200 jobs in forestry in a four-year period.

ASEP's objectives include 100 full-time seasonal silviculture placements, 48 transport-related placements and 6 placements in business management training. This involves looking at training-to-employment retention, supply and demand mapping, previous training and employment experience, and partner awareness.

Labillois-Slocum noted that 905 New Brunswick Aboriginal people have either participated in or had access to ASEP-NB programming. The results include 463 referrals, 456 interventions, 49 heavy equipment operators, 41 student positions pursuing careers in the sector, 12 Class-1 truckers, 9 heavy equipment service technicians, and 8 people in vocational forestry.

Accomplishments in 2007–2008 include a one-year extension for ASEP, a five-year renewal for the national program, and full-time seasonal ASEP-NB clients recalled by employers. Some students were being called back and hired for another year, or given part-time positions during the school year. Furthermore, the partnership with the FNFP was highlighted at the United Nations in New York, and, during Natural Resources Week at the United Nations, CFS gave a presentation.

If the program continues successfully, it will be expanded to include energy and resources.

People looking for information can visit the website at www.asepng.org. There was a call for proposals in the summer of 2007, and groups from around the country were planning on submitting forestry proposals. ASEP-NB provided as much information as possible to ensure the groups' success.

Harry Bombay noted that the ASEP program focuses on skills development, which is a key area in capacity building.

Presentation of 2003–2008 National Forest Strategy Thematic Team Three Initiatives

PRESENTER

Trena Allen, RPF

National Forest Strategy Researcher (former)
National Aboriginal Forestry Association
Ottawa, Ontario

TRENA ALLEN is a registered professional forester and member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. She provided a brief review of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), focusing in particular on recommendation 2.5.13, which outlines the requirements for Aboriginal governments to undertake to strengthen their capacity.

Nine years later, at the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE), Recommendation 7 detailed the next steps and identified a consultation onus on Aboriginal communities.

“There are lots of reasons to have capacity building at the community level,” said Allen. “There’s a push for consultation and new institutional arrangements, and increased interaction with Aboriginal communities and larger Canadian communities regarding the forest sector.”

In the creation of the 2003–2008 National Forest Strategy (NFS), Thematic Team Three worked to implement NFS Action item 3.4 with an eye to capacity building and federal forestry programs. Representatives from across the country participated in this multi-disciplinary group that included different Aboriginal organizations, tribal councils, representatives from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, industry groups, and academics. NAFA acted as the Team Three champion and secretariat.

Allen said Team Three used a consensus-based approach to bring together many different groups. The common goal was to define capacity by looking at it from the community level, considering social, economic, and other factors. The team realized that capacity is a cycle, evolving over time and building on itself.

Building capacity is a holistic process, said Allen, incorporating institutional development, human resources development, and the roles of individuals. It is a community-specific, bottom-up process that requires mutual learning.

Team Three made a variety of recommendations to government:

- To supply stable, flexible, coordinated funding
- To provide support to develop and implement capacity
- To increase Aboriginal access to forests resources
- To offer training initiatives
- To clarify roles and responsibilities
- To establish an advisory committee

The next steps, said Allen, are to continue their work, to bring their recommendations to policy makers, and to develop proposals based on discussion papers and recommendations.

Harry Bombay said that NAFA put a lot into the NFS, whose work resulted in seven action items in 2003, but that no one “bought into” those recommendations. He added that NAFA would attend the national workshop in April 2008 to discuss the new NFS and to ensure that Aboriginal issues are a national priority.

Sustainable Forest Management Network Project: Capacity for What? Capacity for Whom?

PRESENTERS

Dr. Marc Stevenson

Director, Aboriginal Research Program
Sustainable Forest Management Network
Edmonton, Alberta

Pamela Perreault

Ph.D. candidate
Faculty of Forestry
University of British Columbia

DR. MARC STEVENSON & PAMELA PERREAULT co-presented the Sustainable Forest Management Network (SFMN) synthesis document. Dr. Stevenson said that many of the ideas in the paper were the ownership of the Team Three working group and that many of the concepts were complementary.

Their paper reviewed a number of existing programs and case studies to develop a model and list of recommendations. They also looked at what Aboriginal communities had done in the past, as well as NAFA's forays into these issues, and discovered that these efforts had lacked a focused approach.

Perreault listed some of the commonalities they observed in existing programs:

- Focused on capturing existing opportunities, or "Capacity begets capacity"
- Underfunded
- Focused on the individual to engage in existing employment opportunities in the short term (which can be considered both a strength and a weakness)
- Lacked a long-term focus
- Lacked a focus on community's goals and aspirations
- Treated government program funding as discretionary funding
- Uncoordinated and lacked community involvement

Perreault also mentioned several lessons learned over the course of the research:

- The right cultural fit must be a priority.
- Political stability and a balance of economic and cultural values in communities are crucial.
- Commercial forestry may not be a sustainable foundation for the future.
- Learning transferable skill sets and life skills useful in the global marketplace is necessary.
- Communities must move from a reactive to proactive approach, and take the time to commit their own resources to building proactive responses.
- Programs need a complementary approach. Each new initiative should not have to revisit previously covered ground.

Dr. Stevenson said most communities can benefit from existing opportunities, and Aboriginal peoples should engage in these opportunities in the short term before they can engage fully in capacity building. He added that many programs assume a “capacity deficit” instead of reframing the situation and looking at strengths and skills that are already in place. Many communities have the capacity strength to participate in existing opportunities and to construct and implement their vision of the future.

Perreault said Aboriginal capacity should be considered in multiple scales and dimensions, such as the short- and long-term views. Their internal connections and external links to outside opportunities are also factors. She said communities with these connections have the best prospects for long-term sustainability. “It’s a complementary approach,” said Perreault.

Using a model, Perreault demonstrated how to measure a community’s social, economic, natural, and human capital in terms of empowerment and capacity. “As you introduce capacity programs,” she noted, “things might shift around; your natural capital might deplete as your economic capital grows. You have to look at what trade-offs you’re willing to make.”

The presenters concluded that the “top-down” efforts must be met with equal efforts from the “bottom up,” where Aboriginal communities document, assess, and prioritize, develop plans, identify strengths and requirements, and develop frameworks.

Dr. Stevenson said, “We need to build on what’s already been done, and to effect change, we need to come to grips with our blind spots.” These blind spots can impede the reconciliation process and undermine attempts at self-determination.

He named some barriers to effective capacity building:

- Believing humans are external to natural systems
- Believing humans can control and manage nature
- Viewing environmental changes and ecological flux as disorder
- Separating Aboriginal rights from Aboriginal responsibilities

Dr. Stevenson said resources for government-sponsored Aboriginal capacity development should be increased to meet the demand and need, and that Aboriginal peoples should own the process of capacity building and determining those needs. He suggested that, in the spirit of reconciliation, an Aboriginal research and policy institute be created to ask the right questions and find the right solutions. He also noted that post-secondary institutions must redesign curriculum to create space for Aboriginal peoples in forestry and the natural resource sectors.

Carol Labillois-Slocum described her experience with government programs: the money comes, and there is a very small window in which to spend it, and when it’s gone, it’s gone. She agreed that the decision-making should be more accessible to the communities, and that projects should have something to show, such as training or a database that continues to be used, once funding ends.

Travis Jones said capacity building initiatives tends to favour communities that already have capacity, while the ones who need it most are often left out. He asked about new ways to gauge need. He also asked about the issue of political stability in First Nations communities as an impediment to capacity building: if this is a factor, what approaches would be required?

Dr. Stevenson said instability is often a direct function of a community not having the opportunity to document and assess their needs, values, and resources to develop sustainable forest management plans. "Not knowing where you are or where you want to go is a recipe for instability," he said. "It's a vicious circle and you need to break the cycle."

Perreault stressed the need for accepting new ideas while acknowledging that old ideas have value. She said many First Nations communities do not have policy and procedure manuals, and she is currently working on updating these documents for some communities. Considering the long-term vision, and then setting realistic and achievable goals, can guide a community through the life of development, and provide a strong sense of self-government.

A participant asked where responsibility lies—in communities or in the government? Dr. Stevenson said rights cannot exist without responsibilities. "We need to figure out what those responsibilities are: to family, to society, to the land... these are vague concepts now, but perhaps they need to be more concrete to help with reconciliation." Each nation must take responsibility for its future in order to survive.

Perreault said First Nations can argue for access to manage the land, but they must balance that argument with the skill sets to take responsibility for that land. She asked how First Nations plan to take responsibility for the land once the land is theirs. She said it is difficult to convince communities to encourage their children to enter the field of resource management.

Dixon Terbasket said that, as a person in mid-life, he has learned many skills, but they are not recognized. Only institutions bring recognition and value. He wants to bring his knowledge of the traditional ways and his understanding of the world to the table, but the institutions aren't interested. He asked how that could be changed, and there is a way to bridge the gap between the Elders' ways and the modern ways.

Perreault acknowledged the difficulty of this issue. She said that when she met with Canadian administrators of Aboriginal programs, she asked whether there would be an opportunity to fund a program in which capacity was developed for articulating and developing existing traditional knowledge in the community. The answer was negative. She agreed that huge gaps exist, and that a new model is needed to address the issue.

Dr. Stevenson said that the group would do well to remember that the institutions in which Aboriginal peoples participate weren't designed by them, and were unilaterally set by the Canadian state: "Are they effective? Probably not. Is there scope for them to become true partners? Probably not. Are effective institutions negotiated on a community-by-community basis yet? No. So how do we get there? Let's talk about that."

Forest Research and Capacity-Building Including Research to Inform Related Policy, and Research as a Means of Strengthening Capacity

PRESENTER

Dr. Marc Stevenson

Director, Aboriginal Research Program
Sustainable Forest Management Network
Edmonton, Alberta

DR. MARC STEVENSON spoke about forest research and capacity building, specifically how research informs policy and builds capacity. He noted that during his time with the Sustainable Forest Management Network, the network's Aboriginal partners taught him what to do and what not to do in respect to research in Aboriginal communities. His document, "Ethical Principles for Negotiating Research Relationships with Aboriginal Communities: A Sustainable Forest Management Network Perspective," is not a guideline for Aboriginal communities; it is a guideline for researchers wanting to work with Aboriginal communities.

The document sets out four ethical principles, two of which are already well-addressed by guidelines and ethical principles designed by other organizations. However, two ethical principles are new, and build upon the principles that others have developed. The first principle is that research relationships with Aboriginal communities are, first and foremost, social relationships. Along with this come social rights, responsibilities, and obligations from which researchers can develop more appropriate guidelines for research.

A second principle is that researchers have an obligation to create in their work the ethical space for Aboriginal people and their knowledge. They also have an obligation to assist First Nations to develop appropriate institutions and processes that accommodate the First Nation values, rights, interests, responsibilities, and management systems into the processes.

"Researchers should not be seen as outside experts," Dr. Stevenson said. "They should help to build local capacity to do research on their [First Nations] own problems and seek their own solutions to these problems." The guidelines outline issues that researchers in the SFMN must be cognizant of when developing research relationships.

Dr. Stevenson also noted the opportunity to access resources to build capacity for Aboriginal peoples to effectively represent their needs, rights, and interests in negotiations and in the consultation process. Researchers do not know enough about the impact of development on the social and cultural environment of Aboriginal communities. Some of the most damaging and long-lasting impacts are on the social and cultural environments, yet not enough is known about those impacts before decisions are made.

“Researchers have an obligation to help in this paradigm,” Dr. Stevenson said. He noted that some headway is being made with some of the issues. Furthermore, dialogue from the government and the broader First Nations community is occurring.

Harry Bombay closed by noting that research can help to articulate the challenges around capacity building.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

PRESENTER

Jackie Hartley

Policy Analyst

First Nations Summit

Vancouver, BC

JACKIE HARTLEY gave a short presentation on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007, by a vote of 144 in favour and four against, with 11 countries abstaining. The countries who opposed its adoption were Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

Hartley said that the Declaration is intended to be a “guiding, uplifting document” that sets out the rights of indigenous peoples worldwide. While it does not create new rights, it recognizes existing rights, and confirms them in a collective way. Hartley said Canada did not vote “yes” because of the government’s ideological (and unreasonable) opposition to provisions of the Declaration. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, and organizations such as Amnesty International have chastised Canada for not supporting the Declaration. Hartley added that a recent government change in Australia has led to an apology being issued to the Indigenous peoples of that country for the removal of Indigenous children from their families (i.e. the Stolen Generations). Australia has still not endorsed the Declaration.

Hartley reviewed some of the key provisions of the Declaration, including the right to self-determination, the freedom to pursue economic, social and cultural development, and the right to own, use, and develop territorial lands. She encouraged everyone to view the entire document since it contains 46 articles relating to the rights and freedom of Indigenous peoples worldwide.

Hartley presented some ways that First Nations can use, move forward with, and bridge the “implementation gap” of the Declaration:

- By asserting, exercising, and practicing their rights, and making it clear that these rights are recognized by the United Nations
- By exerting political pressure on the federal government (particularly in light of the House of Commons vote in favour of the Declaration).
- By integrating the Declaration in litigation strategies and negotiations
- By using international mechanisms

“This Declaration sets the minimum standards that will not only be used throughout the UN, but more broadly” said Hartley. “You should be demanding and expecting more, but these, at least, should be upheld.”

Gary Anka, from CFS, said he could elaborate further on why Canada did not sign. He said that for countries without many Indigenous peoples, signing the Declaration was easy. But Canada feared that, because the Declaration was non-binding, it would not be a powerful tool for litigation or for changing legislation.

Hartley replied that most of the rights in the Declaration are already part of many Canadian laws, and Canada is already bound to implement those rights.

Albert Gerow said that not signing the Declaration is a black mark on Canada, and sends a message to indigenous peoples and to the world. If the non-binding nature of the document is a problem, then the Declaration should be a binding one. “This substantiates the rights we should have had from Day One,” Gerow said.

Report of Breakout Sessions Resulting in a Summary Spectrum of Community Capacity Needs

Travis Jones from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada presented the needs identified by Group One:

- The Federal government must support communities for capacity building.
- Core funding is needed for environmental and forestry positions within bands.
- The local workforce feels secondary to qualified outsourced workers; this must be addressed.
- Traditional knowledge about land use must be better incorporated in decision-making.
- Resource revenues, such as stumpages, should be shared.
- Canada must have a better understanding of treaty rights.
- First Nations must prioritize capacity building and joint ventures.
- More First Nations people must work for the federal and provincial governments.

Frank Brown from FPInnovations presented the needs identified by Group Two:

- Lack of access to timber is an impediment to capacity building. Wealth cannot be generated without resources.
- Reconciliation of traditional and western values is needed for a more integrated approach.
- Human resources development is a key issue. The impacts of colonization have created a gap; there is a need to address that gap through youth education and community empowerment.
- Workers need skills development.
- Traditional methods of governance and management addressed the unique skills of each individual, and there is a need to return to these.

John Scott, from the Ministry of Forests BC, presented the needs identified by Group Three:

- How do I get from 0 to 5 RPFs in my community?
- What about succession?
- Is the problem improving or becoming worse?
- More cultural knowledge is needed. Forestry doesn't exist on its own.
- We must settle our land questions before we can move forward.
- Start early with teaching the children about cultural knowledge. By building it into sciences at a higher education level, it will create more successful First Nations students.
- Role models must be provided, to build confidence in the youth, and let them know they will be the stewards of these resources.

Dr. Marc Stevenson commented on the need to start educating children at an early age, to give them the core skills needed to set them up for success in their roles as stewards of the land. School curriculum should be redesigned to focus on Aboriginal language, knowledge, and culture so students can graduate with a greater sense of identity.

Bob Stevenson said First Nations people must take more control over the traditional land mass of their territories, and not address themselves only to the boundaries of their reservation. He added that, for big industry or governments, capacity gets built in a hurry, but that is not the case with Aboriginal communities.

Pamela Perreault responded to Dr. Marc Stevenson's comments, saying that it is worth looking to other models in capacity building, especially in terms of placing the children at the centre of the approach. Such an approach requires longer-term thinking, changes the priorities, and still recognizes the immediate needs for survival.

Dixon Terbasket, former forestry manager from the Lower Similkameen Band, presented the needs identified by Group Four.

Needs at individual level:

- Individuals who are ready and motivated to be educated
- Better cultural curriculum and career counselling
- Families to encourage and support youth to stay in school

Needs at community level:

- Community-defined goals, budgets and plans
- Gap analysis to identify gaps and required research
- Access to land base and fibre
- Access to timber
- People with experience in senior-level management
- Recognition of and respect for traditional knowledge based on experience
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) as part of youth education
- Funding for hiring specialists in capacity building
- Trustworthy and knowledgeable expertise from outside sources
- Access to government data
- Core funding instead of grants to enable capacity building
- Business and marketing skills
- Research around implications of greenhouse gases, climate change
- Log brokering expertise
- Data, software and systems expertise
- Integrated research and planning instead of fragmented approaches
- Monitoring in all areas

Needs at regional level:

- Recognition of capacity limits to avoid burnout
- Technical assistance to navigate legislation and regulations
- Gap analysis on inventories and research
- Willingness and the capacity to process wood to attain the highest value
- Marketing capacity and control over our own wood
- Collaborative and substantive policy development
- Permitting system (First-Nations-based authority)
- Protocols for information transfer
- Organization in types of development
- Research and recognition of issues in other areas, such as the bark beetle in Yukon
- Allocation of volume—organized to be compatible with ecosystem-based management
- Government capacity to learn and implement TEK in working agreements

Needs at national level:

- Training to support the national body
- Recognition of Yukon's and Northwest Territories' forests
- Forest lands
- Climate change research
- Core funding

Breakout Session on Community-Level, Regional and National Strategies to Strengthen Aboriginal Capacity in the Forest Sector

Workshop participants rejoined the four groups formed in the previous breakout session. The groups discussed what could be done at community, regional, and national levels to put together a fundamental framework for capacity building that would address changes affecting the forest sector. Such changes include climate change and a high Canadian dollar. The groups presented the results of their discussions, using the same presenters from the previous breakout session.

Group One, represented by Travis Jones, discussed the need to make Aboriginal professionals role models rather than ousting them from the community. Jones noted that Aboriginal professionals should be positively regarded and used as role models for decision-making. The group also discussed the need for more on-the-job training opportunities, the assertion of rights, an increase in capacity-building programs (such as the First Nations Forestry Program), and help for communities that lack capacities. Regarding education, the group stated that more tradition-based science could be incorporated in the curriculum, and a higher value should be placed on traditional knowledge.

Other strategies include increasing the rates for consultation, increasing the number of joint ventures, and programs to involve community-level trainees and employees.

Group Two, represented by Frank Brown, discussed the need to have a vision and a plan. The group said First Nations could start by working within existing limits and build from there. However, this would take a commitment from leadership, and would require building accountability. The group discussed the need to learn from past mistakes, to build trust with potential partners, and to ensure that the party's interests are looked after. Finally, it is not enough to just talk about a plan; the plan must be implemented.

John Scott, representing Group Three, said that words and phrases voiced in the group included empowerment, working together, integration of technology and science, joint decision-making authority, methodology, bringing science education to target groups in isolated communities rather than taking children away from their homes again, harmonizing harvests with the trappers, and looking to other First Nations for their success and methodology. The group also said that federal institutes must work together to set youth up for success and build on what already exists. The group noted that it is important to expose future environmental stewards to the resources that they one day will be managing and protecting.

Dr. Marc Stevenson, also from Group Three, elaborated on the group's discussion. He noted that Alfred Jolly spoke about the Cree and their efforts and initiatives to build capacity and engage the forest on their terms. In the community, the role of research is vital to building capacity. The group also discussed the need to look at educational curricula in Aboriginal communities, and to ask if what exists is setting children up for success in their roles as Aboriginal peoples and stewards of the land. If the answer is no, then it is important to determine where the curricula can be changed to better facilitate Aboriginal youth to fulfill these roles. There may be gaps in curricula that must be addressed.

Alfred Jolly, from Group Three, spoke about Waswanipi, noting that they have forestry technicians already in place in their operations. He said that they handled the situation by including in the job description a requirement that non-Natives transfer their knowledge to the Aboriginal people. Furthermore, they usually take a few practicum students in the summer to show them the opportunities in forest technology. They also have career days in the community, and general assemblies at which they present what is being done in the forest. Waswanipi have a forest model, because a policy had to be developed regarding the knowledge that was gathered from the land. For example, researchers may use their knowledge only for research, and must leave the information behind when they have finished.

Harry Bombay noted that he used to be on the Waswanipi board of directors; he said the beauty of the model forest approach enabled First Nations to develop their own research priorities.

Group Four, represented by Dixon Terbasket, presented their findings. The group discussed the importance of teaching youth, even when they are very young. The goal is to start early with the children, and use many visual tools, metaphors, and interactive learning methods. Also, when teaching the youth, allow them to come up with their own motivation and goals, and provide incentives that are not necessarily monetary. Youth could also be involved in camps where Elders teach them about the land and natural resources.

Problems with getting people to work could be solved by allowing them to set their own hours and days of operations. This would also avoid conflicts with other important community events. Another strategy is to teach community members about the opportunities and the many types of jobs and activities in forestry and forest-related industries.

Protocols and rights of first refusal are an option when working with companies and non-natives. Also important is mandatory cultural training to overcome racism and build relationships. This includes training for supervisors and co-workers on speaking respectfully and avoiding offensive language when interacting with new trainees. Finally, it is important to monitor and enforce agreements that have been negotiated and to use UN agreements as leverage to assert rights in other venues.

Fundamental Components of a Framework for Aboriginal Capacity in the Forest Sector

Following the breakout session, Pamela Perreault asked workshop participants how they would know when capacity has been built, and how capacity is measured and evaluated. She noted that capacity can be a means to achieve a goal, or it can be an objective in itself. Perreault said that they must be clearer about what they are trying to achieve. "Are we building capacity in a way that will allow Aboriginal peoples to take control and self-determine their future? That is how I evaluate things. Is that our measurement? Is that a question we're asking?"

Harry Bombay responded that Aboriginal peoples must determine what capacity is and whether or not they are progressing in that area. He said that he knows of a small First Nation community with two foresters and five to six trained forest technicians, yet only one or two are actually working for their community. "This community has the capacity, but why are they not working in forestry areas?" Bombay asked. He said that capacity is also about institutional development, but many First Nations communities lack the institutional infrastructure to engage their trained people. The people who have been trained cannot be put to use without institutional arrangements, including organization, defined roles and responsibilities, to engage them properly.

Terry Teegee, from Takla Lake First Nation, said that often First Nations have to build capacity as a reaction to something on which they had no input, for example, forestry policies. Teegee noted that it is important to retain people who go on to get degrees. However, some people do not return to their community after graduating. He also noted that First Nations must have input in the development of policies, so they are not a reactionary group. His community issues its own permits, and requires organizations to get permits from the community before work is done. This is the community's way of asserting its own jurisdiction and governance.

Bombay responded that capacity is not just about human resources development and training, but also about the institution. Rules and regulations must be in place to enable the human resources to be more effective. For example, he noted that BC has approximately 8,000 foresters and other natural resource workers, but these workers would not be employed in the sector if the laws, regulations, and financial resources were not in place. "You can have all the trained people in the world, but if you can't engage them in institutions, you are not building capacity. That is how we develop frameworks and how we push for capacity," Bombay said.

Frank Brown noted that even though people may not have a lot of financial resources and education, the reality is that they are the titleholders to their lands. He said that they have to be strategic in how they move forward, and remember that they are not the beneficiaries of existing policies. Rather, the next generation will be impacted by the decisions that are made now.

Bombay responded that any capacity-building strategy must have an aspect of experts managing experts, also known as rental of capacity and rental of expertise. First Nations must identify their goals so they know what they need from experts.

Gary Anka questioned whether the concept of “experts managing experts” defies the logic about how development takes place. “It kind of flies in the face of gaining and accumulating knowledge,” Anka said. “Even though you have experts, are they taking you the right way?”

Bombay acknowledged that this is a concern but the need to respond is immediate. Bombay also said that even if work is done incrementally, renting expertise as part of capacity building may still be necessary as long as there is a plan to enable the transfer of knowledge and technological knowhow.

Dr. Marc Stevenson noted that only the Aboriginal communities can answer the question, “Capacity for what?” The closest answer he could provide was that it is the capacity for local, individual, and community empowerment, including the right to exercise Aboriginal rights and responsibilities. He also noted that the duty to consult is a foot in the door for First Nations to build their capacity to exercise their rights and responsibilities. Good consultation results in negotiated institutional arrangements that take place in a nation-to-nation context.

Dr. Marc Stevenson also noted that Canada needs a new Aboriginal capacity-building framework. An effective program would provide resources and opportunities to First Nations communities so they can determine their strengths and needs, and where they want to go in the short term and as a people. He suggested that NAFA could encourage others to consider the need for a capacity-building program that gives funding directly to First Nations to enable them to determine their needs.

Bombay indicated that NAFA hopes to develop a new plan for capacity building which would include a community/regional model supported by strategic initiatives to address key gaps in capacity. NAFA will seek input as a basic framework is developed.

Workshop Participants

Trena Allen – National Aboriginal Forestry Association (former) (speaker)

Gary Anka – Natural Resources Canada (speaker)

Beverly Bird – Tl'azt'en Nation

Harry Bombay – National Aboriginal Forestry Association (speaker)

Lori Borth – Ministry of Forests BC

Frank Brown - FPIInnovations (speaker)

Priscilla Calliou – Kelly Lake Cree Nation

Lisa Charette – Industry Canada

Diane Dawson – Alberta Pacific Forest Industries

Chantal Abou Debs – Networks of Centres of Excellence

Anne Dickinson – Natural Resources Canada

Colette Fauchon – Ministry of Forests BC

Raymond Ferris – Weekoban Inc.

Laurie Flahr – Independent Consultant

Steve Fobister Sr. – Grassy Narrows First Nation

Shawn Gabriel – In-SHUCK-ch Nation (speaker)

Albert Gerow – BC First Nations Forestry Council (speaker)

Laurian Gladue – Kelly Lake Cree Nation

Dr. Garth Greskiw – University of BC

Jackie Hartley – First Nations Summit

Dexter Hodder – John Prince Research Forest (UNBC)

Linette Hodges – Ministry of Forests and Range

Alton Hudson – Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

Wilfred Humchitt – Heiltsuk Coastal Forest Products

George Jennings – Timberline Natural Resource Group (speaker)

Alfred Jolly – Waswanipi Mishtuk Corporation

Travis Jones – Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Rose Kushniruk – Champagne & Aihishik First Nations
Susan Lee – Ministry of Forests and Range
Ted Lewis – Cape Mudge Nation/We Wai Kai Nation
Bruce Macnab – Sustainable Forest Management Network
Shirley Mah – Ministry of Forests BC
Jim McGrath – Kamloops Indian Band
Garry Merkel – Forest Innovations (speaker)
Dave Nordquist – Adams Lake Indian Band
Pamela Perreault – Perreault & Associates (speaker)
Teresa Peters – In-SHUCK-ch Nation
Janet Pronovost – National Aboriginal Forestry Association
Nadine Roach – Union of Ontario Indians
David Rudd – Canadian Executive Service Organization
John Scott – Ministry of Forests BC
Ellen Sedlack – Ministry of Forests BC
Dennis Simon – Elsipogtog First Nation
Carol Labillois-Slocum – Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership-NB (speaker)
Bob Stanton – Natural Resources – Government of New Brunswick
Bob Stevenson – Mohawk Council of Awkexasne
Dr. Marc Stevenson – Sustainable Forest Management Network (speaker)
Terry Teegee – Takla Lake First Nation
Dixon Terbasket – Okanagan Nation/Similkameen
Ron Troster – University of BC
Frank Turner – Swampy Cree Tribal Council
Alexis Vanderheyden – Garden River First Nation
Sarah Weber – University of BC
Paul Willms – Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

