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Secwepemc First Nations Adaptive Management Workshop:

Summary Report



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Henry Michel and John Jules



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ABSTRACT

During a two-day Adaptive Management Workshop, held September 25 and 26, 2001, at the Bonaparte Indian Band Hall in Cache Creek, B.C., 15 representatives of the Secwepemc First Nations explored the development of a co-ordinated strategy to increase their participation in land and natural resource management, planning, and development within their traditional territories. In-depth discussion and information sharing resulted in six recommendations, which are summarized in this report. One key recommendation was to develop and implement the Secwepemc Technical Expertise and Information Sharing Protocol, which will allow all 17 bands to share their current natural resource management capacity. As a background to establishing the protocol, several natural resource management-related issues are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

During a two-day Adaptive Management workshop, Secwepemc¹ First Nations explored the development of a unified, co-ordinated strategy to increase their participation in land and natural resource management, planning, and development within their traditional territories.

The workshop was held September 25 and 26, 2001, at the Bonaparte Indian Band Hall in Cache Creek, B.C. Fifteen representatives from both northern and southern Secwepemc bands, including chiefs and councillors, attended the workshop, which was facilitated by Henry Michel, Aboriginal Extension Specialist with the Southern Interior Forest Extension and Research Partnership (now FORREX–Forest Research Extension Partnership), and John Jules, Cultural Resource Management Administrator for the Kamloops Indian Band.

In-depth discussion and information sharing resulted in a number of recommendations, which are outlined in this report. The recommendations are to:

1. Develop and implement a protocol for sharing natural resource management expertise, personnel, and information among all 17 Secwepemc bands, based on the Cariboo Tribal Council model.
2. House and develop a technology-supported information management strategy and infrastructure, including geographic information system (GIS) capability. This would be done by the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, with the assistance of Secwepemc bands (in particular the Southern bands), FORREX, the Secwepemc Natural Resources Board, and other service organizations.
3. Establish a professional association for Secwepemc First Nations land and natural resource management professionals and technicians.
4. Develop a human resource inventory for all 17 Secwepemc bands.
5. Work towards moving the Archaeological Overview Assessment and Archaeological Inventory Assessment model for assessing traditional land use to the more comprehensive Cultural Heritage Overview Assessment model now being piloted in the Kamloops Timber Supply Area.
6. Ensure that Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge is incorporated into all territorial natural resource management policies and practices, at every level.

¹ "Secwepemc" is the accepted spelling of the previously anglicized "Shushap."

DEVELOPING AN INFORMATION-SHARING PROTOCOL

The Need

A protocol for sharing natural resource management technical expertise and information at the Secwepemc Nation level would address several needs.

Most important is the need to develop working relationships among bands that will allow for co-ordination on natural resource management issues. Most First Nations experience to date has been between bands, on the one hand, and government and industry, on the other. First Nations are currently engaged in several different levels of natural resource management, including land-use planning, land and resource management planning, and Archaeological Overview Assessments, but this work tends to be done at the band rather than the nation level. The Secwepemc bands would benefit from working collectively from a Secwepemc Nation perspective. For this they need to share resources and information.

Second, many bands do not have the personnel or resources to participate effectively in natural resource management. Those who do have trained personnel may not have the revenue or program funding to keep them employed. A sharing protocol will allow these bands to participate more fully.

Third, a co-ordinated effort is needed for the Secwepemc Nation to effectively address concerns about traditional land use. The ability to do so is being eroded through continual restructuring of the government's natural resource management policies, of the Heritage Act, and of enabling legislation on endangered species and water use. Eco-tourism is another new and significant incursion into traditional territory that lacks adequate input from First Nations. The ability to address these issues within the land-use planning and land and resource management planning processes is limited. First Nations have not yet developed a working relationship with British Columbia Crown Assets and Land, the ministry that controls expansion into Crown lands, to the degree that they have with other ministries involved in natural resources, such as the B.C. Ministry of Forests and B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. In addition, currently no co-ordinated process exists among First Nations to deal with jurisdictional issues. Many of these and related issues extend beyond the traditional territory of any single band or tribal council, and can therefore be handled more effectively through sharing of resources and information at the Secwepemc Nation level.

Issues and Considerations

A number of issues were identified as influencing the ability of First Nations to participate effectively in natural resource management. These need to be considered in developing a technical expertise and information-sharing strategy in this area.

Cultural Heritage Overview Assessment

The Archaeological Overview Assessment and Archaeological Inventory Assessment process is controlled by the British Columbia Association of Professional Consulting Archaeologists and the British Columbia Archaeological Branch, and is viewed by First Nations as being too greatly influenced by industry. It is based on an archaeological model, which is in essence a historical model. Evidence of traditional use of an area is limited to what the British Columbia Association of Professional Consulting Archaeologists and the British Columbia Archaeological Branch

consider relevant. Anything since 1858 is not considered to constitute traditional use. This approach does not adequately meet First Nations' need for protection.

For these and other reasons, the Cultural Heritage Overview Assessment is the model preferred by the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council. This is a community-driven model that relies on First Nations Elders for direction. It provides assessment tools that allow for measurement of traditional use practices up to the present day, and broadens the definition of such use.

Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge Systems

In general, natural resource planning, development, and management are products of government and industry and do not take into account the culture, values, or knowledge systems of indigenous cultures. First Nations are expected to participate within established Western management models and provide information that fits into specific Western knowledge systems. However, Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge systems operate very differently from those of Western government and industry.

The most effective way for First Nations to participate meaningfully in natural resource management is to operate from the strength of their own knowledge and incorporate their cultural values and philosophy into their natural resource policies, planning, and management. This is also necessary in order for bands to meet the requirements of the Delgamuukw test and other aboriginal and treaty rights measures.

It is only recently that pilot models have been developed that incorporate Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge into the natural resource management process. Several have been successful. These are the forest certification processes, the Innovative Forest Practice Agreements, the Community Forest Pilots, and other processes that have a high component of community direction built into them. These have been endorsed by First Nations Elders because they provide clear entry points for First Nations participation. Industry is obliged to find knowledgeable people in the First Nations community to sign off on each First Nations concern in the particular process. At the same time, these processes also provide validation of Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge and values.

There are challenges. Bands developing their natural resource management activity based on their cultural values and knowledge systems are facing difficulty in meeting program funding criteria, while also meeting criteria dictated by their cultural values. Moreover, the colonial process has resulted in a loss of cultural knowledge, practice, and language in many First Nations communities, making it difficult to ensure accuracy when incorporating Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge into natural resource management in these communities.

Nonetheless, meaningful First Nations participation in natural resource management processes must continue to develop around the premise that the incorporation of indigenous culture, values, and knowledge is possible and necessary.

Increased Involvement of First Nations Professionals

Most natural resource management information has tended to come through professionals outside of the First Nations community. For example, a member of the British Columbia Association of Professional Consulting Archaeologists must sign off on Traditional Use Studies, Archaeological Overview Assessment reports, and Archaeological Inventory Assessment reports. Traditional land-use studies, which are important to First Nations, must be vetted by a non-First Nations archaeologist.

At the same time, most of the growing number of First Nations professionals are being absorbed into government, universities, and industry. This occurs at least partly because no organizations or associations are in place for First Nations natural resource professionals. A First Nations Natural Resource Management association is required that includes all First Nations workers involved in natural resource management, and that is equivalent to the British Columbia Association of Professional Consulting Archaeologists, Professional Foresters, and other natural resource-related professional associations. This association would include professionals such as the educated young people currently working with First Nations Elders, who understand both the traditional knowledge process and government land-use methodology. These cultural knowledge keepers would apply traditional ecological thinking to the land-use planning process. Bands could use this First Nations professional association to sign off on their technical contracts.

Such a professional association will have to address the question of who government and industry will recognize as qualified to sign off on reviews. The B.C. Ministry of Forests is already giving recognition to a Secwepemc professional from the Secwepemc Natural Resources Board to sign off on major development plans. Another question relates to how such an association would be organized and whether it would exist on its own or be affiliated with the Secwepemc Natural Resources Board. Furthermore, the legal implications of land-use planning sign-off by the Secwepemc Natural Resources Board or a First Nations professional association should be investigated. Lastly, it must be determined which Secwepemc organization would be able to take on these responsibilities, and when.

Government Relations and Legislation

The Heritage Act has been seen as an opportunity for fee simple holders to assert control over First Nations' natural and cultural resources. Part of readdressing the Act will involve working with licensees' management plans to increase First Nations access to traditional land uses, such as managing and harvesting food and medicinal ethnobotanicals, and maintaining cultural and spiritual practices. It will also involve developing a classification system for heritage sites.

A recent Heritage Act review moved the Technology Branch into the Sustainable Resource Branch and moved part of the Archaeological Branch to the Aboriginal Branch. These changes have implications for bands and tribal councils that have yet to be identified.

The effect of changes to Forest Practices Code legislation and to Ministry of Forests planning processes, such as Allowable Annual Cut, the Forest Development Plan, and Timber Supply Area, must also be determined. It is important that bands and tribal councils keep up with such government developments as they affect natural resource management. It is also important that they develop and maintain a strategy to handle changes within these processes.

At the municipal and regional district government levels, First Nations also need to address their effectiveness in the land-use planning and land and resource management planning processes concerning traditional land use. The land-use planning process allows First Nations to engage in decision making with regard to their traditional lands, but this option has been avoided because it could limit aboriginal title. However, municipalities and regional districts also have influence over land-use planning and this, in turn, affects First Nations access to traditional land use. First Nations therefore need to define their influence in land-use planning. In the land and resource management planning process, First Nations are recognized as stakeholders but, as a recent Memorandum of Understanding agreement recommends, they

need to be recognized as “participants” to have the same legal strength as the provincial government and regional districts, both of whom are participants.

Funding

Soon-to-be-imposed cutbacks in the provincial government will have a significant impact on the ability of government and industry to partner with First Nations in joint projects and research. Many bands rely on these partnerships to build their natural resource management capacity. A major concern, then, is finding the funding to develop the technical and information-sharing infrastructure.

Examples and Models of Centralization

Existing examples of centralization in First Nations could serve as models for natural resource management, and more specifically for the technical expertise and information-sharing protocol.

Secwepemc Unity Meetings

The Secwepemc Natural Resources Board and this workshop were initiated through Secwepemc Unity Meetings. These Unity Meetings can be further used in developing the technical expertise and information-sharing protocol and in moving the natural resource management strategy forward. They have, for example, identified the need for a heritage map that encompasses the whole Secwepemc territory.

Cariboo Tribal Council

As a post-treaty requirement, the Cariboo Tribal Council is developing a centralized government infrastructure for its member bands. At this time the Cariboo Tribal Council resource boards are working as a group on referrals, Archaeological Inventory Assessments, Archaeological Overview Assessments, and other natural resource responsibilities. Each band is adding one technical resource position to each natural resource board. Through this process, all natural resource services are being centralized, although some services will still operate at the community level. All natural resource management information, including Traditional Use Studies, GIS data, and cultural resources, will be held at the Cariboo Tribal Council Geographical Information Systems Department. This centralization will allow the Cariboo Tribal Council to offer co-ordinated data collection and storage and co-ordinated natural resources management. It will also show cultural heritage use over time.

Through implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding agreement, the Cariboo Tribal Council has also identified the need for a Cultural Heritage and History Permitting System, which will enable some regulation of what research takes place in Secwepemc territory. This would also deal with jurisdictional issues that arise between:

- Bands
- Cariboo Tribal Council and the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council
- Secwepemc Nation and neighbouring First Nations
- Secwepemc Nation and federal, provincial, and regional governments

Kamloops Timber Supply Area Predictive Model for Archaeological Overview Assessment

Several bands in the Kamloops Timber Supply Area are participating in pilots of the Kamloops Timber Supply Area Predictive Model for Archaeological Overview Assessments. The model on which it was based was developed by Arcas Consulting Archeologists Ltd. in 1975. The Kamloops Indian Band adjusted this model to address Secwepemc cultural heritage criteria and indicators, as well as the seasonal rounds of traditional food production and harvesting. The North Thompson Indian Band, the Adams Lake Indian Band, and the Whispering Pines Indian Band are now also participating in this pilot process, and other Secwepemc bands are asking to use the model for their Archaeological Overview Assessments. In addition, the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council is partnering with the Kamloops, Skeetchestn, and North Thompson bands to develop an alternative Archaeological Overview Assessment process and has proposed the Cultural Heritage Overview Assessment in its place.

These Archaeological Overview Assessment pilots are opening up an opportunity for greater and higher-level Secwepemc control and involvement in natural resource management. It appears that the Timber Supply Area does not give up any land nor is more outside access to traditional lands possible through the pilot. The Shuswap Nation Tribal Council and its bands have control of the research methodology and will gain the resulting information and data sets.

For Secwepemc bands to incorporate the Predictive Archaeological Overview Assessment Model, there are several considerations:

- The Archaeological Inventory Assessment for the study area was based on a previously conducted Archaeological Overview Assessment of that area—in other words, on old information. Licensees wanted the pilots to look at areas that fit into their current cutting plans. First Nations, on the other hand, want to open the process for areas that have been closed by old Archaeological Overview Assessment data sets and to expand those data sets. Major gaps also exist in the Archaeological Overview Assessment database.
- Who defines the components of cultural heritage that need to be protected? The Archaeological Inventory Assessment has an archaeological perspective based on theory, a linear historical interpretation in the Archaeological Overview Assessment process. Its predictive model needs to be expanded to incorporate wildlife, botanical, cultural, and spiritual components. First Nations may be able to address this by replacing the Archaeological Overview Assessment with the Cultural Heritage Overview Assessment.
- A permit system is needed for researchers who wish to conduct research in Secwepemc traditional territory, as their research could potentially affect aboriginal and treaty rights. The permitting system will provide Secwepemc people with a process to regulate the activity of researchers and other professionals in areas of research that affect them. The Sto-lo Tribal Council, the Cariboo Tribal Council, the Treaty Eight bands, the Kamloops and Skeetchestn bands, and the Haida Indian Band all have this type of permitting process in place.

THE INFORMATION-SHARING PROTOCOL STRATEGY

The Technical Expertise and Information-sharing Protocol aims to provide centralized services to all 17 Secwepemc bands. Political support will be needed to provide services to the whole Secwepemc Nation. Part of the protocol strategy will be to define what kind of relationship each band will have to the protocol.

In addition, the human and technical resource components of the protocol strategy require definition, and the issue of standardization needs to be addressed. Lastly, the strategy must outline which organization can host the protocol as a centralized service.

Human Resources Inventory

The protocol should provide the ability for bands to share professional expertise. For this, a human resources inventory should include information on who is available, their field experience, site recognition, and whether they are recognized by bands.

Much of the information to be shared through the protocol will have come from professionals outside of the First Nations community. Some bands have a mutual agreement on who they want to work with, while the Cariboo Tribal Council has a list of preferred contractors. The Northern Shuswap Cariboo Tribal Council (Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw) has a code of conduct for how to control outside professionals.

At the same time, there is a growing number of Secwepemc professionals in the natural resources field. Spallumcheen, for example, has undertaken band-member training in archaeology, anthropology, and ethnobotany, and has worked with a consultant to disprove the validity of an archaeologist's blanket Archaeological Overview Assessment. These are all resources that could potentially be shared through the protocol.

Technical Expertise

The protocol will include a data centre shared by all Secwepemc bands. This will be a technical co-operative where any one of the bands can bid on contracts and contract technicians from any of the other Secwepemc bands. This will enable bands to keep far more of the forest-management work in-house. It will also allow bands without technical expertise to address referrals. Technical training is also required so that trained Secwepemc specialists can effectively challenge other professional opinion.

Standardization

One of the needs of this protocol will be to standardize operational functions within the 17 Secwepemc bands. Reports, templates, field cards, and other informational requirements will need to be shared. This raises a number of issues:

- The protocol will need to develop standards that will meet those of the Resources Inventory Committee, which are recognized by the provincial government. Other criteria may also need to be developed that go beyond those of the Resources Inventory Committee to be specific to First Nations needs.
- In order for bands to enter into contracts together by sharing information and expertise through the protocol, each band will need to know the other bands' capacities and what level of expertise is available. For this, a database of each band's capacity needs to be developed and then shared.

- To standardize information to enable sharing, the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council model of Archaeological Overview Assessment–Cultural Heritage Overview Assessment could be pursued by all 17 Secwepemc bands.
- Technical reporting process requirements can be shared and standardized to cover important issues, such as defining the information management system, setting educational process standards for any training components undertaken in the process, developing the methodology for data collection, and ensuring that the process meets legal obligations.

Host Organization

The Secwepemc Natural Resources Board seems the most likely organization to house the technical database and information-sharing infrastructure. It is already partnering with FORREX to become the central data management agency for Southern bands. This will bring them in line with the information management capacity of Northern bands. The Secwepemc Natural Resources Board and FORREX are jointly conducting a skills inventory for all bands and developing a database of technical capacity. They will be working toward a formal process for accessing information for the Secwepemc Nation.

Other Secwepemc organizations have the capacity, but not the means. The Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, for example, no longer has the staff to use its technical capability and will need to tap into other organizations to operate its GIS facility. One possibility is the Secwepemc Natural Resources Board, but it is essentially inactive. Previously, this board had the infrastructure that allowed bands to share information and was positioning itself to centralize this for Southern bands, but then lost the natural resource management funding base to operate. The Shuswap Nation Fisheries Commission has a specific mandate that limits it to territorial fisheries issues and, therefore, could not move into other natural resource areas without changing this mandate. Similarly, the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society is specific to cultural education and resource services for Secwepemc bands, and does not have the technical capacity to address natural resource needs.

At this time the Cariboo Tribal Council has significant capacity in the natural resources area because of its involvement in the British Columbia Treaty Process. Each of the six member bands has significant ability to engage in natural resource management activities, and the Cariboo Tribal Council is working toward co-ordinating these management processes at a higher level. However, the Cariboo Tribal Council and the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council are the political bodies for the north and south. Their political mandate could interfere with the needs of the Technical Expertise and Information Sharing Protocol. Moreover, they do not include all the bands in their areas and so would not be a representative organization for all bands who want to use the protocol.

NICOLA TRIBAL ASSOCIATION

In a separate workshop held March 20, 2002, at the Merritt Convention Centre in Merritt, British Columbia, the Nicola Tribal Association addressed similar issues. The workshop was facilitated by Henry Michel, Aboriginal Extension Specialist with the Southern Interior Forest Extension and Research Partnership (now FORREX–Forest Research Extension Partnership); John Jules, Cultural Resource Management Administrator for the Kamloops Indian Band; and Verna Miller, Research Director, Tmixw Research, Nicola Tribal Association.

Workshop participants recognized that a number of internal issues hindered the ability of First Nations to effectively participate in natural resource management. These include:

- a lack of capacity to participate;
- the evolution of band administration from Department of Indian and Northern Affairs models, which are not based on indigenous culture, values, philosophy, and knowledge systems;
- some difficulties meeting government program funding criteria, while meeting criteria dictated by their cultural values; and
- a loss of cultural knowledge as a result of the colonial process.

In addition, cross-cultural issues were noted: differences in culture and world views and the ways in which forested lands are valued, and differences between Western knowledge systems and Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge systems that restrict First Nations participation.

Workshop participants concluded that First Nations must:

- carry out internal adjustments that enable them to develop planning and management policy based on their cultural and philosophical values;
- develop a marketing strategy to promote the integration of their knowledge and values into natural resource management;
- develop criteria and indicators for measuring the effect of current Western natural resource management practices on indigenous lifestyles; and
- work with Western government and industry to develop a process by which First Nations are compensated adequately for the time and energy they put into developing their Cultural Heritage and Land Use Inventories and Overview Assessments, and by which they retain intellectual property rights in relation to the resulting data.

SUMMARY

The Secwepemc First Nations Adaptive Management Workshop focused on the need to develop co-ordination among bands in the area of natural resource management through a sharing of resources and information. With the Secwepemc Technical Expertise and Information-sharing Protocol, all 17 bands will be able to share their current natural resource management capacity. As a background to establishing the protocol, several natural resource management-related issues were discussed, including:

- the preference for the community-driven Cultural Heritage Overview Assessment model over the standard Archaeological Overview Assessment;
- the need to incorporate Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge into natural resource management activities and policies;
- the benefits of establishing a First Nations professional association;
- the effect of government relations and legislation on First Nations involvement in natural resource management; and
- the question of funding.

These are all concerns that may be directly or indirectly addressed through establishing the protocol.

A number of recommendations were made to assist in establishing the protocol and facilitate co-ordination among the Secwepemc bands. These include the establishment of a human resources inventory as well as a technical expertise database. At this time, the most likely host organization for this centralized database is the Secwepemc Natural Resources Board, which has already set up some of the required infrastructure. Some standardization of operational functions will also be necessary for all bands to gain access to and use this information effectively.

The protocol addresses several needs. It will allow bands who have insufficient personnel, technical resources, or funding to nevertheless participate in natural resource management in their areas. Combining professional and technical resources in a centralized database will also give bands and contractors access to a wider range of contracts and put them in a position where they can standardize professional, technical, and labour rate schedules across all 17 bands.

At the Secwepemc Nation level, the protocol will also provide the opportunity for bands to work together on natural resource management studies, developing a collective rather than a fragmented, band-by-band approach. Through sharing information and resources, the protocol will allow the 17 Secwepemc bands to co-ordinate their efforts so that they can address larger concerns, such as traditional land use and the level of First Nations involvement in natural resource management—issues that affect all First Nations on a daily basis.