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CRITERIA AND INDICATORS RECOGNIZE FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES' NEEDS, RIGHTS AND INTERESTS IN FOREST PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT.

Human Organization, a leading social science journal, has recently reported that the Little Red River Cree Nation (LRRCN), located in northern Alberta, and researchers from the Sustainable Forest Management Network have developed 6 criteria and 62 indicators to measure success toward achieving two objectives: protecting the LRRCN traditional way-of-life, and providing economic self-reliance from forestry operations within LRRCN treaty lands. This research was undertaken to inform an on-going cooperative management planning process between this First Nation, two forest companies and the Government of Alberta.

"What a criteria and indicators approach provides," say SFM Network researchers David Natcher and Cliff Hickey, "is a way for the Aboriginal world and the corporate world to meet and negotiate, through a mutually agreed upon language, the tradeoffs required from time to time between economic and cultural values. The result is to create a win-win scenario for both sides. With proper assistance, on a case by case basis, we believe this criteria and indicators approach could be adapted for use by other First Nations across the country."

The 6 criteria listed below are followed by indicator examples (some of which already exist):

- Modify management operations to reduce negative impact to wildlife species (e.g. bison, caribou, furbearers and moose);
- Modify operations to ensure community access to lands and resources (e.g. protecting trails, waterways and firewood stands);
- Protect all those areas identified by community members as having biological, cultural and historical significance (e.g. cabins, burial areas, rare and endangered medicinal plants and other environmentally sensitive areas);
- Recognize and protect aboriginal and treaty rights to hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering activities (e.g. compensating trappers (already exists), limiting industrial access to critical ungulate habitat (already exists), and giving meat from trophy hunting to Aboriginal elders);
- Increase forest-based economic opportunities for community members (e.g. enhancing education and training in forestry and promoting local entrepreneurs); and
- Increase the involvement of community members in decision-making (e.g. enhancing communication between industry and community members, providing more community participation in planning, and by using more local ecological knowledge in planning).

Chief Johnsen Sewepagaham of the Little Red River Cree Nation stated, "The researchers worked cooperatively with a team of community workers to interview community members, document community use of the forest, and record our peoples' recommendations for changing the way commercial forest operations are conducted. We appreciate these joint efforts to

translate what was said by our peoples into criteria and indicators. Our Nation will now use these recommendations to make changes to our own corporate woodlands operations, and recommend that changes be made within those parts of our Treaty lands where forest tenure is jointly held by Tolko and Footner Forest Products. The new criteria and indicators provide a vision of change, clear recommendations on what changes are needed, and ways to demonstrate whether they can help our peoples achieve cultural and economic sustainability."

Note: First Nation Forest Corporations, wholly owned by LRRCN and by the Tallcree First Nation, holds forest provincial tenure over roughly one-half of the 19,000 square kilometre forest area studied. Tolko and Footner Forest Products hold tenures that include the other half of the study area, under a Forest Management Agreement. These tenures, issued by the Government of Alberta, allocate long-term (20 years) harvesting rights to timber companies. The terms of the tenure agreements define the ground rules and conditions (e.g. annual allowable cut) by which timber can be harvested within the tenure area.

Citation:

Natcher DC, Hickey CG. 2002. **Putting the community back into community-based resource management: a criteria and indicators approach to sustainability.** *Human Organization*, 61(4): 350-363.

See also:

Natcher DC, Hickey CG. [2002]. [A criteria and indicators approach to community development](#). *Working Paper 2002-2*. Sustainable Forest Management Network. PDF. 553KB.

