

FFP Edmonton First Nations Workshop, 2008 10 23 - Results of Scenario Discussions

Forest Futures Project of the Sustainable Forest Management Network

Transcribed from flipchart notes and workshop recorder files by Kyle McKenzie, Project Research Associate

Scenario A - Goods from the Woods

- Climate is indeed changing, but why? (natural or human made)
- Finally getting jobs in forestry, but takes a long time
- Forests will still be cut for industrial wood supply (especially clear cutting) (need threats to force better practices)
- Aboriginal people passive or active in relation to charting their futures?
- Sets the stage for social and cultural turmoil
- Storyline of conflict – making dollars but practically powerless → frustration
- Conflict from disparity between communities
- Jobs controlled by multinationals
- Lack of economic development is not necessarily a bad thing because economic development can undermine culture
- Upset over urbanization
- Upset over non-reconciliation
- Connection to the land means that forests are more than just trees – land, church, food basket
- Food and medicine baskets will be different
- Climate change and forests – pretty bad even in this scenario
- Despite only moderate change, it's still difficult to adapt to this scenario
- More local control of natural resources is needed to remove influence of multinational companies
- Some parts of the scenario already here, some hardly reflective of current conditions
 - Absence of aboriginal control over land is key problem
- This scenario is a continuation of the status quo
- Change needed – stronger aboriginal organization for influence on forest control
- First Nations need to unite across tribal lines to have stronger influence on policy
- Need for cross-cultural understanding to counteract competing visions
- Need large, holistic, ecosystems thinking
- Triad models and forest protection in northern Alberta – need for allocation to aboriginal control for ecosystem conservation – under discussion now; action here is collaborative/negotiative
- Scenario A is attractive to big corporations and provinces focused on economy, but not so much to First Nations
- Focus on policies in search of reconciliation
- Need policies to foster cooperation instead of conflict
- Unique strong relations of aboriginal people with trees and forests and wildlife

Scenario B - Peace in the Woods

- Aboriginal people are adaptive
- Aboriginal people's culture will be dynamic (perhaps aboriginal people will need to do the integrating between WS and traditional knowledge)
- Aboriginal values shouldn't stagnate
- If aboriginals incorporate values from other cultures into theirs, that's okay
- Culture = way of life (adaptation due to circumstances is not abandonment of culture)
- Importance of sharing culture within and among groups
- Absence of conflict is boring
- How do we reduce our vulnerability so that adaptation is within the range of changes?
- Aboriginals and non-aboriginals need to cooperate on more than just environmental issues
- Finally non-aboriginals are honouring treaties
- What means brought such adaptive capacity and social harmony?
- Reconciliation will depend on education, not necessarily court decisions
 - Education comes from aboriginal initiative in collaborative forums
 - Best practices in these arenas
 - Need to turn agreement into action
- Educational reform is needed for policy reform
- Educational reform
 - Teacher education
 - Terrible/wrong old curriculum content
 - Basic legal setting and relationships
 - Raise consciousness
 - Raise capacity of non-aboriginal people to work with and understand aboriginal people
 - Experiential pedagogy (outdoor, cross cultural)
- Need to drive reconciliation in civil society – this needs policy support
- Professional training
- Concept of concessions
- Lots of concessions need to be made to get to this scenario
- Change may come rapidly through business deals facilitated by negotiated dollar agreements between aboriginal communities and governments
- Infrastructure funds for aboriginal communities could materialize and bring the scenario to fruition
- Forest industry is down at the moment so this is a good time for aboriginal communities to take control of it

Scenario D - Restoration in the Woods

- Common theme with Scenario A – encroachment of agriculture into forests – drought and nutrient problems

- Changes in animal populations – different species due to climate change
- People can adapt to new animals in the woods
- High recreational use interacting with aboriginal access to forest resources
- Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities collaborating to address environmental problems
- Forest change is more acceptable than removal of forests for agriculture
- Cooperative spirit locally helpful, but internationally too?
- Climate change – extreme events will strain adaptive capacity, but gives opportunity too
- Intensify agriculture, or expand its land base \leftrightarrow what real potential?
- Can agriculture be increased as climate change allows without cutting into the forests?
- Canadian agriculture feeds the world, not just Canada, so increasing it at the expense of forests won't benefit aboriginal communities
- If we end up here, the social institutions are in place to respond favourably
- Need for adaptive responses in resource management now!
- Close the door to immigration
- With control of land, aboriginal people will use traditional knowledge to restore it
- Aboriginal tradition is that when land is not doing well they lessen their impact on it
- Desire for long term continuity of aboriginal culture
- Aboriginals intend to stay here so they will adapt
- Importance of language in cultural community and dialogue
- Need a comprehensive view of biodiversity
- Importance of some species to aboriginal communities \rightarrow e.g. moose
- Broad view of sustainability taken by aboriginal people
- Prevention of negative impacts is important (as opposed to intervention after the fact)
- Opportunities are associated with climate change – wetlands focus
- Utility of asset maps as a basis for planning
- What will be the permanent glue in co-existence?
- Culture = way of life and relationships
- Refocus forest/resources management to a world view consistent with aboriginal culture \rightarrow then reconciliation can proceed
- Aboriginal culture contains requisite adaptive thinking to be able to cope with serious environmental change
- How bad will the environment have to get in order to bring people together to cooperate?
- Climate change will/may be a massively humbling experience – transformative on our own consciousness
- Re-orient science with sustainable values
- Sharing of cultures and cooperative initiatives are needed
- Aboriginal leadership in shifting paradigms
- Importance of traditional knowledge
- Reconciliation with nature