

The Community Collaboration Story

Community Collaboration Project: Empowering Communities & Building Capacity 2005 – 2008 (CCP Model Project)

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*The RDI Team
"On the Road"*

Executive Summary

Community Collaboration Model Project

Rural communities in western and northern Canada are very diverse yet they face many similar problems. Their geographical location itself poses challenges to transportation, communication and service delivery. Dependence on primary industries places limits on economic opportunities and can have unsustainable environmental impacts. The absence or reduction of public and private investment has resulted in problems with food and water security; limited access to education, health care and other important social services; and either a young, rapidly growing population or an aging, shrinking population (Troughton 2003). The impact and importance of each of these complex and interrelated problems on a particular community is dependant upon its history and current context. It is the unique nature of individual communities that underscores the importance of collaborative, multi-stakeholder development in articulating and acting on problems of common concern.

The Rural Development Institute's role in multi-community collaborations began in 1999 when it facilitated the formation of the Manitoba steering committee and the Northern Vision Regional Round Table. Over the next four years RDI facilitated the formation of two more regional round tables in Manitoba and a fourth regional round table that crossed the boundaries of Manitoba and Nunavut. The Rural Development Institute then articulated the community development practices and lessons learned that had emerged in Manitoba and Nunavut into a vision and model for the *Community Collaboration Project: Empowering Communities and Building Capacity 2005-2008* project (hereafter referred to as the Community Collaboration Model Project). In his Foreword to this report, David Douglas states:

Rural development is an extremely complex, challenging and uncertain pursuit. The shifting agenda, indeed the shifting “truths” of political, economic, social, cultural and environmental contexts across Canada's diverse rural regions, and through the vagaries of time, pose almost insuperable challenges for rural communities and public policy. “Almost”, but not completely - for as with the personal development enterprise and those of our families and loved ones, we press on. The Community Collaboration Project is another step in this universal and timeless endeavour.

Throughout this project, eighty-five communities, three rural teams, and four academic institutions participated in six regional round tables. This report highlights the activities, successes, opportunities, challenge, lessons learned and collaborative strategies for community engagement, research and policy development in rural and northern Canada from the regional round tables, Rural Team advisory groups and academic institutions.

In collaboration with the Rural Secretariat, community stakeholders and the rural teams, the Rural Development Institute facilitated the establishment of regional round tables in Saskatchewan and the Yukon and attempted to form a regional round table in British Columbia. The Community Collaboration Model Project also provided a unique opportunity to continue to interact with the Manitoba regional round tables and steering committee to learn about regional round table sustainability as the Manitoba regional round tables moved from external funding and support to self-sufficiency. Integral to the project was continuously evaluating the community collaboration process. As the Rural Development Institute began facilitating the

evaluation, it became clear that evaluation needed to be more than a process in which the members merely participated. The regional round tables and advisory groups needed to decide what “success” meant for them. Thus the evaluation process became a collaborative process that included all stakeholders in deciding what constituted success and how success would be measured.

Lessons Learned

Regional Round Tables

The Project has emphasized the importance of organizational development, and innovation. The literature on rural development planning and management would reinforce this imperative. Rural communities, especially those blazing new trails in innovative process, require organizing and organizations.

-David Douglas

Regional round tables need to develop organizational infrastructures to be sustainable over the long term. They need visions, goals and objectives, which should be revisited from time to time and revised as needed. Terms of references need to be in place that define membership criteria and decision-making processes. There should be clearly defined roles and expectations for the executive and for those who carry out the coordination and administration functions. There also needs to be continuous communication using a variety of media and technologies that are appropriate and accessible. Absence of organizational infrastructure can lead to misunderstandings, tensions, and ultimately the failure of the regional round table to achieve

its goals. Member communities need to contribute both cash and in-kind resources to the regional round tables As David Douglas states:

The Project has emphasized the importance of organizational development, and innovation. The literature on rural development planning and management would reinforce this imperative. Rural communities, especially those blazing new trails in innovative process, require organizing and organizations. The appropriately designed organization, contextually responsive, is one of the primary development vehicles to help us get from “here to there”. As with any journey, the wrong vehicle becomes part of the development problem, whereas the correct organization expedites and fuels the development agenda itself. It is as much a strategic initiative as any other component of the development agenda. In providing negotiated protocols, agreed upon structures, set communications procedures and so on, it provides increased predictability, lowers the risk bar, and itself creates a safe space for the collaborative conversation.

Governments

Requiring participation of the Rural Teams was intended to ensure that there was government “buy-in” to the process, as well as putting forth the concept and practice of “partnering” with communities. Where there was a commitment of the advisory groups to attend and participate in the regional round table meetings, the relationships and partnerships developed and grew. When the advisory group members were less able to attend and participate in regional round table meetings, the partnerships appeared to be more tentative. For the most part, the advisory group members participation in the community collaboration process appeared to be conducted “off the side of their desks”, adding to their already-busy working environment.

Governments need to see that investing in community development processes is an appropriate use of public funds.

Governments need to see that investing in community development processes is an appropriate use of public funds. Governments need to move from funding deliverables to supporting capacity development in the ways similar to that demonstrated in the Community Collaboration Model Project. For community/region-government partnerships to be sustained and effective, government representatives need to have mandates and reporting structures that are flexible enough to work with communities and regions in non-traditional ways and to move them from working “under the radar” to working “within the radar”. The Community Collaboration Model Project demonstrated that investing in community development processes yielded increased partnership and capacity development and produced tangible benefits to the regions involved. As well, governments need to better manage their complex accountability structures. They also need to better manage files horizontally across government departments and across governments. The membership and activities of the Rural Team advisory groups demonstrated that this is possible and can produce synergistic results.

Academic Institutions

To effectively participate in multi-community collaborations, academic institutions need to find new and creative ways to engage the human and capital resources of universities and colleges in communities to be more engaged in community development processes.

The Community Collaboration Model Project was intentionally designed to include post-secondary academic institution partners such as universities and colleges. This included partnering to provide facilitation and evaluation as well as fostering regional round table-academic institution partnerships that may have not previously existed. A primary objective of the project was to provide opportunities for students to build capacity in community development research and practices, and to participate in community development processes with communities. Masters of Rural Development students from Brandon University and students from the University of Saskatchewan actively participated in the project. In addition, two recent graduates of the Masters of Rural Development program actively coordinated components of the project.

To effectively participate in multi-community collaborations, academic institutions need to find new and creative ways to engage the human and capital resources of universities and colleges in communities to be more engaged in community development processes. Academic institutions need to view communities as something more than research laboratories and communities should be able to view academic institutions as resources for their efforts. Academic institutions also need to better understand and value community service by refining understanding of how community service is defined when individuals are “judged” for advancement purposes.

Partnerships and Capacity Development

What was demonstrated over almost nine years of the project was that developing trusting and valued relationships and partnerships within and between communities, governments and academic institutions took persistence, deliberate effort, time, resources, and committed skilled and sustained leadership. In each of the regional round tables, communities needed to overcome historic rivalries; moving from rivals for attention and resources from governments took deliberate effort and visionary leadership. The persistence to organize and hold meetings over large geographic distances and to seek funding and leverage those funds to achieve additional goals is evidence of the committed and skilled leadership.

Bill Reimer in his Foreword to this report states:

Community collaboration is a messy activity. Community members have differing interests which often come in conflict. Communities and community groups represent diverse commitments and dependencies that are bound to appear as tensions within any joint project. If collaboration is to work at all, these diverse interests must be acknowledged and managed rather than denied or avoided. The community collaboration story provides us with examples of how this might be done. The regional round tables play a key role in the process. They provide a venue where people can meet, express their interests in a safe environment, explore differences and complementarities, and consider potential action for local development. In the process, they learn the skills associated with collective action: organizing meetings, managing conflict, coming to decisions, taking action, and celebrating. As is so often the case, once the lessons are learned they can be applied to a wide variety of new challenges and innovations.

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Resources

Resources, both human and financial, were critical to the success of regional round tables' formation and sustainability. It was evident in the Community Collaboration Model Project, that formation of regional round tables required resources for collaborative processes. The project was very innovative in that regard, because the funding provided by the Rural Secretariat was for **processes**. This allowed for flexibility and individual decision-making by the regional round tables as to how their collaborative processes would unfold and go forward. This flexible funding model provided the much-needed resources for regional round table members to meet face-to-face, enabling them to form the valued relationships and partnerships that were foundational to the collaborative process.

Eighty five communities that comprised six regional round tables and four academic partners contributed almost two-thirds of the resources (in-kind and cash) to the Community Collaboration Model Project, with the Rural Secretariat contributing slightly more than one-third of the resources as a cash contribution.

Funding for the collaborative processes of the Community Collaboration Model Project was an investment that yielded benefits and will continue to yield additional benefits over time. Eighty five communities that comprised six regional round tables and four academic partners contributed almost two-thirds of the resources (in-kind and cash) to the Community Collaboration Model Project, with the Rural Secretariat contributing slightly

more than one-third of the resources as a cash contribution. The in-kind contributions of these eighty-five communities, particularly the contributions of time and efforts, were conservatively valued at more than \$1 million. These in-kind contributions were pivotal to the overall success of the project, not only from the hard dollar value, but also intrinsically because they quantified the trust, relationship, partnership and capacity building that occurred. The Rural Secretariat's contribution of a little more than one-third the value of the Community Collaboration Model Project was crucial to the success of the project, because that cash contribution enabled the community collaboration processes to occur over large geographic footprints. Having financial resources that enabled the communities to meet and engage with one-another and government representatives provided opportunities for them to focus on the processes of building the relationships and partnerships foundations.

Hopefully the flexible funding model demonstrated in the Community Collaboration Model Project can be seen as the beginning of a paradigm shift for government, in which financial resources are invested in partnership and capacity development processes in communities and regions of rural and northern Canada.

Resources are still needed to maintain and grow these regional round tables to realize their full potential. The dividends/returns on investing in the communities and regions within the Community Collaboration Model Project are already being realized and have the potential to grow, however, it takes considerable time, perhaps as long as ten years (Baker, 1993).

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partnership and capacity development processes in communities and regions of rural and northern Canada. The dividends/returns on investing in the communities and regions within the Community Collaboration Model Project are already being realized and have the potential to grow, however, it takes considerable time, (Baker, 1993).

Information and Communication Technologies

Information and communication technology, when available, was useful and appropriate for meeting planning and follow-up, however, it couldn't replace the face-to-face interactions that occurred during the meetings. Because relationship-building was foundational to the regional round tables' and advisory groups' development, face-to-face meetings, especially in the forming phase were critical. Being able to not only have formal discussions, but also to have informal and personal conversations enabled people to connect with each other at a personal level. Community, government and academic representatives found common ground, formally, through meetings and informally through the informal components of each meeting, such as hikes up mountains, and walks through the woods.

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Replicability and Transferability

An objective of the Community Collaboration Model Project was testing transferability and replicability to other areas of rural and northern Canada. Did that occur? The answer is “yes” and “no”. The Community Collaboration Model processes were successfully initiated in other areas of rural and northern Canada; however, the Model could not be replicated from province to province to territory because the community collaboration processes are not “one-size-fits-all” processes nor is it a cookie-cutter approach. What was demonstrated is that the Community Collaboration Model can be initiated elsewhere, providing there is deliberate effort; time; financial resources for community collaboration processes; and skilled, committed and sustained leadership. Where one or more of those conditions are not present, it is unlikely that a regional round table and advisory group can be formed.

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Regional Governance

There is a growing body of discussion internationally around regional governance which is different from regional government: it is not necessarily about replacing legacy governments but evolving to have additional forums for planning and decision making.

The exploration of rural regional governance is an issue affecting many communities, regions, and governments. There is a growing body of discussion internationally around regional governance which is different from regional government: it is not necessarily about replacing legacy governments but evolving to have additional forums for planning and decision making. The Community Collaboration Model Project demonstrated the need for more research to investigate multi-community collaborations and regional governance; the Governance and Collaboration Study Group, through their meetings and deliberations raised a number of research themes and questions.

Collaborative Strategies for Community Engagement, Research & Policy Development

Community development practice, research and implications for policy development are central to the projects and activities undertaken by the Rural Development Institute. In the Community Collaboration Model Project, community development processes engaged eighty-five communities, three rural teams and four academic institutions. Outcomes of this research and community engagement have the potential to influence community development practices, research and policy development at the provincial/territorial and federal levels for years to come.

Community Development Practice

An outcome in Saskatchewan was a regional round table that was able to dream large and went beyond the mandates of its founding organizations.

Even though the Community Collaboration Model Project was a research project, from the perspective of the members of the regional round tables and advisory groups, it was community development from the beginning. An outcome in Saskatchewan was a regional round table that was able to dream large and went beyond the mandates of its founding organizations. An outcome in the Yukon was a first-ever inclusive community-based regional organization that included First Nations, incorporated and non-incorporated communities. An outcome in the northern Manitoba Bayline Regional Round Table was a strong regional organization that has made a difference in food security for residents of its member communities.

Outcomes for all members of the regional round tables were connections to governments and academic institutions in new and different ways. Similarly, outcomes for governments and academic institutions were engagements with communities that had not been initiated before.

Research

When engaging with communities in the Community Collaboration Model Project, the Rural Development Institute used a collaborative participatory action research approach. This research approach ensured that the WaterWolf, Yukon and Manitoba regional round tables' and advisory groups' goals and objectives were unique to each regional round table and advisory group, and were not imposed in a one-size-fits all solution. This approach also ensured that the evaluation process was participatory and collaborative incorporating principles of inclusion, equal partnership, shared responsibility, empowerment and cooperation.

The Community Collaboration Model Project also demonstrated the need for more research to investigate multi-community collaborations and regional governance. A research study through their meetings and deliberations raised several questions including those pertaining to rural governance: power-sharing for local governments; power constructs between legacy and emergent governance systems, critical analysis of tension and resolution between legacy and emergent constructs; the role of spacial factors; decision-making; voids as triggers; how individuals are changed, critical analysis of place-based relationships; identification of assets, conditions, initial context and change of communities and influence of normative systems.

The Community Collaboration Model Project also demonstrated the need for more research to investigate multi-community collaborations and regional governance.

Policy Development

Emerging from this research project are several suggestions for policy consideration:

- Communities need to move from a competitive mindset and strategy with their neighbouring communities to that of a collaborative strategy for the region.
- Governments need to see that investing in community development processes is an appropriate use of public funds.
- Governments need to move from funding deliverables to supporting capacity development.
- Governments need to better manage their complex accountability structures.
- Governments need to better manage files horizontally across government departments and across governments.
- Academic institutions need to find new and creative ways to engage the human and capital resources of universities and colleges with communities.
- More research is needed into the exploration of rural regional governance as an issue affecting many communities, regions, and governments.

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Foreword by David Douglas

David J.A. Douglas Professor Rural Planning and Development, University of Guelph

Rural development is an extremely complex, challenging and uncertain pursuit. The shifting agenda, indeed the shifting “truths” of political, economic, social, cultural and environmental contexts across Canada’s diverse rural regions, and through the vagaries of time, pose almost insuperable challenges for rural communities and public policy. “Almost”, but not completely - for as with the personal development enterprise and those of our families and loved ones, we press on. The Community Collaboration Project is another step in this universal and timeless endeavour.

The Project has re-emphasized the centrality of collaboration in the culture of development. Collaboration is undertaken for technical, logistical and practical reasons. It can make good practical sense. But it is also undertaken for normative reasons; it is valued as fundamentally a good thing to do. While these might seem to be self-evidently complementary, as two blades of a scissors, that is not always the case. And indeed, there is often a significant learning process for all participants to seek out, articulate and share the understandings of complementarities here. This is fundamentally a social learning process that can only be achieved through the experiential episode of shared endeavour - we must “walk the talk”, and walk it together, finding each other, and ourselves along the way. But this locates collaboration squarely within the pursuit of rural development which is itself fundamentally a search process; a collective search for understandings (e.g. the “why” of our condition), for development alternatives, and desirable paths toward solutions.

But collaboration is another extension of the self, beyond the easier self-interest and affective extensions in our families, friendships, and immediate communities. It asks us to move to the edge of our comfort zones, toward unknown territories, into uncertain relationships. Indeed it asks us to co-explore relationships with no self-evident returns in terms of benefits to our community’s livelihoods and general development. It is risk rich. And the further we go the less certain the “glue” might be. As researchers have articulated it, going from the relatively known and secure bonding social capital *within* the community out toward the bridging capital, or anticipated capital, of *inter-community* collaborations is not for the faint of heart.

All of this reinforces some of the central conclusions of this innovative applied research/practice project. Collaboration for rural development is a learned behaviour; it is a relational technology that has to be contextually crafted. This crafting requires investment in time and other valuable resources, not the least of which is respect and trust. It requires significant shifts in how we as researchers, practitioners, public policy personnel, community activists and others do what we do. Yesterday’s orthodoxies of bureaucratic process and academic research process need adjusting and refinements for these innovative collaborations to work. But we also need to be mindful of the evidence that the nurturing and crafting of the collaborative relationship is itself fundamentally developmental; it is not just a means to an end, for as it builds capacity, as it enhances self-esteem, as it creates new knowledge, skills and wherewithal it is in itself rural development. Indeed its potentials for being sustained far outstrip most of the physical

infrastructure, business incentives and other elements of what we conventionally see as the markers of “development”.

The Project has emphasized the importance of organizational development, and innovation. The literature on rural development planning and management would reinforce this imperative. Rural communities, especially those blazing new trails in innovative process, require organizing and organizations. The appropriately designed organization, contextually responsive, is one of the primary development vehicles to help us get from “here to there”. As with any journey, the wrong vehicle becomes part of the development problem, whereas the correct organization expedites and fuels the development agenda itself. It is as much a strategic initiative as any other component of the development agenda. In providing negotiated protocols, agreed upon structures, set communications procedures and so on, it provides increased predictability, lowers the risk bar, and itself creates a safe space for the collaborative conversation.

The innovation evident in the design of the Project and in the courageous commitments of its diverse participants is a good example of collective innovation. As noted in the Report, it sends a clear signal to academe, to governments, and to others for a commensurate investment in innovative practice. It might be a surprise to some to hear of this community-based innovation as very “modern”, in many respects very prototypical. But it is. We marvel at the fluidity of flexible production systems and other leading edges of the so-called Post-Fordist information economy. The context responsive behaviours evident in the Community Collaboration Project, the organizational flexibility, the culture of adaptive process and practice - these and other characteristics of the rural development process here are thoroughly modern. So it is no surprise to see the Report conclude that the transferability of the lessons and practices, while evident, are necessarily bounded. Other rural contexts, conditions, players, histories, and other factors will require an informed *place-particular* application of the learnings and relational technologies from this valuable Project. These messages must not be lost.

Foreword by Bill Reimer

Bill Reimer Professor Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia University

This document tells an exciting and valuable story. It is a story about the power of collaboration, its difficulty, surprises, but most of all, its benefits for rural people and ultimately our nation. By doing so, it reinforces the value of such collaboration and the importance of government flexibility and patience while it unfolds.

Community collaboration is a messy activity. Community members have differing interests which often come in conflict. Communities and community groups represent diverse commitments and dependencies that are bound to appear as tensions within any joint project. If collaboration is to work at all, these diverse interests must be acknowledged and managed rather than denied or avoided. The community collaboration story provides us with examples of how this might be done.

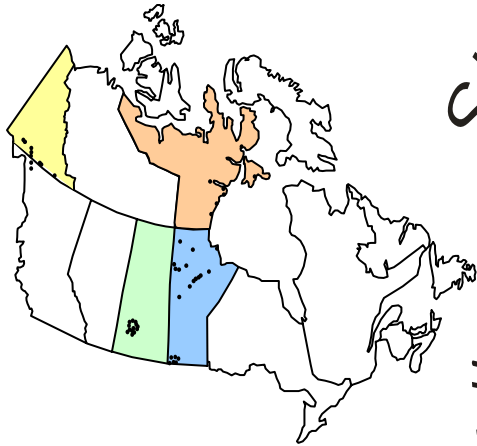
The regional round tables play a key role in the process. They provide a venue where people can meet, express their interests in a safe environment, explore differences and complementarities, and consider potential action for local development. In the process, they learn the skills associated with collective action: organizing meetings, managing conflict, coming to decisions, taking action, and celebrating. As is so often the case, once the lessons are learned they can be applied to a wide variety of new challenges and innovations.

The community collaboration story also illustrates how various partners can contribute to this process. We have learned that local initiative, commitment, and action is critical, but that does not mean that government has no role in the process. Regional, provincial/territorial, and federal governments are well placed to support the community collaboration process. Collaboration requires a venue to meet, resources to get there (especially in rural areas), and models for success. All of these are contributions which governments can make.

The stories in this volume show how it may be done. Government representatives are regular participants at the round tables: initiating the process, providing resources for meetings, communication, facilitation, and training, but always standing on the side to make way for local leaders. Community members show continual engagement with each other: sometimes tentatively, but often courageously – risking embarrassment, cost, or failure in an effort to find new ways to enhance the quality of life for all their neighbours.

As we read through these stories, however, we should remember that there are equally important activities taking place behind the scene. Community collaboration requires government representatives that encourage their colleagues to have the patience for local processes to mature, seek more appropriate ways to represent the intangible but valuable indicators of successful collaboration, and champion similar collaboration across the silos of their bureaucracies. It also requires local people who are willing to transfer their time and energy from family, business, and recreation to engage each other on behalf of their community. And it requires ongoing programs of research and exploration to seek out examples, test the speculations, identify the lessons to guide new initiatives, and investigate the questions arising from the collaboration process itself. The community collaboration story has much to teach us well beyond the community context.

Community Collaboration Model Project 2005 - 2008



Strengthening Community
Partnership Building

Community Partners
WaterWolf (SK), Yukon
and Manitoba/Nunavut
Regional Round Tables



**Trusting
and
Valued
Relationships**



Academic Partners
Brandon University,
University of Saskatchewan,
Malaspina University-College
Yukon College

**85
Communities**
3 Rural Teams
**4 Academic
Institutions**
**6 Regional
Round Tables**

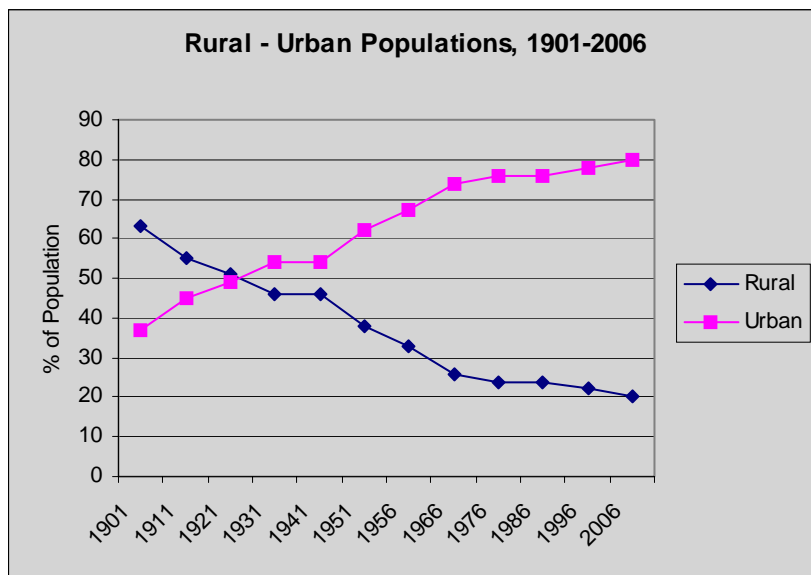
Government Partners
Rural Team Advisory
Groups in Saskatchewan,
Yukon and Manitoba

Strengthening Community
Partnership Building

Multi-Community Collaborations: An Overview

Rural and northern communities are very diverse yet they face many similar problems. Evidence from around the world demonstrates that rural and remote poverty is a problem. Their geographical location itself poses challenges to transportation, communication and service delivery. Dependence on primary industries places limits on economic opportunities and can have unsustainable environmental impacts. The absence or reduction of public and private investment has resulted in problems with food and water security; limited access to education, health care and other important social services; and either a young, rapidly growing population or an aging, shrinking population (Troughton 2003). The impact and importance of these complex and interrelated problems on a particular community is dependant upon its history and current context.

Rural and northern communities throughout Canada are not homogeneous. Trends in population, employment, and income can greatly vary from region to region. According to the 2006 Census, one in five (20%) Canadians lives in a rural or northern¹ community (Statistics Canada, 2007a). In 2006, the total population living in rural and northern communities was approximately six million (Statistics Canada, 2007b). From 2001-2006, the population of rural and northern Canada increased by 1%; however, urban Canada increased by 5.4% (Statistics Canada, 2007c). Rural and northern communities within close proximity to a large urban centre experienced higher growth rates than remote or isolated communities. The percent of Canadians living in rural and northern communities has continually declined since 1931.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2007a

¹ Rural and northern defined as areas located outside urban centers with a population of at least 10,000 (Statistics Canada, 2007a).

Increased global commerce, information exchange and environmental concern have been catalysts for change in rural and remote areas. These changes have led to increased attention to multi-stakeholder collaboration and action as a means of seizing new opportunities and dealing with new or longstanding challenges (Apedaile 2004). An understanding of the processes associated with people working together to articulate and act on problems of common concern is important for successful collaborative development.

In 2004, Deatra Walsh and Robert Annis published a report, *Reflections on Manitoba's Community Collaboration Project 1999-2004*. In this report Walsh and Annis reflected on rural and northern Canada. The following is an excerpt from that report:

Rural, remote and northern Canadian communities face significant challenges and opportunities in the dynamic context of a globalizing world. The presence of change, as is acknowledged in the literature, is not unique to today. Communities are not stagnant and the forces of change have always been a part of rural, remote and northern reality. The future of these communities, however, is a topic that academics, governments, residents and other community stakeholders continue to explore and discuss. Examples of these discussions are numerous in community, political, public and academic spheres. In some instances, it has been asked whether such communities will persist as Canada's economic engine or lag behind the rest of the country, doomed to a slow death. Similarly, academics have asked if rural communities will be part of Canada's future.

While outsiders may question whether or not these communities will survive under these often challenging circumstances, for community residents, it is more a question of how to collectively meet these challenges and address change. Furthermore, what are the respective roles of all stakeholders including: community residents, governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academics alike, in the future of rural, remote and northern communities?

Rural, remote and northern communities are alive in Canada. Despite the discourse cited above, they are one of the many engines contributing to this country's economy. In fact, primary industrial activities in 2003, most of which occur in rural areas, accounted for almost 6% of Canada's Gross Domestic Product and natural resource products comprised over 31% of Canadian exports. The nature of the Canadian and global economy has shifted however, relying more on technological capital rather than human capital (i.e. labour) thereby changing the way in which traditionally labour intensive, predominantly rural, economic activities have operated. As a result, rural demographic changes including youth out-migration and aging populations have occurred and sometimes resulted in service reduction. In addition, these demographic shifts have placed new and different strains for residents who remain in these communities. Likewise, industry shifts favouring the service economy and ideological shifts promoting rural lifestyles have led to other demographic and community change including: urbanite in-migration and seasonal swelling tourist populations. These also lead to other strains on communities and full-time residents living there.

Often, the challenges that many communities face, and the conscious efforts by governments and wider society to address these challenges, has led to a political discourse that sees addressing rural issues as more of a “relief operation” based upon humanitarian aid, rather than as a useful exercise to strengthen the nation as a whole...Rather than discard Canada’s “rural” communities based on the discourses that question its utility, it is necessary to understand the rural experience and work within its parameters (p. 5-6).

Reflecting on rural governance, Walsh and Annis go on to state:

The [Rural Development Institute’s] Community Collaboration Project was an attempt at this dialogue and process. It was also an example of bureaucratic awareness that previous methods of governing are no longer applicable to the current rural Canadian context. Since the post-war period, power in decision-making has largely been held within the hands of the central state. This is a result of the rise of the welfare state in the aftermath of the Great Depression and the need for interventionist strategies for income redistribution. In the case of Canada’s rural communities, the welfare state philosophy is especially relevant to a power discussion. In the context of economic development, diversification and industrialization, rural communities, particularly those dependent on resources exploitation, were also seen as lagging behind their urban counterparts and were, in many respects, viewed as backward. As a result, efforts to address rural-urban inequalities were delivered in what many authors refer to as top-down policy based on central tendencies and development models incompatible with rural reality.

Through nationwide initiatives such as the Canadian Rural Dialogue², which began in 1998, rural, remote and northern people have voiced their desire to change these traditional approaches. Likewise, academic discourse has denounced the top-down approach in favour of more bottom-up approaches to decision making. Responding to the realization that working from the top-down has not adequately addressed rural issues, federal policy in rural areas has moved away from large funding programs aimed at attracting industrial growth and encouraging large-scale development to a predominantly endogenous development approach that places emphasis on community self-reliance. One of the key conclusions from the Conference on Economic Transformation in Western Canada is that Ottawa should consider ways to improve collaboration and consultation processes with the provinces (p. 6-7).

In 2002, Dr. Trevor Hancock published a report, *From Governing to Governance: Reflections on the Community Collaboration Project*. In his report, Dr. Hancock conveyed a fundamental shift in organizational philosophy and arrangements in community-government relationships. The following is excerpted from Hancock’s report:

The “Healthy Communities” movement, now a global phenomenon involving several thousand cities, towns, villages, neighbourhoods and communities on all five continents, is

² Through regular contact and conversations with rural, remote and northern Canadians, the Rural Dialogue was designed to establish a common understanding of challenges and priorities in these areas, to understand what these residents expect of the federal government and identify better ways for the government to respond to rural, remote and northern needs.

but one manifestation of a world-wide interest in building, regenerating or otherwise developing community capacity...Central to this rediscovery of community and its assets is a fundamental shift in our relationship to government, coupled with a growing sense that re-localization is a necessary counter balance to the growing globalization of our economy and culture. The shift in our relationship to government means that we are no longer content to let government make all the decisions, rather we want to be more active participants in the process of governance, which involves all the key stakeholders in making decisions about factors which affect the wellbeing and quality of life of our communities and our society.

The growing emphasis on community-level action may perhaps be traced to two inter-related phenomenon. First, a growing recognition of the validity of Rene Dubos' dictum that to address environmental (and other) concerns, we have to think globally but act locally. Coupled with this is a growing sense of our relative powerlessness to affect supra-national and global issues such as NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], the European community, the World Trade Organization and trans-national corporations which leads us to try to focus our energies where we can make a difference.

But at the same time, access to information and data through information technology infrastructure provides a mechanism to move knowledge resident in government and academic institutions to community-level processes. As digitally literate populations emerge and knowledge and the power that goes with it becomes increasingly distributed across a society the relationship between a state and its citizens may fundamentally change.

For these and many other reasons, the task of (re)building community capacity and a more civil society has emerged as a major concern at the end of the 20th century and as a major challenge for the 21st century. Over the past decade or two, a large number of different "movements" have emerged that, while starting from different perspectives, share a common goal - to improve the wellbeing and quality of life of people in the physical communities in which they live - and common strategies include: involving community members in a participatory process of community action; building the capacity of community members to take action to improve their community's wellbeing and quality of life; forging partnerships among many different stakeholders from the public, voluntary and private sectors; changing local policies and conditions so as to improve wellbeing and the quality of life; advocating and working for supportive policies and programs from higher levels of government; and creating provincial, national and international networks for mutual learning and support (p. 3-4).

Hancock goes on to state:

Communities are usually interested in being one or more of the following: clean, safe, green, healthy, livable, sustainable and prosperous. They are interested in multiple forms of development: social development, community development, economic development, sustainable development, human development, and rural development, among others. But they are normally not interested in all of them at once, nor are they interested in them in equal degrees. On the other hand, they generally don't want to have to deal with each of these as separate issues, partly because in their own lived experience these issues are all inter-related, and partly because it is too cumbersome and too exhausting - particularly in smaller communities - to have to respond to multiple federal and provincial programs using separate forms, with separate criteria, to meet separate deadlines.

One of the things communities want most of all, therefore, is to be able to simplify and rationalize the various funding “pipes” that potentially funnel program resources into their communities. They really don’t want to have to deal with multiple bureaucratic systems to address what they see as a single or a smaller number of inter-related set of issues. Moreover, they don’t want to have to respond to provincial or federal programs that define an issue and an approach to it in such a way that the communities have to adapt to the provincial and federal issue or need. From the communities’ point of view - and it is the communities that governments are trying to serve - they want a provincial or federal program or policy to be flexible enough to adapt to their more local needs.

So how might this be accomplished? First, it is unrealistic to expect that all federal and provincial programs can change their modus operandi either over night or even at all. But if only a small proportion - say 5-10 percent - of provincial or federal funding directed at communities was freed up to be pooled and applied in a more flexible and responsible way, that would be a tremendous step in the right direction, particularly if allied to a process that allowed issues to be combined and integrated rather than dealt with as separate issues (p.13).

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Hancock proposed a new type of community-government partnership in which the partnership were “owned” and managed by community organizations which were autonomous from government. He suggested that no direct funding be provided to the communities, however facilitation and support for skills development and other capacity-building services should be provided. Because of the high cost of travel in rural, remote and northern communities, he suggested that some direct funding for travel costs be provided.

Hancock stated that there were two key elements of this new approach:

- *a community-led partnership organization*, which is a coalition of community-level organizations (e.g. local governments, local community organizations, regional round tables, regional economic development organizations etc.), as well as provincial organizations engaged in one way or another in community capacity building/social development/sustainable development, healthy communities, rural development, etc., together with federal and provincial departments.
- *a government liaison and support group*, which is a work group of provincial and federal agencies and departments whose task it would be to support the partnership and its community members by identifying suitable programs, funds and other resources that could be made available to communities (p.16).

In 1993, Harold Baker presented findings and conclusions from a study of multi-community collaborations in the United States, Ireland, France and Spain. This study examined the structure and processes of creating and sustaining multi-community collaborations. Baker (1993) defined collaboration as:

Work[ing] together, especially to produce something. Specifically, collaboration may be defined as process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions beyond their own limited vision of what is possible (p. 36).

Baker states that there are a number of key elements that are important for multi-community collaborative efforts. They include:

- the people must come to recognize that they have mutual interests, a conceptual framework that includes justice for all, and a shared vision of the future;
- the people develop commitment to work together over an extended period of time, because it will take time to develop the trust required;
- the people must effectively be able to work out their differences. This implies that the interests of each stakeholder must be represented;
- diversity of the group helps to expand the vision of each stakeholder and provides broader appreciation of the situation than would be the case if they worked alone;
- something worthwhile will result from their mutual efforts; and
- the potential advantages of continuing to work together are recognized (p. 36).

Baker formulated twelve guiding principles for multi-community collaborations which include:

- there is a clear and important reason for communities to become partners in collaboration;
- benefits from collaboration are identified and appreciated by all community partners;
- there is adequate orientation and time for planning the collaborative arrangement and the related development program;
- there are reasonable boundaries relating to the development interests in the area.
- there is a sound funding base;
- support from local government officials is established early in the multi-community collaboration;
- there is a concerted effort to share leadership among the community partners;
- there is adequate arrangement for staff support;
- leadership training is viewed as an essential and ongoing part of the collaborative effort;
- external support systems (governments, educational institutions, consultants, etc) plan an essential but temporary or periodic role;
- “win/win” strategies/results are emphasized in dealing with issues, problems, needs or opportunities; and
- following evaluation, successes are celebrated and failures are a source of learning (p. 37-39).

In his typology of multi-community efforts, Baker (1993) observed that the emerging phase of multi-community collaborations took less than two years and was relatively easy and usually

exciting. Everyone is enthusiastic with high expectations. External start-up money has either been provided or obtained. Organizational structures and mandates are being formulated. The second to tenth year, which is the formation stage, seemed to be the most difficult phase in creating viable relationships among the communities. Volunteers may become fatigued, and the patience or impatience of the expected results is experienced. In this phase, new leaders, and new kinds of expertise are needed, and failures are experienced. The third phase, following about the tenth year is one in which stability and sustainability are more likely to emerge.

Community Collaboration Phases and Characteristics (Baker, 1993)

Emergence	Formation	Established
<i>Exciting</i>	<i>Difficult</i>	<i>Stable</i>
Takes less than 2 years	Lasts 2 – 10 years	Established for 10+ years
Works on a specific project	Has short-term programs	Has a long-term program
Guided by a steering group		Has a representative board
Has no meaningful ties to government		Local government is a partner
Has no employed staff		Employs professional staff
Has an informal arrangement		Organization is guided by a vision, mission statement, objectives, constitution, bylaws
There is no documented agreement		Members have signed legal agreements
There is provisional short-term external funding	Joint internal/external funding	Long-term/permanent internal funding in place

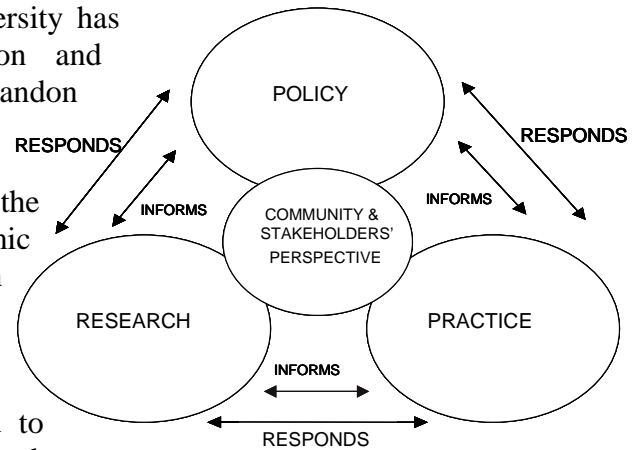
Community Collaboration Model Project Landscape



Multi-Community Collaboration: From an Idea to a Model

For more than one hundred years Brandon University has been a cornerstone of the City of Brandon and southwestern Manitoba. Throughout this time, Brandon University has maintained its foundation as a rurally-based university with strong national and international links. Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute in 1989 as an academic research center and a leading source of information on issues affecting rural and northern communities.

RDI functions as a not-for-profit research and development organization designed to promote, facilitate, coordinate, initiate and conduct multi-disciplinary academic and applied research on rural and northern issues. The Institute provides an interface between academic research efforts and the community by acting as a conduit of rural research information and by facilitating community involvement in rural development. RDI projects are characterized by cooperative and collaborative efforts of multi-stakeholders. The Institute has diverse research affiliations, and multiple community and government linkages related to its rural development mandate. RDI translates and transfers information to a variety of constituents and stakeholders and makes research information and results widely available to the public either in printed form or on its website or by means of public lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences. Led by Dr. Robert Annis, RDI is a collective group of academics, community development professionals and students whose knowledge, skills and abilities are complementary enabling RDI to be a centre of excellence in rural development research, policy and practice.



The Community Collaboration Project 1999-2004

In 1994, Health Canada and Environment Canada collaborated to establish the Community Animation Program³, based on their respective Healthy Environment Program and EcoAction⁴ 2000 programs. The Community Animation Program was designed to provide a link between human health and sustainable environments. The Community Animation Program activities were required to have health as well as an environmental dimension, build on community talent and resources, be driven by community needs as defined by the community and be consistent with the principles of sustainability.

The Community Animation Program was instrumental to the Community Collaboration Project's development as it provided the project with core administrative funding. At the same time as the Community Animation Program, Manitoba's provincial activities in community development were focusing on round tables through the Community Choices Program. From 1991-1999, the Manitoba Department of Intergovernmental Affairs established about one hundred community round tables to facilitate community visioning processes and assist communities with goal setting and action plans to address social, environmental and economic issues and opportunities. Like the Community Animation Program, local control, consensus building, and sustainability were all part of the program's objectives. A third piece that contributed to the Community Collaboration Project was the Rural Secretariat's Rural Dialogue process of the Canadian Rural Partnership. This initiative was based on the need to develop stronger linkages and relationships between rural citizens and the federal government, as well as engage citizens in matters relevant to their communities. In *Reflections on Manitoba's Community Collaboration Project, 1999-2004*, Walsh and Annis observed:

There was a desire on the part of the Rural Secretariat to continue the Rural Dialogue process. Health Canada and Environment Canada had the Community Animation Program. The Province of Manitoba was looking for ways to evolve its community round table process. Since these parties all wanted to investigate a new process for community engagement, the opportunity was there to try something new (p.10).

The Community Collaboration Project was born out of the belief that in changing times, providing access to appropriate tools, resources and information would enable individuals living in rural and northern communities to engage in informed and meaningful dialogue and decision-making with other communities in their region, with local community-serving organizations and with governments. The Community Collaboration Project was intended to be a process for developing linkages among project partners, and a means for exploring alternate governing relationships and new forms of governance. The overall goal of the Community Collaboration Project was to design and facilitate a multi-community, multi-agency cooperative approach for

³ The Community Animation Program emerged in 1994 from a partnership between Health and Environment Canada's Healthy Environment and EcoAction 2000 Programs and officially ended March 31, 2004. Its goal was to work with communities to strengthen community capacity to take action on issues related to health and the environment and to take action on issues in which health and the environment were linked.

⁴ The EcoAction Community Funding Program was an Environment Canada program that provided financial support to community, environmental, and aboriginal groups, First Nations Councils, service clubs, associations and youth and seniors' organizations for projects that addressed clean air, climate change, clean water and nature. EcoAction encouraged projects that protected, rehabilitated or enhanced the natural environment, and built the capacity of communities to sustain these activities into the future.

initiating joint planning and project development activities for regional social, environmental and economic community development in rural and northern Manitoba. Objectives included facilitating processes for communities and governments to work together collaboratively and looking at ways for governments to better serve these communities.

The dialogue between communities and other stakeholders occurred through a regional round table structure with a steering committee providing linkages between the regional round table and governments. The Rural Development Institute, provided facilitation for the regional round table development, initially organizing, facilitating and recording the meetings. The use of information and communication technology was integral to regional round table evolution and capacity building from the onset. The regional round tables used a variety of traditional and Internet-based tools, as the project unfolded to meet the various regional round table needs, with unique knowledge management tools being developed.

Manitoba Steering Committee's Role

Founding members of the steering committee included Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Rural Secretariat, Health Canada, Environment Canada, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs, Community Futures Partners of Manitoba and the Rural Development Institute. In its third year membership expanded to include Manitoba Community Connections, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, and the Community Information Management Network.

The steering committee's goal was to assist groups of rural and northern communities address common concerns and opportunities, particularly as they related to working with government departments and agencies. Its purpose was to better serve rural, northern and remote groups of communities. The steering committee's first role was that of a management committee.

The steering committee endeavoured to have representatives attend each regional round table meeting, usually one federal and one provincial member. These members provided support to the regional round tables. In 2001, the steering committee became a sub-committee of Rural Team Manitoba (Rural Team Manitoba, 2008). The steering committee's direct connections with the regional round tables facilitated linkages to the Rural Team because most of the steering committee members were also Rural Team members. These linkages provided information and pathways to and from other government departments and agencies, which were often funding sources for the regional round tables.

Rural Development Institute's Role

RDI was the project sponsor and facilitator, and stayed connected to the regional round tables and steering committee throughout the five years of the project. As each regional round table became more organized and independent, RDI moved from the organizing, facilitating and recording roles, to only the recording role, then to invited guest and finally to not being present at the meetings at all. In addition to the above-mentioned roles, RDI conducted annual reviews.

Manitoba Regional Round Tables' Formation

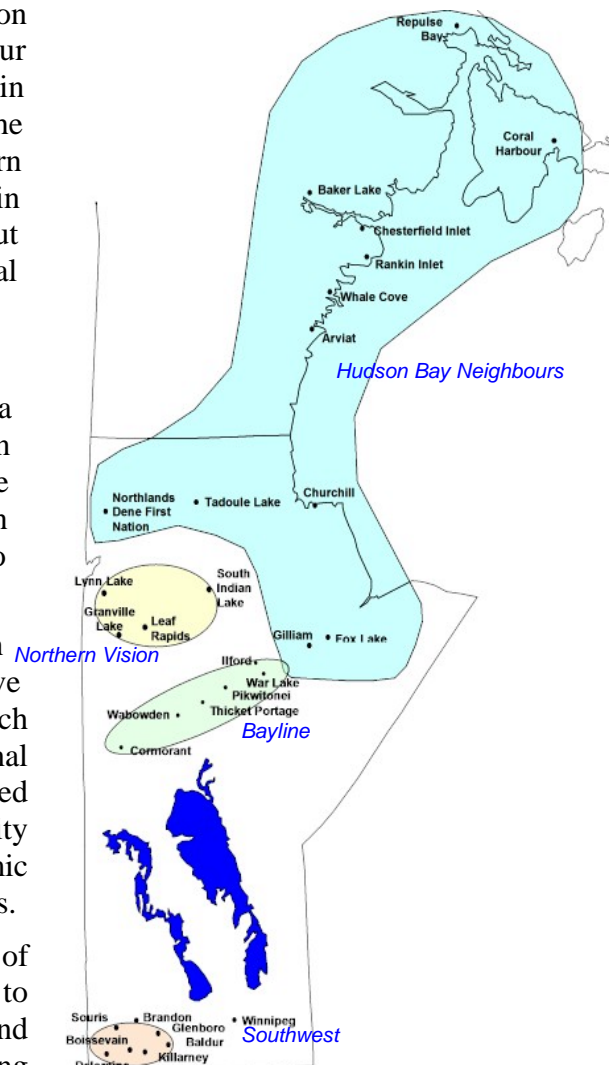
During the five years of the Community Collaboration Project, twenty-eight communities organized into four regional round tables. Two regional round tables were in northern Manitoba, one was in northern Manitoba and the Kivalliq region of Nunavut and one was in southwestern Manitoba. Twenty-one of the communities were in southern and northern Manitoba, while seven Nunavut communities joined the Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round Table.

Northern Vision Regional Round Table

In 1999, representatives from the northern Manitoba communities of Leaf Rapids, Lynn Lake and South Indian Lake met to discuss common issues. This led to the formation of Northern Vision Regional Round Table. In 2000, the regional round table's membership expanded to include Granville Lake.

Northern Vision's purpose was to strengthen their region by coordinating and implementing culturally sensitive goals identified through action-oriented partnerships. Each community recognizing the need for improved regional cooperation to address issues of mutual concern and agreed to work on blueprints for their future. Community representation on the regional round table, were Economic Development Officers and/or elected municipal councilors.

The regional round table met periodically until the fall of 2005. At their last meeting, members discussed revisions to the regional round table's purpose, membership, and potential activities. Community and community-serving organizations agreed to a follow-up meeting. An attempt to schedule that follow-up meeting was made, however the meeting did not occur.



Mark Matiaszek presenting a list of their activities.

Southwest Regional Round Table

The Southwest Regional Round Table formed in 2000. Southwest's vision was that of a non-profit, regional development organization that facilitated regional projects. Founding members included the southwestern Manitoba communities of Boissevain, Deloraine, Killarney, and Souris. In late 2000 Baldur, Wawanesa, and Glenboro joined the regional round table and Cartwright joined in 2006. Wawanesa subsequently withdrew from the regional round table because it was unable to sustain its membership. Community representatives

who participated on the Southwest Regional Round Table were Community Development and Economic Development Officers. Its focus was on projects related to youth inclusion, business retention and expansion, and value-added agricultural opportunities.

The regional round table met monthly throughout each year from September to June. The regional round table continued on after the Community Collaboration Project ended in 2004. In 2007 the regional round table underwent several changes in membership. This has caused them to pause and re-evaluate the regional round table.



Laurie Crowe & Joy Dornian presenting their mission statement.

Bayline Regional Round Table

In 2001, the northern Manitoba communities of Cormorant, Ilford, Pikwitonei, and Wabowden created the Bayline Regional Round Table. Thicket Portage joined in 2001 and War Lake First Nation joined in 2002. The communities' common link was the Hudson Bay rail line, which connected all six communities and was the only year-round mode of transportation for four of the communities. Bayline's



Bayline members discussing the Food Security project.

vision was to work cohesively together around areas of common concern and to collectively have a stronger voice. Membership in Bayline consisted of two representatives from each community with at least one of the two representatives being a member of each community's council. Bayline met three to five times each year. The regional round table continued on after the Community Collaboration Project ended in 2004, and continues to meet.

Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round Table

The Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round Table was established in 2002. The membership was unique because it included communities and First Nations in Manitoba and Nunavut. Founding members included Arviat, Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Rankin Inlet, Repulse Bay, and Whale Cove in Nunavut and Fox Lake First Nation, Gillam and Churchill in Manitoba. Northlands Dene First Nation (Manitoba) and Tadoule Lake (Manitoba) joined the regional round table later. Its vision was to establish a viable regional round table to promote the communities of northern Manitoba and the Kivilliq region of



Members at a regional round table meeting in Rankin Inlet NU.

Nunavut, to coordinate efforts and to advance issues of mutual consideration. Each regional round table community had two representatives, usually the Mayor and the Chief/Senior Administrative Officer. Meetings of the regional round table were attempted twice a year, with the last meeting in Gillam Manitoba in October 2005.

Canadian Rural Partnership Models Program

In 2004, the Rural Secretariat invited the Rural Development Institute to submit a proposal to the *Models for Rural Development Research Initiative* based on the work that RDI had been doing with the regional round tables and the steering committee in Manitoba. The proposal was accepted and the Rural Development Institute undertook the Community Collaboration Model Project from late 2004 to March 31, 2008. The Project was then extended for the Yukon Regional Round Table from April 1 to September 30, 2008. The research and analysis activities that the Rural Secretariat undertook under this program were intended to contribute to the understanding of what approaches to community development and capacity building worked in rural, remote and northern communities. The Rural Secretariat intended to use the information gained from the research initiative to inform all levels of government in decision-making for policies and programs (Rural Secretariat, 2007).



Annual Workshop in Thompson Manitoba May 2005

The Community Collaboration Model Project

The Rural Development Institute articulated the community development practices and lessons learned that had emerged in Manitoba from 1999-2004 into a vision and model for the Community Collaboration Model Project. Foundational to the Community Collaboration Model Project was the building and sustaining of trusting and valued relationships and collaborative partnerships between and among the partners.

Structure and Processes

The Community Collaboration Model Project vision's was to encourage communities to explore and develop processes to increase their ability to address change and work toward becoming more sustainable. The overall goal of the Community Collaboration Model Project was to test whether the Community Collaboration Model, as developed in Manitoba, was applicable and able to be replicated in other areas of rural/northern Canada. Objectives included determining what conditions and circumstances were needed to bring communities together to form regional round tables and advisory groups. Other objectives including determining the role of information and communication technologies in supporting social networks for community development and in supporting universities, research institutes, and governments engaged in community research processes.



The community collaboration process involved a group of communities forming a regional round table and partnering with the Rural Team in their province/territory through a subcommittee called an advisory group and also partnering with an academic institution. For the Rural Development Institute to enter into an agreement to facilitate the development of a regional round table all of the aforementioned partners needed to embrace the process and the partnership requirements.

The roles and responsibilities of the communities included forming a regional round table of diverse stakeholders who had the desire and commitment to work together to achieve common goals. Responsibilities also included working with RDI to evaluate the progress, sharing lessons learned, contributing resources (in-kind and/or cash) and providing a financial accounting of the expenditures of funds and contributions.

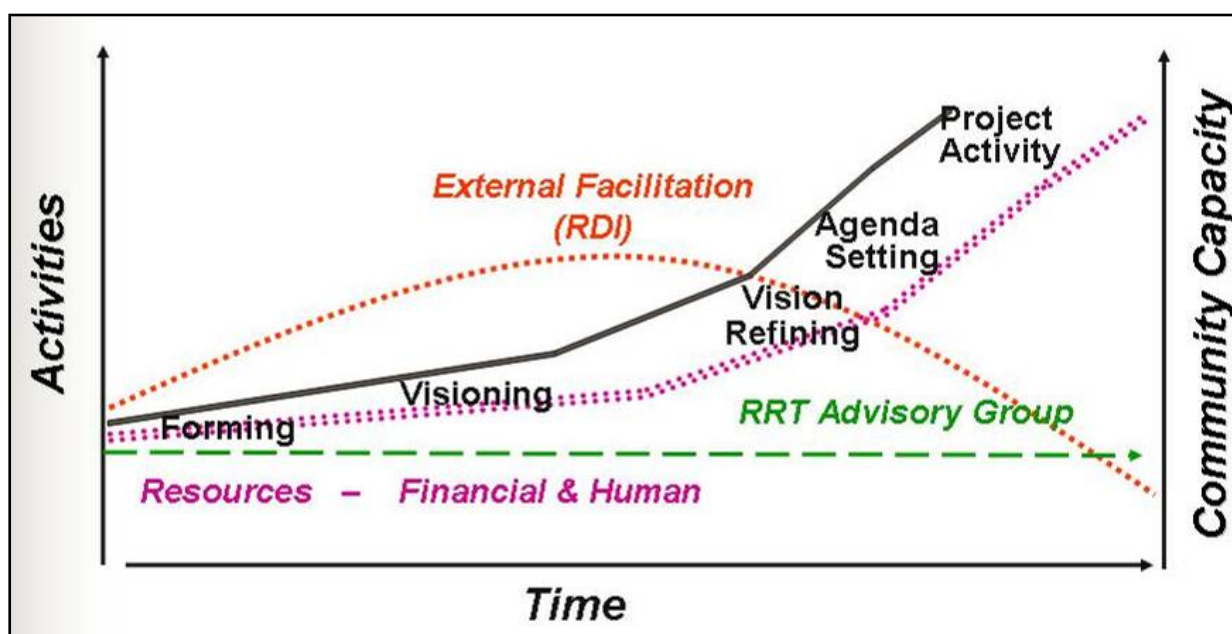
The roles and responsibilities of the members of the advisory groups included providing advice and guidance for implementing the regional round tables; maintaining channels of communication with the regional round tables; serving as conduits for communication between

members of the Rural Teams and the regional round tables; establishing lines of communication with other provincial/territorial Rural Team advisory groups engaged in similar processes and assisting the regional round tables to access information, human and financial resources.

The academic institution's roles and responsibilities included liaising with the advisory groups and the regional round tables; attending any regional round table meetings deemed critical to the community collaboration processes and assisting in strengthening the collaboration processes at the regional round tables.

The Rural Development Institute also committed to strengthening and supporting regional round tables by:

- facilitating the early formation and structure of the regional round tables and dialogues of cross-community and/or government representatives;
- attending, when appropriate, regional round table meetings to facilitate, document, and share information and lessons learned across all regional round tables and advisory groups engaged in the project;
- making cash contributions to support each regional round table. The exact amount of the contribution depended on the regional round tables' ability to leverage cash and/or in-kind contributions and was based upon need and value;
- facilitating participatory evaluation processes; and
- convening annual meetings of representatives of regional round tables and advisory groups to share experiences and lessons learned, documenting and reporting on the community collaboration process.



Application

Longitudinal Study

The Community Collaboration Model Project provided a unique opportunity to continue to interact with the Manitoba regional round tables and steering committee to learn about regional round table sustainability as the Manitoba regional round tables moved from external funding and support to self-sufficiency. Concurrent with the creation of new regional round tables, the Rural Development Institute undertook a longitudinal study of the regional round tables in Manitoba/Nunavut. All four regional round tables were still functioning at the start of the Community Collaboration Model Project, which provided the opportunity to institute an evaluation process with the Manitoba regional round tables and steering committee to look at their successes and challenges, especially their partnerships and relationships, capacity development, influence and advocacy, resiliency and sustainability. Because the regional round table development process takes considerable time, the opportunity to evaluate these processes over an eight-year period was invaluable.

Feasibility Investigation

In collaboration with the Rural Secretariat, community stakeholders and the Rural Teams, RDI facilitated the establishment of regional round tables in Saskatchewan and the Yukon and attempted to form a regional round table in British Columbia.

Early in 2005, RDI met with Rural Team Saskatchewan to discuss the feasibility of establishing a regional round table in central Saskatchewan. The MidSask Community Futures Development Corporation/Regional Economic Development Authority presented a proposal to create a regional round table as a regional services delivery model. MidSask provided a broad range of services in economic development and by forming a regional round table they intended to collaborate with additional stakeholders in the region to increase capacity to assess needs and deliver services from a community-led approach. RDI also met with members of Rural Team Saskatchewan to explore the formation of an advisory group for this regional round table. The group would maintain the Rural Team's liaison with the regional round table. MidSask signed a Memorandum of Understanding with RDI in January 2005 and shortly thereafter, Rural Team Saskatchewan established the Saskatchewan Community Collaboration Advisory group to partner with newly-formed WaterWolf Regional Round Table and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with RDI.



Jock Witkowski & Ed Reimer of Rural Team Saskatchewan

The Rural Development Institute was invited by Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association to attend their annual meeting in September 2005 in Taylor British Columbia. At this meeting RDI representatives explained the Community Collaboration Model Project and the partnership requirements. The Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association Board expressed interest in principle, and then submitted an expression of interest letter to RDI on September 30, 2005. In November 2005 in Vancouver British Columbia, RDI met with representatives of Rural Team British Columbia and Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association. At that time Rural Team British Columbia agreed to create an advisory group from

their membership to support the formation of a regional round table. RDI then signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association and Rural Team British Columbia to initiate a regional round table and advisory group in northeastern British Columbia.

In November 2005, Rural Team Yukon formed an advisory group and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with RDI to support the formation of a regional round table in the Yukon. In December 2005, Yukon Rural Team facilitated a meeting in Whitehorse between RDI and interested communities who were Yukon signatories of the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association Alaska Highway Community Initiative. The community representatives indicated an interest in the Community Collaboration Model Project and a second meeting was held in Whitehorse in February 2006, inviting additional communities and First Nations. At the February 2006 meeting, it was decided to continue exploring this collaborative model and at a meeting held in Teslin on April 4th 2006, the Yukon Regional Round Table was officially established and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with RDI.

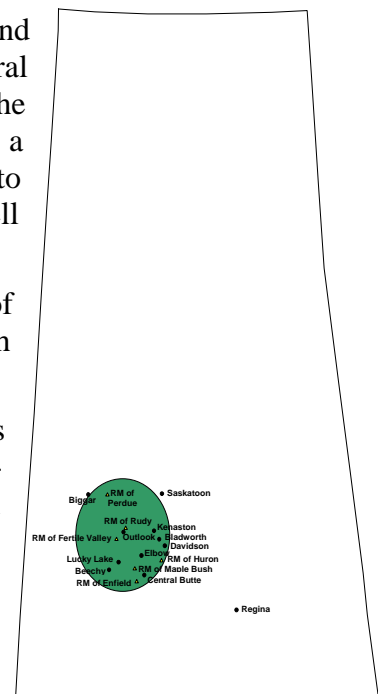
Model Implementation

WaterWolf Regional Round Table

In 2004, the MidSask strategic planning session centered around focusing on regional goals and a general shift away from agricultural related primary production to a more diverse regional economy. The leadership of MidSask had already formed ideas about the need for a regional approach to the problems identified. The opportunity to become part of the Community Collaboration Model Project fit well with these ideas and provided a way to move them forward.

We did not abandon our original mandate however in the creation of WaterWolf we had a vehicle that was able to work regionally with separate project funding. (Martz, 2008).

During WaterWolf's first year, the participating communities incorporated WaterWolf into a non-profit company; signed a two-year funding agreement with Western Economic Diversification Canada for \$176,000; contracted with a project coordinator and half-time technician; and identified a number of projects it wanted to pursue. In 2008, WaterWolf Regional Round Table grew to more than forty-three towns, villages and rural municipalities. The advisory group members who represented provincial and federal government departments and agencies participated in the earlier meetings, however, as time went by their participation diminished somewhat.



WaterWolf members at a regional round table

Yukon Regional Round Table

The Yukon Regional Round Table became the first regional non-political forum in the Yukon that included communities and First Nations. The opportunity to form this inclusive regional association and partner with Rural Team Yukon was a key reason for the creation of the regional round table. In April 2006, in Teslin Yukon, community representatives signed a Memorandum of Understanding with RDI to create the Yukon Regional Round Table.

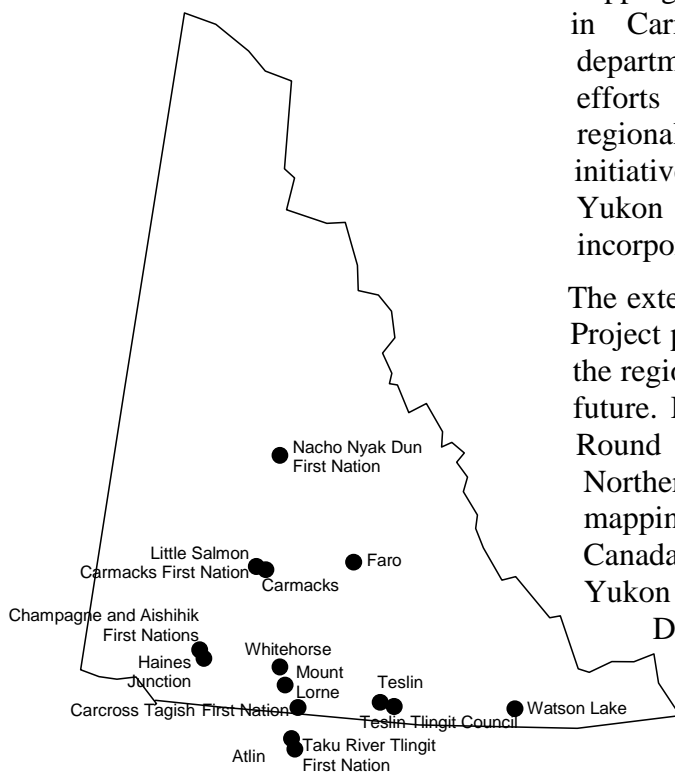


Members at regional round table meeting in Haines Junction

From April 2006 until March 2008, communities, First Nations, and government departments from across the Yukon⁵ committed to working together on regional opportunities, issues, and challenges. Since its creation, the regional round table developed a membership of eight communities and six First Nations. In addition, the advisory group consists of representatives from three federal departments and four territorial departments.

By March 31, 2008 the regional round table had held ten meetings and undertook a number of activities, including planning for an asset mapping pilot project which will pilot the asset

mapping process and document the community assets in Carmacks. The Yukon government tourism department enlisted the regional round table in its efforts to improve its online tourism presence. The regional round table influenced the online tourism initiative for the entire Yukon. At each meeting, Yukon Regional Round Table members also incorporated a training and capacity building session.



The extension of the Community Collaboration Model Project provided additional support and time to enable the regional round table to consolidate its plans for the future. During this time period, the Yukon Regional Round Table was awarded three grants: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada \$28,215 for the asset mapping project; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, \$19,100 for an asset mapping database; and Yukon Territorial Government Community Development \$19,400 for the asset mapping project. On September 11 -12, 2008, a workshop on sustainability planning was held in Faro and facilitated by Angela Walkley and Gillian McKee of Cambio Consulting.

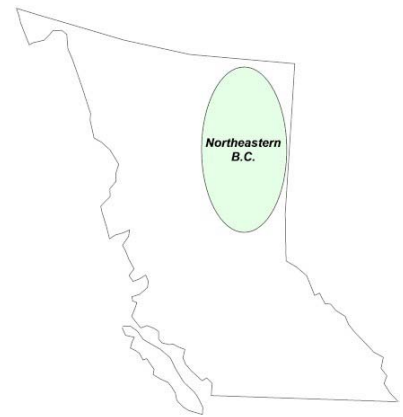
⁵ The Yukon RRT includes two communities located in northern British Columbia: Atlin and the Taku River Tlingit First Nation.

Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table

For the northeast region of British Columbia, the project was viewed as an opportunity to bring the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of the region to the same table to advance common goals, one being the development of tourism along the Alaska Highway corridor. The opportunity to become involved in the project arose at a time when groups such as the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association and the Northeast Native Advancing Society had formed partnerships, undertook research and were poised for regional collaboration.

Membership in the Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table included Aboriginal, local government elected officials, representation from local industry, and Economic Development Officers (as ex officio). The regional round table was administered by the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association who coordinated six regional meetings, which were well attended and resulted in creating the mandate of the regional round table, which was to serve as a sounding board for multi partnership community controlled and administered projects that enhanced and balanced the quality of life for both Aboriginal and local governments.

The Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table functioned as a component of the Community Collaboration Model Project for approximately one year. During this period in 2006, the various partners established that the Community Collaboration Model Project and the region in northeastern British Columbia were not necessarily a strong fit. There were differences amongst the three partners on how to initiate the regional round table and advisory group, including viewpoints and requirements of data ownership and evaluation, as well as the design of the regional round table and advisory group. While it was clear that a dynamic regional round table emerged, and it was believed that it would continue to grow and move forward, the three partners mutually agreed that the design characteristics of the regional round table and advisory group and the relationships of the partners were sufficiently different from those expected of the Community Collaboration Model Project. Therefore, on November 1, 2006, Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association, the Rural Team British Columbia and Rural Development Institute agreed that the



Members at regional round table meeting in Fort St. John

regional round table would transition to a new format of regional round table. RDI provided transition resources to the end of March 2007 and RDI's role during the transition period was to gather an understanding of the processes used for the transition.

The transition process took place from November 2006 to the end of March 2007. During the transition, two meetings of the regional round table took place and additional activities to secure partnerships and funding by the administering body were pursued.

Evaluation

Integral to the project was continuously evaluating the community collaboration processes. As the Rural Development Institute began facilitating the evaluation, it became clear that the evaluation needed to be more than a process in which the members merely participated. The regional round tables and advisory groups needed to decide what “success” meant for them. Thus the evaluation process became a collaborative process which was *an assessment process that included all stakeholders in deciding what constituted success and how success would be measured.*

Collaborative Evaluation Principles:

Inclusion
Equal Partnership
Shared Responsibility
Empowerment
Cooperation

Principles of this collaborative evaluation process included: *inclusion* of representatives of all groups who were involved in the evaluation; *equal partnership* - recognizing that every group had skills, abilities and equal right to participate in the process; *transparency* that created a climate conducive to open communication and building dialogue; *shared power* with authority and power evenly balanced between all partners; *shared responsibility* with all partners having equal responsibility for decision-making, and each having clear responsibilities within the process; *empowerment* for

participants with special skills who were encouraged to take responsibility for tasks within their specialty, yet also encouraging others to be involved and *cooperation* by sharing everybody’s strengths. This meant that regional round tables and advisory groups were involved in determining the evaluation frameworks, the selection of indicators, data collection and analysis of findings. Another important distinction was that the Community Collaboration Model Project evaluation was a ***process evaluation***, which was not linear. Evaluating outcomes as they occurred provided opportunities to adjust the processes as needed, modifying the goals, objectives and actions and creating new ones.

Before commencing the collaborative evaluation process, all stakeholders needed to have clear understanding of the ethical principles that guided the collaborative evaluation process. These principles provided clarity on the rights and responsibilities associated with collecting, disseminating, accessing, and protecting information that was collected. The Rural Development Institute submitted details of the collaborative evaluations to the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee, which reviewed the submission to ensure that all participants involved in the process understood their rights and obligations. A research ethics certificate for the Community Collaboration Model Project was granted to the Rural Development Institute in October 2006.





The Rural Development Institute invited regional round table and advisory group representatives to evaluation-planning workshops in Atlin British Columbia in August 2006 and in Winnipeg, Manitoba in September 2006. During these workshops, the representatives developed their regional round tables' and advisory groups' evaluation frameworks and plans, with their academic partners providing facilitation, guidance and resources. These frameworks and plans were then taken back to the respective organizations for input and acceptance. Following that, the academic partners facilitated data gathering and analyses by reviewing and analyzing meeting minutes, reports and other documents and by conducting interviews with members of the regional round tables and advisory groups. Evaluation reports were produced for the Manitoba, WaterWolf and Yukon regional round tables in 2006 and for the WaterWolf and Yukon regional round tables in 2007. In September, 2008, representatives of the Rural Development Institute attended and participated in a Yukon Regional Round Table sustainability planning workshop in Faro. During that time they conducted interviews with regional round table and advisory group members discussing the Yukon Regional Round Table and Advisory Group impacts and the future for both groups. A final Yukon Regional Round Table Report was produced and distributed to all members of the Yukon Regional Round Table and Advisory Group.

The Rural Development Institute also facilitated annual workshops that enabled the regional round tables and advisory groups to tell their stories and share what they had learned. The first workshop was held in Thompson Manitoba in May 2005, the second workshop was held at Cedar Lodge Saskatchewan in April 2006 and the third workshop was held in Haines Junction Yukon in May 2007.



Thompson MB May 2005



Haines Junction YT, May



Cedar Lodge SK. April 2006

The Community Collaboration Story

The Rural Development Institute partnered with Dr. Diane Martz of the Centre for Rural Studies and Enrichment, University of Saskatchewan to evaluate the WaterWolf Regional Round Table processes and outcomes. The partnership moved with Dr. Martz when she assumed other responsibilities at the University of Saskatchewan.

Ryan Gibson, an RDI Research Affiliate worked with the Yukon and Manitoba regional round tables to evaluate their processes and outcomes for the 2006 and 2007 evaluation reports. Marian Beattie, an RDI Research Affiliate worked with the Yukon Regional Round Table on their final evaluation report in September 2008.

RDI partnered with Dr. Nicole Vaugeois of Malaspina University-College in Nanaimo British Columbia to provide an evaluation of the transition that the Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table underwent after the devolution of its relationship with the Community Collaboration Model Project.



Diane Martz leading an evaluation discussion



Nicole Vaugeois leading an evaluation discussion

Community Collaboration Governance and Collaboration Study Group

An outcome of the Community Collaboration Model Project was the opportunity to engage additional researchers with interests in multi-community collaborations and regional governance models. This resulted in the creation of the Community Collaboration Model Project Governance and Collaboration Study Group. (See Appendix A for membership).

RDI hosted three meetings of researchers from across Canada and the mid-west USA. During these meetings, researchers were introduced to the Community Collaboration Model Project and the model sites in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, the Yukon and Manitoba. The study group identified four objectives which were to: create opportunities for researchers to provide feedback on the evaluation processes that were developed by regional round tables and advisory groups; provide feedback on the Community Collaboration Model Project evaluation processes; explore linkages to existing and future research in multi-community collaboration and regional governance; and develop a forum for researchers



Community Collaboration Governance and Collaboration Study Group

to discuss multi-community collaboration and regional governance. Through the term of the project, the Community Collaboration Model Project Study Group continued the dialogue on multi-community collaboration and regional governance. Through discussions, a number of potential research themes and questions were identified, which are discussed in a later section. The Study Group also submitted a proposal to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to further their dialogue and networking endeavours.

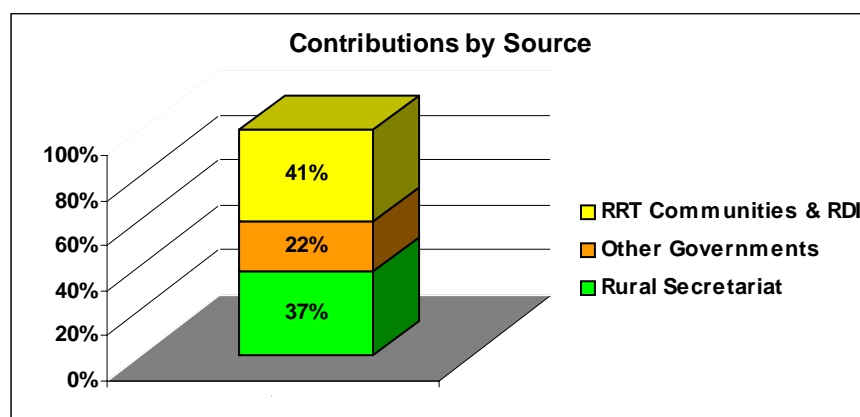
Project Management and Financial Administration

As the Rural Development Institute entered into a Contribution Agreement with the Rural Secretariat, it became clear that the project would benefit by RDI partnering with a steering committee comprised of representatives of the Rural Secretariat. This Community Collaboration Model Project steering committee whose members included the Senior Policy Advisory, Regional Advisor and Program Officer, provided advice and assistance during the Feasibility Investigation and Model Implementation phases, as well as project reporting requirements. RDI set up an administrative structure to manage the project and meet the Rural Secretariat's requirements for the quarterly and annual reporting of its activities, evaluation and financial accounting. Robert Annis provided overall administrative direction and guidance; Marian Beattie provided project management and coordination and Ryan Gibson assisted in the financial tracking and documentation especially for the Manitoba and Yukon regional round tables.

Quarterly, RDI submitted, on Rural Secretariat-generated documents, cash-flow spreadsheets detailing cash and in-kind expenditures and contributions, progress reports of the just-completed quarters, and work-plans for the next quarter. RDI also submitted annual audited financial statements, annual budgets, annual work-plans and annual evaluation reports. This tracking and reporting required a lot of time and attention to detail as it meant working with up to seven regional round tables' administrative personal every quarter. Having the capacity and flexibility to carry the cash flow into the next fiscal year without constraints was very beneficial. This flexibility enabled RDI to design and carry out the work-plan according to the project objectives rather than to fiscal year-end constraints.

Contributions

The terms of the Contribution Agreement between RDI and the Rural Secretariat indicated that the Rural Secretariat would provide up to 50% of the total eligible costs, with the other 50% coming from other sources. As is evidenced by the graphs following, the contributions from other sources comprised the majority of the financial contributions to the Community Collaboration Model Project, with the Rural Secretariat's contribution being 37% of the total contributions.

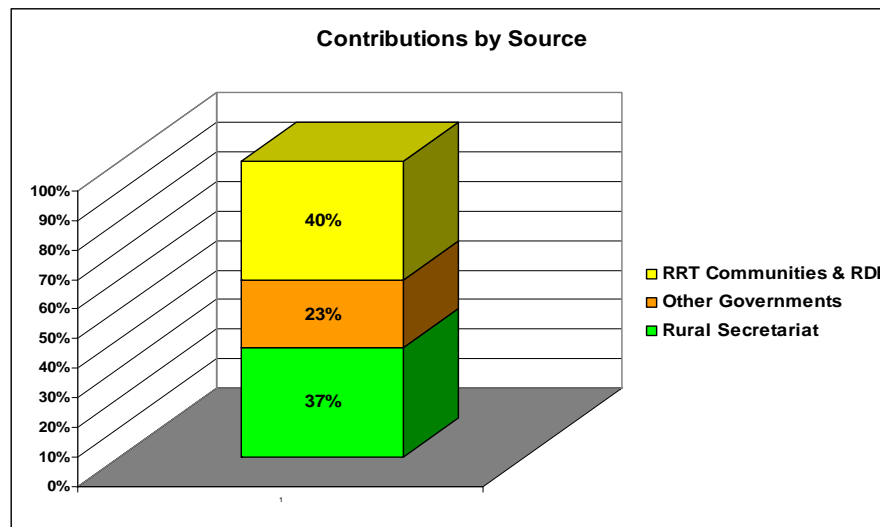


Source: Rural Secretariat 4th Quarter (2008) Cashflow Report

The final contribution distribution clearly shows that the regional round table communities and the proponent (RDI) contributed the most financial resources to the project.

When the Community Collaboration Model Project was extended for an additional six months for the Yukon Regional Round Table, additional funding was provided by the Rural Secretariat. Additional in-kind resources were provided by the regional round table communities, and the Rural Development Institute contributed additional cash and in-kind resources. During this six-month period, three government grants were confirmed: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada \$28,215 for the asset mapping project.; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, \$19,100 for a asset mapping database; and Yukon

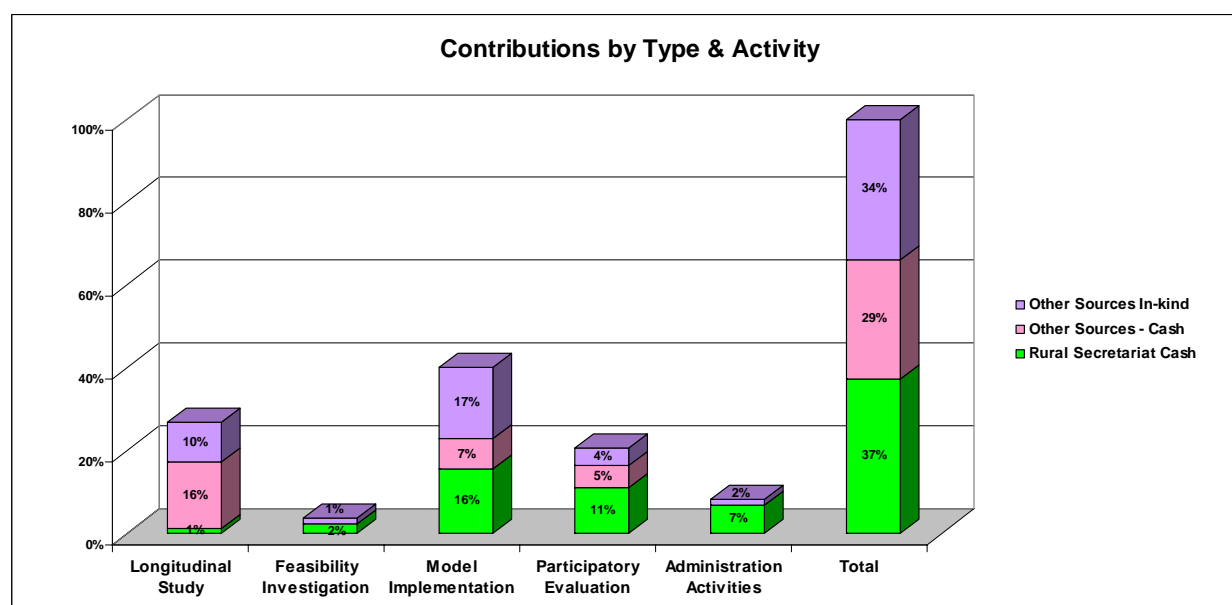
Territorial Government Community Development \$19,400 for the asset mapping project. The proportion of the regional round table communities' and RDI's contributions to other governments' contributions to Rural Secretariat's contributions shifted slightly, with other governments' contributions increasing to 23%, regional round table communities' and RDI's contributions decreasing to 40% and the Rural Secretariat's contributions staying the same at 37%. The final contribution distribution clearly shows that the regional round table communities and the proponent (RDI) contributed the largest part of the financial resources to the project. For every dollar that the Rural Secretariat invested in the Community Collaboration Model Project, almost two dollars were invested from other sources. That is a very favourable return on the Rural Secretariat's investment in this project.



Source: Rural Secretariat Quarter 2 (2009) Cashflow Report

For every dollar that the Rural Secretariat invested in the Community Collaboration Model Project, almost two dollar were invested from other sources.

In the analysis of the contributions by type and activity, the Longitudinal Study which was 27% of total contributions, yielded valuable information and insight into sustainability of regional round tables. The contributions needed for the Feasibility Investigation (3% of total contributions) was lower than anticipated, in part, because the communities in Saskatchewan and the Yukon became engaged relatively early on in the process. The majority of the contributions to the Community Collaboration Model Project directly benefited the communities of the regional round tables through the Model Implementation activities (40% of total contributions) which strengthened and built relationships, partnerships and networks to accomplish common goals. Contributions to the Participatory Evaluation process (20% of total contributions) strengthened capacity for regional round table and advisory group members to continuously evaluate their processes and outcomes and modify activities as required. The Administration of such a large and diverse project with eighty-five communities in three provinces and two territories; three rural teams in two provinces and one territory; and four academic partners in three provinces and one territory, along with quarterly reporting requirements, needed dedicated resources which were 9% of the total contributions.



Source: Rural Secretariat Quarter 2 (2009) Cashflow Report

The majority of the contributions to the Community Collaboration Model Project directly benefited the communities of the regional round tables through the Model Implementation activities (40% of total contributions) which strengthened and built relationships, partnerships and networks to accomplish common goals.

In-Kind Contributions

Based on RDI's experiences with the Community Collaboration Project in Manitoba, it was acknowledged that there would be significant in-kind contributions. At the outset of the project, RDI and the Community Collaboration Model Project steering committee determined a fair value for these contributions. Because of the collaborative nature of the project, no distinction in value was made among the contribution sources. That meant that regional round table community members, advisory group members and academics were valued equally. RDI and the Community Collaboration Model Project steering committee also acknowledged the reality in rural and northern communities that traveling to and from meetings consumed considerable amount of time during which individuals were not contributing elsewhere. Thus it was decided to include travel time in the in-kind contributions. It was also decided by RDI and the Community Collaboration Model Project steering committee at the outset, that there would not be a variation in value between provinces/territories in which the regional round tables were formed. The value for participants' time was agreed upon as \$37.50 per hour or \$300 for an eight-hour day. In addition, contributions by governments, including the Rural Secretariat, could be no higher than 80% of the total cost.

RDI set up a tracking and reporting system and established parameters of what should be reported as in-kind contributions. The regional round tables, in their Memoranda of Understanding, agreed to provide in-kind contribution information according to these parameters. The Rural Secretariat staff's and RDI Team's time were not included in the in-kind documentation. The Longitudinal Study activity of the project necessitated that this study be a major agenda item at the Manitoba regional round table and steering committee meetings, and that RDI representatives be in attendance whenever possible. Therefore the travel and meeting attendance time for Manitoba regional round table and steering committee representatives were in-kind contributions to the Community Collaboration Model Project whenever the Longitudinal Study was on the agenda and RDI representatives were in attendance at the meetings. As was the project design, over time, RDI moved away from the facilitation role in the new regional round tables, and in fact did not attend some of the later meetings, particularly the WaterWolf Regional Round Table meetings. Regardless of RDI's attendance at meetings, all participants' (with the exception of Rural Secretariat staff and RDI Team) travel and meeting attendance times were in-kind contributions for the Feasibility Investigation, Model Implementation and Evaluation activities. RDI also provided in-kind contributions to the Administration activity.

It is likely that the in-kind contributions that were tracked and reported are lower than what actually occurred. For example, with the benefit of hindsight, RDI realized that the financial and other administrative functions that member communities provided, such as in the case of Wabowden in Bayline Regional Round Table, and Haines Junction and Teslin in the Yukon Regional Round Table were not valued or tracked. Had those contributions been included, the in-kind contributions would have been considerably higher.

Cash Contributions

As was stated earlier, the Rural Secretariat's cash contribution to the project represented 37% of the total contributions. Other major cash contributions included leveraged contributions for the Hudson Bay Neighbours, Bayline, WaterWolf and Yukon regional round tables. In the Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round Table, each of the Nunavut member communities received grants from the territorial government to be used at their discretion. Each Nunavut member community contributed a portion of this grant directly to the regional round table. The Bayline Regional Round Table leveraged funds from the Public Health Agency of Canada and Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs for a food security project. WaterWolf Regional Round Table leveraged monies from Western Economic Diversification Canada to use to accomplish their goals and objectives. The Yukon Regional Round Table leveraged the Rural Secretariat contributions to obtain grants from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Yukon Territorial Government Community Development.



***Who represents communities
and regional round tables?***

Who represents governments?

***Who represents academic
institutions?***

Collaborative Partnerships



Lessons Learned: Regional Round Tables & Advisory Groups

Over the course of the nearly four years of the Community Collaboration Model Project, and then extending back to 1999 when the Community Collaboration Project was initiated, all participants in the community collaboration process experienced successes and challenges, both collectively and individually. These are the lessons learned from these experiences, particularly as they related to *partnership development, capacity building, impact and sustainability*.

A partnership is an agreement to combine resources, ideas and talents to do something together that will benefit all involved. The partnership adds value to each partner's respective situation and there is give and take with shared decision-making, risks, resources, investment, power, benefits, burdens and accountability. Successful partnerships have: a *reason* to come together; a common vision and goal; *rules* – ways of doing business together; *responsibilities* – every partner is responsible for and contributes to the outcomes; *respect* – every partner is respected and valued; *reward* – every partner understands their gain; a trusting *relationship* – partners have developed a trusting relationship between and amongst themselves; *results* – the partnership accomplishes its collective vision and goals; *rejuvenated* – the partnership is evaluated, successes are celebrated and reflected upon: and *re-tooled* - the partnership is adjusted as needed (Annis, *et al.*, 2006).

The Rural Development Institute's approach to capacity development is through community development. Community development has been defined as *a philosophy, a process, a project, or an outcome, and perhaps all four at once*. As a philosophy, community development entails the fundamental belief that *people can identify and solve their problems*. As a process, it *supports citizens as they find their power to effect change*. As a project or an outcome, it *involves working with citizens to bring about change in their community*. The community development process involves engagement, assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation. While this circular process may become convoluted at times, it remains continuous. Throughout community development processes, products for communication and mobilization regenerated and disseminated first within the community and eventually beyond the community for research, practice, and policy purposes (Healy & Racher, 2008). "Community Development is community-based and people-centred: is inclusive; promotes good practice; builds on strengths; ensures the decision-making comes from the community; recognizes and develops expertise of community residents; requires assessment and does not rely on assumptions; and is understood by those involved" (Frank, 2001).

Community development has been defined as a philosophy, a process, a project, or an outcome, and perhaps all four at once.

WaterWolf Regional Round Table

Processes and Infrastructure

Vision, Goals and Objectives

WaterWolf's vision was to redefine the economy of the region. During the evaluation process in 2007 and again in 2008, Diane Martz stated that:

The staff and board members are responding to the decline in the area in the traditional resource industry, agriculture. The analysis of the situation in the region by the project coordinator is as follows:

As agriculture related business continued to suffer down turns in prices, markets and high input costs, the region was continuing to decline in almost every respect. The majority of farm family members are working off the farm because agriculture is not driving the economy any more. Much of the grocery business goes to Saskatoon, businesses are declining and collapsing, in some towns the last business in town is closing, population has declined, schools are closing and the region is increasingly becoming a residential area. We need to look at a different model, although it's a hard thing for people to get their heads around, the things we have done for fifty years are not working.

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Rural Saskatchewan has had a hard time adjusting to the change. So a lot of our stuff is aimed at getting them to think about long term strategies.

The WaterWolf board and staff based the analysis of their situation on their personal experiences as elected municipal representatives as well as studies of the region by the local community college; Statistics Canada Census data; analysis of Rural Saskatchewan by Stabler and Olfert (various years); Sask Trends Monitor. They are looking for solutions. Rural Saskatchewan has had a hard time

adjusting to the change. So a lot of our stuff is aimed at getting them to think about long term strategies.

The regional round table established committees to work on:

- a governance model to provide good stewardship and oversight of development in the South Saskatchewan River valley South of Beaver Creek;
- potential solutions to the issue of long term stability and sustainability in providing technical oversight for water quality to small communities in accordance with provincial regulations;
- a process and time table for development at or near Danielson Park as a demonstration pilot for tax and investment sharing;
- recommendations for priorities in the development of data layers within the region - what the priorities for GIS digitization in the region should be; and
- a framework for municipal sharing of the cost of infrastructure development and sharing taxes on new regional developments.

Membership

The goal was to create a regional development structure that would have the capacity to do more than the existing provincial Regional Economic Development Authority and federal Community Futures Development Corporation structures had achieved. One of the first steps toward this goal was the incorporation of a non-profit corporation. This corporate structure allowed for the creation of a reporting mechanism separate from the existing provincial and federal community development structures which improved transparency and allowed access to a broader range of funding. WaterWolf became a wholly owned subsidiary of the Community Futures Development Corporation/Regional Economic Development Authority; however they are a separate corporation with its own Board of Directors made up of municipal government representatives of the rural municipalities, towns and villages in the region. The organizational structure of WaterWolf built on the already successful and innovative organizations in the region. This group had innovative ideas about the value of regional collaboration and needed a way to move these ideas forward. The Community Collaboration Model Project allowed a new non-profit corporation to be created that was able to accomplish goals the original organizations could not. WaterWolf was able to move forward and benefit from groundwork that had already been laid by the predecessor organizations and the skills and capacity already present.

Coordination and Administration

WaterWolf benefited from the very strong and skilled leadership of the project coordinator along with the elected municipal representatives who provided leadership as members of the Board of Directors. The staff and the board members have lived in the region for many years and this has likely contributed to the acceptance of their ideas and initiatives. The staff supported the regional round table process and structure by providing support to meetings, handling financial and reporting requirements, providing information, keeping websites up to date and assisting in presentations and public events. Even with skilled staff in place, board members noted the project faced limitations on what could be accomplished due to the small staff, limited budget and reliance on volunteers (Martz, 2008).

Resources

The Community Collaboration Model Project funding increased the capacity of the overall project by providing resources and staff to work at the regional round table process of building community collaboration as well as enabling WaterWolf to undertake projects that provided tangible benefit to the communities in the region.

In WaterWolf's first year, in addition to the funding available from the Community Collaboration Model Project, WaterWolf obtained a two-year funding agreement for \$176,000 with Western Economic Diversification based on the objectives and goals outlined under Water, Tourism and GIS segments of the project. Throughout the project, revenue was successfully obtained from other government programs including:

- Community Investment Support Program (provincial);
- Saskatchewan Highways (provincial);
- Saskatchewan Watershed Authority(provincial); and
- Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada Community Investment Support Program to support the development of the regional GIS system (federal).

WaterWolf accessed resources through the provincial Regional Economic Development Authority Enhancement Fund and the provincial Regional Economic Development Authority Youth Apprentice Fund. The Municipal Capacity Development Program provided access to two planners and planning staff which has been instrumental in WaterWolf developing an organized sustainable approach to land use planning in the region.

Communication

Central to WaterWolf's communication strategy was branding the organization and developing the WaterWolf logo, which is that of the northern pike, or in local vernacular, the *water wolf*. Another important communication vehicle was developing a website. Minutes of board and committee meetings were posted soon after the meetings as well as news releases and other items of interest to the region. WaterWolf staff also posted servicing agreements, bylaw examples, planning commission examples, contact information and notes taken at workshops.

Central to WaterWolf's communication strategy was branding the organization and developing the WaterWolf logo, which is that of the northern pike, or in local vernacular, the water wolf.



Partnerships and Relationships

With Rural Team Saskatchewan and Other Government Departments and Agencies

The project was designed to include Rural Team Saskatchewan as a major player whose role was to provide a connection to governments that could be a resource in accessing money and expertise. The role of the Rural Team was pivotal in the early part of the project. One Rural Team member facilitated an inter-departmental group of provincial officials, (including representatives from the Crown corporations), to meet with WaterWolf staff and board members to hear their presentation and to discuss regional issues. Rural Team Saskatchewan members' involvement in the project diminished over time; the provincial representative resigned and was not replaced and one federal representative retired and was not replaced. Two members of the Rural Team are still engaged with WaterWolf. Although one has just retired, plans are to replace that person with another Rural Team representative to WaterWolf. WaterWolf board members and staff feel that Rural Team members were invaluable assets to the WaterWolf Regional Round Table (Martz, 2008).

Although the provincial government appears to be slow to recognize the value of WaterWolf as it relates to provincial objectives in managing and developing regional economies, the relationship of WaterWolf with the provincial government expanded during the past year as more provincial government departments became interested and involved with the project (Martz, 2008).

With Local Governments and Other Regional Groups

All of the five projects associated with WaterWolf involved partnerships among the communities in the region. Communities became involved in these projects according to their needs and interests. The intent of WaterWolf was to support the development of these partnerships in all of their activities. As a result of WaterWolf, new partnerships formed among communities in the region. Better relations and better communication were evident between the towns, villages and rural municipalities in the region than were present in the past. There are new partnerships with the West-side Irrigation Producers Groups; Lake Diefenbaker Tourism/West Central Tourism; and the City of Saskatoon (Martz, 2008).

The initial focus of the land use planning committee was with rural municipalities, towns and villages along the South Saskatchewan River and Lake Diefenbaker, however, the project boundaries expanded as more municipalities became interested in the concept of land use planning at a regional level. A partnership was also formed with the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. WaterWolf and the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority have similar goals and objectives for land use along the river and lake; including water quality and safe development of water based commerce and developments.

WaterWolf Regional Round Table has grown the Community Futures Development Corporation/Regional Economic Development Authority's capacity and ability to make a difference in the planning and prioritization of programs in the region. Early in the discussions of the River Valley Authority Project, the project coordinator approached the Chief Executive Officer of Meewasin Valley Authority for information and advice. This relationship yielded valuable insights over the life of the project and was a key influence in the direction of WaterWolf. Partnerships have also been formed with South Saskatchewan River Water Stewards; Heritage River Designation; Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities.

*We cannot change
our past, but we can
change our future.*

With First Nations Communities

An important accomplishment that WaterWolf was part of, and speaks to the partnership building capacity of WaterWolf and its staff, is the designation of Highway #219 as a tourism corridor:

October 23, 2006 saw the announcement of the #219 highway partnership. Under this groundbreaking agreement, a First Nation Community, rural municipalities and the provincial Department of Highways have come together with resources in common cause to fund the redevelopment of #219 highway as a tourism corridor between Saskatoon and Lake Diefenbaker. The process is underway to rename the highway Whitecap Trail, in honor of the first Chief of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation when they located at their present site...This corridor partnership opens the opportunity for our board and communities to dream large...The success of the first leg from Saskatoon to #15 highway shows that there is an appetite to diversify our rural economy beyond a dependence on agriculture alone. We cannot change our past, but we can change our future. (MidSask, Fall 2006).

With Universities and Colleges

WaterWolf staff also noted that the relationship with the Rural Development Institute was a valuable asset (Martz, 2008). The workshops, the reporting model and in-kind teaching all contributed to the success of the project and were identified as important in capacity building. Connecting WaterWolf to a local academic institution (University of Saskatchewan) provided them with resources to initiate a participatory evaluation of their processes. In addition, the academic institution representative became a member of the Rural Team, thus providing a new linkage between the academic institution and federal and provincial governments.

Capacity Development

In the WaterWolf Regional Round Table 2008 evaluation report, Martz states:

As individuals, board members indicated they have developed their skills over the course of the project through learning by being involved and listening to others, working with others and attending meetings associated with the different projects. When there were not ready answers, members and staff looked for written materials and accessed the Internet to find information. Staff and some board members also took training and attended workshops, seminars and conferences. Board members also talked about gaining a better understanding of the issues facing rural Saskatchewan, the benefits of thinking regionally, sharing ideas and co-operation through their experience with WaterWolf. One Board member stated that their experience with the WaterWolf led to interest and membership in other provincial and location organizations.

The capacity of the staff was enhanced through continuous training with ESRI Canada (GIS) and using that training to work with communities to produce GIS outputs. They further developed their project management skills as they evaluated and managed a large, complex and highly significant project. They enhanced their team working skills as the contributions of all members were critical to fulfill the obligations of the job.

Staff gained confidence in dealing and partnering with all levels of government and government departments. Staff and board members developed their interpersonal skills with participants who ranged from local councilors to Rural Team members. The networking base of all involved expanded tremendously to include representatives and staff of federal, provincial, and Aboriginal government; faculty at Brandon University and the University of Saskatchewan; and other government and non-government organizations. Staff and some board members improved their ability to plan and manage multiple projects.

Board members were also able to use their experience with WaterWolf as well as their learning about rural economic development, capacity building and partnering to develop new and successful projects in their own communities. The skills and knowledge acquired at the regional round table were important in the formation of a non-governmental organization in one community to bring in international students for their final two years of high school. The regional round table approach has also been used to organize a Lake Diefenbaker Destination Tourism group to develop a comprehensive marketing plan (Martz, 2008).

WaterWolf staff has devoted a lot of time and effort in initiating a GPS asset management and emergency response system for their region:

The intent of this project is to assist municipalities in asset management and evidence based decision-making, as well as provides real time road and grader data to emergency dispatch organizations to help move rural dispatch to a digital base. We currently have commitments from two rural municipalities to equip their graders [with GPS units](MidSask, Spring 2007).

In 2007, WaterWolf was awarded the Minister's Award of Excellence and Innovation to recognize their efforts, innovation and initiatives towards economic development and support to their communities. To be a recipient of awards such as this certainly underscores WaterWolf's capacity to initiate and lead innovation and change in their region (MidSask Winter 2007).

Influence and Advocacy

The Community Futures Development Corporation/Regional Economic Development Authority and WaterWolf Regional Round Table have become “visible” within the provincial government, and starting, in a small way, to influence how things are done. Representatives from a number of provincial government departments have attended WaterWolf meetings and meetings of the project committees. Some provincial government employees have devoted a significant amount of time to WaterWolf projects. The WaterWolf Regional Round Table had two meetings with representatives of provincial government departments and crown corporations including Highways and Infrastructure, Energy and Resources; Municipal Affairs; First Nation and Métis Affairs; SaskPower; Enterprise and Innovation and Tourism; and Parks, Culture and Sport. A future follow-up meeting is being organized by the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation. A planner from the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport has been a valuable asset in developing the Lake Diefenbaker Destination Area Plan.

Resiliency and Sustainability

In the beginning some of the board members were not sure how successful WaterWolf would be. Some of the uncertainty was about the degree to which regional co-operation would develop or what results would be achieved. According to Martz’s 2008 report:

In retrospect, many of the Board members reported that the WaterWolf Regional Round Table had achieved better results than they had originally expected. They mentioned much better regional interest and co-operation than anticipated, more positive networking and participation among the communities and municipal governments in the region and the much higher profile of the region as very positive outcomes. Board members also mentioned that the WaterWolf Regional Round Table was a great example and a template for similar projects.

Results so far have exceeded my wildest dreams. I never in a million years dreamt we would be sitting around a table representing some 45 municipal governments all talking about working together and envisioning a new Saskatchewan. I follow along in wonder (Martz, 2008).

Results so far have exceeded my wildest dreams. I never in a million years dreamt we would be sitting around a table representing some 45 municipal governments all talking about working together and envisioning a new Saskatchewan. I follow along in wonder.

At the outset, the staff hoped to create a regional service delivery project that would reinforce and create new and existing partnerships with their local municipalities, provincial and federal governments. They hoped that the various levels of government could be shown the value of regional planning and capacity building. Although the staff knew there would be a considerable amount of time and energy needed for the project, they underestimated what it would actually take. Looking back, staff are very pleased with the progress they have made. Both staff and board members commented in their recent evaluation that they didn’t expect that the WaterWolf Regional Round Table would be as successful as it has been, more municipalities are coming to the table than expected and landowners, councilors, developers and government departments are now realizing the value of land use planning.

There is a strong sense among the staff and board members who responded to the [2008 evaluation] survey that the momentum built by this project is sustainable. They recognize that at least in the near term and perhaps for some projects over the long term, they will have to

continue to access outside funding from the federal and provincial governments. Some board members noted that it will be important to continue to have success stories that are tangible for people to ensure support for WaterWolf to continue and support to a move to new models of internal funding. The importance of strong leadership and consistency in the people involved has been a key asset and will be important in the future. It was also noted that there will be challenges as some of the more divisive issues in the region are addressed. Another challenge will be the need for a shift in mentality from a government funded pilot project to a service model that is self sustaining through user pay funding. The goal of staff is to continue to move slowly in that direction and to be 75-80% there after the next three year phase.

It will be important to continue to have success stories that are tangible for people to ensure support for WaterWolf to continue and support to a move to new models of internal funding.

Suggestions from board members to ensure sustainability included:

- continuing to have success stories that produce tangible benefits for people in communities;
- taking on new projects;
- additional resources for implementation of the strategies being developed. Both government resources and local funding by participants were suggested as sources;
- the continued endorsement and participation of the members;
- a strong leader with skills and dedication;
- consistency in the people involved; and
- action taken by all levels of government to ensure the lessons learned from WaterWolf are recognized (Martz, 2008).



“In 2007, WaterWolf was awarded the Minister’s Award of Excellence and Innovation to recognize their efforts, innovation and initiatives towards economic development and support to their communities.

To be a recipient of awards such as this certainly underscores WaterWolf’s capacity to initiate and lead innovation and change in their region.”

(from MidSask, Winter 2007)

Yukon Regional Round Table

Processes and Infrastructure

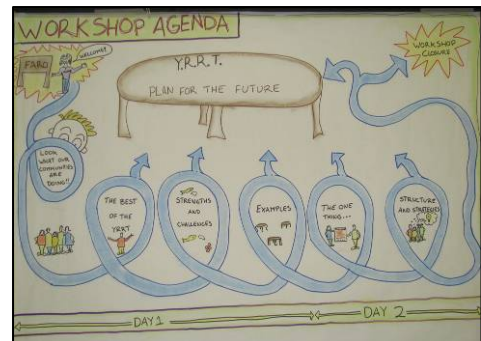
Vision, Goals and Objectives

The Yukon Regional Round Table developed a vision with six key themes: collaborative community economic development; accountability and credibility; healthy, respectful relations; networking; coordinated promotion; and social development initiatives (Gibson & Annis, 2008).

Objectives of the Yukon advisory group included: maintaining open channels of communication with the regional round table; serving as a conduit for communication between all members of the Rural Team and the regional round table; establishing open lines of communication with other provincial/territorial Rural Team advisory groups engaged in similar processes in other provinces; and assisting the regional round table to access information, human resources, and financial resources that will move their projects forward.

We are an all inclusive, non-political, open and honest forum that collaborates to evoke change, address issues, share knowledge, ideas, and practices through consensus to improve the quality of life in the Yukon.

On September 11 and 12, 2008, the Yukon Regional Round Table held a facilitated workshop in Faro, with nine regional round table and three advisory group members in attendance. The theme for this workshop, facilitated by Cambio Consulting, was *Emerging from the Cocoon: Creating a Viable and Sustainable Strategy for the YRRT*. At this two-day workshop those present spent time taking stock of where they were, and then looked for strategies and solutions for sustainability.



The regional round tables restated their vision, mandate and objectives to guide them in the future (Cambio Consulting, p. 3-5):

Vision

We are an all inclusive, non-political, open and honest forum that collaborates to evoke change, address issues, share knowledge, ideas, and practices through consensus to improve the quality of life in the Yukon.

Mission Statement

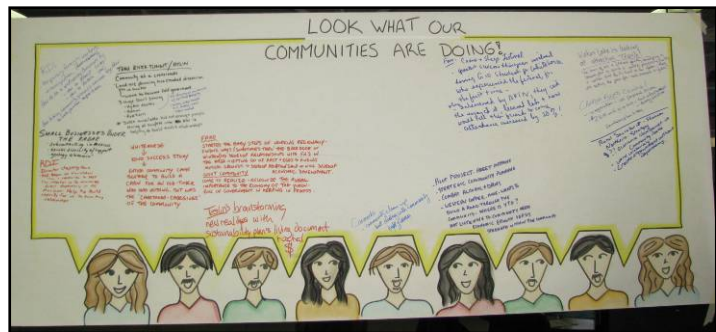
Collaborating together to create opportunities and address community issues.

Purpose

- Share knowledge and best practices
- Identify community gaps and needs
- Build trust and appreciation
- Bridge gap between First Nation and non-First Nation
- Build community capacity
- Provide services (take advantage of economies of scale)
- Improve efficiency of projects or initiatives
- Undertake projects that invoke positive change
- Take relevant, common issues to the federal and territorial government

Building Relationships

The YRRT has built relationships among communities and between communities and First Nations where they were previously absent. The YRRT has a unique, open and honest dynamic that has allowed members to remove walls that have been in place since the inception of many communities. Removing these walls improves the dynamic within individual communities and also creates a more unified Yukon.



Developing Best Practices

The YRRT promotes sharing that allows members to discuss common interests and concerns and to identify solutions based on their own experiences. Identifying best practices for YRRT members saves everyone significant time and financial resources.

Spontaneous, Unpredicted Outcomes

The positive group dynamic created by the YRRT facilitates opportunities for innovation and creativity and frequently leads to unanticipated beneficial outcomes.

Outreach and Dissemination of Information

In addition to the benefits for YRRT members, the Yukon Government has benefited from the YRRT on a day-to-day basis. The government resource people have found it to be a good tool to access communities and an effective way to distribute and solicit information to member communities and First Nations. It is also a very effective information gathering tool for learning what is happening at the community level.

Collaboration

The YRRT participated in the development of the Yukon Government Tourism website. YRRT members were able to work together and to communicate clearly their needs and ideas during their regular YRRT internal communication. Had Yukon Government undertaken a community-by-community information gathering process, they would have been looking at thousands and thousands of dollars in expenses. If they had proceeded without community involvement, they would have had a product that didn't reflect community needs and interests.



Services

In the future, the YRRT foresees having the ability to provide services, such as asset mapping, insurance, Integrated Community Sustainability Plans. Similarly, YRRT members could offer to share their services or resources such as technical expertise, so each member would not have to find the resources on its own.

Structure and Responsibility

At the sustainability planning workshop, members also discussed their organizational structure and responsibilities (Cambio Consulting p. 5-6):



Yukon Regional Round Table members meeting in Faro

Flat Structure

The YRRT has a flat structure. Every member on the Round Table has an equal voice. The Chair rotates and the role is appointed to the community representative responsible for hosting the next meeting.

At a previous meeting, the YRRT had raised the possibility of creating a formalized structure such as non-government organization status. However, that possibility was ruled out due to First Nations YRRT members being unable to represent their First Nation in that capacity.

Protocol

The non-formal status of the YRRT assists the organization in being inclusive; however it does create challenges related to accountability and follow through. The YRRT will develop protocols that identify responsibilities and accountability.

Decision-Making

The YRRT intends to make its decisions based on consensus. Where consensus is not possible, the group relies on majority rule with the proviso that there should be no decisions that leave someone who cannot live with the decision.

Most major decisions will be made during YRRT meetings; however decisions may also be made via email. The person requesting feedback from the group will specify a time period for response and if they do not hear back from YRRT members, they are to assume that the non-response means “no objection”.

The YRRT intends to make its decisions based on consensus. Where consensus is not possible, the group relies on majority rule with the proviso that there should be no decisions that leave someone who cannot live with the decision.

Continuity and Commitment

While the YRRT would like to engage all Yukon communities and First Nations, it is primarily important that those that are involved are consistently attending meetings and following through on their commitments. This kind of commitment is often dependent on the individual having the support of their community. The YRRT suggests that representatives seek a letter of support from their community or First Nation. Seeking such support has the added bonus of raising awareness of the value of the YRRT to the community or First Nation.

Perception of Duplication

(Cambio Consulting, p. 9)

It is up to the YRRT to clarify how it differs from other organizations and that it does not duplicate the Association of Yukon Communities and Council of Yukon First Nations. The YRRT is not political and is the only organization where both First Nations and municipalities can work together on common interests for their communities. This value needs to be put front and centre.

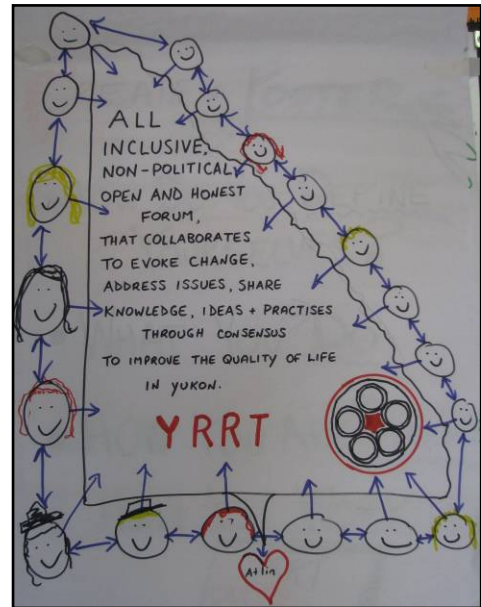


Yukon Regional Round Table members meeting in Faro

Membership

The regional round table deliberately strived for inclusive membership for all Yukon communities and First Nations. Communities and First Nations were welcomed to join the regional round table at any time. It was decided at the February 2006 meeting that each community and First Nation could send two representatives to the regional round table. The suggested representation was one elected and one administrative representative. Fourteen out of eighteen Yukon communities and First Nations are now members of the regional round table.

At the sustainability planning workshop, Yukon Regional Round Table members reviewed their membership criteria and reaffirmed their commitment to being an open and welcoming regional round table. However, members present also recognized the challenges of many communities and First Nations for active participation. The participants present decided to focus on those members who were present. They were confident that as their successes grew, membership would also grow. They also decided to continue being a non-formal organization with every member having an equal voice and they reaffirmed their consensus-building decision-making process. In order to ensure continuity, those present stated that there needed to be commitment from the leadership of the member communities, and members were encouraged to seek letters of support from their community leaders. The members also decided to hold quarterly one-day meetings with the location and meeting chairperson rotating between the member communities. The agenda would be set collaboratively, with the host community chairperson taking the lead in building the agenda and recording the meeting. In the workshop report it was noted (Cambio Consulting p. 5):



Any community or First Nation in the Yukon or Atlin is welcome to join. Whoever considers themselves to be a community will be welcome to be a member of the YRRT.

Start Small and Committed

The present YRRT members believe the YRRT would benefit greatly from having every community and First Nation represented. However, significant capacity issues could be limiting the involvement of potential members. Some First Nations, incorporated and un-

incorporated communities have reported to the YRRT that, while they appreciate the value of the YRRT, due to a number of responsibilities they are unavailable to participate due to time constraints and other priorities. The large travel distances for meetings can be a hindrance, both due to time and due to the cost of travel.

The workshop participants decided that the best course of action for the YRRT is to focus on those members that they have at present. YRRT members are confident that as the successes of the YRRT increase and grow, membership will grow. In addition, the YRRT will work to raise the awareness of the YRRT and to reach out to communities who have not previously participated.

Over the two days of the workshop, attracting and retaining members was an underlying theme. It was summarized as follows (Cambio Consulting, p.9):

Build on Successes

The best way for the YRRT to get others interested is to build on their successes. By starting with the current projects and members, the YRRT will attract other interested people. Members can raise awareness by sharing their success stories through casual conversations and through media and communication material. It is equally important to share these stories back with the communities who support the involvement of their representatives in the YRRT.

The best way for the YRRT to get others interested is to build on their successes.

Coordination and Administration

At the outset of the regional round table formation, RDI recognized that the long distance between Brandon Manitoba and the Yukon would necessitate enhancing the facilitation process used with other regional round tables. To this end, RDI sought and engaged local community development professionals to assist with meeting organization, facilitation and recording. As time went on, and a core group of communities came together to form a regional round table, the need for local facilitation diminished. RDI continued to retain a meeting organizer and recorder on behalf of the regional round table until June 2006 when the regional round table engaged a part-time facilitator to coordinate and facilitate regional round table activities. Initially this person took on the financial administrative tasks for the regional round table. The financial administrative role was transferred from the facilitator to a contracted financial administrator for a few months. The Village of Haines Junction then volunteered to handle the financial administration for the regional round table. After approximately one year, the financial administration function moved to the Village of Teslin, which, at the writing of this report, is still providing the financial administration for the regional round table.

During the sustainability and planning workshop in September 2008, the members discussed the idea of engaging an Executive Director (Cambio Consulting, p. 6):

The YRRT does not presently have an executive director. Such a position would be dependent on securing funding. An Executive Director could take on the responsibility of fund raising, coordinating meetings, moving projects along, and assisting with communication. The YRRT is committed to having its membership maintain control of the direction of the organization. As such, the Executive Director would play primarily an organizational support role, and not that of spokesperson or agenda setting.

They also discussed often they should meet and the responsibility for organizing and reporting on their meetings (Cambio Consulting, p. 6-7):

The YRRT will host quarterly, one day meetings. The location of the meeting will shift each time and the host community will chair the meeting. In addition to chairing the meeting, the host is responsible for coordinating the meeting logistics and informing communities about the meeting arrangements and agenda.

YRRT members are very interested in learning from other communities and First Nations. Each meeting will serve as an opportunity to profile the host community and to meet staff and community members, which can be done at a gathering the night before the meeting.



The agenda for the next meeting will be set collaboratively by members at the end of each meeting, and refined through communication between members following the meeting.

Yukon and Federal Government advisors will be informed of the meeting dates and will be invited as appropriate for relevant items on the agenda.

In order to increase the number of communities that benefit from and know about the YRRT, it was suggested that funding and support be secured to host meetings in communities that had not yet been involved with the YRRT, if they were interested in having it in their community. It was also suggested that meetings should be dove-tailed with other non-YRRT meetings to take advantage of people traveling. In particular it was suggested that opportunities be explored to have YRRT meetings coincide with First Nations events to promote the YRRT in those communities.

In summary:

- One day meeting to be held quarterly
- Meeting will start the evening before with social community activity
- Host community will coordinate/disseminate information
- Collaborative agenda set at previous meeting, with additions over email
- Rotate the meeting locations and encourage new communities to participate
- Invite key advisors

Resources

Both the regional round table and advisory group noted resources were required for the regional round table to effectively function. It was noted, “the regional round table can not be done off the corner of someone’s desk. It needs to have real resources and recognition of person’s involvement” (Gibson & Annis, 2008). Member communities and First Nations financially supported members to attend meetings and absorbed costs of hosting meetings. Numerous in-kind contributions, such as contributions of time and supplies, were made to the regional round table and advisory group.

Shortly before the sustainability planning workshop, the Yukon Regional Round Table received word of being awarded three grants: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada \$28,215 for the asset

Mapping Project; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, \$19,100 for an asset mapping database; and Yukon Territorial Government Community Development \$19,400 for the asset mapping project.

During the workshop, there was much discussion on funding (Cambio Consulting p. 7):

The YRRT is in a transition period with the end of its previous stable funding from the Rural Development Institute. The YRRT has \$7000.00 in savings and some remaining RDI funds which must be committed by September 30th. The YRRT has a separate dedicated fund for the Carmacks Community Asset Mapping Project. The YRRT has identified several cost saving strategies to keep the YRRT going in the interim without a stable source of funds. The YRRT will use the funds currently available to them to contract a proposal writer to secure funding for the administration and meetings of the YRRT and will contract a writer to raise awareness about the YRRT. The YRRT considers these two strategies key to the financial sustainability of the YRRT. The following provides additional details on funding.

The members achieved consensus on the need to secure a person whose skill-set identifying applicable sources of funding, and then writing proposals to granting bodies to secure funding (Cambio Consulting, p. 8):

In the short term, a proposal writer will be contracted to identify applicable sources of funding for the YRRT, and to develop proposals to cover the needs of the YRRT for administrative support, an executive director, participation in meetings, general communication and outreach, and possible project funding.

Members also discussed how to be financially sustainable. They discussed members' financial commitments, as well as brainstormed other possible sources of funding (Cambio Consulting, p. 7-8):

Member's Financial Commitment

- Where possible, self fund our own attendance costs: travel, accommodation and meals (when possible find funding for those communities who can not afford the cost but are very interested in participating)
- Provide in-kind time for hosting meetings in your own community
- In-kind time for meeting participation
- If funding is secured, communities interested in participating but unable due to financial limitations will have their meeting attendance costs covered.

Corporate Sponsorship

Corporate sponsors could be solicited to cover meeting costs or to support the attendance of communities at meetings. This would not give any corporation ownership of meetings or any part of the YRRT, but would provide the corporation with valuable publicity.

Yukon Government Support

YRRT has been valuable for Yukon Government and could be an effective way for Yukon Government to gain community input in a cost effective, streamlined way. As a result, the YRRT proposes to solicit permanent funding from Yukon Government. In addition, the YRRT will apply for funding through relevant proposal driven granting programs (as above).

Other Ideas

- Act as business to sustain themselves – raise money
- Reciprocal agreement – one window for funding/service provision – what does YRRT offer to communities; develop a template for communities to use; maybe communities pay services, but use reciprocal agreements to get it done
- Economies of scale – act as broker and collect fees, eg ICSP, insurance, asset mapping
- Community Futures is a federally funded initiative that is not presently found in the Yukon. Dene Naye Ventures is looking at the Community Futures model and other Round Tables have taken advantage of partnering with organizations supported by Community Futures. However, Community Futures is aimed at providing loans for economic development activities and might not be an appropriate match for the purpose of the YRRT.
- Granting Foundations such as the Gordon Foundation may be a good possibility that should be explored by the proposal writer.

A member of the advisory group cautioned against being too funding-focused. This Advisory Group member stated:

“The worst thing you could do is plan your work actions around funding...determine your purpose first and then figure out how to give it legs.”

Communication

In the past, there was no regular forum for communications between communities and First Nations. One Yukon Regional Round Table representative noted, “this type of forum has been long overdue in my opinion.” The value of face-to-face meetings was emphasized by a number of regional round table members as being of great importance. The communications between meetings was identified as a challenge. With the open membership approach, the regional round table had to be proactive with their communications. As not all communities and First Nations are able to participate in each meeting, the regional round table had to be able to communicate effectively between meetings.

The value of face-to-face meetings was emphasized by a number of regional round table members as being of great importance.

To address communication issues, the regional round table utilized an online project management website called Basecamp⁶. Through this program, members of the regional round table and advisory group were able to post key documents, messages and collaborate on proposal development. Each member received personalized access to the website and the website became a central depository for all documents, meeting notes, proposals, and discussions. Members were divided on their opinion of the usefulness of this online tool. For many, Basecamp was seen as a good way to communicate information to all members. They felt the website helped create transparency within the group as all documents were available to everyone. A number of members noted they used online tool sparingly or were reluctant to use the website. Reasons cited for not using the online tool include not having the time to explore the program to understand it, lack of confidence with computer programs, and the lack of Internet access at home (Gibson & Annis, 2008).

⁶ Further information on Basecamp is available at www.basecampHQ.com.

At the sustainability planning workshop, members discussed communication strategies (Cambio Consulting, p. 7):

The YRRT members will communicate internally amongst themselves primarily by email. If possible, the YRRT may explore producing a newsletter as a mechanism for sharing information.

They also discussed raising awareness of the regional round table (Cambio Consulting, p. 8-9):

While the YRRT has been of value to those involved over the last two years, the YRRT does not have a high profile among those not directly involved. The YRRT members will communicate the vision, mission, and purpose clearly articulated from this workshop to their communities, Yukon Government and to the general public.

While the YRRT has been of value to those involved over the last two years, the YRRT does not have a high profile among those not directly involved. The YRRT members will communicate the vision, mission, and purpose clearly articulated from this workshop to their communities, Yukon Government and to the general public.

Within Yukon and Federal Government

- YRRT will write a letter to the Ministers thanking them for the support that their advisory committee has provided to them over the last several years. The letter can serve to emphasize the importance that the government support has been and to raise awareness of the future plans of the YRRT and the need to continue the support. The letter will include a suggestion that the Advisors be rewarded for their contribution
- Through the above letter and through communication by Advisory members themselves, the YRRT will let Government know how the YRRT can improve YG/Fed efficiency

Partnerships and Relationships

At the beginning of the regional round table process members viewed the regional round table as an opportunity to build respect and trust among participating communities, First Nations, and government representatives. At an early meeting, a First Nation member addressed “the wall” they perceived that existed between First Nations and non-First Nations communities. Since that meeting the regional round table intentionally addressed building understanding between First Nation and non-First Nation communities. The regional round table’s agenda included capacity sessions on Aboriginal self-governance and conflict resolution. A member noted the regional round table was currently building relationships that would assist in building trust among the group. A member indicated, “this has definitely been one of the best byproducts of the entire process. Communications and trust between communities, First Nations, and government is still building but we are starting to see benefits”. A regional round table member expressed the regional round table has helped build understanding between government departments, communities and First Nations. This understanding will be a key asset toward building trust (Gibson & Annis, 2008).

The regional round table has helped build understanding between government departments, communities and First Nations. This understanding will be a key asset toward building trust.

In thirty years, this has been the most effective way [for municipal and non-incorporated communities] in engaging First Nations people. The beauty of it is that each component can move independently so long as there is sensitivity. This process allows it to happen – to establish comfort levels and trust.

Engaging in the consultative process and developing trust is the real value of this endeavour. Just being able to talk to each other is a tangible measurable, in my opinion. It is really important to acknowledge that this process has proven to work.

-(regional round table member)

The creation of the regional round table brought communities, First Nations, and government together at the same table. As one member noted, “we had very little experience working with our neighbouring First Nation, not to mention other communities and First Nations across the territory.” A key benefit of the regional round table to date is the increased understanding of communities and First Nations. A prime example cited was the understanding of Aboriginal self-governance. A number of members indicated they did not understand Aboriginal self-governance until

the capacity session organized by the regional round table. One member said, “I grew up here but have never understood the structures of local First Nations. This is the first time I have heard a clear message about First Nation self-governance.” Another member noted “I was much more involved with my local First Nation since the formation of the regional round table. The regional round table has been influential in assisting local collaboration between the community and the First Nation” (Gibson & Annis, 2008).

Relationship and partnership-building has been foundational to the Yukon Regional Round Table. Members of the regional round table interviewed by the Rural Development Institute representatives in September 2008 were emphatic about the benefits and impacts of this partnership. One member stated:

The Yukon Regional Round Table is probably the best forum ever seen for engaging First Nations because of the free flow of ideas and the non-political environment.

There is the potential to join forces to do something that benefits all of us...we need to continue this collaboration for strategic thinking of the Yukon as a whole... we are speaking with one voice.

-(regional round table member)

This member went on to state:

In thirty years, this has been the most effective way [for municipal and non-incorporated communities] in engaging First Nations people. The beauty of it is that each component can move independently so long as there is sensitivity. This process allows it to happen – to establish comfort levels and trust. Engaging in the consultative process and developing trust is the real value of this endeavour. Just being able to talk to each other is a tangible measurable, in my opinion. It is really important to acknowledge that this process has proven to work.

Another member stated:

I now know people in other communities. I have physically met them – so I now trust them. This is a serious benefit. Trust is a big deal.

Another member stated:

There is the potential to join forces to do something that benefits all of us...we need to continue this collaboration for strategic thinking of the Yukon as a whole...we are speaking with one voice.

And finally another member stated:

This [partnership] could supersede politics. It could last.

At the September 2008 sustainability planning workshop, regional round table members concluded (Cambio Consulting, p. 4):

The YRRT has built relationships among communities and between communities and First Nations where they were previously absent. The YRRT has a unique, open and honest dynamic that has allowed members to remove walls that have been in place since the inception of many communities. Removing these walls improves the dynamic within individual communities and also creates a more unified Yukon.

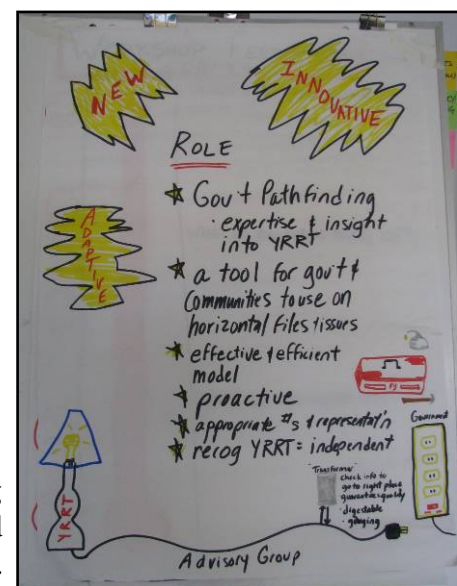
This [partnership] could supersede politics. It could last.
-(regional round table member)

The regional round table was not exempt from conflict, although all members were unanimous in describing the conflicts to date as healthy. A member noted the regional round table did not leave conflict unresolved at meetings. When conflicts occurred, members took time to discuss the issues and find consensus. “By and large, people are respectful of opinions. Every opinion is valued and we look for consensus. Personal ideas and agendas are usually put aside”. It was also noted “the consensus format of the group has been advantageous as we are able to understand the various perspectives from across the region.” A member described the regional round table meetings as venues for “open and frank discussions, but this was the intention from the beginning.”

The partnership between the Yukon Regional Round Table and Yukon Advisory Group has been a continuous process. As stated earlier in this report, certain members of the advisory group facilitated the initial exploratory meeting. As the process moved forward, the advisory group’s role evolved into support and pathfinding. This type of role sometimes moved advisory group members outside their comfort zone.

Members of the Yukon Advisory Group who were present at the sustainability planning workshop reflected on their own experiences and determined how they contribute to the direction the Yukon Regional Round Table was now taking. And considered their own strategies for sustainability. During a workshop exercise, the advisory group members discussed their role(s) and then depicted their conclusions in a poster. They see their members as having a pathfinding role that connects communities and governments. They articulated their strengths (Cambio Consulting p. 26):

- Good tool to access communities
- Access to other non-governmental networks
- Intelligence gathering – learn what communities are up to
- Facilitating connections
- Support apolitical aspect



Advisory Group members & other supporters

They also articulated their challenges (Cambio Consulting p. 26):

- government silos - government is mandate driven, so we work in our silos, we need to be able to communicate what the RRT benefit is
- government fear of the new - fear is that this is another level of government; what will you ask for? The YRRT is new territory so lot of fear about it.
- pushing the envelope may cause more checking within government, may mean having to do more selling of the concept in government, especially if it crosses mandates. When YRRT brings in new ideas – new to go and check with many depts. Because the ideas cross into many mandates of government, we have to bring this concept to these departments.
- perception of duplication with other mechanisms that engage communities – Association of Yukon Communities, Council of Yukon First Nations, need to get support for definition of what this YRRT is – not political
- ministerial buy-in is missing - need to get buy-in to this new model of engaging with communities; if we don't get buy-in at that level, [the advisory group] can't help the YRRT
- appropriate funding

Government is mandate driven, so we work in our silos, we need to be able to communicate what the RRT benefit is.

Government fear of the new - fear is that this is another level of government; what will you ask for? The YRRT is new territory so lot of fear about it.

Ministerial buy-in is missing – need to get buy-in to this new model of engaging with communities, if we don't get buy-in at that level [the advisory group] can't help the YRRT.

Concrete ideas for achieving the goal of continuing the good experiences, benefits, and potential of YRRT that came out of this exercise included (Cambio Consulting p. 26 -27):

- Raise awareness of the YRRT
 - Clearly define the YRRT
 - YRRT write letter to the Minister to raise awareness and also to get buy in from the necessary departmental Ministers
 - Let government know how YRRT can improve YG/Federal government efficiency
 - Award recognition for advisor contribution
- Advisory people
 - sell the YRRT model to get Ministerial buy in so RTRT and Advisory Council are supported and can get other departments to participate
 - Advisors to write a paper on the benefits they've observed and a position paper on Advisory Council role and YRRT role
 - Separate meetings among the advisory people
 - Maximum of 2 or 3 advisory people at YRRT meeting
 - Advisory reps take YRRT issues back to relevant departments, Ministers; ensure and communicate follow through and accountability



Advisory Group members & other supporters

They see themselves as conduits into various places, especially for horizontal issues such as those that emerge from the Yukon Regional Round Table. The advisory group members recognized the need to be efficient and effective, and that they should meet, occasionally among themselves, and at that meeting determine who and how many should attend the regional round table meeting (Cambio Consulting p 30).

They [advisory group] see themselves as conduits into various places, especially for horizontal issues such as those that emerge from the Yukon Regional Round Table.

From 2006 – 2008, the regional round table entered into one formal and five informal partnerships with external organizations. In addition, the regional round table strengthened many existing relationships between communities and First Nations. The formal partnership is:

Yukon Tourism and Culture – A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the regional round table and Yukon Tourism and Culture to assist in developing the new Yukon online tourism calendar of events. In addition, a representative of Yukon Tourism and Culture has been a member of the advisory group from the beginning.

Informal partnerships include:

Arctic Health Research Network Yukon (www.arctichealth.ca) –The Arctic Health Research Network Yukon is part of a Canadian tri-territorial health research network linking northern regions to improve health outcomes through research. Two members of the Network attended a regional round table meeting and expressed an interest in the asset-mapping project the regional round table was undertaking.

Crime Prevention Yukon (www.crimeprevention.yk.ca) - As a non-profit organization that encourages activities and networks that lower crime in communities, Crime Prevention Yukon was interested in learning about the regional round table and a representative attended the September 2006 meeting and made a presentation about her organization.

Community Development Institute, University of Northern British Columbia (www.unbc.ca/cdi) - In building the asset mapping, the regional round table established a connection with the Community Development Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia, which had been active in research in northern communities. The regional round table met with an Institute representative who provided suggestions on the asset mapping process.

National Rural Research Network – In February 2008 the regional round table had the opportunity to co-host the Northern Dialogue Session with the National Rural Research Network. The Northern Dialogue Session focused on the themes of regional governance, Aboriginal self-governance, understanding and working with diversity, and capacity building. Through the workshop, members had the opportunity to network with researchers, community development practitioners, and government representatives from southern Canada.

Yukon College (www.yukoncollege.yk.ca) – In 2007, RDI partnered with Yukon College to assist in the collaborative evaluation. Yukon College also served as host for one regional round table meeting.

The regional round table positively demonstrated that communities, First Nations, and government could work together. Yukon Regional Round Table members indicated that the process of working together was time-consuming and frustrating at times; however, the results far exceeded the effort. Changes in membership in both the regional round table and advisory

group created challenges: lack of continuity in members required that new relationships to be developed. One regional round table member noted that many people under-estimated the time and resources required to develop and sustain the inter-community/First Nation relationships.

Capacity Development

The regional round table purposefully undertook activities to increase the capacity of the regional round table and its members. In conjunction with the meetings, a series of capacity building sessions were held. These sessions included conflict resolution, collaborative evaluation, First Nation's self-governance, sustainability/social economy, residential school compensation, and asset mapping.

As noted in the 2008 evaluation report, (Gibson & Annis, 2008) all regional round table members noted they personally gained skills and knowledge through the regional round table although some were difficult to describe and count. Knowledge and skills gained included:

- *I learned a lot about asset mapping. Prior to the regional round table I had never heard about this. After learning about asset mapping through the regional round table meetings, two groups I am involved with are now looking at this kind of model. I have been able to bring much of the information I learned from the regional round table to these groups.*
- *I learned and refined my active listening skills.*
- *I gained a better relationship with First Nation communities through the territory that I have never had in the past 20 years I have lived here.*
- *Travelling to each of the communities and First Nations has been a huge learning [experience] for me. Prior to the regional round table, I had never been to many of the other communities. As I travel I am learning about each community, their assets, their opportunities, and their challenges.*
- *A key capacity I gained is I realize we, as communities, do not have to work alone. Working together with neighbouring communities and First Nations was rare in my community.*
- *The regional round table process is a bit like 'herding cats'. Through the process I have gained many skills in group facilitation.*
- *I learned to allow others to speak and hear other people's thoughts and opinions.*
- *I gained a better understanding of tourism and how to relate to the Department of Tourism.*
- *I gained an appreciation and understanding for the different ways things are done among the municipalities and First Nations.*
- *The training session on First Nations self-governance was an eye-opener. Since that training session I am better able to understand the roles and responsibilities of the local First Nation, which has changed my approach to working with the First Nation.*

Travelling to each of the communities and First Nations has been a huge learning [experience] for me.

Prior to the regional round table, I had never been to many of the other communities.

As I travel I am learning about each community, their assets, their opportunities, and their challenges.
-(regional round table member)

- *I learned to communicate with people. I was quite shy and did not speak well in public. At the regional round table meetings I now feel comfortable speaking, something I was definitely not anxious to do when I first started with the regional round table!*
- *I try to apply regional round table meeting techniques to my local town council.*

Although capacity development as a topic unto itself was not addressed at the September 2008 sustainability development workshop, it came out in the many discussions (Cambio Consulting p. 4):

Developing Best Practices

The YRRT promotes sharing that allows members to discuss common interests and concerns and to identify solutions based on their own experiences. Identifying best practices for YRRT members saves everyone significant time and financial resources.

Spontaneous, Unpredicted Outcomes

The positive group dynamic created by the YRRT facilitates opportunities for innovation and creativity and frequently leads to unanticipated beneficial outcomes.

Influence and Advocacy

Stemming from a lack of understanding of community-based tourism initiatives in the region and the lack of a year-round online source of tourism events, the Yukon Regional Round Table pursued building a coordinated regional approach to an online tourism calendar. The culmination of the regional round table's discussions was a proposal to Yukon Tourism and Culture for the development of a regional website and to build capacity within local communities and First Nations for updating key local information such as upcoming events and tourist attractions. This proposal was not funded; however, the regional round table received the attention of Yukon Tourism and Culture which was in the process of a large scale review of their website. The department approached the regional round table to provide suggestions and comments for the re-development of the tourism website. These efforts culminated in a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the regional round table and Yukon Tourism and Culture.

The regional round table has more influence that we originally recognized. Now we need to focus on how to use the influence for positive changes in our communities.
-(regional round table member)

The initial reaction of the members was disappointment because the department did not accept the proposal. However, the meaningful contributions towards the re-development of the territorial tourism website and the Memorandum of Understanding were acknowledged as "success". One regional round table member noted this was the first tangible output the regional round table had produced and a "very significant achievement".

Through collaborative efforts such as these, regional round table members acknowledged their strength as a collective regional voice. A member noted, "the regional round table has more influence than we originally recognized. Now we need to focus on how to use the influence for positive changes in our communities." During the earlier meetings, the regional round table explored two formal structures: a registered non-profit society and an incorporated group. The regional round table decided to pursue neither option. A member noted, "We already have more power as an organization than we would ever have as a non-profit."

At the September 2008 sustainability planning workshop, Yukon Regional Round Table members decided to proactively contact governments (Cambio Consulting p. 8-9):

While the YRRT has been of value to those involved over the last two years, the YRRT does not have a high profile among those not directly involved. The YRRT members will communicate the vision, mission, and purpose clearly articulated from this workshop to their communities, Yukon Government and to the general public.

Within Yukon and Federal Government

- YRRT will write a letter to the Ministers thanking them for the support that their advisory committee has provided to them over the last several years. The letter can serve emphasize the importance that the government support has been and to raise awareness of the future plans of the YRRT and the need to continue the support. The letter will include a suggestion that the Advisors be rewarded for their contribution.
- Through the above letter and through communication by Advisory members themselves, the YRRT will let Government know how the YRRT can improve YG/Fed efficiency.

*There are so many of us
represented at the table,
they have to listen.
-(regional round table member)*

During evaluation interviews and at the sustainability planning workshop in September 2008, when asked to reflect on the Yukon Regional Round Table's influence, regional round table members stated:

- *There are so many of us represented at the table, they have to listen.*
- *Ministerial buy-in is missing - need to get buy-in to this new model of engaging with communities; if we don't get buy-in at that level, can't help the YRRT (Cambio Consulting, p.26).*
- *We can invoke change together.*

*We can invoke change
together.
-(regional round table member)*

Resiliency and Sustainability

At the beginning of the process, the Yukon Regional Round Table was provided process funding through the Models Program until the end of March 2008. In February 2008, regional round table members were unanimous in expressing their desire for the regional round table to continue beyond March 2008. In reflecting, at that time, on the past two and half years, the regional round table members agreed the benefits had outweighed the costs of participating in the regional round table. From the community perspective, the costs of participating in the regional round table have been low. Many members were quick to note they believe the value of the regional round table is still to be discovered. In moving forward, members identified three items to address. First, the regional round table members need to have active leadership from all members with each member assisting the regional round table in accomplishing its goals. Second, the regional round table needs to continue building relationships among communities and First Nations. Third, the regional round table needs to explore methods to keep communities and First Nations engaged that couldn't participate in the meetings.

On April 1, 2008, the Yukon component of the Community Collaboration Model Project was granted a six-month extension that enabled the regional round table to specifically focus on sustainability planning. A facilitated workshop to create a viable and sustainable strategy for the Yukon Regional Round Table was held in Faro Yukon on September 11-12.

During this workshop, the Yukon Regional Round Table members formulated both immediate and longer term strategies and actions. The sustainability plan that emerged from the workshop is as follows (Cambio Consulting (p. 10-12):

Immediate Commitments

1. Share outcomes from this meeting and about the YRRT
 - a. Email, list serve distribution list to circulate information about upcoming opportunities we might want to collaborate on, e.g., Alaska 50th birthday. Can also be used to develop proposals when there are deadlines that fall in between YRRT meetings. **Action:** Sheila Dodd will create email distribution list.
 - b. Newspaper ad or story with call to join. **Action:** by a communications person (see #2).
2. Hire proposal writer and communications person. Proposal writer will seek ongoing funding for YRRT and write to government Ministers to seek ongoing support. Communications person will develop newspaper and other media material about RRT with a call to join. **Action:** Shannon, Christine Smith, Marian Power, Wes will work on getting this in place. The RT agrees through consensus for Wes to prepare a contract(s) for communications and proposal writing.
3. Decision-making – will use email to discuss issues that require decisions and use email to ask for input to decisions, with a set time frame. Each is responsible for indicating their decision – if no response, will assume consent.
4. Next Meeting
 - a. Teslin, Wes Wirth as Chair, will also advertise the meeting to all YRRT members and organize
 - b. Second week of January
 - c. Agenda Items:
 - i. Tourism opportunities of Alaska 50th birthday and Sarah Palin VP candidacy;
 - ii. Conference participation – possible funding from Tourism Marketing Program to develop YRRT display; Business and Trade Branch funding;
 - iii. Community column for Yukon News, other media – what messages;
 - iv. Workshop report – content, distribution, on track with YRRT model;
 - v. Update on proposal writer and communications hiring from the sub-committee;
 - vi. Fundraising;
 - vii. Financial report;
 - viii. Asset mapping;
 - ix. Networking and social time built in.

Longer Term:

- Host meeting in new community - Carcross could be approached for a future meeting. They have indicated interest in the aspect of bridging gaps between FN and non-First Nation. Need to approach community directly – don't make any decisions to hold it in their community without approaching them first.
- Future meeting could focus on the topic of bridging the gap between First Nation and non-First Nation, since it is within the purpose of the YRRT.
- Hire executive director
- Administration services contract to build on existing contract for proposal writer/communications. An existing staff person could have their salary boosted to cover off the responsibilities of organizing meetings and covering off the administrative responsibilities of the YRRT. This would have the added advantage of supporting a community or First Nations capacity and contributing to local economic development.
- Dovetail meetings with other community events where YRRT can have a presence
- Regular Yukon news column. Increase visibility on news, TV, What's Up Yukon, other media
- Sell products – asset mapping; produce Yukon gold coin
- partnerships – corporate (Lotteries, Air North); operational partnership – (Teslin – financial services); external partnership (government departments - Economic Development, Community Services).

During evaluation interviews in September 2008, when asked to reflect on sustainability of Yukon Regional Round Table, regional round table members stated:

- *What we've learned in the last year is that we want to stay together*
- *Will the regional round table survive? I would like to see it survive as long as it keeps non-partisan and free-flowing.*
- *We seem to think we need [external] money to do things. The regional round table should get to a point where it is worthwhile on its own...or what is the point?*

*We seem to think we need [external] money to do things.
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or what is the point?
-(regional round table member)*



***Participants at the September 2008
sustainability planning workshop in Faro***

*What we've learned in this past year
is that we want to stay together.
-(regional round table member)*

Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table

Dr. Nicole Vaugeois of Malaspina University-College, Nanaimo British Columbia, partnered with RDI to conduct a collaborative evaluation of Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table. When the regional round table moved away from the Community Collaboration Model Project, RDI provided funding for a transition period and Dr. Vaugeois agreed to document and report on this transition (Vaugeois, 2007).

Processes and Infrastructure

Vision, Goals and Objectives

Forming a regional round table was viewed as an opportunity to bring the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of the region to the same table to advance common goals, one being the development of tourism along the Alaska Highway corridor. One of the primary goals for the regional round table was to strengthen relationships with representatives from the First Nation communities

Membership

Membership in the regional round table included Aboriginal, local government elected officials; representation from local industry and economic development officers (as ex officio). The membership of the initial regional round table included federal, provincial and local level government agencies, municipalities and First Nations communities. As was the design, this structure was also to link Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table to Rural Team British Columbia, and RDI.

After becoming aware of the loss of funding support through the Community Collaboration Model Project, some of the municipal groups within the regional round table strengthened their commitment to the regional initiative. For example, arterial communities such as Mackenzie and Tumbler Ridge both offered to host regional round table meetings.

Coordination and Administration

The regional round table was administered by the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association administrative staff who coordinated six regional round table meetings and two transitional meetings.

Resources

The Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association had financial support from its membership, as well as for the projects it had underway, such as the Alaska Highway Community Initiative.

Partnerships and Relationships

With Member Communities

After meeting one another through the activities planned by the regional round table, stronger networks in the region and enhanced partnerships emerged. For example, the Peace Liard Regional Arts Council signed a Memorandum with the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association to develop cultural tourism along the Alaska Highway Corridor. The Executive Director maintained communication with administrative personnel of the Yukon Regional Round Table. Tourism staff in some of the municipalities formed stronger working relationships and discussed the potential for joint marketing initiatives and packaging their products.

With Rural Team British Columbia

According to Dr. Vaugeois's report, when the Administrator of the North Peace Economic Development Commission and the Executive Director of the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association initially approached the Rural Team British Columbia Regional Advisor regarding establishing a regional round table in northeastern British Columbia, he was very candid and explained that the time required to establish a regional round table was beyond his time commitments. In addition, he also explained that since the majority of the Rural Team members were from the lower mainland, representatives from government agencies that were more involved with the north would have had interest in dealing with the issues of northeastern British Columbia and sitting as members of the advisory group. However, when the Executive Director of the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association, RDI and the representatives of the Rural Team British Columbia initially met in Vancouver to discuss the possibility of forming a regional round table RDI's impression was that the Rural Team was a fully participating partner. RDI and Rural Team British Columbia subsequently signed a Memorandum of Understanding that outlined the roles and responsibilities respectively of the Rural Team and RDI.

Dr. Vaugeois noted that through her discussions with regional round table members that, from their perspective, the interest by the majority of the Rural Team members appeared to be minimal. There appeared to be a lack of understanding of what was taking place with the regional round table and of the role that the Rural Team was to play in its overall success. This "disconnect" was felt by many of the regional round table members to be an important "missing link" in the overall regional round table process. Without a clear understanding of the role of the Rural Team and advisory group, the regional round table administering body selected members for the advisory group themselves and identified and invited multi-level stakeholders to participate in the regional round table. The misunderstanding due to the perceived or apparent lack of involvement/direction from the Rural Team and selection of the members and creation of the advisory group by the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association team was a point of weakness in the regional round table. The role of the advisory group and the members seemed not to be clearly defined. Also, the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association team and the regional round table members appeared to not be fully aware that the Rural Team was to play a greater role in establishing the advisory group. In preparation for the September 2006 regional round table meeting, the Rural Secretariat assigned an interim chairperson for the advisory group. The appointee was very uncomfortable with the position and unfortunately this step was not well received by the First Nation representation on the regional round table. The situation was very confusing and uncomfortable for many of the advisory group members who were not certain of their role or the function of the advisory group. Following that meeting, it was difficult to gain interest/commitment from some of the people who were to sit on the advisory group.

During the transition period, the Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table operated without the links to Rural Team British Columbia and RDI but strengthened its membership regionally. In terms of government involvement during the transition, no other government body joined the regional round table following the original establishment. As evidenced through participation at the March 2007 regional round table meeting, only one government agency, through the provincial Ministry of Economic Development, was present. The advisory group, which was originally comprised of members from various government agencies, appeared to

dissolve. At the local level however, the nine municipalities continued to participate in the regional round table.

With Other Government Departments and Agencies

Throughout the transition period, a very important relationship was developed with a representative from the provincial Heritage Branch of the Ministry of Tourism Sport and the Arts department. This representative was a member of Rural Team British Columbia and appeared to be genuinely interested in the area. Over the years, the Heritage Branch did not have enough funds to enable him to travel extensively around the province; however, the funds dedicated through the regional round table enabled him to travel to the region and establish new partnerships. Discussions with this representative at the regional round table meeting prompted the member from Tourism Dawson Creek to help the City of Dawson Creek become better informed about the steps required to establish a Heritage Advisory Committee.

A representative of Industry Canada shared a genuine interest in the regional round table and the opportunities that discussions at the grassroots level would offer for reassessing the value of federal funding programs for rural areas. Unfortunately, he retired January 2007. However, he remains a champion for the process.

With First Nations Communities

One of the primary goals for the Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table was to strengthen relationships with representatives from the First Nation communities. During the original regional round table, this relationship was fostered through the participation of the Northeast Native Advancing Society and the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association which had previously signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work on tourism development initiatives collaboratively.

During the transition period, other community leaders – i.e. Treaty 8 Tribal Council, further respected the relationship between the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association and the Northeast Native Advancing Society. Evidence of this strengthened relationship was that Northeast Native Advancing Society contributed funding to operate the March 2007 regional round table meeting and over one third of all participants at that meeting were from First Nations within the region. Some specific examples of increased involvement included a commitment by the Kaska Dena First Nations to send a representative to the regional round table. As well, in 2006 representatives traveled to Ross River Yukon to attend the Annual General Assembly and invited the Nation to participate. An invitation was extended to the Northeast Native Advancing Society/Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association to attend the 2007 Annual General Assembly at Liard River Hotsprings. As well, Fort Nelson First Nation and McLeod First Nation also became aware of the regional round table and the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association. The remaining funds from RDI for the regional round table meeting held in March 2007 were offset by a Labour Market Partnership agreement between the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association and the Northeast Native Advancing Society. The purpose was to introduce and investigate storytelling techniques. That meeting marked a milestone for the regional round table as representation by the First Nations communities was much stronger. The meeting was attended by the drummers from the Doig River First Nation, elders from the Doig and Blueberry First Nations, and the First Nations Education Coordinator for Northern Lights College.

With Universities and Colleges

Integral to the Community Collaboration Model Project were development of partnerships with academic institutions. In addition with forming a partnership with RDI, an objective of the project was to foster the development of new regional round table/academic institutions partnerships with closer-to-home academic partners. Three academic institutions were involved in this process in northeastern British Columbia.

Rural Development Institute

RDI's relationship with Rural Team British Columbia and the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association began in November 2005 at a joint meeting held in Vancouver British Columbia. At this meeting, RDI explained the Community Collaboration Model Project and the roles and responsibilities of each partner - the Rural Team, the regional round table and the academic institution. RDI was invited to and attended regional round table meetings during 2006. In August 2006, RDI hosted an evaluation-preparation workshop in Atlin British Columbia. The purpose of this workshop was to work with the regional round tables and advisory groups in preparing their evaluation frameworks and plans. Members of Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table, and an academic partner from Malaspina University-College, Dr. Nicole Vaugeois, attended. Prior to this workshop Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table members and RDI had held discussions regarding the evaluation process, data collection, analysis of the findings, storing and ownership parameters. Some Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table members had concerns regarding the evaluation, particularly about data ownership. After several conversations that included members of RDI's Community Collaboration Model Project steering committee, it became clear that much more time would be needed to develop the relationships to enable all parties to understand each others' needs and build consensus regarding data collection, storage and ownership and sharing findings. Unfortunately, the time-lines to complete evaluations didn't provide enough time for the much-needed relationship building, understanding and consensus-building.

From RDI's perspective, it seemed that the regional round table administrative personnel didn't view RDI as a partner, but rather that of a funder. This seemed to create some frustrations on the administrative personnel's part for providing the documentation agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding. RDI's relationship with the advisory group never really got off the ground. RDI did not attend any Rural Team British Columbia advisory group meetings, and initially all communication was with the Regional Advisor; part way through the year that contact was turned over to the Acting Senior Policy Advisor.

Malaspina University-College (Nanaimo British Columbia)

RDI initially partnered with Dr. Nicole Vaugeois of Malaspina University-College to facilitate the evaluation process. Dr. Vaugeois participated in the evaluation planning workshop in Atlin British Columbia in August 2006 and worked with the regional round table representatives to create an evaluation framework. When the regional round table transitioned out of the Community Collaboration Model Project, Dr. Vaugeois agreed to document the transition.

During the transition period, Dr. Vaugeois remained connected to the regional round table through her role as evaluator and as an advisory group member. She assisted in locating resources and facilitated sections of the regional round table meeting. She further developed some links with individual communities that enhanced her own projects to support rural tourism in British Columbia. The communities of Taylor and Mackenzie, for example, sought out expertise to gain an external perspective on tourism assets through the Tourism Research

Innovation Project, coordinated by Dr. Vaugeois and various provincial partners. Vaugeois promoted the regional round table and efforts of the northeastern British Columbia region in presentations at the British Columbia Annual Tourism Industry Conference and in regional presentations, and accompanied the staff and community leaders to visit Minister Stan Hagen in Victoria. Dr. Vaugeois and the Executive Director of the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association collaborated to place a regional liaison in the northeast region of British Columbia for the summer of 2007 to undertake some joint initiatives for the Tourism Research Innovation Project and to follow up on some of the ideas developed during the regional round table meetings.

Northern Lights College

Relationships with representatives from Northern Lights College were also stimulated through the meetings. It is expected that these relationships will be expanded in the future.

With Other Partners

A relationship formed between the regional round table and the Peace Liard Regional Arts Council. In the spring of 2007 and as a result of relationships formed through the regional round table, these two bodies signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work collaboratively on tourism development initiatives.

Capacity Development

During the regional round table experience, members of the regional round table built capacity. These capacities resulted from the nature of the activities required with regional collaboration. In the *Collaborative Evaluation Report, July 2007*, Vaugeois observed that members of the regional round table developed the sensitivity required to facilitate a meeting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members. One of the tools used to develop regional collaboration was community storytelling. Stemming from a conversation between the regional round table and the Northeast Native Advancing Society representatives, the idea of using storytelling to advance the work of the regional round table was first discussed in November 2006. The need to learn more about each community in the region also came through in the input session at the meeting, indicating to the group that perhaps the tool would be useful to advance the regional round table. The March 2007 meeting was dedicated to introducing the concept of storytelling, providing examples, and highlighting the opportunities for introducing a storytelling program in the region.

Influence and Advocacy

Members of the regional round table felt that there continued to be a lack of understanding by federal agencies and administrators of government programs for the support and solutions that are required in order to meet the unique needs of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities of northeastern British Columbia (Vaugeois, 2007).

Resiliency and Sustainability

The transition of the regional round table from the Community Collaboration Model Project resulted in new opportunities and challenges for the northeast British Columbia region. The announcement of the transition and an understanding of why the Community Collaboration Model Project did not fit the region created a renewed commitment among the participants of the regional round table. One participant stated “We failed because we were trying to fit a square peg into a round hole – but let’s learn from that and not do it again. The relationships formed and emphasis on a common goal developed early in the regional round table process allowed the regional round table to become resilient to funding pressures. Committed partnerships resulted

in leveraging for the March 2007 meeting and two communities pledged support for the next meeting. While there were still reporting requirements during the transition period, there was also less administration and reporting expected following the end of the period. This of course was offset by the priority to find new funding partners, write proposals and lobby for support. During the transition period, the regional round table was able to focus more on what they wanted to do and less on a model that they “had to do” due to funding requirements. As the struggle with fit was reduced, the participants responded with ideas to further their goals and spent less time trying to understand what the regional round table was. Not working within the framework of the Community Collaboration Model Project provided the Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table with the flexibility to focus on quality of life issues that related to developing a healthy tourism industry and supported a corridor management strategy for the Alaska Highway (Vaugeois, 2007).

The transition period was also marked by some challenges for the regional round table members. Some of these challenges were overcome and others were still being addressed as the regional round table moved forward. The loss of funding security for long term planning impeded the members of the regional round table to move into an implementation stage during meetings. As many of the regional round table members had to travel long distances to participate in the meetings, the transition period was strained by the need for members to return to their communities to justify continued participation. The initial announcement of the regional round table and enthusiasm of the participating communities served to create a lot of expectations in the region about what could happen when they worked together with government at the table. During the transition period, there was a notable feeling that the region “did not fit” and the regional round table had to realign the expectations of its members and supporting communities (Vaugeois, 2007).

Manitoba Regional Round Tables

The Manitoba regional round tables collectively developed an evaluation framework and measures of success. Throughout 2006-2007 representatives of RDI worked with the regional round tables to evaluate their regional round tables. This endeavour resulted in a collaborative evaluation report (Gibson & Annis, 2007).

Processes and Infrastructure

Vision, Goals and Objectives

Each regional round table developed a mandate through its vision, goals and objectives. Hudson Bay Neighbours established itself as more of an advocacy network. Northern Vision and Bayline had both advocacy and project activities within their mandates. Southwest focused on capacity building and project development. Two of the regional round tables, Bayline and Southwest, went through incorporation processes as means to secure project funding. While the regional round tables remained focused on their visions and goals, Northern Vision, especially, had challenges carrying them out.

Membership

Each regional round table established its membership criteria early on in their development. Bayline and Hudson Bay Neighbours mandated that elected members of their local governments be representatives to the regional round table. Northern Vision encouraged but did not require elected representatives be members of the regional round table. Requiring local decision-makers to be their community's representative enabled those regional round tables to make decisions to move a regional agenda forward. However, arriving at those decisions took considerable time and effort. The Southwest's membership was designated as Economic and Community Development Officers. When talking to Southwest members, a common theme for them was getting attention and support of their respective mayors and town councils. They were constantly challenged with having their projects and activities be seen as regional efforts by the local politicians.

Membership in the steering committee, at first, consisted of federal funders who saw an opportunity to collaborate amongst themselves, and then sought a region and facilitator to enable them to put forward their collaborative efforts. That membership soon expanded to strategically include other funders or potential funders whose mandates and/or interests were in rural and northern Manitoba. As time went by, and as Rural Team Manitoba grew from an ad-hoc networking group to a group with structure and focus, the steering committee's membership started to purposefully include others from the Rural Team.

Changing members was a considerable challenge for the regional round tables and the steering committee. With each change in membership, new relationships needed to be built, which took time and effort, especially as these relationships were often built over considerable geographical distance. In the steering committee, members changed because of new and/or changing responsibilities, retirements and changing responsibilities within their respective departments. The steering committee members noted, however, that new people brought new ideas and energy. In some of the regional round tables, membership changes were related to changes in community leadership through elections and retirement. Changing membership also presented challenges of ensuring continuity and linking to the "history" of the organization. While new members brought freshness with new approaches, linking to the past was also important. The regional round tables that had some type of continuity mechanisms in place seem to overcome

those challenges better. The changing membership, as well as other factors, likely contributed to Northern Vision's inability to meet over the past two years. Changing membership in Southwest over the past year has caused them to pause and re-evaluate their organization. The steering committee's changing membership did not seem to affect its ability to remain a group, however, it did change the connectivity of the steering committee to the regional round tables. Feedback from the regional round table members indicated that when a steering committee member who was their connection to government moved to other responsibilities or retired, the regional round table experienced a disconnect with the steering committee.

Coordination and Administration

Each of the regional round tables approached the coordination and administration of its regional round table differently, and, as stated earlier in this report, that is as was expected because the community collaboration process was not a "cookie cutter" process. The coordination ranged from a total voluntary system, to a blended system, to having paid staff. Southwest and Northern Vision relied on coordination and administration by the regional round table members themselves. In Southwest, the Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary assumed many of the administrative responsibilities. Northern Vision, like Southwest, designated coordination and administrative responsibilities to its executive officers. However, as their membership changed, and, as well, the communities' population and demographics changed, the administration and coordination in Northern Vision seemed to flounder.

Hudson Bay Neighbours had unique challenges because of the cross-jurisdictional nature of the organization. Their meetings alternated between Manitoba and Nunavut. The responsibility for organizing a meeting lay with the host community, and that community's representative acted as the co-chairperson. The other co-chairperson was the host of the previous meeting. As they moved away from RDI's facilitation and coordination, the Keewatin Business Development Centre in Arviat Nunavut assumed a coordination and financial administrative role. A meeting coordinator was contracted with, and he organized the meeting held in Gillam in 2005. Legal issues arose from that process and diverted the regional round tables efforts and attentions for some time. The cross-jurisdictional nature of the regional round table passed additional challenges. In order to hold a meeting, funding support was needed from both the Manitoba and Nunavut governments. On more than one occasion, one of the governments could provide funding for a meeting but not the other one resulting in the need to try and reschedule the meeting. This inability for the provincial and territorial governments to coordinate their funding efforts impeded Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round Table's progress.

Volunteer administration posed challenges for the regional round tables, as those charged with the administration responsibilities were often carrying out those responsibilities "off the side of the desk", that is, in addition to their "regular jobs".

The Wabowden Community Council initially provided administration and coordination for the Bayline by providing the services of their Community Animator. As the regional round table moved away from external facilitation, they applied for and received funding for regional round table-led projects. As is often the case with project funding, there were gaps where the work needed to be done, but the funds had not arrived. The Wabowden Community Council underwrote the administrative expenses, enabling the work to continue until the funding arrived. Having paid staff to administer Bayline enabled them to carry out the regional projects that were important to their region.

Volunteer administration and coordination posed challenges for Southwest, Hudson Bay Neighbours and Northern Vision, as those charged with the administrative responsibilities were often carrying out those responsibilities “off the side of their desks”, that is, in addition to their “regular jobs”. Where carrying out regional projects were part of their mandate, volunteer administration and coordination to write proposals, secure and report on project funding was a considerable challenge.

Administration and coordination of the steering committee seemed to fall to the Rural Secretariat Regional Advisor. While it is unknown if that was intentional, it seemed to be practical. Because of the evolved connection to the Rural Team and the Rural Secretariat, coordinating and administering a Rural Team sub-committee, as the steering committee became, seemed to be a natural fit with the responsibilities of the Regional Advisor. That individual was a member from the beginning, and has been able to ensure the continuity of the committee, linking its past mandates to its current one.

Communication

Communications were described by regional round table members as pivotal for the regional round tables to operate effectively. The ability to share information, plan meetings, circulate meeting notes, and create dialogues was highlighted as key communications. The regional round table meetings, which were held based on need, priorities, and activities, were the principal means for members to communicate with each other. The time between face-to-face meetings often was time of little communication: the more meetings held, the greater was the communication.

Regional round table representatives make presentations to Town Councils and Economic Development Boards on an ad hoc basis, typically reporting on the regional round table activities. Community discussions were not documented; however, one regional round table member estimated that each community received at least one report on the regional round table activities per year. To assist in communicating the work of the regional round tables, all four utilized local and regional media. Regional round table members indicated they supplied stories and press releases to local newspapers and radio stations most of the time.

Each regional round table had the opportunity to develop information and communication technologies through a partnership with the Community Information Management Network, which provided common tools to create, store, share, and manage community information more effectively online. All four regional round tables developed websites in conjunction with the Community Information Management Network. The original websites contained meeting notes, description of member communities and information on project activities. To assist in building information and communication technologies capacity, the Community Information Management Network provided training for the regional round table members. Approximately sixteen to twenty people from the four regional round tables received the training between 1999 and 2004. However, three of the four regional round tables indicated their websites were not updated in the past year. Lack of time, lack of training (and ability to take training), and lack of need were cited reasons for no longer utilizing the information and communication technologies tools. Bayline is the only regional round table still actively utilizing the online tools to administer and update their website.

Over the past eight years, communication between and among steering committee members, regional round tables, and other partners/stakeholders fluctuated. Changing membership within

the regional round tables and the steering committee contributed to miscommunications or no communication. At times, some regional round table members noted that their communications with the steering committee became infrequent. One regional round table member noted that if a steering committee member was not present at their meeting, they often did not communicate with that steering committee representative after the meeting. It seemed that steering committee members' presence at regional round table meetings facilitated greater communication.

Communicating to other members of government often was a challenge for the steering committee. Some steering committee members constantly needed to communicate within their departments/agencies providing a rationale for their continued involvement with the regional round tables. After the steering committee became a sub-committee of Rural Team Manitoba, the members were able to communicate with other members of government more efficiently by providing updates on regional round tables' and steering committee's activities at the Rural Team meetings.

Partnerships and Relationships

Regional round tables and steering committee members identified that trusting relationships were essential in the Community Collaboration Project. Relationships between and among regional round table members and Steering committee members, as well as with other partners, needed to be created and maintained. A regional round table member stated "we didn't notice the difference that relationships made to a group

We didn't notice the difference that relationships made to a group until we didn't have the relationships anymore.

(regional round table member)

until we didn't have the relationships anymore." Since 1999, each of the regional round tables formed numerous relationships and partnerships that assisted in building their capacity for undertaking activities and projects. The regional round table members noted that commitment was required in building relationships. One member stated, "there is a recognition that our group functions well because of the commitment of each member." A second member explained, "the more you work together the better results you can achieve." As discussed earlier, membership changes posed challenges because relationships with new members needed to be built. An interesting observation was identified in relationships between regional round tables and the steering committee. The relationships that were developed were perceived to be mostly individual relationships and not organizational relationships, so when a member of either group was replaced, the relationship building began again.

Since 1999, in addition to the partnerships established between the regional round tables and Steering Committee, at least thirty-five new partnerships, both formal and informal, were attributed to the Community Collaboration Project.

Through the Community Collaboration Project, the steering committee members identified that new and beneficial relationships developed between communities and governments. Connections to the regional round tables provided mechanisms for steering committee members to become more actively and directly engaged with rural and northern communities, increasing their knowledge of community issues, opportunities, and challenges. Over the past eight years, through these relationships, communities provided government departments/agencies with feedback and commentary on policy and programs. Conversely, through direct relationships with government representatives, regional round table members gained greater understanding of

how governments and government funding opportunities worked. Those relationships, in several

instances, enabled a regional round table member to telephone a government representative directly with questions, requests for assistance, suggestions and feedback.

Each of the regional round tables indicated that they built a number of partnerships as a result of the Community Collaboration Project. In some cases, new partnerships were established, while in other cases existing partnerships were strengthened. Since 1999, in addition to the partnerships established between the regional round tables and steering committee, at least thirty-five new partnerships, both formal and informal, were attributed to the Community Collaboration Project.

A profile of achievement was completed for the Bayline Regional Round Table in 2007 (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2007). The report's authors interviewed members of the regional round table and steering committee. The members were asked the question "*have these partnerships actually worked?*" The following is excerpted from that report:

Responses from interviewees continually supported the assertion that the partnerships developed were very much a key ingredient to the success of Bayline Regional Round Table...an important ingredient of the partnership issue is how Bayline Regional Round Table is perceived by First Nation entities. Since jurisdictional matters between on and off-reserve communities often challenges relationship building efforts, the fact that the town of Ilford and the War Lake First Nation are linked together closely by geography and that both are active members of Bayline Regional Round Table, is a significant sign that these partnerships certainly cross jurisdictional boundaries. However, even more instructive were the responses of representatives of two First Nation groups from outside the Bayline area (The Four Arrows Regional Health Authority 'representing the four Island lake First nation communities' and the Bunibonibee 'Oxford House' Cree Nation) when asked about their relationships with the Bayline Regional Round Table. One said 'without the Bayline Regional Round we would not have put ourselves on the map for our food projects' and the other said 'they were very helpful, they always made us feel included, and they shared information and offered practical support.' From experiences with First Nations – other jurisdictional quagmires in other parts of Manitoba – this level of cooperation and working together is quite extraordinary.

*This level of
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Capacity Development

Over the years, each regional round table established mechanisms and systems to enable their organization to operate. Organizing into regional round tables enabled the communities in the region to pursue goals and objectives that, in most cases, were too large or complex for any one community to tackle. All four regional round tables successfully made applications for funding projects important to their regions. This required developing capacity for proposal writing and project administration. Bayline's capacity grew to be the "go-to" organization for facilitating projects that went beyond the geographic boundaries of their regional round table. Examples of that include the Food Security project (Bayline Regional Round Table, 2008) and the Access to Health Services in Northern Manitoba research project (Community Collaboration to Improve Health Care Access of Northern Residents 2008). The partnerships for these projects were based on the relationships and networks developed by the Bayline and its members through the Community Collaboration Project.

Steering committee members noted that through the Community Collaboration Project, regional round table members increased their understanding of governments, planning processes, cross-jurisdictional issues and long-term planning. A steering committee member illustrated that observation by stating that in 2001 no Kivilliq region of Nunavut communities had long-term economic development plans. By the end of 2006, three communities had plans, while four additional communities were finalizing their plans. It was felt that through the connections and relationships developed at the Hudson Bay Neighbours, the communities' abilities to complete these plans increased. Through the organizational capacity that was developed, steering committee members noted they witnessed increased pride in communities and regions. In their opinion, the communities empowered themselves to take action and be proactive on local issues.

In addition to developing organizational capacity, as was discussed earlier in this report, the Community Collaboration Project facilitated developing collective and individual capacity. For many communities, experience in regional planning was limited before the Community Collaboration Project. Through facilitation, the regional round tables representatives built trusting relationships with other communities and steering committee members that moved the regions forward. For communities to successfully work together, a steering committee member noted, communities needed to address past inter-community suspicion and competition. Through the organizational capacity that developed there seemed to be an increased sense of pride in communities and regions. It was noted by another steering committee member communities did not realize the power they held collectively. Regional round tables undertook a coordinated and comprehensive approach. All regional round tables have now realized they have significant power. Regional planning capacity was hindered, at times, by events in each community such as the departure of major employers. In those situations, the affected communities focused their attention back to their communities rather than the region.

Communities did not realize the power they held collectively.

The Bayline's experiences highlight outcomes possible once organizational capacity was built. Bayline identified that food and food security were primary concerns within their member communities. Access to healthy foods was limited within communities in northern Manitoba. Many communities only had small general stores with limited selection and hours of operation. Most residents relied on transportation out of their communities to obtain groceries and household products. Four of the six Bayline communities could not access fresh produce within their communities. To address issues related to accessing healthy foods within communities,

The garden project provided benefits to not only to the children, who learned valuable skills, but also to the families, who were provided fresh healthy foods that may otherwise have been unavailable.

Bayline promoted ‘community gardening’ and ‘freezer’ projects. Gardening tools including rototillers, were purchased by the regional round table and supplied to each community to develop community and private gardens. In one Bayline community, partners worked closely with the local school to engage youth in growing fresh produce, with the children starting their own gardens at home. Volunteers visited the children and their gardens weekly during the summer of 2006 and assisted them whenever needed, empowering not only the students, but also their families and the communities. The garden project provided benefits not only to the children who learned valuable skills, but also to the families, who were provided fresh healthy foods

that may otherwise have been unavailable. In addition to the gardening project, a neighbouring community raised chickens as a means to locally provide the community with fresh poultry.

An additional component related to food security in northern Manitoba as identified by Bayline was the capacity to properly store food. When transportation and access to healthy foods were limited, it became imperative to have the ability to buy in bulk and store food long-term. Many issues related to ‘bulk buying’ were addressed by Bayline, specifically related to transporting purchased goods. The regional round table worked with Via Rail to enable residents to transport their goods on the train at no charge, even when the number of packages exceeded the passengers’ allocated amount. The freezer project helped community residents purchase freezers to store foods, either purchased in bulk or obtained through hunting and gardening. The *Northern Healthy Foods Initiative* (Bayline Regional Round Table, 2008) funded the project and Bayline made the purchases and necessary transportation arrangements. Payment plans were arranged with Social Assistance and Band payrolls and twenty-two freezers were placed in communities. The project was highly valued by partners and residents as a self-sustaining mechanism to improve food security and quality of life. Bayline also lobbied Social Assistance to designate freezers as ‘essential appliances’ so that appropriate provisions could be made for individuals to pay for their freezers, continuously re-investing in and expanding the project so that more northern residents may benefit.

A research project, *Community Collaboration to Improve Health Care Access of Northern Residents*, (Community Collaboration to Improve Health Care Access of Northern Residents 2008) funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and facilitated by the Rural Development Institute, worked closely with Bayline partners and partners in northern Saskatchewan providing a comparative perspective not only cross-jurisdictionally within northern Manitoba, but also between the two provinces. Researchers in Manitoba conducted interviews and focus groups with community members, service providers and government representatives involved in policy and program design and implementation. Research participants identified several key themes related to accessing health services in their communities, including issues related to accessing services within communities, issues related to regional access, issues related to specialized services that were available only in southern, urban centres and transportation issues. Collaboratively Bayline sought dialogue with local regional health authorities, federal and provincial government representatives to share their concerns and work towards positive solutions that would enhance access to services and quality of life and care in remote northern communities.

Over the past several years, Bayline's Coordinator/Community Animator hired and trained four administrative/secretarial assistants. Each of these assistants took their newly acquired skills and sought full-time employment elsewhere in public and private sectors. Rather than lamenting their "bad fortune" of training people who left soon thereafter for other employment opportunities, a Bayline member saw this as a positive by stating that, people in Wabowden view working with Diana as a big item on their resume. Although we have constant turn over, it is great to see this opportunity for young women in the community.

Early on, Southwest identified a lack of learning opportunities for Economic Development Officers in the area. Because their membership was mostly Economic Development Officers, they facilitated a number of training events on topics such as competitive intelligence, business retention and expansion and negotiation skills. In addition, they researched value-added agriculture opportunities, and explored youth migration in their region. While many of the members who participated in those learning opportunities moved to other positions and left the regional round table, they carried the skills and knowledge that they acquired while being members of the regional round table with them to other spheres in their lives.

Through the CCP, a steering committee member noted, "seeds have been planted in communities which have fostered growth and change." Communities and regions were actively engaged in future planning and actions. Regional round tables were empowered and motivated communities to address issues and concerns to achieve mutual benefits and opportunities. A steering committee member noted, "at times, the regional round tables could be chaotic, but out of chaos came opportunities. Many communities capitalized on these opportunities through the Community Collaboration process."

In April 2007, Diana DeLorande-Colombe (Community Animator, Bayline Regional Round Table) was recognized for her achievements in community leadership at the Manitoba Rural Forum.

On September 1, 2007, Diana was awarded the Prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life by the Women's World Summit Foundation. Diana was one of only fourteen winners in the world and the only one from North America.

The prize honours creative and courageous women and women's groups around the world for their contributions in improving quality of life in rural communities, for protecting the environment, transmitting knowledge and standing up for human rights and peace.

Influence and Advocacy

The regional round tables attempted to influence government policy and programs through resolutions, projects and relationship building. The results of this influence are varied depending on the situation. Regional round table members noted that they may have informally influenced members of the steering committee through their involvement, but they were not certain this translated into influence on policy or programs. They believe that they increased the governments' understanding and appreciation of the regions. Through regular connections with steering committee, a regional round table member noted: individuals in government, I would like to believe, have a better appreciation for our communities and region.

Bayline and Hudson Bay Neighbours were active in creating and circulating resolutions based on mutual concern. Since 2005, eight advocacy resolutions directed to private business or government services were adopted by those regional round tables. A member explained, results

from resolutions adopted at regional round table meetings took an enormous amount of time before seeing any results. However, another member perceived that their resolutions were getting people's attention. As mentioned earlier in this report, through the efforts of Bayline, Via Rail changed their baggage policy and also transported gardening equipment and supplies at no charge to each of the Bayline communities. Bayline lobbied for raises in Social Assistance food rates within the provincial government. The Hudson Bay Neighbours lobbied for changes in government programs and policies. A Hudson Bay Neighbours member believes that the regional round table has had some influence on the discussions on the location of a future road connecting Manitoba and Nunavut.

Steering committee members cited regional round tables as community development examples to their colleagues. Southwest was cited as an example in the *Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting through an Integrated Framework* brochure released April 2007 (Green Manitoba, 2007). The Bayline was often cited by the Public Health Agency of Canada as an example of process funding for grass-roots community development.

Resiliency and Sustainability

To be sustainable, organizations must have agreed-upon structures, processes, capacity and resources, both human and financial. While all of the regional round tables developed organizational structures and processes, not all have been able to carry on after 2005, when external facilitation and financial support ended. Only two, Bayline and Southwest continue to meet regularly.

Southwest did not have the challenge and expense of organizing meetings over a large geographic landscape. In fact, that was a non-issue, as at most, it was a one-hour drive to a meeting. Their challenge, however, was changing membership and the associated continuity issues, as well as not being all that visible with their political leaders. This left the members with competing priorities, at times, for the little time that the members could afford to spend working on the regional round table activities.

Hudson Bay Neighbours not only had the challenge of a large geographic landscape, they also had cross-jurisdictional logistics to deal with as well. They were further challenged because most of the operational responsibilities, which were being provided by the facilitator until 2005, now lie with volunteers who already have busy lives.

Northern Vision has all but ceased to function. There was an attempt in 2006 to restart the regional round table, expanding their membership and mandate. Although there were good intentions to continue, nothing has happened since. In addition to having similar challenges of operational responsibilities lying with busy volunteers, the communities within Northern Vision are in a state of change with demographic shifts and population changes.

Funding is all project-based, so the focus is on that, for example, food security. There are other urgent issues such as housing; we do them on the periphery.

Bayline continues to exist, and in fact has grown in capacity since 2004. They manage to carry on their operations by seeking project funding, and by having the underlying support of the Wabowden Community Council. Pragmatically, their project choices were those for which funding was available. One Bayline member stated they followed the money: "funding is all project-based, so the focus is on that, for example, food security. There are other urgent issues such as housing; we do them on the periphery. Our priorities would have been different if we had general funding". When asked what they saw in

the future for Bayline, members stated “if the founding people and Diana were to leave, the regional round table would still exist – there is enough of a foundation—even with less funding, we would exist”.

As discussed earlier, the regional round tables were provided resources from 1999-2005 to fund the processes of forming regional round tables. These funds provided for facilitation and travel and other costs associated with bringing community representatives together from across vast geographical regions. However, that funding ended in March 2004 for three of the regional round tables, and a little later for Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round Table. It seems where there was no provision to engage and pay staff to carry out the operations of the regional round tables, it was very difficult for them to carry on, once all supports were removed.

Some Northern Vision members have gone to other places, some remain, and new ones are joining. However, it seems the current members are directing their focus back to their communities and dealing with the communities’ issues and challenges and there isn’t a common vision anymore within the regional round table. It is questionable whether Northern Vision has the organizational capacity to carry on. There are those among the members of Hudson Bay Neighbours who feel there is political will for them to carry on; they are now figuring out a way to do that. Southwest is in transition as founding members have left, and new members are joining. They have a history of seeking project-funding, so if the membership is able to carry out the work of the regional round table in addition to their “day jobs”, they too may carry on. Bayline is carrying on; leveraging what is available to them, to new opportunities that reflect their vision and goals. One of their members summarized it this way: it’s OK to have a big goal, just so long as you understand that you can get there only one step at a time. Accountability, transparency and good financial records, minutes and resolution summaries are all there for those who follow us.

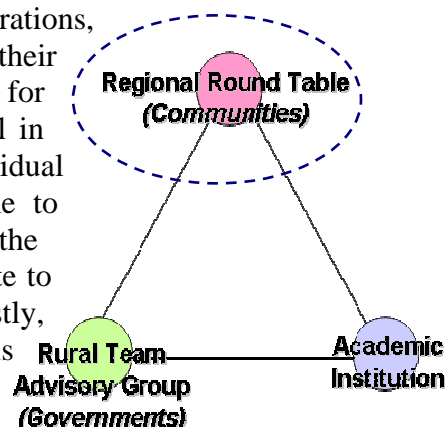


*Manitoba Regional
Round Tables*

Lessons Learned: Community Collaboration Model

Communities & Regional Round Tables

To effectively participate in multi-community collaborations, communities need to move from a competitive strategy with their neighbouring communities to that of a collaborative strategy for the region. Communities should be strategic and purposeful in the partnerships and collaborations that they enter into. Individual members of the regional round tables should devote time to championing partnerships and relationships and should have the desire, leadership and organizational skills and time to devote to multi-community collaborative efforts. They need to firstly, achieve consensus of the regional round table's vision, goals and objectives, and then realistically plan actions that will lead them to their goals.



The Project has emphasized the importance of organizational development, and innovation. The literature on rural development planning and management would reinforce this imperative. Rural communities, especially those blazing new trails in innovative process, require organizing and organizations.

-David Douglas

As was discussed earlier in this report, regional round tables need organizational infrastructure if they wish to succeed over the long term. They need to have visions, goals and objectives, which should be revisited from time to time and revised as needed. Membership should be defined to include, at minimum “who” the members are, “how long” they serve, and what the decision-making process is. Likewise, there should be clearly defined roles and expectations for the executive and for those who are coordinating and administering the regional round tables. As David Douglas states in his Forward to this report:

The Project has emphasized the importance of organizational development, and innovation. The literature on rural development planning and management would reinforce this imperative. Rural communities, especially those blazing new trails in innovative process, require organizing and organizations. The appropriately designed organization, contextually responsive, is one of the primary development vehicles to help us get from “here to there”. As with any journey, the wrong vehicle becomes part of the development problem, whereas the correct organization expedites and fuels the development agenda itself. It is as much a strategic initiative as any other component of the development agenda. In providing negotiated protocols, agreed upon structures, set communications procedures and so on, it provides increased predictability, lowers the risk bar, and itself creates a safe space for the collaborative conversation.

It has also been discussed earlier that there needs to be continuous communication using a variety of media and technologies that are appropriate and accessible. Absence of organizational infrastructure can lead to misunderstandings, tensions, and ultimately the failure of the regional round table to achieve its goals.

The skilled leadership of the WaterWolf staff enabled the regional round table to work on its goals and objectives successfully. It was difficult for the regional round tables that did not have paid staff to carry out their mandates. The responsibility to plan, organize, conduct and record the meetings fell to busy volunteers. The responsibility to ensure that proposals were written, and if/when funded, were carried out was burdensome for volunteer members. Northern Vision Regional Round Table did not have a staff person, and struggled to achieve their goals. Comments from Southwest Regional Round Table members indicated that they were worried about the continued viability of the regional round table because of the “full plates” of their members with their “regular” jobs. The Yukon Regional Round Table faced a similar dilemma, however in the short term they had the resources to engage a part-time coordinator/facilitator. They are now looking at engaging an Executive Director to carry out their vision and mandate. Funding for that type of administrative infrastructure remains a challenge. Long term, as demonstrated in the Bayline experience, Yukon Regional Round Table hopes to pay for this service through project dollars. To that end, with their few remaining “process” funds, they are looking to contract with someone with the skill-set to seek out funding opportunities and write funding proposals. This could be problematic, because if they do not receive project funding, they will not have process funding and it becomes a cycle of chasing project funding to ensure, the viability of the Yukon Regional Round Table. A Yukon regional round table member suggested that relationships and partnerships developed in this endeavour should be considered “hard” measurables because the partnerships are valuable to the communities in and of themselves – thus the collaborative process should be measured and valued as a “project deliverable”.

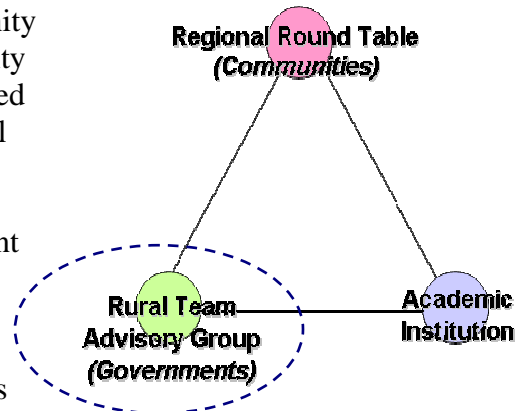
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Overcoming the jurisdictional problems of territorial/provincial funding support for meetings was difficult and almost impossible to attain for the Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round Table. The funding to support travel and organizational costs for meetings did not seem to be available from both jurisdictions at the same time. This will likely be a challenge for any regional round table that crosses political boundaries, so collaborative planning and discussions need to take place early in the formation phase of regional round table development.

Member communities need to contribute both cash and in-kind resources to the regional round tables to be sustainable. As illustrated earlier in this report, the communities, in fact, contributed significant in-kind resources to their regional round tables and because of the nature and reporting requirements of the Community Collaboration Model Project, the in-kind contributions became visible and evident. That is not always the case because in-kind contributions are often seen as “soft” contributions that are of lesser value.

Governments

From the lessons learned in the Community Collaboration Project, 1999-2004, the Community Collaboration Model Project was intentionally designed to require government participation through the Rural Teams in the provinces/territories. As was discussed earlier, this was an evolutionary learning experience as the Community Collaboration Project's government partners moved from a management committee to a steering committee to finally, a sub-committee of the Rural Team. Requiring participation of the Rural Team was intended to ensure that there was government "buy-in" to the process, as well as putting forth



the concept and practice of "partnering" with communities. Where there was a commitment of the advisory groups to attend and participate in the regional round table meetings, the relationships and partnerships developed and grew. Comments by both regional round table and advisory group members suggested there was mutual respect and appreciation. When the advisory group members were less able to attend and participate in regional round table meetings, the partnerships appeared to be more tentative. For the most part, the advisory group members participation in the community collaboration process appeared to be conducted "off the side of their desks", adding to their already-busy working environment, and perhaps "under the radar" of their mandates.

Governments need to see that investing in community development processes is an appropriate use of public funds. Governments need to move from funding deliverables to supporting capacity development in the ways similar to that demonstrated in the Community Collaboration Model Project. For community/region-government partnerships to be sustained and effective, government representatives need to have mandates and reporting structures that are flexible enough to work with communities and regions in non-traditional ways and to move them from working "under the radar" to working "within the radar". The Community Collaboration Model Project demonstrated that investing in community development processes yielded increased partnership and capacity development and produced tangible benefits to the regions involved. Governments need to better manage their complex accountability structures. They also need to better manage files horizontally across government departments and across governments. The membership and activities of the Rural Team advisory groups demonstrated that this is possible and can produce synergistic results.

Governments need to see that investing in community development processes is an appropriate use of public funds.

Government is mandate driven, so we work in our silos, we need to be able to communicate what the RRT benefit is.

-(Cambio Consulting, p. 26)

As described earlier in this report, at the sustainability planning workshop in September 2008 in Faro Yukon, the Yukon Advisory Group identified some of the challenges that the advisory group members faced as they participated in this new model for community development. Included in those challenges was notion that government departments are silo-like, with not a lot of horizontal connections. Advisory Group members saw themselves at the forefront of horizontal file management. Another challenge identified was the fear

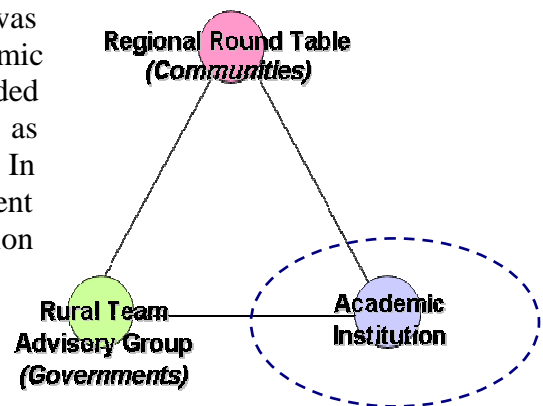
of government for new processes that did not clearly fit established mandates. The community and government participants at this workshop concluded that for this new model of engaging communities to gain traction, there must be Ministerial buy-in, both at the territorial/provincial and federal levels. To this end, one of the actions forthcoming out of this workshop is to write to the Ministers whose departments are represented on the advisory group detailing the positive outcomes of the CCP Models project from a Yukon perspective.

Ministerial buy-in is missing – need to get buy-in to this new model of engaging with communities, if we don't get buy-in at that level [the advisory group] can't help the YRRT.

-Cambio Consulting, p. 26

Academic Institutions

The Community Collaboration Model Project was intentionally designed to include post-secondary academic institutions such as universities and colleges. This included partnering to provide facilitation and evaluation as well as fostering partnerships that may have not previously existed. In the Manitoba regional round tables, the Rural Development Institute of Brandon University was the academic institution that partnered with the regional round tables to facilitate the formation and evaluation processes. In Saskatchewan, that connection was made with the University of Saskatchewan. In the Yukon, both Yukon College and the Rural Development Institute partnered with the regional round table. In Northeastern British Columbia, a partnership developed between the regional round table and Malaspina University-College of Nanaimo British Columbia. That partnership endured even after ending the Community Collaboration Model Project efforts. In addition, the academic institutions benefited from partnerships that developed with each other.



A primary objective of the Community Collaboration Model Project was to provide opportunities for students to build capacity in community development research and practices, and to participate in in-the-field community development processes. Two Masters of Rural Development students from Brandon University and one student from the University of Saskatchewan actively participated in the project. In addition, two recent graduates of the Masters of Rural Development program actively coordinated components of the project. One student described the experiences:

Learning to work with communities in building capacity was truly beneficial as a student...learning to work with people had its benefits and challenges...but how to handle those challenges is an art ...learning to talk in public presentations I have to give ...was not an easy task at first [and] still something I am learning...the art of facilitating HUGE!. When I had to do focus groups

Learning to work with communities in building capacity was truly beneficial as a student...learning to work with people had its benefits and challenges...but how to handle those challenges is an art ...learning to talk in public presentations I have to give ...was not an easy task at first [and] still something I am learning...the art of facilitating HUGE!.

for my thesis and after my thesis, as a research associate, learning how to facilitate well is difficult. There were a lot of things I picked up from the RRT [regional round table] meetings, such as making sure everyone gets a chance to talk, how to get conversations flowing, what to do if there are a few dominant participants, keeping it fun and interesting, etc. I had the opportunity to participate in report writing, it has since been very valuable in the research I am doing now.

Another viewed the experiences this way:

As a student many of my interactions were with the Bayline Regional Round Table in northern Manitoba. Through this project I gained first-hand knowledge about many of the challenges that northern people and communities face, as well as how they creatively approach those challenges. Experience, in addition to education, enriched my studies. Education and experience provide insight into many of the issues rural and northern communities face, enabling me to continue to meaningfully contribute to academically and professionally to the fields of rural and community development.

Through this project I gained first-hand knowledge about many of the challenges that northern people and communities face, as well as how they creatively approach those challenges.

To effectively participate in multi-community collaborations, academic institutions need to find new and creative ways to engage the human and capital resources of universities and colleges in communities to be more engaged in community development processes. They need to minimize role ambiguity by clearly defining the institution's role because role ambiguity leads to trouble. Academic institutions need to view communities as something more than research laboratories, and communities should be able to view academic institutions as resources for their efforts. Academic institutions also need to better understand and value community service by refining understanding of how community service is defined when individuals are "judged" for advancement purposes.

To effectively participate in multi-community collaborations, academic institutions need to find new and creative ways to engage the human and capital resources of universities and colleges in communities to be more engaged in community development processes.



Diane Martz
(University of Saskatchewan) and
a regional round table member



Nicole Vaugeois
(Malaspina University-College)
presenting at the Atlin Evaluation workshop

Partnerships and Capacity Development

What was demonstrated over the past nine years is that developing trusting and valued relationships and partnerships within and between communities, governments; and academic institutions took persistence, deliberate effort, time, resources, and committed skilled and sustained leadership. In each of the regional round tables, some of the communities needed to overcome historical rivalries, or as Russ McPherson of the WaterWolf Regional Round Table has often stated, the “hockey wars”. Bill Reimer in his Foreword to this report states:

Community collaboration is a messy activity. Community members have differing interests which often come in conflict. Communities and community groups represent diverse commitments and dependencies that are bound to appear as tensions within any joint project. If collaboration is to work at all, these diverse interests must be acknowledged and managed rather than denied or avoided
-Bill Reimer

Community collaboration is a messy activity. Community members have differing interests which often come in conflict. Communities and community groups represent diverse commitments and dependencies that are bound to appear as tensions within any joint project. If collaboration is to work at all, these diverse interests must be acknowledged and managed rather than denied or avoided. The community collaboration story provides us with examples of how this might be done. The regional round tables play a key role in the process. They provide a venue where people can meet; express their interests in a safe environment explore differences and complementarities, and consider potential action for local development. In the process, they learn the skills associated with collective action: organizing meetings, managing conflict, coming to decisions, taking action, and celebrating. As is so often the case, once the lessons are learned they can be applied to a wide variety of new challenges and innovations.

Moving from rivals for attention and resources from governments took deliberate effort and visionary leadership. The persistence of the Bayline Regional Round Table to seek funding for the food security project, and leverage that and other funding to achieve additional goals is evidence of committed and skilled leadership. WaterWolf Regional Round Tables’ ability to gather more than forty towns, villages and rural municipalities together on issues such as land-use planning speaks to the visionary leadership of the Board of Directors and the staff. In spite of, or perhaps because of its large geographic footprint, the Yukon Regional Round Table’s vision for the regional round table to be an inclusive, collaborative regional round table that will effect positive change still remains strong. Despite the challenges of consistency and capacity of its members to attend all meetings, members at the sustainability planning workshop held in September 2008 unanimously insisted that the regional round table will continue into the future.

Overcoming the historic challenges, as well as the large geographic distances between communities took considerable amounts of time and effort. As Baker noted in his research findings, it can take up to ten years for a multi-community organization to reach stability and sustainability. A contributing factor to the inability to form a regional round table using the Community Collaboration Model Project in northeastern British Columbia was there wasn’t sufficient time to develop the relationships necessary to understand each partner’s perspectives and build consensus on processes for moving the regional round table forward.

Beverly Cigler, a professor of public policy and administration at Penn State University conducted case studies of collaborative partnerships in Michigan and Alberta. From this

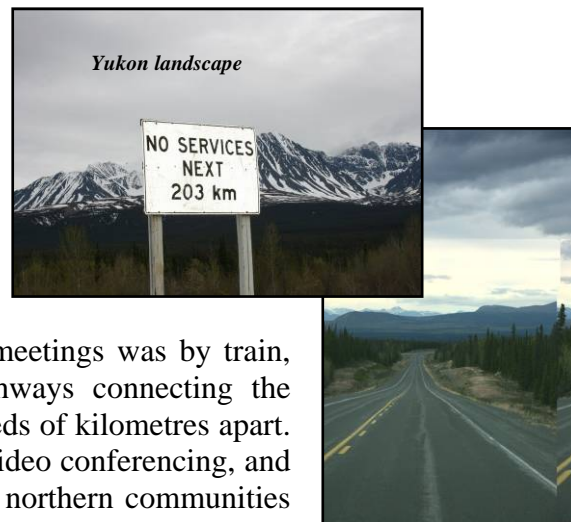
research, Cigler developed a list of pre-conditions within the local context for multi-community collaborations. Those pre-conditions include: a disaster occurrence; community fiscal stress or perceived stress by key local decision-makers; the presence of a political constituency for cooperation and/or the perception by key officials that such a contingency exists; supportive programs provided by external agents, such as state government, professional and municipal associations and university programs (Cigler, 1999).

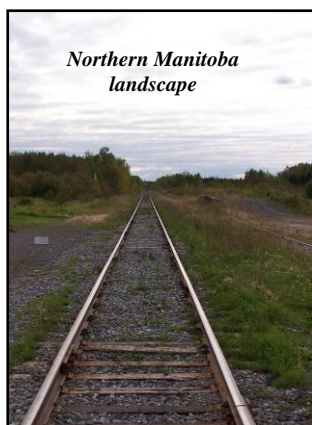
In the Community Collaboration Model Project, there were elements of all four pre-conditions. However, project demonstrated that **visionary opportunities** brought communities together. The civic leaders in the Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round Table saw an opportunity to cross jurisdictional boundaries and form a regional round table where the sum was greater than the parts to give them greater opportunities for influencing policies and programs. The Southwest Regional Round Table members saw an opportunity for Economic Development Officers of small individual communities to pool resources for training and research. The Yukon Regional Round Table members seized the opportunity to come together in a first-ever forum of communities and First Nations. WaterWolf Regional Round Table leaders envisioned a future whereby their member communities and rural municipalities determined their own fate around land use planning, as well as other agreed-upon priorities.

Resources

It was equally evident that formation of regional round tables required resources for the collaborative processes. The Community Collaboration Model Project was very innovative in that regard, because the funding provided by the Rural Secretariat was for collaborative *processes*. This allowed for flexibility and individual decision-making by the regional round tables as to how their collaborative processes would unfold and go forward. This flexible funding model provided the much-needed resources for regional round table members to meet face-to-face, enabling them to form the relationships that were foundational to the collaborative process.

For four of the six regional round tables, overcoming large distances to hold meetings was a huge challenge. Since there were no all-weather road access for over two-thirds of the communities and First Nations belonging to the northern Manitoba/Nunavut regional round tables, organizing and holding meetings was challenging. Depending on the season, travel to meetings was by train, boat, or airplane. In the Yukon, there are highways connecting the communities, however the communities are hundreds of kilometres apart. While the use of technologies such as telephone, video conferencing, and Internet was an option for meetings, many of the northern communities did not have the available technologies and/or the skills to use the technologies. In fact, sometimes arranging a telephone conference call was a challenge. Internet was unavailable in many communities, or if it was available, it was low-speed dial-up access, which was not conducive to almost any type of communication between and among regional round tables. The optimal option for meetings was face-to-face, which was expensive. Because relationship-building is foundational to multi-stakeholder collaborations, face-to-face meetings, especially in the forming phase were critical. Being able to not only have formal discussions, but





to have informal and personal conversations enabled people to connect with each other. The large distances and remoteness required considerable creative planning included “piggy-backing” regional round table meetings with other events. Because of the expense and distance, some regional round tables held meetings only two or three times a year, rotating between communities.

Resources, both human and financial, were critical to the success of regional round tables’ formation and sustainability. It was evident in the Community Collaboration Model Project, that formation of regional round tables required resources for collaborative processes. The project was very innovative in that regard, because the funding provided by the Rural Secretariat was for *processes*. This allowed for

flexibility and individual decision-making by the regional round tables as to how their collaborative processes would unfold and go forward. This flexible funding model provided the much-needed resources for regional round table members to meet face-to-face, enabling them to form the valued relationships and partnerships that were foundational to the collaborative process.

As shown earlier in this report the eighty five communities that comprised six regional round table communities and the academic partners contributed almost two-thirds of the resources (in-kind and cash) to the Community Collaboration Models Project, with the Rural Secretariat contributing slightly more than one-third of the resources as a cash contribution. The in-kind contributions of the eighty-five communities, particularly the contributions of time and efforts were conservatively valued at over \$1 million. These in-kind contributions were pivotal to the overall success of the project, not only from the hard dollar value, but also intrinsically because they quantified the trust, relationship, partnership and capacity building that occurred. The Rural Secretariat’s contribution of a little more than one-third the value of the Community Collaboration Model Project was crucial to the success of the project, because that cash contribution enabled the community collaboration processes to occur over large geographic footprints. Having financial resources that enabled the communities to meet and engage with one-another and government representatives provided opportunities for them to focus on the processes of building the relationships and partnerships foundations.

Having financial resources that enabled the communities to meet and engage with one-another and government representatives provided opportunities for them to focus on the processes of building the relationships and partnerships foundations.

As the regional round tables are now moving to “independence” in the process, they need to raise those collaborative process funds on their own. WaterWolf, Yukon and Bayline regional round tables are resolving this dilemma by seeking out project funding, and managing to fund their meeting costs, so far, through their projects. This method is precarious, as receipt of project funding does not always coincide with paying the regional round table’s bills. WaterWolf and Bayline have founding organizations that will “carry” them, if need be, however the Yukon does not have this organizational infrastructure; the ability to continue meeting will undoubtedly become a greater challenge.

Funding for the collaborative processes of the Community Collaboration Model Project was an investment that yielded benefits and will continue to yield additional benefits for many years.

Resources are still needed to maintain and grow the regional round tables to realize their full potential. Hopefully the flexible funding model demonstrated in the Community Collaboration Model Project can be seen as the beginning of a paradigm shift for government, in which financial resources are invested in partnership and capacity development processes in communities and regions of rural and northern Canada. The dividends for investing in the communities and regions within the Community Collaboration Model Project are already being realized and have the potential to grow, however, it takes considerable time (Baker, 1993).

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Information and Communication Technology

The role of information and communication technologies in supporting social networks for community development and in supporting universities, research institutes, and governments engaged in community research processes was also examined. Information and communication technology was a part of each regional round table advisory group process. Low-technology tools such as telephone conference calls were employed during the course of the project. Emails were constantly flying around the country and web-based technologies were used in websites and online collaboration tools such as that used by the Yukon Regional Round Table. Successful use of these technologies depended on the individual's awareness, access and skill level. There were still some communities that did not have Internet access, or if they did, it was slower dial-up access.

Even when Internet access was available sometimes there wasn't the appropriate hardware to access it; or if there was the hardware, the cost of Internet access is too high. Another limiting factor was that even when there was access, hardware, and affordability, regional round table members may not have had the skills and/or the time to maintain their online presence. This was the case for three of the Manitoba regional round table websites. Websites were developed, and initially there were skilled people to maintain and update the sites. This diminished over time, until the websites were not maintained and not used. Where there were dedicated resources, such as in WaterWolf's case, the website became an important communication tool. WaterWolf successfully utilized technology for planning and carrying out their objectives.

Information and communication technology was useful and appropriate for meeting planning and follow-up, however, it couldn't replace the face-to-face interactions that occurred during the meetings.

Feedback in the Yukon suggests that even where there was access, affordability and skill, not all members used the online collaboration tool. However, at the sustainability planning workshop in September 2008, members agreed to create and use a list-serve for project updates, agenda-planning and distributing information between meetings. They will continue to hold face-to-face meetings quarterly because consensus was that they could not replace the personal interaction at general meetings, with technology.

In summary, information and communication technology was useful and appropriate for meeting planning and follow-up, however, it couldn't replace the face-to-face interactions that occurred during the meetings. Because relationship-building was foundational to the regional round tables' and advisory groups' development, face-to-face meetings, especially in the forming phase were critical. Being able to not only have formal discussions, but also to have informal and personal conversations enabled people to connect with each other at a personal level. Community, government and academic representatives found common ground, formally, through meetings and informally through the non-formal components of each meeting, such as hikes up mountains, and walks through the woods.

Replicability and Transferability

The Community Collaboration Model processes can be initiated in other areas of rural/northern Canada; however, the Model cannot be replicated from province to province to territory because the community collaboration processes are not "one-size-fits-all" processes nor are they cookie-cutter approaches.

The Community Collaboration Model Project vision was to encourage communities to explore and develop processes to increase their ability to address change and work toward becoming more sustainable.

The Community Collaboration Model Project tested transferability and replicability to other areas of rural/northern Canada. Did that occur? The answer is "yes" and "no". The Community Collaboration Model processes can be initiated in other areas of rural/northern Canada; however, the Model cannot be replicated from province to province to territory because the community collaboration processes are not "one-

size-fits-all" processes nor are they cookie-cutter approaches.

What was demonstrated is that the Community Collaboration Model is applicable elsewhere, providing there is deliberate effort; time; financial resources for community collaboration processes; and skilled, committed and sustained leadership. Where one or more of those conditions is not present, it is unlikely that a regional round table can be formed, as in the case of northeastern British Columbia, or if formed, cannot sustain itself, as is currently the case with Northern Vision, Hudson Bay Neighbours and Southwest Regional Round Tables. From the evidence documented from the WaterWolf Regional Round Table tangible outcomes such as land use planning and the tourism corridor illustrate what can be accomplished regionally. The Yukon Regional Round Table is exploring and developing processes to increase their ability to address change and become more sustainable. However since they are still in the formation phase, it is too soon to tell if that will occur.

What was demonstrated is that the Community Collaboration Model is applicable elsewhere, providing there is deliberate effort; time; financial resources for community collaboration processes; and skilled, committed and sustained leadership.

The same conditions and circumstances apply to the advisory groups. There also needs to be deliberate effort; time; financial resources for community collaboration processes; and skilled, committed and sustained leadership for the group to form and sustain itself. The Yukon advisory group is the most active advisory group at the writing of this report. The Saskatchewan advisory group and the Manitoba steering committee are less active, so there is a question of whether they are viable into the future. The Rural Team British Columbia had limited engagement in the attempt to form a regional round table in Northeastern British Columbia and was unable to form an advisory group.

Regional Governance

There is a growing body of discussion internationally around regional governance. Regional governance is different than regional government: it is not necessarily about replacing legacy governments but evolving to have additional forums for planning and decision making. Communities and governments, at all levels, have been concerned over the future of rural and northern communities. Decentralization and trends in regional policy are influencing rural policy makers (OECD, 2006). The exploration of rural regional governance is an issue affecting many communities, regions, and governments.

Bill Reimer, in his Foreword to the *Rural Community Health and Well-Being: A Guide to Action* writes of the demands governance makes on civic groups:

Political analysts point to the ‘new governance’ as ‘the revolution that no one noticed’. They refer to the many ways in which non-government and private sector groups have taken over government functions — sometimes on their own, and sometimes in partnership. Health, environmental enhancement, recreation, economic, and social support services that used to be provided primarily by governments are now shared by complex systems of government, private, and public partnerships or left to the purview of voluntary groups. Without strong and flexible civic engagement, this new form of governance is bound to fail. It requires communities and groups that can investigate and represent their situation in terms that are well founded and comprehensible. It requires debates on key values and objectives that are transparent and inclusive, and it requires social action that is focused and strategic. All these place additional demands on communities that are challenged already by change and uncertainty (Annis *et al.* 2004, p 3).

Communities have increasingly become more responsible for local development, which has varying implications based on the availability of human and social capital (Drabenstott, 2001; Jean, 1997; Reimer, 2006). Communities throughout Canada have identified a number of means to address issues presented in rural and northern communities (Annis & Gibson, 2006; Baldacchino & Greenwood, 1998; Vaugeois, 2000). With these ever-changing dynamics, many rural communities have turned to regional governance as a mechanism for survival and sustainability. Unfortunately, the conditions and context for regional governance are not well understood, particularly understanding critical phase changes, negotiated power sharing, the role of distance/density and place-based relationship. Understanding regional governance and collaboration will have an influence on rural policy, at the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal level. As communities and municipalities create an interest in regional governance and collaboration, provincial and federal governments need to be responsive to new needs (Douglas, 2005). Through effective rural policy, rural and northern communities may have an opportunity to increase their contribution to national economies (Johnson, 2001).

Goldenberg (2008) states:

New policy approaches to regional and rural development require new governance structures and methods. Indeed, new and effective governance modes are inherent in the new, more holistic, place-based and community-driven approaches being implemented by countries. Governance in this context will require innovative and active consultation and engagement mechanisms to involve the local community and citizens; effective coordination and strategic planning; new partnership arrangements to bring together the different actors including the local community, the private and non-profit sectors, government at all levels, educational institutions, and others; new accountability regimes; and new delivery systems to accommodate the different players and agencies involved and better link services to local needs and contexts (p. 27).

Communities and governments have begun to “think regionally”; however, there is a lack of understanding and knowledge by communities, government and academia. A better understanding is required to enable researchers, governments and communities to apply collaboration and governance to policy, practice and research (Goldenberg, 2008; Ministère des Affaires Municipales et des Régions, 2006; Partridge, 2007 Drabenstott, 2001; Douglas, 2005; Johnson, 2001). Role of Information and Communication

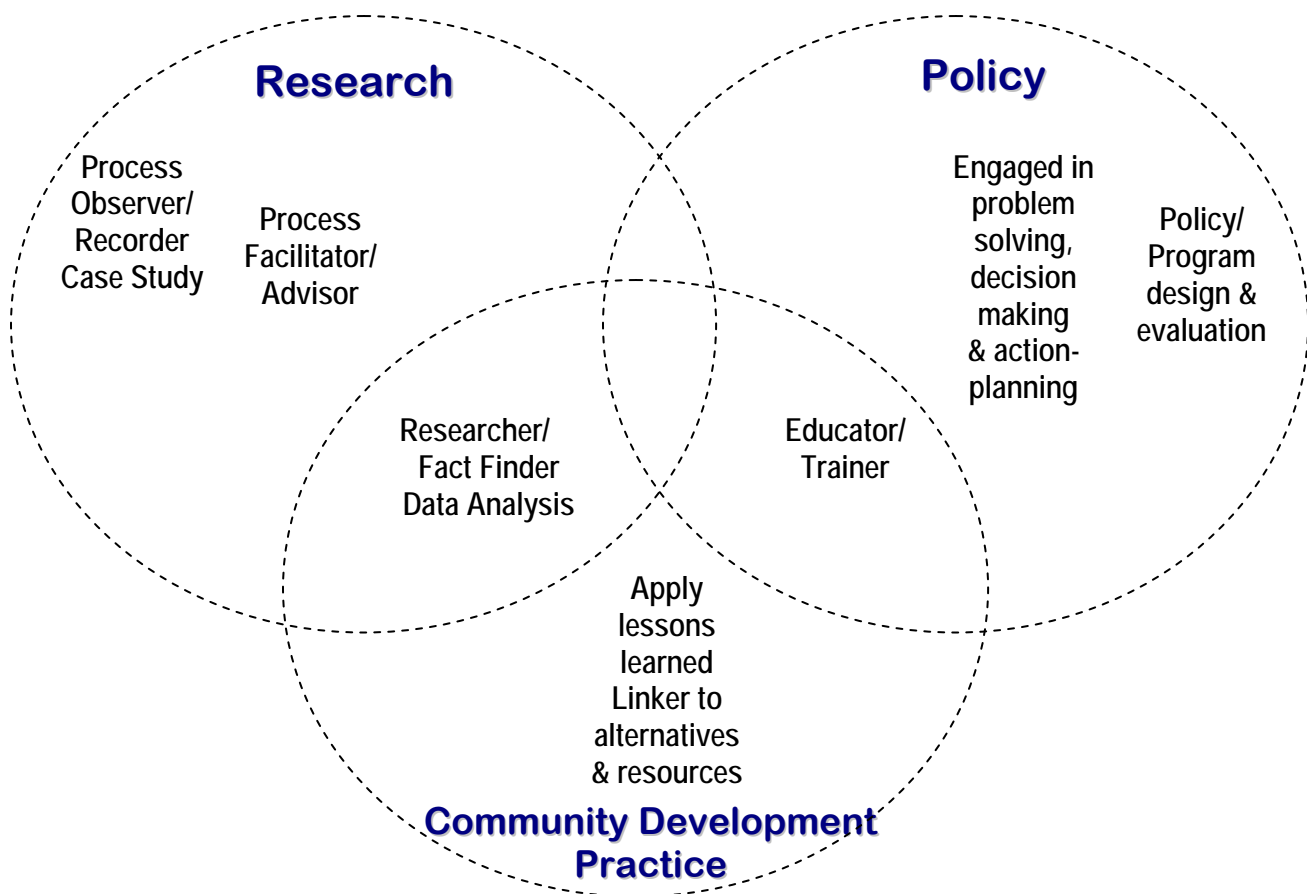


Yukon Regional Round Table members

Collaborative Strategies for Community Engagement, Research & Policy Development in Rural & Northern Canada

Rural Development Institute's Approach

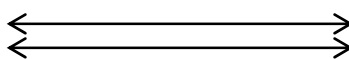
Community development practice, research and implications for policy development are central to the projects and activities undertaken by the Rural Development Institute. While the emphasis may be more in one domain at any given time in a project, to some extent they are interrelated and overlap. The emphasis is determined by the purpose of the project and the nature of the community engagement.



High engagement in process

Low engagement in content

Low engagement in outcomes



High engagement in content

High engagement in outcomes

The Community Collaboration Model Project was a research project initiated through the Rural Secretariat's *Models for Rural Development Research Initiative*. The Rural Development Institute's role in the project incorporated aspects of community development practice, research and suggestions for policy development. In the Feasibility Investigation phase and initial stages of the Model Implementation phase, RDI was the process facilitator, observer and recorder. In the Participatory Evaluation phase, RDI's role was that of researcher, fact-finder and data analyzer, as well as evaluation process educator. In the Model Implementation Phase, RDI facilitated linking the regional round tables with advisory groups and academic institutions. The advisory groups provided assistance, advice and pathfinding to the Rural Team and/or other government departments and agencies. Outcomes of this community engagement and research have the potential to influence policies, both at the provincial/territorial and federal levels. Through this report and presentations at national and international conferences, the Rural Development Institute provided summaries of lessons learned that can be used for community engagement policy discussions in the future.

Considerations for Community Development Practice

Community Development principles were at the forefront of activities within the Community Collaboration Model Project included community development principles:

Community Development is community-based and people-centred: is inclusive; promotes good practice; builds on strengths; ensures the decision-making comes from the community; recognizes and develops expertise of community residents; requires assessment and does not rely on assumptions; and is understood by those involved. Community Development is for the community, by the community towards a shared vision with a broad base of community support (Annis, Rancher & Beattie p. 7.)

Even though the Community Collaboration Model Project was a research project, from the perspective of the members of the regional round tables and advisory groups, it was community development from the beginning. An outcome in Saskatchewan was a regional round table that was able to dream large and went beyond the mandates of its founding organizations. An outcome in the Yukon was a first-ever inclusive community-based regional organization that included First Nations, incorporated and non-incorporated communities.

An outcome in Saskatchewan was a regional round table that was able to dream large and went beyond the mandates of its founding organizations.

An outcome in the northern Manitoba Bayline Regional Round Table was a strong regional organization that has made a difference in food security for residents of its member communities. An outcome for all members of the regional round tables was connections to governments and academic institutions in new and different ways. Similarly, an outcome for governments and academic institutions was engagement with communities that had not been initiated before. An outcome for every person involved in this project was the development of relationships in perhaps new and different ways. As one regional round table member stated at the sustainability planning workshop in the Yukon:

I now know people in the other communities. I have physically met them, so now I trust them.
-(regional round table member)

I now know people in the other communities. I have physically met them, so now I trust them.

Considerations for Research

When engaging with communities in the Community Collaboration Model Project, the Rural Development Institute used a collaborative participatory action research approach. This approach linked research purposely with community action and change. *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) aims to:

empower participants through their participation in and control of the research agenda, process and findings; and their establishment of individual and community change as a planned outcome (Dickson, 2000).

This research approach ensured that the WaterWolf, Yukon and Manitoba regional round tables' and advisory groups' goals and objectives were unique to each regional round table and advisory group, and were not imposed in a one-size-fits all solution. The PAR approach ensured that the evaluation process was participatory and collaborative incorporating principles of inclusion, equal partnership, shared responsibility, empowerment and cooperation. The regional round tables and advisory groups actively participated in determining their evaluation frameworks, analyses of the findings and identifying lessons learned.

The PAR approach ensured that the evaluation process was participatory and collaborative incorporating principles of inclusion, equal partnership, shared responsibility, empowerment and cooperation.

The Community Collaboration Model Project demonstrated the need for more research to investigate multi-community collaborations and regional governance. The Community Collaboration Model Project Governance and Collaboration Study Group, through their meetings and deliberations raised the following research themes and questions:

Analysis of critical phase change factors in rural governance systems: What are the phases? How would we analyze and interpret the phases? What do the phase changes mean? What are the indicators?

Critical interpretation of negotiated power sharing progress for rural local governments in emergent governance systems: How do local governments gain/lose power? Is negotiated power formal or informal? How does Aboriginal self-governance fit in power-sharing?

Critical analysis of tension and resolution between legacy power and emergent negotiated power constructs in rural governance: What is the residual power? What is the relationship between legacy power and emergent governance systems?

The role of spatial factors in the formation and operations of rural governance systems: What are distance and densities of rural governance systems? How do federal, provincial, and territorial governments perceive space as opposed to how communities or regions perceive space? How is the shape of new governance depicted?

Interpretation of “maps” for decision design and decision-making in rural governance systems: What are the networks that people have? What is the influence of the networks? What is the changing nature of these networks? What influence does this have on governance?

Voids' as trigger conditions for emergent rural governance systems: case studies and implications: What are the voids or lapses in our current system? How do you define the concept of voids? What role does technology/Information and Communication Technology

play in creating opportunities? Has Information and Communication Technology allowed for different types of governance to be created?

How individuals are changed and change emergent rural governance systems: How do the characteristics of people aid or hinder the process? What change occurs? What is the role of gender and culture? How are individuals located, changed? What are the changes in emergent governance systems?

A critical analysis of place-based relationships in collaboration and rural regional governance systems: What is the role of place? What is the role of place-based assets? How do people describe their relationship to their place? What is the loyalty to place?

Identification of assets, conditions, initial context and change of communities collaborating together and/or involved in new governance systems: How are assets, conditions, and context measured through the process? What is the influence of these assets in new governance systems?

Influence of normative systems interrelationships in collaboration and rural regional governance systems: What normative systems are at play in emergent regional governance systems? How is capacity built within the normative systems?



*Community Collaboration Model Project
Governance & Collaboration Study Group*

Considerations for Policy Development

Communities need to move from a competitive mindset and strategy with their neighbouring communities to that of a collaborative strategy for the region.

Governments need to see that investing in community development processes is an appropriate use of public funds.

Governments need to move from funding deliverables to supporting capacity development.

Governments need to better manage their complex accountability structures.

Governments need to better manage files horizontally across government departments and across governments.

Academic institutions need to find new and creative ways to engage the human and capital resources of universities and colleges with communities.

More research is needed into the exploration of rural regional governance as an issue affecting many communities, regions, and governments.

As detailed in the Lessons Learned section of this report, there were several findings of this research project that have the potential for policy development. In summary they are:

- **Communities need to move from a competitive mindset and strategy with their neighbouring communities to that of a collaborative strategy for the region.** Communities should be strategic and purposeful in the partnerships and collaborations that they enter into.
- **Governments need to move from funding deliverables to supporting capacity development** in the similar to that demonstrated in the Community Collaboration Model Project. For a relatively modest investment, eighty-five communities, three rural teams and four academic institutions mobilized community development processes.
- **Governments need to see that investing in community development processes is an appropriate use of public funds.** The findings of this project indicated that the monies provided by the Rural Secretariat were leveraged by the communities at almost 2:1. For every dollar invested by the Rural Secretariat, the communities leverage almost two additional dollars in contributions, both cash and in-kind. David Douglas in his Foreword to this report states:

But we also need to be mindful of the evidence that the nurturing and crafting of the collaborative relationship is itself fundamentally development; it is not just a means to an end, for as it builds capacity, as it enhances self-esteem, as it creates new knowledge, skills and wherewithal it is in itself rural development. Indeed its potentials for being sustained far outstrip most of the physical infrastructure, business incentives and other elements of what we conventionally see as the markers of “development”.

- **Governments need to better manage their complex accountability structures.** For community/region-government partnerships to be sustained and effective, government representatives need to have mandates and reporting structures that are flexible enough to work with communities and regions in non-traditional ways and to move them from working “under the radar” to working “within the radar”. The Community Collaboration Model Project demonstrated that investing in community development processes yielded increased partnership and capacity development and produced tangible benefits to the regions involved. A Yukon Regional Round Table member stated: *the community development process was proven to work. That should be a measurable in and of itself.* What that member was getting at was just being able to form a trusting relationship with other communities in the region should be considered a tangible “measure” and “deliverable”. David Douglas in his Foreword to this report also suggests that the collaborative process should be recognized as worth flexibility and patience of governments:

This document tells an exciting and valuable story. It is a story about the power of collaboration, its difficulties, surprises, but most of all its benefits for the rural people and ultimately our nation. It reinforces the value of such collaboration and the importance of government flexibility and patience while it unfolds.

Bill Reimer in his Foreword to this report states:

Community collaboration requires government representatives that encourage their colleagues to have patience for local processes to mature, seek more appropriate ways to represent the intangible but valuable indicators of successful collaboration, and champion similar collaboration across the silos of their bureaucracies.

- **Governments need to better manage files horizontally across government departments and across governments.** The membership and activities of the Rural Team advisory groups demonstrated that this was possible and could produce synergistic results. A member of the Yukon Advisory Group stated that whenever this member attended a Yukon Regional Round Table meeting, in addition to the regional round table/advisory group communications, several other small and sometimes individual meetings occurred. This member saw these connections as synergistic opportunities, and stated that the Yukon Regional Round Table needed to be sustained, because these relationships and partnerships were too important to fail to be sustainable.
- **Academic institutions need to find new and creative ways to engage the human and capital resources of universities and colleges with communities** to be more engaged in community development processes. They need to minimize role ambiguity by clearly defining the institution’s role because role ambiguity leads to trouble. David Douglas in his Foreword to this report states:

The innovation evident in the design of the Project and in the courageous commitments of its diverse participants is a good example of collective innovation. As noted in the Report, it sends a clear signal to academe, to governments and to others for a commensurate investment in innovative practice.

- The exploration of rural regional governance is an issue affecting many communities, regions, and governments. There is a growing body of discussion internationally around regional governance which is different from regional government. It is not necessarily about replacing legacy governments but evolving to have additional forums for planning and decision making.



Community-Government-Academic Collaboration



Appendix A –

Community Collaboration Model Project Governance and Collaboration Study Group Members

ROBERT C. ANNIS (BRANDON UNIVERSITY)



Robert C. Annis, Director of the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University, is actively engaged in many community-based development organizations and research activities. Dr. Annis has published more than fifty journal publications, reports and foundation documents reviewing many of the important social and economic issues facing rural and northern people on the Prairies. Research Interests include: community-based development strategies; sustainable healthy communities; rural social and demographic trends; community government partnerships

MARIAN BEATTIE (BRANDON UNIVERSITY)



Marian Beattie, a Research Affiliate with the Rural Development Institute is an experienced educator and facilitator, her expertise experience are in the field of human resources and organizational development, specializing in adult education, training and development. Her career began as a teacher in the public school system. She also spent several years as a human resources coordinator for a rural health district in southwestern Manitoba followed by nine years as a training specialist for a large international manufacturing company. Six years ago, she established her own independent consulting firm. During the span of her career she has focused on individuals and their communities: assessing needs, designing, developing, delivering and evaluating programs.

KENNETH C. BESSANT (BRANDON UNIVERSITY)



Kenneth C. Bessant is an Associate Professor in the Department of Rural Development, Brandon University and a Research Affiliate with the Rural Development Institute. Ken has been a resident of and student of varying rural environments for the better part of his life, most notably as a long-term member of two Manitoba communities, a "part-time" farmer, and a rural social scientist for over 25 years. Ken's research interests include social and community capital; rural community health and vitality; the diverse functions, activities, and linkages among community (economic) development organizations multiple job-holding within the farm family household (division of labour); the role of women in agriculture; the farm "crisis" and farm stress, and the changing structure of agriculture.

MARK DRABENSTOTT (RURAL POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE)



Mark Drabenstott is the Director for the Centre for Regional Competitiveness at the Rural Policy Research Institute in the United States. Mark is working to develop economic indicators that help regions understand their economic competitive standing and to provide regions with tools to diagnose their competitive advantage. In addition to being an active speaker on economic issues, he also provides analysis of the economy and economic policy issues to Congress, state policymakers, and Federal Reserve officials. He is involved in a number of community organizations and has published on many economic issues involving agriculture, rural America, and public policy.

DAVID DOUGLAS (UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH)



David Douglas is a professor with Rural Planning & Development, University of Guelph is actively involved in a number of research projects and community outreach, and instructs several courses within Rural Planning and Development. His academic interests include: rural community development and governance, local and community-based economic development, rural development policy, strategic planning and management, regional development planning, sustainable development, participatory process, local government, organizational analysis and development, small community design, planning and development theory.

RYAN GIBSON (BRANDON UNIVERSITY)



Ryan Gibson is originally from rural Manitoba and has been engaged with the Rural Development Institute since 2002. During this time, Ryan has been involved in many RDI research projects. His research interests include community development, cooperatives, broadband connectivity, rural governance, and rural revitalization.

CHRISTINE GOSSELIN (CANADIAN RURAL REVITALIZATION FOUNDATION)



Christine Gosselin is a member of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation and a Public Policy Senior Advisory for the Rural Development Department of the Québec Ministry of Regional and Municipal Affairs. As a member of this team, the ministry works to elaborate and apply Québec rural policy. Christine is a board member of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation and the Rural Network of Rural Research. In addition to working rural development, Christine has also worked in the areas of tourism, regional governance, regionalization, and land use planning.

TOM JOHNSON (UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA)



Tom Johnson is the Frank Miller Professor of Agriculture Economics and Director of the Community Policy Analysis Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia. In addition to being actively involved in teaching and research he directs a university center called the Community Policy Analysis Center (CPAC) which conducts research and outreach programs focused on the economic and social decision-making in small communities.

DIANE MARTZ (UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN)



Diane Martz is the Director of Research Ethics at the University of Saskatchewan. Her work focuses on rural women, rural families, family farms and rural communities. She has been involved in qualitative and quantitative research projects in sustainable community planning in economic regions and watersheds: farm family work; the new rural economy; women's work in the agricultural and forestry processing industries; and family violence in rural Saskatchewan. Diane was involved in the establishment of the rural family support center in Humboldt, SK and is currently taking the lead role in the development of a family violence protocol in that region.

ALISON MOSS (BRANDON UNIVERSITY)



Alison Moss is a Research Affiliate with the Rural Development Institute, Brandon University. Alison grew up outside of Dauphin, Manitoba on a small farm. Alison has spent time living and working in northern Manitoba. Those experiences gave her first hand-knowledge of the remarkable environment, culture, and life-style in the northern extremities of Canada. She became aware of many of the challenges associated with daily life in isolated communities. Since 2004, Alison has worked with RDI on a number of projects including access to health services in northern Manitoba, youth migration, rural immigration, and community collaboration.

DARELL PACK (RURAL SECRETARIAT)



Darell Pack is the Senior Policy Advisor (MB/SK) with the Rural Secretariat. A native of rural southern Alberta, he has been employed with the federal government since 1984, working out of Saskatoon, Ottawa and Winnipeg. He has experience in communications, policy analysis, and program administration and delivery. Prior to joining the Rural Secretariat in February 1996 he spent three years with the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) Administration. Previous work experience included time spent with Western Economic Diversification in Saskatoon, a secondment in the office of the Honourable Charlie Mayer as Press Secretary and Policy Advisor and the Communications Branch of Agriculture Canada.

BILL REIMER (CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY)



Bill Reimer is a Professor of Sociology at Concordia University in Montréal. He is currently a Board member of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) and Research Director for their national research and education project entitled, *Understanding the New Rural Economy: Options and Choices*. He has conducted research on issues relating to social rural Canada, with particular focus on social inclusion and exclusion. His publications deal with the impact of technology on rural communities, women's farm and household labour, the economy and the household, Aboriginal communities, the informal economy, social support networks, social capital, social cohesion, and community capacity-building. In addition to directing the NRE Project, he participates as a researcher in four other partner-based rural research projects.

NICOLE VAUGEOIS (MALASPINA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE)



Nicole Vaugeois is a faculty member in the Department of Recreation and Tourism Management at Malaspina University College. Nicole undertakes research projects in a number of areas, many to do with recreation and tourism in rural areas. She has undertaken numerous market research projects, labour market analysis, economic impact studies, and inventory development.

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