
Assessing the Ability of Forest-based Communities to Respond to Transformative Change

Toronto Workshop Summary

Prepared by Leanne Elliott, for the Canadian Model Forest
Network

December 29, 2009



CANADIAN
MODEL
FOREST
NETWORK

RÉSEAU
CANADIEN DE
FORÊTS
MODÈLES



Canadian Model Forest Network

POBag 2150, 10 Campus Drive
Kemptville, Ontario K0G 1J0

President: Daniel Ryan IRC,P.Adm.,CMC

Web: www.modelforest.net

Info: cmfn@cmfn-rcfm.ca

Tel: 613.258.8400

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Workshop Summary.....	4
Conclusion.....	11
Appendix A - Workshop Agenda.....	11
Appendix B – Workshop Attendees.....	15



Introduction

The Canadian Model Forest Network (CMFN) developed and hosted a workshop in Toronto, December 10-11, 2009. The purpose of the workshop was to establish an appropriate theoretical framework for the collection of information and data that will assist rural resource-based communities to respond to transformative change. The workshop was the first step in developing tools and approaches to help resource-based communities assess their ability to cope with and adapt to the kinds of changes - mainly economic (e.g., mill closures due to bad market conditions) but also social (e.g., outmigration of young people) and ecological (e.g., forest damage due to insects) - now occurring in their region. Most of these changes bring some form of hardship or challenge, and many communities are reeling from the many contemporary pressures they face. A first step in rising to meet the challenges is assessing capacity to do so.

The workshop created an opportunity for dialogue between community members (those who require the information), those who have expertise in the collection of this type of information to build consensus on what kinds of information is required and how it should be collected. The event was meant to be a dialogue; there were presenters (two community leaders to describe their reality and two experts, who provided a backdrop for workshop discussions) with the majority of the time spent in discussion and building consensus.

The information is to be used to create a tool (workbook) that can be used to assess a community's current status, make decisions about their future and assess movement towards those goals.



Workshop Summary

What follows is a summary of discussions from the workshop entitled: **“Indicators for Assessing the Ability of Forest-based Communities to Respond to Transformative Change Foundational Workshop”**.

Outline of key issues, challenges and barriers that forest-based communities face, as well as examples of past successes

Issues and Challenges

- Mills close and the issues that result
- Relationships with First Nations and Municipalities
- Lack of community champions
- Few individuals that are able to think creatively to find solutions
- Minimal motivation to do positive action; passive rather than active approach
- How to get people interested

Youth:

- Half want to leave
- Half want to come back later

Retirement

- Aging demographic in many communities
- How to address a diverse community and their needs
- Limited community capacity

- How to make community welcoming to immigrants
- How to create open-minded communities
- Changing mindset of the community
- How to create diversity in economy
- How to education the population
- Changing forestry dynamic, i.e. in Québec
- Wide range of economic issues
- Understanding the vision of the community
- Hydro power and other development pressures
- Some communities are simply waiting for mills to reopen without other initiatives during the transitional phase and new ideas for the future
- How to spend locally and keep money in the community

Barriers

- Need community assessment frameworks to utilize ideas
- Forest towns need to learn from mining – the resource will run out and a new economic strategy will be required
- It has been forecasted that ¾ of pulp mills will close in next 10 to 20 years
- Do not know what is economically important to the community
- Finding individuals who are keystones in the community to initiate action
- Sense of entrepreneurship is hard to get
- Not all forestry towns will make it; barriers in knowing how to decommission town
- Demographic diversity may not be achievable in rural communities
- For community forestry you need a set of characteristics for it to be viable. Need indicators to determine when the time is right for this activity.
- Tools that do not reach those who need it
- Understanding if social and economic indicators are making a difference
- Communities may not be receptive when you begin initiating activities
- Indicators are less important than how things get done in communities
- Challenge in finding best approach to working together with First Nations
- Unknowns are unsettling when planning for the future
- All resource sectors are in a downturn
- Communities are often based on one mill
- Communities don't see themselves as a region, thus part of a larger landscape of activities
- Lack of creativeness when looking for solutions
- Lack of agreement to social goals due to diversity
- Rural urban split and the views that result

Successes

- Mayors group – eight First Nations Chiefs and six Mayors
 - Application to the Forest Communities Program
 - Fully integrated economic development – (a) biomass, (b) blueberries
 - Has joint meetings
 - Common voice in region
 - First issue of discussion – forest tenures
- Community forest – provides commitment to resolving First Nations Issues
- “Common ground” – recognize First Nations issues, got land via through municipalities and First Nations working together
- Community Forestry Forums
- Community colleges are important for community structure
- Partnership – pulp and paper industry passed tenure to the community
- Indicators tell when community or region is in trouble
- Looking at what other activities are compatible in region
- Community forests can retain residents because people want to live there
- Retirees in the community spend their money locally
- Activities have resulted in the description of villages’ governance structure
- Google Earth atlas designed by First Nations communities
- Asset mapping process

Evaluation of existing frameworks:

1. *Measuring Change in Rural Communities: An Economics Workbook for Western Canada* *Dianne Korber and Ray Rasker*

Strengths

- Use statistics data (census) and adapt to local situation/knowledge
- Shows how to use data and apply to community
- Includes ecological components and health
- Addresses tangible components
- Outlines the cost and time required
- Comparison to other communities
- Useable community outsiders
- Supply side driven
- Provides a starting point of where community is (baseline)
- Useful to contribute to broader conversation
- Can contribute to future process planning

Weaknesses

- Data collation from Statistics Canada maybe difficult from lay person – need to delineate area, data, etc.
- Maybe easier to hire consultant
- A lot of the required information is already present in the communities as common knowledge – framework maybe too specific
- Does not address intangible information
- Does not point to other information you may need – cash income, etc.
- May give false information to community outsiders
- Words maybe more useful than numbers
- Will not help understand social components
- Supply side focused – based on what is available not what you need
- Helps understand where you have been, not where you are going
- Needs to be linked to asset mapping exercise
- Not geared to community people

Further Comments

- Statistics Canada data is becoming more useful
- Good to integrate ecological with the socio-economic data – good complete data
- Good for comparing communities
- Good baseline data – informative
- Numbers are good but they need to be part of the broader conversation

2. *The Community Resilience Manual: A Resource for Rural Recovery and Renewal* *Centre for Community Enterprise*

Strengths

- Strength based (not deficit) – creates community empowerment
- Creates place to look at community from analytic perspective
- Complementary to asset mapping
- Shows degree of community resilience at the beginning
- Pragmatic
- Snapshot of community
- Can identify issues (or weaknesses) based on responses to each characteristic
- Direct link to respond to transformative change
- Good assessment to open people's eyes
- Work with regional economic planners
- Help to create strategizing
- Indicators provide context for characteristics

Weaknesses

- Rural community might be intimidated by the scope
- Need to think in an analytical way
- Ideological bias to the ideas
- Very focused on economic development
- Focused on larger communities – >4000 or regional development
- Values are getting buried
- Has an interest at a higher level but at a detailed level are too prescriptive
- May put emphasis on the wrong things
- 23 points are very top down – might not work in rural communities
- Communities need to 'create' transformative change
- Need to do training of facilitators to help create the change
- Does the component (i.e. ownership, education) have a role in resilience – question as to if it is really an indicator or is the indicator buried in the framework
- No capacity to do the workbook
- Concern about having transformational change without injecting conflict

Further Comments

- People sometimes need prescriptions
- Providing some choice give empowerment
- “Community of Communities”
- Resilience is close to transformative change
- Need to use GIS tools so people can make their own connections

3. Measuring Community Capacity Building: A workbook-in-progress for Rural Communities *The Aspen Institute*

Strengths

- Straight forward and useable (defined in general terms)
- Respects values of people in community
- Builds on community derived concerns
- Systems diagrams
- Adaptable to communities who may not have community leaders
- Settles basic vocabulary (that can work forward from)
- Focus on outcomes (what need to mobilize to get the job done)
- Open rather than prescriptive

Weaknesses

- Asset mapping → desired outcome → purpose to measure progress → possible outreach
- Outcomes don't link to stewardship only to civic capacity and economics
- Very large – could be paired down, could be electronic
- Frustrating to use – format or content
- Not a rounded enough picture – not sure if they are the eight right things
- Makes judgments on what a community should be
- What is our unit of change – should be resilient, capacity is a component of resilience

Further Comments

- Very straight forward
- Respect values of the community

Comments on All Three Frameworks

- Format is important to community – content is important to feed back information
- Challenge to get a ‘one-size fits all’ model
- Need to maximize and engage leadership
- Asset mapping is an experimental learning process
- Need to identify who the workbook is for
- Keep frameworks with community boundaries
- Have separate workbooks for: (a) facilitator (mapping process), (b) participants
- Profile and process indicators are needed, with community-based approach
- How to foster facilitators and leadership
- Portraits → decisions → planning
- Guide to a toolbox – develop the toolbox to be used by Model Forest (Community Interest) or by communities (community of place)
- Need a set of indicators for facilitators

Discussion – What kind of Community do we want?

- Possible approach:
 - Step 1 – Asset mapping
 - Step 2 – Quantitative profile (Statistics Canada)
 - Step 3 – Qualitative profile (leadership/entrepreneurship)
 - Step 4 – Plan for the future with a wide range of creative approaches
- If we want resilient forest communities – need to identify levers to incorporate into a strategic plan
- Indicators characterize the problem
- Asset mapping – What do we want? How do we get there?

Tom Beckley – Community Indicators Outlining a Possible Approach:

- Asset mapping should be completely driven by the community
- Connect asset mapping and secondary data
- Five pieces of community resilience framework are critical:
 - Understanding the concept of resilience,
 - Assessing your community resilience,
 - Documenting your results in a portrait of community resilience,

- Making decisions – using the community portrait to set local priorities for investing community resources more effectively, and,
- Creating a plan to address community priorities and strengthen your resilience.
- Aspen community indicator framework – shows critical outcomes and goals that community may want to achieve
- Need to determine:
 - What indicators or assets which are the most appropriate to the community
 - What it takes to mobilize resources
 - If the intended goals were achieved
- Need to create not only community of place but community of interest
- Canadian Model Forest Network's role:
 - Can share knowledge and be the site for implementation
- Need to talk about story behind indicators – outline where the process came from (i.e. where did 'we' (in the community) come from)
- What indicators a community chooses depends on the desired future outcome
- Create an informed process
- Order of activities
 - What do we have
 - Trends (reality check) and hard profile
 - What do we really want to look at



Conclusion

The information collected from the paper by David Bruce (2008), the Lisa Christensen literature search (2009) and the workshop will be synthesized into a tool for use by rural resource dependent communities. Dr. Sara Tietelbaum has been contracted to carry out the development of this tool. It is expected for review and piloting in the fall of 2010.



Appendix A

Workshop Agenda



Indicators for Assessing the Ability of Forest-based Communities to Respond to Transformative Change Foundational Workshop Toronto, Ontario

December 10/11, 2009

Agenda

Workshop Overview: This workshop is the first step in developing tools and approaches to help forest-based communities assess their ability to cope with and adapt to the kinds of changes - mainly economic (e.g., mill closures due to bad market conditions) but also social (e.g., outmigration of young people) and ecological (e.g., forest damage due to insects) - now occurring in their environment. Most of these changes bring some form of hardship or challenge, and many communities are reeling from the many contemporary pressures they face. A first step in rising to meet the challenges is assessing capacity to do so.

December 10, 2009

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 3:00-3:30 | Welcome, Workshop Objectives, Introductions |
| 3:30-5:00 | What information do communities need to assess current status? Issues and Challenges. (Full group) |
| 5:00-5:45 | Daniel Arbour – Project Manager Ecotrust Canada - “Clayoquot Socioeconomic Report 2009”
Sophie Michele-Cyr – Restoration Forestry Coordinator - Falls Brook Centre –
“What we need to make decisions – Asset Mapping in NB” |
| 5:45-6:30 | Discussion and charge for the next day |
| 6:30 | Dinner |

December 11, 2009

- 7:30-8:00 Breakfast
- 8:00-8:15 Mapping out the day. (Brian Barkley)
- 8:15 – 9:15 Dr. John Parkins - Associate Professor, Rural Economy - University of Alberta –
“A history of community indicators research in the Canadian Model Forest
Program”
- Bill White – Senior Economist - Canadian Forest Service – “Status of Key
Socioeconomic Indicators”
- 9:15-10:00 Cafe Sessions – Assessing current tools – Working Groups
- 10:00-10:30 Break and hotel checkout
- 10:30-12:15 Cafe Sessions – Working Groups
- 12:15-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-1:45 Reporting out on frameworks- Cafe Leaders
- 1:45–2:45 What next? Recommendations for mixing and matching the frameworks
- 2:45-3:00 Final Remarks
- 3:15 Departure



Appendix B

Workshop Attendees

Participant	Organization	Location
Daniel Arbour	Clayoquot Model Forest	British Columbia
Brian Barkley	Individual	Ontario
Tom Beckley	University of New Brunswick	New Brunswick
Diane Dubé	Individual	Manitoba
Peter Duinker	Dalhousie University	Nova Scotia
Leanne Elliott	Canadian Model Forest Network	Ontario
Dan Friyia	Individual	Ontario
Glenda Garnier	Individual	Newfoundland and Labrador
Jean Gaudreault	Individual	Quebec
Richard Gill	Individual	Prince Edward Island
Nairn Hay	Fundy Model Forest	New Brunswick
Clara Lauzière	Northeast Superior Forest Communities	Ontario
Sandra Lawn	Individual	Ontario
Sophie Michele-Cyr	Individual	New Brunswick
Solange Nadeau	Canadian Forest Service	New Brunswick
John Parkins	University of Alberta	Alberta
Joanne Pugin	Canadian Forest Service	Ontario
Mike Slivitzky	Canadian Forest Service	Ontario
Peggy Smith	Lakehead University	Ontario
David Stanley	Dalhousie University	Nova Scotia
Sara Teitelbaum	Individual	British Columbia
Margaret Wanlin	Individual	Ontario
Bill White	Canadian Forest Service	Alberta

