FOREST-COMMUNITY INNOVATION NETWORK

Workshop Summary and Report

May 2017

The University of Winnipeg

Department of Environmental Studies and Sciences

Centre for Forest Interdisciplinary Research

Forest-Community Innovation Network

WORKSHOP SUMMARY AND REPORT

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
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AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Forest-Community Innovation Network is a locally mandated national network that will support transdisciplinary research, education, and action to advance forest-community sustainability. This newly-formalized network builds on over a decade of work by a variety of forest groups to engage in public debate, grassroots organizing, technological and product innovation, and policy reform processes. The objectives of the workshop, held December 14, 2016, were to:

➢ strengthen and affirm network partnerships and governance arrangements;

➢ support development of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Partnership Grant application, including clarifying network objectives and activities; and

➢ identify network plans and collective steps to achieve future goals.

Diverse participants attended the workshop from Indigenous and settler communities, and university, research, non-profit, and business organizations. The participants came from across Canada and brought with them a variety of perspectives, values, and experiences working with forest communities. They advanced a shared vision of developing and sharing models and techniques to bolster local community adaptability and resilience, meaningful cross-cultural collaboration, and economic, environmental, and social innovation in Canada's forest communities.

Participants identified several priority activities for the network, to be undertaken through community-based research:

➢ share data, information, and stories to support co-production of knowledge and learning about forest and community conditions in a manner that reflects diverse groups, values, knowledges, as well as cultural and research protocols;

➢ support education and training to improve capacity (e.g., business training, credential building, and cross-cultural understanding) by bridging students, youth and Elders, and communities, professionals, and researchers;

➢ co-develop and test improved models of collaborative governance for sustainable community and forest development, including better decision-making processes and sector integration.

Participants discussed governance and funding structures for developing an adaptive, transparent, and sustainable network which supports the meaningful involvement of diverse partners. The proposed structure would incorporate regional nodes which would build on existing relationships, facilitating research that is relevant to local and regional contexts. Network members would also come together nationally to build relationships, address issues of common concern, and share resources. An inverted funding structure would direct the majority of network resources to community-based research, supporting meaningful engagement of community participants in the entire research process.

The workshop was a major step forward in formalizing the Forest-Community Innovation Network, establishing structures and actions, as well as capacity for ongoing collaboration. Since the workshop, network partners have used the outputs to complete a SSHRC Partnership Grant Letter of Intent, submit a discussion paper for publication, prepare a presentation for the Canadian Association of Geographers, and draft an online platform for network resource and information sharing.

PARTICIPANTS

List of Workshop Participants

Alan Diduck	The University of Winnipeg	Professor, Environmental Studies and Sciences
Andrew deVries	Sustainable Forestry Initiative	VP, Conservation and Indigenous Relations
Alfred Gamble	Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation	GIS, Forestry, Environment
Amanda Karst	TNC Canada	Community Outreach Coordinator
Brian Henderson	Black River First Nation	Consultant
Colin Lachance	Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum	Corporate Secretary
Derek Rice	NORDIK/Algoma University	Lecturer
Jennifer Gunter	British Columbia Community Forest Association	Executive Director
John Sinclair	University of Manitoba	Professor, Natural Resources Institute
Marika Olynyk	University of Winnipeg	Research Associate, Environmental Studies and Sciences
Marvin McDonald	Wabaseemoong Independent Nations Traditional Land Use Area	Resources Information Officer
Maureen Reed	University of Saskatchewan	Professor and Assistant Director, School of Environment and Sustainability
Max Skudra	Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business	Director, Research and Government Relations
Miranda Hamilton	The University of Winnipeg	Student, Environmental Studies and Sciences
Nicholas Palaschuk	The University of Winnipeg	Graduate Student, Biology
Stefania Pizzirani	University of British Columbia	Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Wood Science
Paul-Emile McNab	Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business	Senior Manager, Research
Peggy Smith	Lakehead University	Interim Vice-Provost (Aboriginal Initiatives), Associate Professor, Natural Resources Management
Peter Sigurdson	Forest Product Innovations	Provincial Leader, Saskatchewan and Manitoba
Ryan Bullock	The University of Winnipeg	Director, Centre for Forest Interdisciplinary Research Assistant Professor, Environmental Studies and Sciences
Sara Teitelbaum	Université de Montreal	Professeure adjointe, Département de sociologie

WORKSHOP PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The central purpose of the workshop was to strengthen partnership relations, and articulate a shared vision and structure for the Forest-Community Innovation Network. The groundwork for this network had been established at meetings and symposia over several years, as groups engaged to rethink relationships among communities, governments, industries, and forests. At the Community Forests Canada Symposium hosted at The University of Winnipeg in June 2014 participants identified the need for a network to develop these collaborative opportunities and to share relevant knowledge, networking opportunities, and exchange skills and resources. Such a network would also help address recommendations of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, who explicitly called for increased linkages among governments, academics, and industry because collaboration for innovation is not currently "happening at the level that it could and likely should" (Canadian Council of Forest Ministers 2015: 39).

In response to the need for local, regional and national networking, efforts were made to formalize the Forest-Community Innovation Network, which is based on both existing and new partnerships involving a wide range of groups and individuals. This locally-mandated national network will support transdisciplinary research, education, and action to advance forest-community sustainability. To support this vision, in February 2017 the partnership submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI) application for a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Partnership Grant. If successful, the partnership will prepare and submit a full proposal in October 2017.

To prepare for the SSHRC PG LOI application, the network needed to identify shared priorities, resources, and an organizing structure. The workshop allowed this to be done with broad input to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Thus, the specific objectives of the workshop were to:

➢ strengthen and affirm network partnerships and governance arrangements;
➢ support development of the SSHRC PG LOI application, including clarifying network objectives and activities; and
➢ identify network plans and collective steps to achieve future goals.

SESSIONS

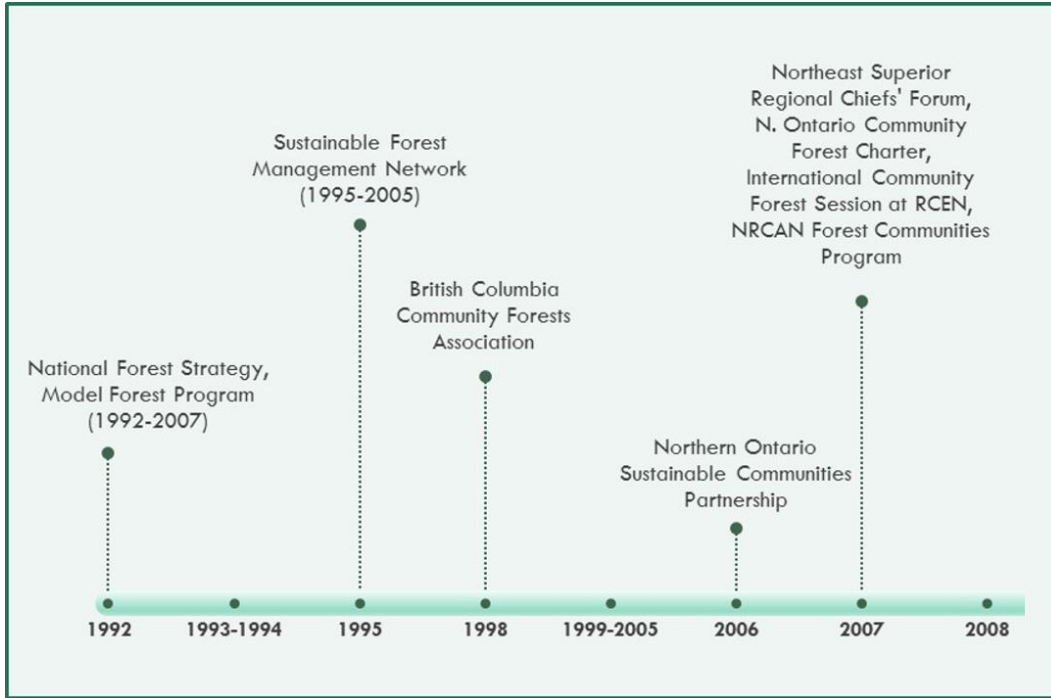|	Agenda
8:30	Welcome
9:00	**SESSION 1: BACKSTORY**
9:30	**SESSION 2: VISION AND THEMES OF NETWORK**
9:50	**SESSION 3: NETWORK ACTIVITIES**
10:30	Break
11:00	**SESSION 4: PRIORITIZING ACTIVITIES**
12:15	Lunch
1:15	**SESSION 5: NETWORK STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE**
2:00	**SESSION 6: CONTRIBUTIONS AND WORKING TOGETHER**
3:00	Break
3:30	**WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS**

Session 1: Backstory

Canada's forest communities and industries must increasingly address economic transition, social pressures, and environmental change to remain viable and support local well-being (Coates and Crowley 2013). To this end, as noted earlier, different forest groups have been engaging in public debate, grassroots organizing, technological and product innovation, and policy reform processes in order to rethink relationships among communities, governments, industries, and forests for a sustainable future. Although implementing creative and new collaborative approaches is proving to be a complex task, new arrangements involving Indigenous and community groups, firms, and various governments already offer a growing body of experience to draw upon.

To learn from these experiences in a systematic and effective manner, a national research network is needed to support policy development, as well as exchange information, resources, and talent. The Forest-Community Innovation Network can fill this gap but requires governance and technical infrastructure to become fully active. There is a tremendous need and opportunity to harness new and existing knowledge by improving coordination and focus during this period of community and sector transformation. Formalizing a national strategy, priorities, partnerships, resources, and an organizing structure to support forest communities and their partners is necessary, but this must be done with broad input to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Previous work in the last decade set the stage for this workshop. This included meetings and projects that created momentum for collaborative approaches to addressing community and forest issues. A many-year record of collaborative applied research and policy work demonstrates the relevance and significance of the Forest-Community Innovation Network to all partners. In the first session of the workshop, participants identified and shared these activities with each other, building a timeline of a shared history, and highlighting the importance of building on previous work. Going forward, the partnership will learn from and build on these experiences in order to develop appropriate policies, new relationships and knowledge to enable collaboration for innovation.

Timeline of community and forests activities, programs, and meetings

Session 2: Vision and Themes of Network

After establishing a narrative of previous accomplishments and identifying the context for the network, participants shifted focus to the question of how to guide future work of the network. The diversity of participants meant that varied perspectives, values, and aspirations were brought together at the workshop. The group recognized that a priority for establishing a collaborative network was maintaining effective and respectful communication between Indigenous and settler organizations, across differing organizational cultures, and among partners/members with different disciplinary foundations. Moreover, given the national scope of the project there was a need to reconcile regional differences in research and development priorities. Developing and affirming a shared vision was therefore a priority for the workshop, as this would provide a strong central foundation for network decision-making processes and effective communication.

A presentation of a draft vision and major themes of the proposed project was followed by a discussion of the overarching focus and purpose of the network. Through conversation, participants identified that a focus on communities was a central principle which anchored their diverse perspectives. Participants further discussed and revised a vision based on three theme areas which focused on the needs of forest communities, and which brought together the work of the individuals and organizations who were present.

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Our Vision

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The network will develop, share, and build on cutting-edge models and techniques to bolster local community adaptability and resilience, meaningful cross-cultural collaboration, and economic, environmental, and social innovation in Canada's forest communities.

➢ *Community adaptability and resilience*: A measure of the sustained ability of a community to utilize available resources to anticipate, respond to, withstand, and recover from changing situations (adopted from the RAND Corporation 2017.

➢ *Cross-cultural collaboration*: People or organizations from different cultures working together to realize or achieve a common purpose (adapted from Margerum 2008).

➢ *Economic, environmental, and social innovation*: A novel solution to an economic, environmental, or social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or fair than current solutions (adapted from the Center for Social Innovation, Stanford Graduate School of Business 2017).

This vision is distinct from those of previous forest research networks that once worked to address community sustainability and which also focused on industry and technology. The end of these networks has created a serious gap and need for research leadership, but also an opportunity to address those needs stressed by communities themselves. Previous networks were directed by federal, university, and industry representatives and priorities rather than by communities. This vision reflects the participants' recommendations for a locally mandated national network which supports transdisciplinary research, education, and action to advance forest-community sustainability.

Sessions 3 and 4: Network Activities

In the context of the shared vision discussed in Session 2, the middle of the day was spent identifying which types of activities the network should prioritize. Participants at a previous meeting, the Community Forests Canada Symposium (Bullock and Lawler 2014), had outlined broad action areas that a forest-community network could address. These action areas focused particularly on community needs, which previous forest research networks had not emphasized. Using these action areas as a starting point, participants broke into small discussion groups to identify and discuss the types of activities they wanted to see the network undertake.

Action Areas

- ➢ Sharing data and information
- ➢ Research collaboration
- ➢ Education/training opportunities
- ➢ Putting knowledge into active use

- ➢ Funding opportunities
- ➢ Dialogue and networking
- ➢ Policy advocacy
- ➢ Other

Afterwards, in a plenary session, participants reported on the activities discussed in their small groups and elaborated on their main points. The suggested activities were recorded and all participants took part in a multi-voting activity to identify group priorities. Participants spent a significant portion of time identifying and discussing the need for meaningful community involvement in network activities. They gave examples of effective and ineffective knowledge implementation and discussed how to mobilize local knowledge within network activities. The conversation highlighted the need for network activities to value and support empowerment, inclusivity, diversity, and democratic decision making.

Priority Activities

The network will undertake community-based research to:

➢ Share data, information, and stories to support co-production of knowledge and learning about forest and community conditions in a manner that reflects diverse groups, values, knowledges, as well as cultural and research protocols;

➢ Support education and training to improve capacity (e.g., business training, credential building, and cross-cultural understanding) by bridging students, youth and Elders, and communities, professionals and researchers;

➢ Co-develop and test improved models of collaborative governance for sustainable community and forest development, including better decision-making processes and sector integration.

Session 5: Network Structure and Governance

An objective for the workshop was to begin developing governance arrangements in an open and inclusive manner. This design process was led by several guiding principles derived from previous meetings and from published research:

➢ Develop a national network with relevance to regions, local communities, and practitioners (Bullock and Lawler 2014, Klenk and Hickey 2013);

➢ Develop an adaptive and modular network to ensure relevance and flexibility to changing needs and the ability to grow and include new members (Bullock and Lawler 2014);

➢ Ensure transparency and accountability with regard to how decisions are made (Klenk and Hickey 2012); and

➢ Be realistic with regards to capacity of membership (time, resources, skills, etc.).

A central governance issue was the question of how to create a national structure that is responsive and flexible to diverse local and regional contexts. In this vein, workshop participants stressed that the chosen network structure must support the co-generation of knowledge and support the meaningful involvement of diverse partners. The proposed approach to this issue was a regional node structure that would allow regional partners (communities, researchers, industries, etc.) to build on existing relationships to work together on shared community-based research that is relevant to their local and regional contexts. Regional coordinators would support these nodes by engaging regional partners and other members, identifying community-based research priorities, developing collaborative research projects, and facilitating community-focused knowledge sharing and dissemination. This modular structure of networked nodes would facilitate adaptability to potential changes in partners, research topics, and social and economic contexts.

While the nodes would work within their regions, the national structure of the network would bring members together to address shared issues, build relationships, and facilitate sharing of information and resources. Network membership will be inclusive and open to forest community stakeholders and rights holders involved in the network's activities. A steering committee, supported by a national coordinator and advised by the network membership, would set the strategic direction and make budgetary and funding recommendations for the national network. Workshop participants discussed

who would sit on this steering committee and agreed that the network should aim to have representation from all key stakeholders and rights holders on the steering committee, as well as a majority of members from local communities. Participants also discussed the importance of sufficient coordination resources to facilitate network operations and management.

Proposed Governance Structure

Research Node

Research Node

Management Committee

Steering Committee

KM Committee

Research Committee

Research Node

Research Node

Research Node

Session 6: Contributions and Working Together

A key aspect to the development of a functioning and sustainable network is having stable and well defined contribution arrangements. In the context of the SSHRC LOI application, participants discussed partnership arrangements and contributions to the network. To enable meaningful community-based research, participants supported a funding structure that would allow community participants to engage in the entire research process, from question identification to knowledge mobilization. Participants discussed an "inverted" funding structure which directs the majority of network resources to community-based research. This approach redefines the usual roles of research expert and research subject and builds the capacity needed for ongoing community-university collaboration.

Proposed Dedication of Network Funds	
Community-based Research 70%	**National Coordination 30%**
Student salaries	Coordinator salary
Community researcher salaries	Annual meeting costs
Direct research costs	Web platform and data sharing
Equipment	Travel
Travel	
Honoraria	
Knowledge mobilization costs	

During this session, participants discussed SSHRC's requirements, and staff from the University of Winnipeg Research Office answered questions and provided information on the SSHRC granting process. Participants discussed the ways in which partners could contribute to the network. They also identified other organizations, communities, and individuals who could be approached to join the network, thus building on existing relationships and prior collaborations to strengthen and build the network into the future.

OUTCOMES AND FUTURE WORK

The workshop was a major step forward for the Forest-Community Innovation Network. As the first formal meeting of the network, the workshop solidified a shared commitment among partners. It produced concrete ideas for shared actions and innovative governance structures which are in the process of being enacted. Perhaps most importantly, it established a forum for networking and dialogue among diverse groups and sectors, strengthening relationships and building capacity for ongoing collaborations.

Since the workshop, partners have successfully completed and submitted a letter of intent application for the SSHRC Partnership Grant. This application drew heavily on the discussions held at the workshop, which shaped the design of the network, and the proposed activities and desired outcomes described in the application. If the LOI application is successful, a full application to the Partnership Grant will be submitted in the fall of 2017. In the meantime, partners are continuing the ongoing work of building the network by bringing in new partners and strengthening relationships.

Since the workshop, network partners have come together to contribute to the publication of a short discussion paper on the need for and evolution of the Forest-Community Innovation Network. To be submitted to a peer-reviewed international forest journal, this paper represents the first academic output of the formalized network. Bringing the workshop outcomes together with established research, this paper will increase the profile of the network while contributing to applied theory on networked research and multi-sectoral partnerships. Similarly, network partners will be represented at the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) Annual Meeting (May 29 – June 2 2017). As part of a special session on "Governance of small-scale forestry for sustainability in the Canadian context", network partners will present on the rationale for and process of establishing the Forest-Community Innovation Network.

Another step in formalizing the network is the development of an online platform which will serve as a virtual roundtable and clearinghouse to link partners and others interested in resilience, collaboration, adaptation, and innovation in forests and communities. Based on the priorities identified at the workshop, partners have developed the design and content for a scalable website and communications platform which will meet current and future resource-sharing, communications, and knowledge dissemination needs.

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