

**Renewable and Non-renewable Resources and Northern Aboriginal Communities:
Impacts and Initiatives**

For:
Winning the Prairie Gamble

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Part I: Introduction

The following paper is the result of collaboration between the Western Development Museum and the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre. The overall purpose of this paper is to explore the reaction of Northern Aboriginal communities to changes in their traditional livelihoods. For the most part the change has been the result of renewable and non-renewable resource explorations over the past 100 years.

The intended focal point of this paper is the perspective and experience of the members of Northern Aboriginal communities. The reactions of Aboriginal communities and individuals to the development of forestry, mining and oil and gas industries will be included. The stories of Aboriginal Elders will be the source of the Aboriginal voice.

The influence that the exploration of forest and mineral products has had on Aboriginal peoples' traditional lifestyles will also be included. Current Aboriginal economic initiatives that have emerged in Saskatchewan will be used to illustrate the influence. Such economic ventures are attempting to promote the incorporation of traditional principles of making a livelihood into Canada's natural resource industry. The incorporation of Aboriginal principles is evident in projects such as sustainable resource and economic development in Saskatchewan.

It is also intended that the adaptability of Aboriginal communities in the face of change be demonstrated. More importantly, how Aboriginal communities have retained the fundamental values and principles that governed past and that continue to govern present Aboriginal communities. This will be illustrated by examining current Aboriginal economic ventures in timber and non-timber resources, metallic ores and non-metallic products that incorporate traditional principles of conservation.

Part II: Forestry

1. Traditional Landscape and Uses of the Land

In order to promote an understanding of the overall impact that the forestry industry has had on Aboriginal communities in Northern Saskatchewan it is necessary to create an image of the traditional lifestyle and landscape. Using the stories of Aboriginal Elders, this image of the traditional lifestyle and landscape of the North will be created. The importance of listening to Aboriginal Elders and preserving their voice is emphasized in, Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan:

All First Nations possess rich sources of oral history and information pertaining to their peoples and the lands occupied by their nations. The Elders, as custodians of that knowledge strongly indicated their readiness to share the knowledge they have. They stand prepared to help provide guidance, direction, and co-operation....¹

Fortunately, there have been efforts made to preserve the words and stories of First Nations Elders. In many of the stories that have been shared by the Elders and then recorded, there is a strong message conveyed of what traditional life entailed and how Aboriginal peoples thrived in Saskatchewan.

¹ Cardinal, Harold and Walter Hildebrandt. Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan, Our Dream Is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized As Nations. Calgary: University of Calgary Press Inc., 2000. at p. 24.

In most of the stories, it is apparent the primary principle being communicated by the Elders is respect and gratitude for the gift of the land and its resources. In reference to this point, Jimmy Myo stated in Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan:

When the Creator first put Indians on this land, He gave him everything that he needed, land to live on, He gave them trees, animals and from there to make his own clothing and to make their shelters and to eat. And He also put there good medicines that would heal all kinds of illnesses and those medicines were true and they were all good medicines.

The Creator has given the Indian a lot of powerful things. And everything that He has given to the Indian is all meshed into a way of life.²

It is clear that there was an understanding among Aboriginal peoples that the land and its resources were a gift from the Creator and were to be treated accordingly.

Traditional life focused on mindfulness of consumption and conservation in order to maintain the existence of the resources for future use. The principle of gratitude and conservation determined the amounts of natural resources that were consumed by early Aboriginal communities. Perhaps this is why land uses did not consist of mass exploitation or consumption. Only what was needed was taken to ensure that the resource would continue to exist for future generations.³

Elders that have shared their stories make it clear that the relationship between Aboriginal peoples, the land and the land's natural resources was based on maintaining a balance between the resources that the Creator provided and the resources that were used by the communities for survival. The balance would be disrupted by mass exploitation of the resources that were provided. The late Bart McDonald, an Elder from the Denesuline Nation, spoke of the relationship to the land in Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan:

This land is our land. The Dene land. We are people of the Land. The land is who we are. The wildlife provides for us. Fish, water, trees, everything, the plants, all the animals, all the beings of the Earth all provide for us. We lived off that. That was part of our livelihood.⁴

The consequence of the disruption would be failure by the Creator to provide the necessary resources for survival to Aboriginal peoples.⁵

A traditional livelihood in Northern Saskatchewan was dependent on the land and its resources. The land provided the trees used for camps or homes. Plants and berries were used for medicinal and sustenance purposes. Finally, the game that also lived off of the land provided Aboriginal peoples with food, clothing and tools. In Stories from Kohkom, Ina Ahenakew describes what the old way of life entailed in her story, "*Living the Indian Way*". The story illustrates some of the traditional land uses:

We lived in a mud house. It wasn't exactly made of mud, but that's what we called it. The house was built with logs. We used mud to chink between the logs and to make the roof. The flat roof was covered with

² Ibid, at p. 30.

³ WDM Elders Transcripts. Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. June 3-4 2002.

⁴ Cardinal and Hildebrandt 2000, at p. 44.

⁵ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

mud and grass because we didn't have shingles. Our house was very warm and it stood for the longest time....

We started hauling water and chopping wood at sunrise. We picked blueberries and sold them. We would set up camp and pick berries until they were gone. When we moved our camp, we had the help of horses and wagons....

We dried Saskatoon berries outside so they would last longer. My mom put them in soup. We set snares for rabbits and prairie chickens. Prairie chickens got caught in the snares when they were dancing. When they closed their eyes and bent down, they got caught. Gophers were also good to eat, especially spring gophers. We caught them by pouring water down their holes....

I was brought up the Indian way. I thought it was hard then, but I don't think that anymore. We were taught to work hard.... I will always be an Indian and I will always find a way to survive; nothing can change that. I'll never forget what I grew up with.⁶

The story gives a glimpse into traditional Aboriginal lifestyle. Everything a family needed came from the land. Aboriginal peoples knew how to survive throughout all the seasons and for the most part families were provided with more than enough to live on.

In Northern Saskatchewan, the forest provided Aboriginal peoples with non-timber resources such as medicinal plants, berries, small and large game and fishing. Rose Atimoyoo, indicates the non-timber uses of the forest in her wonderful story of gathering plants and learning the uses of different plants from her grandmother:

In the fall we camped out to pick berries – raspberries, Saskatoons, and chokecherries. My mom canned or dried the berries. We had to preserve our food because we had no freezer.

We also learned a lot from our grandparents. My grandmother had a lot of knowledge about foods found in nature. She showed us how to peel the outer bark from white poplar and how to scrape off the inner layer to eat. She said, “Grandchild, this is good for you. It cleanses you, and if you have an illness, this will cure it.”

Grandmother also took us out on the lake to pick cattails. She showed us how to pull them out and peel back the root to the soft part. You ate the soft part, and was it ever good. She picked young leaves of dandelion and stinkweed to put in her soups. If the plants were older, she'd scrape off the outer layer before adding them to her cooking. In the fall I went with her to pick rosehips. We peeled the rosehips and ate the skin. My

⁶Ahenakew, Ina. “*Living the Indian Way*” in *Stories from Kohkom*. 2nd ed. Sylvia Vicq, et al. eds. Saskatoon: READ Saskatoon, 2000. 91-95.

grandmother knew they were good for us, and now I know they are loaded with Vitamin C.⁷

There are endless stories from Aboriginal Elders that offer a glimpse into the diversity of the landscape and the richness of traditional life in Saskatchewan.

Aboriginal peoples also had conventional timber uses for trees. The Elders' stories indicate that trees were used to build houses and furniture. Mary Wells speaks to this point in Kôhkominawak Otâcimowiniwâwa – Our Grandmothers' Lives As Told In Their Own Words:

It was that fall that my dad started to build a little house, with logs, before winter, for us to live in during the winter. I remember helping my mom to mud that house. My dad finished that house but we did not have any furniture that might be used inside; now my dad put the pieces together and made a dinner-table with an attached bench on either side – the dinner-table which my dad made looked very much like the picnic tables of today. And he built cupboards for my mom to put the pots and the dishes. He also made a big wooden box for the firewood. And then he also made beds, wooden beds.⁸

It seems as though survival was dependent on innovation. The ability to create and invent tools, furniture, clothing, supplies, traps, etc. was necessary for survival. For the most part, timber and non-timber materials were used to create the items that were used in daily life.

The most well known use of the land by Aboriginal peoples was for hunting, fishing and trapping. There are numerous stories of living on the trap lines, hunting small and large game and fishing. It would be impossible to include every story. Elder Jim Settee of Little Red River Cree Nation gives an overall impression of hunting and trapping in Northern Saskatchewan:

And when those [leaves] fall, that's the time trappers would leave for their trap line; at this time of the year, while the moose [was] in season. They would kill a moose and have meat for their trapping season.... The women would help by making pemmican, the women used rocks to pound the dried meat and made pemmican that way..... [They] would use the marrow and fat of the moose, "moose grease", this is what we call bone fat or marrow from the bone....⁹

In Northern Saskatchewan, it was necessary that Aboriginal peoples made their living from trapping. The numerous trees made it difficult to hunt using the methods used in Southern Saskatchewan. It was easier to hunt large amounts of game on the open prairie. Therefore, in the North the use of traps was necessary.¹⁰

⁷ Atimoyoo, Rose. "Kayas mana – Long Ago" in Stories from Kohkom, 2nd ed. Sylvia Vicq, et al. eds. Saskatoon: READ Saskatoon, 2000. 70 – 74.

⁸ Ahenakew, Freda and H.C. Wolfart, eds. Kôhkominawak Otâcimowiniwâwa – Our Grandmothers' Lives As Told In Their Own Words. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1998. at p. 169.

⁹ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

¹⁰ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

In the North, there was not the same amount of land available to use for agricultural purposes as in the South. The Aboriginal peoples did not choose to clear-cut the forest in order to create space for farming, but instead relied on hunting, trapping and fishing as their primary means of livelihood.¹¹

For example, the Dene came to rely on the caribou for survival. Hunting the caribou was the mainstay of traditional Dene life and the hunt for caribou was the focal point of all aspects of life.¹² Lucy Robillard explains the importance of caribou:

My father used caribou hide sinew to stitch caribou hid string to make a fish net and snares to catch animals to eat. In the fall time the caribou and moose would be hunted using spears made from birch trees and the spear head was made from quartz rock. It must have been time consuming to work this way. That was our means for survival so even if the work was tedious it had to be done.¹³

There was a use for almost every part of an animal and very little wasted from a hunt. Hunting was necessary for acquiring materials to make needles, clothes, linens and sustenance.¹⁴

Finally, Aboriginal peoples did pursue commercial hunting, trapping and fishing. Upon the emergence of the fur trade, trapping became a more valuable livelihood to pursue. Fishing was used for some commercial purposes but mostly for food. Elder Frank McIntyre speaks about commercial fishing in the following excerpt from All Nations of Saskatchewan Indian Elders:

I started trapping with my old man. We went up to Cree Lake, north of Patuanak. That's where I learned to trap and hunt. In 1948 we came back to Churchill River in the Patuanak area and we started to do commercial fishing....

My commercial fishing wasn't much of a money making thing but at least we survived with that. We had a little bit of money left after we sold the fish. We used fish for our food also.¹⁵

In looking back to the past uses of forest products it is apparent that there were many uses for timber and non-timber materials. The purpose of using the stories of Aboriginal Elders was to paint a picture of the traditional lifestyle and landscape in Northern Saskatchewan. Traditional life usually contained an element of hardship and difficulty. Survival required work and constant preparation for the coming seasons. Despite the hardship warmth and fondness of the memories always comes across in the Elders re-telling.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

¹⁴ Ahenakew and Wolfart, eds. 1998; Groenen, Wilma, Neil Pasqua and Harvey Whitecalf, eds. All Nations of Saskatchewan Indian Elders. Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, 1989; Vicq, Sylvia, Elsie Keewatin, Shane Laliberte, Andrea Dufour, Daniel Nicotine, Bonnie Ahenakew, Trina Baldhead and Conrad Norton, eds. Stories from Kohkom. 2nd ed. Saskatoon: READ Saskatoon, 2000; WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

¹⁵ Groenen, Pasqua and Whitecalf, eds. 1989 at p. 7.

In closing, Elder Pat Robillard shared an interesting concept regarding the traditional lifestyle and landscape of the North, “*The forest was their [The Dene] school and with that loss, it was difficult to teach their young the way of the people.*”¹⁶ There is a great sorrow felt by Aboriginal Elders over the loss of Northern Saskatchewan’s forestland through the mass exploitation of forests. The following section explores the sorrow and fears that the Elders have in regards to the fast disappearing forestland in Northern Saskatchewan.

2. Elders’ Concerns and Experiences

The history of Aboriginal peoples in Northern Saskatchewan indicates that there were practical and commercial uses for logging. For the most part forestland remained relatively unchanged for hundreds of years. The Elders’ stories show that there were plenty of uses for timber. Trees provided material for homes, schools, furniture, traps, transportation, and many other items. There was also a vast list of personal uses for timber.¹⁷

Timber was a valuable resource to the settlers. Aboriginal peoples discovered that they were able to make a livelihood from selling and delivering timber or chopping wood for the settlers. Aboriginal peoples were also involved with the early developments of the forestry industry. In the beginning there was no mechanization of the industry. Aboriginal peoples were required to cut and gather timber by hand as illustrated by Rosa Longneck in the following excerpt from an interview with Freda Ahenakew, “*Really, many times I would sweat in the bush chopping, I was chopping fence-posts.... I’d be going about alone in the spruce, you know!*”¹⁸

The message in the stories told by Elders is that in the early stages of the forest industry, Aboriginal peoples made a livelihood by chopping wood, selling wood bundles, and working in lumber camps. The job was difficult but for many Aboriginal families, it was the best means of making a living.¹⁹

Some Aboriginal peoples continued to manually collect timber and then sell it on their own. Glecia Bear shares the story of the process of cutting and selling:

We cleared the land with an axe, and the trees were big. My husband pulled them away with the horses. And then, in the fall, we would cut the cordwood by hand; in those days we used to use long saws with two handles, one on each side. We would cut the cordwood, and my husband sold it in town for seventy-five cents a cord; and he would also haul it; he split it and took it to the bakery and sold it. Sometimes he would take two loads in one day, he would cut two cords.²⁰

In the early stages of forestry, the work to produce just a small amount of timber products was gruelling. Large amounts of physical labour were needed to profit from timber sales.

¹⁶ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

¹⁷ Ahenakew and Wolfart, eds. 1998; Funk, Jack and Gordon Lobe. “...And They Told Us Their Stories” *A Book Of Indian Stories*. Saskatoon: Saskatoon District Tribal Council, 1991; Groenen, Pasqua and Whitecalf, eds. 1989; Phillips, Donna and Harvey Whitecalf, eds. *Enewuk*. Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College, 1977; Vicq et al, eds. 2000; WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

¹⁸ Ahenakew and Wolfart, eds. 1998 at p. 255.

¹⁹ Ahenakew and Wolfart, eds. 1998; Groenen, Pasqua and Whitecalf, eds. 1989; Phillips and Whitecalf, eds. 1977; Vicq et al, eds. 2000; WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

²⁰ Ibid at p. 223.

Perhaps this is the reason why with the mechanization of the forestry industry, there was an emergence of clear-cutting methods. Up until the mechanization of the industry, it was not possible to extract large amounts of timber to make large profits.²¹

When lumber mills began to surface in Northern communities, it was clear that the forestry industry has been established in Saskatchewan. Elder Harry Angus shares his experience working in Meadow Lake in the following story from All Nations of Saskatchewan Indian Elders:

I would like to talk about the timber reserve by Meadow Lake. At that time I worked for two winters over there. There were 15 men in total. This was in winter and it was cold. 15 of us men were left over there. There was nothing ready, no houses. I saw hard times there. It was bitterly cold at the time. I was selected at the time to lead this crew in the building of cabins there. We all worked together to build these buildings. The first one we built was the one to sleep in because of the cold. The men began to haul the logs that were needed. They would set them in a circle and I would use the axe to cut them in the places that they were expected to go in. There was no mud because it was winter, so we used insulation like the one they have in the houses. The men would use mud in the inside of these houses and they were very warm. Material was brought in later to further warm these buildings, like plywood and tar paper.... We also made a table in the camp for the buildings. All the cooking was done within the camp and everything was a group effort. Everyone did their share. All the cutting and skidding was done here by the crew. I stayed for two winters. I made five buildings at that time.²²

Aboriginal peoples found work in sawmills cutting wood and building log houses like Harry Angus did. Jobs chopping and hauling firewood for the settlers continued to be available but most Aboriginal peoples worked in lumber camps as the industry developed.²³

Aboriginal Elders express great concern in regards to the present and future state of the Saskatchewan's forests. The forestry industry in the past neglected to include elements of conservation in the operation developments. When Aboriginal peoples used timber and non-timber materials it was essential that the resource be used only in moderation. Aboriginal peoples of the past wanted to ensure that the land and its resources continued to exist for future generations. It was customary that this principle of conservation be incorporated into the use of natural resources by Aboriginal peoples. George Peequaquat comments on the difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal forestry processes:

We used to have a sawmill on our reserve back in the early fifties. We used a horse to skid the logs. We cut only the trees that were ready to harvest. Nowadays big companies...have taken to clear cutting, a practice

²¹ Ahenakew and Wolfart, eds. 1998; Groenen, Pasqua, and Whitecalf, eds. 1989; Phillips and Whitecalf, eds. 1977; Vicq et al, eds. 2000; WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

²² Groenen, Pasqua and Whitecalf, eds. 1989 at p. 25.

²³ Ahenakew and Wolfart, eds. 1998; Groenen, Pasqua and Whitecalf, eds. 1989; Vicq et al, eds. 2000; WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

that destroys the entire forest in that particular area. There is no respect for nature. We understood that we needed the trees for the future and managed the resource so that there would be enough for always. We understood that trees purified the air, and respected them.²⁴

The primary concern that has been expressed by Elders is that natural resources will be greatly depleted and unavailable for use by future generations. Another reason the preservation of resources is of great importance to Aboriginal peoples is that as Pat Robillard stated; the forests contain much of the teachings and traditional knowledge retained by Aboriginal communities.²⁵

The environmental condition of the forests is also a concern. It is necessary that the forests be protected from the pollution that is emitted from commercial industrial processes. Elders feel that if the forestland allocated for commercial forestry uses are not protected from mass exploitation and the conservation forestland areas are not protected from the pollution emitted from commercial forestry processes, all forestland is at stake.²⁶

Elders are also concerned with the preservation of the bio-diversity of the forests. If steps are not taken to preserve forests in their natural state, the result will be a loss of plants and animals. The plants and animals that are found in forests, as illustrated in the stories from the first section of this paper, are the links to Aboriginal heritage and the traditional lifestyle. If Aboriginal peoples are unable go hunting, trapping and gathering transmitting traditional knowledge will be difficult.²⁷

Elders speak of the great health of Aboriginal peoples when they lived a traditional life. The land was healthy and the people were also healthy. The balance was retained between the land and Aboriginal peoples. Now that the forests are facing great destruction, Aboriginal peoples are also dealing with health difficulties. Sarah Jane Asapace speaks of the benefits of living a traditional life and the difficulties of modern living in Enewuk:

We use to hunt rabbits, muskrats, gophers and other wild animals to eat. All these were clean; they eat grass, bark, and roots. Today, everything we buy to eat is polluted. That's why people were healthy in those days and are always sick now. Up north, there's still a place where the people never go to the hospital. They have an Elder who doctors them with Indian medicine.²⁸

It is important to Aboriginal Elders that the balance that once existed be re-instated. The best way to achieve the delicate balance is through efforts to conserve the forests for future use.

In conclusion, Elders feel that if timber companies continue to use clear-cutting practices there will cease to be forests. The important resources are the plants and wildlife that at one time provided food, medicine and a foundation for transmitting

²⁴ Funk and Lobe 1991 at p. 102.

²⁵ Ahenakew and Wolfart, eds. 1998; Groenen, Pasqua, and Whitecalf, eds. 1989; Phillips and Whitecalf, eds. 1977; Vicq et al, eds. 2000; WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

²⁶ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Phillips and Whitecalf, eds. 1977 at p. 40.

traditional knowledge to future generations. Fortunately, there have been efforts made by both Aboriginal Elders and politicians to raise their concerns with the Canadian Government. Currently Aboriginal communities and the government are working towards sustainable development and forest preservation, which will be explored in the third part of this paper.

3. Aboriginal Involvement and Participation In Forestry

There are records of Aboriginal peoples working for European settlers as early as the late 1870's. An example of early employment comes from the Lakota Nation. Members of the Lakota Nation spent a winter in 1879 in the area that is now Prince Albert making lumber, fence rails and cutting wood. The Dakota Nation in the same area met longer success in the forestry industry. They were able to earn a livelihood by cutting wood for the settlers year round. The jobs were not permanent and the Dakota peoples found themselves to be casual labourers in an area, that "*was a centre for a developing forest products industry*"²⁹. It was not until Aboriginal peoples, including the Dakota, settled on reserves that employment opportunities became permanent.³⁰

The permanent settlement on reserves in Northern Saskatchewan caused Aboriginal peoples to perceive employment in the forestry industry differently. Seasonal work and temporary employment in a lumber camp or in the sawmill no longer sufficed to meet their needs. Aboriginal peoples wanted an active role in decision-making and managing of the North's forests. The land that was being used for logging, prior to contact, was the land of Aboriginal peoples. The rationale for wanting decision-making power is founded in the belief that it is the responsibility of Aboriginal peoples to manage and ensure that the land is preserved for future generations. Therefore, Aboriginal peoples viewed participating in the decision-making process and forest management as necessary to their responsibility to the Creator as keepers of the land.³¹

A. History of Forestry In Northern Saskatchewan

The development of the forestry industry in Saskatchewan has been anything but gradual. The early settlers of Canada recognized the potential for commercial value in Saskatchewan's forestland. This is made evident in, The Province of Saskatchewan, Canada – Its Development and Opportunities³², a book that was published in 1919 with the purpose of attracting settlers to Saskatchewan. Though it is true that Saskatchewan was perceived to be mostly agriculturally rich, there was a merchantable portion of Saskatchewan's forests. There were many lakes and rivers such as Carrot River, Montreal Lake, and Lac La Ronge, located in the area that was considered to be of economic value. The significance of the location of the merchantable forests is that majority are located in the traditional hunting, trapping and fishing areas of Northern Aboriginal communities.³³

The area that was described to contain merchantable timber was also considered to have great non-timber value. The valuable non-timber resource was primarily animals

²⁹ Laviolette, Gontran. The Dakota Sioux In Canada. Winnipeg: DML Publications, 1991. at p. 260.

³⁰ Laviolette 1991.

³¹ Cardinal and Hildebrandt 2000.

³² Kitto, F.H. The Province of Saskatchewan, Canada – Its Development and Opportunities. Canada: Department of the Interior, 1919.

³³ Ibid.

whose furs were considered to be extremely valuable at the time. In The Province of Saskatchewan, Canada – Its Development and Opportunities, it was clear that the settlers felt that the forestland was best used to supply traders, trappers and prospectors with the supplies needed for survival. In 1919, the different uses of the forest's timber and non-timber resources were still relatively unexplored. Fortunately for Aboriginal communities, the foremost use was for non-timber materials such as game and shelter.³⁴

When European settlers were arriving in Saskatchewan, it was clear that they intended to develop the resource potential. The purpose of the settlement in the harsh environments in the North, was to extract the valuable resources that existed to create wealth. It is clear that the forests were considered to have little to no tourist potential. The early settlers and the Government of Canada for the most part intended to use Northern Saskatchewan for economic development. The Province of Saskatchewan, Canada – Its Development and Opportunities makes clear the desire of the settlers to develop a large forestry industry. Early developers expressed that a commercial forestry market required the mechanization of forestry operations. If logging and forestry were to be a viable industry in Saskatchewan, it was important that the industry expands itself to include pulp making.³⁵

During the settlement of Canada, the Europeans were not only concerned with the development of the Canadian economy. It is clear that forestry development also contained aspects of conservation of forests. As early as 1919, there were processes of re-forestation occurring through tree-planting operations in order to ensure that Canada's forests continue to exist.³⁶

The non-Aboriginal residences of Saskatchewan foresaw that the development of a mechanized industrial operation would maximize the amount of production was necessary for economic development. The high level of exploitation was and continues to distress to Aboriginal communities, who at one time derived an ample livelihood from the forests.³⁷

As indicated earlier, the role of Aboriginal peoples in the development of forestry did not typically extend beyond employment in positions of casual and manual labour. Aboriginal peoples filled the positions that required difficult labour such as working in lumber camps and sawmills. It was not until many years later that Aboriginal communities were given the power to be able to take control over the economic development of the North. Aboriginal peoples played a subsidiary role in the development of forestry. Up until the late 1960's, Aboriginal peoples continued to fill mostly the labourer positions.³⁸

Aboriginal and Metis communities employed by the forestry industry ended up losing jobs due to the mechanization of the industry. There was a trend to afford the available jobs to non-Aboriginal people. This point is further illustrated by the following:

³⁴ Kitto 1919.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Kitto 1919.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Buckley, Helen and Kew, J.E.M. and Hawley, John B. The Indian and Metis of Northern Saskatchewan – A Report on Economic and Social Development. Saskatoon: Centre for Community Studies, 1963.

Therefore, what little employment there is in the Northern Region goes to outsiders as much as it does to local men. The largest contractor, for example, employs 75 to 85 men, only 40 of whom are Indians or Metis.³⁹

The Department of Indian Affairs explained the reduction of employment as being due to the fact that Aboriginal peoples were unable to adapt to the machinery and technology that was being used. There was also a policy that cutters were required to have their own power saws. Non-Aboriginal people were able to purchase their own power saw whereas Aboriginal peoples were not able to afford expensive machinery.⁴⁰

In 1979-1980, the trend to prioritize non-Aboriginal employees in the forestry industry was no longer being implemented by employers. A large number of Aboriginal peoples began to find permanent employment. The Forest Industry in the Economy of Saskatchewan, 1979 – 1980⁴¹ stated that there were 652 jobs filled by Aboriginal peoples. The 652 jobs made up 18% of the available positions in the entire Saskatchewan industry. 48% of the Aboriginal employees were logging, and 52% were employed at the primary processing site.⁴²

The tendency to neglect non-timber development continued throughout the 1920's to the 1960's. The Canadian government did not believe that there was a foundation for tourism in the North. The main area of tourism that could have possibly been developed in the 1960's was in tourist outfitters, or employing Aboriginal peoples to act as tour guides of the north. The job itself was not highly esteemed and it appeared that Aboriginal peoples were not likely to find the best source of employment, “[w]hen the job is distasteful as well as poorly paid, [An Aboriginal person] sees little reason for working at all.”⁴³ There was little room for improving an area that was not considered to be dignified a stable industry.⁴⁴

In regards to hunting, trapping and fishing even 40 years ago there was, “no chance whatever that fish and fur could support future generations”⁴⁵. Trapping and fishing had long ceased to be a viable livelihood in the North. A fact that is to the great disadvantage of Aboriginal peoples. At one point in time, hunting and fishing was an abundant resource. There was a lack of a non-timber industry because of competition between trappers and fishers in overcrowded areas causing the resource to be rapidly depleted. There did not exist regulations to increase the efficacy of the trade, therefore the traditional livelihood of hunting, trapping and fishing was insufficient to provide for Aboriginal peoples.⁴⁶

In the forests of Saskatchewan, there is great biodiversity. Such diversity makes it possible to pursue both timber and non-timber commercial ventures. Northern Aboriginal communities have become increasingly involved in pursuing such economic ventures ranging from timber and mill productions to wild rice harvesting. The following

³⁹ Ibid, at p. 45.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ondro, W.J. and T.B. Williamson. The Forest Industry in the Economy of Saskatchewan, 1979 – 1980. Edmonton: Northern Forest Research Centre, 1985.

⁴² See Appendix A for more information.

⁴³ Buckley, Kew and Hawley at p. 47.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid, at p. 49.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

two sections deal separately with timber and non-timber resources and the ways that Aboriginal communities are pursuing sustainable economic enterprises in order to preserve their traditional lands.

B. Timber Resources

In Saskatchewan, there is vast commercial value for timber which most would not imagine. It is estimated that at least 50% of Saskatchewan's forests are considered to be commercial. In 1997, the Canadian Government owned the majority of the forestland in Saskatchewan, approximately 93%. Canada's natural resources are very economically valuable. This acts as an incentive to the Canadian Government to extract the resources for wealth. There is no denying that there continues to be a tendency to increase logging operations despite known environmental impacts. The number of logging operations that are currently occurring in Saskatchewan have increased more than three times in the past thirty years.⁴⁷

In Saskatchewan, Northern Aboriginal communities have pursued employment in the forestry industry beyond subordinate positions by owning and operating logging and sawmill companies. The Federal government inadvertently supervises forest management on First Nations reserves through Indian and Northern Affairs. All the reserves are accountable to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the decisions that are made to carry out forestry operations on reserve lands are ultimately at the discretion of the government. Therefore the ventures that are undertaken by Aboriginal communities are within the supervision of the Federal government.⁴⁸

The level of Aboriginal participation in forestry is also affected by the fact that the Canadian Government owns the majority of forestland. In order for Aboriginal communities to successfully participate in the forestry industry, they must compromise their objectives to an extent. The reason being is that they enter into forestry agreements that the government believes best supports the expansion of the forestry industry. Claude Notzke stated that the Canadian government does not actively involve itself in forestry production, so much as it oversees the expansion of the economy, "...the government essentially plays the role of landlord, virtually all of the timber harvesting and forest products manufacturing are being conducted by the private sector."⁴⁹ Overall, the government will be more willing to support forestry initiatives that benefit the Provincial or Federal governments.

It appears that Aboriginal communities have met great success when co-management operations with the Canadian Government and the private sector corporations are entered into. The co-management forestry scheme allows Aboriginal communities to voice concerns and ambitions but ultimately the decision-making power remains the discretion of the Canadian Government. The lack of real decision-making power afforded to Aboriginal communities gives the impression that the scheme of co-management benefits primarily the government and its Crown corporations.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ May, Elizabeth. *At The Cutting Edge – The Crisis in Canada's Forests*. Ontario: Key Porter Books Ltd, 1998; National Aboriginal Forestry Association. *Value-Added Forestry and Aboriginal Communities: The Perfect Fit: Study Report*. Ottawa: National Aboriginal Forestry Association, 1997.

⁴⁸ National Aboriginal Forestry Association 1997.

⁴⁹ Notzke, Claude. *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada*. Ontario: Captus University Publications, 1994. at p. 83.

⁵⁰ Beckley, T.M and D. Korber. *Clear Cuts, Conflict and Co-management: Experiments In Consensus Forest Management In Northwest Saskatchewan*. Ottawa: Natural Resources Canada, 1996; May 1998.

The Provincial government felt that the process of co-management should be directed at a local level to best encourage the development of the scheme. The rationale was that at the grassroots level there would be greater input from the Aboriginal community and individuals. Whereas if the scheme worked from top to bottom at the lower end individuals may be discouraged from speaking out and voicing their concerns.

Aboriginal communities hoped that the implementing of co-management agreements would ultimately result in the creating of an avenue that allowed for the local Aboriginal communities to exercise decision-making powers.

An example of an Aboriginal organization and community taking part in a co-management arrangement is Mistik Management Ltd. and communities from the Meadow Lake area. Mistik Management Ltd is a company that was created by NorSask and Millar Western Pulp. NorSask received a Forestry Management Licence Agreement to provide timber for both NorSask's, and Millar Western Pulp's sawmills. The Meadow Lake Tribal Council owned 40% of NorSask prior to the co-management program but the purpose of a co-management was to include Aboriginal businesses and/or organizations as well as individuals and communities in forestry developments.⁵¹

The co-management scheme allows for local community members to contribute to the economic development. The co-management scheme was implemented with the purpose of developing a more effective means of communicating between the entities involved in the forestry industry and the individuals in the communities that are affected by the forestry industry. In the end, the co-management agreement included the province, the private sector (Millar Western Pulp), an Aboriginal organization (Meadow Lake Tribal Council) and the local community.⁵²

The timber industry continues to grow and perhaps the government is developing regulations and schemes that better incorporates the interests and concerns of the local communities as well as the economic need for timber products. It appears that in order for Aboriginal communities to experience success in economic development there must be a level of adherence to the forestry practices of the industry. In Saskatchewan, the values and principles of Aboriginal communities have yet to be incorporated into the industry at a level that satisfies the community members.

In Canada, the forestry industry includes procedures such as clear-cutting that have devastating effects on the land. Despite the principles of resource conservation that Aboriginal Elders have expressed it appears that it is also difficult for Aboriginal communities to avoid falling into the pre-existing pattern of the methods of harvesting timber products. In Value-Added Forestry and Aboriginal Communities: The Perfect Fit, attention is brought to this obvious difficulty that Aboriginal communities will inevitably face in resource development:

While the forest industry has become Canada's largest, it is still based on timber extraction and primary processing with much less emphasis on multiple use activities. Even on Indian reserves this "cut-and-sell" orientation exists, despite its contradiction with historical Aboriginal practices of treating the forests as a provider of multiple benefits.⁵³

⁵¹ For information on the scope of the NorSask Forest Management Licence Agreement throughout Aboriginal communities see Appendix C.

⁵² Beckley and Korber 1997; May 1998; National Aboriginal Forestry Association 1997.

⁵³ National Aboriginal Forestry Association 1997 at p. 13.

The National Aboriginal Forestry Association is a venture that has been created to assist Aboriginal communities in developing forest resources while encouraging the refining of forestry practices to include traditional Aboriginal principles and values.⁵⁴

It appears that at the community level there is a resistance to the adherence of conventional timber practices that could lead to the fast destruction of Northern forests. Part of the rationale arises from the fact that if Aboriginal forestry companies exploit the forests at rapid rates, the fundamental values of preservation that exist in Aboriginal culture and tradition are being blatantly neglected. Unfortunately, it is obvious that the process of developing a forestry industry that strictly adheres to the fundamental values of Aboriginal tradition is not easily created. Aboriginal forestry companies are required to compete with corporations that have greater wealth and experience in the industry. If Aboriginal companies want to see any success in the forestry industry, it is necessary that they compete using the standards the industry has set if they want to profit.

In Value-Added Forestry and Aboriginal Communities: The Perfect Fit, the difficulties that Aboriginal communities face in developing timber resources is well put: [G]lobalization, cost cutting, measures and advanced technology may place barriers to Aboriginal participation in the forest sector, the growing recognition of the need to place more value on diminishing resource is one that fits well with Aboriginal aspirations for integrated resource use, traditional values and community-based economic development.⁵⁵

Perhaps the reason that it appears that Aboriginal communities are interested in the development of non-timber enterprises in Northern Saskatchewan is a result and solution to the struggle with competing with multi-national corporations such as Weyhauser in the forestry industry. It may be easier for Aboriginal communities to develop an industry that is closer to a traditional livelihood and ultimately preserves Saskatchewan's forests.⁵⁶

Aboriginal communities have become more and more apprehensive in their dealings and participation in the forestry industry. The mass exploitation of timber products in Saskatchewan may lead to the loss of forests, which seems to deter the involvement of Aboriginal communities in forestry operations. Such a loss is ultimately the loss of a channel for transmitting traditional Aboriginal knowledge to future generations. The reason for the loss is that traditional knowledge and livelihood continues to be inextricably bound with the timber and non-timber resources of the forest.

C. Non-Timber Resources

In the North, there are many non-timber resources that have provided for Aboriginal peoples for hundreds of years. Such resources were discussed in detail in the first part of this paper. The stories of Aboriginal Elders illustrate that there is wealth found in the forest in many ways other than through timber. In fact if non-timber resource development is pursued it appears that there is a greater chance of preserving forests in their natural state while deriving a commercial value from forests.

⁵⁴ National Aboriginal Forestry Association 1997; National Aboriginal Forestry Association. November 2002. May 27, 2003. <<http://www.nafaforestry.org/about.php>>.

⁵⁵ National Aboriginal Forestry Association 1997 at p.19.

⁵⁶ May 1998; National Aboriginal Forestry Association 1997; For more information on the importance of Forestry for Aboriginal communities and the greater community see Appendix B.

There is a range of non-timber products obtained from forests. Recently there has been a greater push in the direction of developing non-timber resources by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Partially the reason for the interest in non-timber resources is due to an increase in the popularity of sustainable resource development. It seems to follow that Aboriginal communities and the Canadian Government are considering the ways in which non-timber resources such as harvesting wild rice, gathering berries and mushrooms, hunting, trapping, fishing, outfitting and tourism can be developed. The value of non-timber resources like any renewable resource, if used in moderation, will continuously provide economic benefit. For Aboriginal communities, the appeal of a non-timber industry appears to be that it very much resembles a traditional livelihood. To the advantage of Aboriginal peoples, there already exists a reservoir of knowledge. Ultimately Aboriginal communities have an advantage in competing in such an industry because they have experience with non-timber resources.⁵⁷

The advantage of developing a non-timber economy is the resources are abundant in the forests and in the lands belonging to Aboriginal communities. The government and corporations do not wield the same amount of power in the non-timber industry as in the timber. A non-timber industry resembles the traditional livelihood of Northern Aboriginal communities, which appeals to majority of the community. Specifically, a non-timber economy appeals to the concerns of Elders. Therefore, Aboriginal peoples may prefer a non-timber economy to timber. If Aboriginal communities are given power to make decisions collectively with the administrative institutions such as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, governing bodies such as the Meadow Lake Tribal Council and First Nations bands, it is possible that there will be a greater push towards non-timber Northern developments.⁵⁸

Elizabeth May in her book, At The Cutting Edge – The Crisis in Canada’s Forests, summarizes the value of the non-timber industry in the following excerpt:

Many indigenous people in Saskatchewan are dependent on the forest, returning to the bush to escape the grim social problem of the reserves, to hunt and fish and trap. Others make their living from the non-timber resources of the forest. There are \$5-million-a-year industry in wild rice in the Saskatchewan forest, and a smaller but growing business selling wild berries, fresh, and also made into jams and jellies. Still others are seasonal mushroom pickers; about 4,500 kilograms of mushrooms are collected from Saskatchewan’s forests every year, amounting to \$100,000 in sales.⁵⁹

It is clear that there is an available non-timber resource base that is receiving more and more consideration as a viable Northern economy. The development of non-timber resources encompasses one facet of sustainable resource development and the goals of Aboriginal communities in their expansion of natural resource control.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ May 1998; Beckley and Korber 1996.

⁵⁸ WDM Elders Transcripts.

⁵⁹ May 1998 at p. 168.

⁶⁰ “Strategy: Forest Land and Resources for Aboriginal Peoples - An intervention submitted to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples by the National Aboriginal Forestry Association”. National Aboriginal

The importance of developing non-timber resources lies in the reality that there is a real threat to the existence of the forest ecosystem. Claude Notzke stated that Aboriginal communities face a great difficulty in forestry development. The difficulty is that most of the projects undertaken by Aboriginal communities are in restoration of the forests. The following excerpt further explains this point:

Indian reserve forests potentially constitute a considerable resource for native people in the pursuit of their socio-economic goals. At present, however, due to their degraded state, Indian forests fall short of their productive potential and their owners are fully engaged in basic rehabilitation work. The only benefits thus created are training and employment. Due to program restraints there is little opportunity for native people to implement multiple use or to employ non-traditional forestry practices.⁶¹

There is a risk that the logging methods of clear-cutting will result in the disappearance of the natural ecosystem of the forests. The social and economic development process in the North is in need of improvement. Hopefully, as time passes and the government and Aboriginal organizations continue to support development, it will be possible to establish a non-timber resource base that would benefit the community. The creation of a non-timber resource base would also preserve forestland, which Aboriginal peoples' heritage is so closely connected with.

For example, wild rice is part of the history of Aboriginal peoples in Northern Saskatchewan. The harvesting of wild rice is a market that has been regulated by the Canadian Government. The National Aboriginal Forestry Association stated that the advantage to wild rice production in Saskatchewan is that the licensing scheme that regulates the harvesting of wild rice favours Aboriginal peoples. In order to obtain a wild rice permit one of the advantageous prerequisites that must be satisfied is that the applicant must be a resident of the North for 15 years or at least half of the applicant's life. Perhaps the most favourable condition concerns individuals with trapping licences. A wild rice permit is issued to a trapper that covers the vicinity of his or her trap line. The non-timber industry is of great value for to Northern communities for wild rice harvesting is in fact an international economy. Those who produce wild rice export the product to places as far as Japan and Europe.⁶²

4. Preservation and Sustainability

This section will examine how the traditional principles and practices are being incorporated into the current economy. The forestry industry is fast approaching the necessity to change and develop policies that support preserving Saskatchewan's forests. At an increasingly alarming rate, there is a greater and greater risk of irreparable damage incurring as a result of mass timber exploitation. It is necessary that a sustainable resource economy be developed corporations, communities and the government.

It is not uncommon for difficulties to arise when a natural resource is being exploited. When there is an impediment in the development of a resource, it seems that

Forestry Association. May 16, 2002. May 29, 2003.
<<http://www.nafaforestry.org/roycom/roycom3.php#introduction>>.

⁶¹ Notzke 1994 at p.108.

⁶² Ibid.

the industry and the public begin to endorse slogans or catch phrases in order to resolve development conflicts such as environmental or health risks. One such impediment to the forestry industry is the environmental concern of depleting a renewable resource base faster than it can be renewed. In order to address the environmental concerns that frequently surface in the forestry industry, the term sustainable development is being used to describe the process of sustaining renewable resources instead of exhausting them.

What exactly does sustainable development mean? It appears that the forestry industry has yet to come up with a concrete definition, instead it is a work in progress. For Aboriginal peoples the concept of sustaining the land's resources is a principle that is deeply rooted in the cultural tradition. In the following quote the previous point is illustrated, "*Although sustainable development and utilization are now becoming buzzwords of industrialized societies, Aboriginal Peoples have long recognized the importance of living in physical and spiritual harmony with the environment.*"⁶³ The uniqueness of Aboriginal beliefs lies primarily in the concept of preserving the land for future generations. Aboriginal peoples come from a tradition where the effect and impact of present actions on future generations is for the most part taken into consideration.

The increasing involvement of Aboriginal peoples in the forestry industry is advantageous in the sense that a distinct set of values and principles are brought to the industry. Elder August Lidguerre of the Fond du Lac Denesuline Nation clearly makes mention of this idea:

The land is very valuable to us. It is very valuable, all the wildlife, all the furs, animals, what animals are here. If our people were mismanaging the wildlife, the wildlife resources that the Creator put on this earth for us, if we mismanaged it, there wouldn't be anything left for us today.⁶⁴

It is apparent that there is much to be learned from the principles and values of traditional Aboriginal communities.

In Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan – Our Dream Is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized As Nations, the authors speak of a Cree, "*concept called 'pimâcihowin' (the ability to make a living)*".⁶⁵ The traditional viewpoint of making a living or livelihood is a concept that is eminent in the Dene, Cree, Saulteaux and Assiniboine Nations. The foundation of the principle is that there is an interconnection between spiritual, physical and economic elements, which is evident by the continued abundance of natural resources that are provided by the Creator. The concept of *pimâcihowin* is further explained in the following:

When treaty Elders use the word "*pimâcihowin*", they are describing a holistic concept that includes a spiritual as well as a physical dimension. It is an integral component of traditional first nations doctrines, laws, principles, values, and teachings regarding the sources of life, the responsibilities associated with them, including those elements seen as

⁶³ Hagerman, Ellen. "*The National Aboriginal Forestry Association – An Interview with Harry Bombay and Peggy Smith*" in *The Forestry Chronicle*. May/June 1998, v.74, no. 3. pp. 367 – 369.

⁶⁴ Cardinal and Hildebrandt 2000 at p. 45.

⁶⁵ Cardinal and Hildebrandt 2000 at p. 43.

necessary for enhancing the spiritual components of life and those associated with making a living.⁶⁶

In order to make a living while abiding by the principle of *pimâcihowin* it is required that an individual abide by the teachings of the community or in Cree, *kakêskihkêmwina*, which includes a personal code of conduct that shapes and guides personal development.⁶⁷

The code of personal conduct is an indication of the interconnection of the land and its elements. The code requires that each individual learns respect, gratitude and moderation of resource use. The rationale behind the code of conduct is that it is necessary that there exist a system of conservation to ensure that natural resources are available for future generations. It is evident that the principle that binds Aboriginal Nations is that, if natural resources are to be preserved it is necessary that individuals show gratitude to the Creator for providing their communities with the resources necessary for survival. Gratitude is shown by taking only what is needed to survive, or not taking more than what is necessary for survival, which greatly differs from the current practices of the forestry industry.⁶⁸

The code of conduct ensures that individuals learn self-sufficiency, respect and most importantly *pimâcihowin*. Some of the principles included in the Cree personal code of conduct are:

iyinîsiwin	the ability to develop a keen mind
nahihtamowin	the ability to develop keen sense of hearing
nahâsiwin	the ability to develop alert and discerning faculties
nisitohtamowin	the ability to develop understanding
kakayiwâtisiwin	the ability to develop an inner sense of industriousness or inner ability to desire to be hardworking
astoskêwimahcihowin	the inner desire or need to work
waskawîwin	inner energy to move or develop a sense of personal initiative
manâtisiwin	the inner capacity of respect
kisêwâtisiwin	the capacity to be kind ⁶⁹

The code of ethic served a greater purpose among Aboriginal peoples. The code was a means of teaching the way of making a living in accordance with the fundamental values and principles of Aboriginal traditions.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Cardinal and Hildebrandt 2000.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Cardinal and Hildebrandt at p. 45.

The authors of Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan – Our Dream Is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized As Nations, express the rationale behind the concept that teachings are indivisible from the land in the following excerpt:

The connection to the land, to Mother Earth, was indispensable to the First Nations peoples if they were to achieve the ability to make a living and meet the responsibilities demanded of them by the spiritual values contained in the codes of their nations.⁷⁰

It was necessary that the spiritual aspect governed the physical and economic in order to preserve the resources that were given to the Aboriginal peoples.

Aboriginal communities and organizations are now actively participating in the development of a sustainable forestry industry. The primary concern is to incorporate the traditional values and beliefs of Aboriginal peoples that effectively conserved natural resources in the past. One such organization that is working towards addressing the traditional values along with the current industry is the National Aboriginal Forestry Association (NAFA).

The mandate of NAFA has been described as, “*committed to holistic or multiple use forestry which takes into account the unique environmental, cultural and spiritual values of Aboriginal Peoples.*”⁷¹ NAFA is committed to working towards the commercial involvement of Aboriginal peoples in the forestry industry with the intent of developing the timber and non-timber resources. The unusual part of NAFA is that wealth is not at the forefront of their goals, instead preservation and sustainability are most important.⁷²

It is encouraging to know that there exists an organization that is more concerned with sustainable economic and social development in Aboriginal communities, developing effective environmental repair methods and community and cultural spiritual restoration among Aboriginal peoples. Finally, NAFA focuses on the development of non-timber resources that more closely resembles the traditional Aboriginal livelihood. NAFA is working towards the movement away from placing Aboriginal peoples in labourer positions until the resource base is exhausted. The risk of maintaining the same level of involvement of Aboriginal peoples in the industry is that once the current forestry practices depletes the resource base, there will be nothing left for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Saskatchewan. With the help of NAFA it appears that such a risk will be eliminated through sustainable resource development.⁷³

It is clear that Aboriginal communities have much to contribute to sustainable resource development. It is encouraging that there now exists an interest to include the Aboriginal perspective and voice in resource development by the forestry industry through organizations like NAFA. In Saskatchewan, the process of attracting the interest of the forestry industry was not easy. In fact, it took the longest forest blockade in Canada to communicate the importance of listening to the concerns of Northern Aboriginal communities!⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Hagerman at p. 367.

⁷² Hagerman 1998.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ May 1998.

5. Political Reactions

It appears that the main challenge to development that the forestry industry faces is over the use of traditional Aboriginal lands for logging. It is clear that there are certain lands reserved for Aboriginal peoples, which dates back to the signing of the treaties. Aboriginal communities prior to European contact traditionally occupied treaty Nations and the Canadian Government agreed that there would exist Aboriginal title to that land. The reserved land includes forestland in Northern Saskatchewan. Even though it was estimated that in Canada less than 1% of forestland belongs to Aboriginal peoples, there is still a portion of Aboriginal forestland that is considered to be commercial forestland.⁷⁵

The difficulty that has arisen in Aboriginal communities is that there are mixed opinions concerning the use of traditional lands. Some members of the community, such as Elders, are resistant to using the land for forestry for the reasons that were stated earlier, mainly preservation and conservation. Whereas, there are members of Aboriginal communities that feel the development of the forestry industry, chiefly timber materials, will lead to economic and social development. Finally the corporations of the forestry industry are interested in exploiting the commercial forests of Saskatchewan for profit. If Aboriginal lands are allocated for commercial development, a profit can be made from the lands. Aboriginal communities feeling exploited as well as socially and economically underdeveloped if forestry companies come into the land remove the resource and fail to invest back into the community.⁷⁶

Elders and Aboriginal community members chose to make their concerns known to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal corporate entities. The plan was to target companies that had decision making-power in the forestry industry such as the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Mistik Management Ltd and NorSask. The result of the efforts of the Elders and the community members was the longest forest blockade in Canada.⁷⁷

The blockade was organized by individuals from Canoe Lake and was set up in Meadow Lake in May 1992 and lasted until the fall of 1993. The organizers of the blockade adopted the name, Protectors of Mother Earth, and protested the rapid expansion of the forestry industry in Northern Saskatchewan. The blockade was organized in order to express the concerns of the environmental impact of the Forest Management Licence Agreement that was issued to NorSask and Mistik Management Ltd. There was great concern over the clear-cutting methods that were standard in the forestry industry. Members of Aboriginal communities were also concerned that there would be a large exploitation of Northern forestland with little monetary compensation to Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal peoples felt that it was fair that there be compensation for the loss of trap lines and any other traditional uses of the land. Aboriginal peoples worried that the forestry industry would exhaust the forest resources leaving both the land and the communities destroyed. Therefore, it was believed that the industry should at the least provide communities with monetary benefits.⁷⁸

The community members that were involved with the blockade included political leaders such as the Northwest Mayors Association (Métis mayors) and First Nations bands as well as Elders and individuals. The blockade was so long lasting that semi-

⁷⁵ May 1998; Beckley and Korber 1996.

⁷⁶ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

⁷⁷ Beckley and Korber 1996; May 1998; National Aboriginal Forestry Association 1997.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

permanent lodgings were set up for the winter. The supporters of the blockade faced many challenges, from coping with the seasonal elements to facing arrest for protesting!⁷⁹

When the blockade became well known in Canada, the protesters began to receive support from individuals and groups outside of Northern Saskatchewan. Visitors and supporters included Mohawk speakers to commemorate one year of having the blockade set up, the Lone-fighters Society (Peigan Reserve, Alberta) and perhaps the most renowned visitor, David Suzuki. The blockade lasted for nearly two years and resulted in dialogue between individuals and the forestry corporations regarding the inclusion of the communities' interests when considering new forestry developments.⁸⁰

The blockade brought to the attention of the government the serious issues concerning the forestry industry in Northern Saskatchewan. The issues included the destruction of lands traditionally used for non-timber resources, environmental concerns regarding clear-cutting, and the need for Aboriginal communities to benefit from the use of traditional lands for forestry in the shape of long-term social and economic benefits. The government has responded to such concerns by introducing and contributing to Aboriginal forestry initiatives. The following section deals with specific programs that have been introduced to assist in achieving the goals of Aboriginal communities.

6. Government Response

The government publication, Economic Development Program Information⁸¹, is an information booklet that lists the programs and initiatives that are funded by the Canadian government. The government has taken the initiative to offer support and assistance to Aboriginal individuals and communities that are undertaking social and economic development projects. Some of the programs that the government has created are; Community Economic Development Program, Resource Partnerships Program, Resource Access Negotiations Program, Opportunity Fund and Resource Acquisition Initiative, Major Business Projects Program, Regional Partnerships Fund, Procurement Strategy For Aboriginal Business and finally the First Nations Forestry Program.

The programs that have been designed by the government are of great value to Aboriginal communities that are pursuing economic ventures. The reason being is that the general mandate of the programs includes training and skill development. If Aboriginal individuals are trained and experienced in the resource industry, the communities are then able to better participate in resource development. The importance of offering education and training is that the government is assisting Aboriginal communities in the development of a reservoir of knowledge, skill and the opportunity to experience economic success without external assistance. Aboriginal communities will be capable of social and economic development without intervention from others.⁸²

The focus of this section will be on the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP). The mandate of the FNFP is to assist in economic development in First Nations communities. The purpose of the program is to create employment opportunities on and off reserve and to develop the abilities of First Nations communities in forest management. The FNFP overall has four objectives:

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Economic Development and Program Information. Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2002.

⁸² Ibid.

- (1) to develop sustainable management skills;
- (2) to ensure that First Nations are able to benefit from participating and operating in the forestry industry;
- (3) to include traditional knowledge and principles concerning sustainable development; and
- (4) to make possible First Nations participation in the forestry industry by increasing First Nations ability to participate in the provincial and territorial institutions.⁸³

The importance of the FNFP is that it is evidence that the government is beginning to effectively respond to the need that Aboriginal peoples have expressed to be actively involved at all levels in resource development. The FNFP appears to be a program that seeks to incorporate and support the integration of Aboriginal knowledge into the modern economy specifically into sustainable resource development processes.⁸⁴

Part III: Minerals

We have to document our rich history, there was also a woman name[d] “kaiṣi” meaning “willow scent”.... A vision that she told of was the mother earth and how these people will tear it down to pieces. Kaiṣi said she did not know what they were looking for under mother earth. She foresaw the mining industry and drilling for oil.⁸⁵

In the following portion of the paper, the focus shifts to the development of mineral exploration in Northern Saskatchewan. The investigation into the mining and oil and gas industries will include the positive and negative aspects of non-renewable resource development. Most importantly the section on minerals includes an examination of the impacts that non-renewable resource development has had on Aboriginal communities. The main question that will be examined is whether or not traditional livelihoods will cease to exist if the landscape of the North is altered to meet only the industry demands for non-renewable resources?

1. Northern Economic Development

It is difficult to determine the direction that development in Northern Saskatchewan is going to take. There are competing interests at work causing the process of development to appear as though it is not occurring at all. Northern residents would like to see wealth emerge from the resources that are found in renewable and non-renewable resources, but there are also strong supporters of development that does not jeopardize the environmental integrity of the North. Aboriginal peoples are frustrated by the social and economic states in their communities. There is a lack of education and training. This is an obstacle that must be overcome quickly. It is clear that the population of Aboriginal peoples is rapidly increasing and there must be a way to teach future generations skills. By training the future generations of Aboriginal peoples, it will be possible for them to sustain a Northern economy that will continue to thrive for generations.

⁸³ Indian and Northern Affairs 2002; First Nations Forestry Program. December 20, 2002. June 3, 2003. <http://www.fnfp.gc.ca/index_e.php>.

⁸⁴ For more information concerning the scope of the FNFP see Appendix D.

⁸⁵ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

Currently the prospects of a sustainable economy seem small. Many Aboriginal people express the belief that the development of non-renewable resources such as uranium will not provide for future generations. It is unavoidable that a non-renewable resource base will become exhausted. Furthermore, the danger of uranium mining is that the land faces destruction by the chemicals used to extract the mineral.⁸⁶

The difficulty that Aboriginal peoples face in Northern development arises from the fact that at stake is the traditional lifestyle and livelihood of Aboriginal communities in Northern Saskatchewan. If there are no steps taken by communities to preserve their traditional means of making a living, there is a great risk that the process of uranium mining will deprive all future generations of any opportunity to retain traditional knowledge. The complete loss of traditional knowledge is a severe consequence resulting from the devastating impacts mining has on the land. There will be nothing left for future generations if uranium mining destroys the land through radioactive poison.⁸⁷ George Smith, mayor of Pinehouse in 1984, speaks to this point of Northern development:

We want the chance to develop the north ourselves. We've got to keep our bush economy. If we don't have it in twenty years the pulp industry's going to go and the uranium mines they're going to go – and there's hardly any jobs in the first place and all we are going to be left with is poisoned land. We're all going to be on welfare and we're going to be just like a third world country. The only thing we have that we can survive on is the land. People come and go and we'll still be alive. We manage to live in the bush and there's no way that anything's going to replace the bush.⁸⁸

The dilemma that the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents of the North face is due to the instability of the non-renewable resource economy.

The Northern economy is unstable for two main reasons; (1) non-renewable resources will eventually become depleted; and (2) the external market demand for a supply of minerals is subject to boom and bust trends. It is difficult to predict when the next economic low will occur and the bust can have devastating effects on the resource communities. The North can only rely on the mineral base for a fixed number of years. The development of the North must factor into future plans how the communities will survive after the non-renewable resources are used up.⁸⁹

It is clear that the mining industry is fast growing in Canada. In the mid-1990's, Canada exported the largest amount of minerals to the external market. Over 80% of the minerals that were extracted were shipped outside of the country. In 1995, mineral productions in Canada were valued at \$43.4 billion. The value had increased by 5.4% since 1994. In only one year the value of the mineral industry had increased by \$2.2

⁸⁶ Bone, Robert M. *The Geography Of The Canadian North – Issues and Challenges*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992; Dobbin, Murray, ed. *Economic Options for Northern Saskatchewan*. Report of the Economic Options for Northern Saskatchewan Conference, Saskatoon, November 16-17, 1984; National Film Board of Canada. *Uranium*. Video. 1990; WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

⁸⁷ National Film Board of Canada 1990.

⁸⁸ Smith, George. "The Effects of Present Underdevelopment" in *Economic Options for Northern Saskatchewan*. Eds. Murray Dobbin. Saskatoon, 1984 at p. 29.

⁸⁹ Bone 1992.

billion! In Saskatchewan \$4.6 billion of the total value was generated. Saskatchewan was contributing 10.6% of the minerals in Canada, and the third largest contributor next to Alberta and Ontario.⁹⁰

There are large amounts of wealth being produced by the mineral industry yet the residents of the North are seeing very little in development or investment back into the communities where the minerals are found. The problem that Aboriginal communities faced was in regards to compensation for the use of traditional lands for mineral exploration and development. In 1995, the land claims by Aboriginal communities to the mineral deposits were settled. The government agreed to compensate Aboriginal communities for land that was lost. Northern communities are still frustrated by the fact that the mining industry is generating billions of dollars. The frustration arises from the fact that Northern communities from which the uranium is being extracted from are under-developed and impoverished. There continues to be low education rates and lack of social development. The members of the communities cannot understand how the minerals found in their traditional lands are worth billions of dollars, but Aboriginal peoples are still facing poverty and little future economic development.⁹¹

Aboriginal Elders are mostly concerned with the devastating environmental effects that uranium mining has on the land. The type of development that Elders would like to see consists of programs and operations that are sustainable and will continue to benefit communities for years to come. Non-renewable resource development will not fit into the vision of economic development that Elders have. The effects of mining endanger the land and this is of great consequence to Aboriginal peoples. Uranium mining specifically has caused great distress to Aboriginal communities. Elder Ralph Paul speaks of the difficulties of the conflict:

When we signed the treaty of 1906 in the northwest, there was no negotiations about mining, drilling and logging. When I look at it today it was the big plan of the Canadian government. The northwest communities such as Patuanak, Buffalo River, Birch Narrows, and Clearwater River did not benefit from uranium mining. We were not too excited about it, all it does is destroy the land.⁹²

The Elders have made it clear that the process of mineral extraction and the dire effect that the removal has on the land is not a viable use of the land's resources. It is a difficult problem to resolve because Aboriginal peoples did not feel that the treaties entitled the government to extract the natural resources in the first place. Elders have indicated that the Aboriginal peoples felt tricked by the government through the treaties. The Canadian government had intended to exploit the natural resources without compensation to the Aboriginal peoples.⁹³ Elder Pat Robillard speaks to this point:

The Canadian government has broken many promises. It has not been long since the treaties were signed, only one hundred years have passed. I know

⁹⁰ Intergovernmental Working Group on the Mineral Industry, Sub-Committee on Aboriginal Participation in Mining. Aboriginal Participation in the Mining Industry of Canada 1996 at pp 3-4.

⁹¹ Ali, Saleem H. Environmental Resistance and Aboriginal Development – A Comparative Study of Mining Ventures in the United States and Canada. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001.

⁹² WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

⁹³ Harding, Jim. Aboriginal Rights and Government Wrongs: Uranium Mining and Neocolonialism in Northern Saskatchewan. Regina: Prairie Justice Research, 1988; WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

they came immediately after the signatures. They came in a round about way and began the explorations, I worked for a surveying outfit once and I too followed blindly to feed my children. We did not get paid a lot of money but it was a job. When there are any other means of employment you take what you get. We did not know about their long ranged plan.⁹⁴

The development of the mineral industry has faced many impediments. The unsettled land claims was one such hurdle and also the environmental effects of mining. Somehow the government has been able to continue to move forward with mineral explorations despite the concerns of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

The difficulty of developing a Northern economy has become abundantly clear. It is apparent that Aboriginal peoples face difficulty preserving an economy based on hunting, trapping and fishing. The traditional livelihood once pursued by Aboriginal peoples has ceased to provide the necessities of life and trappers are required to find other ways of supplementing their incomes. Transmitting traditional knowledge requires that a person lives in accordance with the traditional lifestyle, but a non-renewable resource based economy does not support the sustaining of traditional life.

The final difficulty that the communities of Northern Saskatchewan face concerns the creation of resource communities. The problem with basing an economy on a boom and bust industry is that in order to meet the external market's demand, workers are brought into the site where the mineral has been found to extract the mineral as quickly as possible. Once the resource base becomes exhausted and minerals are no longer available, the Northern communities will be abandoned. The mine sites create only temporary employment and when the mines close the residents of the resource town are forced to leave. For example, when the Uranium City mine site was exhausted and the operations were shut down, the population went from 2,507 in 1981 to 171 in 1986. After the resource has been exploited, the impact on the community can be disastrous. It is very difficult for economically underdeveloped resource community to create a new economy. This is partly due to the fact that there was never any effort to create a sustainable economy in the first place.⁹⁵

The future development of Northern Saskatchewan remains to be a process of balancing the interests of the people, the land and resources. A non-renewable resource based economy may destroy any chance of the North developing a sustainable economy. If the resource base is exhausted and the land is destroyed by the extraction of minerals, there will be little hope for alternate economies in the North. Moreover, the cost of losing the land to Aboriginal peoples equates the loss of a means of transmitting traditional knowledge to future generations. The mining industry may destroy the land and the communities that depend on the land. It seems logical that the vision for Northern development consists of sustainable resource development. The future for the North will hopefully be consistent with what Aboriginal Elders have envisioned for hundreds of years, a place that will continue to provide for future generations.

2. The History of Aboriginal Participation in Mining

It is clear that prior to contact Aboriginal peoples did not explore for minerals in the North. Upon the arrival of Europeans in North America, metallic ores such as gold

⁹⁴ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

⁹⁵ Bone 1992.

and non-metallic products such as petroleum were introduced to Aboriginal peoples. The early stages of metallic ore exploration had already begun in the 1800's. Prospectors had been searching for gold in the North for years. Prospecting in Saskatchewan also included the search for other metallic ores such as copper and iron.⁹⁶

The traditional Aboriginal lifestyle did not include the need to search for minerals. As mentioned earlier, the land provided all of the resources that Aboriginal communities needed for survival. There was never any incentive to search for minerals when communities had everything that was needed for survival. During the fur trade in the late 1800's, Aboriginal traders would bring mineral samples to the trading posts. The Aboriginal peoples interest in mineral exploration increased when Europeans indicated that there was a market for valuable minerals. Mineral discoveries were often the result of an Aboriginal trapper bringing a mineral sample to prospectors or traders to examine.⁹⁷

Although Aboriginal peoples were not usually accredited for being the finder of a mineral deposit. One mineral site that was discovered by an Aboriginal person was the Anglo-Rouyn mine, which was found by an unknown Aboriginal trapper from Moose Point. There were also discoveries where the true finder was accredited. David Collins brought a mineral sample to the famous prospector Thomas Creighton in 1915. The sample led to the discovery of a large deposit on the shore of Flin Flon Lake.⁹⁸ Elder Ralph Paul comments on minerals being brought to Indian agents in the following:

I was child then still in 1948 – one Elder name[d] Wilbert McIntyre brought a rock to the Indian Agent to examine because this rock was hot to the touch. He picked up this stone from a lake in the north. He claimed the stone was hot even during the winter. The lake he got the stone from was Cree Lake. My late father and I use to trap there and there use to be a small lake there because I remember it was on our trap line.⁹⁹

Prospecting parties during the early developments of the mining industry employed aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal peoples had mastered the invaluable skills that were necessary for survival especially in the harsher environment of the North. Aboriginal peoples possessed a strong work ethic and knowledge of the land that greatly assisted the prospectors in their early endeavours. It is interesting to note that some of the Aboriginal men that were employed by prospectors later went on after gaining knowledge and training from their employer to become prospectors themselves!¹⁰⁰

There are records of Aboriginal peoples taking prospectors into unexplored sites, testing the depth of lake ice to ensure that it was safe to cross, building the lodgings for the mining camps and finally working in the mining camps that were extracting the minerals from staked claims. Generally, Aboriginal labourers were hired to supplement the crew in the mining camps. It was held generally that Aboriginal employees were an, "*effective and efficient hard-working labour force*".¹⁰¹ Though the Aboriginal employees did not have the experience prospecting, they learned quickly and were more than able to

⁹⁶ Bone 1992; Hanson, S.D. and W.O Kupsch, eds. Gold and Other Stories as told to Berry Richards – Prospecting and mining in northern Saskatchewan. Regina: Saskatchewan Mining Association, 1986.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Hanson and Kupsch 1986.

⁹⁹ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Hanson and Kupsch 1986 at p. 136.

keep up with the non-Aboriginal crewmembers. To the benefit of the prospectors that hired Aboriginal employees, the employees and their families were quite autonomous. Aboriginal employees lived independently with their families in their own camps. Of course this comes really as no surprise, seeing as Aboriginal peoples had survived for hundreds of years in the North!¹⁰²

There were benefits to working in the mining camps. Aboriginal peoples were able to create additional income during the times when they were not earning a traditional livelihood. This was especially beneficial in between the seasons when there was little work hunting, fishing or trapping. It was also beneficial for Aboriginal peoples to learn the skill of mineral exploration particularly when there was greater competition hunting and trapping in the North. Though quite unfortunately, there was little interest in training Aboriginal peoples beyond the camps. Aboriginal peoples were not enrolled in the Prospectors' School for formal training. The training in prospecting that Aboriginal peoples received did not extend beyond fieldwork.¹⁰³

In the book, Gold and Other Stories as told to Berry Richards, the miners in Saskatchewan offer nothing but great praise and admiration of the skill and abilities of Aboriginal peoples. Overall, it is clear that the non-Aboriginal people that resided in Northern communities such as La Ronge recognized the capacity of Aboriginal peoples to work hard and contribute greatly to the early mineral explorations. The ability to work hard and thrive in the difficult working conditions made Aboriginal peoples ideal labourers in the mining industry.¹⁰⁴

There was a continued need for minerals in Canada and the external market as time went on. It was not until the 1960's that there was a great enough demand for uranium by the external market to motivate the Federal government to consider mass exploitation of uranium in Northern Saskatchewan. The boom and bust nature of the market for natural resources was a factor that caused the Canadian government to be wary of investing too much money into mineral exploration.¹⁰⁵

The Second World War was the primary impetus in the development of the uranium industry in Saskatchewan. The American and German military were competing to build the first atomic bomb. Canada provided the United States with some of the uranium used in the military experiments. At this point, the uranium finds in Saskatchewan were still not considered as valuable as the deposits in Africa and the United States in the 1960's.¹⁰⁶

Aboriginal peoples continued to be employed in the mining camps into the 1960's. Unfortunately, the trend that occurred in the forestry industry to afford available jobs to non-Aboriginal people also surfaced in the mining industry. In The Indian and Metis of Northern Saskatchewan – A Report On Economic and Social Development, the authors stated that even if there was a claim staked with great value, the chance that jobs would be created for Aboriginal peoples was dependent on their level of training and skill. Non-Aboriginal people were difficult to compete with in the mining industry. The non-Aboriginal miners had experience with the technology that was being used at the

¹⁰² Hanson and Kupsch 1986.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Buckley, Kew and Hawley 1963.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

mine sites. The necessity of training and program development in for Aboriginal communities is reiterated in the following excerpt from The Indians and Metis of Northern Saskatchewan – A Report on Economic and Social Development:

What the future of mining holds for Indians and Metis depends less on new discoveries and more on training. In the absence of the latter, any number of new mines may be brought into production and the Indian will remain on the fringe of employment, as he has at Uranium City. But even without new mines, Indian people can be trained for jobs with existing companies.¹⁰⁷

It was clear that there was a great need to provide training to Aboriginal peoples in the North. The development of a resource-based economy resulted in the decrease of individuals pursuing a traditional livelihood.¹⁰⁸

To the dismay of many Aboriginal peoples in the North, the establishment of a resource-based economy translated to the loss of their traditional lifestyle and livelihood. Hunting and trapping was becoming an insufficient means of making a living in the North. Though it is arguable that it was inevitable that making a living by hunting, trapping and fishing would eventually cease to meet all of the needs of Northern residents. The availability of resources would decrease along with the economic value of a traditional livelihood. Eventually the traditional income would have to be subsidized by other means of employment.

By the 1970's, there was not any evidence that the mining industry was even creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal peoples. The number of Aboriginal peoples that were employed at the mine sites was very minimal. In Northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the combined number of Aboriginal employees in seven mines was a mere 2%. The number of Aboriginal peoples employed at the Uranium City mine in 1979 was only 7%. Seeing as the majority of the residents of the North was made up of Aboriginal peoples, the low employment number seemed erroneous.¹⁰⁹

By the 1980's, the value of the uranium located in Saskatchewan increased. It was apparent that the potential for uranium mining was great and the external demand for supply was even greater. The mining industry had become established in Saskatchewan and ore had been extracted from sites at Beaverlodge, Cluff Lake, Key Lake, Rabbit Lake, Wollaston Lake, Uranium City, Waterbusy Lake, Black Lake and more. In 1988, the estimated amount of uranium in Saskatchewan was 700 million pounds, which made up more than 90% of the uranium reserves in Canada. The value of uranium increased from \$9.3 million (1972) to \$250.5 million (1982) in just 10 years!¹¹⁰

Eventually the mining industry developed a method of hiring employees on the basis of Northern residency that was a great benefit to Aboriginal peoples. A person would be considered a “*native northerner*”¹¹¹ if he or she had lived in the North for half of his or her life or for 15 years. A “*native northerner*” includes both Aboriginal and

¹⁰⁷ Buckley, Kew and Hawley 1963 at p. 44.

¹⁰⁸ Bone 1992; Buckley, Kew and Hawley 1963.

¹⁰⁹ Harding 1988.

¹¹⁰ Brook, Peter. “*Notes on the Northern Economy*” in Economic Options for Northern Saskatchewan. Eds. Murray Dobbin. Saskatoon, 1984; Harding 1988.

¹¹¹ Brook 1984 at p. 13.

non-Aboriginal individuals. The purpose of the hiring policy was to ensure that the mines were creating jobs for people in Northern Saskatchewan. In 1984, the number of native northerners working in the mines was approximately 42%. It worked that there were 480 jobs held by native northerners out of the 1,150 available positions. In 1988, it was estimated that if half of the jobs that were allocated for native northerners went to Aboriginal peoples, there would be around 212 jobs created. Unfortunately, Aboriginal peoples were being recruited to fill only the labourer positions. Moreover, the positions that were being made available to native northerners were mostly the dangerous labourer positions in the mines.¹¹²

As of 2002, the number of mining jobs being filled by Northern Saskatchewan residents was approximately 50% of the total available jobs. The primary uranium mining company in the world, Cameco, continues to endorse the policy of preferential hiring. The policy is directed at individuals who qualify as 'Residents of Saskatchewan's North' (RSN), individuals who have lived in Northern Saskatchewan for 10 years or like "native northerners", individuals who have lived in the North for half of their lives. Currently, 43% of Cameco's employees in their Northern mining operations are Aboriginal. The percentage equals 300 jobs. Cameco has also implemented training programs for Aboriginal peoples to create a workforce skilled in the mining industry beyond the basic labourer positions.¹¹³

3. Uranium

In this section, the focus shifts to the current impacts of uranium mining on Northern Aboriginal communities. It is clear that the uranium industry has serious risks involved with it. Aboriginal communities are now taking into control the future of the North. Part of the role that communities have assumed involves economic development. The purpose of including the following sections is to consider the advantageous and/or deleterious effects that mining has in the North. Specifically, in what ways has non-renewable resource development changed Aboriginal communities and how have the communities reacted to the change?

A. Current Ventures and Successes

Cameco controls the mining industry in Saskatchewan. Soon after Cameco was formed, it became renown as the world's leading uranium producer. It was previously mentioned that Cameco has a preferential hiring policy that favours employs that are from Northern communities. The process of preferential hiring ensures that the Cameco mines creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal peoples. The hiring policy has made Cameco the primary industrial employer of Aboriginal peoples.¹¹⁴

Cameco has also taken the initiative to develop work conditions and practices that accommodate to Aboriginal peoples. Cameco designed a system of working for 7 days and in the mines and then having 7 days off. One of the purposes of the schedule was to make it possible for individuals to continue to pursue traditional livelihoods. The week off was intended to give individuals the opportunity to hunt, trap or fish.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Brook 1984; Harding 1988. See Appendix E for more information on Aboriginal employment in selected mines.

¹¹³ Ewing, Julie. "Cameco's Socio-economic Experience in Northern Saskatchewan". March 12, 2002. June 4, 2003. <<http://www.pdac.ca/pdac/pub/papers/2002/T-41.pdf>>.

¹¹⁴ Ewing 2002.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

In addition to the “7-days-in, 7-days-out”¹¹⁶ schedule, Cameco has implemented an air commuting system in and out of the mine sites. By flying in employees from Northern Saskatchewan, the individuals who have been hired through RSN are able to access the mines from remote communities. The air commuting method of bringing employees to mine sites benefits Northern communities by effectively preventing the creation of resource towns. As stated earlier, the danger of resource towns is that the community faces abandonment upon the depletion of the resource. Instead, the employees of Cameco are able to remain in their home communities rather than re-locate and bring wealth into the community.¹¹⁷

Cameco has not only developed ways to accommodate to the needs of Northern residents through employment, it has also taken steps to encourage education and training of Northern residents. Training programs for all levels of the company were developed to finally make training and education accessible to Northern residents. In 1999, Cameco agreed to participate in a \$13 million Northern training program in collaboration with the Canadian government, other mining companies and First Nation and Metis authorities. The program is designed to identify future positions in mines that Northern residents can be trained to fill in order to maximize opportunities. The initiative is entitled the Multi-Party Training Plan II. The areas of skill that are targeted for development include “*radiation, environmental and chemical lab technicians, mine/mill workers, heavy duty equipment operators and mechanics, mill operators, welders and industrial mechanics.*”¹¹⁸

Cameco also provides funding to Northern students by way of scholarships to encourage skill development. The students that are in disciplines related to the mining industry are also offered summer employment positions. Cameco is dedicated to assisting the residents of Northern Saskatchewan in creating a reservoir of knowledge and skill.¹¹⁹

Cameco has made a commitment to investing into Northern Saskatchewan through training programs and ensuring that there are employment opportunities for Northern residents. The ways in which Cameco invests in the community goes beyond the mining operation itself. They invested into the Northern economy through a policy to purchase materials and goods from Northern companies and suppliers whenever possible. In 1995, 52% of purchases made by Cameco were from Northern enterprises. Cameco also employs Northern contractors for services and projects undertaken at the mines. Overall in 1995, Cameco ended up spending \$46 million in the Northern companies. The La Ronge First Nation and the Prince Albert Grand Council have been greatly benefited by Cameco’s preference to purchase Northern goods and services. Both have investments in business ventures that Cameco supports.¹²⁰

It is clear that Cameco has taken the appropriate steps to invest the wealth generated by the mining industry back into Northern communities. It seems that without a doubt the mining industry should benefit Northern communities. Unfortunately, there

¹¹⁶ Ewing 2002 at p. 4.

¹¹⁷ Bone 1992; Ewing 2002.

¹¹⁸ Anderson, Robert Brent. Economic Development among the Aboriginal Peoples in Canada – The hope for the future. North York: Captus Press Inc., 1999; Ewing 2002; Intergovernmental Working Group on the Mineral Industry 1996 at p. 30; Ewing 2002.

¹¹⁹ Anderson 1999; Ewing 2002.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

are still disagreements over whether or not the investments are worth the risk that the North will be destroyed by the mining operations.

To date, Cameco appears to be addressing the concerns of the community to the best of their abilities. Mining projects are typically proposed to Northern communities before being carried out. The meetings that are held by Cameco with the communities accommodate to the language needs of Aboriginal peoples. The meetings are translated into Cree and Dene in order to provide an opportunity for every community member to speak and be heard. Cameco also has the Chief of the La Ronge First Nation present at the highest corporate level giving input into development plans.¹²¹

It appears that Cameco has made a genuine effort to assist in Northern development by recognizing the need for development. There has also been an effort to accommodate to cultural differences. It is arguable that the cost of uranium mining is not worth the short-term benefit to communities. Presently, the mining industry is working towards the inclusion of the perspective of Aboriginal peoples in future mining operations. By addressing the concerns of the community, it is hoped that Cameco will be able to shape future developments with the input and consent of Aboriginal peoples.

B. The Dangers of Mining

Mining is an industry that is worth billions of dollars. It is of great economic value to a country that is rich in uranium deposits. There is still great opposition to the development of the mining industry. Some believe that the dangerous environmental effects of mining operations are hardly worth the economic value of uranium. The question that communities are proposing to the Canadian government is, whether the monetary value of mining is worth the cost of human life?

When uranium is mined, the site emits small radioactive particles. The particles are the residue of the minerals after the uranium has been extracted. When a mine is closed, the mine must be properly cleaned out. If the residue is not properly cleaned out, the radioactive particles will begin to seep into the land. The particles cause damage to the cells of organisms. In humans, the known effects of the residue are incidents of brain damage in children and cancer.¹²²

A second serious risk of uranium mining has to do with the waste or the tailings that are produced from the mine sites. It was estimated that by the end of the 20th century there would be 300 million tons of tailings produced by the mining industry in Canada. If the tailings from uranium mining are not contained properly, to be exact anything less than 100%, there will no doubt be a leak of contaminants. The consequences of tailing contamination are devastating. The tailings from uranium are made up of radioactive by-products, acids, chemicals and heavy metals. Once the tailings are absorbed into the land it is not long before the entire food chain becomes poisoned by the radioactive particles. The tailings are easily absorbed into plants, water and animals. The effect of the contamination on Aboriginal communities is especially severe. The land and its resources have provided for Aboriginal peoples for hundreds of years. If the land and its resources become poisoned and when consumed the consequence is illness, the traditional lifestyle of Aboriginal peoples will no longer exist.¹²³

¹²¹ Anderson 1999.

¹²² National Film Board of Canada 1990.

¹²³ National Film Board of Canada 1990; Harding 1988.

It is easy to feel far removed from the dangers of uranium tailing contamination. The reality is that it is not difficult for the tailings and residue to travel. In fact the environment is very easily permeated by the particles. The obvious example of tailing pollution is acid rain. Unfortunately the environmental hazards are not easily solved or dealt with. There is no doubt great pressures put on the government to regulate the mining industry. The government could enforce strict disposal regulations that would prevent the contamination of the environment. Yet, it was estimated that even at the standard industrial levels for uranium mining the incidence of lung cancer in the mining community would still be 2-4 times higher than communities without mines.¹²⁴

An example of failed tailings disposal is at the Cluff Lake mine site. Uranium tailings were sealed in concrete containers that were intended to last for one hundred years. Yet within only six years the containers were leaking. It is clear that the disposal of tailings in Canada is done using only temporary methods. It is very discouraging to know that the Canadian government continues to approve uranium waste disposal that will last for 50 years at a maximum. The impact of the disposal on future generations will be very severe. Essentially the government is setting the stage for future environmental disaster when the millions of tons of tailings begin to leak.¹²⁵

For Aboriginal peoples, it is very difficult to reconcile the government's actions. The traditional principle of decision making is to always consider the effect that present actions will have on future generations. In order to prevent the contamination of radioactive particles in the environment, it is necessary that a method of tailings storage is developed that will last for at least 200,000 years. Presently there is no such method in existence. In the future, it is inevitable that there will contamination.¹²⁶

The impact of mining uranium at the standard imposed by the Canadian government has severe consequences. Once environmental disasters such as toxic spills are considered along with tailing contamination, the deleterious effects of mining seem much greater than the benefits. However, Saskatchewan has received the title of the "Saudi Arabia of uranium mining"¹²⁷, which may mean that the wealth generated by the industry will overshadow the risk of environmental destruction. The government has made it clear that the industry is of more value than human life and the environment. This is evidenced by the fact that between 1981 and 1989 there were more than 90 mining spills in Saskatchewan and the government still approved the opening of three more mines.¹²⁸

In Saskatchewan there are three open pit mines at Cluff Lake, Rabbit Lake and Wollaston Lake. The effects of the mining operation have been irreparable to the communities surrounding the mines. The contaminants from the mine have permeated the land, water and animals. The effect has been especially difficult on Aboriginal peoples.¹²⁹

At Wollaston Lake near Collins Bay, a retaining wall was built and the lake was pumped out in order to mine the uranium. The mine site was located near the traditional

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ National Film Board of Canada 1990.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

lands of the Metis and Chipewyan Nations, who relied on the fish, caribou and moose. In 1989, there was a toxic spill of approximately 2 million litres of wastewater. It is no doubt unsafe to consume the water, plants or animals in the area.¹³⁰

The Key Lake mine produces very radioactive wastes. The uranium is one of the richest deposits in the world. The richer the deposits the higher the radioactivity of the wastes. In order to mine the uranium a reservoir was built and the lake was drained. When the Key Lake mine was first opened in 1983, the operators believed that the technology of the mine could protect the workers and the communities from toxic exposure. Despite the efforts of the mining operators, the water became contaminated after seeping into the reservoir.¹³¹

The Key Lake Mine had one of the largest spills in Saskatchewan. The water broke through the reservoir, washed over the road and spilled into the lake. The spill released approximately 100 million litres of radioactive water. It comes of an even greater shock to know that prior to this extremely large spill, there had been 8 smaller spills. Is it possible that the mine operators really believed that the technology was preventing radioactive contamination after repeated spills? The mining industry clearly does not have effective means of protecting the communities from the radioactive material produced from mining. The consequence of spilling the waste water composed of radium is bone cancer. How is it that the industry continues to extract more and more uranium at the cost of the environment and human life?¹³²

The effects of mining clearly are extremely devastating. Yet there has been little done to put a stop to the mining operations. Uranium mining must be 100% safe in order to preserve the lives of future generations and the environment. For Aboriginal peoples the impact of the mining industry could mean the complete loss of their traditional lifestyle and livelihood. If the land becomes poisoned and there is no means of transmitting traditional knowledge through the traditional lifestyle, there has been a great injustice to Aboriginal peoples. It is apparent that the Canadian government is not interested in developing a method of mining that will not contaminate the environment. It is necessary that Northern residents take an active role in controlling the future of the North. It is also the responsibility of all the residents of Canada to open their eyes to the dangers of uranium mining. Radioactive contaminants are not contained and will permeate all of the land. In conclusion, Jim Harding clearly summarizes the impacts and costs of the mining industry:

To the profit or energy hungry the mining of these reserves has short-term advantage. To those who care about the future of the earth and know the potential of renewable resources and conservation, such mining represents millions of tonnes of radioactive tailings which will ultimately disperse into the water, air and food chains.... And of course, it represents an affront on those who now live in the North or will come to live in the North where uranium is mined.¹³³

C. The Reaction of Aboriginal Communities

¹³⁰ Bone 1992; National Film Board of Canada 1990.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² National Film Board of Canada 1990.

¹³³ Harding 1988 at p.4.

In Northern Saskatchewan where the mines are located, there are 30,000 residents. Aboriginal peoples make up 80% of the Northern population.¹³⁴ There are Aboriginal peoples who feel that the Federal and Provincial governments have not been forthright with Northern communities in regards to mining operations. It is almost unreal to consider that the government has approved the extraction of minerals in Northern Saskatchewan with little to no consultation with the communities.¹³⁵

The information that the government did provide the Aboriginal communities with was not relied on. The residents of Northern Saskatchewan did not believe that the mining operations were safe. This was strongly evidenced by the fact that animals, plants and water were clearly contaminated. Aboriginal peoples live closely with the land. It is clear that there is a change happening and the land is suffering. Elder Ralph Paul speaks to the dealings with the government and the mining industry:

The government of Saskatchewan and Canada encourages mining telling us that it is a safe operation but I do not believe it. The industry makes good money for the province and employs many of our people but our people are blind. They may have a good job until the earth is depleted of what the government wants and then we will be out of a job, our land demolished and caribou and other wild life.¹³⁶

In the 1950's and 1960's when uranium was being removed from Saskatchewan mines for military purposes, many of the Aboriginal peoples that were worked in the mines admitted that to not knowing what the minerals being removed were. The hazardous health and environmental effects the uranium had were never made known to Aboriginal peoples including the individuals employed by the mine. It is clear that the government did not take any measures to inform the Northern communities of the potential effects that mining could have on the North.¹³⁷

There is still a mixed reaction from the communities. Some members support the mines whereas there are many Aboriginal peoples that oppose the mining operations. The reason being is that the mining industry is creating employment opportunities and bringing wealth to Northern Saskatchewan. Despite the long-term contamination that may occur, presently Aboriginal communities are beginning to see social and economic development. The Elders know better. Elders have expressed their protest against an industry that may destroy the land and the traditional knowledge that is deeply rooted in the land.¹³⁸ Elder Ralph Paul made it quite clear that he feels the mining industry is not of a great benefit to Aboriginal peoples:

Depleted. Wild life was abundant at one time around Key Lake mine and now there are hardly any. If there are some wildlife people are reluctant to eat it. That was my father's trapping territory. My father died last year and he died a poor man as far as material possessions are concern[ed]. The Uranium mining industry brought millions of dollars for the province, but we, as First Nations people[s] do not get a fair cut from the wealth.

¹³⁴ Ali 2002 at p.147.

¹³⁵ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

¹³⁶ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

¹³⁷ National Film Board of Canada 1990; WDM Elders Transcripts.

¹³⁸ Ali 2002; Ewing 2002.

My father use to trap there since the 1920's and before that many, many Dene people have trapped there. One day my father told me about the great depression. It brought many white people to our area. They were looking for a place to start life again. But they stayed and ruined the land as the result.¹³⁹

Aboriginal Elders have made it abundantly clear that they are not interested in the short-term benefits that mining may bring to Northern Saskatchewan.

The Elders have lived throughout the development of the mining industry and can remember when the land provided for Aboriginal peoples. The Elders will also attest that the land has been poisoned. Elder Ralph Paul trapped in the Key Lake area and speaks of how the Key Lake mine changed the land:

I have many concerns from Elders before us on this subject.... My late father and I use to trap there, and there use to be a small lake because I remember it was on our trap line. Shortly after the mining industry began I went back there to see the lake again and it was not there, it had all dried up. This is around the Key lake mine in northern Saskatchewan. The radiation and chemicals used to mine the ore is not doing our land any good. The creator did not plan it this way. Our mother earth is being torn apart.¹⁴⁰

The Elders are concerned that the mining operations leak contaminants into the water and the land. They are also concerned that there is damage done even after a mine has been closed. Elder Pat Robillard speaks of the pollutants that are emitted from the operating and closed mines and how the health of Aboriginal peoples is affected:

A small uranium mine was erected near Black Lake, Saskatchewan in 1952. It was called Nisto mine. I do not know the status of the ore body at the mine but it did not last too long, maybe three or four years. The site is still there, it does not look like it has been cleaned. One can observe the open pit from where the ore was taken. There must be harmful chemicals and ... it seeped through the ground to our drinking water it must be harmful. Cancer is a disease that our ancestors didn't get, but today it is as common as a cold among our people[s]. Uranium City is another place in the far north that was in operation for a long time. After the mine closed it's doors in 1980, Green Peace protestors requested the mine be cleaned out completely. I do not believe the mine at Beaver Lodge is totally clean, it will never be the way it was before the mine. Mining does create employment for our youth and today they are being trained in areas of electrical engineering and other affiliated professions, but when the mines go what will the people do? It looks attractive at first but it won't last.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ WDM Elders Transcripts 2002.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

It is clear that the future of Northern Saskatchewan consists of only short-term benefits. Unless it can be ensured that there will be no contamination, waste water spills, or abandoned mine sites filled with residue because the mine was not properly cleaned out.

In 1990, Janet Fietz was interviewed for the documentary, Uranium. Janet Fietz, a Cree Elder, still lived on a trap line in Saskatchewan at the time of the interview. She had witnessed the dire effects of the mining industry and the way that the industry continues to move in on traditional lands used for hunting and trapping. She spoke of the way mining surveyors mark the prospective areas in the bush and how she fears that the land will be lost because of mining contamination. In the following excerpt, Janet Fietz addresses how Aboriginal peoples have been treated as an expendable object in order to further the development of mining:

They don't see us as people, maybe they see us as another stick of wood, standing there or something. They don't seem to care. What do they feel, if someone went over to there, to where they live and destroyed their livelihood like trapping and fishing...?

The Elders have valuable insight that must be heard. Especially when the fears that the mining industry will destroy the land are becoming a reality.

There have been efforts by Aboriginal communities to effect change in the mining industry. Communities attempted to make their concerns known to the Canadian government regarding mining operations. The Aboriginal communities in the area of Wollaston Lake organized one such effort. In the summer of 1985, the community members held a protest and blockade at the Wollaston Lake mine sites. The blockade had the support of approximately 150 community members. The blockade resulted in the mining companies at Wollaston Lake meeting with Dene chiefs. In the end, there really was little change of the mining policy and four years later the mine had a massive waste water spill.¹⁴²

Overall there has been minimal protest against the advancement of mining operations in Northern Saskatchewan. The Wollaston Lake blockade was one of the only formal protests against the mining industry. For the most parts the administrative institutions for Aboriginal communities such as First Nations chiefs and band councils have done what they could at the government level to communicate the discord experienced by Aboriginal communities. For example, the Hatchet Lake First Nation hired consultants to assess the actual benefit of proposed mining projects to Aboriginal communities. The economic consultants put together a report and submitted their findings to Cameco and the government but unfortunately the report was for the most part disregarded by both.¹⁴³

Aboriginal communities may not be best equipped presently to assess what is needed to develop a Northern economy that is sustainable. Fortunately, Aboriginal peoples are taking it upon themselves to pursue an active role in social and economic development and future planning. Members of Aboriginal communities are pursuing education and training that will enable them to assist in such development. Eventually the government will be unable to ignore the voice of Aboriginal communities and the injustices that have been carried out against them through the mining industry. The

¹⁴² Ali 2002; Bone 1992.

¹⁴³ Ali 2002; Harding 1988.

efforts to change the standards of the mining industry will be a benefit to all future generations for the land; water, plants and animals will be available for future use. It is the hope of those concerned with the dangerous impacts of the mining industry that it is not to late.

4. Oil and Gas

The oil and gas industry is beginning to surface in Saskatchewan. First Nations communities are finding ways to pursue resource development. The risk of oil and gas like any non-renewable resource is that the economy is subject to boom and bust trends and that it cannot be relied on for the resource will one day be depleted. There are concerns expressed by Aboriginal peoples regarding the development of non-renewable resources, the ventures that are being undertaken take into account how the developments will effect future generations.

One example of the development of the oil and gas industry by a reserve is the White Bear First Nation. The White Bear Oil and Gas (WBOG) is the reserves oil production company. In 1997, WBOG was producing 1,700 barrels of oil every day. White Bear First Nation was able to pursue a venture in oil and gas after entering into an agreement with a Calgary based oil company. The conditions of the agreement include an option to participate in the oil production and with a base royalty for the oil. The options have made it possible for White Bear First Nation to *triple* their revenue!

The unique part of WBOG is that the mandate of the company is to adhere to traditional principles such as preserving the land for future generations and investing back into the community. WBOG has described their priorities as, “*helping their community, protecting the environment and respecting Aboriginal traditions*,”¹⁴⁴ Another unique aspect of the oil and gas venture is that the reserve recognizes that the resource base will one day become exhausted. Therefore the emphasis for development is on the community, present and future. The president of WBOG, Terry Littlechief, stated that, “[E]ach action taken has many effects. What we do today will effect future generations. Following strict environmental guidelines and spending the revenue properly is very important to us, so that 20 years, 50 years, 100 years down the road our grandchildren won’t question the decisions we made.”¹⁴⁵ WBOG is a company that has taken the necessary steps to preserve Aboriginal knowledge and tradition by applying the principles to a modern venture. The result of the incorporation of modern and traditional principles has been very successful.¹⁴⁶

There are many ways that WBOG has adhered to traditional principles. For instance, the company has reconciled its use of the land for extracting oil by ensuring that prior to drilling thanks is given for the bounty of the land. At an oil site before drilling is carried out, WBOG has an Elder visit the site to pray and offer thanks for the land. WBOG also has a no-drilling policy near sacred sites in order to preserve the traditional lands of Aboriginal peoples. Finally, in order to preserve the area surrounding White Bear Lake and the traditional lands, abandoned oil wells sites are thoroughly cleaned and restored to a level that is higher than the standard environmental level.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Anderson 1999 at p.122.

¹⁴⁵ Anderson 1999 at p.123.

¹⁴⁶ Anderson 1999.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

As far as community development is concerned, WBOG has taken the steps to train and educate members of the White Bear First Nation. In 1997, there had been 37 band members trained in the industry and the number continues to increase. In addition to band member training and employment, WBOG has created short and long term employment opportunities to Aboriginal peoples through service contracts, construction, drilling, maintenance and any other positions associated with the upkeep of the well sites.¹⁴⁸

WBOG is a venture that is of great encouragement to Aboriginal peoples. It is proof that it is possible to pursue resource development in Aboriginal communities while retaining and incorporating traditional principles and values. The most important aspect of the oil company remains to be the focus on benefiting the future generations. Moreover, the company is taking it upon itself base all decisions on whether will be advantageous or detrimental in the future. The benefits of the WBOG initiative will not be truly realized for years until the ways that future generations are benefiting from the reserve's investment into oil and gas is visible.

Part V: Conclusion

In Saskatchewan there is an abundance of natural renewable and non-renewable resources. It appears that if the forestry and mining industry develop a high standard of environmental safety and preservation it will be possible to have a sustainable economy. On the other hand if the present standards and practices continue to be carried out, there is a great risk that the North will soon be destroyed. In Saskatchewan, the Aboriginal peoples are re-claiming their inherent right to manage the land. To the benefit of the rest of the province, particularly in Northern Saskatchewan, Aboriginal communities are taking action to preserve the land and develop a system of sustainable resource development.

Aboriginal communities in Saskatchewan are now facing the future of development in their communities. It has become clear that the retaining of traditional lifestyles and livelihoods and the development of a resource-based economy must be balanced with one another. The difficulty that communities are facing in economic and resource development arises from the need for social and economic development in

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

Aboriginal communities. An important lesson to learn from the traditional principles of Aboriginal peoples is that the most important factor of development is how present actions and decisions will affect future generations. The development must be sustainable and preserve the land and its resources for future generations.

It has been a struggle for Aboriginal peoples in the past 100 years. The struggle resulted from the process of adapting to a new lifestyle and economy. Aboriginal communities are now finding their role in the industrial economies of Canada and will contribute much more to future developments.

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Appendix A:

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Native Employment ^a in the forest industry, 1979-80

Industry Group	Native employment					
	Total Industry employment ^b		Logging		Mill	
	Logging	Mill	No.	% of industry	No.	% of Industry
Sawmills						
5 MM fbm and over	655	540	160	24	116	21
1 MM to 5 MM fbm	44	86	35	80	75	87
100 M to 1 MM fbm	45	104	19	42	26	25
Less than 100 M fbm	37	40	1	3	2	5
Independent planning mills	2	26	0	0	18	69
Plywood mill	5	200	0	0	24	12
Wood preservation mills	114	178	53	37	47	26
Miscellaneous	15	128	13	87	8	6
Waferboard	65	266	6	9	5	2
Pulp	590	460	25	4	20	4
Total	1602	2028	312	19	340	17

^a In person-years

^b Includes independent log producers

Appendix B:

National Aboriginal Forestry Association. Value-Added Forestry and Aboriginal Communities: The Perfect Fit: Study Report. Ottawa: National Aboriginal Forestry Association, 1997. at p.18.

The Importance of Forests and Aboriginal Communities' Relationship with Forests

Environmental/Social	Economic	Aboriginal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 10% of the planet's forests cover (45% of Canada's land mass) * net absorption and storage of carbon by Canadian forests * about 20% of the world's fresh water flows from Canadian forested watersheds * hunting and fishing * over 70 species of mammals and about 300 species of birds live in Canada's forests * 13 million visits to national park * aesthetics, shade, windbreak, wind reduction 	<p>Forest Products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * value of shipments: \$56.3 billion (1995) * contribution to GDP: \$19.8 billion (1994) * 369,000 direct forest-based jobs and 511,000 indirect jobs (1995) * wages and salaries: \$10 billion (1993) * investment: \$7.1 billion (1994) <p>Tax Revenues (1989-92) (\$billion/year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * federal (excluding GST): \$3.4 provincial & municipal: \$2.8 * 350 forest independent communities * other forest-based industries: tourism, outfitting and recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 80% of Aboriginal communities are in forest producing areas * Aboriginal and Treaty rights impacted by the forest industry * 40,000+ Aboriginal trappers * subsistence, commercial and sport fisheries (inland and coastal) * cultural, spiritual and material needs * medicinal, wild rice and other food stuffs * 10,000+ employed in logging and forest industries * reserve lands: 1.4 million hectares of forest lands with \$4-600 million potential in timber production

Appendix C:

Beckley, T.M and D. Korber. Clear Cuts, Conflict and Co-management: Experiments In Consensus Forest Management In Northwest Saskatchewan. Ottawa: Natural Resources Canada, 1996. at p. 4.

Communities of the NorSask Forest Management Licence Agreement (Source: Statistics Canada 1993)

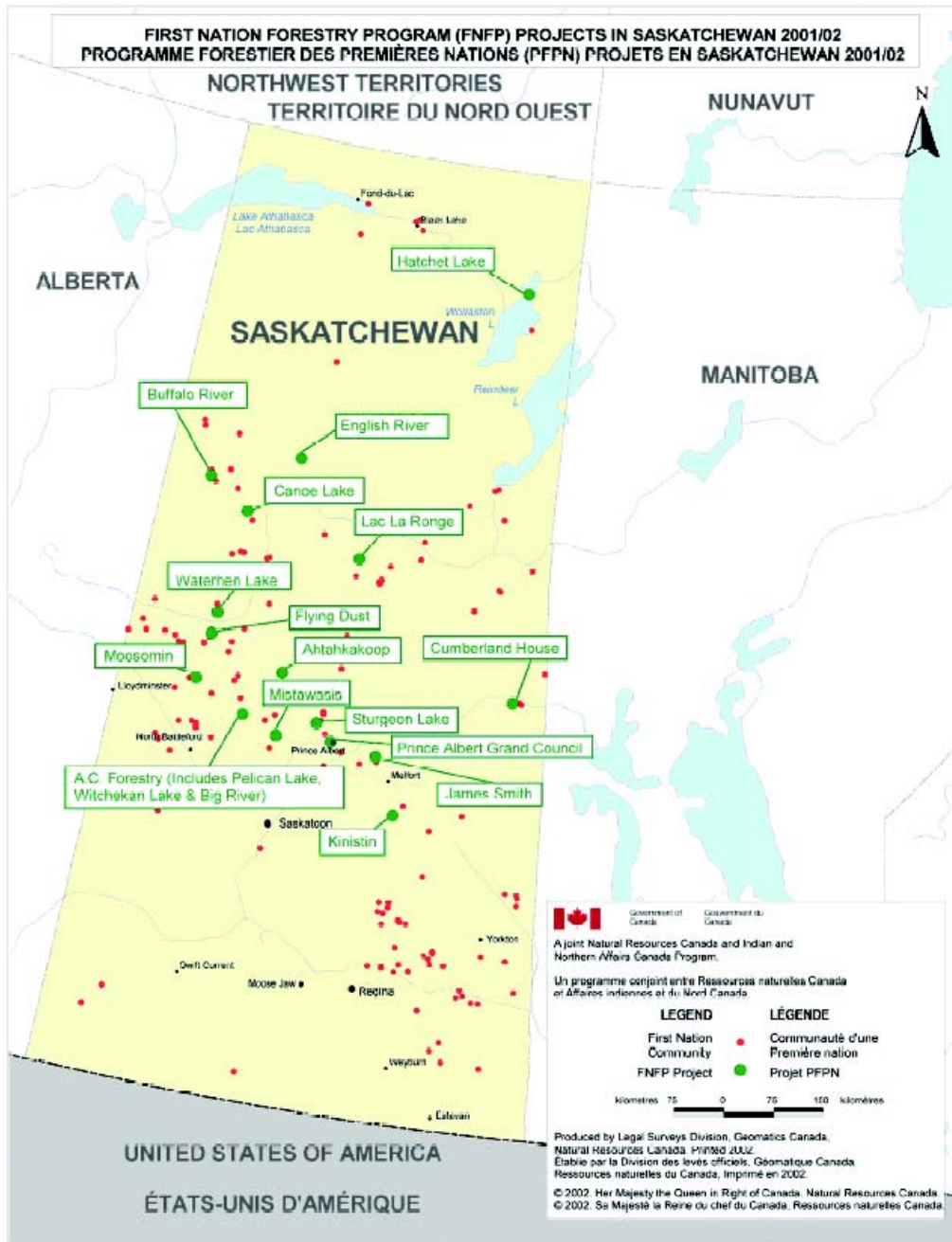
Community ^a	Population		
	Native	Non-Native	Total
La Loche (NV)	1585	105	1690
La Loche (R 222)	450	5	455
Turnor Lake (NV)	180	5	180
Turnor Lake (R 193B)	220	0	220
Patuanak (NH)	95	0	95
Patuanak (R 192D)	410	15	425
Dillon (R 194)	No data	No data	No data
Île-à-la Crosse (NV, R 192)	1205	70	1275
Michel (NV)	85	0	85
St. George's Hill (NH)	120	5	125
Buffalo Narrows (NV)	870	190	1060
Cole Bay (Métis)	150	15	165
Jans Bay (Métis)	190	5	195
Beauval (NV)	650	70	720
Canoe Narrows (R 165)	465	5	470
Waterhen Lake (R 130)	505	0	505
Green Lake (Métis)	480	30	510
Meadow Lake (T)	1050	3200	4250
Pierceland (V)	0	475	475
Loon Lake (V)	0	366	366
Loon Lake (V)	520	0	520
Meadow Lake (R 105)	320	0	320

Source: Statistics Canada (1991).

^a NV = Native village, NH = Native hamlet, R = reserve, V = village, and T = town.

Appendix D:

First Nations Forestry Program. March 31, 2003. June 3, 2003.
http://www.fnfp.gc.ca/content/projectsProvincial_e.php



Appendix E:

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Native Employment at Selected Mines, 1987

Mine	Native Employees	Per cent
Cluff Lake, Sask.	110	41.8
Rabbit Lake, Sask.	95	25.5
Key Lake, Sask.	110	22.6
Star Lake, Sask	5	9.4
Polaris, NWT	26	9.3
Lupin, NWT	35	7.9
Detour Lake, Ont.	4	2.7
Total	385	19.4