

Integrating Aboriginal Values into Land-Use and Resource Management First Quarterly Report: January to March, 2000

1. Project Background and Goals

This project contributes to the “values” component of the Ecosystems Based Management (EBM) pilot project that Manitoba’s Department of Conservation is implementing on the east side of Lake Winnipeg (Ecoregion 90). IISD’s goal is to develop a process that a) helps Aboriginal people identify the values their community places on the forested landscape around them; b) effectively expresses those values to decision-makers in the provincial government, the forest industry and other stakeholders; and c) stimulates discussion by all stakeholders on ways to incorporate Aboriginal values into land use and resource management. To achieve this objective IISD intends to:

- Determine community values by adapting an innovative method to local conditions. The method, called appreciative inquiry, empowers local people building a shared vision based on community strengths. It then helps to develop strategies to turn the vision into reality. IISD is using appreciative inquiry to determine how an Aboriginal community values the landscape around it through the course of a year. This valuation will be as holistic as possible, and could include monetary value from trapping, subsistence value from hunting, medicinal value from gathering herbs, spiritual and cultural value from living in a forested landscape, and other values determined by Aboriginal people themselves.
- Build a community vision and action plan based on the shared values that have been identified using appreciative inquiry.
- Record the results of the appreciative inquiry on videotape, producing a set of programs that portray the community’s values and vision accurately and powerfully.
- Communicate local values to decision-makers in the provincial government and to other stakeholders through focus-group sessions in which the video programs are played and discussed.

IISD consulted the First Nations community of Skownan (formerly called Waterhen) regarding its interest in becoming a partner in this project. Skownan was approached after consultation with Gord Jones, Manitoba’s Director of Forestry, as well as with Glen Cummings, then-Minister of Natural Resources and

David Newman, then-Minister of Northern Affairs. Although it is located to the west of Ecoregion 90, Skownan lies in an area of interest to the forest industry.

The community has completed a traditional land use survey, and conducted an innovative economic development project connected to its traditional livelihood system: the introduction of both domestic and wild herds of wood bison into its land use area. At the community's request, the province formally protected a large area of land used by the bison in 1998, thereby restricting the range of activities that can occur there. The community is now looking for further economic opportunities related to its culture and livelihood system. On September 15, 1999, Skownan First Nation agreed to be IISD's partner in the project, by passing Band Council Resolution 281-0068-99.

During the course of the project, IISD is transferring skills and methods to local people and other stakeholders in a "co-learning" environment. For example, the project team trained Aboriginal members of the community in the use of appreciative inquiry. It will also work in partnership with an Aboriginal video production company, Winnipeg-based I.C.E. Productions. These linkages help all stakeholders take ownership of the project, making subsequent applications of the process both productive and cost-effective.

2. Goals for the First Quarter

The activities planned for the first quarter of the project included:

- A community consultation to ensure that local people supported the project, and to give local people an opportunity to advise the team on project implementation;
- Training in appreciative inquiry for a six-person team from Skownan;
- A storytelling stage, in which the Skownan team conducted appreciative interviews with a cross-section of people who live in the community; and
- Analysis of the appreciative interviews to determine community values and to develop a preliminary vision for Skownan.

These activities were all completed successfully between January and March, 2000.

3. Team Members

During the first quarter of the project, IISD worked closely with a six-person team from Skownan. Team members included:

- Neil Ford: IISD team leader
- Graham Ashford: IISD community development specialist
- Punya Upadhyaya: IISD trainer in appreciative inquiry (on contract from the University of Kansas, Emporia)
- Alan Reid: Skownan team leader
- Elaine Houle: Skownan team member
- Ken Catcheway: Skownan team member
- Michael Catcheway: Skownan team member
- Delores McKay: Skownan team member
- Sterling Catcheway: Skownan team member

Nelson Catcheway, the education coordinator for Skownan First Nation, acted as a liaison person for the project, ensuring good communication between the IISD team, the Skownan team and the community's chief and council. Archie Catcheway was chosen as an elder-adviser by the team. Harvey Payne and Karen Stock, Winnipeg-based consultants to Skownan First Nation, offered useful advice on the community's traditional activities and project implementation.

4. Community Consultation

On January 12 and 13, Neil Ford, Graham Ashford and Ron Missyabit from I.C.E. Productions spent two days in Skownan to review the project with a wide range of people from the community, and to seek comments on ways that it could be improved. They spent most of January 12 with the project team, explaining the appreciative training that was scheduled for later in the month, and making preliminary plans for the production of a video to express the community's values and vision.

To determine the best times for the Aboriginal video crew to work in the community, the team created a calendar of seasonal activities. Presented as Annex A, the calendar places traditional activities in an annual cycle. The yellow shaded areas represent times when a lot of activity occurs in the community, providing interesting subjects for the video crew. The first video shoot was scheduled for mid-April.

In the late afternoon, the Skownan team organized a community meeting that was attended by approximately 20 people. The team explained the project, asked for advice and answered questions in a lively session. The First Nation members who attended were both enthusiastic and inquisitive.

On January 13, the IISD team drove the ice road to Chitek Lake, a place of special spiritual significance for local people. They talked to local people and watched

commercial ice fishing by members of the community. The IISD team returned to Winnipeg confident that the project had a wide range of support in the community.

5. Training in Appreciative Inquiry

From January 23–28, IISD conducted training in appreciative inquiry for six young adults from Skownan at the community's daycare centre. The training team consisted of Punya Upadhyaya (appreciative inquiry specialist), Neil Ford (team leader), Graham Ashford (community development specialist) and Karen Stock (adviser/reporter).

Both theoretical and practical, the training workshop was and consisted of the following elements:

- Introduction to the theory of appreciative inquiry (lecture and discussion).
- Practical exercises in conducting appreciative interviews (team members interviewed each other).
- Technical demonstration and practice with microphones and tape recorders.
- Listening sessions, in which appreciative interviews and stories were discussed and analyzed.
- Test interviews with members of the community (team members visited people outside the team and conducted interviews for analysis).

The training in Skownan focused on the first two stages of the appreciative inquiry cycle: the discovery phase in which participants tell stories about peak moments of community excellence and explore the conditions which made these high points possible, and the dream phase in which people challenge the status quo by envisioning more valued and vital futures (an introductory description of appreciative inquiry is in Annex D). After a theoretical discussion, the participants interviewed each other to discover what they valued in their community and what they dreamed for its future. After more analysis and discussion, they tried the process on community members outside the team. Twelve test interviews were successfully completed, with interviewees ranging from 11 to 70 years of age.

In addition, the team organized and held a community meeting to explain the project to a larger group, answer questions and seek advice about how it could be improved. Nelson Catcheway, the project's liaison person, wrote a description of the project that was presented at this community meeting.

The team discovered that the best interviews contained stories of peak moments or achievements, not just “facts” or “information” about life in the community. Stories have a plot—something to be achieved. Listeners respond to stories emotionally as well as intellectually. For these reasons, it is easier to determine the values of a community from stories than it is through facts or information.

During the training course, the participants had time to discuss the goals of the project both among themselves and with others. They decided that the project has the following benefits:

- It creates a time for people to visit each other and tell stories. Because of the phone and the TV, people don't visit as much as they once did. The project encourages generations to mix and reconnect with each other.
- The project continues to establish a community inventory for the future. It builds on the land-use study and survey by recording stories audio- and videotape.
- It creates a community vision to project possibilities for the future.
- It will help the community to find value in the land without cutting large areas of trees, or by logging using community-approved procedures and areas.
- The stories recorded on audio- and videotape can be used in the school to educate students about the community's history.
- The project could lead to creative partnerships between the community, industry and government.
- It will help create self-respect in the community.
- The project will encourage people to build a vision together. If it succeeds, people will start working more co-operatively.
- It will encourage people to take their children out on the land more often.
- It will help them find ways to be more independent in education, government and business.

During an evaluation at the end of the training week, the participants made the following comments:

- It was a good week of training.
- It was a different kind of training.
- At first, it was hard to understand what was going on (first day), but we learned.
- We learned a lot and had a good time.
- It is good that the project actually happened.
- We can see that we are not doing this for nothing.
- Without the project we would not have met Punya Upadhyaya.
- It is going to be fun doing the interviews.

- Some people were negative towards the project at first, but after they heard the taped interviews they changed their mind.
- Good presentation to the community.
- People feel that it is their project.
- Hopefully, we will get something out of this to use our own resources and the land.

6. Appreciative Interviews

The Skownan team spent the eight weeks following their training (January 31 to March 24) conducting appreciative interviews and collecting stories about peak experiences with members of the community. In all, they interviewed 35 people, approximately 10 per cent of Skownan's population. All age groups were represented in the survey sample, as were all family groups. A rough gender balance was achieved.

The interviews were informal and relaxed. They usually took place over a cup of tea in the person's house, or while the person was working on the land. The team member would start by asking the person to tell a story about a peak experience—his best time fishing, for example, or his most successful hunt, or a particularly memorable family outing. Then the team member would ask why the person valued that activity—what it gave them, both its economic benefit and spiritual fulfillment. Finally, the team member would ask if the person could think of ways to make the peak experience happen more often or more easily. These comments would lead into a discussion of the person's vision for Skownan in the future.

Most of the interviews were recorded on audio cassettes. Occasionally, the interviewee did not want his or her voice recorded. Here, the team member took written notes either during or immediately after the interview. The audio cassettes and notes will be preserved by the community as oral history.

Neil and Graham visited the community on March 16, near the end of the process. They scheduled the data analysis session in Winnipeg with the team, started a discussion about the values contained in the interviews, and asked the team how they could be organized and understood by outsiders.

7. Data Analysis and the Development of Community Values and Vision

The data analysis workshop in Winnipeg took place from March 28 to 30. The objective of the workshop was to draw out shared community values from the interviews, then use the values and interview data to construct a preliminary

vision for the community. The entire Skownan team (with the exception of Mike Catcheway) took part in the session. Nelson Catcheway participated for the last day and a half.

The entire first day was spent reviewing the interviews. The team used a flip chart to note the values contained in each story, as well as each person's vision for the community. The shared community values recorded on the flip chart were the following:

- The forest gives protection and comfort to the people.
- It is a magical and mystical place, connecting Ojibwa people.
- The forest provides food, shelter and medicines.
- The land and the forest have human properties. People see the trees as their brothers and sisters.
- Going onto the land provides peace and healing. People feel good about themselves. They develop a spiritual and loving relationship with the land.
- Chitek Lake is the heart of the homeland of the people of the Skownan First Nation.
- It is fun to spend time on the land; people are happy in the bush. The land gives a feeling of togetherness to the people. People were much healthier and stronger when they lived off the land. People work together when they hunt, trap, fish and gather. Hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering continue to be important economic activities for many people in the community.
- The Skownan Fur Block continues to provide many resources that are of high value in the Ojibwa culture.
- Seneca root gathering continues to be an important cultural and economic activity.
- Fishing at Chitek Lake, Inland Lake and Archie's Lake is profitable.
- Hunting moose and deer brings happiness and pride to the hunter and feeds families. Wild meat tastes better and is healthier than store-bought meats.
- The forest should be a natural place; tree plantations are not acceptable.
- More trees should be on the reserve. People would like to plant trees around their houses.

The community vision, which began to emerge through the analysis of the appreciative interviews, included the following elements:

- To develop caring, sharing and kindness.
- To develop respect for people and resources.
- To be a place of learning.

- To bring back some of the old ways, to teach children how to hunt and fish, to share the spirituality of Chitek Lake.
- To revive connections with elders.
- To plant gardens and trees.
- To teach traditional values and skills in school.
- To have fun on the land.
- To become healthier people and use traditional medicines.
- To start eco-tourism.
- To have more community celebrations and socializing on the land.
- To start community-approved logging ventures.

During the second day, the interview team grouped the values identified the previous day into categories and brainstormed a preliminary vision for each category of values. The outcome of the process was a diagram of Skownan's values, presented as Annex B, and a preliminary vision of the community, included as Annex C. During the process of drawing out the values and vision, team members noted that many people in the community have common values and share a common vision of how they would like to develop.

On the last day of the workshop, the team made a presentation to the project's funders, represented by Gord Jones, director of forestry, and Barb Scaife, bio-economist, Fisheries Branch, (both with the Department of Conservation, Province of Manitoba), along with Dale Hutchison, environmental and natural resource analyst with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The team explained the appreciative process that they used to draw out community values and develop a vision. They also presented their diagram of values organized into categories and their preliminary vision, based on their initial 35 interviews. The presentation was well received by the funding agencies.

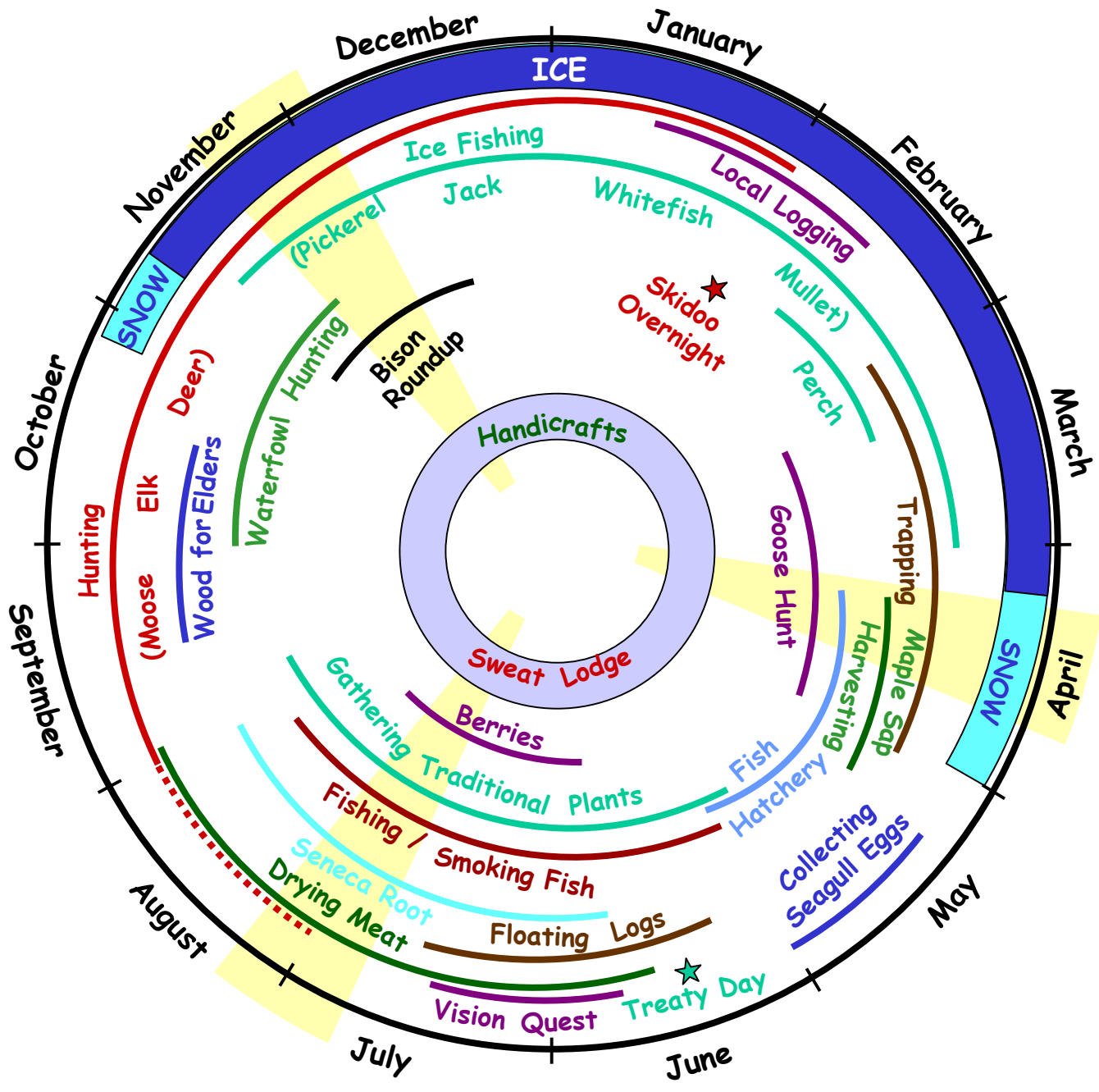
In the afternoon, Ron Missyabit, the executive producer of I.C.E. Productions, worked with the team to develop a detailed schedule for the first round of video production, scheduled for April 11 to 15. The team discussed the traditional activities that they would like to videotape (those that best expressed the community's values and vision), and identified the people who should be interviewed about each activity. They created a production schedule from this brainstorming session.

8. Next Steps

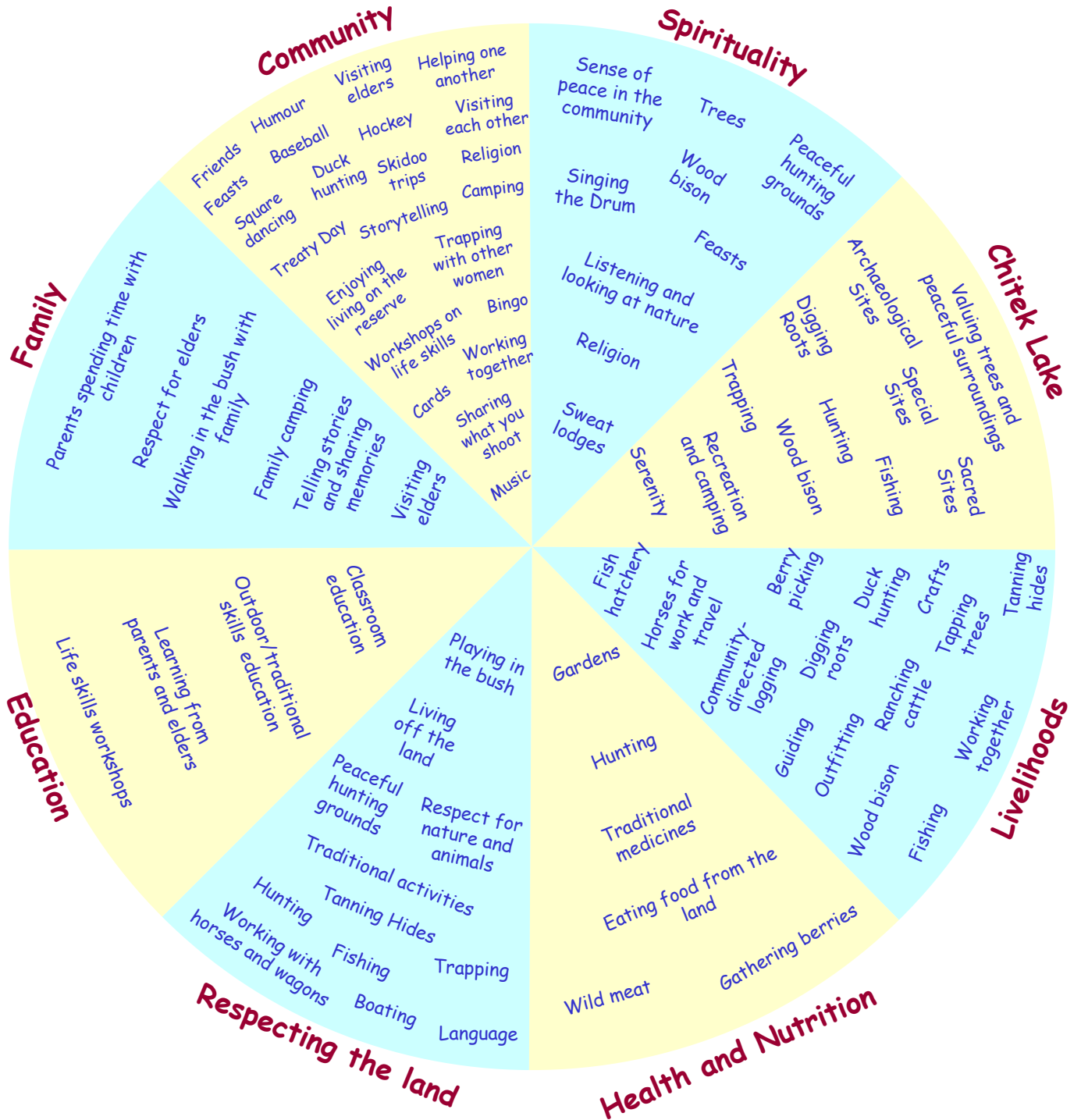
In the next quarter of activities, the project will prepare for the first focus group meeting between community members and representatives of industry and government in Winnipeg. For the focus group session to be a success, the following tasks must be accomplished:

- **Move from a community vision to an action plan.** The team must now enrich its preliminary vision by gathering experiences and suggestions from a wider range of people, and discussing its contents in more detail at community meetings and in small group sessions. They will develop a detailed community vision, which will be approved by Skownan's Chief and Council, then create an action plan to implement the vision. They can accomplish some parts of the vision by themselves, and will require creative partnerships with outside agencies to accomplish other parts.
- **Produce a spring season video.** I.C.E Productions will videotape community activities and interview local people from April 11 to 15. They will edit these sequences into a short production expressing the values and vision of Skownan with special reference to springtime activities. This video will be used to introduce the community and the project to the focus group at its first meeting.
- **Form the focus group.** Gord Jones, Dale Hutchison and Skownan's Chief, Bernard Catcheway, have agreed to identify potential focus group members and invite 12 to 15 people to form the focus group, including two or three representatives of the community. The focus group should also include senior representatives of the provincial government (assistant deputy minister level), as well as representatives of the forest, hydro and tourism industries. IISD will brief all focus group members about the project before its first meeting, which is planned for late summer 2000.

Annex A: Seasonal Calendar of Traditional Activities in Skownan First Nation



Annex B: Skownan Community Values



Annex C: Preliminary Community Vision Skownan First Nation

(30 March 2000)

Respecting the land

- Teach young people outdoor skills
- Elders teaching part of the school system
- Mother and daughters summer camp (not part of school system)
- Father and sons summer camp (not part of school system)

Education

- Conversational Ojibway
- Language club: children and adults speaking together
- Language days—do something in the bush and speak Ojibway
- High school (add written Ojibway)
- Gymnasium
- Focus on math and English—the basics
- New communication technology—Internet
- Marketing skills for new activities
- Hospitality skills
- Show children the sacred sites
- Teach craftmaking
- Teach canning foods
- Teach traditional medicines
- More Native teachers
- Teach community history
- Adult education and training
- Seaming nets
- Better quality classroom education
- Half in school and half outdoor training

Family

- Summer and winter camps
- Move to bush for a couple of weeks in summer

- Go to north end instead of Manipogo—re-discover Waterhen’s traditional land-use area
- Find a couple of families to set an example
- Regular story-telling by elders inside and outside school

Community/Recreation

- More organized activities
- More community get-togethers
- People hunt and share meat—every season, bring elders, adults and children together
- Include elders more in the community activities
- Plant trees in the community
- Arena for hockey and roller skating
- Elders advisory committee
- Fitness programs
- Baseball diamond, soccer field
- Home care for elders and old folks home
- Full-time policing and more street lights
- Better store
- Groomed skidoo trails
- Pow wows
- New band office

Chitek Lake

- Leave it untouched
- Lodge built with local wood for cultural tourism
- Guided hunts
- Limited wood bison harvest—traditional hunt
- Community approved logging outside protected area with local employment to improve community housing
- Logging with horses
- Re-forestation
- Logging to improve bison habitat
- No road
- Marketing skills required
- Hospitality skills required
- ‘Quiet’ retreat for artists
- Show young people sacred sites
- Sell crafts
- Chitek Lake gives people peace and freedom—to keep it that way

Livelihood

- Market ecological or Aboriginal products, for example Seneca root and wood bison meat
- Market the community's own fish to restaurants
- Scale up the wood bison herd
- Local logging for local markets—slab lumber, buy planer
- Sell locally grown vegetables, especially potatoes
- Farm elk and whitetail deer
- Market fingerlings and fry
- Tourism—outfitting for Lake Waterhen and Chitek Lake
- Cattle ranching
- Organize ice-fishing derbies
- Tourist horse trips

Health and Nutrition

- School garden
- Community garden (young mothers)
- How do get people to eat more green veggies?
- Encourage canning meat, veggies and berries
- Fitness programs
- Community hunt (one of the seasonal celebrations)
- Elder teach/encourage traditional medicine
- Fish and meat drying
- Treatment centre (traditional)

Spirituality

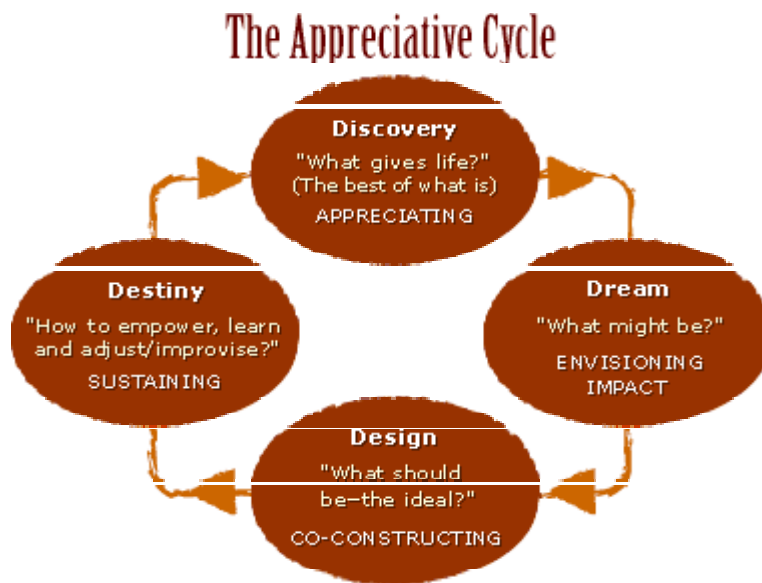
- Part of culture camps
- Peace from being on the land
- Feeling of freedom
- Tree planting
- Improved spirituality from achieving community goals
- Working together

Annex D: Primer on Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry is a strategy for purposeful change that identifies the best of “what is” to pursue dreams and possibilities of “what could be.” It is a co-operative search for the strengths, passions and life-giving forces that are found within every system—those factors that hold the potential for inspired, positive change. Appreciative inquiry involves collaborative inquiry, based on interviews and affirmative questioning, to collect and celebrate the good news stories of a community—those stories that enhance cultural identity, spirit and vision. Appreciative inquiry is a way of seeing that is selectively attentive to—and affirming of—the best and highest qualities in a system, a situation or another human being. It involves an appreciation for the mystery of being and a reverence for life.

Local people can use their understanding of “the best of what is” to construct a vision of what their community might be if they identify their strengths, then improve or intensify them. They achieve this goal by creating provocative propositions that challenge them to move ahead by understanding and building on their current achievements. Provocative propositions are realistic dreams: they empower a community to reach for something better, but base that empowerment on an understanding of what gives them life now

The appreciative approach has four steps.



The core task in the discovery phase is to appreciate the best of “what is” by focusing on peak moments of community excellence—when people experienced the community in its most alive and effective state. Participants then seek to understand the unique conditions that made the high points possible, such as leadership, relationships, technologies, values, capacity building or external relationships. They deliberately choose not to analyze deficits, but rather systematically seek to isolate and learn from even the smallest victories. In the discovery phase, people share stories of

exceptional accomplishments, discuss the core life-giving conditions of their community and deliberate upon the aspects of their history that they most value and want to enhance in the future. In the dream phase, people challenge the status quo by envisioning more valued and vital futures. This phase is both practical, in that it is grounded in the community's history, and generative, in that it seeks to expand the community's potential. Appreciative inquiry is different from other planning methods because its images of the future emerge from grounded examples of the positive past. They are compelling possibilities precisely because they are based on extraordinary moments from a community's history. Participants use positive stories in the same way an artist uses paints to create a portrait of the community's potential. They think great thoughts and create great possibilities for their community, then turn those thoughts into provocative propositions for themselves.

In the design phase participants create a strategy to carry out their provocative propositions. They do so by building a social architecture for their community that might, for example, re-define approaches to leadership, governance, participation or capacity building. As they compose strategies to achieve their provocative propositions, local people incorporate the qualities of community life that they want to protect, and the relationships that they want to achieve.

The final phase involves the delivery of new images of the future and is sustained by nurturing a collective sense of destiny. It is a time of continuous learning, adjustment and improvisation in the service of shared community ideals. The momentum and potential for innovation is high by this stage of the process. Because they share positive images of the future, everyone in a community re-aligns their work and co-creates the future.

Appreciative inquiry is a continual cycle. The destiny phase leads naturally to new discoveries of community strengths, beginning the process anew.