

A SHARED Future

Inaugural Team Meeting Report



Prepared by

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T'Sou-ke Nation

March 20-22, 2017



Photo Credit:
Mark Gaudi, T'Sou-ke
Nation



CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada



Before you put your solar panels up, turn off a light.

Chief Gordon Planes, T'Sou-ke Nation



The inaugural team meeting for “A SHARED Future” (Achieving Strength, Health, and Autonomy through Renewable Energy Development for the Future) took place across three days, hosted by T'Sou-ke Nation. It was the first meeting for this new program of research funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR), a team grant responding to CIHR's call for proposals to examine *Environments and Health: Intersectoral Prevention Research*. Of the nine grants awarded, A SHARED Future is the only program funded through the “*Indigenous Ways of Knowing/ Traditional Ecological or Environmental Knowledge/ Two-Eyed Seeing approaches*” track. T'Sou-ke Nation was named Canada's first Aboriginal Solar Communityⁱ, and as such, provided the perfect location to bring together like-minded people from across Canada to learn and discuss with members of T'Sou-ke Nation about their firsthand experiences in developing renewable energy resources.

The gathering took place during World Water Day, and A SHARED Future's Elder, Barbara Dumont-Hill, acknowledged the importance of moving towards renewable energy to protect our waters. The inaugural meeting brought together a nationwide team of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, university-based researchers, Indigenous government representatives, as well as representatives from environmental NGOs to meet each other, begin to develop relational accountability to each other and the goals of the program, learn about T'Sou-ke Nation's vision for the future, and its exceptional solar energy program (T'Sou-ke Nation, 2017^{i, ii}).

Day 1: March 20, 2017

Our time at T'Sou-ke Nation began with a welcome dinner and an opening address from the Chief of T'Sou-ke Nation, Gordon Planes, who spoke about his experience during the development of the community solar program. A key message from his address was to stress the conservation aspect of energy rather than focusing exclusively on the generation of renewable energy. In shifting the focus to conservation and energy efficiency, communities can significantly reduce the financial investments that are necessary to transition to renewable energy, which in turn provides more communities with the opportunity to become energy self-sufficient. Before closing his address, Chief Gordon stressed to all in the audience that “before you put in a solar panel, turn off a light.”



Day 2: March 21, 2017

Opening ceremonies were conducted by Elders Shirley Alphonse (T'Sou-ke Nation), and Barbara Dumont-Hill (Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg). Elder Shirley opened our gathering with a prayer and smudging as part of a spiritual healing ceremony, and Elder Barbara followed with a prayer and welcome address to allow us to open our minds and our hearts, and to conduct ourselves in a good way.

Heather Castleden, the Director for A SHARED Future provided a thorough introduction to the research program and her hopes for our 5-year commitment to each other. This presentation included a slide deck that outlined our research proposal (which is available from either Heather Castleden or Robert Stefanelli, at the reader's request), as well preliminary ideas for each of the affiliated projects within the A SHARED Future program of research. Team members Cheryl Bartlett and Diana Lewis also provided some introductory remarks about Two-Eyed Seeing, and governance through research agreements respectively, after which, a circle of introductions was held. During that circle everyone present introduced themselves, and identified the role(s) they sought to play within our A SHARED Future program.

After an amazing sockeye salmon lunch catered by the chefs at T'Sou-ke Nation, we set off on a solar tour led by T'Sou-ke Nation's Andrew Moore. It was here that Andrew outlined the community visioning exercises used to design the solar energy project, provided details about the panel installation (which included the hiring and training of 10 T'Sou-ke Nation members in solar panel installation), as well explaining the community goal of *Net-Zero* for the administration building. Surprisingly, the panels require very little cleaning and maintenance to remain operational. Also of note during the tour was the discussion around building the free-standing solar panels in a way so as to cause as little disruption as possible to the

T'Sou-ke Nation

T'Sou-ke Nation, located on the Southern coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia, is home to nearly 300 residents.

T'Sou-ke Nation began its journey to become a leader as a solar community in 2008 (T'Sou-ke Nation, 2017ⁱⁱ) through community visioning exercises that allowed all community members to contribute their ideas for autonomous energy development.

Since then, T'Sou-ke was named the first Aboriginal Solar City in Canada, and at present, the scale of their solar development project is larger than any other development in the province. The administration building and community kitchen at T'Sou-ke Nation now run entirely on solar energy, and the goal of *Net Zero* energy consumption for these buildings has been achieved.

In addition to the benefits associated with the transition to sustainable energy development, T'Sou-ke also contributes to global markets through the production and shipping of locally grown organic wasabi.

Finally, as a spinoff from the solar development, T'Sou-ke Nation has a unique opportunity for eco-tourism through guided tours of both the solar facilities and the community greenhouses (T'Sou-ke Nation, 2017ⁱ). This small Nation in British Columbia is host to nearly 2000 ecotourists per year (Troian, 2017ⁱⁱⁱ).

earth and the archaeological relics present in the area.

Following the tour, we completed our introductions to each other (yes, it took all day, in a good way!), took in the wise closing words for the day from Elder Shirley, and wrapped up our first day over dinner with community members from T'Sou-ke Nation.



Day 3: March 21, 2017

Elder Shirley and Elder Barbara began our morning with welcoming prayers. Elder Barbara shared with us a Goose Teaching. While we cannot come close to conveying the poignancy of her Teaching, we share this: no single one goose leads for the duration of their migration. Instead, each goose plays a vital role and supports the others – just as this research team has many members with important roles, we support each other to accomplish our goals for A SHARED Future.

The remainder of the day was directed towards addressing program- and project-specific goals for the team. We created space for small group discussions amongst team members, who naturally aligned with projects and topics. Not all projects were discussed, as we were limited in terms of critical mass. Projects discussed included:

1. Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI)
2. T'Sou-ke Nation

3. Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Secretariat

4. International Institute of Sustainable Development – Experimental Lakes Area

5. Other conversations unfolded around Sex-and Gender-Based Analyses and integrative and equitable Knowledge Translation.

Each group reported back to our Circle at the end of the day. These reports are briefly summarized here:

Those associated with CEPI chose to discuss the strengths of reflexivity in the work and the idea of constant evaluation to ensure that the research continues to address priorities of both the community and the research-team. Final research questions will be solidified at a team meeting later this year.



Those who joined the T'Sou-ke Nation project conversation discussed opportunities to continue to improve the project in meaningful ways through internal evaluations and community discussions. This process will allow for researchers and community partners alike to remain transparent in the research process, as well as to ensure that community and research goals that were defined at the outset of the project are being achieved.



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Those who participated in the Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Secretariat group discussion touched on reconciliation, both with the Crown, and Canadians writ large. Discussions also included community wind energy development, the importance of developing baseline data to note changes in community health and economic indicators over a fixed temporal scale, and that political stability is a mechanism to strengthen claims to resources and proposed developments.



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The group discussing potential projects for the International Institute of Sustainable Development – Experimental Lakes Area came up with ideas relating to Knowledge Translation, and those discussions are detailed further in the Knowledge Translation section of this report

Champions for Sex/Gender Considerations

The team held a discussion regarding sex and gender considerations for the program, which was identified by CIHR as a key opportunity to adequately translate these considerations into methodologically sound studies. We held a robust conversation about how our team could constructively decolonizing the existing CIHR SGBA principles and policies using a Two-Eyed Seeing approach that would see 'balance' come to the fore. There was consensus around recognizing the need within the team to better understand the ways in which we can incorporate sex and gender considerations into our overall program and each project supported through the program. This resulted in proposing a Webinar or other teaching mechanism that would be co-led by team members Amy Nahwegahbow (Native Women's Association of Canada), Jeffrey Masuda (Canada Research Chair - Environmental Health Equity), and Ken Paul (Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs) (and other who may be interested).

Champions for Knowledge Translation (KT)

We had an open discussion on reconciliation and the translation of knowledge as being integral to project success. The merging of these two concepts provides a potentially fertile ground for advancing a decolonizing approach to Knowledge Translation. Key KT partners who were at the meeting identified their strengths in generating awareness about A SHARED Future and the associated projects (e.g., David Suzuki Foundation, Pembina Institute, Native Women's Association of Canada, The POLIS Project, International Institute of Sustainable Development).

Project-specific discussions included identifying an opportunity with respect to the IISD-Experimental Lakes Area project to facilitate the implementation of Indigenous and Western Knowledge systems, and that sharing such a story to broader audiences could be a key contribution that A SHARED Future makes to this realm of knowledge. Highlighting the continued permeation of Two-Eyed Seeing into Canadian scientific policy (including CIHR) is a

tremendous indicator of success, and as such, directing some of our research towards the policy realm to better understand Two-Eyed Seeing in Canadian policy, in addition to the renewable energy infrastructure can lead to quite novel findings.



Concluding Thoughts

Team members also shared their thoughts about project outputs, with general agreement that consistent messaging from the Team Lead is needed. Doing so allows the project team to share our message with a wide audience, but this also requires continual updating from team members. As noted in this round of our conversation, the research program story is constantly evolving, so must be innovative in how we continue to share what we have learned. New media, such as project-specific websites, can be crucial to knowledge translation.

After two stimulating days of relationship-building, project-focused discussion, and Elders' teachings, the team shared a final dinner together before returning to their respective homes.

Key outputs from our meeting include this report and our videographer, Jon Aarssen, filmed most of our meeting activities, as well as interviews conducted by coordinator Rob Stefanelli with each of the meeting participants, which will be compiled into a short and long team video.

Next Steps

1. Interational Advisory Committee
2. Project-specific Team Meetings
3. Integrative Knowledge Translation
4. Trainee Recruitment

Acknowledgements

A SHARED Future would like to extend our sincerest thanks to: Elder Shirley Alphonse for conducting prayers and ceremonies; Chief Gordon Planes and members of the T'Sou-ke First Nation for welcoming us to your territory; Andrew Moore for co-organizing and coordinating our gathering; Trevor McQueen for providing shuttle service to-and-from the airport; and to the chefs that provided food and beverage service: Daphne Underwood, John Ryce, Rob Davies, and Elizabeth Planes.

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The authors apologize for any errors or omissions in the preparation of this short report.



Coming up next for the members of A SHARED Future will be project-specific meetings throughout 2017.

The present schedule includes:

April 25: Project Meeting with T'Sou-ke Nation partners (BC).

June 2-3: Project Meeting with NunatuKavut partners (NL).

June 7-8: Project Meeting with MMS partners (NB).

June 10-11: Project Meeting with CEPI partners (NS).

Aug 8-9: Project Meeting with IISD-ELA partners (MB).

Other meetings to be determined as needed.

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OF IT.



Team members are encouraged to post these and other materials on their respective websites, and to keep the conversation going on social media using the hashtag #A_SHARED_Future

Meeting Attendees:

Jonathan Aarssen, Queen's University
Shirley Alphonse, T'Sou-ke Nation
Priscilla Apronti, Queen's University
Kelly Bannister, The POLIS Project on Ecological Governance;
University of Victoria
Cheryl Bartlett, Cape Breton University
Jamie Baxter, Western University
Oliver Brandes, The POLIS Project on Ecological Governance
Heather Castleden, Queen's University
Barbara Dumont-Hill, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg
Troy Jerome, Sen'ti Environmental & Aboriginal Services
Derek Kornelsen, University of Manitoba
Diana Lewis, Dalhousie University
Dave Lovekin, Pembina Institute
Jeffrey Masuda, Queen's University
Matt McCandless, International Institute for Sustainable
Development – Experimental Lakes Area
Michael Miltenberger, North Raven Consulting
Faisal Moola, David Suzuki Foundation
Andrew Moore, T'Sou-ke Nation
Michele-Lee Moore, University of Victoria
Amy Nahwegahbow, Native Women's Association of Canada
Ken Paul, Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs
Merrel-Ann Phare, Centre for Indigenous Environmental
Resources
Gordon Planes, T'Sou-ke Nation
Emily Root, Cape Breton University
Robert Stefanelli, Queen's University
Hannah Tait Neufeld, University of Guelph
Sonia Wesche, University of Ottawa

Meeting Regrets:

Amy Bombay, Dalhousie University
Simon Brascoupe, Carleton University
Dan Christmas, Membertou
Ashlee Cunsolo, Labrador Institute
Sarah De Leeuw, University of Northern British Columbia
Nichole Fraser-MacDonald, Shared Value Solutions
Guy Freedman, First Peoples Group
Catherine Graham, National Association of Friendship
Centres
Margo Greenwood, National Collaborating Centre for
Aboriginal Health
Sherilee Harper, University of Guelph
Chris Henderson, Lumos Energy
Amy Hudson, NunatuKavut
Irving LeBlanc, Assembly of First Nations
Judith Lipp, TREC Renewable Energy Co-op
Shaun Loney, Aki Energy
Gregory Lowan-Trudeau, University of Calgary
Lydia Ma, National Collaborating Centre for Environmental
Health
Warren Mabee, Queen's University
Debbie Martin, Dalhousie University
Theresa McClenaghan, Canadian Environmental Law
Association
Rod McCormick, Thompson Rivers University
Joseph Moses, Pic River First Nation
Chantelle Richmond, Western University
George Russell, NunatuKavut
Rachel Speiran, Shared Value Solutions
Wanda Wuttunee, University of Manitoba

ⁱ Retrieved from <http://www.tsoukenation.com/sun-keeps-shining-on-tsou-ke/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/tsou-ke-nation-green-energy-leaders-1.4067833>

ⁱⁱ Retrieved from <http://www.tsoukenation.com/first-nation-takes-lead-on-solar-power/>