

First Nations Integrated Watershed Planning

1. Describing Your Approach: Know Yourself



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Quote



“There are people that still understand the very significant role of water in our lives. So we need to bring back some of those teachings that have been around for 60,000 years.”

~ Chief Simon Lucas
(2000, quoted in Sanderson
2008, p.127)



INTRODUCTION

Whether your First Nation is getting involved with an existing watershed planning process or beginning your own, whether it is a regional or a local initiative, take the time at the community level to develop or understand your First Nation's approach to watershed planning. This means exploring your ways of relating to each other and to the land and waters that are fundamental to your First Nation. To do this and to prepare for the other stages of watershed planning, you will need to organise at the community level to develop a local watershed planning group and determine the best ways to engage the whole community in discussions. This will help to build a solid foundation of values, governance and community cohesion in your First Nation and assist in bringing your First Nation's perspectives into all stages of watershed planning.

Developing support for the watershed planning process in your First Nation

The planning process outlined in this first guidebook: *Describing Your Approach* encourages and, in fact, relies on involving a wide range of people from your First Nation. Exploring the many ways that water is important to the members of your First Nation and articulating a common vision for the watershed that your First Nation is part of will build support for your work within your community. A common vision is one that reflects the diversity of views of your membership, and is a vision that all members can 'see' themselves in and therefore support. Describing the foundation of your First Nation's relationship to water and the watershed will help your First Nation understand and support the members and staff involved in the watershed planning process.

Defining your First Nation's message for your representative(s)

Whether watershed planning is happening at the local level or at the regional level, there will most likely be one or more First Nation members who will be involved in the day-to-day planning process (detailed on page 4). A locally-led initiative will be a smaller group than the regional group, but will still only involve a handful of your First Nation's members and staff – who will need to get direction from your First Nation as a whole. For regional planning initiatives, there might be space for one person from your First Nation to sit on regional committees and represent your First Nation.



Some people may feel uncomfortable participating as individuals in regional planning initiatives when they are expected to represent and bring the message of their First Nation to this group. This is why it is important for your First Nation to determine collectively what approaches or ideas are most important to them in the context of watershed planning. Gathering these perspectives and knowledge from your membership, and building them into the watershed planning process will make it easier for representatives, either sitting on a local board or as representatives in a regional planning process, to make decisions on behalf of your First Nation with clarity and confidence.

Developing your First Nation's message to bring to outside groups

The western world has much to learn from Indigenous worldviews, stewardship ethics, and traditional values related to water. Increasingly, more people are wanting to listen. Articulating these worldviews, ethics and values for yourself and with your First Nation is preparation for the planning process, and will enable your community to be better able to influence the watershed plan. The more you can define your First Nation's values, vision and approach to water, planning and development, the more able you will be able to help others understand them and explain why they are essential to the regional plan for the watershed.

This guidebook will discuss the following topics and suggest ways you can explore them in your First Nation:

- Indigenous Knowledge – a First Nation definition of its knowledge system
- Governance – understanding and strengthening your governance for watershed planning
- Cultural protocols and traditional laws – rules that guide your relationship to the watershed
- Rights – your inherent, Aboriginal and treaty rights to water
- Language – words that relate to water and watershed planning
- Vision and values – in general and related specifically to water.



GATHERING PEOPLE FROM YOUR NATION



How to get people's attention and frame your message

In order to start gathering people together to work on the watershed planning process you will need to get community members' attention so they see this as something meaningful to support and put their energy into. The way to do this is to connect the watershed planning process to water-related topics that are most pressing in the community.

Often watershed planning processes are initiated by some sort of catalyst – an issue that people are concerned about and/or interested in. Identifying an issue(s) of importance to frame your planning initiative is key to capturing the attention of your First Nation's leadership and members. Initiating watershed planning because people are concerned about the destruction of fish habitat or to protect safe drinking water, for example, would be a much stronger motivator for your First Nation than simply saying it is the best way to ensure the watershed is healthy. As well, a catalyst or focus can often help sustain – because planning can sometimes take years to complete – the watershed planning process in your First Nation.

To determine what possible catalyst(s) for watershed planning in your First Nation would be, ask yourself (and key members of your First Nation):

- Is water quality an issue?
- Is water quantity an issue?
- Is a nearby development activity impacting, or threatening to impact, the water?
- Are there problems with the fish (e.g. potential impacts from pollution) or fishing (e.g. caused by habitat loss, temperature changes)?
- Is another jurisdiction initiating or already engaged in watershed planning and you need to be involved?

If the catalyst(s) are not clear, *Guidebook Three* outlines an activity to identify priorities and concerns of your First Nation's members about the water or watershed.



Starting a Watershed Planning Group in Your First Nation

The need for a planning group in your First Nation

To bring your First Nation's views on water to the forefront of watershed planning in your area or to lead this process yourselves, you need interest and commitment from your First Nation. This will include the membership as a whole, but will specifically require some key people that will be involved in the day-to-day activities of the planning process.

While it is important to get input from the members of your First Nation at certain times (engaging the members of your First Nation is outlined on page 6), it is only possible to make decisions and move forward if a small group of dedicated people are involved in the daily planning process. It is a good idea to set up a working group of people who can meet on a regular basis to discuss watershed issues, and who will continue to meet throughout the planning process. This group should be made up of multiple 'champions' from your First Nation so that the energy and workload required for watershed planning can be shared.

Identifying people for your First Nation's watershed planning group

To begin thinking about who could be a member of the watershed planning group ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is passionate about water or planning?
- Who on staff that has the time and interest to participate?
- Are there any informal leaders in your First Nation who should be involved?
- When you need to bring the membership together to talk about priorities for action, who can generate the necessary momentum, excitement and commitment?
- Who has the education, historical and Indigenous Knowledge, connections and time to participate?

Develop a list of possible names.

Tip



What is a champion?



A champion is the person who brings enthusiasm and dedication to a specific cause, who provides sustained energy to the initiative and keeps the momentum going. They may also be the spokesperson for the cause, or may be 'behind the scenes' making sure that the work gets done. The champion is the person who inspires others and brings people together to get things done.

If this person is not you, find out who it could be in your First Nation. This person will keep the watershed planning process moving along, and will motivate others to keep going when the process gets difficult.

When you are thinking about who should participate in the planning group, try to keep a balance in numbers between men and women, young and old, and family groups if possible, in order to ensure that all perspectives and voices will be heard in the planning process. You also may want to consider the following roles to help you determine possible members for your local planning group. Keep in mind that one person could fill multiple roles:

- **Political representative/decision-maker** (councillor, chief): This member provides political approval/support for the project, and allows for the relevant decision-making processes to take place to support the watershed planning process. If possible, have a council member add responsibility for water matters to their portfolio, if this doesn't exist already.
- **Technical support** (people with environmental training and an understanding of Indigenous Knowledge): A person is needed to assist with gathering and conveying technical and Indigenous knowledge information to the rest of your First Nation. Someone with planning expertise (e.g. a local water planner, community planner, or land-use planner) may also be included. If you do not already have the necessary technical support in your First Nation, *Guidebook Three* discusses ways to increase this capacity.
- **General coordinator:** This person will have responsibility for the logistics of organising and meeting as a group (ideally this is a person skilled in administrative matters who is already on staff of the First Nation and thus is familiar with administrative protocols).
- **Community engagement coordinator:** This member will initiate (develop activity ideas) and coordinate (advertise, arrange logistics) engagement activities for your First Nation.
- **Cultural expert:** The process will benefit from a respected individual that can provide advice on proper ways to share and apply Indigenous Knowledge and communicate with other cultural experts in your First Nation.
- **Active land/water user:** An individual (or individuals) who is respected for their knowledge by the members of your First Nation. This person will be able to speak to environmental changes and provide insight into the land and water and how they are used by your First Nation.

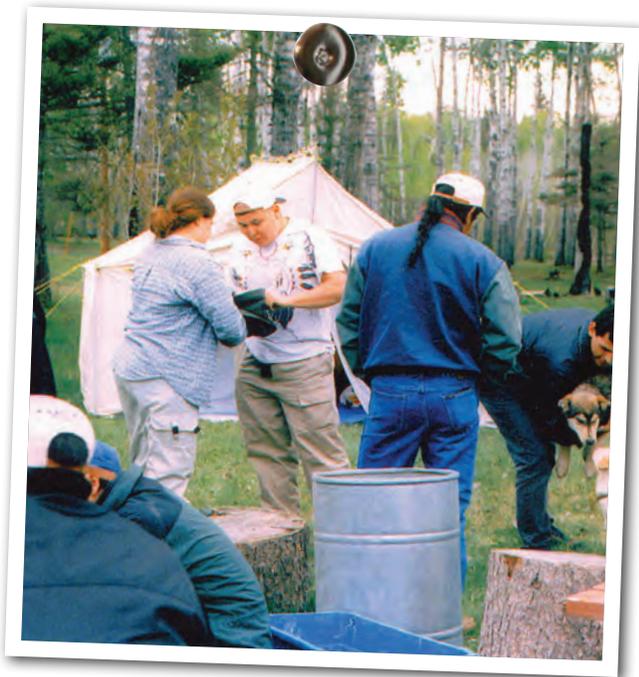
You will probably need to narrow your initial list to a manageable number of people for the planning group. A group of five to ten people is a good size. Once you have this list you can start approaching people to determine their interest. You will likely need approval and support from the leadership to get this process moving so talking with your political representative is a good place to start.

Community Engagement

What is community engagement?

Community engagement, in the context of this guidebook, means talking with your First Nation members to find out what they think about water, the watershed, and how to protect or manage it. It means involving your nation in an ongoing way in the watershed planning process that your First Nation is undertaking. The purpose of community engagement can be to get ideas, advice, direction, or approvals. Community engagement can also be an opportunity to share information and increase awareness about watershed planning or aspects of the watershed itself.

Community engagement also means reaching the diversity of your membership, for example, Elders, youth, elected leaders, women's groups, resource/land users, etc. Decisions that are made about water will affect everyone in your First Nation, so everyone should have a role in those decisions in some way. As well, different people will have different knowledge about the water – for example, fishers may know about fish and their relationships with water, and Elders may know spiritual and cultural teachings about water.



Following the requirements of your First Nation's internal decision-making process is important for any issues involving planning, including those around watershed management. However, good planning also requires full and meaningful participation from all the members in order to be successful. Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation explains one important way of looking at what meaningful participation entails.

Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

Level of Participation	Characteristics of Participation	How Will Your First Nation's members Participate in the Internal Watershed Planning Process?
Community Power (Partnership, Delegated Power, Community Control)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community input determines the direction and form of policies or programs Partnerships where the community makes decisions with public officials Community control and self-determination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can members direct the types of policies that will be determined? Will Chief and Council work with watershed planning committees to make decisions? Do members feel confident and strong in making decisions to benefit the First Nation?
Tokenism (Informing, Consultation, Placation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committees or boards without clear roles or mandates Information is shared, but there is little opportunity to influence decisions being made Maintains the status quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will committees established through the watershed planning process have clear mandates and roles? Will these committees have the opportunity to provide input and influence decision-making?
Non-Participation (Manipulation, Therapy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little useful information is shared Little or no opportunity for feedback or decision making Gives the illusion of participation Participants may be blamed for their concerns, rather than looking to underlying causes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will information about the watershed planning process be shared with members? Do members have the opportunity to comment on watershed planning decisions before they're made? Are members made to feel responsible for the challenges facing the watershed, or are the structural issues facing the watershed discussed?

Adapted from S. Arnstein (1969).

The above table shows the different levels of participation. At the bottom, participation is non-existent - shared information is incomplete and there is no opportunity for people to provide feedback or have their concerns heard. In the middle, participation means people offer comments on an existing process or idea, but without the opportunity to influence decisions. At the top of the ladder, people are 'full' participants, either in partnership or in complete control. People directly influence decisions about policies and programs, and what they should look like (Arnstein 1969).

The kind of process that you use to gather feedback from your First Nation's members - how you engage them, when, and how much decision making power they have - will depend on what level of participation you want them to have. Will they just be hearing updates about the process? Will they have an opportunity to comment on decisions that are made? Or will they be able to contribute ideas and influence the planning process more directly? Increased participation leads to a better outcome, for reasons we discuss later, so aim to have as much participation from the membership as possible.



Watershed Planning as an Awareness-Building Opportunity

Community engagement not only provides the means to gather input and feedback, it also provides an opportunity to build awareness among the First Nation membership. This could be awareness of watershed issues or traditional teachings from your First Nation. Ensuring that awareness building is a part of your community engagement activities will actually make it easier to gather input and feedback from your First Nation. If the members are more aware of water, watershed planning, issues affecting the watershed, and cultural teachings around water, they will see how important watershed planning is and be more willing to contribute their time.

Quote



“First Nations need to educate themselves about taking care of water. The groups [attending the workshop] cited community education and awareness on protecting water using traditional teachings as a priority. They expressed directly the need to educate children, as well as water treatment plant staff, so both will understand how truly important water is, thus ensuring water’s health for future generations.”

~ Chiefs of Ontario (2006, p.11)

Increasing awareness of watershed issues and terms

Your First Nation will likely benefit from learning about water-related topics, such as environmental aspects of the watershed from a western perspective, a backgrounder on the watershed planning process, and how water is currently being managed. By informing your First Nation’s members about these topics and familiarising them with the language relating to watershed management and planning, people will feel more confident asking questions and being involved in the watershed planning process. Providing this kind of information should be a component of some of the participatory events you plan. For example, at an open house, you can set up information booths about water-related topics for people to come and ask questions.

Increasing awareness of Indigenous Knowledge and teachings

The types of knowledge discussed in this guidebook – language, stories, and teachings – are often held by Elders or knowledge holders. The engagement process can serve to increase awareness in the community as a whole about the Indigenous Knowledge and teachings of the Elders. In your First Nation, this could include exploring the meanings of water, how water is taken care of, how these teachings should be shared with the membership as well as outsiders, people’s responsibilities toward water, etc. Gathering the members of your First Nation to discuss these issues can serve to inform those who may not have known about these ideas and concepts and unite the First Nation in a common approach to the watershed planning process.

Methods of Community Engagement

There are many different ways to engage your members. Workshops, meetings, one-on-one conversations, surveys, interviews – these are all ways to talk to people and listen to what they think. Depending on what works best in your First Nation, you can gather everyone together at once, or meet with smaller groups. For example, you could gather people in family groups or in groups of similar ages, gender or lifestyle (e.g. Elders, youth, women, resource users). Community participation will be important throughout the watershed planning process and into implementation of the plan so it is best to determine and use the methods that work best in your First Nation now. Each of the guidebooks include suggestions for activities and stories from other First Nations about how to engage people in the various steps along the way.



The method of gathering information that works best for the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources is a workshop format. This is because:

- Of the understanding that Indigenous Knowledge is collective
- It allows people to spark each other's memories and come to an agreement on an issue
- It is a social gathering and time for people to share knowledge.

More Details



Ways to make community involvement easier

As you think about how to involve your First Nation's members in the watershed planning process, remember that other priorities – whether they are work- or family-related – will always exist so you need to find ways to make planning for the watershed accessible for the membership. This could mean setting up an information booth at the Band Office, where a lot of people may be passing through or taking a coffee break. This could mean providing childcare to allow people with young children to attend. Maybe you can add your event or activity to an existing event, such as a Band meeting or a bingo night. You cannot force people to participate but you can create situations that make it as easy as possible for people to get involved. Remember to be flexible, positive and realistic.



Considerations when planning a community session

Planning the logistics

- Pick a convenient time for the meeting. Think about the following: when are the majority of people available, what else is going on in your First Nation, is now a good time or should you wait a few days or a week?
- See if you can 'piggy-back' on an existing event that is occurring.
- Pick a convenient and accessible location (e.g. Band office, community hall, arena) for people.
- Have more than one session so that people with different schedules can attend.
- Provide refreshments or a meal during the session(s).
- Provide childcare or have a kids' corner with crayons and activities since people will often bring their children with them.
- Spread the word early enough so people can plan to attend and then remind them again a few days before the session.
- Use multiple methods of communication to let people know about the meeting (e.g. newsletters, radio, TV, websites, social media, posters, bulletin boards and word of mouth).
- If key people cannot or do not attend, go to them or invite them to meet you separately for coffee/tea.

Planning and conducting the meeting

- Think about the purpose of the session (gather input on a specific issue? raise awareness about a certain topic?) and have your activities relate to this purpose.
- Think about and plan for different ways to talk about your topic to different audiences (e.g. Elders, youth, fishers, leadership). If possible, have sessions that are group-specific as well as mixed and multigenerational so people feel comfortable sharing their ideas, and so that the groups hear from and listen to each other.
- Make sure you know the materials required for each activity and who is responsible for leading the activity.
- Consider setting up information stations around the room and spreading out the resource people, so people have many places to provide input.
- If you need to sit and talk as a group arrange the chairs in a circle or horseshoe so everyone is included and knows that their views are equally respected.
- If you do have childcare, organise some activities for the children around the topic area, for example by having them draw pictures about water or the watershed. Make sure you have activities that are appropriate for different ages.
- Have a short questionnaire that is connected to the input you are trying to get from the members and link it to a door prize so that people who complete the survey are entered into the draw. Advertise the door prize as part of your communication strategy.



Unama'ki Water Celebration 2009, Eskasoni, NS

This story about the Unama'ki Water Celebration describes how the Eskasoni First Nation water planning committee held an event to get their members out and thinking about water. It is intended to give you ideas on what you can include in a water related event.

The Eskasoni Source Water Protection Committee wanted to hold a small water celebration to initiate their First Nation's water planning and get community members thinking about the importance of water and what it means to them. Several booths were set up for the event (Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, Pitupaq, Traditional roles of Mi'kmaq woman in water use, Atlantic Coastal Action Program, Nova Scotia government, Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources) and participants received a raffle ticket for every booth they visited, which was then entered into a draw for door prizes.

During the celebration, the committee provided refreshments and performances, which were led by a local drumming group and a jingle dancer. Children drew pictures of what water means to them and Elders told stories and spoke about the importance of water and what it means to their community and Nation. This was just the beginning of their community engagement process and they also held a much larger water festival.



Compensation for engagement

Another consideration when you are involving your membership in the watershed planning process is whether members will be compensated for their time – especially those that are committing significantly to the watershed planning work (e.g. participation in the planning group, Elders committee). Hopefully the key members of your planning group will be Band staff and will be able to dedicate some of their work hours to this process.

Some First Nations have a system of compensating members for their contributions to initiatives. In some cases every member is compensated for the time they contribute to meetings and events, while in others maybe it is just Elders/knowledge holders and/or resource users who are compensated for the specific expertise they provide. You can compensate people in simple ways with a meal and/or a small thank you gift(s) and/or they can be compensated monetarily through an honorarium. Others may agree to volunteer their time.

The issue of compensation should be discussed within your planning group. Here are some considerations to discuss in your planning group. The benefits of providing compensation such as honoraria include:

- Providing honoraria is a way of compensating people fairly for their time, especially those who may not have substantial sources of income.
- Like any expert who is compensated for their contributions, honoraria provided to Elders and/or resources users reflect that these individuals have expertise that has taken years to acquire and it is valuable.
- You may have more consistent turnout to your activities.

The drawbacks of providing compensation such as honoraria include:

- Honoraria can sometimes be the main motivator for some peoples participation instead of the knowledge they have to share and the belief in the initiative – if the money runs out, they no longer want to participate.
- If your watershed planning work has limited funding, having an expectation of honoraria may limit how much you can involve people in the work.

You may come to the decision that members' participation in some activities or events should be compensated while participation in others will not. Perhaps there is an understanding that individuals will donate their time if the funding is not available but will be compensated if your watershed group is able to secure funding. Elders may feel this is important work for the watershed and for their First Nation and will give their time accordingly. It is best to discuss this (i.e. what is the current way your First Nation approaches this topic) at the beginning of the planning process.



Activity



Engaging Different Groups

While everyone in the community has a role to play in providing input into the watershed planning process, there are a few groups that require special consideration. Here are some considerations to make engagement activities accessible and interesting for different groups:

Engaging Youth

Youth are an important group to involve in your First Nation's watershed planning, since they are the ones who will be taking care of the watershed in the future. Youth often have creative ways of thinking about or addressing challenges, and listening to youth and taking their concerns seriously is a way to get them involved and engaged in their community. Supporting youth to speak up and act on their ideas is also a way to build their skills, strengthen inter-generational ties, and build the skills of possible future leaders. You can work with the high school or with youth groups or programs to involve youth in the watershed planning process to find out what youth have to say about their vision and values for the watershed, how they see the watershed in the future, and what their priorities are for the watershed.

Involving Youth

As you think about how to reach out to youth in your First Nation and get them thinking about water, here are some ideas to consider:

- Hold workshops for the youth about water and water issues, and ask what they think the priorities for the watershed should be.
- Work with the science teacher to set up a program to test the water – this can be part of the water testing work you do for your watershed plan.
- Set up a digital storytelling project or photo project by providing youth with video and still cameras. Ask them to take pictures and use voices and music to illustrate what water and the watershed mean to them and their First Nation. Share these projects with the whole community at a film screening, on posters or in a newsletter, or on the First Nation's website.

Story



Involving Youth in Fisher River Cree Nation

The Council in Fisher River Cree Nation asked a number of youth to help them gather community perspectives about water and the watershed. The youth took a short questionnaire to the pow wow and asked members and visitors about the challenges facing the watershed. Information gathered from the questionnaires will feed into Fisher River Cree Nation's watershed planning process. This activity got the youth involved in watershed planning, and got other community members thinking about water and the watershed too!

Junior Chief and Council

Developing a Junior or Youth Chief and Council is one way to involve youth in planning and decision making in your First Nation. It can be a good way to build leadership skills among the youth and make them better able to participate in community initiatives such as watershed planning. The Junior Chief and Council (e.g. elected through the high school) can represent the youth of the First Nation, and work with the Chief and Council to develop projects and programs on issues that are important to the youth. With support from community members and the Band administration (e.g. through grant applications and in kind support), a Junior Chief and Council is a great opportunity for the youth that has potential to benefit the whole community.

Different First Nations will have different understandings of the term 'Elder'. In some First Nations, the term 'Elder' may be given to anyone who has reached a certain age. All of the individuals in this age group will be respected by the community, although some individuals in this group may also be recognised for their knowledge and cultural expertise. In other First Nations, the term 'Elder' may be given to someone with particular knowledge or wisdom and other qualities defined by the First Nation, regardless of their age. Because of different interpretations of the word Elder, CIER uses the term 'knowledge-holder' when describing individuals with cultural expertise and wisdom.



Tip

Engaging Elders

Elders are integral members of your First Nation to involve in watershed planning, since they are often the knowledge holders who possess the knowledge needed to protect and appropriately use water sources. It is sometimes only the Elders that still remember some of the traditional teachings around water and other aspects of the watershed. They also may have special needs that should be considered when involving them.

- Give Elders the time they need to process information and share their ideas.
- Adapt to their energy levels: late night events or even after lunch may not be a good idea. Ask someone who works with the Elders on a regular basis for advice on their availability to meet.
- Accommodate any mobility challenges: make sure meeting locations are wheelchair accessible and if necessary, arrange for a ride for Elders.
- Provide translation services if Elders prefer to speak in their traditional language.

You may be able to connect with Elders through an established Elders group, council or committee, if such a group exists in your First Nation. If this group doesn't already exist, this may be a chance to start one. An Elders' council or committee is a way to organise the Elders to provide ongoing support and advice on your watershed planning activities. The Elders' council can also provide advice and support to the Chief and Council and may represent a more traditional approach to decision making for some First Nations.



Engaging Resource Users

Active resource (i.e. land and/or water) users have a special role in the watershed planning process. These individuals currently use the lands and waters in your watershed for traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, and plant collecting. You will need to know how best to involve these individuals since their environmental knowledge will be critical for the *Knowing Your Watershed* stage (*Guidebook Three*). These individuals can provide insight on current environmental observations, changes in plants, animals and water, or ways of knowing the land and waters are healthy. These are a few considerations when planning to meet with resource users:

- Resource users may prefer to meet and have discussions outside. If possible, consider hosting some outdoor gatherings, out on the land.
- Be mindful of times when people are typically out on the land (e.g. berry picking times, hunting times, medicine picking times). Sometimes break-up and freeze-up times are ideal times to meet with resource users.
- Although maps may serve as a useful resource for engagement with any groups about the watershed, they will be especially useful for resource users, since they will be able to identify detailed environmental information about specific areas of importance or priority.

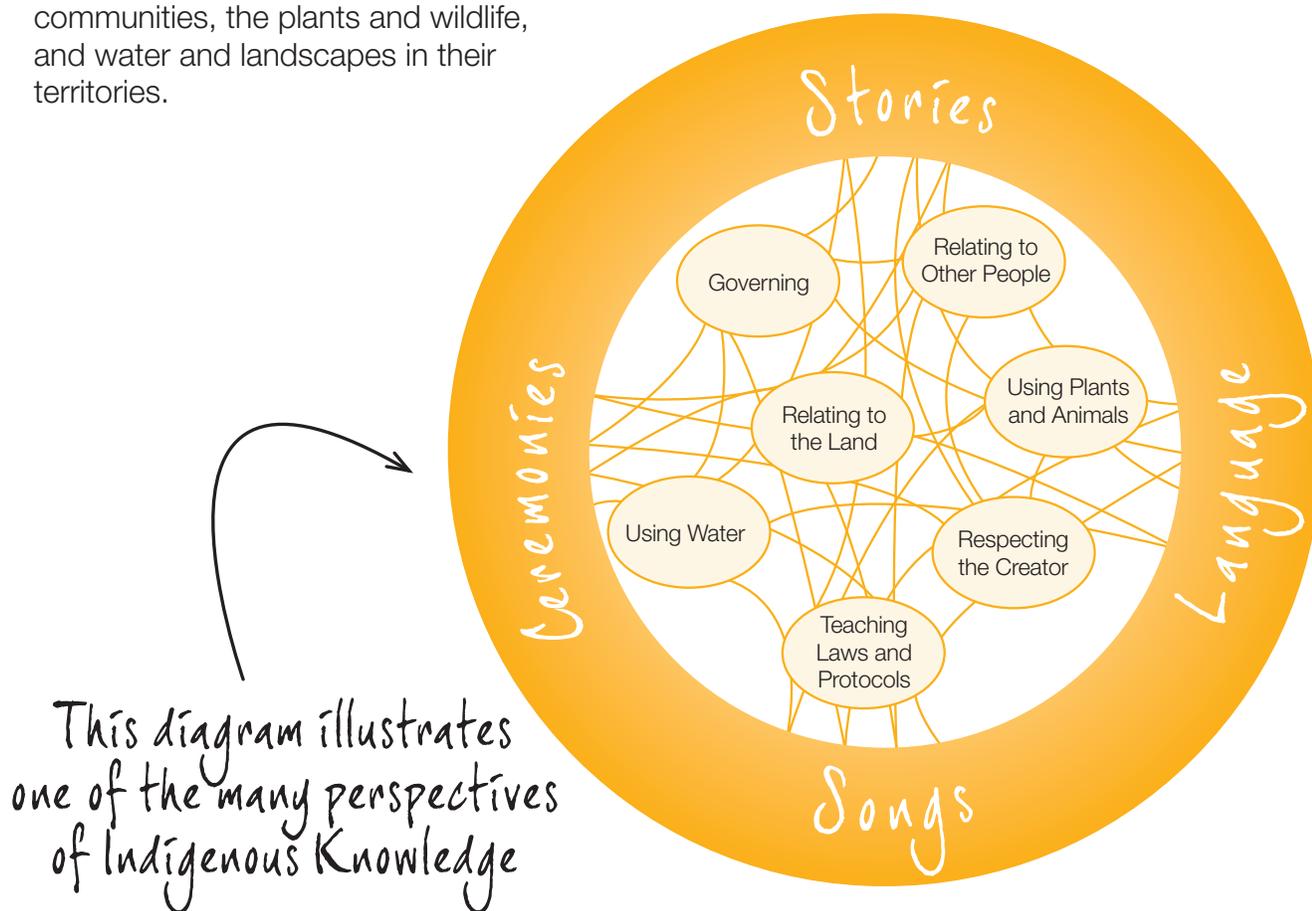
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is an excellent resource for information about watershed processes and management. As your First Nation moves through the watershed planning process, there will be many opportunities to include IK. At any watershed planning table involving diverse interest groups, it will likely be your responsibility to promote the importance of IK, ensure its inclusion and provide guidance on how this knowledge should be gathered and used. Knowing what IK is and means to your First Nation and who the holders of this knowledge are in your nation is an important first step.

IK is knowledge gathered over generations by indigenous people about their communities, the plants and wildlife, and water and landscapes in their territories.

IK essentially encompasses all the ideas outlined in this guidebook. Understanding traditional values, voicing terms and concepts in your language, exploring traditional forms of governance – these concepts can all be considered components of IK.

Each First Nation is unique and IK plays different roles in different First Nations. If IK is not presently as strong in your First Nation as Elders and members would like, this planning process could be an opportunity to reconnect with history and traditions to build IK back into people's daily lives and decisions.





Identifying the knowledge holders in your First Nation

Similar to the scientific world, where it takes many years of training to gain expertise, it also takes First Nation knowledge holders many years of learning and observation to develop their knowledge and expertise. Just as the scientific world has a system for determining credible knowledge or information, every First Nation has its own process for determining who the respected knowledge holders are (i.e. this does not just 'happen' at a certain age). Your First Nation should take appropriate steps to ensure that the IK that is provided is credible or is coming from credible knowledge holders. In some First Nations, particular knowledge holders have the authority to speak on behalf of the community. Members of the First Nation should agree on who these people are.

As your First Nation participates in a regional planning process, you may come across individuals that question the validity of the Indigenous Knowledge of your members. The most powerful way to have your First Nation's IK taken seriously is if you understand, apply and articulate your system of recognising knowledge holders. If your First Nation has a system of identifying credible knowledge holders and has a history of using these people as experts and representatives of their First Nation, this establishes credibility for their expertise.



These guidebooks use the term 'knowledge holder' to identify someone who has particular and respected knowledge about a topic and who is considered a cultural expert by the First Nation. Use whatever term that has meaning in your community for your own watershed planning process.





You can ask yourself (and your nation) the following questions to explore this topic:

- What were the traditional ways of determining who was a knowledge holder or cultural expert (e.g. who knows the most about the 'old ways' (teachings, stories, songs)?)?
- Are these traditional ways of determining who is a knowledge holder used in today's context? If not, what ways are used today?
- Do knowledge holders have certain term(s) associated with them?
- Does the amount of expertise vary among older members of your First Nation? While all older individuals in the community are given respect, are some well known for their IK?
- What are the qualities of knowledge holders (e.g. humility – do they typically defer to someone they feel is more knowledgeable than them?)?
- If you wanted to organise these individuals into a group so they can inform the watershed planning process, what would be the best format for this?



Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge

The Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources developed their own definition of their knowledge with Mi'kmaq knowledge holders. "Aboriginal traditional knowledge (ATK) is a broad description of an integrated package that includes the local knowledge of species, environmental practices and management systems, social institutions that provide the rules for management systems, and worldviews that form the basis for our beliefs. ATK is not a tool but rather a knowledge that comes from watching and listening through direct experience of song and ceremonies, through the activities of hunting and daily life and from trees and animals, and in dreams and visions. Knowledge, values and identity are passed down to the next generation through practice, ceremonies, legends, dance or song. ATK, and more specifically Mi'kmaw ecological knowledge (MEK) is the Mi'kmaw way of life, derived from centuries of interaction, observation, and adaptation to the natural environment. It is the Mi'kmaw science of survival intertwined with spirituality and culture unique to the people of Mi'kma'ki."

~ Unama'ki Institute
of Natural Resources (2009)



Developing your First Nation's own term for IK

One way to start the discussion about the knowledge of your First Nation is by developing a locally relevant term for and definition of this knowledge based on the input of your members. Each First Nation may have its own term and/or definition for IK. Some First Nations use TEK, or Traditional Knowledge (TK), or simply 'our ways'. Others talk about Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK). CIER uses the term IK in our work and throughout these guidebooks and believes that IK includes many things, including ecological knowledge, which is critical to understanding the watershed and success of future decisions. What does IK mean in your First Nation?

Tenets of IK

CIER describes seven tenets of IK as follows:

- IK is a holistic paradigm that acknowledges the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being of people;
- IK is a complex and sophisticated system of knowledge drawing on centuries of wisdom and experience, associated with long-term occupancy of a certain place;
- IK is acquired through experience and observation, from the land or spiritual teachings, and is handed down from one generation to another;
- IK is dynamic and constantly grows and changes with new information;
- IK includes knowing and understanding proper protocols and values of conducting oneself within the cultural norms of an Indigenous society;
- IK is unique to different Indigenous communities, reflecting the cultural diversity of Indigenous peoples; and,
- IK includes and is attached to the cultural, linguistic, spiritual, and subsistence ways of Indigenous peoples.

~ CIER (2006)





Mikisew Cree First Nation Traditional Environmental Knowledge (TEK) Committee.

Mikisew Cree First Nation Government Industry Relations (MCFNGIR) implements many projects and studies that require the incorporation of MCFN TEK for resource management plans, environmental monitoring, government and industry regulatory processes and internal initiatives. To assist them with this work, MCFN GIR formed a TEK Committee to:

- Act in a TEK advisory role to the GIR and MCFN including Chief and Council
- Provide guidance on TEK collection methods
- Provide guidance on how TEK could be incorporated into existing studies and
- Have knowledge of and recommend MCFN members who possess expertise in different areas of TEK.

The criteria for TEK Committee members were developed as follows:

- Must be knowledgeable land users, either currently or in the past (Elders)
- Must be respected by the community
- Must be representative of all major families in MCFN
- Must include both male and female members
- Must have Elders as well as younger land users
- Must be able to identify other cultural specialists/land users in MCFN.

To set up the committee, a MCFN GIR representative approached individual members to confirm their interest in being part of the committee and held a meeting with the group to confirm the intent of the committee. Once established, the committee developed a definition for their knowledge using their own language and concepts. A starting description for Mikisew TEK is the Cree term *Sagow pimatisiwin*, which literally translates into 'bush lifestyle'. The term encompasses a wide range of components of IK including the practical understandings of plants and animals for survival and the teachings and values that guide Mikisew members in their relationship to all the elements of the land and water and ways to use them properly.

~ Mikisew Cree First Nation
Government and Industry
Relations (2010)



Story





Tip

One way to be able to readily access information from existing interviews is to purchase qualitative research software (e.g. NVIVO). You can use this software to organise all your raw transcripts and reports so certain information (e.g. water, specific geographic area, cultural protocols) can be readily accessed when you decide to explore that topic. This work takes time up front but it saves time in the future when you need to access the information on an ongoing basis.

Collecting Existing IK Documents

Why it is beneficial to gather previous IK research

The best preparatory step before gathering the membership to discuss the topics described in the following pages is to gather and build on related work that has already been done. Previous research studies can provide a lot of information about the topics discussed in this guidebook and could help you avoid duplicating work that has already been done. By gathering previous studies, you may find that you have valuable information from members, including those who may have passed on already. People with whom you continue to work will feel that their contribution to research is meaningful if they know you are building on research that they have already participated in.

Examples of IK research that may have relevance to your watershed work include (but are not limited to):

- Land use and occupancy studies
- Traditional plant/animal use guides or studies
- Workshop reports involving Elders and/or resource users.

How to gather and organise documents and research for your First Nation is explored in more depth in *Guidebook Three*.

What to do with previous research

Once you have gathered all your IK related studies, the watershed planning team will have to go through them to see what has been completed and determine how best to build on this work. If some First Nation members were interviewed in the past for research, finding out who was interviewed and the questions they were asked is important so that you do not redo the same work again with these individuals. You should have a discussion with the membership about the research and any resulting documents and what is appropriate to share outside the First Nation and what must remain confidential.





“Governance is an institute that is a natural expression of social norms, customs and practices. Every society has a worldview in which the people of that society come to understand the world around them...[which] determines how they govern and how they interact with their environment.”

~ M. Buchan (2003, p.33)

Quote



GOVERNANCE

What do we mean by governance?

Governance refers to the processes of governments, such as creating policy, making decisions, administration, and so on. It also includes the protocols and laws of your First Nation (which are discussed on page 29). Different First Nations may have different systems of government (such as Chief and Council systems, or hereditary systems), but even when the system of government is the same, the approach to governance can be different. For example, who makes decisions about what or how members participate in information gathering and decision making. The area of governance is a vast topic. In this guidebook we will be focusing on these specific areas relating to governance:

- Understanding how decisions are made in your First Nation, focusing on incorporation of traditional governance and involvement of the membership
- Understanding who has authority to represent and speak for your First Nation and in what ways
- Learning about the qualities of successful governance
- Improving your system of governance to assist with the watershed planning process.



All Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination (UN, 2007). Recently, Canada endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which is an important rights and governance statement. Webster's Dictionary defines self-determination as "the right of a people to decide upon its own political status or form of government, without outside influence". It is through governance that Indigenous peoples exercise this right. Therefore, First Nations are practising their right to self-determination by participating in the planning and management of water and the watershed.

How governance relates to watershed planning

Planning is inherently linked to governance, both in process and implementation. In order to make good environmental decisions and engage in watershed planning a First Nation needs to have good governance. In order to have good governance, you will first need to understand the current system of governance in your First Nation. There will be many times throughout the watershed planning process when understanding your First Nation's own governance system and being able to explain it to others, both within the First Nation and outside the First Nation with neighbours and other governments – will be important. Knowing how the membership can contribute to decision-making processes and what councillors or staff are responsible for what areas of work will make it easier to access information and to bring the right people into the watershed planning process at the right time.



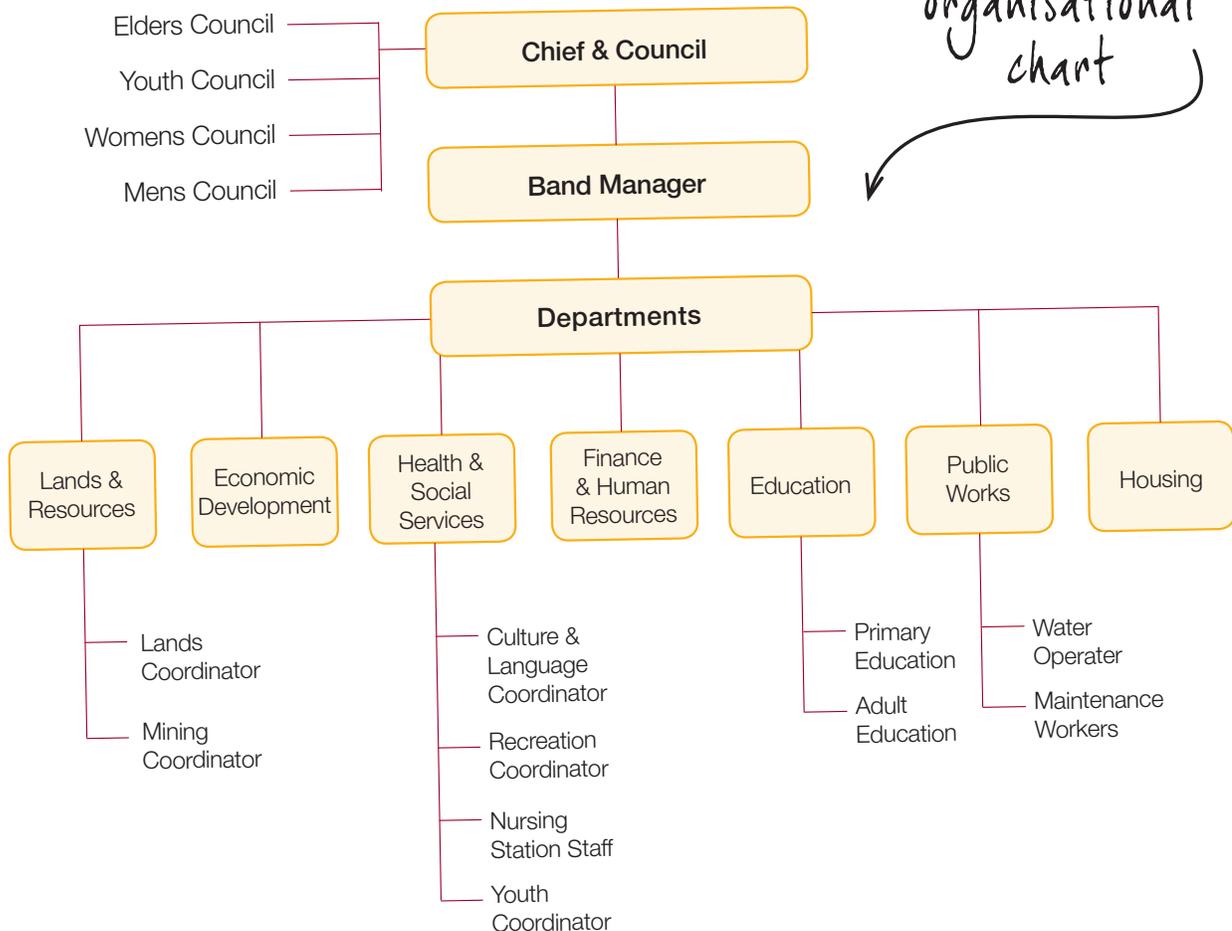
To better understand the governance processes in your own First Nation, start by making a simple organisational chart.

Draw out the various elected and administrative positions and portfolios using these questions for assistance:

- Which portfolios does each council member hold?
- What departments exist in your First Nation, which staff members work within these departments and what are their responsibilities?
- Are there any committees or working groups that advise or report to the Chief and Council or specific councillors?
- Who do each of the Band staff report to?

Drawing an organisational chart and sharing this information will help the members understand the governance processes of their First Nation.

Advisory Committees



Example of an organisational chart

Once you understand the basics of the governance structure and process in your First Nation, think about how this might affect a watershed planning process. If you have an organisational chart (developed in the activity on page 24), consider how these questions relate to the different departments or areas. Who are the key First Nation members within the current governance structure who need to be involved in the watershed planning process? You will need some individuals with political, technical and cultural decision-making authority. How will communication flow between your formal/informal leadership, your First Nation representative sitting at a regional watershed group and the rest of the membership when decisions need to be made?

<i>How are decisions made for the First Nation?</i>	<i>Answers/Notes:</i>
Who makes decisions on behalf of the First Nation?	
How are these decisions made?	
What is the role of Chief and Council in decision-making? Do they have a final decision-making role?	
How are community members engaged in decision-making?	
How can or do community members contribute to decision-making in the community? (e.g. meetings, committees, volunteering, etc)	
Is consensus important?	

Duplicate this table and use it to fill in your answers and notes to these suggested questions.

You may also want to think about how this information will be shared with other interest groups in the watershed, and think about the relationships your First Nation has with the neighbouring communities in the watershed. This is discussed further in the second guidebook, *Building Partnerships*.

First Nations system of government and strengthening the role of traditional government

Take some time to consider your First Nation's current system of government and if your traditional form of government can have a stronger role. Many First Nations follow the elected Chief and Council system. Some First Nations may follow a traditional system of governance or combine this with the Chief and Council system.

Discuss the current and traditional system of government with the elected leadership, knowledge holders and general membership. Does everyone know what the traditional system of government looked like if it is no longer in place? There may be a benefit to incorporating some aspects of this traditional system into the current one. The traditional system of government may still be supported by the membership; members may still informally organise according to traditional systems of government today and may feel more comfortable sharing information through this system. However, each First Nation is different and it will be up to your First Nation to determine which system of government works best.

Communication between leadership and membership

Another aspect of governance that is important to consider in the context of watershed planning is how the leadership communicates with the members. Your watershed planning process will rely on the involvement and input of the membership in any major decisions that need to be made about the watershed plan. Therefore the current relationship between the membership and the leadership could positively or negatively impact your process. The most successful decision-making processes are those that promote local participation and distribute power and influence evenly. The leadership will not be able to involve the membership on every single decision; however, the membership needs to feel that they have a say in major decisions before they are made.

The communication between the leadership and membership will be strong if the leadership makes use of engagement processes (outlined on page 6. Events and

Hereditary and Elected Systems

Although Hupacasath First Nation (HFN) has hereditary seats of governance, it is operated under an elected Chief and Council. When input from the community is needed, members feel more comfortable sharing information through traditional governance structures. Engaging community members through the traditional structures offers Elders, adults, and youth an opportunity to participate. Gathering to share food and talk about community issues and priorities through the houses (or families) ensures that everyone is included in community decisions.

Story



groups like community meetings, Elders/ youth/men/women's councils, committees, volunteer opportunities are all opportunities for community members to get involved. Even having members vote on major decisions is another mechanism to involve the membership. If the communication between the leadership and the membership is not that strong, the watershed planning process could serve as an opportunity to strengthen that process.

Understanding who has the authority to speak for your First Nation

Part of understanding the governance of your First Nation is knowing who has the authority to speak for your First Nation. As described previously (page 5), different individuals may represent your First Nation for different purposes in the watershed planning process, including elected leadership, traditional leaders or knowledge holders that can speak for your First Nation on specific matters. All of the membership should know who the designated people are and support them as they represent and speak for the First Nation.

Qualities of good governance

In order to engage in watershed planning you need to have good governance. There are many resources and even whole curriculum discussing governance and specifically, Indigenous governance. The hallmarks of good governance include strong leadership, empowerment of the membership, and a firm grounding in your First Nation's culture. Making any significant changes to the governance processes would likely take a major initiative and support from the leadership but there may be opportunities to discuss this topic in some meetings or events in your First Nation.

Story



The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) provides its membership with a yearly workshop called "CAFN 101". The workshop deals with different topics each year to help members understand the role and work of the Chief and Council and administration.

Improving the governance structure for the watershed planning process

Consider ways that you can improve your First Nations governance as part of, and to benefit, the watershed planning process. As you worked through the exercises above, you may have found some gaps in the governance structure. For example, are there any councillors with an environment or water portfolio? Are there staff employed by the Band in an environmental capacity? Is there funding available to support this work? Do the individuals who work on initiatives connected to watershed management communicate with each other? If not, addressing these gaps will strengthen in the watershed planning process.



Good Governance

What does good governance look like? CIER worked in partnership with the National Centre for First Nation Governance (NCFNG) to research and document examples of successful environmental governance and how they are being implemented by the First Nations of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC). Together, we learned that First Nations with successful environmental governance shared seven essential elements. These First Nations had:

1. A strong connection to their culture
2. Respect for the authority of their community leadership
3. Stable institutions to address environmental issues
4. Access to information about environmental issues relating to their lands and waters
5. Their own capacity to conduct independent environmental research
6. Administrative structures to implement the mandates of their institutions
7. Financial resources to build capacity in their community

The video that discusses these elements can be viewed at:

www.cier.ca/information-and-resources/publications-and-products.aspx?id=1694

Aspects of governance that matter for success

The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (HPAIED) looked at a number of different aspects of governance on American Indian reservations to understand the factors that contribute to “sustained, self-determined social and economic development” in American Indian Nations (HPAIED, 2010). The most important findings of the Project are:

- “Sovereignty Matters. When Native nations make their own decisions about what development approaches to take, they consistently out-perform external decision makers on matters as diverse as governmental form, natural resource management, economic development, health care, and social service provision.
- Institutions Matter. For development to take hold, assertions of sovereignty must be backed by capable institutions of governance. Nations do this as they adopt stable decision rules, establish fair and independent mechanisms for dispute resolution, and separate politics from day-to-day business and program management.
- Culture Matters. Successful economies stand on the shoulders of legitimate, culturally grounded institutions of self-government. Indigenous societies are diverse; each nation must equip itself with a governing structure, economic system, policies, and procedures that fit its own contemporary culture.
- Leadership Matters. Nation building requires leaders who introduce new knowledge and experiences, challenge assumptions, and propose change. Such leaders, whether elected, community, or spiritual, convince people that things can be different and inspire them to take action.” (HPAIED, 2010).

For more information on the Harvard project see: hpaied.org

PROTOCOLS AND LAWS

What are protocols and laws?

Protocols or laws are rules of expected and acceptable behaviour and often relate to particular occasions, activities or relationships with people, and in this case, water. Some protocols or laws relate to how people interact with each other, how community decision-making happens or how a First Nation relates to other governments or to organisations. Other protocols or laws regulate or guide people's relationship to the land or the waters. These are often termed 'traditional' to refer to the rules of practice followed by Nations in the past and in some cases still today.



Tip

Protocols and laws are simply rules about the appropriate behaviour or action one should take. There is a lot of overlap between the two terms: protocol and law. Something that is considered a law by one First Nation may be a protocol to another Nation, or there may be another term that people would use to describe these rules. Keep in mind that while we use both terms interchangeably in this guidebook, your First Nation should explore and use the term that is relevant to the membership.

Why protocols and laws are important for watershed planning

Understanding traditional rules of behaviour can tell you a lot about your First Nation's relationship to the environment – it can tell you about people's ecological understandings of the land and water, the way social behaviour is or was regulated for the benefit of the future generations and the environment itself, how people respect each other and their use of the land and water, and how your First Nation manages or takes care of the environment. Since a big part of developing a watershed plan is deciding on the rules or ways of managing the watershed, understanding the rules guiding how your First Nation traditionally and/or currently manages or takes care of the environment would be a valuable contribution to the watershed plan. These rules can also guide how you work with the planning team and engage the broader part of your First Nation while you develop and implement the plan.



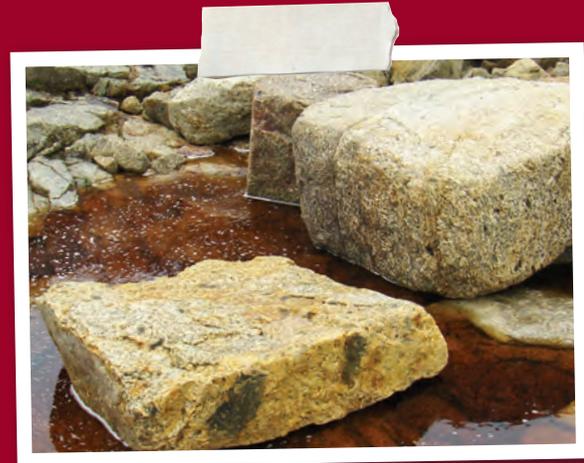
How to talk to your First Nation about protocols or laws

In your First Nation, the people who would typically know the most about traditional protocols or laws are likely the knowledge holders. In some nations, it may be that only a few members remember the traditional protocols or laws. Working on your watershed plan can provide the time to share these protocols or laws so that they can be revitalised, if that is what is needed, within your First Nation. One way to discuss protocols and laws could be gathering the knowledge holders in your First Nation and asking questions about:

1. How people use, interact with and relate to water for drinking, cooking, bathing, cleaning, fishing, travel, recreation;
2. Spiritual and ceremonial uses and responsibilities for water;
3. The formal and informal rules that your First Nation follows that relate to water;
4. How these rules came to be and why they are important.

Mi'kmaq Swimming Protocol

Historically, the Mi'kmaq in Cape Breton regulated swimming in any waterbodies: no one was allowed to swim in the water before June 29 because before this date, aquatic life was young and just forming and so people were not allowed to disturb the development of the aquatic life. This reflects both traditional ecological knowledge of the Mi'kmaq as well as how the Mi'kmaq managed and took care of their environment.





Pih̄tokahâkan – An Example of a Cree Protocol

Protocols that are not directly linked to water can also be valuable in a watershed planning process. The Cree Protocol represented by word *Pih̄tokahâkan* (someone who is let in; someone admitted) communicates how the Cree traditionally managed the lands and waters and worked together. It describes the protocol of group area leaders inviting other non-group area members to trap in their family or group trapping area in Wood Buffalo National Park.

For example, if the furbearer and wildlife population declined to a point where further harvesting would significantly harm wildlife sustainability in an individual's family or group area, they may ask permission of another family or group area leader to invite them onto their trapline. The invitation would come with the understanding that the invited person would return to their own trapline once the furbearer and wildlife populations recovered. It would also be understood that the favour would be reciprocated should the inviter's trapline not be productive in future years. This example of stewardship, as well as the respect for other people and the rules of reciprocity, can inform watershed planning and management processes.

~ Matthew Whitehead
(Mikisew Cree First Nation Government Industry Relations)





What are natural laws?

'Natural laws' are a concept that many First Nations talk about when explaining their relationship with the natural world, including their relationships with water. Natural laws are not the same as the laws of nature, which are the laws describing how the natural world works (e.g. the law of gravity). Natural laws are values or rights that are considered to be inherent and that exist whether or not a system of positive law is in effect (a system of positive law is a codified arrangement of law that is created by humans to govern humans).

What do natural laws mean for First Nations?

Many First Nations' natural laws set out a foundation for how to live life in a good way. This foundation is based on understanding and valuing the sacred in the world around us, and means that living in a good way in relationship with the land and waters "obliterates the distinction between sacred and secular" (Kulchyski et al., 1999, p.xvi). These natural laws were given by the Creator, and form and maintain the connection between First Nations and the natural world. They also describe how to live out that connection.

Quote

"Our traditional practices are dynamically regulated systems. They are based on natural and spiritual laws, ensuring sustainable use through traditional resource conservation. Long-tenured and place-based traditional knowledge of the environment is extremely valuable, and has been proven to be valid and effective."

~ Simpcw First Nation (2010, p. 3)



The Seven Sacred Teachings

One example of natural laws is found in the seven sacred teachings that shape many First Nations' understanding of the world. These seven teachings are: love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth. Each of the teachings explains one part of how to live in good relationships with others and with the land, and is associated with a particular animal. Together, the teachings offer a way of being in the world, and following the teachings will lead to a balanced life.

Importance of documenting protocols or laws

In many cases First Nation's protocols or laws are well-known amongst some members and form the 'unwritten' ways of doing things. It may be beneficial to document these protocols or laws for the benefit of your First Nation. This could be in the written, audio or video form. Documenting these protocols or laws will ensure that they are available for use by your First Nation's leadership and other members especially if they are known by only a few knowledgeable Elders. Another benefit of documenting your First Nation's protocols and laws could be to inform outsiders, be they researchers or government officials, of the expectations of your First Nation and the proper way to do things in your First Nation.

Developing IK Protocols

The rules for research involving Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in First Nations are one particular area that is often described as a protocol by many First Nations. These protocols, also called research guidelines, can apply to research or studies carried out by external researchers, and can also apply to internal processes to engage with a First Nation's membership. These protocols give the First Nation a say in identifying culturally appropriate uses of information and ways to avoid exploitation of the information. They serve as a method of empowerment as they give control of the research back to the First Nation.

Each First Nation will be unique in what it will expect in an IK protocol, and the protocols need to conform to the laws of your First Nation. Having a protocol will guide you and any outside people you bring in as you gather information and ideas from the membership about water and watershed planning (e.g. the activities suggested in this guidebook and the third guidebook, *Knowing Your Watershed*).



If your First Nation does not already have this type of protocol, this could be an opportunity to develop one with your membership.

Your First Nation's research protocol does not need to give a step-by-step method or 'spell out' engagement but can include the appropriate channels people both inside and outside of your First Nation must go through (e.g. when and how to talk to and work with the Elders' council, Chief and Council, environment department, etc.) to obtain permission to work with the Nation, work with knowledge holders and IK, etc. As part of your discussions to develop the protocol, you can also discuss specifically how IK (both previously collected and in future research) can/should be shared, used and integrated with other knowledge systems for watershed planning.

"Protocols must be recognized and respected. When non-Aboriginal people consult First Nations, notably Elders, they need to familiarize themselves with existing protocols and follow them, whether they be treaties or contemporary guidelines devised by a First Nation community."

~ Chiefs of Ontario (2006, p.11)

Quote



Story



“A Mi’kmaq Ethics Committee has been appointed by the Sante’ Mawio’mi (Grand Council) to establish a set of principles and protocols that will protect the integrity and cultural knowledge of the Mi’kmaq people. These principles and protocols are intended to guide research and studies in a manner that will guarantee that the right of ownership rests with the various Mi’kmaq communities. These principles and protocols will guarantee only the highest standards of research. Interpretation and conclusions drawn from the research will be subject to approval to ensure accuracy and cultural sensitivity.”

~ Unama’ki College of Cape Breton University (2010)



Although the content in your First Nation's research protocol will depend on what you will use it for and the unique rules in your First Nation, the following questions will give you a starting idea of what should be included in this protocol. Gather your knowledge holders and discuss:

- What do you call this knowledge (Traditional Knowledge; Local Knowledge; our ways)?
- What does IK look like in your First Nation?
- What are appropriate ways that knowledge can be shared?
- What protocols need to be followed to gather, to share, to document, etc.?
- Are there things that should not be shared outside the community?
- What are appropriate ways for the knowledge to be used?



Activity

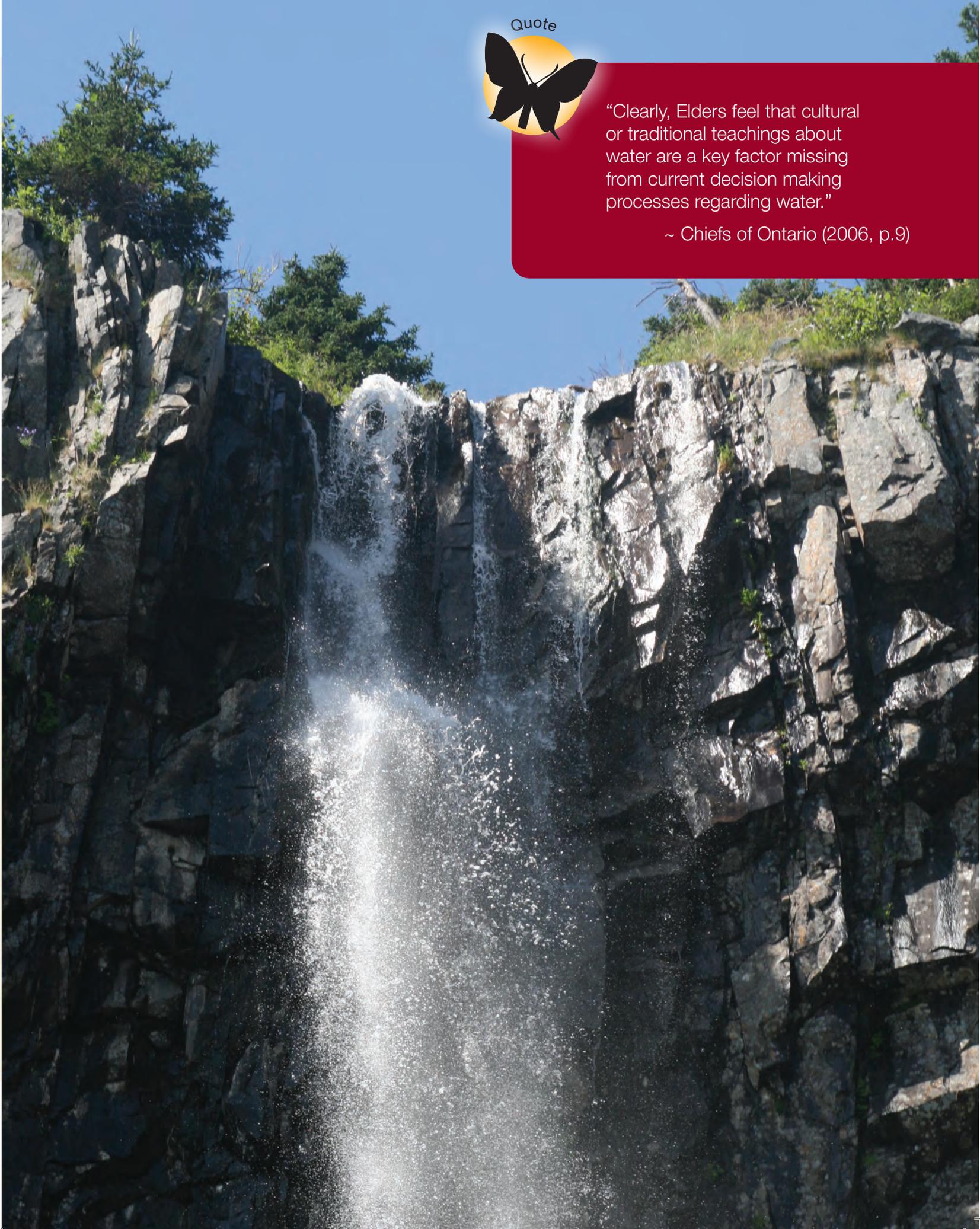


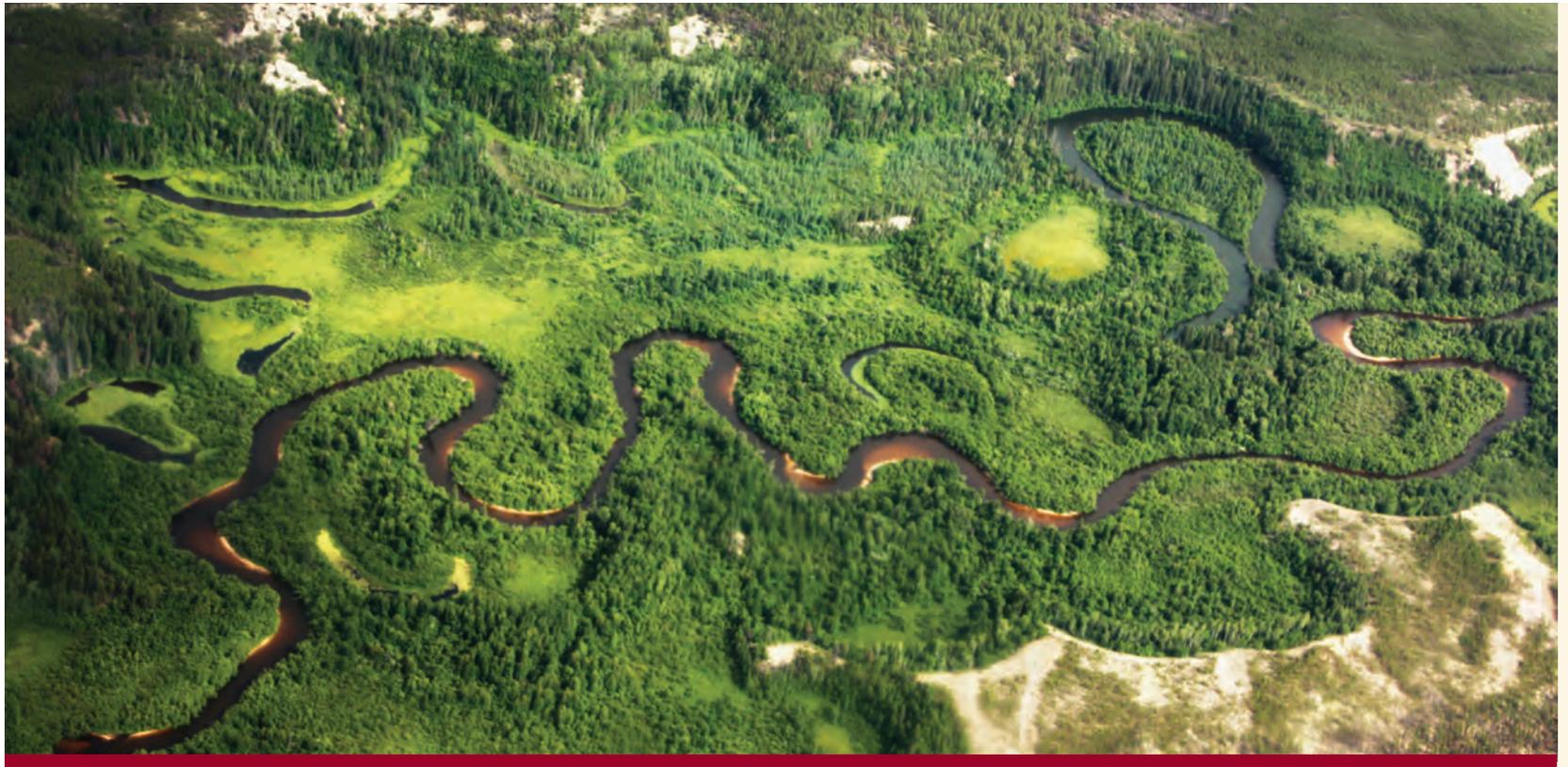
Quote



“Clearly, Elders feel that cultural or traditional teachings about water are a key factor missing from current decision making processes regarding water.”

~ Chiefs of Ontario (2006, p.9)





Responsibility for Taking Care of the Water

One way to find out about traditional protocols or laws related specifically to water is to speak with those who were given the responsibility for taking care of the water. In some cases, specific individuals, clans or groups within a First Nation were traditionally responsible for taking care of the water. It is important for you to explore if this was or is the case in your First Nation (i.e. who had these responsibilities traditionally, is this someone's current responsibility, etc).

Individuals or groups that have had or have the responsibility of caring for the water may have a more in-depth understanding of the protocols and laws that need to be abided by in order to take care of the water. Also, if these individuals responsible for taking care of water have specialised knowledge, they should be involved in your First Nation's watershed planning process,

either directly on the watershed planning committee or indirectly, as an advisory group to the representative or planning committee. It would also be useful to find out if your First Nation would be interested in bringing this responsibility back into practice.

Quote



“Women, as life-givers, have a special relationship to water. Women look after and do ceremonies for water. It is associated with Grandmother Moon, and links the moon with women. Traditionally, women took care of water in the household. Water is also used in ceremonies and to make medicines. Notwithstanding, the groups underscored that everyone has a responsibility to honour and respect water.”

~ Chiefs of Ontario (2006, p.10)



Photo credit: Brent Wesley

Keepers of the Water

Among the Anishinaabe people, women were traditionally the keepers of the water. Josephine Mandamin, an Anishinaabe Elder, has taken action to raise awareness about water issues in her traditional territory.

In 2003, Josephine Mandamin, from Thunder Bay, began walking around the Great Lakes. She says that “the water is sick ... and people need to really fight for that water, to speak for that water, to love that water” (Mandamin, quoted in McMahon, 2009). Along the way, she speaks to the water, to offer tobacco and thanks. By 2009, she had walked 17,000 kilometres. (McMahon, 2009).

RIGHTS

Why there is a need to talk about rights in watershed planning

Watershed planning serves as an opportunity for First Nations to implement their Aboriginal, treaty and inherent rights. However, many may not yet be fully aware of the importance of Aboriginal and treaty rights, or may not be able to articulate how they relate to watershed planning. As well, too few non-Aboriginal people have had the opportunity to learn about the nature of the special rights possessed by First Nations. It can be difficult to explain the scope and application of Aboriginal and treaty rights in a way that others will understand.

The need for trust and respect when talking about rights

Your First Nation should articulate the rights of your people and be clear about the expectations it has regarding recognition of those rights by others. Doing this in ways that build trust and understanding both within your First Nation and with external governments and organisations is a key challenge that requires careful consideration in order to succeed. Trust building is a critical part of the planning process and difficult or new conversations (and talking about rights can be difficult) are more productive in environments where people feel safe to talk and listen.

Especially when working in a regional planning process, the more you can do to help foster safe places to share information in a way that builds collaboration, the more likely others will be comfortable participating in a process that recognizes your rights. Respectful information sharing and listening inside and outside the planning process will

Quote



“Secwepemc people have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right we have the right to freely exercise full authority and control of our natural resources including water. We also refer to our right of permanent sovereignty over our natural resources, including water.”

~ Simpcw First Nation
(2010, p.2)

dramatically improve its results. Working with others who are part of the watershed to build relationships and trust is discussed in greater detail in the second guidebook, *Building Partnerships*. The information in this section will help you to discuss rights within your First Nation and clarify how these will be presented to others.

The best way to understand the rights you have is to talk to your Elders, leaders, and knowledge holders to understand the history of your nation and what agreements were, or were not, made between your nation and the Canadian or provincial/territorial governments. Treaties (if you live in an area where treaties have been negotiated) hold some of that information, but legal Aboriginal rights cases have also proven that First Nations' history, laws, and understandings about their rights are legally acceptable as well as indications of the existence of rights. Also, there may have been legal actions that resulted in statements about the rights of your nation.

Inherent Rights, Aboriginal Rights and Treaty Rights

Inherent rights flow from the Creator and cannot be taken away by anyone but the Creator. For example, Aboriginal peoples' responsibility and right to protect their lands and waters is considered by them to be an inherent right. The right to determine their future and the destiny of their nations and to govern themselves are also considered to be inherent rights. Nothing the federal or provincial/territorial government has done can eliminate these rights, although often governments do not recognise them.

Aboriginal rights are rights that have been recognised and affirmed by Section 35 of the 1982 Canadian Constitution. These include the right to hunt, to fish, to self-government. Case law shows how these rights have been proven, and how they can be extinguished.

Quote

"Treaty rights must be upheld. Treaty rights to water were never surrendered, nor were the rights to land under the waters."

~ Chiefs of Ontario (2006, p.11)

Treaty rights are rights that have been affirmed or granted through a treaty-making process. These rights can be found in both the written text of the treaty as well as oral or written accounts of agreements made in addition to those contained within the written treaty document (e.g. as the Delgamuukw case illustrated). There are numerous written treaties, as well as extensive documentation



and oral histories containing treaty understandings between First Nations and Britain. For example, in the 1700s, the British Crown created strategic alliances through Peace and Friendship Treaties entered into with First Nations on the east coast of Canada. The 'numbered treaties' (1 through 11) are land cession treaties signed between 1871 and 1921 in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, the Northwest Territories and part of British Columbia. These treaties involved First Nations ceding or surrendering rights to the land, maintaining or affirming certain rights (including hunting, fishing, trapping, and harvesting rights), and receiving other new rights (such as the right to receive agricultural implements, medical treatment, yearly financial payments). Other treaties include Robinson-Superior Treaty (1850), the Robinson-Huron Treaty (1850), the Williams Treaties (1923), the Manitoulin Treaty (1836) and the Douglas Treaties (1850). First Nations in British Columbia are now in the process of negotiating modern-day treaties. In the Yukon and Northwest Territories, some First Nations have self-government and land claim agreements while others are in the negotiation process.

First Nation Water Rights – Key Myths Explained

Myth #1: Treaties extinguished all rights held by a signatory First Nation.

Although a First Nation may have agreed to relinquish some rights as part of their treaty negotiation they still maintain many inherent and Aboriginal rights in addition to their treaty rights. First Nations assert that water rights were never given up by their ancestors in the treaty negotiation process. Rights to water were not specifically identified in the text of treaties, nor in side agreements to the treaties, and so this remains a very contentious legal issue.

Myth #2: First Nation rights only apply on reserve. Aboriginal and Inherent rights can also exist within the boundary of a First Nation's traditional territory, even where that territory is located off-reserve.

Myth #3: If a First Nation has not signed a treaty, they have no power to address or influence regional planning and management activities. A First Nation that may not have negotiated a treaty right maintains Aboriginal and inherent rights to the land and water. The continued existence of these rights forms the basis of modern day treaty negotiations all across Canada. Therefore, First Nations have the right to a decision-making role in regional planning and management activities that might impact their rights. This is the case regarding non-treaty First Nations even where there has not been a legal assessment by a court about the existence of a First Nation's existing rights.

Myth #4: Only the federal government has a duty to consult. Section 35 of the Constitution, and the obligations imposed by the courts as a result of this section, apply to the Crown, which includes both federal and provincial governments. Therefore both federal and provincial governments have a duty to consult.

Myth #5: First Nations do not have water rights because provinces/territories own all water. Provinces/territories often assert that they own the water as a result of agreements made with the federal government (e.g. the Natural Resources Transfer Agreements) and as set out in provincial/territorial legislation. However, because these agreements were signed without the involvement of Aboriginal people, whose treaty, Aboriginal and inherent rights existed before these agreements, First Nations assert that provincial/territorial rights to water are subject to pre-existing Aboriginal water rights.



Myth #6: First Nations do not have laws. Traditions, customs, ways of life, traditional activities, and governance structures of First Nation societies all include and, where applied by the First Nation, are dictated by, First Nation laws.

Myth #7: Aboriginal title is not ownership of land. Aboriginal title is a form of Aboriginal right; it is closest to outright ownership and a form of property right unique to Aboriginal people regarding their lands.

Myth #8: First Nations cannot be involved in water decision-making, only the federal and provincial/territorial governments have jurisdiction. Water in Canada is managed by cooperation and agreement between the federal and provincial/territorial governments. This approach is necessary because neither government has clear or exclusive jurisdiction regarding water, and each have some responsibilities. First Nations could and should be decision-makers regarding the water management in every province/territory and on federal lands given their inherent, Aboriginal and treaty rights to water. While governments generally accept that consultation is necessary prior to their approval of projects being done on the ground (e.g. a forestry operation, a hydro dam), it is in everyone's – federal and provincial/territorial governments and First Nations – best interests to include First Nations governments early on in all planning processes. The Northwest Territories Watershed planning process adopted this approach.





Recognition of Mikisew Cree First Nation's Rights

Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) has taken legal action to have their Aboriginal rights recognised. Parks Canada approved a plan to build 118 kilometres of winter road in Wood Buffalo Park, which would have also gone through a portion of the MCFN reserve. MCFN felt that there was inadequate consultation with MCFN and no efforts were made to minimise the impact of road on treaty rights of hunting and trapping. The Supreme Court ruled in favour of MCFN. This case has benefited First Nations in Canada in that it provided recognition of their rights to the land. MCFN is still in the process of determining how it will apply these rights as it participates in decision-making bodies in the region.

Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn - Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative

In Cape Breton a group called Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn, Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative (KMK) was created to address Mi'kmaq rights issues in the Atlantic region. KMK works with all the Mi'kmaq chiefs of Nova Scotia. The name means 'we are seeking consensus'. Any initiative that may have an impact on Mi'kmaq rights is handled by KMK. By having a separate organisation or body that deals with any decisions that may impact Aboriginal rights, Mi'kmaq First Nations can participate in multi-jurisdictional bodies such as the Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI), while KMK focuses on issues related to rights.

Hupacasath First Nation's Land Use Plan

To maintain its responsibilities as an independent and self-determining nation, and in response to relations with the Canadian governments, Hupacasath First Nation (HFN) created a land use plan for its traditional territory as well as a traditional use study to identify areas of interest to the community. These two documents were developed with extensive input from the community, and so represent a mandate from the community about how HFN can protect the land. They also present a foundation for developing other plans.

The land use plan and traditional use study are tools that HFN uses in exercising its title and rights. These tools enable HFN to state its position on proposed projects that would impact the territory and community. The land use plan includes zones, which are open to development, open to development with restrictions, and not open to development. If a project were proposed that would require development in areas with restrictions or that are not open, then these tools provide a starting place for understanding if HFN's rights or title are affected and if accommodation would be required.

VALUES

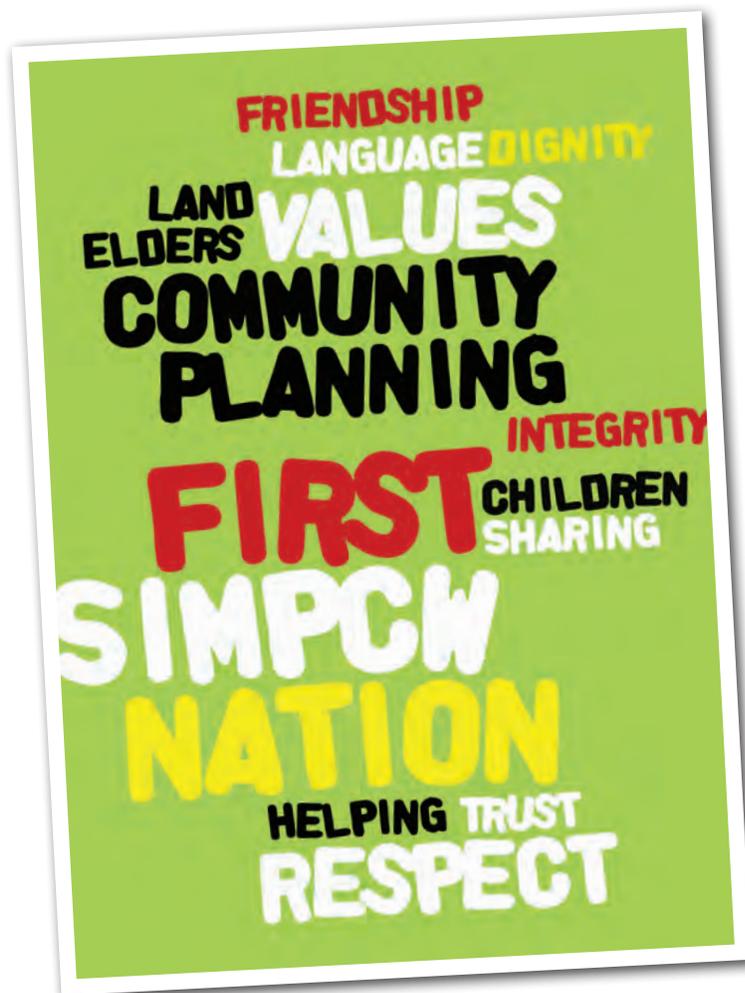
What are values?

- When you think about water, what is its significance?
- What does water mean to you, and to your First Nation?
- When you think about your relationship with water, what is most important about it to you?

These questions are all about values. Knowing and articulating your values explains what is important to you and your community about water.

Why are values important to the planning process?

The values that your First Nation holds dear form the foundation of who you are as a people. Articulating these values can help bring people together. Your values help explain why certain goals, priorities and approaches are important to your First Nation and provide guidance in the development of your First Nation's goals, priorities and approaches. You can return to these values throughout the planning process to ensure your decisions are consistent with your values.



Simpcw First Nation created this poster to illustrate its community values during the development of their comprehensive community plan.

Quote



Hidden values in our current water management systems

There are values embedded in all cultures and decision-making processes. The values relating to water can be seen in how policies are developed and carried out, and in the impact that policies have on water. For example, the (perhaps even unconscious) belief that economically beneficial uses of water take priority over the environmental benefits of leaving water in waterbodies is often embedded in local policies and licensing decisions. It may be useful to examine if your First Nation's values are reflected in its policies and processes and what values are reflected in existing municipal or provincial/territorial water policies and laws in your region.

The current use of values in planning processes

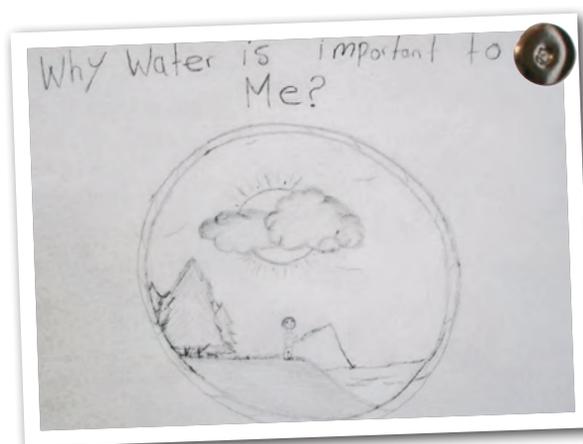
Sometimes planning processes skip discussions of values, or rush through them. Water managers and policy makers may not explicitly talk about values. Western planning processes often ignore or minimise the role that values play in policy and process development, or assume that everyone will share the same values and approaches to water and watershed planning. Alternatively, people may talk about one kind of value, but seem to act on another. Knowing what your First Nation's values are, and being explicit about them is one way to talk about why certain decisions or policies may or may not fit with your First Nation's concerns, and can be a way to connect with other people who share those values. It is also a way to make sure that those decisions and policies reflect the kinds of values your First Nation holds.

“Bringing the sacred nature of water into discourses of ‘water management’ becomes an essential and urgent component of any discussion that involves the purity and protection of water.”

~ Darlene Sanderson (2008, p.106)

How to determine your community values

To identify your First Nation's values relating to water, start by talking to people to understand what work has already been done. Maybe your First Nation has already identified community values as part of another planning process (e.g. comprehensive community planning, land use planning). Ask around to see if there is something to revisit and build on. If your First Nation's values have not been articulated in other planning activities, you need to have this conversation so your First Nation's values and relationship with water become clear. You can use existing engagement methods that your First Nation already uses to discuss values or consider using the following activity.





Creative ways to talk about values

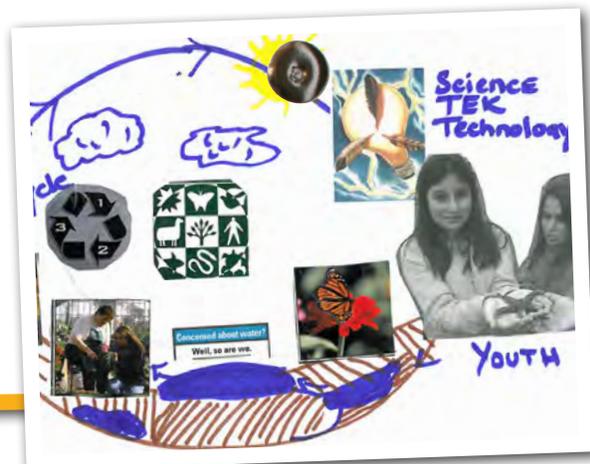
Since values come from the heart, not the head, sometimes it is easier to talk about values when you take a creative approach. People may find it easier to talk about their values by using images rather than words. You could start a discussion about values and water by asking people to get creative! Have paper, scissors, glue, markers, and magazines available and ask people to make a collage that illustrates what water means to them.

As a starting point you might want to ask people a few questions to get their creativity flowing – but be careful not to ask too many questions or you will lead them in the direction you are thinking, rather than letting them develop their own. Some of the questions you might ask are:

- How do you interact with water in your life?
- What is your connection to the water in your First Nation, and in the watershed/your territory?
- How and why do you value water?
- How do you respect water and the land in the watershed?
- Does water have responsibilities to your First Nation?

Every age enjoys the opportunity to be creative! Sit back and give people the space and time to think. Some people may draw, others may write, some may cut out pictures from the magazines, and still others may combine all of these methods. Any and all methods work perfectly!

After about 20 minutes, or when the group is finished, ask each person to talk about their design. Write key words and ideas on chart paper or a whiteboard to create a list of ideas that will help you develop value statements. This exercise will also provide good information for your future visioning exercise.



After discussing what water means to your First Nation, you can collect the responses into a list that reflects the values of all your members. You may want to show the values graphically, rather than just in a list. Here is one example of Indigenous perspectives on the meanings of water.



Adapted from © Darlene Sanderson

The Chiefs of Ontario organised a workshop with Elders in Ontario and asked questions to elicit words used to describe water, traditional teachings around water, actions needed to make good decisions around water, and protocols that should be followed when using water. These are questions you can ask all the people and groups in your First Nation. Some values that were identified during the discussions held by the Chiefs of Ontario are:



“A sense that water is life.

More than just supporting life, many Aboriginal people express the idea that water IS life. Water is the first environment for new life within a woman’s body, and it continues to be a crucial component of all later stages of life. Without water, life does not exist...

The knowledge that water is the blood of Mother Earth:

Water (as well as rocks, the wind, and all other components of the Earth, including Earth itself) is considered a living entity. Water has just as much right to live as we do. One of the many roles of water is to bring nutrients to the body of the Earth (the land) as it flows through the Earth’s blood vessels (waterways)....



A profound respect for water:

All these aspects of the importance of water lead directly to a profound respect for water common to many Aboriginal people. This is illustrated in part by the fact that water is a key component in many Creation stories and cultural ceremonies.”

~ Chiefs of Ontario (2006, p.7-8)

Story





Simpcw First Nation has created a Water Statement, which describes the First Nation's relationship with water and values relating to water in this way:

- “1. We, the Simpcw First Nation, affirm our relationship to Mother Earth and responsibility to future generations to raise our voices to speak for the protection of water. We were placed in a sacred manner on this earth, each in our own sacred and traditional lands and territories to care for all of creation and to care for water.
2. We recognize, honor and respect water as sacred and sustains all life. Our traditional knowledge, laws and ways of life teach us to be responsible in caring for this sacred gift that connects all life.
3. Our relationship with our lands, territories and water is the fundamental physical cultural and spiritual basis for our existence. This relationship to our Mother Earth requires us to conserve our freshwaters and oceans for the survival of present and future generations. We assert our role as caretakers with rights and responsibilities to defend and ensure the protection, availability and purity of water. We stand united to follow and implement our knowledge and traditional laws and exercise our right of self-determination to preserve water, and to preserve life.”

~ Simpcw First Nation (2010, p.1)

LANGUAGE

Quotes



Why language is important to describing your relationship to water

Language has a profound effect on how people think about the world. It shapes people's worldviews and defines people's relationships to people, animals, plants and the whole environment. Cultural protocols or concepts are communicated through language, and often lose some of this meaning when translated. As noted in the previous section, many western terms around watersheds or watershed planning reflect values that may or may not be relevant for your First Nation. Explaining things in your own terms and language, such as your relationship to the watershed, or using particular words for water or for working together, will be far more powerful and relevant to your community than using terms developed by others.



“Our language is our power. We need to use our language to protect our lands and waters. We will need to use our language because our knowledge and values are imbedded with a sacred bond.”

~ Eli Baxter (2010)

“Water is alive, and is life itself. All life on this earth depends on healthy water for survival. Some of the words for ‘water’ in First Nation languages reflect this worldview. Water is a relation, and it connects us to all other living things in the ‘web’ of life. As we humans co-exist with the water, we have to care for the water in order for water to be clean. The presence and sanctity of water infuse all aspects of First Nations’ existence.”

~ Chiefs of Ontario (2006, p.10)

“Relationships can be seen, as well, in the words used in Cree for waterway and for life (pimiciwan and pimitisiwin)...Cree beliefs include that the rivers are the veins of Mother Earth, and those veins bring food and nutrients to the rest of the body, meaning all living things on Earth, thereby creating the potential for life.”

~ Darlene Sanderson (2008, p.90, following Jean Aquash O’Chiesse)



It is worth exploring whether some people know particular terms in your local language that reflect special meanings and values around water or the watershed. These words can offer insights into your First Nation's relationship with water and how people should treat water. If these terms exist, it may be beneficial to talk with your First Nation to see if the membership wants to bring them into the watershed planning process. They can be used to represent particular aspects or concepts that are important to the planning process, whether internally when talking about watershed planning with your First Nation, or with outsiders at the regional level.

The key is describing things in your terms

Your local language may or may not be widely used in your First Nation. Describing and documenting things in your own

terms and language can serve as a great opportunity to research, revitalise and build on your local language, even if it is not widely spoken. If your local language is no longer spoken in your First Nation, there is still an opportunity to describe concepts with words that are grounded in your worldviews through the English or French language. The key is that you are describing ideas and concepts in ways that are relevant to your First Nation.

As you talk about relevant words with the members of your First Nation, it is important to try to get consensus on the use of these terms and their meanings at the local level (versus speaking with one or two members). By doing this you will be verifying and endorsing these terms and meanings locally first, which is important before sharing them at a regional level.



Creating Relevant Environmental Terms Based on Traditional Teachings

In *Staying the Course, Staying Alive – Coastal First Nations Fundamental Truths: Biodiversity, Stewardship and Sustainability*, Frank and Kathy Brown explored Indigenous stories and ideas that communicated western terms such as stewardship. Elders from three Coastal First Nations shared their thoughts on “fundamental truths or core values related to biodiversity, sustainability and stewardship” (Brown, F. and Y.K. Brown, 2009, p. xiii). These were expressed through seven fundamental truths, based in the lands, waters, and histories of each of the three coastal First Nations. (Brown, F. and Y.K. Brown, 2009, p.xiii-xiv)

Fundamental Truth 1:

Creation

“We the coastal first peoples have been in our respective territories (homelands) since the beginning of time.”

Fundamental Truth 2:

Connection to Nature

“We are all one and our lives are interconnected.”

Fundamental Truth 3:

Respect

“All life has equal value. We acknowledge and respect that all plants and animals have a life force.”

Fundamental Truth 4:

Knowledge

“Our Traditional Knowledge of sustainable resource use and management is reflected in our intimate relationship with nature and its predictable seasonal cycles and indicators of renewal of life and subsistence.”

Fundamental Truth 5:

Stewardship

“We are stewards of the land and sea from which we live, knowing that our health as a people and our society is intricately tied to the health of the land and waters.”

Fundamental Truth 6:

Sharing

“We have a responsibility to share and support to provide strength and make others stronger in order for our world to survive.”

Fundamental Truth 7:

Adapting to Change

“Environmental, demographic, socio-political and cultural changes have occurred since the creator placed us in our homelands and we have continuously adapted to and survived these changes.”

Redefining existing words related to the watershed

One way you can explore community definitions of terms is to talk about government and academic terms relating to water and watershed planning and to consider how relevant they might be to your First Nation. This is important because you will likely have to use these academic and government terms when getting involved in watershed planning and getting the interpretation of these terms from your community will be helpful in explaining and sharing the perspectives of your First Nation.

You can ask your membership how they understand the government/academic terms to determine whether or not there is any similarity in the understanding of the terms. There may be another word in your local language that expresses more clearly what your First Nation would like to convey, or you may use the English word, but in a different way from how a non-First Nation community would. If the western terms do not make sense for your First Nation, then you need to help your First Nation redefine them, or create new terms. This will help your First Nation better understand and support watershed planning efforts and communicate your perspectives to outsiders.



When CIER staff met with the Eskasoni Source Water Protection Committee ('the Committee') to develop a vision for the source water protection plan, the group had an initial discussion about 'source water' and what source water protection meant versus watershed protection. The Committee had a different perspective on 'source water' than the typical definition for this term.

'Source water' (and its protection) is usually interpreted as protecting the drinking water source for a community, which encompasses a smaller area than a watershed. From the perspective of the Committee, source water protection meant protecting all water, right to the 'source'. The 'source' could describe the tap, as well as the ocean, a cloud, the ground, and our bodies, since water passes through all things in a cyclical way. In contrast, the Committee saw that a 'watershed' covers only a small area, which is more limiting.

These different definitions would change how you would go about developing a source water protection plan, and illustrates the importance of talking about how terms are defined, and finding common definitions or words for each idea.





These terms are examples of the types of academic/government words you may want to explore with your First Nation in order to find your own ways of describing/defining them:

- Watershed
- Sustainability
- Ecology
- Biodiversity
- Stewardship
- Keystone species
- Source water
- Groundwater
- Aquifer



Finding words unique to your First Nation about their relationship to water and the watershed

Another way to find relevant terms (without needing to reinterpret an existing word) that convey your relationship to water or the watershed is to ask community members directly. Learn more about the words for water, the watershed and words related to water, caring for water, using / bringing water,

animals and water, plants and water, different parts of the river, how it flows, etc. This can happen informally, through one-on-one discussions with community members, or can be through an organised meeting. Even if you are not focusing specifically on language during an organised meeting about the watershed, pay attention to see if any words come up about water or how people interact with water that you will explore in more detail at a later gathering.

Story



Yecwiminte Temicw – Taking Care of the Land

“When the Secwepemc were collectively managing the land and its resources they referred to it as yecwiminte temicw which roughly translates to “Taking care of the land”. But our language is of a far deeper meaning [and] the translation into semastin or English loses some of its clarity.

This phrase encompassed so much more and was of prime importance to the nation as a whole. Because it encompassed our belief system and high reverence for the land and everything upon it. Those words when spoken have a powerful meaning within the nation because it reminds us that no one individual can speak to the land question or to the resources or the value upon the land. Because this phrase also implies a collaborative effort put forth by all members of the nation. The system involved everyone collectively managing the land base where all decisions were thought of carefully by both men and women.

For instance it was the women who decided where to pick berries and dig potatoes and other root sources from year to year. It was the men’s decisions to determine where and when to hunt for game. This process of management or system was known as *yecwiminte temicw* and was used throughout the Secwepemc nation.”

~ Joe Jules, Simpcw First Nation, personal communication (March 9, 2010)

Story



Using Mi'kmaq Terms in Environmental Initiatives

For the Mi'kmaq in Cape Breton, there are a number of words in their language that are relevant to watershed use and guide people's relationship to the watershed. The Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) uses these ideas and concepts in their communications (e.g. newsletters, emails) to the Mi'kmaq communities that they serve.

Tetpaqo'tmnej is a Mi'kmaq word that means 'using things properly', 'let's take care of it', 'considering all aspects' or 'action is harmonious'. UINR used this term as the concept title for a brochure on protecting eelgrass.

Sespite'tmnej means 'we are worried; concerned', 'worry about what you do', 'action is guided', which was used in eel habitat protection documents. Shelley Denney (Biologist and Research Coordinator with UINR) explains that this word is similar to the concept of stewardship: it is because of their concern that they adopt certain actions.

Pekajo'tmnej is a Mi'kmaq word that means 'to have for a long time'. This word was used in a lobster stewardship document, to communicate the idea of keeping the lobster for a long time.



The word *Netukulimk* has been described as 'how one sustains itself', 'developing the skills and sense of responsibility required to become a protector of other species', 'co-existence, interconnectedness, community spirit', 'the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community', and 'achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardising the integrity, diversity, or productivity of our environment'.

Elder Albert Marshall says that *Netukulimk* takes you to a place where you are very conscious of how humans, the two-leggeds, are interdependent on and interconnected with the natural world; this becomes so embedded in the subconscious that you do not create imbalance in the natural world. He says that when the Mi'kmaq are engaged in these three concept/verbs (*tetpaqo'tmnej*, *sespite'tmnej* and *pekajo'tmnej*) then they have achieved *netukulimk*. *Netukulimk* is not a word that is used everyday but encompasses all the other words and serves as a guiding principle.



What to do with these words defined by your First Nation

Once you have gone through the process of redefining environmental terms in a way that is relevant to your First Nation or finding new terms or concepts that reflect your First Nation's relationship to the watershed, there are a number of ways that they can be used in the planning process. These terms could be used to name a group or initiative related to watershed planning. They could be included in watershed planning communication materials (newsletters or brochures) to the membership and wider community. Or they could become a part of values or principles of your local watershed planning group and the regional steering committee.

Finding words in your language to inform the watershed planning process

Another way to bring your language into the watershed planning process is to talk to people in your First Nation about words or concepts in their language that could help guide the watershed planning process. Although these words may not relate specifically to water, they may be important in explaining how your First Nation approaches partnerships and planning. These might include words about how people work together, work in partnerships, governance, or a good life. Find out if there are particular ideas or concepts about how people work together that are important to include when working inside the community or in a regional partnership.

Pitu'paq Partnership Society

"Pitu'paq was formed in 2001 as a partnership between the five municipal units and the five Mi'kmaq communities of Cape Breton/Unama'ki. Pitu'paq works collaboratively to address and work on the sewage problems in the Bras d'Or Lake. The name Pitu'paq is the Mi'kmaq word for the Bras d'Or meaning 'flowing into oneness'. Pitu'paq represents not only the geographic area, but also the spirit of support and cooperation among the cultures and communities, coming together for a common purpose."

~ Pitu'paq Partnership Society
(date unknown)

Story



Story



There are a number of Cree words that describe ways of working together. The word *Miyo-wicehtowin* means working well together, or good relationship. This can be understood to mean that good things come from good relationships or people working well together. It also implies that you cannot have good things happen without it. Another Cree word, *mâmawi-atoskêwak* means we all work altogether.

What words in your language relate to governance and how can these inform the process of planning and working together?

Story



Isaak – A Way of Working Together

In Hupacasath First Nation, the word *Isaak* means ‘respect’ in the Nuučaan’uł language. *Isaak* is a word that was taught to Hupacasath members to explain how to relate and communicate with each other. *Isaak* may be used in a prayer or opening to a meeting. *Isaak* means listen to the speakers and use a respectable language. *Isaak* is what you show the family and guests that visit or do business with the Community. There are many reasons to show *Isaak*. Although it is not a word that is used everyday, it should be thought of daily when relating to others.





The vision is a picture of the future but is best written down using the present tense. Write it like it already exists and feel the power of expressing it in this way!

A vision statement uses nouns and verbs – this is what we are, we have, we do.

A mission statement includes the actions and outlines how to achieve the vision. It can be developed later.



Tip

Why it is good to develop a community vision for the watershed

At this point, you have gathered all kinds of information about your First Nation's values, language, knowledge, rights, and governance. You have talked to many people in the community, and are beginning to develop a good picture of your First Nation's relationship with water and the watershed. Before you get into the details about the current state of the water, the watershed, community and industrial development in the area, you should engage people in an inspiring conversation about their vision for the watershed in the future – what they imagine and 'see' in 40 to 50 years.

What is a vision?

A vision is what your First Nation members imagine the watershed will look like in an ideal future. This is an opportunity to create a picture, with words, images and artwork, of that future that people can imagine and 'see' is possible. The process of creating

the vision, and the vision itself, will generate excitement and energy and help keep people motivated through what will likely be a long-term planning process. The vision will be what your First Nation can take to the regional planning process to share as a vision for the future of the watershed.

Bringing your First Nation's vision to the regional planning table

Developing a vision for the watershed will be a process that the broader planning forum and steering committee (representing all the interest groups in the watershed) engage in as well. Having a discussion within your First Nation first allows your representative(s) at the regional process to share their First Nation's ideas with confidence and certainty. Your First Nation's articulation of the future, through this vision, should have a strong foundation in the values and culture of your First Nation. Bringing your First Nation's vision to the broader planning table helps to share not only the community's vision but also its values.

Quotes



The Simpcw First Nation Vision Statement is:

"The Simpcw are a Culturally Proud Community, valuing Healthy, Holistic Lifestyles based upon Respect, Responsibility and Continuous Participation in Growth and Education."

~ Simpcw First Nation (2011)

The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council vision statement is:

"...to be able to drink water directly from the Yukon River".

~ The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (2008)



Creating a Vision for the Water

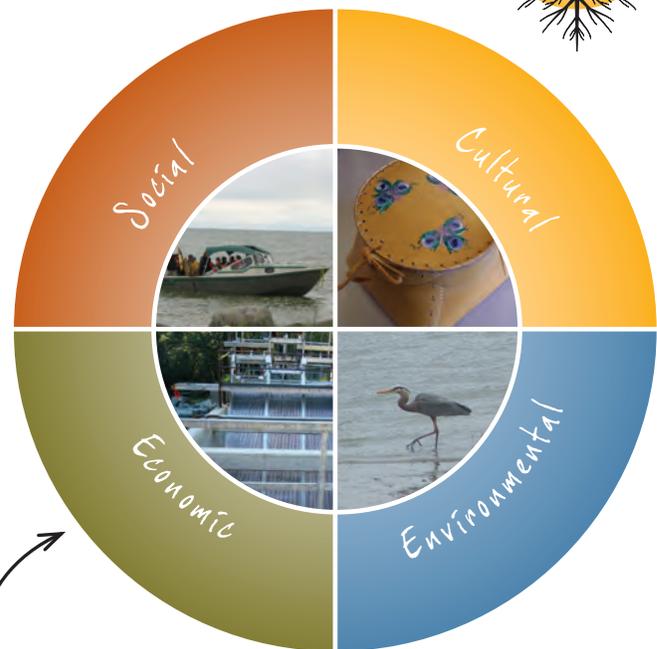
Developing a vision can be a long process, but it is worth investing the time to gather ideas from a wide range of people. The workshop described here will take two to three hours; you may want to repeat it a few times with different groups, such as Elders, youth, children, men, and women.

You will need: sticky notes, pens, pencils, large image of the four pillars (printed out or drawn on a blackboard), and a flipchart with paper and markers.

To start the visioning process, gather people together to talk about how your First Nation relates to water. You can use the four areas of sustainability (environment, economy, society, culture) as a way to bring together and talk about the many ways in which water is important. These four areas represent the four components of a sustainable community. Water is important to each of these areas, but in very different ways.

Talk about how you use and relate to water today in each of these areas:

- **Environment:** How is water important for the environment? Who and what else uses water? How do you relate to the water as part of the environment? (e.g. plants, animals, being outside, etc)
- **Economy:** How is water important for the economy? Do economic uses of water benefit or harm the watershed? What is your relationship with water through the economy? (e.g. jobs, economic development, etc)
- **Society:** How is water important for society? What are social uses of water? How are social relationships formed with water, or through water? (e.g. swimming, transportation, health, etc)
- **Culture:** How is water important for culture? What is your culture's relationship with water? How does your culture support, and how is it supported by, water? (e.g. medicines, fish and other traditional foods, etc)



The four areas come together in the Sustainability Wheel to create a sustainable community.

Different people will have different relationships with water and use water in different ways. Some answers fit into more than one category, so do not worry about being exact. Write the ideas on flipchart paper, and post them on the wall so that as you continue on with the activity, people can refer to these ideas.

It is likely that people will talk about the watershed's strengths, as well as challenges facing the watershed. This is an important conversation to have as well, but keep the conversation focused to the watershed! Sometimes people can spin off into other areas, which are equally important, but not the priority at the moment. Write these ideas and comments down on a 'parking lot' chart paper to refer to later in the planning process.

Once you know more about your First Nation's relationship with water today, invite everyone to close their eyes and imagine their First Nation 40 or 50 years into the future. What would the watershed look like? What would be the best use of the water and the lands in the watershed? What are people doing? What are the animals and plants like? How do the different communities and industries in the watershed related to each other and water?

Hand out sticky notes or index cards and ask people to write down what they saw – one idea per paper. There are no wrong ideas! Any idea that people have for what they would like the watershed to look like in 40 or 50 years important and useful for developing the vision.

Draw a large sustainability wheel on some paper or a blackboard, with the four areas clearly labelled. Ask people to put their sticky notes on the wheel in the area where they feel it best fits. Some ideas might be connected to more than one area and people can place their notes to show this relationship (e.g. on a line, or in the middle).

Once everyone has put their notes on the wheel, talk about what you see – is there one area with a lot of ideas? Is this because this is an area that currently has gaps and needs to be strengthened? Are there gaps – areas with very few ideas? Why is this – is this area doing well or was it missed for some reason?

Work with your group of people to identify similar ideas and create groupings of ideas that are related to each other. Try to come up with a theme name that represents each grouping. Ask 'why' having this or doing this is important for the First Nation and the watershed and write down these ideas.

Use these themes and ideas to craft a vision statement about the watershed. Put them together in different ways, add in words to fill in gaps between ideas, play with the different ideas that came up through the conversation, and see what emerges! The draft vision will be a picture of the watershed in the future that inspires and motivates people to action.



Watershed Planning in Fisher River Cree Nation

Fisher River Cree Nation (FRCN) developed a vision for the Fisher River watershed through a series of community workshops led by CIER. A few of these workshops were with high school students.

The sessions began with background on what a watershed is, and what watershed planning means. CIER then asked the students about what water means to them, and how they use water. The students had lots of ideas, ranging from drinking water to transportation (by boat or canoe) to fishing to swimming. They also noted that plants, animals, birds and fish also use water in the watershed.

CIER then talked about the four areas of sustainability – environment, economy, society and culture – and asked the students to imagine themselves and FRCN in 50 years. What they would like to see in the community and the watershed relating to water? The students were given sticky notes and asked to write down their ideas and then to stick them up on the big sustainability wheel. Their vision for the Fisher River watershed included the importance of clean water and drinkable water; being able to go swimming in the river; hunting and fishing; and cleaning up garbage and using recycling to keep Fisher River clean. They also mentioned picking wecase (a wild medicine) and having an economically stable community with a good fishing industry.

At one of the sessions, there was some extra time, so CIER asked the students to think of how to create this vision. They suggested a number of actions, including:

- Protecting and adding wetlands, trees and forests
- Preserving knowledge of land, animals, preservation/conservation principles in Indigenous cultures
- Maintaining the new water treatment plant
- Starting a recycling program and a composting program,
- Removing garbage from the community, especially poisonous garbage,
- Removing pesticides and herbicides that might come from farms, and
- Keeping foreign or invasive species of animals out of the area.

Not only did the students develop a vision for the water, but they were able to create the beginnings of a plan to address some of their concerns!

Building a Common Vision: The Eskasoni Water Source Protection Committee

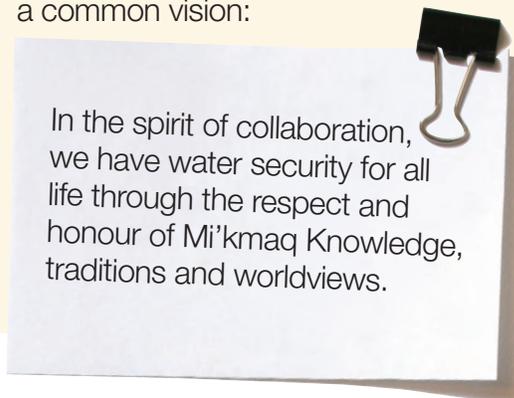
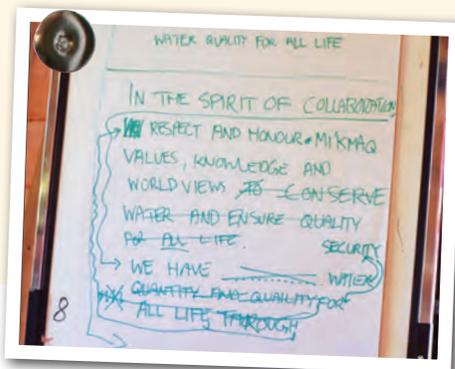
The Chief and Council in Eskasoni First Nation, in Cape Breton, decided that the community should be actively protecting its own water. To do so, they brought together local interested community members, the land manager, an Elder, First Nation organisation representatives, and federal and provincial government representatives to form the Eskasoni Water Source Protection Committee. Before the committee could proceed in developing a plan to protect the water that worked for all perspectives, they decided to articulate a common vision with the assistance of CIER.

Members of the committee gathered for a half-day session to arrive at a common vision. The visioning exercise began with a discussion of what a vision can look like, and why a well-constructed vision can help guide the committee. This was followed by a discussion about water – committee members spoke of the difficulties in involving community members, about the taste of chlorinated water treatment, and how Mi'kmaq values could play a stronger role in their relationship to their water. With these water issues on the mind, the committee began to imagine their own personal visions. First they closed their eyes and imagined they were flying over the community 20 years later. Then they were asked about what they saw and how the community was relating to water. After two minutes, everyone wrote down descriptions of what they saw in their thoughts. One by one, each description was placed under

one of the four areas of sustainability: social, cultural, economical, or environmental. Not all the descriptions fit only in one area, so these were placed near or between areas. After a short while, all of the descriptions were assembled in a jumbled array; hidden within them was the common vision. The group set about arranging the descriptions into seven overarching themes, and discussed how each theme related to the others and what other issues or themes might also be added, such as water rights.



These themes were then strung together into a sentence that was at first hard to read and difficult to understand, yet packed with powerful ideas. The group began to mix and remix the sentence. One change led to another, leading up to the final vision. Seemingly in an instant, the sentence became complete, both inspiring and powerful. A collection of views and values brought together a common vision:





What to do after the visioning exercise

Once you have drafted a vision statement, you should check in with members of your First Nation to make sure people agree with the draft vision statement. As you verify the vision statement with people, consider answering the following questions: Does it convey what people would like to see for the watershed? Is it something that people would be comfortable sharing with others in the watershed? Keep in mind that it might take some wordsmithing or rewording of the ideas in the statement before people agree with it – or it might be something people agree with right away.

When the vision statement is ready and agreed upon, you need to get it endorsed or approved by your First Nation using whatever formal process is appropriate (e.g. a band council resolution, ratification). Once your First Nation approves the vision statement, celebrate and share the vision with the members! Some ideas to celebrate are: make a poster of the vision to put on display, put it in the community newspaper, or have a feast in your First Nation. Publicising the vision statement is a good way to remind people about the project, and to motivate people to think more and get involved in the watershed planning process.

CONCLUSION

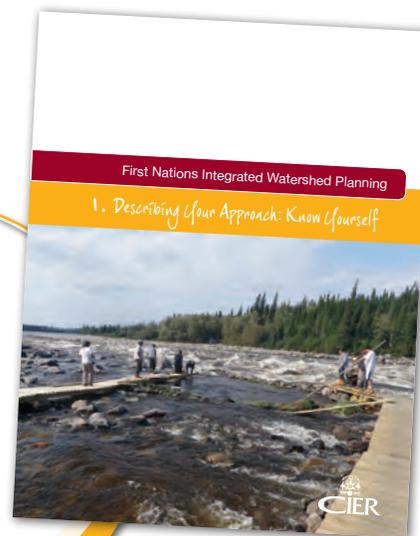
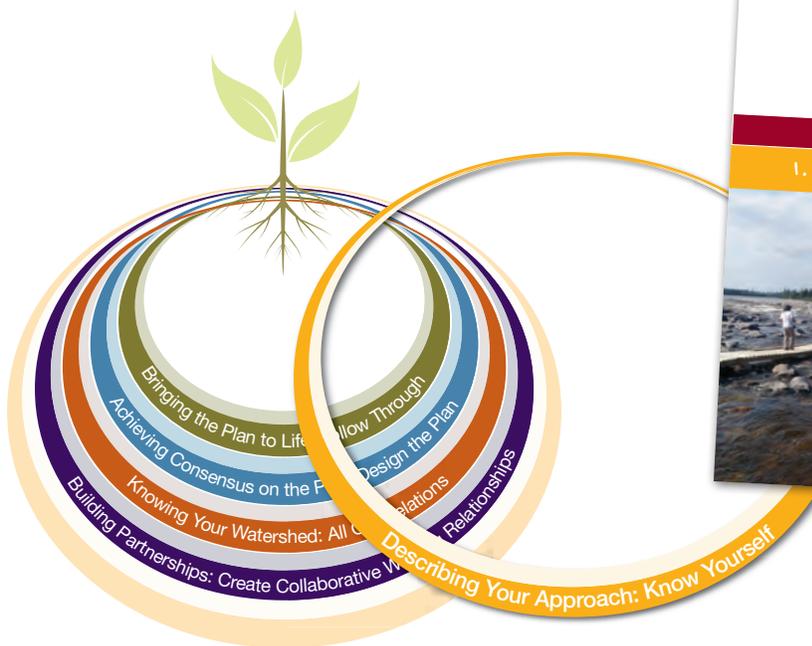
Through the use of this guidebook, you have come to know your First Nation, and you have gathered some information about your First Nation's relationship to water and to the watershed. As a result of the discussions you had with the members about their values, language and knowledge about the watershed, a community vision emerged.

At this point, if you worked your way through this guidebook, you will have:

- An understanding of who you will talk to in your First Nation about watershed planning, and some ideas about how to engage them in the process
- A definition of what Indigenous Knowledge means and looks like in your First Nation
- An overview of governance and decision-making processes in your First Nation, including traditional laws
- Protocols for gathering Indigenous Knowledge
- A strong understanding of your inherent, Aboriginal, and treaty rights

- An understanding of your First Nation's values relating to water
- A list of words (in English or in your local language) and ideas relating to water and planning that have particular relevance for your First Nation and
- A community vision for the watershed that you can share with a regional watershed planning process.

The next guidebook, *Building Partnerships*, looks at the process of working with the wider community to develop a regional watershed plan. As you are researching your watershed, you can build relationships and work with others who are also concerned about the health of the watershed. The information you have gathered here and the partnerships you will develop through the next guidebook will support your First Nation as you move towards starting or joining a more formal watershed planning process.



Guidebook #1

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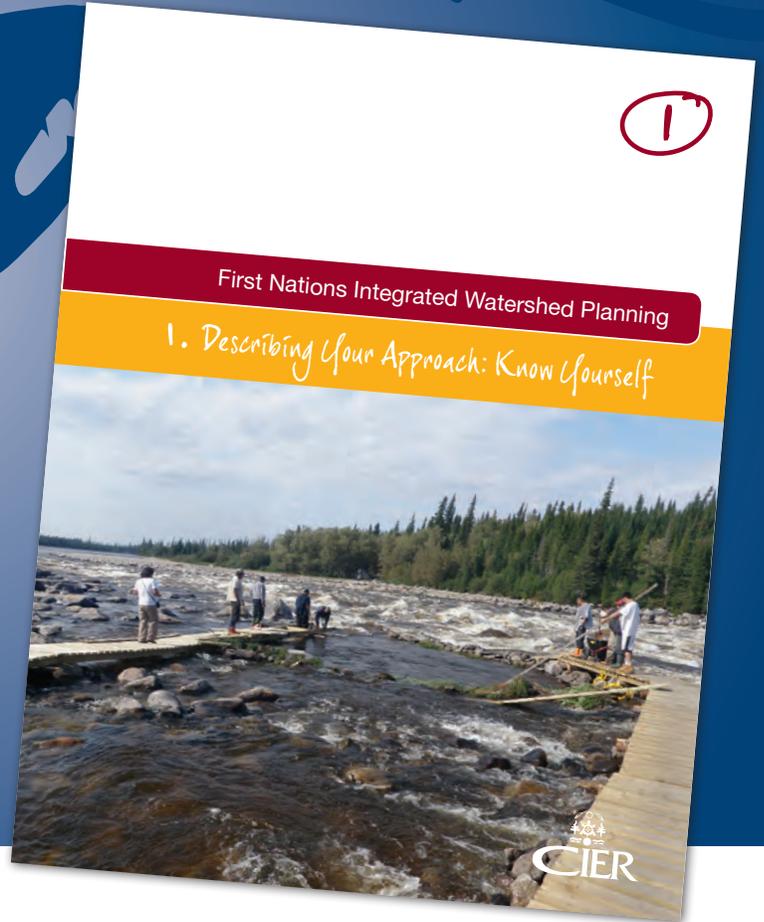
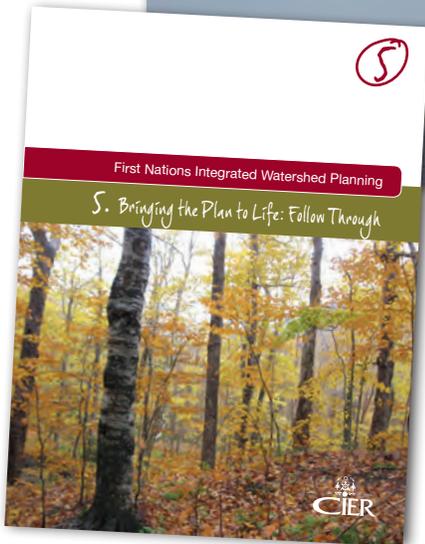
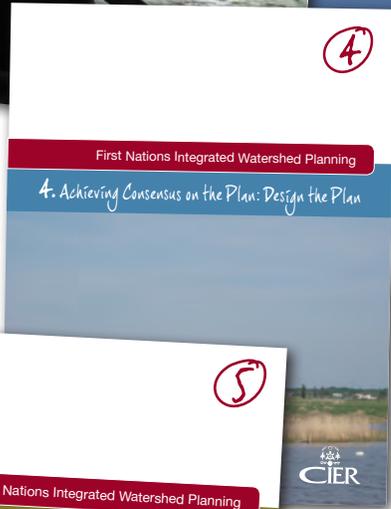
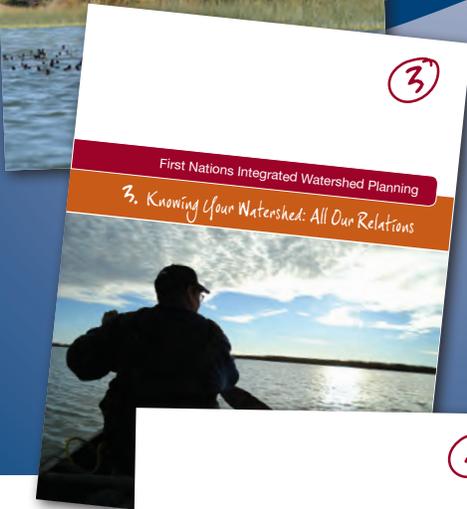
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The First Nations Watershed Planning Guidebooks offer an approach to watershed planning that is led by and grounded in the voices, values and priorities of First Nations.



This guidebook discusses:
Gathering People from Your Nation
Indigenous Knowledge
Governance
Protocols and Laws
Rights, Values, Language, Vision