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December 15, 2004

Yukon at a Crossroads: The Development Choices Facing First Nations

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MAIS 701

Abstract

It is a very exciting time in the Yukon. There are discussions underway about major nonrenewable resource development, the building of a pipeline from Alaska through the Yukon to the southern United States, and the building of a railroad from Alaska that will also move through the Yukon. There are also small agricultural projects being pursued along with sustainable activities like tourism. It is a time of optimism and hope. There are major decisions to be made about how Yukon First Nations will be developed and what type of society First Nations and non-First Nations wish to collectively create. This paper explores some of the options that are available to First Nations that have finalized their land claims and self-government agreements. While all Yukoners may not agree on how development should occur, all would like to create a brighter future for themselves and future generations. The challenge will be to maintain the environment and scenic appeal of the Yukon while at the same time enhancing the economy.

This paper is about the need for sustainable development among Yukon First Nations. Ironically, while this term appears in many government and First Nation's documents there is a considerable difference in how this term is used and what it means to the Federal Government and First Nations. This paper, among other things, explores how the Federal Government uses the term "sustainable development" in a misleading and self-serving way that does little, if anything, to promote the well-being of future generations of Yukon First Nation's people. Self-government agreements also make reference to sustainability, but unlike the Federal Government documents I have read, do

not suggest that nonrenewable resources are a sustainable resource that can provide ongoing benefits.

The abuses the government and churches have inflicted on First Nation's people in residential schools may simply take a different form, with the partnership now being one between the government and multi national resource extraction companies that have as their primary interest profit rather than the welfare of local people. The government removes barriers to unsustainable non renewable resource development and multi national companies then come in, take the resources they wish and leave with little regard for local people, communities or economies unless they are required to negotiate local employment and training agreements.

The issue of sustainable development is a critical one if First Nations are to fully benefit from the development of their lands. It is very important that varying definitions of the term "sustainable development" are reconciled prior to major development occurring.

Introduction

The Yukon is the most westerly territory in Canada. Within the Yukon there are fourteen First Nations. As First Nation's land claims are signed they create stability in terms of the status of land. This in turn creates an economic environment where investment in exploration and extraction of nonrenewable resources is more likely to occur. Companies are seldom willing to invest major amounts of capital knowing that they could be asked to leave the land on which they are working, or that their work could be halted due to disputes over land ownership. In the 2002 Yukon Government Throne

Speech the following priorities were identified which show the link between land claims and economic development,

- Rebuilding the economy.
- Completing and implementing land claims.
- Formalizing government to government relationships with First Nations.
- Making First Nations full partners in the economic development of the territory.
- Implementing and improving devolution.
- Achieving a proper balance between the economy and the environment.
- Achieving a better quality of life.
- Practicing good government.

(<http://www.gov.yk.ca/pubs/2003/thronespeech.html>)

It is clear that the settling of land claims is a critical step in terms of the Yukon being able to move forward in the area of macro economic development. The government wishes to remove barriers that have made it difficult to attract companies to engage in large scale nonrenewable resource extraction. Creating certainty about the status of land is a very important element of creating an environment where companies are more likely to invest in the Yukon.

First Nations do not see land as a commodity to be traded and sold, but rather as part of that which defines who they are. There is a spiritual link between First Nation's people and the land and it will be important that the exploitation of resources does not diminish the First Nation's capacity to maintain a spiritual relationship with the land on which they depend.

Throughout this document, reference will be made to the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA). The Umbrella Final Agreement is, “An historic document that forms the basis for settlement of outstanding land claims.” (Understanding the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement: A Land Claim Settlement Information Package 4th edition, 1997, p.2) Since all Yukon Land Claim Final Agreements are based on the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement the clauses cited in this paper are common to all Yukon First Nation agreements. The various agreements do differ, but these differences are based primarily on regional differences. For example, there may be a clause about sheep hunting in one agreement, but not in another because there are no sheep local to that area. These agreements may include final agreements, self-government agreements and implementation agreements. Therefore a reference to one agreement could be made citing any of the agreements.

As land claims are signed First Nations are finding themselves confronted with choices about the types of communities and economies they wish to develop. These choices will have a profound impact on their citizens today and those of future generations. That is why sustainable development is of such critical importance.

This paper explores what Yukon First Nations agreements are about, the implications of choices that First Nations may make regarding economic and community development, and how self-government agreements may change Yukon First Nations communities and the Yukon as a whole.

While there are conflicting opinions about whether or not First Nation's people are stewards of the land, this paper will not enter into this debate. For the purposes of this paper it will be assumed that there is generally a healthy relationship between First

Nation's people and their environment. A healthy relationship implies respect for the environment and the recognition that sustainable harvesting of renewable resources is desirable. It also means that the environmental impacts of nonrenewable resource development need to be mitigated to the greatest degree possible.

Yukon First Nations

The Government of Canada has committed itself to recognizing, “The inherent right of self-government by First Nation’s people.” (Tr’ondek Hwech’in Self-Government Agreement, 1998, Preamble) According to the document, ‘Understanding the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement: A Land Claim Settlement Information Package, 4th edition’ the term self-government is defined in the following way,

It is the system that we use to govern the affairs of our communities. This may refer to education, justice, health care and management of our lands. Self-government may have different meanings for different people. However, it is generally considered to be a government under the control and direction of people living in the community. To Yukon First Nations, self-government means Yukon Indian People controlling and directing their own affairs in accordance with their aboriginal rights as recognized in their Yukon First Nation Final and Self-Government Agreements. (1997, p.68)

The concept of the inherent right to self-government recognizes that First Nation’s people within the Yukon, “Have traditional decision-making institutions and practices, integrated with a contemporary form of government.” (Tr’ondek Hwech’in Self-Government Agreement, 1998, Preamble) Self-government agreements are designed to, “Promote opportunities for the well-being of Citizens equal to those of other Canadians and to providing essential public services of reasonable quality to all Citizens.” (Tr’ondek Hwech’in Self-Government Agreement, 1998, p.4) Further, these agreements contain clauses that protect First Nations against any reductions in rights they have enjoyed prior

to the signing of a self-government agreement. The ‘Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Self-Government Agreement’ states that,

3.1 This Agreement shall not affect any aboriginal claim, right, title or interest of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations or of its citizens.

3.2 This Agreement shall not affect the identity of Citizens as aboriginal people of Canada.

3.3 This Agreement shall not affect the ability of aboriginal people of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to exercise, or benefit from, any existing or future constitutional rights for aboriginal people that may be applicable to them.

3.4 Unless otherwise provided pursuant to this Agreement or in a law enacted by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, this Agreement shall not affect the ability of Citizens to participate in and benefit from Government programs for status Indians, nonstatus Indians or native people, as the case may be. Benefits under such programs shall be determined by the general criteria for such programs established from time to time. (1993, p.4, 5)

Yukon self-government agreements enhance the ability of local First Nation’s people to make decisions and solve problems that have a direct impact on their lives. They, however also require willingness by people to exercise their rights and participate in the democratic process. As Alinsky says, “One hundred and thirty-five years ago Tocqueville gravely warned that unless individual citizens were regularly involved in the action of governing themselves, self-government would pass from the scene.” (1972, p. xxv) The same may be true today because rights that are not exercised may be more easily lost. With an increase in rights comes an increase in responsibilities. The effectiveness of self-government will be determined to some extent by the degree of inclusiveness of First Nation's residents in the governing process. It will also be determined by management practices, accountability, leadership and capacity.

Self-government agreements allow for services to be provided locally in a culturally sensitive manner that recognizes the traditional practices and beliefs of First

Nation's people. This is critical to being able to develop a community where cultural knowledge and belief systems are transmitted from one generation to the next. This allows for the retention of traditional values and heritage over time. (Understanding the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement: A Land Claim Settlement Information Package, 1997, p. 34)

After the signing of self-government agreements further negotiations are entered into to transfer control of the following government functions from the Federal to First Nation's governments,

- 24.2.1.3 community development and social programs;
- 24.2.1.4 education and training;
- 24.2.1.5 communications;
- 24.2.1.6 cultural and aboriginal languages;
- 24.2.1.7 spiritual beliefs and languages;
- 24.2.1.8 health services;
- 24.2.1.9 personnel administration;
- 24.2.1.10 civil and family matters;
- 24.2.1.11 subject to federal tax Law, the raising of revenue for local purposes;
- 24.2.1.12 economic development;
- 24.2.1.13 the administration of justice and the maintenance of law and order;
- 24.2.1.14 relations with Canada, the Yukon and local governments;
- 24.2.1.15 financial transfer agreements;
- 24.2.1.16 and implementation plan, and
- 24.2.1.17 all matters ancillary to the foregoing, or as may otherwise be agreed.

(Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement, 1993, p. 350)

When a self-government agreement is signed it sets the stage for further negotiations beyond those related to land, taxation, compensation, nonrenewable resources, heritage, fish and wildlife, forests, water and royalties. (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement, 1993, p. i-ix) The actual way in which a First Nations community functions is to a large extent determined by negotiations beyond those that take place to settle a

land claim. Land claims negotiations are about the management, access and ownership of resources. The negotiations that occur after a Land Claim Final Agreement has been signed are about people, their quality of life, community priorities and associated resource allocation. It should be noted; however that resource management can have a profound impact on the daily lives of First Nation's citizens. This becomes clear when a local mine is started or a fishery or forestry operation closes. Issues such as training, employment and environmental concerns may be directly related to resource management on First Nation's land. So the successful completion of land claim negotiations requires that further issues be negotiated in order that the benefits of a land claim can be fully enjoyed by local First Nation's people. For example, if mining is to occur on First Nation's land, local First Nation's people may require training and education to benefit from the new jobs that are created. Without training and education local people may not qualify for jobs that have resulted from nonrenewable resource development or other initiatives. Land claims are about securing resources and other rights, while subsequent negotiations will result in programs and services that prepare people too fully benefit from land claims. This may be in the reverse order from the ideal. The ideal may be where First Nation's residents receive training in preparation for jobs prior to nonrenewable resource development occurring after a land claim is signed.

Sustainable Development" Federal Government Confusion

First Nation's define sustainable development in a way that differs from the federal government with whom they negotiate land claims. This definition states that sustainable development is, "Beneficial socio-economic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which communities and societies are dependent."

(<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca>) This definition makes sense but is not consistent with comments made by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Andy Mitchell. Mitchell says that,

While sustainability issues have not changed from previous years, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's (INAC) approach to handling them has. This strategy is more holistic, and the scope longer term. It focuses on supporting community development by addressing some cornerstones of sustainability that First Nations, Inuit and Northerners have indicated they need. It has been designed to guide communities toward a more sustainable future (<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca>)

The Minister's lack of understanding, as compared to that of First Nations is highly disappointing. Sustainability is not based on the degree of longevity, but is ongoing. Sustainability is "longer term" may merely suggest that new mineral resource discoveries suggest longer mine life, given that the Federal Government refers to diamond mining as the "gem" of northern sustainable development. Within this rhetoric the Minister suggests that his only motivation for implementing what he errantly considers sustainable development is for the benefit of Indians, Inuit and other Northerners but forgets to mention that the brunt of any benefits will be received by nonrenewable resource extraction companies, and the Yukon Territorial and Federal Governments. This might have been a mere oversight on the part of the Minister, however when one looks at other definitions of sustainable development used by Federal Government departments it is clear that this term is either being strategically misused with the intent of creating the illusion of a bright future, or there is virtually no coordination and communication between Federal Government Departments. Either way one thing is obvious and that is that First Nations are having to negotiate with a Government that is either deliberately misleading them or has departments that operate in isolation of one another and will not,

or cannot, communicate effectively with each other. In addition, the Federal Government definition differs from those of the Departments that comprise it. The following are examples of definitions used with the Federal Government to define sustainable development.

The integration of environmental and economic considerations, along with the consideration of equity, is a fundamental underpinning of the concept of sustainable development. House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. (<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca>)

This definition has nothing to do with ongoing development so presumably a mere consideration of economic environmental factors will suffice prior to engaging in large scale nonrenewable resource extraction. Consideration alone is pathetically inadequate as sustainable development requires strategic action and not mere thought without any subsequent action.

The next definition is from Heritage Canada and states that,

Sustainable development requires that society as a whole consider collectively the implications of its actions for society, the economy and the biophysical environment (i.e. fauna, flora, the air water and soil) and that this consideration extend decades into the future. (<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca>)

So in this case long term consideration is advocated, but again like the previous definition no concrete action is required. So long term contemplation will suffice and no specific strategic measures are required. This is not the type of leadership required from the Federal Government and is grossly inadequate because long term contemplation is not nearly enough.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans defines sustainable development as being as follows, “Sustainable development seeks to: recognize the complex interrelationships within and between aspects traditionally characterized as the environment, the economic

and the social or cultural.” (<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca>) What recognition with no associated action has to do with sustainability is not clear. Perhaps the most promising definition used by a Federal Government Department to define sustainable development is that provided by HRDC,

Sustainable development is a long term focus that seeks to preserve and enhance economic, social and natural (resources) capital to improve the quality of people’s lives and ensure a continuing legacy for the future; a coordinated and integrated approach to decision-making, and horizontal issues in the federal government, incorporating social, economic and environmental considerations, and recognition of the interdependence of domestic and global issues. (<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca>)

This definition is better than the others from the perspective that it talks about “improving people’s lives and ensuring a continuing legacy for the future”. There are other federal government departmental definitions of sustainable development. The varying definitions within the federal government suggest that the definition is contextual as seen by different departments using different definitions. This is extremely confusing and as First Nations negotiate with HRDC, Fisheries and Oceans or the Ministry of Environment they are working with departments that define the term “sustainable development” differently. This shows how a lack of coordination over something as simple as the definition of one word can create a nightmare for First Nations trying to negotiate various agreements with different federal government departments. It is easy to imagine a dispute occurring over an issue between a First Nation and one Department that arises as a result of a First Nation using the definition for sustainable development from another department. It would be extremely difficult to negotiate an agreement when the terminology involved is used in different ways by various negotiators. It would be

prudent for First Nations to have the federal government arrive at one mutually acceptable definition for the term sustainable development.

I would suggest using the definition provided by the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission 1987) which states that sustainable development is,

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In more detail, the commission said, sustainable development is a process of change in which exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations. (<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca>)

Unlike the definitions used by two of the three federal government departments this definition of sustainable development is about action and not just contemplation or thought. It talks about a coordination of various aspects of development and it is clear, unlike the definitions used by the federal government, that which will fit within the definition of sustainable and that which does not. It identifies that sustainable development involves development today that does not compromise the health and wellbeing of future generations.

Nonrenewable Resources

Batteke said at a National Symposium on the North that, “Devolution, division and land claims all signal the possibility of new institutional and organizational arrangements for resource development in the north.” (1988, p. 51) Certainly the settling of land claims assists in creating an economic environment where companies will be more likely to invest in the north. There has been major interest in nonrenewable resource

development in the north and the Yukon and Federal Governments have been encouraging this type of development.

Nonrenewable resources in the Yukon have tremendous potential according to Yukon Premier, Dennis Fentie and Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Archie Lang. In a Yukon Government News Release on January 22, 2004, “Premier Dennis Fentie promised Yukon investment opportunities in front of an overflow audience of investors at the Calgary Petroleum Club.” (<http://www.gov.yk.ca.news>) In another Yukon Government News Release on January 23, 2004, Archie Lang, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources stated that, “With rising gold and base metal prices and a growing interest in the gems sector, I anticipate industry will pay considerable attention to investment opportunities in the Yukon.” (<http://www.gov.yk.ca.news>) In a September 30, 2004 Yukon Government News Release it was stated that,

Premier Fentie will give the keynote luncheon address tomorrow at the 6th Annual Far North Oil and Gas Forum in Calgary. Fentie will update delegates on the progress the Yukon has made since he last spoke at the 2003 Far North Forum. His speech will focus on developing partnerships with First Nations and neighboring jurisdictions as well as new resource opportunities as a result of strengthening these relationships. (<http://www.gov.yk.ca.news>)

In contrast to the above statements the Tr’ondek Hwech’in Self-Government Agreement states that, “The parties recognize and wish to protect a way of life that is based on an economic and spiritual relationship between Tr’ondek Hwech’in citizens and the land.” (1998, Preamble) It may be possible to have responsible nonrenewable resource development and also protect valuable resources such as land, water and animals. It should be noted that tough environmental legislation will be required in order for this type of balance between economic and environmental issues to exist. Failure to balance these issues could have a devastating impact on the Yukon. Any long term adverse affect

on the environment may result in decreases in tourism and renewable resource development. Tourism is sustainable and contributes significantly to the Yukon economy.

It is difficult to gain confidence that a balance between nonrenewable resource development and environmental stewardship is possible when a recent document published by the Federal Government's Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada makes it clear that the Federal Government does not understand what the term 'sustainable development' means. In its 'Sustainable Development Strategy 2004-2006- On the Right Path Together: A Sustainable Future for First Nation, Inuit and Northern Communities' it is stated that,

Achieving sustainable development through a successful interplay between economic, social, political and environmental factors is a much talked about but rarely achieved dynamic. However, diamond mining in Canada's north is one such "gem" of sustainable development. Aboriginal and private sector organizations have worked together to create a vibrant diamond mining industry in the Northwest Territories. (2004, p.9)

The document also identifies oil and gas initiatives as part of its sustainable development strategy for First Nation, Inuit and northern communities. (2004, p. 35) Yearley states that according to the Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Economic Development (1987) sustainable development is, "A form of socioeconomic development which can continue indefinitely without exhausting the world's resources or overburdening the ability of natural systems to cope with pollution." (1996, p. 96) Finite nonrenewable resources like oil, gas and minerals cannot be extracted "indefinitely without exhausting the world's resources". In addition, the extraction of nonrenewable resources often involves the creation of undesirable by-products. An example of this is seen when arsenic is created as a by-product of gold mining. In a recent article in the

Whitehorse Star it was made clear that nonrenewable resources cannot be, “extracted indefinitely”. Tobin states that

Dunning told delegates attending this week’s 32nd annual Geoscience Forum that while the Wolverine project envisions a nine year mine life, expectations are for a much longer company presence in the area.” (2004, p.1)

As Dunning states there is a beginning and an end to projects that are based on nonrenewable resource development. The project he is referring to is a lead/zinc mine in the Finlayson Lake area of the Yukon. (2001, p. 1) Nine years is a relatively short time, and during this time it will be important that Yukon First Nations consider how they will invest royalties that come from lead and zinc extracted from the Finlayson Lake area. Dunning makes it clear that it would be unrealistic to expect that this mine will continue forever, however he does indicate that further exploration may result in a longer life for the mine. (2001, p. 1) Therefore the investment of royalties in sustainable development would be wise. It would also be wise to consider small scale economic development projects that generate ongoing employment as people like Schumacher and Sirolli advocate.

It is of concern that the Federal Government does not seem to understand the difference between development that is sustainable, and that, which is not. At best the revenues accrued from nonrenewable resource extraction will be invested in sustainable economic activities that will assist in diversifying the economies of Yukon First Nation’s communities before these resources are exhausted. Needed employment may be provided for those qualified to work when nonrenewable resource extraction begins, however the degree to which Yukon First Nation’s people will benefit is unclear. In a CBC story aired in Whitehorse on November 26, 2004 the Arctic Council was reported as finding that,

“Economic development and exploration is happening in the arctic without northerners, especially indigenous peoples, reaping many benefits.” The broadcast goes on to point out that, “Some northern communities are benefiting from economic spin-offs, especially if they have revenue sharing agreements.” (<http://north.cbc.ca/regiolanews/caches/north-human-11282004.html>)

In order to ensure that Yukon First Nations do benefit from the extraction of nonrenewable resources on their Category A lands they would be wise to negotiate local employment levels, training provisions and revenue sharing agreements. Otherwise they too may reap few benefits as a result of nonrenewable resource exploration and development. The key to making agreements with nonrenewable resource companies beneficial to First Nations is ensuring any environmental damage is mitigated to the greatest degree possible and that First Nations benefit economically. The CBC broadcast also reported that, “Riches head out of the north with only a fraction of the income and profits remaining” (November 26, 2004) The broadcast also raised the question of whether or not companies that extract nonrenewable resources can provide much benefit to local people,

Is it possible for extractive industries to play a constructive role when it comes to sustainable development or are they condemned to be simply exploitive of existing resources and disappear once the resources are gone? Asks Oran Young of the University of the Arctic.” (CBC, November 26, 2004)

The answer to the question asked by Oran Young will dictate the type of strategy required to maximize benefits for Yukon First Nation’s people when nonrenewable resource extraction occurs on their land. Negotiations between First Nations and resource extraction companies will be critical in ensuring that First Nations benefit from the extraction of resources on their Category A lands.

The extraction of nonrenewable resources is seldom an ecologically friendly process and it is impossible to maintain extraction “at a particular level” because depletion is ongoing and nonrenewable resources are finite.

Partnerships between First Nations, other governments and the private sector may be desirable, but they fail to lend credibility to the Federal Government claim that the extraction of nonrenewable resources is sustainable. (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 2004, p. 9) It will be this kind of inaccurate rhetoric that could eventually lead First Nations back into poverty, as activities identified by the Federal Government as being “sustainable” eventually result in mine closures and oil and gas being exhausted.

While the ideal may be to create a balance between economic and environmental considerations there are numerous examples where this has not occurred. Further, in spite of the wealth generated by nonrenewable resource extraction there are also associated boom and bust cycles. The CBC reported on October 25, 2004 that, “Twenty years ago bumper stickers began appearing in Alberta that said, please God just one more boom and I promise not to piss it away this time. Well now Albertans are getting that chance.” (<http://internal.gov.yk.ca.news>) So there has been a period of twenty years between booms in Alberta. An economy based on nonrenewable resource extraction is not stable, and is not characterized by steady predictable growth. Further, nonrenewable resource extraction damages the environment and is not consistent with the concept of reciprocity. As Shiva says, “The earth bestows gifts on humans who, in turn, are well advised to show diligence in order not to suffocate her generosity. In early modern times, ‘resource’ therefore suggested reciprocity along with regeneration.” (In Sachs, 1993, p.

206) This is consistent with First Nation's values where the balance of nature is respected and people harvest the natural gifts they need, but do not waste or over exploit the environment.

In a historic document entitled, 'Together today for our children Tomorrow' outlining Yukon Indian grievances to the Federal Government in January 1973, the Yukon First Nation's outlined their experiences with mining,

Just as the Gold Rush changed the way of life of Indian people, now we see new mines doing the same thing. Although Indian people helped find the Klondike Gold, none were rich ten years later. With the Dynasty Discovery in 1965 leading to the development of the Anvil Mine, the Indian people of Ross River were suddenly with large numbers of Whitemen (sic) moving in. During a period of busy exploration and construction, many Indians left their traplines to get jobs such as line-cutting and staking.

Now there is a mine with an all-White payroll, and the village of Ross River is made up of former trappers many of whom have to depend on Indian Affairs and Welfare handouts. That was only seven years ago but still the Whiteman (sic) has not learned how to help the Indian benefit from the development of his own land. (p. 12)

A more recent truth about the Anvil Mine in Faro is that it has been closed for a number of years. Many people left the community when the mine closed and there are no major economic prospects looming. The community has had to become innovative and engage in small-scale community and economic development. Sirolli makes an applicable point when he states that,

The last fifteen years have confirmed that governments and corporations do not create jobs, jobs are created by small individual enterprises. It seems that today intelligence creates jobs and capital creates products. (1999, p.3)

This has been the experience in Faro. For example the community has built a golf course, holds an annual music festival and a number of bed and breakfasts have opened.

Interestingly, when the mine closed and many mine employees left the community, so too

did many of the health and social problems. It is unclear, aside from the vacant houses in the community and some recreational facilities, whether the community would have been in better or worse condition if the mine had never existed.

There may be royalties gained by First Nations today when nonrenewable resources are extracted from their lands, however when all the minerals have been extracted many people may need to rely on government support, if major sustainable development is not undertaken. This would leave Yukon First Nation' people in a similar situation to that outlined by Yukon Indians in 1973, in their historic document. The situation would be similar, however the populations of the First Nations will be larger and many will have grown use to the large pay cheques associated with nonrenewable resource extraction.

In an Alternatives Journal editorial entitled, 'Punching Dummies in the North' Gibson states that,

Twenty years ago it was oil. At the turn of the century it was gold and before that whales. Each time the big economic punch and then whonk in the face. In each case, with the whales no less than the oil, the economic rule was maximum immediate exploitation. When the resource was exhausted or the discoveries proved disappointing, a bust was inevitable. Virtually no one attempted to see beyond the rich times. Those who did-usually the local aboriginal people who knew they would remain after the whales or the gold or the oil were gone-had no power to influence the course of events. (1996, p. 2)

The Alternatives Journal goes on to point out that,

When the boom ends, and the bust bounces back up, those who get hit hardest are not the mining, financial and government officials who are in the decision-making ring now. If the new boom damages the land and weakens the communities, the people who will suffer most at the end are those who continue to live on that land and in those communities. (Gibson, 1996, p.2)

Then there are stories of BHP dumping 80,000 tons of contaminated waste rock and tailings per day into the Ok Tedi and Fly Rivers in Papua New Guinea. (Evans, Mining Watch Canada, 1999, Joint Press Release) This Press Release goes on to point out that, “Mine waste could impact up to 1,350 kilometers along the rivers.” (Evans, 1999) Finally this Joint Press Release states that BHP, “Would have never been allowed to dispose of toxic mine waste directly into rivers in Australia. Yet BHP does this in Papua New Guinea and continues to do so.” (Evans, 1999) This type of blatant disregard for the welfare of people and communities could easily occur in the Yukon if economic considerations result in a weakening of environmental protection legislation. Along with strong environmental legislation there must be a commitment to enforce the legislation.

In an alarming CBC interview that was aired in Whitehorse on October 13, 2004 a woman spoke about how oil and gas development have impacted the community of Fort St. John, British Columbia. Among other things she (Hougen) said that, “Gas companies are attracted to residential areas because the gas fields there are easy to access.” (CBC Interview, Croft and Hougen, October 13, 2004) The reporter, Croft then said, “Her nightmare began more than a year ago when a company announced plans to drill in her neighborhood.” Croft said that,

So-called sour gas contains poisons including hydrocarbon sulphide. It’s fatal in large doses. Wells are required to be 100 metres from homes. Industry and government say that there isn’t solid proof that small amounts of hydrogen sulphide damage health, however Hougen says there is evidence that exposure to small amounts, especially in children, may cause long term damage. (CBC Interview, Croft and Hougen, October 13, 2004)

The interview goes on to point out that local residents have virtually no say in what development occurs because the public commission that regulates the industry is paid for by the industry. Hougen advises the Yukon people that if they have a pristine

environment they had better keep it because the oil and gas industry will damage the health of Yukoners and their environment. Chief Liz Logan from the Fort Nelson First Nation (approximately 10 hours south of Whitehorse by car and four hours north of Fort St, John on the Alaska Highway) states that,

Moose, deer, wolf, bear, birds were coming to these pits and drinking out of them and what industry has created is an artificial mineral lake. A lot of our people have been saying, well we're concerned about what the moose-what's happening to the moose you know. We're finding moose with green livers and abscesses and really skinny moose running around. (CBC Interview, Croft, Hougén, October 13, 2004)

So when nonrenewable resource development occurs there is a potential for harm to land, water, air and animals. This is not to say that all development is a bad thing or that corporations by their very nature are irresponsible. It is to say that the Yukon would be well advised to learn from the experiences of others and to not allow multi national mining and oil and gas companies to run roughshod over the Yukon. In the end it will be Yukoners and not these companies who have to live here.

The Land as a Commodity

The way in which Yukon First Nation's people view land differs from that of economists like Daly and Cobb Jr. who say that, "Economics has come to treat land as a mixture of space and expendable or easily substitutable capital." (1989, p. 111)

Schumacher adds that,

Modern man (sic) does not experience himself as part of nature but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it. He even talks of a battle with nature, forgetting that, if he won the battle, he would find himself on the losing side. (1973, p.14)

The conquering of nature is counter productive in that nature is what sustains us. The question that arises is what is to be gained through dominating or conquering that upon which we are dependent upon for our survival. As Schumacher suggests, winning this battle will ultimately result in us losing. It should also be noted that the term conquering suggests overcoming some type of reciprocal aggression. This is misleading in that nature and land have no ability to retaliate. Conquering the land is actually abuse with man (sic) standing to become the ultimate loser as he destroys something that has no ability to defend itself. The more aggressive he becomes toward nature, the more he will ultimately have difficulty surviving. Tom Dale and Vernon Gill, in Schumacher's book entitled, 'Small is Beautiful: Economics as If People Mattered', sheds further light on mankind's insistence on attempting to dominate nature,

Civilised man (sic) was nearly always able to become master of his environment temporarily. His chief troubles came from his delusions that his temporary mastership was permanent. He thought of himself as "master of the world," while failing to fully understand the laws of nature. Man, whether civilised or savage is a child of nature---he is not the master of nature. He must conform his actions to certain natural laws if he is to maintain his dominance over his environment. When he tries to circumvent the laws of nature, he usually destroys the natural environment that sustains him. And when his environment deteriorates rapidly, his civilisation declines. (1973, p. 108, 109)

This suggests that dominance over nature is an illusion because man (kind) is part of nature and cannot take actions against nature without impacting himself.

There are seldom positive outcomes associated with the abuse of anything and nature is no exception. This cycle can only carry on for a certain period of time until the natural system will collapse. Over the past few years there appears to be a heightened recognition among the public that human survival is linked to the environment and that ongoing damage to the environment will threaten man's (sic) existence. The Kyoto Accord is one

indication that man (kind) is beginning to realize that (s) he must operate in a more environmentally friendly way.

First Nations and the Land: Sustainability and Stewardship

First Nations see land as representing, “A way of life that is based on the economic and spiritual relationship between Kluane First Nation [all Yukon First Nation self-government agreements contain this clause] and the land.” (Kluane Self-Government Agreement, 2003, Preamble) Land is not viewed as a commodity by First Nation’s people but as part of their identity. It has defined who they are, how they have lived and what they believe. It is far more than real estate to be sold or traded. As Shiva says, “The earth bestows gifts on humans who, in turn, are well advised to show due diligence in order not to suffocate her (sic) generosity. In early modern times, ‘resource’ therefore suggested reciprocity along with regeneration.” (In Sachs, 1993, p.206) This is consistent with First Nation’s values around living in harmony with nature. Land claims are symbolically important from the perspective of First Nations reclaiming the land that defines who they are. Capra outlines how non First Nations may benefit from the more holistic view of nature common among First Nation’s people when he states that,

Ecological awareness will arise only when we combine our rational knowledge with an intuition of the nonlinear nature of our environment. Such intuitive wisdom is characteristic of traditional, nonliterate cultures, especially of American Indian cultures, in which life was organized around a highly refined awareness of the environment. (In Berkes, 1999, p.3)

First Nation’s people were stewards of the land and understood that their survival depended on responsible harvesting, environmental awareness and reciprocity. The land would look after the needs of First Nations if they looked after the land. This is a very different concept from the commodification of the land that Daly and Cobb have

mentioned and viewing the land as a commodity may be useful in business circles but has not been helpful in ensuring its continued well-being.

The Land and First Nation's Spirituality

There is a strong connection between First Nation's people and the land in terms of spirituality and survival. "Among many North American aboriginal groups, hunting is not merely the mechanical use of the local knowledge of animals and the environment to obtain food, it is a religious activity. (Preston 1975; Tanner; 1979, Speck (1935, 72) in Berkes 1999, p. 24) In essence then, control of traditional land by First Nation's people is a step to becoming whole as a community and individually. It is about the reclamation of identity and a spiritual connection. In describing the relationship between the Koyukon of Alaska and the environment, Nelson says that,

Not only the animals, but also the plants, the earth and landforms, the air, weather and sky are spiritually invested. For each, the hunter knows an array of respectful gestures and deferential taboos that demand obedience. Violations against them will offend and alienate their spirits, bring bad luck or illness, or worse if a powerful and vindictive being is treated irreverently. (1983, p.31)

So the Koyukon people interact with nature and there are taboos in place that stop Koyukon hunters from abusing that which he relies on. He will face a severe penalty for not respecting nature. His interaction with nature is always within the spiritual realm and his life is characterized by continual interaction with the concrete, yet spiritual world. The Tlingit from Alaska and the Yukon believe that the world was created by Raven and have stories of how the land they live on was created (adapted from Swanton 1909 in Olson, 1991, p. 1)

The point is that with land claims and self-government agreements there is far greater chance that First Nations in the Yukon will be able retain their First Nations

spirituality, culture and heritage (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement Implementation Plan, 1993, p. 184-239). The maintenance of culture and heritage will in turn result in a continued respect for the land and the overall environment. Yukon First Nations with settled land claims have the opportunity to model economic and community development that is respectful of human needs, but also is respectful of the environment.

Licensing and Spiritual Practices

I cannot help but wonder what would happen if non-First Nation's people were advised that they needed a license to attend church in order to engage in spiritual practices. The inability of First Nation's people to hunt without a license is a comparable scenario because they require a license to engage in this spiritual practice when previously they did not. From this perspective land claims can be supported on moral and ethical grounds because they allow First Nation's people the right to engage in traditional spiritual practices such as hunting without as many restrictions. Perhaps the best analogy to explain the spiritual relationship between the land and First Nations is to view the land as a place of worship and spiritual fulfillment.

It may be true that many First Nation's people have adopted other religions over the years, however many still feel a spiritual connection with the land. Without exception all Yukon First Nation's healing camps are located outside communities 'on the land' and this may have a great deal to do with making a spiritual connection in order to become grounded and whole. I have been involved in the development of a couple of healing camps in the Yukon and the First Nation's people whom I have worked with see a direct link between "being on the land" and healing. Since healing is seen as a holistic process interaction with the land is related to mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health.

Life in the North

The north offers a lifestyle that differs from that in southern Canada. While things are changing, for many the north has offered them a desirable alternative to the south. There is a northern culture that is difficult to define, however most people in the Yukon take great pride in being northern Canadians. This is true of First Nations and non First Nation's people.

Peter Usher says that,

Northern communities have informal economies that work well, not only in providing for material needs, but also in creating a sense of community and social well-being. Northerners do not want to lose these attributes which they often describe as simply part of their culture. (1988, p. 69)

It is true that many northerners do not want to lose the things that make the north unique however in the Yukon many people also want and need good paying jobs. (2001 Canada Census) The issue is one of gaining jobs while maintaining those aspects of northern life which make it appealing to the people who live here. Self-government agreements may provide the opportunity to enhance local economic opportunities while at the same time enhance First Nation's culture, heritage, education and social and health programs. (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement, 1993, p.350)

With self-government come choices about how community development ought to occur. According to Rubin and Rubin community development, "Occurs when people strengthen bonds within their neighborhoods, build social networks and form their own organizations to provide long term capacity for problem-solving." (2001, p.3) Self-government agreements do enhance the ability of First Nation's people to engage in decision-making and problem solving within their land claim areas. There will also be choices about how to use royalties enjoyed as a result of nonrenewable resource

development on Category A First Nation's lands. First Nations own surface and subsurface rights on Category A lands and therefore gain royalties if nonrenewable resources are extracted from them. (Tr'ondek Hwech'in Final Agreement Implementation Plan, 1998, p. 389) Decisions about what form of justice will be administered for some offences will also have to be made. (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Self-Government Agreement Implementation Plan, 1993, p. 22-24) The type and scope of economic and community development will need to be determined (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement 1993, p.350).

There will be choices to be made about whether or not to revitalize the local language, and if so, how this will be done. (Kluane First Nation Self-Government Agreement 2003, p. 13) There will also be decisions to be made about how to address local health and social issues. (Kluane First Nation Self-Government Agreement 2003, p. 13)

It is possible to retain aspects of the north which residents find desirable, while at the same time, undertake community and economic development which will enhance the lives of Yukoners. The culture may change with development but there are provisions within self-government agreements that support the retention and enhancement of heritage and culture. Perhaps Yukon First Nation's people will find it somewhat easier to maintain some cultural practices if they are able to gain employment. For example, it is expensive to purchase a high powered rifle, snowmobile, boat and motor, tent and an all-terrain vehicle for hunting. Employment may allow for the purchase of these items and the pursuit of this spiritual activity by First Nation's people who previously did not have the resources to do so. It may also assist in enhancing family life and allow for an

increased ability to engage in healthy enjoyable leisure and recreational activities. This position is consistent with Kirsh in that she suggests that employment is clearly linked to health, self esteem and conformity to social norms (1983, p. 52) This in turn positively impacts on the people around the person who is able gain or maintain employment.

Northern Health-an Unequal Playing Field

The addressing of health and social issues will be critical for Yukon First Nations because jobs and other economic opportunities can only be taken advantage of if people are healthy enough to hold a job. The 2001 Canada Census reported that there was a 26.8% unemployment rate among the Yukon First Nations population. Chronic unemployment is debilitating and is associated with a number of health issues (Kirsh, 1983, p. v) Kirsh goes on to say that, “Unemployed persons, oppressed by fear and frustration, can muster energy merely to survive, not to thrive and bloom.” (1983, p. v) Therefore in order for First Nation’s people to fully benefit from opportunities that may be realized as a result of self-government agreements there must be programs offering people support, hope, education and training. The problem of unemployment may manifest itself in other issues such as violence, addiction, homicidal and suicidal behavior. (Kirsh, 1983, p. 52) In addition, many First Nation’s people and their families are struggling with the intergenerational impacts of abuse experienced in residential schools. The challenge will be for First Nations and the Yukon and Federal Governments to prepare First Nation’s people to gain optimum benefit from community and economic development opportunities when they arise.

Yukon First Nations self-government agreements state that one of the purposes of these agreements is to, “Promote opportunities for the well-being of Citizens equal to

those of other Canadians and to providing essential public services of reasonable quality to all Citizens.” (Tr’ondek Hwech’in Self-Government Agreement, 1998, p. 4) In order for this objective to be achieved there must be acknowledgement of the impacts of colonization and issues related to residential school abuse and its intergenerational impacts. Sirolli aptly illustrates the past experiences of many First Nation’s people when he shares his own history of personal domination,

Contrary to Dante’s “Inferno”, however my hell wasn’t populated by naked gluttons, greedy merchants and assorted petty sinners. The torturers had no tails, rather, they were well-dressed authoritarian figures, who in the name of an idea, would torture and beat the psychological life out of people in their power. From unyielding bureaucrats to religious fanatics, from political extremists to rabid dogooders, my demonology started to contain anybody who dreamt up a code of conduct and tried to manipulate or coerce others to follow it. (1999, p. 24)

First Nation’s people, like Sirolli, have had a history of others imposing decisions on them. While the people who made these decisions may have been well-intentioned and helped in some ways, in other ways they may have been harmful. The church, state and others have attempted to impose their will on First Nation’s people. There is a history of exploitation and this has manifested itself in health and social problems.

With high unemployment (2001 Census) and the associated increases in health and social problems as cited by Kirsh (1973, p. 52), it is fair to suggest that there will need to be a major injection of resources in order for First Nation’s people to enjoy “well-being equal to that of other Canadians.” This is because the histories of First Nations and non First Nation’s people in Canada are considerably different. This results in First Nation’s people having to overcome health problems that are not as prevalent among non First Nation’s people. Self-government is a step in the right direction in terms of injecting needed resources into First Nations communities to address local problems and issues.

This is also consistent with providing First Nations with the tools to undertake community development as defined by Rubin and Rubin. (2001)

Taxation

Self-government agreements allow First Nations to levy local taxes. All these agreements result in First Nation's governments being able to generate revenue for internal use through taxation. Each Yukon First Nation Self-Government Agreement contains the following tax related clauses,

14.1 taxation for local purposes, of interests in Settlement Land and of occupants and tenants of Settlement Land in respect of their interests in those lands, including assessment, collection and enforcement procedures and appeals relating to thereto.

14.1.1 other modes of direct taxation of Citizens (and, if agreed under 14.5.2, other persons and entities) within Settlement Land to raise revenue for Champagne and Aishihik First Nation purposes; and

14.1.3 the implementation of measures made pursuant to any taxation agreement entered into pursuant to 14.8. (Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Self-Government Agreement 1993, p.24)

The ability to generate revenue through taxation is important because a local tax base provides an ongoing predictable source of revenue to undertake local programs and services. It may also decrease reliance on outside funding sources which seldom provide long term, predictable, ongoing funding for program and service development and enhancement. Community development often requires resources and it is good that First Nations have an ability through taxation to respond to local needs. As the tax base increases or taxes are increased a First Nation will have the ability to respond to a greater number of local needs. When communities are totally reliant on external funding they are often required to develop funding proposals on an ongoing basis to augment programs

and services. This is time consuming, costly in terms of staffing and seldom results in ongoing long-term funding.

It is common to see good programs end as funding is no longer available. A good example of this in the Yukon has been programming provided through funding from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation for 40 projects in the amount of \$10.8 million.

(<http://north.cbc.ca/regionalnews>) This organization provided funding to Yukon First Nations and other First Nation's organizations to address the healing needs of First Nation's residents who had attended residential school. It was announced that funding for this program would cease and now Yukon First Nations and other organizations funded through this organization are now considering lay-offs and program closures. As opposed to this type of scenario, taxation will allow for the ongoing funding of programs deemed to be of importance by First Nations. Schumacher makes the relationship between economic development and resources, such as revenue generated from taxation clear when he says that,

Economic development is primarily a question of getting more work done. For this, there are four essential conditions. First, there must be motivation; second, there must be some know-how; third, there must be some capital; and fourth, there must be an outlet: additional output requires additional markets. (1973, p. 218, 219)

Taxation will provide one source of capital needed to undertake local economic development projects. Economic development may create needed employment within First Nations communities. With ongoing tax revenue the creation of additional long-term employment may be possible.

Division of Yukon Land

While it may be argued that the Yukon Territorial Government has a responsibility to provide programs and services for all Yukon residents it is difficult to understand how negotiators arrived at the amount of Category A land First Nations could receive under their land claims agreements. In the document, ‘Understanding the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement: A Land Claim Settlement Information Package it states that in relationship to First Nations, “The total amount of Category A Settlement Land cannot be more than 10,000 square miles (25,899.88 square kilometres). Yukon First Nations will own both surface and sub-surface resources on category A Settlement Lands.” (1997, p. 22) The total area of the Yukon is 483, 450 square kilometres. (<http://canada.cio-bic.gc/facts/yukon>) Since the Yukon Government will have sub-surface rights to all the land that is not considered Category A Settlement Land, the Yukon Government will have sub-surface rights to no less than 457,550.212 square kilometres of land after all land claims have been settled. Ironically, the ownership of sub-surface rights is not even close to representative of the difference between First Nation and non-First Nation’s populations in the Yukon. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics reported that in June 2004 the Yukon First Nation’s population was 6,878, while the non-First Nation’s population was 23,591. (<http://www.gov.yk.ca.depts./eco/stats/index>) So even though First Nations comprise approximately 20% of the Yukon population, at most they have sub-surface rights to approximately 5.5% of Yukon’s land. Clearly, it is hard to fathom how this type of discrepancy can be justified, even though the Yukon Territorial Government has a responsibility to provide programs and services for all Yukoners, including First Nations.

Sustainable Development

Given that the oil, gas and minerals in the Yukon are finite there will be a time when they have been exhausted. If the Yukon Government and First Nation's Governments can implement sufficient environmental protection and monitoring systems nonrenewable resource extraction may make a great deal of sense. This type of development must be perceived as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. As Campfens says,

Social initiatives are linked to economic ones through the creation of innovative, participatory, community-based organizations that are accessible, that generate income and local job opportunities, and that finance community infrastructure and social services. (1975, p. 5)

Royalties from oil and gas can be used to develop social programs, sustainable businesses that employ people and community infrastructure. This approach will result in long-term benefits to the community and the people in it. What does not work is the approach that views nonrenewable resources as sustainable, as per the Federal Government, and that they will never be exhausted. This type of thinking does not result in strategic thinking that ensures long-term benefit from short-term wealth.

The Canadian Mental Health Association would support Campfen's view that the generation of jobs and income is important because the Association draws a clear relationship between health problems and unemployment. The Association says that unemployment results in problems in the following areas, "...alcohol and drug abuse, increased mortality rates, increased mental illness and increased incidents of suicides, homicides and imprisonment." (1983, p. 52) The 2001 Canada Census reported that out of 4,570 First Nations Yukon citizens fifteen years and older 880 were unemployed in 2000. By comparison out of 17,915 non-First Nation citizens in the Yukon only 1,205

were unemployed. The Census goes on to report that there was a 26.8% unemployment rate for First Nations as opposed to a rate of 8.2% for non-First Nations. Clearly, in order to have a healthy Yukon there must be more employment. (2001, <http://www.statcan.ca>) There must also be programs that assist the chronically unemployed in regaining their health and the qualities necessary to function in the workplace when new job opportunities are generated.

In terms of how a First Nation may choose to develop employment Anderson, when discussing Maslow, suggests that,

The possibilities of a society's development are contingent upon the ability of its structures and its members to recognize and encourage higher human needs and the potential for self-actualization. Therefore, social science, political dialogue, and public policy must recognize and deal with the needs other the most basic material ones. (Anderson in Sirolli, 1999, p. 19)

This approach recognizes that people need meaningful lives. Presumably this includes meaningful employment. It is important to also note when considering possible types of employment on First Nations land that First Nations do not see land as Daly and Cobb suggest when they say that, "Economics has come to treat land as a mixture of space and expendable, or easily substitutable capital." (1989, p. 11) Rather, First Nations see land representing, " A way of life that is based on the economic and spiritual relationship between Kluane First Nation [all Yukon First Nations self-government agreements contain this clause so 'Kluane First Nation' is interchangeable with any of the other Yukon First Nations] and the land. (Kluane First Nation Self-Government Agreement, 2003, Preamble) This approach to land may result in a number of sustainable business options. In a report by CBC on December 6, 2004 it was reported that,

A Yukon First Nation's land claim is about to give big-game hunters access to a protected wildlife for the first time in 40 years.

A part of the Kluane First Nation' land claim allows it to sell exclusive hunting rights in parts of its territory, including the Kluane Game Sanctuary.... Kluane Chief Bob Dickson says it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for American trophy hunters.

"To a sheep hunter, someone who does that kind of stuff, it would be worth a lot of money, anywhere from \$100,000 to \$500,000, depending on the success of the hunt and the size of the animals that are coming out of this area, I guess," he says. (<http://north.cbc.ca/regionalnews/caches/sheep-hunt-12062004.html>)

Outfitting is an example of an activity that is sustainable provided wildlife management is done properly. There will also need to be consideration given to the impact on tourism a reduction in sheep may have on the First Nation. Nevertheless, this does serve as an example of a way a First Nation can generate revenue on an ongoing basis from a renewable resource.

Using the revenues from nonrenewable resource development to create sustainable First Nation's economies makes sense. This is true because no one will wish to return to a First Nations unemployment rate of in excess of 25% once nonrenewable resources are exhausted. Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, cottage industries, manufacturing and the arts are some of the economic activities that are sustainable if managed well. The Yukon Territorial Government stated in a New Release of December 10, 2004 in relation to the 'Strategic Forest Management Plan signed with the Champagne Aishihik First Nation that,

The funds, administered by the First Nation, will employ between 20 and 30 people on various projects. Work is expected to commence in early 2005. "We are now in a position to move forward with the next steps of integrated forest management planning and development" (Allen said [Chief] "We will be working on completing plans for forest renewal, wildfire protection and harvest beetle kill forest" (<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/2004/04-291.html>).

This is the type of sustainable development that is needed and the concept of working in the area of forest renewal is a good one. This is the type of thinking that will be required to utilize renewable resources but at the same time ensure that activities are sustainable.

Agriculture and Small Scale Renewable Resource Development

The use of cooperatives and bartering systems also holds promise because they are approaches that are consistent with the First Nation values of interdependence, sharing, stewardship of the land and cooperation.

Perhaps one of the most promising activities may be agriculture. Agricultural ventures offer a number of possibilities from private ownership to community ownership. Not only can organic agriculture be pursued in an environmentally friendly way, but it can also flourish regardless of economic conditions. If costs drop for produce, meat and eggs and it does not make sense to sell agricultural products they can be consumed by local residents. This would improve local health and would help offset very high northern food costs in the Yukon's small communities.

There are substantial agricultural projects in Haines Junction and Carmacks. The project in Carmacks has been administered by the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation and has been used as a type of support for local residents with addictions problems and other issues. The Greenhouse Project in Haines Junction was developed as a project that would employ people with a variety of disabilities. The way in which these projects have

been designed is consistent with Campfen's position that social initiatives should be linked with economic ones. (1975, p.5)

In a Yukon Government Press Release on November 25, 2004 regarding who had been selected as the 2004 Yukon Farmer of the Year it was reported that the winners have a successful farming operation,

Bonnie and Steve Mackenzie-Grieve have been developing their farm operation since 1998. This year, the Yukon Grain Farm produced over 100 acres of grain as well as 22 acres of potatoes. The Yukon Grain Farm employs several staff to process potatoes going to market. It now supplies Superstore in Whitehorse with locally grown potatoes. (<http://gov.yk.ca/news/2004/04-275.html>)

It is true that a great many Yukon people grow their plants in raised boxes and start their plants in greenhouses. With the long daylight hours in the summer and relatively warm conditions the Yukon is ideal for this type of farming. Initial capital costs for farming can be high because some areas have poor soil, however good soil can be trucked in. With revenues from nonrenewable resources, the initial capital costs for a number of commercially viable farms could easily be dealt with. The building of gardening boxes and greenhouses would also provide some needed employment in the First Nations communities, as would the processing of the produce.

Another aspect of farming that may have an appeal to First Nations is the idea of growing traditional medicines and then either using them locally, or seeking to enter into agreements with other First Nations that have no ability to grow these types of plants. It will be small enterprises and cooperative efforts that help to support local culture. As Sirolli says,

The human scale of small enterprises, their bond with the community, the fact that they use proportionately more labor and intelligence than raw materials, makes

them easy to propose to even the most environmentally conscious communities.
(1999, p. 3)

So it is possible to use ingenuity, labour and intelligence to create small environmentally friendly businesses. As Sirolli also suggests, "Jobs are created by small individual enterprises." (1999, p.3) So revenues from nonrenewable resource development could be used to stimulate local economies through small First Nation business loans and the development of infrastructure and services. These revenues could also be used to support health and social programs that will ensure there is a healthy workforce when jobs do become available. In order to have competitive businesses ongoing training and education will also be required. Investment in human resources will be a critical element of almost all economic initiatives that continue to prosper in the long-term.

Nonrenewable resource development is an important ingredient for First Nation economic health; however it will be sustainable development that provides for future generations. It is important that the future is not sacrificed for the present because good planning and management can result in major benefits for both. It does not need to be a choice between the two if there is a balance between environmental and economic considerations.

It is also very important that nonrenewable resources revenue is used to support the education of local First Nation's residents. Not only will this type of investment provide for a more educated workforce, but will also result in new ideas and innovative thinking. It will also allow First Nations to deliver programs and services that have traditionally been offered by non- First Nation's people on First Nation's land. This in turn will put an increasing number of First Nation's people to work with no displacement of other First Nation's workers. Human resource development is a key component of

sustainable development. There must be an ongoing injection of new ideas, knowledge about the latest technologies, and business expertise to operate sustainable businesses. Young First Nation's people must see a future for themselves in the Yukon because otherwise "brain drain" will be an ongoing issue.

Summary

It is an exciting time in the Yukon as land claims and self-government agreements are signed. The future looks quite bright if lessons learned from elsewhere can be applied in the Yukon. First Nations with land claims are in a position to benefit from nonrenewable resource development in the immediate future beyond the small amount of revenue they have already received.

Land claims and self-government are good ideas because they provide for greater local control of local First Nations programs and services. One major problem First Nations face is that they negotiate land claims and self-government agreements with a Federal Government that stands to benefit substantially more from First Nation nonrenewable partnerships and the ensuing development than any other economic activity a First Nation may undertake. The Federal Government still controls the funding provided to First Nations that have settled land claims so the playing field is uneven. Of particular concern is Federal Government document, 'Sustainable Development Strategy 2004-2006-On the Right Path Together: A Sustainable Future for First Nation, Inuit and Northern Communities'. This document clearly shows that the Federal Government does not understand what sustainable development is and appears more interested in royalties from Yukon nonrenewable resources than about the people who they have a fiduciary responsibility to provide programs and services for.

Tough environmental laws are required in the Yukon to protect the land, the animals, the cultures and sustainable activities such as tourism, outfitting and sport fishing. The First Nations need employment, but also need certainty that their land and way of life will be protected. Lessons can be learned from elsewhere and applied in the Yukon. Nonrenewable resource revenue can be used to stimulate sustainable economic development.

In the final analysis we have choices to make as Yukoners about what our immediate and longer-term future will look like. We have the expertise and information necessary to make wise decisions and balance the needs and concerns of industry and environmental groups, First Nations and non First Nations, people who live off the land and those who don't, and with the employed and the unemployed.

Sustainable development and environmental protection must not be sacrificed for jobs and other short term economic and political benefits. The Brundtland Commission definition of sustainable development should be used by all Federal Government Departments when negotiating with First Nations. The terms sustainable development, environmental protection, economic development and social development are far too important to leave open to interpretation as the Yukon moves forward. First Nation's spirituality, culture, training needs, health and capacity should be constant considerations as non renewable resource extraction occurs. There must be a holistic approach to development where the link between economic and social development is given ongoing consideration. Training and education must precede development to ensure maximum economic benefit for First Nation's people. The Yukon's First Nations have a tremendous opportunity to develop their communities and members. Strong resource sharing

agreements with companies that wish to exploit resources on Category A lands must be the focus of negotiations if they are to benefit First Nations beyond the signing of land claims and self-government agreements.

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