

FINAL REPORT

Community Resiliency Project

Community Roundtable

Burtt's Corner, NB

March 20, 2008

**Submitted by: Rick Hutchins
Recorder: Stacey MacDonald (NANY)**

Table of Content

Summary: 3

Key learning’s: 5

NOTES FROM THE SESSION 6

Overview Rural - Pandemic Planning..... 6

Summary of group questions - Rural Pandemic Planning..... 7

Appendix (A) INVITATION..... 11

Appendix (B) PARTICIPANTS..... 13

Appendix (C) PRESS RELEASE 14

Appendix (D) WEB LINKS AND RESOURCES 15

Appendix (E) RESOURCES 15

What is a Sustainable Community? 15

Ecological Governance 16

Summary:

The first rural roundtable of this community resiliency project was, for all intents and purposes a success. The participation and support from community was very positive and there was a great atmosphere of legitimate interest and concern over both preparedness and capacity to respond to crisis at the community level.

The host organization NANY (Neighborhood Alliance for North York) did an exceptional job of getting the community out and supporting the process. If there is a good lesson to learn up front it is the need to have good “connectors” at the community level. NANY works as a network to support community projects in the area of North York. This geographical area is totally rural and is made up of small towns, local service districts and isolated communities in central New Brunswick. The area we drew from is about the size of Prince Edward Island and very typical of rural Canada.

Participants began arriving at 5:30 PM and a community dinner was served. ***The dinner was an important way to welcome participants and have them connect with each other before the formal agenda began.*** Home made soup and sandwiches were served by the Burtts Corner Lionesses, our community partner. By 6:00 PM we were ready to begin and opened the evening with a welcome from NANY, thanking all of the participants for coming. Rick Hutchins then gave a brief breakdown of the agenda and David Pardoe was asked to introduce the project and its main goals and objectives.

Unfortunately, we were not able to distribute the framework document in advance but did give print copies to all the attendees. The document: **Voluntary Sector Framework for Health Emergencies** is certainly a valuable tool for future sessions. (A follow up session in the region will likely be held with a greater focus on the actual framework document).

The first exercise that took place was a community roundtable of introductions. Participants were asked what role (if any) they played as responders in their community and what they felt were major concerns / issues as residents. This “ice breaker” was very interesting because it allowed the group to get a sense of “who” their community members were and what roles they play as citizens and volunteers. It was evident that some groupings (by community) were present however many of these individuals did not know each other. This is not surprising in a large, rural area. Nor in an urban setting.

It is important to note that the breakdown of community participants included; volunteer firefighters, search and rescue, ambulance services, community schools, home care providers, seniors, a Member of Parliament, planning committee members, town officials, pandemic planning committee members, local service districts, local businesses, concerned citizens and seniors. A very

representative group. There were also a number of officials present including; Emergency Measures, Province of New Brunswick (Dept. of Social Development) and the Canadian Red Cross.

Once the roundtable had been completed we moved to a planned presentation from Bill Lawlor (Canadian Red Cross). After discussion with Randy Robinson (Emergency Measures Organization) it was agreed that Randy would give the “context” or background piece regarding what services are in place to support emergency planning. You will see in the attached notes that he gave a breakdown of the official response to disaster planning and explained the roles and responsibilities of each level of response. His presentation was interesting and the participants were very attentive to what he had to say. The first major learning of this session came next.

Once Randy completed his presentation Rick Hutchins asked the group (roughly 25 participants) how many of them knew of this detailed strategy or more specifically, how it would be implemented in their communities. Of the group there were only 6 hands that went up. What was evident and becoming clear was that the “**connection**” was not as strong as one might have thought. In fairness to the presenter from EMO he made it very clear that a plan was in place and that the key responders knew their roles. However, amongst the participants there was agreement; for the most part they did not know what the planned response was for their communities. This was a key learning, early in the process. The question became: ***whose responsibility is it to insure the citizens in a community are prepared and more importantly that the citizens know the plan, as well as how and where to respond?***

Once Randy completed his presentation we moved to roundtable discussions. Five prepared questions were circulated and the group was broken down into four separate tables. A recorder was appointed for each group and the process was self facilitated. You will see from the detailed notes that the responses were varied and very rich in perspective. The questions discussed were:

- How ready is our community for a health emergency? Have we done any emergency planning already in this field? Are we aware of the risks?
- How would our community react right now to a health emergency if one where to occur today?
- Have we formed any formal or informal partnerships with other organizations to manage a crisis (sustain support to vulnerable populations)?
- What help do we need in terms of moral support and tangible resources to assure that service to their community members is maintained?
- What formal or informal arrangements have we made with the local Emergency Measures and health authorities? What kind of relationship would we like to have with them?

Once discussions were completed the groups reported back with a wide range of responses (see notes) and some commonality. As well, there was recognition that further discussion and engagement of more community members was needed.

Emergency volunteering is a way to further engage people in the community. They can contribute while not making a huge commitment (i.e. no weekly meetings etc., just need to participate in some planning and training).

Before having another community meeting, there needs to be some pre-meeting terms of reference established so that the participants from each community know “what page” everyone is starting on; so that every one in the group can talk the same talk.

All people with a role in community need to be involved in the next meeting. Hopefully, the seeds have been laid for a community follow up effort...MP Mike Allen expressed support for continued efforts and there is interest within NANY to continue the dialogue.

Overall, the session went very well and was a great starting point for the community roundtables. There is a need to look at rural and urban communities with a greater understanding of the uniqueness and individuality of each community. There is a hunger for information and a definite need to engage the voluntary sector in this meaningful dialogue.

Key learning's:

- The importance of a strong community “connector.” This is a critical factor for sustained focus and support. NANY is a good example.
- Be prepared for a range of both preparedness and awareness. Although agencies responsible for emergency planning have strategies many individuals do not and many communities are not “connected.”
- Recognize that these roundtables are actually a starting point for communities to assess and strategize preparedness. Push very hard for follow up.
- It is important to keep the focus on the framework document if possible. It is easy to get side tracked into a discussion around agency responsibilities, etc.
- Diversity in participants is recommended. The more diversity the more recognition of inter connectivity and the range of roles to be played. As well, the diversity helps to build strength for a community as a responder and communicator to all citizens.
- Give as much time as possible to discussion amongst participants. This is where the richness comes forward.

- Get support from local media (see release attached). This helps to bring focus to others who could not participate or would like information.
- Work closely with the partners in disaster management to insure that the goals and objectives of the session are understood in advance.

A special thank you to Stacey MacDonald from NANY who compiled the excellent notes (attached) and Sue Rickards for bringing together such a rich and diverse group of community members.

Rick Hutchins
March 28, 2008

NOTES FROM THE SESSION

Overview Rural - Pandemic Planning

Randy Robinson of EMO gave a brief presentation on how a response to an emergency would take place.

- It begins first with the individual taking responsibility and action for themselves in case of an emergency (mitigation – self help for individual and community).
- Then the Municipality is responsible for responding.
- If there is no Municipality then the District Emergency Action Committee steps in providing services and equipment to those in need. Can find information on these on EMO's website.
- The final step on the ladder is the Provincial Emergency Action Committee. They step in when services and equipment are needed beyond the District and Municipal levels.

Randy also talked to the group about completing an “all hazards” assessment of their community. A template for this can be found on their website. He talked about the importance of contingency planning. Told the group that the 24/7 number for EMO is **1-800-561-4034**. EMO has a template online, a “how-to” on setting up community emergency response plans. Taymouth group has used and said it is very helpful.

Randy talked about the role EMO has in the community.

1. Mitigation – self help information for individuals, communities and businesses. Group received information on PLANNING ASSISTANCE – NB-EMO provides assistance in preparing emergency response plans. This includes meeting with elected officials, administrators, company officials and volunteers,

and providing advice as they identify risks and plan for appropriate response procedures.

2. **Preparedness** – lots of talk on emergency drop-in centers and 72 hour kits.

3. **Response** – the individual, then the municipality, District Emergency Action Committees and the Provincial Emergency Action Committee

4. **Recovery** - Talked about the Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA). No one in the group communicated that they knew that there is a Disaster Financial Assistance program that is managed by the Department of Public Safety's New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization. Participants were told that this program helps people and communities get back on their feet after a disaster. It covers damage and loss that is widespread and threatens the future of individuals and communities. First have to call EMO and they will inspect any system that may have been affected by the disaster. Reiterated that we all have the responsibility to safeguard ourselves and our property from damage.

Randy told the group the Social Development is legislated to deliver services during a state of emergency. He did not elaborate on what those services were. Randy talked about **The Partnerships Toward Safer Communities Awards Program** that recognizes the efforts of communities and industry in joint planning and training to provide a coordinated response in emergency events. There are three levels of achievement: **Essential, Enhanced and Comprehensive**.

There was some interest in “**preparedness kits**” Bill Lawlor from Red Cross stated that it is not necessary to stockpile “72 hour kits.” They can be made up easily by individuals. There were discussions at the tables as well as during the wrap-up on their affordability. A second question asked was related to what the criteria are for Federal funding for things such as the **emergency drop-in buildings**.

Summary of group questions - Rural Pandemic Planning

1. **How ready is our community for a health emergency? Have we done any emergency planning already in this field? Are we aware of the risks?**

- Taymouth/Stanley apparently ready, however, not aware of the plan
- LSD; no local government, no coordinated effort
- Taking care of their neighbors and themselves
- As per MP, money for designated disaster centers is available
- There are buildings where people can go but who is in charge?
- BC Lions Club can service many people in the area. Would be good to know who has generators or other equipment.

- What about smaller areas? What kind of centers would be available for them?
 - Power is critical as is access to heat, washrooms, etc.
 - Be aware of the toll free number. They can give you direction.
 - NANY – basic information that they should send out to people
 - MP – Federal pamphlets available to distribute information as well as the individual's role
 - Red Cross – lots of preparedness information available. The concern is, are people aware of the available information?
 - Some people can not afford emergency kits. Could those people be helped somehow?
 - MP – Seniors groups have the inventory of seniors in the community. They could be the tie to ensure no senior is overlooked.
 - In small communities most people are aware of the members of the community.
 - MP – Communities are changing and maybe someone will be overlooked
 - Red Cross – Awareness does not necessarily mean taking responsibility for that senior
 - Not necessarily ready except possibly on an individual basis. Would “lump through it.”
 - Everyone needs to be responsible for themselves and their neighbor.
 - Health Emergency – pandemic. It's enormous. Then the capacity is severely diminished. Continue to make sure that individual is prepared. Supply issues. We won't have the luxury of going to the store for supplies. Selling preparedness kits and also having kits available for those who can't afford them.
 - Marilyn says pre-approval for fire departments, community centers, yes in the Taymouth and Nashwaak areas. No for this area (Keswick). There is some thinking but nothing written or put down on paper. Brainstorm and put thoughts together. Start small.
 - Marion's group said that the community is not ready. There has been no planning completed to our knowledge.
 - People are aware of the risks at varying levels. Some people are very keen and have taken individual steps to prepare for some kind of emergency but other people are totally oblivious to the risks.
 - Our communities have limited knowledge on responding to a health emergency but realize that a standard response plan should be in place.
 - No planning or limited planning has been done.
 - People are generally not aware of the risks.
- 2. How would our community react right now to a health emergency if one where to occur today?**
- There would be chaos. Everyone would function in a silo; house to house, community to community.

- Currently, community reaction would not be consistent, would be disorganized.
- The back up is there. Goes back to individual responsibility. It takes an education process. Community would not react well – need to be prepared and “hunker down.”
- The community would be panicked and overwhelmed. Would not know what to do or where to go.

3. Have we formed any formal or informal partnerships with other organizations to manage a crisis (sustain support to vulnerable populations)?

- Before the fact we can work together. But during or after, each community would be on their own. Need to help each other with information and resources. Seniors are great for knowledge and information; how to get along without things.
- No formal partnerships. Informal partnerships between neighbors. Need regular meetings between groups, fire departments, senior’s groups, Red Cross. Partnerships need to be in place. Lots of informal relationships can be made. Need inventories of people who can have roles in an emergency.
- No plan has been devised.
- Formal and informal partnerships have been made to address certain situations. These are excellent partnerships BUT they only deal with specific situations.

4. What help do we need in terms of moral support and tangible resources to assure that service to their community members is maintained?

- We need to have the 1-800 number available to each household (refrigeration sticker) but ultimately we need assurance that we will be able to contact EMO when needed.
- A plan has to be devised. Need to know that this plan has been tried and tested, improvements made where the plan broke down. Revisions need to be made and communicated as required.
- Need to be assured that anything that is designated as an emergency center site is equipped properly. What is needed in an emergency site? Need the infrastructure first. Maybe in some communities would be neighbor to neighbor. Who designates a disaster site?
- Train people – give them knowledge. More communication between areas and individuals. Resources in our area – equipment, nurses (personal). Checklist of what is needed. Could be obtained through the schools. Emergency numbers on hand. Bring to a family level. Communication is key.

5. What formal or informal arrangements have we made with the local Emergency Measures and health authorities? What kind of relationship would we like to have with them?

- We haven't made any arrangements.
- Would like to have teamwork, communication, a good working one.
- We need communication. It is "key."
- Need resources to train people.
- There are no formal arrangements.
- Knowledge of where disaster centers are is key.
- Informal things in place of people's talents and resources. Need an asset map for the community (a visual inventory list of sorts).
- Taymouth has started a community directory. Could utilize this for knowledge resource (i.e. medical, mechanical).
- Some in the group were not aware of the role that EMO could play in any sort of disaster.
- We need more information, more communication.
- More individuals need to look after themselves.
- The connections need to be strengthened between communities and EMO
- Need to know what should be in the 72 hour kit as well as how should the community organize for an emergency.
- Need EMO rep. and/or information to be more visible at community events, church services, schools, media, public notices, and TV programs. Can't rely simply on the internet. There are communities with limited access to the internet. There are also people with limited literacy abilities. It would do them no good to receive a pamphlet in the mail. Need to broaden communication methods and their scope.
- To date, there are emergency resources available but the public in general have not responded to these issues. Need better two-way communication.
- Peter – We need leaders in the community with key knowledge and widespread dispersion of information.
- Ray – A uniform plan need to be standard for all rural communities and actively introduced/available to all households.

Appendix (A) INVITATION

An invitation to participate in a valuable community roundtable

On Tuesday, March 18th the Neighborhood Alliance of North York will be hosting a community roundtable at the Burtts Corner Lions Club from 6.00 until 9.00. This very important session is focused on: “**Enhancing the role of the voluntary sector in health emergencies**”. We have attached a background document for you to read in advance of the session. We will be discussing the document as part of the roundtable. As a rural community are we ready to deal with emergencies? What services and responses do we have? Who is responsible for services to vulnerable populations? This is an important discussion and we hope you will consider the invitation to participate.

Date: *March 18th, 2008*
Location: *Burtts Corner Lions Club*
Time : *A dinner will be served at 6.00. Meeting to follow*
Adjournment: *9.00*

Please RSVP your attendance to:

Sue Rickards
selbyinc@nb.sympatico.ca
 Ph: 363-2969

Rick Hutchins
hutchr@nbnet.nb.ca
 363-4538

This consultation is made possible with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada and is in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross and the Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership and Development at Ottawa / Carlton University.

It is the objective of this session to test out the framework for community response, present a discussion paper and get feedback and input on current frameworks, supports and community planning

A wide range of community organizations, local and regional elected officials, service agencies and other interested groups have been invited to participate, as well we have representatives from the local/regional government emergency management sector to support the effort to raise awareness and recognition of the roles and capacities of the voluntary sector in responding to emergencies, health or otherwise.

Although there will be a range of discussion we will be focusing on a few key questions;

- How ready is our community for a health emergency? Have we done any emergency planning already in this field? Are we aware of the risks?

- How would our community react right now to a health emergency if one were to occur today?
- Have we formed any formal or informal partnerships with other organizations to manage a crisis (sustain support to vulnerable populations)?
- What help do we need in terms of moral support and tangible resources to assure that service to their community members is maintained?
- What formal or informal arrangements have we made with the local Emergency Measures and health authorities? What kind of relationship would we like to have with them?

Defining Community Resiliency:

For the purposes of our work, **community resiliency** is broadly defined as the ability of a community to work together, to adapt to change and to respond to unanticipated events such as health emergencies, natural disasters, or security incidents. It involves identifying the collective assets of individuals and organizations including skills, facilities, equipment, and communications systems. In health emergencies, resilient communities are able to attend to peoples' basic needs, especially those who are vulnerable because of age, ability, and socio-economic circumstances.

Natural Community Conveners:

The traditional community conveners of non-profit and voluntary organizations are community foundations, volunteer centres, social planning councils, Y's, and, more recently, chambers of voluntary organizations. These community conveners have often brought the local non-profit and voluntary sector together to discuss cross-cutting, community-wide issues. Health organizations have typically been underrepresented in these broader conversations. This has been partly due to their own very well established health networks, and their distinct differences from other sub-sectors, in terms of budget size, regulated professional staff, level of government funding, and linkages to public health bodies. Through this component of the project, our hope will be to enhance the engagement of health organizations in these broader networks and conversations.

Overall goals of this session:

- Improve the well-being of citizens
- Involve residents in local decision-making / planning
- Create cohesion within the neighbourhood/community
- Strengthen the relationships between the neighbourhood and governments
- Establish linkages among service providers from the public, private, and voluntary sectors
- Build Community Capacity (leadership, organizational development)

Appendix (B) PARTICIPANTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Linda Johnston	Taymouth	1063 Rte 628 Hwy, Taymouth, NB E6C 1A1	367-3278	ljohns@nbnet.nb.ca
Barb Flinn	Ambulance	915 English Sett Rd, Taymouth, NB E6C 2B2	367-3140	barbflinn@hotmail.com
Marilyn Evans	Ambulance	48 Zionville Rd, Taymouth, NB E6C 1Y4	(H)367-2700 (Cell)461-3515	marilyn.evans@smunbems.ca
John Nicholson		203 Fulton Ave, Fredericton, NB E3A 2C7	447-7023	john.nicholson@smunbems.ca
Peter de Marsh	Taymouth Community Association	12 Zionville Rd, Taymouth, NB E6C 1Y3	367-2503	grandpic@nbnet.nb.ca
JoAnne Colford	Stanley Fire Dept.	338 Rte 625, Green Hill, Nb E6B 2H3	(H)367-2254 (W)452-6247	jcolford@unb.ca
Marion Norquay	NANY	2446 Rte 105, Lower Queensbury, NB E6L 1G2	363-2125	
Stacey MacDonald	NANY	11 Route 615, Jewetts Mills, NB E6L 1M3	363-1907	dsmacdonald@aernet.ca
Cindy Forbes		401 Route 610, Upper Caverhill, NB E6E 1L2	463-2632	
Kenn Hong	YSSR	810 Tripp Settlement Rd, Keswick Ridge, NB		sar1@yssr.nb.ca
Randy Robinson	EMO	65 Brunswick Street, Fredericton, NB		Randy.Robinson@gnb.ca
Brenda Boucher	Keswick LSD	640 Rte 616, Keswick Ridge, NB		bboucher@warpsnet.ca
Chris Bubar	NANY	33 Foster Ave, Burtt's Corner, NB		thebubars@aernet.ca
Ray Dillon	NANY	1132 Rte 616, Keswick Ridge, NB E6L 2N9	363-2839	dillonr@nbnet.nb.ca
Gerald Bourque		46 Tay Falls Rd, Woodlands, NB E6B 1N3	367-2177	geraldbourque881@hotmail.com
Kevin Guiggey	Lions Club	1110 Keswick Ridge Rd, NB E6L 2N9	363-3833	keving@targetts.ca
Bryan Edmondson	Lions Club	Burtt's Corner	363-5925	
John Gordon	Lions Club	Burtt's Corner	363-5227	
Murray Wilson	ATV Club	Mactaquac	363-3915	
Carl Fox		1319 Route 104, Upper Keswick, NB E6L 2G8	363-5237	
Wayne Annis	Keswick School	652 Sisson Settlement Rd, Burtt's Corner, NB		wayne.annis@nbed.nb.ca
Margie Cummings	Keswick School	874 Rte 616, Keswick, NB	363-3213	
Sophie Michèle Cyr	Falls Brook	125 S. Knowlesville Rd, Knowlesville, NB	375-4310	
Mike Allen	Member of Parliament	25 Diplomat Drive, Douglas, NB	613-947-4431	allenm@parl.gc.ca
Pat Burgess	Canadian Red Cross	318 Maple St, Fredericton, NB E3A 3R4	458-8445 #5	patburgess@redcross.ca

Appendix (C) PRESS RELEASE

For York Connection: Community newspaper

Community volunteers and emergency responders gathered on March 18 at the Burtts Corner Lions Club to discuss the readiness of our communities to cope with a health-related emergency like a pandemic or a natural disaster, such as an ice storm, which could affect health. This session was sponsored by a group of national voluntary sector agencies including the Red Cross, and was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. It was the first of several rural community roundtables to be convened across the country and was hosted here by NANY (Neighbors' Alliance of North York.)

This roundtable session was useful in identifying the gaps in our systems which are meant to protect and sustain people through a crisis. A presentation by EMO's Randy Robinson stated that the first level of response to any emergency is the individual or family, whose major responsibility is to take reasonable preventive measures to blunt the impact of a disaster. But subsequent discussion by the participants indicated that there is no mechanism at a neighborhood level to help people plan for an emergency or to access assistance and resources when they need them. As well, there was general agreement that communication between the responder agencies, the government and volunteers who might help in an emergency is virtually non-existent.

The roundtable participants came from communities around York County, including Stanley, Taymouth, Tay Creek, Burtts Corner, Keswick Valley, Hainesville, Keswick Ridge, Mactaquac, and Lower Queensbury. Some belonged to volunteer fire departments and York Sunbury Search and Rescue, while others represented government services such as Ambulance NB. A third group came from organizations such as service clubs, community associations and churches, who have buildings which could be designated as emergency centres.

This roundtable was a preliminary exchange of information; it is anticipated that there may be follow-up activities, probably focused on the readiness and resilience of individuals and families and their connection to informal networks which exist throughout our communities. For more information call Sue at NANY (363-2969).

Appendix (D) WEB LINKS AND RESOURCES

Recommended web links for further information on Health Emergencies supplied by Bill Lawlor (Canadian Red Cross)

- NB Dept of Health: www.gnb.ca/0551/index-e.asp
- NB EMO: www.gnb.ca/cnb/emo-omu/index-e.asp
- Public Health Agency of Canada: www.influenza.gc.ca/index_e.html
- Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada: www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca
- Canadian Red Cross: www.redcross.ca/flu

DOCUMENTS HANDED OUT

Managing Risk: Pandemic Planning and Crisis Response

An introductory planning guide for New Brunswick Business
Produced by Business New Brunswick March 2007

Voluntary Sector Framework for Health Emergencies

Produced by the Community Resiliency initiative
Funded by PHAC

Appendix (E) RESOURCES

What is a Sustainable Community?

If someone asked ‘What is a sustainable community?’ what should we say? One way to answer is to provide a description of what, ideally, such a community would be like. For example, it would be characterized by safe neighborhoods, affordable housing, and efficient approaches to energy use and transportation. It would take appropriate steps to conserve natural resources and valuable agricultural lands. Its economy would be vibrant, promote local goods and services, and welcoming to new residents. At the same time, it would participate confidently in the New Economy, based on its special strengths. It

would encourage population growth, but do so in ways that were consistent with the carrying capacity of its resources and environment.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, a sustainable community would be open to and adept at managing change. It would recognize that its long-term viability as a community requires that its members:

- plan together to set long-term priorities and societal goals that balance their economic, social and environmental needs and interests;
- form practical plans to achieve these goals; and
- work together to implement the plans and solve problems that arise along the way.

A key difference between sustainable and traditional communities thus lies in this special capacity for long-term planning. *While traditional communities tend to see their economic, social and environmental interests as competitive and separate, sustainable communities see them as complementary and interdependent.*

This initiative offers an opportunity for the Upper Sty John River Valley to take stock and create a vision for the future of community. IT is an important undertaking and one that will bring together a diverse and vibrant mix of persons.

Governance:

How we work together is important. There are many models of governance that we will explore within the scope of this project. Local models have been employed in communities such as Nackawic and Juniper. As well, we have strong models in place with municipalities and economic development commissions. The key to success will be to combine these models into a broader regional vision.

Ecological Governance

“Ecological Governance” is a relatively new concept describing the process of embedding the environment in all levels of decision-making and action from the personal to the global. It’s a new paradigm that treats ‘the environment’ not as an add-on or afterthought, but as all-encompassing and all-pervasive. (Michael M’Gonigle)

Given the alarming state of global environmental degradation and resource depletion, it is imperative that societies adopt a new framework on which to build a sustainable future. This process begins by changing our approach to resource management. All approaches to resource management are value-laden; what needs to change is the set of values which informs environmental, social and political decisions. The change is needed because we now recognize that our current values and methods, based on unlimited consumption of finite resources, will inevitably result in increasing scarcity and eventual resource exhaustion.

Traditionally, there have been two management perspectives, supply-side and demand-side.

Supply-side management has an “engineering” perspective. Planners extrapolate from current consumption patterns to determine future requirements, and then locate and develop new sources of supply to meet the projected demand. Policies are based on the presumed need for new infrastructure, so this approach often results in major construction projects. Environmental impact assessments are now part of this process, but much previous (and ongoing) development has already had damaging impacts on the environment.

Demand-side management tries to change patterns of consumption. It’s about reducing the need for a particular resource to conserve it, while saving money and decreasing environmental impacts. Policies are based on short-term cost-benefit calculations. This is an “economics” perspective, as it manipulates taxes and other incentives to increase efficiency.

Neither of these traditional approaches is sustainable in the long term, because there is no recognition of bio-physical limits. We need a third option, called the Soft Path, which is based in the “social sciences”. This approach produces options for resource management through innovation, conservation, resource allocation and changing patterns of use. Planners model a sustainable future state for the use of a particular resource focusing on socioeconomic prosperity. Then they backcast (go from there to here) to devise a feasible path to reach the desired state.

There is a model for the Soft Path, called the Polis Project on Ecological Governance.

Step 1: Identify, in a participatory manner, all present stakeholders, social (political and economic) systems and ecosystems

- Identify businesses, civil society, communities
- Who uses resources? How are resources used?

Step 2: Adopt a projection for the region

- Identify the ecosystems or environmental issue in question
- What are the actions actually occurring within that ecosystem and what have the effects been on the ecosystem or environmental issue in question?
- Apply existing use patterns of stakeholders, social systems and ecosystems to a 10-20 year projection, creating a “business as usual” baseline
- Identify and consider the current state of implementation of state laws and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and their stated goals in developing this projection

Step 3: Establish a desired future condition

- deriving from step one and two, create a desired future pattern of stakeholders and social systems and ecosystems for a point 10 years into the future.

Step 4: Analyze how that future condition can work

- Consider the projected needs of the region (considering local context), if we take all conservation measures into account.
- Would the existing laws and MEAs be part of that desired future? What role would they play? Can they be used to build a common political platform?

Step 5: Review the supply/demand dynamics and options for resources

- Identify all current sources of the resource and determine if there are any sources that are being overused or degraded. Determine alternatives to these resources.
- Do MEAs contribute to, strengthen or entrench negative supply/demand dynamics?
- Do they promote positive alternatives to these negative dynamics?

Step 6: Back casting

- Create various paths to follow by designing incremental policies and programs that can get the community from “there” (the desired future projection) to “here”. Working backwards, determine what steps need to be taken in order to attain that future (details are important).
- Determine if and how MEAs and national laws/policies need to be changed to attain the desired future. Are new MEAs needed? Do existing ones need to be implemented more effectively, reformed or repealed?

Step 7: Write, Talk, Walk, Promote

- Conclusions must reach the general public and particularly key decision-makers with civil society, if they are to be successfully implemented.
- Conclusions must reach the foreign relations and international environmental departments of national governments, in addition to the UNEP and specific body or secretariat responsible for the implementation of each specific agreement.