



Summary of Case Studies

For this project the three case studies were developed as resources for other communities to learn from. Their experiences and those of their citizens are exemplary of communities taking action and addressing their futures.

Miramichi Case Study: The Miramichi Action Committee: Imagining Miramichi 10 Years Out

Globalization is having direct and often unsettling consequences for many communities in New Brunswick. In the first half of 2007, the region of Miramichi was informed of the downsizing or closing of several mills. The impact on the workforce and the community has been dramatic.

Many community leaders saw the problem as a recurring one and they agreed that a lasting solution requires real change. The alternative, they concluded, is to engage in some serious reflection, research and long-term planning to see what prospects there are for developing a realistic plan for renewal over the next 10 years. If such a plan is to be developed, the discussion must be based on hard facts and reliable expertise. Residents need to get clear on the issues they are facing and identify promising directions for change. At the same time, any effort to produce such a plan must involve the whole community. People must see themselves in it and feel that they have a role to play in achieving it. The Miramichi Action Committee was formed to help the community take the situation in hand. The mandate also includes a commitment to engage community members in some long-term thinking. The Long-Term Subcommittee of the Action Committee was struck to lead this initiative. It will bring together a group of about 35 people from across the region. The goal is to begin building a network of community leaders who will be responsible for launching and ongoing dialogue, forging a plan and moving it forward.

The group is meeting regularly over five months to discuss how the world has changed over the last two decades, how this is impacting on traditional industries, what opportunities exist for the region in the future, and what kind of process they need to form and implement a long-term plan for community renewal. During these five months, they are hearing from and questioning recognized experts on how globalization, new technologies, new business and demographic trends, and issues like the environment, are impacting on the region, and discussing what trends are discernible for the future. They will also hear from people in other places who have gone through similar adjustments and succeeded in reinventing their communities as sustainable communities. Finally, each session concludes with a one-hour facilitated discussion aimed at deciding what lessons they have learned for the Miramichi. This dialogue will form the basis of a 15-20 page report that contains the group's findings. Ideally, it will contain a straightforward, but informed assessment of how new economic, demographic and technological forces are impacting on Miramichi and its economy; set out some possible directions and options for the future, and develop an action plan for testing them. The plan should ensure that the next phase of the project



continues to focus the community's attention on how it can draw on its own internal strengths, engage the public in making choices about its future, and commit this group of community leaders to work together to implement the plan.

Juniper Case Study: The path that leads to being heard by the decision makers

Organized community action is often catalyzed by a common crisis that affects the community dynamic. This is the case for the community of Juniper. This article presents the story of the transition from laid off mill workers to the formation of the Committee Against Transfer of Crown Land Allocation (CATCA).

On September 18th 2007, Fraser Paper, the major employer of the village, announced they would close the Juniper mill operations for an undetermined time leaving 175 people out of work. This was the second closure the community had experienced this year; the first one being the Norbord I-Joist. Fraser Paper Ltd. entered into a one-year deal that allows the sawmill in Deersdale (owned by Irving Ltd.) to harvest on Fraser's Juniper Crown allocation. In return, the Deersdale mill will supply Fraser Paper's pulp mill in Edmundston with wood chips.

In response to the mill closure announcement, Marla Mills, the owner of the Juniper Convenience Store, organized a public rally at the Juniper recreation center on September 18th. About 200 people attended the rally, including Jeannot Volpé (Opposition leader & Progressive Conservative MLA from Madawaska-les-Lacs), Dale Graham (Progressive Conservative MLA for Carleton), David Alward (Progressive Conservative MLA for Woodstock), Keith Ashfield (Progressive Conservative MLA for New Maryland-Sunbury East) and some media representatives. The majority of the rally participants were mill workers; woodlot owners and concerned citizens from surrounding communities also attended. The audience's largest concern was the loss of high paying jobs and the effect it would have on Juniper and surrounding communities. At the end of the rally, Marla gathered the people who wanted to get involved and later announced another meeting.

The major concerns of the newly formed committee were the job losses and the effect on the local economy. Most thought that meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources would fix the problem. Some others felt that they needed to take action by protests and civil disobedience.

The unsuccessful meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources that followed provides an example of the breakdown in communication between communities and decision-makers. There are two major facts that explain this miscommunication: first, the grassroots committee often don't have the organizational capacity for effective strategic planning; second, they are often easily caught up in the emotional side of their community's crisis, becoming distracted from the negotiations and finding it difficult to express their ideas clearly. Nevertheless the members of such grassroots committees are first-hand witnesses to the problems that emerge in their communities, and as such, they are valuable agents in working towards a solution.

At first, the common interest that brought the 200 people together was the loss of employment. Then, as the group started organizing itself, the group vision and mission took form and fewer people remained involved, considering they had to leave the



community to find other jobs. A smaller committee was formed to oversee the issue and their focus was taking a more extensive direction. The group felt that they had to focus their attention on the cause of the mill closure, namely the policy that allowed the mill closure and the transfer of crown land allocation, rather than its consequences. They called themselves The Committee Against Crown Land Allocation (CATCA). This transition allowed them to take part in a much bigger movement that was already taking form at the provincial level, the Public Land Campaign. This involvement allowed them to understand, represent and inform their community about the whole provincial crisis, providing context to the local situation. The committee is now consisted of one active member that participates in provincial discussions about New Brunswick forest management and disseminates the information in the network created by CATCA.

In the mean time, there was another group that formed to work with Enterprise Carleton to discuss of the different possibilities for their community. They are carrying a survey in the community to indemnify peoples interest for the future and exploring the possibilities for the laid off workers to keep their training valid. Hopefully, they will be able to establish goals to meet what they envision for the future.

Communities are a component and a valuable tool for developing solutions to resource management. Society has to find ways to reach those important and valuable inputs as they are a part of the global solution to the broader crisis. The communities should not be kept in the dark when decision-makers are assessing their future. The grassroots committee CATCA is a great example of how a community can be involved in a larger network that can provide the resources and tools to present and debate a common goal with the decision-makers.

Nackawic Case Study: Initiative and Entrepreneurship need to Arise from Inside the Community

In 2007, the Rural Secretariat funded an asset-mapping project in the town of Nackawic. It was facilitated by retired teacher Julie Stone on behalf of NANY (Neighbours' Alliance of North York), a regional community association. This project was sparked by the closure of the St. Anne-Nackawic Pulp and Paper Co. mill in 2004, with the loss of 400 jobs. The mill re-opened in 2006 as AV Nackawic, but this rebirth did not signify a return to the good old days. Many former mill workers were not rehired, resulting in negative attitudes toward the new employer. The pension fund was found to be seriously under funded, creating uncertainty, anxiety and hostility in the community. Some moved away to work elsewhere, while others stuck it out in hopes of being employed at the mill once again. Others turned to local options, including jobs offered in a call centre.

One result of the turmoil surrounding the mill closure was the recognition that the forest industry is in transition, and towns like Nackawic must diversify their economic base if they are to survive. This recognition was the impetus behind NANY's asset-mapping project.



Over a 10-week period, 5 formal meetings were held with interested citizens, as well as informal gatherings and telephone conversations. Several meetings took place in local community centres like the Lions Club and Curling Club, while others were less formal and held in coffee shops and restaurants. The facilitator had many casual conversations which also yielded important information, engaging well over 300 people in the process.



The participants identified the major assets of Nackawic and the surrounding areas, in order of their priority, as

1. the St. John River and its tributaries, with their potential for recreation, education and economic development
2. the existing infrastructure, including recreation facilities (golf course, arena, ball diamonds, etc.) and public services such as the schools
3. economic assets other than the mill, particularly several small businesses with growth potential (eg Riverbend Log Homes)

The report of this project contains several pages which list in detail the assets identified through this process, as well as lessons learned. It was found that this project

- confirmed that citizens know what they want and have good ideas
- demonstrated that people will get involved if asked to do a small part of a big project
- identified potential community leaders by giving them the opportunity to show their skills and talents in group settings
- stimulated broader community discussion about the future of Nackawic

Since the project was completed in March 2007 and the announcement of the mill reopening, the process has stalled. Once the funded facilitator was gone, there were no resources to enable it to continue, although the participants showed strong interest in keeping the ball rolling. It takes exceptional leadership arising from the workshops to keep the process alive. We hope that the next workshop, organized by Falls Brook Centre, will pick up where NANY left off. The last meeting in the framework of this project took place last February 20th. The people envisioned actions that will improve the quality of life their community has to offer. Here are the ideas of projects they listed as goals for the next steps:

- Senior transportation service
- Home care: matching the care workers with people with needs
- Local product pamphlet: to link goods and services with the people
- Meals on wheels
- Gather elder's stories about their community
- Delivery service for general public

Another meeting is scheduled for April 9th at the Nackawic town hall to fallow up on these projects. We plan on informing them of the discussions that took place for the wrap-up session and discuss of how they want to take part and what their thoughts are on ways to carry on the regional outcomes.

