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Issues and Opportunities in Creating a Community-Based Approach to Watershed Health

A Report Prepared for the
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho



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About the Cover

The photograph by Kristine Komar shows the view from above Moyie Falls.

Acknowledgements

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Glossary

ESA	Endangered Species Act
HRU	Human Resource Unit
MMBF	Million Board Feet (timber)
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
RC&D	Resource Conservation and Development (District)
SEA	Social Ecology Associates
SCD	Soil Conservation District
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Issues and Opportunities in Creating a Community-Based Approach to Watershed Health

Section One: Introduction

Executive Summary

Social Ecology Associates (SEA) was contracted by the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho to identify citizen issues and interests in watershed management and water quality. SEA conducted community research in northern Idaho and western Montana early in 2001, the results of which are summarized here. The research showed active interest and involvement in watershed health activities, a wide range of concerns about present watershed conditions, and numerous opportunities identified by residents for improvement. The tribe has developed widespread support in the community because of its successes in economic development, the hatchery and other enterprises, and has ample leadership to foster a community-based approach to watershed restoration.

Background and Objectives of the Project

The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho has undertaken a project to promote better control over Kootenai resources now and for future generations. The project is funded by a grant from the Administration for Native Americans under its Social and Economic Development Program. One of the objectives of the project is the preparation of a Water Quality Plan for the Kootenai River Watershed. The information in this report enables the Tribe to negotiate and plan on an equal basis with the governmental agencies responsible for maintaining water quality. One of the Tribe's interests is to undertake to facilitate the development of water quality standards, or Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and the subsequent implementation plans for affected streams within the Kootenai River basin. During the course of the project, the Tribe developed expertise for the technical requirements of this effort, but desired to understand the social and economic context within which water quality issues can be managed. Specifically, the Tribe wanted to explore the prospects for a community-based collaborative stewardship approach towards watershed health. The term "community" in this report includes the Kootenai Tribal members and non-Indians in northern Idaho, and western Montana. It is this community, in particular, that the Tribe desires to participate as an equal partner in the process, contribute to water quality improvements and derive benefits from a community-based stewardship approach. The Tribe felt that a voluntary, cooperative effort is better in the long-term. It wanted ideas from citizens about the best ways to develop the Tribe's water management principles of "Stewardship, Leadership, Harmony, and Guardianship."

An important aspect of undertaking a community-based approach is an understanding of community networks, issues and dynamics relating to the watershed. The Tribe

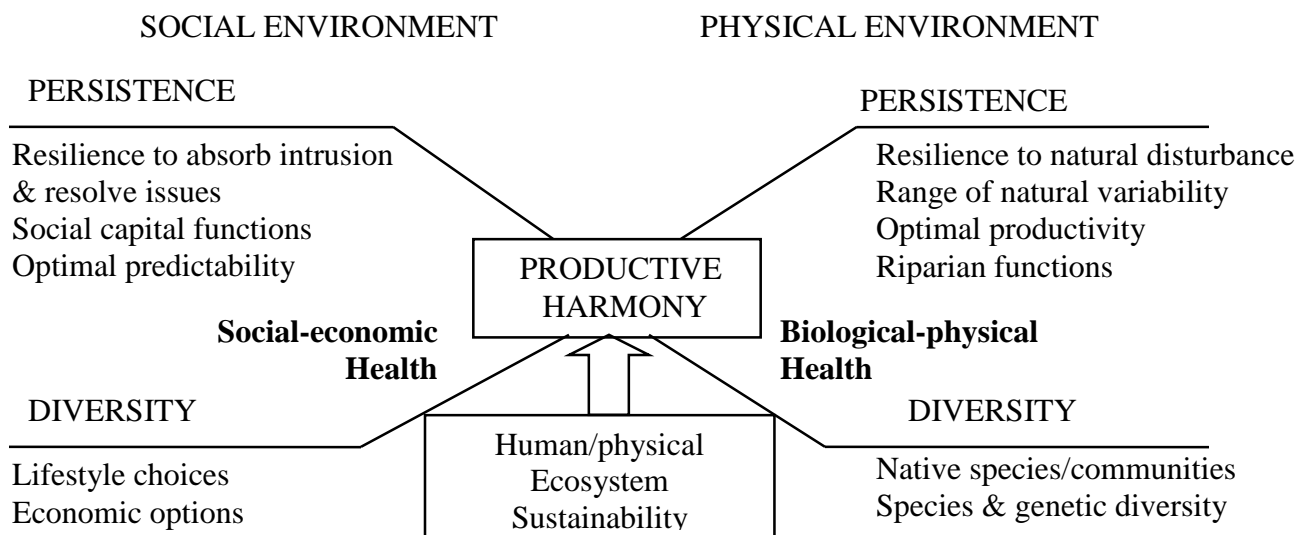
contracted with Social Ecology Associates (SEA), based in Ashland, Oregon, to conduct a social assessment with the following objectives:

1. Identify the interests and issues of residents in watershed health;
2. Describe informal networks and communication pathways in the communities of the area; and,
3. Identify opportunities to mobilize residents to participate in watershed health activities using a stewardship approach.

SEA is an anthropological consulting firm specializing in community assessment, action programs, and management training. Working with rural western communities, natural resource agencies, nonprofit organizations and other groups, it works to create “productive harmony” between human and natural environments. Productive harmony is a balance between people and nature in order to “fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans” (Preister and Kent, 2001, citing the National Environmental Policy Act). The term “social ecology” refers to efforts to assess the human and natural environments and to create alignment between informal stewardship systems in communities and the formal institutions that serve them in order to foster movement towards productive harmony (Preister and Kent 1997). The Tribe chose this approach towards water quality management because it was in alignment with the Tribe’s water management principles.

Figure One shows a biosocial model of ecosystem management in which productive harmony is the goal. This model was used as a framework for the development of communication strategies and opportunities to promote watershed health. In working towards watershed health and ultimately the enhancement of water quality within the basin, the management question is broadened with a biosocial perspective to become, “How can water quality be supported while also creating a benefit for the community?” Or, “How riparian areas be managed in a way that creates livelihood for local residents?”

Figure One
A Biosocial Model of Ecosystem Management



The substantive answer to questions like these has almost always meant partnership. Only through collaborative stewardship in which there is community consensus and support have regulating agencies found the flexibility to permit innovative approaches to addressing the health both of the natural and human environments. The Tribe selected this approach to watershed health because there are many examples of operating, successful partnerships such as, the Sandhills Private Lands Initiative in North Carolina (dealing with the red-cockaded woodpecker), the Applegate Partnership in southern Oregon (dealing with salmon and the Clean Water Act), and the Gila River Watershed Group in southern Arizona.

SEA has senior endorsement in working with the biosocial ecosystem model through the JKA Group in Aspen, Colorado. There are two steps of this process, the Discovery Process™, the social assessment process used to generate this report, and the Human Geographic Issue Management System™, an action process for which the opportunities are identified in this report.

The purpose of “discovery” is to understand how the biosocial ecosystem works so that actions that promote change within the system match the culture and are successful. Experience has shown that local people know more about their environment than any so-called “expert.” Rather than perceiving change as something that is done to people, often imposed from the outside, a social ecology approach suggests that local people are active partners in shaping change activities. When this occurs, science becomes usable and useful, rather than an instrument of oppression, and elected officials and other leaders have direction that helps them be effective.

The Discovery Process was used as a means to “enter the routines” of the community in order to understand it as local residents do. In doing research for this report, team members went to cafes, laundromats, taverns, sporting events, public meetings, and other gathering places to listen to residents and to observe the daily round of events. They became involved in conversations with people about their community, asking people what they liked and didn’t like. The team specifically asked about watershed health and what people thought the challenges and the opportunities to be. They asked people about trends in the community and what the community should be like in the future. In short, the team encouraged people to tell stories—stories of their lives, their values, change and adaptation. Every conversation was closed with the question, “Who else should we talk to about this?” This provided the team with a sense of the informal networks that make up the community. The team met with those people whose names came up repeatedly, thus “testing the waters” for local capacity in forming partnerships.

The four authors spent a total of 51 professional days in April in the communities of Bonners Ferry, Troy, Libby, as well as the rural areas in between. The team talked with tribal members, county commissioners, city officials, agency personnel, farmers, newcomers, retired people, and teenagers. The team talked to people who worked in the mills, the nurseries, and the hops farms. The team talked with river guides, Canadian gamblers, and local waitresses.

This report summarizes the community's conversations. Although organized and categorized by content, this report lets people speak in their own words about what is important. The report consequently is filled with quotes so that people can speak for themselves. When read in its entirety, this is the story of the community. While the information provided in the quotations may not be factually accurate, it does represent underlying truths found in the community. It is these truths (not necessarily the facts) that have been used to create management actions.

Section Two describes the current social and economic conditions of the area, including geographic orientation, settlement patterns, social and economic patterns, key values, and community issues. Section Three contains the interests and issues in watershed health of various segments of the community. Section Four outlines communication strategies and opportunities to promote watershed restoration.

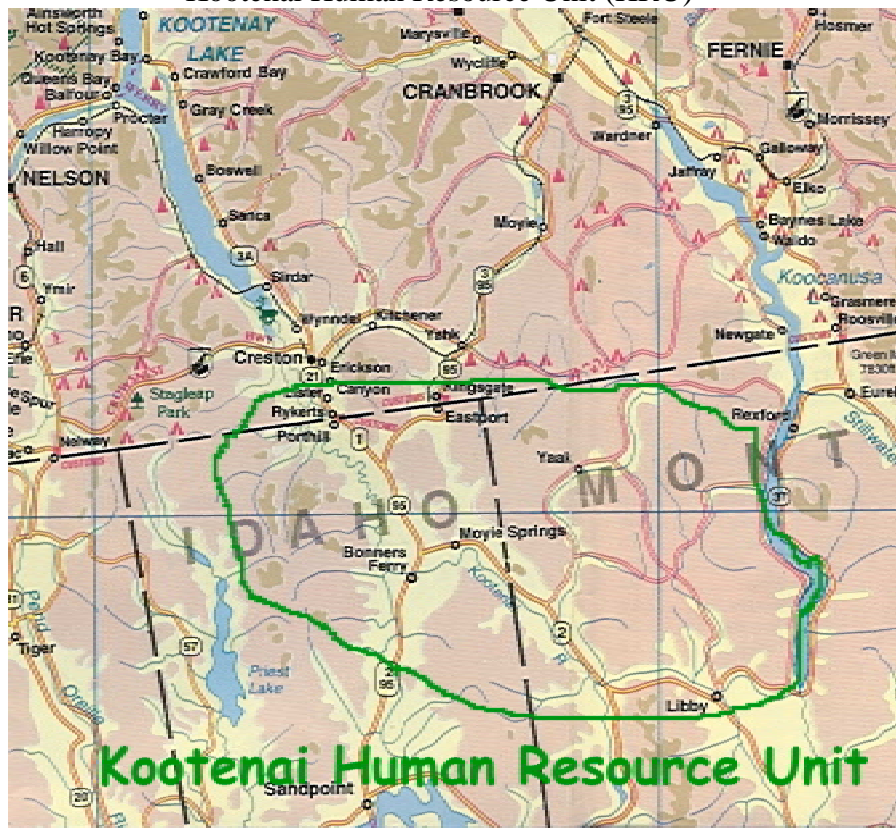
Section Two: Geographic and Social Conditions

Geographic Features

A social assessment is accomplished by understanding seven Cultural Descriptors (Appendix A) within the context of a defined geographic area. The descriptors include settlement patterns, work routines, recreation activities, support services, family and social ties and other routines of daily life that show a geographic aspect. In addition, the seventh descriptor, geographic features, identifies the natural or man-made barriers that separate human populations. These barriers are the boundaries of the Human Resource Unit (HRU) and generally correlate with watershed boundaries. For this report, the Kootenai Human Resource Unit (HRU), shown in Figure Two, was drawn on the basis of the cultural descriptors and verified with through conversations with local residents (Kent and Preister 1999). The Kootenai HRU follows the contours of the Kootenai River Watershed in Montana and Idaho, with portions of the HRU extending into British Columbia, Canada.

“Northern Idaho is like a state of its own. It’s not like Montana or the rest of Idaho.”

Figure Two:
Kootenai Human Resource Unit (HRU)TM



On the west, the crest of the Selkirk mountain range separates the area from Priest Lake. To the south, the county line south of McArthur Lake seems to be the break-off point between Sandpoint and Bonners Ferry. On the east, the Yaak River area to Lake Koocanusa, along with Troy and Libby, appears to have social and economic ties to the northern Idaho area. A strong timber base in times past, a continued reliance on natural resources, and rugged isolation characterize this area. Finally, to the north, the areas of Porthill, Rykerts, and Lister have social and economic ties to the south.

Human Resource Units aggregate into Social Resource Units (SRUs), often a river basin, for example, that express regional affiliations, and common history, outlook and values. Although not shown here, the SRU undoubtedly includes Creston to the north and Sandpoint to the south. The Kootenai Tribe, of course, has extensive connections with other Kootenai bands in the north. People from Northern Idaho go to Creston for medical care while Canadians come to Bonners Ferry for the casino. Farmers particularly have Canadian ties, as does the Copeland area. One observer attributed the greater prosperity of Creston to its diversity—its openness to outsiders and to business and new ideas. Farmers, for example, point to the agricultural innovations in this area (Asian orchards, the manufacture of “grass cubes” for Japan).

Community Themes and Values

Themes are widespread attitudes or perceptions reflected in often-repeated phrases. Values are aspects of community life highly prized by many residents, as revealed by the frequency with which they are reflected in local conversation.

1. Stewardship not environmentalism.

People want to take care of the land and waterways and believe they have good experience in doing so. They see “environmentalism” as a political process that excludes them, results in preservation, and precludes traditional uses of the land. Environmentalism depends on regulation and its solutions are often seen as not practical, flexible, or locally appropriate.

“I believe in multiple uses of the forests—I do a lot of camping, hiking, and hunting. I’m tired of single-issue environmentalism.”

‘I want sensible utilization of forest products and to maintain forest health. There’s plenty of room for critical habitat and other uses.’”

“There is too much preservationist attitudes by the urban population. Good logging practices are essential for forest health and long term water quality.”

2. “There is a disconnect between government and citizens.”

“There’s a total disconnect in this community. Rapid changes and poor leadership means this really isn’t a community anymore. We have a whole bunch of folks who can’t work together.”

“Public meetings here are just sickeningly abusive.”

3. “It’s hard to see progress on local issues.”

A major theme in local relations is the widespread sense people communicated that many of the important issues could not get resolved. Partly this theme reflected local in-fighting that has scuttled projects that were perhaps valuable. However, this was not a dominant ethos in the stories—many people had stories of successful community projects that required much cooperation and good will. More often, this language related to the sense people had that more and more of the decisions that affect them are outside their control, specifically decisions made by federal agencies. There is a certain defeatedness to these sentiments that may make collaborative partnerships difficult. The reader will see this theme played out in the ensuing pages.

“Locals versus locals is the name of the game here. Everyone has an opinion that seems to keep them from working together.”

“I’m skeptical that the feds would support it.” [that is, collaborative approaches to watershed health]

“People are worn out on the issues around here. We get a new issue every week and expend all our energy and good will on just reacting to new challenges, all of which we seem to lose.”

4. Love for the rural lifestyle.

The number one feature that binds people together in this area is the spectacular physical environment. Almost everyone made reference to the physical setting in which they live, many pointing to the broad valley that has been the source of livelihood for so many. Many other people, both white and Indian, have talked about a special mountaintop that affords a view of the valley as a place to go for reflection and perspective by a troubled adolescent or others. Residents used place names extensively in local conversations and newcomers learn these names as a source of pride that they are getting incorporated into the community. The rural lifestyle refers to livelihood (agriculture, timber, tourism) as well as leisure time pursuits (hiking, hunting, snowmobiling).

“This fertile valley is the heart and soul of the county.”

“This area evolved without much influence from outside our boundaries. This region has a lag of 30 years which has its benefits and costs.”

“This area still doesn’t have a lot of people and that’s good.”

“Too many people are moving into the area.”

5. Self-sufficiency and caretaking.

“I was so supported during my husband’s illness. All I had to do was voice my need and it was taken care of. The hospice was wonderful. The churches banded together to help and pray.”

“Everyone survives here by keeping his head down and attaching to a network of friends who take care of each other.”

“During the depression, local farmers and businesses around Bonners printed their own script to use as money. It kept money in the community and insured their own money was good.”

“There is a community wood pile where the mill dumps wood scraps for folks to pick up for free. They’ll even deliver with a pickup for \$50.”

“This county was settled by misfits, independents and dysfunctionals, farmers wanting to get away from society in the early 1900s. They banded together and supported each other. Nowadays, the misfits are a couple of white supremacists and a family of polygamist Mormons.”

“Volunteers are our backbone. A lot of the 4-H leaders are childless, so these are people committed to the community.”

6. “We are not all for economic gain here.”

Poverty in the Kootenai Human Resource Unit is real enough. People talked about the difficulty of making ends meet, the necessity of more than one job, and doing with less. What was clear, however, from people’s description, is that doing with less is a value and a tradeoff for living in such a beautiful setting. A couple people scoffed at local leadership identifying a “living wage” at \$40,000 for a family of four. “That’s if you want a big pickup, four wheeler, and snowmobile.” Related to the idea of living with less is the reliance on others—for childcare, for transportation, for labor exchanges, and other strategies that make life work. People we talked with were not oppressed by lack of money but had broader interests.

“The economy is currently slow. People love to live here and will make sacrifices to do so. I have an electrician friend who works in Columbia Falls during the week. Another person I know commutes to a North Slope drill platform—3 weeks on, 2 off.”

“I’ve been here about 8 years. I love living in such a beautiful place and figure it’s a fair trade off to have to figure out how to live on less. I work two jobs.”

“You have to make sacrifices to be here.”

“I have been willing to not need as much so that I have time to think and read and pursue other interests.”

“How do we welcome progress and keep our quality of life? This setting is a gift.”

7. Pride in a one-class society.

“This is a community without pretenses—one class pretty much across the board.”

“There’s no hierarchy here. It’s all one social class. There’s a sense of humility.”

“If I have to work with the mayor or city council I can. And I know that they will work with me.”

8. Finding value in an individual.

Part of the rural lifestyle and living with less is a healthy tolerance for “characters” that would not fit in elsewhere. In the Kootenai area you can be odd and still have a place. This value has played out in matters of race as well. Many residents talked about their racist past regarding their treatment of Native Americans, and their stereotyping of certain behaviors like public drunkenness. The pride and optimism expressed about recent tribal history is partly a healing process from those darker days. It seemed, however, that the rural ethic of engaging person-to-person first, good or bad, trumped stereotyping tendencies. The value for the individual is strong and was expressed in a variety of ways.

“There is latent racism, a very small minority of active racists. In 1999, there was an incident between a racist white and a Mexican worker at Safeway—an infrequent happening.”

“About 2 years ago, my dad was spit on while he was shopping at Safeway. He did not want to do anything about it, but the clerk and the manager of the store insisted. Dad had his day in court but without success despite several witnesses. I still don’t understand why the judge dismissed the case due to lack of evidence.”

“The guy who started to yell racial obscenities to the girl got fired by the owner of the business.”

“The racism here has never been dealt with. I remember my mom telling me, ‘Don’t put that money in your mouth. A dirty Indian may have touched it.’”

“The Human Rights Task Force doesn’t do enough to uplift folks from local racism. It’s not just skin color either. As late as the 1970s, a woman couldn’t get a loan here without a man’s co-signature.”

“Racism here is covered by a semi-legitimate reason that hides inner beliefs. The grocery store is as clear an example of racism as you can get.” [a tribal initiative that failed]

Settlement Patterns

Settlement patterns refer to how people use the land—the distribution of a population in a geographic area, including the historical cycles of settlement. This descriptor identifies where a population resides and the type of settlement categorized by its centralized/dispersed, permanent/temporary, and year-round/seasonal characteristics. It also describes the major historical growth/non-growth cycles and the reasons for each successive wave of settlement.

The Kootenai people have lived within the Kootenai River watershed since time immemorial. Quilxka Nupika, the supreme being, gave the Kootenai people his most important commandment: “I have created you Kootenai People to look after this beautiful land, to honor and guard and celebrate my Creation here, in this place. As long as you do that, this land will meet all your needs. Everything necessary for you is here, as long as you keep your Covenant with me. Will you do that?” And so, the first Kootenai people promised to keep the Covenant and were placed on this land. The Kootenai people lived in harmony with Creation, in the Rocky Mountains, the heartland, and along the river. The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho is one of the surviving groups of the River Kootenai People. (Adapted from “Century of Survival,” an oral history of the tribe.)

Non-Indian settlement of the river basin began in the 1800s One non-Indian resident described settlement as having three phases: a) the early century of typical western expansion; b) dustbowlers in the 1930s, mainly Scandanavian and Germans with conservative attitudes of “Don’t make waves, don’t say anything against the dominant leadership”, and c) late 1970s and 1980s of urban and suburban people with retirement, also careful not to make waves.

Reclamation, agriculture, and the railroad characterized non-Indian settlement. The white history of the area is one of remarkable change in converting wetlands into productive agricultural lands that have supported 4-5 generations. Eventually, the Libby dam controlled the periodic flooding of the Kootenai River Valley, making farming and town life downstream of the dam much more predictable. Sturgeon populations in the river declined after the construction of the dam. It is also remarkable that the same achievement in agricultural development is causing a re-thinking today as the costs of that development (lost species, water quality issues) become better known. Be that as it

may, the history of the area following non-Indian settlement is one of farming and self-sufficiency. One person told us that agriculture is still the bedrock value of the community. Those folks built the community, the dikes, and the infrastructure that made secondary settlement by shopkeepers and others possible.

“I can remember the years of flood water and flood debris in the Kootenai. The Libby dam changed all that.”

In recent years, the return of former residents and the influx of newcomers have most characterized settlement patterns. Factors influencing settlement are the attractions of family, friends and the rural lifestyle versus the need to make a living. People that came back sometimes reported that they left during a bust so that they could find work. The need for job opportunities is cited as the primary motivation for leaving.

“I grew up here but I was gone many years with the military. I came back to farm the family land.”

“I moved back to Bonners for the third time, this time as a storeowner.”

“I grew up here, left, and came back like lots of others seem to do.”

“I was born and raised here but moved away for about 20 years. I was living in _____. I moved back mainly because I wanted to start my own business and knew it would be cheaper to operate out of here. Since then, business has steadily grown.”

Newcomers are the second force of current settlement and are a frequent topic of local conversation. Although the number of newcomers does not appear to be large, they are beginning to change the flavor of the area. Newcomers are described more fully below.

Finally, residents pointed to the highway as an organizer of settlement in Bonners Ferry. The highway is a central feature of the community that residents see as busy, noisy, and a source of commerce and jobs. The highway is not “local”. Once off the highway, things are more welcoming, kids are safe, and local “hangouts” can be found.

Key Publics

A public is a segment of the population or a group of people having common characteristics, interests, or some recognized demographic feature. Sample publics include agriculturalists, governmental bodies, homemakers, industries, landowners, loggers, miners, minorities, newcomers, preservationists, recreationists, senior citizens, small businesses and youth. A few of the major publics are described below.

The Kootenai Tribe

Prior to the arrival of David Thompson in the early 1800's, there were about 4,000-5,000 Kootenais living near what is now known as Bonner's Ferry. Today, Kootenai tribal members number around 124. The leaders and elders told stories that described the almost total loss of the people prior to the last generation. Children were involuntarily removed from their homes and placed into children's homes, foster homes, and boarding schools. Poverty had forced many young people to leave the area in the 1960s and '70s, leaving elders without the care they needed, and many others in the throes of alcohol and drug addiction. After declaring war on the U.S. government in 1974 and charging 10 cents a car to go through aboriginal lands ("We had to market our poverty."), President Ford awarded them 12.5 acres along the Kootenai River on which they built up to 20 homes during the next several years, eventually getting electricity, drinking water and other services established.

"Lots of young men died in those days, high suicide and high drug and alcohol deaths. I got a call to come back in '74. The next thing I knew I was on the picket lines."

"My grandmother had arthritis but she continued to do bead work so she could feed us."

"It's harder on the men. They are always having to prove themselves."

"My mother was physically abused by my father, and I swore we wouldn't live that way. We found that non Indians and Indians had similar interests—keep our families healthy and together."

With the help of business people, the Tribe began the Kootenai River Inn, and its success has allowed the provision of social services and college education for tribal members. A tribal school was begun two years ago and offers learning in native language and cultural traditions. The casino aids the larger community also through employment opportunities, access to medical care, and aid to schools and other community institutions. Drugs and alcohol are less of a problem. Elders are now cared for.

"We moved forward."

The Tribe also sponsored a powwow for the first time and it was reported to have gone very well.

"The powwow was great and the Tribe participated in the Centennial in late 1999 as well."

"Everyone really loved it. It cost a lot! The Tribe lost money overall, though. There's a real sense here that the Tribe was asked to do things that were in excess of what another community group would be asked to do for a similar event. They

had to have an ambulance standing by, an on-site medical facility—almost an emergency room, more porta-potties than were really needed and so on.”

The Kootenai rely on a variety of strategies to get by, including jobs, allotment funds and other support from the Tribe, day labor or casual labor, labor exchanges with others, and caretaking within their support system.

“Indians get short of cash and pawn guns, pick them up again when they get their per capita.”

One means of survival for tribal members in the past has been to focus in on the Tribe and not out to the larger society.

“Cultural things were given in secret and are still kept that way.”

“The Kootenai have been open in the past with ethnographers and ethnobotanists, but have been ripped off many times. And they’ve seen other Tribes get burned, so it’s no wonder they hold their culture and traditions closely.”

The Kootenai believe that one of their purposes in life is stewardship of the earth. “We are a river people,” said one elder. “Why can’t we survive with what the river gives us?”

The white community has viewed the Tribe in a variety of ways over the years. Our team heard these comments:

“The Tribe is doing much better. They are much more competent. They have learned how to work with the community. After a few bad experiences like the grocery store, they got some good advice from the Idaho congressional delegation.”

“I think they’re getting some good coaching from the Coeur d’Alene or the Nez Perce.”

“I am so impressed that they haven’t just pocketed their profits but have been generous in giving back to the community.” [common]

“I’m very proud of the accomplishments of the Tribe. We used to have Kootenai kids working on summer crews—I heard stories of how poor the tribal members were. They’ve done a lot for the community—whether the community is willing to recognize it or not—like opening their health care center to the public.”

“Thirteen years ago when I got here, it was not uncommon to hear high schools calling Indians ‘blanket ass’ and other slurs. Kids now challenge each other on Indian racism but still struggle with sexism.”

“One confusing thing is that sometimes their positions don’t mesh, first they’re for conservation, next for rampant development.”

“Most folks in town don’t understand aboriginal rights and this causes animosity about what the Tribe ‘gets’ versus what others ‘get.’”

“Everyone looks to the Tribe for money. The city and county are flat broke.”

“The county was totally disinterested in the Kootenai until there was money.”

“After the grocery store experience, the relationships between the city/county and the Tribe were very poor. No one was speaking.”

Newcomers

Newcomers have influenced the area in a number of ways. They stimulate local economic activity through construction of homes and local spending. Newcomers in their 30s and 40s are said to be looking for a saner way of life and a slower pace. They tend not to live in town but out in the rural areas “on their own,” many overlooking the river, and some with small nurseries or “hobby farm” operations. Many build their own places. Many newcomers try for jobs with the Tribe at the Kootenai River Inn, many are self-sufficient, and many start their own businesses. They also seem generally to have urban environmental values tending toward preservation. Hence, they have high value for the land and for ecology but not much knowledge or experience. Some local people pointed out the education process of newcomers. As they begin to learn about the local ecology, they begin to appreciate and learn from their neighbors, and through this process get incorporated into the community.

“Newcomers put up these ‘no trespassing’ signs but you almost have to do that because of break-ins.”

“New people are retirees or semi-retirees. They are invisible. They build their homes in the sticks and keep to themselves. They don’t mix into politics or issues. They don’t get involved in community efforts.”

“For some reason, there are lots of Los Angeles retired police officers moving to north Idaho.”

“Newcomers move here to escape, to get away.”

“There is a trickle of folks moving in. Some make the adjustments quite well, others don’t.”

“Newcomers don’t want to pay anymore than they have to. They do not support education. The last education levy failed by just 6 votes. We have an anti-tax sector here and it’s organized and vocal.”

“We made more new construction loans last year than in the last five. Most of the loans were on houses \$200,000 and over. Retired people are moving here. If the trend continues, we will become a service-oriented town.”

“Retirees moving in don’t help the tax base much because in Idaho, the first \$50,000 of house value is exempt.”

Youth

The youth in the area to whom we talked voiced a complaint heard a lot in rural America, “There’s nothing to do.” But when asked what they do do, teenagers of Kootenai had a pretty good list—they hunt, fish, dirt bike, skateboard, and do school sports. Employment, they said, is also not much, although adolescents work at fast food restaurants, the tree nurseries, and the hops harvest. For a career, “you have to go somewhere else.” A couple kids mentioned the forest closures and that jobs in logging can no longer be found. Youth issues had to do with opening up the forests for employment, construction needs at the high school, and crowded classrooms. Younger kids are active in 4-H and the churches.

“Teachers here are OK. There are some drug problems but they’re not a big deal.”

“The lack of employment opportunities pushes kids out of here after high school.”

“The lack of supervision because both parents work is one of the toughest issues in the community.”

“What’s the number one priority for kids your age?” “Girls!”

“We need a new gym with a pool. That’d be cool.”

Mennonites

Most of the Mennonites who settled in the Kootenai River Basin came after the dust bowl, looking for cheaper land and a place where they could live with very little money. They came mainly from Kansas and settled in northern Idaho and Canada. In time, their numbers grew, and the need for a second church was evident. A second church was purchased and the two now serve somewhat different functions. Members of the church who feel the need to go back to the fundamental teachings prefer the new church. There are several Mennonite business owners in Bonners Ferry. They are well regarded for having a strong work ethic and for successfully diversifying their economic enterprises.

“There are two sects of Mennonites in the community—black caps and white caps. The white hats are more liberal than the black hats. White hats can wear more modern fashion, get involved in sports and other community activities more than black hats.”

“The Mennonites keep to themselves and don’t mix much.”

“Mennonites are good to work with. They are cautious about new methods, but they will adopt them if the elders accept them.” [farmer]

Latinos

We were told that there are about 100 Latino families living in Bonners Ferry without counting migrants. Most Latinos in the area are said to be from Mexico and work in agriculture. Some work in the hops and others in the nurseries. Some of the hops workers rely on migrant housing furnished at Elk Mountain Farm, which is owned by Anheiser-Busch. There are presently around 70 workers now at that farm, all but one from Mexico. Not all of them have families but most do. Wages are low. One worker said that after 8 years of returning to work, he still only makes \$7.50 an hour. Migrants tend to return to the same places season after season. They say that they find out about work through word of mouth. Employers have learned to communicate their job needs to their workers and the word gets around.

Migrant education is a challenge. Migrant Head Start is limited in enrollment to about 14, leaving at least 35 children without access to education. Positive outlets for kids and transportation to services for wives while their husbands work are key issues in the Latino community.

Relations between Latinos and the larger community appeared to be cordial in public settings but with little interaction and with occasional racial incidents.

“We put the word out and they come.” [employer speaking about migrant workers]

“I want to reach out to the Mexican community—get them involved in our programs.” [4-H coordinator]

“Working conditions are good. The company is good to us.”

“Some people give us looks like they do not want us here.”

“Hispanics will be good for the community. They have strong church and social structures to contribute.”

Communication Networks

The Kootenai HRU relies heavily on informal networks for survival. Although the formal system provides valuable services and the structure of government and business is an essential overlay in the community, it still remains the case, as part of its historical

legacy, that people in the area rely more on each other. Informal communication is important because most people trust and depend upon it. Newspaper and television are used but they are not as important as talking to a neighbor or gathering at a key hang out spot to pick up the latest information.

“The good thing about this is that everyone stays informed. The bad news is that rumors travel just as easily and they have been known to run people out of town. It takes a long time for rumors to disappear.”

“Everyone stays informed here.”

Our team noticed a lack of information as well. For example, many people did not know about the tribal school, although it is over two years old. Many others did not know about efforts to create a Cultural Center.

The key gathering places in the area are:

- Safeway, just about everybody but for short time periods
- The Panhandle Café, business people, long time residents
- The feed store
- 3-Mile Café, timber workers, long haul truckers
- The library, a hub of information in the community
- Bonner Bookstore
- Northwoods Inn, workers and truckers
- Moyie Club, mill workers, rural residents
- Mugsys
- Zip Trip
- Carwash
- Boundary Trading Company (“BTC”)

There are formal government structures, agencies, and organizations that will play a key role in water quality management as well. Among the important ones are:

- Boundary County Commission
- Bonners Ferry City Council
- U.S. Forest Service, Panhandle National Forest
- Paradise Valley Granges
- Boundary County Backpackers, AKA Idaho Conservation League
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Kootenai Wildlife Refuge
- Chamber of Commerce
- County agricultural extension office
- Natural Resource Conservation Service, Resource Conservation District
- The Panhandle Lakes Resource and Conservation District (RC&D)
- Panhandle Area Council, regional economic development district
- Cabinet Mountain Water Association
- Pleasant Valley Water Association
- Twenty-Mile Water Association

- Ministerial Association
- Kootenai River Network
- Bonners Ferry Artist Association
- Sportsmen's Association
- Trout Unlimited
- Boundary Head Start Center

Work Routines

Work routines refer to the way in which people earn a living, including where and how. The types of employment, the skills needed, the wage levels, and the natural resources required in the process are used to generate a profile of a population's work routines. The opportunities for advancement, the business ownership pattern and the stability of employment activities are also elements of this descriptor.

In the Kootenai HRU there has been a high dependence on natural resources for economic livelihood. Agriculture, timber production and some mining have characterized the economic mainstay since white settlement. In recent years, the decline of timber production and the tight financial condition of many agricultural operations have compelled business leadership to explore other options. The major sources of employment today are the school district, Rocky Mountain Academy, Kootenai River Inn, timber, and farming. The lack of jobs is an important community issue. As in other parts of the country, the trades and services jobs are growing faster than agricultural, forestry, and manufacturing jobs, leading to concerns about low wages.

“People in general are a little more worried about their jobs, about having to move out of the area.” [barber]

“The local economy is not doing so well. There are lots of minimum wage jobs that are seasonal. Like the jobs at the nursery. Lots of locals work there at one time or another but it is not a living wage.”

Leadership seemed to concur with this sentiment:

“As a community we need to preserve the industries that we have here already but diversity is needed to meet the challenges ahead of us.” [elected official]

Recently, an economic development effort has begun that includes unprecedented involvement from the city and the county as well as the Tribe. Although it is called a “downtown revitalization” effort, its vision is broader than that. Key items called for in the plan so far are moving the fairgrounds, creating a business incubator center, and constructing a tunnel under the highway to connect the casino to additional parking and shops. The intent is to “restore the core”, diversify industry and commerce, and connect the town by enhancing the highway, making pedestrians safer, and creating a river walk. It is clear that the economic development effort has the talent, skills, and connections for

successful action, but its participants acknowledge that the poor quality of schools and the hospital are a damper on possible success.

A more detailed look at three economic sectors follows: agriculture, timber , and trades and services.

The Agricultural Sector

Agriculture was described by a number of people as the “heart and soul” of the area, the “bedrock value” of the community. The soils are very good, and the average yields, between 90 and 110 bushels for wheat per acre, are comparable with irrigated farmland. Wheat, barley, and hops are the primary crops. Wheat and hay production is down, and some farmers growing small grains are going out of business. Not many are buying new equipment. Although there are not a large number of livestock growers, perhaps 15-20, livestock prices at the moment are good. Two or three dairies remain. Rising fertilizer and fuel prices are expected to drive more people out of business in the coming year. Only three allotments for grazing on Forest Service lands are currently held by local farmers and two of them are for sheep. The individual members of the Kootenai Tribe have approximately 2000 acres of tribal allotments most of which are leased for agricultural purposes. Some are managed for timber.

Numerous people in the community reported that young people are not going into agriculture, primarily because of the economics. As evidence of this, Paradise Valley Grange, the only remaining grange in the county, has about 48 members—all but a few are over 70 years old.

Many people, from farmers to agricultural specialists to townspeople, stated that farmers do not use many fertilizers and pesticides. For economic and ecological reasons, they have been adapting to respond to the concerns about this issue expressed in the community. Tribal members on the contrary, express concerns about fertilizer and pesticides that are used on the agricultural lands adjacent to the reservation, particularly when these materials are applied by aerial application.

The so-called “North Bench” area is made up of cut-over timberlands with shallower erodable soils. Farmers use minimum tillage methods and rotate permanent hay crops to maintain ground cover and avoid water quality problems. Lagoons are used to control waste. The North Bench dairies and the private woodlands are breaking up. The land is going to heirs and sold on the market. Lots have gone from 1600 to 4000 in number. Rural residential housing is going in—“farmettes”—, which makes future private timber harvest improbable and increases water demand. This is an emerging issue that is likely to affect water quality and quantity in the future.

“Dairies were sold off by the 2nd generation kids who didn’t want to farm. They sold the cows, logged the land and broke up the farm or leased it to others.”

The Anheiser-Busch hops farm, Elk Mountain Farm, is less than 10 years old and employs about 70 people. During harvest, it will have between 275 and 300 workers.

“I really applaud Anheiser-Busch’s hops farm and migrant worker program. They are investing in the county. They take care of the workers, contributing to the school in the Copeland area, and sponsoring classes to learn English.”

The prospects for alternative agriculture were explored with some farmers. Specialty niches have always been part of agriculture but the tricky part is staying in the game long enough for the market to develop. How much demand is there? How solid is the demand? How can risk be minimized? One farmer is growing hard white wheat for Asian markets. In Creston, they are manufacturing “grass cubes,” highly dense, one-ton bricks of timothy grass, for sale to Japan.

Finally, nurseries represent an important new way of using the land that is generating “crops” capable of creating local livelihood. Observers point out that nurseries have been attracted to the area because the climate is mild yet produces hardy stock. Most tree nursery stock goes to California for landscaping and orchards. People have appreciated the employment opportunities represented by nurseries but complain of their low wages.

“There are lots of minimum wage jobs that are seasonal—like jobs at the nurseries. Lots of locals work there at one time or another but it is not a living wage.”

“We need more job diversity here. A case in point is the recent growth of nurseries around here. They are all doing well. The problem is that those jobs are minimum wage jobs that are seasonal. They are not good as the economic base.”

Agricultural issues of importance to farmers are reported in Section Three.

The Timber Sector

Local residents commonly reported the decline of the timber industry in the last several years. Long timers still consider Bonners to be a timber town. A number of signs were observed that said, “This family supported by timber dollars.” Frequently, people told of the loss of timber mills. Presently there are two large mills left, Crown Pacific and Louisiana Pacific, and a smaller cedar mill, Welco. Crown Pacific owns 50,000 acres of timberland and recently invested \$27 million into mill upgrades. Both larger mills are capable of working with small diameter products, down to 3 or 4-inch material. Both mills can handle studs, utilize Canadian material and require about 200 MMBF a year to stay in operation. Residents wondered openly if both mills can stay in operation and pointed to Crown Pacific’s liquidation of existing stock of logs as evidence of possible imminent closure. With mill pay at \$13-14 for good operators, millwork offers some of the more lucrative family wage jobs in the area. Residents said that timber mechanization has resulted in a dramatic reduction in jobs. Crown Pacific is said to run its whole mill with 6 people since retooling. Remarkably, people in the area did not mention

mechanization as a factor in the decline of timber production but attributed the decline to “forest closures.”

Other, smaller mills are located in the rural areas. In addition, there are a number of secondary wood products businesses that reportedly are doing well. A post and pole operation obtains raw material from Canada because of price and preferred species, although they buy 15% in the immediate area to support the local economy. Its product goes to California. The waste material goes to Kettle Falls, Washington to a power generation plant. The operation continues to locate here because, for the owner, “it’s home.” A pressed log business uses waste chips from the local mills. A log home business assembles custom homes on site, then disassembles them and ships around the world. Its big markets are in Colorado and North Carolina. Canada is not a market but is the source of material because the supply is more available and larger in size.

In the past, harvesting would take place on high ground during summer and fall and move down to lower portions of drainages (especially Myrtle Creek) during winter and spring. Locals viewed this pattern as sustainable. The curtailment of public logging has put greater stress on private woodlands. There are 150,000 acres of private woodlands versus over 400,000 acres of public woodlands in the immediate area. Moreover, private woodlands are getting subdivided. Newer woodland owners are less interested in logging their land or even reducing stocking levels for fire safety. Smaller woodlots mean more roads, more septic systems, which tend to lower water quality.

The Bonners Ferry Ranger District of the Forest Service currently has 80,000 acres of overstocked acres in accessible areas. It is trying to offer 2000 acres a year, or about 10 MMBF or roundwood (pulp) on a yearly basis. The total District annual offer is about 15 MMBF. At that rate, officials stated, it will take 40 years to clear up the backlog of fuel reduction. An experimental stewardship contract is underway in Priest River. Such contracts offer the Forest Service the means to effectively reduce fire hazard through thinning, but stewardship contracts are still the exception but not the norm. The Forest Service acknowledged that a consistent supply of material is the single greatest impediment to market development and staff listed several businesses currently capable of expanded production if the supply was available.

The Panhandle National Forest reported that it has been 100% successful in lawsuits in recent years, partly because it develops projects that have ecosystem health as the first priority with timber and other resources being a by-product of watershed restoration.

The politics of forestry and timber production appear to locals to be beyond their control. According to local views, their experience and ideas are not valued and decisions are increasingly made, not even at local office of federal agencies, but at higher levels and in Washington. The Clinton/Gore administration is viewed as shutting down forests for timber harvest, and many people commented that the loss of “forest access” has hurt the area and the forest. People have the belief that the government/citizen disconnect has harmed local communities and is leading to long-term degradation of forest health. The high risk of catastrophic fire because of overstocked and unmanaged stands is taken as

evidence of this disconnect. Timber production has been limited also because of the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The lack of flexibility in this effort, the focus on single-species instead of many, and the lack of inclusion of local knowledge is perceived to have caused more restrictions than would otherwise be necessary. There is a belief that locals could do a better management job while still meeting the requirements of the ESA and other laws. Politics is also to blame for the glut of Canadian logs on the market. Because of trade agreements, residents said that Canadian logs can be transported up to 1000 miles and still out compete local mills that have about a 100 mile radius of profitability.

“The enemies of the economy are the environmentalists and Fish and Wildlife Service causing forest land to be locked up. They are extremist and not caring about community.”

“Boundary County is more dependent on timber harvest than any other Idaho county.”

Timber and forestry issues are summarized in the next section.

The Trades and Services Sector

In the last few years, residents say that many new businesses have come into the area, from hardware to tourist type places. At the same time, people have said that many of the practical stores important for everyday living have disappeared, like carpet stores and farm implement stores. The loss of these kinds of businesses has created a high degree of “leakage” in the perception of local residents. That is, because people have to go to Sandpoint for carpet and for a doctor, they put off small purchases and then buy all they need when the trip is made. In this way, the loss to the economy is not just the carpet or the doctor’s fee, but groceries, appliances, clothing and other items that might be available locally. This pattern begins a downward spiral in a local economy of which many people were aware.

“Getting and keeping professionals here is a problem because of low wages.”

“If retirement continues and we become a service oriented community, displacement and change of local values will occur. Service jobs do not pay well.”

“We need to decide if we are going to be a service oriented town with nothing but minimum wage jobs.”

The educational academies are a significant source of employment in the area, especially Rocky Mountain and Boulder. They have contributed to spin-off businesses such as tutoring and other services. A number of high-end resorts have also developed in the area that offer local employment.

Two economic generators that are important within the trades and services sector are retirement and tourism. They are both difficult to assess because their activity is measured along with the general statistics for the trades and services sector. In other words, the statistics do not measure whether a restaurant patron or buyer of gasoline is a visitor, retired person, or a local resident. Activities associated with retirement and tourism contribute to the economic base if they bring more money into the area than they cause to leave the area. There are two ways by which this happens. One is what economists call “transfer income” and it refers to social security, pensions, and dividends that retired people bring into an area in which they live. Although not significant yet in Boundary County, transfer income has become an important part of the economic base in other parts of Idaho and the west.

The second way retirement and tourism contribute to the local economy, of course, is the businesses and the jobs that are made possible by the presence of more people with specialized buying interests. Residents pointed to the visitor patterns they notice in the summer season, that Bonners is a stopover for Spokane traffic headed to Glacier National Park. Bonners is also on a north-south corridor that takes people north to Banff and Jasper National Parks in Alberta.

“Boundary is remote—right in the middle of high recreation areas, but not a destination itself, people are all passing through to other places.”

Leaders in economic development are keenly aware of the value of the highway and highway placed businesses and amenities to capture the benefit of visitor traffic. The effort of downtown revitalization reflects the importance of this resource.

Local residents were keen to point out the number of new businesses in recent years catering to retirement and tourism interests as well as the general public. These include:

The casino.

One gentleman works with his son earning livelihood as a “forest manicurist.” Seeing that big new homes were going in and that folks were disappointed their acreages looked messy, he bought a small skidder and sculpts and manicures the forest for the rich.

A pair of brothers decided to open up a mountain bike shop 7 years ago. From mountain bikes they have expanded to a four-season, high-quality outdoor store. They started in a space 1/8th the size of the total building, they expanded continuously, and now they own the building. One of the owners estimated that 70% of his customers are from the County, 10% from Coeur d’Alene, 10% from Spokane, and 10% from Canada.

A world-class photographer does landscape photos for garden/landscape/architecture magazines and books, and has appeared in

hundreds of books and regional galleries. Working out of a studio in his home, he employs two part time people.

A catering/lunch/antique/cooking class store has located downtown that serves local residents, visitors, as well as the resorts.

An art gallery and framery makes use of several types of local artists.

A new bus service, especially for Medicare appointments.

River outfitters, operating out of Coeur d'Alene, have reported prosperous times managing river running visits. The season is short—four to seven weeks—but active. Using inflatable kayaks could extend the season, but so far, no one has done so.

Recreational Activities

Recreational Activities refers to the way in which people use their leisure time. The recreational opportunities available, seasonality of activities, technologies involved, and money and time required are aspects of this descriptor. The frequency of local/non-local uses of recreational resources, the preferences of local/non-local users, and the location of the activities are also included.

There is a profound love of setting in the Kootenai Human Resource Unit. People appreciate the beauty of their surroundings and comment openly on their wish for a quality environment. Both the Indian and non-Indian people have a tradition of visiting certain mountaintops in order to appreciate the beauty and uniqueness of this area. It is an environment they are active in as well. In addition to the many work routines that get people outside, this is a population of avid outdoors people. Residents reported hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, skiing, and snowmobiling activities that occur on a regular basis.

“When the river is high, there are a lot of people fishing the river, lots of recreation, especially in Moyie Canyon. Last year, canoes left the city dock and went to the Columbia River.”

“Snowmobiling is good in the winter but people don't spend as much as we'd like.”

Recreation activities for visitors are covered under Work Routines.

Support Services

Support Services are any arrangement people use for taking care of each other, including the institutions serving a community and the caretaking activities of individuals. This descriptor emphasizes how supporting services and activities are provided. Commercial businesses, religious institutions, social welfare agencies, governmental organizations, and educational, medical and municipal facilities are all examples of support services. Caretaking activities include the ways people manage on a day-to-day basis using family, neighborhood, friendship or any other support system.

It was clear from citizen descriptions that local people depend more on each other than the formal services offered through government and agencies. From historical necessity, people took care of themselves, and self-sufficiency and caretaking have become values embedded in the culture. It is also the case the local government and residents have not been able to afford the services that some would like. The major concerns we heard related to support services are listed in order of importance.

School Infrastructure

School infrastructure needs repair and there is no apparent way available to fund them—at least one new building and significant renovations and repairs on others.

“School facilities are in dire need of improvements. Lots of safety issues need to be addressed, but there is no money to fix them.”

“All the schools need improvements and repairs.”

Transportation

“There is no public transportation in Boundary County. Low income families and some elderly have trouble getting to appointments in Sandpoint.”

“Transportation is critical in this town.”

Social Services

“There is not enough quality child care here.”

“The community needs a playground.”

“In this town, everyone will do anything to provide services to people.”

“There used to be an agency here that helped displaced workers or even seasonal workers with their rent, groceries, and other crucial expenses. They lost their funding.”

“We don’t have pediatricians but midwives are used a lot.”

Energy Costs

Residents were quite worried about escalating costs of energy. They expressed gratitude that the city power capacity would buffer them from the high costs being experienced in other areas, particularly California, but that they are still experiencing twice the costs of a few months ago with more increases likely.

County roads need improvements.

“Some of the roadways in the County are a little rough.”

Section Three: Public Interests and Issues in Watershed Health

Stewardship Activities

Stewardship refers to how people take care of the land. When the Kootenai people managed the land, they lived about 70-80% from fishing and about 20-30% from waterfowl. They believe one of the reasons they are here is to take care of the land. One elder put it this way,

“This is what we believe, if the river is sick, we are sick. If the river is dying, we are dying.”

“The Kootenai River was a mountain stream with a great fishery, but over the years there’s been a systematic destruction of its side stream fisheries through the use of culverts, the practice of river channeling, septic systems, and erosion from farming. Trail Creek, Cow Creek and Deep Creek are badly damaged. Deep Creek is so bad that the lower portion is just a mud hole. Ling used to spawn in the side streams in February, the bull trout in August and September. The culverts (illegal in Washington and Oregon) are major problems as they are narrow and water rushes too strongly through them for the fish to pass. They’re also too high in the channel. The habitat has been so degraded that there are no holes for fish and they are often openly exposed over gravel.” [non-Indian elder]

The Kootenai Tribe hatchery program was begun in 1991. From a low budget and shaky beginning, it has become a successful hatchery that supplements natural stocks of sturgeon. One of its purposes is to understand the biology of the sturgeon population and to pinpoint the causes of its decline. Program staff are researching a range of variables like temperature, water levels, habitat, nutrient levels, predators, and stream structure. The 1-2 year old fish released by the hatchery are surviving in the river, and they have learned that fertilization of eggs is occurring naturally as well. Program staff have found that the critical time for sturgeon is between the fertilized egg and one year old. Survival rates at this age are very low and the research is oriented to understanding why. A tribal member had this perspective on the problem as it relates to former power peaking practices:

“Sturgeon spawn at night in gravel nest beds in shallow waters during the first weeks of June. The Army Corps of Engineers, who administer Libby Dam, cut the water flows at night when the demand for power is lowest and increases water flow at daybreak. When water flows increase from 4000 cfs [cubic feet per second] to 7000 or 8000 cfs, the eggs wash down the river. As a result, we were not finding any newly hatched eggs. We would locate the nests at night, and reinspect them in the early morning hours and they would all be gone.”

“The system is upside down—the insect population is greater in the winter months than what it should be.”

The Kootenai Tribe wetland restoration program, through its wildlife biologist, is in its infancy. Working through the Bonneville Power Administration, the Tribe has been seeking responsibility for recreating wetlands as a mitigation for the dam at the Pend Oreille River. Because of special considerations for loss of aboriginal hunting, fishing, and gathering opportunities, the Tribe has a means to spearhead watershed restoration efforts, and to gain financial support from federal sources.

During the early historical period when management of the land was controlled by white people, stewardship efforts centered on reclamation. Huge expanses of land were converted from wetlands to farmlands and were supported by an infrastructure of dikes and levees. This accomplishment permitted four generations of farming and livelihood for the valley.

There's quite a history of reclamation here, with dikes, pumping stations, dams, levees, Libby Dam, and reclamation districts.”

“I remember huge fish runs in the old days—fresh water ling (burbot). You could walk across the river on them. People would come from miles around during spawning to snag them. We used to have fish festivals and community fish fries. My friend and I once caught a 10-ft sturgeon and had a big fish fry—we sliced off steaks all day.” [farmer]

The Kootenai Wildlife Refuge supports 220 bird species and 300 vertebrate species. Over 20,000 people visit the site on a yearly basis from 28 states and 7 countries. Between 500 and 1000 waterfowl hunters make use of the refuge annually. Ducks Unlimited has undertaken a number of wetland restoration projects but so far has focused mostly on state and other public lands. Current projects of the Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCS) include two farmers who are building grass filter strips along the river and ditches, and two farms being converted into Wetland Reserves (2000 acres) just south of the Canadian border, to restore the natural hydrology. The District Conservationist reported that 20,000 to 30,000 ducks and geese pass through in spring and fall and use the area's ponds. Crop damage is apparently not significant. The proposed expansion of the refuge has generated conflict in the community (see below).

The NRCS administers the most important wetlands restoration program. Farmers wishing to sell their land and get out of farming utilize the program. Alternately, farmers can be paid for wetlands easement, reportedly up to \$1,000 an acre. In this way, they still own the land, or they can sell it, although, of course, it must be kept in wetlands. This program is not popular because it is seen as contributing to the demise of farming because the program inflates the price of land. Farmers have feared a domino effect in which other farmers are also encouraged to quit farming and they feel their fear has proven to be true.

“I hate the Fish and Wildlife Service. They are the ultimate authority, answer to no one, get money from seemingly nowhere, and have no accountability. In public

meetings, they are really clear that their only interest is the sturgeon—that they don't care about people, farms, or anything else.” [well-regarded community leader]

Local officials have criticized the program as leading to the loss of the tax base, as lands become public and are taken off the tax rolls. Apparently, however, federal payment-in-lieu-of-taxes adequately compensates for this loss. Although this appears to be a “non-issue,” it is talked about in the community as if the tax loss was real. Moreover, farmers point out that the farming infrastructure is lost with farmers leaving the business—the supply stores, the organizations, farm jobs, grain in the elevators, and so on. With the loss of “critical mass”, whatever that threshold may be, agriculture could collapse.

“Farmers like restoration, but they are afraid of federal regulations.” [common]

Fish and Game says they will stock your place, but then they want to come on your place all the time.”

“The Coeur d’Alene Tribe is doing a wonderful job spearheading the clean up of their watershed.”

“There was a partnership in 1976 between Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Lower Kootenai band to create wetlands. In 1991, pumps were added to supplement water levels. I wonder if that could work in Boundary County—maybe relieve some ESA [Endangered Species Act] pressure on Forest lands.” [Other people we spoke with did not seem aware of this project.]

“The Trout Creek area looks good. The trees are back, the bugs are back.”

Citizen Issues Related to Watershed Health

Citizen issues are statements people make about their situation that can be acted upon. If a statement is too general, or reflects a value but not an action, we call it a theme that portrays an attitude or perception, but in and of itself cannot be acted upon. Citizen issues, by contrast, by having an actionable component, indicate what is possible to make progress on in a community. Change can happen in a society when people mobilize together, and that is most likely to happen when citizen issues are incorporated with the management concerns of government agencies and organizations. SEA's theory of Issue Management (Preister and Kent 1997) states that issues have a life cycle to them—emerging, existing, and disruptive. Leadership that focuses on resolving emerging issues, incorporates them into the relevant scientific and technical considerations, and fosters action with citizens as well as groups, has the best chance of creating true partnerships and lasting change that makes sense for an area. Hence, the importance of discovering issues early, so that public programs and initiatives are grounded in citizen interests.

This segment of the report identifies the citizen issues identified through the course of the fieldwork that relate to watershed health. Section Four will explore the opportunities to resolve issues while making progress on watershed health. Watershed health concerns were of the highest interest in local conversations, outranking economic concerns in terms of frequency of reporting. Nevertheless, citizens consistently stated that their interest is a balance between maintaining the quality of the natural environment, clearly a central value in the community, and the need to make a living. At the same time, while environmental values are very strong, environmental politics were not well liked. Stewardship, not environmentalism, makes more sense for the communities within the Kootenai River Basin, as stated earlier.

Water Flows, Libby Dam, and Fish

There are widespread issues between farmers, State Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Army Corps of Engineers over management of fish and water flows. The Army Corps of Engineers is under pressure to implement the US Fish and Wildlife requirements for endangered species by increasing water flows for sturgeon and other fish species. When flows are higher, as for fish habitat purposes, farmers experience more seepage under the dikes, the erosion of dikes, and crop damage. Liability questions from these occurrences have never been resolved. If water level is brought down slowly, apparently there is less damage. There is also active paranoia that the Corps is keeping water to sell electricity to the highest bidder. The question about the removal of Libby Dam is actively discussed, but few people think the possibility is real. The overwhelming majority of people do not want this because of the certain destruction of agricultural operations and the return to frequent flooding of the city. However, communication about the possible options related to water flows has not been extensive or inclusive, and people have asked for better communication with relevant agencies to explore the options.

“Raising water levels for spawning causes water table problems in adjacent fields, threatening dikes and levees. It causes a seepage of water under the fields. This creates conflict in the community.” [common]

Discussion was active in the community about water flows in the Kootenai River, the role of Libby Dam, and the choices that confront the area in the future. Libby Dam itself was very welcomed by the community when it was completed in the early 1970s.

“Farmers liked the dam because it made things more predictable. They knew their growing season.”

“No more worries about downtown flooding.”

“My relatives would be hired to bag sand at certain times of years. My relative was hired to trap moles that would burrow through embankments, threatening them with flooding.”

Recently, there has been a proposal by environmental interests to remove Libby Dam, which sparked active debate in the community:

“The recent flap about removing Libby dam is being trumped by the old guard to set the community against ‘environmentalists’—no one believes that dam will ever be removed.”

“The environmentalists are petitioning to have the Libby Dam removed. Here’s a picture of the Bonners Ferry flood of 1948—we don’t want to go back to those days.”

“The dam’s been a lifesaver. We don’t want it removed. Breaching would devastate cropland and farmers.” [common]

“Rumor has it that Libby Dam is keeping the water in order to generate more electricity.”

“Even higher water flows put the farmers at risk because the depth of the river is less than before because regular spring floods used to wash the sediments out from the bottom. Now it takes less water to get us in trouble.”

“The real trouble is the re-regulation dam was never built downstream from Libby that was supposed to have controlled water levels. Now, there’s no cash and there are wildlife issues.”

“The water flow issues are overblown. When the Corps built the dam in ’72 they offered to maintain the dikes forever or give the landowners a lump sum buyout. The farmers took the money but memories are short. Seems like the folks who so hate the government are always willing to take money from it. The dam increased the number of crops you could get and everyone cut a fat hog.”

Water Quantity

“It’s hard to get a reliable source of domestic water.” [emerging issue]

“Due to deep glacial soils, drilling for water is risky. People can drill 400 feet and not get water. Rural development needs to work on community water systems.”

“Getting water to a new house on the North Bench about ½ mile away cost about \$40,000.”

“The difficulty in getting water is limiting development in the valley.”

“Wellhead protection is going to continue to be a problem as new people and businesses move to the area.” [water association member]

“Bonners is about out of water. The Myrtle Creek source is maxed out so they’ll have to do something. Their backup plan is to pump water out of the river and use a sand filter, but they could do a much better job of conservation. Some uses aren’t even metered.”

Water Quality

“What are the effects of the Crown Pacific run off into the river?” [newcomer]

“Farmers don’t use much pesticide or herbicides—for cost as well as environmental reasons. There are no large point sources of pollution in the County.” [local farmer, a common perception]

“There’s my pipe into the river from my fields. What will be said about the quality of that water? Will it be considered ‘baseline’? Can it be considered a point source since it’s one pipe? And who will be snooping around to find this out?” [farmer]

“I’m worried about the chemical use of farmers. I don’t know what they use but it can’t all be good. How bad is it? Is it getting into the river?”

“The ditches have been cleaned up so there are good water flows. I see farmers doing all they can to keep ditches clean for water quality.”

“There is good water quality in the streams. I can remember drinking right from the river.” [old timer]

“The water is almost sterile since the dam went in. There are not enough nutrients.” [common]

“The productivity of the river has gone down. There has been talk of fertilizing the river some way in Canada.”

“What is the Tribe’s role with DEQ [Department of Environmental Quality] in water quality study and air quality? Until we know, motives are suspicious.”

Agricultural Issues

In addition to the agricultural issues related to water quality and quantity, two additional issues challenge farmers currently:

The County has raised the issue that wetlands designation and other conservation measures mean a loss of tax base but other people point out that federal payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (so-called PILT payments) are comparable compensation. The underlying issue is the loss of farm jobs, service businesses, and other infrastructure of the farming lifestyle.

Farmers realize they will likely be stopped from burning stubble because of air quality considerations. They are planning now to do things differently. There is general agreement that they won't burn on weekends, and they announce on the radio and in the paper. They stop burning at 4 p.m. on Fridays when there's a football game.

“Then there's one bonehead colleague who doesn't get it, burns anyway and the whole stadium hates all the farmers.”

Forest Closures, ESA, and Timber Management

“Forest closure” is the term local people use to refer to the increasing restrictions on timber harvest on Forest Service lands, primarily because of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The law states that if a species is threatened or endangered, deliberate actions cannot be taken that would degrade the habitat. Local residents complain about the declining timber harvest and also that the agencies seem locked into a single-species approach which is not flexible or efficient. In their view, a multi-species approach would permit some area to remain open for “multiple use”, that is, for more human activities including timber harvest.

“ESA and forest closures really hurt the community. Forest lands in Boundary County could produce annual cuts of 110 MMBF [million board feet] of timber instead of the 15 MMBF it produces now.” [A common theme was expressed by residents that Forest Service decisions were too centralized and should account for local ecosystem capacity for timber production.]

“ESA consultation and resulting single-species habitat restrictions on the land are the two factors that limit our ability to get timber sales out.” [Forest Service official]

“The County should put consistent pressure on Congress to ease the roadless area and ESA restrictions.”

“Properly managed, the two mills can keep operating indefinitely without compromising the forests around here.”

Forest Service timber production is much less than even called for in the President's Northwest Forest Plan. Our team was told that 40 MMBF are permitted but only 10 MMBF are cut on an annual basis. Reduced timber harvest puts tax burden on private landowner and increases the financial strain on schools and roads.

“We could do a better job at forest management, provide for the Endangered Species Act, and still create livelihood for local workers.”

“Our requirements for NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] and ESA [Endangered Species Act] are the things that slow us up the most. The single-

species habitat restrictions are most cumbersome—they should be better coordinated and streamlined.” [Forest Service official]

It is apparently difficult to get Forest Service timber contracts for the small operator.

“The Forest Service now requires a hammer brand on each log before being transported. This was something the government came up with when lots of raw logs were being sent to Japan. Small operators couldn’t afford to do that. I went and talked to our Senators and found the law only applied to logs leaving the state.”

Private Woodlands

“Private woodlands are stressed because there is less logging on public lands. The number of woodland owners is increasing because of subdivision. That means logging on private lands is going to get more difficult and that water demands are going to go up.” [emerging issue]

“Cutting on private lands is not sustainable over the long haul. They are cutting heavier and taking the smaller trees.”

“People are moving into cut over timberlands. That means more work in dealing with the wildland interface.

Roads

“Since I came to work here in the early ‘70s, the amount of roads in the area has tripled. All that access puts pressure on sensitive species. Without collaboration, all the land is taken up for one species or another.” [Forest Service staff]

“Road closures and gates for grizzly habitat has been an issue since 1985.”

“Public lands should be kept open to access. The Forest Service said they were going to put up a few gates. Now there are over 400.”

Fire

“I’m afraid of overstocking and big fires. Extreme single-issue environmentalism is hurting us.”

“I’m concerned about the possibility of catastrophic fire and fuel loadings in the Forest, especially Myrtle Creek watershed. The city gets most of its water from Myrtle. Heavy fires there would cause Bonners to have to pump directly from the river.”

“In the fires of last summer, soil temperatures were so high that the soil became sterile. If that happens here it will be devastating since the recovery time will be a very long one.”

Proposal for a Power Co-generation Plant

The Kootenai Tribe is developing a proposal for a power co-generation plant. Details of the plan are not well understood in the community. Those that thought the power plant is a good idea had this to say:

“I think it’s a good idea. There would be plenty of material, especially if the Forest Service cleans out understory material to reduce fire hazard. Local power generation could be important in the future.” [timber company official]

“A biomass co-gen power plant is a great idea. I’d like to see them be able to pay \$30-40 per ton.” [Forest Service official]

“The Kettle Falls plant in Washington can produce power for about \$20/kwh.” [woods products business owner]

“I like the Tribe’s proposed energy generating plant. They are proposing to burn wood related fuels the first two years and then switch to solid waste.” [bank official]

“There is nothing in the proposal that calls for the burning of waste.” [tribal council member]

“It would burn the waste of 10 counties. Thirty living wage jobs would be produced.” [tribal staff member]

Those that thought the power plant is not a good idea voiced these issues:

“I worry about pollution smoke. When the Forest Service burns on either mountain it hangs in the valley. When grass growers burn, it hangs in the valley. When they burn in Canada, it hangs in the valley. I’m not sure it’s the answer.” [tribal member]

“I don’t think trash burning technology is perfected well enough yet. There are bad emissions. There are hydro-electric power generation opportunities on the county’s western mountains.” [timber company official]

“If they plan to burn garbage, I will stop the project. The emissions technology isn’t adequate to stop dioxins, heavy metals and so on. I moved here to get away from heavy civilization.” [newcomer]

“It’s a good idea, but the Tribe should not burn garbage because of emissions problems.” [environmentalist]

“We have concerns about the effects on water supply from such a water-intensive facility.” [Water Association official]

The County Proposal for the Tribe to Manage 200,000 Acres of Forest Service Land

Most residents thought it was a good idea:

“I support the county’s efforts to have the Tribe manage Forest Service land. Locals can do a better job while still meeting the requirements of ESA [Endangered Species Act].” [mill company official]

“Long term, steady, sensible logging is good for forest health, for fire protection, and for the local economy. It’s a good proposal.” [elected official]

“It’s a good idea for three reasons: 1) the Tribe would do something similar to timber receipts so that the county would receive revenue; 2) local residents hate the shut down of the forest and this is a way around that (or so they think); 3) it would give local people a change to manage it right.” [elected official]

“Having the Tribe manage the land won’t change the ESA requirements. The end result will remain the same.”

Proposal for Expanded Wildlife Refuge (USFWS)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently proposed a 27,000 acre study area to explore the prospects of expanding the Kootenai Wildlife Refuge. Because the study area included most of the private lands in the valley, it created alarm that private land would be lost to agriculture. The proposal is currently on hold.

“A few locals blindsided the idea by branding it as a federal land grab.”

“There is a local belief that the refuge doesn’t bring in any dollars to local tax rolls or the economy, but the refuge gets thousands of visitors each year for hunting and viewing.”

“I didn’t think announcing a study of lands would raise resistance. The idea has merit. The refuge creates economic benefits that are not fully developed. I have meetings set up with the County Commission to rebuild support.” [refuge manager]

“We could incubate recreation businesses like non-consumptive packing for uses other than traditional hunting trips.”

“The Fish and Wildlife Service cause forest land to be locked up. They are extremist and don’t care for the community. It’s frustrating because there doesn’t seem to be any way to open up forest products to harvest again.”

“Agricultural jobs are lost if the refuge expands.”

Other Watershed Health Issues

A number of people in the Libby area expressed concern about the asbestos contamination. Local deaths and illnesses are attributed to this contamination as well as pollution of the river.

Section Four: Principles and Strategies that Promote Water Quality Management

Principles for a Community-Based Approach to Stewardship

The Kootenai Tribe is exploring watershed and water quality programs. In particular the Tribe has pursued a its Memorandum of Understanding with the Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to participate as an equal partner in the development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) in the Kootenai River Basin. The development of TMDLs and their implementation plans is the remaining challenge related to water quality under the Clean Water Act. The TMDL process focuses primarily on non-point sources of pollution—those which cannot be traced to a single source but are the likely result of collective action in some way, such as runoff from agricultural fields. Under the Clean Water Act non-point source pollution is controlled through voluntary means. People have to want to cooperate and participate in addressing pollution sources. Consequently, a successful program depends on either the good will of residents who want to voluntarily cooperate or on social and economic incentives that might encourage clean-up activities and better land management practices.

In developing community-based programs, there are five principles that can be used to enhance stewardship activities within the community:

Principle One: Projects that address both community and ecological health, are more likely to be successful and to build community capacity. A productive harmony approach to watershed health calls for looking at ways to address the health of local communities while restoring watersheds. Projects that serve multiple functions, such as using at risk youth to build a recreation trail, for example, use resources efficiently, broaden support, and develop patterns of working together.

Principle Two: Working through informal networks and citizen issues is more effective than formal (meeting) settings dealing with public positions. Stewardship groups in other parts of the country have been able to bring citizens together with different levels of government and industry to accomplish common objectives related to watershed health. For example, the Fish and Wildlife Service, operating through the North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership, successfully implemented a “safe harbor” program that reduced the more onerous aspects of ESA while creating landowner benefits. It is interesting to note that in this case the public statements made about this program were consistently negative (“a federal land grab,” and so on) but in private, all landowners stated that the program had been a positive experience (Preister et.al. 2000). What that means is that the Kootenai Tribe can utilize the informal system of community, functioning around caretaking, survival and cultural values, to facilitate change and adaptation related to watershed health, while the formal system, often mired in its

political, economic, and ideological agenda, remains locked into positions and fighting the fight.

Principle Three: Agencies contribute strength, credibility and resources to partnership efforts, but citizens are the driving force. The community members that were interviewed as part of this project were often asked what they thought of collaboration as a way to achieve successful stewardship projects. Most were “cautiously optimistic.” Many had stories of such efforts that had failed in the past, and many more did not believe the local leadership either had the authority or the commitment to make collaboration happen.

“I’m skeptical that the feds would support it.”

“I think locals now have a willingness to try a cooperative approach because their backs are against the wall. I don’t think we would get support from Fish and Wildlife Service and the Forest Service.”

“A stewardship group could work if the Tribe took the leadership and if enough reasonable people were willing to be active.”

Principle Four: Early, small successes create optimism, energy, and momentum. SEA found a strong willingness within the community to collaborate on the important issues of the day—watershed health, local jobs, breaking the impasse with federal agencies over road closures, ESA habitat, and loss of forest products and jobs. Other options seem to have run out. SEA’s research revealed a frustration among citizens that so little progress on issues seems to occur and a feeling of tiredness that existing efforts might not be worth it. However, it did not take much to engender optimism that perhaps things could be different. In addition to our field contacts, other indicators are the County’s sponsorship of public meetings to explore tribal management of public lands and collaborating with the Tribe on downtown revitalization. The community (County, industry) is looking for a way to move away from the impasse with federal agencies, even as they mistrust them and the established leadership wants to stay in charge. They have begun looking to the Tribe as partners to do that.

Principle Five: The Tribe has sufficient social capital to successfully engage in a community-based approach to stewardship. SEA found that important sources of unity are already present between the Indian and non-Indian communities. The very receptive reaction to the SEA team when we mentioned the Tribe is a positive indicator. When we stated our purpose and who brought us to the community, the reaction was open arms, suspicions down, and hospitality. People consistently stated their congratulations at the Tribe’s successes, optimism about its future endeavors, and appreciation for sharing the benefits of success with the larger community.

The Kootenai River is the key to unifying the community and their interests—farmers, agencies, Tribe, economic development, and watershed health. It is important historically and presently to both cultures and represents a unifying symbol. Both cultures can say,

“We are a River People.” Sturgeon also represent a unifying symbol—members of both communities had stories of the old days of big and plentiful fish and of mourning their possible loss. Family life is important in both communities and highly valued. “Women in hardship” is a common thread in both cultures—women lost their men to work and to drug and alcohol addiction and had to learn to survive with each other. For some, the gender connection represents the strongest cross-cultural link. Economic development is a goal that unites both communities. And finally, in celebration, both communities have come together such as at the county fair and the recent powwow.

Key Action Sets

This segment of the report will review the key action sets that are possible in the community based on local interests and issues. It summarizes recommended actions for major areas such as water flows, water quality and quantity, the important economic sectors of agriculture, forestry, tourism, and education. Since no one entity, including the Tribe, can do it all, attention will then turn to sequencing action in a way that is strategic for the resources at hand and that builds momentum and capacity as it goes.

Water Flows, Fish, and Electricity

- Better communication and coordination is needed between the community and responsible agencies regarding water flows on the Kootenai River. Fish and Game, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Corps of Engineers should be encouraged to talk more directly and with community representatives so that the compatibility of different and overlapping interests can be achieved. Daily water flows, seasonal considerations, fish habitat requirements, power generation requirements, and other aspects of watershed management should be understood together in order that people are not operating out of their myths or with partial information. If people that came together were committed to a community-based approach, a powerful force for unleashing energy and commitment can be triggered. In other settings, successful partnerships have made agency work easier by reducing controversy, attracting funding resources, catalyzing citizen volunteers, and mobilizing public support.
- Avoid “either/or”, “we/they”, and other divisive language that sets up polarization and false choices. It is not farming *or* dam removal, it is not fish habitat *or* electricity, and it is not *us* versus *them*. It is something in-between and much more. The first objective should be communication, the second information gathering, and the third exploring action. Only if partners feel trust that they will not be backed into a corner and forced into decisions will ample room be developed to look creatively at all the options.
- An early action could be a “River Flows Update.” Recreationists, outfitters, and fishers would like to know flows for the area, specifically the Kootenai and Moyie Rivers. . Although the Corps of Engineers has something like this on a web site,

many people do not know about it. An announce-only voice mail box extension at the tribal headquarters auto attendant would be very helpful because it would remind folks that it was the Tribe providing the service. A daily update of the announcement would not be expensive. The phone could also have a Sturgeon Hotline to announce organized regular tours and special events like release days, and so on.

- Another early action could be a “Concert for the River”, for both fundraising and awareness building. Find someone famous to do an outdoor concert for the river. Use the proceeds for an educator, art, or volunteers.

Water Quality and Quantity

The Tribe is negotiating with Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency the ability to facilitate voluntary watershed activities as part of the TMDL requirements under the Clean Water Act. These activities depend on the goodwill and cooperation of citizens. Water rights, quantity, quality issues are certain to become huge issues in the County that will affect river use and management. These issues could become a source of conflict.

- The Tribe should clarify its own water quality/quantity interests. By leading efforts to deal openly with TMDLs, the Tribe will model partnership behavior.

“This area needs an advocate for water. Hats off to the Tribe.”

- Encourage the formation of a Kootenai River Stewardship Group for implementing the water quality recommendations. It is best for the Tribe to be the facilitator or co-sponsor. In the longer view, the group could evolve into a Kootenai Watershed Stewardship group involved with broader natural resource issues, like forest health, ESA implementation, and multi-species recovery plans. This group could establish a cadre of volunteers that do outdoor projects to help the river, the refuge, and the sturgeon. Hatchery activities could be incorporated into the stewardship group. The group does not have to be large—it can begin with only a few people, with kids, with anybody.
- Highlight and honor any water quality stewardship practices. SEA kept hearing from people that farmers use relatively small applications of fertilizers and pesticides/herbicides.
- Ensure that the water management plan addresses the issues identified in this report and through other means. Of critical importance is that the water supply for County water users (residents and business) comes from community wells. Wellhead protection should be addressed. The long-term picture of water availability in the face of increasing population should be addressed.
- Use the watershed management plan to trigger broader community action,

continually tying watershed health with economic development, tourism development, agriculture, forestry, and education.

- Both the Tribal wildlife biologist and TMDL Project Coordinator are well-liked in the community and valued for their contribution.

Agriculture

- Continue to expand the Tribal Wetland Restoration Projects (WRP) while avoiding the pitfalls experienced by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Language in the community about “land grabs” must be countered through communication with informal networks. Make sure farmers informally support projects, that they have ownership of projects and identify them as “ours” before going very public. Minimize confusion or misinformation about taxes paid to County for farmland, forestland, and restored wetlands or refuge lands. Have accurate information available at informal settings.
- Use NRCS, the County board and their programs, and the Soil Conservation District (SCD) to connect with the farming community. Working with key individuals respected in their networks will help as well. Also, engage the new County Extension agent who is devoting half of her time to agricultural economic issues.
- Wetlands restoration efforts should be linked to sustaining agricultural operations. Assist farmers in exploring niche marketing of emerging specialty crops and other supports so that wetlands will be supported.
- With the continued economic pressure and aging of grain farmers, there will likely be farmers willing to convert to Wetland Restoration Programs (WRP). Highlight the benefits to the community: It keeps ownership in the hands of farmers; the tax implications for the County are favorable or at least neutral; maintaining water quality and quantity has value; and landscape characteristics are maintained. Work with NRCS and County Extension to get the message out.

Forestry

- The Forest Service should be encouraged to initiate partnership projects in the Kootenai area related to management, fire hazard reduction, and business incubation. Sometimes Forest Service partnerships have meant agency to agency cooperation. However, community-based partnerships must involve everyday people and a range of interests, economic as well as ecological. The Forest Service/citizen disconnect is as strong as any discovered in the area. Part of the reason lies in the increased centralization of authority that has come from combining management units. Local staff have less autonomy than before. Part of the reason lies in national legislation, particularly the Endangered Species Act

(ESA), and in recent agency directives, that puts ecosystem functioning as the first priority, and relegates timber and other forest products as a byproduct of ecosystem management. In other areas of the country, the Forest Service has shown that ESA and ecosystem requirements can be met while still meeting local economic needs. Regardless, local people do not believe the effort has been well enough explored to warrant the present restrictions. This report is testimony to the reasonable and moderate voices in the Kootenai area that are ready to participate in dialogue about mutual direction, and action on the ground that will create biosocial ecosystem health.

- Foster dialogue about forest closures so that rumors, myths, and misinformation are minimized. Ensure that the areas of Forest Service discretion are fully explored. See if monitoring by the community of biological standards, and other forms of support and responsibility, can expand the current set of opportunities.
- Organize local training and hiring efforts related to fire hazard reduction projects on public lands. Following the catastrophic fires of the summer of 2000, Congress appropriated several million dollars for thinning the fire hazard areas of national forests. A recent decision by the regional office of the Forest Service approved a lower price for small diameter material, to be competitive with Canadian material.
- The prospects for expanding jobs and businesses from this opportunity should be actively explored. In addition to the direct jobs made possible by these projects, businesses could be supported or incubated to create value-added production from the diverse forest products harvested from these projects. SEA found that the community is poised to use small diameter wood products resulting from fuel reduction on forest lands—several loggers, both large mills, the chipping plant—as soon as a consistent supply is assured from National Forest.
- Encourage the Forest Service to expand stewardship contracting opportunities to the Kootenai area.
- The Forest Service could assist in exploring the feasibility of a log sort yard. Such a facility would allow loggers to load all types of material on trucks rather than trying to sort in the woods. It would be much cheaper for loggers and haulers. It could be a cooperative venture. A log sort yard permits stockpiling a wide variety of forest products and to create sufficient volumes to generate a better market price than individual harvesters could. Preister (1997) and others have examined the feasibility of this option in relation to small diameter, hardwoods, and other non-traditional forest products. The Gifford Pinchot Institute in Washington has examined this option as well.
- The Tribe's proposal for a power co-generation plant has merit but must be developed with community members to avoid misinformation and disruption. The concept is very popular from an energy generation and jobs standpoints. Practical ways to recycle the warm water used for steam generation and cooling needs to be

found—warm water aquaculture, city swimming pool/spa, and winter heating for business or homes. The emerging issue related to the proposal is widespread concern about whether burning garbage and trash are part of the proposal and whether these emissions are safe. Many people in the community do not believe waste emissions are safe. The merits of the proposal for creating demand for small diameter and other thinning material in the forests are outstanding, however.

Tourism

The attraction to a slow pace of life, the ability to escape from the busier society (Come Escape to Boundary County!), and the superior natural beauty of the County are all values that attract visitors and settlement now and they will increasingly do so in the future. How this potential can contribute to both economic and ecological health is the challenge.

- The new economic development effort in the area must be linked with watershed restoration efforts if the community is to maximize its opportunities. Natural resources can be the themes instead of fudge factories. For example,
 - We are a River People
 - Sturgeon People (a “Sturgeon Festival” with a motif?)
 - Exploration of Nature
 - History & Culture of the Area
 - White Water Capital of North Idaho
- The Kootenai Wildlife Refuge, in conjunction with other interested organizations, could foster more deliberate economic development from conservation efforts. Although a “Friends of the Refuge” group apparently exists, it was not mentioned once in the community. An effective group could serve as a non-profit organization to channel foundation dollars and other funding, as well as membership and citizen support, to create community benefit from conservation. Learning from other areas of the West that have undertaken grizzly reintroduction, such as the Cody, Wyoming area, could garner economic development clues for this area. Alternately, the Tribe could consider being the broker between the refuge, area farmers, and other leaders to accomplish this step.

“Tie grizzly habitat and range corridors on the east side of the valley before private development closes options and intensifies local opposition to bears.”

“Wildlife could be a support to economic development—the sturgeon, the grizzly, osprey. But it has to be done right—there has to be a benefit to people for conservation.”
- There could be a nice loop drive from Bonners, highlighting viewable wildlife and interpreting historic wetlands and grain elevators. It could tie in with

implementing the water management plan for Boundary County, explaining water reclamation history, water quality, farming, wildlife, and TMDLs.

- Coeur d'Alene river outfitters expressed keen interest in expanding river running experiences in Boundary County. They said in the 1980s they used to run up to 500 people through the area but that in recent years, it has tapered to 280-300. A marketing program with various packages could be developed in conjunction with local business leaders. In addition, the City previously rejected a partnership role in the development of the city docks near the Moyie Dam. However, the outfitters have hired locally and their patrons spend locally. This is an undeveloped opportunity.
- The small theatre group is thriving and at the stage where they are looking for a home. They can bring a lot of folks to town to spend money for dinner, overnights, and shopping. Support their efforts emotionally, etc. *They* will look for the money to make it happen.
- Public art reflecting the natural resource heritage is both an educational tool and a tourist attraction. Grand Junction, Colorado, for example, is a community that is thriving with public art that local people are quite proud of, that supports an artist community, and that has begun to attract visitors in its own right. In this area,
 - Three-dimensional sculptures of animals... grizzly, caribou, sturgeon (at the bottom of the river bed)
 - Hillside canvases—bridge approach; earthworks
 - Bridge supports (highway and train) could be canvases
 - Public art in town
- Incubate recreation businesses.
 - non-consumptive backpacking
 - expanding outfitters to include hikers and trekkers

Education and Interpretation

- Local residents and visitors alike need education about local heritage—the river, the sturgeon, uses of the land over time, current water management challenges. Education is the key to understanding and collaboration. Get an interpreter/educator who can reach out to public, visitors, and schools, someone who can help all tribal staff become teachers in every interaction. Given the smallness of the Tribe, perhaps Kootenai cultural interpretation can be delivered, in part, by non-Indians. Kootenai could participate as available—special stars. Or, this opportunity could mean jobs for Kootenai relatives in Montana and Canada who need them.
 - ❖ How about the fish team getting an interpretive specialist to help everyone become a good/better teacher, work regularly with school kids, organize special events, etc.
 - ❖ Use the Kootenai River Inn to its fullest advantage:

- restaurant: binoculars on the tables, one page guide to birds
 - outdoor seating overlooking the river, wildlife viewing with binoculars
 - a trail along the river with sitting spots
 - summer evening outdoor camp fire talks (and s'mores) around a fire for guests and the entire community
 - star parties on the lawn—if too light, then somewhere else, perhaps the Wildlife Refuge.
 - peregrine nesting boxes along the other side of the river.
 - improve habitat on the other side of the river
 - bird feeders on the fence outside the restaurant
 - the guest book in each room has a local attractions section and every entry is for Sandpoint! Make it local!
- Foster education and interpretive signage to promote visitation and watershed health. For example, the Tribe should consider a more active role in establishing the interpretive effort at the visitor center of Libby Dam. The interpretive center being developed has not benefited from consultation with any of the Kootenais in Canada or the U.S. The Tribe now has a member trained in anthropology and interpretation.
 - The public school system is a great opportunity for an environmental education partnership with the Forest Service, Wildlife Refuge, and environmental groups, State Game and Fish and the tribal fish hatchery. Start with a one-day multi-agency program in spring or fall—maybe build on existing involvement at Refuge, but bring in other agency specialists. Move next to one-week environmental camps for local kids in summer, including camping and rafting.
 - Moyie Falls should include three aspects: 1) Dam/powerhouse (turbine) tours; 2) A public space at the falls area could be created on the power house lawn, offering viewing, picnics and interpretation; and 3) Interpretive signs at Moyie Falls can tell the story of how power is made, what fish need for survival, and so on.
 - Encourage the hatchery, the Forest Service, and the Kootenai Wildlife Refuge to undertake more environmental education.
 - The Tribe should find ways to communicate its tribal culture, history, traditions, arts/crafts, and wetlands history to the larger community. A cultural center has been talked about and planned, although its purpose became too broad. Recreation and other elements got included and they made it impractical. However, it seems like everybody wants one, and there are artifacts and story-tellers which might not be around much longer. The Tribe and community members could work with Paul Flinn (historian) to document stories, and to provide a mechanism for transferring his collection of artifacts

to Tribe or museum or cultural center. Water management projects should be framed with a cultural overlay so the connection is made between natural resources and human culture.

- The Tribe could provide archeologist/oral historian to work with the Forest Service and the community to free up/save time for the Forest Service to assist the Tribe and the community in interpretation.
- With regard to the Powwow, the Tribe should partner with the City/County and do it again! Everyone loved it and now that they are aware of what goes on, locals can build on and participate more fully.
- With regard to Tribal philanthropy, the Tribe could produce a “Giving Report” that would educate the community about Tribal priorities and funding. A Small Grants Program could be set up that would allow people to apply by interest category and would require a match. This is really the way to move a whole bunch of folks in a direction because you write the guidelines.

The Sequencing of Action

The Tribe has already undertaken several initiatives with the larger community and has provided the benefit of its leadership and resources to many in the community. SEA recognizes that tribal time and resources are limited and that tribal members must consider carefully the projects with which they get involved. The opportunities identified here are ones that seem to be natural extensions of things that have already been happening, or that show the potential to further trust and mutual experience in the community.

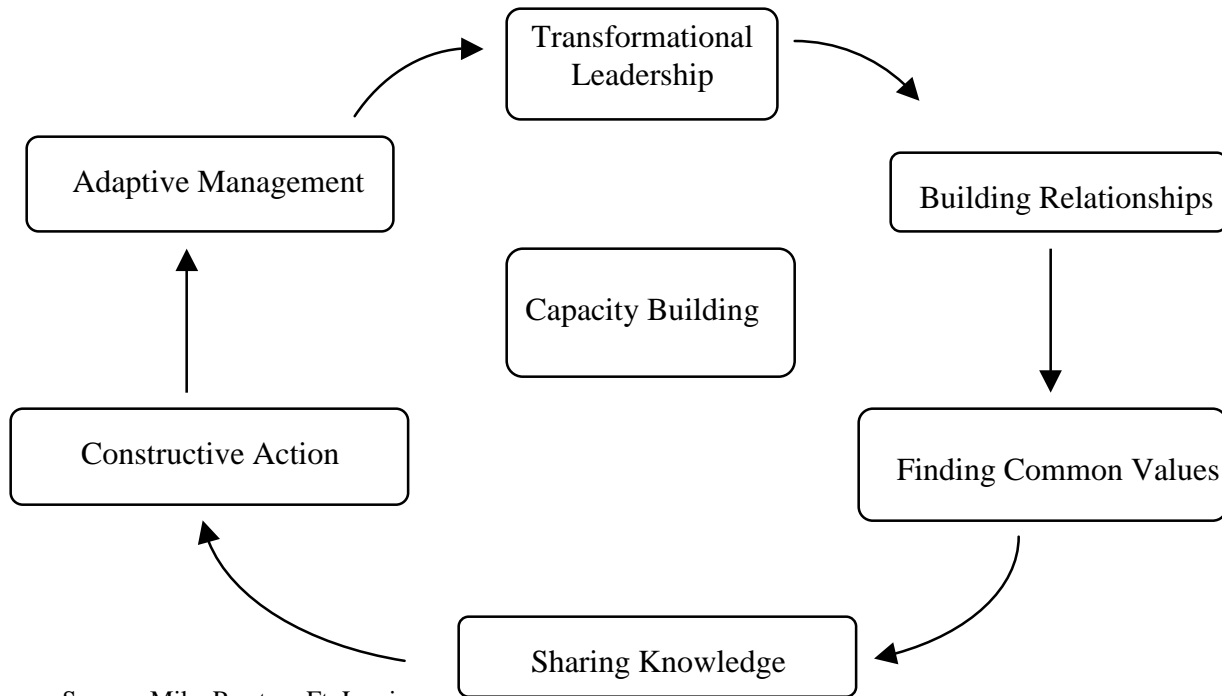
The Tribe already works with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS, formerly, the Soil Conservation Service) and the Soil Conservation District (SCD) on water issues and wetland restoration. There are multiple cooperative programs with incentives for landowners to conserve soil and preserve water quality. The new County Extension agent will devote 30-40% of her time to rural development once she is oriented to her new position.

Outside resources include:

- Idaho Department of Commerce
- Rural Development (administered through USDA)
- CDBG monies (Community Development Block Grant funds, administered through Housing and Urban Development [HUD] and others)
- Panhandle Area Council, regional economic development district
- Bonneville Environmental Foundation, for biosocial assessment, restoration projects, and monitoring
- Panhandle Lakes RC&D

The Tribe should integrate natural resource projects at the tribal level so the community can work on all at once: integrate wetlands project, sturgeon, and TMDLs so that community is tied into all activities in one informal effort. The Natural Resources and Economic Development offices in the Tribe should be integrated as well. Each set of activities should be informed by the other. How can restoration efforts be created that have an economic benefit to them? How can economic development efforts be structured to resolve natural resource issues?

Figure Three
Capacity-Building Principles for
Community-Based Projects



Source: Mike Preston, Ft. Lewis College, Durango, Colorado, Ponderosa Pine Partnership

Figure Three above is a conceptual rendering of a partnership model used by Mike Preston at Ft. Lewis College. Mr. Preston has successfully implemented the Ponderosa Pine Partnership in which Montezuma County purchased a timber sale and sold it to local harvesters and processors. The project had the support of both industry and environmental groups because it addressed the need for thinning overstocked stands while it contributed to local mills and employment. In Mr. Preston's experience, successful partnerships have the elements expressed in the figure. Briefly:

1. **Transformational Leader Principle:** encourages public land managers and other community-based leaders to address complex issues by sharing power and accepting mutual responsibility for community and ecological stewardship and sustainability.
2. **Building Relationships Principle:** Building relationships that increase partnership capacities among land management agencies and community-based institutions and networks that encourage collaborative sharing of resources and knowledge necessary to facilitate an appropriate integration of desired community and ecological futures. Involves both formal and informal networks that become increasingly more inclusive. As partnerships open and expand, the community stewardship initiatives become deeper and more comprehensive.
3. **Finding Common Values Principle:** Community leaders, public land managers and citizens work together to understand and sustain the long term interdependencies that are critical to ecosystem stewardship aimed at sustainable landscapes, communities and local economies. Inclusiveness of wide ranging values has been critical to progress.
4. **Sharing Knowledge Principle:** Sharing knowledge involves integrating scientific information with the knowledge of community members and leaders in order to improve research, planning, public involvement, ecosystem stewardship and monitoring.
5. **Constructive Action Principle:** Achieving real progress on the land by transcending ideological polarization and procedural gridlock through face-to-face problem solving and developing local capacity to act constructively.
[Formulate goals out of common values which initiating partners can develop a research and knowledge sharing strategy]
6. **Adaptive Management Principle:** unifies all the other principles that have been essential to turning the wheel. The leadership, the relationships, the values, and the knowledge are applied to evaluating and adapting the results of constructive action. Ecological, economic, and social research and monitoring provide the basis for inclusive knowledge sharing and public involvement to shape future constructive action supported by all of the other capacity building principles.

Conclusions

The tribal role in considering a community-based approach to stewardship of the watershed is one of convener, expediter, and facilitator, not confronter or regulator. SEA has found that these key concepts will enhance tribal council and staff commitment to such an approach:

1. Commitment to outreach in the community through informal networks, to stay on top of the issues and insure that projects resolve citizen issues while accomplishing watershed health goals;
2. A focus on what the land and waterways need, not the philosophical or political debates that sometimes get personal and cloud the direction;
3. Commitment to citizen responsibility and action. A thriving partnership is not agency-driven, but community-driven—hence, citizens who have the issues should advocate projects considered for support. In this way, the partnership remains a conduit for funding and labor resources, but is not the driver of action.
4. Ensure adequate resources before starting, so that the Tribe does not “open the door” with the community without being able to close it. Stabilize the turnover of personnel to minimize disruption from changing staff members. In the past, turnover on the Tribal Council and with the Tribe’s staff positions has limited its partnership initiatives. Staff could introduce their replacements to key people in the community as part of the job introduction process.
5. Review organizational structure, specifically the coordination between the hatchery, wetlands, and TMDL programs. From the community standpoint, a “seamless” approach is best so that we “knock on doors” once and not three times. Regular communication, coordinated action, and clear lines of authority will be important.
6. The model suggests a place for the “citizen scientist”, or the local knowledge held by residents by virtue of their experience with the land. The notion is to blend the science of government agencies with the “science” of everyday people so that there is unity of purpose and direction.
7. The Tribe, along with the Forest Service, timber mills, NRCS, USFWS, the Corps of Engineers, and State Fish and Game, should sponsor a partnership course offered through BLM’s National Training Center in Phoenix. These courses have been offered successfully at 23 sites around the west and they are designed to introduce concepts and processes to foster community-based stewardship through partnership efforts. The flagship course, “Community-Based Partnerships and Ecosystems for a Healthy Environment,” is designed for individuals and groups who do not have a strong history of working together. Another appropriate course entitled, “Learning Community: Linking People, Place, and Perspective” is specifically suited for leadership and citizens to discover their community as a disciplined stranger so that ties are broadened, relationships deepened, issues discovered, and opportunities developed for specific action. The latter course has led directly to collaborative action in a number of locations.

This report has described the Kootenai Human Resource Unit the way that local residents do. Because of this, some of the information provided in the quotations may not be

factually correct. They do, however represent underlying truths about the people and issues in the Kootenai River Watershed. SEA did not learn everything, but did identify current social and economic conditions, the major citizen issues related to the community and to watershed health, how people communicate and the informal networks by which information gets passed, and what local people see as opportunities for addressing both the health of their communities and the health of their natural environment. The team explored a conceptual model of stewardship development and listed some key features of successful partnerships.

SEA concludes that the Kootenai area could become a demonstration area on how ESA, community, forest health, economics, and preservation could work in productive harmony. The value for stewardship, the experience with the land, the knowledge of the environment, and practice in working together are all present in the local area. That the SEA project was so well-received is testimony to the optimism that people would like to see about “progress on issues.”

SEA notes that the Tribe has overcome a difficult past and is entering a period in which its leadership is true and valued. It has great potential to foster a process where people can talk over the current challenges and work themselves toward some answers that will make things better.

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Appendix A: Seven Cultural Descriptors Used In Community Assessment

Publics: Segments of the population or a group of people having common characteristics, interests, or some recognized demographic feature. Sample publics include agriculturalists, governmental bodies, homemakers, industries, landowners, loggers, miners, minorities, newcomers, preservationists, recreationists, senior citizens, small businesses and youth.

Networks: A structured arrangement of individuals who support each other in predictable ways because of their commitment to a common purpose, their shared activities, or similar attitudes. There are two types of networks, those that are informal arrangements of individuals who join together as a way to express their interests, and those that are formal arrangements of individuals who belong to an organization to represent their interests. Networks functioning locally as well as those influencing management from regional or national levels are included in this descriptor. Examples of citizen networks include ranchers who assist each other in times of need, grassroots environmentalists with a common cause, or families who recreate together. Examples of formal organizations include a cattlemen's association, or a recreational club.

Settlement Patterns: The distribution of a population in a geographic area, including the historical cycles of settlement. This descriptor identifies where a population resides and the type of settlement categorized by its centralized/dispersed, permanent/temporary, and year-round/seasonal characteristics. It also describes the major historical growth/non-growth cycles and the reasons for each successive wave of settlement.

Work Routines: the ways, in which people earn a living, including where and how. The types of employment, the skills needed, the wage levels, and the natural resources required in the process are used to generate a profile of a population's work routines. The opportunities for advancement, the business ownership pattern and the stability of employment activities are also elements of this descriptor.

Supporting Services: Any arrangement people use for taking care of each other, including the institutions serving a community and the caretaking activities of individuals. This descriptor emphasizes how supporting services and activities are provided. Commercial businesses, religious institutions, social welfare agencies, governmental organizations, and educational, medical and municipal facilities are all examples of support services. Caretaking activities include the ways people manage on a day-to-day basis using family, neighborhood, friendship or any other support system.

Recreational Activities: The way in which people use their leisure time. The recreational opportunities available, seasonality of activities, technologies involved, and money and time required are aspects of this descriptor. The frequency of local/non-local uses of recreational resources, the preferences of local/non-local users, and the location of the activities are also included.

Geographic Boundaries: Any unique physical feature that defines the extent of a population's routine activities. Physical features generally separate the cultural identity and daily activity of a population from those living in other geographic areas. Geographic boundaries include geologic, biologic, and climatic features, distances, or any other characteristic that distinguishes one area from another. Examples of geographic boundaries include topographic features that isolate mountain valleys, distances that separate rural towns, or river basins that shape an agricultural way of life. Geographic boundaries may be relatively permanent or short-lived; over time, boundaries may dissolve as new settlement patterns develop and physical access to an area changes.

Source: Kent and Preister (1999)

