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Stó:lō Community Entrepreneurship and Economics: Rebuilding the Circle

Keith James and Wenona Victor

THE CONTEXT FOR STÓ:LŌ COMMUNITY ECONOMICS

The focus of this article is economic and business organization at the Stó:lō First Nation in British Columbia, Canada—although as for most indigenous peoples, Stó:lō economics implicates Stó:lō culture, place, identity, and history.¹ Tellingly, *stó:lō* means “the river” or “people of the river,” referring to what is now generally known as the Fraser River.² The modern Stó:lō First Nation is made up of ten communities, or bands, in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia.³

Indigenous community economic vitality requires social, cultural, and environmental sustainability; the health of the land cannot be separated from individual and social health.⁴ Indeed, the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development recognized in 2002 that environmental, social, and economic sustainability development was the critical “triple bottom line” for all communities, indigenous and nonindigenous, around the globe.⁵

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Economic and broader community development are important and pressing problems for indigenous peoples in Canada, just as they are for Native peoples around the world.⁶ For instance, studies of unemployment rates in North American indigenous communities in the 1990s yielded estimates that ranged between 35 and 90 percent.⁷ More recent estimates of indigenous unemployment in Canada yield a somewhat more positive range of rates. However, the overall average levels of unemployment are substantially higher for indigenous people in Canada than in the general Canadian population. Among First Nations, official figures show a 42.9 percent unemployment rate; among Inuit, it is listed at 41.4 percent.⁸ Unemployment rates are also calculated based on job seeking (labor market participation), which is also lower among indigenous than among nonindigenous Canadians.⁹ Thus, official indigenous unemployment rates are lower than actual indigenous unemployment.

Similarly, average indigenous income levels are substantially lower than the national average.¹⁰ Moreover, because indigenous populations are younger and increasing at a rate faster than the national average, large waves of young Native adults will be entering the job market in coming years, so both unemployment and income levels are likely to get worse. Consequently, barring major changes, this growth in the working-age population will generate an even more acute need for community services.¹¹ Further, as national and international economies have also changed and continue to do so, in the future historic economic sources (including government transfer payments) will not provide an economic base adequate for the well-being of Native communities, families, or individuals.¹²

These problems affecting indigenous employment and economic development have led growing numbers of Canadian and worldwide indigenous community members to advocate for the development of Native-owned enterprises as a solution to economic and other problems.¹³ Historically, Canadian federal policymakers, programs, and laws have contradicted the efficacy of this solution, but have recently become somewhat more encouraging. The efforts of tribal and other groups to promote Native enterprises have met with increasing success in recent years.¹⁴

Typically, those tribal enterprises that fail have been poorly planned, ill-conceived in their fit with tribal culture, skills, and available markets, overly ambitious, and undercapitalized.¹⁵ Successful efforts, on the other hand, tend to fit well with existing skills, historical social patterns, and cultural trends; start small and with a clear market in mind; and have good financial, managerial, and technical support bases.¹⁶

A number of fundamental issues have been repeatedly targeted as necessary for successful tribal enterprises to develop or as possible obstacles to success. These include tribal members' skills, including those best developed through formal education; business financing, which is generally difficult for individuals and indigenous governments to obtain; infrastructure weaknesses; and poor support from mainstream (i.e., provincial and federal) governments for indigenous business development. In addition, generally low incomes and low net worth among individuals and families limits the money available to invest in business.¹⁷ Collective ownership is common, sometimes including single-family homes, which means that using this property as collateral for loans is often difficult to arrange.¹⁸

Poor physical facilities (such as waste treatment, power, roads, and other transport), especially in more rural areas, make it hard both to attract private businesses to Native communities and for Native companies to function effectively and competitively.¹⁹ Mechanisms for providing additional money for both of these purposes would be beneficial, though tribal governments and communities need to recognize that the results of infrastructure and development can be both good and bad. Infrastructure improvements, especially roads and communication links, allow outsiders to penetrate more tribal areas, in person and through the media. Outside intrusion into Stó:lō territory has increased in recent decades, creating both economic opportunities and social and cultural problems.²⁰ Economic development typically requires at least the initial support of some nonindigenous workers and managers, and draws outsiders seeking expanding opportunities. Both effects can produce cultural, physical, and social disruptions. In addition to tribal/band councils, all community members and groups need to be aware of these potential pitfalls of development. In making decisions about development options, both leaders and grassroots community members should consider unintended negative consequences, and develop strategies for limiting and countering them.

Technical support services for tribal enterprises have also been frequently mentioned as important to making them feasible and more likely to succeed. Adequate technical support from the federal government for tribal enterprises has often been lacking for reasons that are not only financial, but at times also philosophical (i.e., a preference for economic initiatives that are individualistic and focused on mainstream organization); self-serving (i.e., a vested interest in dependency and limited economic opportunities so as to continue the apparent need for existing federal policies, programs, and control); and political (i.e., perceptions by powerful lobbies that federal support for Native enterprises might result in subsidized competition for them). Thus, several Native and non-Native not-for-profit groups have partially stepped into the breach, such as the First Nations Development Institute, First Nations Investment Group, the Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development, the Tribal Councils Investment Group, and foundations such as Kellogg. Mainstream government and universities are also potential sources of technical support, including feasibility assessment, capital recruitment, planning and design expertise, engineering, scientific management, and legal assistance.²¹ Since all mainstream universities in Canada reside on the traditional territory of some indigenous group(s), they should all make efforts to address that responsibility to indigenous communities. Some, such as Thomson River University in British Columbia and the University of Manitoba, seem to be making that a priority, while others still give it short shrift. Finally, indigenous groups in Canada and elsewhere have increasingly explored partnerships with nonindigenous for-profit companies. As will be detailed later, the Stó:lō government and community members have pursued all these options in pursuit of economic development, and have done so within a framework of broader community and cultural health.

THE STÓ:LŌ: PAST

Like most North American indigenous groups, the Stó:lō were, after contact with Europeans, decimated by illness.²² Moreover, at contact the bands that make up the

Stó:lō traditionally had sophisticated economies based on fishing and other natural resources, traditional crafts, and trading.²³ Traditional Stó:lō economies were undermined by European settlers, who limited fishing access and rights, for instance.²⁴ Nonetheless, members of Stó:lō bands largely found profitable seasonal employment that fit into the cycle of ceremony in traditional culture until late in the nineteenth century, when immigrant laborers began to actively displace them, partially due to employers' active recruitment of Chinese and European immigrants.²⁵ Prior to European settlement the Coastal Salish communities that now form the Stó:lō Nation seem to have had a mix of localized and collective identities (Stó:lō and Salish). Identity is always both cultural and comparative;²⁶ the identity of the Stó:lō evolved out of cultural similarities, and comparison with the pressures from surrounding indigenous and nonindigenous groups. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Stó:lō identity coalesced out of various internal dynamics, one that contrasted with the surrounding non-Stó:lō, European-derived society.²⁷

Contact between immigrants from Europe and the Stó:lō first occurred in the early 1800s. Simon Fraser (after whom the Fraser River and its valley are now widely known) and his party traversed British Columbia between 1805 and 1808 to the Pacific Ocean. First Nations guides showed them the way; Fraser's party used First Nations infrastructure such as ladders, woven bridges, and canoes; and, on occasion, First Nations warriors drove off the inquisitive and acquisitive whites.²⁸ By the 1850s, substantial incursions of fur traders, farmers, and loggers began.²⁹ The Fraser Valley gold rush also began, which brought about 30,000 nonindigenous people into what is now known as British Columbia (BC). When these largely European, male outsiders desired land, Native communities were pushed off of it. Settlers also agitated with the United Kingdom to restructure the political landscape. Around that same time, the United Kingdom and the United States reached agreement on their disputed boundary in the Pacific Northwest. Together with the efforts of the settlers internally, that boundary settlement led to the formal founding of the United Kingdom colony of British Columbia.³⁰ In the latter part of the eighteenth century and the first three-quarters of the nineteenth, indigenous peoples in BC were dispossessed of more and more of their traditional lands. As in the vast majority of BC, no treaties were ever signed between the Stó:lō and the UK-controlled, Canadian federal dominion government, nor with the BC provincial government once it became formally organized into a province.

Although in recent years the lack of treaties has created unique opportunities for many indigenous groups in BC, historically, this lack has created problems: dams were built, water was diverted for agriculture, heavy logging was undertaken, beavers were trapped to near extinction in accessible areas, salmon fishing areas were expropriated, invasive plants and animals were introduced, creeks were diverted, wetlands were filled, and the natural ecology was otherwise altered. Traditional indigenous community economies and other lifeways became increasingly difficult to maintain in the face of direct extirpation of traditional plant and animal food sources, as well as indirect losses of subsistence foods from interference with salmon breeding and migration, silting of watersheds, diversion of the Fraser River, clearcutting of forests, and restrictions to land access, for example. Introduced diseases, health-degrading

changes to behavioral patterns, and community and family dissolution caused decreases in the population.³¹

Given their involvement in fishing, trapping, trading, and other economic activities in the early years of the “settlement” of BC, the Stó:lō people participated strongly in regional, “national” (Canada-wide), and global economics. With the establishment of more formal capitalistic systems and companies, the Stó:lō found employment in canneries and agriculture.³² Those forms of seasonal, cash-economy labor were compatible with traditional cultural patterns tied to the seasonal cycle. Some Stó:lō became the capitalists who ran businesses based on natural resources such as timber-harvesting and fish-processing. Prosperity was widespread during those years.³³ Late in the nineteenth century, however, Stó:lō employment diminished as a great volume of immigrant labor was brought into the province to compete with (and to undercut the wages of) indigenous peoples. Non-Stó:lō fishing and timber harvesting increased with increasing mainstream government support for nonindigenous “settlers” and businesses. In other words, traditional Stó:lō fishing and land rights were increasingly undercut.³⁴

In fact, the nonindigenous society increasingly made direct efforts to stamp out traditional lifestyles, such as banning potlatch ceremonies and restricting fishing by First Nations.³⁵ Around the same time, more and more interference with traditional cultural practices was introduced, along with legally mandated and coercion-enforced assimilation mechanisms. The pattern was the same for indigenous groups throughout Canada.³⁶ Beginning in the 1830s, for about 150 years the governments of Britain, Canada, and BC engaged in practices such as forcing children into residential schools that were designed to erode indigenous cultures, including that of the Stó:lō.³⁷ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that the residential schools were one part of a broad policy of “cultural genocide.”³⁸ Stó:lō traditional culture and ways of life were heavily undermined during the colonial and postcolonial eras, just as they were among other indigenous peoples. Resistance to colonization waxed and waned multiple times postcontact, yet core traditional knowledge and ways of life always persisted.

The rebuilding of the social and cultural webs of First Nations communities generally, and Stó:lō in particular, gathered strength after World War II. Land claims were filed. To try to stop specific carnage, such as clearcutting old-growth forest, and also to draw general attention to the damaging and unfair treatment they had received, in the 1980s railway and road blockages, sit-ins, and other direct actions took place. These actions asserted fishing and other rights, which were adjudicated by the courts when challenged by nonindigenous governments or groups. As mainstream society evolved—if slowly—the uniform denigration that the First Nations people of British Columbia had faced from formal authority and public opinion for nearly 150 years began to show some cracks.³⁹ Finally, Ronald Edward Sparrow, a member of the Musqueam Band, was arrested for violating game laws.⁴⁰ He and supporters used the arrest to challenge provincial fishing restrictions on First Nations, asserting that the Musqueam Band had fishing rights that they had never surrendered to the province or the Crown.

When the case came before the Canadian Supreme Court in 1990, it held that the Musqueam had an “inherent” Aboriginal right to fish that had existed before the legislation establishing the province, and furthermore, that the Canada federal

constitution guaranteed that right.⁴¹ The concept of indigenous rights to fish in traditional territories was then generalized to all indigenous groups, not only the Musqueam. Contemporary indigenous fishing, however, continues to be restricted by dam construction, other environmental changes, and competition from nonindigenous commercial and sport fishermen. In the subsequent 1997 *Delgamuukw* ruling, the court affirmed that the aboriginal peoples of BC who had never signed treaties with the British, Canadian, or provincial governments still retained title to their traditional lands.⁴² This was effectively the beginning of “modern treaty negotiation” between the Canadian federal government and each BC First Nation or Inuit group.

The mainstream governments found it necessary at least to make a show of seeking agreements with indigenous peoples over land rights and self-governance. Provincial governments naturally prefer to enter into and execute limited, non-treaty or joint-use agreements as they have direct power over these. Even though not directly empowered to strike treaties, the BC provincial government attends treaty negotiations and advises the federal government. Typically, however, the starting provincial position has been that “settlers’ rights” and mainstream economics should take precedence over indigenous territorial claims, economics, or spiritual or moral rights. Indigenous communities, especially those near substantial nonindigenous settlements or significant corporate interests, would be eligible for only limited rights and control, possibly augmented by one-time cash payments. Since most indigenous communities are loath to start from a premise asserting the supremacy of the mainstream society, it is not surprising that few modern treaties have been struck.

The Stó:lō are among those First Nations who have discussed, but not reached an agreement on, a full-blown “modern” treaty. However, the Stó:lō and a number of other First Nations groups have taken advantage of the negotiations to reach some piecemeal agreements advancing limited land, economic, or self-governance rights. Much of recent Stó:lō economic development has been built on those limited agreements, and substantial levels of the revitalization of Stó:lō communities have occurred in the last two decades. A number of other BC First Nations communities have achieved similar levels of progress; the Stó:lō have achieved neither the most nor the least.

Stephen Cornell and Joseph Kalt argue that the successful economic development of indigenous communities requires internal, community control of resources and decision-making.⁴³ For the Stó:lō, as for other BC indigenous communities, internal advances both drive and are driven by changes in relations with the external society. The challenges to and education of the mainstream governments and society were a continuation of the cultural and community regeneration of the postwar era. The resulting new legal and attitudinal environment, if incomplete, provided BC indigenous groups with opportunities to make progress on cultural, economic, and self-governance issues. Reaching formal and informal agreements with governments (local, provincial, and federal) and private parties on specific resources, systems, and procedures has facilitated community and economic advancement. In recent decades, BC’s indigenous peoples have begun to bring back traditions in foods, land control, self-governance, language, justice systems, and the other cultural, environmental, and economic pillars of community.

THE STÓ:LŌ: PRESENT

Capel,⁴⁴ Spiller and colleagues,⁴⁵ Yunkaporta,⁴⁶ and various United Nations bodies⁴⁷ have put forward the concept that indigenous economics exists when an indigenous community has a distinctive shared identity.⁴⁸ Such identities are based in culture, history, and place, and from those identities communities tend to build economic activity.⁴⁹ The Stó:lō Nation is a coming together of bands and communities through a common identity that is an ongoing construction as a tool of health and power.⁵⁰ A traditional common language is being reclaimed and rebuilt among a group of people who had lost much of it as a key means of solidifying and projecting a national identity.⁵¹ Current Stó:lō culture is centered around a reverence for the environment and an ethic of care for it, as embodied in their government's motto: "*Xolhemet to mekw'stam it kwelat*" [This is our land. We look after all that we are part of]. That ecocentric element of the Stó:lō culture partly arises from cultural and ceremonial traditions, and to some extent from the modern effort to reclaim and recenter the communities around a common indigenous identity.⁵²

As tends to be true among all indigenous peoples, among the Stó:lō economics, culture, and identity are inseparable.⁵³ Formal efforts to reinvigorate traditional culture, then, go hand in hand with economic development. Both the natural environment and the language are central to contemporary Stó:lō economic development efforts. For instance, an agreement has been signed among ten Stó:lō communities, the school district, and the BC Ministry of Education to teach Halq'emeylem, the Stó:lō language. This is part of a broad language revitalization effort for adults and children that helps to promote identity and traditional culture.⁵⁴ The school program also provides direct economic opportunities for Stó:lō elders and other fluent *Halq'emeylem* speakers as teachers and aides. Such replacement of "external" sources of necessary services and goods with local, internal ones is a classic strategy for community economic development that has been successfully applied in some indigenous communities.⁵⁵ Local replacement generally leads to a multiplier effect whereby direct employment and financial gains in a community lead to greater demand of other goods and services that create employment and business opportunities.⁵⁶

The importance of preparing tribal members for available jobs or to found and operate businesses has been recognized and is underway, with the Stó:lō Nation and member bands operating job skill training and educational support programs. In the mid-2000s the Stó:lō Nation signed a contract with the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and the Employment Insurance Commission in which the Stó:lō government was given responsibility and financial support for delivering employment training and supports to all of the indigenous people residing in traditional Stó:lō territory in the lower Fraser Valley. Even from the outset the activities of that program were not limited to Stó:lō First Nation members, and in 2010 it was expanded and the name changed to Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training (ASET).

Now a major unit of the Stó:lō First Nation government, the ASET program works with existing local businesses both on- and off-reservation to support hiring of indigenous employees, as well as to aid existing indigenous employees to upgrade

their skills. Its mission is “to increase First Nation and Inuit participation in employment and training opportunities to create a sustainable future of self-governing citizens”—economic development linked to self-governance linked to sustainability.⁵⁷ Employment and skills training services are made available to all First Nations and Inuit people, regardless of their place of origin, residing in the ASET catchment area, whether they reside on reserve or off-reserve or in a rural or urban community. It is noteworthy that to access ASET services, official federal “Indian” or “Métis” “status” is not required; rather, community recognition that one is an indigenous person is all that is necessary. Such internal recognition of community membership may be the ultimate in indigenous self-determination.

ASET also works to identify potential joint venture opportunities for the Stó:lō with other First Nations, as well as with nonindigenous individuals and companies. For developing joint ventures, three other organizations are largely responsible, and also support business development by the Stó:lō First Nation, its members, and all indigenous peoples residing in the traditional Stó:lō territory. The first is the Stó:lō Development Corporation (SDC), a for-profit organization incorporated in 1996 and wholly owned by Stó:lō Nation. The SDC is the principal economic development, investment, business creation, and business promotion organization for the Stó:lō Nation, participating Stó:lō Bands, and their businesses. The second community organization with a business and economic development mandate is Stó:lō Community Futures Development Corporation (SCF). SCF supports not only Stó:lō, but all First Nation communities and individuals within the traditional Stó:lō territory, providing community economic development planning and action support that includes entrepreneurial training and access to capital through business development loans and grants. Lack of access to funding is often a critical barrier to indigenous entrepreneurship.⁵⁸ Indigenous community governments therefore need to use creative approaches to aid members who need access to capital to develop new businesses.⁵⁹ The SCF works with both existing and new aboriginal businesses to do so.

The Stó:lō Tourism Commission (STC) is the third Stó:lō formal business organization. The STC has the specific focus of advancing indigenous businesses, Stó:lō or otherwise, that cater to tourists anywhere in the Fraser Valley, whether individually, collectively, and/or family-owned. The STC has developed or supported a variety of tourism operations. They include cultural interpretive centers, longhouse experiences, boat tours that address regional ecology and culture, campgrounds, canoe races, and powwows. A number of these businesses also support maintaining and revitalizing traditional lifeways and languages.

A particularly interesting example of STC-supported activities is the pit-house site operated by the Stó:lō tribal government. Pit-houses were the traditional winter residences for the Stó:lō. Because they are largely underground, they are naturally insulated, while the circular design and stamped-earth and cedar material give them an elegant beauty. The pit-house cultural center includes modern reconstructions of two pit-houses on a traditional residential site that had fallen into disuse. Tours of the pit-houses include presentations on traditional construction methods, traditional life within them, and the traditional social and cultural organization of bands. There

is a plan to begin a company to construct modernized versions of pit-houses both for community members and for nonindigenous individuals who want to build in the Fraser Valley.

The Shxw'tá: selhawtxw [House of Long Ago and Today] converges programs in the Stó:lō language, education, and tourism, while also aiding community economic life. In it, teachers, students, and tourists are offered programs about the Stó:lō way of life, philosophy, technology and culture. The Shxw'tá: selhawtxw uses experiential learning by having visitors try their hand at creating cultural objects using traditional materials with the help of Stó:lō artists and craftspeople who interpret archaeological objects and provide insight into traditional community structure and operations. This also provides employment opportunities for tribal members. In 2010, the center hosted more than 900 elementary school children and their teachers through a formal agreement with the regional school district. Other student groups as well as members of the general public also regularly visit the center. A summer program helps teachers develop knowledge of Stó:lō culture that they can employ in the classes during the academic year. The educational and cultural programs at the House of Long Ago and Today also partner with an SDC-developed Stó:lō arts, crafts, and educational materials store at the pit-house site, Syixcha'awt, or "Little Gift House." The SDC has also developed a program that brokers custom orders for Stó:lō arts and crafts from outside parties.

Subsistence economics have also been revitalized at Stó:lō. Stó:lō community fishing rights for the Fraser River and its tributaries have been conceded, to some extent: there are catch limits set by the province. Community members currently fish for family use, while the tribal government continues to pursue expanded fishing rights and higher catch limits for both tribal member use and potential commercial sale. Initiatives to revive other traditional foods are also underway. Habitat restoration has been undertaken to help bring back wild foods that can be gathered and creatures that were traditionally hunted, as well as to increase fish spawns. A community garden program has recently been started that includes agricultural production of traditional plants and berries. An ethnobotanic garden at the Shxw'tá: selhawtxw cultural center educates Stó:lō members and others about traditional foods and medicines, including language education related to plants, animals, and fish.

Efforts are also being made to integrate traditional culture and traditional ecological knowledge together with making mainstream science and technology skills available to the Stó:lō. For instance, a yearly ceremonial canoe journey includes the testing of water quality across the Pacific Northwest bioregion in collaboration with other Coastal Salish tribes in Canada and the United States. This provides Stó:lō and other Coastal Salish students and community members the science of water quality in the context of ceremony, traditional foods, activities, and technology (the canoes). The scientific results advance indigenous leadership in promoting the health of the bioregion of the Pacific Northwest of Canada and the United States, and potentially, may draw Stó:lō members into training for scientific careers and businesses.

The Stó:lō government administers land claims, land management, and subsistence economics through the activities of the Research and Resource Management Centre (RRMC). Traditional use studies conducted by the RRMC support understanding of

traditional culture, traditional ecological knowledge, and land rights. The center also inventories resources and land, including the GIS mapping that supports planning and management of the Stó:lōs' traditional Fraser Valley territory. It is also responsible for conducting environmental impact assessments that support planning, management, and Stó:lō government interventions and negotiations with outside entities.

The Stó:lō Nation Lands Department (SNLD) not only manages Stó:lō Nation and co-managed lands, but the Regional Lands Administration Program (RLAP) also designated the SNLD to support land management by six other First Nations. Those six First Nations together hold sixteen reserves; 279 certificates of possession; and 338 leaseholds, subleases, or Crown land-use permits. In addition, SNLD co-manages the non-reserve regional indigenous lands with the Canadian federal Department of Indian Affairs (INAC) staff. It also assists the other First Nations in the consortium with legal, technical and environmental issues related to individual land holdings, land estates, leases, and permits. Finally, it assists consortium partners with the development of land codes, laws, and systems compatible with its local self-governance and culture. As those codes and laws are written and then ratified, the individual First Nations assume management of their own lands. Clearly, the programs of the RRMC and SNLD create a number of employment and business development opportunities for members of the Stó:lō community.

THE STÓ:LŌ: FUTURE

A community sustainability vision for the future of Stó:lō and partner First Nations has been developed, and a group of action plans have been derived from it.⁶⁰ That vision includes (1) education in environmental science, other mainstream science, and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK); (2) continued revitalization of Stó:lō culture; (3) redevelopment of traditional foods for health, culture, and economic benefits; (4) extension of environmental stewardship powers; and (5) continued business creation linked to culture, identity, and community sustainability. The sustainability component of the vision arises from seeing and building links between these different initiatives to create synergy.

Integrated sustainability at Stó:lō parallels efforts by indigenous groups globally to obtain property rights and to blend traditional with modern cultures in order to achieve environmental and human health.⁶¹ One action plan develops alternative and sustainable energy sources (replacing external purchases with local products) for internal Stó:lō use and potentially for external sales. Specifically, the Fraser River Valley has tremendous geothermal potential. If the Stó:lō can harvest it sustainably, geothermal power could provide for their own needs, add income from outside sales and quality jobs to members of the nation, and spark other business development.

Also in need of further development are joint TEK/mainstream science educational programs that will bring Stó:lō members and other indigenous peoples into applied and basic science positions. At the moment, nonindigenous scientists hired directly or drawn on from nonprofits or the mainstream governments provide the practical expertise in forestry, water quality management, habitat restoration, and

other issues of concern to the tribes. The goal for the future is to educate indigenous replacements for outside scientists and other experts. Such education should also help trigger development of spinoff indigenous businesses.

In the Fraser Valley, how to assert the community vision of sustainability within the context of an influx of new, nonindigenous, year-round and summer residents presents a major challenge for the future. It may be difficult in the face of this tide to advance indigenous stewardship of the watershed, sustain and strengthen traditional culture, and also expand economic successes at the same time. Doing so will require working on multiple fronts to develop partnerships that continue to strengthen the Stó:lō community, its culture, and its vision of sustainability.

Incongruities between nonindigenous and traditional indigenous systems and worldviews are not easy to reconcile. The momentum of power and interest divergences over the past two hundred years, the historical trauma that the Stó:lō experienced, and the difficulty of finding bridges between different worldviews all present formidable challenges. Mainstream society needs the sustainability vision of the Stó:lō and other indigenous people if it is to survive challenges such as those posed by climate change. The Stó:lō community is deeply rooted in traditions, and ties of people and place. It flows from the past—tradition—but is also rooted in the present, including current technologies and scientific knowledge. With an encircling embrace, it reaches for a sustainable future that advances the well-being of all of the people and all of life.

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