

**TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE
ON FORESTRY ISSUES
WITHIN THE PRINCE ALBERT
GRAND COUNCIL**

DRAFT

**Submitted to:
Prince Albert Model Forest
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan**

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The Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) is the governing body of 12 First Nations within Northern Saskatchewan. The 12 First Nations represented are: Black Lake First Nation, Fond Du Lac First Nation, Hatchet Lake First Nation, James Smith Cree Nation, Wahpeton Dakota Nation, Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Cumberland House Cree Nation, Red Earth Cree First Nation and Shoal Lake First Nation. The PAGC represents 25,700 First Nations people in an area that includes just south of Prince Albert to the Manitoba/Saskatchewan border and north to the Saskatchewan/NorthWest Territories border.

Twenty-five people were interviewed from 9 locations as follows:

Deschambault Lake	- Malcom Custer
James Smith First Nation	- Edith Head
	- Silas Head
	- Ray Opoonechaw
	- Louisa Moostos
	- Gilbert Twist
Lac La Ronge	- Sam Hardlotte
Montreal Lake	- Ken Bird
	- Jimmy Bird
	- Danny Hunt
	- Amos Naytowhow
	- Wilson Bird
Pelican Narrows	- Napoleon and Clara Michel
	- Eli Highway
Red Earth Cree First Nation	- John James Head
Stanley Mission	- Daniel McKenzie
	- Sam Charles
	- Zack and Flora McKenzie
	- Peter and Flora Roberts
Sturgeon Landing	- Joe and Margaret Michele
Sturgeon Lake	- Garry Turner
	- Gordon Bighead
	- Joe Daniels
	- Harold Kingfisher
Wahpeton	- Shirley Goodvoice

The traditional knowledge survey is summarized for each question; however, in some cases the responses have been listed from each of the interviewees. The original surveys are listed in the appendix at the end of this report.

1) In your own opinion, what is your definition of traditional knowledge?

Traditional knowledge had many definitions but the central theme consisted of cultural beliefs and traditions being passed on from their forefathers to the present generation for the purpose of survival while still living in harmony with the ecosystems. Traditional knowledge is something that is learned during a lifetime and realizes the interconnectedness of the trees, soil and water.

2) Why is the forest important to you? Food? Hunting grounds? Spiritual?

All interviewees agreed that the forest was important for shelter from the weather, for providing food and clothing, as a place to trap, hunt, fish and gather, for performing ceremonies and for spiritual purposes. Some felt the forest provided an escape from present day stresses through trapping and acted as a form of restoration. Someone felt that the wood burned in his clay fireplace made all the sicknesses go out the chimney whereas the propane stoves make him sick. The forest is important because it provides landmarks for trappers to navigate on their traplines whereas clearcuts increase the risk of getting lost. If there were a choice between trees versus money one interviewee would select trees because they are forever.

What is your main concern with respect to the forest?

The concerns for the forest varied greatly between interviewees and are listed as follows:

- 1) Conflict between industry which is profit-oriented and First Nations which believe in the principle of sharing.
- 2) Forest products were used for First Nations own use but now are being regulated by governments. For example, if you want to build a trappers cabin you have to pay a fee for cutting logs.
- 3) Today, First Nations people want the easy life (profits) instead of respecting the land; therefore, they value the land less and less.
- 4) The loss of habitat through clearcutting and other explorations has greatly affected the gathering of medicinal herbs and roots, firewood and some building of log houses resulting in some hardships for the community.
- 5) The construction of highways has affected wildlife populations by causing them to leave the area; hence more logging roads will result in no animals at all. For example, because of the roads from Cumberland to Beaver Lake, there is a serious impact on the moose population. Within the last 5-10 years there has been a noticeable change within surrounding reserve communities by the decrease of such an important species. This could be due to increased hunting in the area or simply that the moose were driven away from their habitat into other areas because of such operations in the past.
- 6) Selective logging will affect the forest environment because of the noise and the disturbance in the forest. This type of logging would only lead to other cutting practices. The way harvesting is done using big machines and very little manpower. Machines cause more damage to the forest.
- 7) Removal of trees in the forest will result in nothing being left, particularly depletion of wildlife (moose, elk, deer and bear).

8) The water may be contaminated from agriculture run-off from the surrounding fields which are exposed to chemical pesticides and such. At one time there was a natural spring that had fresh water which also dried up because of agriculture operations. He goes on to mention that the birds of the area now and then have differed in size and species. He recalls when they first moved there, song birds were numerous because of the differing song birds that could be heard in the early morning. Now that there are scattered patches of bush and trees, the songbirds are not so numerous and cannot be heard anymore. Ducks that used to inhabit the lake in great numbers, now dwindle except for the scant few that can be seen and for the geese that remain that are noticeable in varying numbers.

9) As with the other areas involved in this project, there is a high unemployment rate on the reserve due to lack of education and jobs that are available in environmental resource related jobs. Currently, communities in the forest have high (95%) unemployment rates.

10) Trappers feel that any new developments would have negative impacts on the environment and traplines. The trappers are still waiting for some sort of compensation for the clearcutting development into their traplines.

11) Although not a forestry issue per se, Reindeer Lake has been flooded and the flooding has also occurred around the Southend and Hudson Bay areas affecting traplines and wildlife habitats. He would like to see some sort of portage system incorporated to traverse such areas rather than having to go around.

3) How much time do you spend in the forest or away from your home?

Some have spent their entire lives in the forest especially when trapping. No one really specified the amount of time spent in the forest or away from home.

Are there certain times of the year you are in the forest?

People typically went into the forest in the summer months and early fall to pick berries and to go hunting; late summer and fall for trapping, some preferred to trap muskrats and beavers in the spring months rather than the winter as a conservation measure to sustain the populations.

4) What products were traditionally used from the forest? What forest stand types were these products obtained from?

All traditional areas were marked by one band and the suggestion was made that all traditional areas should be marked to protect them.

Edible Products:

Saskatoons, blueberries, raspberries, chokecherries, cranberries, seneca root, sweet grass, wild ginger and rat root. Maple sap was boiled and used as an edible product. Labrador tea plants were used for a tea substitute.

Hunting/Fishing:

Moose, elk, deer, bear, muskrat, beaver, fish, pike, walleye, sucker

When hunting occurred the entire carcass was used with very little, if any, going to waste.

Medicinal:

At one time, areas with spruce trees supplied medicinal herbs and roots; however, these areas are no longer available or had to be obtained elsewhere because of the clearing of forests or from fires themselves. Some roots were used for medicinal purposes, bark of spruce trees were used to aid in the healing of sores. The bark from balsam fir trees was used for medicinal purposes along with, mountain ash, and water lily. It was noted by one individual that trees had to be a certain age if the bark was being used for medicinal purposes. Years ago certain plants were used for stomach problems. The area was cleared for housing and now the plants are all gone and won't come back. Berries, herbs, and other medicinal plants were used for ceremonial, medicinal, and other miscellaneous purposes. Moss was used as diaper material.

Wood:

Firewood was used for heating homes (white poplar). Logs were used to build trappers cabins (mud and moss to fill in cracks) and barns for animals. Rails and posts were cut for sale but not much anymore. It was mentioned that birch bark was used as a superstitious remedy during lightning storms. It was believed that by burning the bark in the fireplace during a storm, the smoke rising out of the chimney would deter lightning from hitting on that particular area. Birch bark was used to make baskets while wood was used to make snowshoes and runners for sleighs. The Sturgeon Lake area, which was once heavily forested, was cut to make way for agriculture and livestock. In the 1940's there was a sawmill that made lumber in Sturgeon Lake by a steam-operated mill that eventually closed because of competition.

5) How were they harvested?

Berries were picked by hand, roots dug up with a shovel and the wood was harvested usually by hand, ax or handsaw. Some wood was cut with ax and hauled out with horses.

6) What products do you currently use from the forest? (Above and below ground products if applicable)

The products mentioned above are still used today to some degree depending on their application. Seneca root is still used and sold in Prince Albert as a medicinal remedy. Wood is still used in many homes as a means of fuel burning for heat. There are a handful of people that still use the lakes for sustenance fishing, but now are mostly recreational fishermen today.

7) How are they harvested?

Berries are picked by hand and wood obtained with shovel, ax, handsaw or chainsaw. Hunting methods are made simpler with the use of vehicles and in some cases the use of spotlights at night replacing traditional night hunting methods used long ago.

8) How do you feel about current management practices by the forest and mining industries with respect to the forest?

The following is a list of how the various individuals felt about current management practices:

Do not like current forestry practices because the large areas being cut make it harder to find certain products.

Bad; forestry companies are cutting down too much forest with little being replaced.

Do not like new developments; cutting down large areas.

Weyerhaeuser Management Plans are a bunch of B. S. – they destroy everything. Not only are the trees being destroyed but the soil, plants and other tree species. It takes many years for the site to return to anywhere near pre-cut conditions. They also drive the animals away and they will not return. They know by instinct that it will never be the same.

Notice a big change in wildlife population. It's a shame.

In the first instance, the year 1947 is mentioned. The Pas Lumber Company apparently took a lot of spruce trees from the Red Earth Reserve. Stumpage is the word used but I am not sure in what context. Mr. Head states the Indians were used as "slave labour" and sometimes the trappers would lose their traps in the cutting areas.

Mining companies affect the forest as well. They do not replant and they should replant what was taken.

Clearing of the forests sees a loss of traditions because the forest isn't used as intended. Once they are removed they cannot be used.

A lot more of the forest should be left untouched and harvesting should be limited. What is taken should be replaced and not only the commercial trees. We'll be killing ourselves if we don't.

Harvesting – all young plants were left. We also would only harvest at a certain time of year because that was the only time that the plants were of use to us. Harvesting was done on a basis of what was required for the treatment. When we would harvest trees only the old trees were taken and again we would offer prayers.

He feels that when there is mismanagement of resources, it is the environment that pays the consequences with the loss of both forest and non-forest products which may take a substantial amount of time to regrow. Loss of medicinal roots and herbs found in certain areas are no longer available. Loss of wildlife.

Fishing has also played a part of their daily life for food. Problems with clearcutting have affected fish populations. HBM&S currently has a clearcutting operation six miles from Sturgeon Landing. The effluent being released into Nemew Lake is affecting fish populations. Some people have had nets out on the lake up to March 17 and have caught very little to no fish.

In my own opinion, species common to the area such as walleye and northern pike are somewhat able to sustain themselves in murky water with sediment. If this is the case, the lake might be winter killed or over fished with little regeneration because of the effluent having an effect???

Because of the clearcutting, open areas have been hunting grounds for wolves. It has been observed that wolves will scare prey out into the open areas where they are better able to stalk and kill their food as a pack.

Clearcutting has affected the moose population by reducing its habitat (also possibly hunted out although not mentioned). Not only has the moose been affected but it also affects other fauna in the area as well, because of the disruption in their habitat.

The clearcutting that has taken place near lakes and other water bodies has had an effect on the organisms that use them. Effluent released into such areas has had a drastic impact on the wildlife. Muskrats and beavers are very few, as well as ducks. Fish populations in some areas are little to none when fished out of.

9) When forest products were used traditionally, were they replaced? What practices were used to ensure that these products were available for future use? How are products replaced, that are used currently? Have these practices changed for traditional methods?

The major response to this question was that everything was allowed to grow back naturally. However, one individual stated that everything taken from the forest (trees and plants) was replaced although no mention is given as to how that was accomplished. There was a sense that everything had to be replaced or First Nations people would “pay for it” (meaning that a person would “suffer” or something negative would happen to that person in the future) as explained by one individual’s grandfather. Prayers were also given when things were taken from the forest explaining why the particular items were being taken from the forest. Current forestry practices have not changed for traditional methods because of the rapid change that has occurred over the years making way of life easier, more materialistic.

10) Were management practices, such as replanting, practiced?

No, trees were allowed to grow back naturally.

11) How were forest fires dealt with prior to modern day forest fire suppression practices?

Not many fires occurred in the areas from which people were interviewed and the majority of fires that did occur were started from lightning strikes. Fires were allowed to burn naturally since they generally had no means of combating them, particularly bigger fires which were left to burn.

Back burning was used as a means of controlling fire in areas close to populated areas or areas with property or valued land. Tractors would be used in some instances to scarify ground for a fireguard. In most cases, fires were allowed to burn naturally which was useful in revegetating old growth with new stands and under growth. Fire was also used to burn open meadow areas which were used for horses and cattle grazing.

It was also in the early 1900's that there were some forest fires. At that time there was no way to combat fires if they were close to resident homes. The only solution was to leave when it got too close and come back after the fire had passed through leaving the inhabitants to start over or resume their lives in another location. One individual found the idea of fire harmful back then because of the damage that it did with the period of time that it took for the plants, shrubs, and trees to regrow. Some species later died out from competition or other limitations.

12) Was fire ever used as a management tool?

Some individuals stated that fires were never set deliberately. However, it was mentioned that the Dakota people used to burn the forest to prevent diseases being passed on (although no mention of what type of diseases) and that fire was only used as an aid in clearing the land for pasture or agriculture. Noah Ballantyne, a trapper, used to set fires to his trapline. The fire would regenerate the vegetation thus allowing wildlife to feed on new shoots and upcoming shrubs and grasses. He felt that it increased or attracted a growing beaver population because of the new growth.

What products were harvested from fire?

Logs that were not burned were used to make lumber for cabins or log homes while some burned logs from fires were used to build houses for people.

How was fire applied and if so, what times of the year was fire applied? (spring, summer etc.)

No information was given for this subject.

13) Do forest fires benefit the forest or are they harmful to a forest? Need to have examples of either.

Most individuals felt forest fires were harmful to the ecosystem by damaging trees and animals but not as severe as compared to that of harvesting. Fires were harmful because of the damage done to the environment and the time needed to revegetate the area with the loss of certain plant and shrub species used for traditional applications. Wildlife also gets trapped and dies from smoke inhalation and fires increase loss of shelter for wildlife. It was felt that burn areas revegetate much quicker than areas that have been harvested. The earlier regrowth in burn areas was also attributed to attracting animals more quickly. Fires, however, did create short-term employment during summer months (fire fighting, tree planting etc.).

14) Do you feel that attitudes, with respect to the forest, are changing from your generation to the next generation?

A lot of traditional knowledge has been lost because of residential schools. When young people were removed from their homes the adults and elders had no one to pass the knowledge on to. This knowledge cannot be learned overnight but takes a lifetime to learn and losing the older generation has resulted in the information not being passed on. Although many people have been assimilated they are returning now because a lot of people see the loss of the forests due to clearing by farmers for grazing lands. Others felt that because there is not much of a forest left in the area for the next generation there is nothing to survive on, traditionally. Tradition is being replaced by the need to be more well off financially rather than living conservatively.

15) How can your knowledge of the forest be passed on to the next generation?

We must educate our young to appreciate the forest and to use it responsibly (one individual had taken the time to teach his granddaughter how to respect nature and protect the forest). They should be taught to use the wood/forest for themselves (to be able to live off of the land) which could be done by spending time with an elder on the trapline. In the past, excursions such as hunting would be shared with family units and other members, being brought along. The young were taught the essential requirements to be successful hunters, trappers, fishermen and gatherers. When a kill or harvesting of products was acquired, it was shared throughout the whole community. This applied to the harvesting of vegetables also and other timber and non-timber products. Because of the change in the Sturgeon Lake area, trees are in patches or scarce leaving little to teach the young about traditional ways other than what would be taught through the educational facilities. A few of the younger generation are seemingly becoming more concerned with the fast paced life in the cities or living on social assistance in reserves (earning a fast buck).

Principals should teach young people the culture at culture camps. If there was a storm like in Quebec we could survive up here because of the forest. A good reason to save the trees. If an ice storm happened here I could go to the cabin and throw suckers onto the ice.

Is this knowledge being currently passed on to the next generation and if so how?

The younger generation is losing their traditional backgrounds and beliefs to the ever fast paced changes in their surroundings and in the cities, with the need for better financial, materialistic gains. There are those few that still hunt and some knowledge is still passed for hunting and trapping practices but not much tradition or cultural beliefs are being passed on. When a death occurs, the community helps each other with the loss and a feast is put on for the deceased with the community helping out by hunting game for the feast.

16) Do you approve/disapprove of the way industry currently uses the forest?

There was no interviewed person who approved of the way industry currently uses the forest. Much of the disapproval centred on two areas 1) that harvesting created a lot of disturbance in the forest particularly the machines that are used today, and 2) that harvesting employed few First Nations people and was only seasonal at best.

Selective logging was mentioned on several occasions as a cutting practice that damages a lot of trees. If companies come in to selective log, other logging practices would soon be allowed just like recreational leases. However, there was concern that cutting practices have impacted trappers to the largest extent.

More areas should be protected from harvesting as people rely on the forest as a form of protection. It is important to be able to do the old activities today.

First Nation people would rather have the forest than get rich off of it. Does not want to see commercial operators move up in his area. Disapprove because there is nothing substantial at grass roots labor level saying that these groups of people are better well off than others. It would seem that the big companies and industry are the ones that make the money from the utilization of the resources. The labor market in the forest industry is scarce because of the new technological advances in machinery and the way timber products are harvested decreasing the amount of manpower and the amount of time spent harvesting such products. Any such jobs are only temporary or seasonal with little employment in the off season.

Power lines that have been installed are sprayed with herbicides to control weeds and shrub growth around poles. Because of this, surrounding vegetation has been effected and killed off. Rabbits that were once present are seldom seen or caught possibly due to such an operation that would poison the vegetation that the rabbits would eat. (Also, the fact that rabbit populations run in approximately 5 year cycles)

Would like to see buffers around lakes to protect both flora and fauna instead of being cut to the edge of the water.

17) Can you think of ways that current forest use can be improved?

Companies should use more of the log that is harvested. They could be sued for building log homes instead of cutting up the wood and shipping it out. Selective logging should be minimized because it creates more roads resulting in more disturbance to wildlife.

Are there practices that you used in the forest that should be used by companies today?

One way of protecting or preserving the environment is through prayer by acknowledging the creator for what he has provided. We need to remember that the forest is only on loan to us so that we do not take advantage of it.

Would like the area left naturally after logging and return to horse logging to minimize impacts on the forest. When logs were used for cabins they were hauled out by horses. Even when forestry practices were infantile in development employment was high and continuous. Reverting back to such practices is something one individual would like to see where horses are used to remove timber from the bush so that it would have less of an environmental impact. Jobs were plentiful back then for bush work because all of it was manual labor. There may have been 30-40 people working in one area at a time but with advancements in technology and machinery, it now only might take 2-4 people to do the same job in less time.

Would like to see sawmills developed as in the past before they were closed by bigger companies. In the 1940's they had 4 operational sawmills on the reserve which was doing very profitable work. But because of private contractors opening up sawmills around the area they eventually were forced to shut down due to a lack of jobs and money being invested.

Would like to see leave or residual trees left in cut blocks as a source of protection for wildlife in the area.

All traditional sites should be marked as La Ronge has done.

18) If a lot of jobs were offered in your community from industry, would the practices then be okay?

The majority of the individuals that responded to this question agreed that forestry practices would be acceptable if jobs were offered to the communities. They would like the jobs to be focussed towards the youth where unemployment is highest but not only are jobs important but the proper training is also needed in order to acquire these jobs (i.e. firefighting or use of chainsaws, and heavy equipment operation). One individual takes 2-3 young people and trains them in firefighting and basic stand tending for opportunities during the summer thus providing skills for potential future jobs. If people were trained in such areas they would look for additional work away from the reserve rather than staying on the reserve and depending on social assistance. There is concern that jobs would only be seasonal (tree planting, stand tending) instead of long-term positions.

One individual felt that jobs should not be offered because of the damage that would still occur to the area with a significant amount of time needed to restore the area back to the way it was for both plants and animals.

19) If you were compensated financially or given money, by industry for the use of the forest would it then be okay?

Of the individuals that responded to this question three were in favour of being compensated and one was not. The individual who did not want to be compensated felt that regardless of whether or not they were compensated that there would still be damage done to the forest. Compensation was also dependent on how much compensation was given while another individual would rather receive food rations (beans, lard, coffee etc.) instead of welfare checks.

There was a concern about compensation in relation to job-related issues from the past that would appear to be unresolved. Clearcutting around Montreal Lake started in 1967 with a 20 year forest management contract put forth by Saskatchewan Pulp. Originally it was agreed that compensation would be paid out to trappers for such developments. Roads were to be improved for better access to traplines. At first employees from Montreal Lake were trained on the use of skidders and chainsaw equipment. They had to pay into a union which they did not understand at first. It was the International Workers of America (IWA). This covered compensation for them if they were injured while on the job. When injuries did occur they were paid little for compensation. They were encouraged to take seasonal layoffs and then when the time came to go back to work, they had already been replaced. Not only the workers themselves but work went out to private contractors with little employment being given to Montreal Lake. Some contracts were given to Montreal Lake but in areas where wood was unmerchantable and giving the better wood contracts to private contractors. As time progressed, new technology and equipment had been developed slowly replacing manual labor and jobs.

Joe would like to see some sort of compensation through a comprehensive study into such developments that has not only affected the resources within the area but affected the lives of the people who have relied on such resources as a main part of their daily living. This compensation would be addressed toward the trappers and hunters.

20) Would you be in favor of developments in the forest that had less of a visible impact on the forest than mining or forestry? (eco-tourism or game farming)

Participants were very much in favor of other developments especially eco-tourism (i.e. sharing of First Nations traditions and lifestyle to tourists) because of the reduced environmental impacts and the potential for employment for the younger generation. One individual feels that the potential for an eco-tourist camp exists with proper research and study because of existing water bodies in the area and the traditional knowledge and ways of life that could be taught to participants. The eco-tourism should be some combination with outfitters but not outfitting alone. Instead of cutting down the forest it should be preserved for every one to enjoy instead of one company benefitting.

The need for opportunities either through training or employment is high amongst the youth. If industry were to come and offer such opportunities would be acceptable, either through development utilizing the resources or activities having low impact on the resources such as eco-tourism.

Little interest was expressed in game farms because there would be problems with people wanting to poach the animals and the time needed to see a profitable return on the investment. Paying to shoot one animal would not make money.

21) Do you feel that you are informed enough about what is happening in the forest?

The general feeling is that First Nations people are not informed enough as to what is happening in the forest. More representation is needed from First Nations in resource-related opportunities and developments such as tree planting or firefighting. Would like more information in developments for themselves and the younger generation where opportunities would exist for job creation. Co-management is another avenue for being better informed as well as a means of transferring traditional knowledge in management processes. There must be a balance between profits and tradition and to make sure that what you are doing is good for the land and for the future and not just for one year. In addition to not being informed, there is concern about process and how it works. One example is why one has to go through SERM for permits (logs and cabins) to build trappers cabins. This process was not done in the past particularly if the cabin was for our own use.

22) How can this be changed for the better?

First Nations people with traditional knowledge should sit on co-management boards or use other avenues to be more involved in industrial matters or negotiations concerning First Nation people.

APPENDIX

Original Response by Location and Individual

Location: Deschambault Lake

Person Interviewed: Malcom Custer

Date Interviewed: March 19, 1998

Traditional Uses: Berry gathering, hunting, trapping, and fishing were the main part of the daily living and survival.

Wood products were mainly for fuel wood consumption and the construction of trappers cabins.

James has the additional notes I need to get from him.

Location: James Smith First Nation

People Interviewed: Edith Head, Silas Head, Ray Opoonechaw

Date Interviewed: July 15, 1998

4) Trees were used for fuel burning purposes to heat homes (white poplar used to burn). Logs that were cut were used for trapper's cabins and barns for animals. Other products include Saskatoons, blueberries, Seneca root, sweet grass. The mentioned of birch bark was used as a superstitious remedy during lightning storms. It was believed that by burning the bark in the fireplace during a storm, that the smoke rising out of the chimney would deter lightning from hitting on that particular area.

5) Harvested usually by hand, ax or handsaw.

6) Products mentioned are still used today to some degree depending on their application.

8) Doesn't like current forestry practices because of the large areas being cut. Harder to find certain products.

9) Forest products were allowed to regrow naturally

10) Same as above

11) Not many fires occurred in the area except those from lightning strikes.

12) No

13) Harmful because of the damage has done to the ecosystem. Although it creates short-term employment during summer months (fire fighting, tree planting etc.).

15) The younger generation is losing their traditional back rounds. There are those few that still hunt. When a death occurs, the community helps each other with the loss. A feast is put on for the deceased with the community helping out by hunting game for the feast.

18) Yes, because it would create employment for the younger people.

19) Yes

20) Yes because it would create employment and less damage to the area.

Location: James Smith First Nation

Person Interviewed: Louisa Moostos

Date interviewed: July 15, 1998

2) It's important because of the various plants and animals that have been used for generations.

3) She doesn't get out much compared to long ago. Going out was mainly during summer months and early fall, spent picking berries and trapping.

4) Blueberries, sweet grass, saskatoons, chokecherries and cranberries.

5) Picked by hand.

6) Same as mentioned in question 4. Also seneca root is still used and sold in Prince Albert medicinal remedy.

7) Picked by hand.

8) Bad, forestry companies are cutting down too much forest with little being replaced.

9) Allowed to regrow naturally.

11) Allowed to burn naturally. Not many fires back then

12) No

13) Harmful, because of the damaging effects to animals and trees.

15) Some knowledge is still passed for hunting and trapping practices but not much tradition or culture is being passed.

18) Would agree with development because of the jobs offered, at times when job creation is scarce.

20) Yes because it would also allow for job creation for younger people.

Location: James Smith
Person Interviewed: Gilbert Twist
Date Interviewed: July 15, 1998

- 1) Cultural beliefs and traditions passed on from our forefathers.
- 2) Food, hunting and gathering.
- 3) Later summer, early fall (Oct.). During the trapping season.
- 4) Seneca root, wild ginger, rat root, saskatoons, blueberries, and raspberries. Moss was used as diaper material. Maple sap was boiled and used as an edible product. The bark from balsam fir trees was used for medicinal purposes along with, mountain ash, and water lily. Labrador tea plants were used for a tea substitute. Wood was used for fuel burning and construction of cabins. Birch bark was used to make baskets. Again with this interview the mention of burning birch bark to deter lighting was mentioned.
- 5) Picked by hand, ax, or hand saw.
- 6) Products are still used to some degree.
- 7) Picked by hand, shovel, ax, or handsaw.
- 8) Doesn't like new developments, cutting, down large areas.
- 9) Allowed to grow back naturally.
- 11) Not many fires were significant enough to do irreparable damage. Lighting caused fires was allowed to burn naturally.
- 12) No fires were set deliberately.
- 15) Not many traditions or cultural beliefs are being passed on. Just the younger generation does some hunting for sustenance and traditional purposes (Feast for funeral).
- 17) Would like the area left naturally. When logs for cabins were hauled out, horses were used. There was a sawmill in the area about 40 to 50 years ago, eventually being closed out by bigger companies.
- 18) No because of the damage that would still occur to the area with a significant amount of time needed to get the area back to the way it was both for plants, and animals.
- 19) No because the damage would still be evident.
- 20) Would be in favor of eco-tourism because of the less environmental impacts it would have.

Game farming would have its problems with people wanting to poach the animals and time needed to see a profitable return on the investment.

21) Would like more information in developments for themselves and the younger generation where opportunities would exist for job creation.

Location: Lac La Ronge
Person Interviewed: Sam Hardlotte
Date Interviewed: May 10th, 1998

Relationship to the land

The land was loaned to us not given.

I quite often go back to the trap line to escape from it all.

I lived on the trap line till I was 10 years old. Every opportunity I get I return to the land.

Forest activities that are viewed as acceptable

Eco-tourism which has very little impact on the forest.

Instead of cutting down the forest it should be preserved for every one to enjoy instead of one company benefitting.

Should pass on First Nations lifestyle onto tourists.

5) You have to learn. Much more than berries and mushrooms. It takes a lifetime of learning. Big game and fish etc. Don't overkill but live in harmony. Years ago anything taken from the forest was shared with the whole community.

Conflict between industry and First Nations

-Industry – Profit orientated

-First Nation shares

11) Bunch of B. S. – Weyerhaeuser Management Plans

They destroy everything. Not only the tree they are harvesting but the soil, plants and other tree species. It takes many years for the site to return to anywhere near pre-cut conditions.

They also drive the animals away and they won't return. They know by instinct that it will never be the same.

14) Notice a big change in wildlife population. It's a shame.

Co-Management

Someone with traditional knowledge should sit on the co-management board.

Traditional Forest Uses

Forest products were used for own use and not regulated by governments. Nowadays First Nation people want the easy life. We value the land less and less and want profits instead of respecting the land.

Location: Montreal Lake
People Interviewed: Ken Bird, Jimmy Bird, Danny Hunt, Amos Naytowhow, Wilson Bird
Date interviewed: March 24, 1998

Traditional Use:

Berry picking was part of how they had made their living by selling them.

Log cabins were made entirely out of natural products. The logs for the frame, roof, with mud and moss to fill in cracks.

There was the sale of rails and posts but not much.

In the 1940's they had 4 operational sawmills on the reserve which was doing very profitable work (Stumpage fees etc.). Because of private contractors opening up saw mills around the area, it was in the 1950's that eventually they were forced to shut down due to a lack of jobs and money being invested.

Forest fires that were combated in the past were fought to an extent. Back then the equipment used was similar with today's modern equipment (Shovels, axes, and piss packs). Except their capability was limited depending on the size of the fire. If it had gotten to big, it was left to burn or in some instances, practiced back burning to an extent so that there was a fire guard in place. Fire was also used to burn open meadow areas which were used for horses and cattle grazing. The purpose was to regenerate vegetation with lush new growth.

Everything was cut down in the forests when they clearcut. At times it was right up to the lakes (Birk Lake) ?????? edge (no buffer zones in place), effecting all forms of life both, floral and fauna.

Clearcutting around the Montreal Lake started in 1967 with a 20 year forest management contract put forth by Sask. Pulp. Originally it was agreed that compensation would be paid out to trappers for such developments. Roads were to be improved for better access to traplines. At first employees from Montreal Lake were trained on the use of skidders and chainsaw equipment. They had to pay into a union which they did not understand at first. It was the International Workers of America (IWA). This covered compensation for them if injured while on the job. When injuries did occur they were paid little for compensation. They were encouraged to take seasonal layoffs and then when the time came to go back to work, they had already been replaced. Not only the workers themselves but work went out to private contractors with little employment being given to Montreal Lake. Some contracts were given to Montreal Lake but in

areas where wood was unmerchantable and giving the better wood contracts to private contractors. As time progressed, new technology and equipment had been developed slowly replacing manual labor and jobs.

Because of the clearcutting open areas have been hunting grounds for wolves. It has been observed that wolves will scare prey out into the open areas where they are better able to stalk and kill their food as a pack.

Clearcutting has effected the moose population by running it out of its habitat (also possibly hunted out although not mentioned). Not only has it been the moose who have been effected. It also effects other fauna in the area as well, because of the disruption in their habitat. Rabbits are slowly starting to come back to the area where there is new growth (5 year cycle).

The clearcutting that has taken place near lakes and other water bodies has had an effect on the organisms that use them. Effluent released into such areas has had a drastic impact on the wildlife. Muskrats and beavers are very few, as well as ducks. Fish populations in some areas are little to none when fished out of.

Present Concerns:

The trappers are still waiting for some sort of compensation for the clearcutting development into their traplines.

Even if jobs are given out in forestry operations, it is never permanent or only seasonal. Training for most jobs today is needed to even carry a chainsaw or to firefight . Jobs are few because of the training needed for resource jobs today. If people were trained in such areas they would want to look for additional work away from the reserve, rather than stay home on social assistance.

Wilson Bird - Every summer takes 2-3 young people and trains them in firefighting and basic stand tending for opportunities.

Resource related opportunities are only for a limited time during the summer season, whether it be for firefighting, stand tending, or tree planting.

They know that there has been some mineral exploration in the past. Where, when, or for what has remained a mystery. They know that there is copper in the area.

Location: Pelican Narrows
People Interviewed: Napoleon and Clara Michel
Date Interviewed: March 18, 1998

Traditional Uses

Noah Ballantyne, a trapper who used to set fires to his trapline. The fire would regenerate the vegetation the result would allow wildlife to feed on new shoots and upcoming shrubs and

grasses. He felt that it increased or attracted a growing beaver population because of the new growth

The trapline was shared by many different trappers in a conservative effort to repopulate one area in one season while trapping out of another. Also they would trap during the spring months and not the winter months as another method of conservation (Gilbert Lake).

Used traditional herbs and berries and part of their living. Wood harvested for firewood purposes and building cabins for trapping.

Today as we see on maps delineating borders and boundaries. Long ago there was no such borders with traplines, it was shared.

Present Concerns

Trappers feel that any new developments would have negative impacts on the environment and traplines.

Reindeer Lake has been flooded

Flooding has also occurred around the South End, Hudson Bay areas effecting traplines and wildlife habitats.

He would like to see some sort of portage system incorporated to traverse such areas rather than having to go around.

Eli Highway and Solomon Michel have been effected by the Reindeer River flooding.

Leader mining proposal within the area.

Location: Pelican Narrows

Person Interviewed: Eli Highway

Date Interviewed: March 18, 1998

Traditional Uses: 1937 in the Steep Hills area, trapping used to be good.

Before white sand trapping was good with up to 700 muskrats being caught in a trapping season. Conservative measures used to sustain beaver populations by trapping in the spring months and not in the winter.

Location: Red Earth Cree First Nation
Person Interviewed: John James Head
Date Interviewed:

If this was suppose to be an interview concerning the Sipanok Lease Agreement, the interviewee, J.J. Head gives only passing reference to it. He talks of everything: treaty, World War II, weather balloons, wolf poisoning, mercury pollution, housing, easements for power lines, farming and ranching. He makes reference to exploration and being on the Vancouver Stock Exchange. I believe this to be true and I think it had to do with randon gas, although he mentions some oil exploration.

He does mention some forestry items such as clearcutting. The two main culprits named are The Pas Lumber Company and Simpson Construction.

In the first instance, the year 1947 is mentioned. The Pas Lumber Company apparently took a lot of spruce trees from the Red Earth Reserve. Stumpage is the word used but I am not sure in what context. Mr. Head states the Indians were used as “slave labour” and sometimes the trappers would lose their traps in the cutting areas.

After the logging was done, the Band or individuals were promised and given cattle to take advantage of the clear cut areas for grazing. It was thought the Indians could make a sort of a living from ranching.

Mr. Head does not come to a conclusion on this subject but it is apparent it did not materialize into anything. Considering the year (1947) and the isolation of Red earth, Indian Affairs in their paternalism would have had absolute control in the area. Indian Affairs would have only made a cursory gestures to the Chief and Council on any developments in and around the reserve.

In the second instance, Simpson Construction seemed to have much influence in the Sipanok area. A lease owned by Simpson’s is mentioned but it is not certain what kind of lease. Again Mr. Head mentions “clear cutting” and according to the lease agreement the Indians were suppose to have gotten contracts in whatever was happening. Apparently there was some trenching and weirs built. It is apparent the Indians never did get anything.

The loss of habitat through clearcutting and other explorations has greatly affected the gathering of medicinal herbs and roots, firewood and some building of log houses. This in turn has provided some hardships for the community. This was strongly emphasized in the interview.

It is odd there is little mention of Ducks Unlimited. Did not author and engineer the Sipanok Lease Agreement?

In conclusion, the Sipanok Lease Agreement, logging operations, exploration and other developments that have happened, it seems the Red Earth and Shoal Lake First Nations never have received any compensation, contractual work and very few job opportunities.

Transcribed, translated and summarized by James A. Roberts

Location: Stanley Mission
Person Interviewed: Daniel McKenzie
Date Interviewed: March 17th, 1998

What effects him is the highway. Once the highway was opened up the animals quite coming around. If logging comes in, more roads, there won't be any animals at all.

Spends most of his time on the trap line – Trapping hunting and fishing

Concerns

Selective logging will effect the forest environment because of the noise and the disturbance in the forest. This type of logging would only lead to other cutting practices. The way harvesting is done they use big machines and very little manpower. Machines cause more damage to the forest.

Forest Fire versus Logging – Fire regeneration comes back much quicker and randomly. Rings animals back to the area much faster.

Notices a lot of trees missing in the south along the highway – no animals

We must educate our young to appreciate the forest. They should be taught to use the wood/forest for themselves (To be able to live off of the land).

Companies should use more of the log. They could be sued for building log homes instead of being shipped out and cut up.

Trees versus money – Trees are forever

Location: Stanley Mission
Person Interviewed: Sam Charles (83 years young)
Date Interviewed: March 17th, 1998

Most of his life he has spent in his cabin on the trap line. He goes to Rabbit Creek and Otter Lake. Traditional activities include trapping hunting and fishing. He uses the forest for cabin logs and firewood.

He tries to protect all the trees around his area. Except the dead fall which is used for fire wood. All trees are protected including the willows.

In his life time he has seen that once trees are gone the animals disappear. If there are no willows or popular the beaver disappear. No trees = No animals.

If they ever cut around here there will be nothing left.

Forest Fire versus Harvesting

If there were a forest fire the animals would come back a lot quicker than it does after harvesting. The animals also come back much quicker.

16) All Traditional Areas were marked by the band. All people should mark them to protect them.

Alternative Forest Uses

Game Farm: No good up here. Pay to shoot one animal would not make money.

Selective Logging: This would create roads all over the place and animals would be affected. He has taught his granddaughter to respect nature and how to protect the forest. Other kids don't know how to. The principal should teach culture – culture camp- to teach the other young people this. If there was a storm like in Quebec we could survive up here because of the forest. A good reason to save the trees. If an ice storm happened here I could go to the cabin and throw suckers onto the ice.

In his time he used to use a clay fire place (hand made wood stove). All sickness went into the fire place and out the chimney. I never got sick. Propane stove in my home I get sick all the time. In my cabin I never get sick. Better atmosphere, fresher air and clean water from the lake. In town – water comes from the system.

Up here I can walk in the middle of the night and not get lost because of the landmarks. I would be lost in a clear cut. I'm 83 years old and never lost on my trap line. I've returned home at 12:00 midnight because of the landmarks.

Location: Stanley Mission
Person Interviewed: Zack and Flora McKenzie
Date Interviewed: March 17th, 1998

The forest protects us from wind and storms. Provides animals for us to eat and for trapping. No animals come back after an area has been cut over. No animals in jack pine.

Spend 4 –5 months in the cabin at the trap line (In spring). Used to live on the trap line.

Mining company affect the forest as well. They don't replant. Should replant what was taken. Back to what was not only commercial trees.

No men are hired or very few. The majority of work is done by machines.

Here is Stanley we don't see the affects of harvesting yet but down south you do. Once a lot of animals were seen but now not many.

9) Natural Regeneration

12) Logs could build houses for people instead of trees going for pulp. Logs instead of plywood.

16) All sites should be marked. La Ronge has done some but all First Nations should.

Selective Logging - Not good. Area is still affected. Machines would damage a lot of trees in the process. The area would still be impacted. Eco-tourism would be OK. If companies come in to selective log other logging practices would soon be allowed.. Just like recreational leases. Trapping is affected. One person gets a lease and everyone gets a lease. Interference by lease owners on trappers.

19) No trees left in area. No protection for animals in the area. Small game will be chased away. No rabbits or chickens.

21) Have to go through SERM for permits (logs and cabins) for trappers cabins. Did not have to do so before. Did not have to do this before if it was for our own use.

22) If the industry would replant the forest back to what was there before it would be better. Animals would return. Do not only replant what you want to harvest.

Location: Stanley Mission
Person Interviewed: Peter and Flora Roberts
Date Interviewed: March 17th, 1998

1 & 2) It's protection from the weather and provides food and clothing.

Most of our lives on the trap line. Every since school starts they have to stay in the community because of the kids.

8) Uses of the forest. I used to make my own snowshoes and get runners for my sleigh form the forest. Other uses included logs for the cabin construction and firewood. No other uses were identified.

Does not create much employment. No one is trained from our community. Need training to become involved.

Old days logs were only used for houses and what else was needed not commercially as now.

18) It's good for students to learn about the forest. Spend time with an elder on the trap line. Should be used responsibly. Not cutting for the sake of cutting.

If you want to build a trappers cabin you have to pay a fee for cutting logs.

In favor of eco-tourism. Should be some combination with outfitters. Eco-tourism but not outfitting.

Signs of harvesting. No animals – no protection from wind and storms.

Difference between forest fires and harvesting – from a fire within 2 – 3 years' growth comes back and animals. With commercial harvesting very little comes back except what they plant.

Areas should be protected from harvesting. People rely on the forest it offers protections. It is important to be able to do old activities.

First Nation people would rather have the forest than get rich off of it. Does not want to see commercial operators move up in his area.

Everything is connected in a balance. Any industry coming in upsets that balance. To cut a tree it affects the soil which affects the water which affects the fish. First Nation people living off of the land live in harmony with the eco-systems.

Location: Sturgeon Landing
People Interviewed: Joe and Margaret Michele
Date Interviewed: March 17, 1998

Traditional Uses

Have been traditional hunters, trappers and gatherers.

Main foods include, moose, fish, beavers, muskrats, fish

Natural products include various herbs, berries, and medicinal plant species.

Commercial net fishing.

Present Concerns

There is one counselor who represents the Sturgeon Lake area who was not available for comment.

Joe is upset that there is not enough representation for the Sturgeon Landing area in resource related opportunities and developments such as tree planting or fire fighting.

He feels that the potential for an eco-tourist camp exists with proper research and study because of existing water bodies in the area and the traditional knowledge and ways of life that could be taught to participants.

Currently in the reserve there is a 95% unemployment rate.

Fishing has also played a part of there daily life for food. Problems with clearcutting have effected fish populations. HBM&S is currently has a clearcutting operation six miles from Sturgeon Landing. The effluent being released into Nemew Lake is effecting fish populations. Some people have had nets out on the lake up to March 17 and have caught very little to no fish.

In my own opinion, species common to the area such as walleye and northern pike are some what able to sustain themselves in murky water with sediment. If this is the case, the lake might be winter killed or over fished with little regeneration because of the effluent having effect???

Because of the roads from Cumberland to Beaver Lake, there is a serious impact on the moose population. Within the last 5-10 years there has been a noticeable change within surrounding reserve communities in such a decrease on such an important species.

This could be due to increased hunting in the area or simply that the moose were driven away from their habitat into other areas because of such operations in the past.

Power lines that have been installed are sprayed with herbicides to control weeds and shrub growth around poles. Because of this, surrounding vegetation has been effected and killed off. Rabbits that were once present are seldom seen or caught possibly due to such an operation that would poison the vegetation that the rabbits would eat. (Also the fact that rabbit populations run in approximately 5 year cycles)

Joe would like to see some sort of compensation through a comprehensive study into such developments that has not only effected the resources within the area but effected the lives of the people who have relied on such resources as a main part of their daily living. This compensation would be addressed toward the trappers and hunters.

Location: Sturgeon Lake
Person Interviewed: Garry Turner
Date Interviewed: April 2, 1998

Traditional: When fires occurred in the past, there was no fire fighting equipment available to extinguish the bigger fires. Back burning was used as a means of controlling fire in areas close to populated areas or areas with property or valued land. Tractors would be used in some instances to scarify ground for a fireguard. In most cases, fires were allowed to burn naturally which was useful in revegetating old growth with new stands and under growth.

When hunting occurred the entire carcass was used with very little, if any, going to waste. The hunt would be for not one individual products for winter storage.

Berries, herbs, and other medicinal plants were used for ceremonial, medicinal, and other miscellaneous purposes.

In the 1920's there was a sawmill that was purchased for various wood products on the reserve. It is no longer there, probably due to sawmill expansion outside of the reserve, choking out the competition.

Additional info.- Instead of giving out welfare checks, food rations would be used instead (Beans, lard, coffee etc...)

Present concerns:

As with the other areas involved in this project, there is a high unemployment rate on the reserve due to lack of education and jobs that are available in environmental resource related jobs.

Location: Sturgeon Lake
Person Interviewed: Gordon Bighead
Date Interviewed: June 4, 1998

Reliving past experiences that are still used today.

The forest is of importance because of the resources used traditional for survival, ceremony and spiritual purposes. That in the Sturgeon Lake area there is only little patches of forest left not much for harvesting practices.

Not much forest to spend time in, in that area.

Wood was used for burning, and some cabin building for trappers. Berries were part of the diet.

Wood is still used for burning in fireplaces.

Chainsaw and truck

Wood was cut with ax and hauled out with horses. Berries picked by hand.

In the Sturgeon Lake area was once heavily forested that was cut to make way for agriculture beginnings. In the 1940's there was sawmill that made lumber in Sturgeon Lake by a steam operated mill that eventually closed because of competition.

Fires that did occur were very few. They had no mean of combating them and were allowed to burn naturally. Gordon found the idea of fire harmful back then because of the damage that it did with a period of time for the plants, shrubs, and trees to regrow. Some species later dying out from competition or other limitations. Where there were spruce trees at one time, were also areas that supplied medicinal herbs and roots that were no longer available or had to be obtained elsewhere, because of the clearing of forests or from fires themselves.

Because of clearing the forests, also led to the depletion of wildlife which also were plentiful in that area (moose, elk, deer, bear). The lake itself and surrounding water bodies to was fished in the past with, little done today except for one or two who still set nets.

The need for opportunities either through training or employment is high amongst the youth. If industry were to come and offer such opportunities would be acceptable, either through development utilizing the resources or activities having low impact on the resources such as eco-tourism.

Location: Sturgeon Lake
Person Interviewed: Joe Daniels
Date Interviewed:

Joe to has recalled times of a sawmill that was in the area, which closed. Once enough land was cleared for agriculture purposes the closed to loss of business. He has noticed to that when their ancestors settled in Sturgeon Lake that it was heavily forested, which eventually was cleared for agriculture and livestock.

The wood cleared was hauled out and used as firewood or lumber for cabins

He feels that even the water may be contaminated from agriculture run-off from the surrounding fields which are exposed to chemical pesticides and such. At one time there was a natural spring that had fresh water which also dried up because of agriculture operations. He goes on to mentioned that the birds of the area now and then have differed in size and species. He recalls when they first moved there, song birds were numerous because of the differing song birds that could be heard in the early morning. Now that there are scattered patches of bush and trees, the song birds are not so numerous and can not be heard any more. Ducks that used to inhabit the lake in great numbers, now dwindle except for the scant few that can be seen and for the geese that remain that are noticeable in varying numbers.

He realizes that the youth today have lost or are on the verge of losing there traditional back grounds and beliefs to the ever fast paced changes in their surroundings and in the cities, with the need for better financial, materialistic gains.

The use of fire was only used as an aid in clearing the land for pasture or agriculture plantings. There were little or no forest fires that were large enough to be of any historical significance.

Location: Sturgeon Lake
Person Interviewed: Harold Kingfisher
Date Interviewed: June 4, 1998

Note: From this interview I tried to fit his responses into the corresponding questions of which some may have been unanswered or unknown.

#1 Definition of traditional knowledge: "How elders survived in this world without non-native involvement".

#3 How much time do you spend in the forest or away from your home? Are there certain times of the year you are in the forest?

Early fall or fall when berries are ready to be picked and in the time when hunting season occurs.

#4 What products were traditionally used from the forest? What forest stand types were these products obtained from?

The residents of Sturgeon Lake had moved here from Fort a la Corne area during the time when the Treaties were being negotiated and signed. The result being the Sturgeon Lake First Nations. He recalls that when his great grandfather first moved to the area, that it was heavily forested which provided the traditional lifestyle (hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering) of truly living off the land.

At that time there was an abundance of wildlife varying from moose, elk, deer, and bear. Berries ranged from saskatoons, cranberries, and blueberries, which were hand picked, for sustenance purposes only. Some roots were used for medicinal purposes, bark of spruce trees were used to aid in the healing of sores. Wood that was harvested was used for lumber production or wood burning. The water bodies surrounding Sturgeon Lake at one time were fished traditionally as a

means of survival. From their residential learning they were taught the fundamentals of farming on how to grow vegetables and cereal grains.

#5 How were they harvested?

Either with an ax, shovel, or simply hand picked.

#6 What products do you currently use from the forest? (Above and below ground products if applicable)

Wood is still used in many homes as a means of fuel burning for heat. Today deer that inhabit the are in low numbers (probably not enough sheltered or feeding areas). Hunting methods are made simpler with the use of vehicles and in some cases the use of spotlights at night replacing traditional night hunting methods used long ago. There are a handful of people that still use the lakes for sustenance fishing, but now are mostly recreational fishermen today. Saskatoons, blueberries, and cranberries are still picked.

#7 How were they harvested?

Similar to today's methods of harvesting ax, shovel, chainsaw, or hand picked.

#8 How do you feel about current management practices by the forest and mining industries with respect to the forest? He feels that when there is mismanagement of resources, it is the environment that pays the consequences with the loss of both forest and non-forest products which may take a substantial if applicable amount of time to regrow. Loss of medicinal roots and herbs found in certain areas are no longer available. Loss of wildlife.

#9 Have current forestry practices changed for traditional methods?

No, because of the rapid change that has occurred over the years making way of life easier, more materialistic.

#10 Were management practices, such as replanting, practices?

No, trees were allowed to grow back naturally.

#11 How were forest fires dealt with prior to modern day forest fire suppression practices? Fires were allowed to burn naturally. It was also in the early 1900's that there were some forest fires. At that time there was no way to combat fires if they were close to resident homes. The only solution was to leave when it got to close and come back after the fire had passed through leaving the inhabitants to start over or resume their lives in another location.

#12 Was fire ever used as a management tool? What products were harvested from fire? How was fire applied and if so, what times of the year was fire applied? The application of fire was used to clear shrubs and brush to help clear the land for agriculture purposes (what time of the year did this occur?). Logs that were not burned were used to make lumber for cabins or log homes.

-He recalls from stories past that in 1906, the Sturgeon Lake Lumber Company had permission for some not all clear cutting. As it turned out most of the trees were either harvested or burned which produced lumber and also was to make way for agriculture.

#13 Do forest fires benefit the forest or are they harmful to a forest? Need to have examples of each.

Fires are harmful because of the damage done to the environment and the time needed to revegetate the area with the loss of certain plant and shrub species used for traditional applications. Wildlife gets trapped and dies from smoke inhalation, loss of shelter for wildlife.

#14 Do you feel that attitudes, with respect to the forest, are changing from your generation to the next generation?

Absolutely, there is not much of a forest left in the area for the next generation. There is nothing to survive on, traditionally.

Tradition is being replaced by the need to be more well off financially rather than living conservatively.

#15 How can your knowledge of the forest be passed on to the next generation? Is this knowledge being currently passed on to the next generation and if so how?

In the past, excursions such as hunting would be shared with family units and other members, being brought along. The young were taught the essential requirements to be successful hunters, trappers, fishermen and gatherers. When a kill or harvesting of products was acquired, it was shared throughout the whole community. This applied to the harvesting of vegetables also and other timber and non-timber products. Because of the change in the Sturgeon Lake area, trees are in patches or scarce leaving little to teach the young about traditional ways other than what would be taught through the educational facilities. A few of the younger generation are seemingly becoming more concerned with the fast paced life in the cities or living on social assistance in reserves (earning a fast buck).

#16 Do you approve/disapprove of the way industry currently uses the forest?

Disapprove because there is nothing substantial at grass roots labor level saying that these groups of people are better well off than others. It would seem that the big companies and industry are the ones that make the money from the utilization of the resources. The labor market in the forest industry is scarce because of the new technological advances in machinery and the way timber products are harvested decreasing the amount of manpower and the amount of time spent harvesting such products. Any such jobs are only temporary or seasonal with little employment in the off season.

#17 Can you think of ways that current forest use can be improved? Are there practices that you used in the forest that should be used by companies today? Even though when forestry practices were infantile in development, employment was high and continuous. Reverting back to such practices is something Harold would like to see or even the use of horses to remove timber from the bush, so that it would have less of an environmental impact. Jobs were plentiful back then for bush work because all of it was manual labor. Where there may have been 30-40 people working in one area at one time. With advancements in technology and machinery, it now only might take 2-4 people to do the same job in less time.

#18 If a lot of jobs were offered in your community from industry, would the practices then be okay?

That's what is wanted, more training or job opportunities for the younger people.

#19 If you compensated financially or given money, by industry for the use of the forest would it then be okay?

Yes. Depends on how much.

#20 Would you be in favor of developments in the forest that had less of a visible on the forest than mining or forestry? (eco-tourism or game farming)

Yes because of the impact that would be reduced environmentally and that the creation of jobs would be established for First Nation people.

#21 Do you feel that you are informed enough about what is happening in the forest?

No, because there are too many changes with little of the benefits for First Nation people.

#22 How can this be changed for the better?

To be more involved in industrial matters or negotiations concerning First Nation people.

Location: Wahpeton
Person Interviewed: Shirley Goodvoice
Date Interviewed: March 13th, 1998

Hunting – rely on the forest for food

Inner bark from certain trees is used for medicines (trees must be a certain age)

A lot of Traditional Knowledge has been lost because of residential schools. When young people were removed from their homes the adults and elders had no one to pass the knowledge onto.

This knowledge cannot be learned overnight but takes a lifetime to learn.

The older generation is gone and haven't passed that information on.

Many people have been assimilated. Returning now because a lot of people see the loss of the forests due to clearing by farmers for grazing lands.

Clearing of the forests sees a loss of traditions because the forest isn't used as intended.

They can't use them once they are gone.

They take many years to return so they can be re-used again.

Once a forest is cleared the animals – especially small game leaves also

Dakota people used to burn to the forest to prevent diseases being passed on.

Everything that was taken from the forest (trees and plants) was replaced.

Prayers were also given. Explaining why we were taking from the forest.

Everything had to be replaced or First Nations people would "pay for it" in the future. This is what my grandfather told me. "Pay for it" meaning that a person would "suffer" or something negative would happen to that person.

Management: A lot more of the forest should be left untouched. What is taken should be replaced. Not only the commercial trees. The harvesting should be limited. We'll be killing ourselves if we don't.

Harvesting – All young plants are left. We also would only harvest at a certain time of year because that was the only time that the plants were of use to us. Harvesting was done on a basis of what was required for the treatment. When we would harvest trees only the old trees were taken and again we would offer prayers.

Co-Management – Traditional Knowledge should be involved in this process. Without this it won't work right. There must be a balance between profits and tradition. Make sure that what you are doing is good for the land for the future and not just for one year.

Eco-tourism – Approval. With very little impact. A way of sharing tradition.

Years ago certain plants were used for stomach problems. The area was cleared for housing and now the plants are all gone and won't come back.

One way of protecting or preserving the environment is through prayer. Must include the creator when we use what he has provided. If we forget that this is only on loan to us we will take advantage of it.