

**Introduction /Background:**

Wikwemikong Community Forest Pilot Project was one of four selected by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. The Government’s purpose was to develop a range of alternative Models for Management of Forest Lands in order to meet commercial challenges in an environmentally sound manner, while meeting a whole range of community needs. The provincial plan was to evaluate these programs over a three year period in order to assess the applicability of each to other communities. Wikwemikong, as the only Aboriginal Community Forest had a responsibility to succeed in achieving the community benefits, proposed in order to ensure continuance beyond the three-year pilot period.

**Location:**

The Wikwemikong Band occupies two land base Reserves. The WUIR # 26 is the area proposed for this Community Forest. Point Grondine Reserve #3 was under a land claim dispute, making any form of management planning difficult as even the extent or location of the land base was not clearly defined. For the purpose of this project at the time, Wikwemikong Community Forest was to be confined to the WUIR #26. On successful settlement of the land claim, discussions will be conducted as to the status of Point Grondine relative to the Community Forest Project. **(Note: The Land claim was settled in February 1995 and the Land transferred in April 2008 by Canada.)**

Summary of Area including all forms of Tenure as described in the Forest Management Plan<sup>1</sup>, based on 1984 Inventory.

CATEGORY OF AREA (NON PRODUCTIVE)	AREA (ha)	TOTAL
Water	297.5	
Flooded (1984)	389.3	
Open muskeg and marsh	921.4	
Treed muskeg	711.0	
Scrubland and rock	2516.8	
Cliffs	17.4	
Gravel Pits	18.6	
Roads	155.0	
Cemeteries	5.3	
Wikwemikong Village	168.4	
<b>TOTAL NON PRODUCTIVE LAND</b>	<b>5200.7</b>	<b>5200.7</b>
CATEGORY OF AREA (PRODUCTIVE)		
Agricultural Land	1660.4	
Grassland and Pasture	1459.3	
Barren and Scattered (1984)	617.1	
Productive Forest Land	32373.5	

<sup>1</sup> There were minor discrepancies between data presented in Community Profile (1992/93) and that in Forest Management Plan 1989. The former was considered official.

<b>TOTAL PRODUCTIVE LAND</b>	<b>36110.3</b>	<b>36110.1</b>
<b>TOTAL AREA (All Ownership)</b>		<b>41311.2</b>

## **MANAGEMENT STUCTURE**

### **Authority and Responsibility:**

The Wikwemikong Chief and Council (WUIR) have given the responsibility and authority of developing and implementing the Band Forest Management Plan (September, 1989) to the Wikwemikong Development Commission (WDC) and Lands & Resources Committee (LRC). WDC is a non-profit corporation, incorporated without share capital under the laws of Ontario. It operates as the Economic Development Branch of the Wikwemikong Band. Its mandate is any activity which enhances lifestyles of Wikwemikong Band Members. WDC would develop and (initially at least) manage new companies such as the Log Building Company.

The Forestry Department within WDC assumed responsibility and administration for fire fighting contracts with Ministry of Natural Resources, silvicultural training, technical forestry details of land claims, fish and wildlife concerns and other resource-based items of concern. Forestry staff also acted in an advisory capacity to other committees of the Band and for communication with other First Nations on technical forestry matters. A forestry staff member sat on the E.B.Eddy Advisory Committee (now Domtar) and Local Citizens Committee coordinated by OMNR for the Spanish and Sudbury Forest Management Plans.

Today the forestry program is under the Wikwemikong Lands and Resources Department and is managed by the Lands Director. LRC still has authority to oversee natural resources and accountable to Chief and Council and indirectly to the Band members of Wikwemikong. LRC has a Terms of Reference that was revised in October 2008.

### **Principles and Objectives:**

The goals and objectives of the band in respect to community forestry were as follows: "The Band's objective is to manage the forest resource to the optimum benefit of individual members and total Band membership, addressing the environmental (and spiritual) concerns of the Band." This main objective can be reached by:

- Managing the forest in a way that encourages long-term production of timber products to be sold or, preferably, to be manufactured and/or used on the Reserve.
- Utilizing silvicultural practices to increase the quality and quantity of timber available on the Reserve.
- Establishing suitable policy and regulations to control cutting and to ensure long-term revenue from timber harvesting activities.
- Working toward optimum development of reserve lands for a variety of uses.

The above activities would provide economic and employment opportunities for community members.

WUIR hired a Forestry Consultant to provide a) advice and b) assist the Band Forestry Coordinator in planning and implementing the Forest Management Plan and Community Forest Pilot Project activities.

**Conflict Identification and Resolution:**

The Forestry Department initialed public meetings in 1992 as part of the Community Forestry activities. The primary purposes were to: 1) introduce the development of Community Forestry to Wikwemikong members; and 2) listen to comments and concerns expressed by community members.

The agenda consisted of presenting the nine areas of concerns detailed in the Statement of Interest on development of the Wikwemikong Community Forest approved by OMNR. The agenda were as follows:

1. Land Tenure
2. Update of Forest Inventory
3. Policy and Regulations
4. Access Plan
5. Traditional Plants and Medicines
6. Communications and Education
7. Current Operations
8. Implementations of Updated Forest Management Plan
9. Market Study/Analysis
10. Other Items of Concerns

**Conclusion:**

In closing the bulk of the report was devoted to Strategy Development. Non-forestry issues affecting community forest development were detailed under land use. Issues such as identification of land tenure, the need for access development and the role of cultural and historical sites were noted. The use of forest lands for mineral and energy purposes are discussed along with the influence of each community forest development. The effect of forestry development on rural and urban lifestyles are described.

Recreational development initiatives also contribute to the lifestyles of WIKY people. The management of the forest for aesthetic purposes adjacent to land and water travel routes will enhance tourism development. Encouraging First Nations tourism to visit demonstrations of community forestry and to attend courses is a potential basis for dynamic interaction between communities.

All this can happen only if the community is fully aware of the potential benefits that may accrue from ecologically-sound development of the resource base of the Band. Programs for public awareness were proposed, many based on hands-on participation in community forestry activities. It will be the responsibility of the Chief and Council to ensure that marketing strategies are in place for deriving benefit to Wikwemikong, from the sale of products ranging from resources from the land, manufactured goods and services resulting from Management of the Community Forest.

<b>WUIR Challenges and Struggles on Community Forest Pilot Project (1991-94)</b>		
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>List of Concerns to Implement WIKY Community Forest Pilot Project</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
<b>Land Tenure:</b>	<p>Land tenure policies and practices need clarification and simplification. Issues of land holdings from Band lands must be resolved: <b>1) Location Tickets 2) Certificate of Occupation 3) Notice of Entitlement 4) Traditional Interest 5) Certificate of Possession</b></p> <p><b>Land Policy:</b> Categories of private land holdings, Dispute settlement, Rights to land holders, Rights of band members on allocated lands, delineation of private lands, on the ground (fences, cut lines) and in band records. Policy pertaining to bands rights to land allocated but no longer in use by land holder.</p> <p><b>Land use on Band Lands:</b> Delineation of community pastures, <b>ensure public access to recreational lands, Protection and buffer zones for wetlands, streams, lakes and Wilderness area, Conservation of forest lands adjacent to wetland, streams, lakes and shorelines for various other uses. It was suggested the advice of elders be sought and that area groups be asked for input resolving identification and registration of the holdings. The lands office would take an active role in dispute settlement. It was clear that the participants see a need for Regulations to ensure sound land management on the reserve whether Band lands or lands allocated for personal use.</b></p>	<p><b>A Lands Policy for Individual Land holdings and Cottage lots (ongoing). LRC recently had a Strategic Planning Session to set new Goal and Objectives.</b></p> <p><b>Land policy not strong enough with any Enforcement and Regulations in place.</b></p> <p><b>There is still a Backlog of land holding to be surveyed.</b></p>
<b>Forest Inventory Update</b>	<p><b>A consultant was hired to organize and conduct an updated forest inventory of reserve Lands under the Community Forest Project. Four community members, graduates of the Silvicultural Workers training course are doing the actual field work. They started in August 1992 and the project was completed before the end of fiscal year. General support for the update on Forest Inventory and provide annual forestry report.</b></p>	<p><b>A Forest Operating Plan are being developed both WUIR and Point Grondine Lands by a RPF Consultant.</b></p>
<b>Policy &amp; Regulations</b>	<p><b>A general feeling about implementing a Forestry By-law to ensure sound use of Community Forests Lands and to protect the Communities interests. Concerns were expressed as to the rights of the band to establish by-laws to ensure sound management under the Indian Act. A question was raised on the validity of Band Council Motions by Chief and Council under the Indian Act. Forest Policy: Concerns for future on cut-overs and ensuring continuing productively of forest lands for the benefit of community members. Clarification of policy, on Band dues, products from allocated lands, from band lands, products from personal use, for commercial use, for off reserve sales. Polices for allowable levels of harvesting, scaling of harvested wood purchase of crown dues; for purposes of recording harvest to compare with allowable harvest. Support for sound forest management on band lands. Support for sound forest land management activities on privately held lands.</b></p> <p><b>Removal of Natural resources under the Section 93 of the Indian Act</b></p>	<p><b>No Enforcement and regulations in place Natural Resources. Ongoing issue today.</b></p>

	<p><b>Private Land Holding:</b> The needs of Band members to earn a living must be recognized. Regulations must respect the rights of private land-owners and protect private woodlot and land holdings. Enforcement of sound forest management, even on private holdings.</p> <p><b>Band Land Management:</b> Enforcement of Band policies. (Midnight transport of wood was by the Band Scaler. Question of definition of “own use” was raised, also noted under Land Tenure.</p> <p><b>Timber Regulations:</b> permit limits, especially for off-reserve sales. Rights to band members to salvage cut wood. Separate accounting for timber dues. Use timber dues for Forestry projects. Under the Forest Management Plan, time was a concern (note: management plan based on regeneration of harvested areas, the year following harvest).</p>	
Access Plan	<p>The major concern appeared to be limitations imposed, preventing access by community members. Policy does not appear to be clear on Rights of private land holders vs. Rights of community members to access Band lands. A need was expressed in WIKY for a mapped access plan, with road access guaranteed to all band members.</p> <p><b>Planning:</b> Concern was expressed for right of way and reserves around wetlands, shorelines, streams, road allowances. Need to develop more comprehensive road systems and to maintain them. Funding for new constructions? Accounting for construction, maintenance costs?</p> <p><b>Road Use:</b> Limitations to vehicle traffic (i.e. Skidders especially related to the time of year. Rights of Band members to use cur out trail by others for harvest purposes? Access to community pasture must be assured. And gates kept closed due to cattle.</p> <p><b>Reporting /recording of road conditions</b></p>	Ongoing issue
Traditional Plants/Medicines	<p>The major concern expressed under this section was protection of natural and culturally important sites. One of special interest in WUIR habitat for Eagle nesting sites. It was suggested that the boundary of the wilderness reserve be extended to the dolomite mining boundary as this would protect known nesting areas.</p> <p><b>Natural areas:</b> Identification and protection of sites growing medicinal and traditional plants. Protection of habitat, i.e. spawning streams, where road construction occurs.</p> <p><b>Protection of shoreline values (i.e. 500feet buffer zones. Need to ensure future forest renewal cover on lands currently being cut. Education: concern or continuity in traditional knowledge from generation to generation.</b></p>	Lands and Resources is responsible to monitor Special Interests. Species At Risk Coordinator has been hired. Data collected is in GIS.
Communications and Education	<p>A general feeling of concern was expressed for the current state of management of WIKY forests, and the importance of public awareness. More meetings were requested on a annual bases.</p> <p><b>Public Education:</b> School programs were encouraged (i.e. presentations, courses and projects.</p>	Ongoing task by the Lands and Resources Department.

<p><b>Current Operations</b></p>	<p>A major issue appears to be the reforestation of abandoned farmlands. Should open lands be left alone or planted? Ensuring future forest on lands currently being cut was seen as very important.  <b>Employment: Silvicultural work/seasonal employment</b>  <b>Private wood lots: development of future fuel supplies and improvement in private woodlot management.</b></p>	<p><b>Plans to do Forest Renewal in Wikwemikong this year, 2009.</b></p>
<p><b>Implementation of updated Forest Management Plan</b></p>	<p>There was no response, positive or negative to implement the Updated Forest Management Plan</p>	<p>An R.P.F. has been hired to develop a Operating Plan for both land bases.</p>
<p><b>Market Study/Analysis</b></p>	<p>Discussion appears to have been centered on harvesting rather than marketing. Band members were seeking access to crown land to cut products for existing markets, (i.e. Employment opportunities).  <b>Improved Marketing: The Band needs clearer understanding of terminology. There needs to be alternative markets (i.e. markets for finished wood products. It was essential to determine competitive pricing for products from a range of markets.</b></p>	<p>Band members find their own Market for saw logs. There is a local buyer in the community including off-reserve purchase.</p>
<p><b>Other:</b></p>	<p>The longest list of topics at each meeting was classed as other. There appears to have been a great deal of interest and discussion. Many topics were extensions of discussions around the previous nine subjects, but others are very much relevant to alternatives in management activities.  <b>Opposition to payment of Band dues.</b>  <b>Concern for other natural resources exploitation, topsoil, gravel.</b>  <b>Firewood situation, difficult to find firewood known on the reserve.</b>  <b>Concern for wetlands habitats, beaver dams, cleaning up stream debris.</b>  <b>Concern for wildlife population, need for allowable hunt level and management for an enhanced habitat.</b>  <b>Policy regarding development on islands around Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve.</b>  <b>Maple syrup production, Use of Wilderness Area.</b>  <b>Priorities in Harvest/Regeneration, Building for future is top priority, Harvest current stands to get rid of poor quality wood and place strong control future stands.</b>  <b>Need for Forest Rangers</b></p>	<p>On-going issues.</p>