

**Aboriginal Sport and Recreation -
Ready to Learn and Lend**

Proceedings

October 2005



Recreation for Life

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"A province, and communities within, that embrace and proactively use recreation and parks as essential means for enhancing individual well-being and community vitality, economic sustainability and natural resource protection and conservation."

Our mission...

ARPA strives to build healthy citizens, their communities and their environments throughout Alberta.

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Aboriginal Sport and Recreation - Ready to Learn and Lend

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Background

The National Parks and Recreation Conference and Trade Show along with four affiliated national symposia were held in Edmonton in October 2005. As part of that event, a series of workshops were offered on October 12th, the day before the conference/symposia officially began. One of the national symposia was entitled the "True Sport in the Community 2005 National Symposium". This symposium offered a workshop focusing on sport and recreation in Aboriginal communities. Facilitators for this workshop included Dr. Vicky Paraschak from the University of Windsor, Dr. Janice Forsyth from the University of Manitoba and Dr. Audrey Giles from the University of Ottawa. Hugh Hoyles (True Sport in the Community Symposium Chair) and Chris Szabo (Government of Alberta, Community Development) were also actively involved in planning the workshop format. Presentations on various community successes/challenges were provided by Marsha Good Eagle (Siksika First Nations), Nadine Bouvette (Tallcree First Nations) and Randy Metchewais (Cold Lake First Nations). Darcy Lindberg and Rachel Rose (Alberta Future Leaders Program) did a presentation on their program as well.

To prepare for this workshop, a survey was created based on the ideas in the Maskwachees Declaration (see Appendix A for a copy of the Declaration and an explanation of how it was created) which was distributed to some Aboriginal community members familiar with sport and recreation in Alberta and the NWT. Of 80 surveys distributed, 31 surveys were returned – see Appendix B for a survey copy. Respondents were asked to review the various strengths, challenges and rationales included in the 2000 Maskwachees Declaration, and to rate the relevance of these statements to physical activity (broadly understood) in their community. The results of those surveys are included in Appendix B. These results demonstrated that there was a range of perspectives on the relevance of these statements from the viewpoint of individuals working in Aboriginal communities.

Acknowledgements

The 'Aboriginal Sport and Recreation' workshop organizing committee is particularly pleased that the partnership of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), ARPA and True Sport enabled it to put together this important one-day workshop. The committee also would like to thank the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta who sponsored the workshop and Alberta Community Development who provided administrative resources in the initial planning stages.

Delegates

Approximately 50 delegates attended the *Aboriginal Sport and Recreation: Ready to Learn and Lend Workshop*. Participants came primarily from Alberta, but also included representatives from the NWT, Nunavut, Saskatchewan and Ontario. Most of the delegates had worked in Aboriginal communities, but a few were from provincial or national organizations that had an interest in providing sport/recreation services to Aboriginal communities. Very few of these delegates had filled out the surveys, and few of them knew about the existence of the Maskwachees Declaration.

Analysis of Maskwachees Declaration

We began the workshop by breaking into four smaller groups to examine statements in the Maskwachees Declaration related to strengths (one group), challenges (two groups) and rationales (one group) in light of delegate experiences in Aboriginal communities. Feedback from each group was then summarized for all delegates.

Strengths Section

We looked at the Maskwachees Declaration strengths statements as they were written in the survey. Due to limited time and a great discussion, we were only able to examine the first three (of six) statements and decide if/how they could be considered a “strength”. Feedback from the group is summarized below.

Title of Maskwachees Declaration

- a number of delegates at the table felt that the title of the document was not inclusive because it did not refer to all Aboriginal peoples in Canada (First Nations, Metis and Inuit). The facilitator clarified that declarations are often named after the place where they were created – which is why this Declaration is named “Maskwachees”. However, delegates still felt that a more welcoming and inclusive term should be used for a framework that supposedly spoke to the perspective of Aboriginal peoples across Canada. The term “Indigenous” was suggested as an inclusive term. (The term “Aboriginal” might work best in the area of sport, since that is the term used by the national Aboriginal Sport Circle, which addresses the sporting needs of First Nations, Metis and Inuit in Canada, and is also the name used in the recent Sport Canada Policy on Aboriginal Peoples’ Participation in Sport)

1) Strength: A willingness to respect partners and to work together with a readiness to learn and lend.

- We agreed that “partnerships” are a strength in Aboriginal communities when providing for sport and recreation, both among various Indigenous groups, and with individuals/groups from the mainstream. Partnerships need to be a two-way street – Aboriginal communities can get resources, for example, and give back appreciation/acknowledgement/recognition. Sometimes Aboriginal communities have to actively go after a partnership initially. We agreed that creating and maintaining partnerships are like creating and maintaining a good personal relationship.
- We discussed what the phrase “learn and lend” might mean, and decided that it should just be called “sharing”. To make this a strength, Aboriginal communities need to be sharing ideas, resources, knowledge and success stories.

2) Strength: A commitment by the Federal-Provincial/Territorial governments to reduce physical inactivity among Canadians by 10% by 2010.

- The facilitator first clarified that this statement was inaccurate – it should read that the goal was to increase physical activity by 10% by 2010. Delegates felt that this commitment was not a strength at this time. Many didn’t know about this goal, and felt that “communication” needs to be improved so that they were aware of it. As well, it was noted that the “top down” approach by government (when creating this goal) is unacceptable and happens too often. They said that someone should first come and talk to Aboriginal communities and discuss this as a possible goal before creating it. As well, government representatives need to be talking to the community about this goal and what should be done to meet it.
- In order for this to become a strength, several questions need to be answered. How will the government measure the levels of physical activity? Delegates felt that to be effective, government needs to help Aboriginal communities document their current involvement level in physical activity, so that they can know how to increase it by 10%. Then they have to help communities have the means (e.g., facilities, funding) to be able to increase physical activity. Without doing this, they felt that the government was setting up people to fail in trying to reach this goal. They also felt that realistic timelines need to be used when trying to work towards this goal. The delegates liked the idea of trying to increase physical activity levels, but felt these suggestions must be addressed before they could view this “commitment to increase physical activity” as a strength.

3) **Strength: A growing number of effective programs, policies and practices.**

- The delegates felt that this statement could be seen as a strength if communities had the resources needed to achieve effectiveness, such as adequate facilities, money and people to run programs.
- Delegates discussed the importance of policy, because it provides consistency to your actions, but they also noted that policies are political. You need to have the support of Council for policies, and when Council members change (e.g., elections), the support of Council for policies can also change. Aboriginal communities are often very small and everyone is related (unlike non-Aboriginal communities) and so the decisions you make are going to reflect on you and your family, which means you have to develop a really thick skin.
- You need to get “buy in” from the majority of the people who will be affected by the policy. This will help you gain credibility for the policy, which is very important if you want it to be successful. Developing procedures for your programs also helps sport and recreation staff members know what to do.
- To provide a safe environment for sport and recreation you need to have your staff get appropriate certification, which will give your employees credibility. You can also consider getting incorporated, or being granted charitable status, because these steps will help you be more accountable (since incorporation requires you to provide information each year) and to qualify for different types of funding (as a charitable organization).
- Communication is needed to help Aboriginal communities know how to incorporate or get charitable status. Provincial Aboriginal sport bodies (such as the Indigenous Sport Council in Alberta) would be ideal organizations to do this. They need to be provided with more staff and resources first, but could, with extra resources, do things like communicate/share the strengths we are discussing, provide a data base of people working in sport and recreation in Aboriginal communities (and keep that list up to date), provide a monthly newsletter with information such as what’s happening in the province and grants that are available, create and maintain an updated web site, and provide advocacy by keeping pressure on governments to help out Aboriginal communities in sport and recreation.

Challenges Section

Delegates working on the “challenges” section were arranged into two groups because of the large number of points to discuss. Each of the delegates shared their ideas and stories about the challenges that Aboriginal peoples still face in trying to implement their vision for sport and recreation at the community level. Of the thirteen points identified in the Maskwachees Declaration, eleven were covered in detail. The feedback shows that many of the challenges identified in the Maskwachees Declaration still hold true, but that these challenges differ from community to community. Collectively, however, the delegates identified the need to do the following on a broad-based level:

1) **Challenge: the fact that Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population**

- Build and support more community leaders
- Develop new programs
- Construct multi-use facilities that can be utilized by the whole community
- Find and share creative ways to access transportation for practices and tournaments
- Encourage reallocation of resources (i.e., too much emphasis on hockey)

2) **Challenge: the need to support, invite, integrate and use the knowledge of Elders in program design and delivery**

- Respect the expertise of Elders in the development and implementation of programs
- Provide honorariums to Elders in honour of their expertise (and have this be a legitimate part of the budget)
- Recognize and support the cultural basis to sport (it is not always about winning, as there is a need to get together and share our different sporting traditions)

3) **Challenge: the lack of priority in allocating adequate financial and human resources for recreation and sport**

- Encourage decision-makers like Band Councils to keep sport and recreation as a priority
- Instill a deep respect for the benefits of sport and recreation participation

4) Challenge: the complexity of the infrastructure independent rather than interdependent

- The delegates recognized the need to make the wording more accessible and suggested the following as an alternative: “The complexity of working together”. As a challenge, this means that there is a need to do the following:
 - i) Get access or increase access to schools and recreation facilities
 - ii) Put political differences aside to work with supportive organizations

5) Challenge: the need to enhance communication and accountability between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sport and recreation organizations and governments

- Define what “accountability” means to each organization involved in programming
- Ensure community participation in developing accountability measures

6) Challenge: the need for quality community based programs and services and the creation and renewal of sport and recreation facilities

- No response due to live debates on the first five points!

7) Challenge: a learned attitude of helplessness and "who cares?" held by many

- Nurture respect for self and others
- Foster a sense of self-determination to increase capacity development at the community level; this will help reduce reliance on outside agencies and government funding

8) Challenge: the lack of clear initiatives for capacity building at the community level

- Teach community people how to plan for capacity building; people don't know how to plan for the future
- Make “following-up” with community members a valued priority
- Invest in people through education (i.e., proposal development and grant writing are needed skills in many communities) versus “throwing money” into projects that are not sustainable

9) Challenge: the need for more leaders and positive role models

- Look inside the community for leaders and role models; this will make visible all of the good things that community members are already doing
- Encourage “giving back” to the community without always relying on financial incentives to promote this behaviour
- Recognize all of the good things that volunteers are doing for the community more often and in public ways

10) Challenge: the need to recognize success and celebrate participation

- Recognize the contributions of volunteers as “success stories”
- Publicly celebrate individual/community “successes” more often

11) Challenge: the need to ensure quality physical education in schools

- Encourage Aboriginal students to become physical education teachers
- Revise the physical education curriculum so that it includes traditional Aboriginal sports and games
- Encourage physical education teachers to work more closely with community recreation leaders

12) Challenge: the need to ensure recreation and sport are positive experiences

- Educate parents and caregivers about how to make sport and recreation more positive for their children and young people
- De-emphasize “winning” in sport

13) Challenge: the need to create, pursue and implement system-wide change that will result in more flexible, creative, and responsive policies and practices

- No response due to lively debate on the previous six points!

Rationales Section

This breakout group was tasked with examining the rationales section of the Declaration. The group went through each of the Declaration's listed rationales, evaluated whether or not each rationale was still valid, and if a rationale was found to be lacking in clarity, validity, or applicability, it was then reworked into something that better reflected the group's views. In particular, it was important to the group that they make the Declaration's language more concise and accessible.

1) Offer preventive strategies that are much more powerful and cost effective than reactive treatment strategies

- the group felt that this rationale needed to be broader in scope
- Changed to: Offer proactive strategies that include prevention, treatment and new initiatives that are more powerful and cost effective than reactive strategies

2) Provide personal development for success in life: for example, mutual respect for each other, honesty, teamwork, healthy work ethic, dealing with conflict, fair play, self-esteem, pride and confidence

- the group felt this rationale was too long
- Changed to: Provide opportunities for personal development

3) Provide inclusive opportunities for all ages and cultures to interact and to develop respect for each other

- the group felt that "inclusive" was vague
- Changed to: Provide opportunities for all ages, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, and abilities

4) Provide inclusive opportunities for leadership development and role modeling

- the group noted that role modeling is not always positive
- Changed to: Provide positive opportunity for leadership development and role modeling

5) Provide opportunities for positive relationships and partnership building

- this rationale was seen as encompassing two very different points that needed to be separated
- Changed to two rationales:
 - i) Provide opportunities for positive relationships (e.g., family, peers, community, etc.)
 - ii) Provide opportunities for partnership building

6) Increase activity levels across the life span to improve quality of life, enhance mental health, and help reduce the incidence of osteoporosis, some types of cancer, and conditions such as heart disease, type II diabetes and obesity

- the group felt that this was too wordy and also missed out on other important diseases/health risks
- Changed to: Increase activity levels across the life span to improve quality of life, and to enhance physical, mental, emotional/social, and spiritual health

7) Provide opportunities for developing a spiritual foundation of the individual, incorporating traditional values

- the group questioned whether it was really a recreation practitioner's role or responsibility to develop spiritual foundations
- Changed to: Provide opportunities for development of a holistic foundation for the individual, incorporating traditional practices

8) Provide opportunities for the family unit, including parents, to be involved in the development of children, youth and communities

- the group felt that it was important to recognize that many people did not have a family unit or did not feel as though they were a part of one
- Changed to: This rationale was omitted, as it was felt that it was reflected in the above rationales

9) Two additional rationales were identified as being missing from the above list:

- Volunteer development
 - i) the group viewed volunteer development as being a crucial rationale for sport and recreation
- The group was unable to reach consensus on how this final rationale would be worded, but felt that it was important to note that sport and recreation are often used to provide positive experiences that may be able to counterbalance negative influences in people's lives.

Overall Comments on the Maskwachees Declaration

After groups presented their findings on the strengths, challenges and rationales, delegates discussed as a group how they might use the Maskwachees Declaration now that they are more familiar with it. Delegates made several suggestions:

- The format used in the Declaration is helpful, but the points and the language used in it need to be specifically geared to each Aboriginal community as they identify their strengths, challenges and rationales.
- The delegates felt that the ideas in this document continue to change over time, and thus the process needs to be repeated. They suggested that each province and territory hold a workshop, involving all Aboriginal groups in their jurisdiction, to create a framework of strengths, challenges and rationales specific to their situation. This document would represent a provincial/territorial wide understanding, and then community representatives would go home and create a comparable document specific to their community. If the four goals of the Canadian Sport Policy (enhanced participation, excellence, capacity and interaction) were incorporated into these provincial/territorial documents and it was then sent to the provincial/territorial governments, this approach would enable government employees to request funds for Aboriginal communities specific to the four Canadian Sport Policy goals (this is a key way that governments are getting funded right now). This would make the provincial/territorial Declarations accessible, meaningful and usable.
- Delegates also felt that communication was a really important point being made by the workshop groups. There should be a central place for the communication of information on sport and recreation that is helpful to Aboriginal communities. This would allow for things like the dissemination of success stories happening in Aboriginal communities, which will help other communities to benefit from these successes and to be inspired by them. There is a mechanism to do this at Sport Canada right now. They have hired a consultant to work with sport organizations to develop web sites to serve as information hubs for their sport/region etc., so Sport Canada could develop a web site that would service all provincial/territorial Aboriginal sport bodies the same way.

Community Presentations: "Promising Practices"

Through the survey process, three individuals identified themselves as being interested in sharing their communities' stories of promising practices in the sport and recreation field. As we had planned to take a strengths perspective to the symposium, it was felt that it would be important to share success stories and to celebrate the promising sport and recreation practices found within Aboriginal communities.

Marsha Good Eagle

Recreation Program Coordinator for Siksika First Nations Parks and Recreation

The Siksika First Nation is located one hour's drive east of the City of Calgary, Alberta, and 3 kilometres south of the trans-Canada Highway #1.

Siksika's Parks and Recreation employs six staff members: Recreation Director, Recreation Program Coordinator, four community workers, and a minor hockey coordinator. Some of the recreation facilities found on the reserve include: one gymnasium, one NHL-sized arena, one smaller arena, a fitness room, three community centres, a four-plex baseball complex, eight playgrounds, a skateboard park, and a golf driving range.

Parks and Recreation's budget is approximately \$900,000, and these funds are used to develop programs to meet the needs of children, youth, adults, Elders, and individuals with disabilities. Programs fall within seven areas: arts and crafts; family; certification; sport; fitness and wellness; outdoor pursuits; and field trips. In the near future, Parks and Recreation looks to add programming in the area of home décor and gardens.

Spring, summer, fall, and winter programs vary, offering community members a variety of sport and recreation opportunities. Notably, these programs are offered in a variety of locations throughout the community, which allows residents who live in areas with smaller populations to have access to programming. Some of the fall programs include: soccer leagues, youth hand games league, Tae Kwon Do, floor hockey, hockey, learn to skate, beading, power of powwow, a Fit Start program that focuses on nutrition and an exercise program, and a monthly special event (e.g., a trip to the Calgary Zoo). Catchy program names were found to be very effective in attracting youth participants. Fees range from \$10-25, an amount that is thought to be affordable for most community members, and flexible payment programs are available if needed.

Four program guides – one for each season – and an additional Christmas brochure are used to advertise available programming. The communication and marketing strategy also includes two large road signs that are situated on the main traffic route into the community, and posters are displayed throughout the community. Questionnaires are used to gain community members' input and feedback into programming, while quarterly newsletters will soon be launched in an effort to communicate information pertaining to Parks and Recreation.

Partnerships have been very important for Parks and Recreation. Alberta's Future Leaders Program and local health services have proved to be particularly strong partners. Perceived benefits were seen as including the sharing of financial resources, equipment, supplies, and information.

Marsha and her team of staff have been very successful in restructuring existing programs and offering new, innovative programs; the response from the community has been very positive. While Marsha has a volunteer base upon which she can count, she finds that it is always the same people who volunteer, and she believes that a stronger volunteer base would be beneficial for Parks and Recreation. In the future, she hopes to offer an annual banquet in order to facilitate volunteer recognition.

Nadine Bouvette

Tallcree Youth Director

Nadine Bouvette, a Métis woman who grew up outside of Red Deer, is the Tallcree Youth Director. Tallcree is located approximately 700km north of Edmonton. Tallcree is comprised of four communities: North Tallcree, South Tallcree, Fort Vermilion, and Beaver Ranch. The closest community with full services range from 76km to 162km away. North Tallcree is the hub community with the Band Office, a Health Centre, Education Office & Elementary School. South Tallcree has a Health Centre and Elementary School as well. There are approximately 500 people living on-reserve, with about half being under the age of 30.

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Community Presentations: "Promising Practices"

The Youth Department was established in 2003. Tallcree had previously developed relations with the Alberta Future Leaders organization from 1998-2000, and then again in 2003. Through this program, post-secondary students come into Aboriginal communities to provide a summer sport & recreation program for the youth. In August of 2003, a proposal was developed that stated the need for a full-time recreation (now youth) department. This proposal was approved by Chief and Council, and Nadine was asked to develop the department.

The Tallcree Youth Department has several basic elements:

- Increased Cultural Awareness/Appreciation
- Leadership Enhancement/Healthy Living
- Education Enhancement
- Sport & Recreation Development

Cultural Enhancement includes the following programs:

- Summer Youth Program
- Cultural Camp
- Dene Games Training
- Tallcree First Nation Pow Wow Dance Group
- Educational Performances
- Cree Classes & Traditional teachings incorporated in school system
- Celebration of Youth
- Handgames Tournaments
- Annual Traditional Winter Carnival
- Annual Treaty Days Celebration

Leadership Enhancement/Healthy Living includes the following programs:

- Aboriginal Provincial Leadership Retreat, which utilizes Future Leaders for future community programs
- Personal & Team Development Retreat
- Healthy Kids Club
- Self-esteem Program
- Recognizing Community Role Models
- Alberta Role Models Program (a youth mentoring program)
- Youth representation at all areas that effect the youth
- Youth Employment
- Youth Workers
- Job Shadowing

In the future, Nadine would like to see the following programs implemented under Leadership Enhancement/Healthy Living

- Life Skills Program-Aboriginal Focus
- Education Enhancement
- Developing strong and positive relations with all key stakeholders: Aboriginal Headstart, DayCare, Schools & Education Department & Parents
- Incentive Programs
- Sports Program
- Canada Exchange Field Trip
- Career Development
- Tallcree Career & Hiring Fair
- Having Youth Participate in Youth Conferences

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Community Presentations: "Promising Practices"

Sport & Recreation Development in Tallcree currently includes these activities:

Jr. High Sports Program

- Volleyball, Basketball, Badminton and Track & Field
- Having home games
- Hosting Divisional Tournaments

Physical Education Program

- Canoeing, Football, X-Country Skiing, Canada Fitness Test, Traditional Dancing, Dene Games, Volleyball, Basketball, Badminton, Soccer, Softball, Track & Field, Floor Hockey & Skating
- Representation in Major Sporting Events
- Arctic Winter Games
- North American Indigenous Games

Sports Clinics/Camps

- Mad Skillz Basketball Clinic
- Club Badminton Program
- Red Deer College Volleyball Camp

Coaching Clinics

- Basketball Alberta Coaching Technical Level 1
- Run, Jump, Throw Clinic
- Dene & Inuit Training

Community Recreation Program

- Nightly Gym Drop-in
- Volleyball & Floor Hockey
- Softball league
- Weekly Women's Night

Sport & Recreation Equipment Enhancement is another area that Nadine would like to see developed. In particular, she would like to see the following made available:

- Fully Equipped Weight and Cardio Facility
- Youth Center Equipment
- Canoes
- Complete new sporting equipment for physical education program

Nadine believes that there are several factors that can be used to explain her program's success, and she believes that these are the factors that other organizations need to focus on to have similar success:

1) Youth Empowerment

- Keep youth involved throughout the entire process
- Ask them what they think & what they want

2) Gain support from key stakeholders

- Chief & Council
- Education Department
- Health Department
- Social Services Department
- Parents
- Elders

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Community Presentations: "Promising Practices"

3) Formulate Partnerships

- Program Managers within the First Nation
- Nearby First Nation communities and other surrounding communities that have youth or recreation departments
- Alberta Future Leaders Program
- Alberta Community Development: ASRPWF
- Treaty 8: Children's Agenda: Tallcree First Nation was chosen as a "Best Practice Site" by Treaty 8 Children's Agenda for their youth programming. Together Tallcree and 2 other best practice sites (Fort McKay & Woodland) are working with Children's Agenda to better address the needs of Treaty 8 Children. Specifically the goal of Children's Agenda is to create better programs and services for children at the community level by using community input and feedback

Several issues were identified as challenges that need to be addressed:

- Large distances between available services
- Shortage of staffing
- Limited number of facilities & resources
- Parental involvement
- funding opportunities

Nadine believes that having someone with strong proposal writing skills is an essential aspect of any successful program. Many funding opportunities are available for First Nation communities, youth, non-profit societies, and charities. As a non-profit society, the Tallcree Youth Enhancement Club was able to access funding through many avenues, including bingos, Brighter Futures, HIV, FASD, Injury Prevention, NNADAP, and HRDC

The following is a summary developed by the Tallcree Youth Department relating to funding opportunities:

Alberta Sports Parks Recreation & Wildlife Foundation www.cd.gov.ab.ca

- Development Initiatives Program
- Coaching Development Initiatives Program
- Sport Participation Initiatives Program
- Youth Initiative Limited Grant Program
- Quarterly Grant Program

Non-Profit Society Information

- Alberta Government Corporate Registry Forms (http://www3.gov.ab.ca/gs/information/publications/reg_forms)

Alberta Gaming & Liquor Commission

- <http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca>

Bingo, Sports Drafts, Raffles, Casino, Pull Tickets, License Applications: Alberta Lottery Fund

- http://www.albertalotteryfund.ca/grants/community_initiatives.asp

Other

- Crime Prevention Grant Application
- ADDAC
- Community Prevention Project Funding
- Student Temporary Employment Program www3.gov.ab.ca/hr/step/guidelines
- YMCA Youth Exchange <http://www.exchanges.gc.ca/TwoWayExchanges>
- On the Move, Aboriginal Girls in Sport, <http://www.caaws.ca/onthemove>
- InMotion, Go Girl! <http://www.inmotionnetwork.org>

Randy Metchewais

The Cold Lake First Nation is located 300 kilometres northeast of Edmonton, Alberta, near the Town of Cold Lake and straddles the Alberta/Saskatchewan border.

Randy, a coach/mentor/athlete, is a resident of Cold Lake First Nations (CLFN) and is the Treaty 6 representative on the Indigenous Sport Council of Alberta. His talk outlined various attempts to create ongoing, quality recreation programming for CLFN since the 1980s. He believes that it is important to have sport and recreation in communities, as these activities can help to create a balanced person. He further feels that a balanced person is a healthier person, and that such a person will be better able to pursue goals, such as education, while such a person will also be better equipped to stay away from drugs and alcohol.

In the late 1990s, Randy and a few other CLFN members came together to form the CLFN Recreation Society. This group was made up mostly of people who had children involved in sport and recreation programs, but who themselves had little experience in the sport and recreation system. Gaining society status was an important step for this group, as it allowed them to gain credibility and access to funding from oil and gas companies. Nevertheless, the process of becoming a society was a difficult one. For example, the Recreation Society had four drafts of its terms of reference before coming to a final draft. Randy was disappointed to note that very few former athletes were involved in the Recreation Society, and he felt that these individuals were falling short of their responsibility to give back to the sport and recreation community. He stated that he felt that it was "almost a sin to keep those skills inside" and not share them with the youth.

The Recreation Society dissolved in 2002. One of the major contributing factors to the dissolution of the group was volunteer burnout. One of the Society's major goals was to have one recreation event per month throughout the year. This taxing schedule resulted in volunteering burnout. As Randy put it, "it took a toll on people." Poor volunteerism in general, lost sources of funding, and a young athlete's death were also factors in the Society's dissolution. In the end, recreation programs were farmed out to the health centre and the wellness centre, while the equipment that was generated over the years was given away.

Randy believes that recreation is one of the most thankless jobs out there, that you very rarely get that pat on the back. He advised recreation leaders to "grow a thick skin, let stuff roll off your back." Such an approach will help recreation leaders to deal with frustrations that include problems with accessing the school gymnasium. Another major barrier that Randy identified concerned turnover in Band Council members. Frequent leadership changes have meant that recreation programmers have to go back to Council members to "sell" programs and goals. Randy feels that recreation needs to continue regardless of elections, and that such programs need to be seen as a pillar of the community "not a rinky-dink have fun out there sort of thing." The pattern of inconsistent recreation at CLFN "hasn't been fun to look at and is almost powerless to stop."

In terms of what the future holds, Randy would like to see CLFN regain a fully functioning recreation board and society, and he would like to see a recreation department that has staff. Input from parents, youth, and athletes are all seen as vital, as are funding agreements with oil and gas companies. A casino will soon be built on Band land, and it is hoped that it will generate revenue that can be used in social programs, including recreation.

Randy believes that the mainstream sport system is "culturally insensitive," and that any Indigenous athlete's success is "in spite of the system, not because of it." He believes that there needs to be culturally sensitive sport available to Inuit, Métis, and First Nations peoples, as there are talented athletes out there. However, greater funding and a larger staff at the Indigenous Sport Council of Alberta are perceived as being two barriers that are in the way of the Indigenous sport system being able to compete with the mainstream sport system. Randy thinks that "conferences like these are important to spread the message, but we need more." Furthermore, while Randy stated that "money is not the solution," he also believes that "it sure would help!"

Finally, Randy noted that involvement in sport and recreation can help to open doors by showing what First Nations peoples can do: "We are just as capable as anybody else to do anything that we want to do for our youngsters."

Strengths, Challenges and Potential Solutions

Once the community “promising practices” were presented, the entire group then reflected on the strengths raised through their presentations, potential barriers that might exist if they were to try and implement these strengths in their communities, and potential solutions to these challenges. The following information was provided:

Strengths

- creativity in their approaches
- their flexibility when dealing with situations and people
- their ability to involve youth and give them a sense of ownership
- their ability to get leadership buy-in
- their ability to get human resources needed
- their ability to sell what they believe in by living those values
- their drive and tenacity
- their ability to get needed funding
- their passion
- their community's pride in their culture and tradition
- their resilience
- their effective use of publicity, for example through using brochures and signs in public, highly traveled places in the community

Challenges

- cultural insensitivity in the mainstream sport system (e.g., Randy's example on sweetgrass burning)
- lack of/loss of necessary funding
- poor communication between the leadership and the grassroots
- lack of volunteers, and volunteer tiredness/burnout
- costly transportation
- lack of participation and especially lack of parental involvement
- problems arising from addiction to drugs and alcohol
- an emphasis in the community on making money through jobs rather than volunteering
- a lack of skill in proposal writing
- a lack of skills such as coaching or refereeing in the community
- a turnover in the population as people skilled in recreation leave
- a change in leadership at the community level that leads to a different view of recreation/sport
- a lack of community support
- lack of valuing sport and recreation in the community
- increasing costs for gas, facilities (lights) etc.
- lack of acceptance for change (e.g., getting more women leaders)
- lack of sustainability for facilities, or lack of access to facilities like the school gym – there is too much “red tape”, and ownership of facilities is too territorial
- there are competing ideas about how to use gym space
- poor communication between communities
- vandalism in recreation/sport facilities
- limited view of what “sport and rec” is/can be
- the politics involved when you're a small community
- when you don't fit the government's funding formulas
- athletes giving in to peer pressure/bullying
- ignorance – people do not listen and they ignore what you say

Potential Solutions

- provide cultural sensitivity training via Aboriginal Coach Manual, i.e., offer Manual through NCCP, physical education curricula in high schools, and university training of physical education teachers

Aboriginal Sport and Recreation - Ready to Learn and Lend

Strengths, Challenges and Potential Solutions

- focus on youth leadership development (after all, they comprise a large portion of the Aboriginal population in Canada) and be willing to learn from them
- create a central place where people can go for information within a region and nationally (i.e., to access information about conferences, workshops, best practices, grants, etc.)
- instill in coaches the idea that coaching is a lifelong learning process
- foster and support lobby groups at the community and regional level
- develop catchy slogans and utilize them as working principles, i.e., “Volunteer more, pay less” to help decrease costs for programming
- document everything!
- mentor young people in sport and recreation
- teach grant writing and proposal writing skills

The delegates talked about the need for a coaching manual which addresses issues specific to Aboriginal peoples (i.e., cultural sensitivity training for non-Aboriginal coaches). A facilitator explained that the Aboriginal Sport Circle (ASC) has created a manual similar to what the delegates were suggesting by way of the Aboriginal Coach Manual (ACM). The majority of delegates did not know about the ACM and expressed an interest in accessing this training. It was explained that interested individuals or groups must first contact their representative Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Sport Body (P/TASB) to register their interest in the program. The P/TASB would then submit a proposal for funding to the ASC, whereupon a limited number of proposals would be identified and funded. Many of the Aboriginal delegates expressed their frustration about the bureaucracy involved in accessing the ACM, while non-Aboriginal delegates expressed their frustration with the ACM being available primarily to Aboriginal peoples, arguing that the lessons to be learned from the ACM are very much needed within the mainstream sport system (i.e., in physical education classes, varsity coaching, and recreation leadership training). Keeping in mind these frustrations, it was clear that all of the delegates, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, saw tremendous value in the ACM and urged the ASC to consider alternate ways to make the ACM more accessible.

Presentation on Alberta's Future Leaders Program

~Darcy Lindberg and Rachel Rose

The co-presenters noted that many of the attendees had been, at some point, associated or affiliated with the AFL.

The AFL started in 1996, mainly out of two concerns: lack of Aboriginal representation in sport at the national, provincial, municipal levels; and the high level of incarceration amongst Aboriginal peoples. The AFL enters into a 3 year commitment with communities that have a demonstrated capacity and desire to be part of the Program. After the three year period of time, it is expected that communities will have developed the capacity to continue offering quality sport and recreation programs. In particular, it is hoped that the future leaders – local youth who have undergone an extensive mentoring program through the AFL – will continue to be involved in sport and recreation.

Youth workers, who are typically university students, are recruited, trained, and hired to work in Aboriginal communities for 4 months. During their time in the communities, the Youth Workers work to develop a wide range of programs, while also engaging in a mentoring relationship with a future leader. The programming varies widely because the Youth Workers work under the direction of the community, developing and assisting with programs that are meant to meet each community's unique needs. Examples of programs include, but are not limited to: sport camps and clinics, drop-in programs, operating youth centres, arts programs, camping trips, recreational and cultural activities

One of the key focuses of the program is to build on existing relationships; the AFL does not want to have a negative impact on existing programs. Instead, it looks to partner with existing programs in an effort to provide programming that is of the highest possible quality, while also meeting community-identified needs.

Each community has a budget of \$25,200. One third of this amount comes from the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks, and Wildlife Foundation, another third comes from the community, while a corporate sponsor provides the final third. The budget is allocated towards the Youth Workers' salaries (2/3 of the budget) and towards programming (1/3).

All future leaders from communities that are currently involved with the AFL, along with future leaders from alumni communities, are invited to attend a leadership retreat in July. Another retreat is also conducted in the fall, as this provides the future leaders with opportunities to follow-up on skills that they developed over the summer.

How Can You Use this in Your Community?

Symposium participants were asked to provide answers to the following question: How can you use this in your community? Responses included:

- bridge gap between youth and elders
- provide good Aboriginal role models
- need to have community readiness first
- shows that mentorship works
- creates expectation for recreation
- bring new ideas and enthusiasm and help community do ideas they want
- potential sources of funding: coaching clinics, etc

Participant Feedback to the AFL Program

Symposium participants were also asked to provide feedback to the AFL Program. This feedback included:

- the AFL gives the Council an easy way out to service the youth – our kids deserve better than 4 months of programming (disappoints the youth after they've had something, inconsistent)
- should be a complement to the program, it doesn't replace it (though sometimes it's not bad to have an expectation)

~The facilitators thanked the participants and completed the workshop at 4pm

Appendix A: Maskwachees Declaration

***Exerpt from: NATIONAL RECREATION ROUNDTABLE on ABORIGINAL/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES FINAL REPORT
Prepared by The Federal-Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Fitness and Recreation June 2000. Report
provided courtesy of the Lifestyle Information Network and is available in full at www.lin.ca***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Federal-Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Fitness and Recreation gratefully acknowledges the significant input and guidance of the Aboriginal Roundtable Steering Committee. The Committee members included:

- Peter Milner, F-P/T representative (co-chair)
- Cara Currie, (co-chair)
- Rick Brant
- Marilyn Buffalo
- Tracey Chevrier
- Richard Jenkins
- Richard Mirasty
- Alwyn Morris
- Jeff Spencer
- Patrick Tagoona
- Bruce Taylor, Health Canada
- Judy Kent, consultant/facilitator
- Pat Swampy, on-site coordinator

The financial contribution of Health Canada is also gratefully acknowledged, as is the sponsoring partnership of all 10 Provincial and three Territorial Governments. Additional appreciated is extended to the Alberta Sports, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation for its generous co-sponsorship of the Roundtable Cultural Night.

The F-P/T Advisory Committee is grateful to the Samson Cree Nation of Hobbema, Alberta for allowing use of their land and facilities as the host site for this year's Roundtable.

Finally, the contribution of the 100 participants of the National Recreation Round Table on Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples is especially acknowledged and appreciated. This Final Report is intended to reflect their collective wisdom and foreknowledge.

Report of the National Recreation Roundtable on Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples

Introduction

On February 17 – 20, 2000, over 100 delegates from Federal, Provincial and Territorial, Municipal and Aboriginal Governments, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal non-government organizations (NGOs) from the physical activity, active living, recreation sector, health, justice and education sectors met at the Four Nation reserve at Hobbema, Alberta. The official name of this territory is Maskwachees, meaning Bear Hills, named in the late 1800's after the large population of bears in the area.

Participants came from all regions of Canada – from coast to coast to coast, with a balance of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, government and non-government delegates. Participants worked to understand each other and create solutions to address health and social issues facing Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples. Solutions were based on holistic concepts and the belief that traditional lifestyles and active living will enhance quality of life.

“Traditionally all aspects of life were integrated for Aboriginal people. Work, play, leisure and religion were interconnected. Life was based on the need for fitness in order to survive – fitness of the body, mind and spirit.” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: 1996)

Held in Treaty Six Territory, the Roundtable included a variety of cultural and ceremonial activities, keynote presentations and working sessions, formal and informal time. The Roundtable attempted to demonstrate integration of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual – so fundamental to Aboriginal cultures.

Delegates worked to create a declaration for use by all to advance the issues addressed at the Roundtable. The declaration, called the Maskwachees Declaration, is intended to provide direction to all who care – those who want to make a difference. It is a tool for anyone and everyone.

Once the Declaration was completed, delegates worked to provide strategies and initiatives that could be used to implement The Declaration. This information is consolidated in section B. Desired Outcomes and Strategies.

This report includes the following sections:

- A. The Maskwachees Declaration
- B. Desired Outcomes and Strategies
- C. Next Steps Appendices:
 - I. List of Participants
 - II. Progress Report (faxback sheet)

MASKWACHEES DECLARATION

(pronounced: musk — wah — cheece)

Preamble

We, the delegates of the National Recreation Roundtable on Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples, held in Maskwachees, February 2000, are deeply committed to improving the health, wellness, cultural survival and quality of life of Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples, through physical activity, physical education, sport and recreation.

We affirm that the holistic concepts of Aboriginal cultures, given by the Creator and taught by the Elders, promote balance through the integration of the physical, mental, emotional, and the spiritual growth of the individual.

We recognize that many social issues including poverty; health concerns such as type II diabetes, heart disease, and fetal alcohol syndrome; rates of incarceration; substance abuse; harassment and racism; and a sedentary lifestyle; have contributed to poor health and a low quality of life for many Aboriginal/Indigenous people.

We recognize Canada's endorsement of Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples¹, and the recommendations from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples dealing with recreation, sport and active living.

Strengths and Challenges

We are supported by these strengths:

- a willingness to respect partners and to work together with a readiness to learn and lend
- a commitment by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial governments to reduce inactivity among Canadians by 10% by 2003
- a growing number of effective programs, policies and practices
- infrastructure development in the sport and recreation sector
- a physically active Aboriginal/Indigenous traditional lifestyle
- international documents/statements that recognize the importance of physical activity, physical education, sport and recreation

We are challenged by:

- the fact that Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population
- the need to support, invite, integrate and use the knowledge of Elders in program design and delivery
- the lack of priority in allocation of adequate financial and human resources for recreation and sport
- the complexity of the infrastructure - independent rather than interdependent
- the need to enhance communication and accountability between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sport and recreation organizations and governments
- the need for quality community based programs and services and the creation and renewal of sport and recreation facilities
- a learned attitude of helplessness and "who cares?" held by many
- the lack of clear initiatives for capacity building at the community level
- the need for more leaders and positive role models
- the need to recognize success and celebrate participation
- the need to ensure quality physical education in schools
- the need to ensure recreation and sport are positive experiences
- the need to create, pursue, and implement system wide change that will result in more flexible, creative, and responsive policies and practices

¹ Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous Peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Rationale

Traditional Lifestyles and Active Living, including physical education, physical activity, sport, recreation, and related cultural activity:

- offer preventive strategies that are much more powerful and cost effective than reactive treatment strategies
- provide personal development for success in life: for example, mutual respect, honesty, teamwork, healthy work ethic, dealing with conflict, fair-play, self esteem, pride and confidence
- provide inclusive opportunities for all ages and cultures to interact and to develop respect for each other
- provide inclusive opportunities for leadership development and role modeling
- provide opportunities for positive relationships and partnership building
- increase activity levels across the life-span to improve quality of life, enhance mental health, and help reduce the incidence of osteoporosis, some types of cancer, and conditions such as heart disease, type II diabetes, and obesity
- provide opportunities for developing a spiritual foundation of the individual, incorporating traditional values
- provide opportunities for the family unit, including parents, to be involved in the development of children, youth and communities

We Declare that:

Sustainable commitment and investment in active living, physical activity, physical education, recreation and sport, are essential to promote health and address social issues facing Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples in communities across Canada

And therefore we call on all Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, communities and individuals in Canada to endorse this Declaration.

Appendix B: Survey Results

The following statements are copied from the Maskwachees Declaration (2000). Please respond to each statement by outlining any activities you offer, 'promising practices' you have developed, or thoughts you have related to each area in the space below. Feel free to leave some areas blank if you have nothing to add on that point. Your responses will be combined with others to provide general trends arising from the survey, so your feedback will not be linked back to you specifically in the workshop.

1. Do you use the Maskwachees Declaration as some basis for developing programs in your community?

6 Yes 24 No

2. The delegates at Maskwachees 2000 stated that they were supported by the following STRENGTHS.

Are these STRENGTHS (listed below) still relevant to you and your community in the areas of sport and recreation ?

STRENGTHS	Very Relevant	Somewhat Relevant	Somewhat Irrelevant	Totally Irrelevant
a willingness to respect partners and to work together with a readiness to learn and lend	11	1	3	0
a commitment by the Federal-Provincial/Territorial governments to reduce physical inactivity among Canadians by 10% by 2010	8	15	8	0
a growing number of effective programs, policies and practices	13	1	5	0
infrastructure development in the sport and recreation sector	8	16	7	0
a physically active Aboriginal/Indigenous traditional lifestyle	14	13	3	0
international documents/statements that recognize the importance of physical activity, physical education, sport and recreation	4	18	8	0

3. What are some specific 'success stories' coming from your community?

school-recreation partnerships; Alberta Future Leaders while it's going; role models; certain events; hunting; more people getting involved; good efforts with limited supplies; successful youth programs; healthy living efforts; culture/traditional activities; leadership enhancement activities; good indoor/outdoor facilities; sports teaching good values

4. The delegates at Maskwachees 2000 stated they were faced with the following CHALLENGES.

Please rate these challenges regarding their impact on the current development of sport and recreation in your community – that is, to what degree are you challenged by:

CHALLENGES	High	Medium	Low
the fact that Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population	9	17	4
the need to support, invite, integrate and use the knowledge of Elders in program design and delivery	10	18	2
the lack of priority in allocation of adequate financial and human resources for recreation and sport	8	16	5
the complexity of the infrastructure - independent rather than interdependent	7	18	5
the need to enhance communication and accountability between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sport and recreation organizations and governments	10	13	7
the need for quality community based programs and services and the creation and renewal of sport and recreation facilities	6	18	6
a learned attitude of helplessness and "who cares?" held by many	9	15	6
the lack of clear initiatives for capacity building at the community level	4	22	4
the need for more leaders and positive role models	18	8	4
the need to recognize success and celebrate participation	15	12	4
the need to ensure quality physical education in schools	13	15	2
ensuring recreation and sport are positive experiences	10	15	5
the need to create, pursue, and implement system wide change that will result in more flexible, creative, and responsive policies and practices	10	16	4

5. What have been some of the greatest OBSTACLES your community has faced in overcoming these challenges? Are there other obstacles not addressed here which continue to limit sport and recreation development in your community?

low parental involvement; bullying in recreation activities; need resources, facilities, equipment and training; negative behaviours; need trained professionals; difficulties with travel/transportation; cost sharing hard to match

6. The delegates at Maskwachees 2000 made a series of statements of rationale stating that traditional lifestyles and active living, including physical education, physical activity, sport, recreation and related cultural activities provided or offered various benefits.

Do these rationales listed below still hold true?

RATIONALE:	Very True	Somewhat True	NA	Somewhat False	Totally False
offer preventive strategies that are much more powerful and cost effective than reactive treatment strategies;	10	8	9	1	0
provide personal development for success in life: for example, mutual respect, honesty, teamwork, healthy work ethic, dealing with conflict, fair play, self-esteem, pride and confidence;	11	15	3	0	0
provide inclusive opportunities for all ages and cultures to interact and to develop respect for each other;	16	9	3	0	1
provide inclusive opportunities for leadership development and role modeling;	16	7	5	1	0
provide opportunities for positive relationships and partnership building;	12	10	4	3	0
increase activity levels across the life span to improve quality of life, enhance mental health, and help reduce the incidence of osteoporosis, some types of cancer, and conditions such as heart disease, type II diabetes and obesity;	13	9	7	0	0
provide opportunities for developing a spiritual foundation of the individual, incorporating traditional values; and	10	9	9	1	0
provide opportunities for the family unit, including parents, to be involved in the development of children, youth and communities.	13	9	6	0	1

7. Are there other RATIONALES not identified here which have played an important role in fostering traditional lifestyles and active living in your community?

need to provide opportunities for Aboriginal communities to be involved shaping their own sport and recreation future

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Appendix C: Selected Participant Contact Information

Appendix C: Selected Participant Contact Information

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