

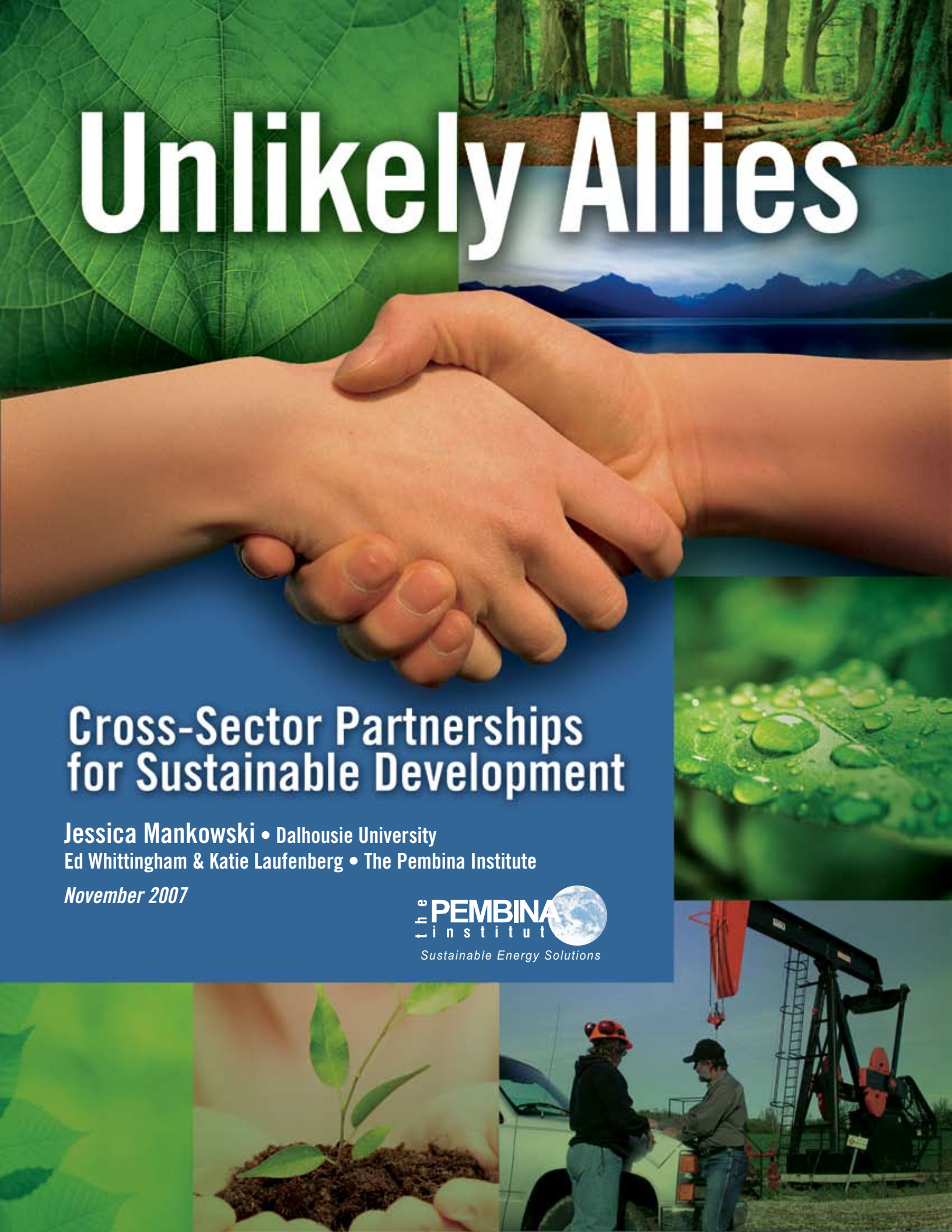
Unlikely Allies

Cross-Sector Partnerships for Sustainable Development

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Ed Whittingham & Katie Laufenberg • The Pembina Institute

November 2007

the PEMBINA
Institut 
Sustainable Energy Solutions





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Unlikely Allies

Cross-Sector Partnerships for Sustainable Development

FOREWORD

Message from Ed Whittingham

Project Lead

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

In November 2006, 30 people from the environmental NGO (ENGO) and public sectors spent an afternoon with 30 people from the private sector to discuss and debate industry-ENGO relationships. The open and honest spirit of the forum allowed attendees to discuss their experiences with these relationships (both positive and negative), identify the underlying conditions that make them successful, and offer new ideas for promoting them. During the discussion an overarching question emerged: how can cross-sector collaboration help people to achieve sustainable development objectives of mutual interest?

By the end of the afternoon participants unanimously agreed upon the need to keep the dialogue going, and recommended some next steps: create a partnership model for use by many, and develop a resource centre with tools, Canadian case studies and multi-sector training. Participants also supported reconvening the forum to create another opportunity for more direct, peer-to-peer dialogue.



The open and honest spirit of the 2006 forum allowed attendees to discuss their experiences with cross-sector relationships.

PHOTO: ALISON JAMIESON, THE PEMBINA INSTITUTE

The Pembina Institute, host of the November 2006 forum, committed itself to keeping the dialogue going. With the recommended next steps in mind, and with encouragement from many forum participants, we decided to create a compendium of Canada-based case studies of cross-sector, sustainable development partnerships, and to present our case study findings results at a 2007 forum, online and in this report.

Along the way we made a few other decisions to in some cases broaden and in other cases narrow the scope of our research. We decided to look specifically at “partnerships” instead of more broadly at “collaboration,” to give the compendium focus.¹ In addition to having sustainable development goals,

¹ Our definition of a partnership is based on that used by The Partnering Initiative for the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association’s (IPIECA) partnership publication, available at <http://www.ipieca.org/activities/partnerships/index.html>



partnerships for this compendium were defined as relationships in which

- each partner has responsibility for different parts of the project and each contributes more than just financial resources;
- risk is shared among all partners;
- problems are jointly discussed and their solutions jointly explored;
- there is some agreement in place that outlines the expectations for the partnership, and the responsibilities and commitments (more than just financial) of each partner.

We also broadened candidate cases to include industry-community and industry-synergy group partnerships.² We knew that there were very interesting examples to draw from in these categories, and that community and synergy group stakeholders are of equal (or greater) concern to companies as their ENGO stakeholders. Finally, we narrowed our focus by limiting partnerships to those involving resource extraction companies simply because this is the sector that the Pembina Institute understands best.

By putting together this compendium, our objectives are three-fold: We hope that this report and the supporting web portal <http://corporate.pembina.org/partnerships> serve as a tool for Canada-based resource sector companies, ENGOs, landowner associations, communities and governments considering or entering into cross-sector partnerships. To do this, we have tried to give the reader information

on the mechanics of the partnership, keys to success, and some of the challenges partners encountered along the way.

By bringing together the key players from companies and their partners to debrief the partnership itself, we also hope to capture and build institutional memory, while at the same time create a new opportunity for partners to reflect on how things are going. With these two particular objectives in mind, our supporting web portal allows people to post their own comments on each of the cases, as another means of keeping the dialogue going.

Lastly, when taken together we hope that the case studies will show how cross-sector partnerships can be used as vehicles for sustainable development in Canada. In an era when companies are increasingly labour constrained and civil society is increasingly empowered, the business case for partnering strengthens each year.

Acknowledgements

Knowing who was involved in making this project a reality will give the reader a sense of the process we followed. Original financial support from the **J.W. McConnell Family Foundation** and **Environment Canada** got us to the point where we had the idea for the project vetted and on paper. We offer our utmost gratitude to the six companies who financially supported the project from its conception: **TransCanada, Catalyst Paper, Nexen, Global Energy, ConocoPhillips Canada**

² See "Trident Exploration and Fort Assiniboine" and "Sundre Petroleum Operators Group" case studies respectively for specific examples.

and Trident Exploration. In addition to their financial contributions, representatives from each company patiently worked with our research team to select appropriate case studies, and even introduce us to those involved in the partnerships we mutually chose.

Second, the Pembina Institute heartily thanks **Jessica Mankowski** for her superb research and writing and good temperament. Jessica is a Master in Environmental Studies candidate at Dalhousie University, and is the lead researcher and author on every case study presented here. Pembina was fortunate to discover Jessica had a mutual interest in cross-sector partnerships early on in the research design process, interest that subsequently led to our own particular NGO-academia partnership.

Third, we thank the many people who volunteered their time to be Jessica's case study interviewees. While too many to name here, you will see the names of a few of them quoted in the case studies themselves.

Lastly, several individuals at **The Partnering Initiative** and the **International Petroleum Industry Conservation Association** provided timely advice along the way. As a result, our publication and web portal is some-

what modelled after IPIECA's Partnerships in the Oil and Gas Industry report (<http://www.iecea.org/activities/partnerships/>). Imitation is indeed the highest form of flattery.

Final Word

The reader might also notice that, with the exception of the Catalyst Paper – WWF US Climate Savers case, all of our cases are not only “made in Canada” approaches to partnering, they are more specifically “made in Alberta” approaches. Geography has a lot to do with it; the project began and developed steam in Alberta. Still, something about the political, business, social and environmental landscapes here in Alberta has fueled the development of, in my own humble opinion, various innovative cross-sector partnerships. For a reader with interest in the topic and PhD aspirations, these landscapes beg further exploration.



Ed Whittingham
Co-Director, Corporate Consulting
The Pembina Institute



Message from Jessica Mankowski

Lead Author

The opportunity to research and write about these dynamic and innovative partnerships has been a wonderful opportunity both personally and professionally. I hope that the benefits of this experience will be shared with many others as these cases are read and considered across sectors. I also hope that these cases will, in some small way, encourage further study of cross-sector partnerships in support of sustainable development.

While the organizations that provided material for the cases vary in size and sector, their partnerships consistently illustrate the importance of building trust, accessing local knowledge, communicating clearly and involving the right people no matter what the desired outcome. It appears that when sustainable development issues are tackled through a process that recognizes their inherent complexity, there is a much greater likelihood that the issue will be resolved through a sustainable solution. If we can come up with more sustainable solutions to existing and emerging environmental issues, then we can start to build a better place to live. I believe that the partnerships profiled in

this compendium do indeed support the creation of a healthier and more sustainable model of development.

I also believe the case study approach is the best approach for studying partnerships. Successful partnerships are multifaceted, synergistic and contextual; characteristics can only be captured through a process that acknowledges a variety of viewpoints and influences. Case studies allow the personal experiences and reflections of partnership participants to guide the case, creating an intimate and distinctive narrative of the partnership. Case studies also provide a context in which to consider partnership outcomes and learnings, a context that is crucial to understanding how a particular partnership works and how different partnerships vary.

When I began to work on these cases I was aware that the case study process itself could affect interviewees. They could, according to the literature, be expected to gain new appreciation for their partnerships, develop more confidence in communicating their successes, and even achieve meaningful personal insights. And so, I humbly prepared myself to shoulder the responsibility of providing participants with inspiration and instilling them with renewed confidence in their work, as well as being the

bearer of insights and the catalyst of organizational change.

As a result of researching and writing these cases, what I expected to happen did not occur. Instead, I believe that I may have been the one most influenced by the case study process. I have had to challenge my own assumptions about companies and non-profits, about people's motivation and sincerity, and about how partnerships across sectors might affect the planet. I sheepishly recognized that I shared the biases and assumptions many of the interviewees had initially held. I too had to release my preconceptions and listen to the experiences and insights of people from different sectors. Inspired by their willingness to listen, engage and collaborate, I have been able to change the way I think about partnerships and about my own potential as an agent of change. This was, I would say, a truly significant personal insight.

I would like to thank all the interviewees for their participation and continued support as the cases were written and edited. Their commitment to sharing their experience is an eloquent example of what sustainable development looks like. Sustainable development isn't something you say, it's something you do. Their effort and time is most sincerely appreciated. Thank you to Ed Whittingham and Katie Laufenberg at the Pembina Institute for all their research, editing and wonderful good cheer. Thanks also to my family for their impeccable advice and unwavering support.

Jessica Mankowski

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Unlikely Allies

Cross-Sector Partnerships for Sustainable Development

ECOTRUST MISSION – Alberta Ecotrust Foundation builds partnerships throughout Alberta between environmental organizations, corporations and others who support environmental action to

- fund and support effective grassroots environmental projects
- build capacity and sustainability in the voluntary sector
- promote the environment as the foundation of a healthy community.

The Alberta Ecotrust Foundation

“Suits and Roots” Together Funding Environmental Initiatives

In the early 1990s there was a surge in oil and gas development on the south eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Only an hour’s drive from the large population centres of southern Alberta, public scrutiny and media attention were keenly focused on resource development. There was a general climate of antagonism between the non-profit and private sector as each sought to fulfill their apparently conflicting objectives.

BACKGROUND

In spite of this climate, in 1991, individuals with the Pembina Institute and Petro-Canada collectively decided to create a space for

PAT LETIZIA (Executive Director, Alberta Ecotrust):

We speak ENGO and corporate and understand the community needs of both.... We’re a bridge between the roots and the suits.”



Alberta Ecotrust funded the Crowsnest Conservation Society’s efforts to let local middle-school students learn in and about the natural environment in which they live.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ALBERTA ECOTRUST FOUNDATION

corporations and environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) to come together to identify common ground, develop trust, build capacity and support grassroots environmental projects in Alberta. At that time, Rob Macintosh, a co-founder and then Executive Director of the Pembina Institute, and Michael Robertson, the Senior Director Environment and Safety at Petro-Canada at the time, had been working on the same issues on opposite sides of the table for years. They had developed a respectful and trusting relationship based on their shared values around environmental issues. They recognized that these values were shared across sectors, but that there was no neutral platform to promote consensus dialogue and decision



Alberta Ecotrust connects with Albertans during the 2007 Calgary Stampede parade.

PHOTO:
COURTESY
OF ALBERTA
ECOTRUST
FOUNDATION

making. They also recognized that there was a lack of funding for Alberta environmental groups. After spending 18 months promoting the idea in the corporate and environmental community, they succeeded in convincing people that "Alberta Ecotrust" could work. In 1992 Alberta Ecotrust Foundation was officially formed by the coming together of eight ENGOs and eight energy sector companies; it has since grown to include 14 organizations from each sector.

HOW ALBERTA ECOTRUST WORKS

The purpose of the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation is to provide grants to environmental non-profit organizations. Unlike many granting foundations, Alberta Ecotrust also accepts

GUY GREENAWAY (Executive Director – CPAWS): "The partnership approach was chosen very deliberately to involve the groups that were antagonistic, the groups that were having trouble communicating and getting together. There was actually a lot of common ground in terms of the issues that they wanted to address..."

GARRY MANN (General Manager, Safety, Environment and Occupational Health – Nexen): "There are, at the grassroots community level... environmental issues that we can tackle together, and if we want to disagree on various issues... that's fine; we'll take our position, they'll take their position, but along the way we'll know that there is this other organization we're involved in where we're actually working on common objectives."

applications from groups that are not registered charities, thus inviting participation from a greater diversity of applicants and making the funds accessible to a wider group of projects. The foundation raises money by soliciting donations from Alberta Ecotrust partners, business donors and the public, and is wholly dependant on these donations to operate. These donations are distributed twice a year in grants to environmental non-profit groups. Each project is then monitored by a partner, reviewed at specified intervals, and evaluated upon completion of the project to measure the grant's effectiveness.

Groups apply to the foundation by submitting a proposal. The grant review committee, comprising representatives from all partner organizations, and with equal representation from both the corporate and ENGO sectors, thoroughly reviews each proposal submitted.

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

The neutrality of both the granting process and of the foundation's structure allows members to identify each other as individuals who share common goals, as opposed to as representatives of particular sectors. Neutrality is achieved in several ways:

Biases left at the door

Members are asked to leave their biases at the door in the understanding that the

PAT LETIZIA (Executive Director – Alberta Ecotrust):
“There are many organizations that call their donors their partners. Our donors ARE our partners: they invest time and people, they contribute to the decision making of our organization, they sit on the board, they contribute to grant and policy decisions; so everything we’ve done as an organization is in collaboration with both sectors.”



foundation represents a neutral ground for dialogue and debate on which to build consensus. The Alberta Ecotrust process requires each member to consider all other participants as team members, despite what may be happening outside of the foundation.

High levels of peer-to-peer interaction

Once a proposal has been accepted for consideration, small ad-hoc committees made up of three members (one corporate representative, one ENGO representative and one Alberta Ecotrust administrator) interview the applicant face-to-face or via telephone to get a real sense of the group, their issues and their strengths. The entire grant review committee later assembles for an all-day selection process during which each subcommittee presents the application they have reviewed. The grant review process demands active engagement, and members are immersed in an experiential education process that highlights the common ground they have



Westmount Elementary in Strathmore, Alberta used an Alberta Ecotrust grant to naturalize their school yard.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ALBERTA ECOTRUST FOUNDATION

cleared and the benefits of working with partners from another sector. The review process provides a space for honest discussion about what matters and why, and builds a sense of familiarity and camaraderie as the committee successfully collaborates and cooperates to review and approve projects. Members build trusting relationships with one another and ultimately with the grantees as well.



CONNIE ATKINSON (Corporate Safety, Environment and Social Responsibility – Nexen): “Well, certainly our reputation with our external stakeholders... and, for me, some of the contacts that I’ve made... I’ve been able to contact them for other parts of my job and that’s been really beneficial....”

Recognizing and servicing the needs of each sector

Alberta Ecotrust’s mission explicitly refers to the need to develop the capacity of the voluntary sector. This is accomplished through professional development opportunities, honorariums to attend workshops, and research projects focused on improving capacity within the sector. Alberta Ecotrust provides yearly reports to its corporate partners to maintain accountability and clearly communicate the value created and change leveraged through their contributions. Because the foundation understands the mandates of each sector, it can effectively build bridges between them and maintain their support and participation.

Balance of power

The balance of power between sectors supports neutrality; each organization has one representative and there are an equal number of corporate and ENGO partners. Each representative has one voice, regardless of their organization’s

financial contribution to Alberta Ecotrust. If there is a perceived conflict of interest, for example when the proposal of a representative’s organization is being considered, that representative will leave the table during the discussion.

Effectiveness at protecting the environment

The environment is a public interest, and the Alberta Ecotrust program is effective at protecting it. Alberta Ecotrust is vigilant about remaining connected to the provincial environmental climate with regard to public opinion and policy issues, as well as to the views of its members and stakeholder community. The foundation has conducted three partner evaluations over the past 15 years to review its focus and mission, and has conducted a number of research projects on environmental priorities, capacity building and effectiveness within the voluntary sector. Alberta Ecotrust is currently engaged in reviewing and renewing its internal evaluation measures and creating new evaluation processes for both the granting program and the partnering process. Members are confident that their efforts produce meaningful gains for Alberta’s environment.

GUY GREENAWAY (Executive Director – CPAWS): “You get a clear sense of where the problems in the whole process are, and that they may not rest with the person or entity engaging in the activity, but with the regulator of that activity. That becomes abundantly clear in many cases.”

ECOTRUST OFFERS VALUE TO MEMBERS

In addition to creating tangible environmental value within Alberta, the Alberta Ecotrust partnership offers members the

GUY GREENAWAY (Executive Director – CPAWS):

“So any opportunity to be on the other side of the table [for non-profits], where they’re reviewing applications, gives them a much better insight into what makes a good proposal, what’s going to work.”



opportunity to experience successful working relationships outside of its own sector, thus producing several related benefits.

Peer-to-peer relationship development

Members develop strong peer-to-peer relationships through their work together on the board and grant review committees. The structure of some corporations and ENGOs may make it difficult to quickly identify the appropriate community contact for specific issues or geographic regions. Interactions and relationships through Alberta Ecotrust allow members to access a peer regardless of sector, who can then guide them to the right person. These relationships are described as one of the greatest benefits by members of both sectors.

Members gain a broader perspective on environmental issues

As a result of the collaboration and robust discussion around the grant making process, the types of challenges faced by each sector within the entire life cycle of a specific problem become clear. Often, it becomes apparent that the issue may not necessarily be with the organization engaging in a particular activity, but with the actual environmental impact and regulation of that activity. This realization has fostered a further sense of alignment and shared purpose among members. It has become clear over the years that

each sector generally recognizes and respects the role of the other.

Member environmental groups learn how to design more effective environmental projects

By fully participating in the granting process, member environmental group representatives have an insider’s perspective on how to create an effective grant proposal and design strategic and successful projects. As well, ENGOs are exposed to the projects and developments occurring in other environmental fields and across the province, which encourages the development of stronger peer-to-peer networks outside of Alberta Ecotrust.

CHALLENGES

The value added to both corporate and ENGO partners is not without some trade-offs. Obviously, groups from both sectors have to commit significant staff time for Alberta Ecotrust to function effectively. For environmental groups with limited staff, this can be a diversion away from their core activities. For corporations, the pace and scale of the Alberta business landscape today create similar labour pressures, in spite of their larger staff bases.

Both groups also put their reputations on the line among some actors from both sectors. The idea of corporations and ENGO groups working together on environmental issues continues to create some discomfort and mistrust among a



PAT LETIZIA (Executive Director – Alberta Ecotrust):

“I think in Alberta, more than anywhere else, industry and ENGOs are aligned together on the need for good government. They both want government to be more decisive, to create a regulatory environment that is fair and consistent so everyone knows what you can and can’t do....”

few groups in both sectors. In particular, there remains a perception among certain environmental groups – especially outside of Alberta – that Alberta Ecotrust is merely a place to “green” the money of certain companies. Some individuals have claimed that the foundation is run by the oil and gas industry that makes all of the granting decisions and determines how funds will be spent. While untrue and impossible given the structure and governance of Alberta Ecotrust, nevertheless it remains a perception challenge that the foundation must contend with.

THE FUTURE OF THE ALBERTA ECOTRUST FOUNDATION

Alberta Ecotrust will continue to fulfill its mission by catalyzing the environmental movement in Alberta, securing increased funding, and providing service and information to other foundations. It is in this niche, as a service provider, that Alberta Ecotrust may have found another way to support the environmental non-profit sec-

tor. By fostering effectiveness at the foundation level, Alberta Ecotrust may become the medium through which additional and more significant environmental grant making is successfully nurtured.

Members of both sectors point to the need for improved evaluation of both grant effectiveness and of the partnering process. The way grants for environmental projects are evaluated is an inherently complex process. It involves the development of appropriate measures, indicators and timelines that adequately capture the effects and relationships within a given project. Yet understanding how and why certain projects have succeeded is integral to the foundation’s effectiveness as a grant maker. In addition to the process by which grants are distributed, the process by which partners are engaged will also require focused attention. As Alberta Ecotrust increases its funding base, it will need to have a clearer understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. If the foundation’s model is replicated,¹ insight into the partnering process itself will prove immensely valuable as the process is scaled up.

PAT LETIZIA (Executive Director – Alberta Ecotrust):

“We’ve started to focus more critically on our future role, while continuing to focus on community education and engagement. We need to ensure that our work remains of critical importance to our partners, our grantees and the protection of the environment.”

¹ Some of the corporate partners with operations in other provinces have suggested a Saskatchewan Ecotrust, or even a national Ecotrust.

Unlikely Allies

Cross-Sector Partnerships for Sustainable Development

GLYNN DAVIS (Manager, Community Engagement and Social Responsibility, Trident): "So that's what we took a look at, getting gas but at the same time understanding people's issues. The corporate culture evolved right from the beginning to support that, so it was possible for a lot of the employees to accept that this was the way we do things."

Trident Exploration and Fort Assiniboine

Not Your Average Christmas Basket

Trident Exploration Corporation, founded in 2000, has its headquarters in Calgary, Alberta. The company's main focus is natural gas exploration and development, largely from coalbed methane. Trident is mainly interested in the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin, which has a significant concentration of high gas content coal. Many rural communities within the region are identified as key stakeholders, and are engaged through the company's Community Engagement and Social Responsibility division.

BACKGROUND

Trident has deliberately crafted a corporate culture that supports commitment to sustainable community development. Its commitment is driven by the worldview of two of the senior founders of Trident who worked overseas in the oil and gas industry. While there, these two individuals developed an appreciation of the potential negative impacts that resource development can have on host communities, as well as ways these impacts could be managed or mitigated. Upon returning to Canada, they applied this insight when creating Trident's particular approach to community development.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

The ABCD model focuses on identifying and supporting the skills that exist within a given community to realize a shared vision of development.¹ In this way it emphasizes strengths, rather than weaknesses, and focuses on the active participation of community members to create solutions that build upon those resources locally available. Trident's ABCD model is a three-step process: map assets, create a shared vision and mobilize local assets in support of the vision. As part of the process, community members work closely with Trident employees to ensure the projects remain grounded in the local reality and are sustainable beyond Trident's projected stay in the community.

ABCD in Action: The Christmas Basket Program

Trident's Christmas Basket Program provides an example of this community development philosophy in action. During the holiday season companies regularly send their business partners and contacts baskets that typically include premium wines, chocolates and even ski passes or tickets to upcoming concerts. Led by Dr. Glynn Davis, Trident's Community



Students from Morrin school put baskets together for Trident's Christmas Basket Program.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TRIDENT EXPLORATION CORPORATION

¹ ABCD is the approach developed and championed by John McKnight and John Kretzmann of Northwestern University. More information on their work and on ABCD is available through the ABCD Institute at Northwestern (www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html).



LOIS ROBINSON (Artisan): "It's a great opportunity for me to advertise my wares... They pay me for my product and I also get to advertise, so you really can't get a better deal."



Trident's Christmas Basket Program is an example of the Asset Based Community Development philosophy in action.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TRIDENT EXPLORATION CORPORATION

Engagement and Social Responsibility Manager, the company decided that a creative approach to its Christmas baskets could help to serve both needs of community development and holiday corporate giving.

Program Origins and How It Works

When Trident began to develop its interests in the central Alberta region, Davis' team began a community consultation process to engage stakeholders in the creation of an ABCD project. As a result of these consultations in the Fort Assiniboine area, Trident knew that there was a shared desire within the community to create educational and employment opportunities for youth while supporting local economic development. Davis and his team wondered, what if Trident engaged Fort Assiniboine high school students to put together its Christmas

baskets, and these baskets were made up exclusively of locally sourced artisan goods? The idea for the Christmas Basket project was born.

GLYNN DAVIS (Manager, Community Engagement and Social Responsibility, Trident): "Within oil and gas there is this notion that engineering and earth sciences have got that rigour, but when you come to the social sciences its more of a pray and spray approach.... A lot of companies do take an initiative, and if it's a good one and it works they aren't entirely clear why it worked.... If it doesn't work, they can't really pull it apart to understand the dynamics."

Trident then approached the principal at the Fort Assiniboine high school to propose the program and identify potential champions within the school. With buy-in secured, Trident used the community farmer's markets, an asset identified during the community mapping activity, to recruit local artisans to provide items for the gift baskets. Trident also identified the existing entrepreneurship program at Fort Assiniboine public school, and in subsequent years at Morrin School, as a platform upon which to provide a hands-on experience for local youth in project development.

Following the contact with Fort Assiniboine, a high school entrepreneurship program curriculum was developed by University of Calgary education students interning with Trident. The education program was then delivered in conjunction with local teachers as part of the existing entrepreneurship class at the high school. The high school students learned project management, planning and budgeting within the context of the Christmas Basket Program. They established costs and pricing, and designed the baskets. Finally, students were provided with the materials needed to assemble a total of 100 baskets, putting to use all the entrepreneurship skills they had been learning in class.

BENEFITS

The program has benefited both internal and external stakeholders. Because of the very positive feedback it has received from the gift basket recipients, Trident has been able to promote itself as a company that practices effective sustainable community development, and one that consistently considers how it can create opportunities for its communities. Local artisans are able to promote their

KYLA FISHER (*Liaison Lead, Community Engagement and Social Responsibility, Trident*): “The effort is up front, but once you get to know who’s doing what, and once the program is designed to the extent that now the school is taking the program on, and the students are identifying the people, there’s less human resource time.... [The Christmas Basket Program is] equivalent to walking to the store and ordering wine like everyone else.”



products to new markets without having to travel or spend money on marketing and transportation, and are given incentive to continue their artisan trades. The schools that have been involved in the program have been able to provide their students with an experiential opportunity that develops entrepreneurship and project management skills. As well, by offering these extra course credits, the schools have been able to increase their provincial funding.

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

A number of unique characteristics have enabled Trident to successfully develop the Christmas Basket Program with its Fort Assiniboine partners. First, senior leadership provides Trident’s community outreach department with almost four times the level of funding found in companies of similar size. The development of a long-term, complex and context-sensitive program like this requires significant time commitment, which in turn requires a significant financial investment.

The Trident staff that engages with the local community are a second important characteristic that makes this program successful. Community members are willing to work with the company through this more complex relationship because they trust the individuals who are consulting and implementing the Christmas Basket Program. This trust is built through the consistent presence of these individuals in the community, and the corporate willingness to engage in dialogue and to go above and beyond regulations in other areas, such as those dealing with the noise level of its pumps.

A third unique characteristic of Trident is that, unlike most other companies, it uses a community development approach grounded in development theory and continuous improvement. ABCD provides a process for Trident to evaluate the success of its community engagement, recognize the drivers and enablers of successful projects, and replicate these successes throughout their development programs.

CHALLENGES

Trident’s approach to community development, and to the Christmas Basket Program itself, is not without risks and challenges. Complex engagement of any kind means that partners are more vulnerable to each other, reputation and resources are more tightly meshed and responsibility is shared. This means that as the program develops, and responsibility for the production of the baskets is given to the community, further elaboration of goals and outcomes is required. Such elaboration is now contained in a Memorandum of Understanding, which clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

Because the ABCD approach places a significant emphasis on the importance of context and local knowledge, the programs developed through this process cannot be easily reproduced. The idea of creating a model that can simply be replicated across all communities is impossible; such models require consistent investments of human and financial resources. This means there will always be an apparently disproportionate input of these resources to develop and implement this kind of approach to community development.



DR. DON SCHIELKE (past Principal, Morrin School): "It was the quality of the people Trident sent, such good quality people. They honestly wanted to help and I thought it was just great, really great. Certainly we weren't getting help from other sources."



Trident reps Sue Wills and Kyla Fisher celebrate "wrapping up" the first Christmas Basket Project.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TRIDENT EXPLORATION CORPORATION

The Multiplier Effect

Davis thinks that Trident's approach to community and stakeholder engagement has had a significant effect on other companies in the sector. He points to the change in terminology, such the vocabulary surrounding community accountability and consultation, as a direct consequence of Trident's approach. He has also noticed a

dramatic increase in the commitment to public education in the coalbed methane field since Trident began its programs. Davis believes that Trident was the first coalbed methane company to make public education a non-negotiable part of project development, and that it is now a common practice among the majority of coalbed methane companies.

Within the oil and gas sector, Trident expects that other companies may adopt a modified version of the ABCD approach. While it is unlikely that other organizations will be able to adopt the

entire model, elements may be successfully adopted without complete buy-in to the philosophy behind the

process. In either case, by creating new norms against which other resource companies are measured, Trident hopes to influence the way energy sector companies engage the communities on which they depend to operate.

In 2007, the program will be run out of the local youth centre and will be associated with Junior Achievement, a non-profit entrepreneurial education program. This format will allow greater flexibility than previously, giving students from different schools the opportunity to participate while continuing to earn credit hours and experience, as well as monies for their schools.

The relationship between Trident and the community is strong. Even those who were not directly involved in the program have offered to help in subsequent years and to produce products or provide other means of supporting the program.

Now in its fourth year the program has evolved to include more local artisans, a well-developed curriculum and a thoroughly documented process. This allows new Trident employees to be quickly brought up to speed on project procedures. While the initial investment of human resources was significant, the program now requires much less effort on Trident's part because the community is able to manage it and produce the baskets nearly independently. The result is a sustainable source of community-produced gift baskets that cost Trident the same price as traditional gifts but are of a much higher value.

GLYNN DAVIS (Manager, Community Engagement and Social Responsibility, Trident): "Companies won't want to jump whole hog into our approach, but what will slowly happen is they'll end up designating someone to do this, or it will be the external construct against which things are projected.... What has been the biggest affirmation is that it has become fairly widely adopted, it's become much more the norm."

Unlikely Allies

Cross-Sector Partnerships for Sustainable Development

CASA VISION: The air will be odourless, tasteless, look clear and have no measurable short- or long-term adverse effects on people, animals and the environment.

The Clean Air Strategic Alliance

Multistakeholder Collaboration for Clean Airsheds

The Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) is an Alberta-based multistakeholder policy forum that brings together representatives from industry, government and non-profit organizations to address air quality issues. It was established by a ministerial order in 1994 as a new way to manage air quality issues in Alberta. CASA recommends strategies to assess and improve provincial air quality, and uses a consensus model to reach its goals. The alliance acts as an advisory committee under the

MIKE KELLY (Director, Environment, Health and Safety - TransAlta): "The Clean Air Strategy Program document was a great document and nobody who was involved with that wanted it to sit on the shelf and collect dust, so they needed an implementation mechanism...."



CASA's Electricity Team, comprised of industry and non-government groups, worked together to develop provincial regulations for coal plant emissions.

PHOTO: MATTHEW DANCE

Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and the Department of Energy Act. Core operating funds are received from the provincial government, with additional support provided by a variety of non-profit organizations, government bodies and industry supporters.

BACKGROUND

In Alberta during the early 1990s there was consensus across sectors that environmental issues were becoming increasingly complex. At that time various non-profit groups were urging the provincial government to be proactive in addressing air quality issues specifically. Concerns around air quality had been brought to public attention earlier during the 1982 Lodgepole blow out¹

¹ In 1982 an Amoco Canada sour gas well blew, and burned out of control for 68 days. During this time 150 million cubic feet of sour gas flowed per day, with a hydrogen sulfide content of 28 per cent. Two blowout specialists were killed following the accident, and 16 people were hospitalized. At times the rotten-egg smell of the hydrogen sulfide content in the gas could be detected as far away as Winnipeg. For a short description of the accident, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_petroleum_industry_in_Canada_\(natural_gas\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_petroleum_industry_in_Canada_(natural_gas)).



TOM MARR-LAING (Senior Associate Consultant – Pembina Institute): “I think the real politik we have to deal with here in Alberta forced activist parties to look at how else they could actually influence the levers of power – both political and industrial – in a way that’s progressive for environmental protection. Bodies like CASA emerged from that paradigm....”



Senior Associate Consultant, Tom Marr-Laing and other CASA members tour a wind farm in Alberta.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CASA

and were therefore of particular interest. After a government-led two-year process of engagement involving stakeholders from all sectors, the Clean Air Strategy Program (CASP) was created. The program outlines a vision, an implementation framework (the Clean Air Management System, or CAMS), and a series of emission reduction goals to address air quality issues in Alberta.

The stakeholders involved in the formative stages of the program believed strongly in its objectives and process, and pushed the provincial government to create the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA), the mechanism

through which the program is now implemented.

Consensus Building and Evaluation

To create long-lasting and appropriate air quality policy recommendations, the CASP recommended a consensus model of decision making; this has come to be one of the defining characteristics of CASA. The process

of reaching consensus requires that participants set aside preconceptions, build trust and goodwill, and search for common ground upon which to build a new understanding of the issue. The CAMS process encourages stakeholders to clearly identify their needs and wants, and then reconsider them in light of the knowledge and insight gained from interacting with other stakeholders. CAMS explicitly names the steps involved in identifying, addressing and creating recommendations for air quality issues. CAMS supports consistent and defensible decision making, and outlines the various steps involved. A strength of the system is that it has regular review and renewal built into the implementation framework. Changes were made to CAMS when it was last reviewed by the CASA membership in 2005. These changes clarified certain procedural

JILLIAN FLETT (Executive Director – CASA):

“I think it was recognized that there is more accountability and buy-in if people are involved in coming up with the recommendations.”

MIKE KELLY (Director, Environment, Health and Safety - TransAlta): “Capital stock turnover was critical to us and to society at large because there are many millions of dollars sitting there in that steel for construction. What we got for our side was that the 40-year life of these plants was going to be honoured...”



steps. For example, stakeholders identified prioritization as an ongoing process as opposed to a discrete step. The CAMS was thus revised to acknowledge that a constant influx of new information and changing external circumstances could affect how best to treat an issue.

The Electricity Team

CASA creates project teams to address statements of opportunity that have been accepted by the Board. The CASA Electricity Team is one such team, and provides an example of how CASA deals with a specific air quality issue. During the early 2000s, a company began building a new coal-fired power plant. The Alberta government, along with the non-profit community, realized that the regulations around the construction and operation of this type of plant had not been examined in years since there had been little development in the sector. The government quickly began working on a new set of regulations, triggering public outcry at the lack of consultation and transparency in the regulatory development process. Recognizing the demand for a more inclusive regulatory process, the government turned the issue over to CASA. CASA was charged with developing new provincial regulations for coal plant emissions, with the understanding that if it could not reach a consensus, the government would create new regulations independently.

The government presented CASA with a statement of opportunity to trigger the consensus-building process. As often happens at the beginning of new CASA projects, the Electricity Team went on an

overnight retreat to identify the group’s objectives and build general knowledge about coal power plant emissions. While both industry and environmental NGOs were concerned with reducing harmful emissions, mitigating environmental impacts and regulating future plant development, the industry members were also concerned with protecting their large capital investments. Industry was also looking for policy and economic incentives to support its investment in environmental infrastructure. By recognizing the constraints faced by industry, learning about the factors involved in air quality issues, and prioritizing the desires of the stakeholder groups, the working group was able to negotiate a mutually acceptable policy framework.

Eighteen months later, the Electricity Team produced a set of regulations that were approved by the provincial government and are still in place today. The regulations govern the operation of existing coal plants as well as the construction and operation of new plants, and include a policy review process every few years. In addition, the regulations call for existing plants to reduce their carbon dioxide and mercury emissions every five years.

Participants on the team identify a number of positive outcomes. The province now has a clear emissions policy in place, which accommodates the building of new plants while responding to the need to reduce regulated emissions at regular intervals. The public benefits from better air quality because the regulations address the harmful emissions in the most effective way, that is, by requiring their



JILLIAN FLETT (Executive Director – CASA):
“It’s been an open and transparent process so that it allows anyone and everyone who wants information to get it... Our minutes are all public. It’s all available for people...”

The alliance has received numerous awards for its partnership approach to complex issues.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CASA



reduction. Industry has adequate time to adapt to new regulations, and can protect its capital investments because the regulations respect the 40-year lifespan of existing plants. Early adopters of the new regulations are rewarded with emission credits. The non-profit sector has a guarantee that emissions will be reduced and air quality will improve, thus fulfilling their mandate.

TOM MARR-LAING (Senior Associate Consultant – Pembina Institute): “It’s a very different experience to sit down inside a room and try and work with somebody who you see as the faceless bureaucrat or the rapacious capitalist... Those are the stereotypes... I think the genius in the Alberta situation was having forums where people were forced to explore those biases, and then have them challenged on all sides through dialogue.”

In addition, the non-profit sector has also gained a deeper knowledge of potential allies and networks within the electricity sector.

The Electricity Team was recognized with an Alberta Emerald Award for its work in 2004.

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

CASA’s multistakeholder collaborative process provides a number of benefits for participants and for external stakeholders. First, by bringing everyone involved in a particular air quality issue to the same table, facts and opinions are communicated directly and openly, ensuring everyone receives the same information. Second, participants gain a broader understanding of the challenges and opportunities that exist in sectors other than their own. This would not occur if stakeholders were operating in isolation. This allows participants to more speedily identify where they may differ and where

MIKE KELLY (Director, Environment, Health and Safety – TransAlta):

“CASA cuts out the backdoor negotiations, and it depoliticizes it too, which is the marvelous thing, because again, you’re not fighting it out in the media, and the politicians like that, and we like that, and the environmentalists like that too... so it works for everybody.”



they may be aligned. Third, a multistakeholder approach to solving air quality issues means that solutions are likely to be acceptable to all stakeholders, reducing the risk of lengthy, expensive hearings and lawsuits that often result from non-inclusive processes. As a result, multi-stakeholder-developed solutions tend to be longer lasting because they were built using the perspectives of those who will be affected by their implementation.

The CASA model often allows sectors to avoid an unnecessary sniping once an issue goes public. In policy processes actors with competing interests will sometimes confront each other through mass media. Public spats between actors may push organizations into postures that are not conducive to consensus building or to collaborating with other sectors. Mike Kelly, Director of Environment, Health and Safety at TransAlta, believes that the valued personal relationships and the trust created through the CASA process, as well as the group’s history of successes, have kept issues from becoming overblown. Relationships and trust are particularly important given the public nature of CASA’s work; minutes from meetings and all reports and recommendations are available online for the public’s perusal, part of the alliance’s emphasis on accountability and transparency at all levels of the organization.

Air quality has improved in the province as a direct result of the implementation of CASA’s recommendations. Solution gas flaring has been reduced by over 70% from a 2000 baseline, while sulphur and

mercury emissions have also been reduced. CASA has also assisted the government in setting ambient air quality objectives.

Finally, CASA has emphasized evaluation and stakeholder surveys, resulting in good organizational understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. This decision to collect feedback has created a flexibility and attentiveness to stakeholder satisfaction that ensures the organization remains relevant and effective.

CHALLENGES

The CASA process is not without its difficulties. First, consensus requires that all stakeholders at the table are able to discuss the issue on equal footing. In many cases, this means that individuals from certain organizations need to be brought up to speed in terms of technical or regulatory knowledge. This process can be lengthy and costly, but is necessary to ensure participation from everyone at the table.

Second, if consensus is not reached within the CASA process, the issue is sent to the provincial government to rule on a solution. However, since it is often the provincial government that requests CASA’s services, when an issue is sent back to government there is no guarantee of quick advancement on the policy issue. This has been the case with creating a carbon dioxide emissions policy and regulatory framework. CASA was unable to reach consensus on two occasions, and until early 2007, the provincial government had no framework in place.



MIKE KELLY (Director, Environment, Health and Safety – TransAlta): “At the end of the day, all those other people couldn’t be at that table, and don’t understand how they got to that particular solution. There are always places where you can point and say, well, you could have done that better, how come you didn’t do this....”

Third, since each sector has a representative, each representative must be an excellent communicator capable of presenting and appreciating the priorities of a number of different organizations. This need also extends to reporting back to one’s own sector. Sector representatives are often unable to achieve every objective that their member organizations desire. With consensus-based solutions, there are always points where certain parties have to compromise. Oftentimes, explaining to people who were not present at the table exactly how and why this happened can be difficult. Further, it is imperative that the individual selected by each sector be respected and credible to ensure support for their commitments and decisions.

There are also some sector-specific challenges created by the multistakeholder approach. It can be difficult to convince some corporations that non-profit groups have a legitimate place at the table, as there remains the perception that non-profits cannot understand the issues and complexities involved in the private sector. On the other hand finding the resources

(both financial and human) to commit to the often lengthy timeline required by CASA deliberations and to develop a sufficient understanding of the issues and complexities can be a challenge, especially for non-profit organizations.

Recognition and Looking Forward

The alliance has received numerous awards for its partnership approach to complex issues, including two Alberta Emerald awards for Environmental Excellence, two Premier’s Awards of Excellence and, in 2005, the Arthur Kroeger College Award for Policy Leadership. With a track record now spanning a decade, CASA serves as a model for other airshed organizations that have been set up across the province to monitor air quality, and more generally as a multistakeholder decision making process. Already a number of other organizations have turned to CASA for guidance in developing and implementing a multistakeholder approach to problem solving. For example, the CASA model has now been used to develop the new Alberta Water Council, which uses a multistakeholder approach to address provincial water issues. The replication of the model to address other environmental areas of interest is an affirmation of the public’s support for the process.

TOM MARR-LAING (Senior Associate Consultant – Pembina Institute): “It’s one tool in your toolkit. It should never be viewed as an either/or – either you’re totally for confrontations or you engage in these complex partnerships... It is a tool to be used at the right time in the right circumstances....”



Unlikely Allies

Cross-Sector Partnerships for Sustainable Development

JANET MARR (SPOG Coordinator): “Well, there were no means to communicate at all before, and each side felt the other was... it got to the point where you were thinking that they were evil, basically.”

Sundre Petroleum Operators Group

*Transforming
Resentment
to Mutual Trust*



Rural Alberta used to be the exclusive domain of ranchers and farmers.

PHOTO: MARY GRIFFITHS, THE PEMBINA INSTITUTE

The Sundre Petroleum Operators Group (SPOG) is an organization of stakeholders from industry, government and community groups that operates in a 1000 square kilometre area of central Alberta. The group includes representatives from the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB), 30 oil and gas companies and 15 communities who work together to effectively communicate information and solve issues in a manner that benefits all stakeholders

in the region. This type of cross-sector collaboration around oil and gas development is called a synergy group, and SPOG was among the first of these groups to emerge in Alberta. SPOG members are dedicated to creating a community through relationships based on trust, honesty and mutual respect between members.

BACKGROUND

Rural Alberta used to be the exclusive domain of ranchers and farmers. Their properties were large, and neighbours were often separated by many kilometres. As the oil and gas industry entered the area and began to search for energy resources, deals were struck between landowners and companies to secure company access to particular sites and along particular routes. Oil and gas companies felt they understood the social and

ALICE MURRAY (Community Affairs Associate – Shell Canada): “There was no real mechanism for the community to bring forward concerns or questions, and likewise the industry people.... were doing all sorts of good things, but there was no mechanism for communicating that back to the community.”



SPOG holds a workshop at the Caroline complex to share concerns and solutions about oil and gas development with community members

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SPOG

environmental concerns of the local population, and that they were adequately addressing these concerns.

Before synergy groups arose, it was difficult for local people to identify and communicate with industry. If landowners had an issue or question, they might go directly to the company. If discussions were unproductive, the landowner would then turn to the EUB, which would then talk to the company. The result was often that very little could be done, since everyone involved may have heard a different story or been given different information. Companies would forge ahead with projects unaware of, or in spite of, community concerns.

The Beginning of SPOG

In 1992, SPOG was exclusively made up of industry members who were working together to provide efficiencies in their emer-

ALICE MURRAY (Community Affairs Associate – Shell Canada): *“Through the Covey training, we all just kind of gelled. We could see then that it was our problem, not someone else’s, and that we all had a part in it. It also gave us a common language to deal with the topic: “win-win” and “synergy” and those kinds of words.*

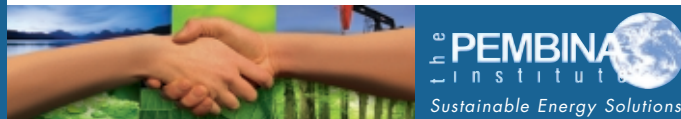
gency response plans within the Sundre area. However, there was no real communication between the SPOG member companies and the community, and the community felt it had been ignored since oil and gas development began in the area during the late 1980’s. A number of incidents during the early 90’s reinforced this growing sense of frustration. In 1992, a sweet gas transmission line explosion in the Caroline area (close to Sundre) caused widespread panic and a surge in media attention. Meanwhile, sour gas development began in the Sundre area, and people were frightened of its lethal potential.

In 1995, when Shell Canada applied to the EUB to increase sour gas throughput in the Caroline plant, the community protested loudly during pre-hearing meetings and through the local media. The EUB, along with a traditional hearing, took the unprecedented step of mandating an “Interrogatory Process” to address general concerns about oil and gas development in the area. This process included hiring a communications consultant to record the results of interviews with local residents. The consultant’s report presented a stark picture of the tense relationship between the oil and gas industry and the communities in which they were operating. The community’s sentiment was clear: People were resentful, mistrustful, and unhappy with oil and gas development.

Because the current confrontational situation was extremely draining, the SPOG member companies decided to hold a communication workshop with other oil

SPOG VISION: *A long term relationship based on mutual trust, honesty and respect, by way of sharing pertinent information and resolving issues to benefit all stakeholders.*

DAVE BROWN (community representative of SPOG):
“We have the vision before us all the time; we have it up on the wall of our office. When people are meeting and start to get out of line, we point to that. Your attitude and approach – does that represent our vision? So we come back to our vision at all times; it wasn’t thought of, put in a corner and forgotten about. It’s at the forefront of everything we do.”



and gas companies in the area as well as with community groups and individuals. As a result of this workshop, the SPOG vision was formed: To establish a long-term relationship (between SPOG members) based on mutual trust, honesty and respect, by sharing pertinent information and resolving issues to the benefit all stakeholders. In addition, organizations involved in the workshop agreed on a series of immediate action items and determined that the community, in the form of representatives from local organizations and different geographic areas, should be invited to join SPOG.

Immediately after completing the communication session, SPOG held a workshop for all members based on Stephen Covey’s principle centered leadership model.¹ Keith Eflinger, a Shell manager at the time, proposed the Covey model because he had seen how effective it was at Shell. The half-day workshop at SPOG provided the now expanded membership with common language to address issues, and a way of communicating effectively across sectors. It also focused the group’s collective attention on their commonly held goals for the development and operation of SPOG. This immediate focus on creating and maintaining a common vision and open lines of communication between all sectors began the trust-building process.

Communication and Vision

Members of SPOG believe the group’s success can be traced to its unifying vision of sharing information, two-way

dialogue, and continued commitment to relationships based on trust and respect. The vision is a constant touchstone for all members of SPOG; it is proudly displayed in the SPOG building and on the website, is referred to at meetings and reviews, and guides all SPOG working groups. The vision reminds members of what they represent and how they have agreed to interact.



As a result of the Interrogatory Process instigated by the EUB, it was discovered that lack of communication between companies and the public was a recurring theme. SPOG addressed this issue by creating the quarterly newsletter, IMPACT. The newsletter has 6,000 subscribers and shares win-win stories from the field, new developments in the

Communication workshops like this one in Clearwater County have the goal of maintaining a common vision and open lines of communication between all sectors

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SPOG

¹ Principle centered leadership is based on the theory that both personal and professional relationships will be more effective when they are based on solid principles as opposed to distorted values and beliefs. More information is available at www.stephencovey.com/.



DAVE BROWN (community representative of SPOG):
"There are positive things about a lot of this [oil and gas development] too. Local people give me heck for saying this because then they say I'm with industry, but a lot of good things come out of it ... like there are lots of small towns in this area that probably would be pretty near dead if it weren't for the oil and gas industry."

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

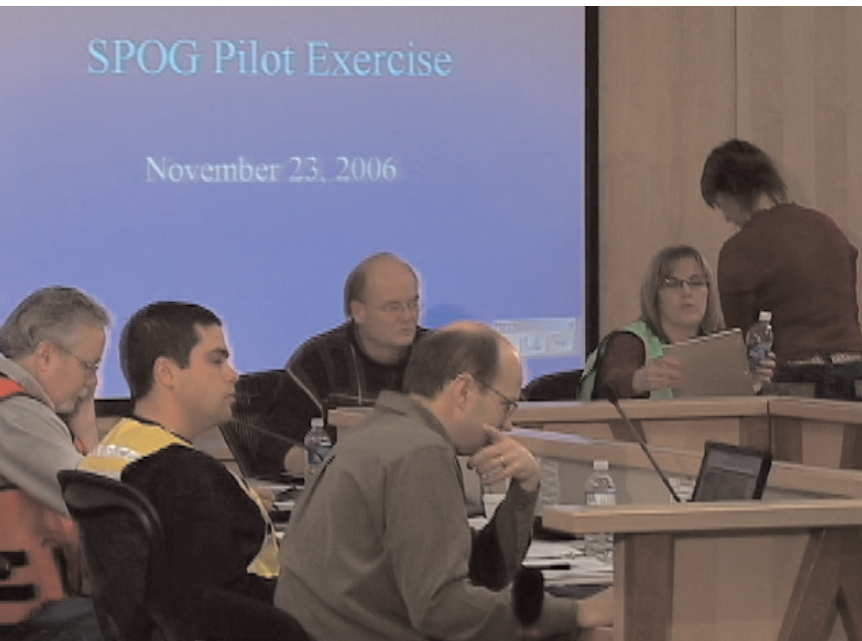
As a result of SPOG's work, the relationship between industry and community has improved greatly since the early 1990s. There have been seven instances where sour gas well applications have gone through the EUB without a hearing, which is nearly unheard of in Alberta. Over 100 public volunteers support the activities of the group. In 2003, SPOG was recognized by the Sundre community as "Ambassador of the Year." SPOG's activities include everything from the popular Community Days, which bring together SPOG member companies and the community to share information and celebrate successes, show support for other synergy groups, and highlight a variety of activities undertaken by working groups. The SPOG working groups focus on specific issue areas such as gas flaring and water quality.

The Caroline "B" Pool working group at SPOG provides one example of the success this collaborative approach has achieved in Sundre. When two companies that were not members of SPOG bought and began to develop wells in the Sundre region, a number of environmental concerns arose within the community. As a result, SPOG representatives from both the companies and the community came together to form the "B" Pool working group. The results of the working group included creating a development plan that was acceptable to both the companies and the community, as well as performance measures that would ensure environmental stewardship and orderly development of the resources. The benefits include an easier

industry, and information on ongoing projects. SPOG is currently looking at other ways of promoting its organizational learning through a synergy support centre and increased web presence. In addition, SPOG holds an annual general meeting, quarterly meetings for the Board of Directors, and subcommittee meetings, which may be held monthly or even weekly, to discuss emerging issues and upcoming events.

Community members and oil and gas workers participate in a workshop in Mountain View County.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SPOG



ALICE MURRAY (Community Affairs Associate - Shell Canada):

"There was a media fellow I had a chat with the other day who was telling me how SPOG is an industry-funded, industry-run thing, just pulling the wool over the eyes of the community. And you know, I don't believe that for a second.... Permission comes from the community, and the partnership has to be mutually beneficial.... We truly sit and listen and sometimes we don't get what we want, but sometimes we get something that we hadn't even thought of."

DAVE BROWN (community representative for SPOG): "A lot of these synergy groups are folding up. The big issue that they formed for is gone. They've learned and they've gotten comfortable, and they know how to deal with things. They don't know what to do anymore so they disband.... So we're looking at becoming more community minded."



process for the companies as they apply to the EUB for permits, heightened environmental protection and performance measures, and improved relationships with local communities. Other successes of the Caroline working group include the adoption of environmental policy recommendations by the provincial government, numerous public presentations and information sessions, and best practices guides for oil and gas companies.

CHALLENGES

The multistakeholder collaborative approach adopted by SPOG presents some challenges for both companies and for communities. The pace of development, the appearance and disappearance of companies, and the buying and selling of companies make it difficult for the group to maintain an accurate list of companies operating in the area. Clearly SPOG cannot recruit companies if it is not aware of their operations within the area. When a complaint or question is logged in the office, it is difficult to determine exactly which company is responsible for the event or structure in question. As the community itself continues to change and grow, SPOG will constantly be tested to find new ways of engaging and integrating members. Ironically, SPOG's success means that in some cases the group has lost company representatives. Janet Marr, the SPOG administrator, notes: "I've had people from companies say to me... SPOG isn't the area we need to concentrate on anymore.... [W]e need to pull our community affairs people and put them up there

where things are active and we need to leave SPOG behind this time because we only have so many man [sic] hours to put towards this type of thing." This represents a real danger, since SPOG's strength, as Dave Brown states, is that all of the stakeholders in the area are "at the table at the same time, hearing the same stories, hearing and learning about each other and their issues." Presence at the table is what has so effectively built the trust and transparency that are integral to SPOG's success.

Companies also face many hurdles. Many medium- and smaller-sized companies struggle to find adequate human resources to address community issues. Attending synergy meetings in every region in which they operate presents a number of logistical and resource challenges. These smaller companies may also balk at paying the fee required to join SPOG, which is linked to the level of production in the SPOG area. Provincial regulations do not mandate that companies join the synergy groups in their operating area. Companies that have not joined SPOG, and that have raised environmental or community concerns, may destroy the delicate trust that has been established in a community, affecting all oil and gas operators in that area. Within a company there may also be uncertainty about the merits of a community partnership; certain employees may be unwilling to embrace the collaborative process, and the model may create tension between those who value the process and those who believe resources should be directed elsewhere.



ALICE MURRAY (Community Affairs Associate – Shell Canada): *We're very aware that SPOG is unique to this community, and another community can't just be SPOG and take SPOG and put it on. Each community has its own uniqueness and has to create its own way of being.*

Finally, SPOG itself continues to face suspicion in both industry and community circles that it is merely a front for industry. Media and community members who are distrustful of industry are quick to criticize instances where they believe SPOG is promoting or supporting oil and gas companies.

The Future

The synergy movement is gaining momentum in Alberta. The SPOG model is being researched and shared by academics and other community groups as an example of successful cross-sector collaboration. SPOG is a founding member of the newly formed Synergy Alberta organization, which will provide tools and support for synergy groups on a provincial scale. However, SPOG members are quick to point out that SPOG cannot be recreated in a new context by following a specific formula. SPOG has succeeded because of the organizations and individuals who have chosen to dedicate their energy to fulfilling SPOG's vision in unique local circumstances.

One of the strengths of SPOG is that its members continue to embrace their

future-focused outlook. Many other synergy groups in Alberta have disbanded after the original issue was resolved. Although the issues of poor communication and mistrust, which catalyzed the founding of the SPOG, have largely been addressed, the organization continues to seek out new ways to maintain relevance and connection within the area. SPOG recently completed a 15 year review using a World Café format. This format allows small groups of people to discuss important issues and then share their collected wisdom as a larger community to develop a co-created understanding of the issue or question and a process or solution. The World Café format enabled members to uncover a new series of interest areas for SPOG. These include educating the community, expanding the emergency response program, increasing the focus on marketing and becoming an environmentally friendly organization.

SPOG has expanded beyond its original mandate in response to the changing local context. While the process-based problem management model has successfully addressed most issues, new technologies, sources of energy and environmental issues will require continued flexibility. As a result of SPOG's clear and frequent communication with all stakeholders, these stakeholders recognize that the landscape is changing. This will allow SPOG to remain relevant and connected by creating new opportunities for organizational learning and growth.

DAVE BROWN (community representative for SPOG):

"We maintain an organization so that if someday some big issue or emergency comes up we can respond to it."

Unlikely Allies

Cross-Sector Partnerships for Sustainable Development

MATTHEW BANKS (Senior Program Office, Private Sector Initiatives – WWF): “Climate Savers demonstrates to opinion leaders and to the business communities... that this is good business, that there is money to be saved and that there is a business case for taking action on climate change sooner rather than later.”

World Wildlife Fund and Catalyst Paper

Saving the Climate Through Collaboration

BACKGROUND

The world’s natural environment is changing significantly as result of human activity. As greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere increase, global surface temperatures are rising as a result. These temperature increases pose several risks, including rising sea levels, more intense rainfall events and tropical storms, a loss of biodiversity and increased economic costs for water, agriculture and forestry management. If we are to address climate change by reducing our production of GHG emissions, we must change the way we live and do business.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF), an international conservation organization, is committed to supporting movement towards more environmentally sustainable business practices. WWF’s interest in reducing carbon emissions is in keeping with its mission – to stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans

live in harmony with nature.¹ WWF recognizes, however, that companies cannot be expected to voluntarily change in ways that will jeopardize their bottom line. Their respect of this fact has been a key to their success in engaging the private sector.

WWF has always taken a collaborative approach to working with the business sector. This is likely a result of its own history: WWF was founded in 1962 by a collective of business people, government officials and scientists. Perhaps as a result of this mix of founding members, the organization has successfully launched a number of partnerships with various sectors and individual businesses. For example, WWF was integral in the creation of the widely respected Forest Stewardship Council, and co-founded the Marine Stewardship Council to monitor and promote sustainable fisheries. In working with a variety of companies across numerous sectors, WWF has developed an appreciation for the potential of cross-sector partnerships, and an understanding of how to leverage their solid international reputation to support change in the private sector.



Delegates from WWF and Climate Savers companies attend the Carbon Management Conference in Paris, France, February 2007. PHOTO: ANDREW KERR, CATALYST PAPER

¹ <http://www.wwf.ca/AboutWWF/WhoWeAre/Default.asp?lang=EN>



The Climate Savers Program

In 1999 WWF established Climate Savers, an initiative aimed at establishing partnerships with innovative companies to help them voluntarily reduce their GHG emissions. Companies that have signed on to the Climate Savers program have been at the forefront of emission reductions in their sectors. By choosing to participate in the program, companies not only reduce their contributions to climate change, they also save millions of dollars and gain a reputation for having an environmental conscience. For example, between 1998 and 2004 IBM achieved savings of over \$115 million in reduced energy costs while avoiding 1.28 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

set goals that are more ambitious than initially suggested. They are then monitored by WWF for compliance with these targets by outside technical experts. The partnership is managed by representatives from both organizations; WWF provides support through advice and by arranging technical advisors, while companies are responsible for making the necessary changes and directing the required actions. The partnership managers are in frequent communication throughout the program.

Climate Savers agreements are formalized with a jointly created Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU outlines the reasons for undertaking the partnership, the areas of focus, and the technical targets that have been set. It also describes how and when the corporate partner may use the WWF logo, and makes clear that partners are not endorsing each others actions beyond the boundaries of the partnership. The MOU also serves as an evaluation tool; by clearly designating emission reduction benchmarks against which success is measured, the partners establish an unambiguous definition of success.



Through the program, WWF acts as a 'turnkey' source for participating companies for GHG emissions reduction target setting and program planning, implementation advice and information sharing. WWF first seeks out progressive companies from a variety of

industries, identifying desirable partners by considering which company within a given sector has the ability to be a leader in its field. In some recent cases companies have sought out WWF to be part of Climate Savers, recognizing the initiative as a leader among corporate GHG reduction programs.

Companies work with WWF to determine in what areas they can best achieve emissions reductions. Goals are negotiated during a series of meetings, and WWF often pushes companies to

Catalyst Paper Joins Climate Savers

Based in British Columbia, Catalyst Paper is one of the world's largest directory paper producers, and the biggest forest products customer in the province. Motivated by the environmental awareness of senior executives, the increase in public attention on carbon emissions and climate issues, and the trust in WWF as a credible environmental NGO, Catalyst began partnering with WWF Canada in 2002. Then Catalyst President, Russell Homer stated that he had "immense respect for WWF – for its vision, its commitment to conservation globally, its col-

WWF's Matthew Banks presents a Climate Savers plaque acknowledging Nike's participation in the program.

PHOTO: ANDREW KERR, CATALYST PAPER



laborative approach to working with all stakeholders and its track record in getting results.”² While the partnership began as a traditional philanthropic relationship (with Catalyst agreeing to contribute \$350,000 over three years to support WWF Canada initiatives in British Columbia), the early success of their partnership built further trust and supported the development of an increasingly involved relationship.

In 2005, Catalyst became the first Canadian company to join WWF’s Climate Savers program. A representative from WWF toured Catalyst’s facilities to ensure appropriate parameters and targets were set in the agreement. Catalyst pledged to reduce its CO₂ emissions to 70% below 1990 levels by 2010.³

According to WWF, this is one of the most ambitious commitments made by a public company to reduce GHG emissions. So far, Catalyst has succeeded in meeting these promises. In 2006 the company had already achieved its emission reduction goals, and it has maintained this level of emissions since.⁴ At the same time the company has saved five million dollars in electricity costs, and cut the use of fossil fuels by 46% between 2002 and 2005, resulting in an additional savings of \$13 million.⁵

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

Representatives from both organizations point to a number of reasons why the partnership between Catalyst and WWF has been so successful. First, both partners recognize that traditional, and often confrontational, interactions with organizations in other sectors fail to create desirable outcomes. Matthew Banks, WWF’s US Senior Program Officer for

Climate Savers, notes that WWF is “an institution that tries to bring solutions to the table, as opposed to naming and shaming companies.” In addition, the partners have developed a clear understanding of their partnership goals and commitments through frequent communication, have maintained corporate support for the partnership at a senior level, and have built upon their history of successful partnership by sustaining a trusting and open approach to interacting with each other. As Graham Kissack, Director of Sustainability at Catalyst, states: “People have to be sincere and genuine in their willingness to work together.” It is precisely this sincerity and openness that has allowed these organizations to build a successful partnership.

CHALLENGES & RISKS

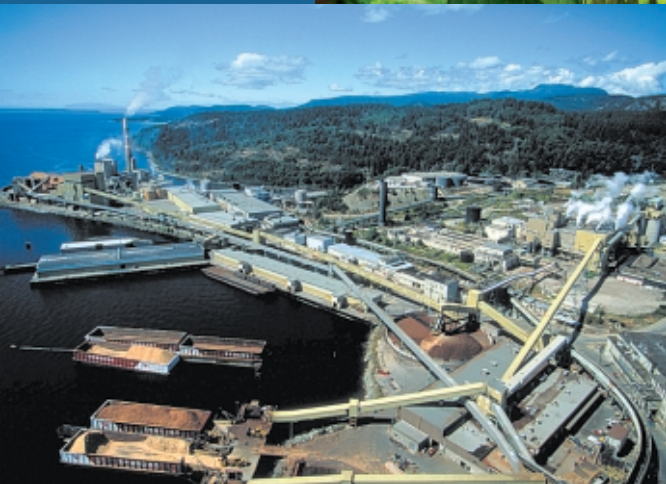
Like any complex relationship, there have been challenges in the development and maintenance of the partnership. Catalyst had been involved in partnerships with other NGOs that resulted in only frustration and paralysis of the partnering process. With certain special interest groups, Kissack states: “it’s not so much about the solution as generating interest in the conflict.... [Y]ou can’t work collaboratively or constructively with a group that’s really trying to undermine the situation.” A lack of transparency and trust across sectors may be exacerbated when there are changes in senior leadership or partnership manager positions. Trust, carefully built between specific individuals in both organizations, isn’t necessarily transferable. Both WWF and Catalyst will need to pay close attention to the partnership as Catalyst undergoes anticipated changes in its senior leadership and

2 <http://www.catalystpaper.com/pdfs/wwf-partnership-dec2002.pdf>

3 http://worldwildlife.org/climate/publications/CS_factsheets_web.pdf

4 http://worldwildlife.org/climate/publications/CS_factsheets_web.pdf

5 http://worldwildlife.org/climate/publications/CS_factsheets_web.pdf



Catalyst joined the Climate Savers program in 2005 and met ambitious commitments to reduce its CO₂ emissions.

PHOTO: CATALYST PAPER

the collaboration as others; some parts of the company are quite traditional in their approach to working with the non-profit sector and may not be supportive of the demands the partnership places on human and financial resources.

The WWF has also faced a number of challenges. One of the most difficult to address is a public perception that programs like Climate Savers are detrimental to the private sector and dangerous for the global economy. As Banks states: “there’s still a lot of rhetoric in political circles... that this will harm business and bankrupt the economy.” The WWF program attempts to address this perception through its successes; participants save money and achieve greater efficiencies. Skepticism around “green washing” is also a challenge to the program’s credibility; as recently as October 2007, the program was attacked in a Business Week article, in which the author claimed that the reduction efforts of member companies do not go far enough along the supply chain, and insinuated that the Climate Savers program is “pay for play.” (Funding for Climate Savers is in fact provided through WWF’s industry program core funds, which comprise contributions from foundations, businesses and individual donors.) The potential for scandal if a partnering company becomes involved

organizational structure. It should also be noted that not all sectors of the company are as supportive of

in an environmental disaster also poses risks to program credibility.

As environmental degradation and global warming continue, the costs associated with implementing a program like Climate Savers will rise, making it increasingly urgent to convince companies to participate now. The lack of sufficient human resources at WWF makes scaling up the program challenging, as do government policies and a regulatory framework unsupportive of ambitious environmental shifts in the private sector.

Partnership Learning

The Climate Savers partnership demonstrates the importance of setting clear, relevant and mutually agreed upon goals at the beginning of a partnership, formalized within an MOU. Further, it shows that taking time for adequate planning before diving into a partnership can pay off, as partners clarify their capabilities, commitments and expectations. These negotiations can take from six months to up to two years before the partnership is formalized. While considerable, as the track record of the program shows, partnerships unfailingly deliver upon their commitments once the framework is in place. Regular communications – every two weeks in some cases – help to keep participants on track. Finally, as with any strategic alliance, Climate Savers shows that brand and reputation matter. The WWF panda is the eighth most recognized brand symbol in world, and an association with it certainly enhances the reputation of member companies among stakeholders. In turn, its credibility allows WWF to push companies to make more aggressive reduction targets than they would have made on their own.

GRAHAM KISSACK (Director of Sustainability – Catalyst Paper): “We sort of needed a fresh set of eyes to challenge us, to help us improve our sustainability performance. The other half of the equation is that they [WWF] bring a certain reputation quality – they have a green halo and they bring that to the table.”

Unlikely Allies

Cross-Sector Partnerships for Sustainable Development

GORD LAMBERT (Vice President, Sustainability – Suncor): “When they created the EUB, it prompted or almost caused stakeholder dialogue to occur because they had this authority and power to have public hearings.... All of the sudden you found that companies and stakeholders were trying to resolve issues and come to an agreement outside of the hearings.”

The Suncor-Pembina Partnership

Mutually Exploring Sustainability

The partnership between Suncor Energy and the Pembina Institute is an example of a cross-sector partnership that provides benefits both for partners and for a much broader stakeholder group.

Suncor Energy is a major energy producer and marketer based in Calgary, Alberta. Suncor pioneered commercial development of the Alberta oil sands in 1967, and has since developed interests in renewable energy, including ethanol and wind power. It was also one of the first energy sector companies in Canada to partner with solution-focused non-profit organizations – organizations like the Pembina Institute.

The Pembina Institute was founded in 1986 by a group of Alberta citizens following the Lodgepole sour gas blowout.¹ The Pembina Institute is committed to finding innovative solutions to energy and environmental issues through research, education, advocacy and consulting, and has been recognized within



The Pembina Institute's early support to Suncor centered around its life cycle value assessment methodology. PHOTO: JEREMY MOORHOUSE, PEMBINA INSTITUTE

the oil and gas industry as a leading non-profit partner in achieving practical sustainable development goals.

BACKGROUND

When Gord met Rob

The tradition of stakeholder engagement in Alberta can be traced back many years. One of the original provincial stakeholder engagement forums was the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB), which was created in 1971. The ERCB's mandate was to regulate energy development in the province, and to conduct public hearings for projects that were especially complicated or divisive.

¹ In 1982 an Amoco Canada sour gas well blew, and burned out of control for 68 days. During this time over four million cubic metres of sour gas flowed per day, with a hydrogen sulphide content of 28 per cent. Two blowout specialists were killed following the accident, and 16 people were hospitalized. At times the rotten-egg smell of the hydrogen sulphide content in the gas could be detected as far away as Winnipeg. For a short description of the accident, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_petroleum_industry_in_Canada (natural_gas).



Rob Macintosh, above, and Gord Lambert developed a personal relationship based on successful collaborations on shared environmental interests.

PHOTO: DAVID DODGE, THE PEMBINA INSTITUTE

safe manner. The EUB is authorized by the provincial government to protect the interests of Albertans with respect to the exploration, development and marketing of these resources; companies must have the EUB's approval before they can begin any extraction work. The EUB also has the power to force public hearings into proposed projects if it thinks that public concern warrants it. Because hearings can significantly increase the costs and timelines associated with a given project, and significantly affect the outcome of an extraction application, companies have a vested interest in avoiding them. This operating reality has historically prompted stakeholder engagement and consultation activities within the oil and gas industry.

The formal partnership work between Suncor and the Pembina Institute emerged from an informal relationship that had developed between two individ-

When the ERCB merged with the public utilities in 1996, the result was the forming of the Alberta Energy Utilities Board (EUB). The EUB's mandate is to ensure that Alberta's mineral and oil and gas resources are developed in a responsible and

TOM MARR-LAING (Senior Associate Consultant, Pembina Institute): "Suncor was one of those companies that we developed a relationship with in the late 1990s. They were making some progressive stands on these issues, so we went in and added a fair amount of value to their analysis, and enabled them to make some progressive and constructive improvements."

uals involved in these stakeholder consultations. Rob Macintosh (one of the founding members of the Pembina Institute) and Gord Lambert (currently the Vice President of Sustainable Development at Suncor) worked together on a number of different projects, beginning with the Clean Air Strategic Alliance process in the early 1990s. They developed a personal relationship as a result of their successful collaborations on shared environmental interests; this relationship created an opening for a more formal organizational-level connection to develop.

The partnership process: key milestones

Suncor and the Pembina Institute had a chance to develop a more formal organizational partnership in 1998 when Suncor submitted its Steepbank mine application to the provincial government for approval. The Pembina Institute saw an opportunity to work with Suncor to develop a more sustainable approach to the mine's development. Suncor and the Pembina Institute were able to negotiate new development goals and alternatives that allowed Suncor to avoid costly legal hearings, increase public acceptance of the project and demonstrate its commitment to triple bottom line objectives. This positive contact allowed Suncor and the Pembina Institute to view each other as competent and trustworthy partners.

A commitment was then made by both organizations to work closely on sustain-

able development goals of mutual concern. Interests were aligned: Suncor wished to be a leader in corporate sustainability, and the Pembina Institute wished to help companies achieve leadership standards. To this end, the Pembina Institute's consulting arm provided Suncor with advice, training and research support on management practices and strategies for sustainability, and grew to serve Suncor as a key external think tank for formulating solutions to complex sustainability challenges. The Pembina Institute's support centered around its life cycle value assessment (LCVA) methodology – a tool to ensure that the environmental, economic and social issues, risks and opportunities are systematically considered throughout the life cycle of a project, product or service. Over several years the Pembina Institute facilitated dozens of LCVA reviews for Suncor projects; indeed, these reviews are now a mandatory part of the company's design process for major capital projects. For its part, Suncor provided the Pembina Institute with sufficient resources and latitude to allow the group to deepen its expertise in LCVA and other components of sustainable business.

The Clean Air Renewable Energy (CARE) Coalition provides another example of a successful partnership between the Pembina Institute and Suncor. The Pembina Institute was instrumental in helping Suncor to articulate the business case for investment in renewable energy. Together, they were able to identify a number of potential benefits and invest-

ment opportunities. In 2000, Suncor publicly committed to investing \$100 million over five years in renewable energy development. Both organizations identified the need for supportive public policy to catalyze Suncor's investment and to encourage other companies to make similar investments. The CARE coalition – comprising 13 companies, eight environmental groups and the Canadian Federation of Municipalities – was formed in 2000 to address this need. This multi-stakeholder initiative aimed to support renewable energy development through advocacy and policy changes. After inviting other organizations from both sectors to join, the CARE coalition successfully lobbied the federal government to create a wind power production incentive program, which subsequently increased production across Canada from 100 MW to over 4,000 MW.

Not unlike the Suncor/Pembina Institute relationship, by being a group of "counterintuitive strange bedfellows" CARE presents its stakeholders with a compelling brand and business case for change.



Gord Lambert, above, Vice President of Sustainability at Suncor provided Pembina with sufficient resources to allow the group to deepen its expertise in LCVA.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SUNCOR

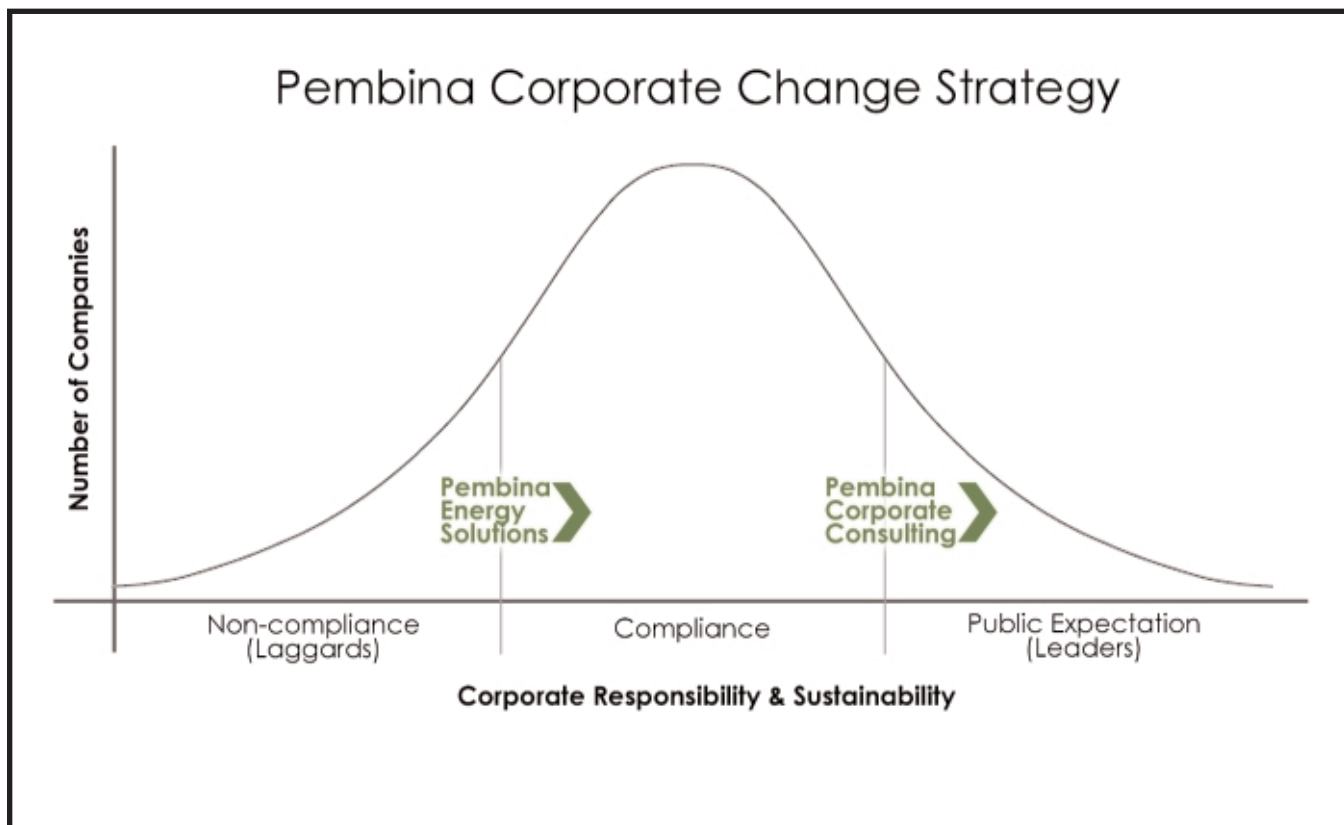


GORD LAMBERT (Vice President, Sustainability – Suncor): “One thing that was characteristic of CARE was a very laser focus on outcomes. One thing I think is really common and has been critical in the Pembina/Suncor relationship is the results-oriented nature of it. We don’t waste time on process if it’s not leading to a clear outcome.”

Within a few short years Suncor’s efforts to become a leader in corporate sustainability drew attention. The company was identified by Corporate Knights magazine as one of the 50 Best Corporate Citizens in 2002, and won an award for the best sustainability report from the North America Awards for Sustainability Reporting in 2004. Today, the company’s core purpose statement refers explicitly to the importance of meeting or exceeding the economic, social and environmental expectations of a broad range of stakeholders.

At the same time, the Pembina Institute has grown into Canada’s largest think tank organization focused on energy and environment issues. Its consulting arm, with a national-level clientele made up of companies and governments spanning various sectors and jurisdictions, serves as a bedrock for promoting the institute’s change objectives.

The traction that the partnership gave both groups was undoubtedly a contributing factor to their individual success.



Pembina Corporate Consulting works with companies that desire to be leaders in corporate responsibility and sustainability.

COURTESY OF THE PEMBINA INSTITUTE

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

The right individuals

A unique mix of individual and organizational characteristics has been responsible for the success of the Suncor/Pembina Institute relationship. Members from both organizations identify the importance of having had the right people at the table who could build trust, understanding and commitment towards their opposite. The “right” people are those who are genuinely committed to finding solutions, to appreciating the needs of the other organization, and to maintaining transparency. They also have relevant knowledge, such as familiarity with life cycle assessment tools that is desirable to the partner organization.

The right drivers

There was also the right mix of drivers. Suncor understood the need to build social and environmental as well as business value, and made a clear commitment to building a culture around this recognition.

From early on, the Pembina Institute viewed Suncor as having the potential to be a leader in its sector, and committed to helping the company fulfill that potential. Part of the Pembina Institute’s strategy for change is to work closely with sector leaders to improve their sustainability performance; at the same time, the institute’s advocacy arm creates disincentives for laggards to maintain the status quo. This “push-pull” strategy, depicted in the figure on page 4, is designed to shift the entire sector toward improved sustainability performance.

Clear expectations and operating principles

Another reason for the success of the partnership between Suncor and the Pembina Institute is the clarification of the partnership’s purpose and goals, as was detailed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by both organizations in 2001. Suncor identifies its interests as securing access to knowledge, testing new eco-efficiency goals and objectives, receiving input and ensuring successful and profitable business projects. The Pembina Institute seeks to advance its long term sustainability objectives by supporting Suncor in the development, monitoring and implementation of sustainability goals, and in promoting corporate responsibility and policy advancement by encouraging positive developments.

The partners’ activities include research, training, assessment and the development of policies and tools. The Pembina Institute may play a different role within each kind of engagement: stakeholder, consultant, joint-venture partner or policy advocate. In some cases, the Pembina Institute will choose to adopt an advocacy role, which may place the partners in direct opposition. The MOU serves to identify each of these potential roles, and clarifies the expectations and outcomes of each type of engagement. It also states that additional agreements will be created for specific projects that will clearly outline the purpose and type of relationship needed for these projects, as well as the objectives agreed upon by



DIANNE ZIMMERMAN (Senior Manager, Issue Management and Stakeholder Engagement – Suncor):
“Suncor’s reputation around sustainability was the reason I was attracted to come and join them.... I believe that you need to reach out to each person individually and provide them with appropriate training on sustainability. We need to create a sustainability culture within Suncor. Much like we did on safety.”

both partners. The clarity surrounding these types of engagement and the expected outcomes creates transparency and builds trust. It also shows that both partners realize the value of flexibility and of knowing where and how they will collaborate.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE COLLABORATION

The matrix of political, environmental and economic forces that act on each organization individually and on the partnership itself has changed. While in the late 1990s Suncor was a pioneer in Alberta oil sands development, it is now one player among many. The rapid pace of development in the oil sands, and the environmental implications of this development, has prompted the Pembina Institute to at times take an aggressive advocacy role. When bilateral discussions on a Suncor expansion broke down in 2006, the two groups ended up on opposite sides of a table in a regulatory hearing into the expansion.

The fact that the Pembina Institute may take a public and oppositional stance to

some of Suncor’s projects or policies can obviously put strains on the relationship. While this reality is acknowledged in the MOU, what is on paper does not necessarily preclude these instances from being uncomfortable for either organization. As with any good partnership, following the 2006 hearing the groups took the time to explore why their discussions failed to reach agreement and what to change for next time.

Still, with a 10-year history of collaboration, both Suncor and the Pembina Institute continue to work together to achieve sustainable development goals of mutual interest. In 2007 the Pembina Institute provided Suncor with research into an emerging biofuel technology, while Suncor was a key sponsor for a national workshop the institute hosted on effective carbon pricing. In early 2008 the Pembina Institute, with the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) as its co-facilitator, will deliver sustainability training to hundreds of Suncor major project employees, leaders and content experts. Through this new project, Suncor and the Pembina Institute will continue to deepen their novel, pragmatic alliance.