

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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**EXPERIENCING A PLACE
ENVISIONING A LANDSCAPE
EMPOWERING A PEOPLE**

THE STORY OF DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY VENTURE WITH THE SIKSIKA NATION YOUTH ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

BY

CATHERINE MICHELLE LONG

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University

of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

of

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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Canada

**experiencing a place
envisioning a landscape
empowering a people**

*The Story of Developing a Community Venture with the
Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society*

A Practicum Submitted to the Department of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Landscape Architecture
in the Department of Landscape Architecture

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

By

Catherine Michelle Long

Autumn 1999

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abstract

As part the ongoing effort of the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society to encourage business training and educational opportunities for the youth of the Siksika reserve, a project to develop a business incubation facility and supporting landscape was initiated.

Through a process which evolved from listening to, and learning with, the Siksika youth about their land, their community, their elders and about entrepreneurialism, the designer and the youth, gained knowledge which enabled them to mutually define experiential goals which were desired of the facility and lands. From these goals the vision arose to use the lands for a community garden venture, to be operated by Siksika youth to serve their community.

In order to realize this vision, the process continued to evolve with the development of the garden. The youth and the designer conducted a research and feasibility study, worked at existing community gardens, prepared a business plan and organizational structure and prepared the lands for a 3 acre garden. A celebratory opening day saw the Siksika community, the Siksika Chief and Council, elders and school children all participate in the planting of trees and the tilling of the land.

This process will continue to evolve, and the vision will continue to grow, as the youth proceed with the operation, management and creation of their community market garden.

acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Adrian Stimson Jr., the founder and facilitator of the *Business Without Borders* program. His enthusiasm for this project and his unwavering belief in its potential was a great source of inspiration.

I would like to give special thanks to the *Business Without Borders* youth and to the people of the Siksika Nation for welcoming me into their community and sharing this experience with me. I will take all that I have learned with them into future endeavours in my life.

I wish to thank my advisor, Professor Ted McLachlan for his guidance and encouragement of the project and to also thank Dr. Rae Bridgman and Professor Wanda Wuttunee for their support and assistance.

Special thanks to Kathryn Amos, Genevieve Freeman, Yvonne Landon, Jennine Long, Arezoo Shafizadeh, Sean Timmons, and Ted Knude for their friendship and support.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Jean and Michael Long, and to siblings Jennine, Steven, Anita, and Brian.

Empowerment is essentially a capacity to define clearly one's interests, and to develop a strategy to achieve those interests. It's the ability to create a plan or program to change one's reality in order to obtain those objectives or interests. Power is not a thing, it's a process. In other words, you shouldn't say that a group has power, but that, through its conscious activity, a group can empower itself by increasing its ability to achieve its own interests.

Manning Marable, *Crisis of Color and Democracy*

Directions in hand, I arrive. For a brief moment the sun finally shows his face. Since the TransCanada dipped south about 20km back, I've been watching for him, hanging somewhere low in the western sky.

There really wasn't much danger of getting lost. Just as Adrian said, "About one hour east on the TransCanada, take the Siksika/Gleichen exit and head 3km south until you see the sign for the high school." Having grown up in Toronto, I had been accustomed to the storylike instructions needed to find your way: Turn left here, now drive until the third set of lights, then make a right turn, drive eight blocks, and on and on. Although I was now at its' opposite end, I had learned through studio projects and field work in prairie towns of southern Manitoba, that finding a destination on the prairies was usually a simple affair.

Attempting to distract my nerves and anxiety, I was trying to coax the sun into setting even the faintest shadows. Without them, this grey screen of winter sky and the snow covered prairie just blend into one. I was going to the Siksika Nation for the first time to begin my practicum project with the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society, a youth entrepreneurial program. I have never worked directly with First Nations people before, only assisting with some research for two Manitoba First Nations, while working at a landscape architecture and planning firm in Winnipeg.

In my childhood 2-3 weeks of every summer were spent at Aunt Marg's cottage on Lovesick Lake, apparently so named for a white fisherman who had been refused a local native girl's hand in marriage. We would barely be out of the car before the two Indian boys

from next door, Larry and Max, were there to fill us in on all the details of the past year. They knew the five restless Long kids were always a captive audience for the newest secrets - the best place to catch fish this summer, what the wild blueberry pickings were like on the island, where some cottager had tied a new rope swing, and the stories of the bears which would wonder across the frozen lake in winter. They were quite pleased to be able to be the ones to provide it.

After I turned off the highway I neared a town called Gleichen. My eyes still trying to coax that sun, were drawn toward three grain elevators in the distant west, their vibrant colours so obvious against barren branches and the dim grey of winter sky. I am quite anxious as I turn off at the exit thinking about all the stuff I've outlined to do, and I say to myself "Just get to know them first, then worry about the project." As I cross over the railroad tracks a sign on the other side reads "You are now entering the Siksika Nation". On my left I noticed a gas station and a rather plain looking, square one storey cream building. From the FoodTown and the Bank of Montreal and the sign it appears to be a small mall and the Administration Building. To the far right past an open field there were a few scattered houses. I know the reserve is large, something like 180,000 acres so I'm not really sure what part I'm in. I think it must be the main townsite. Passing a "Medicine Lodge", a hospital I guess, and a few other buildings, I continue down the road.

At the four way stop there's a police station on the southwest corner. As I look to the left and right I wonder where this road would take me. To the left it seems to just follow power lines off to the never-ending distance, but to the right I notice more scattered homes

and a dark brick building which looks quite out of place with the surrounding environment. I wonder if that was a residential school.

I turned right at the new high school sign. As Adrian said, "You can't miss it." There are two yellow school buses in front of the building... As I enter the building, passing through the flood of students who can't seem to be getting away fast enough, I am aware of the many curious glances in my direction. I figure a pale blue-eyed redhead is probably not a common sight around here. However this reserve is only an hour from Calgary and judging by the abundance of Nike swirls and Adidas stripes I see around me, they aren't living a sheltered life.

I am quite struck by the modern architecture of the high school, it stands out from all the other buildings I've seen. Built in 1996 the High School has a warm and inviting atmosphere. Right now it is bustling with activity – school has just finished for the day, and the atmosphere is typical of what all high school halls are like at that time. It's interior is bright and spacious dominated by the central open space which overlooks the eating/gathering space below and above is the glass tipi-shaped skylight, which I noticed as I turned the road to come in. The painted rails are forged in the shape of the sun...hey, the sun!...painted blue, red and yellow. How different from the dark military green of my high school. That colour blessed every

locker, kilt and sweater of every girl who once walked its halls. Its interior was dominated by long obscure J, K L, M corridors that every new student, in their first few days, could not possibly have navigated without the use of a map.

“Where is Ms. Landon’s classroom?” I ask a young boy sporting a Nike ballcap. A quick point indicates it to be one of the doors which line the exterior of the central space. This is where Adrian said the Business Without Borders class would be. What I notice immediately upon entering, and almost in oblivion to the people, is the configuration of the desks. As opposed to all lined up and facing the blackboard, or grouped in small clusters of four, as I had experienced in my school days, they are arranged in a complete circle. A circle, so that as opposed to focusing on the blackboard, the students, which I’ve now noticed are staring at me, focus inward and towards their peers. The teacher’s desk is in a corner of the room, but I wonder if she too sits with the students in the circle during class.

Adrian is already here. One by one, he goes around the circle and introduces me to everyone. First to two teachers I am told volunteer with the program, Ms. Yvonne Landon and Mr. Vern Gray, and then to the students...Brad Bull Bear, Nikki Black Kettle, Lindsey Yellow Horse, Shane Calf, Waylon Yellow Old Woman, Lisa Mary Bears, Charles Heaby, and Toni Running Rabbit. With shy, half raised heads the students nod and say “hello.” I’m so enthralled by their names...Black Kettle, Bull Bear, Running Rabbit, that it takes me a moment....

I, Michelle Long, finally reply hello, and taking the chair closest to me, join everyone in the circle

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>And so my story begins...</i> | 1 |
| <i>the objectives and the process...</i> | 5 |
| <i>the practice and the principles...</i> | 7 |
| ➤ <i>the setting of the story...</i> | 11 |
| ➤ <i>the idea...</i> | 23 |
| ➤ <i>the beginning...</i> | 25 |
| Elizabeth Brabec, A Culturally Sensitive Approach to Design and Planning with Native Communities | 29 |
| ➤ <i>listening and learning...</i> | 35 |
| <i>beginning to understand the real issues...</i> | 41 |
| <i>defining the real problem to be solved...</i> | 45 |
| ➤ <i>education and outreach...</i> | 51 |
| Chester Sprague, Amerindian Communities: Towards a Life of Unity and Environment | 55 |
| <i>learning about the land</i> | 60 |
| <i>business education trips</i> | 63 |
| <i>gathering site data</i> | 69 |
| <i>community workshop</i> | 73 |
| <i>elders workshop</i> | 79 |
| <i>learning about siksika youth</i> | 85 |
| ➤ <i>defining the goals for the enterprise centre and lands...</i> | 95 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| ✦ <i>uncovering our vision...</i> | 103 |
| Randolph Hester, Community Design: Making the Grassroots Whole | 110 |
| ✦ <i>proposal for developing a business venture on the land...</i> | 115 |
| ✦ <i>exploring the possibility of a market garden venture...</i> | 119 |
| <i>research and feasibility study for a market garden at siksika...</i> | 121 |
| ✦ <i>the vision for a market garden venture at siksika...</i> | 129 |
| <i>a place of education, employment and business training</i> | 130 |
| <i>community oriented</i> | 132 |
| <i>giving youth a positive role</i> | 135 |
| <i>building design</i> | 136 |
| <i>reverance for the land</i> | 138 |
| <i>historically and culturally relevant</i> | 139 |
| <i>agriculture and the siksika nation</i> | 141 |
| The Evangeline Co-operatives | 145 |
| ✦ <i>development of the market garden venture at siksika...</i> | 149 |
| <i>business plan and financing</i> | |
| <i>organizational structure</i> | |
| <i>land development</i> | |
| <i>developing an image and a name for the garden</i> | |
| <i>visits to CSAs and community gardens</i> | |
| <i>visions of First Light Gardens</i> | |

| | |
|---|-----|
| ✦ <i>groundbreaking day...</i> | 167 |
| <i>the stories which followed...</i> | 177 |
| ✦ <i>In Conclusion.</i> | 181 |
| <i>lessons of the practicum...</i> | 182 |
| <i>reflecting on the process...</i> | 197 |
| Marie Kennedy, Transformative Community Planning: Empowerment Through Community Development | 200 |
| ✦ <i>First Light Gardens...</i> | 205 |
| ✦ <i>appendix a</i> | 209 |
| ✦ <i>references</i> | 223 |

A n d s o m y s t o r y b e g i n s . . .



And so my story begins...

This is the story of my experience assisting aboriginal youth of the Siksika First Nation of Alberta with the process of envisioning a landscape and creating a place for their future.

The practicum is the recounting of that process and will demonstrate how this process has become the basis for these youth to establish themselves in the changing order of their community, and has built their capacity to contribute and participate in the development and planning of their own community. In doing so, they have become more involved and empowered members of the community and are developing a sense of identity and purpose for their future.

The framework for the project is based on the proposition that the way of creating a "sense of place" has very little to do with imposing a pre-packaged solution on the land. Rather, it has to do with understanding the nature of places as a precursor to working purposeful change. It has to do with uncovering and motivating the essence of a culture and the underused resources of a people, and with enabling people to create change for themselves. It requires challenging people to expand their horizons and it requires framing alternatives for people that go beyond traditional design and planning to include education strategies and economic development. It believes,

The true role of design is to sow the seeds by which local processes take off by themselves-doing as little as possible for maximum benefits. It is therefore, of a very different order from that which is imposed from above as design form (Hough, 1989).

The framework for the practicum is also founded on a view of architecture that goes beyond, “ the art or science of designing and constructing buildings”. It is a view provided by Peter Nabokov and Robert Easton in their book, “Native American Architecture”. In the book, they provide an extensive examination of North American Indian dwellings, structures and villages. However, more importantly they examine the role, which this architecture played in American Indian life. Through their visits to most of the tribal areas of North America they came to gain an appreciation for the deeper meanings of these places, and

...began to understand how different forces-economic, ecological, social, technological, historical and religious-contributed to the outward appearance and unseen significance of Indian architecture (Nabokov, 1989).

Given their experiences and observations, they believe that the term “architecture”,

...refers to more than just the design and decoration of buildings. It embraces what happens whenever human thought or action makes order and meaning of random space: naming places, designating sacred places of “wilderness”, clearing village areas and garden plots, claiming food gathering areas, planning and constructing buildings, and arranging the spaces that surround and connect them. Finally, it includes the often unseen social and religious meanings which are encoded into buildings and spatial domains (Nabokov, 1989).

Tribal architecture, as anthropologist Walter Goldschmidt puts it,

...is responsive as much to the inner environment of cultural presupposition and social interaction, as it is to the external environment of wind and weather (Nabokov, 1989).

In keeping with this view, the work with the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society (SNYEDS) is the attempt to create a space which is responsive to the inner environment of the Siksika youth, to their environment of culture, and to the social interactions within their community.

Today, First Nation's people of Canada are defining a new social, economic, and cultural order for themselves, both within their local communities, in urban centres, and in the national and international realm. Having been marginalized, discriminated against and limited access to mainstream economic activity they are now turning inwards and discovering the strengths within their culture, land and their people. Through increased land claims, self-governance, and the growing recognition of the value of traditional knowledge, First Nation's people are choosing to assert and direct their own future. These choices are creating many changes in their communities and on the landscapes of First Nation's people.

This practicum is about one of those choices. It is about an aboriginal youth organization of the Siksika Nation of Alberta who, looking to create more opportunity for the youth of the Siksika Nation and their future, proposed to build a business incubator, called the Enterprise Centre. They desired to use their lands as the place, which could support business education initiatives of the Centre as well as serving as the setting/foundation of the Enterprise Centre.

It was an honour to be asked to assist the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society in this endeavour. However not being of First Nation's descent, or having a familiarity of reserve life or an awareness of the youth and their business program, *Business Without Borders*, I realized, would pose some interesting challenges as well as opportunities for the practicum.

Given my belief that places intended for people should be designed and planned in the reality of the people they are for, I committed myself to learning about the Siksika people, and the *Business Without Borders* program, before I would attempt to create change on their land. As Kirkpatrick Sale, Patrick Geddes and J.B. Jackson all profess, a designer must be committed to understanding the social and natural processes of the place, as well as how people use different places to fulfill the practical needs of living. It was with this commitment that I set the stage for the story that is to follow. A story that provided me an experience beyond anything I could have imagined.

the objectives and the process...

Given the framework of the practicum and the commitment I had outlined, I set out the following objectives for the practicum:

- To facilitate (design and plan) the development of a working landscape for the *Business Without Borders* Enterprise Centre
- To develop the working landscape in a manner that is in keeping with the educational and skill training objectives of the *Business Without Borders* program
- To seek out a methodology which is appropriate to cross-cultural planning and design, and which strives to incorporate youth within the process
- To apply that methodology to the development of the working landscape.

However, what would become the story of this practicum is not the achievement of these goals but the process and the means by which these goals were achieved.

The process did not evolve out of a predefined methodology. Instead, founded in the commitment to respond to the realities of this people and place, the process evolved within a framework of beliefs, and principles that grew from continually integrating and engaging with the youth and the community. It was through this transactive and transpersonal relationship

that the process was able to respond to the idiosyncracies and nuances of the Siksika youth and their place. So just as this story will unfold for you as you read it, so to did the process unfold for us as we moved through it.

By participating with the youth, learning from the community, and teaching youth about the land, I, in conjunction with the youth, could address the real issues to be solved. We could mutually define the means and experiences of a process, that were appropriate to the needs of Siksika youth.

This approach challenged my past experiences and understanding of landscape architecture. It required me to learn from and with the community, to be willing to attempt to understand their values and most importantly to be willing to invest the time to do so. I found myself to be more of a facilitator, encouraging the youth to discover for themselves what was needed, than a leader of the development process. In this role I also found myself to be a teacher, a student, a learner, and a listener.

the practice and the principles...

Although the process which evolved in this practicum and the role I undertook were specific to the Siksika youth and their community, ideals of similar attitudes and beliefs to approaching design and planning in this manner have been advocated by many landscape architects, architects and planners. Often named by different terms, such as transformative community planning, place appropriate development, responsive planning, and socially just design, they all have a belief in the importance of the relationship between planner/designer and the community, and a belief that the process of design should be based in the reality of people and their place, in order that culturally and regionally appropriate places are created.

Following are some of the principles that these approaches aspire to:

a. Designing with the community rather than for them

Rather than experts imposing design solutions based on expected market performance, the challenge is to enable individuals and empower groups to frame the issue.

b. A commitment to process over product

The challenge is to rebuild the social, economic and physical infrastructure of a community.

c. A commitment to inclusion

To develop planning principles and architectural practices which discover the greater knowledge that arises from the many different voices within a community. The process and design should strive to include local resources and history and culture in them.

d. Empower individuals to have more control over their life structures

Community design tries to empower people, particularly those less powerful members of society, so that people can have more control over their home, work and lives.

e. Build local resources

Encourage participation and involvement of local assets so that benefits accrue to the community and place.

f. A commitment to recognize the economic and social realities of a place and to address those in the design and planning process.

Throughout the course of this story I will profile a number of planning approaches and principles that demonstrate the application of these ideals as well as discuss how their thinking parallels that of this project. Approaches that will be discussed are:

1. *Elizabeth Brabec's "Responsive Planning Approach" to design with other cultures*
2. *Randolph Hester's work in community planning and design: "Place Appropriate Development"*
3. *Chester Sprague's work with Amerindians in the United States*
4. *The Evangeline Co-operatives Approach*
5. *Marie Kennedy's discussion of "Transformative Community Planning"*

Although none of these approaches were followed as a methodology for this practicum, all have as their basis a transactive design process, as well as a belief in building the capacity of the communities in which the development takes place. I use them to demonstrate other designers' beliefs and practices of similar principles. More than methods to follow, they served as guides to affirm the approach which evolved from my involvement with the Siksika youth, community and their land. And without realizing it, the way the process evolved is actually in keeping with how aboriginal peoples have traditionally viewed the process of life. Just as our process was continually becoming, the traditional native beliefs of holism and personalism see life as a culturally shaped human process of being and becoming.

The doing that characterizes the Native way is a doing that concerns itself with being and becoming a unique person, one fully responsible for one's life and actions within family and community. Finding one's path and following it is a characteristic Native enterprise that leads to or makes for the attainment of inner and outer balance. This is in marked contrast with general western doing, which tends and strains toward having, objectifying, and manipulating every one and every thing it touches (Dickason, 1996).

"For a long time, our people have orated about a unique, well-functioning, sophisticated culture and part of that was the elders' storytelling. That was their communication and education system.

**Russell Wright,
Blackfoot Elder**

I have chosen storytelling for presenting the practicum. The use of storytelling is adopted from the Siksika people, who have traditionally used storytelling as a learning strategy—a tool to teach information believed to have value to everyday life.

Storytelling was often used to provide real-life examples or analogies for individuals in what they needed to learn at the time (Dickason, 1996).

It is my hope that in revealing my experiences to you, I may be able to demonstrate the qualitative value of this experience, and as importantly, to share with you what “living” the story has taught me.

the setting of the story...

Before the story can be told, the context within which the story takes place must be understood. This context goes far beyond the Siksika Nation youth's need for an Enterprise Centre. It extends to include the Siksika Nation, and the economic, political and social status of First Nations in Canada today, and most importantly how these changes are affecting the development of the people and lands of the Siksika reserve.

Present day Siksika Nation

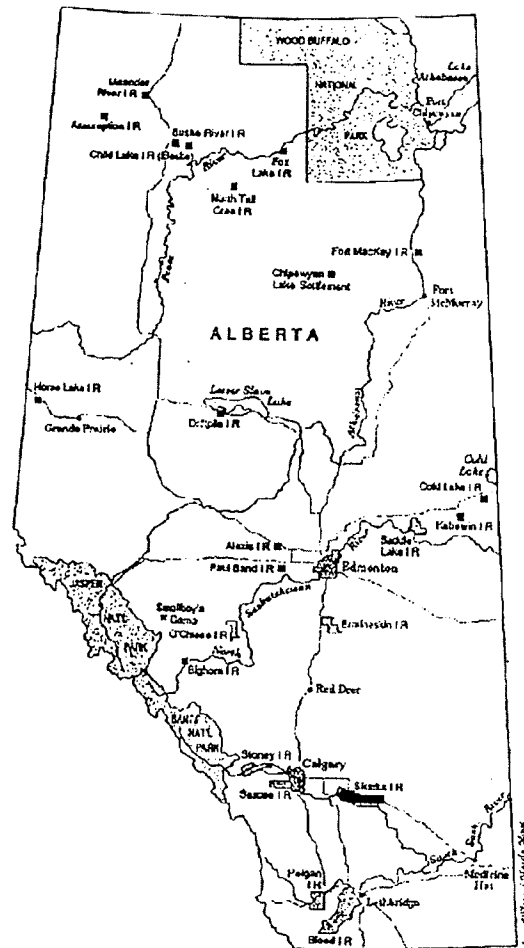
The Siksika Nation, Blackfoot Indian reserve no.146, is located in the semi-arid region of southern Alberta, approximately 90 km east of Calgary on the TransCanada Highway. It is the second largest reserve in Canada and encompasses 178,580 acres stretching along both sides of the Bow River. The Nation is bounded on the north by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Small communities are scattered throughout the reserve, the largest being the Siksika Nation townsite that is adjacent to the town of Gleichen.

Total membership in the Siksika Nation was 4849 at year-end 1997, with 3115 of those residing on the reserve. (Indian Register, 1997). The available labour force on the reserve exceeds 1000. However, sixty-five percent of these people are currently unemployed. The majority of this labour force are youth.



Sik-si-kah',
whose literal
translation
means "black
feet", were so
called because
their moccasins
were usually
black from the
soot of prairie
fires.

Johnston 1987, 9



The majority of employment on the reserve is provided by the Siksika Nation Tribal Administration, which employs a total of 155 people. The Administration provides services including Native Government, Education and Community Services to members living on the Nation (Business Without Borders Sponsorship Proposal, 1996). Employment is also provided by Siksika Resource Developments Limited (SRDL), which was developed to pursue and manage all economic development projects on the reserve. SRDL's subsidiaries include the Siksika Economic Development Corporation (SEDCO), the Siksika Corporation for Agricultural Development (SCAD) and Siksika Energy Resource Company. Siksika Resource Developments Limited encourages the development of projects in the areas of commerce, industry, agriculture, tourism, and oil and gas. The balance of employment on the reserves provided by local business, trades, and services.

First Nations in Canada

The Siksika Nation, like many other First Nations in Canada are beginning to reassert themselves by gaining ownership and control over their lands and their resources. In essence they are attempting to slowly rebuild a new social and economic order for themselves. This order has its foundation in the traditional culture of First Nation's people, but incorporates modern notions.

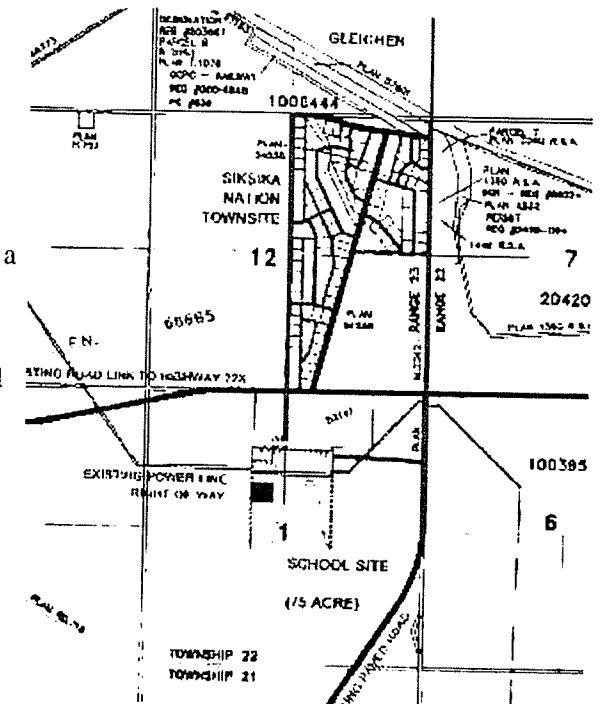
Today, a new generation of native people is not only intent on re-establishing their heritage but also coming to terms with their identity. It will be a modern community, for the native people realize they cannot turn back the clock, nor do they want to. The goal is not to return to the past, but to live in the present with a knowledge and pride in their heritage (Brabec, 1984).

Since the 1970's aboriginal peoples' political and economic influence has been growing in Canada. This new, although limited, autonomy provides aboriginal peoples with a new economic, cultural, and social sustainable future. It is argued that change for the coming generations of aboriginal peoples is likely to be as dramatic as the change from the fur trade to an industrialized economy.

Aboriginal societies will have a very new face. The reasons for this include:

- Self governance: aboriginal peoples and communities will be controlling and influencing the major structures and processes which affect their lives. This includes government, education and economic and social development, to name a few.
- The family structure and social institutions will be primarily western in structure but with adaptations or processes based on aboriginal traditions or philosophies. Organizations, as opposed to community will become the major means by which individual and collective needs are met.
- There will be a positive reassertion of aboriginal identity. Aboriginal people will approach the world with a new confidence and will want to be recognized and live as aboriginal people.
- A large number of aboriginal people will live in urban centres, desiring the consumer goods and material life. They may not have the emotional and spiritual attachments to the land their ancestors did, and will not live in an awareness of the traditions of their culture (Newhouse, 1992)

Siksika Nation Townsite



Source: Bathoury and Associates, 1994

What is of interest to this practicum is the way in which these changes will affect the youth and will impact the development of form and spaces for aboriginal people.

In the past, external policies interfered with aboriginal approaches to development. Traditionally, the construction, development and perceptions of places were inextricably tied to the social order and economic order of the community. These places within the community served as the settings within which the social and economic order was reinforced and expressed.

Tribal social organization contributed to the outward form of communities. Although local resources might restrict the size of a community, or climate might restrict the materials used, social rules governed which tipi individuals resided in, the size of tipis and their spatial relationships.

The way in which tribal people arranged their spaces and used their dwellings reflected the way they organized their society as a whole. Architecture, then, was a principal tool for socialization—a means by which members of a tribe learned rules of behaviour and a particular worldview (Nabokov, 1989).

With the arrival of a colonizing people and subsequent history of federal control of the institutions and processes of aboriginal peoples, the connection between built form and spaces, and the social, economic and cultural roles of aboriginal peoples was lost. They lost control over the development of their places due to the implementation of numerous top down

planning programs. These were created in isolation of the aboriginal culture and only served to supercede the economic and social order of their community and to further destroy their culture. Their patterns of life, which to a large extent dictated the way spaces evolved, formed and were used, were destroyed or altered. Therefore, they lost a sense of ownership over the development of places and thus lost their sense of identity that had traditionally come from the places they occupied.

With a better understanding of the importance of the environment to the physical and social ordering of the Siksika people one can better understand the reason why most development programs which have been implemented have not worked. They are not linked to the social and economic ordering of native peoples. Native peoples do not have control over the dynamics by which those programs function. Thus, by not having ownership of these places, they do not have any connection of self to these 'places' and therefore have little care or concern for them. This evidenced by the state of reserves, which grew increasingly dismal over the years of these topdown planning approaches. (For a detailed discussion of the environmental perception of people as it relates to design and planning with First Nations people, see Elizabeth Brabec's work, "A Culturally Sensitive Guide to Planning and Design with Native Canadians")

However, with growing native self-determination, aboriginally directed and owned developments are increasing and top down planning and development approaches are decreasing. Even the shift of the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs from a governance and regulatory position to one of a consolatory branch signals a change in the federal approach to aboriginal development. As more barriers to aboriginal controlled development are removed and assistance initiatives and programs increased, the potential for innovation of aboriginal peoples in production, environment and employment creation

increases. However the degree to which these innovations will truly benefit aboriginal peoples depends on how well the processes and methods, through which the development occurs, are in keeping with a true understanding of the contemporary values and goals of aboriginal peoples and their communities.

In Canada there are a number of excellent examples where this is happening. Many aboriginal communities are employing traditional knowledge and new technologies to initiate sustainable development. They are developing new ways of achieving sustainable development based on their own value and knowledge.

They are effectively integrating elders' advice and using consensus decision-making, participate community-based development, partnerships with stakeholders, and capacity building for holistic ecosystem management (Dickason, 1996).

At the Dene Cultural Institute in Hay River, NWT the *Traditional Dene Environmental Knowledge Pilot Project* was established in 1987 to preserve and promote Dene culture through research and education. Because of its link to culture and land, traditional environmental knowledge was the focus of the project, which has been a major contributor to methods of documenting knowledge, community participation, training and partnering with other institutions. Through this project, traditional environmental knowledge is being integrated with western science for developing future resource management programs.

In Iqaluit, an Inuit town in the Baffin region, the development of a treatment center provides an excellent example of a design process through which the native people re-established local control over development projects. They were an essential part of the building and site decisions: elders dictated programming and requirements; the construction of the building initiated a local stone industry, developed and managed by the native people in Iqaluit; edible plants are to be grown to provide fresh produce to the community; and a designer training program has been initiated to train native peoples as future designers for their own communities. The proposals made are small in scale and can be implemented incrementally, allowing native peoples themselves to participate in its building and to continue to exert control over their development (Hough, 1989).

In my experience I have also seen a rapidly growing surge of aboriginal peoples, institutions and businesses into large-scale industries. In addition to numerous resource-based projects, such as tourism, forestry, oil and gas, hydroelectric projects, there are also participating in manufacturing and information technology sectors, often in the international realm.

All of these development initiatives are founded on the belief that development which aboriginal peoples control, share in which they share decision-making, and build on traditional knowledge will spawn their prosperity, strengthen their culture, and generate employment.

In a sense, aboriginal peoples are completing a circle. As they are gradually regaining control and management of large tracts of land, they are returning to a place where they are once again creating their own social and economic order. They want the construction, development and perceptions of these places to be based on their traditional knowledge, culture and values.

It is on these beliefs that the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society (SNYEDS) decided to pursue the development of an Enterprise Centre. By concerning themselves with empowering aboriginal youth, they are addressing the capacity of these future leaders to manage and further pursue the projects and the responsibilities borne of today's decisions.

In response to this, the work with the SNYEDS will attempt to create a place which is responsive to the inner environment of the Siksika youth, to their environment of culture, and to the social and economic realities of their reserve

SIKSIKA NATION YOUTH ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

The Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society is a not-for-profit charitable organization which is committed to providing skill development and entrepreneurial education to the youth of the Siksika Nation of Alberta. The Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society was developed in response to a number of factors:

1. THE LARGE UNEMPLOYED YOUTH LABOUR FORCE OF THE SIKSIKA NATION.

The population of the nation is 4,849. Of this population, 3115 live on the reserve, of which 54 percent are below the age of 24 years. The majority of the 900 person labour force are youth and 65 percent of this labour force is currently unemployed.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Youth dominates native population

GRANT ROBERTSON
CALGARY HERALD

As Canada's population becomes increasingly grey haired, a report by the provincial government suggests that Alberta's aboriginal community is experiencing the opposite.

More than 80 per cent of Alberta's aboriginal population is below the age of 40 with nearly half of all 165,000 aboriginals in the province under the age of 20, says a June 1998 report recently released by the province.

Based on data collected during the 1996 Canadian census, the report indicates just four per cent of the aboriginal population is above the age of 60, compared to 13 per cent for the province's non-aboriginal population. And those numbers, consistent with similar data compiled in 1991, point to an alarming trend in their community, say aboriginal leaders.

THE ISSUE

Average age of aboriginal population.

■ **WHAT'S NEW:** Native leaders fear high percentage of youth signals social problems.

"It means we don't have that many elders to teach with," said Chief Pat White, who heads the Urban Indians of Calgary and works with urban aboriginal youth in the city. "They're dying off faster as a result of heavy drinking patterns and hard living," she said.

While the report itself avoided any speculation as to why the aboriginal population has become dominated by youth, White said the numbers reflect a family planning crisis for native communities.

"We have children having children. I've seen mothers as young as 13 and some have had three babies by the time they're 18," she said.

Tsuu T'ina Nation administrator Darryl Crowchild has not seen a copy of the report and reserved comment, but he said the findings are consistent with the demographics in his community.

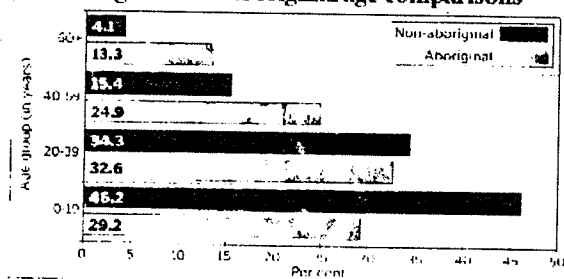
"It's a hard question to answer. I really don't know why," he said.

Dave Hancock, provincial Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, said the report doesn't attempt to answer questions of demographics, but tries to give the government a better idea of how to address aboriginal communities. "This will have an impact, but whether it's planning children's services, schools, housing, it's difficult to say," he said.

"It would be fair to say the aboriginal population on average doesn't enjoy the same socio-economic status as the general population in Alberta. That's something we need to look at."

Alberta's aboriginal community now numbers 164,855 people, which the re-

Aboriginal/non-aboriginal age comparisons

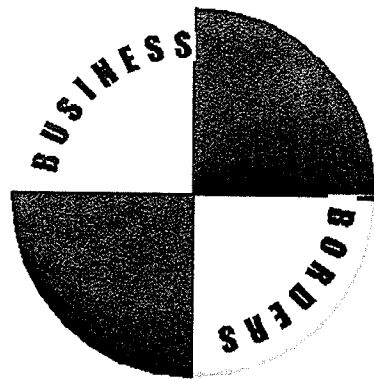


Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 census

port categorizes as North American Indians, Metis and Inuit. It makes up six per cent of Alberta's total population. There are 22,410 aboriginals in Calgary,

about 27 per cent of city residents.

Most Alberta natives live in the province's major centres, with 21 per cent in Edmonton and 14 per cent in Calgary.



WHITE: north, elder, wisdom

RED: west, adult, knowledge

BLACK: south, youth, challenge

YELLOW: east, infant, curiosity

2. THE INCREASING NUMBER OF LAND CLAIM AND SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY BEING NEGOTIATED THROUGHOUT CANADA WITH NATIVE GROUPS AND THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT.

These agreements offer exciting opportunities for increased economic self-reliance and cultural renewal within native communities as well as profound business and strategic marketing opportunities for native business. These social and economic changes bring a clear challenge to natives, to rapidly cultivate enhanced business and management skills within Native communities, and to prepare/empower their young to bear this responsibility.

In 1992, the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society developed a program entitled *Business Without Borders*. This is an integrated training and incubation program developed for native youth living on reserves. This program has been active since 1992 and has been continually growing. Through this program the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society hopes to establish a context for the development of entrepreneurial skills in native youth and to assist the youth in the building of cross-cultural business relationships. Fundamentally, the objective of this program and its supporters within the Native community is to develop native self-reliance.

The goals of the Business Without Borders Program are to:

1. Enhance Native Business Skills
2. Cultivate native Business Opportunities
3. Establish Market Demand for Native Resources

The main objectives of the Business Without Borders program are:

1. To teach business & entrepreneurial skills.
2. To help youth create self-employment opportunities and pursue small businesses.
3. To develop cross-cultural opportunities for youth by providing them businesses experiences and by encouraging mentorship and learning from aboriginal and non-aboriginal businesses.

Some of the major initiatives of the Business Without Borders program include:

- The Enterprise Centre project, which is what this project evolved from.
- A Little Bit of Siksika.
- Aboriginal Business Awareness Initiative.

A Little Bit of Siksika and the Aboriginal Business Awareness will be discussed to a certain extent in the practicum, as they were inevitably influential to how the process was carried out.

THE ENTERPRISE CENTRE PROJECT

In the spring of 1997 the *Business Without Borders* program initiated the development of an Enterprise Centre. At the time of commencing my involvement with the SNYEDS their program for The Enterprise Centre read as follows:

The Enterprise Centre is a facility that provides a supportive environment, including professional, technical, and financial assistance, for the youth of the Siksika Nation to develop and expand their business ventures. The Centre is intended to give the Business Without Borders a sense of permanence in the community by providing a place and an opportunity for the youth to gather beyond the normal class time allotted during the school year.

A detailed site analysis can be found in Appendix A.

The Enterprise Centre will provide an atmosphere where the youth will feel some sense of ownership and comfort in gathering. It will reinforce native values, stimulate their creativity and display their accomplishments. Some of the old, abandoned two-room shacks or other buildings scattered across the nation are being considered to serve as the facility for the Centre.

Business Without Borders proposes re-locating the facility to a location adjacent to the new junior and senior high school where it would be convenient for the students.

At this time a site was chosen, and set aside by Siksika Chief and Council, for the purposes of the Enterprise Centre. This site sits adjacent to the new junior and senior high school. It is located on a bluff, over a valley and creek bed, and is dominated by wind swept prairie grass and the occasional shrub thicket. To the south and west are uninterrupted views of the surrounding prairie and the slopes of the Bow River Valley, and Rocky Mountains in the distance.

the idea and the beginning...



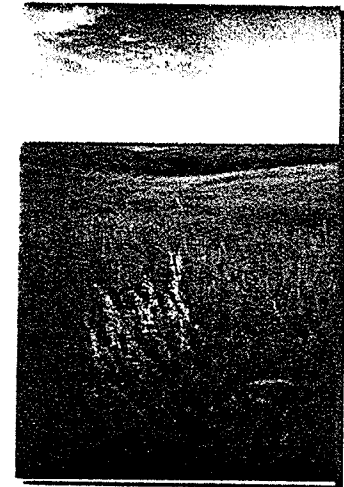
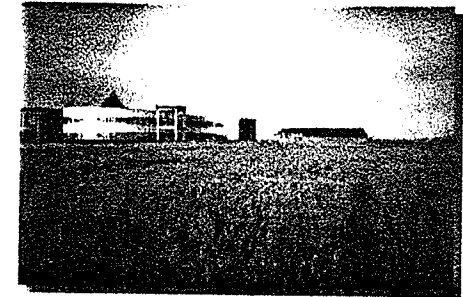
t h e i d e a . . .

In the spring of 1997 *Business Without Borders*, the educational program of the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society, SNYEDS, initiated the development of a business incubator, called the Enterprise Centre. The Enterprise Centre was intended to serve as a resource environment where the youth of the Siksika Nation could seek professional, technical, and financial assistance in developing and expanding their business ventures.

At that time a parcel of land, approximately 10 acres in size was set aside by the Siksika Nation Chief and Council for use by the SNYEDS. This is the land on which the Enterprise Centre was to be developed. This site sits adjacent to the new junior and senior high school. It is located on a bluff, over a valley and creek bed, and is dominated by wind swept prairie grass and the occasional shrub thicket. To the south and west are uninterrupted views of the surrounding prairie and the slopes of the Bow River Valley, and Rocky Mountains in the distance.

The Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society envisioned that these lands would serve as the basis of development for the Enterprise Centre. The Enterprise Centre would serve as a building for business incubation and the landscape could be used to support programs and initiatives of the Enterprise Centre. Such thoughts at this time were to design the grounds of the building, the siting of the building, and to help establish a place for the Enterprise Centre.

This is where I, as a graduate student of landscape architecture, came into the story.....



t h e b e g i n n i n g . . .

I began my involvement with the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society (SNYEDS) when I flew to Calgary, to discuss with Adrian Stimson Jr., the director of the *Business Without Borders* program, the opportunity of assisting the SNYEDS to develop the lands for a business incubator they were going to develop. This business incubator they called the Enterprise Centre and it's primary goal was to assist the Siksika youth through business education. Adrian Stimson was enthusiastic about my involvement in the program, and yes, would like me to assist them with developing a design and plan for a working landscape for the Enterprise Centre. The SNYEDS operates an extra-curricular business education class entitled *Business Without Borders*, and it was the youth in this class who would be involved and participants in the project.

As a student I was excited at the potential to work with aboriginal youth, particularly within a program whose mandate it was to increase the opportunities for aboriginal youth. However, I was also apprehensive about the challenges which this posed. The first and most obvious being that I am not of First Nations descent and had little experience with First Nations communities. The second challenge was that because the desire for a working landscape grew from the goals and objectives of the *Business Without Borders* program, it was important that I actively sought to incorporate those goals and objectives as part of the development of the working landscape.

Concerned about designing with a different culture, I began a literature search to start to familiarize myself with the Blackfoot culture. However, even as I write today, after almost two years of work with the Siksika people, including research, attending conferences, personal interaction, and shared experiences this familiarization is still ongoing. As with any culture one is not a part of, a lifetime's work could be devoted to its study and attempting to understand its ways. E. Brabec, in her MLA thesis, explored a way of designing with other cultures, specifically the Native American culture. A brief discussion of her work follows this section.

Much has been written about the history, art, and culture of the Blackfoot people, but little of their contemporary socio-economic situation. Their politics, economics, and culture, as with many other First Nations in Canada, have been undergoing dramatic changes in the last few years. It is only through personal experience with the Siksika people that I am able to begin to grasp the implications these changes will have for aboriginal people, specifically for the Siksika youth, in the years to come.

Being armed with this increased awareness, I believe has enabled this process to properly address the context of Siksika youth, and to incorporate these changes as rationale for how the project proceeded. Without it, the process may have failed to respond to the essence of the needs and issues facing these youth today.

One of my other concerns was that the youth be active participants in this design process. Although I had participated in a co-design process previous to this, I wanted to be better versed in this area. I conducted a literature search, examining numerous methods of community participation and inclusion in the design process. At this time however, I had not yet met the *Business Without Borders* youth and was unwilling to commit to one specific course of action without a better understanding of the dynamics of the group and the individuals involved. I was quite certain that the reality of the client and the idiosyncrasies of a process involving real people would undoubtedly dictate and direct, to a certain extent, the process we would follow. However, the extent that this would prove to be true I did not have known at that time.

ELIZABETH BRABEC:

A CULTURALLY SENSITIVE APPROACH TO DESIGN AND PLANNING WITH NATIVE COMMUNITIES

The first approach that I will profile is that of Elizabeth Brabec's work with The Burwash Peoples Project. She was concerned with a way of designing with other cultures, specifically Native American cultures, and with the role a designer/planner should take when working with another culture. Her project explored the responsibility of designer as a mediator and interpreter of local culture.

The study evolved from two central propositions. These are:

1. Different cultural groups may have widely different environmental values and perceptions, and therefore
2. The imposition of one set of cultural values and perceptions upon another results in environments which are inappropriate for these societies.

As she states,

The people best able to design and plan an environment or a community are the people who will use that environment or inhabit that community. Environments that are consciously altered by other than indigenous cultures run the risk of being inappropriate. An environment planned/designed by a particular culture in a normative manner will reflect that culture. The planner/facilitator working with a culture other than his or her own must understand the attitudes and values of client culture. The question that remains, is how can a designer/planner from one culture begin to understand, in a limited space of time, the attitudes and values of another?

Through a multi-disciplinary study, conducted by a landscape architect, architect and Amerindian ecologist they studied the environmental and spatial perceptions of the Ojibway people. They studied the different perception of community held by Indians and Euro-Canadians and looked at the different components of community design. They examined the results of missionaries and the Hudson's Bay Company's belief in converting natives to the modern way of life, as well as the subsequent government intervention in the development programs on the reserve. "As these developments proliferated on reserves, there was a gradual breakdown in community structure and individual identity." (Brabec, 1984) They examine how these developments have had an affect on Native people's sense of community.

From this, the group developed a prototypical design process which relied on community input. It recognized the Ojibway definition of community, the consensus decision making styles of the Ojibway, the Ojibway polychronic sense of time in which relationships are more important than time, and the view of nature as one with, and not separate from, man.

This project was integrated with the Burwash Peoples Project, an initiative to use a parcel of land for "a training/experimentation/demonstration centre to contribute to greater self-sufficiency in Native communities". This place was to be a transitional community.

This process culminated in the development of a new planning approach termed a "*Responsive Planning Approach*". It is a holistic approach to planning based on the participation and agreement of the community.

Fundamental characteristics of the Responsive Planning Approach:

1. Responsive planning initiated by the local client not an outside agency.
2. Planning produces minimal incremental changes, not comprehensive or master plans. Incremental plans deal with specific issues by outlining the ramifications of small-scale development acts.

Role of the Planner:

1. Planner acts a facilitator, not as a director.
2. Planner learns from the client's ways and adapts to the client's ways-planner does not study the client and expect the client to adapt to the planner.
3. Mediator and interpreter of local culture.

Framework:

1. Places cultural values and attitudes on equal footing with physical and economic considerations.
2. Assists designers in understanding the importance of the interaction between a cultural group and their built environment.

The Methodology:

Uses the traditions of a culture as a tool in designing environments that will have meaning for their inhabitants. Thus it outlines the means by which the designer/planner should attempt to understand the traditions of a culture. The methodology she puts forth is derived from a model for site planning from Kevin Lynch's "Site Planning". The approach involves both indirect/direct communication the client and she outlines how this should be undertaken.

The *indirect* information needed by the planner/designer is:

1. Indirect evidence of past spatial behaviour through the analysis of area use when choice was available.

2. Analysis of existing environments that are stable and accepted by the cultural group one is working with. "...such environments must have some fit with existing values and activity and new environments like them will appear "right" to displaced people. It is also clear that some continuity of form is desirable, particularly in traumatic moves."

3. Evidences of dysfunction which are directly related to locality such as rates of disease, accident, crime, social disorganization, environmental destruction, abandonment, etc..

4. A search of various media for "...references to the environment that will establish the widely held opinions and images about the subject", and.

5. A literature search. "One always consults previous experience. ...What developments of this type have been built and with what luck?"

Lynch's approach to *direct* communication with the client involves going "...beyond observable behaviour by communicating directly with the people about their images, feelings, experiences, and values in regard to the real world around them" (Lynch 1972:101). Based on Lynch's model, attaining an understanding of the native client through a dialogue is a four-fold undertaking for the planner.

1. The first lies in the understanding the culture's teachings as a window into the workings of the culture. The teachings are an iteration of the world view, social behaviour and bounds of the acceptable in any culture, and therefore.

2. The second step in attaining an understanding of the dialogue is a study of contemporary literature related to the planning/design of native communities

3. The most crucial step is that of interviewing the client. Through the client interviews the planner/designer will realize the dreams, goals and wishes of the people who will inhabit the community.
4. The fourth step, that of visiting other existing communities, is useful for validation of what information has been collected through the other three areas.

What is of value from Brabec's work is an understanding of the overall holistic approach to planning based on the participation and agreement of the community. It provided good direction for recognizing and incorporating cultural differences, as well as knowing where to seek out evidence of the traditions of a culture.

l i s t e n i n g a n d l e a r n i n g .



listening and learning

As a planner/designer you have to be incredibly flexible because every neighbourhood is different, and if the process and the product are to reflect that neighbourhood, you must first be a listener and learner (Randolph Hester, personal communication, 1998).

Given my desire to be better acquainted with the project and the youth, the first thing I committed myself to doing was “learning and listening”. I needed to understand the context within which the project was being developed. I needed to learn about the *Business Without Borders* program and its goals and objectives for business education. As importantly, I needed to get to know the youth and listen to what their youth’s ideas were for the Enterprise Centre (EC) and its’ landscape. If I was going to design the land to serve the EC facility I needed to know how the EC would be used.

This process of “listening and learning” occurred in two phases:

- Participation in the *Business Without Borders* class
- Exploration of ideas for the working landscape

Participation in *Business Without Borders* class

I initiated the project with the *Business Without Borders* youth by attending their entrepreneurial classes. I was introduced to all the students and teachers involved with the program who were aware that I was going to be assisting with the development

of the Enterprise Centre working landscape. At that time, my primary concern was to begin to develop a rapport with the youth. Knowing that they, like all teenagers, would be hesitant and apprehensive about a new person in the project, I wanted them to be comfortable and secure in my purpose of working with them. I joined in classes as a participant and focused on beginning to get to know the youth and to understand the *Business Without Borders* program.

I soon realized that this period of becoming acquainted might take much longer than I had anticipated. Being an extra-curricular, non-academic program, which students take by choice for their own interest, the *Business Without Borders* group was only meeting once a week for 3 hours. These periods were definitely not substantial enough to begin to get intimately acquainted with them, or for them to become comfortable with my presence and trust me. They were shy and reserved, and I was fearful that if I made too many inquiries of them, I would be perceived as too assertive. I accepted to just allow our “getting acquainted” to evolve over time and experience.

This method of familiarizing oneself to others and situations, is also inherently how aboriginal peoples view learning,
... native elder’s teaching focus on learning from one’s
experience... requiring respectful and patient observation
(Dickason, 1996).

I also came to learn that the *Business Without Borders* program focuses mainly on exposing these youth to entrepreneurial thinking-the basics of business, exercises for problem solving and on visiting aboriginal businesses. The program is still in its developmental stages and has not yet developed to the point of nurturing individuals in their business ventures.

Exploration of Ideas for the Enterprise Centre

After participation in a number of classes and exercises, when I sensed they were becoming familiar and comfortable with my presence we began to explore their ideas for the working landscape of the Enterprise Centre. The goal of my involvement at this stage was not to introduce my opinion, but to begin to get an understanding of how the youth viewed the development of the Enterprise Centre, and what goals and wishes they had for the “working landscape”. I needed to see how they saw the land fitting with the *Business Without Borders* program.

Community planners and designers commonly advocate this method of beginning a design process. Randolph Hester, a community planner suggests,

... that you begin the process by listening to residents for several weeks. You may informally interview them, or simply just let them talk. As best as you can, without trying to direct the conversation, try to keep track of what they are telling you and if necessary mark information on the map. At this point in the process you are trying to get their opinion, as opposed to introducing outside bias. By being patient, listening to peoples stories... you will begin to see “. the community from the inside out” (Hester, 1985).

As these young people had never been involved in a design process before I created a theme for exploring their ideas for the landscape. Using the theme, “*What is your I.D.E.A.?*” I began to facilitate the exploration of ideas for the working landscape of the Enterprise Centre.

The following outlines the intended steps of “*What is your I.D.E.A.?*”



- Inventory:* First we must:
- gain an inventory of the situation, i.e. how do the youth view this project as well as,
 - gain an inventory of the site, i.e. what are the attributes of the space we are dealing with.
- Dream:* Then attempt to elicit and evoke some of the dreams and wishes the youth may have for the “working landscape” and encourage them to think broadly about the possibilities for intervention on the site. At this point I wanted to invite as many suggestions as possible without limiting ideas.
- Experiment:* Next we would want to test different possibilities for the landscape which arose from “dreaming”, i.e. what would be possible on this site. Essentially this was to narrow down the ideas or choices for intervention.
- Apply:* And finally to apply this idea through drawings, the design, and the development of the working landscape. In other words, matching the I.D.E.A. to the land.

We began the exploration of I.D.E.A.S. with the Inventory. This involved facilitating *Business Without Borders* classes, and numerous walks of the site with the youth.

Walks of the Site

The first activity carried out with the youth was a walk through of the site. At this point we were primarily conducting a visual inventory and discussing the physical features of the site. I remember being surprised during the first site walk that although the site was adjacent to the high school, the youth had never walked around it. They were only aware that the northern part of the coulee had been used as a dump many years ago.

In the patterns of their everyday life they had no reason to be on this land. I came to find this to be true for much of the land of the reserve. Many of the youth stated that they haven't been to a lot of the sacred sites on the reserve nor do they ever really spend much time "on the land". They told me, as I would also come to observe more and more, that they have little experience and interaction with their environment.

Business Without Borders class:

In the classroom I began to facilitate a number of exercises aimed at trying to explore their ideas for the site. As the intention of the landscape was to serve business education and development the ideas we wanted to explore were business, land, youth, community etc.. So the following questions were addressed:

1. How do they envision using the Enterprise Centre?

- What were their business ideas?



2. What did they want the EC to look like?

- What structures or buildings did they see on the land?

3. What is their goal for the working landscape?

- How do they currently use the site?
- What did they want the landscape to be?
- Did they have any intended uses for the landscape?
- How could the land support their business education?

I was trying to clarify at this point how these youth intended to use the Enterprise Centre. If the working landscape was going to support the Enterprise Centre and the goals of *Business Without Borders* then I needed to have a greater understanding of the context within which it was going to function.

In addition to these exercises, my participation with the *Business Without Borders* class gave me the chance to be involved with the youth in a number of other different classes, including public speaking exercises and the entrepreneurial courses.

beginning to understand the real issues...

What the process of listening and learning brought to light was that the youth were having difficulty defining a purpose for the Enterprise Centre (EC) and the landscape. They were challenged to see how the design of this land or the possible use of this land might be relevant to them, and therefore were having difficulty articulating a clear vision for the project. Although the idea for an EC was conceived in the reality of youth; high unemployment, lack of opportunity, and other social problems, the youth themselves did not see how the EC could be of value to them.

My first concern was to address why these youth did not see the development of the EC as relevant to them. Through this process of listening and learning, by asking the youth about business, conducting walks of the site, discussing the Enterprise Centre and their goals for the landscape, I was beginning to become aware of the realities of these young people and how these could affect their ability to conceive of a design and purpose for EC or the working landscape. These reasons included:

1. Although the parcel is adjacent to the high school the youth have little knowledge of this site or their lands on the reserve.
2. Youth don't see business as a personal option for themselves. Their interest and attraction to the *Business Without Borders* program is because of the positive experiences which participating in *Business Without Borders* provides. That is not to say that they aren't interested in business, but they just don't have enough

personal example or experience their of business activity to be able to internalize it as a feasible option in their lives. Almost all businesses on the reserve are non-aboriginal owned.

3. Although a number of components were in place for the development of the Enterprise Centre – business education, land, youth... the youth involved with the project had little understanding of the interconnectedness of these components and how this project could provide opportunities for them.
4. They have few experiences of their own reserve. The young people lack an in-depth familiarity of their reserve. They seem to be disconnected from an awareness of businesses, politics, and the economy on the reserve.
5. They youth are not used to having initiatives or decision-making on the reserve involve them. Opinions and ideas are rarely asked of them. They seem to have become part of a dependent system that does not challenge them to be critical thinkers and therefore restricts their ability to solve problems, such as the design and programming issues for the Enterprise Centre and lands.

Essentially the reality of these young people was that their life experiences thus far had afforded them little understanding of their land, opportunities to be involved with the operations of their reserve, as well as exposure to and experience with business. The process of envisioning the Enterprise Centre and lands was challenging the youth to think about their land,

their community, and improving their quality of life, but they weren't equipped with the knowledge and experience which would assist them with envisioning what the Enterprise Centre and lands might be.

By carrying out this period of listening and learning I was not only able to gain an understanding of the issues which might need to be addressed, but also helped to increase my rapport with the youth. It revealed to me a better understanding of the problem from the youths' perspective. I was very slowly beginning to grasp the "sense of this place" and to attempt to understand the realities of Siksika youth.

Taking the time to recognize the realities of these young people I believe was so important to the process because it was in this recognition that the real issues could be addressed. Doing this set the focus for how the project would evolve.

defining the real problem to be solved...

As a design student I had been taught to respond to clearly articulated design problems, and was familiar with methodological approaches to design that begin with a vision. Now I found myself working with a truly unique project in which the users did not have that clear design problem or vision. Without a vision to inform programming, a defined purpose for the site, knowledge of who would use the site, or what the goals of the site were without a foundation from which to design.

Until the youth could see and understand the potential for this place, on their own terms, through their own eyes, then they would have little ability to develop their own vision or see how this place could be of value to them.

It was at this point that I had to rethink our approach to this project, as well as to redefine my role. Although I could have proceeded on a conceptually developed vision, and created a design and plan, this process of listening and learning had made me intuitively aware that such a design would not have meaning for its intended users, the youth. What would be the point of designing and planning a site for youth when they themselves don't see or feel a connection to it. It would have no relevance or value to them. I believed as a designer and influencer of forms and places on their land, that I had a certain social responsibility to ensure that this place was based in the realities of the Siksika land and people.

*Vision:
Not a plan but a
projection by
people of an
image of their
community's
future, a portrait
of their desired
quality of life.*

A. Buttimer

About one out of ten Blackfoot tipis were painted, each illustrating the guardian spirit its original owner had received in a vision.....

We needed to develop a means by which the youth could see the value of this place on their own terms. In order to create a vision which will result in a meaningful place, an understanding of this place must first belong to their inner conceptual world. For this to happen, they must have knowledge or experiences of things pertaining to this. Therefore I proposed that we challenge them to see, experience, and learn about themselves, their community, their land and business in a way that goes beyond the everyday horizons of their life.

In doing so, it was hoped that they would build/expand the content and the structure of their own psychological world, and may be able to perceive and be cognisant of the opportunities and values of a working landscape. Thus they might be able to envision what this working landscape might be.

Based on the belief that in order for a place to have meaning to people, there needs to be congruence between the experiential and physical environment, I suggested that by having experiences which increase their knowledge and understanding of what the Enterprise Centre could do or how it would be of assistance to them, would result in the making of a physical environment which is perceived and known by these youth to be of value to them. There needs to be congruence between the experiential and physical environment for people because,

A good settlement is one that can be perceived... with its elements linked to other events and places in a coherent representation of time and space... and a representation that can be connected with non-spatial concepts and values. This is the join between the form of the environment and the human processes of perception and cognition (Lynch, 1981).

It is through one's perception and knowledge that their experiences are linked to a "place", that one develops a sense of identity and purpose with that place. This belief is strongly expounded by a number of landscape architects and planners.

Elizabeth Brabec, through her work with the Burwash Native peoples in 1984 believed strongly in this assertion that it became the premise of her proposed "Responsive Planning Approach" for planning and design with native Canadians.

A sense of identity can be gained through the planning and design process. When a person is allowed input into the ordering of their community, they feel a part of it, for it is an extension of their inner feelings. When a community is planned and imposed by people from outside, it has little or no relevance to the people who will live in that community (Brabec, 1984).

As Anne Buttimer writes of her experiences,

Experience suggests that any solution which people do not consider to be "their idea" will be resented, avoided, or rendered ludicrous over time (Buttimer, 1980).

This fact can be easily substantiated if one looks to numerous First Nation reserves in Canada where years of government solutions to housing and community planning have caused disastrous results in these reserves. For a detailed discussion refer to *Brabec, 1984*.

They identify with the places as their own. Life flourishes in these places, for they were designed with the people who use them. (King, 18)

By being active participants throughout the process there was a tremendous opportunity for the youth to be the creators of a valuable place for themselves. *Therefore, I proposed that in the immediacy it was not a design and plan for the working landscape that was needed, but a process of awakening youth to knowledge and experience so that they could develop, for themselves, a vision for the Enterprise Centre and lands.*

This proposition brought with it two challenges:

1. How do we challenge them to have greater knowledge and information beyond their daily horizons?
2. What role would I serve in this process?

If we are going to aspire to have a vision that is rooted in the youth then we must have a means by which the youth become more awakened to themselves, their culture and the reserve, become more intune to the environmental and social realities of the place. We must encourage them to understand the places with which they are familiar. This process of establishing a vision must facilitate environmental literacy by encouraging the youth to tap at the sources of knowledge and information which surround them, and to learn more about their place. The inspiration, the seeds of this vision, must come from their Siksika community, their elders, their land, from one another, and the *Business Without Borders* program.

I found this to be a guiding principle that both Michael Hough and Jane Jacobs expound for the creation of places that are rooted in the regional imperative. Being rooted in the regional imperative implies that places have meaning for their inhabitants because they have evolved from the inhabitants' understanding of their place as the necessary foundation upon which to create change.

Beginning where it's easiest, therefore, has to do with where most people are and where one can be reasonably certain of a measure of success from efforts made, no matter how small. Success in small things can be used to make connections to other larger and more significant ones... It is about focussing on things that work and that are achievable at any one point in time (Hough, 1990).

So we committed ourselves to learning from and better acquainting ourselves with community, elders and the land. This period would be defined as *education and outreach*.

As designer, I realized that if I was going to assist in discovering a vision which has meaning to the youth then I too would need to attempt to gain a greater understanding of *Business Without Borders*, the youth, the Siksika community and the site. Although I had begun to have a grasp of this place I still knew very little. Essentially, I should attempt to understand the "sense of this place". This would also be a period of *education and outreach* for me as well.

As Michael Hough has observed, the making of memorable places has to do with understanding the nature of places as a precursor to working purposeful change, which is a far more significant act of creativity than imposing pre-packaged solutions on the land (Hough, 1989).

And as Patrick Geddes taught, before attempting to change a place, one must seek out its essential character on foot in order to understand its patterns of movement, its social dynamics, history and traditions, its environmental possibilities. He commented on the way planners dictated form and solutions to problems with little reference to reality. He believed that modifications to any landscape should be based on thought processes that begin and end with the environmental and social realities of the place, not with a plan on paper (Hough, 1989).

I believed that through this process of *education and outreach* in which both the youth and myself sought to understand this place better, through facilitating and participating in “lived experiences” that are geared towards the development of a working landscape, we could mutually begin to build a place which has meaning to the youth

education and outreach...

"We have to ask the elders, they know all the stories and if there are any the sacred sites on the land."

"We can have a meeting to tell people who we are, and maybe they have ideas to help us."

Having established the need for greater "place" literacy and the challenge to learn more about the land, the Siksika community and business, in order to help uncover a vision, the youth were suggesting what and who might facilitate the achievement of that goal.

This period of education and outreach involved a number of planned endeavours such as:

- 1. LEARNING ABOUT THE LAND**
- 2. BUSINESS EDUCATION**
- 3. GATHERING SITE DATA**
- 4. COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS**
- 5. ELDER'S WORKSHOP**
- 6. LEARNING ABOUT SIKSIKA YOUTH**

By reaching out for knowledge it was hoped that collaboratively, the youth and I could begin to define some goals for what the youth would like the Enterprise Centre and lands to be.

In this collaborative activity we do not eliminate the social role of the designer, who as a true artist manifests a vision of the “lost paradise” arising from a sensed difference between what is and what could or should be, but who engages, as the envirotect, in a creative, communal interchange with those who have much at stake in these visions, and much to contribute (Thiel, 1997).

Chester Sprague’s work with Native Americans in the United States is an excellent example of where such efforts have accomplished this. In his collaborative process, the designer/planner’s talents for evoking and eliciting the user’s latent ideas and for applying technical skills, are combined with the user’s knowledge of their place to create a place which has meaning to the users. His work with the Navajo people is discussed on page 58.



This process of education and outreach would require me to be both *facilitator* and *educator*, either assisting with their outreach, such as helping with workshops, or teaching them about the land. However, the nature of this collaborative process also required me to be a *participator* and *learner*. I participated with the *Business Without Borders* program and the Siksika community, and had a chance to observe the youth, in many other capacities beyond these planned experiences. For me the *education and outreach* also included numerous other unplanned experiences. This ranged from attending pow-wow’s, raising a teepee, to discussing religion. It was through these experiences that I gained equally as much, if not more, insight into the Siksika community and culture, the youth and the reserve.

By being intimately involved with them I was able to:

- Develop an idea of what the youth *value*, what their strengths are, and what is important to them.
- Observe potential and underused *resources* and assets of the community, which could benefit the vision.
- Engage in *dialogue* with them to hear what their desires are.

With this qualitative information I really began to gain a sense of these youth and of this place. I was able to see “*clues*” to a vision that through a typical design process I might not have seen. These clues would better equip me to assist the youth with defining goals for the Enterprise Centre and lands that were based in the realities of these youth and their community.

...you begin to have a unique perspective on the neighbourhood. The designer combines the objectivity of an outsider, insights into the emotional intimacy of residents and an awareness of daily patterns and social nuances (Hester, 1984).

Now follow me as I take you through our process of *education and outreach*, a process by which the youth and myself transactively sought greater knowledge and experience. Through embarking on this period of education and outreach together, our objective was to mutually define experiential goals and a vision for this place. A vision that was rooted in an understanding of their place, and a vision that the skills and knowledge of landscape architecture could help to bring to life.



CHESTER SPRAGUE

AMERINDIAN COMMUNITIES: TOWARD A LIFE OF UNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

In 1972, Chester Sprague, an Associate Professor of Architecture at M.I.T., who had studied and worked with numerous Indian communities of the United States wrote,

Real progress for Indian communities will take place only when the people themselves gain control over the social processes in their lives. When they do, the present fragmented federal approach to community services and planning will be replaced by a more comprehensive one growing out of the wisdom of the communities. Indian self-determination and self-planning will create the best, most efficient, most enduring improvements in the Indian physical environment (Sprague 1972, 14).

His belief stemmed from his interaction and experience of working with Native Americans over a 12 year period. His experience with the Navajo of Rough Rock demonstrates how architecture and planning is a valuable tool for assisting Native Americans in gaining control over the social processes of their life.

Sprague was approached by the Navajos of Rough Rock with the request to help them design a Navajo educational environment for a Navajo educational experience. His response was no. He explained that he was not Navajo and could not design for them. They came to an agreement that the people should try to design the environment themselves and that Sprague and a team from M.I.T. could help them by raising issues and presenting ideas, alternatives, and background facts and concepts.

The primary objective would be to try to widen choices for the Navajo people and to widen their opportunity to choose.

Sprague believed that it was not the architect's obligation to limit choice arbitrarily.

"Whatever technical competence or wisdom we might have did not entitle us to ascribe or dictate values to the people of Rough Rock. The crucial question was how to proceed, by non-arbitrary steps, from a general objective to a specific program and physical space."

What this set in place was a twelve month dialogue between Sprague and the Navajo people. It included seminars and living on the reservation for several weeks to gather by a variety of means, the community's ideas using interviews, observations, model-building, sketches, slide shows and discussions. It also included site visits, open community discussions, and trips to see places the Navajo people did and didn't like. Sprague also used community study groups to subtly gather feedback on his understanding of the Navajo people's ideas.

The process included:

- A period of reviewing material to piece together the main idea, to understand the logic and direction of the Navajo thinking
- Articulating and interweaving as many issues as we and they could think of
- Model building to develop a site plan
- Suggestions for alternatives
- Transactive dialogue to evolve their direction.

Once design in place, the process also involved:

- Cost estimates
- Code reviews
- Working drawings
- Assisting the community with preparing for fundraising aimed at the federal bureaucracy.

The result was a school with many qualities that were all articulated by the community. These qualities provide for many choices and spatial qualities-form based on Navajo forms as well as non-native forms for "Anglo" activities (harmonious relationship to each other and to the landscape).

Sprague describes this process as a rather ragged, ultimately ad-hoc approach without a sound foundation of well tested theory and method. Although there were architects and planners beginning to work with community groups at that time, he found no broadly tested or accepted method for doing so.

What was of primary interest to Sprague was not so much the design, but the way of designing it. A way that he believed tried to maximize community expression of community values, to pass the opportunity, responsibility and reward of authorship from the professional designer to the community.

He saw that procedures and vehicles for achieving this way of designing with community and user groups was where genuinely creative and sound work needed to be done by architects and schools. He believed that procedural subtlety and inventiveness may be more important than technical competence; certainly, he believed, they are more important than formal inventiveness.

The new procedures must and will provide the paths by which architects can work for their communities to release the stifled variety and wisdom and sensitivity lodged in those people so that their values and ways can become fully expressed for the benefit of them and of all of us (Sprague, 1972).

Although his observations were made almost 30 years ago, they could not be more true of the view which I have developed through my experience of working with the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society. I only hope that my work with them has indeed helped these youth gain some control over the social processes of their lives, and enabled them to create an expression of their values and ways that can contribute to their positive future.

LEARNING ABOUT THE LAND

Notes from sketchbook.

September 3

Very hot and dry.. At the site today there are three men expanding the cemetery to the south by "eight lengths" ($8 \times 16' = 128'$).

Hawk again! (1.5 months later) She still has not come to like me any more than the last time. I think she must be protecting a nest at the west part of the site..

Still I am stricken by the expanse and beauty of this place



Comments from
**Business Without
Borders** youth about the
"land":

- We don't know much about our land, including legends and stories
- We don't really feel much of a connection to it
- We only own our house on the land
- There's not much to do on the land-Wish there was more to do on the land
- Spend more time watching TV than outdoors

LEARNING ABOUT THE LAND...

As earlier investigation had pointed out, the *Business Without Borders* youth were not at all familiar with the site. Therefore we set out to develop a greater understanding of this land in the hopes that this would assist the youth in knowing how the land was relevant to them and how they might be able to develop a vision for it. Although I had previously done a few walks of the site with the youth, we now continued with the objective of teaching the youth about the land. We discussed the physical attributes of the site, notions of scale and size, weather patterns-wind, sun, and so forth, we conducted plant sampling and discussed some of the traditional uses of these plants. Even though I had obtained this ethnobotanical information from previous ethnologists interviews with Blackfoot elders, I was still awkward about being the person who relayed this information to the Siksika youth. I felt it should come from the Siksika people. However, Adrian assured me that this would not be a problem. In this instance, like many others when I was unsure of the culturally appropriate thing to do I sought Adrian's opinion. He was my "cultural advisor".

For the youth this became an exciting process. It was interesting to see the simple expansion of their curiosity-learning which direction was east, plants which they had seen all their life now had names, and possible medicinal purposes. They became expressive about the garbage in the coulee and the recklessness of people on the reserve, and expressed a desire to have it

cleaned up. They showed a desire to learn more about the site and an ability to be involved with the land. Recognizing this to be the case for all youth in the reserve it would be great to have something that involves more youth.

A complete analysis of the site, as well as ethnobotanical information about a number of plants on the site can be found in Appendix B.

This study and learning about the land helped the youth to begin to think about what they might like the Enterprise Centre to be or to do. This then enabled us to define some experiential goals for the Enterprise Centre and lands:

- **Increase youth's knowledge and interaction with the land**
- **Forum for outdoor education-teaching garden or medicinal garden**
- **Needs to be a place youth are actively learning about the land**
- **We should not pollute the land**
- **We should do something to clean up the reserve**
- **A place that makes us more aware of the land, the trees, the birds, and so forth**

*Plant
identification
with Business
Without Borders
youth.*

We conducted random sampling of 5m plots of the site. This revealed the following coverage:

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| Grasses | 75% |
| Artemisia frigida | 15% |
| Anemone patens | 2% |
| Alfalfa | 1% |
| Rosa woodsii | 5% |
| Achillea | 0.5% |

BUSINESS EDUCATION TRIPS

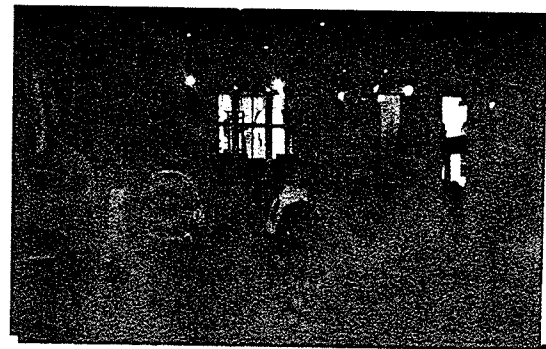
"HA-mathl-koh, HA-mathl-koh", I repeated to myself as I buckled my seatbelt. "I'm determined I'm going to remember that." I turned around to see if I could find Charles and Lisa. This trip to Vancouver is the first time they have all been on an airplane and on the trip from Calgary they had rather green faces.

Assured that all is okay, I shut my eyes, tired after these action-packed last few days. The last few days have been spent visiting aboriginal business owners and other places that exhibit or promote the Canadian aboriginal culture. My mind wanders through all the places we've been... University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology, Native Investment Trade Association, Vancouver Aquarium, Dorothy Grant's Haida Boutique, Tsmussen Yoballa Café, First Nation's House of Learning, L'Allegret Restaurant, oh...and of course, the Squamish Nation Long House. This is where we all were bestowed with new Squamish names. HA-mathl-koh, or Snowy Owl, was the name I had been given. "Ii-yaabb, figures," a favourite expression of the youth's, was what they had said when they heard my name. "It's because I'm so wise!" I had joked with them. "Ii-yaabb, it's because you're so white," they had blurted, as if it was something I was unaware of! At this point I had come to get to know the youth much better. A clear sign being that they were fascinated with teaching me Siksika swearing signals.

Snowy owl - HA-mathl koh
(Ad) raven - scaw - K ^{tich-tich NEDS}
(W) hummingbird - ~~BAK-math~~
(W) killer whale - Yoh-u-yoh-s
(W) dove Si-HA-HUM
(W) bear MAY huth
(W) grizzly bear SHA-THLA-hum
(W) snow goose TLA-p-hun

In an effort to increase the business awareness of youth, this trip to Vancouver was planned to meet with aboriginal business owner, from other aboriginal cultures, and to visit places that exhibit or promote the Canadian aboriginal culture. At two of these places we had been invited to share a bit of their culture. On the Friday we had danced and sang with members of the Tswassen band, led by one of their drummers. Under the drizzly sky, they had taught us a number of their traditional dances. Toni and Nikki, who were traditional Blackfoot dancers, in turn taught some Blackfoot dances.

At Squamish we had made crafts and cooked bannock over the fire. It only struck me later on when we were at the Squamish Long House that as I was experiencing these cultures for the first time, so too were Brad, Lindsey, Shane – all of the youth. They stated themselves that they didn't know much about other First Nations cultures, other than that in the past the Cree had been their great enemies. And although they are all First Nations people with many similarities, so too do they have many differences. Even as we had learned on Friday, their dancing is different. Blackfoot dancing tends to be individualistic, whereas the Tswassen dance as groups and with partners.



Aboriginal Business Awareness Trips

In an attempt to expose these youth to more examples and information about other aboriginal peoples and the businesses they owned, we developed a component called Aboriginal Business Awareness.¹ The goal of this was to provide students the opportunity to meet native entrepreneurs and individuals who are successful in their endeavours, as well as to meet people who are working towards increasing opportunities for native youth. These people act as mentors to the program by providing their time and information, by talking to students about their work, and welcoming the students into their business or workplace.

In this period of education and outreach we made a number Aboriginal Business Awareness trips. There were two day-trips to Calgary, as well as a four-day trip to Vancouver. Primarily the reason for going outside of the reserve is that the example of aboriginal owned business does not exist on the Siksika reserve. Other than a few individuals who have home craft businesses and some operations run by the Siksika Chief and Council, the grocery store, restaurants, beauty parlour, gas station, and the majority of farming operations, including a 200 acre mint operation, are all operated by non-aboriginals. To provide this example of aboriginal businesses we needed to go elsewhere. In the examination of aboriginal businesses it was clear that these youth hadn't seen this as a possibility for themselves. They were curious and in awe of these people and it helped that they were able to see these businesses as operating and successful.

¹ A more detailed discussion about the Aboriginal Awareness Initiative can be found in *Business Without Borders: A Walking in Balance Program*.

We studied an existing business incubator located in Dawson Creek, British Columbia. Although we did not visit this place, studying it gave us a good model from which to understand how business incubators work, and their facility requirements. "Entrepreneurs are not born, they become through experience" is the motto of the Kiwanis Enterprise Centre. Borne of the needs of the community which faced high unemployment and out-migration of young people they created a place to equip young people with the skills and confidence to opt for self-employment as an alternative to unemployment. The Kiwanis Centre offers participants a training program where they learn business skills including how to write a business plan. It offers support services including telephone answering, facsimile, photocopying, and access to computers. People can rent space for offices, commercial or lightweight manufacturing business start-ups. Conferencing rooms and extensive libraries are also available.

Through these experiences, I began to get an idea of the values and attitudes of the youth and to see how they interact with non-aboriginals, peers and elders. Of course, it must be stated here that this type of information is highly subjective, depending on the interaction that occurs between two individuals, my attitude during the conversation, and how I chose to perceive what was discussed. It is highly individual and also highly experiential. Having stated this illustrates the value and influence that a designer/planner can have. As such, a designer must have a responsibility to mindset, as it is crucial to facilitating the process and the outcome of the process. Randolph Hester, a landscape architect, who recognized this, devoted a chapter of his *"Community Design Primer"*, entitled "Contemplation", to some exercises which assist designers in exploring the environmental perceptions, values, beliefs and inspirations behind their design work.

This process of learning about other aboriginal businesses, and meeting peoples of different cultures began to help the youth see examples of other people's successes, people who had pride in their culture and built something from that pride. They learned what a business incubator was all about and how it was helping the community of Dawson Creek. These experiences helped them to define further what they might like their Enterprise Centre to be:

- **Needs to provide experiences for youth**
- **Get them to interact with other people beyond the bounds of the reserve**
- **Deepen their business experience and knowledge**
- **Get some of the mentors/leaders of other businesses we have met to come to the EC to teach**
- **The youth need to have more awareness of businesses on the Siksika reserve**

GATHERING SITE DATA

As the youth had little knowledge of the lands designated for the Enterprise Centre, I began the task of gathering and collecting site data/information that I thought might serve useful to the design process. Not yet having a clear direction, I wasn't exactly certain what might be needed or how it was going to be used, but drawing on the experience of past design and planning processes I sought some of the following information:

- Physical: soils, climatic, existing land use, natural features, etc. (for detailed discussion see Appendix A)
- Social: history of the site, population data (For detailed discussion see introduction and Appendix A)
- History: sacred sites, uses

As facilitator of the process and having experience with data collection, I assumed that I could bring the knowledge of knowing what information might be needed, what data could be available and how to gain access to it, but I would be a lot more challenged in this endeavour than I thought.

After endless phone calls and visits to the Natural Resource Department of the Siksika Nation Tribal Administration, Indian and Northern Affairs, INAC, MapTown, and many others the only map I was able to find was a 1972 INAC Engineering Services map.

Locating any documentation of physical data for the site was difficult. Most of it would come from Bathoury and Associates Architects, as two years previous they had built the adjacent high school. Rob Platts, an architect who had worked on the high school was very helpful to me in this process. All plant data and inventory came from my own analysis of the site, and then from conducting plot sampling with the youth.

As the information was gathered, I was quite conscious of taking this information back to the group and sharing what I had found. As involving youth was a guiding principle of my approach, I set out to relay as much of this information to the youth. Just as they were sharing with me, I wanted to share with them all that I was learning to increase their knowledge of the site and reserve, in the hopes that everyone's collective knowledge of the site would help to inform what the final design and plan could be. Any information that was found was relayed to the youth at classes, to share with them and also to get their input as to other sources of knowledge. They also suggested where we might find information about the site. They said the best places would be the Siksika Museum at Old Sun College, the Siksika community, and of course, the elders. So these were added to the list of places we would reach out for knowledge.

The two-communication process is essential to community design. Because of its reciprocal nature, users are empowered and design is better informed. To be successful at this, community designers have to teach (Hester, 1990).

The advice provided by the youth did produce historical and cultural information, and we were also able to find information from the Glenbow Museum Archives and Siksika Social Services. As the process proceeded we would come to find the

greatest sources of information, or that which became the most useful, would come from future workshops with the community and elders.

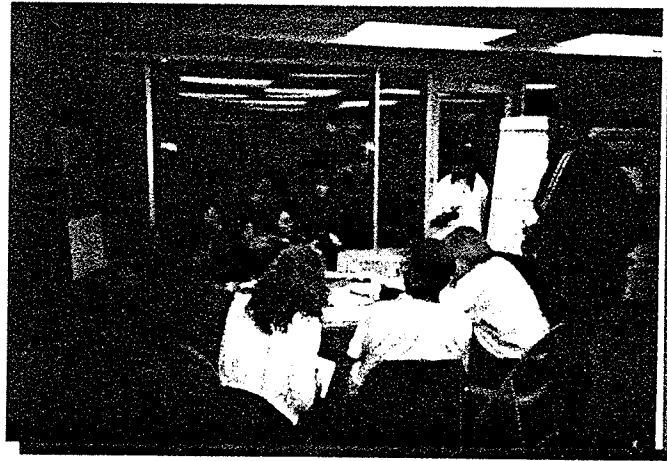
Although they did participate, it would have been most appropriate to have the youth actively assist with the gathering of this data. Time and the students' schooling made the logistics of this difficult. Fortunately, and interestingly enough, as will be discussed later on, the evolution of the process would find three of the youth conducting a thorough site analysis and gathering information on their own. As we gathered and discussed site information, the youth became aware of how much there was to learn about their reserve and their surroundings. This step helped to stir some ideas in the youth, these included:

- **This might be a place to inform youth of information and data about their reserve, like a resource centre**
- **Youth thought this could be a place that they teach other youth about the soil and plants and history and so forth**
- **“We want to be know more about our reserve”**

A detailed discussion of site conditions can be found in Appendix A.

C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P

- 6:30pm. The chairs are arranged, VCR set, maps and writing pads, pencils, programs. I think everything is ready. I am nervous.*
- 6:50pm. Now I am very nervous. No one is here yet.Adrian, sensing my concern, assures me not to worry. Everyone will show up.*
- 7:00pm. People have arrived! Waylon's mother, his aunt, Lucy from the high school office,...*
- 7:15pm. We bow our heads as Vincent opens the meeting with a Blackfoot prayer. Our first community workshop is underway...*





Of particular interest to the youth was learning that two young girls had died during in the coulee during a storm in the 1950's. This became an important part of the agenda for them. They would like this "place" to be a memorial to these young girls.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

The youth invited members of the community, Adrian had phoned people, and signs were posted at the Tribal Administration building and the school. We tried to reach as many people on the reserve as we could, but given the size of the reserve, relaying information can be difficult. It is about 180,000 acres with small communities scattered throughout it.

For a couple of sessions previous to the workshop we had prepared, as a group, some questions we wanted to ask of the community. At this workshop, it was decided that the youth would ask these questions and facilitate the discussion. This was done for a couple of reasons:

1. It was a chance for the youth to be actively involved. More importantly, if process was to be about increasing their knowledge and skills this would be advantageous for them. They were nervous at first, but became more at ease as the workshop proceeded.
2. By the youth facilitating the questioning, it was felt that members of the community would be willing to share information more easily. I was a new person and a new face to them so they may have been more reserved and hesitant to share information.

The youth spent a lot of time practicing asking these questions, and recording the answers given. This may seem like a simple task but to the youth who had never done this before and are self-conscious, this was challenging.

At the workshop, Adrian and some of the students told community members a bit of the history of the *Business Without Borders* program as well as some of its future goals. The one in particular, which we were asking their assistance for that night, was to help us develop a vision for an Enterprise Centre and working landscape. We wanted their ideas and concerns.

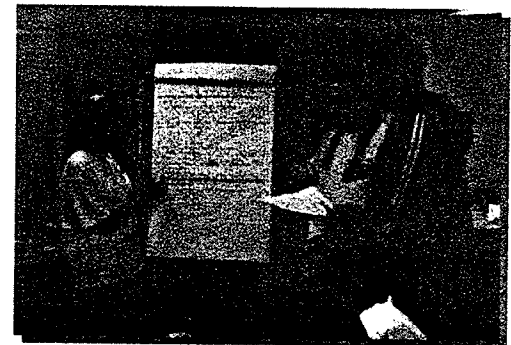
The workshop then broke into smaller groups of six or seven community members each led by a team of two or three youth. Upon arrival the community members had been provided with the list of thought and questions that the youth had prepared previously. Using this list, the youth led their groups through a discussion about the Enterprise Centre. Adrian and I rotated between groups to encourage discussion and to pose questions. Getting the conversation flowing wasn't difficult, as everyone attending seemed to have lots to offer. It seemed that the community had so many ideas, hopes for the youth. They saw the urgency of providing something for the youth. Each group had large newspaper print and maps of the site (although everyone knew where the site was) on which to record answers and mark down information about the site.

There was a great deal of ideas and information being presented. Ideas suggested ranged from what the site could be used for, things people perceived were needed on the reserve, details about the history of the site, to what features a building on the site should have. The information collected came in all kinds of forms. After the workshop it was organized into:

1. History of the land
2. Uses of building
3. Uses of land
4. Design elements of the building and the land

***"The land is
who we are.
It's very
important to
us.
I used to play
on that land
when I was a
child"***

**Vincent,
elder**



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP:

Summation of Information Gathered

History of the area:

- residential school gardening and farming plot
- burial grounds apparently near the waste transfer station
- need elders input-do walk of site with them

Uses of Building

- focus on business training versus a place to hang out
- convention centre/shows of student work
- internet, technology
- Siksika seeds
- Use for conferences and workshops
- Antique shop
- funeral home and products-headstones, coffins (export to other First Nations)
- Native plant species nursery/greenhouse
- medicinal garden
- resort training centre (connect to Castle Mountain, Interpretive Centre)
- resort-tipis, traditional dance, food, guided tours
- businesses-computer based, environmental based,
- recycling depot (presently one in Bassano, none at Siksika)
- animal resource/rescue centre
- gopher "recycling" centre, a.k.a dog food production
- Indian Days held not far from site (possible connections?)
- Blackfoot language immersion program
- place to tell story/historical progression of Siksika Nation

Building (design):

- built into landscape (like University of Lethbridge)
- incorporate cultural features i.e. teepee type building
- wheelchair accessible
- one storey building
- no portable buildings
- log building-warmth (see high school in Canmore)
- incorporate landscape-traditional uses/traditional plants
- corporate sponsorship i.e. U of C and the Zoo
- build with bricks (sponsors names on brick)
- prairie wagon-showing chronological history of the site
- against suggested idea of donated train car/portable building structure
- mark the land where building is to be located

Land

- apparently land at bottom of coulee close to watertable (ask Land Support)
- 4km to Bow River to the west, 8km to the south - excellent Brown Trout Fishing
- use of logs from Castle Mountain
- burial grounds apparently near waste transfer station
- need elders input through walk of site
- use for preserved parkland
- use of traditional plants for healing/medicinal potions
- herb teas-teahouse

Landfill -encourage youth to clean up valley, and maybe they could recycle the artifacts and sell them to others

Although they had been nervous about leading the discussions they were very much at ease once they got started. The fact that they are familiar with many of these people, I believe eased their anxiety. It was a successful event. The youth took a leadership role, the community learned about the project and we obtained a number of ideas for our vision.

What was noteworthy was the community members commenting that it is encouraging to see the youth actively seeking direction and a goal for the future. They were also glad to have been asked for their ideas. Very obvious to me, given the state of the reserve-high unemployment, high teenage pregnancy rate, suicide rates, high school drop-outs, was that the community really vested a lot of hope in this project, as there are few or no initiatives of this nature on the reserve.

The youth learned about their community and the land and could take pride in leading these sessions. Having gathered all of this information and ideas from the community, we reviewed the workshops and narrowed down what the youth thought would be important things for this place:

- **Involve community in this place-they want to assist and they have good hopes for youth's future**
- **Building to reflect Blackfoot culture-nothing should be imported i.e. trailer, portable**
- **Place must be reverent of the land**
- **Place must be memorial to the young girls' death**
- **Not just place for youth to hang out-must gain specific skills**
- **Help these youth to learn what business is all about or to create a businesses to serve their reserve**

Handwritten notes at the top of the page include: "Name: [unclear]", "50's [unclear]", "Roulette", "East Side [unclear] - seems but had always [unclear]", and "Cave [unclear]".

E L D E R S W O R K S H O P

I'm not sure if it was the softness in his voice, or the absolute patience with which he spoke, but listening to his words brought the most calming feeling over me. I could have listened forever as he and the others spoke about the site. They told of the medicines of the plants, the people who had lived there, the fireflies seen dancing above the coulee at night, believed by some to be the spirits of the girls who died there. I was completely mesmerized. I felt like a child at "story time". A program had been made for the workshop and there was a list of issues we wanted to discuss, but it seemed I didn't care. By this point of my experience with the Siksika people I was coming to learn the incredible value of releasing myself from the "agenda" and allowing what knowledge may, to come our way.

We were in a meeting room at the Deerfoot Sportsplex, with Siksika elders, Pius Three Sons, Arthur Ayoungmen, Mrs. Bad Boy, Beatrice Poor Eagle, Frank Turning Robe, Julia Wright, as well as, Floria Duck Chief from Siksika culture. They had come to share with us their knowledge of the site, and their wisdom about how we should proceed with developing a vision for it.

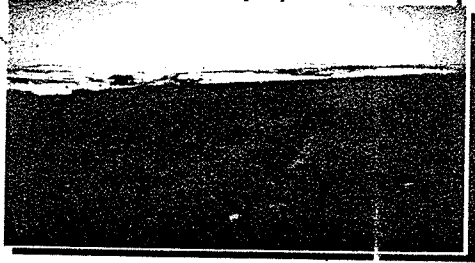
Listening to their stories, the details of the site and the histories and names of the people who had lived there... it was something in all of our searching so far that no map or record has been able to tell. Only some information about plants and medicines had we been able to find elsewhere - the Old Sun College Museum, books, and the Glenbow Museum. Up to this point I have been on the site at least a dozen times yet it is only in sitting here and listening to these words that it begins to come to life for me.

num: box
sketch
N: 1-100

50's area

Rowwater

Black rider - storm out dead
- Crane



The foundation in the grass that I am always tripping over now has an owner... Gordon Yellow Old Woman, and I can imagine the carts and horses which used to ride through the site. All of the plant samples, which we have been collecting, are now more than just part of the ecology of the site, they are remedies to cure colds, headaches and stomach flu. They were once the medicines that healed the Blackfoot people.

Of course, determining which plants these are, requires a good physical description, because what I know by common and botanical names, they, of course, know only by its Blackfoot name. (Note: find out what **Apinikun** is.)

prints - the way

We had set a program for the workshop, although I think we mostly just sat and listened to their stories. It was not until the end that we pulled out the map and began to mark information on it.

The youth were interested in knowing who the young girls were that had died in the storm there. "Rowwater and Crane Bear had died, Black Rider had survived," they were told. She had survived because when all three got caught in the blizzard, and huddled under a bush, she was in the middle.

We were all seeing that this land, which had little meaning for the youth, was a "place" to the elders. A place with a history and connection to their lives.

Handwritten notes at top: "Name: [unclear] 2/10/02 11:00 AM" and "Blackfoot [unclear] - [unclear] - [unclear]".

ELDER'S WORKSHOP

"At such meetings, telling stories which may at first seem to be unrelated to the matter at hand, is an important method of making comments, answering questions, and revealing deep and personal goals and needs. Telling stories is part of the entire folklore of native teachings. In some ways it resembles Euro-Canadian fairy tales, which are stories that can be understood on many levels. Therefore, a planner or designer working with such a group must allow a greater amount of time and flexibility for the decision making process (Brabec, 1984)."

The workshop with the elders was an excellent experience. They have a genuine concern for the future of their youth and the youth in turn have a great respect for their elders. However both recognize that even with this regard for one another, there is a great distance between them.

The elders really sparked the youth's interest in the site, particularly after hearing all the stories about the site and its history. It became very desirable after this meeting with the elders to have the history of the site recognized.

It also became evident to me that these elders could become an integral part of the project. They have experience, wisdom and most importantly, a desire to be of service to their community, particularly the young. When Floria Duck Chief, head of Siksika Culture, commented; "You young guys are doing okay, you're doing it the right way. Often the elders are never asked about developments on the reserve." I realized that these elders were essentially an underused resource. They want to be of service, yet are not granted the responsibility to do so.



Medicine Man of the Blackfoot Indians
Source: Glenbow Archives, Alberta File NA919-39

The elders really want to see these young people as more involved, giving members of the nation. It saddens them to see their youth without direction. I also believe that the youth want the same thing, but they don't know how to go about changing their situation, and are given little guidance to do so.

By seeking out information and knowledge as we had through workshops with the community and elder workshops, we were essentially employing traditional Blackfoot means of educating, mentoring and informing their youth. Many of the approaches to community design or community economic development suggest distributing surveys to the community as a means of gathering information and desired goals from the community. Although we did not attempt surveying, I believe it would not have been nearly as successful, because it fails to recognize the value and importance that the Blackfoot people place on face-to-face communication for information sharing. They need to know who is seeking the information and for what purposes. It also allowed the community and elders to see and share dialogue with the youth who are involved in the project, giving the participants of the workshop a human frame of reference by which they think of the project.

After talking to the elders, the youth gained an appreciation of the value of this land to their own history and culture and became committed to involving their elders in the Enterprise Centre project. The following other goals were also defined:

- Develop landscape memorial to the two girls who died there
- Draw attention to history of site in it's use-transport on site had been by foot, horse and wagon
- Elders must be participatory in developing in our vision, and a part of the operation of the landscape
- Contain the development area to the top of coulee-leave the land where scaffolds are said to exist and where fireflies are seen at night

names listed
sketch
N. 12-100
500' coulee
Rawwater
Black Rabbit

ELDER'S WORKSHOP

Summation of Information Gathered

ELDERS WHO ATTENDED

Pius Three Sons Arthur Ayoungmen
Mrs. Bad Boy Beatrice Poor Eagle
Frank Turning Robe Julia Wright

From Siksika Culture:
Floria DuckChief

LAND USE

Pasture for cows of the residential school
Gardening of vegetables was conducted in the area by the Old Sun school.

Wagon trails on site (teams of horses)

HISTORY

Two young girls died there in 1950's. They froze to death in a blizzard. The Crane Bear and Rawwater girls died, the Black Rider girl survived.

There are many stories of people seeing fireflies coming from the coulee. They are believed to be the spirits of these two girls

At the far western end of the coulee there is a little hill, the remnants of Clifford Crane Bear scaffold (The Blackfoot used to wrap their dead and place them on scaffolds or in trees in order that their spirit could enter the sky). Apparently his beads can still be found buried there.

NATIVE PLANTS

The museum has 8 or 9 of these plants in jars-sage, rosehips, tobacco leaves, mint, berries, etc.

Apinikim these white berries were mixed with Saskatoon berries.

Yarrow is boiled and drank as a broth for colds

Cactus berries (pinkflowers) are eaten in the fall when they are sweet

The yellow flower found in the damp areas is used for headaches.

Many skeletons found in area due to smallpox

MEDICINE

Spiritual gift from nature to them

It can only work for those it is given to by a special spirit, or passed down through an elder. The tradition of passing on recipes from one to another must be followed. If not, often the remedies don't work.

SUGGESTIONS

It was suggested by the elders that "Little kids can help too"

The elders expressed no concern for growing and selling native plant materials as long as was done by the Siksika youth.

Be reverent of the history of the land in its use, not like dump on north side of coulee

Other people to talk to:

Lawrence Flatback

Myrtle BlackRabbit

LEARNING ABOUT SIKSIKA YOUTH

As this practicum was attempting to achieve people and place appropriate development, I felt it necessary to talk with the youth directly about the realities of life at Siksika. I wanted to make sure that my observations were in keeping with how the youth see themselves, and their concerns about their community. In having these discussions, it forced the youth to look inward and address issues they previously had not. We discussed the following issues:

- Youth at Siksika
- The Siksika community
- Youth and the Land
- Business at Siksika

For the youth of the Siksika Nation these are their realities:

▪ LOSS OF CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITY AND CULTURE/ LOSS OF MENTORING AND CONNECTION WITH YOUTH

Aboriginal youth are no longer connected to the host of relatives and neighbours who were once a part of the youth's world and who contributed most to his or her development. In particular, their elders with whom they have little or no interaction with. Today's legacy to youth is one of isolation. The youth spend far less time with real people and far more time watching television, listening to the stereo, and talking on the phone.



The reserve is their home but they have little knowledge of their culture and history, and the “traditional ways” of the Blackfoot culture. They can tell you more about television.

“Community support and involvement is needed.”

“The administration is running the reserve. We want to be included in government now.”

▪ LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES ON RESERVE

The high level of unemployment on the Siksika reserve, reflects the pattern of economic stagnation as a consequence of underdevelopment, as well as the number of businesses and ventures on the reserve in the ownership of non-natives. Youth fully aware of the situation see no opportunities for finding and keeping a steady job on the reserve, and they look to more populous areas, like Calgary. This is an obstacle to the community’s future economic growth; high unemployment erodes skills and entrepreneurial vigor and provokes migration of younger people (Economic Council of Canada, 1990). This will result in a depleted human resource base for the community, causing implications for economic development and continuance of culture. Other issues arise from this as well because often these young people are not prepared for life in the city. They go seeking employment and opportunity with little confidence. Many have not finished high school and lack basic skills.

“There are no jobs for youth. The reserve is full of people with high school diplomas but no jobs.”

“There is no social centre for the youth.”



- **LACK OF PURPOSE AND CONFIDENCE. YOUTH DON'T FEEL LIKE THEY MATTER.**

These young people lack self-confidence. As a result, they fear venturing for success because it removes them from the peer collective (security) and increases their potential shame if they fail. They internalize what they believe are society's views of them and therefore act according to these expectations.

"Youth at Siksika are apathetic."

"We're not supposed to know how to do math, we're Indians."

They are without goals or hopes for the future. This is evidenced by the high teenage suicide rate as well as the high level of teenage pregnancy.

"There is a lot of drug and alcohol abuse and teenage pregnancy."

"Why not, it's something to do." (response to inquiry regarding high pregnancy rate)

From these observations it is clear that what is lacking for these young people is a sense of belonging or of purpose to the current social, cultural and economic order in which they live. They are caught between two cultures, their traditional Blackfoot culture which they have had little or no teachings of, and a western culture which they know about mostly through

television, consumption of western goods and observation of non-aboriginal people. Neither provides them with a strong sense of identity. Consequently, they do not feel rooted to their community, their land or it's future.

In her MLA thesis, *A Culturally Sensitive Guide to Planning and Design with Native Canadians*, Elizabeth Brabec examines this sense of identity as it relates to the psychology of a community. She suggests this sense of identity has been deeply affected by the aboriginal peoples' past interaction with other cultures. Identity is partially formed and takes strength from the symbolic messages that can be read in the build environment. With the exertion of many top down planning approaches for First Nation's people and land, the built environment drastically changed, thereby challenging and threatening the development and strengthening of this identity.

Identity has personal, community or racial aspects. Identity asserts a person's place in the world. Place has both physical, abstract and psychological dimensions. A sense of identity creates a secure base from which a person can attempt to deal with the changing pressures of the surrounding world. It is identity that has perhaps suffered the most from government policies for native people, and it is identity that many hope to reassert in their quest for traditional ways (Brabec, 1984).

Since Brabec made her observations there have been immense changes in the economies and societies of First Nation's people, including those of the Siksika people which been quite rapidly changing in the last 10 years.

Given land claims and self-government, their culture is in a state of change and these young people are caught in the midst of that change. Their culture is trying to figure out how it is changing and it's place in this world.

Culture is never static, it is a process and is constantly changing. The adaptations of a culture are often responses to changes in the geographic environments, the influences of neighbouring peoples or the introduction of new technology (Brabec, 1984).

For these youth at Siksika who do not have a clear understanding of their place in the economic and social order of the present, these changes question and confuse them about what their place in this changing order will be, and therefore it is easier to understand why they can't envision their future.

Identity is a fundamental and dynamic factor in the culture configuration of a group that it allows for historical reconstructions, as well as, for future projections (Tremblay 1976, Editor's note).

Without a strong personal identity and sense of being rooted in today, these young people have difficulty envisioning what they want in the future. With the changes of the past and those of the present, the youth lack a sense of belonging to place or purpose. They stress that they wish they were included more in community ways. I believe that *Business Without Borders* is attractive for them because it gives them a sense of belonging and purpose, just like traditional dancing and drumming, or sports. It helps them to define who they are.

In the past, a Blackfoot youth would have understood very clearly his/her identity as it related to their place in the economic and social order of their family and tribe. In the words of Russell Wright a Blackfoot elder,

A person going through life changed four times as a child, youth, adult, and elder...Early childhood was spent learning the language, followed by youth guidance in the thirteen-to-seventeen age range. There was an attempt to hasten mature thought, not necessarily maturity. In Blackfoot terms, that meant inform, teach, guide and encourage. Anytime you were talking to a young person you applied these four principles.

Life was considered a circle of continual learning and re-learning, as the Blackfoot understood the tendency to forget important principles. Within the tribe, every adult and elder was socially required to teach and re-teach young people who would eventually become elders themselves, replacing the ones who taught them tribal history and traditional values (Mieli, 1991).

In addition to this understanding of their social role, young people also knew of their value to the economics of family life. All members helped with family life and the young knew their tasks in relation to the hunt, food gathering and preparation, and to daily tasks. This knowledge that they were a needed and integral part of family existence also contributed to their sense of identity.

However, it was this sense of identity that was most heavily influenced by the intervention of the Euro-Canadians into First Nation's lives. This intervention broke the construct of social order within the Blackfoot tribe,

The unity of the family and tribe was broken when children were taken away from their parents and raised in residential schools run by missionaries. Cultural values were suppressed and, many children were raised without love and without learning to communicate. Unexpressed feelings turned to rage and led to delinquent behaviour. After World War II, traditional culture was replaced with alcohol culture.

On the Blackfoot reserve in the 50's industrialization and inflated prices made farm machinery unaffordable and the coal mines closed as natural gas caught on. Ashamed because they could no longer act as providers, men leased their land to white farmers and turned to alcohol.

In the 60's children of this alcohol generation were removed from their families and placed in non-native foster homes. Caught between two cultures, they felt alienated in white society yet were estranged from their native heritage (Mieli, 1991).

Given that these individuals did not grow up in the knowledge of their culture it is easy to understand why their children, the youth of today, have little rootedness to their culture. Throughout their lives these youth have not practiced the traditions of the Blackfoot culture within their family unit and how grown up aspiring for a more western lifestyle. It is only in the past few years that the youth have begun to have cultural programming in their education system.

These youth are disengaged from their culture. This is confounded by the increasing changes that are occurring in Blackfoot politics, economics and culture on their reserve. So not only do these young people not have a basis of their culture, they do not grasp their relation to the changes occurring in their community. Not only are they disengaged from their culture, but they are also not being engaged in the changes that are occurring in it.

If this is not changed it could signal problems for the future self-governance of the Siksika Nation. Over half of the Siksika population is beneath the age of 24 years. These youth are coming into enormous responsibilities for the management and control of land, resources and people. If, as so many do now, feel disengaged from it, they may not have the necessary motivating factors of community consciousness and attachment in order to be involved.

In 1992 David Newhouse, Head of Native Studies at Trent University stated that the next twenty years are critical for aboriginal peoples and communities,

...during this period, much of basic structures and processes of aboriginal life will be modified and placed under aboriginal influence (Newhouse, 1992).

Therefore given the changes that are occurring it is even more important that these youth be engaged in these changes that are occurring so that they can understand how their actions, activities and values can create effectual change. It will help to

provide them with a sense of identity and place in their culture today, so they are able to have a better understanding of what their place and identity is in the future.

If this practicum project was going to respond to the realities of the youth then what was most evident was that this project must do something to empower the young people of the reserve. It must involve them actively in community life and on their reserve, so that they have the capacity and the skills to guide their resources, assets and land in the future.

defining the goals for the Enterprise Centre



defining the goals for the enterprise centre and lands...

Goals are the foundation of design. Goal setting is essential to determine needs and priorities.

So by now, as you can imagine from all of our experiences in the education and outreach phase, we were absolutely bursting with information. The youth, excited and bolstered by the encouragement they had been receiving, were quite eager to express the wishes and desires they had for this place. Previous to this education and outreach, during the, "*What is your I.D.E.A.?*" session, I had just stared at blank faces when we had tried to define goals for the Enterprise Centre and landscape. During this education and outreach they began to get the feeling that they were making something happen in their community, and they started to see this development of the Enterprise Centre and lands, not only as an opportunity to learn skills, but of also serving their community. They were participating in the creation of a "place" on their reserve. It started to have value to them on their own life terms.

For me, this education and outreach was an incredible opportunity to get to know the community and the people of Siksika. It enabled me to gain a unique perspective on the youth and to have an awareness of their daily lives. I started to gain insights into the social workings and nuances of this community. This made me better equipped to help the youth in defining their goals for the Enterprise Centre and landscape.

The receptivity and enthusiasm of the community, elders and business practitioners was a confirmation for me, that we had proceeded the right way. It seemed that there are few things beyond the youth's schooling, which expand their lives or challenge their everyday horizons. This process was opening up that opportunity for them.

Our next task was to gather and organize all of the goals we had developed during this education and outreach. As is noted after each step, we had defined numerous goals, listing all thoughts from what the Enterprise Centre would look like, to who would use it. We were essentially defining what experiences the youth would like this place to provide. These responses were analyzed to determine the patterns that could form a framework for the goals. This was done by myself, in conjunction with Adrian Stimson Jr., the program co-ordinator and then taken back to the youth for their agreement.

Having this list, the ideas and thoughts were then content analyzed to develop a set of eight goals that seemed to incorporate the most representative responses and the unique ideas and concerns of the youth.

The following are goal statements for the Enterprise Centre and the landscape, as set and articulated by the *Business Without Borders* youth.

1. INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SIKSIKA YOUTH

"We need more jobs on the reserve" Lange Many Bears

- Concern is more about getting a job and gaining work experience first, then starting their own businesses
- Access to information about other reserves, employment
- Relevant skill training
- Create full-time jobs on the reserve to employ highschool graduates

2. COMMUNITY ORIENTED

"This place should be for Siksika people, they should benefit from it." Waylon Delaney

- Its operation will hinge on community participation. Community participation will be encouraged
- Want it to be inclusive of as many members of community as possible, particularly younger members and elders
- A place of community celebration-other than Sun Dance pow-wow/rodeo grounds, no place for outdoor events

3. GIVE YOUTH A POSITIVE ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

"Youth are the leaders of this place, they get to make the decisions, not someone else." Lindsay Yellow Horse

- Give them a voice and encourages them to make their own decisions
- We do not want this to be a place for youth to "hang out" need to be doing something
- Place whose image is about youth training



4. THE USE OF THE LAND IS VERY IMPORTANT

“Show some respect for the land” Toni Running Rabbit

- No pollution
- Do not develop land which may have historical sites or land which there are stories about
- Incorporate elders into the land planning
- Place of outdoor education/training centre: teach more youth about their land-plants, history
- Maybe the lands could be a native plant teaching garden or a medicinal garden
- Do something that cleans up the reserve

5. CULTURALLY AND HISTORICALLY RELEVANT

- Means to reintroduce sharing of traditional knowledge
- Showcase Siksika culture, especially to youth
- The place should exhibit aboriginal elements
- Make the Enterprise Centre a memorial to the young girls who died there in the 1950s

6. BUSINESS EDUCATION

- Provide curriculum beyond high school and Old Sun College
- Before an Enterprise Centre building to incubate businesses, there needs to be education and training about business
- Train people so that they have relevant skills
- Mentorship: hire aboriginal mentors we met to teach at the Enterprise Centre

7. BUILDING DESIGN

“The building should blend with the landscape” Lisa Many Bears

- Blend it with the architecture of the high school which is adjacent
- Maybe youth could rent space for conferences
- Ensure that the location of building does not interfere with the western view of the mountains from the Siksika high school
- Classrooms to learn about business
- Daycare for youth with children

8. COLLECTIVE ABOUT YOUTH

- The youth don't like the idea of everyone doing their own thing –how can this be a team project?
- Place where youth work together and make decisions together vs. pursuing individual endeavours
- Collective- youth are much more motivated as a group and secure with their peer collective

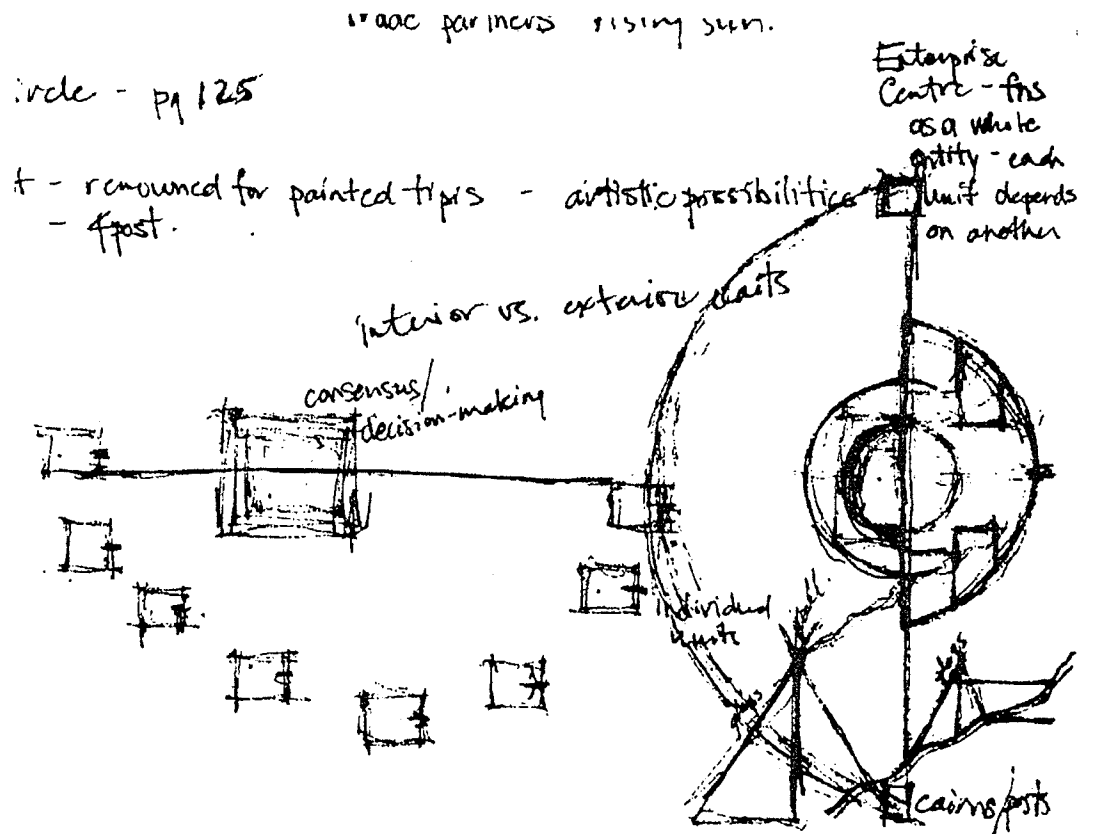
Given all of this combined information I began to explore possibilities for the Enterprise Centre and the lands. My task was to extract from all the information, goals and inventories of the site, a vision for this place. The experience that I had been afforded with the Siksika people and their place was also very helpful to me at this stage. Having an insider's view and intimate knowledge of the youth and the community, I felt, gave me a certain intuition that helped me to be better able to



capture the essence of their needs and priorities.

At this point I began to sketch ideas, however I had an intuitive feeling that an Enterprise Centre building, (a business incubator) the facility which was the original intent of the project, was not what was needed at this time. There seemed to be a step missing. From the goals that were identified, it seemed we were still figuring out what this place might be, and expressing some of the desired activities

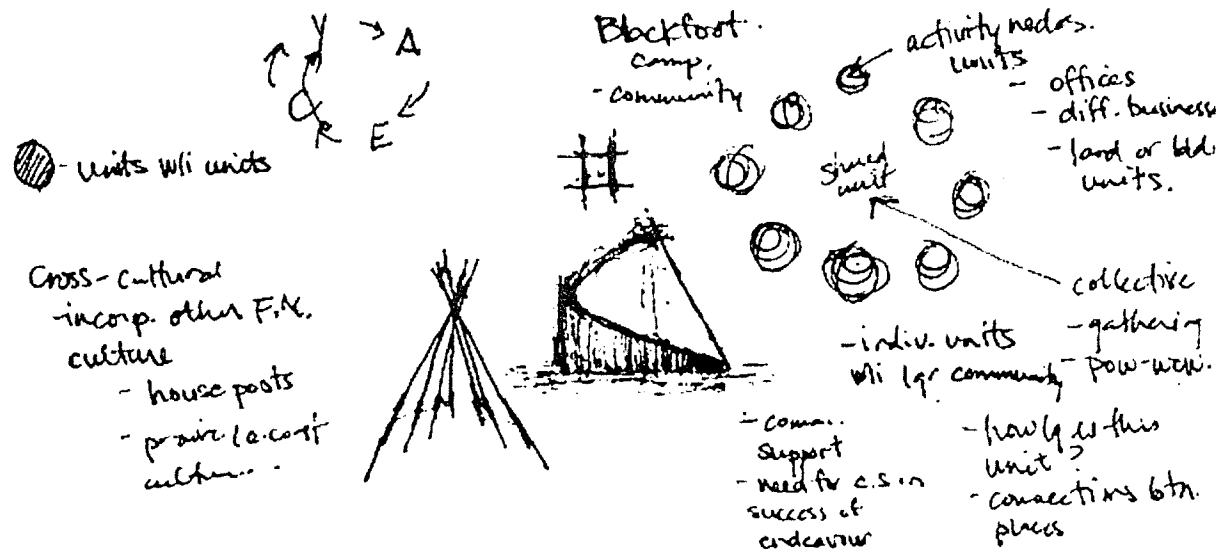
the Enterprise Centre and lands could provide. From what I was hearing the youth saying, and from what I was observing, the youth didn't seem to have the necessary foundations, motivation, confidence, experience, to use a building which would



be structured to help them start their own businesses. They weren't expressing a connection to that idea. There was great potential for this land to serve them, and I didn't think a building was going to do them justice. Just as the youth needed knowledge and experience before they were able to develop goals for the Enterprise Centre and landscape, now they needed the knowledge and experience of business before they could internalize the idea of starting a business for themselves, as well

→ - area for storytelling of the elders pairing of youth w/ elders
 - circle of life complete when elder passes on wisdom to the young

as having the confidence to carry those businesses out.



They needed the experience and knowledge of business...

...and the experience I was about to have with them would be the clue we were looking for.

u n c o v e r i n g o u r v i s i o n . . .

And in finding our vision, we would have to look no further than in the midst of the *Business Without Borders* program..

For a number of years *Business Without Borders* has been developing a product called A Little Bit of Siksika. Although the *Business Without Borders* youth make this product every year, they have done so with little regard or understanding of the whole process from a business perspective.

So this, my first year of working with them on this project, I suggested that we carry out A Little Bit of Siksika as a mini-business development project. In this process the youth would devise a simple business plan and then carry that out from beginning to end, conceptualization to sales. Through this experience they would get exposure to accounting, acquiring supplies, assessing costs, purchasing materials, and to selling and marketing A Little Bit of Siksika for consumption. They agreed that this would be a good idea, and asked me, in conjunction with Adrian Stimson Jr. and Yvonne Landon, to lead them through it.

It was through this experience with the youth that a vision which fulfilled the goals and that matched the reality of Siksika and the Siksika youth was found...



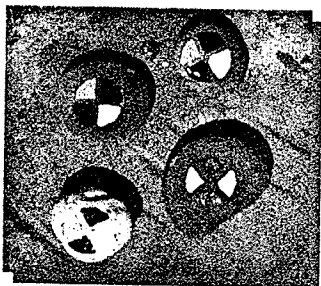
LITTLE BIT OF SIKSIKA

In this heat of the summer sun, the smell of wild mint and sage is heavy all around me. The mint has a curious scent because it is has both a freshness and a dampness combined. Although we harvested it three days ago, its' scent still lingers in the air.



To my right sits a growing pile of little brown boxes that have been stamped, filled and closed, now waiting for Adrian and I to tie with jute. Although it might look a bit frenzied to people who pop their head in to see what's going on there is order in this mess that surrounds us.

As I tie the jute, I think back on that crazy yet wonderful week....



The smooth rounded river rock. This and 999 others had been carefully selected for their flat faces. This made it much easier to apply the circle of red, white, black and yellow acrylics. Having just finished them last night there are many hands around this table still showing remnants of the paint.

And then there was the harvesting of the mint. Following Adrian that day, we had left the road and driven on a faintly laid out trail, right

over the open grasses until we hit the top of a hill. Looking at the oasis in front of me I was in awe. As I drove down into the flats of the Bow River I felt as if we were the first to come here. Everything down here was a lush magnificent green. This is the kind of place a child establishes their own summer kingdom, ingeniously using fallen branches to build their fortress, rendering the sparkling river protection from the horrible enemies. It had the quality of a dream experience, even the sky had that haziness about it.

Here we harvested the wild mint. As wild mint likes it feet wet, it could be trusted to be found in these damp flats of the Bow River curves. I remember the humid air getting thick with the smell of mint, the oils of the mint being released as we harvested it.

The river looked so inviting. "Waylon, do you guys ever come here for a swim?", I had inquired, thinking how much fun it would be. "No," he said, "I don't think that I've ever been here before." I was amazed. "Why not?" I blurted. He and Lisa explained to me that there are a lot more places like this along the Bow River, as it traverses the whole reserve, where they might go to swim instead. I realized there was so much more of the Siksika Nation that I needed to see.

Lesley Stimson had been kind to offer us the use of her backyard for all of the messy work. There in our "outdoor office" surrounded by walls of mature poplar trees we cleaned and painted rocks, dried armfuls and armfuls of mint and sage, beaded bracelets, stamped boxes and laughed. Yes, there was always frenzy, but there was always as much laughter-these youth love to laugh.





"What's going on in here?" I looked up from my tying to see a member of the Nation standing in the doorway. We were now working in the main boardroom which the Administration had been kind to offer us. Being in this busy place we were having many curious onlookers peeking their heads in, either attracted by the scent of mint and sage, the sounds of laughter or the sight of the chaos which surrounded us.



Responding to the inquiry at the door, Lisa Many Bears gladly told him what "A Little Bit of Siksika" was all about. You could see their pride when people asked them what they were doing and all the work that had gone into making each product. In the company of their peers they bring out the best in each other, they have strength as a collective. And all worked together to create "A Little Bit of Siksika".



To the person who buys "A Little Bit of Siksika" it is a collection of pieces, the painted rock, the beaded bracelet, the sachet of sage and the mint, all of which tell a little bit about the Siksika culture. But to Lisa, Toni, Waylon, Nikki, Dave, Shane, and Lindsey it is something much more.

When they look at "A Little Bit of Siksika" they don't just see the final product. They see the hot summer days they harvested sage, the thousands of beads which have slipped through their fingers, the green flats of the Bow River, the colours red, white, yellow and black which they painted a thousand times. They see making numerous telephone calls in search of supplies, tying jute, the day at the Calgary Stampede

where they were able to rustle up some sales of "A Little Bit of Siksika", they see Shane's diligence in cleaning the rocks, Lindsey's impressive sales pitch at the Stampede, the messy boardroom that surrounds them, and many, many more activities. When they look at "A Little Bit of Siksika" they see the experience they had of creating it. There were long hours, hard work, and memorable times wrapped up inside this box.

As I tied another piece of jute around the box, I realized that I was standing in the midst of our vision...



Visit Indian Village and take home
"A Little Bit of Siksika"

A Keepsake of native and traditional artifacts of
the Siksika Nation's land, people and culture.



- Made by youth of the Siksika Nation Business Without Borders Program
- Can be purchased at the Siksika Nation Booth in the Main Teepee of Indian Village for only \$5.00

It seemed that so many of the experiential goals we desired of the Enterprise Centre and lands, were evidenced in A Little Bit of Siksika - the interaction with the land, the youth as students and teachers of their culture, acquiring business skills, community support, and entrepreneurial education. The answer was simple, we needed to take the model of *A Little Bit of Siksika* and apply it to the land. We would develop a business venture on the land. I proposed,

The youth could fulfill the experiential goals defined for the Enterprise Centre lands by initiating and carrying out a process of developing a business venture on the land. In this vision we saw the land not as a place but as an experience.

An experience which...

Draws on the strengths of these young people who are motivated and strong when they work as a collective...

And who work harder and laugh harder when they are all one...

Increases the community awareness of Business Without Borders,

And seeks out the community's involvement and support, they are encouraged and supportive of their youth...

Nurtures the sense of pride and purpose they develop when they feel like they are a part of something important, something that is the work of their own hands...

Encourages them to seek out the knowledge of people and places, whether on the reserve or outside its bounds, their confidence and skills will increase with every little bit...

And most importantly, which uses the land to do so...

In this way the land would become an image of the development of the *Business without Borders*, and an image of the development of Siksika youth. The land would give “identity” to the program. In this vision,

The land is seen as the container for the development of the vision,

The land is the resource through which the vision will be developed,

It is also the image of the *Borders Without Borders* program to the youth,

And the image of the *Borders Without Borders* program to the community.

It is the tool through which *Business Without Borders* can develop an identity on the reserve.

This way of looking at the land in community development is understood from the Randolph Hester, a landscape architect. He puts forward a theoretical basis for community development that comes from four areas: applied social theory of Herbert Gans, political theory and practices of Saul Alinsky; ecological thinking (to be distinguished from ecological determinism and environmentalism) that establishes a systemic interdependence between people, institutions and their landscape; and microeconomics more akin to real estate development than economic theory. The first two of these marked the idealistic period of community design beginning in the 1960s. The latter two indicate the shift towards both more holistic thinking about community problems and a spirit of pragmatic entrepreneurship (Hester, 1987). A detailed discussion of his basis for community development follows.

RANDOLPH HESTER,

"COMMUNITY DESIGN: MAKING THE GRASSROOTS WHOLE"

Given this new economic component to our project, I took particular interest in the work of Randolph Hester, a landscape architect and professor at the University of California Berkeley.

From extensive experience working with local communities for over 30 years he advocates landscape architecture as a tool for community economic development. He believes the growing trend towards grassroots economic development has increased opportunities for landscape architects who approach design from a community development perspective. He sees community design as serving community development, a process whereby groups of people, typically poor, living in a given locale improve themselves collectively and individually through their own grassroots effort. Through his research into community design projects he found that,

Community design is most successful when it is incorporated into the life of a community through economic development resulting in capital generation, an increased level of investment and economic participation (Hester 1984).

This trend towards grassroots development he suggests might be called "place appropriate" economic development. Place appropriate economic development markets the indigenous cultural landscape resources of economically depressed

neighbourhoods, small towns and rural regions for economic renewal. Like the American towns he speaks of, Canadian reservations have been the subject of federal economic development strategies which exploited the resources and the people, rarely considering the more subjective, indigenous resources of lifestyle and landscape. The results of such efforts, as proven over time, only served to be painfully inappropriate to the people and their culture.

This new economic strategy looks to the local historical landscape to inspire economic renewal.

From his experience he believes landscape architects have as great, if not a better ability to direct the development process than do architects, planning economists and developers who currently play these major roles.

He states,

The role of landscape architects in place appropriate community development is obvious: uncovering extraordinary and ordinary landscapes of local and outside value, describing the cultural history and lifescapes, discovering indigenous idiosyncrasies that can be marketed, preserving sacred places, introducing the community to its genius loci, and inspiring place appropriate design choices.

Like Elizabeth Brabec, Hester lays out a process of community design that is unique to landscape architects. Although it is important to look at the process he used (For detailed discussion of the process see "Landstyles and Lifescapes: 12 Steps to Community Development") what is of curiosity, are the principles of his approach.

As Hester himself states every community is different so therefore every process will be different. However if each is grounded or has its foundation within a similar framework of thinking and is guided by a similar set of principles than place-appropriate development can be achieved.

What he believes is important, is the way we choose to see the community and look at possible solutions. He puts forward a series of principles that he believes seem most important to successful community economic development..

1. View the landscape as the resource which provides the basis for economic development; the landscape serves as a container for cultural life essential for a given lifestyle; and the landscape serves as both a reflective image of self to insiders and a marketable image to outsiders.
2. Primary task for the designer is to uncover previously under or unused resources that can benefit the community. In poorer communities the obvious resources may have already been exploited by outsider, however if one looks carefully the underused resources can usually be found. "The critical ingredient to this kind of critical looking is ecological thinking, analyzing the resources and the network of their relationships to people and place so that underused and unused ingredients can be used to the community's advantage.
3. To utilize the landscape resources in a way that maximizes the benefits for those who need them most, in order to achieve a measure of environmental justice. A project must be implemented incrementally, on a small scale, employing local available skills and materials in order that the community can improve their lives. Benefits should accrue to local people.
4. To orchestrate the use of the landscape resource to sustain the yield of the resource.

5. To use the past and present container of cultural life to inspire the future in order to maintain social continuity, minimize the trauma of change and reduce the costs of capital improvements
6. To develop a marketable image that is consistent with the internal reality and that enhances the reflective image. The image that a community chooses to project via its landscape can be an economic assets or liability. He believes that places do not have to be changed, real places can be marketed as they are. The designer must look to the essence of people and culture and find the appropriate image both financially and culturally.

As Hester says,

The way we practice landscape architecture does affect community development. We can point out landscape resources previously untapped. We can show how to use those resources in ways that benefit the community members most in need. We can strike a balance between consumption and conservation so that resources sustain the community over time. We can design the landscape container of community life to minimize the trauma of change, yet reap the benefits of change. We can develop images for the community, marketable yet consistent with the social reality. We can do all these things but only if we are intimately involved with the community and have a vision for a society that is more "whole" some.

proposal for developing a business on the land...



proposal for developing a business venture on the land....

I proposed that what was needed in the near future was not an Enterprise Centre for Business Incubation, but a process of having the youth gain a greater personal experience of what business was all about, a process of developing a business venture of their own. Given the purpose of the *Business Without Borders* Program to gain an understanding of business and skill training, it would seem to follow very simply that this place have an economic component. This place would provide greater business education through actual hands-on operation. This introduced a new challenge to the process. It required very entrepreneurial thinking to search and seek out a viable business venture for a project which had at its roots a social and cultural motivating force, not an economic force.

Rationale for beginning a training/working landscape venture:

The goal is to empower the Siksika youth through knowledge of culture, increased self-confidence, and acquisition of business skills, that they may use their cultural and land resource assets in a manner which is conducive with their traditional values. At the same time it will assist them in thinking progressively about the benefits which business relationships may bring to their future, and to educating others outside of their culture as to the importance of the Siksika Nation peoples.

Other beneficial reasons include:

- They can develop a product that is in keeping with traditional values but that will bring rewards to the community.
- A business venture which incorporates traditional practices into the way it operates can educate others as to the ways of the Siksika peoples.
- Excellent vehicle for educating and fostering appreciation and respect for the valuable information and knowledge of the indigenous people of the Blackfoot culture. It is a celebration for their culture.
- In keeping with the mandate/goal/objectives of the *Business Without Borders* program in teaching business skills, self-confidence.
- Gives the program validity, people can see the objectives and the teachings of the program put into practice.
- Excellent to have the youth of the Siksika the leaders of a pro-community development. It keeps the land and resources, and how they are managed in the hands of the youth who will be its future managers.
- Draws on the underused resources of the community.

choosing a venture for the land...

Having decided that we wanted to carry out a business venture on the land, we returned to some ideas that had come up during our **education and outreach**. There had been much discussion which revolved around plants and getting the Siksika youth more informed of, and interested in their land. As the intent of the *Business Without Borders* program is entrepreneurial education we were also really striving for something that had an economic component and that could function and be run as a viable business venture. We starting looking at ideas such as a medicinal garden, a native plant nursery, and a learning garden. However, with these ideas the discussions revolved around operating them as tourism ventures which would serve non-Siksika members. The youth were quite concerned that the benefits of a business they started would go to their community, and they didn't see these ideas as fulfilling that.

In our research of medicinal gardens and native plant nurseries we happened to come across the idea of community and market gardens. We found so many examples of community and market gardens that seemed to be responding to similar contexts, such as that at Siksika-community involvement, desire to increase community skills and empower poorer communities. Although we did not find evidence of any similar initiative by First Nation youth, there were many models and examples of gardens based on similar principles and goals that we were trying to achieve with the Enterprise Centre. Given this we began to consider a market garden venture to serve the Siksika community as a viable option.

A MARKET GARDEN

A market garden or community garden is a garden that produces fresh vegetables and markets these directly to consumers. Market gardeners are small scale producers that develop their own markets and sell all of their produce during the growing season. Produce can be sold through people coming to the garden, known as farm-gate sales or through farmer's markets.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED FOR THE LAND:

A Native Plant Nursery

As a native plant nursery, plants which not only grow wild on the Siksika reserve, but also plants used in traditional native practices could be harvested. Initial consultation with tribal elders about traditional use and harvesting patterns, and also with outside experts suggests that these products could be harvested on a sustainable basis and that there are possible business prospects which could arise from the harvesting of wildflowers, herbs and other plant species. Today homeopathic medicine, aromatherapy and natural healing methods are becoming increasingly popular and accepted in society. We believe that native plant species, whose medicinal, healing and edible properties have been known and used for thousands of years by the Blackfoot people could be harvested at the Siksika Nation for the creation of exciting and successful products. The idea behind these products will be based on how native plant materials and extracts have been used in the traditional Blackfoot culture. They would be obtained from plants harvested through the Enterprise Centre operation.

A Teaching Garden

The creation of a teaching garden is also being considered. Using the opportunity of the natural landforms and the different conditions contained within the site, plants the different herbal and medicinal plants of the Blackfoot could be grown. The teaching garden could incorporate signage and storytelling to relay ethnobotanical, cultural and environmental significance of the plants. The youth would be responsible for the operation of the teaching garden, maintaining the garden and assessing the potential demand or markets for these products (for sale), as well as generating tourist interest and awareness of the teaching garden.

exploring the possibility of a market garden



exploring the possibility of a market garden...

When it was agreed upon that a market garden would be a viable and exciting option for this project, it was decided that a number of the youth be given the responsibility of researching the feasibility of such an idea. Although we had examples of market and community gardens working elsewhere, we needed to do a research study of Siksika and of market gardens to see if the idea would work at Siksika.

We had to investigate whether this vision had the potential to be a successful and viable venture. Essentially what this study would do was take the idea to the community, and the land, as well as test it's economic feasibility. The process thus far had taught us that a market garden was culturally and socially feasible but if we hoped to realize social and cultural goals it needed to be economically feasible.

What was most important at this point was that the process continue to involve the youth to the greatest extent. Therefore it was necessary to have them carry out this study. In community economic development this perspective on the youth being a part of the process is referred to as "capacity building". This perspective believes that the path to greater self-reliance must involve a process that empowers people and builds organizational capacity. It is concerned with building the necessary infrastructure by first building the institution and the capacity of the institutions' membership. Therefore by involving the

There is a growing trend of using garden projects to play a vital role in connecting people to earth and people to each other. They produce food and beauty, they are places of refuge and learning, and there are places where the community can gather to work and relax.

A number of garden projects we looked at reflected a wide range of involvement:

- Community gardens
- School gardens
- Job training gardens
- Demonstration gardens

youth, encouraging their skill development and involving the community we are building the capacity of the youth to carry on this project independently.

This research and feasibility study also allowed us to take the idea back to the community. It involved the community by surveying them, asking for their assistance and letting them know that they were important to this project.

In community economic development terms community involvement is seen as a key piece to successful community development. Community participation and strategic networking is needed to,

...develop First Nation support and participation in the planning process and establish a network of relationships in the public and private sectors that can be brought to bear in support on First Nations economic development (WestCoast Development Group, 1990).

Just as we had been careful to involve community to this point we wanted to continue to do so as much as possible. Community economic development models suggest right from the beginning of the process,

- enlisting community for ideas, meetings and discussions to solicit ideas for ventures
- outreach to the First Nation members about specific ventures. This can be used to test ideas and develop support for ideas and to identify possible partners
- meeting with them to mobilize support

market research and feasibility study for a market garden at Siksika...

Drawing on knowledge from an Environment Entrepreneur Program I had studied, extensive literature from Alberta Agriculture, and the Alberta Market Gardener's Association, I prepared an outline for a proposed research study. In keeping with the desired vision, this study would be conducted by Siksika youth, enabling them to gain valuable entrepreneurial and research experience.

In the summer of 1998, three of the *Business Without Borders* youth, Toni Running Rabbit, Waylon Delaney, Lange Many Bears, in addition to myself and Ms. Yvonne Landon, who acted as mentors, carried out an extensive Market Research and Feasibility Study. The three key pieces of the study were:

1. to assess the market potential of the market garden venture on the reserve. That is to ascertain whether there is a demand for a garden, who it would serve, and what type of produce is in demand by potential customers.
2. to assess the production requirements of a market garden venture and to assess the feasibility of Siksika lands for supporting the garden venture.
3. to gather cost estimates and to prepare financial projections for the market garden venture.





Assessing the market potential

In assessing the market potential the first step taken was to clearly define the research process which was to be used. In this we set out everything from the purpose of the research to the research plan, methods and sources of data, our sample size, and the data collection forms.

Primary sources of data for the Siksika market were:

1. Siksika community
2. Restaurants at Siksika
3. Grocery stores at Siksika
4. Market gardeners
5. Alberta Agriculture/Alberta Market Gardeners Association



Although not researched as extensively, primary sources of data for the export market were:

1. Marketing consultant
2. Chefs and owners of specialty restaurants in the Calgary area
3. Local organizations
4. Market gardeners
5. Alberta Agriculture/Alberta Market Gardener's Association

Questions were prepared for each of the above sources, and then were reviewed by Lloyd Hausher of Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Market Gardeners Association. After corrections, we began the task of interviewing. The youth conducted face-to-face interviews with all the grocery stores, all the restaurants, the resort and with 150 random community members. They also spoke with some potential export markets such as specialty restaurants within the Calgary and Banff regions of Alberta who might be interested in added buffaloberry as a seasonal part of their menu.

The youth also visited and interviewed the owners of a number of existing operational market gardens in southern Alberta. This gave them the chance to see the production requirements of a market garden, the crops which are grown and to ask questions about the pricing of produce, channels of marketing, production needs, management and labour requirements, and the market garden industry.

During this period we also explored the possibility of using the buffaloberry plant (*Sherperdia canadensis*) as a shelterbelt tree. The buffaloberry, known in Blackfoot as *Miksinistsim*, is native to the Siksika reserve as well as being a plant with many historical and contemporary uses by the Blackfoot people. Once used for pemmican, it is still regularly eaten by Siskika people today and is used to make buffaloberry soup, jams and Indian ice cream. The buffaloberry is also a plant that the PFRA, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, is promoting as an excellent shelterbelt tree. Buffaloberry seedlings, as well as other shelterbelt plants, are donated to farmers and gardeners by the PFRA as part of their mandate to reduce soil erosion on the prairies.



Buffaloberry

Source: Willard 1992

This research found:

- A high level of interest among members of the Siksika community as well as from the grocery store and restaurants
- Currently there is no market garden venture within a half-hour radius of the Siksika townsite.
- Grocery store and restaurants expressed a desire for fresher produce which could be delivered from a shorter distance
- Siksika consumers would purchase buffaloberry, also a potential export market of specialty restaurants would be interested in buffaloberries
- Current market garden owners stated that the market garden industry is growing and that there is increasing demand for fresh produce, As one owner stated, "If you can grow good produce, you will have no problem selling it."

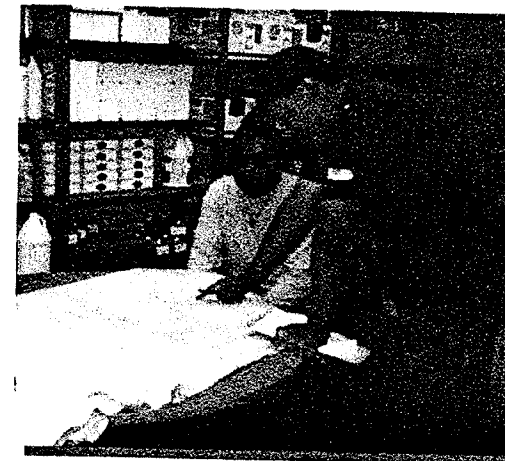
A detailed copy of the study and the results of the study can be obtained from the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society.

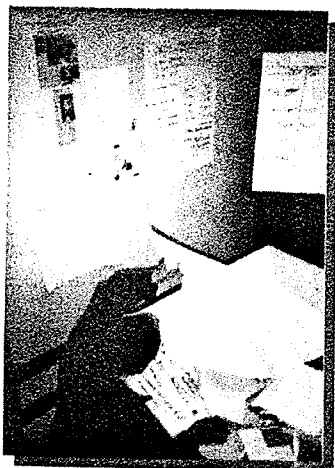
The feasibility of the land for a market garden and the production requirements

As part of the research study, the youth, under my guidance, conducted a thorough site analysis. Particular emphasis was placed on those elements that would be influential to the development of a garden venture. To determine the suitability for gardening the following were studied:

- Cropping history of the site
- Soil analysis was conducted for two possible areas to determine the soil type and quality
- Climate of the site
- Length of the growing season, number of sunlight hours
- Shelterbelt requirements
- Availability of irrigation
- Access to the site by road

A possible location was then chosen based on a number of factors, the soil conditions- the east location had a higher CEC (carbon exchange capacity) and a higher organic matter content; location- it was closer to the high school so running irrigation lines to this area would be less costly (a well was not an option given depth to groundwater and the high saline content of the water), and the garden would stay closer to area already disturbed from high school construction; and slope, the parcel chosen would need minimal grade changes.



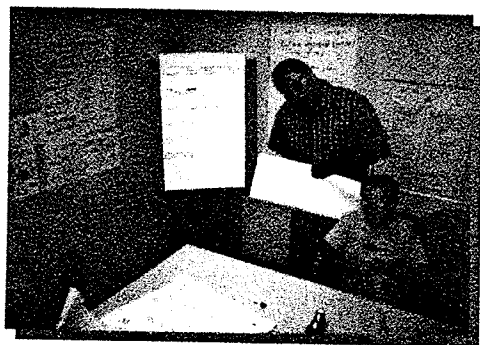


To gather cost estimates for a market garden venture

Throughout the course of this research the youth spoke to a number of people to get an idea of all of the inputs necessary for running a market garden and the costs of all those inputs. The information received depended on the size of the operation, as well as whether or not the operation was an organic garden. They spoke with market gardeners', the Alberta Market Gardener's Association, Alberta Agriculture and to the UFA, the United Farmers Association. The youth priced tractors, and hand rakes and hoes and shovels and backsprayers and seeds and wheelbarrows and so on.

They also studied land development costs for everything from soil tests, purchasing and planting shelterbelts, installing deer fence, to installing and operating irrigation lines. Other costs that looked at were labour costs, office and cleaning supplies.

Again, a detailed look at the production costs can be found in *The Research and Feasibility Study for a Market Garden Venture at Siksika*. This can be obtained from the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society.



By completion of the study the youth had not only gathered valuable information but had gained some research skills, learned about gardening, and had spread the word about the market garden venture. It was very clear that a market garden at Siksika had the potential to be a successful venture. The project was starting to develop real momentum, the community was interested, Chief and council supported it, Siksika agriculture had offered their support, and the youth were enthusiastic.

The study resulted in some of the following decisions:

- The garden would be approximately 3 acres in size. At this size it would be feasible for a group of youth to manually operate, as it would be a good learning and training size.
- The garden would be an organic operation-this would require much more research and expertise to assist with the garden development.
- The garden would start with limited produce: 3-5 crops. From the research those most desired were potatoes, lettuce, carrots and strawberries (see chart on page 128).
- Buffaloberry (*Miksinistim*) would be used as a shelterbelt plant.

The proposal to use *Miksinistim* as a shelterbelt plant for the market garden was received well by the community. The research showed that there is a desire for *Miksinistim* on the reserve, but more importantly, the research revealed it's potential for an export market. Market research analysts, as well as specialty restaurants in Calgary expressed an interest in value added products from the *Miksinistim* berry.

Notes from the youth's presentation of the Market Research and Feasibility Study to Siksika Chief and Council:
August 4, 1998

- "Encouraging to see this proposal. It is the first time I have seen this level of market research performed for a venture at Siksika by members of the community"
Finance minister
- "Would like to see this type of training incorporated at the High school"
Education minister
- The research package, presentation and skills of youth were praised
- Even a sale was made! One council member expressed a desire to purchase 200 boxes of "A Little Bit of Siksika" to be used for gifts at a youth conference.

B U S I N E S S W I T H O U T B O R D E R S



The Market Garden



What will the market garden produce for sale?

| Type of Produce | Community | Grocery stores | Restaurants | Market Gardeners | Alberta Agriculture |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Carrots | X | X | X | X | |
| Lettuce | X | X | X | | |
| Potatoes | X | X | X | X | |
| Tomatoes | X | X | X | | |
| Corn | X | | | | |
| Onion | X | | X | | |
| Cucumber | X | X | | | |
| Celery | X | | X | | |
| Peas | X | | | X | |
| Broccoli | | X | | | |
| Strawberries | X | X | | X | X |
| Buffaloberries | X | X | | | |

The above table indicates the produce desired by potential Siksika consumers and those suggested by the market garden industry. The most desired are:

carrots **lettuce**
potatoes **tomatoes** **strawberries**

As the vision of the garden is of a place which promotes community and culture, it is hoped that the elders could be asked to conduct the harvesting of the plant in its traditional method.

With the research we had gathered about market gardening, the support the project was receiving, and the growing awareness that this project could fulfill the vision, we decided to proceed with the market garden as our choice. We now had our vision and with it we began to plan for its continued development.



the vision for a market garden at Siksika...

the vision for a market garden venture at Siksika...

The vision for the market garden project was based on how a market garden would respond to the goals established during our **education and outreach**. It was of importance in this vision to demonstrate how both the operation and the development of the market garden venture could respond to these desired goals. In other words, how could our goals be operationalized as both the means and the ends of a vision.

This vision, as opposed to being a drawing of plan and forms of what the garden would be like, was expressed as what **experiences** the development and operation of this place, a market garden, could afford the youth and the community of Siksika. The vision was as much about the development and function of the garden as it was about the form of the garden.

As opposed to having a vision for a product we had a vision for an experience.

A PLACE OF EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS TRAINING

The purpose of the garden will be as a training venture. All those involved will receive employment with the garden, but also skill development and mentorship, essentially it will be a “learning job”. Under the guidance of a manager and mentors, the youth will operate as a collective, responsible for mutual decision-making and the operation of the garden.

In addition to education about agriculture, the garden youth will receive hands-on practical experience in the development and operation of the business. From January through to April, the youth who will be involved with the project will learn, through a classroom setting, agricultural and business curriculum. In addition to agricultural training, each student will be responsible for a specific task of the business operation, and will learn about that task through the mentorship of business professionals of CESO (Canadian Executive Services Organization). CESO is a non-profit organization that provides volunteer advisors to businesses in aboriginal communities. These professionals volunteer their time and expertise in business start-up, planning, infrastructure and education. The business tasks will include:

1. Finance/inventory
2. Advertising and marketing
3. Sales
4. Operations

Emphasize will be on hands-on learning, and working side by side with mentors. The market garden youth will study organic gardening, which will include soil preparation, composting, sowing, cultivation, irrigation, maintenance, weeding, propagation and pest control. Organic agricultural consultants, as well as farmers on the Siksika reserve will mentor the youth.



the vision for a market garden venture at Siksika...

COMMUNITY ORIENTED

In the vision for the market garden project, everything from its development through to the operation of a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) encourages and depends upon community support.

CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)

It is envisioned that the youth will form a partnership with their community members through what is called Community Supported or Shared Agriculture. Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) is based on the concept of making business more community oriented-it's a mutually supportive arrangement. The premise is very simple: a local farm or garden provide community members a weekly supply of produce on a pre-paid basis throughout the growing season. In a CSA system the farmer grows food for a group of shareholders who pledge to buy a certain portion of the farm's crop that season.

Therefore, this market garden project has a unique twist. All the produce will be grown for community members and will be grown on the reserve, by the reserve's youth, through an employment training program that enables them to gain skills not only in organic gardening, but also in operating a small local business dedicated to serving their community. While community members get to enjoy fresh produce, it will come with the knowledge that Siksika youth are learning what it takes to produce vegetables and fruits organically, and what it takes to run a business-skills that maybe one day these youth can take with them into other endeavors.

For more detailed information on CSAs the following are a few of the many of organizations involved:

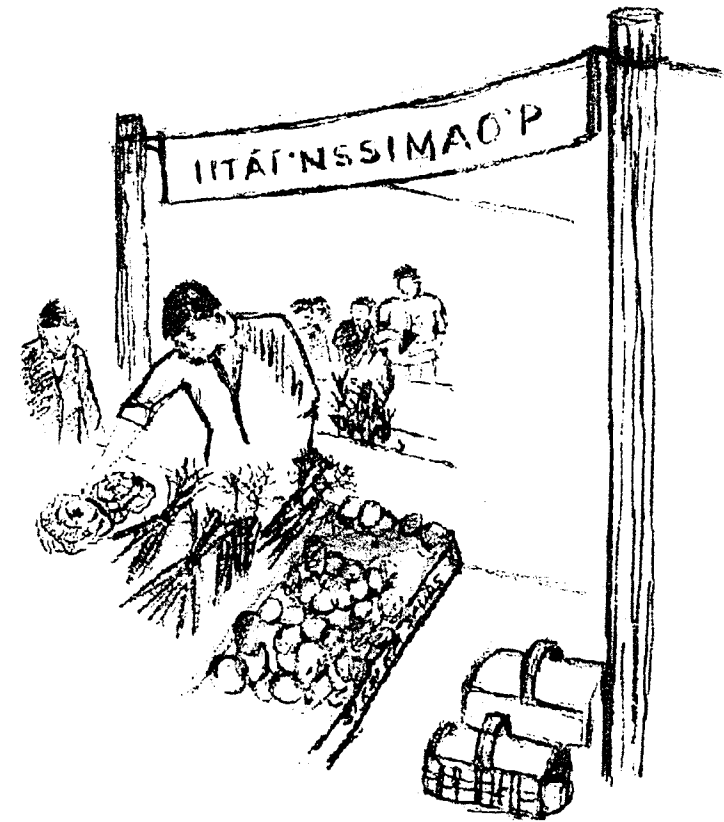
- Community Supported Agriculture of North America, Washington, DC "The Seasonal News"
- Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems Santa Cruz, California
- Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association Kimberton, PA (has list of all U.S. and Canadian CSAs and "Introduction to Community Supported Farms and Farm Supported Communities")

With CSAs, shareholders are encouraged to come to the garden to pick up their share of the produce. This also provides the opportunity for the CSA to share information such as recipes and cooking ideas with the customer. As importantly, it will provide the community members the chance to see their youth working and to talk to them and provide support in their work. It is intended that produce will also be sold through conventional farm-gate sales.

CSAs also use a number of means by which to grow closer ties with their membership:

1. They make the farm feel like a second home. They have workdays that encourage many members to plant and harvest together. They have several occasions, like pot-lucks and harvest celebrations, or they hold a wildflower walk or harvest festival.
2. They encourage kids to get interested in the garden. They plan events especially for youngsters, such as "Earthworm Day": a short walk and talk on the importance of earthworms to organic farmer, kids get a slice of earthworm shaped cake, and make worms out of play-doh.
3. They help educate consumers about growing food.
4. They grow something different, like flowers, mushrooms and berries.

(www.attra.or/attra-pub/csa.htm ATTRA Current Topic:Community Supported Agriculture, 1999)



Place of Community Events: A Miksinitsim (Buffaloberry or Bull berry) Festival

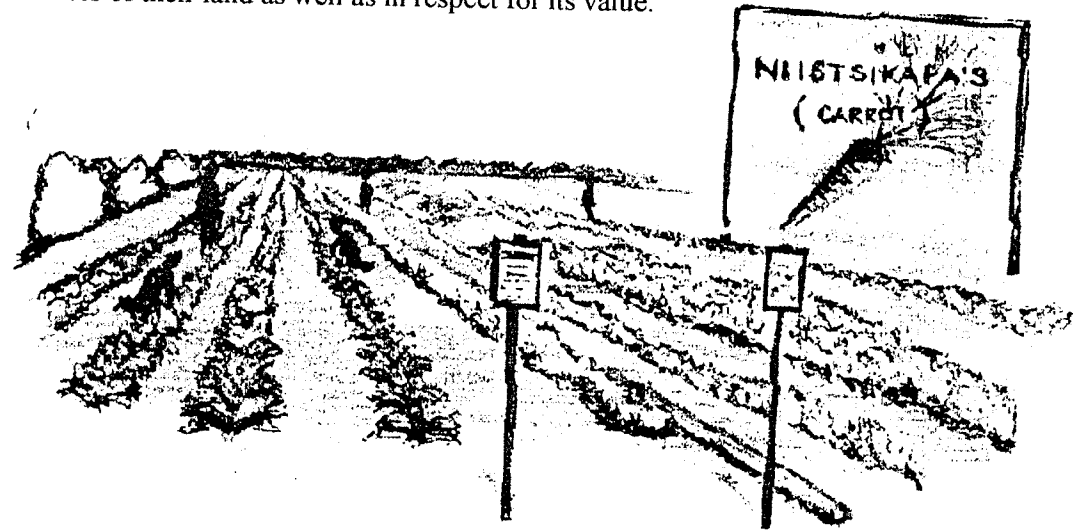
A way to encourage community support will be to hold a festival at the garden. A Miksinitsim festival is a wonderful way to celebrate the year's harvest, and as the fruit of the Miksinitsim does not sweeten until after the first frost, the timing of the festival would signal a great closing of the garden and a celebration of the work of the youth with their land. The youth intend to invite members of the community, elders and schoolchildren to a festival at the garden. At this festival the community will be asked to help harvest the buffaloberries. Elders will lead the harvest, as there is a traditional process by which these berries are harvested. Guests will be invited to sample the number of different products made, and get a chance to view the work which has been done by the students. It is also hoped that traditional dancers, elder's storytelling, teachings about the land, and stories about plants will be incorporated. Although it will be a number of years before the plants will produce berries for consumption, buffaloberry grows native all over the reserve, so it is intended that the youth will harvest the buffaloberry wild on the reserve and begin to experiment with a number of different uses for it. Research from the PFRA and meetings with specialty restaurants in Calgary have suggested to us that preserves, jams, and ice cream all have excellent potential.



REVERANCE FOR THE LAND

It is envisioned that the garden will be an organic operation. In this way no chemicals will be added to the soil. The size of the garden is to be 2-3 acres in size to begin with, and will grow with the growing skills and ability of the youth to manage and properly care for the garden. Each planting and harvest season, the elders will be asked to bless the land and the youth working on it.

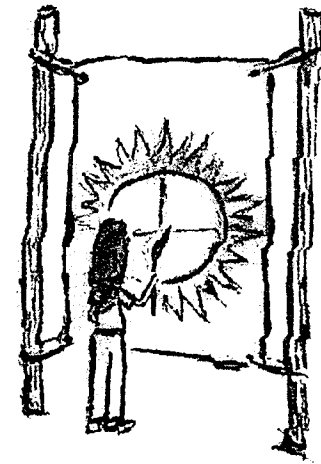
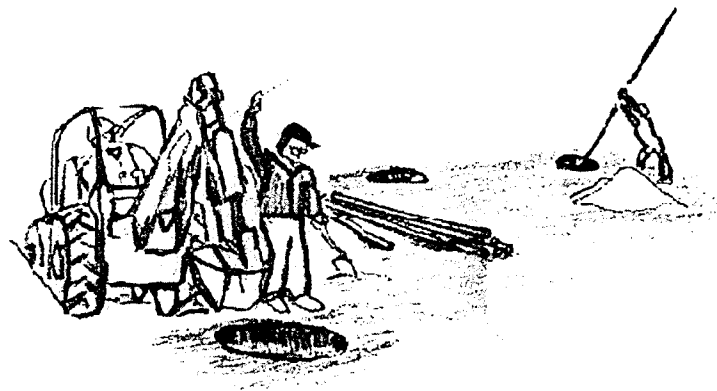
The land for the garden is in close proximity to the high school, so it is remaining closer to lands already disturbed, and is remaining a great distance from possible sacred sites. By working so closely with the land it is hoped that the youth will grow in greater awareness of their land as well as in respect for its value.



the vision for a market garden venture at Siksika...

BUILDING DESIGN

In the long-term vision it is hoped that a building may be constructed to support other initiatives which grow from this market garden. Currently the only buildings envisioned for the site include a sales booth and storage facilities, and potentially a greenhouse in the future. Given the desire for cultural education and community events, storytelling and farm-gate sales, it was also proposed that there be a central gathering area.



- **Design and build of sales booth/storage structure/teahouse**

As it is hoped the youth will gain valuable skills through the development of the garden, the commitment is to have the youth design and then build the necessary structures for the garden. In its construction, as opposed to others building it, a local carpenter, from Siksika, will be employed to assist the students, teaching and guiding them through the process. A similar example of this is the *Habitat for Humanity* initiative. All the youth will participate in the garden's construction. A number of the students are quite creative so it is important that whenever possible, throughout this process, the talents and ideas of these youth be expressed, so that they contribute to the image of the market garden.

- **Painting and treating of canvas panels**

It is hoped that the garden will be a place where the youth have a forum to express their talents. In order to create an entryway for the garden and to use as protection from winds while the buffaloberry plants establish themselves, the youth will construct simple canvas panels. Using basic materials of canvas and lodgepole pine these panels will be painted by the youth with images or abstracts about the garden or Blackfoot people and culture.

These panels are also a great means to provide an image for the garden and to advertise information about the garden, such as what produce is ready to be picked, instructions for u-pick, and what the week's events are at the garden.

GIVE YOUTH A POSITIVE ROLE

At the market garden the youth will be providing a service to their community. This provides the youth with a purpose and in their eyes gives them value and worth as members of their community. As the youth are actively engaging with the land, it is hoped that this will be a place of positive energy. It will give youth another option besides boredom, television, drug and alcohol abuse. Youth can become facilitators and teachers to other members of their community about agriculture and business, and can be good role models for the younger children on the reserve. Through skill development and business education it is hoped that these youth will gain the confidence to begin projects of their own.



CULTURALLY AND HISTORICALLY RELEVANT

In addition to operating as a training business, the garden will also act as a forum for cultural education . It can be a place for elders to be integrated with the youth and sharing with them traditional knowledge. Currently this interaction does not take place.

Elders will be asked to participate in the traditional harvesting methods, as well as in blessing the lands before planting and before harvest. The garden could also incorporate a medicinal/teaching garden to be used by the elders to teach the youth and schoolchildren which come to the garden, the meaning and uses of plants to the Blackfoot people throughout history.



Elders are seen as key to mentoring the youth and providing guidance, so that they will operate the garden in a manner that shows thanks and reverence. Just as we learned through the elders workshop this land has meaning to the elders, maybe they can begin to get the youth to understand and have their own meaning for the land.

Historically, this garden will also have great relevance. While it is sometimes assumed that agricultural activity on Alberta reserves is a recent phenomenon, due to the gradual turning away from traditional forms of livelihood such as hunting and trapping, there are many reserves that claim a long history of agricultural activity. On many reserves there were more people engaged in agriculture a century ago than there are today (Native Affairs, 1985). The Siksika Nation was once regarded as having some of the best farmers in the province. However, with farming policies of the 1950s and the mechanization of farming, Siksika farmers did not have the means to compete with other farmers.



Binders on Blackfoot Reserve, 1908.
Source: Glenbow Archives, Calgary, AB File NA-4928-41



Blackfoot Man sowing seed, 1908.
Source: Glenbow Archives, Calgary, AB File NA-127-1

AGRICULTURE AND THE SIKSIKA PEOPLE

In addition to being historically and culturally relevant there are a number of reasons why an agricultural venture is a good fit with the contemporary Siksika community.

The land base of the native communities in Alberta is one of their major resources, and a major use of land in Alberta is agriculture. For many reserves the land base is the greatest resource available for development, and farming is viewed as a means of long-term economic growth and as a source of jobs for present and future generations.

At present the Siksika Corporation for Agricultural Development (SCAD) is encouraging the development of agricultural enterprises on Siksika land. SCAD was incorporated in 1991 by the Siksika Chief and Council to provide, promote and develop agricultural production and value-added opportunities on Siksika lands consistent with the needs of the community.

The market garden venture would provide a good fit because:

- Agriculture is one area in which the Siksika Nation is encouraging development. The reserve size is 180,000 acres, approximately 112,000 of these are irrigable.
- The mandate of Siksika Agriculture is to increase the number of farmers on the reserve. It would be excellent for Siksika youth to have agricultural skills to start ventures on their own land as opposed to leasing their land to non-aboriginals.

- There presently is no other garden venture within a half-hour radius of the reserve.
- No market garden presently exists on reserve and the population base of 3500 could certainly support one.
- The garden can serve the grocery, restaurants, resort and elder's lodge.

Agricultural Potential of the Siksika Nation

The Siksika Nation is situated in the calcareous dark brown soil zone with land suitable for growing a wide range of crops. A 1985 study by Alberta Native Affairs found that of the 178,500 acres of land of the Siksika Nation, 111,242 were considered arable (Native Affairs 1985, 73). Currently cultivated land is worked by tribal farm members, tribal farms, the Siksika Mint Farming Operation, and off-reserve leasees. There are as many as 35 reserve families involved in agriculture, with many having farmed successfully for a number of years. Other band members are interested in farming and ranching. The Siksika Nation has an irrigation project in the south-east region of the Nation next to the Bow River Irrigation District Canal. At present it supplies water to 5000 acres, with an anticipated 15,000 more in the near future (Siksika Resource Developments Limited, 1997). The Native Affairs study conducted in 1985 showed that with irrigation the Siksika Reserve could support as many as 100 viable farm or ranch units. In this study **market gardening** was suggested as a viable endeavor, with particular emphasis placed on the possibility of potato production.

The vision for the market garden is a long-term vision. It is not set in stone. It will be inevitable, that through the youth developing and creating this market garden, they will explore for themselves what they want this place to be, how it will function and how it will look.

As was stated at the beginning of the practicum, the framework of this project is based on the belief that the true role of design is to sow the seeds by which local processes take off by themselves. By providing these youth with experience, knowledge, and critical analyses the creation of their market garden will evolve from their inputs and involvement. In this way, it may truly be a vernacular expression.

In our vision we were suggesting not a design and plan for a place, but an experiential process to create a place. This is a process of community economic development in which the social and cultural goals became the rationale for economic goals.

A view whereby the desire to empower youth to become participants in their economic and social order brought about the decision to start a business. This approach to community economic development may be seen as a part of a new economics that starts from the premise that 'the social character of human existence is primary' (Daly and Cobb, 1990).

Proponents of this approach argue that an economics based on this new paradigm results in a very different understanding of development, *in which*

the economy exists to promote community. Daly and Cobb advocate a “model of person-in-community calls not only for provision of goods and services to the individual, but also for an economic order that supports the pattern of relationships that make up the community.” Community, in his sense, represents far more than location. It suggests that people are bound up with one another, sharing, despite differences, a common identity. *From this development perspective, compatibility with the community and its culture becomes the essential starting-point for new initiatives* (Wilkinson, 1996).

This is a very different view of community economic development than those which focus on strictly the economic issues.

For the theorists who emphasize the social aspect of community economic development, a fundamental purpose is to decentralize responsibility and to empower people through both ownership and control of economic structures and through assisting them to develop critical analyses. From this perspective community economic development is viewed as building interdependencies and shared commitments among people that take into account social and cultural needs as well as those that are economic (Macleod, 1989; Sachs, 1991; Swack 1992 in Wilkinson, 1996).

An excellent example of community economic development based on this view is that of the Evangeline Community in Prince Edward Island. What is of particular interest of the Evangeline example is the context (framework) within which community economic development took place. It is a situation very similar to that of Siksika. An examination of the framework for the Evangeline community follows.

THE EVANGELINE CO-OPERATIVES

Based on their detailed analysis of four community co-operatives in the region of Evangeline, PEI, which have been in existence for over 50 years, Wilkinson and Quarter suggest that there are essential elements which add to the probability that community economic development will occur. Community economic development here is used to describe both community wide initiatives, as well as specific community economic projects.

The Evangeline co-operatives are all locally owned and controlled, and they are found to harmonize social and economic goals in ways that are compatible with community's cultures and values. Some prominent elements of the Evangeline experience are:

Community Attachments

Attachments to family and friends through social networks, to other community members through social organizations, and to the territorial base itself, provide project initiators and members of planning committees with the energy to act. Solidarity bonds with other community members provide the "pull" that has moved community members to action. This pull works in two ways: (1) while community members may benefit from a community project regardless of their personal participation, their friendship bond acts as a force "pulling" them towards involvement, and (2) initiators experience community needs as their own through connecting their self-interest as persons to the interest of their group.

A Movement Perspective

A movement perspective is an awareness of a collective difference, of distinct needs and aspirations, which grow out of a common cultural, geographic, or socio-economic background. This consciousness exists not only among community leaders, but at the popular level as well. This awareness, including knowledge of socio-economic relationships, was critical to cooperatives developing a common perspective that directed and energized them.

This movement perspective can support community economic development in a number of ways including,

- Legitimizing community resistance to development that was externally owned and controlled
- Provides a direction that was broader than one that was strictly economic. In Evangeline the purpose of community economic development was to pursue the common good of the region (the goal of equity), taking into account social and cultural needs as well as economic ones. The approach in Evangeline is closer to notions of "alternative development" that have arisen from experience in the Third World than it is to mainstream economic development. According to alternative development genuine development must recognize the interdependencies between economic reasoning and the moral relations that link people to each other, and market values must be linked to a community's social values.

Within this paradigm the purpose of community economic development is no longer strictly economic. It is to empower people through building accountable structures of social power at the community level.

- The ideas of cultural resistance and struggle contained within a movement perspective point to the importance of creating community controlled institutions that are both accountable and culturally appropriate.
- Keeping people focused on goals beyond their own immediate community. Since the Evangeline people saw themselves as part of the Acadian nation, their aims including the well-being of that nation.

Involvement and Empowering Strategies

Involvement strategies, meaning the approach that initiators and community development organizations took to obtain maximum possible community participation, find their source in the regions historical traditions of informal co-operation and mutual self-help. The strategies are essential to community economic development because as is demonstrated by the case studies, it is involvement mechanisms that create both community participation for projects and build long term attachments to the community. *In the Evangeline approach to community economic development, participation is not taken for granted but is encouraged in all community projects. Involvement strategies of a recreational and social nature are deliberately utilized to obtain participation.*

It is worthwhile to note that the context of Evangeline is similar to the Siksika experience in that:

- There has been decentralization of decision-making power to communities: the Siksika Nation is assuming self-government.
- The citizens of these communities desire to retain control over institutions that govern them.
- There is a positive desire by citizens to participate in decisions affecting their local community.

- The Evangeline community is tied together by the collective difference of their Acadian culture, sharing a similar cultural and socio-economic background. This is very similar to the collective difference of the Blackfoot people of the Siksika reserve.

It is interesting to examine these factors and find that the market garden project at Siksika will exist in a context that closely parallels that of the Evangeline co-operatives. If these elements are an indication of success, as Wilkinson and Quarter suggest that they are, and as I believe they are, then maybe the market garden will grow to be over 50 years old, just like the co-operatives of Evangeline.

development of the market garden at Svykka..



development of the market garden venture...

It is envisioned that the development of the market garden venture will occur through a series of small incremental projects. Each project will be at a size and scale so that the youth can be active participants in each of the projects, as well as being able to draw upon assistance from the community to do so. Community involvement will be encouraged in the market garden development, so that outside agencies will not have to be relied upon. Just as with the Market Research and Feasibility Study, the goal with these projects is to allow the youth to be involved in each, therefore providing them with skills and increasing their sense of ownership over the project.

bringing the vision to reality...

With our vision in hand, and a lot of enthusiasm behind us, we prepared a development plan for how we proposed to go about realizing this vision. The following outlines the process as it would continue to unfold.

- 1. Business Plan and Financing**
- 2. Organizational Structure**
- 3. Developing an image and a name for the garden**
- 4. Visits to CSAs and community gardens**
- 5. Land Development**

BUSINESS PLANNING AND FINANCE

Given all the work that resulted from the research and feasibility study, a business planning consultant volunteered to assist the youth and mentor them in how to prepare a business plan. The main reason for preparing this business plan was to help access start-up capital. Fortunately there are many incentives available to aboriginal peoples, especially for youth who wish to pursue venture opportunities.

Through this preparation of the business plan the youth approached a number of institutions. They successfully received funding from:

- Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC)
- Siksika Chief and Council
- Kahanoff Foundation
- Inland Cement

“There is so little evidence of entrepreneurial initiatives from Siksika, that it is encouraging to see this one, especially since it is coming from youth.” (Larry Doupé, Development Officer ABC, personal communication, 1998).

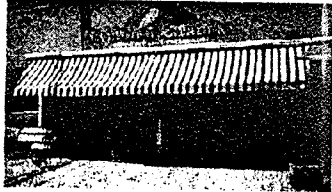
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Getting people in place was very crucial to getting the market garden up and running. A Siksika youth, Stacey Doore, was hired to manage the market garden and to work with the market garden team of Waylon Yellow Old Woman, Lisa Many Bears, Lori Wright, Nikki Black Kettle, Charmaine Yellow Old Woman, and Cherry Low Horn.

An agricultural consultant, Peggy Skinner, with knowledge and experience in organic production was also hired to assist the youth with properly implementing an organic operation, and to prepare and teach the youth hands-on agricultural curriculum. Adrian Stimson Jr., founder and co-ordinator of the *Business Without Borders* program will continue to be a constant mentor as well as will two Siksika elders, Virginia Red Crow and Anne McMaster.

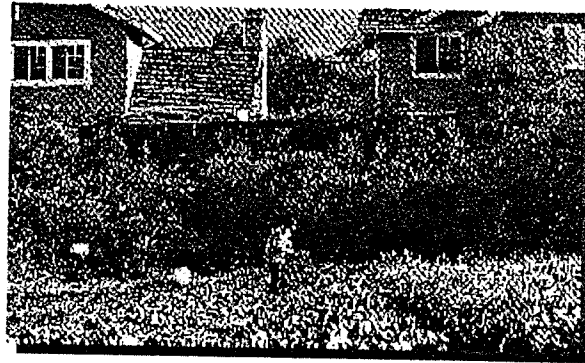
LIVING AND WORKING AT A CSA GARDEN

Michael Ableman, the manager of Fairview Gardens for over 20 years, has written about his belief in reconnecting people with the land and about the life of Fairview Gardens in a book called, "On Good Land". He has also travelled the world studying indigenous peoples food systems. He chronicles these experiences with words and photographs in "From the Good Earth: A Celebration of Growing Food Around the World".



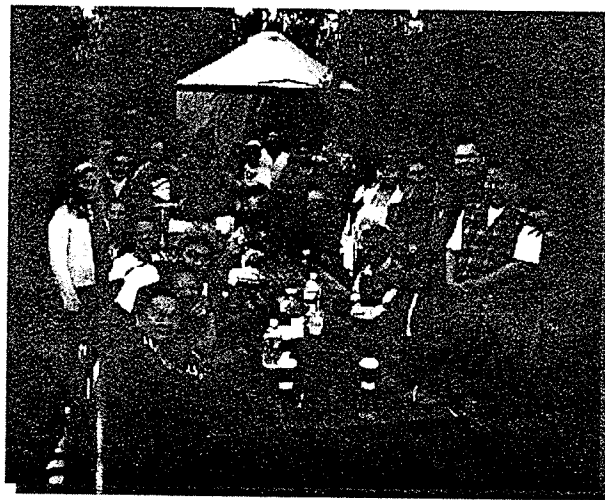
A part of the market garden vision was to operate under the ideals of CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). As this was a new concept to everyone involved in the project it was decided that it would be highly beneficial for the youth to learn about the operation of a CSA first hand.

We were very fortunate to have Fairview Gardens, a well-known CSA in Goleta Valley, California offer to host us for 4 days. I first read about Fairview Gardens in Country Living Magazine August 1998. There we lived and worked at the farm with participation in their CSA day, weeding garden beds and harvesting fresh organic produce. Most importantly we learned

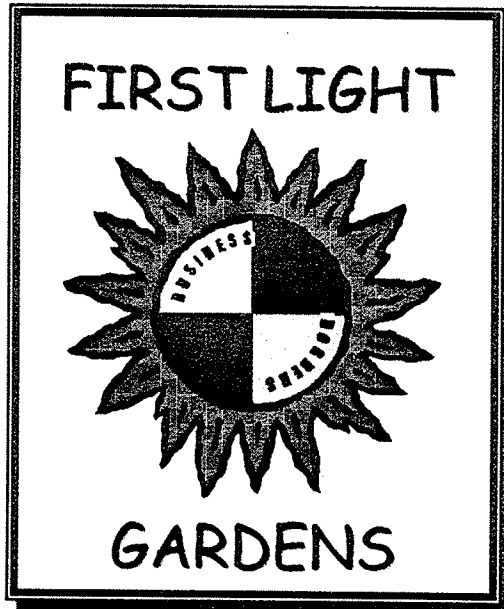


from people whose work is based on the ideals of bringing people closer to the land, and re-establishing our link and dependence on our soil.

While in California, we also visited the Centre for Agro-Ecology and Sustainable Food Systems at the University of California Santa Cruz. There we had a chance to meet with apprentices who live and study organic farming methods at the Centre's 25 acre farm and garden. These apprentices also run a CSA operation for their university community.



CREATING AN NAME AND A LOGO FOR THE MARKET GARDEN



To name the garden a community wide contest was held. Posters and ballot boxes were placed in the schools, elders lodge, and administration building advertising a \$100 prize to the person whose name was chosen. A logo had previously been prepared for the garden and when the naming contest was held it was decided by the youth that they would like to keep the logo because people had already begun to associate it with this project.

The contest was another means by which the project strove to include community support and involvement. The intent was to make the community feel their ideas were valued and that they youth desired them to be a part of the process. Over 200 entries were submitted, with the winning entry belonging to Kelly Cutter, a 22 year old male on the reserve. The name chosen for the garden was **FIRST LIGHT GARDENS**. The youth felt it incorporated a number of ideas about the project:

- The youth creating change for themselves and being the first ones to bring about new hope for their future.
- The first light makes reference to the rising sun. The sun is an important symbol in Blackfoot culture and the success of the market garden depends on a need, a respect and a reverence for the sun.

WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100 WIN \$100

What is your name for the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society's MARKET GARDEN?

Your Name: _____

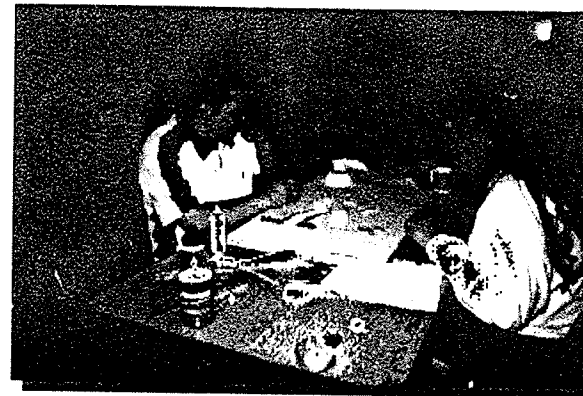
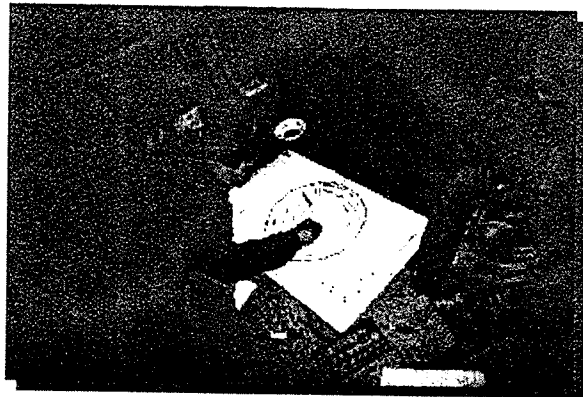
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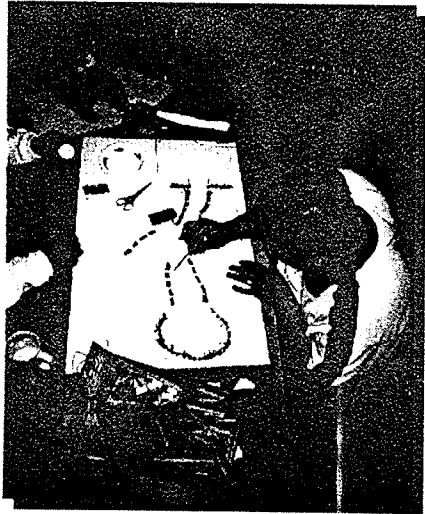
LAND DEVELOPMENT

There were a large number of different components involved in properly preparing the land for a garden.

Given the vision established for the garden I really wanted to see the youth challenge their thinking for what the site could be. Before I introduced my ideas I was curious to see their view. It was important to allow them this step so that they could use their ideas and the knowledge they have acquired and in turn, apply it to problem. Two different exercises were carried out with the youth:

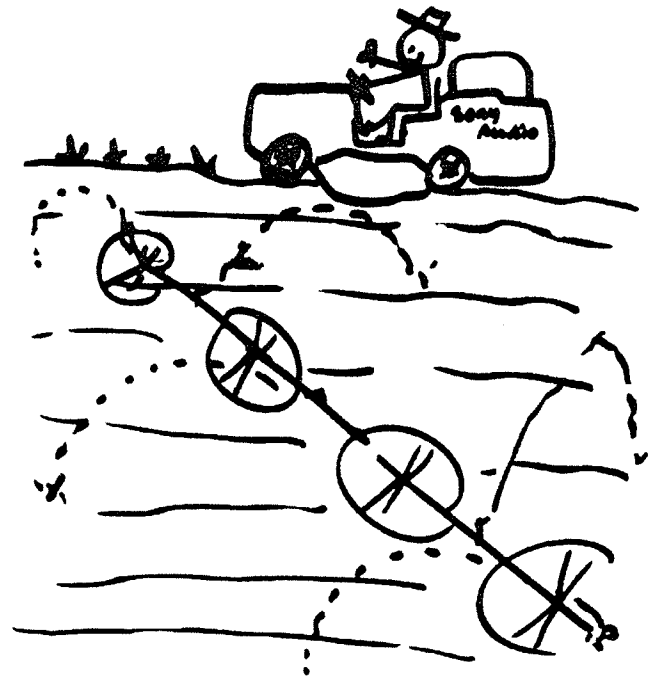
- 1. activity drawings- youth drew how they perceive garden activities they would be engaged in*
- 2. model building-in pairs, the youth developed their ideas using simple materials*



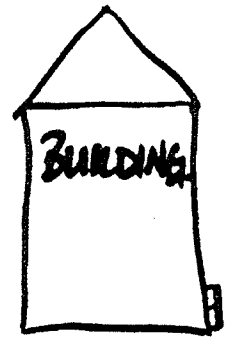
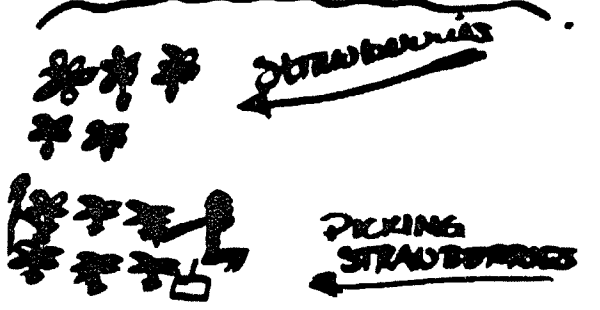


Activities ~~_____~~

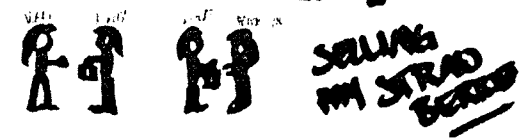
Maintaining garden. DRENOR
 turning on sprinklers
 driving around the garden with the tractor
 putting up fences.



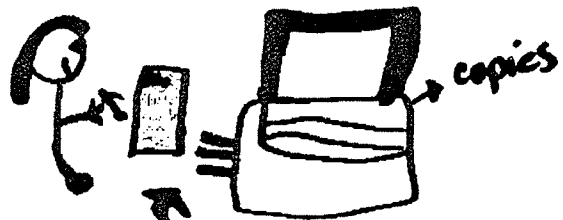
PICKING STRAWBERRIES



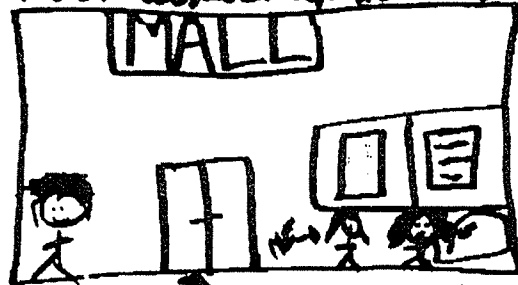
GOING TO THE CUSTOMERS



ADVERTISING NR



- In a hot room
- Sometimes there's people around me - sounds - photocopier
- Feel cramped up & refresh air.



- people around me (public) working
- Sounds people chattering, vehicles.
- Feel fresh air, sunny hot day
- Just a regular summer

Charles Healy.

Maintaining the garden



- **Organic gardening**

As it is intended to be an organic garden, there are specific requirements for the land. An agricultural consultant with experience in organic gardening was contracted to mentor and guide the youth through understanding and implementing organic gardening methods.

- **Shelterbelt Planting**

In its first year the shelterbelts will be planted. All shelterbelts will be provided by the PFRA (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration) and all 400 buffaloberry (*Sheperdia canadensis*) and 100 poplar (*Populus tremuloides*) were planted in June 1999. These are to be planted at the north and west boundaries of the garden to protect the garden from strong northwesterly winds.

- **Tilling of the Land**

We have developed an excellent relationship with the Siksika Agricultural department. Encouraged by this youth initiative, they have offered to provide assistance wherever necessary. To help us prepare the site for a garden they will be tilling the land for us, removing the fence and assisting with the installation of irrigation lines.

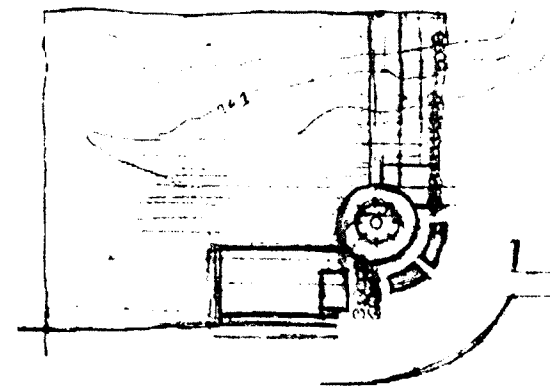
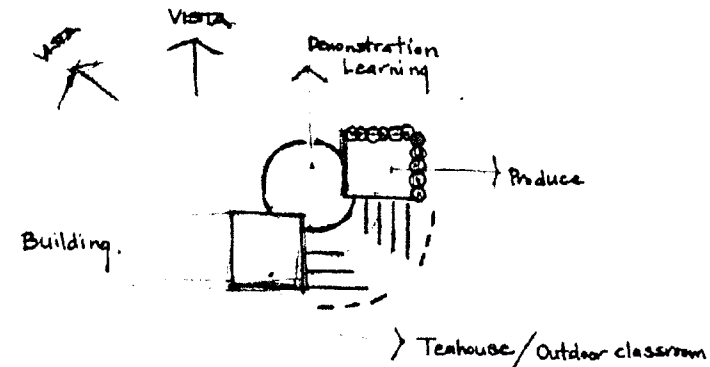
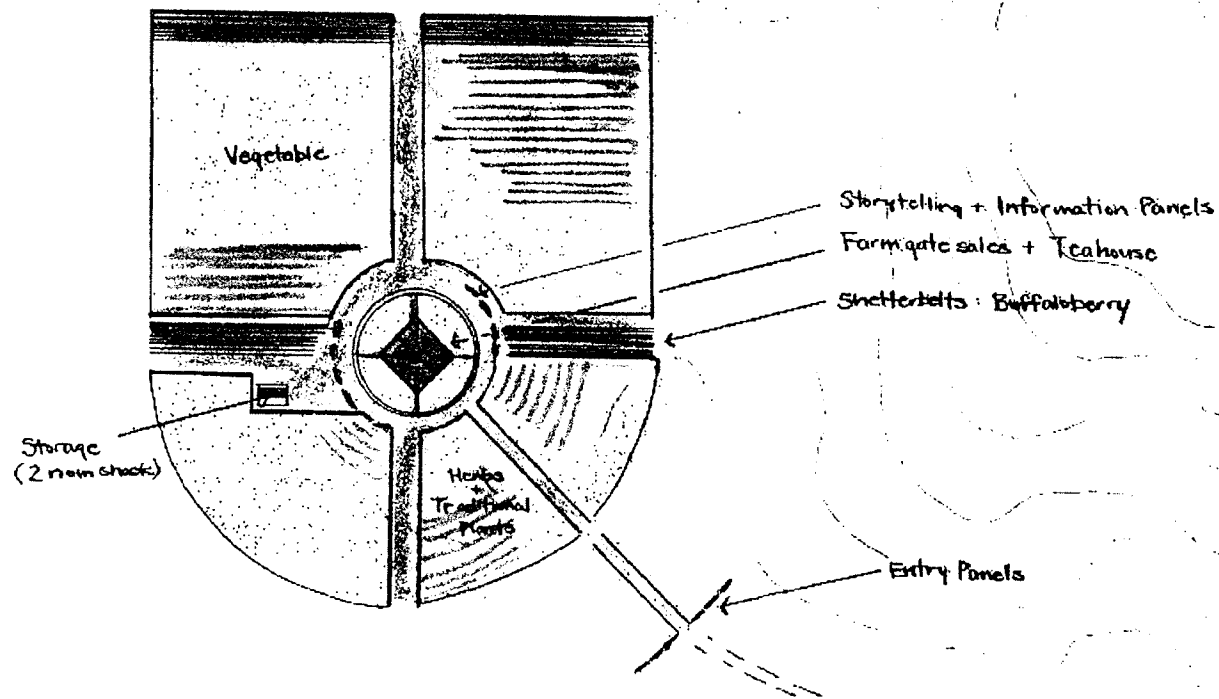
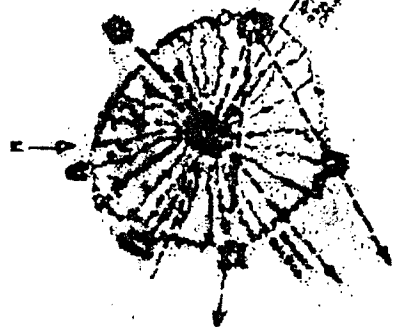
As opposed to developing a master plan, the land was staked out on site by the youth, and I provided Siksika agriculture with a scaled map of the site so they would know where to move the fence and till the land.

Future plans for the garden are expressed more as activities than form. In this way the form of the garden will grow from the vision which the youth own. A vision which has grown and will continue to grow, from their collective of experiences - talking with people, site analysis, the research and feasibility study, and work at other community gardens. These experiences have given them the ability and the power to begin to make choices and decisions about the garden themselves. It is hoped that the depth of knowledge these youth now had, they are empowered enough to direct those choices themselves. Although drawings and sketches were prepared, they are only intended to be suggestive of the vision the youth themselves expressed for the garden. They are not from a master planning intent.

If the garden is part of the youth's inner conceptual world, then the size, events, and features of the garden will evolve with the youth's continued learning and belief in this vision. The garden will be borne of their youth's ideas and not of other's.

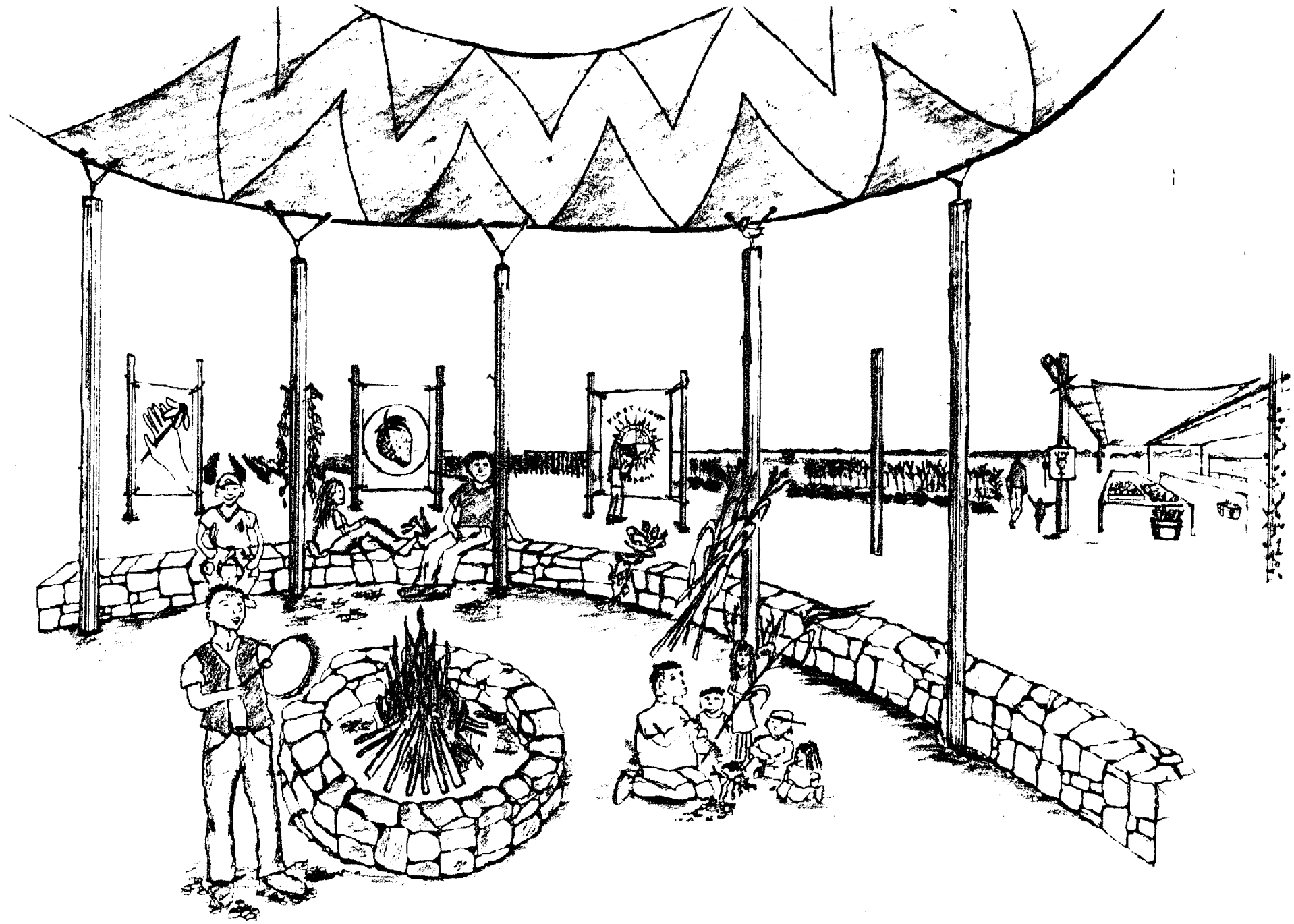
In this sense I believe we have developed the framework from which these youth can create their own physical and social environment.

visions of FIRST LIGHT GARDENS...



a central gathering area...

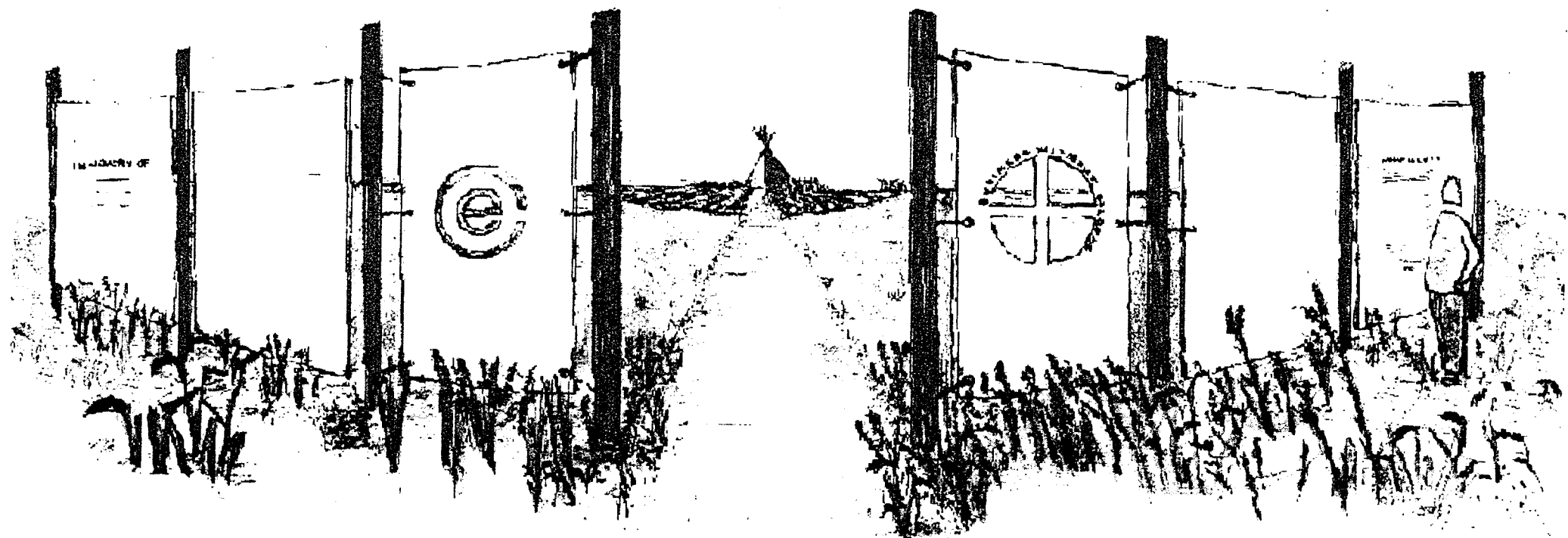
The central gathering area could be a place of learning, celebration and of gathering for Siksika community members. This place would recognize the social nature of the Siksika people by providing a place interaction to occur. Here children could be taught about plants and the garden, the community could gather to celebrate the harvest of the buffaloberry, CSA members could come to pick up their weekly share of produce, berries might be dried, people could picnic after they've bought produce at the stand or picked strawberries, and elders could share stories about the history of Siksika, it's land and it's people.



development of the market garden at Siksika...

entryway to the garden...

In addition to welcoming guests to the garden, the entryway to the garden would provide the positive image of First Light Gardens to the community. The market garden youth could create canvas panels from simple materials of canvas and lodgepole pine, gathered from their traditional lands at Castle Mountain. The canvas could be painted with drawings of the garden, of produce, or with art work of the youth. They could be used to advertise events and information about the garden, and changed to reflect changes that are occurring at the garden such as at planting time and at harvest time. As the garden operation is seasonal, the construction of these structures could reflect that and be removed every fall and erected again in the spring. This would be a great way to signal to the community, the beginning of another garden season, of their youth back at work again. The simplicity of these structures allows for the youth to easily construct them themselves.



development of the market garden at Siksika...

g r o u n d b r e a k i n g



day

g r o u n d b r e a k i n g d a y . . .

We were now ready, after a long, long time to make this vision a reality, and to begin a connection with the land.

The market garden team expressed the idea of having a celebratory opening day. On this day they would plant all of the shelterbelt plants and have the garden lands tilled. Thus it was called *Groundbreaking Day*. It was decided that it would be a great idea to invite the community to help plant all 400 buffaloberry and 100 poplar trees. In this way the market garden youth felt they could include their community and allow the community see what they had been hard at researching and preparing. They also thought it would be great to have some extra hands to help plant all those bushes and trees!

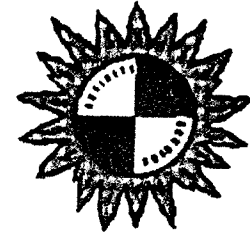
A great deal of time went into planning this day...

...the land had been prepared, we had measured and staked out the site, then Siksika agriculture moved the existing fence for us and tilled the land for the shelterbelts,

...the PFRA had delivered our shelterbelt plants and we had stored them at just the right temperature, markers were placed every 5ft for the buffaloberry planting and every 10ft for the poplars.

...shovels were purchased, and the water hoses hooked up,

**YOU'RE INVITED TO
BUSINESS WITHOUT BORDERS MARKET GARDEN
GROUNDBREAKING DAY!!**



THURSDAY JUNE 3 11:00am
West side of the Siksika Nation High School

CEREMONY WILL INCLUDE

- Blessing of the Market Garden by the spiritual leader of the Nation
- Naming of the new Market Garden name
- Address(es) of the opening ceremony to be presented by the Nation
- A performance by the Nation's dancers will be held on the land as part of the heritage of the Nation's traditional songs

**PLEASE JOIN US RAIN OR SHINE AND CELEBRATE BY
PLANTING OUR BUFFALOBERRY TREES AROUND THE GARDEN !!**



...canvas panels with the logo and the new garden name, First Light Gardens were painted and erected,

...Chief Old Sun elementary school and Siksika High School had granted permission for their students to attend the ceremonies and help plant trees,

...special guests had all been invited...Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society's Board of Directors, funders of the First Light Gardens, Siksika Chief and Council, school and administration and elders of the Siksika Nation,

...posters advertising the Groundbreaking day had been hung at a number of places around the reserve,

...elder Pius Three Sons had been consulted and asked to bless the land and the youth who would be working on it,

...the Siksika Ramblers Drummers and traditional dancers had volunteered to participate in the ceremony,

...a tipi was raised on the garden lands, and in it Pius would conduct a special tobacco ceremony with the youth.

The only thing we didn't plan for was the rainstorm!



Now let me take you to that day.....

“Oki. Honoured Elders, Chief and Council Members and distinguished guests. My name is Stacy Doore, manager of Siksika's First Market Garden. I'm going to act as your Master of Ceremonies today on behalf of our market garden team.

Welcome to our Groundbreaking ceremonies and thank you Siksika Ramblers for that outstanding drumming. I think the Creator is helping us along today with the rain.

Today is a very important one for the youth of the Siksika First Nation. For the past two years, Business Without Borders, has worked hard to help a group of Siksika youth create the Nation's first market garden.

Today's ceremony will involve a blessing by Elder Pius Three Sons, a grand entry, dances, the announcement of the name of our garden and the person who named it, and the planting of buffaloberry trees around the garden.

This is an excerpt from the speech written and presented by the market garden youth at the Groundbreaking Day Ceremony.



g r o u n d b r e a k i n g d a y . . .



GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY

RECEPTION AND GREETINGS OF GUESTS
Dinner at West End Park Hotel

WELCOME ADDRESS AND INTRODUCTION OF
THE MARKET GARDEN TEAM
Master of Ceremonies: Stacy Doorn, Market Garden Manager

BLESSING OF THE MARKET GARDEN LAND BY
SIKSIKA PIIPPI PIUS THOPP SIKS
Cultural Transformation: Herman Yellow Old Woman
* As this is a sacred blessing we ask that no photos be taken

SIKSIKA CHEONEN DANCERS

GROUND ENTRY AND GROUND BREAKING
Led by: Sharon Ponderosa followed by Siksika Chief
Herman Yellow Old Woman, Tribal Councillor, Siksika
Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society
Board of Directors, Market Garden Mentors and Team

TRIBAL COUNCILLOR ADRIAN STIMSON JR.,
PROGRAM FOUNDER AND MENTOR

UNVEILING OF THE NEW MARKET GARDEN NAME
AND CONTEST WINNER BY MRS. COLLEEN KLEIN

CEREMONIAL PLANTING OF BUFFALO BERRY BUSHES

SIKSIKA DANCERS

INVITATION FOR ALL GUESTS TO PLANT
BUFFALO BERRY BUSHES AROUND THE GARDEN

PROGRAM ENDS



Right now I would like to invite Herman Yellow Old Woman to the podium who will tell you about the blessing which Siksika elder Pius Three Sons will give to the garden and us. Since this is a sacred ceremony kindly refrain from photographing or taping it.

Thank you Pius Three Sons.

It is my pleasure to introduce the Siksika market garden team:

Waylon Delaney, Lisa Many Bears, Cherry Low Horn, Charmaine Yellow Old Woman, Nikki Black Kettle and Lori Wright.

Tribal councillor Adrian Stimson Jr. has been our mentor, coach, fundraiser and inspiration. Adrian will have a few words to say about the project

Oki.

Since 1992 the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society's program has been identifying and supporting projects to help our youth.

Our goal is to merge traditional native values with a strong focus on business development. We can never forget that half of the people who live here on the Nation are under 24 years old and we have a very high unemployment rate among our youth.

By creating our own projects, which honour our heritage and develop the essential business skills needed by our youth today, we are taking charge of our destiny.

The market garden is very much a part of our history. The Blackfoot were great farmers, as well as hunters. It is with pride that we see our people return to the land.

The market will be an organic garden with no chemicals and natural fertilizers. In 1999 six jobs will be created and we hope that by 2000 ten people will work at the garden.

We know it can work and with this outstanding team, we believe it will work.



Produce from the garden will be ready for sale by the summer of 2000. It will be sold at the Nation to community members and at local restaurants and groceries.

There are many people who have helped us...our Board of Directors have given us guidance, many foundations and organizations have supported us, and Council has granted us this three acre site.



There are two people who must be singled out for their efforts, dedication and support to turn this dream into a reality:

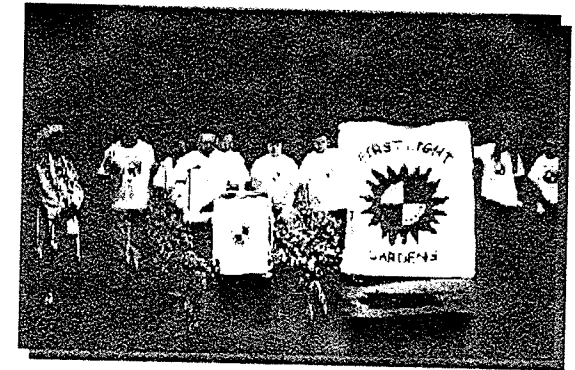
Yvonne Landon, a Former Siksika Nation high school, teacher donated her time from the start of the project to act as a mentor to the students. Yvonne's years of experience in teaching Siksika youth was most valuable to us.

Then there is Michelle Long, a landscape architecture student from the University of Manitoba. Michelle and I first met in 1997 and discussed the idea of creating a market garden at Siksika. Michelle's enthusiasm is infectious and genuine. She offered to make

this her thesis project for her Master of Landscape Architecture which would allow her to devote a great deal of time to it. I'm glad Michelle didn't realize the amount of nights and weekends she would put into the market garden helping us. This is Michelle's achievement as much as it is ours. Michelle, I can't think of a more worthy project. Thank you for choosing Siksika and our youth to make this happen. We hope you will look back on your time with us with pride. Thank you for your encouragement, support and enthusiasm and for believing in us.

And I can't begin to tell you how proud I am of the market garden team who saw the opportunity to learn and worked hard, juggling their time between part time jobs, families and school. Well done!

It is now my privilege to introduce Mrs. Colleen Klein who has been a very active supporter of business without borders. Mrs. Klein will announce the name of the garden and the winning entry.





Thank you Mrs. Klein. First Light Gardens will be surrounded by 400 Buffaloberry bushes and poplar trees which will act as a barrier and border to mark the garden. While planning the garden we needed to find a plant which could provide protection for the garden. We discovered that buffaloberries grow freely on Siksika and after we learned more about them, discovered they would be ideally suited to be a border plant for the garden. Many of us have enjoyed buffaloberry jam, soup and drinks.

We would now like to invite everyone to plant the garden's first buffaloberry bushes. While they are planting I would like to invite the Siksika Nation Chicken Dancers to perform a dance from our heritage. The dancers are preparing the land for planting.

We invite everyone to come back often and visit us this summer. We plant to build our fence, sheds and teahouse and we need lots of help. Feel free to drop by with your toolbox any weekend!

Thank you elders, chief and council, Mrs. Klein, Pius three sons, Siksika High school, Siksika Ramblers and the Siksika Chicken Dancers for being part of our ceremony today.



Now, we invite you all in this pouring rain to come and plant a buffaloberry bush and a poplar tree with us, in the name of the Siksika Nation and First Light Gardens. After that the land will be tilled.

Thank you for being with us on this very memorable day.



g r o u n d b r e a k i n g d a y . . .



experiencing a place envisioning a landscape empowering a people

and the stories which followed...

Gleichen

High unemployment numbers have led youths on Canada's second largest native reservation to create jobs themselves, while giving teens and young adults experience needed to secure future employment.

Ground was broken at the Siksika Nation Thursday to kick off development of a market garden, which will employ reserve youths and offer fresh and organic produce.

It should take two years before the soil is ready to harvest crops, First Light Gardens manager Stacy Doore said.

The opportunity for native youths to work at the garden will allow them to gain experience in a work setting. Working at the gardens should also take away the discomfort many experience when they look for jobs away from the reserve, he said.

"You look for a job and they say, 'What experience do you have — no

front leg, probably from stumbling into a gopher hole on the property, which is near Deerfoot Trail and

experience — then I can't use you,'" Doore said. "This will give the youths a valuable head start and it's home. They are going to know everybody they work with."

Youths make up more than 30 per cent of the Siksika Nation. A high number of those youths are unemployed.

More than 65 per cent of the nation's 1,000-member labour force is unemployed. The nation has 3,05 residents living on 71,432 hectares along the south and north banks of the Bow River, 90 kilometres east of Calgary.

High River

High River has decided to continue its financial support for the High River Centennial Library's participation in

From the
*Calgary
Herald,*
Saturday
June 5, 1999

Blackfoot youth tilling

Project aims to start organic market on reserve

WESLEY WATER CHIEF
Standard Reporter

Siksika's started its youth entrepreneurial project.

Sod has been turned for First Light Garden, an organic garden market venture set up by the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society. It's designed as a learning tool as well as a business.

"We hope in the future to incorporate a full sustainable business with the education part," society member Adrian Stimson Jr. said.

Stimson, who is also a Siksika Councilor and acts as mentor for the youth, said they want to partner up in future with similar youth programs and universities.

The society, though its entrepreneurial program Business Without Borders, has achieved results in creating opportunities for Siksika youth to learn.

"This venture is one of them.

"We are taking charge of our history," Stimson said.

The youth had a hand in every aspect of the development of this venture. For the last two years they've been working on a business plan and conducted a market research.

"We are basically looking at developing an organic garden, free of chemicals, and using natural fertilizers," Stimson said.

As rain fell during the sod turning ceremony on Siksika Nation, many of the participants said it was a good sign of things to come for a new garden business.

Garden manager Stacey Doore said the garden will be surrounded by 400 buffalo berries bushes, which are native to the area, and 100 poplars that will act as a guard for the garden.

Basic vegetables, native to this area, will be grown and sold.

In its initial year in operation, Stimson



WESLEY WATER CHIEF PHOTO

Siksika elder Plus Three Suns says a prayer for the future of the youth venture at the sod turning ceremony.

said the program is unlikely to produce a significant profit, as the first years are seen as a development stage.

But forecasts in their plan predict a profitable business in its third year of operation with eight-10 employees being hired in 2001.

Colleen Klein, a society member and wife of Premier Ralph Klein, was on hand at the ceremony to unveil the garden's name, First Light Garden, submitted by Nation member Kelly Cutter.

"The Blackfoot were great farmers as well as hunters," Stimson said.

From the
Strathmore
Standard,
Tuesday
June 8, 1999,
Volume 90
Issue no.23

Market garden helps youth develop business skills

By Marie Burke
Windspeaker Staff Writer

SIKSIKA FIRST NATION, Alta.

Young Aboriginal people from the Siksika First Nation in southern Alberta are returning to the land while learning about what it takes to develop a business in their home community with a project called Business without Borders.

The group of young people has developed a business plan for a market garden that will eventually provide fresh organic produce to their community and beyond. The official ground-breaking ceremony of the initial three acre garden took place on June 3 on the land of the Siksika with the traditional blessing of the ground by an Elder.

As part of the ceremony, 400 traditional buffaloberry trees and 100 poplar trees were planted around the garden to serve as shelter for future crops.

"The trees were originally called bullberry bushes by the Elders, but somehow in translation the name was changed. They grow native to the reserve and they will have more of a chance to grow a lot better. They will act mainly as windbreak along with the trees that were planted," said Stacy Doore, manager of the market garden.

The market garden will ini-

tially employ six young people from the Siksika First Nation over the course of this growing season to prepare the ground for the all-organic garden.

The project developed over the last year as part of the work that is being done by the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society. The society aims at giving Siksika young people who are 18 to 28 years of age, business experience.

"A group of youth did research last year in the community. They asked if they were to grow a garden . . . would that be good? Everyone in the community agreed to it. There is not too many gardens on the reserve, so why shouldn't the reserve have their own market garden where they can get vegetables from their own youth?" asked Doore.

The Siksika First Nation has more than 3,000 residents and half of them are under 24 years



Coleen Klein (with shovel), Alberta Premier Ralph Klein's wife, takes part in groundbreaking ceremonies for the Siksika market garden.

of age. At least 15 per cent of the young people there are unemployed, said Doore.

Doore pointed to young people of the community as playing a large part in the future of the community.

"Our youth are going to be our future councillors, leaders, police officers, you name it, and this program is based on getting them into a working program where they can actually learn skills. This is an educational program. We all sit down and write a report on goals they want to achieve in this business," said Doore.

third year of operation.

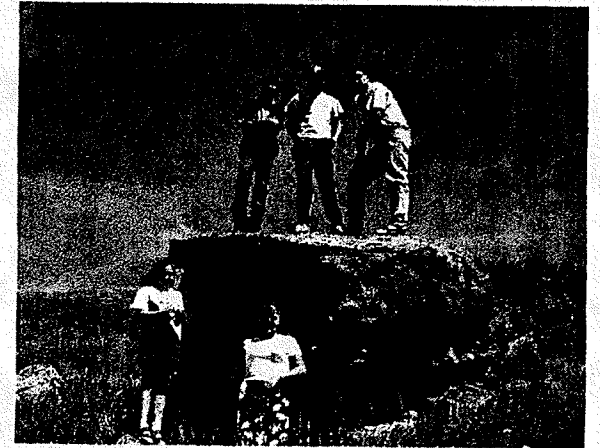
The project is based on a community supported agriculture model that brings community members together to work the garden and then share in the produce.

Funding for the garden came from a number of foundations and organizations including the Kahanoff Foundation, the chief and council of the Siksika First Nation, Aboriginal Business Canada and Inland Cement. The young people who are working to develop the garden are mentored by Elders from their community and professionals like Michelle Long, landscape architecture, and Yvonne Landon in education. The young people who researched the project went to California to see a place called Fairview Farms. Doore and the rest of the group were inspired by the organic farm in California that is in the middle of an urban area and has the whole community involved.

"If you ever ask the youth 'where do you get your vegetables from? . . . they'll say 'I get mine from Safeway,' but that's not where you're getting them from; you're getting it from the farmers that grow it. It's from the earth, everything around us, is there for us; it's a matter of how much we value the earth and that's the focus here. The earth comes first," said Doore.

From
Windspeaker,
July 1999,
Volume 17 No.3

i n c o n c l u s i o n . . .



I n c o n c l u s i o n .

It is very difficult to sum up the “conclusions” of this practicum. This experience with the Sikiska Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society has challenged my view of landscape architecture, it has challenged me to deal with social, political and economic issues in the design process and it has challenged me to approach design and planning with conventions beyond which I was familiar. I have learned from and experienced another culture, I have felt the rewards of working with people and helping them create change in their lives, and I have been a part of the development of a community. From this I am left with strong beliefs in the possibilities for landscape architecture, hopes for First Nation youth, and critical lessons for design and planning with people and communities.

Most importantly, this experience has left me with the conviction that design and planning with people can be a means of empowering people through a process of learning, educating, caring, and friendship. In this practicum I do not propose a methodology for design and planning with cultures and communities, but more importantly outline lessons and principles that I have learned and come to believe are crucial for me, as a designer, to possess and practice when working with people. Just as communities are unique to place and culture, I believe that a method for working with people is unique to place and culture and therefore no one method can be proposed to be “right”. However, if a designer/planner working with people employs principles that are founded in a commitment to create a place true to it’s people, then these principles can be as great, if not a greater tool, than a predefined method. I will share with you the key lessons and principles I gained from this experience.

the lessons of the practicum...

1. The Importance of Getting to Know the People and the Place

People's individuality and nuances are key and must be listened to. As a designer/planner I had to seek out the knowledge, and values of the Siksika youth and attempt to understand the place of Siksika, in order that these could be incorporated in the design process.

2. The Importance of my Attitude and Values as a Designer

Recognizing that I brought my own values and attitudes with me to the design process, and thus allowing myself the flexibility and willingness to learn and respect other people's values and experiences.

3. Focus on the Process of Design and Planning

By allowing a process to be directed by the needs of the user and focusing on a process that involves the user, a design process can do so much more than just create a space. It can build the capacity of a people to participate in the continued development of places and institutions in their community.

4. The Recognition that Design and Planning is not an Isolated Activity

Design exists within a greater context and is bound to economics, social issues, politics, and so forth. As a designer I had to be willing to accept a changing role throughout the process and to inquire of and incorporate other disciplines in the development process.

5. The Value of Landscape Architecture to Community Development with First Nations

Through the development of the market garden, I found that there is value for the skills of landscape architecture beyond their conventional application. The skills of landscape architecture can be valuable when applied to community development and community economic development problems, and can provide for unique and creative ways of finding appropriate solutions.

A discussion of each of these lessons follows.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING TO KNOW THE PEOPLE AND THE PLACE

People want places they can interact with. As a designer in this world I have a responsibility to be aware of the place—the structures, process, institutions, and people with which I am intervening and working. I have a responsibility to attempt as best I can, to grasp what the place is all about before I suppose a change or an intervention. I have seen at Siksika how design intervention can upset the order and balance of a community, and if as designers we design without a knowledge of people and their place, the design can stifle possibility and have devastating effects.

The work with the Siksika people was a great affirmation of the interdependence between people, their institutions and their landscapes. A decision for their land, is inextricably tied to their people and to their institutions. It was crucially important to gain an awareness of the people and the place where the design intervention was intended. By this I mean the culture, the values, the daily patterns of life, the social situation, and the economy of the Siksika people.

I found that no matter what processes or steps other approaches suggested, listening to the Siksika youth was my greatest guide. Siksika is their place, and I had to listen to and respect what they know of this place. In doing so, clues for appropriate decision-making were found.

Gaining an inside view of the community enabled me to recognize the real issues to be solved and to address those issues through appropriate intervention. I choose to call this a “socially responsible” approach to design. As in the case of Siksika, I am thankful that I took the time to participate with the *Business Without Borders* classes, that I spent social time with the youth, attended functions, talked to youth about their dreams and wishes, and spent a lot of time on the reserve. I truly believe taking these steps allowed me to be more intimately aware of the Siksika community and youth, something I undoubtedly know would not have otherwise happened. It was in this awareness of Siksika people and place that I grew in my observation and conviction that their current values and knowledge were not conducive to the development of an Enterprise Centre building. They didn’t own the “idea” or believe in a need for this place. However, they did have a desire to change their situation and thought that this project might help them to do that. Therefore we were able to look at a process of developing the Enterprise Centre as a means for these youth to create change in their lives. If I had proceeded with a conceptual plan and design there would have been no justice to the Siksika youth. Once again, it would have been another change in their lives that they do not have participation in, or have any sense of ownership of. I know, beyond a doubt, that it would have resulted in a place that had little or no meaning for them.

First Nation people once designed their own places, and it was these places that reflected the social order of their community and created identity for First Nation people. When the development of places began to be imposed upon the Siksika people, a loss of identity and a loss of connection with the places that surrounded them occurred.

The Siksika people are once again choosing to develop their own places. As a designer and planner working with them it was important to recognize that these people are looking for ways to improve their skills, their education, to increase the ownership of their resources and to develop their community. As an intervenor in their place it was my responsibility to open up the process to incorporate these issues and concerns. The challenge was then to frame these concerns within the design process by facilitating a process that allowed the youth to acquire skills, to feel ownership of and to be involved in the design process. I believe that in tackling this challenge, greater benefits were brought to the Siksika youth and community. Now, it is hoped, that they are not only left with the market garden project, a project that is theirs, but also with a greater capacity to create places and processes that will help to develop the economy and society of their reserve.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VALUES AND ATTITUDES OF A DESIGNER

Experiences = Values + Attitudes and creates how we approach a situation

A lesson that became the greatest for me was how conscious I needed to be throughout this process of my attitude and mindset as I worked with the youth. I found this experience to be as much an inward-looking, reflective process for myself, as it was an outward process of development for the youth.

As I was working with another culture, there were many occasions that I questioned my values and was fearful that these might be imposed on the process. I realized how important it was for me to be aware that my attitudes and values come from a different life experience than that of the Siksika youth, and to constantly exercise caution that these did not govern the process or were imposed on the people I was working with. I found the best check for this was to continually take my ideas, suggestions and analyses of the situation back to the *Business Without Borders* group. This was facilitated by working closely with the youth, encouraging them to voice their concerns, always asking what they thought of my ideas, and by mutually defining our steps and our goals for the Enterprise Centre. Another thing that I found helpful was to talk with Adrian Stimson Jr. and Yvonne Landon. Adrian is a Siksika member, a tribal councillor and the founder of the *Business Without Borders* program so he was able to provide great insights to his people, and Yvonne is a high school teacher who has been at the Siksika Nation for six years. Through her time she has developed an awareness of, and relationships with the youth, and therefore could provide me with informed guidance.

i n c o n c l u s i o n . . .

FOCUS ON THE PROCESS OF DESIGN AND PLANNING

When working with people, as opposed to focusing on the design product as the final goal and choosing to focus on the design process as a goal, there are possibilities for design to do so much more than create a space. It can build a community, empower people, teach skills, and create a place appropriate to the people it is for. By allowing the process to be directed by the needs of the client, free from a methodology, often the best results will arise because people and community are allowed to express themselves as they normally would. An example of where I saw this very clearly was the experience of talking with the Siksika elders. Although we had prepared a list of questions we wanted to ask them, we just let them tell us stories and talk to us, and the insights and information they provided the process were beyond value.

From this I began to gain an appreciation that information valuable to the process would come not only from seeking it as though a planned method, but equally from being open to information and experiences that come in all shapes, and at all times. As the project proceeded I became more flexible, and inviting of these experiences, so much so that they became the foundation of the whole process as it developed. These experiences could be a conversation with a youth, listening to elder's storytelling, observing the youth presenting their ideas to Chief and Council, watching traditional dance, or having a coyote cross my path. It was these highly qualitative and experiential based pieces of knowledge that give me the intuition and a sense of knowing the place and the people of Siksika. It was this intuition that guided my way through the process, however, it is difficult to record because it is not gained from one experience, but rather a congruence and connection of them all.

**DESIGN IS NOT AN ISOLATED ACT. IT MUST ALLOW THE
USERS AND OTHER DISCIPLINES WITHIN THE PROCESS.**

Although I was aware that design and planning is not an isolated event, the process of developing the market garden demonstrated to me the possibilities for design and the benefits that arise when it encourages the involvement of the user and of other disciplines.

As Sim Van der Ryn has stated,

Design is far too important to be left to designers. Design is not a neutral process, it is molded by powerful social, political and economic forces and therefore as designers we must attempt to open up the methods, the products and the apparatus of design to these wider constituencies (Van der Ryn, 1996).

As we prepared for developing a vision for the Enterprise Center and lands I became aware that there were so many other issues, beyond the need for design and planning, tied up in the possible development of this place. Therefore, for the project with the Siksika youth and the development of a market garden venture, I needed to inquire of other disciplines, and to have the ability to rally numerous disciplines, and to incorporate them where appropriate.

We tapped at countless other sources of knowledge including, economics, demographics, history, culture, and business planning and financing. The need for developing this vision and for developing the market garden required us to work with business planners; agricultural specialists; the public works, agriculture, and social services departments at Siksika; soil agrologists; irrigation specialists; government; funders; farmers; elders and the community.

By believing that greater value would come from opening up the process to these greater constituencies, it also required me to be willing to take on many roles beyond that of designer. These included:

Prospector –to assist the youth with uncovering the ideas and images within them and their community and the land. To find a visions that matches the reality of the youth and which they could be actively engaged in.

Learner –I was as much a learner in this process as were the youth. Through actively participating with the youth, and engaging with the community I came to learn about the people and the place of Siksika, learning that was invaluable to the process.

Teacher-I had to be prepared to spend the time teaching the youth about the land and the process, because the more informed they were, the greater was their ability to be active in the process.

Facilitator- I was responsible for directing the process and this meant paying attention to all of the pieces of the process- youth, land, community, business and rallying the inclusion of other disciplines. As Elizabeth Brabec found in her work with the Burwash People Project,

The native concept of community and the fostering of native identity necessitates a shift away from the role of the contemporary planner/designer. The new role is as facilitator translating the goals and wishes of the native community into policy and plans. (Brabec 1984, 75)

Advocate-I had to be both an advocate to the youth of their own potential, as well as challenging others, particularly non-aboriginals, to see the potential and value of these young people.

THE VALUE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE TO DEVELOPMENT WITH FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

This project also taught me quite clearly that there is a place for landscape architecture in community economic development, particularly as it pertains to local grassroots development, such as at Siksika. This new opportunity has come about due to a number of things:

- First Nation's move towards self-government;
- The increasing number of First Nation land claims, self-governments and aboriginally owned resource development and management;
- The desire by First Nation people to change the disintegration of their communities and the places which were so poorly designed for their communities;
- The First Nation desire to reclaim a place for themselves- a need for place appropriate development

Armed with a knowledge of the First Nation's contemporary situation, I began to understand how landscape architecture can play an important role in assisting First Nations with their drive for community economic development. It can also assist in creating places and institutions that are rooted in First Nation's culture and take form and meaning from their culture.

Now in control of their own resources and land, and having a desire for pride in these resources and lands, First Nation's people are concerned with the aesthetics and the meaning of these places. In their drive to control, own and foster pride in the lands and resources they are faced with numerous challenges-lack of skills, lack of education, and social problems to name a few. They are realizing at the grassroots level that if they are going to stand on their own they must address these issues, and create environments/places which foster and attempt to bring about change in their lives.

For the profession of landscape architecture, or those concerned with the development and design of form in the environment there has begun to be a place for working with First Nations. Until recent years the federal and provincial governments have primarily undertaken the planning and design of First Nation's communities. However, now that First Nation's are in control of the land, resources, assets they are asserting their desire to design and create their own environments.

If, as I know from this project, the social and cultural needs of a community can form the basis for economic development, then as landscape architects, we have much to offer. We are trained to look to the social and cultural context of communities, we are armed with the skills to identify, catalog and protect the cultural heritage, we have the ability to uncover landscapes of local and outside value, to observe social patterns, to discover indigenous idiosyncrasies that can be marketed, and to preserve sacred places. We can facilitate and assist with the creation of places from which economic development can occur, or we can set in place processes for economic development.

OTHER LESSONS ABOUT FIRST NATIONS AND THEIR FUTURE

Through my experience of working with First Nations, I have become aware of many initiatives which First Nations are taking to direct their own future. At present so many of their development initiatives are aimed at the international level, partnering with outside agencies, and on finding external markets for products. With self-government, First Nations are taking things into their own hands, and beginning to control their lands and resources, however, with so much opportunity opened up to them, these First Nations seem to be focusing primarily on grand, external projects and are forgetting to take care of things at home. At approximately 50% of the Siksika population, the youth are the Nation's greatest asset, but in the drive to develop other resource assets, those that spell greater returns on investment, the development of their youth is being neglected.

In Alberta, where the Siksika Nation is located, 80% of the aboriginal population is below the age of 40, with 46.2% being in the 0-19 age range. The trends in the aboriginal population are very different than the trends for the Canadian population, which is experiencing the majority of its growth at the other end of the population pyramid. In the aboriginal population only 4.1% are above the age of 60. To aboriginal leaders this means less elders to teach the young, as well as signaling a family planning crisis. "We have children having children. I've seen mothers as young as 13 and some have had 3 babies by the time they're 18...It's fair to say the aboriginal population don't enjoy the same socio-economic status as the general population of Alberta. That's something we need to look at." (Robertson 1998, B5)

It is unquestionable that the Siksika youth do not enjoy the same socio-economic status, however in terms of tangible means or projects that are dealing with this, beyond the *Business Without Borders* program, I have seen few. At a session in which we discussed Siksika land, youth, and community one of the issues which was raised by the youth, is that they don't feel as if they are included in the processes which operate their reserve. In their words, "Include youth in government now," and "Expand youth role in all aspects."

Without putting more attention to these youth, I believe that present day projects, the progress and advancements that First Nations are striving for today, could see dismal futures. This will be because those that will eventually be responsible for their management and operation, the youth of today, will be unaware of, or overwhelmed by the responsibility of it all. The youth of today must begin to be prepared for these responsibilities. They need to be trained through projects that have relevance to them in the present life situation. By having these youth undertake approaches to economic development and human resource planning at the community level now, they can gain the skills to serve their community at a much broader scope in the future. Right now, the notion of these broad responsibilities is too overwhelming to them. Being intimidated by it, and not being informed of its meaning and its implication to them, they disassociate with it even more by shunning these responsibilities through apathy and by choosing to leave the reserve for opportunities elsewhere.

I hope that this story has demonstrated that by placing youth as the key players in the creation of a place, in its objectives and operation, can address many of the issues facing First Nation's youth today. It shows how landscape architecture can be used as the tool for creating a sense of place for its users and how that place can be the foundation the seed upon which change can occur. It details the growth of a process by showing how getting to know a people allows you to see and uncover the real issues to be solved, the seeds of design, to be able to motivate and facilitate the right activities for those most affected, so that the seed can be planted and begin to take root. By addressing and including all those who might be involved will create a stable foundation from which the seed can grow and will also nourish it's growth.

I know that most design situations don't allow the time and depth of experience that this project did. However, from this project I am left with the knowledge that if I, as a designer and planner, strive to embody the value of experience, of learning and teaching, of addressing the real needs of client, and of being willing to go beyond a defined methodology, only then can I begin to create places which become a part of real people and real life.

reflecting on the project...

As a project is often defined by how well it's objectives were achieved, I looked back upon the defined objectives set out at the beginning of this practicum. Although the practicum has achieved these objectives, what this story is really about is the process by which those objectives were achieved.

The initial objectives were defined before I came to know and be involved with the Siksika youth. When I grew in knowledge and awareness, the focus of the practicum shifted. Rather than being concerned with the final product, which was to be a design and plan for the Enterprise Centre and lands, what would become our focus was to provide the Siksika youth the experience of creating the Enterprise Centre and lands for themselves. An experience which would strive to respond to the real issues and the socio-economic situation of these youth, and an experience which grew out of their ideas and desires. And did this practicum do that? The best way to assess this is to reflect on those wishes and needs.

- Did the youth gain valuable skills?
- Did the process empower them?
- Do they feel like more involved contributing member of their reserve?
- Do they have a sense of ownership over First Light Gardens?
- Have we set a framework from which these youth can create change for themselves?
- Did this project increase their confidence and sense of pride in themselves?

In looking back upon this process and recalling where we started from, and my observations of these youth throughout the process I can quite easily answer “yes” to all of these questions. In terms of gaining skills, every youth involved is a bit different depending on their level of involvement. For Waylon, Toni and Lange who conducted the research and feasibility study they gained research knowledge, an in depth understanding of what it takes to start a business, how to access funding, how to take soil samples and name plants, the procedures necessary to start a garden, and even basic interpersonal skills. I remember Lange being terrified of having to make phone calls and ask people for information. By the time the summer was over she had made so many phone calls, as well as public presentations, that she took of the responsibility of inquiring with suppliers and businesses to price *everything*, right down to pencils, cash registers and hoes, that it would take to start a garden venture. Others like Stacy developed close ties with agriculture and are learning about organic gardening from working one on one with the agricultural consultant. He will also be leading the installation of irrigation lines. The six youth working at the garden this summer of 1999, have had to care for the 500 shelterbelt trees planted in spring, they have learned how to promote themselves and their garden through advertising and hosting the community groundbreaking day.

As importantly as these skills is the evident increase in the pride these youth display when talking to others about the market garden project, and the confidence they have gained in their ability to do something of value for their families and friends. This sense of confidence and pride has had a surprising reaction from children on the reserve. They are more curious and interested in this garden than I would have imagined. The outward activity of their older peers, seems to be a model to them. I have heard a number of them have come to the garden and asked if they can “belong”.

The experience has also helped these youth to see that they can effect change for themselves. So many of them internalize societal stereotypes of them, and don't know how to overcome their self-doubt. An example of how they created change for themselves was through their ability to seek out, and approach supporters for the market garden. They were shocked when they found out Aboriginal Business Canada was going to provide generous funding to the garden. The youth had earlier prepared and delivered a presentation about the market garden project to business development officers at Aboriginal Business Canada and couldn't believe that their own effort had succeeded in getting monies for the garden.

The feeling of being of value and involved in their reserve is the greatest benefit I have seen from this market garden project. They really place a high value on doing good for one another first, before anything else. And the fact that the community has supported and rallied behind them fosters the sense of value that these youth feel.

In following principles, both understood by other planners and landscape architects, and more importantly, those learned from my commitment to the needs and wishes of the Siksika youth. The process became the basis for the youth to be active, involved, productive members of their community. And it will be in the continuance of this process, through the development and operation of First Light Gardens, that these youth will continue to grow. As meaningful is the building of this place, is the building of these youth to take control of their future.

Although I have discussed other designers and planners approaches, I will finish with a discussion called *Transformative Community Planning: Empowerment through Community Development*. It is by Marie Kennedy, a professor of community planning at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. I came upon her discussion only in the last few months of this practicum, but it is one which so accurately and concisely defines how I have come to view community planning, and planning with people, from my experience with the Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society that I would like to share it with you in conclusion.

MARIE KENNEDY,

TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITY PLANNING: EMPOWERMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

(The following is an excerpt from a speech presented at the 1996 Planners Network Conference)

I see real community development as combining material development with the development of people. Real development as I understand it, necessarily involves increasing a community's capacity for taking control of its own development-building within the community critical thinking and planning abilities, as well as concrete skills, so that development projects and planning processes can be replicated by the community members in the future. A good planning project should leave the community not just with more immediate products-e.g. Housing, but also with an increased capacity to meet future needs.

Effective community development planning takes a comprehensive approach to meeting community needs-an approach that recognizes the interrelationship of economic, physical and social development. Community development is linked to empowerment and to valuing diversity of culture. This is true whether you are talking about planning in materially underdeveloped communities in the United States or in the so-called developing world.

...if on the other hand we have a different version of what constitutes success:

- A version that does not include products of development, but which rests primarily on power and control being increasingly vested in community members
- Success that is measured by the number of people who have, in the planning process, moved from being an object of planning to a subject of planning;

- Success measured in terms of increasing numbers of confident, competent, co-operative and purposeful community members;
- Success measured in terms of the ability of people involved in the planning process to replicate their achievements in other situations;
- Success measured in terms of movement towards realizing values of equity and inclusion;

A successful transformative planner must carefully listen and respect what people know; help people acknowledge what they already know; and help them back up this "common sense" and put it in a form that communicates convincingly to others.

Successful transformative community planning also means planners who are willing to acknowledge that into each planning situation we bring with us our own attitudes and biases—biases that flow from our own class background and location, our own gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so forth. And, along with acknowledging the baggage we bring with us, we must recognize that our preferences for certain planning and development outcomes are typically based, at least in part, on these biases (and that they're not always or even often) about being "right", it's not about the "right way"—our preferences are just that, they're our preferences.

Successful transformative community planning means wielding our planning tools in a way that frames real alternatives; that elaborates the trade-off in making one or another choice—that puts real control in people's hands. It does not mean making everyone a professional planner—a possessor of a particular set of skills that planners have developed through professional education and practice. It does mean using our skills so people can make informed decisions for themselves. And, it means including in the trade-offs the consequences of different decisions in terms of overarching community values—it means challenging people on exclusionary, narrow-minded thinking; having enough respect for people to challenge them. It means

framing alternatives that include organizing strategies, political strategies, education strategies, as well as the more traditional planning outcomes programs, buildings, businesses and so forth. Successful transformative community planning means extending our definition of the planning process to include a capacity building and education/outreach phase on the front end and an evaluation period on the back end. In short, it means working with communities in a way that sensitive, supportive, inquiring and carefully analytical, challenging but not directive or patronizing. Although this may sound like "mom and apple pie," it's all too rare in practice.

i n c o n c l u s i o n . . .

As I turn off the road, a turn I have taken a few hundred times, I see the First Light Gardens sign. The image of a bright sun with the four coloured quarters I could not miss anywhere. As I pulled up to the parking area for the garden I could see Stacy had just arrived and was turning the water hoses on. It was early morning and the first light of day was shining brightly on the rows of strawberries lined up in front of me.

In about two hours a group of children from the summer day camp at Chief Old Sun will be arriving. The calm of this beautiful morning won't last long. It's garden day week at the garden and today is their turn to spend the morning at the farm learning about the plants, etc. At lunch, elders Virginia and Anne will be joining them to take them through the medicinal garden. For each plant grown there is a sign written in Blackfoot and a description of how someone might use the plant today. The elders helped the youth to grow and build this garden, now every Tuesday and Friday a few elders from the lodge come down the road to help care for it. In the garden the schoolchildren will get to learn how their ancestors used yarrow, apinikiun, mint and others. They will learn of the colds they cured and the meals they made. The elders also use this garden to grow tobacco and sage for sacred gifts.

Afterwards, they will help to harvest some produce, probably carrots and summer strawberries-everyone's favourite part of the day! Depending on what needs to be done that day they may have to hand weed or water the crops as well. Other than the u-pick strawberries the youth pick all of the produce themselves but they think next year they will also make some of the produce u-pick, to help teach people how to dig a potato, or to check if a carrot is ready.

It's hard to imagine that only three years ago we had all gathered in the torrential rain and planted these trees and bushes that surround us. This year will be the first that the buffaloberry will produce a crop, so big plans are under way for the first buffaloberry festival in the fall. The elders will teach people the proper way to harvest the berry from the bushes and I think the youth will be holding a contest for the best buffaloberry jam.

Last year the market garden team had to purchase picnic tables because so many people from the administration building and sportsplex were coming at lunchtime to buy vegetables and were staying to eat their lunch. It seems a beautiful spot to sit on the western edge of the garden at the top of the coulee and to look out to the Rocky Mountains in the distance. Toni thinks they should start selling sandwiches at lunchtime and is going to ask the high school cook if he would be willing to help them do this in the summer.

As the school is adjacent to the garden, the education department has been very helpful. They gave the youth the use of the shop in the school to build their sales booth and produce stand and gave them the use of the kitchen when they have to prepare food for special events at the garden.

This is only the second year they have planted crops, so it's still a simple palette...carrots, peas, potatoes, lettuce and about an acre and a half of strawberries. Waylon and Lisa say that there aren't nearly enough berries for the people who want to pick them. Kids are out of

school each day so there are lots of school children that come and want to pick the strawberries-some of these kids have even started to pick them for neighbours who give them a little extra money for their work. Even people from the adjoining town of Gleichen come all the time to buy vegetables and pick the strawberries. Next year the youth are considering adding another acre of strawberries.

The garden looks like an outdoor art gallery; the youth have been clever and erected these canvas panels around the garden to help protect the plants from winds while they were growing. On the panels they have painted everything from fruit to cars to traditional Blackfoot imagery, to tipis. After last year, one student, Shane Calf Robe, whose work is on many of the panels was hired to paint murals at schools in Calgary and Strathmore. He's now thinking of making his own business of this.

Four of the students who worked at the garden in the first year are all still here, now they are teaching six new youth how to care for the garden, the proper way to pick weeds, when to turn the compost pile, how to display produce at the produce stand, even how to keep balance sheets for all the sales made.

First Light Gardens really has become a place of learning and sharing for these youth and their community.

e x p e r i e n c i n g a p l a c e e n v i s i o n i n g a l a n d s c a p e e m p o w e r i n g a p e o p l e

a p p e n d i x a

appendix a...

site inventory and analysis of Siksika Nation Youth Entrepreneurial Development Society lands

Climate

Climatic information for Siksika was obtained through *Environment Canada Environment Services Gleichen Station*. Siksika is located at 50°52" latitude, 113°03" longitude. The climate of the site is classified as semi-arid continental, characterized by dry, warm summers and cold winters.

- Temperature-the daily maximum temperature ranges from a high of 24.7°C in July to a low of -6.1°C in January and the daily minimum temperature ranges from 9.7°C in July to -17.6°C in January. The annual daily mean temperature is 3.8°C. Summers can get quite hot during the day but cool down substantially in the evening. Temperatures above 35°C have been recorded in the summer months as well as temperatures below freezing. In the winter months there can also be a broad range of temperatures due to warm Chinooks and prolonged cold snaps, ranges between 15°C and -40°C have been recorded.¹
- The frost-free period is approximately 118 days, occurring generally between May and September although frosts can occur in June and September. The growing season typically lasts from May to October.
- Precipitation- the climate is semi-arid with an average annual total precipitation of 351mm. About two-thirds of the precipitation is received during the growing season. Daily extremes of over 75mm of rainfall have been recorded in the summer months. The month end snow cover accumulations are quite low; however, daily snowfall extremes of over 400mm have been recorded.

¹ Environment Canada Atmospheric Services Gleichen Station, 1997.

- Wind- given data from the Calgary International Airport, the average wind speed from all directions is 16km/hr. However, extreme hourly speeds of over 80km/hr have been recorded in all months with the wind direction from the west and northwest. Wind gusts of over 100km/hr have been recorded in all months of the year. Due to the unprotected nature of the surrounding landscape, the site is at times extremely windy.
- The length of the growing season is 118 days. Based on a 29-year average the last frost in spring occurs around May 19 and the first frost of fall occurs around September 15. The average temperature during the growing season ranges from 4.7°C to 17.3°C. The average amount of rainfall during the growing season is 253.4 mm.²
- Sunshine-the site is characterized by a high amount of hours of sunshine per year.

Topography

The elevation of the site ranges from 903m in the south to 890m to at the west edge. The majority of the site is predominantly level with slopes varying from 0% to 4%.³ The site receives full sun from sunrise to sunset as there are currently no trees, shelterbelts or buildings on the site.

Access to Site by Road

The site is 3km south of the Trans Canada Highway at the intersection of Highway 22x and Highway 901. It is easily accessed by the road leading to the Siksika Nation High School and the Anglican Cemetery.

² Ibid.

³ Siksika Nation High School Feasibility Study, Bathory Associates, May 1994.

Soils

The Siksika area is dominated by Calcareous Dark Brown Chernozem soil profiles. Topsoil is typically loam and silt loam in texture, and ranges from 100-300mm in depth. The soil profiles are typically moderate to well to very well drained and are not subject to water retention for any significant period of time.

Physiography and Surficial Geology

The site lies within the Eastern Alberta Plains (the Third Prairie level) region. The site consists of lacustrine and fluvial deposits characterized by gravel, sand, silt, clay, local till up to 25m thick; deposited in intermittent supraglacial lakes and streams or at the margins of iceflooded proglacial lakes; and undulating to gently rolling hummocky topography⁴.

Vegetation/Plant Associations

The Siksika Reserve is located within the Mixed Prairie zone of the Prairie provinces. The semi-arid conditions which prevail in the region in the late summer, promote the development of grassland vegetation. The site has not been cultivated but the native prairie grass has had some disturbance by some low density cattle grazing and by low levels of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Along an old road bed there is the remnants of an old caragana hedge.

⁴ Siksika Medicine Hat Development Project: Development and Reclamation Plan, Environmental Management Associates, August 1993.

The main vegetation types which occur in the mixed prairie are:

| Grasses | | Herbaceous plants | Shrubs |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| <i>Stipa comata</i> | Needle and thread grass | <i>Artemisia frigida</i> Pasture Sage | <i>Rosa acicularis</i> Wild Rose |
| <i>Agropyron spp.</i> | Western wheatgrass Northern wheatgrass | <i>Phlox hoodii</i> Moss phlox <i>Anenome patens</i> Prairie crocus | <i>Elaeagnus commutata</i> Wolf willow |
| <i>Bouteloa gracilis</i> | Blue Grama grass | | |
| <i>Poa sandbergii</i> | Sandberg Bluegrass | | |
| <i>Poa pratensis</i> | Kentucky Bluegrass | | |

The youth sampled and identified plants located on the site. This investigation of the site identified the following plants:

| Grasses | | Herbaceous plants | Shrubs |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| <i>Stipa comata</i> | Needle and thread grass | <i>Artemisia frigida</i> Pasture Sage | <i>Rosa acicularis</i> Wild Rose |
| <i>Agropyron spp.</i> | Western wheatgrass Northern wheatgrass Slender wheatgrass | <i>Phlox hoodii</i> Moss phlox <i>Anenome patens</i> Prairie crocus <i>Rathida columnifera</i> Prairie coneflowers | <i>Elaeagnus commutata</i> Wolf willow <i>Sheperdia argentea</i> Buffaloberry |
| <i>Bouteloa gracilis</i> | Blue Grama grass | <i>Achillea</i> Yarrow | |
| <i>Poa sandbergii</i> | Sandberg Bluegrass | <i>Heuchera flabellifolia</i> Alum root | |
| <i>Poa pratensis</i> | Kentucky Bluegrass | <i>Campanula</i> Harebell <i>Medicago sativa</i> Alfalfa | |

Random plant sampling of 5metre square plots found the following levels of coverage:

| | |
|-----------|------|
| Grasses | 75% |
| Wormwood | 15% |
| Anenome | 2% |
| Alfalfa | 1% |
| Wild Rose | 3-5% |
| Yarrow | 0.5% |

Wildlife

This area generally has poor wildlife habitat potential, however white-tailed deer, mule deer, coyote, hawks and Richardson's ground squirrel due occur in the region.

Visual Assessment/Land Use

The site consists of wind swept prairie grass with the occasional shrub thicket. The Bow River Valley is 4km to the west and 8km to the south of the site. To the east there is the Siksika Nation Junior and Senior High School, and beyond that is the Deerfoot Sportsplex Recreation Facility. To the northwest there is an Anglican Cemetery which is still in use, and to the distant northeast the Old Sun College, the Police Station and the rest of the townsite in the background. At the north edge of the site there is an east-west traversing power line. On the south portion of the site a gas well and gas line, running east-west have recently been installed. The western edge of the site is a gently sloping bluff that leads into a coulee with an intermittent creek bed. For a number of years the Nation used this as a landfill site. No longer in use, many artifacts of the nation's history have been salvaged from this landfill.

To the south and west there are uninterrupted views of the surrounding prairie and slopes of the Bow River Valley. On a clear day one can see the Rocky Mountains in the distant west.

Cultural/Historical Information

A number of sources were investigated for information about the site. These sources included:

Glenbow Museum Archives
Old Sun College Museum at Siksika
Community Meetings
Elders' Meetings

Three separate workshops were conducted with members of the Siksika Nation for the purpose of gaining their input and suggestions regarding the project, as well as to gather historical and cultural data regarding the site. In addition, research was conducted at the Glenbow Museum Archives in Calgary, and at the Old Sun College Museum located on the Nation to investigate any important historical and cultural aspects of the site.

The workshop which was held with the elders of the Siksika Nation provided the most valuable information regarding the history of the site.

- Death of two young girls in the valley in the 1950's due to blizzard. Two girls who died named Raweater and Cranebear. One girl named Blackrider survived.
- Portions of the area were used by the Old Sun residential school as pastureland for cows and as vegetable gardens.
- In the western portion of the site it was suggested that a few burial sites existed. On a hill in the middle of the valley is a scaffold burial site (apparently evidence of beads still there), and there are possibly skeletons in the area from the smallpox period.

some ethnobotany of the Blackfoot people...

Wild Mint *Mentha arvensis* var. *villosa*

Blackfoot: *Sax-ida-kitsim* (Quick smell); *Cax-si-simmo* (The leaves used to flavour pemmican); *Kak-it-simo*

Identification: Wild mint is a strong smelling perennial herb standing 10-50cm tall.

Distribution and Habitat: This plant grows in wet places such as sloughs and boggy meadows.

Preparation and Uses: Refreshing teas, flavouring agents and scents. Native North Americans used it to make spice meat in the form of pemmican and in soups. It is used by herbalists as a bitter, pungent, antispasmodic, antirheumatic, stimulant and can alleviate pain by reducing the sensitivity of the nerves. A good remedy for children's teething pains consists of peppermint and skullcap infused together, strained and drunk cold.

Traditional Blackfoot Use:

- The leaves were used to flavour meat, pemmican or soups, and were made into a delicious tea for use in treating various complaints.
- Traps were boiled with mint to destroy the human scent.
- The dried leaves were used to treat heart ailments and chest pains; about a teaspoonful chewed and swallowed constituted a dose. The saliva formed when chewing the leaf could be spat into the hand and the chest around the affected area massaged.

Pasture Sage/Fringed Sage *Artemisia frigida*

Blackfoot: *Kaksamis* (She sage); *Kaksimi*; *Ninny-kaksa-miss*; *Kak-sa-mee-a*

Habitat and Distribution: Usually found in dry places or in well drained south-facing slopes throughout the area.

Identification: There are many species of *Artemisia* and they vary in shape from herbs to small shrubs. They are usually quite aromatic, and have alternate leaves. The plants are mostly grey in colour and vary in size from 20-200 cm tall, most being less than 40cm.

Traditional Blackfoot Use:

Medicinal

- The leaves were chewed and applied to wounds in order to lessen the swelling.
- A bleeding nostril was stuffed with the soft leaves
- The roots or tops were boiled and the liquid taken for mountain fever; the tops were chewed and the liquid was swallowed for heartburn; and a tea made from the leaves was used to treat coughs and colds.
- It is suggested that the name She sage was given as women used this tea during the period of their menses.
- For deodorant, saddles, women's pillows, hide bags and quivers were stuffed with *A. frigida* and *A. ludoviciana*.
- This type of sage was used as a toilet paper, especially for children, and a pad of the plant was worn by women in their menses to reduce skin irritation.

Food

- The crushed leaves were mixed with stored meat to maintain a good odor.

Craft/Game

- In the preparation of rattles, the skin was moulded around balls of the plant.
- Quantities of the plant were put on campfire coals and the smoke repelled mosquitoes.
- Children played a game of clubbing gophers unconscious, and then reviving them by holding the crushed leaves to the animal's nostrils.
- Hides were treated with water which had been soaked or brewed in the plant.

Silver Sage *Artemisia ludoviciana*

Blackfoot: Man Sage

Distribution and Habitat: *Artemisia ludoviciana* is common throughout the prairies and foothills, and may be gathered at any time during the summer months.

Traditional Blackfoot Use:

Ceremonial

- Participants in the sweat lodge ceremonies wiped the sweat from their bodies with this sage.
- It was used to cleanse the headdresses of the Horn Society before they were transferred to new owners. In that ceremony the headdresses were laid on a bed of sage. The singers of the all-smoking ceremony cleansed themselves with it.
- When ceremonial moccasins were put away they were packed with man sage.
- The proper way to dispose of the sage was to throw it eastward rather than just burn it or put it down.

Other uses

- A person afraid of a ghost would cleanse himself with sage, or a man who was going to enter a horse race might do the same.

Medicinal/Cosmetic

- Sage was used as a toilet paper, and was often put in moccasins as a foot deodorant

Wolf Willow/Silver-berry *Elaeangus commutata*

Blackfoot: *Miss-is-a-misoi* (Stink-wood), *Cupsi* (The berry)

Traditional Blackfoot Uses:

Food:

- The fruit of the bush were used as a famine food. The berries were peeled and eaten or mixed with grease and stored in a cool place, then eaten as a confection or added to soups and broths.

Craft:

- In craft, the seeds were cleaned, boiled, threaded and hung to dry. (In Blackfoot, *Kis-tchim-mon*, means beads made from seeds). They were then greased and made into necklaces, or were sewn as a decoration on antelope skin dresses. Sometimes the seeds were interspaced with *Juniperus* berries.
- The bark of the bush was braided and used to whip the stone tops which children spun on during the ice in winter (these whips usually lasted longer than the rawhide ones).

Medicinal:

- Children suffering from frostbite were treated with a strong solution of the boiled bark. When the blisters came off some grease was applied to speed the healing, or it was mixed with the infusion beforehand and the solution applied like a salve. Apparently it dyed the skin brown, masking an unsightly white scar.

How Eleangus Commutata got the name "Stink-wood":

- The name "Stink-wood" was given because of the objectionable smell of the smoke which this wood produced when it burned. Anyone who collected wood of this species for a tipi fire was an object of derision or were chided for being lazy.
- The Blackfoot explain the origin of the name "Stink-wood" through the story of Naapi and the gophers:

"Naapi lay down after telling Little Brown-eye (his anus) to watch over some uneaten toasted gophers. Soon Little Brown-eye sounded a warning (flatus), but there was only a crow on a nearby tree. Then a lynx came along and Little Brown-eye sounded a warning. Naapi was sound asleep and, although Little Brown-eye roared away, he refused to wake up. The lynx ate all the gophers. When Naapi awoke, he was angry with Little Brown-eye because it had let a lynx eat all of the meat and had not awakened him. So Old Man took a stick of a kind of willow and rubbed it into Little Brown-eye, and ever since, this willow has smelled like human excrement and has been known as "Stink-wood".

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