EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Manitoo, our Creator, created everything: the daylight sun, the stars, the animals, everything that exists, even the fur-bearing animals. Manitoo even created the flying creatures, all the creatures that run on top of the ground. And after Manitoo created everything, Manitoo blessed everything that had been created. Manitoo even created all the seasons, and in the seasons Manitoo created the different types of weather, the rain and snow. Then Manitoo created all the nations of the world that live on the earth. Manitoo created the Whiteman and every race that exists on this earth. Manitoo even created the precious rock minerals…Manitoo not only created us but created us to sustain us, to live off the land, to live off of all the animals — the moose, the deer. Our land is so beautiful. The Creator blessed us with days that will always change. There will be good weather followed by cloudy days with rain. This is what makes the land beautiful. This is why I am keeping the land," (Pikangikum First Nation, 2006, p. 2).

Since the time of early European settlement in Canada, Aboriginal communities have struggled to assert their rights and title to lands that they once had unlimited access to. Recent legal proceedings have brought attention to this struggle and paved the way for consultation with, and accommodation of, Aboriginal groups during decision making procedures related to resource allocation and land management. Aboriginal communities are increasingly concerned about losing access and control over their traditional territories and their livelihoods due to increased outside interests on their land (Nuttall, 2008). Land use planning holds potential promise to address some of the main sources of concern for Aboriginal peoples related to land use including traditional ecological knowledge, past experiences with resource development activities, cultural preservation, and the lack of knowledge related to impacts of such activities on traditional lands (Stevenson, 1996; Natcher, 2001; Minkin, 2009). As a result, Aboriginal communities are developing community-based land use plans for their traditional lands in an effort to advance their struggle to assert Aboriginal title and ensure that their unique needs are being addressed through conventional planning and natural resources management practices.

Community-based planning is a form of planning that has the potential to incorporate unique values associated with land use. Indigenous community-based plans can incorporate the

traditional knowledge and cultural identities that are rooted in land based communities (Jojola, 2008). Unlike conventional planning practice, the integration of cultural knowledge with scientific methods when valuing lands and the environment is often equally considered within Aboriginal land use plans (Wolfley, 1998). It is this interplay of culture, traditional knowledge and science that is being addressed through Aboriginal community-based land use planning. The objectives of this research are:

- To develop an evaluation tool based on Baer's (1997) evaluation framework, relevant journal literature and five existing Aboriginal land use plans;

- To apply the evaluation tool developed to three completed Aboriginal community-based land use plans,

- And to contribute to the development of best practices in Aboriginal community-based land use planning.

Methods

This research evaluates three Aboriginal community-based land use plans based on criteria adapted from Baer's (1997) general plan evaluation criteria. The three evaluated plans are from three different regions of Canada, including *Keeping the Land – A Land Use Strategy for the Whitefeather Forest and Adjacent Areas* from Ontario, the *Sahtu Land Use Plan* from the Northwest Territories, and the *Nisga'a Land Use Plan* from British Columbia. First, a literature review was completed to provide the context in which Aboriginal community-based land use planning is occurring. Second, the goals of five existing Aboriginal plans were presented through a thematic review. Based on the findings from these two steps, a preliminary set of evaluation criteria were developed, which were then used to evaluate the three case study Aboriginal land use plans. The results of these evaluations were then compared. Lastly,

recommendations and a final refined evaluation tool, as shown in List 1 at the end of this summary, were presented for use in future planning efforts. This research resulted in a framework that Aboriginal communities could use when developing land use plans in the future, or for planners and policy makers to use as a guide in developing culturally sensitive regional land use plans.

Results: Evaluation of Case Study Aboriginal Community-based Land Use Plans

The literature review and the thematic review of the five Aboriginal land use plans revealed a number of key values and issues regarding Aboriginal land use planning. Four main elements emerged including perpetual use of traditional territories, environmental stewardship, sustainable development, and cultural preservation. Two of the three case study plans addressed each of these issues very well, with one, the *Nisga'a Land Use Plan*, not explicitly explaining the connection between their land use decisions and these issues. *Keeping the Land* and the *Sahtu Land Use Plan* each explained these elements in relation to their use of the land and linked these ideas with the rationale behind their policy decisions. All the plans fell short on implementation. Each plan mentioned the need for an implementation plan, but only provided short term or vague direction. Not all of the plans included a vision or goals of the plan. The *Nisga'a Land Use Plan* left these out, but referred to their government agreements, which explored these ideas in greater detail. None of the plans included a timeline, and only one provided an action plan. The recommendations to improve Aboriginal community-based land use planning were based on the strengths and weaknesses in the three plans examined, as well as other observations made throughout the research process.

Results: Recommendations for Aboriginal communities developing land use plans

Recommendation 1: Aboriginal communities engaged in community-based land use planning should consider the evaluation criteria listed in List 1 to help guide their planning process during and after plan development in order to ensure the strongest plan possible is used.

Recommendation 2: Plans should explain in detail the planning process used in the plan development.

Recommendation 3: The plan that is developed should be a standalone plan. Adequate information should be included within the plan to justify and explain the land use policies developed, including community values and issues relevant to land use.

Recommendation 4: Plans should acknowledge the plans and policies of areas adjacent to the plan area in an effort to mitigate any transboundary conflicts in these areas, particularly because of the varied movement of harvested animals.

Recommendation 5: Community and stakeholder engagement in the planning process should be described in detail, particularly with reference to the collection and integration of traditional knowledge.

Recommendation 6: Plans should explicitly state a community vision, goals and measureable objectives and explain their connection to the land use policies within the plan.

Recommendation 7: Plans should identify specific areas or features for protection, and permit and prohibit specific land uses within each of their management zones based on the community's land and resource management goals.

Recommendation 8: Plans should develop both a long term and short term implementation plan complete with timeline to help guide the achievement of plan goals.

Recommendation 9: Develop a community-based plan review and amendment protocol to help retain equity within these decision processes.

Recommendation 10:   Plans should incorporate a glossary of local terms and incorporate appropriate graphics to help illustrate the ideas presented in the plan.

Recommendation 11: First Nation communities who are going to engage in a community-based land use planning process should seek out the advice of other communities that have already completed plans to facilitate information sharing and lessons learned.

List 1: Final Evaluation Criteria for Aboriginal Community-based Land Use Plans Modified from Baer (1997).

Adequacy of Context. (The plan should explain the context and setting: the what and the why of the document. They are not evident to the reader.)	YES ☑
1. Is the political/legal context of the community-based plan explained (e.g., meeting provincial mandates, requirement of a land claim agreement, public discussion and consideration)?	☐
2. Is the administrative authority for preparation indicated (provincial or federal law, Federal requirement, etc.)?	☐
3. Is the role of the preparing agency or committee adequately explained?	☐
4. Are the roles of any planning consultants adequately explained?	
5. Are the roles of other decision makers, such as resource management agencies or project proponents, explained?	☐
6. Is background information adequately presented? (i.e. history of land occupation and use, culture, land claims and treaties, current land conflicts or competing interests, location of community)	☐
7. Are traditional territories and plan area boundaries defined and explained?	☐
8. Is it clear who the plan is for (e.g. community members, Band or Council administration, provincial or federal government)?	☐
9. Are community decision-making and participation processes explained?	☐
10. Is the purpose of the community-based plan explained (e.g., asserting title over lands, guiding provincial or federal decision-making, documenting research and traditional knowledge and integrating this into policy)?	☐
11. Is plan scope reported early on, to alert the reader about what to expect?	☐
12. Is an executive summary provided?	☐
13. Is the source of funding for the plan shown?	☐
14. Is the amount of time in preparation shown?	☐
Rational Model Considerations. (The plan should show basic planning considerations based on underlying theory and its criteria. The plan's authors must be clear themselves about what they are doing, to transmit clarity to the reader).	
1. Are relevant issues clearly identified and presented early in the plan?	☐
2. Does the plan include a community vision?	☐

3. Are goals and objectives explicitly identified?	☐
4. Does the plan include general goals, measurable objectives and action oriented recommendations?	☐
5. Is the tone of the plan consistent with the community-based approach?	☐
6. Is there planning for collaboration or coordination with other relevant plans, policies, or levels of government?	☐
7. Is the capacity or adequacy of existing infrastructure and organizational systems described?	☐
8. Does the plan explicitly state the criteria that will be used to assess the progress of the plan development?	☐
9. Are alternatives listed, or at least considered?	☐
10. Does the plan allow for trade-offs?	☐
Procedural Validity. (The plan should explain who was involved and how they were involved in the plan-making. It should also inform the reader about what went on in making the plan and what is going on by publishing it.)	
1. Does the plan explain who was involved in the plan formulation? (community members, Elders, government agencies, researchers, consultants)	☐
2. Does the plan explain how they were chosen (e.g., on the basis of expertise, interest, volunteering, community election)?	☐
3. Does the plan explain the participation techniques used to engage community members and other stakeholders? (e.g., discussion groups, interviews, community meetings, round tables)?	☐
4. Does the plan explain how the vision, goals and objectives were used in recommending policy or action?	☐
5. Does the plan explain how traditional knowledge was incorporated into recommended policy?	☐
6. Were preliminary drafts circulated for comment from community members and other affected stakeholders?	☐
Adequacy of Scope. (The plan should identify and address key issues and show how the plan is connected to the larger world.)	
1. Does the plan adequately address issues of Aboriginal title on traditional territories and how these territories were defined?	☐
2. Does the plan adequately address the role of culture in Aboriginal land use planning?	☐
3. Does the plan adequately explain the connection between traditional territories, culture, and traditional knowledge in guiding plan development?	☐
4. Does the plan adequately address other pertinent issues related to the specific community developing the plan, such as competing interests on lands?	☐
5. Does the plan outline the community's stewardship role in managing the land within the plan area?	☐
6. Does the plan consider the distribution of costs and benefits among different groups and interests?	☐
7. Does the plan consider current land use policy over the plan area and how it is inadequate	☐

to meeting the needs of the community?	☐
8. Does the plan consider financial/fiscal implications?	☐
9. Does the plan consider legal implications?	☐
10. Does the plan consider its feasibility in the larger political context?	☐
Guidance for Implementation. (The plan should consider the tools and the agencies and persons responsible for making the plan work.)	
1. Does the plan include an implementation plan?	☐
2. Are implementation provisions appropriate in the plan?	☐
3. Does the plan consider a communication strategy for educating non-community members about the plan?	☐
4. Does the plan outline priorities for implementation?	☐
5. Does the plan provide a timeline for plan implementation?	☐
6. Is there provision for scheduling and coordinating of implementation proposals?	☐
7. Is there a program or proposal for an impact analysis?	☐
8. Is the agency or person responsible for implementation identified?	☐
9. Can the responsible agency realistically be expected to implement the plan?	☐
10. Does the plan outline a community-based protocol for plan review and amendment at regular intervals?	☐
11. Does the plan explicitly state the benefits desired from economic development opportunities that are permitted in the plan area and the process by which decisions will be made for project approvals?	☐
Approach, Data, and Methodology. (The plan should make clear the technical bases, if any, of the plan; where the data come from and how they are used, so that others may check the plan's thinking by use of the same sources.)	
1. Does the plan adequately explain the existing physical conditions of the plan area? (natural resources, sensitive ecosystems, disturbed areas, etc.)	☐
2. Does the plan adequately explain the existing cultural heritage of the plan area? (cultural and historic sites, traditional harvesting areas, etc.)	☐
3. Does the plan provide sufficient flexibility to permit new data and findings to be fed in?	☐
4. Does the plan identify areas for future research and documentation?	☐
5. Does the plan cite the data sources used?	☐
6. Does the plan adequately explain the methodologies used in data collection?	☐
7. Does the plan adequately identify specific areas or features for protection? (i.e. cultural sites, harvesting areas, or sensitive ecosystems)	☐
8. Does the plan permit and prohibit specific land uses within each of the management zones based on the community's management goals?	☐
Quality of Communication. (The plan should utilize clear communication to facilitate good understanding and implementation of the plan by its users.)	
1. Does the plan identify its audience?	☐

2. Does the plan speak equally to community members as to decision makers?	☐
3. Does the plan present ideas in a convincing manner, given the need to speak to community members and decision makers?	☐
4. Does the plan effectively present the rationales behind land use decisions?	☐
5. Are the plan's proposals/recommendations/conclusions consistent with its goals and objectives?	☐
6. Is the plan available in the local Aboriginal language and/or does it incorporate local terms within it?	☐
7. Does the plan include the criteria by which it is intended to be evaluated?	☐
Plan Format. (The plan should employ transparency in all areas of the plan development and implementation strategies to illustrate professional responsibility.)	
1. Is the date of the plan's publication shown?	☐
2. Are the authors shown, to indicate professional responsibility for plan preparation (names of consultants, committees, or staff who worked on the plan, as well as agency or firm names)?	☐
3. Is a table of contents provided?	☐
4. Are the pages numbered?	☐
5. Is a glossary of local terms included?	☐
6. Is there a list of figures and tables provided with corresponding page numbers?	☐
7. Are graphics used to help illustrate ideas presented in the plan?	☐
8. Is the plan layout attractive and easy to navigate?	☐