



ESI

Introduction

The Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) team would like to take this opportunity to celebrate everyone who came together to ensure the success of the inaugural ESI Technical Conference, which was held from November 13-15 in Vancouver, B.C. within the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. This event provided an opportunity for government and partner Nations to connect, celebrate successes, discuss challenges, and contemplate strategic opportunities and next steps. The Conference highlighted knowledge transfer between regional forums through project team presentations, and shared learning through issue and skill-driven breakout sessions, led by subject matter experts.

While this gathering was organized to promote networking and the cross-pollination of ideas between the 4 regional forums, it blossomed into something much more as participants forged connections and weaved together their common experiences and

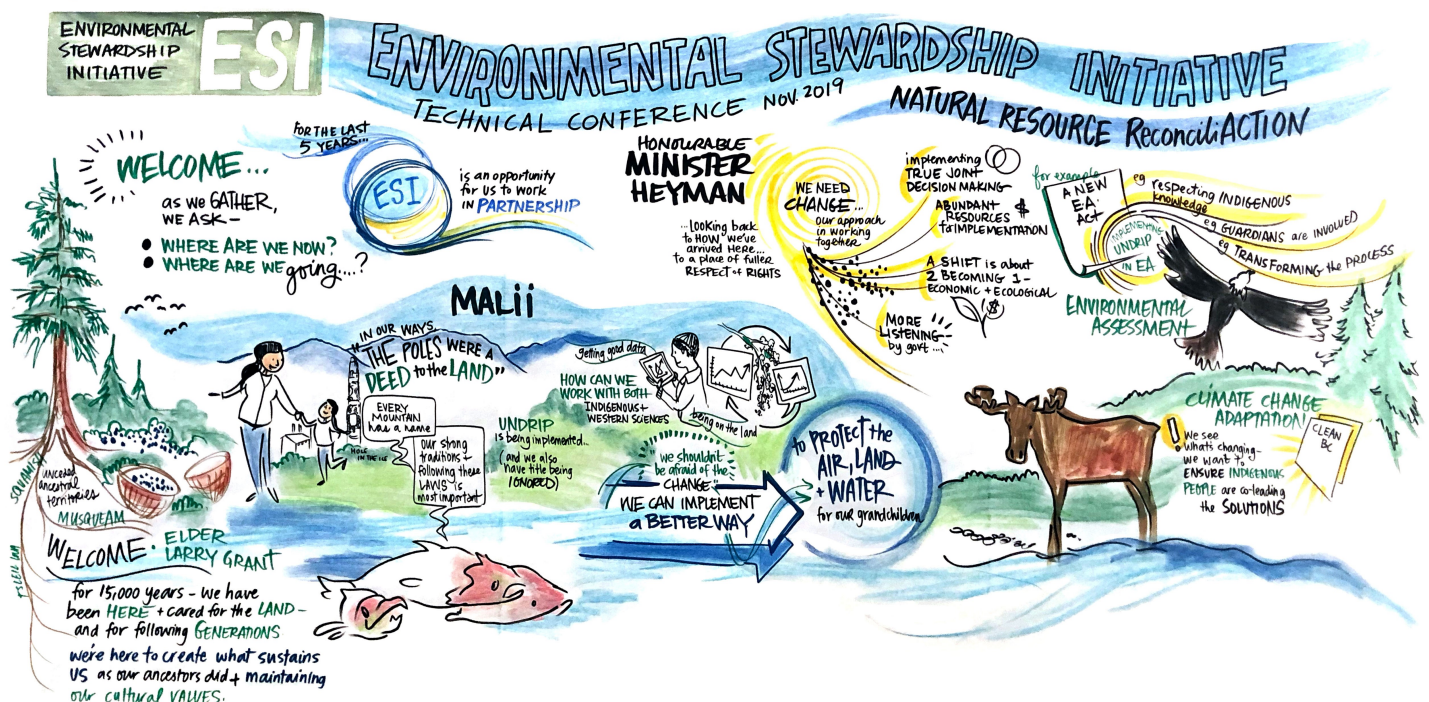
hope for future collaborative stewardship work in their regions, including for the continuation of the ESI. Many provincial leaders and First Nation partners echoed sentiments outlining the importance of ESI as tool for effectively promoting reconciliation and addressing articles of UNDRIP. One unexpected and moving moment at the Conference was when Gitxsan, Wet'suwet'en, and Gitanyow hereditary chiefs from the Skeena regional forum delivered a joint statement on stage. They expressed their support for the continuation of the Skeena region's collaborative stewardship work and for ongoing government support for this example of "UNDRIP in action" in northern B.C. While the successes and impacts of ESI were highlighted throughout the event, a sense of urgency was also communicated about the need for a continued ESI mandate. ESI was identified as an opportunity to work in partnership and its continuation represents a pathway to sustained reconciliation in action.

Opening Remarks

The opening remarks, graphically represented below, set the stage for the next two days. Elder Larry Grant from the Musqueam First Nations grounded us through his traditional welcome and reminded us of our innate connection to the land and our duty as environmental stewards. Next, Gitanyow Hereditary Chief Simogyet Malii (Glen Williams), and Hon George Heyman (Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy) contextualized the

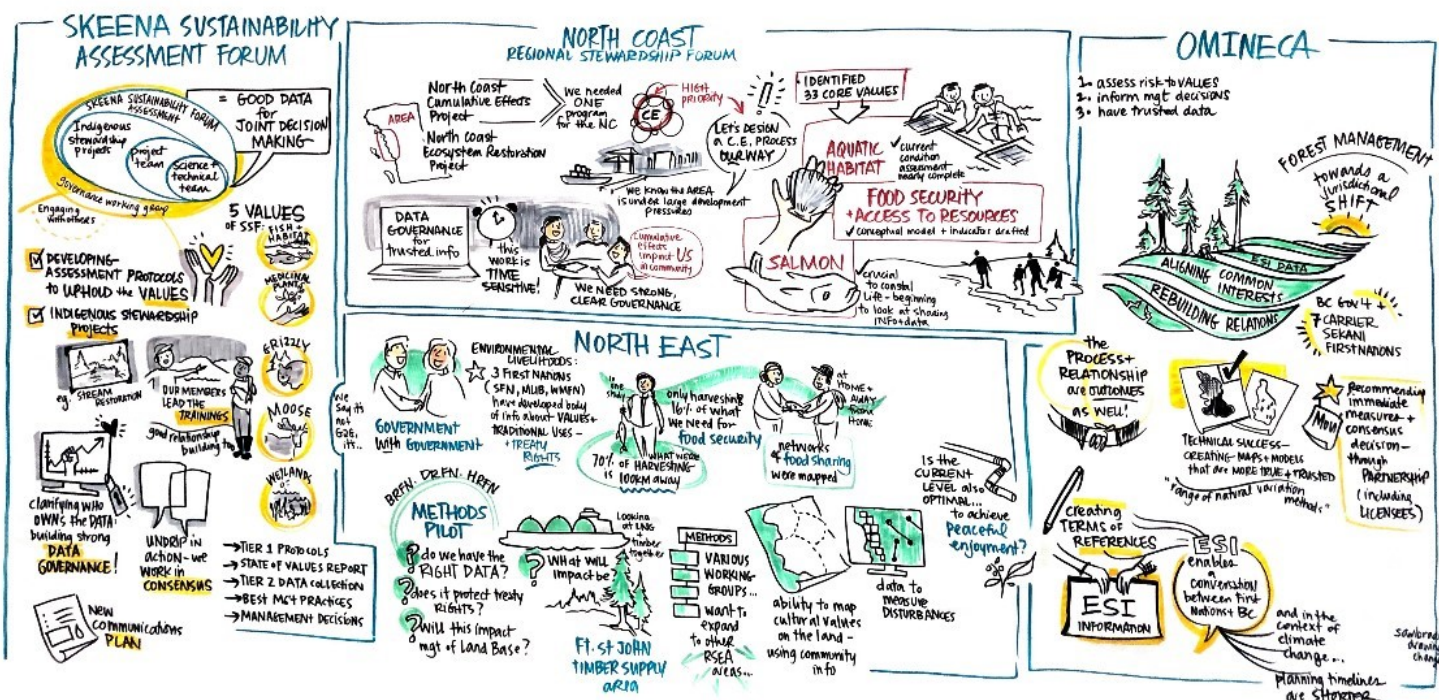
importance of ESI from each of their unique perspectives.

Interestingly, the overlap in their perspectives was substantial, with both articulating the importance of a continued collaborative model and the need for integrating Indigenous and Western world views in our shared journey towards shared and consent based decision making.



ESI Regional Forum Presentations

The regional presentations were the first opportunity for many ESI participants to see what has been happening in the other forums. These presentations offered a platform for the cross pollination of ideas and the demonstration of linkages between the regional forums and their respective projects. The breadth of scope of regional projects is substantial and unique and this form of sharing was paramount in reinforcing the importance of ESI.



Skeena: Leigh-Ann Fenwick, David de Wit

North Coast: Chris Picard, Kyle Clifton, Quinton Ball

Omineca: Justin Calof, Lisa Krebs

Northeast: Gary Reay, Jim Webb

Breakout Group Summaries

Central to the conference objectives is the sharing of information and cross pollination of ideas. The six breakout sessions were rolled out to facilitate a deep dive into subjects of interest for the ESI tables.

These sessions ranged from skill-based training such as Dispute Resolution and Decision Making, to technical discussions about

best practices for developing assessment protocols. The broad scope of these sessions led to robust discussion and the exchange of fresh insights between forums. The following pages offer a high level overview of what was discussed throughout these sessions.

Presenter: Alex Grzybowski, Pacific Resolutions

Context: A protocol is the method by which a group goes about answering a question or series of questions. A good protocol will generate discussion, information, and/or decisions that group members can rely on. The scope of this session focused on 1) Exploring best practices for developing protocols for generating trusted information among conflicting parties; and 2) Identifying both the contributing factors and barriers to generating positive results through these data gathering processes.

What we heard: There were three categories of protocols identified in the sessions, each with different associated best practices:



Procedural Best Practices	Technical Best Practices	Socio-Cultural Best Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Write down the protocol ◆ Follow it! ◆ Get the key principles right 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Select third party consultants by mutual agreement ◆ Define and leverage established scientific standards ◆ Define principles for what to do with the data ◆ Define thresholds/benchmarks for requiring change ◆ Evaluate different model options ◆ Define a shared long-term vision for change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Show, don't share ◆ Generalize info ◆ Plan to use Indigenous knowledge if it is sought ◆ Define how information will be protected and restricted

Contributing Factors to Positive Results	Barriers to Positive Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increasing trust by sharing data and collection methods, ensuring they're understood by all parties ◆ Consistency in project participation builds trust among project team members ◆ Building consensus by undertaking joint work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Disconnect between provincial and First Nations Data ◆ Mistrust from history of BC and First Nations relations ◆ Uncertainty about the consequences of sharing data ◆ Uncertainty over who collected and interpreted the data





Presenters: Justin Calof, FLNRORD; Jeff Mycock, West Fraser

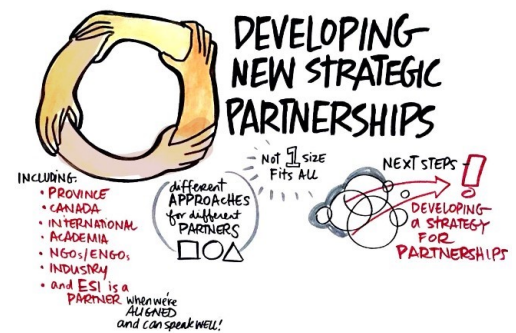
Context: This session explored the interests of First Nations and BC that can be addressed by working in partnership with industry in order to support ESI recommendations. This ‘Fish Bowl’ style dialogue was designed to address the following issue areas: 1) The role of industry in applying ESI information to current resource development 2) Challenges & benefits of working in partnership with industry and stakeholders 3) Exploring linkages between ESI recommendations and partnerships

What We Heard:

Role of Industry in Applying ESI Info to Current Resource Development	Challenges/Benefits to Working with Industry	Linking Recommendations and Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Industry has responsibility to integrate ESI info into resource development and facilitate change. A paradigm shift is already underway ♦ Sustainability is a moving target, integrating ESI information helps finding this aim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Partnering with licensees can help move ESI projects forward; this relationship can increase transparency ♦ Challenge resides in building these relationships. Lack of understanding of each other’s processes acts as barrier ♦ Opportunity to exchange information; generate trust. It must be acknowledged that trust won’t happen overnight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Industry needs to be part of this conversation and part of the solution ♦ Government’s role is to open up doors to facilitate this transaction (information sharing, partnership) ♦ Industry partnership is needed for successful recommendations

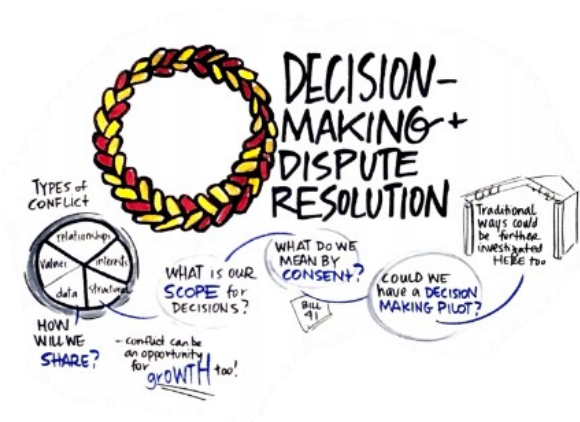
Presenters: Alanya Smith, MIRR; Carley Coccola, MIRR

Context: This session explored the opportunities for identifying and developing strategic partnerships in order to further the objectives of ESI. It was focused on 1) Identifying potential partners that could be involved with ESI and exploring what they could offer the initiative and 2) Exploring the strategies that ESI can take over the next year to identify and involve new strategic partners.



What We Heard:

Potential Partners	Strategies to Invoke Strategic Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Industry- Information and data, funding and collaborative assessment ♦ Academia– review of protocol / content free of charge (input but not deciding) ♦ Other First Nations (outside of ESI) - models and best practices ♦ Other Nations within ESI– exchanging info/tools etc. ♦ Federal– Guardians Program Funding ♦ Public– Importance of engaging community and presenting a united front 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ More investment in community engagement – translate technical information for public consumption ♦ Put politics aside and share information with other First Nations ♦ Collaboratively build partnership strategy ♦ Our most important partners are ourselves; we need to figure out a way to work together



Presenter: Dan George, Four Directions Management Services

Context: As ESI moves forward towards substantive, collaborative land-based recommendations, greater attention needs to be placed on “how to decide” and the process by which disputes are resolved when there is disagreement between the parties on values, preferences, and priorities. This session was designed to identify 1) What decision-making processes should entail to ensure consent-based decisions are being made; and 2) Best practices in dispute resolution that could be utilized to arrive at a resolution between the parties?

What we Heard:

Consent-Based Decisions & Decision Making Processes

- ◆ Collaboratively defining what the decision is, rather than one party defining the decision scope
- ◆ Consent must be meaningful in the context of decision making, some participants felt consent is not meaningful when only one of the parties makes the final decision. The decision and evaluation process is a black box, which creates an unfair power dynamic
- ◆ To ensure decisions are consent based, FNs and the province need to increase collaboration when briefing up together and within the provincial system. Collaboratively making recommendations should ensure final decision is more of a ‘rubber stamp’. Provisions within Bill C41 could facilitate this process
- ◆ There needs to be an inherent right to say ‘No’
- ◆ More transparency is needed from of the province regarding statutory decision making, this will help get us to a place of trust

Best Practices in Dispute Resolution

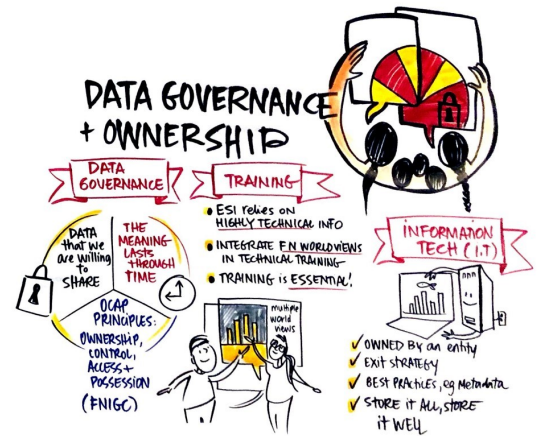
- ◆ Increase incorporation of stakeholder interests; more support = stronger recommendations
- ◆ Facilitate a common understanding of the issue
- ◆ Acknowledging dispute is not a negative thing; provides opportunity to explore tension and different interests - this can help drive things forward



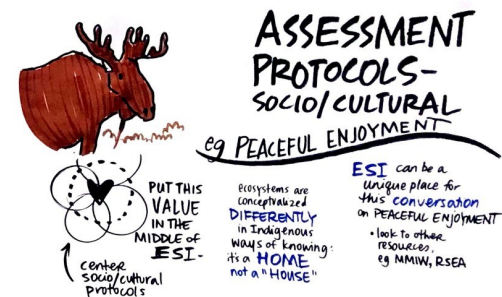
Presenters: Johanna Pfalz, Eclipse Geomatics; Todd Glover, Ministry of Environment

Context: This session offered participants a deep dive into the work that’s being carried out in the Data Management Working Group and facilitated the opportunity to engage with materials and develop governing principles that will drive the efforts of this working group. After a plenary presentation participants shifted into breakout groups to discuss and formulate draft principles for sub topics that interests them the most. These included 1) Data Governance 2) Training 3) Data and IT standards

What We Heard: The following depicts the themes, generated through participant engagement, that will contribute to the development of draft principles:



Data Governance	Training	Data and IT Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Data governance requires a legal entity ◆ Update language in cost sharing agreements to reflect current practises in information sharing, copyright, licences ◆ Identify data steward/manager for ESI data ◆ Track data sharing agreements across all ESI and BC gov't ◆ Abide by principles established through OCAP and UNDRIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Data standards/management workshops ◆ Access to QGIS training resources ◆ Contract Management training ◆ Explore training opportunities with the Land Based Investment Fish Passage Program and the Provincial Stream Crossing Inventory System ◆ Mentorship and building a community of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Link ESI standards with resource information standards committee ◆ Link ESI standards with forest and range evaluation program monitoring protocols monitoring protocols ◆ Identify data management best practices at multiple levels: field data, storage, analysis, and archive



Presenters: Maria Faria, EMPR; Jim Webb - West Moberly First Nations

Context: This session focused on the best way to capture the holistic nature of values during assessments and centred on answering three key questions: 1) How could we integrate the indigenous holistic view of values into the ESI’s assessments? 2) Are the ecological or ecosystem-based approaches satisfactory methodologies to meaningfully capture cultural, social and economic values that reflect First Nations world views? 3) What have been the opportunities and challenges while trying to incorporate the holistic perspective of values in the ESI projects?

What We Heard:

Integrating Indigenous World Views	Assessing Ecological Approaches	Opportunities/Challenges of Integration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Need to expand scope of ESI assessment from the western oriented model of economic, environmental, and cultural, to include First Nations values and worldview ◆ Facilitate deeper understanding of the ecosystem as a home for FNs. This could lead to integration of traditional and fed/prov laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The basic principle to accept worldview of partners is not sufficiently included in ecosystem-based approaches ◆ Difference in perspectives between FN and Western models of understanding: the west sees the ecosystem as a house, something that protects them, whereas this is inherently separate from FN understanding of the ecosystem as a home, something that nourishes them and is greater than the sum of its parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Crown does not see the ecosystem as a ‘home’ and does not adequately protect values such a ‘peaceful enjoyment’ ◆ Use of existing government reports to identify intersection of wildlife habitat area, traditional territory, and social impacts to define ‘healing areas’ ◆ Move towards co-management at local management unit

Panel Discussion

This Panel brought together leaders from the BC government and collaborative forums from across the province. Councillor Jackie Thomas from the Saik'uz First Nation (Omineca), Chief Angie Bailey from Aitchelitz Nation (Collaborative Stewardship Framework— CSF), and Assistant Deputy Minister Simon Coley from the Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Petroleum Resources, gathered to answer questions from the audience and discuss opportunities for more collaboration in moving forward on ESI. Some key issues that were raised included the call for more First Nations involvement in the development of the cabinet submission to determine ESP's future, inquiry into the uncertainty of ESP's fiscal commitment from government, and the importance of collaborative forums in the context of shared decision making.

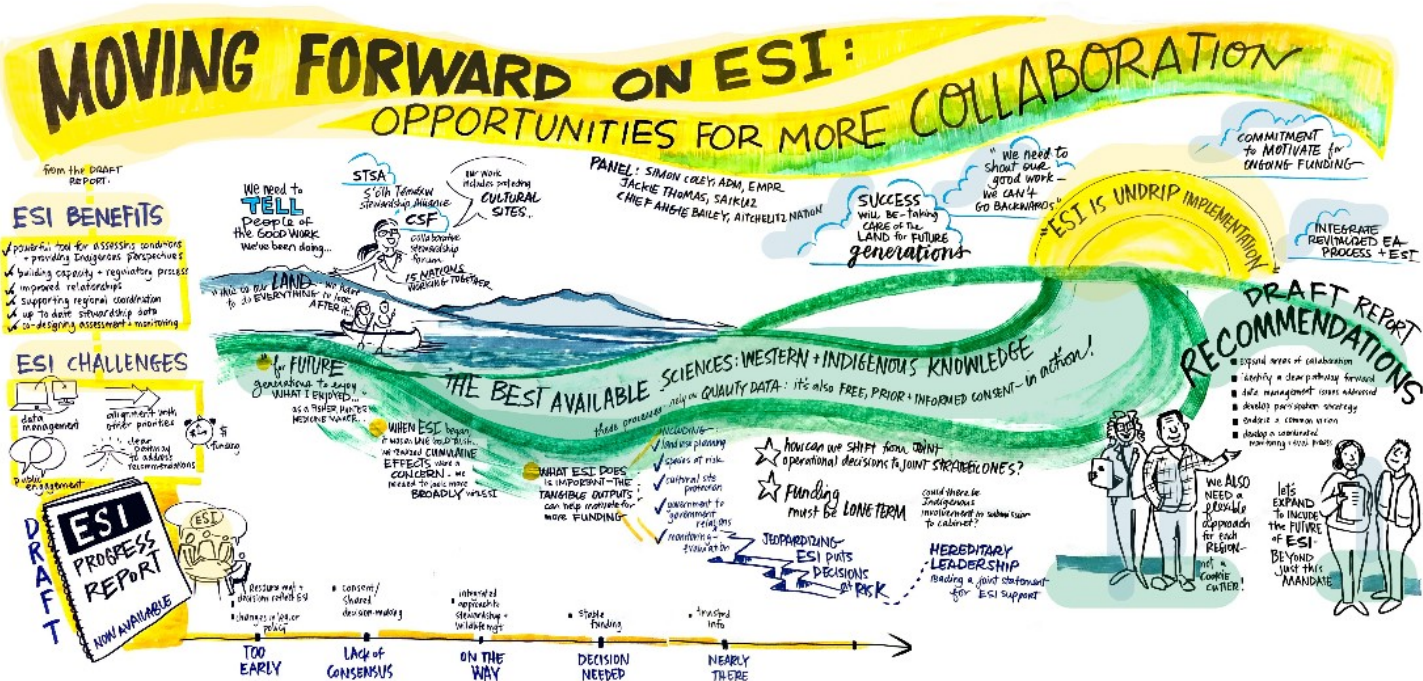
Through this dialogue a few recurring themes began to emerge: change and togetherness. The call for change is central to the ESI mandate; the old way of managing the environment and natural resource development was not working and a new model was needed to ensure that the needs of all affected parties were met. The need for change was especially important for First Nations, according to Councillor Thomas who spoke to the costs of negligent stewardship practices and the impacts they have on her people and land. It is her hope that a continuation of ESI will create the change needed so that future generations can once again generate their livelihoods from the land base. Similarly, the change Chief Bailey witnessed in her own community was catalyzed through their initial involvement in a collaborative forum. Her community had been impacted by industry operating in her territory without adhering to appropriate protocols, a practice that

was becoming increasingly more frequent. It wasn't until her network of Sto:lo communities came together through a collaborative forum that they were able to effectively respond to this encroachment.

The concept of togetherness must also be considered while we develop our proposal for a new mandate. ADM Simon Coley pointed out that the parallels between ESI and CSF are substantial and drawing on these efficiencies is paramount to the continuation of collaborative forums across the province. Their potential alignment has the opportunity to bring strength to the upcoming Cabinet Submission relating to the future of collaborative forums.

There was a call from many First Nation representatives to increase their inclusion in the development and presentation of the Cabinet Submission that will ultimately influence the fate of ESI. There is concern that true shared decision making cannot be realized if First Nations are not more involved in this process; a concern that stems from the broader issue of the inherent imbalance of power between First Nations and the Province in the context of shared decision making.

ADM Simon Coley responded to this call by committing to working internally to help facilitate this change. As an immediate measure, he spoke to the power of a unified regional call for the continuation of ESI. Requests directly from First Nations leadership hold immense weight with provincial decision makers. Ultimately, this session revealed that the work is just beginning on the shared mission to move forward on collaborative forums.



The *ESI progress report*, drafted by Tom Lee Management Consultants is the operational complement to the 2018 FDMS report *Investing in our Future*. This report is a chance to show our work to date, highlight similarities and unique aspects of each project, provide details on the benefit of ESI to decision makers, and highlight immediate challenges to address in the next year. ESI Executive Director, Mark Graham walked us through some of the report highlights and then lead a plenary discussion about some of the recommendations that were conceived through the report. While the report was generally well received, there was substantial

audience feedback regarding recommendations that they felt were overlooked in the report. Here is a snapshot of just a few of them:

- ◆ Performance measures are needed for ESI 2.0
- ◆ We need a long term vision – minimum of 5 years so that we are not always worried about funding
- ◆ Both the province and FN's need more capacity to keep this initiative strong

Future State of Collaborative Stewardship

As the conference drew to a close participants had the opportunity to discuss, in plenary, their thoughts from the past few days and their vision for ESI going forward. The value of ESI became evident as several participants, including First Nations leadership described ESI as “UNDRIP in action”, and provincial leaders called for a renewed relationship between First Nations and provincial governments: Government **with** government, not government **to** government”. The theme of renewing relationships continued as there were calls for increased and continued stakeholder engagement, citing that this was the only way to make “meaningful change on the landscape”. One especially impactful statement came from a participant who pointed out that the environmental crisis is also a social crisis in places that use the land as tool to maintain mental and spiritual health. Those of us who live in cities are often blind to this connection, and this privilege often keeps us from true understanding of the adversities that are imposed on smaller communities in the face of resource development.

needed to continue the work necessary to properly develop recommendations and establish a common long term vision for ESI (beyond 5 years) to facilitate meaningful change. They also called for more internal champions within the province to help take down the barriers that are currently restricting ESI.

The initial mandate has brought both tremendous success as well as many learning opportunities. As we enter the final year of its initial mandate there is a lot of work ahead of us, but as Wet'suwet'en hereditary chief Na'Moks voiced: "ESI has to continue...we've already been doing this for thousands of years". While ESI cannot replicate the level of Indigenous stewardship from generations past, it brings forth a new way forward that models an unprecedented level of collaboration between the province and First Nations. So much so that a nation representative suggested that Elders in her community would never have believed that this would be possible; the action on the ground and how its moving her people forward.

Echoing previous discussions throughout the event, several First Nations representatives signaled that more time and resources are

