

FIRST NATIONS SUN



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Environment and the Economy

## First Nations and Participation in the Green Economy "Communication, Capacity, Creating Opportunity"

Recently the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council developed and delivered for its member communities an exciting project on "Environment and Economy". This project was supported by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada under auspices of the Lands Environment Action Fund Program. The overall goal was to develop "communication, capacity and create opportunity" as it relates to green economic development opportunities and environmental protection.



opportunities are categorized along small, medium and large projects. It also provides an effective resource base. The second workshop was convened in Swan Lake First Nation. The purpose here was to familiarize with the nationally-based housing code; a green oriented energy saving approach that has been deployed by the First Nation. Additionally, a pilot project was undertaken to develop and compile a newsletter to serve as resource-base and effective means for an exchange of ideas and relationships. David Lane served as the very effective Project Coordinator.

Additionally, working with Green Action Centre and Take Pride Winnipeg, the project delivered presentations and workshops on "Environmental Awareness" to students based in schools within DOTC First Nations and those selected elsewhere in Manitoba. A total of 945 students in eight schools in seven communities attended these presentations. Students attending the presentations ranged from Grades 1-9. The facilitators visited and delivered in seven communities from January 20-23, 2014, including Long Plain, Swan Lake, Keeseekoowenin, Waywayseecappo, and The Pas. Added to this roster were the remaining DOTC communities- Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, Birdtail Sioux First Nation and Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation.

Presentations to the students focused on the importance of recycling and taking care of the earth. Time was allocated

Anupam Sharma and Robert Daniels for a question and answer session with the students. Presentations also included short videos on topics such as water conservation, saving electricity, waste reduction strategies and the importance of recycling plastic, especially single use shopping bags. Resource materials and activity ideas were forwarded to the teachers in attendance. The resource materials consisted of 26 environmental activity ideas, worksheets for the students, information on recycling in Manitoba and a list of useful web-sites. All around, the message was one of waste reduction. The facilitators appreciated how students were able to easily grasp the idea that they can make little changes in their lives on a daily basis to make a big difference for our planet in the long run.

Some general observations: preservation of environment and mother earth is everyone's responsibility.

There is still a need for greater communication and public education to raise awareness about the environment and the possible economic opportunities. School children can be effective messengers to the family for the need to sustain the environment. To reiterate, initiatives undertaken should be seen not merely as an expense but as an investment for the future.