

Swan Lake First Nation

Process and Building toward a Comprehensive Community Plan



City 7440: Indigenous Planning Studio, Fall 2011

Albuquerque, Diogo Beauvilian, Chris Eidick, Ryan Mbadugha, Marie Cecile Miller, Alexis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Creating the foundation for a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) with Swan Lake First Nation (SLFN) in Manitoba involved the effort of numerous stakeholders. The knowledge created throughout the process was enriched by the contributions made by these various groups. We would like to thank everyone involved, and recognize that without your hard work this endeavor would not have produced such fruitful results.

First and foremost we would like to thank Swan Lake First Nation for working with us during the 2011 fall semester. This opportunity to build relationships and jointly create knowledge with the community has proven invaluable. We hope that Swan Lake First Nation has gained insight into the practice of planning in a contemporary academic context. As students, the ability to learn and apply skills through an Indigenous perspective has expanded our knowledge base and will allow us to approach the practice of planning from a wider angle. For the purposes of this course, the objective was to create something valuable while fostering partnerships that will encourage future collaboration between Swan Lake First Nation and the University of Manitoba. Holistically our intent is to promote relationships and encourage partnerships beyond the Masters of City Planning Indigenous Planning Studio and into the realm of professional planning. A very special thank you is extended to following Swan Lake First Nation members; John Rigaux for his tireless role as contact point and communication mediator between the students and members of the community, David Scott for his insight and vast knowledge on the history and treaty rights of First Nations in general and Swan Lake First Nation in particular, Tania Scott for being so open and receptive to taking on the challenge of creating a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) and of course Chief and Council for believing in this process as well as lending us their boardroom for our weekly Tuesday meetings.

Secondly, we would like to thank the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) for partnering with the University of Manitoba and supporting the development of our class as a whole and our group projects. AMC, and specifically Brian Saulnier, were instrumental in developing early relationships between communities and the University. Furthermore, funding, conference setup, and other resources made available through AMC provided a productive environment, which greatly facilitated collaboration between all stakeholders.

Finally we very much appreciate the support given by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). CMHC provided both the financial resources for students travel expenses as well as the student planning coordinator positions.

Miigwetch – thank you,



Diogo Albuquerque



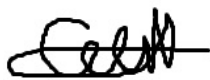
Ryan Eidick



Alexis Miller



Chris Beauvilan



Marie Cecile Mbadugha



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

IMPORTANCE OF OUR WORK

"Come and be with me. Come in and form a circle. Be next to me, beside me, in front of me, all around me. Come and be with me so that we can learn together. Take me in so that I may take you in. Come and be my equal"

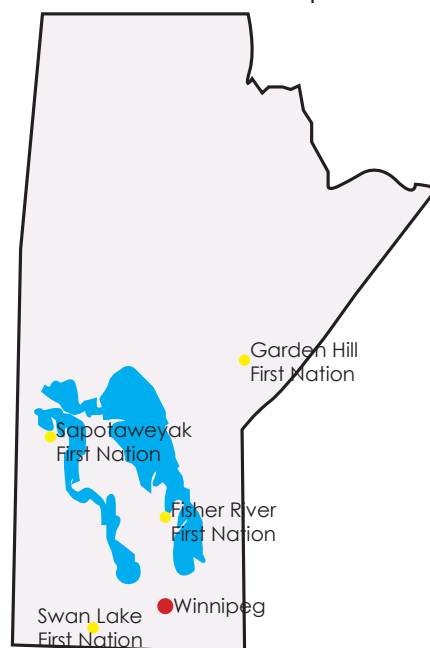
-Inspired by Elder Garry Robson

If there is one commonality among all people, it is that we are all unique. On a macro scale, our communities, our people and our places necessarily result in distinct identities. It is by sharing knowledge and experiences that we can come together to create a better, more complete mutual understanding.

Our studio work has challenged us to seek a deeper understanding with regard to what constitutes Indigenous planning both theoretically as well as practically. At its core, Indigenous planning embraces a worldview built around a sense of collective responsibility. This approach enables empowerment and opposes notions of power over others. Instead indigenous planning embraces cooperation and equity toward shared, reciprocal experiences. Indigenous planning is a truly collaborative and communal process. As such, Indigenous planning does not, and should not strive to prioritize one community over another. Each community faces unique opportunities and challenges. Each community is as significant as the next. From a planning perspective, understanding a broad range of experiences allows us to better comprehend the larger picture. In this context it is of great value to continue working with all communities: wealthy, poor, large, small, urban, rural, and remote.

To emphasize this important topic, we elaborate on our experiences with Swan Lake First Nation. SLFN is much closer to an urban centre than the communities other studio groups worked with. Garden Hill and Sapotaweyak are remote communities located in Northern Manitoba and as such, studio groups working with them had to fly into these communities over the course of the semester. In addition, they were not able to meet as frequently in person. Fisher River is also within driving distance to Winnipeg. As a result of proximity, SLFN seems to have more direct or conventional opportunities for economic development. Proximity is however, accompanied by a heightened threat to cultural identity as their population tends to ebb and flow more easily with access to urban centres. One clear advantage of working with communities that are in close proximity to the University of Manitoba is the opportunity to frequently engage face-to-face. We were able to meet with Swan Lake First Nation every week for three months. These weekly meetings allowed us to build trust and strong working relationships, which resulted in a robust planning process.

It is our hope that this project will inspire other communities to become involved in future Indigenous planning projects. We must continue to create an environment of equals where all communities feel empowered to join the process and engage in the Indigenous planning conversation; inclusion means opening the door to all First Nations.



THE PLANNING TEAM



FRONT: Tania Scott (Planning Coordinator), Marie Cecile Mbadugha, Farrell Cameron (SLFN Housing Manager)

BACK: Ryan Eidick, John Rigaux (SLFN Lands Manager), David Scott (SLFN Treaty Research), Alexis Miller, Chris Beauvilian, Diogo Albuquerque.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUR STORY.....	1
SLFN Community Profile.....	1
City 7440 and S.L.F.N.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	2
THE PROCESS.....	3
The CCP is Born.....	3
Bump in The Road.....	3
A More Effective Approach.....	3
Capacity Building from Within.....	4
Building a CCP.....	5
Language.....	5
Theme.....	5
Vision.....	6
Community Profile.....	6
People & Community.....	6
Land & Environment.....	6
Economic Development.....	7
Housing.....	7
Culture.....	7
Project Gallery.....	7
Project Documentation.....	7
LOOKING FORWARD.....	8
Beyond the University of Manitoba.....	8
REFLECTIONS.....	9
Diogo Albuquerque.....	9
Chris Beauvilian.....	9
Ryan Eidick.....	10
Marie Cecile Mbadugha.....	11
Alexis Miller.....	11
CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	13
REFERENCES.....	14
APPENDIX.....	15
CCP outline.....	16
Project Documentation.....	19
Action Plan Table.....	20
CCP Presentations.....	21
Roles and Responsibilities (Planning Coordinator).....	35
Roles and Responsibilities (Planning Committee).....	36

OUR STORY

Swan Lake First Nation (S.L.F.N) Community Profile

The story of Swan Lake First Nation begins long ago. In 1876, Chief Yellowquill and his followers settled on Swan Lake First Nation Reserve (SLFN, 2011).

Swan Lake First Nation is located in South Central Manitoba along junction Highway #23 and #34. SLFN people are known as Anishinabe people, meaning “original-peoples”; their native language is Saulteaux (Wikipedia, 2011). SLFN is divided into four areas: SLFN #7, which is the main reservation; #7a Carberry which consists of residential and commercial developments; #8 Indian Gardens, ¾ of which is under agricultural lease and #8a Headingley which will consist of mainly commercial developments. A recently settled Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) with the Federal Government has enabled them to expand their land base for future developments (SLFN, 2011).

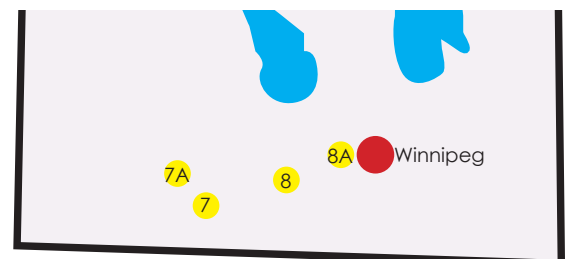
With regards to governance, Swan Lake First Nation is signatory to Treaty 1, which was established in 1871 between Queen Victoria and various First Nations residing in South Eastern Manitoba (SLFN, 2011). An elected Chief and Council who are voted by community members in a two-year political cycle govern SLFN; their elections are still administered by Section 74 of the Indian Act. However, the community would like to extend its political cycle.

In terms of economy, SLFN is located on prime agricultural land and thus has a robust agricultural economy. The economy also consists of: a commercial buffalo ranch, two gaming centres, the future Spirit Sands Casino, Kitchi-Nodin Wind Farm and Four Corners gas bar and convenience store (SLFN, 2011). Swan Lake also has Indian Springs School, and a Health Centre. The community has a population size of approximately 1266, with 710 members who live in the community and 556 who live outside the community, some in other provinces and countries (SLFN, 2011).

SLFN is working towards their vision of having a healthy, prosperous and self-sufficient community. Completed community projects include the Kitchi-Nodin Wind Farm, Youth Camp, as well as the new Band Office development. The recycling depot is completed, however it needs programming to truly reach its potential. Future planning projects consist of the Spirit Sands Casino, commercial developments at Headingley, expansion of the Youth Camp and a Round House development to name a few. SLFN recognizes the importance of community engagement and that projects should be community driven since Chief and Council are responsible to their community. However, this does not necessarily translate into project implementation. This is where the community recognizes an obstacle in their planning process. This is the point where SLFN and the students began working together to identify a different planning process to overcome this complication.

City 7440 and S.L.F.N

Our story is the intersection between the student group and SLFN; it is the result of a mutual relationship, a relationship that fostered an approach, which enabled knowledge to be shared and created freely between the students and Swan Lake. This illustrates the context in which we, as students, entered into a dialogue with Swan Lake. From there our story intersects. It began in the fall of 2011 when we began to work with SLFN. Our approach was informed by our academic experiences and the anticipation of a hands-on method in working with a First Nation community. Utilizing a community driven approach to our planning work is an example of a sustainable way to help clarify Swan Lake's current and future objectives. Together our story has been one of reaching consensus together.



INTRODUCTION



This project initially began in the summer of 2011, when the University of Manitoba City Planning program entered a partnership with Swan Lake First Nation (SLFN). In September, as part of the Indigenous Planning studio, we spent the fall semester working with SLFN. At first, our objectives were loosely defined however through a process of conversation it quickly became apparent that a type of community plan would be of great benefit to the community. Our conversations allowed us to create a working relationship where we were able to formulate an approach to a plan while also defining our expectations and limitations. Through ongoing meetings between students and the Swan Lake community members, a comprehensive community plan (CCP) began to take shape. This working document mirrored our process, and was developed in a fluid and dynamic way. It was designed as a living document to include the rich history of the Swan Lake people, the current context and our work together, and also allows future development to seamlessly integrate into the community plan.

The entire process revolved around knowledge; initially in creating relationships and then as building a knowledge base between the community and us as students in formulating a project. Through the Swan Lake First Nation people, we were able to experience their community and form connections to their place and people. From us, SLFN was able to gain insight into contemporary planning approaches and build links in their community that would remain in place long after we were gone. We also gave them a fresh perspective on their community; they were able to see themselves and their land through new eyes. Together we built a strong foundation to promote future development in a manner that best suits SLFN and their community at large. Together we laid the groundwork of a strong and relevant Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP).

The following sections describe the knowledge created during our work together. First, the process arriving at the Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) is discussed. From the process our CCP outline is then described. We then discuss the anticipated work to be undertaken in the coming months and into the future. Our reflections on the process follow and conclude with future considerations.

THE PROCESS



Our preliminary meetings with members of Swan Lake First Nation in September enabled us to gain as much background information as possible. As well, they learned about us as students and the planning work we were engaging with at the University of Manitoba. Initial meetings revealed that SLFN had previously engaged in a substantial amount of planning work including a strategic plan, community profile, economic development opportunities identification, action plan and a draft land-use plan, just to name a few. This collection of background data and information initially informed our approach to planning with Swan

Lake First Nation. However, community members indicated that the completion of initial planning work did not transition to the delegation phase. Roles and responsibilities were not established and as such, projects did not move forward. In addition, the two-year political cycle was viewed as problematic; the absence of a retention plan equated to projects being shelved. Consequently, we had to approach our project in a different way. We focused on a holistic process and the establishment of a Planning Committee independent of the political cycle to work with the Planning Coordinator on planning projects.

A CCP is Born

After meeting weekly for a month and a half, we jointly came to the understanding that a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) would be of great benefit to Swan Lake First Nation. This process was time intensive but critical; building a strong process is the foundation to a successful project. As well, building relationships and fostering trust in our partnership was an important aspect to launching the CCP project.

Bump in The Road

The decision to pursue a CCP did not initially mean we were going to pursue it. Our preliminary approach to the process was incorrect as we began with a Western planning perspective. We assumed that since Swan Lake First Nation had an understanding of planning, and had completed many planning exercises before our involvement, the creation of a CCP simply meant streamlining their previous work into a single cohesive document. On October 11th, we produced a Student Vision for the SLFN project to clarify the approach of our group. We proposed that our work would support Swan Lake and their transition from knowledge to action because it was stated time and time again that their plans were not implemented. There was a significant gap between the plan and the process of putting that plan into action in the form of a practical project. Thinking we could address this systemic problem through a CCP document, we could not see what was right in front of us: that the stalemate issue was an inherent part of the process. Using previous documents and approaching planning in the same way it had been done previously in Swan Lake would ensure an impasse would be built into our process and document as well.

A More Effective Approach

We needed guidance at this point because we were faced with a wicked problem and were in over our heads. We were fortunate enough to have a Skype meeting with Dr. Ted Jojola from the University of New Mexico, one of the premiere academics in the field of Indigenous Planning. He provided us with the assistance we needed in order to continue our work in a way that would be useful for both Swan Lake and ourselves. He indicated that Indigenous planning is a different process and that sustainable as well as positive changes in a community occur as a consequence

THE PROCESS

of a valuable process. Dr. Jojola also emphasized that we were a part of a continuum of people and that our work would lay the foundation for future student groups to “hit the ground running”. We were already in the process of creating mutually constructive relationships and building a dialogue. Our next step was to continue our discussions with the people of Swan Lake and identify a small planning project to work on within the context of a Comprehensive Community Plan.

Before returning to Swan Lake First Nation, students and the four communities working with our Indigenous Planning studio engaged in a CCP workshop in October. This allowed us to hear about projects in the other First Nations communities as well as work with three members of Swan Lake on our project. We had come up with a range of project options based upon a previous brainstorming session where we identified key theme areas for their CCP. These themes included: People and Community, Housing, Cultural Preservation, Community Economic Development and Environment. Each theme also consisted of a small list of projects. Our plan during this CCP workshop was to converse about formalizing a Planning Committee to work with the Planning Coordinator to be hired at the beginning of November. We postulated that the Planning Coordinator and Planning Committee could engage with a small planning project in order to get their feet wet and learn about a planning process. In addition, we brainstormed around the roles and responsibilities of both the Planning Coordinator and Committee as well as where they would fit within the current governance structure of SLFN. We presented our progress to the rest of the workshop and returned to Swan Lake the following week with a different approach to our work. (See appendix for workshop presentation).

Capacity Building from Within

On November 1st, we met with the future Planning Committee and provided them with an overview of the work we had been doing up to that point, including the CCP workshop. The Planning Committee was established as a way of creating networks into the community as well as to liaison with and provide feedback to both the Planning Coordinator and community members. It was felt that they could gather information and assist with community consultations as well. In order to move forward however, our next step was to meet with Chief and Council. We were hoping that they would provide support by backing the process. We met with Chief and a Councillor along with the newly appointed Planning Coordinator the second week of November. We discussed the extension of our planning work in Swan Lake with the addition of a Student Planning Coordinator to work alongside the Planning Coordinator semester. The need to build relationships among the different departments to work with the Planning Coordinator, Planning Committee and Student Planning Coordinator was expressed as well as the importance of meeting with department managers regularly. Consensus around working together on the beginnings of a CCP was (re) established. Rather than pursue a small planning project with the Coordinator and Committee, we began working on a CCP template.

The original intent of our work with Swan Lake First Nation was to cultivate empowerment, progress and pride within their community. It was to be a “call to action”, to build confidence and ownership in the community, to trust in themselves as well as the planning process. It was thought that the CCP would act as a tool to accomplish the goals and objectives of the community while setting feasible project timelines, project responsibility and accountability. The process as well as the plan would support SLFN and guide the Band Council towards realizing their vision as a “strong, healthy, unified, independent and prosperous” community (SLFN, 2002, p.8). Our journey with Swan Lake was not straightforward, we needed to unpack and understand the assumptions we brought into

THE PROCESS

their community before truly engaging in a sustainable planning approach. Although we moved away from the CCP document at one point during this project, we returned to it after lengthy discussions about feasibility and desirability from Swan Lake First Nation. There was recognition that this work would not be completed in our remaining time there, but that we could work with the Planning Coordinator and Committee to get them off to a good start. At our next meeting, the CCP document began to take shape.

The aforementioned CCP workshop in October also featured a presentation identifying various First Nations that had completed Comprehensive Community Plans of their own. From the research for this presentation, two First Nations emerged as possible precedents for our work with Swan Lake: Gwa'sala 'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation in British Columbia as well as Woodstock First Nation in New Brunswick. The former community involved a similar process, where planning students from the University of British Columbia worked with the First Nation in the beginning stages of their CCP, while the latter was a complete CCP document. We presented both examples in our meeting with Planning Committee members and it was decided that the Woodstock First Nation CCP would be an appropriate template to follow for the creation of Swan Lake First Nation's document. The decision was made because the Woodstock CCP was very approachable both in terms of its content and length. The concise structure of the Woodstock CCP could be tailored and adapted to the context of SLFN. We spent the next meeting formalizing a table of contents for the CCP. An intensive working session during our final visit to Swan Lake led to the creation of a tentative template for their CCP. The template will allow Swan Lake First Nation to follow a general direction while continuing to adapt and refine their approach to the CCP based upon feedback from and working with community members; the next stage in this project is a series of community meetings.

Building a CCP

The Woodstock template allowed Swan Lake First Nation to fast track the structural elements of the CCP without reducing the effectiveness of the process. Woodstock was primarily used to guide stylistic elements of the CCP while emphasizing a coherent and compact document. The content is entirely based on work done in Swan Lake. Additionally, emphasis was placed on treating the document as a dynamic entity capable of evolving over time. This approach will ensure that the initial document is manageable while allowing the CCP to expand to meet any community need, should it be required. The aspects of the Swan Lake First Nations CCP template are discussed below. (See appendix for CCP table of contents).

Woodstock First Nation Community Plan



2004



THE PROCESS

Language

The Planning Committee expressed a desire to have a bilingual document, with titles and headings written in both Ojibway and English, while the body of the document will initially be in English. In the future there may be a desire to have a complete translation done in Ojibway. This may contribute significantly to language preservation in SLFN.

Theme

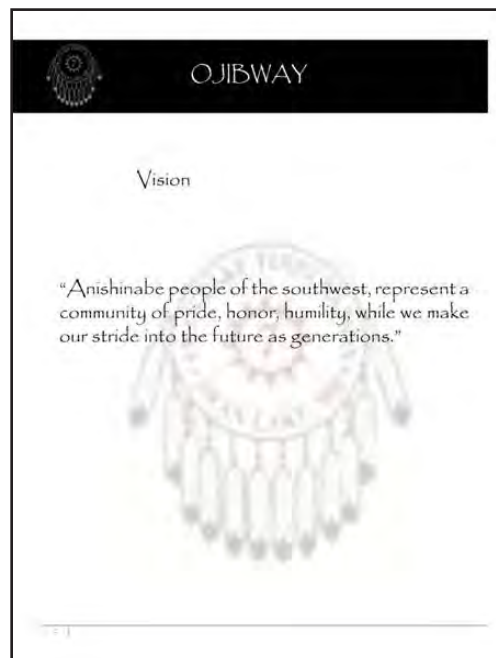
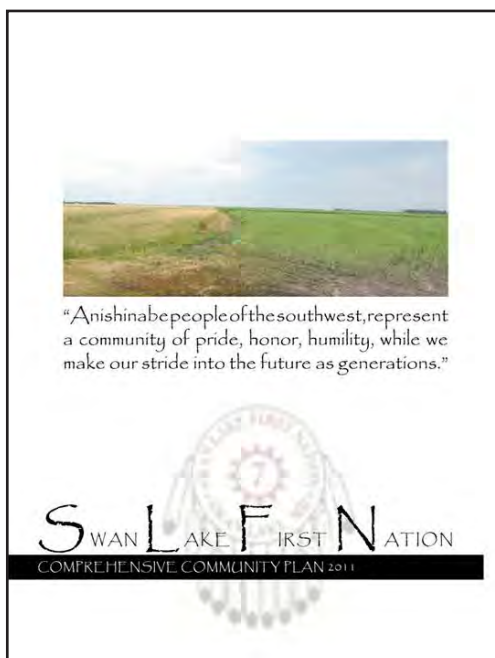
Fortunately the newly hired Planning Coordinator was eager to get started on the CCP and had begun to outline her vision for the document's appearance. The title page will feature an image as well as a quote that both have significant relevance to the history of Swan Lake First Nation. All graphics and logos throughout have been selected keeping in mind the relevance to SLFN.

Vision

It was decided that the community's vision would be extracted and given its own section at the beginning of the document; therefore highlighting its importance as well as setting the tone for the entire CCP. A (re) visioning process may be undertaken with community members to ensure that the community outlook is up to date and adequately represented. This is being proposed as the current vision dates from a 10 year-old strategic planning document.

Community Profile

This section will feature a short introduction to the process from the perspectives of both the students as well as the Planning Coordinator. A history of Swan Lake First Nation will also be included in the form of a short narrative; an idea initiated by the Planning Committee. From there, a community profile will be developed that synthesizes relevant information from existing documents and studies, including information on population (age, gender, on-reserve/off-reserve, etc.), governance (with the new governance structure outlined), and other valid statistics that describe the community. The introduction will also include land use maps and other graphics that came out of recent community engagements.



THE PROCESS

People & Community

The first of the five large themes that arose from our discussions with Swan Lake over the course of the semester, this section will focus on issues related to education, health, recreation, youth camp, and other community events and activities.

Land & Environment

Topics covered within this section include land use and zoning, waste management, public works and water management. The environmental aspect inherent to an Indigenous worldview permeates the entire document and manifests itself specifically in this section under sustainability. Economic Development

Matters pertaining to agriculture, livestock, and other economic opportunities will be discussed in this section. Swan Lake First Nation has many economic activities ranging from casino development to wind power.

Housing

Topics will include planning for housing locations, enforceable standards for housing (e.g., building codes), the creation of a housing authority, sustainable housing, and housing types and forms.

Culture

This will include a museum, history of SLFN, language preservation, round house, arts and crafts programs, and preservation of traditional land uses and cultural traditions such as hunting, tanning hides and herbs.

Project Gallery

The first of two sections that will continue to be updated over time, this section will aid in the monitoring and organization of all current projects in the community. Each project will be categorized in one of the five aforementioned themes and provide basic information on the projects' goals. Each project will have an attached file number, referencing a more detailed project file stored elsewhere. This will keep the CCP document short and concise, while also aiding in the creation of a filing system for projects spearheaded by the Planning Committee. Anyone can then flip through the CCP and get an idea of the type projects happening in Swan Lake First Nation.

Project Documentation

A more detailed outline of each project can be found in this section. In spreadsheet format, projects are listed including goals, timelines, responsibilities (individuals and committees) and current status. This list will allow for easily monitoring projects as well as providing accountability. As mentioned before, this section will continue to be updated as older projects become completed and new projects emerge; eventually creating a large database of projects. (See appendix for project documentation).

LOOKING FORWARD

The opportunity to partner with Swan Lake First Nation has laid the foundation for the creation of a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP). This document will act as a tool to guide the community toward attaining prosperity, health, and self-sufficiency. The CCP will be a live document that will continue to grow and evolve to meet the needs of the community.

Beginning in January 2012 and ending in March 2012, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has provided funding to hire a Student Planning Coordinator to build capacity as well as to provide research and planning assistance to Swan Lake First Nation. Within the three-month time frame, the student will work in partnership with the Planning Coordinator and Committee on the Comprehensive Community Plan project. We recognize that the creation of a successful CCP document takes time; as the goal with Swan Lake is to create a complete and sustainable CCP document, the planning team will first embark on coordinating and facilitating a community consultation process. This community consultation will include engaging with Chief and Council, Junior Chief and Council, members of the community and interested stakeholders. In the creation of a CCP document, community consultation is vital, as the voice of the community will drive the project. As the CCP will be structured with the five themes that were identified in the last section of this report, community consultation will revolve around these five themes as well. Community consultation will provide feedback from the community on where they want their community to go in the future in relation to the five themes. Another role of the Planning Committee will be to form partnerships and collaboration with departments in the community to gain knowledge and understanding about their area of expertise that would inform the CCP document. Also, as it has been stated at previous meetings with SLFN, gathering accurate population statistics has been an issue in the past. Therefore, the Student Planning Coordinator may embark on a methodology to collect accurate population statistics. This will be relevant and beneficial to the CCP as population size is an important element for planning future projects. In order to keep projects moving forward, an action area (i.e., project themes) plan will be developed to track and rate action areas according to the degree of impact on other action areas. In addition, this action area plan will track accountability and responsibility. Unlike the project documentation, the action area plan focuses on rating the importance of projects and how they impact other themes within the plan. It prioritizes projects and highlights overlap or linkages. (Please refer to the appendix for the action plan table).

Beyond the University of Manitoba

As the CCP is a holistic document and the student's position ends in March, it is unrealistic to state that the CCP will be completed by March 2012. With that said, the continuation of the CCP document will be carried on by the community Planning Coordinator and Planning committee. Ideally in the fall of 2012, new students from the University of Manitoba Master's of City Planning Program will continue to work with SLFN. As a strong relationship has already been established, this may ease the new student group into a good working relationship. These new students can continue working on the CCP document with Swan Lake in whatever capacity they need.



REFLECTIONS

These reflections are our personal insights into the planning process we experienced throughout the course of our semester. We approached this section individually to be able to share our unique experiences and insights while working with Swan Lake First Nation.

Diogo Albuquerque

I am an Economics student from Brazil; coming from a different country I compared the native communities in Brazil to the native communities in Canada, specifically SLFN. I noticed that in SLFN, the members of the community think as one unit, for the benefit of their community as a whole. However, in Brazil the members of native communities think individually, instead of as a unit. As an Economics student I am naturally drawn to the economics side of matters. In the past, I was accustomed to analyzing the economic impact that projects have on communities and their economy. However, after working with SLFN, my perspective changed. I now see how a community can work in unity and also how projects can impact the people rather than solely concentrating on the impact of projects on a community's economy. I have learned that the people of a community are the most important when making plans for the community.

An important part of this work experience with SLFN was the opportunity to work together to achieve a better community for its members. This experience showed that working with members of the community would have a better result, rather than having the project prepared by the government or a private agency. Involving the community in the work process helped build capacity within the community and also locals are knowledgeable about their community and their needs, which informed our work. In addition to what was taught in our studio about First Nations people, I learned that SLFN and other First Nation communities value their culture, tradition, land and history. What was more impressive to me was the unity and bond within the community. They all seem to have the same objective for their community, which is, working towards achieving a better community. Although some members have different ideas on how to achieve this goal, they all have the best intentions and they try to share their ideas in small assemblies.

I am so thankful for the people of SLFN who helped me change my blind mind. As English is not my first language and it was challenging to study in English, I would like to thank all my classmates who assisted me in English language and who shared their knowledge in the field of City Planning. Like a new student in City Planning, I just have to say that I learned a lot about native communities in Canada. I would also like to thank my group members: Alex, Marie Cecile, Ryan, Chris, and also my Professor Ian Skelton and all the other students in City Planning.

Chris Beauvilain

The process involved through Indigenous planning was a key component to my understanding of how to create knowledge. The process, as I came to learn, is in fact an essential element and a necessity to working together in the creation of knowledge. While we often discuss collaboration and inclusion, the process is also about empowerment. It is about sharing and mutual respect. It is about listening and working together on a vision that reflects the interests of the greater community. It is about healing and moving forward while remaining cognizant of the past. It is about coming together in the pursuit of a common goal.

While working with Swan Lake First Nation I was struck by how open and inviting the community was. They were willing to work with us from the very beginning. In this context the notion of client became somewhat irrelevant. We were not planners working for Swan Lake but instead equals working with the community toward an appropriate and relevant vision. Due to our proximity we

REFLECTIONS

were able to form tight bonds with the community. Immediately the tone of our meetings was one of openness and mutual respect.

This is not to say that there were no frustrations. Initially our approach was goal oriented and focused on fixing problems highlighted during our conversations. This approach proved to be flawed. It was flawed because it necessarily incorporates failure into the process. When we focused on fixing perceived problems, the approach required centering our focal point on failures in the community. Holistically this approach was very short sighted. Not only does become irrelevant should the problems become solved but it also assumes that in the absence of these problems the community will instantly realize its potential. On a practical note a negative approach is difficult, if not impossible to execute, due to the destructive process, which is built around failure. Unwittingly we were creating a document that was both negative in scope and in intent.

This realization was a tipping point in the process. It became clear why previous documents and planning approaches had failed to gain momentum. Previous work done in the community by planners had sought to fix the community instead of focusing on potential capacity. This is not to say that we ignored problems however instead of assigning blame we began to find strengths in the community that would allow us to problem solve. The process then became centered on healing, building and recognizing their potential and fostering an environment that would nurture strength. This proved to be a much better form of collaboration as SLFN had always stressed their continued desire for a strong and proud community.

This experience with SLFN was invaluable to me and has transformed my approach to planning not only in a First Nations context but also as a planner in general. The act of truly collaborating does not focus on assigning power. Instead it is about bringing people together on a level playing field. Furthermore, planning should be a positive experience where value is added by working toward better future. Our profession is about creating better outcomes.

Ryan Eidick

The one thing I learned the most over the course of the semester that has already been mentioned in this report is the importance of striking a balance between expert knowledge and collaborative planning processes. We realized midway through the semester that we were spinning our tires and heading down a road already travelled by Swan Lake First Nation on a number of occasions; a road that led them to a multitude of stalled planning projects collecting dust on a shelf somewhere. It wasn't until we made a push for a specific direction that the end result of our work became clearer. Obviously we needed to gather ideas from the community in regards to their needs, however it would have been a smoother process had we come to the community with basic goals in mind at the onset. We were attempting to avoid being "experts" and coming in with preconceived notions and ideas for how to change the community. However, the community came to our initial meetings with the hopes that we could provide solutions to their existing issues. When neither side took control of the direction of the work, we began venturing towards producing plans that would sit adjacent to the already large collection of stalled projects.

One thing I am very thankful for was the amount of time we spent building relationships in Swan Lake First Nation. I feel in the end the formation of the Planning Committee as well as the beginning stages of the CCP will benefit the community. Had we altered our approach at the start of the semester we could have been much further along in the process, despite this, I still believe our work was successful. I am appreciative of the opportunity to work with Swan Lake First Nation.

REFLECTIONS

Overall, it was very interesting to follow the progress of all four student groups working with other First Nation's over the course of the semester. It was important to see the differences in opportunities and challenges each of the four groups faced. The semester showed that each community is different and should be treated accordingly in relation to the planning process.

Marie Cecile Mbadugha

This project has been challenging yet rewarding. I have learned that Indigenous planning is different from Western planning; however there are some Western planning benefits that can be incorporated into Indigenous planning. I have also learned that First Nation communities have some differences as well as similarities and therefore plans should be created to address a communities unique needs. My experience working with SLFN taught me to pay more attention to the process of planning as opposed to focusing entirely on the end product. In order to produce a successful project that would benefit the community for the long term, you should first build a strong foundation through the planning process.

I also learned that it is important to learn in details about the community I am working with, as this learning process can unravel root causes of unsuccessful projects that need addressing. However, in order to make the learning process meaningful, it is most important to invest time in building strong relationships and trust with community members. Only with this strong relationship and trust will one learn stories about the community and the obstacles they have faced and work towards addressing these obstacles and challenges.

My experience with this studio and working with urban Aboriginal people, I have come to the realization that it is imperative to build capacity within the population I am working with. It is vital to teach them skills, train them and encourage them to pursue their dreams and aspirations and contribute positively to their community. In the context of SLFN, I am glad we were successful in creating a Community Planning Committee to carry on with the work in the community and support the Community Planning Coordinator.

Working with SLFN has given me invaluable knowledge on SLFN's community and First Nation's culture and traditions. Also, participating in the Sweat Lodge gave me a clear understanding of their spiritual beliefs. I am very grateful to have had such an enriching experience and the opportunity to learn about First Nations people, their communities and their rich culture.

Alexis Miller

Working with Swan Lake First Nation was a fruitful experience. We shared our food, good stories and most importantly our time together in the pursuit of creating something meaningful with and for the people of Swan Lake. We travelled four hours every Tuesday for three months because we were committed to our partnership; I now have an emotional attachment and vested interest in the success of the CCP project. I genuinely came to care about the people we were working with, and I am sorry to see our time come to an end. This has taught me a valuable lesson, caring about the people you are working with pushes you to work harder. This was more than just a studio credit for me to get my degree; it was about bonding with community members over a project that will continue to have positive effects in Swan Lake long after our student group is a distant memory.

Needless to say this project tested us; our approaches to and understanding of Indigenous planning were certainly challenged throughout our work with Swan Lake. I learned that relationship building is important, indeed crucial to planning in an Indigenous context, however we need to be cognizant about what kind of relationships are being built. Our intentions were not to go into the community as experts, but in taking this approach we did not adequately represent the skills

REFLECTIONS

we had to contribute. Members of Swan Lake expressed the same sentiments as well; they did not come to our meetings with a clear idea of what they would like to work on and how we would partner. Although our project work was thought to be successful by those we worked with in Swan Lake, it took us time we didn't have to negotiate our partnership through a few of vague meetings. A successful partnership comes from knowing what each group is bringing to the table at the beginning of a process. Relationships may change over time and different skill sets may be needed, but this approach provides a starting point and a basis to build on.

Another point to note while working with Swan Lake is the convergence of Western planning expectations with Indigenous planning approaches. Our work with Swan Lake came from the understanding that for planning to truly be sustainable in their community (and in First Nation communities in general) that a different approach was needed. Traditionally, Western planning has not done First Nations communities any favours. Swan Lake previously engaged in Western planning activities and although many of those projects failed at the implementation stage, there was still an expectation of a deliverable or an end result. This perspective conflicted with our process oriented approach and position that we were part of a continuum of people and that our work would lay the foundation for future endeavours. As such, some people lost faith in our project work. Consequently, tackling manageable planning projects that fit our three-month timeframe may have elicited more support. These critiques of our work highlight the idea that Indigenous Planning is certainly not a straightforward process. All the reading I have done and theoretical knowledge I have gained could not adequately prepare me for the unique obstacles we faced in Swan Lake. This simply reiterates that every community is different; indeed every week was different in Swan Lake, we never knew who would be attending our meetings. Consequently, we had to be prepared to problem solve on the fly and to think on our feet!

Swan Lake is a progressive First Nation with an incredible capacity to do great work. We came from different cultures with different worldviews and different experiences here in Canada, but at the end of the day, we were all people working together to make a community better. I take pride in the work we did and I am certainly grateful for the experience. Future students will be lucky to have the opportunity to work with them.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our work this semester began as a partnership between the University of Manitoba and Swan Lake First Nation. Throughout the course both students and SLFN members were able to form a cohesive group that worked as equals toward a common vision. The result of our work will continue next semester through the Community Planning Coordinator, Student Planning Coordinator and Planning Committee and hopefully well into the future as a living document. This was a mutual learning experience for both students and community members who took part in this project. Together, we negotiated the process of creating a project that would be valuable for their community. Unfortunately, not every member of our student group will be able to carry on with the CCP process, but fortunately, our Student Planning Coordinator will continue to work with SLFN and we expect that a chapter or two will be completed over the next three months. To complete a successful CCP document, it can take up to two years, therefore the Community Planning Coordinator and the Planning Committee will continue working on the document until its completion. Furthermore, we hope that our work provides insight into the benefits and challenges of working with First Nations communities in general. In reflecting on our experiences we cannot reiterate enough that each planning project in each community involves a different process and may produce different results because of their uniqueness. However, building trust and good working relationships are paramount to the Indigenous planning process within all Indigenous communities. Our process was about creating knowledge together, and using this knowledge as the foundation for a CCP. SLFN for all the time and energy they have put into this project so far, deserve a document that serves to guide and grow with their community for years to come.



REFERENCES

Swan Lake First Nation (2011). About Swan Lake First Nation. Retrieved from <http://www.swanlakefirstnation.ca/hist.html>

Swan Lake First Nation (2002). Strategic overview presentation - 10 year strategic plan: 2002-2012

Wikipedia (2011a). Wikipedia the Free Encyclopaedia: Anishinaabe. Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anishinaabe>

Wikipedia (2011b). Wikipedia the Free Encyclopaedia: Treaty 1. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_1

IMAGES:

p.10: Woodstock First Nation Community Plan (2004). www.woodstockfirstnation.com/WFN%20Community%20Plan%202004.pdf

All other images from own collection

APPENDIX



“Anishinabe people of the southwest, represent a community of pride, honor, humility, while we make our stride into the future as generations.”

S WAN L AKE F IRST N ATION

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2011



OJIBWAY

Vision

“Anishinabe people of the southwest, represent a community of pride, honor, humility, while we make our stride into the future as generations.”



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OJIBWAY INTRODUCTION	1
OJIBWAY PEOPLE & COMMUNITY	2
OJIBWAY LAND & ENVIRONMENT	3
OJIBWAY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	4
OJIBWAY SETTLEMENT & HOUSING	5
OJIBWAY CULTURAL PRESERVATION	6
OJIBWAY PROJECT GALLERY	7
OJIBWAY PROJECT DOCUMENTATION	8

PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

File No.	Code	Theme	Description	initiated	start	complete
p-0001		People & Community	ex: skills workshop	Planning	01/01/2012	ongoing
l-0001		Land & Environment				
e-0001		Economic Dev.				
h-0001		Housing				
c-0001		Cultural Preservation				

ACTION PLAN TABLE

SWAN LAKE FIRST NATION

Projects by Action Area Chart – Work Plan:

1 – Indicates the Action Area that is impacted the most by the project

2 – Indicates the Action Area that is secondarily impacted, and so on.

Subthemes	Main Themes					Planning Coordinator	Planning Committee	Student Planning Coordinator	Timeframe
*indicates a priority project	Cultural Preservation	People and Community	Environment	Housing	Community Economic Development				
Cultural Preservation									
1. Hunting & Trapping	1	2			3				
2. Language	1	2							
3. Traditions: Tannery, Herbs	1	2	3						
4. History	1	2							
5. Arts & Craft	1	2							
6. Museum	1	2							
7. Roundhouse	1	2			3				
8. Pow wow									

SWAN LAKE FIRST NATION



Morning Process

- **Brainstorming**
 - Where does planning fit in the governance structure?
 - Accountability
 - Delegation of responsibility
 - Keep continuity in projects/plans

Establishing A Planning Committee

Task One:

- List major stakeholders in community
 - Elder(ly)
 - Woman
 - Junior Chief accompanied by Rec. Director
 - Youth
 - Community health representative
 - Others

Establishing A Planning Committee

Task Two:

- Outline roles, responsibilities and expectations
 - Work directly with planning coordinator
 - Identify projects
 - Establish work plan and timeframes
 - Community consultation
 - Foster, build and maintain relationships and linkages
 - Skills training and capacity building
 - Write proposals
 - Apply for funding
 - So on

Next Steps...

In December:

- Present to Chief and Council
 - To clarify roles and garner support
 - Regarding revised governance structure
 - Planning processes in community

Indigenous Planning Fall 2011 SWAN LAKE FIRST NATION



Presenters:

Tania Scott – Community Planning Coordinator

Marie Cecile Mbadugha – Student Planning Coordinator

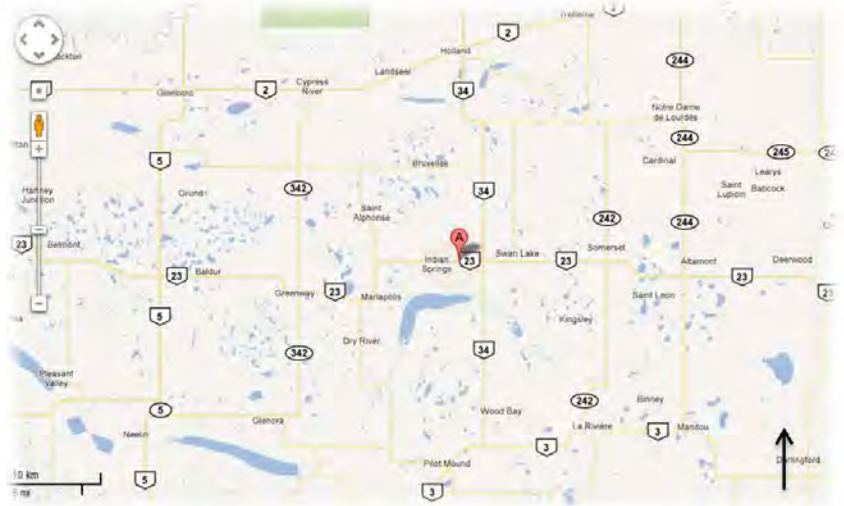
Group Members: Alex Miller, Ryan Eidick, Chris Beauvilian, Diogo Albuquerque

Outline

- Community Profile
- What we did – Process
- CCP Framework
- Results
- Future Plans
- Acknowledgements

Community Profile

- Location: South central Manitoba
- Anishinabe People
- Native language: Saulteaux
- Population size: Approximately 1266 members
 - 710 live in the community
 - 556 live outside the community
- Economy: Farming, buffalo ranch, and so on



What We Did - Process

- Met weekly with members of SLFN beginning September 2011 to December 2011
- Built relationship and trust
- Researched and learned about SLFN
- Created a Planning Committee
- CCP framework



CCP Framework

- CCP Themes:
 - People and Community
 - Land, Environment/ Resources
 - Economic Development
 - Housing and Settlement
 - Cultural Preservation



"Anishinabe people of the southwest, represent a community of pride, honor, humility, while we make our stride into the future as generations."

SWAN LAKE FIRST NATION
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN 2011

Results

- Built relationship and partnership
- Creation of Planning Committee
- Alternative governance structure
- Creation of a CCP framework
- Creation of CCP template



Vision

"Anishinabe people of the southwest, represent a community of pride, honor, humility, while we make our stride into the future as generations."



OJIBWAY INTRODUCTION	i
OJIBWAY PLANNING COMMITTEE	1
OJIBWAY GOVERNANCE	1
OJIBWAY GOVERNANCE	1
OJIBWAY GOVERNANCE	1
OJIBWAY GOVERNANCE	1
OJIBWAY GOVERNANCE	1
OJIBWAY GOVERNANCE	1
OJIBWAY GOVERNANCE	1
OJIBWAY GOVERNANCE	1

Future Plans

- Community Planning Coordinator, Student Planning Coordinator and Planning Committee working together on planning issues
- Start the CCP
- Community consultations
- Form partnerships and collaborate with departments in the community
- Census gathering
- Completion of CCP
- ...

Results

- Built relationship and partnership
- Creation of Planning Committee
- Alternative governance structure
- Creation of a CCP framework
- Creation of CCP template



Vision

"Anishinabe people of the southwest, represent a community of pride, honor, humility, while we make our stride into the future as generations."



OJIBWAY INTRODUCTION	i
OJIBWAY PLANNING COMMITTEE	1
OJIBWAY GOVERNANCE	1
OJIBWAY COUNCIL	1
OJIBWAY LEGISLATION	1
OJIBWAY LEGISLATION	1
OJIBWAY LEGISLATION	1
OJIBWAY INTRODUCTION	1
OJIBWAY INTRODUCTION	1

CHI MIIGWETCH! Thank You!



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (PLANNING CORD.)

Swan Lake First Nation

Position: Planning Coordinator

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the Planning Coordinator of Swan Lake First Nation are outlined below:

- Work with planning committee
- Report to John
- Write reports, proposals and documents
- Research funding opportunities
- Identify projects through community consultation
- Establish work plans and timeframes
- Monitor and oversee projects to ensure goals are being met
 - Project management
- Get updates from planning committee on planning concerns
- Foster, build and maintain relationships and partnerships with departments membership, and chief and council
- Be the liaison person between departments, planning committee, and Chief and Council
- Coordinate community consultation process
- Provide information and announcements to membership
 - E.g., progress reports
- Other duties as assigned

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (PLANNING COM.)

Swan Lake First Nation

Planning Committee

Roles and Responsibilities

Members of SLFN's Planning Committee are expected to carry out the roles and responsibilities outlined below:

- Work directly with Planning Coordinator
- Report to planning coordinator
- Attend meetings related to planning concerns
- Facilitate community consultation/engagement
- Identify projects through community engagement
- Establish work plans and timeframes with Planning Coordinator
- Foster, build and maintain relationships and linkages with departments, membership, chief and council
- Keep the planning coordinator updated on issues surrounding planning
- Other duties as assigned