



Knowledge and action in support of small town economic transition

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Overview

- Rural restructuring
- Creating community / university relationships
- Community receptor capacity
 - McBride Community Forest Corporation
- Lessons for developing university-community relationships
 - Beyond instrumental partnerships



Rural Restructuring I

Industrial restructuring

- Industrial consolidation
- Labour shedding technologies
- Fluctuating commodity prices
- International trade uncertainty
- Increasing global competition



Rural Restructuring II

Service restructuring

- Neo-liberal policies
 - Reducing government expenditures
- Services offloaded, downsized, regionalized, or closed
- Retrenchment of government supports
- Job losses and out-migration



Community-University Relationships

The Challenge

- Small places face many changes
- Seek information to make decisions
 - Timely, relevant, and useful
- Academics enter research task seeking to improve questions
- Mismatch of expectations
 - Communities want answers
 - Academics want questions



Community Receptor Capacity I

- Small municipal offices – few staff
 - Experience
 - Turnover and institutional memory
 - Limited technical support and resources
- Getting mutual commitment
- Relationship demands
 - Difficult on time / staff
 - Often need financial commitment

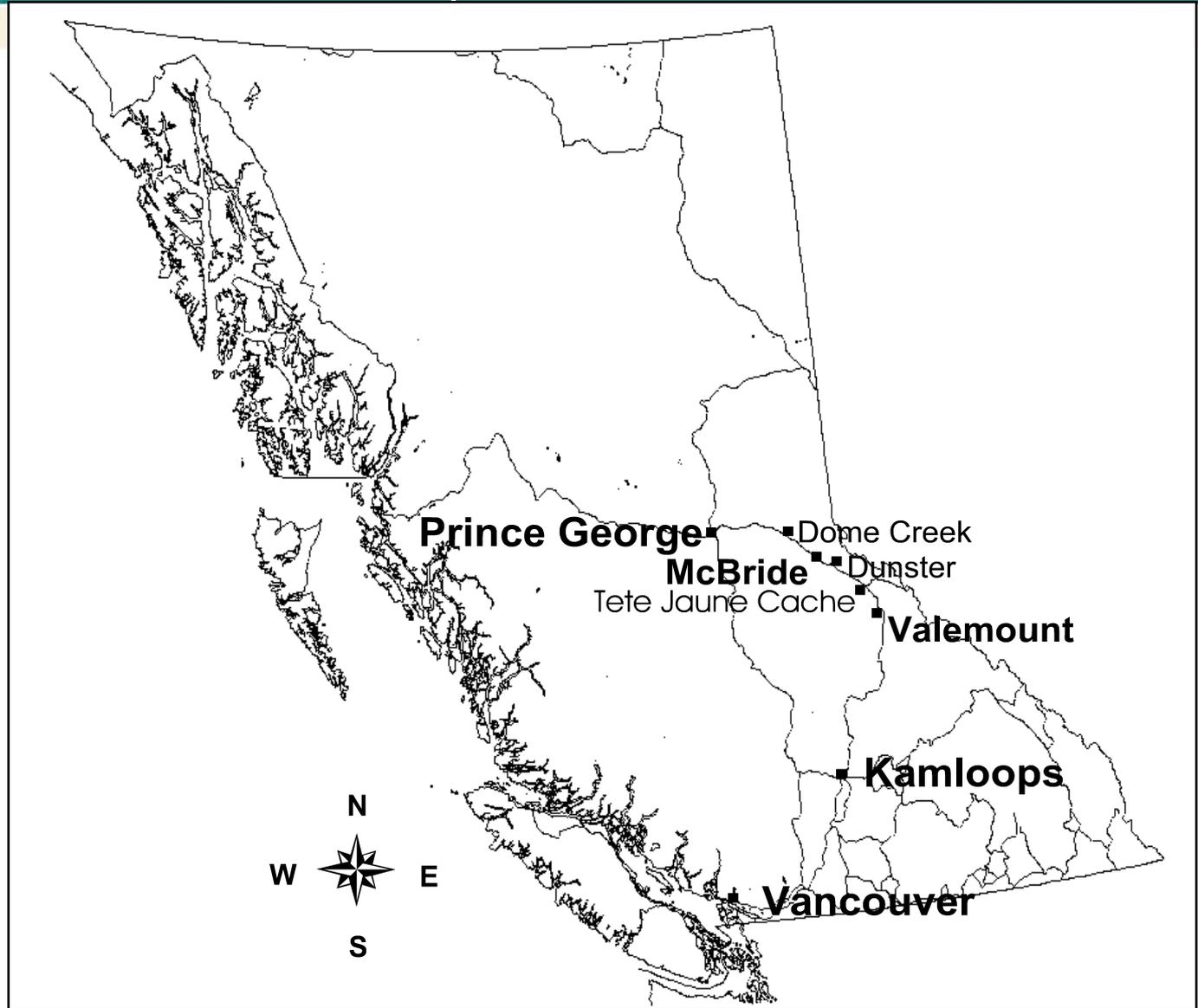


Community Receptor Capacity II

- Bottom-up 'may not be equipped' to mobilize knowledge
- Need support for building relationships / capacity
 - Poorly understood by funding programs
 - Academic and funding institutions talk 'engaged' language but not equipped to follow through with infrastructure / support

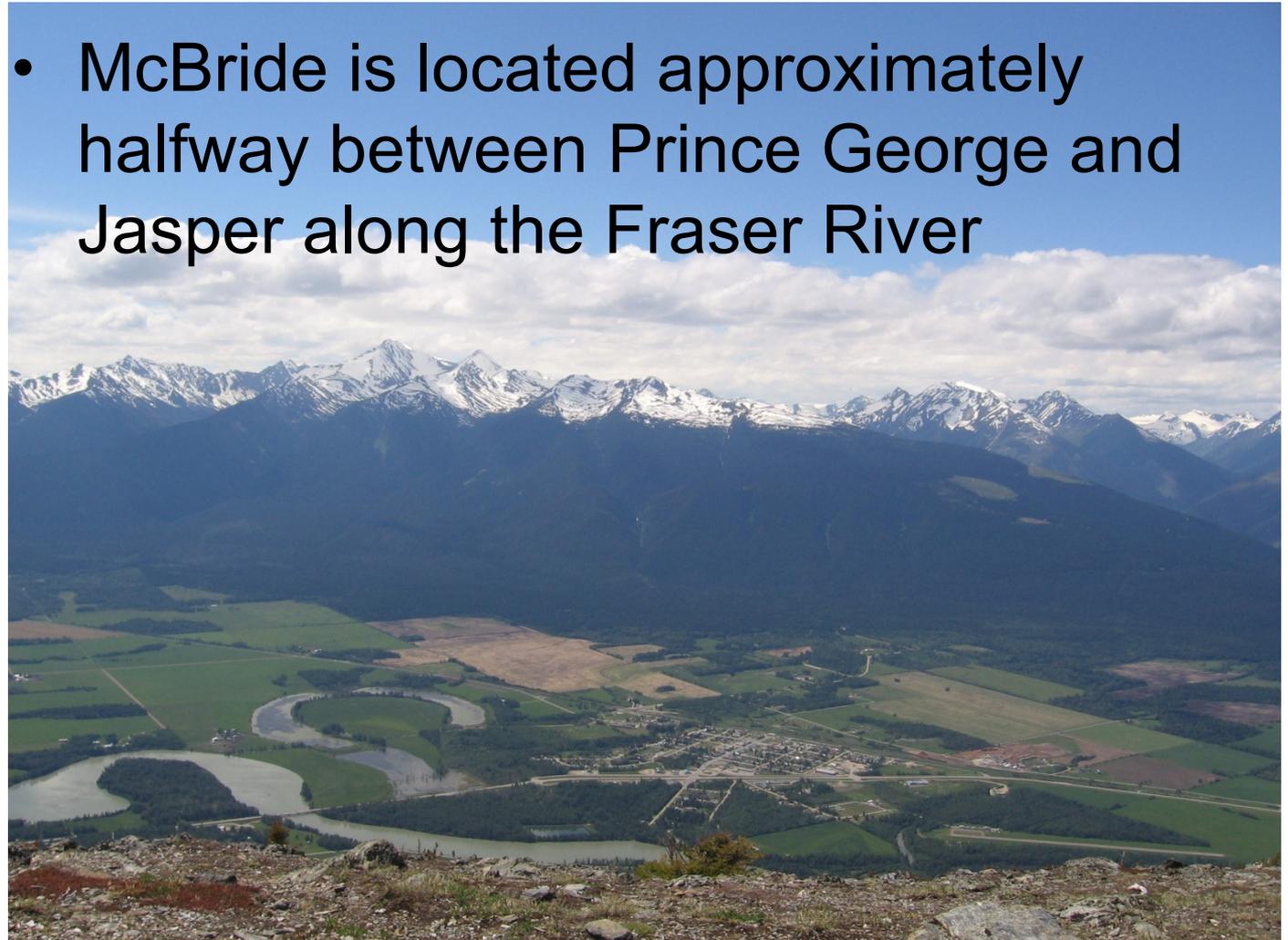


Economic Renewal: The case of McBride, BC



The Local Context

- McBride is located approximately halfway between Prince George and Jasper along the Fraser River



The Local Context

- Population approximately 660
- Services broader community of about 1,500



McBride Community Forest Corp I

- MCFC established in 2002
- Goal to provide greater socioeconomic diversity
- Wholly owned by the Village of McBride
- Board of directors reflective of broader community
- Staff: general manager, operations supervisor, part-time clerical help



McBride Community Forest Corp

- Field operations by contract
 - Preference to local businesses



McBride Community Forest Corp II

- Sell commodity grade logs to larger companies



McBride Community Forest Corp

- Small market logger program
 - Smaller licenses sold to develop specialty forest products
 - 53 users around the province



McBride Community Forest Corp



- Building resiliency
- Transition from commodity to value-added markets



McBride Community Forest Corp III

- MCFC income paid to Village of McBride
- Leverage to obtain other funding
- Support for community projects
 - New community hall
 - Community Foundation
 - Employ an economic development officer
 - Small fund for community groups



McBride Community Forest Corp

- In-kind support / expertise
 - Development of tourism strategy
 - Public trail system



McBride Community Forest Corp IV

- Need for receptor capacity to be open
- Links with UNBC
 - CDI (Future Forest Summit), Kathy Lewis (Forestry Roundtable)
 - Darwyn Coxson (Future Forest Ecosystem Scientific Council research proposal)
- Links with others
 - BC Community Forest Association
 - OBAC
- How can receptor capacity be better supported?



Research, Information, Expertise I

- **Energy (Waste wood bio-energy)**
 - Business cases / models
 - Technology options
 - Environmental impacts / monitoring
 - Waste, transport, emissions, ash, etc
 - Feasibility studies for new power lines
 - Bio-fuel for other industrial plants
- **Forestry**
 - International market ‘surveillance’
 - Maximizing wood values
 - Possibilities of non-timber forest products
 - i.e. devil’s club, mushrooms, medicinal plants / herbs



Research, Information, Expertise II

- **Transportation**
 - Alternatives for moving wood / forest products
 - Traffic studies
 - Impacts of changing traffic mix
 - Highway and 'off-highway' safety
 - Truck and traffic impacts on highway maintenance
- **Business-Related**
 - Key trends for small and medium-sized businesses
 - Human resource needs
 - Infrastructure needs



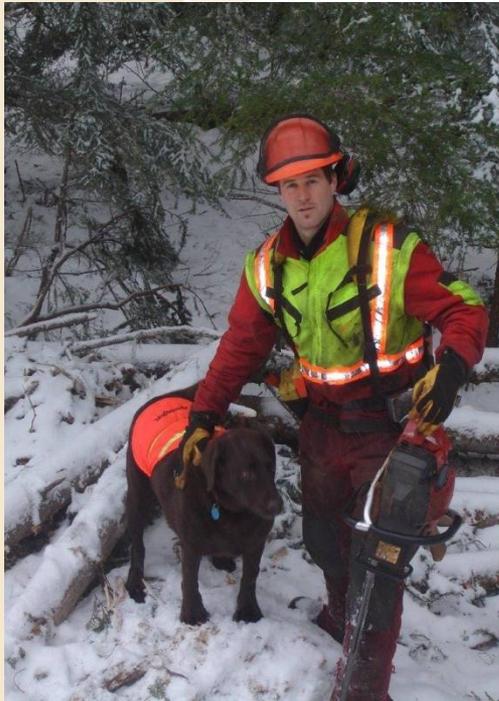
Research, Information, Expertise III

- **Marketing and Exporting Products**
 - Market options / product options
 - Case studies of successful small places/exporters
 - Marketing / distribution models for local products
 - Use / access to e-commerce



Marketing Example – 2010 Winter Olympics

- BC's Wood First Initiative



- **Quality of Life**

- Role of a healthy, diversified economy in attracting residents / businesses
- Services to improve quality of life



Summary: Community-University Relationships

- Tool to support community economic development
- Can enhance local capacity / responsiveness
- Surrogate for building social cohesion and social capital
- Spur innovation / enhance competitiveness
- Key input into policy development



Lessons for Community-University Relationships

1. Creating / maintaining a relationship
2. Link community partnerships with appropriate university resources
3. Develop bottom-up research ideas
4. Research design should be driven by community partners
5. Involve community partners in execution of research projects
6. Guide knowledge mobilization



Creating / Maintaining Relationships

- Need to build relationships, project partnerships
- Requires investment of time / resources
- Requires routine interaction
 - To develop trust / credibility
 - Share power / decision-making
 - Responsibilities / accountability
 - Mutual learning



Link Communities with Appropriate University Resources

- Need to know what types of research universities offer
 - Difficult to browse university websites
- Outreach to promote research areas
 - Provide valuable contacts / info
- Speaker's series, newsletter, website
- UNBC's North First Initiative
 - Requires resources to follow through
- Rural infrastructure underutilized
- Meetings concentrated in urban areas



Develop Bottom-Up Research

- Research should be collaborative, community driven
 - Make research relevant, useful, and timely to support decisions
- Platform for ongoing dialogue / exchange of ideas to support community / economic renewal
- Opportunities to extend community-university relationships



Research Design Driven by Community Partners

- Involvement in project design:
 - Ensures fit with community goals
 - Improves understanding of questions and how results can be used
 - Develop realistic expectations



Involve Community Partners in Execution of Research

- Builds capacity
 - (i.e. data collection, writing, promoting results)
- Become invested in mobilizing results
- Logistical support
 - (i.e. field costs, accommodations, access to records, donated items)
- Adopt a flexible approach



Guide Knowledge Mobilization I

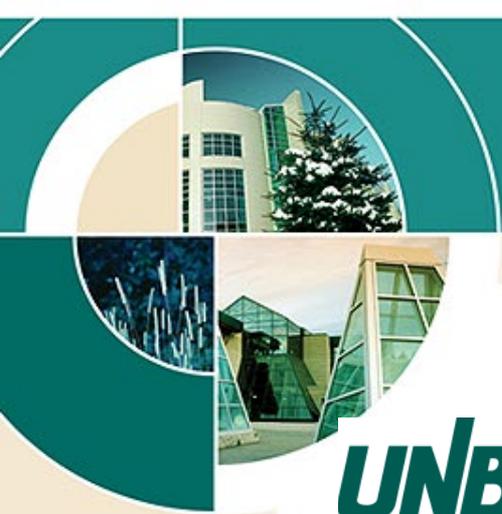
- Communicating research
- Identify importance of results for informing action
 - Local networks
 - Update letters, newspaper articles, radio interviews, posters, copies of research products, websites, community forums, council presentations
 - Posting solely on a university website does not work!



Guide Knowledge Mobilization II

- Must share decision-making and project responsibilities
 - To increase ownership and mobilize new knowledge, relationships, and processes
- Respect, patience, and flexibility
- Follow-up on a routine basis
- Broker dialogue and relationships to initiate and implement actions
- Build momentum!





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