Tides Canada

Workshop Report: Gathering of Northern/Arctic Indigenous Guardian Programs to share knowledge on training - April 30 - May 2, 2019

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Indigenous Guardian Training Guidebook

Prepared by:

BLYTH&BATHE

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Executive Summary

Blyth & Bathe conducted research and stakeholder engagement in preparation for Tides Canada's Northern Guardian Training workshop which was held April 30th to May 2nd, 2019. This document builds on the preliminary scan that was the culmination of the stakeholder interviews held over the month of March. The goal of this document is to provide some insight into the shared experiences of the numerous guardian programs operating in Canada's north, with the hopes that this insight will provide a roadmap for training participants in stewardship programs.

Background

Blyth & Bathe was retained by Tides Canada to conduct interviews with Northerners who are involved in the stewardship programs across Northern Canada. The primary goal of these interviews was to identify the various processes by which guardians are trained with the hopes of gaining some broad insights into best practices, knowledge/skills gaps, and the possibility of collaboration between the various groups on future guardian training programs.

Across Northern Canada, indigenous communities are exercising important leadership in the management and care of their territories' environmental health and sustainability. In many cases, following examples set in other parts of Canada and the world, these initiatives take the form of community-based "guardian" or "steward" programs. These community guardians/stewards (hereafter, "guardians") are often described as the community's eyes and ears on the land – watching, anticipating, and protecting the natural systems on which we all rely. As such, the role of the guardian has generally been framed as a kind of indigenous environmental monitor. This characterization is now seen as too limiting by some groups, as the activities that guardians are engaged in are not limited to the monitoring of the physical environment. Throughout the north, the vision for guardian programming is as varied as the landscapes and communities that guardians service.

The required expertise and know-how of guardians is expansive – ranging from water to air to land, from caribou to fish, and from policy to practice. At the same time, guardians are often expected to be cultural leaders for their communities, acting as the facilitators in language and on-the-land programming.

We have heard, for example, that the best training experiences have resulted from programs that are flexible enough to meet the local priorities for monitoring and stewardship and that focus considerable energy on hands-on, land-based learning. We also consistently heard the importance placed on programming that includes training in personal wellness.

Workshop Review

Day One: Introduction & Existing Programs

Presentation on the Indigenous Guardian Training Needs Scan and discussion

The first presentation of the workshop focused on the key findings of the pre-workshop survey. This provided attendees the opportunity to comment on findings and, for some, to provide initial input as they were not able to be contacted during the original survey period.

The survey found that that the main sentiments of the respondents were:

- Land-based education needs to be a priority;
- Technical and cultural skills are both important, although the technical side has been given more focus during past and current training programs;
- There was a strong desire to seek enforcement powers and the hope to learn from any others who have done so already;
- Almost all of the respondents stated that wellness ought to be seen as a foundation of stewardship; and
- Finding funding and organizational support is a significant burden for organizations. Some respondents express the desire to see a regional or national secretariat created that would aid in securing funding and possibly provide other operational supports.

Key competencies required by guardians

Nature United's Indigenous Guardians Toolkit[1] was used as a foundation for the discussion on skills required by guardians. In the tool kit the training elements are broken into the following categories:

- Safety & Outdoor Skills
- Monitoring & Technical Field Skills Cultural & Community Knowledge and Skills
- Communication Skills
- Computer, Data Collection, and Data Management Skills

Based on our conversations in the pre-workshop survey, we added the following elements:

- Personal Wellness
- Community Wellness

This is based on the recognition that guardians need to understand the relationship between stewardship and wellness. At the same time, healthy communities are able to support the development of resilient guardians. As such, programming for the whole community with

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[1] https://www.indigenousguardianstoolkit.ca/

respect to wellness can act as an important factor in supporting the long-term viability of a stewardship program.

These component skills from each of these training elements were discussed later in the workshop.

What are the most effective approaches and best practices being taken to train guardians?

Respondents had little in the way of consensus on this topic, as training programs tended to be developed on an ad-hoc basis; these one-off deliveries leave little opportunity for evaluation and improvement of future deliveries.

Almost everyone did agree that on-the-land and mentorship programs significantly improve learning. Similarly, hands-on experience should be prioritized over classroom lecture–based learning environments.

During the workshop it was suggested that having elders present during training can also improve results, as this gives students someone they can turn to for knowledge support that a visiting instructor may not have. Having an elder present may also improve the attentiveness of students as they will be more likely to act in a respectful manner with the elder present. It was also suggested that training programs include at least some certificate courses, such as first aid or chainsaw safety, which provide a sense of accomplishment that may be harder to achieve from other forms of training.

Currently offered training for guardians

This presentation provided an overview of organizations offering training for guardians and detailed some of the benefits and criticisms of each of the training pathways. The discussion regarding training provided by private contractors has been merged into larger presentation review below.

ECO Canada BEAHR Environmental Monitor Training Program

In its own words, ECO Canada's mission is to "ensure an adequate supply of people with the demonstrated skills and knowledge required to meet the environmental human resource needs of the public and private sectors." Further, BEAHR exists to "increase awareness about environmental careers and build environmental capacity within Indigenous communities. ECO Canada's training division maintains and administers community-based environmental training programs designed to provide introductory skills to those who want to work or pursue further education in the environmental field. Programs are delivered by ECO Canada or third-party trainers approved and licensed through the BEAHR Training Programs."

During the presentation and pre-workshop survey, it was noted that the BEAHR offerings are too narrowly focused on technical environmental techniques and do not give meaningful consideration to the community-driven cultural and other needs unique to guardian-type programs. When these courses are taught for guardians in Northern Canada, the delivery has to

be modified by trainers who are well-versed in the needs of the local program and who are willing to work beyond the standard curriculum to include non-technical aspects of stewardship.

College and university training

These programs range in length from days and weeks to degree programs that are up to four years in length. In almost all of the surveyed programs, the focus is still very much on the technical aspects of stewardship, with some newer programs starting to make advances in including the important cultural elements in the training of guardians (presentations by VIU and Dechinta below). The biggest criticism of these programs is the reliance on classroom-based learning; even when a program aspires to be land-based, issues with liability and instructor competency limit the amount of time that students actually spend on the land.

In the future, some of the groups present at the workshop would like to see how they can accredit their own programs. While they may still partner with academic institutions in the delivery of some program elements, taking over accreditation may help focus a training program on the goals of the local community. For many this would be well beyond their capacity to achieve, so it was suggested that having a regional training centre could both reduce the cost of program delivery and provide a physical space for an organization that could offer other non-training related supports to guardian programs with limited capacity. Building on this comment, it was suggested that managers involved in overseeing guardian programs also need training. They need to better understand the activities that guardians are involved in on a day-to-day basis as much as they need capacity-building training for their own roles and responsibilities.

Current barriers to effective training

Near the end of this presentation, a few barriers to effective training were brought up. Foremost is the issue of language. Some of the best guardians are elders who may find it challenging to complete courses delivered by unilingual instructors. When using interpreters, courses can easily double in length. Some organizations rationalize the cost of spending that extra time by making sure all of the participants are offered the chance to work on their language skills and vocabulary.

Accreditation of local instructors is another way to deal with this issue, but it also presents its own challenges. Often, there are significant barriers to being certified as an instructor. For example, an environmental monitor instructor needs to have at least four years of fieldwork experience that includes sampling a number of environmental parameters. Instructors are also expected to have experience with GIS, health/safety, traditional knowledge collection, communications and adult education. While there may be some people with the requisite skill sets in the community, they are often already fully employed.

Another barrier to accessing training is the lack of available childcare. Often students need to leave class early, miss class or don't bother signing up at all because of the lack of childcare.

Given the significant investment that goes into delivering training programs, some consideration should be given to the benefit of offering childcare during the training period. This allows for the program to select from a broader pool of potential guardians, improving the chances of selecting a candidate who will succeed in the role.

Similarly, some thought should be given to the timing of the course deliveries. This includes both the time of day to better work around students' schedules, and the time of year to avoid offering training during prime hunting seasons when many of the people with on-the-land experience are unable to attend courses in town.

Presentation: Review of existing training programs – Presentation on Vancouver Island University guardian training programs

Vancouver Island University (VIU) delivers two guardian training programs: one in partnership with the Coastal First Nations Great Bear Initiative, and another with the Nanwakolas Council.

These two guardian training programs both train an annual cohort through one-week sessions delivered in-community, with the module deliveries spaced out over two years. Students assemble every couple of months in their home or nearby communities to participate in the modules. These modules primarily focus on the technical aspects of environmental monitoring, but courses on wellness are also included. The program is a total of 14 weeks in length with some independent work also required. The key to these programs' success has been the regional training coordinators employed full time in each community to support the students on their educational journeys, both in their studies and their employment.

Workshop participants acknowledged that using these programs as a model for regional collaboration could be useful, as each community is able to work towards its own goals and may choose to collaborate with other communities where goals overlap.

It was explained that the programs are particularly successful because they are flexible and able to change over time. In order to make this work, there needs to be a strong relationship between the communities, the program coordinators and the educational intuitions. A measure of the programs' success is the fact that participants are able to advance through their respective organizations in part due to their experience in the training programs.

As with the other programs, the issue of accreditation is a tricky subject. Being accredited ensures that a program is meeting minimum quality standards, but it can become a hindrance if an elder is preferred as the teacher for a program. At the same time, non-aboriginal instructors occasionally have a hard time delivering the programs, highlighting the fact that finding a balance between knowledgeable elders and accredited outsiders is a hurdle that many programs face.

Participants in the workshop were excited to hear about the VIU programs and suggested that they'd like to see a transfer program between guardians based in the north and the Coastal Guardians network.

Presentation: Review of existing programs – Presentation on guardian training delivered by private companies

Private contractors provide both standard and custom-designed courses. These companies can provide readymade or custom courses. Most of the survey respondents had partnered with one of these companies at some point and suggested that they can sometimes provide value and flexibility over some of the larger institution-based programs. Generally, it was the instructor's flexibility and ability to work with a community's needs that caused respondents to choose to work with a contract instructor rather than an educational institution. Another benefit of working with private instructors is that they are able to work in any location allowing students ton stay in their home community during the training session.

Respondents mentioned that even for basic safety courses, such as a wilderness first aid course, it was important to work with a provider who is comfortable with alternative and cross-cultural learning situations.

Workshop participants commented that they would like to see more training for soft skills such as communications for outreach and visitor interaction.

Workshop participants also expressed that direct involvement with instructors and community representatives during the planning stage of these courses dramatically improved the quality of the courses.

Presentation: Review of existing programs – Presentation on Dechinta guardian training experience

This presentation provided some technical information about post-secondary accreditation, as well as an overview on what kind of programming Dechinta offers, how they create and deliver their programming, and the future of the programs. Dechinta has been delivering land-based post-secondary programming in the north for close to a decade. Their goal is to help northern students overcome some of the unique barriers they face when accessing post-secondary programing. There are two core aspects of Dechinta's programming: the first is supporting students' self-determination to follow the path that they wish to pursue, and the second to is supporting communities to determine the important educational content.

Dechinta's offerings broaden the diversity of post-secondary options for northerners and support communities. With the emphasis on family inclusivity and multi-generational learning, Dechinta provides a learning space that is accessible to students who would not otherwise be able to attend similar training programs. Providing courses in a land-based context is also an important factor in developing an educational space that is welcoming and relevant to northern students.

Students are able to get university credits through Dechinta's partnerships with the Faculty of Native Studies at the University of Alberta and the University of British Columbia to provide a Certificate in Land and Community-Based Research.

Programing focuses on self-determination, land claims process, and self-government. An important aspect of all of these is to understand how Dene ethics and values provide guidance from a Dene perspective. Through this lens students study how the Dene protected the land in the past and how they can continue to build strong relationships with the land and people in the future, thus leading to strong communities and nations.

For one participant from Fort Simpson, the Dechinta experience was challenging as there are lots of technical elements, but the process of learning about decolonization and sharing knowledge with healthy people on the land from all over Canada was life changing. Walking in the mountains and paddling every day gave her time to really internalize the teachings of the program. At the same time, she was given a space to understand and love herself. Through the program the participants developed a sense of community, and that helped her to find a connection to the land.

According to a representative from Ross River, people come back changed from Dechinta programs. A Dechinta program was delivered in partnership with the Ross River Dena at Dechinla Lodge. Many of the participants were interested to hear about the experience that Kaska had with requiring non-Kaska hunters to get a licence to hunt in their territory. Josh highlighted that current wildlife management practices are archaic and don't recognize local ethics and values. Providing more opportunities for strong Dene values to be used at the core of stewardship training will help to spread those values throughout the management regimes.

Lastly, an instructor from Chekoa Nı htł'èkǫ̀ Deè (KidsU), which is Dechinta's youth programming presented on their programming. This program removes barriers to education for northern learners and ensures safe and culturally relevant programming is delivered alongside innovative university-level courses. Children are invited to attend semesters with their parent(s) and learn on the land. This has become one of the most vital components of the Dechinta model as many students, particularly single mothers, opt to bring their children with them.

Chekoa Nı htł'èkǫ̀ Deè (KidsU) was partially inspired by a study conducted during the development of Dechinta, which showed that lack of childcare and not wanting to remove children from culturally safe and relevant environments was the number one reason Indigenous women in the NWT cited for not attending, or for dropping out of, post-secondary schooling.

Day Two: Training Needs and Collaboration
Session one: Review of Table One from Guardian Needs Scan
After the opening prayer and circle, the group decided to discuss the Indigenous Guardians Toolkit Training Elements[2] together rather than breaking out into smaller units that would report back to the whole workshop. Throughout this section most of the discussion revolved around the particular courses/skills that participants would like see added to the Training Elements list. The following table is pulled from Nature United's Toolkit and included the

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[2] https://www.indigenousguardianstoolkit.ca/

additional elements that were put forward during the workshop. In some cases, the added skills do not directly align with Nature United themes. They are included here as the workshop participants felt that there was enough overlap to include them under these broader training element headings during the discussion. These additions are italicized.

Training Elements
1. Safety & Outdoor Skills
Vehicle Operations – *boat safety, driver's licences, ATV/snowmobile safety and repair*
First Aid Training – Wilderness First Aid, Basic First Aid, Wilderness First Responder, *Marine First Aid, Mental Health First Aid*
Safety Training – *chainsaw safety, predator awareness, wilderness survival and crisis management, firearms, ice rescue, conflict resolution, critical thinking, policies and procedures, trip planning, wellness*
Land Skills – *search and rescue, GPS, navigation by reading the land, traditional knowledge*
Discussion: *Being out on the land and being stuck because of the weather is when you tell stories.*
2. Monitoring & Technical Field Skills
Environmental Monitoring – water quality, construction/development sites, contaminated sites, compliance monitoring, observe and report, use of drones
Fisheries – electrofishing, fish identification, fish habitat, stream restoration, water monitoring
Wildlife – wildlife ecology, wildlife monitoring techniques, habitat survey, population survey
Forestry – forest inventory, vegetation, soil sampling, riparian inventory, habitat restoration
Restoration – stream restoration, habitat restoration
Compliance Monitoring – relevant Indigenous laws, relevant Canadian laws and regulations, observe-record-report procedures, note-taking, evidence-gathering
Archeology and Cultural Heritage – archaeological inventory, culturally modified tree inventory, cultural site protection, cultural compliance monitoring
Natural Resource Management – land use planning, marine use planning, wildlife management, fisheries management, forest management, protected area management
Discussion: *Many participants wanted to provide their guardians with skills and certifications to act in a similar manner to conservation officers to monitor and enforce rules protecting each of these parameters.*

3. Cultural & Community Knowledge and Skills
Indigenous Knowledge – cultural sites, harvesting sites, species information, understanding local place names and how to navigate to them
Language – local language, place names, subjective meanings
Cultural Protocols – protocols for harvesting (including rules for guardians harvesting while on the job), protocols for visiting areas in territory, protocols for sacred sites, protocols for interacting with neighbouring communities, etc.
Indigenous Laws - local Indigenous stewardship laws and policies, understanding and navigating conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous laws
Indigenous Stewardship Plans and Agreements – existing plans/agreements/protocols signed by Indigenous community (land use plan, marine use plan, wildlife plans, chapters of settlement agreements, etc.)
4. Communication Skills
Interpersonal Communications – communication styles and approaches, communicating with academics
Conflict Resolution – dealing with conflict in the field
Public Speaking – speaking with resource users in the field, presenting at community events, outreach with youth and community members, storytelling, media relations, cultural interpretation for visitors
Writing and Reporting – taking good field notes, daily/weekly activity logs, report writing
Leadership – team-building, leadership styles, group dynamics
Discussion: *Workshop participants noted that there is an increased spotlight on guardian programs and as such it is important to have skilled communicators on the team to champion the work they are doing. Leaders also need to have strong communications skills as they are often dealing with teams with diverse backgrounds spread over remote regions. They need to be able to diffuse challenging situations and inspire confidence and respect from their team.*
5. Computer, Data Collection, and Data Management Skills
Microsoft Office – Excel, Word and PowerPoint
Filing and Information/Data Management – file systems, downloading data, saving data, transferring data, inputting data, GIS, turning data into narratives
Monitoring Protocols – recording observations, data collection and input, intellectual property rights, non-invasive traditional collection and data sharing
Discussion: *While courses for specific software are available, many of the guardians with the strongest land skills struggle with computers. This is changing in some places with*

younger generations, but the issue remains that these skills are often mostly held by managers.
6. Wellness
Personal Wellness – intergeneration trauma, residential schools, personal resilience, emotional literacy, language and culture, traditional medicines
Community Wellness – Similar to the personal wellness skills but with a focus on providing safe spaces for guardians to thrive when returning from their time on the land
Discussion: *Strong healthy communities sustain stewardship programs. Throughout the workshop and the survey, participants said that it was important to intertwine wellness training into the guardian programs, which have generally focused on technical and cultural skill sets. Healing camps and workshops were noted as being positive steps, although they provide short-term benefits which need to be reinforced through ongoing programming in the community. Participants highlighted the awareness of local culture, language support and emotional literacy, and that working on these skills needs to be a part of wellness training.* *Managers will need to confront many issues that arise as people are on their wellness journey. While a manager should not be expected to be a trained wellness professional, they should have some training that helps them to address situations appropriately and be able to direct individuals in need of help to a professional.*

Session two: Opportunities to collaborate on training programming

During the initial survey there was considerable support for the idea of collaborating on training, but there was a lack of consensus on how best to go about working together. Workshop participants explored the question of how their organizations can engage more effectively with each other, as well as with governments and non-profits, to better solve their training challenges.

Participants highlighted many of the issues that can make such communications difficult. They also provided some ideas on what they might be able to offer a collaborative organization so that they might work together more effectively.

The challenges that surfaced include a lack of trust over issues such as intellectual property, uncertainty about the potential benefits of working together, and the difficulty on both sides of finding the time for initial exploratory conversations given that they are already stretched to the limit with their current workload at both the personal and organizational levels. Participants also noted an apparent disparity between organizations in terms of the elements that each would be able to offer, as some groups are just getting started while others have been at it for a

long time. While this isn't necessarily a roadblock, it should be noted that more experienced organizations may have little capacity to directly assist other groups.

However, it's one thing knowing that collaboration can be mutually beneficial and another thing finding out how to make more effective collaborations happen. Ideas such as a guardian exchange were largely supported but were noted to be quite expensive and potentially difficult to manage. Similarly, a list of sharable resources was suggested with some enthusiasm. These resources could range from technical staff to equipment and software. It was noted that the Nature United Indigenous Guardians toolkit does provide an online platform for sharing digital resources. Organizations with materials that could be useful to other groups can forward them to Nature United to be put up on the site.

Both Tides Canada and Nature United commented that they have funding to help groups collaborate, including some funding for travel.

Next, the conversation turned to asking how it is possible to start creating a more active network for collaboration. While there was a lot of enthusiasm for the idea, no concrete suggestions were made beyond the commitment to keep in touch and to continue to seek pathways for connection.

Workshop participants didn't shy away from the challenges to many of the ideas present. For any of this to happen and succeed, leadership buy-in will be required, and in the case of some organizations, there is barely enough support for their leadership to keep their programs running. The fact of the matter remains that while collaborations may provide rewarding relationships which can enhance the viability and effectiveness of stewardship programs, these benefits are only available to those who are able to seize these opportunities. As such, it is important for any organization interested in collaboration to recognize the challenges that some groups face to just show up at the table.

In the end there was no clear path forward for developing some form of ongoing partnership, but most of the participants left this session saying they were hopeful and wanted to keep the conversation going.

Day three: The benefits of guardian programs
On the third day of the workshop, the focus shifted to funding, evaluating and communicating the benefits of guardian programs. Representatives from both NGOs and the federal government offered support and suggested some avenues for funding collaboration between guardian organizations and individual training needs. Each of these groups highlighted the need to provide tangible numbers that funders can use to justify the support they may provide. By demonstrating the value of these programs, it may be possible to increase and stabilize funding streams.

Shari Fox of the Ittaq Heritage and Research Centre presented on her experience working with Esa Qillaq in Clyde River, where they have been funding Esa to live as a full-time hunter. Esa and

Shari documented every aspect of Esa's life as a hunter. In particular, they recorded the amount of food that he provided to the community and how it was shared throughout the community. Providing Esa the security of full-time pay while harvesting helped reduce stress on all aspects of his life. A hunter has more responsibilities than to just provide meat; Esa was able to act as a mentor to younger hunters, his work helped to maintain the language and culture, and he was able to make continuous observations of the land, providing a constant stream of data useful for both stewardship and research. On top of these sometimes-unquantifiable benefits, Esa's harvest provided high-quality country food which was much higher in nutrients than anything found at the store. In particular, the levels of vitamin D in the food that he was providing was sufficient enough to cause a decrease in the prevalence of rickets in the community.

Despite the obvious qualitative benefits, it is important that a program have measurable indicators of its success. In their evaluation, they looked at how the project impacted the community, government and the hunter when quantifying the social and economic benefits of the project. During this process of evaluation, it was important to consider the audience and what they would consider a success. To this end, they had trackable components for short- and long-term benefits and constraints, which allowed them to create a narrative of the impacts of the program.

Guardian Training Guide

Why develop a guide?

Indigenous guardian and community-based monitoring (CBM) programs provide a number of important services that range from the inter-family to national levels. They collect and make sense out of data in order to help decision-makers make good choices for the land, the water and wildlife. They also provide important cultural supports in each of the communities they operate in. As such, it is vital to ensure that everyone participating in these programs has the right skills to help their team meet its objectives.

Selecting the right training program for your team can be overwhelming. Many of the organizations surveyed before the meeting in Yellowknife reported that training was often done as needs arose with little long-term planning involved. Furthermore, funding for training is often project-based or intermittent, leading to further difficulties in planning. Lastly, the fact that many off-the-shelf courses – even basic first aid, for example – are often delivered by providers who are unfamiliar with local cultural and environmental contexts limits the overall outcomes that can be achieved in these deliveries.

Keeping training simple, relevant and appropriate for guardians is critical. For many, extensive classroom time will be untenable. This guide outlines strategies for finding balance within a training regime.

How was this guide developed?

This guide represents information shared between northern Indigenous stewardship program managers, educators, and the authors of this report, who have been involved in training stewards in Northern Canada for over a decade. This document is meant to be treated as a living document; much like our conversations in Yellowknife, it is important that we continue to learn from each other's experience.

How to manage, deliver, and evaluate effective guardian training programs

Introduction to effective guardian training

Many stewardship organizations spend a lot of time, effort, and money trying to develop and improve the skills within their institutions. It's not always clear what makes certain training programs more effective. It's equally unclear how to manage, deliver, and evaluate these training programs.

Fortunately, we don't need to reinvent the whole process for each new stewardship program. We can learn from the successes of other groups and build relationships that allow for the development of systems that improve learning outcomes while reducing work for managers, who are already often over-worked.

The following guide borrows heavily on the work Blyth & Bathe has done with Gámaþjónustan, an Icelandic waste management company, which contracted us to help improve employee retention through the development of economic and social sustainability standards for the company. This experience is buttressed with more than a decade training environmental stewards in Northern Canada and the shared knowledge of the attendees of the Yellowknife Workshop.

In this guide, we'll spell out what we have seen as the best practices for setting up training programs. If these steps are implemented in your program, your guardians will be on solid footing.

Scope

This guidebook covers these elements for developing and maintaining a guardian training program:

- Management
- Design and development
- Delivery
- Evaluation
- Progressive development

Purpose

The purpose of this guidebook is to outline best practices for training guardians. The guidebook was developed to provide a common process that program managers can use as a benchmark for their own training. At the same time, this document is meant to be a living document. It should be shared and built upon as groups develop new successful training programs.

Managing a guardian training program

A well-rounded training program must be part of an overall guardian program. The integration of the training program into the workings of the guardian institution as a whole should account for developing a clear understanding of who is responsible and accountable for all elements of the training program. Often, training elements are delivered when funding arises or when there is pressing need. Sometimes different departments within an organization have training programs and skills needs that overlap. Taking the time to assess training/skills requirements across whole organizations rather than just within a Lands or Stewardship department can allow for significant cost savings and increase efficiencies.

Similarly, there must be a clear process for managing all necessary resources. This is where training programs often encounter critical issues. It's not enough to just get students into a classroom, as there are often challenges with both the delivery and the physical tools need for training.

Lastly, evaluating each phase of the training program is a key element that needs to be properly managed in order to ensure that guardians attain the required learning outcomes and so that the training program can be improved upon each iteration.

Responsibility and accountability

Managing a training program includes determining who is responsible and who is accountable for each element of the program. These may be the same person or different people. The person who is responsible "supplies or performs that aspect of the training" and is the instructor, who is often a contractor from outside of the organization. The person who is accountable "answers for that aspect of the training" and is generally a manager working within the organization.

Aspects of a guardian training program

A guardian training program should include provisions for:

- Establishing a system for managing and administering the program in accordance with goals of the institution and the community's standards.
- Designing and developing training in an appropriate manner that relies on best practices, and recognizes social and environmental contexts in which trainees learn and will be working.
- Delivery of training by competent instructors in an environment that is appropriate for training.
- Evaluating the training to determine its effectiveness.
- Creating and maintaining a continuous improvement system for the training and training program.
- Documenting and keeping records for all aspects of the training program.
- Creating a written training program that documents all of the above.

Managing resources

It should go without saying that you will need personnel to administer and manage the training program. This will involve finding instructors with expertise in the subject matter and who have appropriate technical information and resources for developing/providing training on the required topics. Furthermore, there will need to be ample consideration of budgets and location. It has been repeatedly shown that some of the best learning outcomes happen when students are trained on the land in a culturally appropriate manner. Unfortunately, this can be astronomically expensive. Finding a balance between what is seen as best practice and what is acceptable within budget limitations will be an important task for any program manager.

Training program evaluation

During the workshop in Yellowknife and the pre-workshop interviews, participants noted that the "one-off" nature of much of the training provided for guardians leads to a lack of proper

evaluation. As such, our ability to articulate how to improve what is currently being offered is limited.

To ensure that a program is able to achieve its goals, many elements of the training program must be evaluated. This is to say that evaluation is not limited to students and their test scores. It should include all training processes (including training goals, learning objectives, content, methods, and whether content and methods support the learning objectives), training environments, and training effectiveness.

Instructors and delivery need to be evaluated, even in courses as common as First Aid. The results of the evaluation will support the general plan for development, including a plan for regular needs assessments and to promote lifelong learning.

Developing effective training

So how do you know when it's time to develop a training program? And what should you do if it *IS* time to develop a program? Do you want to design and develop or should you bring in outside providers?

Training needs analysis

Whether you have a new crop of guardians ready to join your team or you are just setting out with a guardian program, it is important to take stock of what your team's needs will be. It's easy to assume a little training can fix any gaps and prepare your crew for everything they will face in their work. That's not always true. Before you rush into training creation, and possibly waste a lot of time and money, it's best to analyze the situation more closely. This is where a training needs analysis comes in. In general terms, we can break the training needs analysis down into two phases:

- Is training the right solution for the current skill needs?
- If the training is the best solution, then gather information that will help deliver effective training.

These phases of the training needs analysis are discussed below.

Is training needed and will it fix the problem?

Before jumping into creating/offering training, it is critical to analyze the situation why training is being considered in the first place. With the rush to provide training, you may waste money on training development and delivery when training isn't the best way solve the problems faced by your organization. Thus, there is the risk of wrongly putting resources into training development, ignoring a different aspect of the situation, and possibly leaving a skill gap in place.

For example, say a new guardian gets into trouble on thin ice and has to be rescued. During the incident debrief, it is noted that ice safety and rescue training could have prevented the incident or limited the severity as rescue response would have been better co-ordinated and

more effective. You can create/offer training for guardians operating on ice, telling them how to be careful of dangerous ice conditions. Or, you can perform a training needs analysis and decide that it would be more effective to make rules about who can travel during certain ice conditions, control the hazard, and skip the training. Now resources that would have been used for expensive ice safety training can be more effectively redirected to more pressing training needs. Obviously, this is a simple example, and there are more reasons why training may or may not be needed.

Here are some things to consider at this point:

- Can you change how the work is done instead of developing training?
- Are there elements of a guardian's work that are hazardous because of lack of appropriate skills? If so, can these be removed or redesigned?
- Is it possible to teach skills through mentorship on the job instead of providing training?
- Are there any factors that currently impact a guardian's ability or desire to undertake training or develop new skills? For example, if someone needs to take time off work to take a course, they may choose to skip the training for economic reasons. This may then limit their ability to work safely or learn how to use tools that would improve their effectiveness as a guardian.

If training is needed: Gather data!
The next phase of the training needs analysis is to gather data that will help design, develop, and deliver better training. Information to gather at this point includes:

- What the trainees should know or be able to do after the training is complete
- Characteristics of the trainees, including:
    - Previous/existing knowledge
    - Current/existing skills and abilities
    - Language preference (speaking and listening)
    - Education (including past positive and negative experience with education systems)
    - Culture and community
    - Literacy
    - Preferred learning methods
    - Interest in training topic/reason for interest
- Site-specific information to include in the training (should it be done on the land?)
- Any existing relevant job analyses, including safety analyses

Learning Objectives
Once the needs analysis is completed, training is determined appropriate, and all the relevant data has been gathered, it's time to think about learning objectives. Learning objectives are the skills a guardian should know or be able to do when training is complete. It's the reason for

providing training. Once the learning objectives have been decided upon, they'll function as a roadmap for everything else that needs to be done. Next, it is time to develop training programs that are intended to help employees satisfy the learning objective. Learning objectives can be used to let trainees know what the training is intended to teach them and what they're expected to be able to do when the training is over. They can also be used to select training providers and provide a learning roadmap for guardians.

In our experience, many organizations begin creating training plans before they develop clear learning objectives for their staff. This leads to expensive and irrelevant courses that don't solve the most important skills gaps. Even if the course selected is the right one, without clear objectives it is possible that the delivery method will not be appropriate for the group, so it is important to review the data collected in the needs analysis at this time as well.

In the past, we've found that breaking the learning objective down into four discrete parts was helpful:

Student

This is the "who" of the training objective. It is not always possible or even desirable for everyone in an organization to have the same skill set. Each learning objective should state something that the trainee should be able to do after the training. Don't fall into writing learning objectives that simply explain the content of the training. Here it is important to be clear on which team members need each skill.

Skill

This is the "what" of the training objective. Every learning objective should state something that the employee must be able to do. This may be something as simple as following a monitoring protocol or something requiring cultural and physical knowledge, such as performing a traditional activity. As this is something the trainee must perform, the skill should be an observable behaviour, not something that's unobservable or subjective. This underlying subjective knowledge can be hard to test for, especially for guardians in their varied roles in their communities.

EcoCanada's Environmental Monitor core skills checklist can be used as a foundation for developing an organization's skills requirements list.[3]

Setting & Action

This is the "where and how" of the training objective. Many times, the trainee will have to perform the action or behaviour of the learning objective in a number of different contexts. Here it is important to describe both the context or setting and the action, as the action may change between different locations or seasons.

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[3] https://www.eco.ca/wp-content/uploads/BEAHR-NOS-Environmental-Monitor-CORE.pdf

Degree

This is the "how well" of the training objective. This describes how well the employee must perform or understand the behaviour. For example, some guardians collect biological samples and need to follow rigorous protocols. Their managers, on the other hand, may be expected to understand the fundamentals of this sampling protocol but don't need such in-depth knowledge. Tailoring the training to meet the required degree can both increase training efficiency and improve student success.

Honing the Learning Objectives

These are some things to consider when deciding on learning objectives:

Objectives should be clear. Letting guardians know what the target is will help them to achieve the training objective and provide them with vital agency in the vision for both themselves and their institution.

It is important that a learning objective indicates a measurable goal that a trainee can meet. It is easiest to do this by making the objectives measurable through an action or activities that managers can observe and objectively determine whether the trainee has satisfied the learning objective.

When a trainee begins a course, it is imperative that the learning objective is attainable. This isn't to say that trainees shouldn't be challenged or placed in courses where they may fail, but that consideration must be taken regarding the trainee's current ability to pass the course successfully. Setting someone up for failure can be catastrophic and can completely derail their learning ambitions. Similarly, training objectives that are too easily attained may disrupt workflow and may indicate that training is not necessary.

Often, training is offered because funding becomes available for certain courses. We have seen it happen too many times that an organization jumps at the chance to have a course delivered despite the irrelevance of the objective for the community's needs. Training should be something that is relevant to the guardian's work so they see the value of learning.

Lastly, make sure objectives are taught in a timely manner. This can be difficult as it can be hard to time training with skills needs, but this is another issue that we have seen repeatedly. For example, we may know that there will be demand for certain skills two years from now and that there is funding in place to do that training. If the training is help too soon, trainees will forget these skills before they get a chance to practice them or may move onto other jobs before the work starts.

Prerequisites

After analyzing the current skills within the organization and creating learning objectives, take some time to consider any prerequisites that will be necessary for the training. Again, we don't want to set people up to fail, and we do want to provide them with a clear path for skills

development. What experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities will the guardians need even before they begin each training element so that they can perform well and have a fair shot at satisfying the learning objectives?

Training program design

With learning objectives in order, and any prerequisites identified, it's time to design and develop the training program.

Selecting the mode of delivery

Many of us have been conditioned to expect skill development and training to operate in the traditional classroom model. The truth is that there are many options, and often these are more effective. Here are some examples of delivery modes. These shouldn't be seen as mutually exclusive, as mixing up the delivery modes often works well.

- Instructor-led lectures
- Web-based videos or courses
- Mentoring on the job
- Team discussions/Case studies
- Exercises performed on the job
- Webinars

Each of these methods has some advantages and disadvantages for particular applications. For each training objective, you should try to select the most appropriate training delivery method (or a mix of delivery methods).

Continuous development strategy

Now that the training program is rolled out, it is important to periodically review it to ensure that it is still up-to-date and effective at delivering the learning objectives. Does it need to be revised? It helps to begin planning for updates to the training program early on, as this will make it easier to keep tabs on changes in skills needs while at the same time providing space for the trainees to be engaged in a lifelong learning plan.

Delivering Effective Training

Effective Instructors

Effective instructors should:

- Have interdisciplinary and subject matter expertise
- Have strong people skills
- Have training in multiple methods of instruction
- Have awareness of trauma-informed practice
- Have awareness of health and wellness challenges faced by guardians
- Be actively improving their skills through engagement in the field

- Be comfortable teaching in multiple contexts

It should be obvious that instructors need to be subject matter experts, but that isn't the whole story. Instructors of even the most standard courses need to be aware of the context in which trainees live and work. This both allows them to understand students' challenges and strengths while offering possible points of connection between the student and instructor which improve learning outcomes.

Training Delivery

Two things the trainer should pay especially close attention to while delivering training are:

- Applying adult learning principles
- Fostering communication and ensuring adequate feedback

Adult Learning Principles

The trainer should use adult learning principles while leading the training. Depending on where you look, you'll see slightly different sets of adult learning principles. One of the most cited lists of adult learning principles comes from the theorist Malcom Knowles[4] (this set focuses on traits of the adult learners that the trainer should appeal to). According to this list, adult learners:

- Are self-directed
- Have life experiences
- Are goal-oriented
- Are task-oriented
- Want to learn within their own schedule
- Learn when motivated
- Want to feel respected

While these are traits are generally applicable, an experienced trainer ought to be able to assess which of the trainees don't fit into this mould. In the training environment it may be necessary to change tactics based on student needs, experience and learning styles.

Communication and Feedback

When guardian training is being organized or developed, it's important to provide opportunities for communication with the trainees. This includes allowing for input in the planning stages, feedback during and after the course, and coaching or guiding employees as they learn to perform new skills. Trainers and managers must foster an environment that encourages dialogue. To do this, try to focus on asking guardians questions instead of merely telling them what is planned for them. Given the opportunity, they often come up with novel ideas.

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[4] Knowles, Malcolm. "Adult learning processes: Pedagogy and andragogy." *Religious Education* 72.2 (1977): 202-211.

Evaluating guardian training

During the Yellowknife workshop, the topic of evaluating training programs was highlighted as an important process that often gets overlooked. Often it is due to the one-off nature of training programs, but if there is an expectation that a guardian program will continue long term, there should be a similar expectation for training. As such it is imperative that each training element is evaluated as to whether the training was effective. Are the guardians learning from the training? Does the training lead to the desired development in their skills? Does an individual guardian need additional help after the training? Do you need to modify the training or deliver it again?

Evaluation Strategies

Managing guardian training should require familiarity with carrying out the evaluation strategies created during the training planning phase. The evaluation strategies will change depending on the size of the group and type of training but could include:

- Pre-assessment of skills
- Trainee/trainer reaction survey or interview
- Methods for observing new skills on the job
- Methods for evaluating the effect of training on stewardship goals

Evaluation Tasks

It's common to think of evaluation in stages. Evaluation typically occurs both right after the training and in the weeks or months following the training. If the goal is to deliver effective training that builds the guardian's skill set, then it is necessary to confirm that the training was effective. One of the most common ways to do this is to use the following four factors for evaluation.[5]

Reaction to training

Did the trainee enjoy the course? Did they feel like they learned something of value? Depending on the group, it may be best to evaluate this factor during or right after the course. This can be done by observing the trainee during the course, asking their opinions in an exit interview, or handing out surveys. Many standard courses finish with a paper-based student evaluation, but even when confidentiality is ensured, students may not feel comfortable offering any critiques. In our experience, showing students how the data is anonymized and then used can improve the number and quality of responses.

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[5] Kirkpatrick, Donald, and James Kirkpatrick. *Evaluating training programs: The four levels*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006.

Observing on-the-job skills

In the weeks and months after the training, observing the guardian in action is one of the best ways to see if the skills taught in the training are being put to good use. Are they correctly applying the knowledge, skills, abilities, or attitudes the training was intended to convey?

This can be done during regular meetings, but it will likely be best observed during the actual work activities in which the trainee would be expected to use the new skills. This is another example of why it is important for managers to have some familiarity of the skills that guardians are using and that managers should plan to spend some time observing them in action.

This stage of the evaluation includes providing recognition to trainees who are applying their new skills. Reinforcing the goals of the learning objectives through positive recognition of a trainee's skill development helps to cement in the new skills and strengthens their commitment to lifelong learning.

Analyzing impact on stewardship targets

It's also important to track key stewardship targets after the training, compare these indicators to measurements made before the training, and try to determine if the training program had any impact.

Remember, any claims that the time and effort that went into the training had an impact will be more persuasive with data from before and after the training.

Continuous improvement of training

Once again, evaluation isn't done just for it the sake of it. Instead, use the evaluation data to determine if the training has been effective or not, and whether it can be improved. If the data suggests that any aspect of the training can be improved, work to make the training program more effective. This process should be reoccurring throughout the training program, providing an avenue for the training program to build on its successes and learn from stumbling blocks.

Conclusion

This guide provides a basic roadmap for managing all stages of a training program, hopefully making it easier for stewardship organizations to carry out their important work and for the staff of those organizations to have a clear view of their future and their roles in the organization.

We hope this guide has been informative and wish you well as you begin the process of building the skill level in your existing organization. Know that well-administered training programs bring with them a significant positive return on investment, making the investment put into stewardship worth it many times over.

Appendix A: Workshop Participant List

Name	Organization
Kelsey Wrightson	Dechinta
Chloe Brogan	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
Jana Kotaska	Coastal Stewardship Network
Kristen Tanche	Dehcho First Nations
Clare Kines	Parks Canada Agency
Prairie Desjarlais	Thaidene Nëné
Kristielyn Jones	Smith's Landing First Nation
Patrick Riley	K'atl'odeeche First Nation
Jeffrey Fabian	K'atl'odeeche First Nation
Gloria Enzoe	Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation
Joshua Barichello	Ross River Dena Council
Deborah Simmons	Ɂehdzo Got'ı̨nę Gots'ę́ Nákedı (Sahtú Renewable Resource Board)
Michael Birlea	Tłı̨chǫ Government
Corrine Porter	Dena Kayeh Institute
Daniel Taukie	Nunavut Tunngavik
Mary Denniston	Nunatsiavut Government
Stephen Kakfwi	Kakfwi & Associates Ltd. / Indigenous Leadership Initiative
Tamara Tarasoff	Erebus and Terror Guardian Program, Gjoa Haven
Morgan Voyageur	Dene Land & Resource Management
Amos Scott	Adze Studios
Justina Black	Dechinta
Harry Harrison	Fort Good Hope Renewable Resources Council
Elodie Button	Coastal First Nations	Great Bear Initiative
Jennifer Schine	Tides Canada
Rodd Laing	Nunatsiavut Government
Terrel Knaptonpain	Tłı̨chǫ Government
Tracey Williams	Nature United
Wesley Johnston	Environment Canada
Shari Fox	Ittaq Heritage and Research Centre / University of Colorado
Steve Ellis	Tides Canada
Nicole Hardisty	Dehcho First Nations
Willie Aglukkaq	Erebus and Terror Guardian Program, Gjoa Haven