



COMMON GROUND RESEARCH FORUM

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CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
CONTENTS	2
PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	3
The Scope of Research	3
Focus of the Research	3
Role of the Common Ground Research Forum in “Common Ground”	4
PURPOSE	5
STRATEGY	6
1. Promulgation	6
1.1 Academic Presentations	7
1.2 Community Dissemination	9
2. Education and Awareness	11
2.1 Exhibits and Installations.....	11
2.2 Performance and Theatre	12
2.3 Guided Tours and Site-specific Events	13
2.4 Public Lectures and Storytelling	14
2.5 Working and Artistic Models	15
2.6 Curriculum Development.....	17
2.7 Archival databases & resource centres	17
3. Participatory Communication	19
3.1 Meetings.....	19
3.2 Community-based Archives / Archival Database.....	21
3.3 Feasts	21
4. Traditional and New Media	23
4.1 Print Media	23
4.2 News reports and press releases.....	23
4.3 Radio & Television	24
4.4 Video, DVD & CD-ROM Production	24
4.5 Web.....	24
ASSESSMENT MEASURES	27
Quantitative Measures	27
Qualitative Measures	28
SUMMARY	29

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

THE SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The Common Ground Research Forum (CGRF) is a Community – University Research Alliance (CURA) project funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Its purpose is to understand and build capacity for cross-cultural collaboration and social learning for regional sustainability in Kenora, Ontario.

The project began in early 2009 and will run through February 2014. During this research period, it is anticipated that up to seven Masters theses and one Doctoral thesis will be produced. The CGRF also supports one post-Doctoral researcher, and several senior undergraduate students. All graduate students are enrolled at the Natural Resources Institute at the University of Manitoba, while undergraduate students are in the Environmental Studies program at the University of Winnipeg.

In addition to academic research, the CGRF also supports community-initiated research. In these projects, community members, groups or organizations undertake projects related to Common Ground themes. The CGRF has acted as both sole and partial sponsor to numerous community-led projects, covering topics related to arts and culture, resource management, traditional knowledge transfer, and environmental stewardship.

FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

The CGRF project has both a broad and a narrow focus of research. Broadly, the CGRF supports research that builds capacity for cross-cultural collaboration in Kenora, Ontario. Many of its community-initiated research projects provide opportunities for broad-based, local and regional cross-cultural exchange and establishment or reinforcement of cross-cultural social cohesion.

Narrowly, the CGRF research focuses on a tract of co-managed heritage land situated in the heart of the municipality of Kenora. The land, known locally as “Common Ground,” comprises approximately 450 acres (180 hectares) on Tunnel Island, Old Fort Island, and an adjacent mainland heritage property, Bigsby’s Rat Portage.

The land is owned and managed by a stewardship corporation, the Rat Portage Common Ground Conservation Organization (RPCGCO). The RPCGCO is a historically important entity for Kenora, the province of Ontario, and Canada, in that it represents one of the first examples of a modern-day attempt at nation-to-nation, equal land sharing between Aboriginal and settler populations.

The board of directors of the RPCGCO is comprised equally of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interests. The City of Kenora appoints four delegates, while the four remaining seats are filled by the Grand Chief of Treaty #3 and the Chiefs of the three

Common Ground partner First Nations: Obashkaandaagaang First Nation, Ochiichagwe'babigo'ining Ojibway Nation and Wauzhushk Onigum Nation. These particular First Nations are partners in "Common Ground" because the land lies within the region of overlap of all three Nations' traditional territories.

ROLE OF THE COMMON GROUND RESEARCH FORUM IN "COMMON GROUND"

The Common Ground Research Forum is wholly independent of the Rat Portage Common Ground Conservation Organization. However, the CGRF does provide academic research in support of the nascent RPCGCO, offering the fledgling corporation a means by which it can engage in research into co-management governance issues, cross-cultural co-management of resources, and any other topics of relevance.

The Common Ground Research Forum has also been at the forefront of public communications regarding Common Ground as, at its inception in early 2009, the Rat Portage Common Ground Conservation Organization was an emerging, and not fully functioning entity. As the CGRF began its local work in Kenora, it was necessary to do a great deal of public outreach and education to ensure project participants understood the distinction between the two entities (the research body versus the owner / management entity), and also understood the role of the CGRF with respect to the Tunnel Island Common Ground.

It is anticipated that as the RPCGCO matures and begins investing in its own public communications and outreach strategy, the CGRF will do less public communication specifically about the management and day to day affairs of the Tunnel Island Common Ground, and will instead focus primarily on dissemination of project research results.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Communications Strategy (the “Strategy”) is to map out the means by which the Common Ground Research Forum and its participants and partners will disseminate research results, engage the public and academic peers in these results, and assess the efficacy and success of the research program. Many of the communications techniques described herein may also be of use to active researchers, and may contribute to individual projects’ research work plans.

The Strategy covers aspects of academic and community-based dissemination of results, as well as recommended methods for communicating educational materials derived from original CGRF research, methods for conducting participatory and non-participatory outreach, and suggested means of communicating research results and concepts using both traditional and new media.

Much of the research to support this Strategy was prepared by CGRF undergraduate student, Dawn Fraser under the supervision of Dr. Alan Diduck. In early 2010, Dawn researched over 100 other CURA projects’ communications methods and compiled a comprehensive report on “best practices” and recommendations for the Common Ground Research Forum entitled Knowledge Sharing Methods in Community-University Research Alliance Projects: In Search of Best Practices.

Her report is available online as a downloadable PDF from the CGRF website: <http://www.cgrf.ca/research-reports/>.

STRATEGY

1. PROMULGATION

Promulgation refers to the unidirectional communication of research results to both academic and non-academic audiences. Information flows from the research body – the Common Ground Research Forum – to the recipient audience.

From Knowledge Sharing Methods in Community-University Research Alliance Projects: In Search of Best Practices:

“Promulgating methods include presentations of research to an academic body or at a conference, poster presentations and installations, reports and the publishing of books and papers in academic journals. Such methods are typically used for knowledge dissemination purposes.”

The following sections - Academic Presentations and Community Dissemination - cover the recommended methods to be used by Common Ground Research Forum researchers and project partners to promulgate research results to either an Academic or a Community audience.

1.1 Academic Presentations

1.1.1 Conferences

Academic researchers, including students, post-docs and project investigators, are encouraged to present their findings at both community-based conferences and scholarly symposia, and budget resources have been allocated to support travel (for both community and academic team members) to such events.

Slide shows and other supporting materials for presentations given at academic conferences will be made available for public viewing through the CGRF website.

1.1.2 Posters / installations / exhibits

As per item 1 above, posters and other installations or exhibits may be presented at scholarly or community-based conferences and symposia. Electronic copies of supporting materials shall be posted to the CGRF website for public access.

1.1.3 Reports

All academic and technical reports produced by CGRF researchers will be posted to the CGRF website, respecting that all CGRF research products must conform to established ethics guidelines, and that some limitations to public access may be placed upon culturally sensitive content.

Reports will be shared with peers in the setting that is most appropriate to the context of their production. For example, where a report is produced that satisfies required student coursework, that report should be shared with the course instructor and / or fellow students and academic peers, as well as with CGRF members and partners.

1.1.4 Books

It is anticipated that one or more books both of academic and non-academic bent may be produced based on research conducted through the Common Ground Research Forum.

Any such book production and publication shall be thoroughly reviewed and vetted by the Common Ground Research Forum Executive Committee and will be required to meet University of Manitoba / University of Winnipeg ethics approval.

Books may be works of a single author or multiple authors, and should be co-produced by academic and community researchers.

1.1.5 Journal publications

Individual and team-based publications will be produced throughout the project's life for peer-reviewed scholarly journals (e.g., *Society and Natural Resources*, *Human Ecology*, and *Environmental Management*), community-based newsletters (e.g., the

Northern Ontario Municipal Association newsletter), and mass media outlets (e.g., *Kenora Daily Miner and News*).

1.1.6 Theses

Each graduate student will produce a thesis as part of the degree requirements. The CGRF anticipates supporting one Doctoral candidate and seven Masters candidates, for a total of eight theses produced during the project lifetime.

1.2 Community Dissemination

1.2.1 Aim of community dissemination

Community dissemination is aimed at an audience with a wide spectrum of interests and backgrounds. It focuses on communicating fundamental messages, themes, concepts and results of Common Ground Research Forum research to that broad audience.

As compared to scholarly promulgation, community-based dissemination uses less technical language and focuses less on theoretical contributions made by the original research. It otherwise follows most of the same methods outlined in the preceding section.

One of the more important expectations for community dissemination is that it successfully conveys to the public the *processes* and *experiences* of cross-cultural collaboration experienced by project researchers and participants through each of the CGRF's academic and community-initiated research projects. Projects receiving funding through the CGRF are expected to share their results with the community as a condition of receiving funding.

1.2.2 Methods and researchers' responsibilities

Community dissemination methods may include community-based symposia and seminars, print, and multimedia methods. Exhibits, open house events, poster displays, will also be used to share results of specific projects as they are completed, or groups of projects, for example on an annual or semi-annual basis.

Single Project Dissemination Events

A researcher or research team may choose to hold a single, stand-alone public event such as an open house or presentation workshop to promote the results of the research at the conclusion of the project. The organization, promotion of, and reporting on such an event will be primarily the responsibility of the researcher or research team. Some assistance in promoting the event and accessing resources to facilitate the event's success is available through the CGRF Community Research Coordinator, but the event itself is primarily the responsibility of the research proponent.

Multi-project Dissemination Events

On the other hand, for projects that are ongoing, or are part of a larger research program external to the CGRF, or do not otherwise lend themselves well to a stand-alone public information sharing event, research results may instead be publicly promoted through an annual gathering or showcase of many projects simultaneously. For example, an annual partners' meeting or symposium will provide a community forum for posters and presentations on a number of projects undertaken throughout the year, and may be the best way to communicate the purpose and results of some of the larger or ongoing community-based research

projects. In such a case, the CGRF Community Research Coordinator will be responsible for organizing and promoting the event, while the research team will be responsible for preparing and presenting a poster or public presentation as an invitee to the event.

Other External Dissemination

The CGRF has identified specific partners who provide a variety of forums through which the results of the project may be shared on an ongoing basis. The City of Kenora and Grand Council Treaty #3 continue to provide briefings to other northwestern Ontario municipalities and First Nations through yearly meetings such as the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, and the Treaty 3 assemblies. As well, the CGRF continues to participate in presenting regular updates to business community groups like the Rotary Club of Kenora. The Northern Ontario Sustainable Communities Partnership is an example of a regional partner through whom the CGRF also may communicate directly with other communities in the region about the project.

2. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

“Education methods are those used by the project partners to educate themselves, each other, community groups at large and the general public. Education methods cover the spectrum from knowledge dissemination to co-production of knowledge purposes, though they are mostly focused on knowledge transfer and knowledge mobilization efforts. Education audiences tend to be community partners, community groups, schools and especially the general public of all ages.

Education methods [may be] outcomes themselves, such as museum or art exhibits, a play or other performance piece, educational materials or tools like curriculum lesson plans, guided tours, working or artistic models, or the creation of a post-secondary course.”¹

The following seven sections (b.i.) through (b.vii.) cover the recommended education methods to be used by CGRF researchers. In many cases, a community partner may have a limited ability to extend the scope of their work beyond the core project to include production of curriculum or other educational materials. The CGRF will strive to partner student researchers with community projects as often as possible to ensure the community partner has adequate support to develop as many educational and secondary outputs from their research or work as possible.

2.1 Exhibits and Installations

For projects that have a strong visual or artistic component, an exhibit or installation at a museum, art gallery or other public place is a recommended means of sharing project results with the community-at-large. The CGRF primary research focus for all projects involving an exhibit or installation will be on the process of creating the works to be exhibited or on the creation of the exhibit or installation itself, with a secondary focus on outcomes realized during the exhibit or installation.

One example of this type of communication of a final research product is the CGRF-funded participatory community art project, *Finding Common Ground Through Creativity*.² In this project, art works were produced throughout the community via a series of workshops over many months (the primary research focus). The final product was revealed at an exhibition and final workshop during which participants reviewed and reflected on the work produced and the process of cross-cultural artistic creation through the project (secondary focus on outcomes).

¹ Fraser, Dawn and Diduck, Alan. (2010). Knowledge Sharing Methods in Community-University Research Alliance Projects: In Search of Best Practices. Retrieved from <http://www.cgrf.ca/research-reports/>

² See <http://www.cgrf.ca/lowac>

In some cases, the exhibit or installation may, itself, be the project. An example of this type of project is the Lake of the Woods Museum's project *Mijim: Traditional Foods of the Lake of the Woods Anishinaabeg*, which was also supported by the Common Ground Research Forum.³

The CGRF values secondary research outcomes related to public reactions to exhibits and installations. Regardless of whether the exhibit or installation is itself the project, or is a public display of a finished product, the CGRF recommends that any exhibit or installation of a finished project should offer opportunities for audience participation or commentary on the exhibit, whether through an interactive public launch event or on-site "guest book" or other means. In this way, the cross-cultural knowledge transfer processes inherent in the project may be extended to an audience broader than just those people who participated directly in the creation of the final product, exhibit or installation.

Where final project productions or research results are expected to be shared as a public exhibition or installation, proponents will be required to provide a summary report, exit interview, or other means of reporting on project outcomes specifically related to the exhibit or installation, to the CGRF Executive. These conditions will be detailed in the Statement of Work for the project prior to advancing funds.

2.2 Performance and Theatre

Theatrical and other physical performances may be suitable outputs for some projects. Similar to Exhibitions and Installations, theatrical and physical performance may represent a response to results of a project, or the performance may, itself, be the final output for a project.

In either case, again, the performance should offer opportunities for public input, reflection or commentary via a guest book, on-site video diary, or other means.

Reporting conditions for a project whose outputs involve a theatrical or physical performance will be detailed in the Statement of Work for that project. Again, reflection on both the process of creating the performance and the results of the performance itself will be important components of the reporting on the project outcomes.

³ <http://www.cgrf.ca/lake-of-the-woods-museum>

2.3 Guided Tours and Site-specific Events

2.3.1 Guided Tours

Given that the narrow focus of research for the Common Ground Research Forum is a physical place – the Tunnel Island Common Ground – many opportunities exist to do on-site public outreach and education on Tunnel Island, Old Fort Island, and Bigsby’s Rat Portage in conjunction with the landowners, the Rat Portage Common Ground Conservation Organization. The RPCGCO has been in a nascent state through at least the first half of the CGRF project, and as of early 2011 has yet to coordinate formal tours of the site. For this reason, members of the CGRF have been conducting informal tours of Tunnel Island and the Common Ground lands at the request of community groups since the inception of the CGRF in early 2009.

The pretext for tours of Tunnel Island to date (March 2011) has generally been external to the direct research mandate of the CGRF but has targeted the CGRF goal of increasing broad-based public support and understanding of Common Ground themes, goals, and the Common Ground Research Forum’s involvement in Common Ground. For this reason, tours have involved CGRF personnel.

For example, in 2010 Executive member Cuyler Cotton and the Research Coordinator, Teika Newton, conducted tours of Tunnel Island for students of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, students of Seven Generations Education Institute, and the Lake of the Woods Arts Collective. The latter tour was done in support of the LOWAC – CGRF community-based project *Finding Common Ground Through Creativity*, but tours for the student groups were conducted purely to support the CGRF’s broad outreach strategy. Tours focused on the shared history of the land, historical uses and significance of the land, and the current significance of the land as the site to enact principles of Common Ground.

For the latter half of the CGRF project lifetime, it is anticipated that the RPCGCO will begin to take on the responsibility for coordinating public tours of the Common Ground lands. However, CGRF personnel may continue to be involved in conducting these tours at the request of the RPCGCO.

Additionally, as results of original research specific to the Common Ground lands emerge from CGRF students and community researchers, the researchers will be encouraged to offer content to already established guided tours or to assist in creating new tours.

Tours may also be developed for other sites other than Tunnel Island elsewhere in the partner communities in conjunction with student or community-initiated research projects. Such tours would be developed as part of the anticipated outputs of the project and the details of delivery would be included in the Statement of Work for that project.

2.3.2 Site-Specific Events

Site-specific educational events may take place on any of the Common Ground lands or at significant locations elsewhere within the partner communities. Such events may include feasts, ceremonies, and teaching sessions conducted on the land. These events may occur at the request of project partners, or as part of the deliverables for a given project.

For example, the project's partner communities may request CGRF research personnel contribute to or participate in community-based teaching events or ceremonies such as storytelling sessions or feasts.

2.4 Public Lectures and Storytelling

2.4.1 Public Lectures

Public lectures represent an excellent method for communicating information about CGRF research and project outcomes. Public lectures may be a component of the dissemination strategy for a given project, i.e. upon project completion, the researcher will conduct a public lecture in the community.

Public lectures also represent a means by which the general public or specific groups or organizations can be kept apprised of ongoing work. For example, the Community Research Coordinator provides annual or semi-annual updates on CGRF activities to community groups such as the Rotary Club by requesting to be an invited speaker at club meetings.

Finally, annual events such as a CGRF symposium or the Annual Partners' Meeting may provide a suitable venue to conduct a public lecture event, for example, an evening of talks by all active CGRF researchers.

2.4.2 Storytelling

Storytelling in Anishinaabe culture is an important tool in traditional education. Through the sharing of stories, a community shares and understands important morals, traditions and life lessons. Often, this is the means by which elders impart wisdom to others in the community, and there are specific times and seasons during which stories are shared.

In the settler tradition, storytelling has a less auspicious role in communicating cultural values and traditions, but is still viewed as a delightful and powerful way to share ideas and to build community cohesiveness.

Storytelling may play a variety of roles within the CGRF. First, it may be used as a more welcoming, less scholarly alternative to more formal public lectures as a means of conveying research results or information learned through community-based research. Members of the both settler and Aboriginal communities may feel

more comfortable sharing personal stories, insights and information in the less formal setting of a storytelling event than in other venues (e.g. workshops, public lectures, symposia). This increased comfort would enable more information to be shared and discussed, and more ideas to emerge. This could also be a powerful means by which children and youth, in particular, can be educated about CGRF research and Common Ground themes and goals.

It is important to consider storytelling as a mechanism for knowledge-transfer that differs cross-culturally. The very process and significance of storytelling itself – apart from the stories that are told - could become an important tool for building cross-cultural understanding and community cohesiveness. For example, settler members of an audience may not be familiar with storytelling as a tool for reinforcing community values or teaching lessons and may learn new processes or methods for sharing knowledge within the community by learning how to use this teaching tool more effectively.

Storytelling may be a way for CGRF researchers to engage community members in sharing information. For example, in the CGRF-supported community-based project *Historical Analysis of Lake Sturgeon on the Winnipeg River: A focus on the importance of lake sturgeon to area communities and an estimation of historical population levels on the Ontario portion of the Winnipeg River*, researchers invited elders from First Nations and municipalities surrounding the relevant areas of the Winnipeg River to an informal gathering on Old Fort Island. At this gathering, elders shared stories about their lives lived on and around the River, and their memories of fishing for sturgeon. In this way, the sharing of stories facilitated cross-cultural dialog and understanding. It also allowed more information to emerge as elders' memories were triggered by listening to one another's personal histories and recollections.

Similarly, storytelling may be an appropriate way to communicate specific project results with particular community members, or a larger storytelling event may be used as an alternative to a public symposium or lectures at an annual partners' meeting.

2.5 Working and Artistic Models

2.5.1 Maps

Maps are one type of anticipated output from Common Ground Research Forum research. Maps represent a physical depiction of information gathered from and held by a community or an individual. They may be annotated to include more information than can be coherently depicted on the map itself, or a series of maps may be collated to create an atlas containing a wealth of information linked to a particular landscape. This information can range from geophysical to socio-political, to cultural and historical.

As per University of Manitoba / University of Winnipeg research ethics requirements, maps produced as research outputs that contain information belonging to a community will ultimately be held by the partner community. Whenever possible, as ethics agreements allow, maps produced by CGRF researchers will be available for public viewing through the CGRF website. If the map(s) cannot be shared publicly through the CGRF website, the website will list places or ways to view maps that are produced by CGRF researchers.

2.5.2 Computer models, maps and virtual tours

In addition to physical, hard copy maps, CGRF researchers will likely create electronic or virtual maps and models. As with hard copy maps, as per ethics and community information sharing agreements, virtual maps and computer models or simulations, or directions for finding these tools, will be available via the CGRF website as they are produced.

Virtual tours are another possible CGRF output, and with online maps, may also serve as a potential research tool. A guided virtual tour of a particular landscape may be co-created by one or more community partners and CGRF personnel. For example, an online virtual tour of Tunnel Island or any other CGRF research landscape could be created, using video and audio footage. Content would be supplied at the discretion of the RPCGCO but production could be done by a CGRF student. Alternatively, information gathered through student research could provided the basis for an online film or virtual tour produced by a community organization.

Virtual tours or interactive online maps can also provide a means of engaging a broad public in contributing to discussion, dialog and information-sharing around a physical space. For example, an interactive online map may allow users to add comments or annotations, pinpointing particular sites of relevance or interest to a particular project.

Researchers dealing with site-specific information should consider the merits of using virtual tours and online maps as both tools for collecting data and a means of disseminating a finished product.

2.6 Curriculum Development

Curriculum development based on CGRF research is one of the short-term goals of the Common Ground Research Forum. Curriculum development based on the project's research is a tangible means of giving lasting, local life to the research results. From the CGRF funding proposal:

"[T]he purpose of our project is to understand and build capacity for cross-cultural collaboration and social learning for sustainability. ... The project will result in six short-term (within the life of the project) and four long-term (beyond the project life) outcomes. The short-term outcomes [include] an innovative curriculum and pilot project for place-based, cross-cultural, environmental education."

It is anticipated that in the final three years of the project (2012-2014) three action research projects will be undertaken to produce curricula and supporting materials for place-based, cross-cultural environmental education, using Common Ground as the land base. Projects will be aimed at the elementary, junior high, and postsecondary (college / senior undergraduate / masters) levels. The projects will involve elders, local and regional resource managers, academic researchers, educators, and students. The methods will include document reviews, interviews, meetings, workshops, focus groups, and transect walks and field observations.

All research, including community-initiated research, will be considered in terms of contributing content toward curriculum development at any of these academic levels.

Midway through year two of the project, the CGRF enlisted the aid of a post-secondary curriculum development partner in the Department of Education at the College Universitaire de Saint-Boniface. Negotiations are also underway with local education authorities in Kenora to contribute toward developing elementary and secondary curriculum for use in local and regional schools.

2.7 Archival databases & resource centres

Archival databases and resource centres represent physical spaces where the partner communities may hold the results of research co-produced by their citizens and the CGRF. These spaces will endure past the lifetime of the project itself, and when used properly, provide a living legacy of the research after the project completion. Good, working archives enable community members to access and use the unique information contained therein easily, and provide an excellent repository of local knowledge. Archives should not simply be storage spaces filled with abandoned content.

Archived data may be stored centrally, or it may be held in a variety of locations specific and relevant to a given project. Some examples of centralized spaces where CGRF research results may be held within the partner communities include municipal, First Nations, and Grand Council Treaty #3 archives, the Lake of the

Woods Museum, community or school libraries, or community and resource centres, such as Women's Place Kenora.

Information deriving from a specific First Nation community or municipality remains the property of that community and, in keeping with university ethics policies, such information will be delivered back to the contributing community following project completion.

Student and community researchers should attempt to ensure that research partner communities that will be receiving research results have, or establish the capacity to, appropriately store and access the information resulting from this research. CGRF researchers are encouraged to assist research partner communities in developing archival and accessibility plans for the research results as much as is possible and reasonable.

3. PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

“Participatory methods engage audiences to be active participants in the creation and sharing of knowledge. Common examples found in the CURA projects were workshops, seminars, forums and conferences. Such methods are highly suited for knowledge mobilization and co-production of knowledge purposes. Workshops have been especially fruitful, used as training sessions and as a means to facilitate new working groups...” (Fraser & Diduck, 2010)

3.1 Meetings

3.1.1 Annual partners meetings

The Common Ground Research Forum holds an annual symposium that includes a general business meeting for the project and presentations by project researchers and invited speakers. This meeting may take the form of a standard symposium, but in keeping with Anishinaabe tradition, it may also occur through a community feast led by project elders. Regardless of format, the annual gathering of partners is the principal vehicle through which the CGRF creates a broad, face-to-face exchange of information and allows for new relationships amongst CGRF partners to develop. Both symposium and feast events are open to the general public, potential new partner organizations and the media.

The business meeting allows the CGRF to evaluate the activities to date, to issue calls for student and community proposals to encourage specific project activities, and to devise research targets for the coming year. At these annual gatherings, recipients of CGRF supported research report on what they have been learning through their activities. This provides the opportunity for communication, dialogue and learning among project partners, representing diverse sectors of the local community and region who are involved in the projects and processes related to developing cross-cultural partnerships for sustainable economic development.

The CGRF also anticipates inviting to these events guest speakers from partner policy makers, such as Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Miiitigoog Corporation, to discuss their experiences in encouraging meaningful consultation between industry and local communities as well as establishing economic development partnerships.

3.1.2 Final symposium

The CGRF proposes that together with the Rat Portage Common Ground Conservation Organization it will hold a larger conference during year 5 which will focus on cross-cultural collaboration for sustainable economic development in the north and will include invited speakers, project partners, local community members and CGRF researchers.

3.1.3 Workshops and seminars

Project researchers often use workshops and seminars to engage research participants in the co-production of research. For example, the community participatory art project undertaken by the Lake of the Woods Arts Collective, *Finding Common Ground Through Creativity*, used a series of workshops as a means of bringing together artists from a diverse array of cultural and social backgrounds to co-create artistic works and share insights, ideas and perspectives on what it means to share place.

Similarly, workshops and seminars can also be a very efficient way of gathering an active audience that will utilize research results to their fullest potential. For example, a concluding workshop in which results of research are shared may present an opportunity to take those results a step farther by having participants develop a community action plan or define new policy directions based on the research results.

3.1.4 Business meetings and committees

Within the CGRF itself, member participation is ensured in part through committee membership.

The Common Ground Research Forum has an active executive board that meets quarterly. As per the Executive Committee Terms of Reference (2009), this group approves projects, reviews progress of projects, adapts approaches as necessary, makes policy decisions, allocates budget to the community projects, and facilitates project implementation. In addition there are two standing subcommittees, the Communications Subcommittee, and the Process & Approvals Subcommittee. The latter is charged with drafting procedural guidelines and vetting project proposals, while the former oversees communications and dissemination work.

The Executive Committee and standing subcommittees are comprised of members representing each of the partner First Nations, the City of Kenora, Grand Council Treaty #3, community partner organizations (2 reps), student researchers, and the Rat Portage Common Ground Conservation Organization. Three university investigators and the Community Research Coordinator complete the membership of the Executive and subcommittees.

The quarterly business meetings are an important means not only of communicating project updates to partner communities and organizations through their board representatives, but also of engaging these partners in shaping and conducting the research itself. Board members are able to openly exchange information and debate ideas in this forum, and new directions for research are often set through this process of group exchange.

Externally to the CGRF, members also sit on various other academic, municipal and professional committees and boards, including those for other CGRF partner organizations. In each of these external forums, CGRF members are encouraged to

actively promote the CGRF research program and its results. Where possible and appropriate, CGRF researchers should aim to engage colleagues on external boards to discuss and join in the CGRF project.

3.2 Community-based Archives / Archival Database

Although the topic of community archival databases has been covered in some detail in the Strategy, section b. Education and Awareness, subsection vii., it is worth noting that community archives and archival databases should not be treated as static repositories of information, but should be used as participatory tools for information-sharing.

In addition to allowing community users access to unique information generated by, and belonging to that community, archives should provide a gathering point for people to exchange knowledge held personally, as well as within the archives. The archive should seek out community contributions on an ongoing basis.

3.3 Feasts

Feasts have been an integral part of the participatory engagement of CGRF partners since the project's inception. Feasts are traditional Anishinaabe ceremonies that allow people to mark the passage of the seasons, give thanks to the Creator for the bounty and support of the land, ask questions of the Spirit Guides, and seek direction on issues of mutual importance.

During the grant proposal-writing period in September 2008, a feast was held to celebrate the development of the proposal. At this event, one participant noted that the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal attendees clustered at either side of the drum. Somewhat tongue in cheek, that participant went on to note that by the end of the project the two groups would be intermingled and interacting much more closely. This meeting reflected the existence of the two solitudes this project is trying to break down, and reinforces the importance of face-to-face meetings as a communications vehicle.

Since 2007, spring and fall feasts have been held on Tunnel Island. The Common Ground spring and fall feasts have become a very important means of gathering partners of the CGRF, as well as supporters of the incipient Rat Portage Common Ground Conservation Organization. The Common Ground partners take turns hosting feasts with each of the three First Nations, Grand Council Treaty 3, and the City of Kenora taking it in turn to invite a drum and singers, to cover the attendant honorarium fees, and to provide a community feast.

These feasts have become, as envisioned in 2008, a means of bridging two historical cultural solitudes, with members of settler, Metis and Aboriginal communities eagerly participating in these important traditional ceremonies. Each feast sees greater attendance than the last, and the notion of using feasts as a means of building community cohesion and understanding has caught on broadly within all cultural segments of the population in Kenora.

Since the project's inception, the CGRF has come to play an instrumental role in assisting with logistical coordination of the Common Ground spring and fall feasts, including inviting guests, ensuring appropriate permits are acquired, and setting up tables, waste bins, and so on.

In October 2010, the CGRF was able to offer planning advice and recommendations to the organizers of the first ever Kenora community fall feast, organized by the Kenora detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police, the Treaty 3 Police, Ne Chee Friendship Centre, and the Kenora Fellowship Centre homeless shelter, along with other partners. This was an event conducted according to Anishinaabe tradition, and was honoured by hundreds of patrons of many backgrounds, again reinforcing the notion that through community feasts and similar festive and ceremonial gatherings, community cohesion continues to grow.

4. TRADITIONAL AND NEW MEDIA

This section covers a range of communication tools available to CGRF researchers to use for results dissemination. Traditional media are best used for promulgation, and to some extent education, whereas New Media tools offer opportunities for audience participation and interaction.

4.1 Print Media

Print media includes all the traditional publication formats such as books, newsletters, journal and magazine publications, brochures, maps and atlases. Most of these tools have been discussed elsewhere in the Strategy (section a. Promulgation, subsection i.).

However it bears repeating that student and community researchers should consider these time-honored communication devices for disseminating research results. For example, a collection of local stories bound in a single volume as a book can become an excellent way to both safeguard information and to share it with a very broad audience. In some instances, a simple pamphlet, brochure, or rack-card synopsis of research results, shared at municipal buildings like museums, libraries, and City Hall, can become a convenient and accessible means of conveying information to the general public.

Compilation and publication of print materials can be done both as components of projects, as entire projects, or in addition to projects. The CGRF Community Research Coordinator and Communications Subcommittee can offer suggestions and assistance in determining suitability and style of print media.

4.2 News reports and press releases

From time to time, the CGRF issues statements to the press, prepared press releases, or full articles for publication in local, regional, and inter-provincial news media. Individual researchers or community-based research partners may wish to release their own news releases, and are encouraged to do so provided media releases adhere to SSHRC and CGRF funding and ethics guidelines. Researchers are encouraged to contact the Communications Subcommittee if they have any questions related to preparing and issuing statements to the media. Researchers are also requested to submit a copy of any media releases to the Community Research Coordinator, ideally before the public release date, so that the information can be promoted directly to project partners.

Generally, all releases pertaining to CGRF administration and project governance will be prepared or approved by the Community Research Coordinator, the project Principle Investigator, or the Communications Subcommittee to ensure accuracy in

detail, and adherence to CGRF project guidelines. For issues related to student and post-doctoral research, communications shall be at the discretion of the student / post-doc and his/her supervisor. For issues related to community research, communications shall be at the discretion of the community project lead, although community project proponents are encouraged to seek feedback from the Communications Subcommittee in developing their media releases.

4.3 Radio & Television

As with press releases, radio and television spots must present accurate content details, and adhere to CGRF funding and research guidelines. Generally, researchers are at liberty to direct their own radio and television appearances. However, community researchers are encouraged to work with the Communications Subcommittee as they develop their radio or television spots. Student researchers, similarly, must work with their academic supervisors to develop radio or television appearances. All researchers are required to notify the CGRF Community Research Coordinator and / or the Communications Subcommittee prior to the air date so that the event can be promoted to project partners.

4.4 Video, DVD & CD-ROM Production

Videos, DVDs, and CD-ROMs based on results from a CGRF project or created as a research project, must be approved by the project supervisor in the case of student research, or by the CGRF Communications Subcommittee in the case of community research, prior to distribution. Additionally, if digital video is produced for public viewing, this should be submitted to the website administrator (the Community Research Coordinator) in a format that is compatible with the CGRF website so that it can be posted online, if appropriate.

4.5 Web

4.5.1 CGRF website

The CGRF website is the online communications hub for the Common Ground Research Forum. Rather than create unnecessary and inaccessible paper outputs, the CGRF maximizes use of digital media, and the grant budget includes allowances for necessary website maintenance and server space. The web URL is:

<http://www.cgrf.ca>

This web portal has been developed for students and community participants to showcase their work creatively using new media such as digital photography, blogs and podcasts. Through the website administrator (the Community Research

Coordinator) students, researchers and community participants are able to post technical reports, project updates, meeting minutes, video and audio clips, and theses in a manner that can have a variety of access permissions. Comments fields can be enabled for individual postings on the site, to allow for public feedback and discussion.

The website also contains a substantial catalog of information related to the Tunnel Island Common Ground and the Rat Portage Common Ground Conservation Organization.

Project participants including members of the Executive committee are regularly encouraged to submit content for the website.

4.5.2 Video Sharing

In order to maximize opportunities for community participation, the CGRF web portal can also link to other external social media sites. Students and community researchers may upload their own videos to YouTube, Vimeo, and other video sharing sites, and share these with the CGRF website administrator to have the videos also appear on the CGRF website.

Project participants are reminded that prior to publicly posting videos based on CGRF research, these should be approved by the Communications Subcommittee and, if relevant, the academic supervisor to ensure accuracy of details, particularly related to grant guidelines.

4.5.3 Facebook page

The CGRF also maintains a Facebook group page:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=112642142103423&v=info>

The Facebook page contains basic information about the CGRF, including links to the CGRF web portal. It is used to promote events, to direct traffic to the CGRF website, and to share photos related to CGRF events and projects. Its content is mainly a duplication of the “Blog” section of the CGRF web portal, plus photos.

This group is open to everyone and is maintained by the Community Research Coordinator.

4.5.4 Podcasts

The option exists to include podcasts as a communication feature on the CGRF website. Students and community researchers who have an aptitude for communicating through this medium are encouraged to launch a podcast series at any time.

4.5.5 Photo sharing

Similar to video sharing, photo sharing websites can be linked to the CGRF website. Project participants with photos uploaded to other photo sharing sites can alert the

CGRF website administrator, who will then either link to these albums or embed the photos right on the CGRF website.

ASSESSMENT MEASURES

In their June 2010 report on other CURAs' communications and knowledge sharing activities (Fraser & Diduck, 2010), Dawn Fraser and Alan Diduck noted that very few CURA projects to date have published performance indicators for either their dissemination efforts or for the overall projects.

In many respects, methods used to evaluate the success of ongoing communications and dissemination of research results echo methods used to evaluate the success of the overall project. Performance measures used by other CURA projects involved quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. The CGRF has proposed using a mix of quantitative and qualitative (trends) performance indicators to evaluate both the success of the overall project and the success of the communications strategy.

QUANTITATIVE MEASURES

Quantitative methods are not used to inquire into substantive indicators of success. They are limited to counts of key performance indicators.

Many of these indicators, including expected counts and a timeline, were devised in the CGRF proposal-generating process in 2008. Table 1 below shows product indicators and quantitative process indicators for the overall project as predicted in the funding proposal.

Table 1. Performance indicators and outputs

Performance Indicator	Targets:	Year 3	Year 5	Total
<i>Product Indicators</i>				
Thesis documents		3	4	(7)
Peer reviewed papers		2	4	(6)
Community Common Ground (CG) maps		3	1	(4)
Compilation CG cultural asset map			1	(1)
Web-based presentation of CG stories		2	2	(4)
Web-based presentation of best practices			1	(1)
Course curriculum			1	(1)
Communications strategy		1		(1)
Tourism plan			1	(1)
Web-based annual report to partners		3	2	(5)
<i>Quantitative Process Indicators</i>				
Student proposals		5	4	(9)
Community proposals		3	2	(5)
Annual meetings		3	2	(5)
Story telling workshop		2	2	(4)
Joint venture and partnership seminars		2	3	(5)
Press releases, public service announcements or media reports		15	10	(25)
Project lessons seminars		2	3	(5)
Education experiences (Secondary,		1	2	(3)

University, Adult)			
Project money leveraged	\$100K	\$150K	(\$250K)

These same indicators also reflect the success of the CGRF’s communications and dissemination strategy in achieving key quantitative goals. In addition, to measure specifically the success of the communications strategy, the following additional quantitative performance indicators will be measured:

Table 2. Additional communications performance indicators and outputs

Performance Indicator	Targets:	Year 3	Year 5	Total
<i>Additional Quantitative Process Indicators for Communications Strategy</i>				
Other print publications (magazines, books, reports)		4	4	(8)
Academic conference presentations		3	3	(6)
Rate of Project completion				100%
Content submissions to CGRF website		30	60	(90)

QUALITATIVE MEASURES

Using a qualitative approach presents a more difficult task of setting not only what the benchmarks are, but how success would be “measured” against these benchmarks. According to Fraser & Diduck (2010), some of the qualitative benchmarks used by other CURAs to measure overall project success were ongoing demand for outputs, relationships built in the community, and impact on policy and decision making in the community. Other qualitative measures have included measuring impacts on community resilience, the degree to which the community-level knowledge crossed boundaries between research themes in the project, and between community groups and policy makers. Some projects also considered the quality, in addition to the number, of knowledge dissemination efforts like reports and journal publications.

Below is a list of the qualitative process indicators (trends) that will be monitored as part of the effort to evaluate the success of both the overall CGRF project and the communications strategy. In all cases, the CGRF anticipates the trend will be an annual increase in all measures, with the final year of the project seeing the greatest numbers for each indicator measured.

- People attending annual meeting
- New partners
- People attending seminars
- Web traffic
- Ongoing demand for project outputs
- Relationships built in community
- Impact on policy and decision making in community
- Reach / penetration into community (community awareness)

SUMMARY

Communicating clearly and appropriately is important at all stages of research. Whether a researcher is just beginning to explore possibilities for community engagement to support a proposed project, or is actively working with community partners to collect research data, or is sharing research results with a partner group, a solid communications strategy can support the successful outreach and spread of the researcher's message. This communications plan is intended to prompt researchers to consider their own communications strategies that are appropriate and effective for their research as they craft their overall project design.

This long-term communications plan is intended to serve primarily as a guide and reference for CGRF researchers and personnel, rather than as a hard and fast rulebook. The Strategy offers recommended methods for disseminating research results, communicating educational materials derived from original CGRF research, for conducting participatory and non-participatory outreach, using both traditional and new media. Within this broad spectrum of communications options, CGRF personnel should be able to find the tools they need to most effectively communicate the purpose and meaning of their own research, and to contribute to sharing the important messages of the Common Ground Research Forum project as a whole.