

Enhancing the Capacity of Canadian Rural Communities to Adapt to Uncertain Futures
Funded by Natural Resources Canada Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Program

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Research topic:

This project builds upon CCIAP Project A1234 (<http://http-server.carleton.ca/~mbrklac/ruralcommunities.htm>) and www.sfu.ca/coastalstudies/uncertainfutures.htm). Conducted in 2006, this project identified key vulnerabilities impinging upon the well-being of selected rural communities across Canada. This project moves beyond the identification of how climatic change and other environmental and societal changes may threaten the livelihoods of rural communities and begins the process of identifying solutions. It is in this context that the project seeks to:

- Understand the sensitivities of current community plans to climatic variability,
- Assess the capacity of current community decision-making structures to manage future uncertainties owing to climatic change, and
- Explore mechanisms to mainstream climatic change and adaptation to climatic change into the routine planning activities of selected Canadian rural communities.

Overall, this project focuses on understanding the capacity of current decision making structures to address the challenges associated with multiple uncertainties and the opportunities for rural communities to amass the sufficient human, economic and environmental capital to cope with and if necessary adapt to future contingencies. In addition to close collaboration between four Canadian universities and three rural communities across Canada, this project also provides a forum for community-to-community learning. The project creates space for community-based workshops that will allow each of the communities to explore individually adaptation strategies and to then engage in a community-to-community dialogue that will discuss their respective capacities to develop and implement adaptation strategies as well as options for mainstreaming climatic change and adaptation into rural community planning processes.