

EMS: Opportunities for Indigenous Peoples

Context

Environmental Management & Stewardship (EMS) programs offer an important way to diversify the livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples have a competitive advantage in EMS for several reasons. First, Indigenous Peoples more often live in remote areas that are of high ecological value. Second, Indigenous Peoples hold important stewardship values and living traditional ecological knowledge systems. Third, research demonstrates a strong desire among many Indigenous Peoples to engage in EMS. EMS programs involving Indigenous Peoples have demonstrated positive ecological, social and economic benefits to participants and the broader public.

Key Elements

- A. Indigenous Peoples have a strong and grounded stewardship ethic, and traditional ecological knowledge provides crucial understanding of ecosystems dynamics. This knowledge can guide environmental governance and planning.
- B. The location of Indigenous communities and their reliance on healthy ecosystems, means that they are well-placed to engage in EMS in areas of high ecological value. Supporting EMS among Indigenous communities is a cost effective way to produce positive ecological outcomes.
- C. EMS projects offer sustainable livelihood opportunities to communities in need of diversified economic opportunities. EMS creates opportunities in ecological restoration, protection and monitoring (among others). These services when combined with carbon programs, can provide full time employment to Indigenous Peoples living on their homelands.
- D. Empirical research shows that EMS programs produce positive targeted ecological outcomes, as well as positive social (health and wellbeing) and economic outcomes to participants. These benefits have flow on benefits to the broader public including reduced carbon emissions, and reduced public health care costs (among others). EMS programs can build healthy ecosystems and healthy communities.