

## 6. Adapting to Climate Change in Jean Marie River

For our community, adapting to climate change is viewed in a similar perspective as our approach to many of our community initiatives – to build and create a sustainable and healthy community. Sustainability is essential for our community to survive and thrive in the current cultural, social, economical, and political contexts our community is a part of. The impacts being caused by climate change now, and possible impacts in the future, pose some new challenges, along with compounding existing ones, to achieve our objective of a sustainable community; however, our people have a history of resiliency when it comes to adapting to climatic, environmental and socio-cultural changes.

As a first step to address the current and potential vulnerabilities of JMR to climate change, a community workshop was conducted where members of the community were presented the vulnerability assessment of JMR to climate change as influence diagrams (see Appendix 6). Community members discussed possible adaptation strategies that the community could explore to minimize and/or prevent health related risks linked with climate change, and strategies to take advantage of potential opportunities afforded by climate change.

Based on the vulnerability assessment several possible adaptation strategies were identified that could be implemented at the community and possibly regional level. Other adaptation strategies identified would require support from the territorial and federal governments and technical assistance from subject matter specialists, as JMR does not have the capacity or resources to independently develop and implement some of these strategies. These adaptation strategies have been grouped according to the key vulnerabilities identified in Section 5.

### 6.1. Food Security

The major climate change impacts regarding food security are primarily in relation to restricted access at certain times of the year to both country and store bought foods, and a decrease in the abundance of important country foods, such as berries and fish. To improve food security in the community many of our members suggested growing food locally. Shortly after JMR was first settled in the 1920s a community garden was created where vegetables such as cabbages, carrots, and even tomatoes were grown; and with a milder climate developing a community garden would alleviate some restrictions to access to country foods, and provide community members with local access to produce that is healthier and less expensive than store bought foods.

“To seriously consider and plan agricultural actions (JMR needs to have a) big community garden, can grow our own food, have our own poultry business to produce meat, eggs, etc. to ensure that we are self sufficient in case we get disconnected from the South, where most of our food products are currently coming from.” (*Margaret Ireland, September, 2010; parentheses added*).

If a community garden is successful and produces a surplus of food a root cellar could be built to store the surplus food, and community members could can and dry foods, to store over the winter months. Moreover, a warmer climate may allow for a longer growing season and more varieties of produce could be grown. Another food source that could be available to the community locally is chickens and geese that could be raised in the community.

A step further could be the possible coordination of more formalized food sharing networks with other small communities in the area, such as with Trout Lake and Nahanni Bhalte. Communities that have a