



RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

A FORM OF CREATIVE RESISTANCE

A ROUNDTABLE CONVERSATION

JULY 18-20, 2012

in SITKA, ALASKA



HOSTED BY
THE ISLAND INSTITUTE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND	4
WHO PARTICIPATED	5
THE ROUNDTABLE’S EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN	5
EVENING EVENTS	6
THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT	6
KEY THEMES AND IDEAS	7
INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM RESILIENCE	7
GRIEF AND FEAR	8
RELATIONSHIPS	8
DIVERSITY	9
EDUCATION	10
LOCAL MONEY	10
LOCAL FOOD	11
CREATIVE RESISTANCE / DEFENDING WHAT WE LOVE	11
CREATIVE EXPRESSION	11
RE-IMAGINING OURSELVES AND OUR COMMUNITIES	12
NEXT STEPS	14
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES	14
RESILIENCE VIDEO	15
RESILIENCE RESOURCES	16

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES: A FORM OF CREATIVE RESISTANCE

A Roundtable Conversation, July 18–20, 2012 in Sitka, Alaska

HOSTED BY THE ISLAND INSTITUTE

INTRODUCTION

In July, 2012, the Island Institute hosted a gathering unlike any of its previous events. In pursuit of our interest in different forms of resilience, we put together a three-day roundtable discussion—*Resilient Communities, A Form of Creative Resistance*. We aimed to both query and celebrate resilience; to learn what we could about it from scientific examples; and to identify, hone, and pursue questions that would help us understand its application in human communities. The Roundtable gathered a remarkable group—46 people—who brought with them a wide array of perspectives and experience on resilience and contributed to a conversation that was exploratory, deeply moving, challenging, and inspiring. This document aims to capture key themes and ideas that are worth sharing with our own community of Sitka, and with other communities in our region and beyond.

BACKGROUND / PREMISES & DEFINITIONS / WHY

We at the Island Institute came to our interest in resilience after twenty-five years of engagement with the nature of vital communities through the Sitka Symposium and our collaborative leadership initiatives related to community sustainability in Sitka. That experience, together with current global circumstances, prompted us to sharpen our inquiry to explore resilience thinking as a prerequisite for sustainability and apply its key tenets to human communities.

How do we define resilience? Buoyancy, flexibility, toughness, elasticity. The capacity to adapt to change. The capability to absorb shocks to the system without losing the ability to function. The aptitude to thrive in turbulence.

Resilience implies innovation, positive responses to difficult situations. It encourages constructive, ingenious ways to cope with challenging circumstances. It is a form of creative resistance—the capacity of the human imagination to push back against the pressures of reality. It is a characteristic to be celebrated as well as a goal to strive for. It asks us for new language, new stories that can ground us in a changing world. It is a quality we can nurture in ourselves individually as well as in our communities.

Our interest in resilience is stimulated by widespread concern for the future of our planet, our communities, our children and grandchildren. Individuals feel an increasing sense of vulnerability and helplessness in the face of mounting pressures. They are looking for pragmatic ways to take constructive initiatives.

Understanding and applying resilience thinking can help us help each other—neighbors, colleagues, community leaders, families, friends—adapt more effectively to the magnitude of change we all can expect in coming decades as simultaneous transformations in society, politics, economics, culture and nature alter the world as we know it.

WHO PARTICIPATED

Twelve creative thinkers—scientists, artists, writers, teachers, economists, spiritual leaders from Alaska and elsewhere in the U.S.—were invited to serve as the Roundtable Core Group:

- Gordon Blue, Episcopal priest, fisheries conservationist, recovery counselor, Sitka
 - Phil Burdick, Pacific High School Co-Principal and teacher, Sitka
 - Terry Chapin, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Ecology, University of Alaska, Fairbanks
 - Robin Kimmerer, Writer, Professor of Environmental Science and Biology, SUNY-ESF, Syracuse, NY
 - Kathleen Dean Moore, Writer, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Oregon State University
 - Trista Patterson, Ecological Economist, U.S. Forest Service, Sitka
 - Libby Roderick, singer/songwriter and social justice activist, Anchorage
 - Lauret Savoy, Writer, Professor of Environmental Studies and Geology, Mt. Holyoke College, MA
 - Sam Skaggs, conservationist and financial investment advisor, Juneau
 - Joe Solomon, social media coordinator for grassroots organizations, Vermont
 - Molly Sturges, Artistic Director of Littlelobe; Professor of Practice, Art and Ecology, University of New Mexico
- Nancy Douglas, Director of Native Education, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, was unable to attend.

Twenty-eight additional registered Participants paid to attend. They ranged in age from 18 to 79. Thirteen were Sitkans, eight came from Juneau and Gustavus, the others from communities in Oregon, Arizona, Washington, California, Connecticut, New York. They included students, business people, conservationists, Forest Service employees, teachers, researchers, an anthropologist, a museum curator, nonprofit administrators, religious leaders, and retired professionals.

Seven staff and volunteers rounded out the Roundtable group to a total of 46. Elise Pepple and Elena Gustafson served as facilitators.

Evening events were open to the public and included another two-dozen Sitkans with varied interests.

THE ROUNDTABLE'S EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

The Roundtable used an experimental fishbowl structure, a process of careful listening and response. The Core Group opened the Roundtable with a conversation to introduce key aspects of resilience. The thirty Participants were first their audience, and then had a chance to respond. Participants were divided in two groups, each of which took a turn in the fishbowl, engaging with what they've heard through their own focused conversation. The Core Group shifted to the role of listeners. There were four fishbowl conversations over the three days, the Core and Participant groups trading places, each conversation building on the previous one(s) to deepen and expand the discussion.

Between the fish bowl sessions, participants met in smaller groups for more focused conversations. Those groups then reported back to the whole, allowing all ideas to be heard by all who attended.

The experimental fishbowl structure brought to light the tension between the importance of careful thinking about resilience and the need to take action. Adequate time for dialogue was juxtaposed against a sense of urgency to take initiatives toward building resilience. At various points, participants found themselves on one side or another of this dilemma—or wanting to do both. In the end, the group recognized the ways in which reflection and action need to balance each other.

EVENING EVENTS

Two evening events were designed to celebrate resilience. The first, “Sustain Me, Stories of Falling Down, Getting Up, and Finding New Ground,” was a live storytelling event featuring seven participants from the Roundtable who each told a personal story. The mixture of sorrow and humor, of candid reflection and new insight made the stories compelling, offering a range of vital lessons learned from life experiences.

The second was an “Evening of Creative Collaboration.” Under the direction of composer and artist Molly Sturges, a group of 30-40 people combined written word, spoken word, music and rhythm to create a dynamic improvisational choral soundscape that reflected the primary relationships—of people to people and people to the greater natural world—that were integral to our conversation about resilience. Molly Sturges was the only person who knew in advance what shape the event might take. All of the participants took cues from her and became integral to the creation of the piece. It was a powerful and moving experience.

A third and final evening event, “Sparks and Highlights,” invited Sitkans for dessert and the chance to talk with Roundtable participants about ideas and strategies that emerged as key themes of the Roundtable. Those ideas and themes are described in the body of this report.

FROM THE DIRECTORS: THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

We have already acknowledged that the Resilient Communities Roundtable was unlike any other event that the Island Institute has convened since its founding in 1984. The territory it covered was remarkable—the interwoven threads of resilience came together in ways we couldn’t have anticipated. In some respects, the Roundtable was unsettling. It did not resolve issues about resilience. Rather, it opened up a panoply of fear, joy, anxiety, passion, anger, excitement, sorrow, dedication, doubt, hope.

But resilience as a topic for discussion imbued that very discussion with resilience—with diversity of perspective, adaptability, toughness, the capacity to thrive in turbulence. Through the uncertainties and uneven ground of the Roundtable’s experimental design and process, participants persisted in focusing on pressing concerns, how to confront them, how to initiate change that moves individuals and communities toward resilience.

This report captures an impressive range of highlights, key ideas, major themes from the Roundtable. What it can’t convey is the fervent passion involved in many of the conversations—the depth of people’s anguish on the one hand and determination on the other.

For those who participated, we hope the report serves as a reminder, in outline, of key points you wanted to be sure to remember. For those who were unable to attend, we hope the report conveys the array of vital components that go into creating resilient communities. May the ideas here be useful to any and all who are interested in working toward that goal.

~ Carolyn Servid and Dorik Mechau, Island Institute Co-Directors
October 31, 2012

KEY THINKING / THEMES / IDEAS

The Resilient Communities Roundtable planning began with a definition of resilience that came out of ecosystem science. Ecologists have developed resilience thinking out of decades of studying natural systems—how systems and species adapt to change, and what happens when the change is overwhelming. Their studies have clearly demonstrated that resilience is inherent in the natural world. Given this recognition, is the capacity for resilience not also inherent in us? How, then, can we recognize and cultivate resilience in individuals and in human communities?

To explore that ground, we included social, economic, educational, and spiritual perspectives in the Roundtable to help us think about resilience from humanistic angles that would complement and echo scientific understanding. This range of perspectives is reflected in the key themes and ideas outlined below. We also refer readers to the Roundtable participants' blog entries on the Institute's website: www.islandinstitutealaska.org. The posts began in June, 2012, and are ongoing.

Two important insights ran as threads throughout the Roundtable:

It's all good work.

Given the magnitude of challenges that face us, there is work to be done on many fronts, ranging from contemplative personal reflection to activism on behalf of others, the community, and the environment. Individuals choose to do what is most important and appropriate for them at any given time. Engagement in any and all of it matters. It's all good work.

Everything we need is right here.

Local knowledge, tools, skills, and intelligence are likely to be enough to frame innovative initiatives and responses to difficult circumstances. Look within your community before going outside to find "expertise."

And with those two insights, these themes—not prioritized, for they are all related to one another:

❖ Individual Resilience and Social-Ecological System Resilience

The Roundtable looked at resilience on two distinct levels: that of the individual and that of larger scale systems, e.g. natural ecosystems or social-ecological systems. Definitions of resilience for each were distinct, but also overlapped and shared some characteristics.

The definition of resilience that has been introduced to ecology over the last forty years or so has to do with the capacity of natural systems to withstand the shocks, disturbances, perturbations, and inevitable unexpected surprises that cause ecosystems to change.

Social scientists, looking at individuals and groups of people, have drawn their definitions of resilience largely from psychology rather than ecology.

Over time, ecologists have become more and more interested in working with social scientists to look at how people interact with the natural world and create a broader picture of social-ecological systems—the integration of natural ecological systems and human social systems.

With their shared interest in social-ecological systems, both social scientists and ecologists draw from each other's understanding and definitions of resilience. The common thread between their schools

of thought is the importance of maintaining the defining characteristics of systems—whether on the individual level or the social-ecological system level—through all kinds of disturbance and change.

Psychology’s definition of resilient individuals centers on a person thriving and being as healthy as possible. The ecological definition of resilience has more to do with maintaining the characteristics of systems as they have been—and those may or may not be the most favorable characteristics. These are important differences between the two definitions. But both social scientists and ecologists are dealing with systems—the system of an individual functioning as an integrated whole and the integrated social-ecological systems of people and nature interacting in various ways.

❖ Grief and Fear

Underlying the focus on resilience is an acknowledgment that our planet is in trouble. Climate change alone is moving us toward losses and alterations in our world that we can hardly imagine. Scenarios of what life might be like for our grandchildren and great grandchildren torment us. National and worldwide economic instability has and will continue to have profound effects on individuals, families, and communities. International political volatility generates an ongoing air of threat and uncertainty. These do not take into account losses of parents, friends, colleagues, of childhood homes or other favorite places that undermine a sense of certainty.

The cumulative effect of these simultaneously personal and global realities is anxiety, grief and fear. These emotions quickly emerged in Roundtable conversations and surfaced throughout—among young and old, novice thinkers and old hands, bright upcoming leaders and experienced veterans.

Acknowledging these emotions proved helpful—both in easing them and encouraging other’s expression of them. As one participant said, “Hearing people speak from the heart has given me more heart with which to speak.” Another noted that grieving can lead to courage: we continue to care, very deeply, even when our hearts are split open again and again. Even then we still show up at the table.

This is the important work of strengthening personal resilience, itself a critical component of community resilience. The vital connection between these two—between the individual and more the complex social-ecological systems that make up a community—was noted again and again by many participants. Giving voice and space to emotions that undermine personal resilience and offering needed support were steps that helped to honestly portray part of what goes into creating a resilient community.

The Institute will convene a community forum on this issue (See Next Steps).

❖ Relationships

The support networks that help individual community members through loss, grief, and fear exemplify one layer of the critical relationships that make a community resilient. Others include

- Respect between people with differing points of view
Roundtable participants recognized how much resilience is undermined by stereotypes of “us” and “them” that fragment a community. The importance of dialogue and careful listening surfaced repeatedly. As one participant suggested, you might “listen a person into change” by engaging with curiosity and sincerity rather than argumentative questions.

Along with careful listening comes patience—with a different perspective, with one’s own frustrations, with contradictions and paradoxes.

Participants also recognized the need to foster inclusiveness when dealing with important community issues—taking the necessary time to foster relationships that will ensure all needed perspectives are reflected in a dialogue, not excluding people whose views differ from our own.

These are all components of the collaborative process, a deliberate, carefully-designed means of bringing people of differing viewpoints together to work toward stronger common solutions on divisive community issues. Collaboration is “not about compromise; it’s about innovation”—people working together are likely to come up with better ideas and solutions than any one individual would on their own. And though it may not be the quickest or easiest path, true collaboration results in longer-lasting solutions, trust and respect—part of the glue of community resilience.

Less formal ways to overcome divisiveness include spending casual time with “them”—e.g. shared meals, weekly poker games, volunteer neighborhood or community projects, hikes or other adventure-related activities related to place—any chance to engage and learn about shared values rather than differences.

- Honoring different cultural legacies and perspectives
The cultures that make up a community contribute to its diversity and strengthen its resilience. Each have stories and traditions that define them, legacies that include both celebrated traditions as well as histories that often include painful change and assimilation. It is important for individuals and the community at large to understand and respect both the living culture and its history; to recognize and counter discrimination and racism when they are present; to honor the experiences of others, especially if they are difficult to bear; and to celebrate benchmarks and traditions together through ceremony and festivity.
- Taking care of those in need
Levels of need in a community arise from homelessness, disabilities, domestic violence, child abuse, poverty, substance abuse, dysfunctional families, and other conditions. People of all ages are affected, from the young to the elderly. Acknowledging rather than denying these realities, respecting those in need, understanding and educating the community about contributing factors, supporting and providing networks of care all help to build the essential inclusive relationships necessary for recovery and resilience.

❖ Diversity

Just as biological diversity is vital to the natural world, so social and economic diversity is vital to human communities. Roundtable Core member and ecologist Terry Chapin explained it this way: “The basic essence of resilience is to maintain sources of flexibility and maintain sources of diversity that provide you with a good tool kit to create a new system regardless of whatever changes happen in your environment. So sources of ecological diversity, biodiversity, diversity of culture, economic diversity are important. All this contributes to resilience.”

Protecting the biological diversity surrounding a given community is just as critical as nurturing economic and social diversity within a human community. Biological diversity can be one source of economic diversity through careful, sustainable use of local natural resources. Economic diversity is further cultivated by developing and supporting local businesses, large or small, that cater to the needs of people living in the community. Social diversity is cultivated through strengthening and celebrating the relationships mentioned above.

One suggested activity was mapping the diversity of our communities. Such a map could clearly identify interests, groups, relationships, intersections, and ways different segments of community interact or don't, thus strengthening or impairing a community's resilience.

Another Sitka-specific project idea focused on collecting migration stories as a means of highlighting and celebrating diversity (see Next Steps).

❖ Education

There were strong concerns about ways to incorporate resilience into schools at all levels, but it is fair to say that resilience education did not get the attention it deserved. Fostering personal resilience is one goal—easier to achieve with actively engaged students than with those who are disadvantaged. How do we make resilience real for individuals struggling with day-to-day basics of food, family, shelter? Some of the strategies outlined under “Relationships” could be helpful.

Integrating resilience thinking into the curriculum would be another goal to help students understand the dimensions of community resilience. Special projects such as the migration project focused on diversity (mentioned above) would provide an example and explore the ways in which personal resilience and community resilience are intertwined. (See also Next Steps).

❖ Local Money

A group of Roundtable participants was keenly interested in developing opportunities for local investment as a means of strengthening the long-term economic resilience of Sitka. (Such strategies could also apply to other communities.) One reason for local investing is to keep capital in the community. Another is to provide people an opportunity to invest in things they care about rather than a substantially risky stock market. Another is to strengthen the local business sector. Another is to provide adequate philanthropic support for local nonprofit organizations.

Ideas for use of local investments included a local student loan fund, creation of a carbon-offset fund for mitigation of climate change, and creation of a community foundation. (A local working group is currently exploring community foundation options.) Free programs in financial literacy were suggested as a means of educating the community about wise investment strategies. Other ideas included selling local bonds to Sitkans and providing access to local or regional investment options for IRA's and 401K's.

An important measure of Sitka's economic resilience is the extent of federal and state funding for existing economic sectors and the consequences for the community if that money diminishes or disappears.

Ideas for developing local investment options will be further explored in an upcoming community forum (see Next Steps).

❖ Local Food

Ideas and concerns about community food resilience included affordability; encouraging locally-grown food through gardening education and cooperative efforts (e.g. community composting, experimental gardens); developing greenhouse options for year-round local food production; promoting local knowledge of subsistence options (hunting, fishing, gathering); sustainable use of local food resources (e.g. fish, game, plants and berries); promoting local foods in schools; education about food preservation; and developing food cooperatives and networks.

A comprehensive Community Food Assessment was chosen as one of three top priorities for Sitka at a recent Health Summit. The Institute will be one of the partners on this project (see Next Steps).

❖ Creative Resistance / Defending What We Love

Creative resistance—the subtheme of the Roundtable—has to do with imagining innovative ways to push back against the pressures of reality. Climate change, economic disparity and instability, political volatility, multinational corporate control and abuse, the loss of the local to the global—all of these are real pressures, even for local people living in small rural communities. They potentially pose chaos, catastrophic threats to things we know, things we love, to our ways of living in community, to cultures and languages, to biodiversity, to the planet as a whole.

Resisting these pressures takes extraordinary acts of imagination. Two possible strategies might best be understood by a metaphor. Compare the strategy of the willow, which bends in front of the wind and then snaps back, to the strategy of the oak, which stands up to the wind. We need both types of resistance to maximize our resilience.

To be able to either snap back from the forces of radical change or to stand strong against them, we need to invite people to come together to envision and defend what we love. This process should create safe, celebratory social spaces that give people vision and courage to act in innovative ways. The more positive, inclusive, and creative these efforts can be, the more they will be helpful and successful.

Legislation is one means of this resistance (e.g. ending fossil fuel subsidies, or amending the U.S. Constitution to reverse the Supreme Court’s “Citizens United” ruling). Direct action is another, particularly in front-line communities (e.g. those near mountaintop removal mining projects or those that will be seriously affected by ocean acidification). Direct action is important because it widens the boundaries of what is conventional; that is, it enlarges the space in which other sorts of actions can take place. Direct action that is beautiful and creative is most effective.

❖ Creative Expression

Creative expression through storytelling, music, writing, and group collaboration was integral to the Roundtable. Creativity was acknowledged again and again as fundamental to resilience. It provides space, freedom, and courage for people to do what they never would have thought they could. It allows for exploration of the unknown, opens up the vulnerability needed for change. As one Core member said, “Creativity means not worrying if what we’re saying is plausible or sane too early—it encourages wildness and abnormality in ideas.”

All art forms contribute to resilience by nurturing the human spirit. Visual images can be as powerful as theater productions. Dance can be as expressive as music. Written and spoken words can awaken hearts and minds. Indigenous art can sustain established traditions and inspire new ones. Collaborations invite the integration of varied expressive forms and can demonstrate the power of the arts to stimulate fresh thinking and social change.

The role of creativity is recognized, too, in the resilience cycle described by ecologists. Creativity can trigger change—break out of stagnant systems or practices and develop viable new ones. It opens the windows of possibility, option, opportunity. It is its own life force.

❖ **Re-imagining Ourselves and Our Communities**

Given the challenges described so far in this report, one could say that we, as the dominant species on a planet that is our only true home, find ourselves at a significant threshold. The choices we make—as individuals, as communities, as states and nations—will affect not only our lives but the future of the Earth. Taking responsibility for decisions that have such enormous consequences is daunting, and yet we must begin. What do we do?

Roundtable Core Members and Participants offered these ideas, again not in order of importance since they are integral parts of a whole:

- We work at a scale that is manageable. Each piece contributes to the whole. We share what we learn with others. It's all good work.
- We respect, learn from, and protect the ecosystems around us.
- We create new stories that are relevant to what is actually happening in the world and in our communities, stories that change the way we think, stories that help us imagine and create different relationships—essential reciprocal relationships—with the natural world that sustains us and with one another.
- We nurture what's local—businesses, cooperatives, affordable housing, energy, food, schools, the arts, intellectual opportunities, civic engagement, community health, safety, recreation.
- We take time to understand the experiences of people oppressed by society, of people who are disadvantaged, those at the edge. We foster connections of respect, learn all we can from their experience, invite them into the dialogue, value their perspectives, define resilience so that it inherently incorporates social justice.
- We turn to each other and ask, What's alive in you? What's alive in me? What can we do together? What if we try this? Or this? We create new alliances that can strengthen us and our communities.
- We reorganize communities around genuine need versus want. “We can never get enough of what we don't really need,” offered Libby Roderick. Instead of fostering longing for inessential things, we shift our priorities to adequately provide for true needs.
- We care for each other.

- We foster resilience and critical thinking in young people to prepare them for the future. We respect them, include them in the dialogue, welcome their ideas.
- We work at essential crossroads where things really matter. We take time to pull together the experience and knowledge from the community that will ensure our work is successful.
- We do the hard work of identifying what we sacrifice for the good of the whole.
- We acknowledge our losses, love them as a means of honoring them, fixing them in memory. When it's possible, we love our losses back to health again. We take time, care, patience to restore places we have defiled, to learn all we can from nature itself without human presumption.
- We open wide the boxes that confine our thinking. We harness creativity to reveal all possibilities. We share ideas, dreams, wild imaginings that might bear fruit, be useful.
- We create—sculptures, paintings, film, dance, plays, poetry, songs, novels, ceramics, weavings, baskets, totem poles—giving artistic voice and form to our love, our sorrow, our experience, our inherited knowledge, our insight, our hope.
- We celebrate—hold ceremonies, practice rituals, play music, dance, feast together, laugh, express our joy.

NEXT STEPS

❖ Community Activities

The Island Institute plans to convene and be involved in the following events and activities to follow-up on the Resilient Communities Roundtable and bring some of its key ideas alive in our community.

1) Local Investment Opportunities for a Stronger Community Future A Community Discussion | December 8, 2012

People want their core values reflected in other aspects of their lives, including how they invest hard-earned or inherited income. Today's standard practices for investing allow narrow options in this regard, and pose substantial risks. Few if any of them contribute directly to local community well-being, to the long-term economic resilience of people's home towns. Strategies for local investing are starting to emerge, especially in response to the 2008 stock market decline. Examples include Local Investment Opportunities Networks (LION) that are being created in communities small and large.

The Institute will convene this forum to offer Sitkans the opportunity to explore and learn from various local investing strategies. We hope the forum will launch an citizen initiative to develop investment opportunities that will strengthen Sitka's resilience.

2) Cope with Grief and Fear Related to Global Planetary Threats A Community Gathering | February 2, 2013

Threats to the planet and the stability of our lives are mounting on many fronts. Climate change is at the forefront. Environmental degradation and rapid loss of species is close behind, as is the instability of regional, national and global economies. Our tendency often is to distract ourselves from news stories about economic issues, from the increasingly frequent warnings of scientists. We prefer to believe everything will return to "normal." But the distractions do little to assuage the fears that are lodged just below the surface and the accompanying grief for losses—of homes, jobs, favorite places—already sustained. This fear and grief affects young and old, often moving people toward despair.

Using the expertise of local grief counselors, our gathering on this theme will allow people to turn to each other for consolation and courage, and for constructive coping strategies and tools that can help build and sustain personal resilience. Such personal resilience is the backbone of resilient communities.

3) Steps to Ensuring Sitka's Food Resilience

An adequate affordable food supply is essential for any community to be resilient. The stakes go up when a huge proportion of a coastal island community's food is shipped in by water and air, driving up costs and making the supply vulnerable to external circumstances (e.g. a break in barge service, rising shipping oil costs). And when the local climate and growing season pose significant challenges to farming / gardening that might allow for a level of self-sufficiency. Sitka has strong traditions of subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering, but not all households have easy access to the woods and waters or know the area's edible plants. Steps have been taken to encourage more local food gardens, though not everyone has adequate space to grow enough food for their family.

To help the community better understand the realities behind all these factors, the Institute will join the Sitka Local Foods Network and other partners to conduct a comprehensive food assessment as a step toward developing a strategic plan for Sitka's food resilience.

4) Celebrating Sitka's Cultural Diversity through Migration Stories

Ongoing work in schools and community February—April, 2013 | Final Events : April 26 & 27, 2013

Diversity is fundamental to resilience, and Sitka is a culturally rich community. Our first people, the indigenous Tlingit, make up almost a quarter of the population. The “newcomers” include Latinos, Filipinos, and African-Americans as well as a wide range of Caucasians from varied ethnic backgrounds. All people who share this community came here from somewhere else, including the Tlingit. We came, leaving other places behind, and decided to stay for a variety of reasons, bringing with us all kinds of knowledge useful to building a resilient community. While Sitka's diversity is an asset, it can also be the source of conflict and division. Finding common ground through our respective migration stories will allow us to celebrate our diversity and the range of knowledge we all contribute to our community.

Strong community engagement in this theme is important, and we need to take the necessary time to involve a broad cross-section of Sitkans. We expect to work with Sitka's schools as well as different ethnic communities to generate and capture migration stories. In school settings, we'll encourage students to use creative expressive arts (writing and perhaps video) to capture their family and their own migration stories. With ethnic communities, we will ask permission to do audio recordings that might be transcribed or used for radio programs. We will host two concluding events: a student reading and possible film screening, and an evening of live storytelling. We also hope to publish a small collection of migration stories (funding permitting) that will be made available to the public.

❖ Resilience Video

To capture individual thoughts and reflections about resilience, interviews with Core members and Participants were filmed outside the Roundtable sessions by Ellen Frankenstein of Frankenstein Productions; Taylor Dow, Sitka Conservation Society intern; and Michael Furniss of the U.S. Forest Service. Film editing and development of a final video is in the hands of the Forest Service, and, as this report was being written, is uncertain due to lack of funding. Updates on the availability of the video will be posted on the Island Institute website: www.islandinstitutealaska.org.

RESILIENCE RESOURCES

Ideas and programs about resilience have grown substantially over the past decade. The resources below, by no means comprehensive, offer places to start learning more about resilience thinking and initiatives that are underway in different places.

Suggested Books

Resilience Thinking: Sustaining Ecosystems and People in a Changing World

Brian Walker and David Salt (Island Press, 2006)

“... An essential guidebook to a powerful new way of understanding our world—and of living resiliently within it—developed in recent decades by an international team of ecologists.”

Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems

Lance Gunderson & C. S. Holling, (Island Press, 2002)

“The fundamental question this book asks is whether or not it is possible to get beyond seeing environment as a sub-component of social systems, and society as a sub-component of ecological systems, that is, to understand human-environment interactions as their own unique system.”

Getting to Maybe—How the World Has Changed

Westley, Zimmerman, & Patton (Vintage Canada, 2007)

“*Getting to Maybe* applies the insights of complexity theory and harvests the experiences of a wide range of people and organizations... to lay out a brand new way of thinking about making change in communities, in business, and in the world.”

Local Dollars, Local Sense—How to Shift Your Money from Wall Street to Main Street and Achieve Real Prosperity—A Community Resilience Guide

Michael Shuman (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2012)

“Local economy pioneer Michael Shuman shows investors, including the nearly 99% who are unaccredited, how to put their money into building local businesses and resilient regional economies—and profit in the process.”

The Resilience Imperative: Cooperative Transitions to a Steady-State Economy

Michael Lewis and Patrick Conaty (New Society Publishers, 2012)

“How can we get our economy back on track while simultaneously making it more socially, environmentally and financially sustainable?” Lewis and Conaty “advocate for the U.S. moving away from a large economy reliant on fossil fuels to small, local economies.”

The Transition Companion: Making Your Community More Resilient in Uncertain Times

Rob Hopkins (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2011)

“We’re coming to a powerful crunch time for our civilization, and if you read this you’ll be well ahead of the curve in understanding how to prepare your community. There’s much beauty here, and hope.”

Other Publications

Resilience and Sustainable Development: Building Adaptive Capacity in a World of Transformations

A Report for the Swedish Environmental Advisory Council, 2002

(Limited copies available from the Island Institute)

Rethinking Social Contracts: Building Resilience in a Changing Climate

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Resilient Nation (www.demos.co.uk/publications/resilientnation)— “instead of structures or centralized services, it argues that citizens and communities are the true source of resilience for our society... Resilience is an everyday, community activity.”

Organizations / Websites

Resilience Alliance (www.resalliance.org/index.php/about_ra)—a research organization comprised of scientists and practitioners from many disciplines who collaborate to explore the dynamics of social-ecological systems, encompassing key concepts of resilience, adaptability and transformability.

Post Carbon Institute (www.postcarbon.org)--Provides resources needed to understand and respond to the interrelated economic, energy, environmental and equity crises that define the 21st century. They envision a world of resilient communities and re-localized economies that thrive within ecological bounds.

Resilience.org (www.resilience.org)—Building a World of Resilient Communities (a website of the Post Carbon Institute)

Stockholm Resilience Centre (www.stockholmresilience.org/)—an international centre that advances transdisciplinary research for governance of social-ecological systems with a special emphasis on resilience.

Slow Money (www.slowmoney.org)--National network organized around new ways of thinking about the relationship between food, money, and soil and the belief that putting money to work in local food enterprises makes tremendous sense.

On the Commons (onthecommons.org/)—Commons movement strategy center developing and nurturing commons work of egalitarian and reciprocal relationships.

Transition Network (www.transitionnetwork.org/) and *Transition US* (www.transitionus.org/) non-profits aiming to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organize around the transition model, creating initiatives that rebuild resilience and reduce CO₂ emissions.

Fiery Spirits—Community of Practice (fieryspirits.com/)—Carnegie UK program aimed at accelerating learning by activists, professionals and policy makers who are building resilient and sustainable rural communities by enabling practitioners to connect, challenge and learn from each other. Publication: *Exploring Community Resilience*

Bay Localize (www.baylocalize.org/)—California non-profit supporting residents in building equitable, resilient communities by equipping local leaders with flexible tools, models, and policies that strengthen their communities. Publication: *Community Resilience Toolkit*