

Looking for resources in all the right places: The role of place-based development in strengthening rural regions

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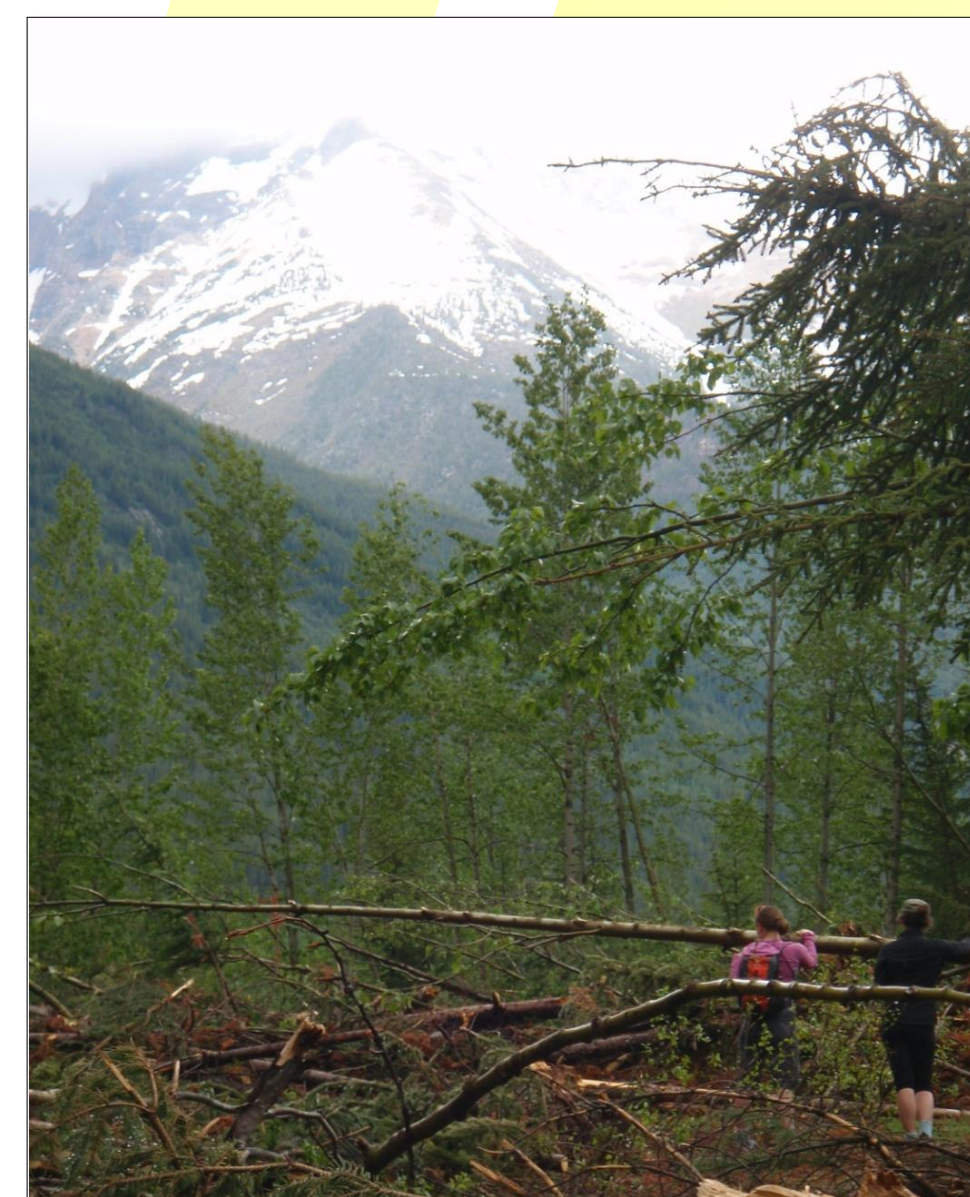
Recreation

Key Elements	Characteristics	Tie with Place
Activity is:	Occurs outside work	Physical context
- Voluntary	Can be:	- Geography
- Undertaken for enjoyment, satisfaction, or accomplishment	- Formal or informal	- Access to amenities
	- Active or passive	Human context
	Includes:	- Social network capacity
	- Sport	- Healthy lifestyle
	- Leisure	- Tourism
	- Tourism	- Connection with environmental policy

Kootenay lifestyle

While the mountainous terrain of the Kootenays lends itself perfectly to rock climbing and other alpine sports, the region's uniqueness goes beyond the physical space. The human element of place, the Kootenay culture or lifestyle, reflects pace and quality of life as well as the natural amenities. Both elements combine to offer a recognized recreational playground for locals and outsiders alike, from world class ski resorts and back country lodges to hot springs and golf courses to community recreation facilities, festivals, arts and culture.

In this setting recreation links closely with economic development. The question then becomes: how do you build a place-based community in an amenity-based economy? While place-based criteria such as identity and branding are met, others are not (e.g. recreation is both transient and often at the mercy of non-local investors). How do you celebrate local amenities and deal with the challenges of doing so, such as infrastructure needs or conflicting user groups?



Jumbo Glacier Resort, BC:

Background:

- Year round glacier resort spanning 110 ha
- Proposed in 1990
- Final approval by BC government in 2010

Key Concerns:

- Access
- Grizzly Bear habitat
- Employment
- Public vs. private land

Challenges:

- Need for economic development
- Clashing values around recreation and development

Actors:

- Glacier Resorts Ltd., Vancouver, BC
- International financing
- Community agencies and user groups
- First Nations
- Government: (province, regional district, local)

The Result

- Resort intends to go ahead
- Campaigns continue against the development

Key Place-Based Criteria:

- **Identity:** different user groups with differing values
- **Infrastructure:** new development, improvement
- **Sustainability initiatives:** conflict. Sustainable design in unsustainable location?
- **Participation:** depends on who you ask
- **Cohesion:** divisive issue

Watershed management in central Newfoundland

Key Concerns:

- Access
- Multi-use values
- Protection of fishery stocks
- Water quality
- Employment

Challenges:

- Inconsistent support of local groups by senior government
- Illegal cabin development and poaching
- Large-scale industrial demands impede local groups' ability to operate

Actors:

- Indian Bay Ecosystem Corp.

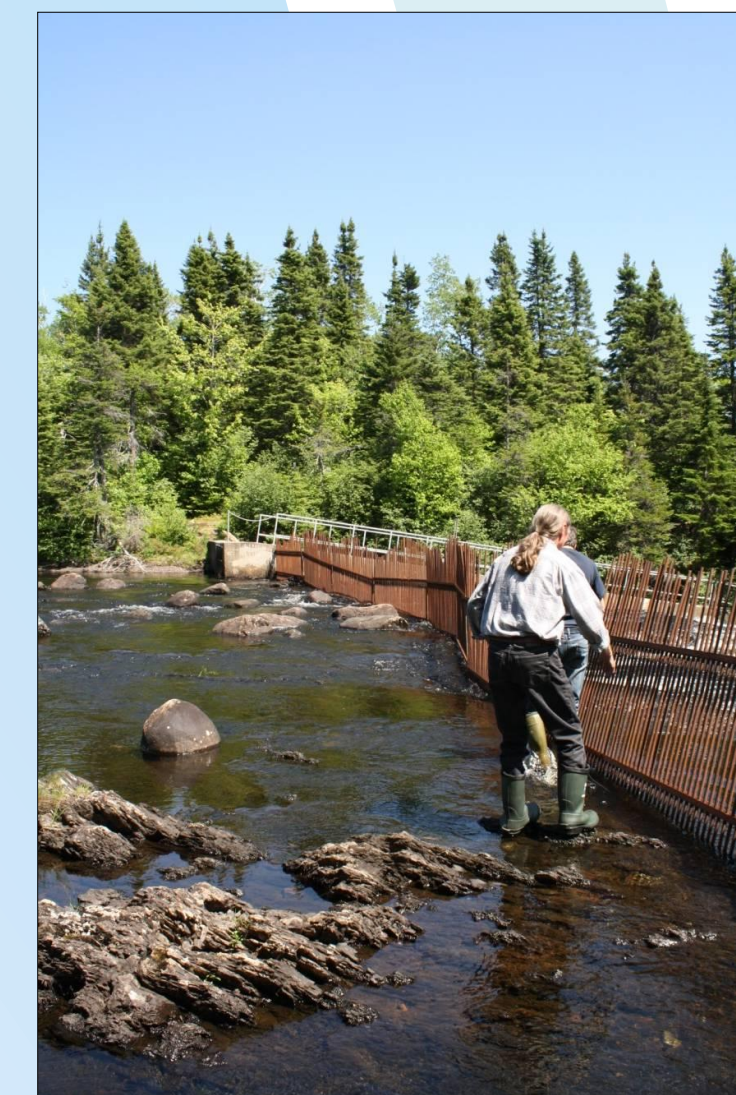
- Gander River Management Association (folded 2008)
- Community and regional agencies and user groups
- First Nations
- Industry (forestry)
- Government: federal, provincial, (to limited degree) municipal

Current Management

- IBEC the only major active group in the region
- River monitoring and enforcement continues on the Gander, through Aboriginal Fishery Guardians

Key Place-Based Criteria:

- **Identity:** territoriality and place large component of management
- **Community-based management:** Has existed at varying degrees in the region
- **Environmental infrastructure:** Improving over time. Especially effluent treatment on the Gander River.
- **Place-based branding:** river associated recreation (e.g. angling) have been used to brand the region



Watershed Management

Key Geographic Elements

- Bio-physical processes:*
- Effluent flow, storage—hydrologic cycle
 - River barriers
 - Wildlife
- Human processes:*
- Natural resource use and management systems
 - Recreation
 - Livelihood and territorial identity

Characteristics of Management

- Can be formal or informal
- No "one-size-fits-all" solution; i.e. context specific
- Premised on sustainable development; pursuing environmental targets as well as social and economic goals
- Often most successful with bottom-up, place-based strategies in tandem with senior government support; multi-level governance



Watersheds as regional places of belonging in Newfoundland

One's sense of territory is intimately linked with notions of home and belonging, which are in turn tied to identity. Those regions with the strongest resonance tend to be areas where there has been a long standing -or at least strong- historical and cultural connection between communities or between people within a particular community and their environments. This is evident when viewing watersheds as regions. Research participants have indicated regions delineated by their respective watersheds, such as: Gander River, Northwest River, Indian Bay River watersheds as critical areas in which they live, work, shop and belong.

Watershed management, we argue, is entangled with social and economic realities. As such, watershed management, and indeed, territorial identity are inextricably linked with questions of economic development. This poses a particular challenge to our current government institutions because the sectoral divisions between (and within) natural resources, cultural industries and economic development have by and large kept policy-makers apart where inter-sectoral issues emerge.

Place-Based Development

Within development theory and practice, place plays a key role by illustrating the effects of factors such as culture, resources, human capacity, identity rooted in place, relationships, and others that combine to create a unique environment, which, in turn, influences how development proceeds. Place-based development is a holistic and targeted intervention that seeks to reveal, utilize and enhance the unique natural, physical, and/or human capacity endowments present within a particular location for the development of the in-situ community and/or its biophysical environment. Place-based approaches have been widely discussed within the geographic and planning literature and are gaining prominence in federal policy discussions.

Here, we present cases where place-based development has been undertaken in rural British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador through three distinct, yet interconnected arenas: **economic development (ED)**, **recreation**, and **watershed management**. These initiatives illustrate how place-based development can proceed, including the kinds of practices that were most successful, as well as the challenges these communities/regions faced in their respective place-based approaches. These challenges provide insight into some of the limitations of adopting place-based approaches in current Canadian policy frameworks.

Invest Kootenay: Where opportunity meets lifestyle

Purpose:

- Regional partnership
- Attract and retain investment
- Building capacity (e.g., effective investment-strategies)

Challenge:

- Enabling appropriate investment

Key Points:

- Merge lifestyle amenities with investment opportunities
- Allow rural communities to diversify and remain sustainable
- Place-based characteristics showcased (e.g., proximity to the U.S., business friendly communities, lifestyle, heritage,)
- Membership includes:
 - Access to branding materials
 - Coordinators able to recruit community support and train community ambassadors,
 - Access to the CONNECT database,
 - Succession planning,
 - Expanded ED network

Actors:

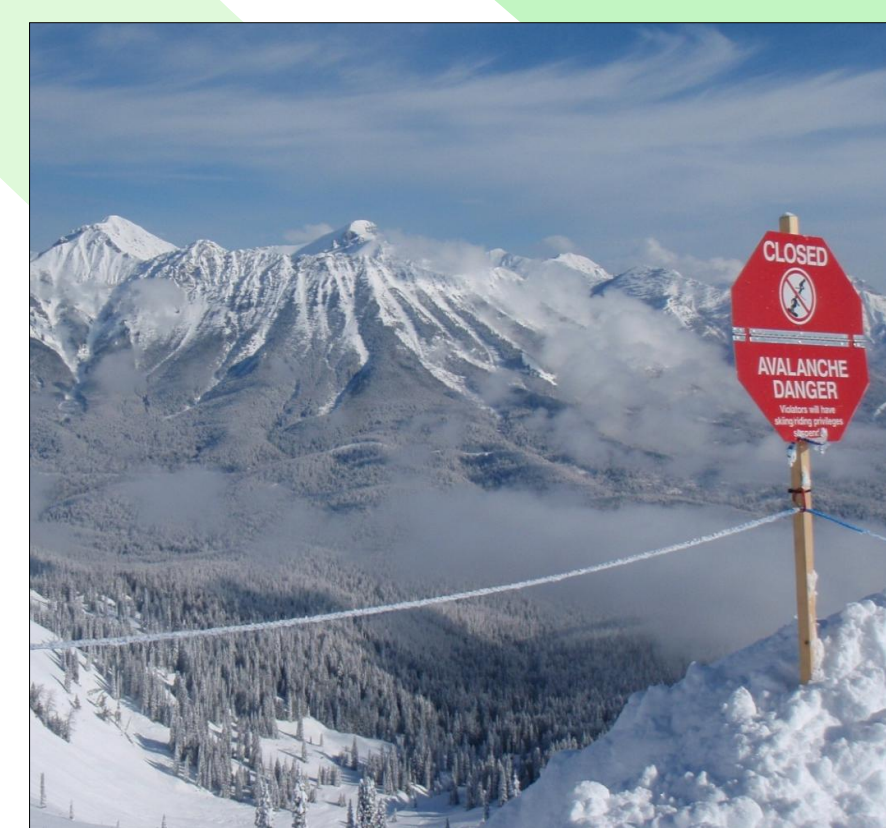
- Advisory group
- Chambers of Commerce
- Columbia Basin Trust
- Communities
- Community Futures Development Corporation
- Economic Development Partnerships
- Regional Districts

Results:

- CONNECT database has had over 250 registered investors representing over \$125 million in potential investments
- Investment opportunities range from existing businesses to recreation facilities, available land, etc.
- Success stories illustrate that initiative is working.
- Evaluation and data collection tracks progress.

Key Place-Based Criteria:

- **Identity:** focal point of investment strategy
- **Economic diversification and health of local business sector:** growth, succession, new opportunities
- **Access to capital:** brings in investment
- **Infrastructure:** likely improvements as well as building of new



Economic Development

- Synonymous with business, industry, employment, and income
- Definitions generally include capacity surrounding producing and selling or otherwise distributing goods and services
- Inclusive of: bartering and more diverse economic approaches, and in local and regional contexts

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Indian Bay Biological Station

- Corner Brook Pulp and Paper (Kruger)
- Kittiwake Economic Development Corp.

Results:

- Job creation and economic activity in development phase
- Educational opportunities
- Limited utilization post-construction, threatened future

Challenges:

- Resource limitations (financial, human), short-term funding
- Lack of policy and institutional support
- Remote location – logistics, competition with urban adjacent alternatives

- Balancing local and external partners objectives

Key Place-based Criteria:

- **Identity:** strong links with ecosystem and activities throughout watershed
- **Participation:** community-led social enterprise
- **Economic diversity and infrastructure:** knowledge-based economy, protection of informal economy
- **Access to capital:** seeking to build self-reliance
- **Environmental:** local involvement for sustainable, integrated, and ecosystem-based planning