



## **Sustainable Livelihood Assessment**

*A sustainable livelihood assessment* is being conducted in the Bulkeley Valley that will examine how effectively our community can adapt to climate change and assist in any resulting transitions.

The impacts of climate change go beyond simple economics. While our industries, such as forestry, have been affected by a shifting climate, our everyday lives are also influenced. Traditionally, climate change effects are studied with regard to employment, production, markets and forestry: systems that are primarily economic. Livelihood assessments look at factors affecting people's lives; they describe how people influence and are influenced by the world around them.

When assessing how livelihoods would be affected by climate change, we examine factors that are social and environmental, as well as economic. A livelihood is considered sustainable when it can maintain its assets — the resources that help people live their lives — over the long term, despite stresses from climate change.

Livelihoods are studied by looking at individuals' goals and their ability to access social, human, physical, financial and natural assets. For this study, we will look at five basic assets: natural capital (soil, water, air and forests), economic capital, human capital (skills, knowledge, ability to labour and health), social capital (relations, affiliations, associations and organizations) and physical capital, such as infrastructure, roads and schools. We then look at how these assets are used by community members to pursue their goals. Finally, we will examine the policies and institutions that affect access to these assets and goals.

In order for communities to successfully adapt to climate change, decision makers and those attempting to transition communities need to understand the dynamics of the social, economic and ecological world we live in. This sustainable livelihood assessment aims to help participants understand their community and the links between local livelihoods and climate change. Secondly, it is to evaluate the community's capacity to adapt.

As part of the livelihood assessment process, a workshop will be held to study how local residents react and adapt to their surroundings as social and economic systems change. The workshop takes place at Northwest Community College on Nov. 30, 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., and Dec. 1, 9 a.m. until noon.