



For further information, HWI can be contacted by e-mail at through either:

Harley Bastien
<hunya@telusplanet.net>
or
Nick Roe
<nick_roe@irisenvironmental.ca>



Harmony Walkers Inc.

635 - 36 Avenue NE
Calgary, Alberta
Canada T2E 2L8

Tel: (403) 543-4455
Fax: (403) 543-4459



**An Aboriginal Business
Joint Venture in
Sustainable Development
Consulting**

HARMONY WALKERS INC.

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Harmony Walkers Inc. (HWI) is a joint venture consulting company, established as an aboriginal business in Alberta, Canada. It represents the interests of **Piikuni Friends Along the River Inc. (PFATR)**, a company owned and managed by members of the Piikani (Peigan) First (Indigenous) Nation of Alberta, Canada, and the environmental consulting company **IRIS Environmental Systems Inc. (IRIS)**, with head office in Calgary. HWI provides joint services in environmental, social and economic issues management, with the objective of assisting the development of sustainable projects, programs, communities and businesses. Prior to HWI, PFATR had been a charitable NGO for more than 10 years, undertaking environmental projects, and had developed unique expertise in natural resources management and environmental assessment. With the aim of promoting economic development for Piikani people through business, PFATR incorporated and initiated the joint venture with IRIS, an established company operating both within Canada and internationally.



HWI provides consulting services to a variety of economic sectors, including forestry, energy, water resources, agriculture, mining, tourism, and protected areas management both within Canada and internationally. HWI's resources allow it to undertake projects and programmes in consulting, management, training and geographic information systems, all with the objective of promoting sustainable development. As well as utilizing conventional methods of scientific and social enquiry, HWI avails itself of the services that PFATR provides in Traditional Environmental Knowledge (TEK), which is of interest to a variety of international financial and donor agencies pursuing development programmes, and can be used to address the interests of indigenous peoples.



HWI provides an Integrated Traditional Ecological and Contemporary Environmental Knowledge Model, describing the special bond with Nature as a life force. TEK embraces traditions in: ecological knowledge and natural resource use, medicine and nutrition, ethno-veterinary medicine, conflict resolution, and the traditional justice system. By means of environmental monitoring and stewardship, the HWI approach encourages self-reliance and enhances the self-esteem of indigenous peoples within a development context. Fundamental to the approach is the notion of spirituality, the key to unlocking ethical considerations surrounding environmental questions. Other key elements include public consultations with indigenous peoples, promotion of traditional conflict resolution and negotiation mechanisms for environmental disputes, inter-generational transfer of knowledge and curriculum development, participatory data collection and analysis, examination of the socio-economic and cultural impact of development projects on local indigenous people, focus on the process as opposed to the specific content of traditional knowledge (e.g. consensus-building around environmental management issues), ensuring that intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples are protected and respected such that their communities reap the benefits of TEK.

