



## Strategic Foresight Training Workshop

# Systems Mapping of WICKED PROBLEMS

The most telling feature of a wicked problem is its complexity (see sidebar). The common way we address wicked problems is to deny their complexity. We pretend we can reduce them into smaller, more manageable issues with familiar parts. By doing so, we ignore the very nature of complexity – the dynamic interaction of the various parts of the problem. To address complex/wicked problems effectively we must recognize the systemic nature of the issue, keep the interactions intact, identify its dynamic structure and look for multiple points of intervention.

Systems Mapping is a well-developed method for representing complexity in a manner that supports appropriate analysis and action. A Systems Map is a picture of how a group thinks about an issue, challenge, problem or situation – a 'Cognitive Graphic' that represents the current thinking of a diverse group of people. As a visual representation, a Systems Map allows a number of analyses to be undertaken. Each type provides insight about an issue that is not possible from a single perspective or even from a summary of all perspectives. The process of developing Systems Maps creates a way to become conscious of embedded – tacit – knowledge and deep assumptions that do not normally appear in less structured dialogues.

The workshop will provide participants with:

- A means to identify and select wicked problems for mapping.
- A hands-on experience of building Systems Maps.
- A variety of analyses for identifying significant dynamics in the system being considered..
- A model of how to intervene in a wicked problem.

The workshop is led and facilitated by Brian Woodward, Ph.D. Associate Executive Director, Foresight Canada. He is an active member of the International Society of Systems Science (since 1975), a body of researchers and practitioners in the areas of systems research, methodologies and applications. Dr. Woodward is currently a Senior Faculty member at The Banff Centre.

**Register Today** using the attached form.

*Delta Hotel  
Calgary Airport  
March 22-23, 2012*

Wicked Problems\* are complex and swampy conditions that are highly resistant to resolution.

Wicked problems cannot be dealt with within our dominant logics, mental models, sectors and organizational silos.

Wicked Problems:

- Display a high degree of complexity
- Are difficult to grasp
- Are immune to simple and clear solutions
- Are highly interdependent and multi-causal
- Are dynamic; not stable
- Involve changing our minds as well as our behaviour
- Are laden with unforeseen consequences
- Are often characterized by chronic policy failure

There are no quick fixes or formulas for addressing Wicked Problems. Yet the important and pressing issues that face us today, e.g. Climate Change, Obesity, Social Reputation, etc., require a response. There are increasing demands and expectations that these issues must be addressed.

Systems mapping offers a way through swampy problem.

\* H. W. J. Rittel and M. M. Webber, 'Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning', Policy Sciences, Vol. 4, No. 2, June 1973. pp. 155–69.

## Workshop Particulars: participants will receive:

- Copy of all presentation material
- Copy of a Handbook of Systems Mapping
- A Light Breakfast, Lunch and mid-session Breaks March 22-23, 2012
- The caring attention of the facilitators: Dr. Brian Woodward and Dave Chaplin of Foresight Canada

\* For questions about **program content** please contact Dr. Brian Woodward at [brian.woodward@shaw.ca](mailto:brian.woodward@shaw.ca)

\* For questions about **registration and administration** please contact Ruben Nelson: [foresightcanada@shaw.ca](mailto:foresightcanada@shaw.ca) or 888-673-3537

## Workshop Partners:

- ARPA
- Alberta Foresight Community
- Association of Professional Futurists
- Canadian Association Club of Rome
- Foresight Synergy Network, Ottawa
- World Futures Studies Federation

## Location: Delta Calgary Airport Hotel, Alberta, Canada

(403) 291-2600

## Hotel Accommodations:

Participants are responsible for their own hotel reservations/accommodations and evening meals.

The Delta offers single or double rooms at \$189.00, plus taxes. Refer to Foresight Canada's code #: **110311FOR**

## Dietary Requirements:

Please convey your special dietary requests to Ruben.

[foresightcanada@shaw.ca](mailto:foresightcanada@shaw.ca)

## Workshop Registration

Name:

Title:

Organization:

Address:

City:

Postal Code:

Phone:

Email:

Name for Name Tag:

**FEES:** \_\_\_ \$1,195 + 5%GST or \_\_\_ \$795 + 5% GST (FC family rate) or \_\_\_ \$395 + 5% GST (charities and individuals)

Our GST# 82753 5923 RT0001

### PAYMENT:

\_\_\_ Cheque: Please make cheque payable to "Foresight Canada"  
(Mail to: Foresight Canada, 29 des Arcs, LAC DES ARCS, AB, T1W 2W3)

\_\_\_ Credit Card: We accept Visa, Mastercard or AMEX

(For security please **do not** email card number; please phone, fax, mail credit card number.)

Card #

Expiry Date:

Signature (if by fax/mail):

\_\_\_ Invoice: Check here if you require an invoice.

**Financial Agreement:** Pre-payment or invoice required. A \$75 fee will be charged on cancellations after March 6, 2012. No refunds after that date. Substitutions welcome at any time. "No Shows" will be charged the full fee.

## Registration by Fax

Foresight Canada

**403-673-2114**

## Email Registration/Information

Ruben Nelson

**888-673-3537**

[foresightcanada@shaw.ca](mailto:foresightcanada@shaw.ca)

Your registration will be confirmed.

## Upcoming Workshops

**Is Our Civilization Sustainable?**

Ottawa, April 26-27, 2012

**New Tools for Foresight,**

Victoria, May 10-12, 2012

**Governing Whole Systems,**

Calgary, October 18-19, 2012