What is Sustainable?

• Meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs
• In Native American tradition we are supposed to consider seven generations
• “Developed countries”: integrates economic growth and social development with environmental protection
Contrasting Worldviews

- **Western Philosophical Tradition**
  - Temporally Oriented: sees current place in history in relation primarily to time
  - Views history as linear and progressive

- **Indigenous Philosophical Traditions**
  - Spatially Oriented: sees current place in history in relation to local places
  - Views history as non-linear
What Makes up a Worldview?

• Yupiaq scholar Oscar Kawagley

Understand the concept of worldview by answering the following questions:

– 1) What is real? (metaphysics)
– 2) What can we understand? (epistemology)
– 3) How should we behave? (ethics)
– 4) What is pleasing to the senses? (aesthetics)
– 5) What are the patterns upon which we can rely? (logic)

Compare between Western and Indigenous Traditions
A Sense of Responsibility

• One thing often left out of contemporary concepts of sustainability is the very real sense of responsibility for future generations

• This was built into rituals and ceremonies that constituted much of the spiritual realm of Indigenous peoples
Placating Nature

- Both the size of Indigenous Populations and length of time they spent interacting with particular places are underestimated
  - More people lived in Western Kansas 200 years ago than live there today
  - Resource shortages were always possible
Development of Rituals

• Respect for nature does not mean lives cannot be taken
• Livelihood dependent on taking lives
• Must recognize and honor the sacrifice
• Apologize and give thanks
Conservation Must be Personal and Emotional

- Recognition that the Natural World is providing for you and your family
- All Things are Connected: By consuming the plant or animal you prove that you and it are connected and related
  - Made of the same materials
  - Products of the same creative process
Relatedness and Sustainability

• Accept Relatedness among life forms
  – Caring for them as part of your community means allowing their lives to continue
  – Sustainability becomes personal
Connectedness and Sustainability

- Improper impact on the system can cause long-term problems
- This is because all elements of the system are connected
- Polluting or wasting can damage the system resulting in failure of sustainability
Sustainability and Spirituality

• Only by caring for the earth and natural systems can we really sustain them
• Economic interests must not prevail over the needs of future generations
• There is only One Earth
Does Not Preclude Change

• Nature is constantly changing
• There is no Stable point or equilibrium
• Must ensure that change does not mean destruction
• All of NA has been impacted by humans