



Friends of the Earth Les Ami(e)s
de la Terre

www.foecanada.org



WATER SOFT PATHS: FRESH WATER AND ECOLOGICAL SECURITY FOR CANADIANS

Friends of the Earth Canada



Presentation Overview

1. Explain the Concept (Thinking Globally)
2. Current Study
3. Getting Started (Acting Locally)



Friends of the Earth Les Ami(e)s
de la Terre

www.foecanada.org



Part 1: Explaining the Concept (Thinking Globally)



The Vision of Soft Paths

*The future lies with
restricting demand, not
increasing supply*



Four Distinguishing Principles

- Treat water as a service, not an end
- Make ecological security an absolute criterion
- Match quality of water delivered to that required by end use
- *Plan backward - from future to present*



Why a “Soft” Path?

- Requires less steel and concrete
- Solves natural resource problems through ingenuity and innovation
- Asks “why?” rather than “how?”
- Works with nature rather than against it



Hard Paths vs. Soft Paths

- **Large, centralized sources of supply**
- **Demand is macro function of growth**
- **Waste moved to central plant**
- **Waste treated chemically**
- **Small, distributed sources of supply**
- **Demand built-up from end-uses**
- **Waste kept nearby or on-site**
- **Waste treated with bio-mimicry**



Typical Soft Path Policies

- **Same Tasks Done Differently**
 - Ultra-low or no water sanitation
 - Rain-fed Agriculture & Supplemental Irrigation
- **Change Infrastructure**
 - Local use of stormwater
 - Brokering recycling and re-use
- **Reduce Institutional Barriers**
- **Revise Economic Development Models**



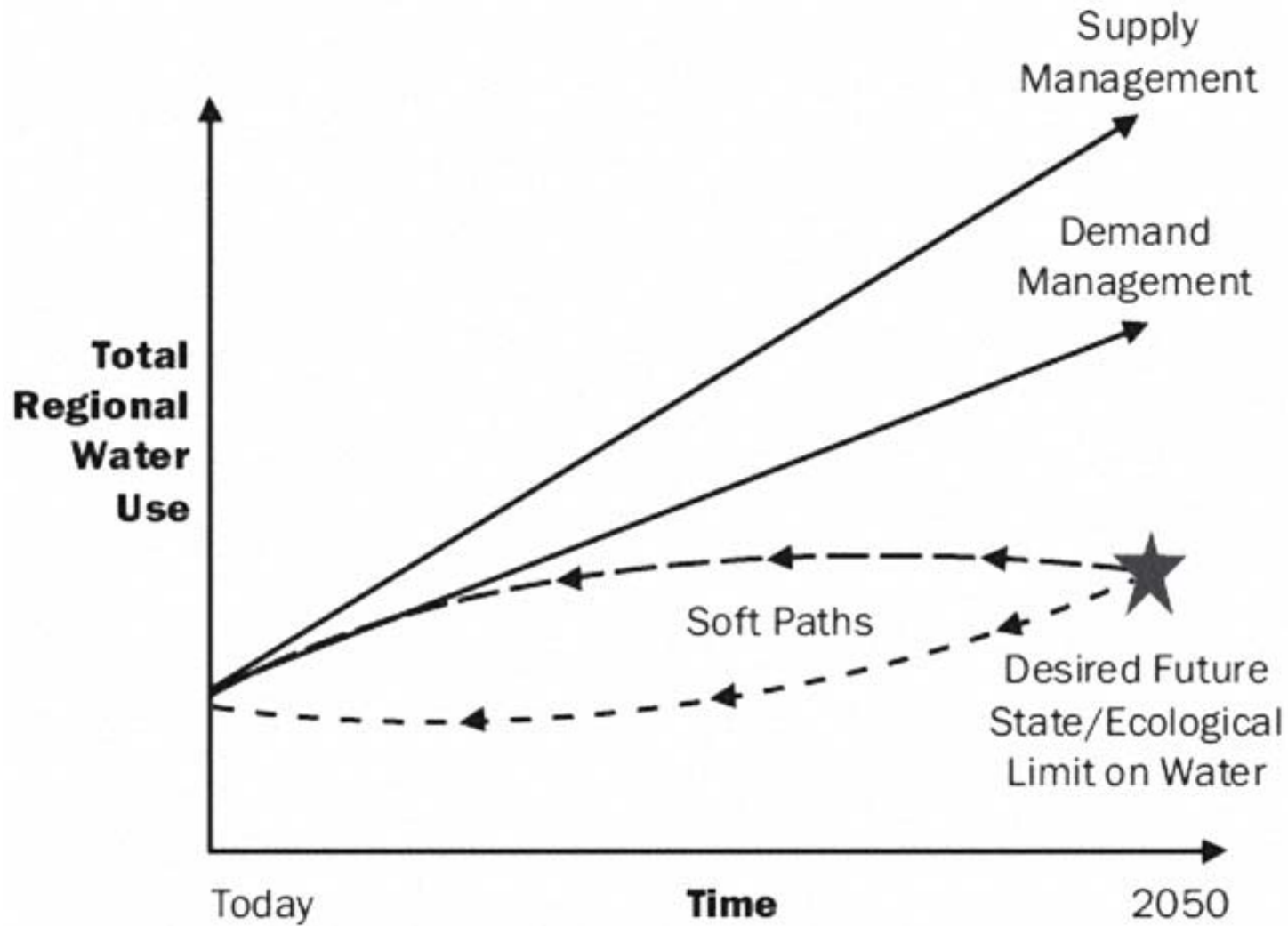
Indicative Results

Demand Mgmt

- Efficiency gains of 1/3
- Market driven
- Less risky than supply measures
- Weather independent
- Implementation
Decentralized

Soft Path

- Total gains of 2/3
- Triple bottom line
- Intermediate Risk
- Climate change inside
- Even greater
decentralization





Results from world's first Water Soft Path Study Details

- **Indicative Examples (using current growth projections):**
 - Nova Scotia could cut water use by over 50%
 - Ontario could cut delivered water use by 20%
 - Urban water use can drop by 45% (no new water)
 - Fully recycling Pulp & Paper Mills in Ontario could cut water use by 95%
 - Dietary changes can cut water use by 1/3 to 1/2



GAPS & LIMITATIONS

- **No change to economic or population growth forecasts**
- **No overall new data on water use across Canada since 1996**
- **Agriculture included but no prairie study**
- **Results are Indicative, not Definitive**



Friends of the Earth Les Ami(e)s
de la Terre

www.foecanada.org



Part 3: Getting Started (Acting Locally)



Start Thinking Soft Path

- **Focus on avoided costs (80%)**
- **Design educational programs**
- **Propose a “no new water” policy for your jurisdiction**
- **Experiment with WSP analysis**
- **Attack institutional barriers**



**Sustainable development
depends not only on sustainable
production,
but also on sustainable
consumption**

**A Water Soft Path
charts the course to
sustainable consumption**