**Abstract**

Traditional ecological knowledge has been acknowledged within indigenous communities for millennia; however traditional ecological knowledge received attention within the western science paradigm only within the past 25 years. Federal agencies, national organizations and university programs dedicated to natural resource management are beginning to realize the critical need to incorporate different ways of knowing into their natural resource management decisions. Further, Native American tribes on a national scale are assuming greater leadership through self-determination and self-governance and continue to serve as models for sustainable forestry and resource management by incorporating components such as traditional ecological knowledge, community support for integrated resource management plans and a holistic, dedicated, long-term vision for the environment. This paper proposes a *yin-yang* theory for conservation in the 21st century where TEK and WS are applied equally in natural resource management.