Identification and Application of the Components of Meaningful Public Participation in Forest Management

By
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Abstract

Public participation is a central principal of sustainable forest management and is increasingly seen as an important method for facilitating fair and effective decision-making in forest management. Public participation is rapidly moving from a policy goal to a legal requirement in forest management in Canada. However, achieving meaningful participation continues to be a challenge. There is a growing body of research that is attempting to uncover and define what elements make public participation processes effective. This study builds upon this research by examining what makes a participation process meaningful and investigating the potential for implementing more meaningful public participation in forest management. To achieve this, the specific objectives of this study are: 1) to establish the key components of meaningful public participation; 2) to investigate current approaches to public participation in forest management planning; 3) to consider levels of satisfaction with current participatory approaches within Manitoba's Mountain Forest Region by examining current practice in light of the components of meaningful public participation; and 4) to develop recommendations for public participation in forest management.

A qualitative research approach was used to address the goals of the research including, structured standardized expert interviews, semi-structured participant interviews, and a review of the relevant literature. Structured standardized interviews were conducted with academics, practitioners, and professionals involved in the public participation field. The results of these interviews were used to develop the key

components of meaningful public participation. These components were vetted and built upon during the second phase of interviews involving participants from four public participation initiatives in Manitoba's Mountain Forest Region.

The results established a definition of meaningful public participation and several components of meaningful public participation. The components of meaningful public participation identified by this research include, fair notice and time, integrity and accountability, fair and open dialogue, multiple and appropriate methods, learning and informed participation, adequate and accessible information, participant motivation, inclusiveness and adequate representation, and influence. The components of meaningful public participation outlined in this study provide insight into how to run a more meaningful public participation process and show promise for use as a straightforward guideline for developing and implementing public participation processes that are more meaningful.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Public participation is rapidly becoming an integral part of forest management in Canada as the management of forests shifts from a traditional management scheme based on the sustained yield to a more holistic approach based on the concept of sustainable forest management (NRC 1997). Sustainable forest management is a management paradigm which attempts to incorporate the social, economic, political, ethical, and environmental considerations of an action into decision-making (Bengston 1994; Duinker and Euler 1997; Shindler et al. 2003). A number of policies and programs have been established to integrate the principles of sustainable forest management into forest management in Canada such as the Canada Forest Accord, the National Forest Strategy, and the Canadian Model Forest Program (Duinker et al. 2003). Public participation is a central principle of sustainable forest management and is seen as an important method of facilitating fair and effective decision-making in natural resource and forest management (Hunt and Haider 2001; Wellstead et al. 2003).

The majority of the forests in Canada are publicly owned. As such, the government is obligated to ensure this resource is managed in accordance with the values and preferences of its owners the public (Tanz and Howard 1991; NRC 2002; Robinson et al. 2001; Shindler et al. 2003). The public is a major source of information related to social forest values and as such public participation is an important mechanism for capturing and incorporating these values into forest management (Robinson et al. 2001).

Public participation in forest management is also strongly supported by the public in Canada. According to the 1996 Canadian Forest Survey, citizen participation in

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setting management goals for public forests was supported by 74 % of respondents (Robinson et al. 2001).

It is now widely accepted that the public should be involved in environmental decision-making. In forest management public participation is rapidly moving from a policy goal to a legal requirement in Canada. Sparked by these trends is a growing body of research that attempts to define the principles of effective public participation. This project attempts to build upon this research by examining existing or recent public participation programs in forest management in Manitoba to investigate the potential for implementing more meaningful public participation in forest management.

1.1 Research purpose and objectives

The purpose of this research is to define meaningful public participation and investigate the potential for its implementation in forest management. To achieve this, the specific objectives of this study are:

1) to establish the key components of meaningful public participation;

2) to investigate current approaches to public participation in forest management planning;

3) to consider levels of satisfaction with current participatory approaches within Manitoba's Mountain Forest Region by examining current practice in light of the components of meaningful public participation; and

4) to develop recommendations for public participation in forest management.

1.2 Study Area

The study area for this research is Manitoba's Mountain Forest Region. This region consists of the large forested areas extending from Riding Mountain National Park in the south to the Porcupine Mountain Provincial Forest in the North (Figure 1). There are a variety of land-based activities in this region including forestry, agriculture, hunting and trapping, protected areas, and recreation. This diversity has led to the development of a range of consultation processes in the region. Four public participation programs in the region related to natural resource and forest management were chosen: Louisiana Pacific's participation process, Riding Mountain National Park's Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee, Manitoba Conservation's Protected Areas Initiative's consultation activities for the Bell and Steep Rock Canyon designation, and Manitoba Conservation's Southern Area Forest Consultation.

These public participation cases were selected for three key reasons. First the cases were all recent and at different stages in their development. For example, Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee was a long-running process, the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee was at the beginning stages, the Protected Area Initiative was close to completion, and Southern Area Forest Consultation had already come to completion when the research began. The second reason these processes were selected was that the organizations running the processes were different in each case. The researcher also, purposely chose public participation processes that used different participation techniques, which allowed the research to test the assumption that the components of sound public participation practice will be important across a variety of participation processes regardless of type.

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Figure 1: Manitoba's Mountain Forest Region
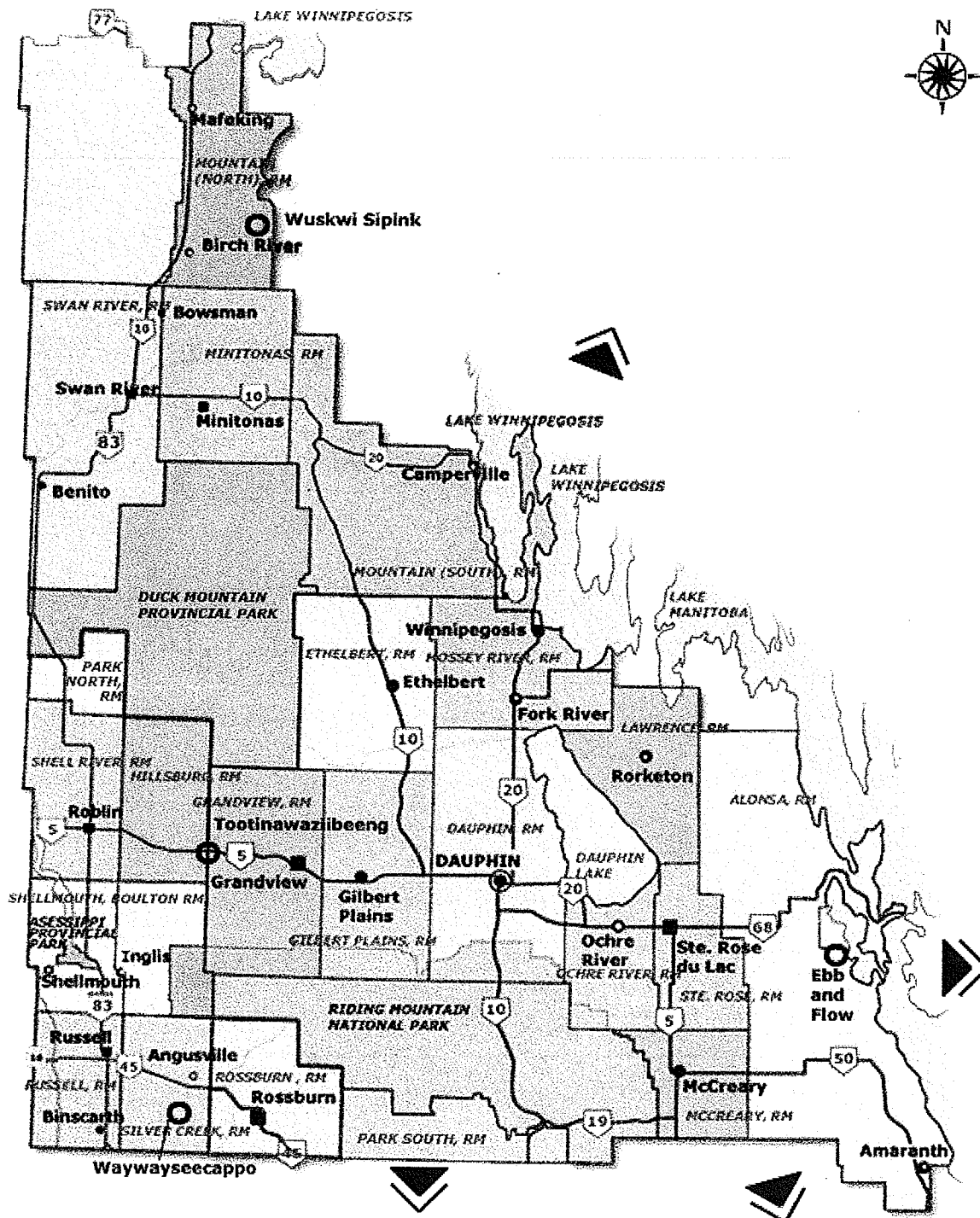
Source: Manitoba Government
http://communityprofiles.mb.ca/maps/regional/parkland.html

1.3 Methods

Various qualitative methods were employed to fulfill the research objectives of this study including a literature review, structured expert interviews, and semi-structured participant interviews. Expert interviews were conducted with academics and practitioners involved in the field of public participation nationally. The results of the interviews were used in combination with a review of the literature to establish key components of meaningful public participation, which were then used to evaluate public participation initiatives in Manitoba's Mountain Forest Region. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a selection of participants involved in public participation activities related to natural resource and forest management in Manitoba's Mountain Forest Region. The interview schedule for the participant interviews was developed based on the key components of meaningful public participation as established through the literature review and expert interviews. A detailed explanation of the methods used in this project can be found in Chapter 3.

1.4 Research organization

The thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study and states the purpose and objectives of the research. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature relevant to the study. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological framework and the specific research techniques undertaken to meet the research objectives. The results of the study are presented and discussed in chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 presents the components of meaningful public participation derived from expert interviews and the literature. Chapter 5 relates the components of meaningful

public participation presented in chapter 4 to the public participation processes examined in this research. The final chapter contains the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Chapter 2 – Public Participation in Forest Management

2.1 Defining public participation

There are numerous definitions of public participation. For example, Praxis (1998) defines public involvement as "a means by which public concerns, needs, and values are identified prior to decisions, so that the public can contribute to the decision-making process". The Canadian Standards Association (CSA 1995) defines it as "the process through which people who will be affected by or are interested in a decision, and who have a stake in the outcome, get a chance to influence its content before it is made".

This multiplicity of definitions is confused further by the fact that the terms public participation, public involvement, and public consultation are at times used interchangeably and at other times are used to differentiate the public's degree of involvement. For example, Roberts (1995) differentiates the three terms as follows. Consultation includes "education, information sharing, and negotiation, the goal being better decision-making by the organization consulting the public". Public participation "actually brings the public into the decision-making process". And public involvement, according to Roberts, is a more general term that encompasses both public consultation and public participation and is seen as "a process for involving the public in the decision-making process of an organization".

Often in the literature the public is not viewed as a single entity but as various shifting affiliations and alliances formed in response to an interest (Praxis 1988; Roberts 1995; Connor 2001; and others). Therefore, it is not a public that a public participation program is attempting to engage, but a variety of publics. These publics are not

necessarily organized and are sometimes difficult to identify at the beginning of a participation process. Identifying and engaging the impacted and interested publics is essential to the design of a public participation program.

There are several typologies of public participation that attempt to identify the different types or varying degrees of participation. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation is considered one of the first models to address the differing degrees of participation and is often replicated in the literature. Arnstein differentiates the different types of participation based on the extent to which the public and the lead organization share decision-making power. Arnstein's (1996) model identifies eight rungs (levels) of participation and their associated degrees of power sharing. The bottom rungs of the ladder, manipulation and therapy, are characterized as non-participatory. This stage involves public relations type exercises designed to educate or cure participants of their mistaken perceptions, gaining their support. The middle rungs are characterized as forms of tokenism and include informing, consultation, and placation. Informing involves a mainly one-way flow of information from the lead organization to the public. Consultation and placation provide the public with an opportunity to express concerns; however this input is not necessarily listened to or used to inform decisions. The top rungs are characterized as forms of citizen power and include partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. The lowest of the top rungs, partnership, involves the parties negotiating trade-offs. The top two rungs, delegated power and citizen control, provide participants with the highest degree of power. Arnstein was highly critical of the levels of participation at the lower rungs of the ladder and argued that to be meaningful participation required a redistribution of power in favor of the public (Arnstein 1969).

A number of authors have created variations of Arnstein's ladder (Connor 2001; Dorcey et al. 1994; Wilcox 1994; UNDP 1997; and others). Using Arnstein's ladder as a template, Dorcey et al. (1994) present a spectrum of participation processes with increasing levels of interaction, intensity, commitment, and influence as one moves up the continuum. The lower levels of the continuum are to inform and educate and the highest levels are to seek consensus and ongoing involvement. In this model, each level along the continuum could be an appropriate level of participation depending on the situation and the purpose of the participation exercise (Dorcey et al.1994). Unlike Arnstein's view, the lower levels of the continuum are considered important and are viewed as means to aid in reaching the higher levels of participation.

2.2 Benefits of public participation

The benefits associated with public participation have been extensively written about in the literature. The literature discusses the benefits of public participation in both theoretical and practical terms. A key argument for public participation is that it upholds democratic principles and helps to strengthen the democratic fabric of society (Sinclair and Diduck 1995; Moote et al. 1997; Shepard and Bowler1997; and others). Public participation brings people "… closer to driving the democratic machine than simply casting a vote" (Roberts 1995). It provides a check to ensure that voters' concerns are addressed on a variety of issues and not merely the issues that represented officials used to obtain office.

Another theoretical argument for public participation that has recently emerged in the literature is the belief that participation can contribute to the broad-based individual and social learning needed to approach the goal of sustainability (Webler et al. 1995; Sinclair and Diduck 2001; Fitzpatrick and Sinclair 2003).

There are numerous practical benefits of public participation. For example, public participation has the potential to both prevent and reduce conflict and confrontation by creating channels for open and honest two-way communication (Roberts 1995; Blouin 1998; Praxis 1988; Connor 2001; Beierle and Cayford 2002; and others). Public participation can lead to the identification and resolution of concerns before they have the opportunity to escalate into larger problems (Roberts 1995). According to (Beierle and Cayford 2002) "collaborative rather than adversarial decision-making is more likely to result in lasting and more satisfying decisions, potentially adverting the litigation and gridlock that characterize much environmental decision-making".

The public is also an important source of knowledge and ideas for decision-makers (Beierle and Cayford 2002; Connor 2001). Effective public participation can provide invaluable local knowledge and experience to both the planning and management stages of a project or program (Roberts 1995).

The incorporation of the public's values, goals, preferences, and priorities is considered a crucial component of the planning process (Beierle and Cayford 2002; Connor 2001; Tanz and Howard 1991; Robinson et al. 2001). The public is the only valid source for this information, and as such public participation is an important mechanism for capturing and incorporating this information into planning and management (Robinson et al. 2001; Connor 2001).

Effective public participation is recognized as an integral component in the development of fair and effective decisions (Hunt and Haider 2000). By fostering open two-way communication between decision-makers and those affected by the decision, public participation creates opportunities for the development of alternate solutions that satisfy a wider range of interests (Beierle and Cayford 2002). Effective public participation encourages collective learning and the sharing of knowledge which in turn can enhance the quality of decisions.

Public participation has the potential to enhance the quality of decisions by adding to the creative capacity for perceiving solutions to problems. Public participation can foster creative solutions to problems through the contribution of additional knowledge and expertise, enriching debates, and discussing viable alternatives (Connor 2001; Praxis 1988).

Public participation can increase the credibility of decisions and decision-makers (Praxis 1988; Roberts 1995; Blouin 1998; Beierle and Cayford 2002). Increased credibility can lead to enhanced support for a program, project, or policy and foster the development of valuable relationships (Praxis1988).

As discussed above, a carefully designed and well-executed public participation program has numerous benefits. Many of these benefits are long term, such as enhancing the quality of decisions. As a result, public participation should be thought of as an investment, and like all investments along with benefits there can also be risks and costs. Two drawbacks to public participation noted in the literature are that public participation can often be expensive, as well as time-consuming and laborious. The counter argument often made to these claims is that choosing to exclude the public can lead to distrust and

public controversy which can lead to costs and delays greater than the initial investment of time and money required to involve the public (Praxis 1988; Roberts 1995).

Practitioners also warn about putting unrealistic expectations on a public participation program. As expressed by Roberts (1995), "Public involvement is not a panacea. The unpredictability of human behavior means that problems may develop despite the best of plans and intentions". There are many benefits associated with public participation and as a result participation is an important tool for planning and environmental decision-making. However, attempting to use participation as a magic bullet can be unrealistic.

2.3 Steps toward more effective public participation

It is becoming widely accepted that the public should be involved in the decisions that impact them. Public participation is the main method for involving the public and is often expected and required of both businesses and government. A common criticism of ill-received public participation initiatives is that they were simply an exercise in public relations and not a genuine attempt to engage and involve the public. Public participation literature often alludes to discrepancies in the quality of public participation programs by using the adjectives meaningful or fair and effective in front of the term public participation when describing some of the benefits and virtues of public participation. Terms like meaningful and effective can be hollow when not expanded upon. The term meaningful public participation is often left undefined in the literature.

In 2000, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) Regulatory Advisory Committee (RAC) struck a subcommittee to address meaningful public

participation in environmental assessment. The subcommittee was unable to come up

with a consensus definition. However, they did agree that there should be a ministerial

guideline on meaningful public participation and they provided the following non-

consensus description of meaningful public participation in their report to the Minister of

Environment: "Some principles of meaningful public participation that should be

reflected in a guideline on interactive public participation where required in screenings

and comprehensive studies include: should be based on full access to relevant and

required information; must include the opportunity to critically review and comment on

information in a two-way exchange; must be done early enough to allow participants to

have an influence on the planning of the project; must allow sufficient time to review and

respond; must require a consultation plan to be developed and shared with the public;

must make efforts to relate public comment to process or project decisions; must include

notification, information out, and information discussion and exchange; must be timely"

(RAC 2000). A new RAC sub-committee was struck and is currently in the process of

developing ministerial guidelines for meaningful public participation in screenings.

Researchers and practitioners are continually attempting to uncover and define

what elements make a public participation process effective. The elements that make a

public participation process successful are often introduced in the literature in the form of

best practice principles, recommendations, and process evaluation criteria. Guidebooks

and manuals on public participation also hold many insights on how to plan and

implement a successful public participation program. As a result, guidance publications

were one of the key sources used to construct this list of best practice principles. An

annotated bibliography of the guidebooks referenced in this thesis is provided in

appendix A. The remainder of this section will discuss some of the common best practice principles for the implementation of a successful public participation process found in the literature and these guidebooks.

Advance Planning and Process design:

To develop a successful public participation process, a lot of effort is needed at the process design / planning stage. A number of public participation guidebooks (IFC 1988, Praxis 1988; McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Sterne and Zagon 1997; Anon 1998; Bleiker and Bleiker 2000; Connor 2001; Anon 2002; and others) have recommendations and programs for this critical stage of a public participation process. The planning approaches vary slightly among the different authors, however they generally require a through review and evaluation of the specific circumstances in which the public participation process would be embedded in order to best establish the level of participation required, the appropriate techniques and activities, the interested and affected publics, and resource requirements.

Transparency:

To be credible, a public participation process must be transparent and implemented with integrity (Praxis 1998; Sterne and Zagon 1997; Anon 1998). Meaning that both the lead organization and the public should be able to trace how the input collected from the public participation process was used in decision-making.

Inclusiveness and Representation:

Public participation processes should be inclusive and attempt to include all parties who are interested in or impacted by the process (Praxis 1988; Strene and Zagon 1997; Anon 2002; CSA 2002; and others). The public is not viewed as a single entity,

but as various shifting affiliations and alliances formed in response to an interest (Praxis 1988). Therefore it is not a single public that a public participation process is attempting to engage, but a variety of publics. An important component of developing a representative and accessible public participation process is identifying all of the potentially affected and interested publics (Praxis 1988; McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Anon 1998; Connor 2001; CSA 2002; and others).

Linking Public Participation to the Decision-making Process:

The majority of the literature reviewed discusses the importance of integrating public participation into the decision-making process (Praxis 1988; McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Anon 1998; Strene and Zagon 1997; CSA 2002; and others). To be effective, public participation cannot be simply an add on; rather it must be an integral part of the project planning process from the onset. A perceived inability to influence issues can be a major deterrent for key publics to participate.

Respect:

A basic component of a successful participation process is mutual respect for all participants and their positions. A large percentage of the literature reviewed presents respect as an essential ingredient for successful public participation (Praxis 1988; Mcmillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Sterne and Zagon 1997; Anon 1998; Anon 2002; CSA 2002; and others). It is important for lead organizations to respect the diverse interests, values, and knowledge of all parties and to foster respectful treatment between parties.

Access to and Quality of Information:

It is made clear from the literature reviewed that information is a critical ingredient for effective public participation (McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Sterne and

Zagon 1997; Praxis 1988; EPA 2001; Anon 2002; and others). Participants are not able
to participate effectively unless they have a good understanding of the issues involved.
Part of building this understanding involves having access to all relevant information.
The quality of that information is also crucial, it is important that the information be
accurate, credible, balanced, and comprehensive (McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Sterne
and Zagon 1997; Praxis 1988; EPA 2001; Anon 2002; and others). The information
provided must also be manageable to avoid overloading participants. For example, it can
be helpful to provide quality summary documents of critical information in language that
all participants can understand, while giving participants access to the source documents
if they desire.

Clear Mandate and Purpose:

A common theme, which presented itself in the review of the literature, was the
importance of establishing a clear mandate for the public participation process at the
onset (Praxis 1988; Sterne and Zagon 1997; Anon 2002; CSA 2002; and others). The
purpose of a participation process can be defined solely by the lead organization or by the
group, depending on the situation. It is vital, that before the public participation process
begins, all participants have a clear grasp of the mandate and understand what the process
is and what it is not. This is important because an ill-defined purpose can create a
mismatch in expectations, which can lead to misunderstandings that can threaten the
success of the participation process.

Consultation on Design:

A meaningful public participation process should be designed to address the
unique circumstances of the project at hand. Consulting the affected publics on the design

of the process is a good way to customize the program to the unique characteristics of the situation and the publics involved. The design of a public participation process can be improved significantly through the involvement of the public at the design stages of a process (Praxis 1988; Sterne and Zagon 1997; Anon 1998; and Anon 2002). Consulting on design is also valuable because it helps address the issue of defining and clarifying purpose and expectations of the process at the onset.

Clear and Fair Timelines with Built in Flexibility:

Time management is an important factor in implementing a successful public participation process. A realistic time frame needs to be created to allow enough time for participants to engage meaningfully on issues of concern while progressing towards the goals of the process in a timely manner (McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Sterne and Zagon 1997; CSA 2002; and others). The process should respect the time requirements of the participating organizations and allow a reasonable amount of time for participants to report back to the groups they represent to relay any developments in the process and to verify positions. A number of guidebooks recommend setting realistic time lines for major milestones in the process but warn that flexibility should be worked into the schedule in case of unavoidable delays.

Participant Support:

There are times where participants may require financial and / or technical support to participate fully. It is important to understand the needs and abilities of the key publics, so that needed assistance can be provided. The type and amount of assistance required will vary in each circumstance and can range from financial assistance to technical support (Sterne and Zagon 1997; Anon 1998; EPA 2001; CSA

2002). When a public participation program involves technical issues, it is important to allot the time and effort needed to bring participants to an adequate level of understanding so that they can participate fully (Praxis 1988; Sterne and Zagon 1997; Anon 1998; EPA 2001; CSA 2002). In some situations where participation is going to be long-running and highly participatory it may be necessary to have training sessions to enhance participants' capacity in participation processes such as consensus building, constructive dialogue, and conflict resolution.

Identifying Skill Requirements and Training Needs:

There are a number of skills required to implement a strong public participation process including but not limited to process design, facilitation, problem solving, negotiation and conflict resolution, relationship management, and information management (Praxis 1988; McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Sterne and Zagon 1997; IFC 1998; EPA 2001; Anon 2002; CSA 2002; and others). The skill level required for a public participation process will increase with the level of participation. It is often beneficial for organizations to evaluate the skills they possess and require before beginning a public participation process. If the skill evaluation determines that the lead organization does not have representatives with all of the necessary skills, it should look at different ways to rectify this problem such as training and / or the hiring of outside expertise (Praxis 1988; Connor 2001; Sterne and Zagon 1997).

Multiple Techniques and Activities:

To be effective a public participation program should use a variety of activities and techniques to engage the public (Praxis 1988; McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Anon 1998; and others). There are a number of activities and techniques available for

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conducting a public participation process. Public participation techniques and activities are an integral part of a public participation process. Each activity and technique has its own strengths and weaknesses and therefore works best when used in combination in a comprehensive public participation process.

The combination of techniques used in a process will depend on a variety of factors including the dynamics of the situation, participation objectives, and the needs of the lead organization and the publics involved. A number of guidebooks including Dorcey et al. 1994, Sterne and Zagon 1997, and CSA 2002, provide recommendations for matching public participation techniques and activities to needs of the program.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Follow-up:

Monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up are presented in the literature as essential elements of public participation (Praxis 1988; Sterne and Zagon 1997; Anon 1998; CSA 2002; Connor 2001; Anon 2002; and others). Monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up are important mechanisms that allow you to learn from and improve your public participation process.

Monitoring and evaluation should occur throughout the implementation of a public participation process. Monitoring and evaluation help track the progress of public participation process and are important methods for documenting the lessons learned from the process (Sterne and Zagon 1997; Anon 1998; CSA 2002; Connor 2001; Anon 2002; and others).

Follow-up is a critical component of effective participation. It is important to communicate to participants how their input was used in the decision-making process while explaining the rationale for the decisions (Praxis 1988; Sterne and Zagon 1997;

CSA 2002; and others). Without follow-up, the public can be left with doubts surrounding how their input was used and with questions about how the final decision was made. Providing feedback to participants reaffirms and demonstrates a sincere commitment to involving the public. Follow-up can also be used to get feedback from participants about what worked and what did not in the process.

2.4 Public participation and forest management

Historically, there has been little to no public input in the formulation of forestry policies and regulations in North America. Forest policy decision-making has been dominated by the bilateral decisions of government and the forestry industry (Beckley 2003). This decision-making arrangement provided mutual benefits for both the government and the forestry industry. The arrangement provided the forest industry with the ability to secure long-term timber supplies, guaranteeing profits, and provided government with increased revenue and the political benefits associated with ensuring employment and community security through the development of the forestry sector (Blouin 1998; Drushka 2003). As a result, the demands of forestry companies have often dictated forest use, perpetuating the market orientated sustained yield forest management paradigm (Howlett and Rayner 1995; Bengston 1993; Beckley 2003; Cote and Bouthiller 1999).

The public began to question the appropriateness of the traditional forest management approach in the 1960s and 1970s, and grew critical of the bilateral decision-making of government and the forest industry (Tanz and Howard 1991; Higgelke and Druinker 1993; Blouin 1998; and others). The public demand for increased input into

natural resource management and forest management has stemmed from a number of other sources as well, including distrust in bureaucracies and the over-centralization of governments, an increase in the education levels of the general public, the rise of the civil rights and environmental movements, and the expansion of the forest values held by the public (Blouin 1998; Cortner 1996).

Fueling the demand for increased accountability in forest decision-making is a shift in the public's forest values (Robinson et al. 2001; Beckley 2003). According to (Beckley 2003) "European settlers to North America have gone through a progression of values towards forests, beginning with negative progressing through the utilitarian, and arriving at a recognition of the intrinsic value of forests". As the spectrum of forest values broadened and the consideration of non-timber benefits has expanded in forest management, so to have the diversity of stakeholders involved. This diversity of interests often includes "government, forest owners, corporations, environmental NGOs, social NGOs, academics, hunting and fishing associations, consumer associations, churches, worker's unions, and native people" (Cote and Bouthillier 1999).

Over the past three decades, there has been a growing realization that the public should be more involved in forest management in Canada. Forest management and policy in North America have evolved from a closed decision-making approach with a primary focus of timber harvest to sustainable forest management, which is a more open and holistic approach to forest management that includes involving the public and incorporating a greater range of forest values (Shindler et al. 2003; Drushka 2003; and others).

Sustainable forest management stems from the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development was popularized by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987. The commission's report "Our Common Future" defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987). Of key importance to the concept of sustainable development is the recognition of the interconnection and interdependence among the economy, society, and the environment in decision-making. Sustainable forest management has become a key goal within public policy both in Canada and internationally since the commission's report. Public participation is a central principal of sustainable forest management and is seen as an important method for facilitating fair and effective decision-making and incorporating the full range of forest values (Table 1).

Table 1: The role of public participation in forest decision-making

- To ensure that managers consider the widest range of the public's values in forest decision-making, including economic, social, and ecological values;
- To assist managers in determining the socially desirable management directions they should be striving for;
- To set the bounds for choices on forest management practices, strategies, and policies;
- To bring unique local knowledge and insights into decision-making (eg. Traditional ecological knowledge of Aboriginal people, and local knowledge of other forest users such as recreationaists and tourism outfitters);
- To provide strong forums for citizen learning about forest ecosystems, the views and positions of other stakeholders, and management options and alternatives; and
- To provide a forum for addressing and resolving conflicts and attempting to develop consensus.

Source: Duinker (1998)

This review of the literature has presented many of the benefits of public participation and has highlighted the importance of public participation to democratic decision-making. This review also highlights a growing body of the public participation

literature focused on effective application and good technique. The importance of involving the public in forest management has been established in the literature. As a result the literature is now shifting its focus to how to best conduct public participation processes in forest management.

Chapter 3 – Methods

3.1 Overview

As discussed in Chapter 1, the purpose of this research is to define meaningful public participation and investigate its implementation in forest management. The following section details the methods that were used to fulfill the research objectives of this study. Various qualitative research methods were employed, including a literature review, expert interviews, and participant interviews. Expert interviews were conducted with academics and practitioners involved in the field of public participation nationally. The results of these interviews were then used in combination with the literature review to establish key components of meaningful public participation, which were then tested on the ground for their relevance to real public participation processes through the participant interviews. The researcher conducted the participant interviews with a selection of participants involved in four public participation initiatives in the Mountain Forest Region. The interview schedule for the participant interviews was developed based on the key components of meaningful public participation established by analyzing the results of the expert interviews and reviewing relevant literature.

3.2 Literature Review

To provide the context for the research, a literature review has been conducted on public participation in general and in forest management. The review has been compiled from publications on public participation including government publications, conference proceedings, books, peer reviewed journals, and practitioner guidebooks.

A review of public participation guidebooks (Appendix A) and other literature related to public participation was used in combination with the results of the expert interviews to establish the key components of meaningful participation, which were used to evaluate the four forest management public participation programs being examined. The literature reviewed was also used to inform survey development and the analysis of the data.

3.3 Expert interviews

Structured standardized interviews were conducted with professionals from a variety of sectors in the public participation field. Interviewees included academics, practitioners, civil servants, and members of non-government organizations all well known for their involvement in public participation. All of the individuals who participated in the expert interviews were considered experts due to their extensive experience with public participation. The measure of this was represented in fulfilling several of the following criteria: having been referenced in the literature, having written guidebooks on public participation, having reviewed and written for peer reviewed journals, having presented papers at national and international conferences, and having an active on-the-ground involvement in public participation activities. The central goal of the expert interviews was to gather data on how to define meaningful public participation and to determine what components are integral to achieving more meaningful public participation. The results of the expert interviews were used in combination with the literature review to establish the key components of meaningful public participation. The components of meaningful public participation derived from the results of the expert

interviews and the literature were tested for their relevance to real public participation processes during the participant interview phase of the research.

In consultation with my thesis advisory committee, a list of individuals across Canada with extensive knowledge and experience in public participation was developed. Additional interview candidates not on the list were added when recommended by an interviewee. During the first few expert interviews, participants were given the interview schedule and asked to discuss the aspects of the schedule they felt needed to be changed or any aspects they felt should be included. This step helped to ensure that the questions were clear and concise. The interview schedule for the expert interviews is located in Appendix B.

3.3.1 Interview process

A purposeful sampling technique was used, as described in the previous section. Potential interviewees were contacted by phone and introduced to the study. The participants were then sent a consent form (Appendix C), which explained the study and interview process in detail and verbal consent was requested and given before each interview began.

Twenty-five interviews were conducted in total and involved professionals from across Canada, plus one individual from the United States who was interviewed at the suggestion of several of the expert interviewees. The interviews were conducted over a four-week period in January and February 2004. The majority of the expert interviews were conducted by phone at a predetermined time set by the interviewee. When possible interviews were conducted in person with the individuals who resided in Winnipeg. The

lengths of the interviews varied, ranging from 20 to 45 minutes. The average interview length was 30 minutes. The results of the interviews were used in combination with the literature review to establish key components of meaningful public participation that were used to design the participant interview schedule.

3.4 Participant Interviews

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with a selection of participants involved in the public participation programs being studied. The purpose of the interviews was to examine the current approaches to participation in forest management in Manitoba's Mountain Forest Region and to explore components of meaningful public participation from the perspective of participants.

The interviews were semi-structured, the researcher had a list of predetermined questions, but allowed for other matters to arise during the interview. Interviews were tape recorded when permitted by participants and then transcribed verbatim. Semi-structured interviews were the method of choice for the participant interviews because they allow informants to describe their participation experiences in their own words and to clarify the meaning of their responses (Creswell 1998). This approach also allows for novel responses not captured by a questionnaire or anticipated by the researcher.

Participants were given the interview schedule during the first couple of interviews and were asked to discuss the aspects of the schedule they felt need to be changed or the aspects they felt should be included. This step helped to ensure that the questions were clear and concise. The interview schedule for the participant interviews is presented in Appendix D. The wording of some of the interview questions was adjusted

according to the type of public participation technique the participants were involved in. The interview schedule for the participant interviews consists of three sections, Part A. background questions, Part B. components of meaningful public participation questions, and Part C. wrap up questions, as outlined below.

Part A - Background questions:

In this section a number of background questions were asked to get some general information about why people chose to participate in their given participation process and how they felt about their respective participation process. Before participants were introduced to the constructed list of components of meaningful public participation in part B of the interview schedule, they were first asked what they thought made a participation process meaningful.

Part B - Components of meaningful public participation:

This section of the interview schedule focused on the components of meaningful public participation extracted through the expert interviews and a review of the literature. One of the objectives of the questions in this section was to find out if the components were present in the cases being studied and how participants related to and felt about each component. The other purpose of this section was to find out what factors influenced each component, which would subsequently aid in determining how to incorporate the components into public participation processes.

The first question in this section introduced the respondents to the components of meaningful participation and asked them to rate their levels of importance. Each respondent was provided with a list of meaningful public participation components (Appendix E). The list included a brief description of each component, written by the

researcher based on the responses from the expert interviews. The respondents were then asked to rate the importance of each component on a 5-point scale after reviewing the descriptions of the components. The rating scale ranged from 1 (the component is extremely unimportant to making a public participation process more meaningful) to 5 (the component is extremely important to making a public participation process more meaningful). A copy of the rating scale question is provided in Appendix F. While completing this exercise the participants were able to ask for clarification on any of the components, and were also encouraged to critique, add to, and discuss any of components.

The remainder of the questions in part B are organized around each of the components of meaningful public participation. The components used in the questionnaire include: fair notice and time, integrity and accountability, fair and open dialogue, multiple and appropriate methods, learning and informed participation, adequate and accessible information, participant motivation, inclusiveness and adequate representation, and influence. Approximately 3-5 questions were asked per component. The questions varied slightly between the components. The questions attempted to determine: a) if the components were present in the process they were involved in, b) what factors help facilitate each component, and c) what factors inhibited each component.

Part C – Wrap up questions:

The final section of the interview schedule asked respondents again to consider what they think makes a public participation process successful. This question was repeated at the end of the interview in case in the course of answering the other questions

new ideas had come to mind. This section also asked whether the participation process they were involved in met their expectations and if there were any other components they thought contributed to making a participation process meaningful that were excluded from the components provided. These questions were asked at the end of the interview because it was believed that respondents would be better able to answer these questions after completing the previous sections of the interview.

An adapted interview schedule (Appendix G) was used when interviewing First Nation participants. The First Nation representatives of three of the participation programs being studied were interviewed. The interviews were focused specifically on First Nation participation. The interview schedule was designed to determine how First Nations were being engaged in participation processes in the region and how they would like to be involved.

3.4.1 Interview process

Before the research began, the researcher first contacted representatives from Louisiana Pacific, Parks Canada, and Manitoba Conservation to discuss the purpose of the study and request their participation.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2004 with twenty-one participants over a two-week period in May and four days in July. Purposeful sampling was used so that the views from a cross section of the interest groups involved in the different participation processes could be collected. The location of the interviews, selected by the participants, predominately consisted of homes, offices, and coffee shops in Swan River, Dauphin, and a number of small communities surrounding Riding Mountain National

Park. The lengths of the interviews varied from 45 minutes to 2 hours and 45 minutes. The average interview length was 1 hour and 15 minutes.

3.5 Data analysis

Expert interview data:

The expert interviews were recorded on audiotape when permitted and transcribed into separate word processing files. The transcribed documents were then imported into QSR Nvivo, a popular software package for qualitative data analysis. The software program was used to identify common themes in the data. Using a qualitative data software package helped to organize the data for easy documentation of results and aided in the analysis of complex relationships in the data. The coding process was completed faster using the software program than it would have been using conventional manual methods. The dominant themes extracted from the expert interviews were both tested and probed further during the participant interviews phase of the research. The results of the analysis of the expert interview data are presented in Chapter 4.

Participant interview data:

Each of the participant interviews were transcribed into a separate word perfect file. The first question in the participant interview schedule was a five-point likert scale, which is a quantitative data collection technique. The results of this question are summarized in table 4, displaying the question and the total number of respondents per response category by percentage.

A qualitative content analysis was conducted on the remainder of the participant interview data. The data was analyzed for common themes and patterns using QSR

Nvivo, the same qualitative data analysis software program used to analyze the expert

interviews. The results of the participant interview phase of the study are presented in

Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 - Meaningful Public Participation

4.1 Overview

The objective of this chapter is to identify and document the common themes found in the expert interview data. This chapter will present and explore the components that academics, practitioners, civil servants, and members of non-government organizations involved in the field of public participation expressed as essential to meaningful public participation.

4.2 Defining meaningful public participation

When the respondents were asked to define meaningful public participation, a number of insightful definitions were given. For example, one respondent defined meaningful public participation as "...participation that ensures public input is used in a functional and responsible way as compared to the public relations type of experience where the questions are often irrelevant and little use is made of the public response" (respondent # 3). Another, respondent referred to meaningful public participation as "... a process that ensures that the public has access to a decision-making process, and that they have access to the information necessary to participate in that process, and that the process be transparent so as to allow members of the public who have participated to determine whether their views have been adequately incorporated into the decision-making processes" (respondent #7). Several key themes were found within the definitions. The themes that emerged most often within the definitions of meaningful public are presented in table 2.

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**Table 2: Elements found within the definition
of meaningful public participation**

Influence
Inclusive / representative
Input is used
Fair and open dialogue
Perceived as meaningful
Informed participation
Intentions of the process are clear
Results in better decisions
Uses appropriate methods
Multiple methods / staged process
Results in mutual learning
Early involvement
Sincere listening
Results are representative of public values

Influence was a common theme among the respondents' definitions of meaningful

public participation. In order to be meaningful, respondents felts that participants must

have a genuine opportunity to influence decision-making. Some participants took the

concept of influence a step further suggesting that, to be meaningful, a public

participation process should involve participants directly in the decision-making process.

Representation was another theme common in the respondents' definitions of

meaningful public participation. The range of individuals participating is important to

the meaningfulness of a public participation program as most projects affect a variety of

publics.

Outcomes are an important determinant of the meaningfulness of a public

participation process. Many respondents included in their definitions a reference to

meaningful participation processes having specific desirable outcomes including that the

process result in improvements to decision-making, that those involved perceive the

process to be meaningful, that mutual learning takes place, and that the end decision be more harmonious with public values.

Other themes that appeared in the definitions of meaningful participation include, using participation methods that are appropriate to the situation and the publics involved, fair and open dialogue, early involvement, informed participation and sincere listening. Many of the themes that appeared in the definitions of meaningful public participation were also considered to be components of meaningful public participation by respondents and will be presented in greater detail in section 4.3.

4.3 Components of meaningful public participation

One of the objectives of this study was to determine the essential components of meaningful public participation. An analysis of the data revealed a number of the components that underpin meaningful public participation. Table 3 provides a summary of the components and subcomponents of meaningful public participation found in the data.

Table 3: Components and subcomponents of meaningful participation extracted from the expert interviews

Integrity and accountability Transparency Sincerity of lead agency Process intentions are clear Follow-up
Influence
Fair Notice and time
Inclusiveness and adequate representation Engaging interested and affected publics
Fair and open dialogue Positive communicative environment Capacity building Interactive formats (workshops / fieldtrips)
Multiple and appropriate methods Multiple techniques Staged process Appropriate techniques Consult on design
Adequate and accessible information
Learning and informed participation
Resources and participant support
Early on-going participation

4.3.1 Integrity and accountability

A component that respondents felt was essential to meaningful public participation was the accountability and integrity of the process. To be credible, respondents felt that a public participation program should be open and implemented with integrity. A public participation program cannot be successful without a sincere commitment by the lead organization. This is reflected in the comments of one respondent who expressed:

> *For a process to be meaningful and to avoid a situation where people get more and more frustrated with it, there has to be some indication that the authority involved is paying some attention and that it's not just going thorough a process*

with no intention of listening. There has to be a listening process because if people feel like they're making comments and then not seeing them reflected in any way or not having any rationale for them not being acted upon, it just feels like a complete waste of time and you get people alienated (respondent 5).

In order to avoid misunderstanding and conflicting expectations of the process, it is important to ensure that the purpose, intentions, and scope of the process are defined and agreed upon before the process begins. The following comment reflects this idea:

First that the ones delivering the process understand what they are looking for, because if they haven't thought through what they expect or what they are going to do with the input they will not be able to communicate that to those who they are going to ask for input, those who will be asked to participate. So what will happen is they simply will not communicate that element and lots and lots of public participation processes go forward without really ever articulating what the expectation, what the end result of it is going to be. I think it's because very often those who developed the plan for it haven't thought through "what do we expect, what are we going to do with all of this advice, this guidance, this input", so they don't communicate it and that's where it all starts to fall apart because then you have the disconnect where the public that is being asked to participate has different notions of what their involvement is going to be and what it is going to result in. So I think that's one of the first components it's that understanding of what the goal is of the consultation, what is the purpose of it, what will be achieved and then of course to communicate that (respondent 16).

When a public participation program is accountable and conducted with integrity, both the lead organization and the public should be able to trace how the input collected was used in decision-making. Many respondents stated that meaningful participation would involve considering the input received, and explaining the thought process used for incorporating or not incorporating that input. Follow-up was brought up by some respondents as a method that can be used to communicate to participants how their input was used. The following quotes capture the ideas expressed above:

...the consultation itself needs to be in good faith and what I mean by good faith is that, where possible, the input of the public is actually used in the decision-making process and if it's not used reasons are given for why it hasn't been used (respondent 8).

The process needs to be transparent and there need to be checks and balances in place to ensure that appropriate and relevant input received is actually taken into account in the decision-making process and is reflected in the final decision (respondent 7).

One thing that's not really recorded in the literature but my personal experience is that I think it is important for people to show how the public consultation affected the decision, making it very clear, because I think that sometimes people walk away from the process and there's not opportunity to debrief all the energy they've put in to the consultation and there is not proof, there's no easy example to say look this changed because of what you said. I think that that's something there needs to be more follow-up (respondent 15).

I think to be meaningful the proponent needs to make use of the public input and feedback what use is being made. Parks Canada awhile back did a major study in the Western Provinces and it fed back to their participants what points they made and what use was made of their input and also why in some cases the input could not be used, sometimes because it contradicted input that was used and sometimes because it referred to something that was outside the jurisdiction of Parks Canada, in which case they passed it on to the relevant organization (respondent 3).

4.3.2 Influence

In order to be meaningful, respondents felt that participants needed to have a genuine opportunity to be heard and influence decisions. Some respondents took this component a step further recommending that participants be directly involved in the decision-making process. A couple of respondents also stressed the importance of communicating the level of impact the process is to have on decision-making to avoid the difficulties that can occur when the level of influence is not communicated or is misrepresented. The following quotes capture the essence of why influence is an essential component of meaningful public participation.

First on, is that there is genuine opportunity to influence the decision and that distinction is made because many public involvement processes are kind of at the tail end of the study after the agency is already intellectually and emotionally locked into an answer. And it's sort of this is what we're going to do

*unless you can make enough noise to stop us. So meaningful means that there's
some genuine opportunity to influence the decision, the implication of that is
that the participation occurs throughout the entire decision-making process, so
that there is some form of public participation in how the problem is defined,
what alternatives get considered, how the alternatives are evaluated, and which
alternative is selected (respondent 13).*

*Again it has to be, you know, it has to have some essence of being able to
change a project. People sense very quickly when something's a done deal;
then they stop participating (respondent 11).*

4.3.3 Fair notice and time

A number of participants discussed the need for processes to provide adequate

notice and follow fair timelines. Fair notice includes making a genuine effort to engage

members of the interested and impacted public, encouraging them to participate. The

process must also follow a fair timeline, meaning there must be adequate time allotted for

the collection, review, and distribution of relevant information and for the discussion and

debate of the issues of concern. The timing of a participation process was also introduced

by respondents as being important to the meaningfulness of a process. Respondents felt

that it was important that participation occur at the early stages of a project before the

lead organization is intellectually or emotionally committed to an outcome. The

following responses capture the reasons why many respondents felt fair notice and time

was essential to meaningful public participation.

*There has be clear and fair notice. People need to know what the process is,
how it's going to work, what the decisions are that are going to be made, and
who's going to make them (respondent 20).*

*Adequate for lack of a better word adequate notice, in other words some effort,
effective effort to engage members of the public and to encourage them to
participate (respondent 7).*

Give people lots of notice and lots of time to access, think about, and talk to others, especially organizations which need to talk to their own organization to get the view of their organization. And hence we most of the time we say oh gee we'll send out a notice that we're having an open house, mail it out, well you've lost a week in the mail, because most go to postal boxes especially in rural areas urban it's different and then they may pick it up that week or not by the time they get it the process may be over then they're really ticked. So you've got to allow the appropriate time given the particular context you're dealing with to go though any kind of consultation and feedback loops. And I say loops plural multi-staged is of course one of the other principles (respondent 6).

The next would be fair notice and fair time to prepare. I think that that's a common thing people talk about, that it is important to provide fair notification of the event or the process but also fair time to prepare because I think depending on what is being asked for what is being sought that might input might require extensive preparations it's very easy to develop a question that you want answered or an issue that you want addressed but you have to step back and say okay now what is involved for those we are asking to answer this question, to respond. Let's say your taking something as significant as an assessment of a project, an environmental assessment, what is the amount of time it will take for the parties or the people we want to participate, the public to develop a level of understanding of what's on the table what's being presented or suggested before they can begin to actually develop a response that's meaningful (respondent 16).

4.3.4 Inclusiveness and adequate representation

A number of the respondents expressed the importance of ensuring that the process is both inclusive and representative. An important step in developing an inclusive and representative process is identifying all of the potentially impacted and interested publics so that the program can effectively engage these publics. The following comments reflect this idea:

The participation needs to reach out to the various publics who have a stake in the proposal, which may include neighbors and employees and customers and tourists and First Nation people a variety of types (respondent 3).

In terms of representation, there should be opportunities for a wide range of people to participate with a diversity of perspectives that could sit at a table or participate in some way. One issue would be to just get those people to the table (respondent 4).

4.3.5 Fair and Open dialogue

A number of respondents felt that fair and open dialogue was an important component of meaningful participation. They expressed the importance of having a forum that involved a two-way flow of information and promoted open discussion and debate. Respondents also noted that having a good facilitator or chair was often the key to developing and maintaining a process that promotes fair and open dialogue. The importance of fair and open dialogue to the meaningfulness of a participation process is illustrated in the following quote.

> *A meaningful process would include the opportunity for a two-way flow of information. In other words we receive information from others but we also are providing information into the process and not only providing that information but allowing opportunities for discussion and debate to take place and that allows people to really get into the issues to challenge each other's perspectives but to do that in a way that is constructive rather than destructive and I think our society in general doesn't have very good debating skills. We don't exercise those skills very much, so a good facilitator is someone who can bring people through that kind of process in a constructive way, which is very important to the meaningfulness of public participation (respondent 4).*

A number of participants expressed that fostering fair and open dialogue requires developing a respectful communicative environment where participants feel comfortable expressing themselves and discussing issues.

> *A positive contributory atmosphere [is needed for fair and open dialogue], which for me means that the negative vibes of conflict aren't rampant in the process in the events (respondent 14).*

Respondents also noted that participants sometimes range in their ability to communicate and participate in fair and open dialogue and that the lead organization and / or chair of the process need to be aware of these differences in abilities and attempt to

aid individuals in communicating and participating effectively. Some respondents expressed that one way of doing this is through capacity building designed to facilitate fair and open dialogue.

> *The next issue would be that those people have an opportunity to have their voice heard and in some cases that's more challenging than it sounds because a number of people that choose to participate may not have the communication skills, the background, the ability to really engage, and challenge various perspectives so it's a matter of being sensitive to those issues and allowing a variety of communication styles to be represented in a process and to not just refer to those with good rhetorical skills but to open up that process to a wide variety of people with a wide variety of communication skills (respondent 4).*

> *There needs to be consideration given to developing capacity in those that have a stake in the decisions that are pending to ensure that they are able to participate in a meaningful way (respondent 7).*

Interactive formats were another method respondents felt encouraged fair and open dialogue. Workshops and field tours were both mentioned by respondents as effective methods for fostering dialogue. An academic who has done work on public participation in the forestry field commented:

> *I am one for interactive formats with, as I mentioned earlier, high structure and low formality. By high structure I mean there is an agenda that has some specific things that people should work through in a structured way but I very much dislike hearing formats and media, and lawyers, and all that kind of court like stuff. I'm very much in favor of having people have as much time in the woods together as possible. I find that many important discussions take place in the woods not in relation to what you're seeing in the woods but in relation to important questions that you want to discuss just because you're standing there. And you can have those discussions so much better under the trees rather than under a ceiling (respondent 14).*

4.3.6 Multiple and appropriate methods

Using multiple methods of engagement, designing a program appropriate to the situation and participants involved, and consulting on design are all process design

factors that were introduced by respondents as being important to meaningful public

participation. A number of respondents alluded to the importance of using multiple

techniques and designing a staged process. Respondents indicated that having a staged

process that uses multiple tools and techniques to engage the public (eg. open houses,

advisory committees, surveys...) gives the public more opportunities to enter the process

and engage in discussion. The following responses discuss the value of using multiple

methods for engaging the public.

> *I like a multiplicity of formats so that when people want to make input they have a variety of ways of doing that. When there's only one means of doing it I think it's less than meaningful (respondent 14).*

> *... typically in an effective public participation program people are given opportunities to participate at the level of their interest so there are multiple forms of participation. So some people may be involved in advisory groups, some people may be involved in workshops, some people may just be receiving information (respondent 13).*

> *...[meaningful public participation involves the] sincere solicitation of the full spectrum of public values with multiple tools, and multiple formats, and multiple opportunities to do that (respondent 23).*

Using the appropriate methods for the situation and the publics you are attempting to

engage was another process design factor that a number of participants thought was

important to meaningful public participation. A public participation process is more

meaningful when it is planned with the specific circumstances of the situation in mind

and uses the appropriate techniques for engaging, communicating, and participating with

the public, appropriate to both the situation and parties involved. A couple of

respondents felt that the best way to design a participation process appropriate to the

public involved was to involve the public from the start by consulting on the design of the

process.

So you have to have consultation that's appropriate to the groups you're talking to and the best way of doing that if you don't know, and you should never assume you do know, is to go and talk to them and ask them how they want to be involved (respondent 6).

Some other aspects of it are that they have been consulted in advance with respect to the actual design of the process. That's a real common error in my experience that the public participation process is designed without any consultation with the public. You end up with processes that are designed in ways that do not meet the public's needs and that can be very impractical or it can be more complex. Anything from meetings in locations and at times that are very difficult for people to participate in or the means for participation aren't that easy for people to use, to the actual nature of the process so that may require people to work together with people they don't feel comfortable with or not work with other people that they would like to work with. So consulting on the design of the process is a key element in public participation process design (respondent 12).

4.3.7 Learning and informed participation

A number of respondents felt that for participation to be meaningful it must be informed. A meaningful process requires that participants and the lead organization have enough information to effectively debate the issues and reach an informed position on the issue at hand. All parties should have the opportunity to build a high level of understanding of the issue, situation, alternatives, and of the various perspectives and views.

Key components, well first of all the participation needs to be informed; in other words the participants need to know enough about the subject matter and the proposal to make a relevant response (respondent 3).

A key thing is that the participants have a high level of knowledge and understanding of the item that is the subject of the participation and that regard of the situation, of alternatives, and of the technical aspects that are being dealt with and also of the factors that are relevant in identifying and evaluating alternatives. Meaningful public participation is hard to achieve because it takes a long time to get the participants up to speed to the point where they have this level of understanding that enables them to really get engaged in an

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examination of the issue and an examination of the alternatives and arriving at
an outcome that can meaningfully influence the decision (respondent 24).

4.3.8 Adequate and accessible information

Critical to the component of informed participation is the access to and quality of

information used in a participation process. Many respondents commented on the

importance that information has on the meaningfulness of a public participation exercise.

Access to information, quality of information, and how information is presented can

impact the quality of a participation process. While discussing the need for access to

quality information, a few respondents also addressed the fact that in some situations

participants may need help understanding and interpreting some of the more technical

information. The following quote reflects these ideas.

> *...[meaningful public participation is reliant on the] availability of sound*
> *information, which mean that information needs to be available to the public*
> *and support needs to be available to them in understanding and using that, and*
> *interpreting that information (respondent 20).*

4.3.9 Resources and participant support

It is important to understand the needs and abilities of the key public involved, so

that if assistance is needed to allow participants to participate fully it can be given. The

nature and amount of the support required will vary with the situation but it can range

from financial support to technical assistance. Some respondents discussed the

availability of participant support and resources as a key component of meaningful

participation.

> *Some of it would require funding, so there would be intervener funding or*
> *something equivalent to that depending on the situation so that the people who*

are otherwise disadvantaged in the process would have a reasonable shot at being able to present their position and views and understandings in a competent way (respondent 2).

...there needs to be resources to try to make it happen, and when I say resources I don't just mean there has to be money available, there are other ways that people can be assisted to participate (respondent 8).

4.4 Redefining meaningful public participation

Considering the information provided from the expert interviews and the literature, the following definition of meaningful public participation was developed. *Meaningful public participation attempts to improve decisions that impact the public domain by identifying the needs, values, and concerns of the public at the early planning stages of a development or project. A meaningful public participation process provides the public with a genuine opportunity to influence the decisions that impact them; uses multiple and customized methods of involvement that engage the full range of impacted public(s); is based on full and accurate information; establishes and sustains fair and open two-way dialogue; is perceived as legitimate and genuine by participants; is conducted with integrity and accountability; and demonstrates how the input collected from the process was used in decision-making.* This definition has a number of built in assumptions as outlined below.

- Meaningful public participation is not a single event, such as an open house, but is a carefully planned process that uses a multiplicity of techniques that attempt to engage the full range of impacted public(s).

- Meaningful public participation gives participants a genuine opportunity to be heard and influence decisions. Participation has to begin at the early stages of a project

before the lead organization is intellectually and / or emotionally locked into an outcome.

- Participants should be able to trace how the input collected from the process was used in decision-making and have explanations given for the decision to incorporate or exclude input.

- The process should be built on full access to all relevant information. A meaningful process requires that all participants have the information needed to effectively debate the issues and reach an informed position on the issues at hand. All parties should have the opportunity to build a high level of understanding of the issues, situation, alternatives, and the views and perspectives of the other participants.

- The purpose, intentions, and bounds of the process are clearly defined and agreed upon at the start to prevent misunderstandings.

- To be meaningful public participation needs to foster an open two-way dialogue between participants and the lead organization. The process should capture more than first impressions, promoting open discussions of information, perspectives, and ideas.

Meaningful public participation is not:

- a human resource exercise that attempts to sell a predetermined solution to the public;

- a haphazard string of encounters with the public;

- a hollow attempt at transparent decision-making, where information is withheld and planning occurs behind closed doors; or

- a one-way communication process, where the lead organization fails to recognize that public participation is about both providing and receiving information.

The definition as presented addresses, some of the common shortcomings of conventional public participation processes. Common shortcomings outlined in the literature included problems surrounding notice and time, limited opportunities for participation, incomplete or inaccessible information, undefined intent or purpose, and lack of resources (Sinclair and Doelle 2003). For a public participation process to be meaningful, the decision to involve the public must be genuine. "Otherwise public participation becomes a procedural exercise rather than a substantive democratic process" (Shepherd and Bowler 1997). Adding the term meaningful in front of public participation raises the bar for public participation by tying in the aspects of a process that move it beyond the minimum requirements and attempts to elevate the process to take in the full range of benefits. Working to actively include the components of meaningful public participation into a participation process enhances the quality and effectiveness of a participation process by actively dealing with common process shortcomings.

There is no single element that makes a public participation process meaningful; it is the combination of components, most of which are interdependent. As a result many of the components discussed cannot be present in a participation process to their full extent unless the other components are also present. As one public participation practitioner eloquently responded when asked what component of meaningful public participation he thought was most important:

> *Ya well that's a bit like saying if you have a car with four tires which is the most*
> *important to keep inflated. All of those components are important and if any*
> *one of those fails you're going to have problems. Each one has a role to play*

and without it it's like trying to mix up a recipe and which is the most important ingredient well I guess the missing ingredient (respondent 3).

For example, how well a participation process is able to manage and present information can influence the success of all of the other components of meaningful participation. If participants believe that necessary information is being withheld from the process or feel that questions and requests for information are not being addressed in an appropriate and timely manner, they will have difficultly viewing the process as having integrity and accountability. Information is also critical to the component of fair and open dialogue. What information is provided and how it is presented can impact the quality of the dialogue in a process. As a result of this interdependency between components, when one component deteriorates it is difficult for the other components to be incorporated to their full capacity.

Chapter 5 - Meaningful public participation in forest management from the perspective of participants

5.1 Overview

The participant interviews were designed to examine whether the components of meaningful public participation uncovered in the first phase of the research were present in the four public participation initiatives examined, and how the participants of these initiatives relate to and value these components. This was done by presenting the components of meaningful public participation to the participants. The results of the participant interviews helped to unpack each component of meaningful public participation by illuminating how the components were incorporated or not incorporated into a process. Before presenting the results of the participant interviews, an overview of the four public participation initiatives looked at in this study is provided.

5.2 Cases

Four public participation initiatives related to forest management were looked at in this study. Different participation methods were used in all four cases. Public participation methods tend to fall under four main categories, public meetings and hearings, advisory committees not seeking consensus, advisory committees seeking consensus, and negotiations and mediations (Chambers and Beckley 2002). According to (Chambers and Beckley 2002) "methods become more intensive as they progress from the first of these to the last, also becoming more oriented towards forging agreements among a small group of interests rather than gathering information from a wide range of stakeholders".

Manitoba Conservation's Protected Area Initiative's consultation activities for the Bell and Steep Rock Canyon designation involved separate meetings with the different stakeholders including First Nations, forestry companies, mining interests, and environmental and local interests. The segregated meetings involved having representatives from Manitoba Conservation present and receive comment on the land parcels they wanted to designate as part of the protected areas program.

Louisiana Pacific's participation program involves more than one approach. However the initiative investigated in most depth by this study was their stakeholder advisory committee. Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee has been a long-running public participation initiative of the company and was originally formed in 1994.

The Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee is an initiative of Riding Mountain National Park and differs from Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee in that it is an issue orientated process and is not long-running, but instead is focused on developing consensus-based recommendations for the park on the management of Bovine Tuberculosis.

The fourth initiative, the Southern Area Forest Consultation, was different again. It was a large multi-stakeholder process run by the provincial government that attempted, but ultimately failed, to involve the participants in a negotiation. The researcher purposely chose public participation processes that used different participation methods to test the assumption that the components will be important across a variety of participation processes regardless of type.

5.2.1 Case 1: Louisiana Pacific Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Louisiana Pacific is an international forest products company with facilities in the United States, Canada and Chili. Louisiana Pacific Canada's Swan Valley Division manufactures oriented strand board in a mill east of Minitonas, Manitoba. Louisiana Pacific signed a Forest Management License (FML #3) with the Province of Manitoba in September 1994, which incorporates Forest Management Units 10, 11, and 13 within the Mountain Forest Section. Under this agreement Louisiana Pacific is responsible for the planning and coordination of the forest management activities in the license area.

Louisiana Pacific's public participation program involves more than one approach; however the initiative investigated in this study was their Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee has been a part of Louisiana Pacific's planning process since its inception in 1994, with the goal of incorporating community interests. The committee was involved in the development of the company's first 10 Year Forest Management Plan (10-yr FMP), which covers the period from 1996-2005 and is licensed by Manitoba Environment Act License # 2191E. Louisiana Pacific is currently reviewing their 10-yr FMP with the intention of updating it into a more robust Long Term Sustainable Forest Management Plan. The committee is involved in the current review of the 10-yr FMP and has over the years played a role in reviewing and commenting on the company's Annual Operating Plans, harvest blocks, and regeneration plans. The committee meets approximately six times per year in the fall, winter, and spring months, with an occasional summer field tour.

5.2.2 Case 2: Southern Area Forest Consultation

The Southern Area Forest Consultation, often shortened to the Southern Area Initiative, was a multi-stakeholder process organized by the Clean Environment Commission to advise Manitoba Conservation on wood allocation in what was, at the time, the southern area of Tolko's forest management license. The area under discussion, which was labeled the Southern Area, is comprised of portions of the Mountain and Interlake Forest section south of the 53rd parallel. The process involved a number of training sessions in negotiation and consensus; however in the end the process was unable to achieve consensus. The process brought attention to the need for more up-to-date figures on the wood supply in the region before a decision on wood allocation could be made.

5.2.3 Case 3: Protected Areas Initiative

Manitoba's Protected Areas Initiative is a program of the provincial government designed to create a network of protected areas that represent and protect natural regions in Manitoba. Ecological principles and criteria are applied to selected areas for possible designation in a process called enduring features analysis.

Manitoba Conservation's Protected Areas Initiative's consultation activities for the Bell and Steep Rock Canyons designation involved separate meetings with special interests. The consultation generally involved the presentation of land parcels in the Bell and Steep Rock Canyon area that were being considered for designation as part of the protected areas program to special interests in the region for comment. The interests consulted were First Nations, forestry companies who operate in the area, mining

interests in the area, and environmental groups and others that lobbied for or demonstrated a direct interest in the designation.

The area of land in question was given the protected areas designation just shortly after I began interviewing participants. I talked to three of the participants before the designation had been finalized and one after the finalization. This did have an effect on the perceptions of the participants interviewed to a degree because the first three participants interviewed were unsure where the process stood, which created some frustration.

5.2.4 Case 4: Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee

The Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee is an issue-based consensus-oriented group, meaning that it was formed as a result of an issue of concern and has decided to operate using consensus. Bovine Tuberculosis has been a contentious issue for Riding Mountain National Park and its surrounding area for more than ten years. The disease has been found within a portion of the park's elk population, and it has recently been discovered that it has spread to portions of the whitetail deer population. The disease can be passed between elk and cattle and over the last decade there have been a few outbreaks of tuberculosis within the cattle herds in the area. The tuberculosis issue has a number of social and economic implications for cattle producers and communities in the region.

In February of 2003, a group of local cattle producers went to Ottawa and presented to the Standing Committee of Agriculture their concerns about Park Canada's lack of local stakeholder involvement in the management of the tuberculosis issue. Parks

Canada was ordered by the Committee to do a better job of consulting the local public in regards to the tuberculosis issue. This series of events lead to the development of the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee. After an initial meeting with stakeholders to discuss the formation of the committee, it was decided as a group that a neutral party, the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve, should chair the process.

When the interviews were being conducted, the committee was still at the beginning stages they had just completed setting the ground rules for the process, and were in the process of gathering information and debating issues in preparation for the development of the recommendations.

The goal of this participation process is to develop consensus-based recommendations for the management of tuberculosis to present to Parks Canada. Some of the committee members were opposed to using consensus at the start. However through discussion and debate, consensus was chosen as the method of choice. At the meeting attended by the researcher it was agreed the committee would operate by consensus while presenting any alternate stances or arguments against a particular recommendation if consensus could not be achieved.

When the interviews were conducted, the committee held an advisory role on tuberculosis management for Parks Canada. At this time they wanted to extend their mandate so that they also advised the Tuberculosis Management Task Force. The Tuberculosis Management Task Force is made up of four government departments the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Manitoba Agriculture and Food, Manitoba Conservation, and Parks Canada and was established in 2000 to combat the tuberculosis problem. At the time of the interviews, a formal request was in to the task force for the

committee to play a direct advisory role to the Tuberculosis Management Task Force. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee already plays an indirect unofficial advisory role to the task force, as representatives from each of the four government departments are present at the committees meetings.

5.3 Participant views

Participants were able to relate to each of the components of meaningful public participation presented in the interviews and discussed the factors they felt influenced each component. The following section presents the participants' perspectives on the components of meaningful public participation. Examples from the cases help illustrate what the components of meaningful public participation look like in a public participation process.

Participants were asked to rank nine of the components of meaningful public participation in terms of their importance in making a public participation process more meaningful (Table 4). The overwhelming majority of the participants ranked all of the components as either important or extremely important.

Table 4: Importance of the components of meaningful public participation – as perceived by participants

Listed below are the components of meaningful public participation. A rank of 1 means the component is extremely unimportant to making a public participation process more meaningful. A rank of 5 means the component is extremely important to making a public participation process more meaningful.						
	Extremely Unimportant			Extremely Important		Don't Know
	1	2	3	4	5	
Fair notice and time	-	-	6%	24%	71%	-
Integrity and accountability	-	-	-	18%	82%	-
Fair and open dialogue	-	-	6%	41%	53%	-
Multiple and appropriate methods	-	-	18%	35%	47%	-
Learning and informed participation	-	-	6%	29%	65%	-
Adequate and accessible information	-	-	-	29%	71%	-
Participant motivation	-	-	24%	24%	53%	-
Inclusiveness and adequate representation	-	6%	12%	18%	65%	-
Influence	-	-	24%	12%	65%	-

5.3.1 Fair notice and time

Fair notice and time was considered to be an integral component of meaningful participation with 94% of participants considering it to be important or extremely important to meaningful public participation. One participant expressed how limiting short notice can be to members of the non-profit sector when you're trying to participate in a number of initiatives simultaneously.

> *The whole notion of fair notice and time that is often something that's really frustrating especially for people in the non-profit or environmental sector because in that realm you're always trying to participate in as many things as possible and you end up having a really busy schedule and then all of the sudden someone drops on you a meeting that is supposed to happen in like five days. Then it becomes an issue of well we told you this meeting was going to happen and you're like, well ya, but you told us four days ahead of time how can you expect us to drop everything. So I think that's a really important thing and I think that all the people who don't work in the non-profit sector don't necessarily take that into account. I mean the same can be true for anyone if you don't give someone notice it's really hindering their participation in the process (participant 19).*

Several factors were identified as having the ability to influence the component of fair notice and time they include, how meetings are scheduled, scheduling constraints, and the development and communication of a timeline. Table 5 provides a summary of the different factors that have the ability to impact the component fair notice and time. The description of the component provided in the left column is derived from the results of the expert interviews and the literature and the factors of influence presented in the right column are derived from the results of the participant interviews. Time was also seen as a factor influencing many of the other components of meaningful public participation. As a result, time will be introduced several more times throughout the presentation of the results in relation to its impact on other components.

Table 5: Fair notice and time

Component of meaningful Participation	Factors that can influence the component
Fair notice and time: For a process to be meaningful participants must be given fair and adequate notice of the process. Fair notice includes making an effort to engage members of the interested and impacted publics and to encourage them to participate. The process must also follow a fair timeline, meaning there must be adequate time allotted for the collection, review, and distribution of relevant information and for the discussion and debate of the issues of concern.	• How meetings are scheduled • Scheduling constraints • Development and communication of timeline

How meetings are scheduled:

How meetings are scheduled was established as a factor that impacted the component of fair notice and time. A number of participants said they liked having meetings scheduled with participation in a structured manner versus an ad-hoc manner scheduled at the whim of the lead organization. At the end of each Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting, Louisiana Pacific scheduled the next meeting and sometimes outlined the following meeting's agenda. Most of the members interviewed did not mind this method because it gave them flexibility as well as plenty of notice. Louisiana Pacific's committee meetings were mostly held during the fall and winter when participants were most able to attend.

The Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee had frequent meetings, which were pre set at the beginning of the process for the first Tuesday of every month. Meeting once a month can be intense as there is a limited amount of time between meetings to digest information and communicate with your representative organization

but is necessary in some situations. All of the members of the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee interviewed felt having meetings every month was appropriate for their situation. An advantage of having frequent meetings like the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee is that the information presented and the discussions that occurred at the last meeting are still fairly fresh in the minds of the participants at the next meeting, enabling discussions to continue with greater ease. Participants of the Protected Areas Initiative complained that meetings were infrequent and scheduled in an ad hoc-manner. The participants of the Southern Area Initiative that were interviewed had difficulty remembering if they received adequate notice of meetings.

Scheduling constraints:

Scheduling constraints were identified as a possible barrier to achieving fair notice and time due to the various constraints on people's time. Showing sensitivity and flexibility when scheduling meetings was seen as an important way of ensuring that fair notice and time is present in a process. A good example, of this is how the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee breaks during the harvest season when the producers on the committee would be unable to attend. Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee also made arrangements to break during times of the year that were inconvenient for participants.

Development and communication of a timeline:

Developing a timeline and communicating it to participants can be an important step in keeping participants motivated, because it allows participants to see where the process is headed and approximately how long it should take to get there.

The Protected Areas Initiative consultation was a multi-year process and participants involved expressed frustration with not having a timeline for the process. Participants found the process lengthy and painfully slow at times, and this was further exasperated by staff changes. A couple of participants also mentioned that since the meetings were so sporadic they would have liked it if Manitoba Conservation had put more effort into keeping participants up-to-date on the process through other means such as regular emails or mailings.

A couple of the participants in the Southern Area Initiative felt that the process was trying to operate within a constricted time frame and felt that the process should have been allotted more time and had greater flexibility built in for unforeseen complications.

5.3.2 Integrity and accountability

Integrity and accountability was considered to be an essential component of meaningful participation, with all participants considering it to be important or extremely important. The following quote illustrates the importance of integrity and accountability to a public participation process:

> *The whole idea of integrity and accountability, I think, is also really key, the key there being able to trace how the input collected from the public participation process is actually used in decision-making, because that's where you get people being frustrated saying, well why did I even bother participating if nothing that I said was taken into account, or considered, or included. If you don't have any way of conveying to people how the decision-making process works then you really can frustrate people, which can have an impact on future processes (participant 19).*

An analysis of the data found that there are a number of factors that influence the integrity and accountability of a process including clear process intentions, honesty and openness, influence, access to decision-makers, fair and open dialogue, information

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management, and feedback and follow-up (Table 6). All of the factors listed above were

also mentioned by the experts except for access to decision-makers.

Table 6: Integrity and accountability

Components of meaningful participation	Factors that can influence the component
Integrity and accountability: To be credible a public participation program must be open and implemented with integrity. Both the lead organization and the public should be able to trace how the input collected from the public participation process was used in decision-making. Included in this, is the responsibility of the lead organization to ensure that the purpose, intentions, and bounds of the process are defined and agreed upon before the process begins.	• Process intentions are clear • Honesty and openness • Influence (Input is used) • Access to decision-makers • Fair and open dialogue • Information management • Feedback and follow-up

Process intentions are clear:

A number of participants stressed the importance having a well defined process,

where the purpose of the process was clear, and the expectations are well defined.

Clearly defining and communicating the intentions of a process is not always an easy task

but it is a necessary one, as leaving them undefined will inevitably result in

misunderstandings and unmet expectations. As one participant commented:

> *...defining the process very clearly up front[is important to integrity and accountability]. It actually can be rather painful; it seems like you are not getting anywhere, but, if you can define the terms of reference what's in and what's out and what the expectations are upfront, that may take two meetings before you have even begun to address what you want to address but it's very helpful. If they tell you up front that "we are just going to inform you and your opinion is not being asked for" then I can say "okay just email me and I won't drive to Winnipeg and attend meetings" (participant 9).*

One complaint a number of the participants had about the Protected Areas Initiative process was that the process was never defined. Participants found this frustrating, as they were not clear on what was expected of them or what influence their input would have. One participant stated that he did not know where the participation process sat along the public participation continuum because it was never made clear how much input was wanted or how it was to be used. This participant was frustrated further when the expectations of the process were never made clear after clarification was requested.

The long-term members of the Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee felt that they had a clear idea of what the purpose of the committee was and remembered being involved in the development of the committee's terms of reference. One of the newer members of the committee, however, said that the purpose of the committee was not outlined to them and was unaware that the committee had developed a terms of reference. It is important for participation techniques that are long-running, such as stakeholder advisory committees, to communicate their purpose and terms of reference to any new members and provide them with any other background information they require to make their transition into the process easier. It is also crucial for long-term processes like Louisiana Pacific's committee to take time to review the process's purpose and terms of reference from time to time so that it can evolve as time goes by, or if the purpose has stayed the same, to ensure that all of its members are aware of the committee's purpose.

The Tuberculosis Advisory Committee's participants said that the intent of the process was made clear from the start; however time was taken to decide how the process should unfold. It was decided that the process should be chaired by a neutral

organization, the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve, and that a professional facilitator be hired.

While one of the participants felt that the Southern Area Initiative had clearly outlined the purpose and intentions of the process. The rest of the participants interviewed recalled there being a lot of confusion surrounding the purpose of the process, resulting in a request being made to the Minister for clarification. As expressed by one participant:

> *It was very unclear about what the purpose of the process was from the onset. Everyone came with a different idea of what this was suppose to be and because it wasn't well defined I think that was the biggest issue in terms of it not being a good process (participant 19).*

Honesty and openness:

Honesty and openness was another factor that participants' thought was critical to the integrity and accountability of a process. As one participant commented:

> *I think, though, what people really pick up on with regards to integrity, respect, and trust is the attitudes, the body language, the tone of voice, the communication styles of the people at the table that work for the company and that can vary between individuals and with seniority as well. People can really sense when someone is not being fully open or when someone reacts to a certain issue negatively when they don't want to go there or they don't want to deal with that at the time. People can pick that up quick and that can cause a little feeling in back of your head that they're not always open and trustworthy (participant 12).*

Many of the Louisiana Pacific Stakeholder Advisory Committee members, when asked about the integrity and accountability of the process, immediately began discussing the time that Louisiana Pacific was facing charges for an infraction and immediately brought it to the attention of the committee. Committee members thought that this demonstrated that the company was willing to be transparent and honest with their

operations, which to them confirmed that the process was being run with integrity and accountability in mind. As one committee member commented:

> *Ya and I can give you a good example. They were potentially going to be charged for a small infraction where one of their pieces of equipment had gone through a water crossing and made a problem there. They brought it to the advisory board immediately. Whether or not we would have found out I doubt we would have. But they said we've made a mistake; here's what happened; here's some of the possible consequences; we're just keeping you abreast (participant 3).*

Influence:

Participants thought that influence was important to the integrity and accountability of a process. Participants felt that a process demonstrated integrity and accountability when it used the input collected from the participation process to make decisions. Participants also commented that it was important for the organization collecting the input to illustrate to the participants how their input is being used in decision-making and to provide an explanation when input cannot be used. The following comments capture the essence of how influence impacts the integrity and accountability of a process.

> *I think it's demonstrated in part by what we talked about demonstrated in changes that have resulted as a result of discussions at the stakeholder advisory committee.... [The process needs to demonstrate] that our time, our participation, our opinions, advice, and recommendations are taken seriously and that every effort is made to utilize the input of the group or at least to explain why it's not possible to accommodate some of those interests or opinions. I think that's the most important thing; then the group at least feels that there's trust and honesty and respect there. Obviously, if the company cannot do something, they tell us why so that we can at least understand it (participant 12).*

> *It's really nice when they listen to you, when your advice is actually followed. It shows respect for the process (participant 14).*

> *When the decisions are already made and it appears as though what happens in the meetings does not translate into the decisions that are being made even if it's just small things like administratively it just somehow indicates that the real driver of the process is not the participants (participant 19).*

Access to decision-makers:

Having decision-makers present at meetings demonstrates to participants that a process has integrity and accountability. Many participants thought that having individuals who had decision-making authority present at the meeting was vital to the meaningfulness of a process. Having decision-makers present at the process helps to better link the participation process with an organization's decision-making process. All of the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee participants interviewed believed that having the Superintendent of the Park as well as some of the other members of the Tuberculosis Management Task Force present at the meetings lent the process integrity and accountability. One of the main reasons that participants valued having decision-makers present was that decision-makers were hearing their concerns and recommendations directly, not in a reiterated format from a third party. This sentiment is expressed in the following quote by a Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee member:

> *It gives you the opportunity to get close to the main table, certainly with this Tuberculosis Stakeholders Advisory Committee there are members there that sit on the actual advisory committee [Tuberculosis Management Task Force] they make the decisions, so they're hearing what we are saying and of course we're not all going to all have the same view but hopefully there are a few things in there that they will offer some compromise there so we can work on a consensus (participant 11).*

Fair and open dialogue:

Participants felt that a process demonstrates accountability and integrity when it is able to support fair and open dialogue. When a process never achieves fair and open dialogue or if dialogue breaks down, the integrity and accountability of a process can be compromised because fair and open dialogue is often a critical factor in reaching the

desired goals and outcomes of a process. Participants said that having a respectful

communicative environment where participants and the lead agency were open and

candid added to the integrity and accountability of the process.

> *Communication barriers are probably one of the main things I feel [would*
> *impact integrity and accountability]. When you get a breakdown in*
> *communication you get a total breakdown (participant 6).*

Fair and open dialogue was also introduced to the participants as a separate

component of meaningful public participation and as a result is discussed in further detail

in section 5.3.3 of this chapter.

Information management:

Another factor that is critical to the integrity and accountability of a process is

how the lead organization manages information. Participants felt that a process

demonstrates a commitment to integrity and accountability when the lead

organization manages information effectively, by being dedicated to the provision of

accurate, complete information, responding to questions and requests for information

in a timely manner, and accurately recording and documenting the input of

participants. The following response illustrates the importance of proper information

management.

> *To me information management really demonstrates a commitment to integrity*
> *and accountability whether there's enough resources and will to make sure*
> *everyone has the same information about what's going on and it's in a timely*
> *fashion and it's accurate and detailed and people have a chance to comment*
> *and make sure that if there is a meeting minute where something is or isn't*
> *concluded that there is opportunity to provide feed back. Just that things are*
> *well organized and that no one seems to be left out to me that demonstrates a*
> *commitment to making sure everyone is on the same page and have the same*
> *information; no sort of side deals are going on that everything is out in the open*
> *and that's how the decisions are being made (participant 19).*

Feed back and follow-up:

The provision of feedback by the lead organization is critical to the integrity and accountability of a process. Participants need feedback throughout the process so that they know that their concerns are being listened to, recorded, and responded to.

> *There has to be some way of recognizing that that information has been listened to, dealt with, and responded to. It doesn't have to be responded to positively, but at least there has to be a response. They don't have to say we accept everything you say, but there has to be some sort of response people can measure (participant 22).*

Follow-up is a critical stage in a public participation process that is often overlooked. Follow-up is important because it communicates to the participants how the process has progressed and how their input was used. A few participants who had been involved in past public participation initiatives without follow-up expressed frustration in not knowing what the final results of the process were and how or if their input was used. As one participant stated:

> *I think follow-up too [adds to integrity and accountability]. I often damn these public meetings because there is no follow-up and you don't know what ever came out of it...after a few times like that you feel you wasted your time going (participant 5).*

5.3.3 Fair and open dialogue

Participants perceived fair and open dialogue as integral to meaningful public participation, with 94% of the participants interviewed rating fair and open dialogue as important to extremely important.

Participants introduced a number of factors that they felt could impact a process's ability to have fair and open dialogue including good facilitation, information, the

establishment of a non-critical comfortable communicative environment, and time. Table 7 summarizes the various factors that have the potential to influence the component of fair and open dialogue.

Table 7: Fair and open Dialogue

Component of meaningful Participation	Factors that can influence the component
Fair and open dialogue: To be meaningful, public participation needs to foster a two-way dialogue, involving both information in and out. The public participation process should create a fair and open forum for the discussion of the project or issue in question. The process should capture more than just first impressions allowing for the discussion of information, perspectives, and ideas.	- Good facilitation - Information - Non-critical comfortable communicative environment - Time (seen as both opportunity and barrier)

Good facilitation:

Many participants discussed the importance of good facilitation. A strong facilitator was seen as the key to having successful meetings where fair and open dialogue could take place. There are many things that a facilitator can do to help encourage fair and open dialogue in the process, including but not limited to, managing the dynamics of the group, assisting the group in creating a comfortable communicative environment, and aiding members of the group who have difficulty expressing themselves in a group setting. The following responses capture the role that participants felt good facilitation played in facilitating fair and open dialogue.

> *I think a lot of it [fair and open dialogue] has to do with the facilitator or chair of the meeting in ensuring that people have the opportunity and recognizing when people feel a little uncomfortable with part of the presentation and when they're squirming a little bit and trying to help them to open out and some people all shy or uncertain of their knowledge and don't want to embarrass*

themselves encouraging people to state what's on their mind without any threat of being embarrassed (participant 12).

Participation and motivation, a lot of people in public meetings have something in mind but they are not public speakers and unless the chairman can take time and draw that out of them otherwise the poor guy never gets represented and that is part of the skill of chairing a meeting (participant 5).

Another aspect of good facilitation that was brought up by participants was the establishment and enforcement of ground rules by the facilitator to ensure that all communication and interaction is done in a respectful and orderly manner. The following response highlights the importance of establishing ground rules at the beginning of a public participation process.

That's really tough, I think that's [establishing fair and open dialogue] the really challenging part of the process where you are trying to bring together a very diverse group of people. I guess probably what facilitates that [fair and open dialogue] is establishing process ground rules at the beginning, set them clearly not only that but establishing them at the very beginning. This is what is going to happen in this process we're going to spend three meetings only talking about process we're not going to talk about the issues and once we've established our ground rules so that we know that everyone knows how the communication will occur and what is respectful communication etc. then we will discuss the issues (participant 19).

Many participants also, talked about the importance of having a strong facilitator or chair who could keep meetings balanced, focused, and moving forward. Participants felt that meetings can sometimes be sidetracked or taken over by participants with strong personalities impacting the quality of dialogue. The following responses express the importance of having a facilitator who can assist in keeping meetings balanced and on track.

It comes back to that facilitating chair; it's very important to keep people focused on the issue. It's hard to be one and I give these people credit, because it makes or breaks most meetings, they can end up in total chaos very easily. And again you spend 3 hours in a meeting and go home with nothing (participant 11).

I think that that is up to the chairman of the stakeholder advisory committee to see that he keeps a balance and not let it become one-sided you know (participant 5).

A facilitator allowing bullying disrespectful comments and not dealing with them I think that pretty well shuts down the dialogue; and I guess not creating an atmosphere where people feel like they can criticize but instead have guidelines to constructively relay criticism or opinions in discussion. Which is of course easy to say but very difficult to do (participant 19).

It was noted by some of the participants that it is important to have a balance between the provision of information by the lead organization and opportunities for the participants to provide input. Participants felt that, if the lead organization always dominated the meeting, open dialogue was discouraged. The facilitator can play a critical role in maintaining this balance.

The Louisiana Pacific Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the Protected Areas Initiative both had company personnel facilitate the meetings. The Southern Area Initiative hired a team of professional facilitators to facilitate the process. The Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee is unique in that it has both a chair and a facilitator. When the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee was first being developed, it was decided that it should have a neutral organization, the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve, chair the process and hire a professional facilitator to help design the process and facilitate the meetings.

The main focus of the participants' responses was the importance of having an effective facilitator and the role he / she should play. However, there were some participants who indicated that they felt that independent facilitators lent a process greater credibility than a completely company run process. A couple of participants warned that if company facilitators are used they should be careful not to let their role as

representative of the company impact their role as facilitator. As stated by a member of the Louisiana Pacific Stakeholder Advisory Committee:

> *I think it's really important for that person to know what their role is. If they are from the company, their role is not just to represent the company, but to help people be involved (participant 12).*

Information:

Information plays a critical role in fair and open dialogue. Before dialogue can occur, everyone must have a clear understanding of the issues under discussion. To develop this understanding, participants require access to relevant information. A number of participants stressed the importance of information and informed participation to good quality dialogue. The following quote from a participant of the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee illustrates this:

> *Well fair and open dialogue, it has such a large information component to it. If you're going to make sense then you have the information you have to understand the issue. When I was talking about people who talk about exterminating all the elk, well if you have all the information in your head as to exactly what's going on here then you likely wouldn't come up with that sort of recommendation. You'd realize that it wouldn't work and we don't run into it so much at our meetings because people are pretty much up to speed. But I have gone to other meetings around the park where producers have come in to the meeting and they know about tuberculosis but they don't know much about it and they dominate the meeting with some fairly radical solutions. Certainly in that sort of a forum you do not have fair and open dialogue simply because of ignorance (participant 14).*

Participants are often most comfortable when they are discussing issues they are familiar with. This is another reason why it is important to spend time at the beginning of a participation process raising participants level of understanding of the issues, as highlighted by the following response:

> *I think from a general perspective lack of familiarity with the issues in the area people may not speak up if they don't feel that familiar with things that are going on (participant 4).*

There are a number of other critical factors related to information such as access, quality, and relevance. All of these factors are critical to the relationship between information and fair and open dialogue. However, since information was presented to the participants as a separate component of meaningful public participation, the participants' views on the more intricate factors impacting information will be discussed in greater detail under the heading of information.

Non-critical comfortable communicative environment:

Time has to be spent building an environment where people feel comfortable expressing their opinions and concerns freely without fear of repercussion. It is important that the lead organization fight the urge to be immediately on the defensive because this can threaten the process's ability to elicit honest open responses and dialogue from participants. Participants discussed how fear of repercussion, comfort, and having ideas criticized, ignored, or dismissed were all deterrents to fair and open dialogue. Putting effort into creating an environment that encourages open communication, fosters trust, and establishes and polices guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate behavior is important when trying to encourage fair and open dialogue in a participation process. The following comments highlight the importance of creating a situation where people feel comfortable communicating:

> *Hesitation, fear of repercussions, its probably one of the biggest fears by people of dialogue and it definitely hinders... What definitely discourages fair and open dialogue would be somebody who would frown on a suggestion. Not having the opportunity to be heard in a manner that you feel comfortable with. That to me discourages fair and open dialogue (participant 6).*

> *Any time someone's interest or feelings or opinion are put down or criticized in any way that would definitely lead them to wonder about the usefulness of their participation (participant 12).*

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You have to make people comfortable. That works all the time. No matter what they say don't slam them for what they say and take your lumps as they come because good points come out of everyone; it's just a matter of putting them together and you put someone off once, maybe twice but then that's it they're going to go home and say nothing but bad things about you. Well they're not going to help you (participant 11).

Participants of the Protected Areas Initiative participation process described the dialogue as being primarily one-way instead of the desired two-way communication that is essential to a meaningful participation process. As one participant expressed:

Well the communication was pretty much one-way in this process. They're telling us "here it is, what are your concerns" and they would be "okay we heard you now go away." There wasn't a lot of two-way dialogue. They present what they are doing and we here in the forest industry say "here is our position, if you're going to do this then you will need a fire management plan." It was kind of like two one-sided conversations instead of dialogue (participant 9).

Having the main person in charge of meeting with the different stakeholders change on more than one occasion also strained the process's ability to develop an environment that supported fair and open dialogue. Participants expressed frustration with the inconsistency of the facilitation and lack of immediate notice when staffing changes occurred. One participant also felt that the decision to separate the different stakeholders also impacted the ability for effective dialogue, as participants were not able to gain an understanding of the complete situation because they were never clear of the opinions and perspective of the other interests involved.

The large number of stakeholders and the diversity of interest present at the Southern Area Process made creating a non-critical comfortable communicative environment challenging. As one participant stated, the process began with diplomatic and polite commentary but over time descended into more direct, less polite commentary.

Participants also commented that the confusion surrounding the purpose of the process made constructive dialogue difficult. The following quote illustrates this point:

> *It became difficult to have a dialogue and talk about the process when you didn't have a clear direction as to what exactly the process was and basically what the Minister wanted out of it (Participant 19).*

The Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee was in the process of setting the groundwork for the development of a comfortable communicative environment when the participants were interviewed. The facilitator aided the committee in the development of a terms of reference and rules of conduct for the committee. Participants were generally pleased with how the process was beginning to unfold in regards to communication and dialogue, as highlighted by the following response:

> *I think it's developing and you know yourself there are quiet people and noisy people in this world and I think our facilitator is quite good in getting people to speak up. And people are now quite conscious of the fact that the more they talk the less opportunity other people have to talk so you should really only speak when you have something to say so ya I think it's developing. I mean we only get together from 10:00 to 3:00 and then we have lunch in that interval as well so there is not a lot of time. If you're going to cover the ground and have fair and open dialogue then people have to be quite conscious of their own behavior (participant 14).*

While a number of Louisiana Pacific Stakeholder Advisory Committee members interviewed stated that they were generally satisfied with the committee's facilitation and the dialogue at the meetings, there was concern about the company's tendency to dominate the meetings. The following quotes capture the concern described above:

> *The agenda is sometimes too controlled and too full for a lot of that [dialogue] but we always get some time at each meeting (participant 12).*

> *Ya by and large I think it is very open and very fair. Having said that, sometimes the chair has to be cautious that they don't talk too much and [the chair] sometimes from my perspective goes on too long. There's a simpler way to answer questions. He's been in politics too long and can be evasive and long winded no or yes is sometimes the best answer (participant 3).*

> *...they have 20 really well informed, earnest, enlightened people with various points of view and no one gets to hear anything but [the chair] talk about how great the company is and we all go away complaining. We're all there out of a sense of duty and of obligation because we're told this is good and that it's a way of communicating with the company; well we're not communicating we're asked to be an audience again and again and again (participant 15)*

One member's solution to this concern was to alter the structure of the meetings so that the opportunity for the lead organization and committee members to have the floor was made more equal. A few participants wanted more time at each meeting to express their concerns and engage in dialogue with other participants.

Time:

A number of participants discussed time as a factor that can both facilitate and discourage fair and open dialogue. You need to have enough time so that trust can be built and a comfortable communicative environment can be created. There also needs to be adequate time to allow participants to develop a high level of understanding of the issues being discussed so that informed dialogue is taking place. Conversely if the process lasts too long and becomes stagnant, the process can lose focus, impacting the quality of the dialogue.

> *Opportunities for fair and open dialogue, one is time again not too much time that people lose interest not so much interest but lose focus, but not too short of a time where people don't have enough time to learn and read information. So time could go several ways; proper timing is important for fair and open dialogue (participant 21).*

5.3.4 Multiple and appropriate methods

Participants considered the multiple and appropriate methods component to be integral to meaningful public participation, with 82% of participants rating it as important or extremely important to meaningful public participation. Participants introduced a few

factors that they felt influenced the multiple and appropriate methods component

including having multiple opportunities to participate, the use of interactive formats, and

using appropriate methods of participation for the situation and impacted publics (Table

8).

Table 8: Multiple and appropriate methods

Component of meaningful Participation	Factors that can influence the component
Multiple and appropriate methods: Using multiple tools and techniques for engaging the public (eg. open houses, advisory committees, and surveys…) is viewed as an important component of meaningful public participation. A staged process that uses multiple methods allows the public different opportunities to enter the process and engage in discussion. The term appropriate method, refers to a public participation process that is planned with the specific circumstances of the situation in mind and uses the techniques for engaging, communicating, and participating with the public, appropriate to both the situation and the parties involved.	• Multiple opportunities to participate • Use of interactive formats (field tours, workshops) • Appropriate methods of participation

Multiple opportunities to participate:

Providing the public with multiple opportunities to participate while using a

variety of engagement techniques was introduced in the results of the expert interview

phase of the research as an important way to increase the meaningfulness of a

participation process. Participants agreed that providing the public with several

opportunities to participate contributed to the meaningfulness of a public participation

process. Participants also noted that not all participation exercises would appeal to everyone, and thought that a variety of techniques should be used.

> *I think you have got to use all the means that you have [to engage the public] from open houses, advisory committees, surveys, polls you know there is no secret to this. You need to use every means you can because what appeals to some doesn't appeal to everyone, so you have to cover all your bases (participant 5).*

Use of Interactive formats:

The public participation experts interviewed in the first phase of the study introduced the use of interactive formats that promote open dialogue and learning as an important method for meaningfully engaging the public. Interactive techniques for engaging the public, such as workshops and field tours, can have many benefits as they are effective methods for collecting open and candid input, fostering dialogue, and facilitating learning and understanding of the issues. Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee has used interactive formats such as field tours and workshops to inform participants and promote discussion. The members interviewed enjoyed the field tours and found them to be an effective way to learn about the scientific aspects of forestry and how the company operates. A few members also expressed appreciation for being involved in choosing the areas visited during the tours. As one member commented:

> *... once in a awhile when people are interested they try to organize a field trip where people can learn about a certain aspect of the operation whether it's a cut block or regeneration plots or how the mill operates and things like that. I think a lot of people have gained a lot of understanding from those field trips. Then once in a awhile they have a workshop where there is a specific set of issues to be dealt with and I think the people who participate in those maybe feel a little bit more of the influence and usefulness of their participation so that time seems to be well spent (participant 12).*

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Appropriate methods:

The results of the expert interviews showed that experts felt that a public participation process was more meaningful when it is carefully planned and attempted to use methods and techniques for engaging and involving the public that were appropriate to the circumstances and the public(s) involved. Participants agreed that providing the public with several opportunities to participate and using techniques appropriate to the impacted public(s) contributed to the meaningfulness of the public participation process. One way suggested by some of the expert respondents to design a participation process that is sensitive to the public(s) involved is to involve the public in the design of the process. In the four cases looked at by this research the public was generally not involved in the design of the processes. Although, participants of the Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory committee and the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee were able to have some influence in the development of their committee's terms of reference.

Methods of public participation that may be appropriate for engaging some publics may not be appropriate for all of the publics impacted by a project. For example, conventional methods of public participation are often inadequate when attempting to engage First Nations. First Nations are not regular stakeholders they have unique rights in relation to natural resources that set them apart from other stakeholders, entitling them to a process that may be different in its approach and scope. This has been reconfirmed in the courts, which have established that the government has a legal obligation to consult on activities that infringe on aboriginal and treaty rights. Within Canada, the legal framework governing First Nation engagement and public participation is currently in a

state of development. The First Nations participants interviewed all outlined how their rights and relationship to the land set them apart from regular stakeholders.

We're not just ordinary stakeholders like the white people (participant 16).

I guess, basically, we consider ourselves as having a very special stakeholder status. We like to be looked at that way by the government. It's our traditional territory, that's the way we look at it, that's were we've lived for decades, and we have rights of access to resources, that's where we're coming from, and we want the general public to know that (participant 17).

First Nation participants discussed a reluctance to participate in stakeholder based public participation initiatives such as stakeholder advisory committees because of this unique status.

I was apprehensive about coming because I don't view myself as a stakeholder. We were invited to the table sometime back, but we never participated because it was a stakeholders table, so there is no place for First Nations to be at a stakeholder table. It's not like we never had an invitation but it is the wrong place for First Nations to be sitting at a stakeholder's table. But I was assured that it wouldn't take away anything from our claims, but would be a good place to collect information (participant 18).

First Nation participants did recognize the benefits of participating in public participation initiatives that encouraged dialogue and sharing between different interests. As the following two quotes illustrate, when asked what were the main strength of the processes they were involved in. A member of the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee commented:

The strength is that we are all here and can support one another (participant 18).

A member of the Louisiana Stakeholder Advisory Committee commented:

Yes, it is an effective body, and it is diverse, there are different people sitting there and people from different sectors of education, people with Bachelors of Science and people with life experience who work in the industry. And some are just ordinary citizens that are just concerned about the land. So it pulls in a

diversity of people, which is good, different voices. But in the end we all want the same thing and that is sustainable forests (participant 16).

First Nation participants discussed willingness to participate in stakeholder based participation initiatives to keep abreast of an issue, to share their perspective with the other participants, and to learn about the concerns of the other public(s) impacted. They felt most comfortable doing this when they were also being consulted independently about any issue related to their aboriginal and treaty rights.

One participant also discussed the importance of using traditional ecological knowledge to enhance sustainable forest management.

[Traditional Ecological knowledge] is part of the process of sustainable forest management; I call it our Indian science. Now the government even sent a letter to Louisiana Pacific that this has to be part of the process of Louisiana Pacific's sustainable forest management plan. So this is a big break through for us, our elders are going to be consulting with them... Our knowledge of the forest should be part of sustainable forest management (participant 16).

5.3.5 Learning and informed participation

Learning and informed participation was considered to be an essential component of meaningful participation, with 94 % of participants rating learning and informed participation as important or extremely important. The following quote from a Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee participant illustrates the importance of informed participation and learning on the quality of input a process receives.

...but even more important is the educational aspect that comes from this sort of consultation in that if you're going to give decent advice you have to have all of the information presented to you and you have to understand it. ...I think learning is almost implicit in a good process (participant 14).

Several factors were identified as having the ability to influence the component learning and informed participation including information, motivation to learn, and meaningful dialogue (Table 9).

Table 9: Learning and informed participation

Component of meaningful Participation	Factors that can influence the component
Learning and informed participation: A meaningful process requires that participants and the lead organization have enough information to effectively debate the issues and reach an informed position on the issue at hand. All parties should have the opportunity to build a high level of understanding of the issue, situation, alternatives, and of the various perspectives and views.	• Information (access, quality, comprehension, and presentation) • Meaningful dialogue • Motivation and willingness to learn

Information:

Information was considered by participants to be a critical factor influencing the meaningful public participation component of learning and informed participation. The quality of information, the readability and understandability of information, the accessibility of information, and how information is presented can either facilitate or discourage learning.

When discussing the factors that influence learning and informed participation in a public participation process, many participants began discussing presentation styles and the use of different tools or techniques that encouraged learning. It was noted by several of the participants that people learn differently and to account for this it is important to use multiple methods and a variety of presentation tools.

I guess pictures facilitate learning, good simple presentations, and plain language. Some people can do it and some people can't. I mean we don't have David Suzuki in there explaining all this stuff to us, so we make do with people who maybe aren't quite as good. But in order to get your points across I guess maybe you have to do it several different ways because different people respond to different methods of learning (participant 14).

Some participants also discussed the use of visuals and interactive techniques to present information as an important method for facilitating learning. The use of visuals such as maps, pictures, power point presentation, and computer modeling were all seen as important tools for sharing information and encouraging learning in a participation process. However, it is important to note that not all of these learning tools would be appropriate in every situation. As illustrated by the quote below, visuals and other tools used to present information need to be tailored to the audience you are trying to reach.

A clear message is tailored to specific audience. Another key component is repetition because nobody gets everything the first time. Obviously the tools they use is important too because not all tools, as an example a company using computer simulations, speaks volumes to people who are computer literate and understand that, it means nothing to a guy who doesn't understand computers or predictive modeling. You got to use the tools that are tailored to the audience (participant 7).

The use of interactive learning techniques such as workshops and field tours were viewed by several of the participants as effective tools for facilitating learning in a participation process. The following quote helps to illuminate this point.

Seeing the results of the discussion visually going out into the field and saying hey this is what we are trying to do here. Seeing things in place that's important [for learning] (participant 3).

Handouts were also seen as an effective tool for encouraging learning, as they provide an opportunity for the participant to review a summarized view of the information presented when needed. The following quote describes the usefulness of handouts.

I like handouts, you've got it there in black and white so you can review it and refresh your memory. Whereas if you go to a public meeting it's all talk. How much of it do you retain two weeks later? You ask these guys what they heard and they don't even remember being at the meeting (participant 5).

Meaningful dialogue:

Meaningful dialogue allows people to better understand their own concerns and the concerns of the other participants. If a process breaks down and communication becomes stagnate, then meaningful dialogue cannot occur, impacting the ability for mutual learning to take place. Some participants commented that listening to the comments of other participants often helped them to better understand the concerns of other stakeholders and sometimes clarified their own concerns and understanding of issues. As a Louisiana Pacific Stakeholder Advisory Committee member stated:

Well I think the strength is that I get to hear other peoples' input and other peoples' use of the forest. So in the past I was probably very narrow in what I thought the forest was used for and listening to First Nation people for example, or environmental people, or trappers I begin to appreciate the multi perspectives and uses of the forest.... That's certainly been a wonderful part of it I'm much more aware of looking at other sides (participant 3)

Motivation and willingness to learn:

A few of the participants discussed personal motivation to learn as a factor influencing the component of learning and informed participation. The sentiment expressed was that people learn best when they are motivated to learn. If participants feel that the participation process is moving forward and that their involvement will make a difference, this will also influence their motivation to learn.

And I guess people have to want to learn. They have to realize that they have to be up to speed on this issue and that they have to learn and you know it sort of ties into the whole process they have to learn so that they can give good advice and then that advice gets followed and than it seems to be the process that gets established then that almost stimulates committee members to learn even more because they know that it's going to be used. (participant 14).

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I think it's a personal thing. I think you have to come with a goal to learn from others, to learn to work with others that should be a goal of all of us, if we think we know everything we're really in trouble (participant 3).

The following quote illustrates how a participant's motivation to participate and to learn can be impacted by their perception of the process:

I think if you have people who don't feel the process is valid for one reason or another, if they don't feel their participation is meaningful then I think it breaks down, you don't have people making the contribution that they could make and you're not going to have as good of a process and as useful of a dialogue and therefore you're not going to have learning (participant 19).

A few participants also stressed that, although it is critical for all participants, it is especially important that the lead organization to enter the process open and willing to learn from it. They expressed that sometimes the company or government agency leading the process will put the emphasis solely on educating the public and forget that a public participation process, when meaningful, should result in mutual learning and a greater understanding of the issues under discussion.

5.3.6 Adequate and accessible information

Information was considered to be a critical component of meaningful public participation with all of participants considering it to be important or extremely important. How well a participation process is able to manage and present information can influence the success of several of the components of meaningful public participation including integrity and accountability, fair and open dialogue, and learning and informed participation. Several factors were identified as having the ability to influence the component of information including quality, access, readability and understandability, and presentation (Table 10).

Table 10: Adequate and accessible information

Component of meaningful Participation	Factors that can influence the component
Information: Information is critical to a meaningful public participation process. For example, access to information, quality of information, and how information is presented can all impact the quality of a participation process.	• Quality and access • Comprehension • Presentation

Quality and access:

In order to participate fully participants need to acquire a solid understanding of the subjects and issues being discussed. In order to build this understanding and have informed participation, participants require access to all relevant information. The quality of information provided in a participation process is also critical and efforts should be made to ensure that information is accurate, balanced, and comprehensive. A public participation process where the lead organization is perceived as secretive and there are gaps in the information provided were viewed by some of the participants as signs that the process lacked integrity and accountability.

Comprehension:

To be useful information has to be presented at a level that all participants can understand. Participants discussed the importance of the understandability or readability of information. A lot of public participation process requires that participants comprehend information that is technical in nature. It is important for lead organizations to do what they can to assist participants in understanding the information provided. Some participants recommended technical assistance in the interpretation of technical documents, as outlined in the following quote.

A barrier to learning is the information itself that includes the readability of the information and if you have to provide technically dense information, then you have to provide assistance; you have to make it explicit that someone is going to be there to answer your questions, not after you read it, but as you read it, so saying if you have questions I'm going to be here at such and such a time. We're going to have someone here to answer your questions basically that needs to be. I don't think everything has to be technically complicated but when it is, it needs to be made clear that when I'm reading this, this is not all the information I'm getting so those are a couple of things (participant 21).

This factor includes gathering and organizing information so that it is both accessible and in a readable form for all participants. During this study the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee was working on developing a binder for each committee member, that would hold summaries of all of the key topics, organized under specific headings so that participants will be able to quickly reference information and file any new information.

We're almost ready to create summary documents on some of these things. There's been enough work done and we're thinking every member of the committee needs a binder of all of these summary documents so whenever they get a new piece of information they can fit it in to the proper context by putting it into the appropriate section. That will hopefully keep the information more organized and more organized in their own heads as well. ...because this is a complicated topic it is a bit of a challenge to make sure people continually understand what's going on (participant 14).

A few participants made an important point when they expressed that information on its own is often incomplete and discussed the importance of showing the relevance of information and making connections between the information presented. They felt that, when presenting new information, it is beneficial to the process for the presenter or the facilitator to take the time to discuss the relevance of any new information to the participation process. For example, one of the Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee members felt that when Louisiana Pacific brought in technical experts to present information they did not spend enough time afterward discussing how that

information was relevant to issues and concerns of the committee. Having the facilitator point out the connections between the information presented was also seen as important to the learning / educational aspect of a participation process. A couple of participants also discussed the importance of historical context to the comprehension of many issues. As the following comment illustrates, without a background of the history of the problem, it becomes difficult to understand the problem and the position of the other participants.

> *One more thing when we talk information we tend to talk about the information about the project or the issue at hand. What's so difficult though, is that we're rarely provided information on the history of the problem and without that history we don't have a context and without the history it becomes difficult to understand other people's positions (participant 21).*

Another factor that influences the comprehension of information is repetition. As a number of participants pointed out, it is often difficult to comprehend information the first time it is presented to you, especially when you are having a lot of new information presented to you at the same time.

> *Another key component is repetition because nobody gets everything the first time (participant 7).*

> *The case is almost that once is not enough. You can say well I told you that. Ya well maybe you did but you told me a lot of things so you almost have to keep on repeating it (participant 14).*

Presentation:

A number of participants felt that how information was presented impacted the quality of that information. Information has to be presented in a way that reaches each participant. People learn differently; as a result it is often useful to use more than one technique when presenting information. Information should also be presented in plain simple language, with limited use of technical jargon. The following quotes highlight the

importance of good quality presentations that are sensitive to the background and

comprehension level of their audience and attempt to capture the full range of learning

styles by using a multiplicity of techniques.

> *It goes back to using different methods really, everybody learns differently. Some people learn by watching, so a video or a movie is good; many other people learn by reading; other people can learn by listening. So information needs to be presented in a variety of ways and we tend to simply rely on reading right now with the public registry for example. A lot of people learn from question and answer; they need to have someone make a presentation and then have an opportunity to ask questions (participant 21).*

> *Poor presentations, people who can't answer the questions and I guess there can sometimes be a language problem when your dealing with guys who know a little too much; they don't seem to realize that there is a way to talk to people that works and there's a way to talk to their colleagues that works and they are not the same (participant 14).*

5.3.7 Participant Motivation

Participant motivation was considered to be an integral component of meaningful

public participation with 77% of participants considering it to be important or extremely

important to meaningful participation. It was found that a number of factors motivate a

participant to participate and continue participating in a public participation process

including interest and concern, relevance, and a process that moves forward and

accomplishes goals. Table 11 summarizes the factors that influence participant

motivation.

Table 11: Participant Motivation

Component of meaningful participation	Factors that can influence the component
Participant motivation: is a key component of the public participation process. The ability of a process to maintain and enhance a participant's drive to participate can have a dramatic impact on the processes result.	• Interest and concern • Relevance • The process is moving forward and accomplishing goals

Interest and concern:

A common motivation for participants was a concern for what is happening on the local landscape and a desire to get information about what is happening from a direct source. Participants also saw being involved in a public participation process as a way for them to express their personal concerns and the concerns of their member organization. Some of the motivating factors of interest include:

> *I was concerned about what was going to happen to our forests when I read that they were going to take 900,000 cubic meters of wood every year. I became quite alarmed (participant 5).*

> *I think initially a concern about what the big forest industry could do to the area where I spend my summers I was concerned. ...I wanted to know what the plans of Louisiana Pacific were and how that could potentially impact the forest and surrounding areas in our area (participant 3).*

> *To ensure that Louisiana Pacific is doing the correct thing on the landscape in terms of sustainability and conservation (participant 1)*

> *I guess basically an instinct that unless we were there we wouldn't really know what was going on (participant 19).*

Others listed their primary motivation for participating as their responsibility to the organization they represent or their employer to act as a liaison between their organization and the organization running the process by collecting information from the process and representing the position of their organization.

Relevance:

Relevance of the issues being addressed in the participation process to the lives of the participants also plays a strong role in motivation. When participants have a vested interest in the results of the process, they are motivated to participate and to work towards that process's success. This factor came through most strongly from the participants on the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee, which is not surprising since the tuberculosis issue has had such a strong impact in the region. Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee members expressed being motivated to participate because the tuberculosis issue impacts them and is relevant to their daily lives. As a result, they have a vested interest in seeing the process succeed and are motivated to work towards their collective goal of developing recommendations for the management of tuberculosis. As two participants noted:

> *I'm involved because I'm impacted by the whole thing (participant 13).*

> *Like I said, it's personal because I'm a fourth generation farmer and I don't know if my kids will farm. I had no intentions of farming when I left here 20 years ago either but I came back. I always liked farming. I just didn't think I would end up doing it because it doesn't really pay much but after a while working in Winnipeg for a few years I came to the conclusion it's not all about money. I prefer quality of life and that's why I'm here and that's why I'm very interested in tuberculosis, it's very important to our economy in cattle production (participant 11)*

The process is moving forward and accomplishing goals:

A number of participants expressed that they needed to have a sense that the process was moving forward and would continue to improve to maintain their motivation to participate. Participants also said that if they sensed that a process was becoming stagnant they would probably consider no longer participating. As a member of the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee exclaimed:

Yes I think we're on track, like I said a couple of meetings ago I was thinking that maybe I should just take a step back. I didn't see it going anywhere; we were stumbling a bit there, but I'm glad again I never really like to walk away from anything and I'm glad I didn't because otherwise you'd miss out on that transition, I think now we're going somewhere (participant 11)

As a member of the Louisiana Pacific Stakeholder Advisory Committee stated:

I think they [my expectations] have been met. I expect more as time goes by. I expect more involvement, more openness, more influence on decisions by the group. I think we're still growing. If it became stagnant I probably wouldn't stay, if we weren't getting anywhere, but there's an optimism there that things will continue to open up and the advisory committee and my own participation will be more influential in the future of the company and its operations on the landscape (participant 12).

5.3.8 Inclusiveness and adequate representation

The component inclusiveness and adequate representation was considered to be integral to meaningful public participation with 77% of participants considering it to be important or extremely important to meaningful participation. This component was introduced in the rating scale question, but there were no follow-up questions related to this component in the interview schedule. However, during the completion of the rating scale questions, a couple of participants stopped to discuss this component. While they agreed that people with a stake in the issue at hand should be involved "whether you agree with their perspective or not" (participant 5), they felt that sometimes people can abuse the inclusiveness of a process by trying to bring in issues and interests that are not the main goal of the process and stated that there needs to be bounds on the issues discussed because, if the scope is all encompassing, it becomes difficult to set and achieve goals. One participant felt that people who don't have a direct stake in the issues

being discussed should not have the same say or level of influence as the participants

who would be the most impacted by the decision and commented:

> *How can someone from another area come in and be in the same position as I am. Just because they view themselves as the general public doesn't mean they can tell us what to do. We don't tell anyone else what to do. To get their support they need all the information but they shouldn't have the same say. The people whose interests are going to be more impacted should have more of a say than the ones whose aren't (participant 18).*

5.3.9 Influence

Influence was considered to be an essential component of meaningful public

participation with 77% of participants considering it to be important or extremely

important to meaningful public participation.

The Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee was at the early stages of the

process at the time of the study so participants felt that it was too early to tell if their

recommendations would be heeded by Parks Canada. There was optimism expressed by

a number of participants that when the committee did complete the development of their

recommendations they would be considered by Parks Canada. However, one participant

expressed that he believed that the committee would have had a greater ability to

influence if it had started a few years earlier because at this stage action on the issue was

already beginning to take place. At the time of the interviews, committee members

wanted to increase their ability to influence by expanding their mandate from solely

advising Parks Canada to advising both Parks Canada and the Tuberculosis Management

Task Force on tuberculosis management issues.

The majority of the members of the Louisiana Pacific Stakeholder Advisory

Committee interviewed felt they had some ability to influence the decisions of the

company. Some members were able to recall changes made to harvest plans to accommodate concerns brought forward at committee meetings. The examples given were all site specific in nature and mainly involved making changes to cut blocks to remove areas of ecological, cultural, or recreational significance. Some of the participants appeared satisfied with the committee's level of influence while others felt that the committee should play a greater role in advising the decisions of the company. The following quote outlines the views of a participant who believed the focus of the committee should evolve to include involvement in the company's long-term management goals.

> *I think substantial, significant involvement in recommendations and decisions is what's maybe lacking a little bit and could be enhanced.... I think the company could focus more on areas where the committee could feel that they're actually making a difference. For example, we spend a lot of time on annual operating plans every year and I think most of us and the committee in general we now have gone through that enough times that we trust the company to do the right things and maybe we could shorten that component and concentrate more on long term planning with their long term management strategy and have involvement in specific issues. Things like questionnaires and workshops, where specific questions have to be answered, where decisions have to be made, and where we can get up to speed on an issue, make some recommendations then move on to the next issue. More relevant discussions where we feel we're involved in changing things for the better. Of course each of us has a different idea on what better is but obviously for me it's protecting the environment while still providing opportunities for recreation and employment and all those things (participant 12)*

The Protected Areas Initiative consultation was set up to solicit input from special interests on the Bell and Steep Rock Canyon proposed protected areas designation. The participants were invited to comment on the land parcels being considered for designation. The process was described by participants as involving primarily one-way communication with limited opportunity for dialogue and discussion. The intention or purpose of the participation was never defined for participants; as a result participants

found it difficult to gauge the influence their participation was having. When decisions were presented, the rationale for the choices made was generally not shared with participants.

The confusion surrounding the purpose of the Southern Area Initiative led to unmet expectations, which in the end left a number of participants unsatisfied with the level of influence the process had. The process's ability to influence wood allocation was also impacted by the need for more up-to-date figures on the wood supply in the region.

5.4 Unpacking the components of meaningful public participation

The components of meaningful public participation uncovered in the first phase of this study were reaffirmed and expanded upon by the results of the participant interviews. This section will use the results of the participant interviews and the existing literature on public participation to further unpack each of the components of meaningful public participation. Another goal of this section is to evaluate the cases against the components of meaningful public participation.

5.4.1 Fair notice and time

Both the experts and the participants interviewed discussed the need for participation processes to provide adequate notice and follow a fair timeline. Participants considered fair notice and time to be an integral component of meaningful public participation, with 95% of the participants interviewed considering it to be important to extremely important to meaningful public participation.

Participants and experts both saw the development and communication of a timeline as an important tool for ensuring fair notice and time. Participants involved in the Protected Areas Initiative expressed frustration with the process's lack of a timeline and the sporadic nature of meetings. Timelines can be an important tool for outlining goals and keeping a process on track. The communication of a timeline can also be an important motivational tool because it shows participants where the process is headed and approximately how long it should take to get there. Public participation guidebooks often recommend that processes set up realistic timelines for major milestones, but warn that flexibility should be worked into the schedule in case of unavoidable delays (McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Sterne and Zagon 1997; CSA 2002). There needs to be enough time for participants to engage meaningfully on the issues of concern. However, if processes designed to undertake a short-term goals become too time-consuming, costs can escalate and the process runs the risk of becoming stagnant, straining participants motivation to remain involved. Participants discussed the need to feel that a process was moving forward and accomplishing its goals to maintain their motivation to participate.

For a participation process to be meaningful, participants must be given fair and adequate notice of the process. Without adequate notice a participant's ability to participate is hindered. Inadequate notice can leave potential participants unprepared or unaware of the opportunity to participate. A number of the experts interviewed felt that fair notice included making a genuine effort to engage members of the interested and impacted public(s). Expert respondents also felt that notice of a participation initiative needs to be clear and concise, providing potential participants with all of the information they require to make the critical decision of whether they should participate or not.

Notification should also give all potential participants plenty of time to think about, prepare, and discuss their participation in the pending participation events. People do not have the time, energy, or inclination to participate in every process and need to be able prioritize their participation. Participants felt that fair notice could be hindered by how meetings and participation events were scheduled. They appreciated when meetings or events were scheduled in a timely and organized fashion, and expressed frustration with meetings being called on a whim. The importance of notice is supported by the literature, with lack of adequate notice considered to be a potential barrier to fair and effective public participation by a number of authors (Sinclair and Doelle 2003)

The timing of a participation process was introduced by the respondents of the expert interviews, as being important to the meaningfulness of a process, and they often advocated that participation begin at the planning stages of a project or development. The importance of timing to the success of a public participation process is often discussed in the literature, with most researchers and practitioners advocating early and on-going participation (Blahna and Yonts-Shepard 1989; Shindler et al. 1998). According to Praxis (1988) "Timing is everything, you can develop the most elaborate program which may take months or years to implement. You may get the best possible involvement and the best data, but if the decision was made months before, of what value was the public involvement program?" The timing of participation is of particular importance during, the assessment of a proposed development, as the public's ability to influence fundamental issues within the assessment process such as need, purpose, and alternatives, increases with earlier involvement (Sinclair and Diduck 2001). Inviting the public to participate in the advance stages of planning places the participants in a reactive

position where the proposal is perceived as a final decision thus limiting the discussion of possible alternatives (Chess and Purcell 1999). According to Diduck and Sinclair's (2002) work on non-participation, timing can be a barrier to participation when potential participants choose not to participate because they view the decision being made as a foregone conclusion. Meaningful public participation should provide participants with a genuine opportunity to participate and therefore needs to occur at the beginning stages of a planning process before organizations are intellectually and emotionally locked into a decision.

5.4.2 Integrity and accountability

Respondents of the expert interviews felt that for a participation process to be meaningful it needed to be run with integrity and accountability. The component, integrity and accountability, is multi-facetted and deals with the manner in which the process is facilitated and how the input derived from a process is incorporated into the decision-making process. The experts introduced a number of subcomponents related to integrity and accountability including transparency, sincerity of the lead organization, clear process intention, influence and feedback and follow-up. The results of the participant interviews revealed that participants also put a high value on integrity and accountability in public participation. The subcomponents of integrity and accountability established from the expert interviews are reaffirmed in the results of the participant interviews with participants identifying clear process intentions, honesty and openness, influence, access to decision-makers, fair and open dialogue, information management,

and feedback and follow-up as factors that can influence the integrity and accountability of a process.

The importance of integrity and accountability to a public participation process is confirmed in the literature. According to Praxis (1998) "The most important qualities in any public involvement program are that the agency and its representatives are sincere, ethical, and have integrity and commitment". The responsiveness of the organization leading a public participation process is identified by Beierle and Cayford (2002) and McCool and Guthrie (2001) as a key factor in the success of a participation process. Numerous studies have identified a correlation between strong leadership and successful public participation. According to Beierle and Cayford's (2002) systematic review of public participation cases, low levels of responsiveness by the lead organization appears to lower trust and foster perceptions of process illegitimacy.

The respondents from both the expert and participant interviews stressed the importance of having a well-defined process, where the purpose and expectations of the process are well defined and agreed upon at the onset. Failure to effectively define and communicate the purpose and expectations of the process with participants was found to be a common problem in the four cases studied. This factor is supported in the literature, with many practitioners and researchers asserting that having a clear mandate and purpose is vital for managing the objectives of a process and preventing misunderstandings (Duinker 1998; Shindler and Neburka 1997; Sterne and Zagon 1997; Sinclair and Doelle 2003). While it is critical to define and agree upon the purpose, intentions, and scope of a process at the start, it is also imperative that long-term participation initiatives such as advisory committees ensure that any new members have

all the background information they require to transition into the process smoothly. Long-term processes should also review their purpose and terms of reference on a regular basis to ensure that the process evolves as goals are achieved and that all members are familiar with the purpose and intent of the process.

Many participants found that having decision-makers present in the process was another factor that demonstrated that a process was run with integrity and accountability. Participants felt that having decision-makers present added to a process's legitimacy and enabled decision-makers to hear their concerns and recommendation directly instead of in a reiterated form. This is supported by Shindler and Neburka's (1997) study of forest management related public participation initiatives in Oregon, which found that participants believed that their contributions were taken more seriously by the agency when decision-makers had a regular presence at meetings. All of the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Committee participants interviewed mentioned how having the superintendent of the park present at meetings lent the process greater integrity and accountability.

Several of the factors introduced by participants as having a influence on the integrity and accountability of a process are also separate components of meaningful public participation including fair and open dialogue, information, and influence; and as such will be discussed in further detail in the upcoming sections. Integrity and accountability are essential to a meaningful public participation process because they are necessary for the development of a process that results in fair and effective decisions that are supported by the public.

5.4.3 Fair and open dialogue

Respondents of the expert interviews felt that for a participation process to be meaningful it needed to support fair and open dialogue. Participants also, put a high value on fair and open dialogue, with 94% of the participants interviewed rating this component as important to extremely important to meaningful participation.

Both experts and participants felt that strong facilitation was essential in developing a process that is able to foster and support fair and open dialogue. The participants identified a number of things that a facilitator can do to help facilitate fair and open dialogue in a participation process including keeping meetings balanced, focused, and moving forward; managing the dynamics of the group; assisting the group in creating a comfortable communicative environment; establishing and enforcing the rules of conduct; and aiding participants who have difficulty expressing themselves in a group setting. Hiring an independent facilitator can lend a process creditability and is recommended in processes where the level of trust between the company or government agency running the process and the public is poor. If an employee is used to facilitate a participation process it is critical that this person has the skills and experience needed to be an effective facilitator and is careful not to let their role as company representative impede their role as facilitator.

Respondents from both the expert and participant interviews highlighted the importance of developing a non-critical comfortable communicative environment where fair and open dialogue could take place. In order to elicit honest and open responses from participants, an environment must be created where participants are comfortable and assured that positions will not be criticized, ignored, or dismissed.

Experts introduced the use of interactive techniques such as workshops and field tours as an effective method for fostering dialogue. Several participants also discussed interactive formats such as workshops and field tours noting that these types of techniques encouraged learning and helped facilitate fair and open dialogue.

Time is also a factor that can both facilitate and discourage fair and open dialogue. There must be enough time so that a comfortable communicative environment can be nurtured, and participants are able to develop a high level of understanding of the issues under discussion. However a process that is too long can lose the interest of the public, impacting participation and the quality of dialogue.

A common complaint of public participation is that organizations can sometimes get carried away in their attempt to educate and inform the public that they overlook the importance of fair and open dialogue. Fair and open dialogue is a critical component of meaningful public participation that requires two-way communication. Providing information without opportunity for feedback and discussion does not constitute dialogue and often leaves participants questioning the validity of the participation process. According to Praxis (1998) "The essence of public involvement is two-way communication. It is not genuine public involvement unless there is some information coming back from the public, although there may be times during a public involvement program when it is appropriate to be simply providing information". Participants can generally sense right away if a process is genuinely attempting to enter into a meaningful dialogue with participants on an issue or if a process is simply being used as a vehicle to inform the public and influence public opinion. As one member of the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee stated when comparing the committee to Parks

Canada's past attempts of dealing with local stakeholders on the tuberculosis

management issue:

> *They used to stand on high and provide information and they'd think that constitutes dialogue. A lot of organizations think that constitutes dialogue when really that doesn't constitute dialogue. Dialogue to me is when you say "okay we have this problem; how are we going to solve it?" Where Parks Canada in the old days before this committee, they would stand up and say okay here is the situation with the elk and this is what we're going to do, does anyone have any questions and they'd think that was dialogue (participant 14).*

Striking a balance between informing the public and soliciting public input and

discussion can be difficult to do. However, being able to find this balance is critical,

because when fair and open dialogue is not represented strongly in a process many of the

components of meaningful public participation can be impacted including integrity and

accountability, fair and open dialogue, and learning and informed participation.

5.4.4 Multiple and appropriate methods

The experts and participants interviewed in this study saw using multiple methods

and designing a participation program that is appropriate to both the situation and

participants involved as an important component of meaningful public participation.

Participants considered using multiple and appropriate methods to be an integral

component of meaningful public participation, with 82% of participants considering it to

be important or extremely important to meaningful public participation.

According to Praxis (1988) "You must remember not to limit yourself to only one

method or technique when designing a public involvement program. 'Putting all your

eggs in one basket' can result in the downfall of the process you are trying to achieve.

Divide your resources over several techniques. What do you have if no one shows up to your public meeting and you have no flexibility to develop something else? "

There is a wide range of techniques that can be used to engage the public; however, often public participation processes only use one or two techniques. Public participation practitioners and researchers often highlight the value of using numerous techniques when attempting to engage the public (Duinker 1998; Praxis 1988; McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; and others). Each participation technique has its own strengths and weaknesses and therefore works best when used in combination with others. Using a multiplicity of techniques also, helps capture the full rage of impacted and interested publics, as people will often have differing comfort levels with specific methods of participating. There are numerous techniques to choose from when developing a public participation process. The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2 2001) has compiled a comprehensive list of public participation techniques (Table 12). The IAP2 has classified the techniques into six categories which include passive public participation techniques, active public information techniques, small group public input techniques, large group public input techniques, small group problem-solving techniques, and large group problem solving techniques. There are also, several guidebooks including Dorcey et al. (1994), Sterne and Zagon (1997), CSA (2002) and others that provide recommendations for matching public participation techniques to the needs of a public participation program.

Table 12: Public Participation Techniques

Passive public information techniques: printed material (fact sheets, newsletters, brochures, and issue papers), information repositories, technical reports, advertisements, newspaper inserts, feature stories, bill stuffers, press releases, news conferences, television, and websites
Active public information techniques: Briefings, central contact person, information hotline, technical assistance, simulation games, information centers and field offices, expert panels, field trips, open houses, and community fairs
Small group public input techniques: Interviews, in-person surveys, coffee klatches, and small format meetings
Large group public input techniques: response sheets, mailed surveys and questionnaires, telephone surveys and polls, internet survey and polls, and public hearings
Small group problem solving techniques: design charrettes, community facilitators, mediation and negotiation, focus groups, advisory communities; task forces; panels; citizen juries; and role playing
Large group problem solving techniques: samoan circles, open space technology, workshops, future search conference, and interactive polling

Source: IAP2 (2001)

A key element of meaningful public participation that emerged from the expert interviews was the importance of choosing the appropriate methods of participation for all affected publics. The literature discussing public participation in forest management often puts forth the argument that no single public participation approach can be used successfully in all situations. The literature instead suggests that effort be directed at creating public participation processes that best suit the public and the issues at hand (Higgelke and Duinker 1993; and others).

One way to do this is to consult the public on the design of the participation process. A number of public participation guidebooks recommend consulting the public(s) on the design of public participation processes including Praxis (1988), Sterne and Zagon (1997), and Anon (2002). An innovative approach to customizing the involvement of the public was used during the Kananaskis Country Recreation

Development Policy Review (Roberts 1999). The public was engaged in the design and review of the participation process through the establishment of a Process Advisory Committee, a separate committee that dealt with the process issues of the participation process. The committee was responsible for overseeing the process, which aided in ensuring the process was customized and appropriate to the situation and accepted as being open and objective by the impacted publics (Roberts 1999).

During the interviews, it became clear that participants often had strong opinions surrounding what they thought worked and did not work in a process. A lot of insights surrounding the functioning of each of the four cases were uncovered when participants discussed the components of meaningful public participation in relation to their processes. They also had many practical ideas and solutions on what could improve a process. This suggest that there might be an opportunity to strengthen a process mid-way by providing participants with an opportunity to review the process, encouraging discussion on what works and what does not, and opening a dialogue on how to improve the process. This, of course, would only work if participants remained constructive in their review of the process and if the facilitator and lead organization made a genuine effort to not get defensive, which would shut down the openness of the participants' responses.

5.4.5 Learning and informed participation

Both the expert and participant interviewees saw learning as a key component of a meaningful public participation process. Participants considered Learning and informed participation to be an integral component of meaningful public participation, with 94% of

participants considering it to be important or extremely important to meaningful public participation. This component involves the participants and decision-makers building a high level of understanding of the situation, issues, perspectives and concerns, and plausible alternatives so that effective dialogue can take place improving the quality of decisions.

Learning is recognized in the literature as being important to public participation (Webler et al. 1995; Daniels and Walker 1996; Beierle 1999; Fitzpatrick and Sinclair 2003). It is considered by some to be both a precondition for and an outcome of fair and effective participation (Sinclair and Diduck 2001; Fitzpatrick and Sinclair 2003). There are also several evaluation frameworks for public participation that include learning as a criterion. Learning helps facilitate meaningful public participation by enabling the public, experts, and decision-makers to debate issues more effectively, formulate alternatives, understand the tradeoffs involved with each alternative, and acknowledge and understand the interests and values of other stakeholders (Beierle 1999). To effectively incorporate the public's values, assumptions, and preferences into decisions, mutual learning must take place. Public participation that can foster mutual education surrounding differences in values, assumptions, and preferences will ideally lead to creative and effective decisions.

All of the participants interviewed considered learning and informed participation to be an important component of meaningful public participation. The participants identified three main factors that influenced the learning and informed participation component of meaningful public participation including access to, quality of, and understandability of information; meaningful dialogue; and motivation to learn.

The quality, readability, accessibility of information, and how that information is presented are all factors that can facilitate or discourage learning in a public participation process. Using a multiplicity of methods for presenting information can aid in the facilitation of learning by accounting for the full range of learning styles. Other techniques that participants introduced as being effective in promoting learning in a public participation process were the use of visual, interactive techniques, and handouts.

Meaningful dialogue is another factor participants thought influenced a process's ability to encourage and support learning. The quality of the communication that occurs within a process has an affect on the learning that can take place (Sinclair and Diduck 1995; Sinclair and Doelle 2003). Maintaining a process that fosters fair and open dialogue impacts the learning as well as many other components of meaningful public participation. Fair and open dialogue and the factors that impact this component of meaningful public participation are discussed in further detail under the heading fair and open dialogue.

Participants saw personal motivation to learn as a factor influencing learning and informed participation. Meaning that people will learn better when they enter into a process open and willing to listen and learn. This study found that a participant's motivation to learn is impacted by their perception of how the process is functioning. When participants think that their involvement will not make a difference or that the process is becoming stagnant their motivation to learn will decline. Maintaining a productive participation process will aid in keeping participants interested in learning about the issues under discussion and the perspectives of other participants.

Educating participants about a development and the surrounding issues is critical to meaningful public participation. However, there were experts and participants interviewed that cautioned about the dangers of letting the education component of a participation process turn into an attempt to simply quiet concerns and sway participants to the lead organizations desired course of action. Meaningful public participation is a collaborative process where decision-makers and the interested public(s) can discuss and debate key issues in an attempt to develop creative solutions to complicated problems. The value of informed participation is that the participants involved are able to debate and discuss issues from a high level of understanding. Participants felt it was important that learning be mutual, meaning that all participants, including the lead organization, should ideally enter a process open and willing to learn.

5.4.6 Adequate and accessible information

Both experts and participants thought that adequate and accessible information was an essential element of meaningful public participation. The public's ability to access all relevant information related to the issues under consideration in a timely manner is important factor in their ability to participate fully (Lucas 1978; Sinclair and Fitzpatrick 2002). The literature also addresses the quality of information stressing that information needs to be accurate, complete, balanced, and comprehensive (McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Sterne and Zagon 1997; Praxis 1988; EPA 2001; and others).

The study found that quality, access, comprehensibility, and presentation of information all impacts how a public participation process functions. Participants discussed the importance of having full access to quality information. The

comprehensibility of information was another factor that participants introduced as being important. The information presented in forest management public participation processes can be technically dense. It is important for the organizers of a participation process to pay attention to the readability of the information provided. There may be situations where participants may require technical assistance to comprehend information. There may be other times where it would be appropriate to break down information into manageable summaries for participants. The technically dense nature of the tuberculosis management issue meant that effective dissemination of information was critical to the success of the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee. To help participants organize and manage the information provided by the process the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee decided to develop a binder for each member that would hold summaries of the key topics, organized under specific headings for easy reference.

Participants also highlighted the need for the facilitator to aid in a participant's comprehension of new information through outlining the relevance of new information to the big picture and illuminating the connections between all of the information presented. A few participants also pointed out that in some situations it is difficult to fully understand an issue or the positions of other participants without having information on the historical context of the issue. The results of the participant interviews also highlight the importance of good quality presentations that avoid using technical jargon and are sensitive to the capacity participants. It was noted by participants that people learn differently so different presentation styles are often needed to accommodate differing learning styles.

A meaningful public participation process also needs to pay careful attention to the information that it is collecting from the process. It is important to accurately record and organize the information collected from the process through the creation of thorough and accurate minutes of meetings and other interactions with the public. Careful documentation of the public's input will simplify the process of incorporating the public's input into decision-making and provide documentation for the feedback and follow-up stages of the process, where illustrating how the public's input was used is critical.

5.4.7 Participant motivation

Participants and experts both found participant motivation to be an important component of meaningful public participation. Ninety-four percent of the participants interviewed considered participant motivation to be important or extremely important to meaningful public participation.

Participant motivation is essential to a meaningful public participation process. A process's ability to engage and maintain a participant's drive to participate can have a dramatic result on the success of a process. Participant motivation is also, recognized by a number of authors as an important element in successful public participation (McCool and Guthrie 2001; Beierle and Cayford 2002; Wondelleck and Yaffee 1994; Moore 1994). According to Beierle and Cayford' s (2002), systematic review of 67 public participation cases the correlation between motivation of participants and success ranged from moderate to high.

This research uncovered three main factors that can impact a person's motivation to participant in a forest management related participation process. A common motivation for participants to enter into a forest management participation process was an interest / concern in what was happening on the local landscape. Participants saw becoming involved in a participation process as a way to stay informed and present concerns.

Relevance was also a common motivation that participants gave for their participation. Almost all of the participants in the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee interviewed stated relevance to their daily lives as their primary motivation for getting involved in the committee. The members of this committee also discussed being dedicated to working towards the goals of the process. Demonstrating that the relevance of a process to people's daily lives can be an important tool for motivating the impacted public(s) to become involved in a process and maintaining the motivation of participants to remain actively involved.

A process's ability to maintain a participant's motivation to continue participation seemed to hinge on a participant's perception of how the process was functioning. Participants talked about needing to feel that a process would continue to improve and make progress toward stated goals to maintain their motivation to participate. Participants felt that if a process became stagnant they would have to reconsider their involvement. Time is a rare commodity for most people and as a result when people feel that their time is not being spent productively by attending a participation process they will discontinue their participation. In order to maintain a participant's motivation to

participate, a process must demonstrate that it is using participant input in a useful and respectful way, and that it is making progress toward its intended goal.

This study asked participants of participation processes to discuss what motivated them to participate. It is equally important to understand what motivates the public not to participate. Diduck and Sinclair's (2002) study of the nonparticipant outlined the following set of barriers that can impact a participant's decision to participate including inadequate notice, incomplete and inaccessible information, insufficient resources, lack of opportunity, and lack of input in decisions made. To make a genuine attempt to engage all of the impacted publics of a development or project it is important to be aware of any potential barriers to participation. Identifying and addressing the barriers to participation can be an important tool in motivating participants to participate.

A public participation process can impact a participant's motivation to participate and continue participating by taking the concerns and interests of the public seriously, showing the relevance of a process, demonstrating that the process is moving toward a collective goal, and identifying and addressing any barriers to participation.

5.4.8 Inclusiveness and adequate representation

The majority of the experts interviewed thought that the inclusiveness and representation of a participation process was important to the meaningfulness of the process. Participants also viewed inclusiveness and representation as an important component of meaningful public participation, with 83% of participants considering this component to be important or extremely important to meaningful public participation.

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The issue of inclusiveness and representation of public participation in forest management is often discussed in the literature, with authors calling for participation that is representative and inclusive (Knopp and Caldbeck 1990; Tanz and Howard 1991; and others). However, as Wellstead et al. (2003) articulate, the level of analysis given to the issue of representation in often superficial. The authors evaluate three different types of representation, descriptive representation, representation of subjective interests, and the representation of unattached objects. They point out that when evaluating the representation of a participation process one must look at the context of that representation. The authors also argue that descriptive representation is one of the weakest forms of representation and discuss the merit of introducing subjective and objective approaches to understanding representation (Wellstead et al. 2003).

5.4.9 Influence

The experts interviewed felt that in order for a public participation process to be meaningful it must provide participants with a genuine opportunity to be heard and influence decisions. Participants also, viewed influence are an important component of meaningful public participation, with 77% of participants considering influence to be important or extremely important to making a participation process meaningful. Both the experts and participants felt that it was important to communicate the level of influence a participation process was to have on decision-making at the start of a process. As misunderstandings can occur when the influence a process is to have is misrepresented or not clearly defined.

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Researchers and practitioners agree that providing the public with a genuine opportunity to influence decision-making is a key element of public participation. For this reason, numerous guidebooks on public participation recommend integrating public participation processes into the decision-making process (Praxis 1988, McMillan and Murgatroyd 1994; Anon 1998; Stern and Zagon 1997; CSA 2002; and others). For example, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers note in their guidebook on public participation that, "For public involvement initiatives to be meaningful, they must be linked to decision-making processes. When public involvement is well integrated into decision-making, public interests and input can be incorporated into planning along with economic, environmental, and engineering data" (CAPP 2003).

Many of the experts also discussed the importance of demonstrating how the input collected during a public participation process impacted the decisions made. It is essential that the public be able to see evidence that their comments and concerns have been incorporated into decision-making. In other words decision-making should be transparent. As Knopp and Caldbeck (1990) note, "A distinction is made between simply listening to the public versus actually allowing them to influence the land-use or resource allocation. This distinction is hard to establish. As long as the ultimate decisions, the tradeoffs, occur in a black box, no one on the outside can be sure that the public has any influence".

5.4.10 Evaluating meaningful public participation in forest management

As the previous sections illustrate, the components of meaningful public participation developed from the expert interviews were reaffirmed by the results of the participant interviews, and are supported in the literature. The participant interviews, which took the components and tested them on the ground in four forest management related public participation processes, unpacked the components of meaningful public participation by identifying the key factors that impact each component. The participant interviews also demonstrated how the components were naturally incorporated into the cases by varying degrees. Table 13 summarizes the results of this research, highlighting the components of meaningful pubic participation and the factors that influence them. As such, Table 13 provides a useful tool for considering how meaningful a public participation process has been and was therefore applied to the four case studies as revealed below.

**Table 13: Components of meaningful public participation
and the factors that influence them**

Components of Meaningful Public Participation	Factors that can influence components
Fair notice and time	• How meetings are scheduled • Scheduling constraints • Development and communication of a timeline
Integrity and accountability	• Process intentions are clear • Honesty and openness • Influence (input is used) • Access to decision-makers • Fair and open dialogue • Information management • Feedback and follow-up
Fair and open dialogue	• Good facilitation • Information • Non-critical comfortable communicative environment • Time
Multiple and appropriate methods	• Multiple opportunities to participate • Use of interactive formats • Appropriate methods of participation for all of the impacted public(s)
Learning and informed participation	• Information (access, quality, comprehension, and presentation) • Meaningful dialogue • Motivation / willingness to learn
Adequate and accessible information	• Quality and access • Comprehension • Presentation
Participant motivation	• Interest and concern • Relevance • Process is moving forward and accomplishing goals
Inclusiveness and adequate representation	
Influence (input is used)	

Participants were asked to reflect on how well the processes they were involved in incorporated each component of meaningful public participation. The results reveal that the level to which each case naturally incorporated the components of meaningful public participation varied from case to case. This is shown in part by the examples that were provided throughout this chapter of how well each case incorporated the different components of meaningful public participation. Participants were generally more satisfied and less frustrated with the processes that did a better job of incorporating the components of meaningful public participation.

In all four cases, the majority of the participants interviewed believed that all of the components were present in their process at some level. However, when participants discussed the factors that they felt influenced the various components it became clear that in all four cases there were problems or process limitations that prevented the components from being incorporated to their full potential. The components that the processes had the most difficultly with were integrity and accountability, fair and open dialogue, and influence.

When participants discussed the factors that they felt influenced integrity and accountability it became clear that there were issues that prevented this component's full incorporation. Failure to effectively define and communicate the purpose and expectations of the process with participants was found to be a common problem related to integrity and accountability in the cases studied. Participants of the Protected Areas Initiative consultation process felt the process was never properly defined, leaving participants unclear as to how much input was wanted and how it would be used. Participants of the Southern Area Forest Consultation also reported confusion

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surrounding the purpose of the process, which created a situation of frustration and conflicting expectations. While the long-term members of Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee had a clear idea of the committee's purpose, new members expressed a desire for a more complete orientation into the process.

As participants discussed the factors they thought influenced fair and open dialogue it became clear that in the majority of the cases, there were issues related to fair and open dialogue that prevented this component from being incorporated to its full capacity. The diversity of interests and the large number of stakeholders at the table made developing a non-critical communicative environment where fair and open dialogue could flourish difficult for the Southern Area Process. This coupled with the confusion surrounding the purpose of the process affected the process's ability to support the fair and open dialogue component to its full capacity. There were also issues in the Protected Areas Initiative's participation initiatives that impacted the process's ability to promote fair and open dialogue. Changes in staffing created inconsistency in the facilitation of the process. The limited scope of the process and the separation of the different interests also limited dialogue. While participants of Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee felt that their process facilitated fair and open dialogue there was still a concern about the company's tendency to dominate the meetings. Participants expressed a desire to have an increased opportunity to express their concerns and engage in dialogue.

Participants were not always satisfied with the level of influence a process provided. Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee members were able to give some examples of where the committee's influence has resulted in some small

changes, that generally involved making changes to cut blocks to remove areas of ecological, cultural, or recreational significance. Some participants were satisfied with the committee's level of influence while other members believed that the committee should play a greater role in influencing the company's long-term management goals. It was too early to tell if the Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee's recommendations would be heeded by Parks Canada. However, a number of participants were optimistic that the committee's recommendations when completed would be considered and used when feasible. At the time of the interviews the committee was attempting to increase their influence by expanding their mandate to advise both Parks Canada and the Tuberculosis Management Task Force on tuberculosis management issues. The limited scope of the Protected Areas Initiative participation constrained the participants' ability to influence decisions, with participants generally left feeling that all that was wanted was a simple yeah or nay to the selection of boundaries for the designation, with expansion to other areas of discussion discouraged.

In summary, all four cases experienced challenges incorporating the components of meaningful public participation. However, to complete the evaluation of the cases it is important to reflect briefly on the context in which each of the processes was developed. The remainder of this section will review the context in which each public participation process was developed and summarize some of the key strengths and weaknesses of each process.

Louisiana Pacific's Stakeholder Advisory Committee was the longest running process studied. While evaluating the committee against the components of meaningful public participation some clear strengths and weakness of the committee were identified.

The participants' responses allude to the need for balance between the information provided to the participants and the input collected from participants. Currently participants feel that the company has the tendency to dominate meetings, and that their time spent being an audience is not balanced with activities designed to solicit input. One of the strengths of the process was that participants felt that the process had developed and improved over time and thought that it would continue to evolve.

The southern Area Initiative was a relatively ambitious participation process, due to the sheer number and diversity of interests involved. The process was initially set up as a negotiation and was developed to advise Manitoba Conservation on wood allocation in the region. There were a number of key weaknesses, in the implementation of the process that ultimately prevented the process from reaching fruition. Confusion surrounding the purpose of the process created a situation where participants had conflicting ideas of what the process was trying to achieve. The dialogue on wood allocation in the region was limited due to a lack of up-to-date figures on the wood supply. In the end, the process was dismantled and Manitoba Conservation updated the figures on wood supply and made the final decisions on wood allocation in the region independently without further participation by the stakeholders.

The Protected Areas Initiative made participants aware of the parcels of land in the Bell and Steep Rock Canyon that were under consideration for designation and provided selected stakeholders an opportunity to bring forward their concerns and opinions. However, there were a number of weaknesses apparent in the Protected Areas Initiative participation process, when evaluated against the components of meaningful public participation. Many of these weaknesses are related to the structure and design of

the process. It appears as though the participation process developed out of a need to inform and involve key stakeholders in the selection of the boundaries for the protected areas designation in the Bell and Steep Rock Canyon region, without a lot of thought put into how to design and implement a meaningful process. There are a number of simple changes that would have increased the presence of the components of meaningful public participation in this process. The areas that needed the most attention include fair and open dialogue, consistency in facilitation, and clarity surrounding the intentions of the process. The process came to completion during this research; the designation was established with stakeholders generally in support of the final decision.

The Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee was established in an attempt improve the involvement of local stakeholders in the management of tuberculosis after Parks Canada was ordered by the Standing Committee of Agriculture to do a better job consulting the local public on the tuberculosis issue. The committee was at the early stages of its development when this research was conducted; however, it was already showing some clear strengths. The process is chaired by a neutral third party, the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve, and the meetings are run by a experienced facilitator. Another clear strength of the process is that it has clearly laid out the purpose of the process, and the committee appears committed to working together to achieve their primary goal developing consensus recommendations on tuberculosis management. The process had set the groundwork for the establishment of all of the components of meaningful public participation. However, since the process was still in the early stages, it is difficult to know how well the components will be incorporated throughout the process. For example, the process had put effort into establishing a non-critical

communicative environment. However, the committee had not started developing their

consensus recommendations when the interviews were conducted, a task which will test

the process's ability to support fair and open dialogue.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

6.1 Overview

The purpose of this research was to define meaningful public participation and investigate the potential for its implementation in forest management. To achieve this, the specific objectives of this study were: 1) to establish the key components of meaningful public participation; 2) to investigate current approaches to public participation in forest management planning; 3) to consider levels of satisfaction with current participatory approaches within Manitoba's Mountain Forest Region by examining current practice in light of the components of meaningful public participation; and 4) to develop recommendations for public participation in forest management. These objectives were addressed by: 1) reviewing relevant literature; 2) conducting standardized interviews with experts in the public participation field; 3) conducting semi-structured interviews with participants of four local public participation initiatives. This chapter highlights the key conclusions of this study and provides recommendations for improving the meaningfulness of public participation in forest management.

6.2 Approaches to public participation in forest management

To investigate the current approaches to public participation in forest management, this research examined four public participation initiatives in Manitoba's Mountain Forest Region. Manitoba Conservation's Protected Areas Initiative's public consultation activities for the Bell and Steep Rock Canyon designation involved separate meetings with stakeholders including First Nations, forestry companies in the area, mining interests, and environmental and local interests. The Southern Area Initiative was

a large multi-stakeholder process run by the Province that attempted to involve participants in a negotiation style process. Louisiana Pacific's stakeholder advisory committee was also looked at by this study as was Parks Canada's Tuberculosis Stakeholder Advisory Committee. The researcher purposely chose cases that used different participation techniques to test the assumption that the components will be important across a variety of participation processes regardless of the methods used. Key conclusions:

- There is a range of methods being used to involve the public in the four cases studied.

- There is an inconsistency in the publics targeted. Some programs attempted to involve a broader range of publics involving stakeholders, and the local and broader general public, while other processes focused primarily on stakeholders alone excluding the broader public.

- The processes' tendencies to naturally incorporate the components of meaningful public participation varied from case to case.

- The assumption that the components will be important across a variety of participation processes regardless of the methods used was confirmed by the results.

6.3 Meaningful public participation

This research set out to define meaningful public participation and uncover the key components that make a public participation process meaningful. A comprehensive definition of meaningful public participation, which incorporates the results of the expert interviews and the relevant literature, is presented on page 46. The definition addresses some of the common shortcomings found in public participation processes and attempts to raise the bar by moving public participation beyond the minimum requirements. This research revealed several of the key components that underpin meaningful public

participation including fair notice and time, integrity and accountability, fair and open

dialogue, multiple and appropriate methods, learning and informed participation,

adequate and accessible information, participant motivation, inclusiveness and adequate

representation, and influence.

The components of meaningful public participation outlined by this research are

supported in the literature, and have been verified and grounded in the results of the

participant interviews, which took the components and tested them against four forest

management related public participation programs. The results of the participant

interviews helped to unpack each of the components and identified some of the key

factors that influence each component. The components and their corresponding factors

are outlined in table 13.

Key conclusions:

- There is not one correct method for undertaking a public participation process. The uniqueness of circumstances surrounding each process makes this evident. However, it is possible to identify the components that characterize a meaningful process.

- There is a good deal of consensus surrounding what makes a public participation process meaningful. The components of meaningful public participation outlined in this study were developed by experts and are supported in the literature and by participants.

- Meaningful public participation is not a single event, but a carefully designed process that uses a multiplicity of techniques appropriate to the situation and the public(s) involved.

- There is no single thing that makes a public participation process meaningful, rather it is a combination of components.

- Many of the components appear to be interdependent and as a result when one component deteriorates it is difficult for the other components to be incorporated to their full capacity.

- There is existing literature that can shed light on how to best incorporate the individual components of meaningful public participation. For example, this research found using multiple methods appropriate for the circumstances and the parties involved an important aspect of meaningful public participation. There are a number of resources that outline the different participation methods available and when to use them. Appendix A lists a number of the resources available to practitioners and organizers of public participation initiatives in an annotated bibliography of the public participation guidebooks and manuals referenced in this research.

6.4 Public participation and forest management

It is widely accepted that pubic participation is a critical component of sustainable forest management. However, achieving meaningful public participation continues to be a challenge. This research has developed a comprehensive definition of meaningful public participation and has established the key components that make a process meaningful. This research has also demonstrated that how a participation process functions can be evaluated by examining how well a process is able to incorporate the components of meaningful public participation. Evaluating the four cases against the components of meaningful public participation has confirmed that there is a need to focus on the quality of public participation in forest management. The evaluation provided insight into the key strengths and weaknesses of each of the cases, showing that while the components were present to some degree in the cases studied, there were problems and process limitations that prevented the components from being incorporated to their full potential.

It is clear that process weaknesses related to the components of meaningful public participation can lead to dissatisfaction and frustration on behalf of the participants and can prevent a process from realizing the many documented benefits of public

participation. Participants were generally more satisfied with the processes that did a better job incorporating the components of meaningful public participation.

Striving toward the concept of meaningful public participation can only improve a public participation process and its resulting outcomes. That said it would be difficult to claim that a participation process was truly meaningful in every sense of the word, because there is not one correct method for undertaking a public participation process. The diversity of situations, participants, and techniques surrounding forest management related public participation in Canada makes this evident. Each situation is unique and as a result what is considered meaningful will vary according to the variables of that situation, the goals of the process, and the degree to which the public is involved. Nevertheless, the components of meaningful public participation should be considered during the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of a public participation process. Paying close attention to the components, incorporation at the planning and implementation stages of a participation process helps build an effective and meaningful process. Evaluating a public participation process using the components of meaningful public participation provides an exceptional opportunity for learning by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of a process in turn, providing an opportunity for improving the meaningfulness of a process.

Public participation is considered to be a core principal of sustainable forest management. Public participation aids the move toward sustainability focused decision-making by adding to the creative capacity for perceiving solutions to problems and by encouraging complete decision-making that involves considering the full range of environmental, economic, and social impacts of a project. To do this the participation

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must be meaningful. Many of the components of meaningful public participation

outlined by this study encourage the discussion of issues of substance. For example, for

public participation to be meaningful it must be run with integrity and accountability

meaning it must be genuine and dedicated to making better decisions that take the true

environmental and social cost of an action into consideration. To do this the scope of the

project must be set appropriately being careful not to define critical issues of substance

such as the consideration of alternatives, and the definition of the environment too

narrowly.

Key conclusions:

- Although, efforts are being made to involve in public in forest management, this research has shown that there is room for improvement when it comes to the meaningfulness of that participation. The components of meaningful public participation were present to some degree in all of the cases studied. However, there were problems and process limitations in all four cases that prevented the components from being incorporated to their full potential.

- Evaluating a public participation process using the components of meaningful public participation highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the process in turn providing an opportunity for improving the process.

- Participants are most likely to see a participation process as successful and endorse the decisions made by the process if they consider it to be meaningful.

- Ensuring that the components of meaningful public participation outlined in this research are strongly represented in a process is one way in which process organizers can monitor the quality of their participation process and demonstrate their commitment to involving the public in a meaningful way.

6.5 Incorporating the components of meaningful public participation in forest management

The potential for incorporating the components of meaningful public participation

into forest management related public participation appears promising. The importance

of involving the public in forest management decision-making and the need to improve

the quality of current public participation processes has been established in the literature. The focus is no longer on whether the public should be involved in forest management, but rather how best to involve the public. Also, the results of this research demonstrate a willingness of participants to try new approaches to public participation.

The evolution of the management of Canadian forests from a closed decision-making approach with a primary focus on timber harvest to a more open and holistic approach based on sustainable forest management is occurring slowly. According to Duinker (1998), "public participation in forest management in Canada is evolving through its adolescence. While many issues still remain to be resolved, the signs are positive for a long and productive maturity". As a result, it can also be assumed that the incorporation of the components of meaningful public participation will occur at a slow but steady rate.

Key conclusions:

- The components of meaningful public participation outlined by this study provide insight into how to run a more meaningful public participation process and can be used as a straightforward sensible guideline for developing and implementing public participation processes that are meaningful.

- Striving for meaningful public participation by working to include each of the components of meaningful public participation throughout the life cycle of a participation process from design to execution can take a participation process beyond the minimum requirements to a process that is meaningful from the perspectives of both practitioners and participants.

- The components of meaningful public participation do not guarantee meaningful public participation, but they are necessary for it.

- While the components established by this research were vetted in participation processes involving forest management, the majority of the analysis is relevant to public participation in general.

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Appendix A

Annotated Bibliography of Selected Public
Participation Guidebooks

Prepared By
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Anon. 2002. Public Participation in Protected Area Management Best Practice. Sydney, Australia: Parks and Wildlife Commission on Northern Territory.
- This report was developed as part of the "Best Practices in Protected Areas Management" project, undertaken by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory for the Committee on National Parks and Protected Area Management. The mandate of the public participation part of the project was to develop a best practices report through pooling the experiences of conservation agencies with public participation in protected areas management in Australia and New Zealand. This report is tailored to the protected areas management in Australia, however many of the approaches and issues discussed would also apply to other public participation situations. Major sections include: exposing the myths surrounding public participation, principles of public participation, and a model of best practice. The report also includes case studies and recommendations to aid in the adoption of a best practices approach to public participation in protected area management.
- Available from the Australian Government Department of the Environment and heritage, available for download @ http://www.deh.gov.au/parks/best-practice/reports/public-participation

Anon. 2002. Consulting with Citizens: Building Knowledge about the Public Consultation Process. Government of Manitoba. *

Anon. 1998. Guide for Effective Public Involvement. Calgary, Alberta: Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers.
- This guide is designed for the petroleum industry, but has wide application. It provides a framework for structuring and managing public involvement programs. The guidebook provides a five-step process, which include: step 1 – establish a preliminary plan, step 2 – make initial community contacts, step 3 – prepare a detailed plan, step 4 – implement the public involvement plan, and step 5 – monitor, evaluate and follow through. The guidebook also includes a section entitled the toolbox, which provides techniques and tools for the implementation of the guides recommended five-step process.
- Available from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers: Publication # 1997-0005; http://www.capp.ca; suite 2100, 350 7th Avenue S.W Calgary, Ab T2P 3N9; ph. 403-267-1100; f. 403-261-4622. [non member price $110.00]

Anon. 1994. Public Involvement in Saskatchewan. Regina, Sk: Saskatchewan Book Bureau. **

Anon. 1993. Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Guiding Principles. Ottawa, ON: National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy.
- This guide was developed by the National Round Table on the Environment and Economy, to share the experiences of the individual round tables in implementing consensus, with the assistance of the Canadian Standards Association, the

International Institute for Sustainable Development and the Niagara Institute. This guide will be helpful to those designing or involved in a public participation process that is seeking consensus. This guide does not provide a comprehensive how to for consensus building, but rather it has been written to provide guiding principles and key steps to consensus building. The principles and steps presented in this guide are build upon and expanded in the National Round Table on the Environment and the economy's "Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Putting Principles into Practice"
- Available from the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy: Isbn.1-895643-24-4; 5369 Canotek road unit 1 Ottawa, Ontario K1J 9J3; ph. 613-745-2665, toll free 866-767-6766; available for download @ http://www.nrtee.trnee.ca. [Print copy $5.95 plus postage & tax].

BC-CORE. 1995. Public Participation: Rights and Responsibilities, Community Resource Boards. Volume 3. Provincial Land Use Study. Victoria, BC: BC Commission on Resources and Environment: Victoria. *

BC-CORE. 1995. Dispute Resolution: Developing a Comprehensive System, Ensuring Fairness and Effectiveness. Volume 4, Provincial Land Use Strategy. Victoria, BC: BC Commission on Resources and Environment: Victoria. *

Bleiker, H and Bleiker, A. 2000. Citizen Participation Handbook 10th edition. Monterey, CA: Institute for Participatory Management.
- Hans and Annemarie Bleiker who have over 25 years experience in the consent-building and management development field primarily in the public sector have developed this guide, which is focused on improving government decision-making through consent-building. Major elements include: 60 citizen participation (CP) Principles, 15 CP objectives, 64 CP techniques, CP management, and 6 case studies. This guide has been developed to accompany their Systematic Development of Informed Consent and Citizen Participation by Objectives course series.
- Available form the Institute for Participatory Management and Planning: http://www.ipmp-bleiker.com; P.O Box 1937 Monterey, CA 93942-1937; ph. 831-373-4292; f. 831-373-0760. [$52.50 US]

Bruce L. Smith Consulting Inc. 2000. Public Participation: Theory, Skills, Techniques and Best Practices. Seminar #DT838, December 11-12 2000. Liverpool, NS. *

Canadian Standards Association. 2002. Z764-96 A Guide to Public Involvement. Mississauga, ON: Canadian Standards Association.
- This guide has been developed by a technical committee of experienced practitioners, it is set up in a workbook format, identifying key questions that should be answered in order to make informed decisions surrounding when and how to involve the public. The guide is comprehensive, easy to use, and designed to help organize all the information that will be needed in order to make informed

design choices when developing a public participation program. The guidebook includes worksheets, matrixes, and flow charts that aid you in the development of a public participation program. The final section of the guide is designed to assist in the evaluation of the public participation program and the documentation of lessons learned during the completion of the process. The guide could be used to assist in the development of a variety of sized public participation programs from the very small to the very large.

- Available from the Canadian Standards Association: Product ID 2005591; http://www.csa.ca; 178 Rexdale Boulevard Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 1R3; ph.1-800-463-6727. [$80.00]

Connor, D.M. 2001. Constructive Citizen Participation: A Resource Book 8th edition. Victoria, BC: Connor Development Services Ltd.

- This guidebook provides a comprehensive collection of articles and case studies on constructive citizen participation. The guide covers a wide range of topics pertinent to the issue of constructive participation including but not limited to the rational for and the benefit of public participation, techniques and program design, and the role of public participation in social impact assessment. The guide contains case studies of public participation in the fields of forestry, mining, energy, transportation, transportation, waste management, and corporate and government planning.
- Available from Connor Development Services Ltd: ISBN 0-920136-00-1; 5096 Catalina Terrance, Victoria, BC V8Y 2A5; ph. 250-658-1323; http://www.connor.bc.ca/connor. [$59.00]
- Other participation related resources are available for order on the Connor Development Services website.

Cormick, G. et al. 1996. Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Putting Principles into Practice. Ottawa,On: National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy.

- This guide is the follow-up document to the NRTREE's "Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Guiding Principles," providing a more in depth examination of the principles of consensus and insight into how to implement them. This guide will be helpful to those designing or involved in a public participation process, which is seeking consensus. The guide also includes a number of case studies of Canadian Consensus Processes.
- Available from the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy: Isbn.1-895643-42-2; 5369 Canotek road unit 1 Ottawa, Ontario K1J 9J3; ph. 613-745-2665, toll free 866-767-6766; available for download @ http://www.nrtee.trnee.ca. [Print copy $15.95 plus postage & tax]

Creighton, J.L. 1992. Involving Citizens in Community Decision Making: A Guidebook. Washington, DC: Program for Community Problem Solving. **

Creighton, J.L. 1993. Guidelines for Establishing Citizen's Advisory Committees. Washington, DC: Department of Energy. *

Environmental Protection Agency. 2001. Stakeholder Involvement and Public Participation at the U.S. EPA: Lessons Learned, Barriers, and Innovative Approaches. Washington, D.C: Environmental Protection Agency.

- The report was completed on behalf of the EPA in an effort to compile the lessons learned from the various public participation projects undertaken by the agency to guide the agency's future public participation initiatives. Based on a review of formal evaluations and informal summaries of EPA public participation activities, this report identifies key lesions learned, barriers and recommendations to overcome each barrier, and a collection of some innovative approaches to stakeholder involvement.
- Available for download on the Environmental Protection Agency's public involvement webpage: http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/intro.htm
- The EPA's website holds many publication that may be of use to individuals interested in public involvement.

Godschalk, D.R et al. 1994. Pulling Together: A Land Use and Development Consensus Building Manual. Washington, DC: Program for Community Problem Solving. *

Howell, R.E., M.E. Olsen and D. Olsen. 1987. Designing a Citizen Involvement Program: A Guidebook for Involving Citizens in the Resolution of Environmental Issues. Corvallis, Western Rural Development Center. *

International Finance Corporation (IFC). 1998. Doing Better Business through Effective Public Consultation and Disclosure: A Good Practice Manual. Washington, DC: World Bank:.

- The IFC the private sector development arm of the World Bank. The IFC has developed this manual to provide guidance to its private sector project sponsors on consulting the public on development projects in developing and emerging economies. Major elements of the guide include: a discussion of the rational for consultation, eleven actions for managing a consultation process, and tips for planning and implementing a consultation process.
- Available from the IFC, the private sector arm of the World Bank. It can be downloaded or ordered from the IFC website http://www2.ifc.org/publications/ [Print Copy $25]

Johnson, P.J. and P.N. Duinker. 1993. Beyond Dispute: Collaborative Approaches to Resolving Natural Resources and Environmental Conflicts. School of Forestry, Thunder Bay, On: Lakehead University. *

Ontario Hydro. 1989. Public Participation. Toronto, On: Ontario Hydro Community Relations Department. *

Ontario Ministry of the Environment. ND. Public Consultation: The Guide. Toronto, ON: Ontario Ministry of Environment. *

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1998. Resource Management – Working Together: Your Guide to Public Involvement in Land Use and Resource Management Planning. Toronto, ON: Ontario Ministry on Natural Resources. *

Maynes, C. and The Ontario Environmental Network. 1989. Public Consultation: A Citizens Handbook. Toronto, ON: The Ontario Environment Network. *

McMillan, B. and Murgatroyd, S. 1994. Opening the Door: Improving Decisions through Public Consultation. Edmonton, AB: Equus Consulting Group. **
- This book is organized into three sections the first related to the context in which public participation has emerged and developed, the second is related to process and provides a model for public participation, and the third section discuss some techniques of public participation. This book also addresses the relationship between public participation and decision-making, and the importance of implementation and monitoring.

National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee. 2000.The Model Plan for Public Participation. Washington, DC: The Public Participation and Accountability Subcommittee of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council of the Environmental Protection Agency.
- The National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee of the EPA developed this guide, which includes guiding principles, critical elements, and core values of public participation.
- Available for download on the Environmental Protection Agency's public involvement webpage: http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/intro.htm
- The EPA's website has many publication that may be of use to individuals interested in public involvement.

National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee. 2000.Guide on Consultation and Collaboration with Indian Tribal Governments and the Public Participation of Indigenous Groups and Tribal Members in Environmental Decision Making. Washington, DC: Indigenous Peoples Subcommittee of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council of the Environmental Protection Agency.
- This guide was developed by the Indigenous Peoples Subcommittee, of the National Environmental Justice Advisory committee of the EPA, as a tool to improve public participation involving tribal governments and for stimulating fresh debate on tribal consultation among federal and tribal governments and other interested parties. The guide includes discussions on the need for meaningful consultation with tribal governments, and recommended methods for effective consultation. The guide includes a revised version of the "The Model Plan for Public Participation" designed to be more applicable to tribal consultations.
- Available for download on the Environmental Protection Agency's public involvement webpage: http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/intro.htm
- The EPA's website has many publication that may be of use to individuals interested in public involvement.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation. 2003. A Handbook on Consultation in Natural Resource Development 2nd edition. Thunder Bay, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation Lands and Resources/ Economic Development Unit.

- This guide was developed by Nishnawbe Aski Nation to provide a framework for consultation for the First Nation concerning land and resource development. This guide is also intended to aid other First Nation communities, government, and industry in addressing projects and decisions that have the potential to impact or infringe on First Nations right to use the land. The guide consists of discussions surrounding Aboriginal and treaty rights, the responsibilities of government and resource developers, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation consultation policy and a model consultation process.
- Available for download on the Nishnawbe Aski Nation website: www.nan.on.ca

Praxis. 1988. Public Involvement: Planning and Implementing Public Involvement Programs. Calgary, AB: Praxis. **

- The manual is organized into three volumes. Volume 1, Management Implications for Decision Makers, provides a thorough introduction to public involvement and covers a number of topics including but not limited to: when is public involvement needed, the importance of planning for public involvement, staffing and organization requirements for public involvement, and trends in public involvement. Volume 2, entitled Developing a Public Involvement Program, is focused on issues of public involvement design and implementation. Volume 3, Public Involvement Techniques: A Dictionary of Ideas and Methods, is a technical volume outlining possible methods and strategies for practitioners.

Renn, O. et al. 1995. Fairness and Competence in Citizen Participation: Evaluating Models for Environmental Discourse. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

- This book contains 20 chapters each containing an article on a separate public participation topic. The themes that run through the collection of articles include: how can we measure the performance of citizen participation processes, public participation as communication, and procedural fairness and competence in verifying knowledge. Several techniques for citizen participation from North America and Europe are evaluated and critiqued including: planning cells, citizen advisory committees, regulatory negotiations, mediations, citizen juries, Dutch study groups, compensation and benefit sharing, and citizen initiatives.
- Available from the Kluwer Academic Publishers website www.wkap.com [$154]

Sarkissian, W. et al. 1997. Community Participation in Practice. Australia: Institute for Science and Technology Policy, Murdoch University. *

Spencer, L.J.1989. Winning Through Participation. Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co: Dubuque, IA.*

Sterne, P and S. Zagon. 1997. Public Consultation Guide: Changing Relationship between Government and Canadians. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre for Management Development.

- This guide has been designed to assist public service managers in consulting the public. Major chapters in the guide include: a discussion on the changing relationship between Canadians and government and the role that public consultation plays in this changing relationship, principles for effective consultation, measures of success, and a presentation of four different frameworks for public consultation. Each of the four frameworks focus on a different stage of the public consultation process. The guide includes a conceptual framework, a strategic framework, a planning framework, and a process framework..
- Available from Canadian Centre for Management Development: order #P75E; http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca

*These items have not been looked at in detail by the author, but may be useful resources.
** These items are no longer in print and may be difficult to obtain.

Appendix B
Interview Schedule for the Expert Interviews

The purpose of my research is to define meaningful public participation and explore the opportunities and barriers to its implementation in a forest management context. You have been asked to participate in the expert interview component of this study. During this component of the study academics and practitioners involved in the public participation field will be asked a series of questions surrounding their views on meaningful public participation. The results will not be characterized based on affiliation. The results of the expert interviews will be used in combination with the literature review to establish key components of meaningful public participation, which will then be used to evaluate public participation initiatives in Manitoba's mountain forest region.

This interview should take approximately 20 minutes, and will cover a range of topics pertaining to your knowledge of and experience with public participation. You can, at any time, end the interview or refuse to answer individual questions. In the case you do not wish to answer a specific question, simply respond "no comment". Your responses will be held in strictest confidence, and the results of this study will be aggregated with no reference made to specific participants. I only require your mailing address if you would like to receive a summary of the research findings.

1. How would you describe the concept of meaningful participation in one sentence?
2. In your opinion what are the essential or key components of meaningful participation?
   - Questions to probe for greater elaboration: why is (the component) important to meaningful participation? Can you describe or explain (the component) in further detail? What would (the component) look like when done successfully?
   - I have a list of components of meaningful participation gathered from the literature. When the participant does not mention a component on the list, the researcher will bring up the component and ask the participant if they consider it to be a key component of meaningful participation.
3. Of the various components that you have identified, which, do you think, are most significant?
4. Of the various components discussed are there any that you feel are not well understood that should be researched in further detail?
5. In your experience what activities/techniques/means/tools make a public participation initiative successful? Are there any activities/techniques/ means/ tools that you feel are not well understood and should be researched in greater detail?
6. Can you think of any examples of good public participation in a planning situation/ Environmental assessment case/ or other situation?

7. Can you think of anyone else I should talk to concerning meaningful public participation?

Components of Meaningful Public Participation List:
a. Interactive (two way vs. one way participation)
b. Representation and access to process - involvement of interested and affected parties
c. Timing of participation- early involvement
d. Notice
e. Access to information
f. Opportunities for mutual learning *
g. Variety of techniques
h. Clear mandate and purpose
i. Ongoing participation – public is involved continuously throughout all stages of planning and decision-making
j. Collection and representation public values *
k. Clear influence on decision-making
l. Opportunities for relationship building *
m. Strong leadership role of lead organization
n. Participants are motivated to see the process through *

Appendix C
Consent Form for the Expert Interview

Identifying the Opportunities and Barriers to Meaningful Public Participation in Forest Management

This consent form, which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask.

Dear Participant,

My name is Jennifer Stewart, and I am a graduate student at the Natural Resources Institute (NRI), University of Manitoba.

The research project being undertaken is a Sustainable Forest Management Network (SFMN) project and is part of a larger study being conducted by Dr. John Sinclair, NRI, and Dr. Peter Miller, Centre for Forest Interdisciplinary Research (C-FIR). The purpose of my research is to define meaningful public participation and explore the opportunities and barriers to its implementation in a forest management context. You have been asked to participate in the expert interview component of this study. During this component of the study academics and practitioners involved in the public participation field will be asked a series of questions surrounding their views on meaningful public participation. The results of the expert interviews will be used in combination with the literature review to establish key components of meaningful public participation, which will then be used to evaluate public participation initiatives in Manitoba's mountain forest region.

This interview should take approximately 20 minutes, and will cover a range of topics pertaining to your knowledge of and experience with public participation. You can, at any time, end the interview or refuse to answer individual questions. Your responses will be held in strictest confidence, and the results of this study will be aggregated with no reference made to specific participants. Your mailing address is only required if you would like to receive a summary of the research findings.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jennifer M.P. Stewart
Masters Student
Natural Resources Institute
70 Dysart Road, University of Manitoba
Wpg, MB R3N 2T2
(   ).   ;   _____

This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Joint Faculty Ethics Review Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about the project you may contact my supervisor Dr. John Sinclair, NRI at (204) 474-8374 or Ms. Margaret Bowman, Ethics Committee Secretariat at (204) 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Appendix D
Interview Schedule for Participant Interview

The purpose of my research is to define meaningful public participation and explore the opportunities and barriers to its implementation in a forest management context. This research will attempt to determine ways to improve public participation in forest management through the examination of existing forest management related participation programs in Manitoba's mountain forest region.

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and will cover a range of topics regarding your experience with public participation activities in the mountain forest region. You can, at any time, end the interview or refuse to answer individual questions. Your responses will be held in strictest confidence, and the results of this study will be aggregated with no reference made to specific participants. Your mailing address is only required if you would like to receive a summary of the research findings.

Part A. Background Questions

I understand that you were involved in the [name of the specific process will be slotted here] public participation process.

1. Are you involved in any other public participation initiatives? Which ones?

2. What were your main reasons for getting involved in the process?

3. Did you get involved as an individual or as a representative of a group?

4. Is there anything in particular you wanted to get out of the process?

5. How do you think the process went/is going so far?

6. Do you view open houses/advisory committees to be an effective method of public involvement in forest management?

7. In your view, what do you think were the strengths and weaknesses of the committee/open house? (Will probe for process vs. outcome strengths and weaknesses for example "That is a great outcome how about the process the committee follows what are the strengths and weaknesses of the process")

8. In your opinion what are the essential or key components of meaningful participation?

Part B. Components of Meaningful Public Participation Questions

Part of my research has involved researching the different components or characteristics of meaningful public participation. I have extracted several key components of meaningful public participation through reviewing the literature and talking to people with experience in public participation. The remainder of the questions will revolve around the different components of meaningful public participation gathered from these sources.

Question one (hand out the components sheet and question) You will be asked questions about the components on the sheet.

Fair notice & time:
[For a process to be meaningful participants must be given fair and adequate notice of the process. Fair notice includes making an effort to engage members of the interested and impacted publics and to encourage them to participate. The process must also follow a fair timeline, meaning there must be adequate time allotted for the collection, review, and distribution of relevant information and for the discussion and debate of the issues of concern.]

1. Did the process you were involved in provide adequate notice of the process? Did the process follow an adequate timeline? (eg. Was there enough time to read and digest the information that was given to you? Was there enough time to address all of the issues that were brought forward? Are you given enough time to share information and discuss issues with the group you represent?)

2. What do you think the opportunities including adequate time and notice in a participation process are? Conversely what do you think some of the barriers are for ensuring that there is adequate time and notice?

Integrity and accountability:
[To be credible a public participation program must be open and implemented with integrity. Both the lead organization and the public should be able to trace how the input collected from the public participation process was used in decision-making. Included in this is the responsibility of the lead organization to ensure that the purpose, intentions, and bounds of the process are defined and agreed upon before the process begins.]

1. Was integrity and accountability present in the process? Explain? Has the company ever shown you how the input of the (process) has impacted what they do? Would you have liked that?

2. Was the purpose and intentions of the participation exercise made clear from the beginning? How was this done?

3. What in your opinion demonstrates or shows a commitment to integrity and accountability in a public participation exercise? Conversely what demonstrates a lack of commitment to transparency and accountability?

Fair and Open Dialogue:
[To be meaningful public participation needs to foster a two-way dialogue involving both information in and out. The public participation process should create a fair and open forum for the discussion of the project or issue in question. The process should capture more than first impressions allowing for the discussion of information, perspectives and ideas.]

1. Did you experience fair and open dialogue in the process you participated in? If so how?

2. Where there enough opportunities for fair and open dialogue to occur?

3. What about a process helps facilitate fair and open dialogue? When are you the most comfortable discussing your views or opinions?

4. Now that we have talked about what facilitates fair and open dialogue, what do you think discourages fair and open dialogue? When are you the least comfortable disusing your views or opinions?

Multiple and appropriate methods:
[Using multiple tools and techniques for engaging the public (eg. Open houses, advisory committees, and surveys…) is viewed as an important component of meaningful public participation. A staged process that uses multiple methods allows the public different opportunities to enter the process and engage in discussion. The term appropriate method here, refers to a public participation process that is planned with the specific circumstances of the situation in mind and uses the appropriate techniques for engaging, communicating, and participating with the public, appropriate to both the situation and all parties involved.]

1. What techniques were used in this consultation? Was there an attempt made to use appropriate techniques for the participants and the situation involved in your opinion?

2. Were you asked how you would like to participate before the process began? If yes, did this improve the process? If no, in your opinion do you think this could of helped improve a process?

2. (Alternate) Alternate question for participants who are involved in a long running process such as SAC Were you asked how you would like the direction of the process to proceed? If yes, did this improve the process? If no, in your opinion do you think this could improve the process?

Learning and informed participation:
[A meaningful process requires that participants and the lead organization have enough information to effectively debate the issues and reach an informed position on the issue at hand. All parties should have the opportunity to build a high level of understanding of the issue, situation, alternatives, and of the various perspectives and views.]

1. Would you describe your time in the participation process as a learning experience?

2. What did you learn about?
Facts learned: (forest ecosystems or functions, forest management practices, LP, Riding Mountain)
Learned about various values and preferences: (Did you learn about the concerns and positions of other participants?)

3. Do you feel that the process helped you to better understand the positions and concerns of other participants?

4. Do you feel that the process helped you to better understand your position and concerns?

5. What do you think facilitates learning in a public participation process? What do you think discourages learning in a public participation process?

Adequate and accessible information:
[Information is critical to a meaningful public participation process. For example, access to information, quality of information, and how information is presented can all impact the quality of the participation process.]

1. Do/did you have adequate access to all the information you needed to participate fully?

2. Do you think the information presented was well balanced? Do you think this is important?

3. Were experts brought into present some of the technical information? if yes was this helpful? If no would this have been helpful?

4. How was information presented in the participation exercise? Was this an effective way to present the information? Why? Why not?

5. Could the information be presented in more effective manner? How?

Participant Motivation:
[Participant motivation is a key component of the public participation process. The ability of a process to maintain and enhance a participant's drive to participate can have a dramatic impact of the processes result.]

1.How long have you sat on the advisory committee? Have you gone to more than more open house involving forest management issues?

2.What keeps you coming back? What encourages you to participate in public participation process?

3.What do you find are the major disincentives to participating in a public participation process?

Wrap up question:

1.In your view what makes a public participation process successful?

2.Were your expectations about the (process) met?

3. After having discussed the different components of public participation and the (process)? What other factors do you think contribute to making a public participation process meaningful?

(Definitions of the components of meaningful public participation given to
participants during the interview)

Components of Meaningful Public Participation

[You are invited to comment on and critique any of the following descriptions at any
point during the interview. Also feel free to ask for clarification on any of the
descriptions.]

Fair notice & time:
For a process to be meaningful participants must be given fair and adequate notice of the
process. Fair notice includes making an effort to engage members of the interested and
impacted publics and to encourage them to participate. The process must also follow a
fair timeline, meaning there must be adequate time allotted for the collection, review, and
distribution of relevant information and for the discussion and debate of the issues of
concern.

Integrity and accountability:
To be credible a public participation program must be open and implemented with
integrity. Both the lead organization and the public should be able to trace how the input
collected from the public participation process was used in decision-making. Included in
this, is the responsibility of the lead organization to ensure that the purpose, intentions,
and bounds of the process are defined and agreed upon before the process begins.

Fair and Open Dialogue:
To be meaningful public participation needs to foster a two-way dialogue involving both
information in and out. The public participation process should create a fair and open
forum for the discussion of the project or issue in question. The process should capture
more than first impressions allowing for the discussion of information, perspectives and
ideas.

Multiple and appropriate methods:
Using multiple tools and techniques for engaging the public (eg. Open houses, advisory
committees, and surveys...) is viewed as an important component of meaningful public
participation. A staged process that uses multiple methods allows the public different
opportunities to enter the process and engage in discussion. The term appropriate method
here, refers to a public participation process that is planned with the specific
circumstances of the situation in mind and uses the appropriate techniques for engaging,
communicating, and participating with the public, appropriate to both the situation and all
parties involved.

Learning and informed participation:
A meaningful process requires that participants and the lead organization have enough
information to effectively debate the issues and reach an informed position on the issue at

hand. All parties should have the opportunity to build a high level of understanding of the issue, situation, alternatives, and of the various perspectives and views.

Adequate and accessible information:
Information is critical to a meaningful public participation process. For example, access to information, quality of information, and how information is presented can all impact the quality of the participation process.

Participant Motivation:
Participant motivation is a key component of the public participation process. The ability of a process to maintain and enhance a participant's drive to participate can have a dramatic impact of the processes result.

Inclusiveness and appropriate representation:
Public participation programs should be inclusive, and attempt to include all parties who are interested in or are impacted by the process.

Influence:
Public participation, which is meaningful, will give participants a genuine opportunity to be heard and influence decisions.

Participant Interview Rating Question

How important do you view each of these components in conducting a meaningful public participation process. Using a 5- point scale, where 5 means the component is extremely important, please evaluate the importance of the following components, to making a public participation process more meaningful. (Refer to the components of meaningful public participation sheet for descriptions of each of the component)

	Extremely Unimportant				Extremely Important	Don't Know
Fair notice and time	1	2	3	4	5	6
Integrity and accountability	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fair and open dialogue	1	2	3	4	5	6
Multiple and appropriate methods	1	2	3	4	5	6
Learning and informed participation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Adequate and accessible information	1	2	3	4	5	6
Participant motivation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Inclusiveness and appropriate representation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Influence	1	2	3	4	5	6

Are there any components or elements that you feel are integral to meaningful public participation that are not listed above?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix G
Revised Participant Interview Schedule for First Nation participants

The purpose of my research is to define meaningful public participation and explore the opportunities and barriers to its implementation in a forest management context. This research will attempt to determine ways to improve public participation in forest management through the examination of existing forest management related participation programs in Manitoba's mountain forest region.

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and will cover a range of topics regarding your experience with public participation activities in the mountain forest region. You can, at any time, end the interview or refuse to answer individual questions. Your responses will be held in strictest confidence, and the results of this study will be aggregated with no reference made to specific participants. Your mailing address is only required if you would like to receive a summary of the research findings.

How are you being consulted? (How is LP consulting with on forest management issues?) (Other than your membership on the TB SAC how are First Nations being consulted on bovine TB?)

How is this going so far?

Is this how you would like to be consulted?

How would you like to be consulted/involved?

How long has the tribal council been involved in the process?

What were your main reasons for joining the process?

Do you view advisory committees to be an effective method of public involvement in forest management?

Is there anything in particular that you wanted to get out of the process?
(Is this happening?)

Do you like being a member the SAC? (Do you find it useful? What are you getting anything out of the process?)

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to consultation, in terms of both the SAC and their other approaches to consultation?

Additional question for representative on the TB SAC: Is there anything else you would like to add in reference to the TB issue?

Part B. Components of Meaningful Public Participation Questions

Part of my research has involved researching the different components or characteristics of meaningful public participation. I have extracted several key components of meaningful public participation through reviewing the literature and talking to people with experience in public participation.

Components of meaningful participation rating question:

Hand out components and ask them to rate and add any other components they feel are important. Encouraged them to discuss the components as complete the rating questions.