

**An Analysis of the *Parks Act* Review: Public Engagement for New Brunswick's
Provincial Parks**

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Abstract

The New Brunswick government has recently completed its first extensive review of the *Parks Act*, which included an ample public engagement strategy. Part of the review identified the need to implement park management plans, which is no small task and will require a second round of consultations. Developing and executing a well-rounded public engagement strategy is necessary for the successful implementation of park management plans and to avoid conflict and distrust from the public. This report is an analysis of the *Parks Act* Review public engagement process, making recommendations for the second round of consultation concerning management plans. To make recommendations for implementing a public engagement strategy for resource management plans to the Government of New Brunswick, a qualitative research approach was implemented. This focused on literature and documents from the following organizations; Parks Canada, Ontario Parks and British Columbia Parks. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with stakeholders who partook in the *Parks Act* Review public engagement strategy and with government officials from the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture who helped design, implement or analyze the public engagement strategy. Results show that New Brunswick needs a larger, more robust and comprehensive public involvement process for its provincial parks system.

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For the sake of this report, public engagement, public participation, public consultation and public involvement will be used interchangeably. All of these terms are representative of a comprehensive public engagement strategy and while distinctions can be made between them, this report does not do so.

Where otherwise not specified the use of “the Department” refers to the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture.

Introduction

In 2013, the Parks and Attractions Branch of the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture conducted an extensive review of the *Parks Act*, which focused on four central themes: the mandate, health, safety & accessibility, partnerships and stewardship. By focusing on these themes, the Department's goal was to modernize the vision for provincial parks in New Brunswick (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013a).

The legislative mandate has been rewritten, including only vague statements about education and future generations, to including specific statements about wellness, cultural and educational opportunities, environmental conservation and enhancing tourism within New Brunswick. Health, safety & accessibility was approached by promising to continue offering programs that promote wellness, and to keep parks safe by implementing risk management plans. Partnerships were seen as vital and encouraged in many different areas of park programming and goals. Stewardship was suggested as the foundation for developing a sustainable park system in New Brunswick. The Department identified four initiatives that would help in developing an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable parks system. These initiatives include: consumer expectations, revenue-generation, awareness & promotion and effective resource management (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013a).

The white paper: Review of New Brunswick's *Parks Act*: Conserving and Protecting for the Future, outlined the aforementioned themes and was made available to the public before a month long public engagement process, which included an online

survey, stakeholder round tables, and a brief letter submission. This process sought to identify if citizens agreed with the changes being proposed to the Act and if they had any other recommendations (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013b).

One of the major recommendations of the review was derived from the Stewardship theme, which focused on effective resource management within provincial parks. One result of the public engagement process was a recommendation to create and maintain resource management plans for each provincial park. While effective resource management was mentioned in the white paper, there were no specific questions about the subject in the survey (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013c). Mandatory management plans were recommended within each provincial park, along with the development of classification and zoning schemes (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013b). As a result, the *Parks Act* was amended to include a requirement for resource management plans for each provincial park (New Brunswick Attorney General, 2014). Now that the province has experience developing and implementing a public engagement strategy for the *Parks Act* Review, a review and analysis of their process is required to ensure sufficient public engagement during park management planning.

This report examines relevant literature and context regarding public engagement, resource management planning and the New Brunswick provincial park system. Specifically, provincial park systems in Ontario, British Columbia and Parks Canada will be examined. By evaluating their strengths and weaknesses and incorporating the best

practices identified in the park planning literature, New Brunswick can benefit from their experience and existing public engagement strategies for management planning. Interviews were also conducted with participants of the *Parks Act* Review public engagement strategy. Recommendations will be based on research from these park systems and, data gathered from governments, park users and non-government organizations.

Objective

The objective of this report is to present recommendations to the Government of New Brunswick for the implementation of a public engagement strategy for provincial park resource management plans, based on an examination of their public engagement strategy for the *Parks Act* Review. Additionally, this report will also discuss various public engagement theories and strategies to provide implementation advice for organizations wishing to include the public in decision-making. More specifically it seeks to examine public engagement methods and strategies used throughout Canada for park management, and the personal experiences of individuals and groups who participated in the *Parks Act* Review in 2013.

A Background of New Brunswick's Provincial Park System

In 1935, New Brunswick's first provincial park was established in Glenwood, near Campbellton by Percy Harrison (Carr, 2010). Between the 1950s-1970s several more provincial parks were established, many initially used as roadside stops and picnic areas. As time passed, they developed into recreation-oriented parks with breathtaking

wilderness areas. With the establishment of Parlee Beach Provincial Park in 1957, the province began to understand the benefits of providing areas for recreation and relaxation, which led to the development of New Brunswick's provincial park system. The New Brunswick provincial *Parks Act* was established in 1961, and remained unaltered until 2013 when the Act underwent an extensive review process (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013a).

During the 1970s, the modern environmental movement sparked a shift in thinking, inspiring the growth of nature clubs and promoted spending time outside to improve mental and physical health. With this movement came the implementation of New Brunswick's first interpretive nature programs offered at the provincial parks. This reflected the public's changing preferences from economic development toward ecological preservation (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013a).

Throughout the decades the need for revenue generation in provincial parks became the focus in New Brunswick, resulting in the addition of many amenities such as golf courses, pools, restaurants and ski hills to help attract visitors. However, even with these new amenities it became difficult for the Department to financially maintain provincial parks. This financial need led to municipalities overtaking some of the parks, leasing to the private sector or closing some parks permanently (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013a). The mandate that guided the vision of parks from 1961-2013 stated that parks were "dedicated to the people of the province and others to use for their healthful enjoyment and education, and were to be maintained for the benefit

of future generations. As social, economic, and environmental impacts have changed in the decades since inception, the current administration of Provincial Parks cannot be taken for granted” (Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013a, p.1).

Currently, the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture actively markets 10 of the 16 provincial parks designated under the *Parks Act*: Mactaquac, New River Beach, Herring Cove, Murray Beach, Parlee Beach, Mount Carleton, Sugarloaf, de la Republique, Hopewell Rocks, and the Fundy Trail Parkway. The remaining 6 parks designated under the *Parks Act* include The Anchorage, Oak Bay, Val-Comeau, Lepreau Falls, Castalia and Saint Croix (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013a). The amended mandate, which is a result of the *Parks Act* Review, now states that:

All provincial parks are dedicated to residents of the Province, visitors and future generations to

- (a) Permanently protect ecosystems, biodiversity and the elements of natural and cultural heritage,
- (b) Provide opportunities for recreational and outdoor educational activities to promote a healthy lifestyle,
- (c) Provide opportunities to increase knowledge and appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Province, and
- (d) Offer a tourism product that enhances the Province’s image as a quality vacation destination (New Brunswick Attorney General, 2014).

New Brunswick’s provincial parks hold rich history and traditions (Carr, 2010), and also play an integral role in conserving nature while providing opportunity to enhance the tourism / ecotourism sector of the economy. One of the main struggles of the provincial park system is striking a balance between nature conservation, recreational

activities and tourism. Parks themselves have been bounced between the management of the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture since their creation (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2013a). The parks are at a turning point due to the new direction of the and the development of resource management plans could greatly increase the effective management of parks. However, the Department will need to execute a satisfying public engagement strategy to ensure the publics' opinions, advice and concerns are heard and addressed.

Review of Best Practices in Documents and Literature

Public Engagement

Public engagement, simply put is the exchange of ideas and opinions between the public and an authority when making a decision that impacts the lives of the public. The exchange can happen between a corporation and the public, the government and the public or any person/entity that has power to make decisions that affect the public.

Engaging the public on any issue in a meaningful way is complex and requires planning.

There is a huge breadth of public engagement tools and strategies. Beckley, Parkins and Sheppard (2006) give an excellent definition of public engagement for forest

management:

It is where individual, communities, and stakeholder groups can exchange information, articulate interests, and have the potential to influence decisions or the outcome of forest management issues. It is a two-way process between experts/managers and the public, and should not be confused with the one-way flow of information in public relation exercises. There are many diverse

“publics”, and most “stakeholders” hold multiple stakes in any planning process (Beckley, Parkins & Sheppard, 2006).

There are many different considerations and levels of public engagement as a concept. Mannigel (2008) gives two general understandings of the concept, one being a means to enhance the effectiveness of management or decision-making where positive changes are made and supported by the general public. The other is seen as an end, which is crucial for equity and suppressed groups, here public engagement is seen as creating social change (Mannigel, 2008). Mannigel also outlines seven levels of public engagement, listed from the weakest to the strongest. The first level is called minimal or nominal participation and it reflects no interaction occurring between the institution and the public (Mannigel, 2008). The second level is called informing or passive, where the public simply receives information (Mannigel, 2008). The third is information seeking or informing which represents that the institution is seeking stakeholders to share information with (Mannigel, 2008). The fourth level is actively consulting or giving opinions, which is the exchange of views (Mannigel, 2008). The fifth level is negotiation or active/functional participation, which allows stakeholders to engage in actual decision-making (Mannigel, 2008). The sixth is the sharing of authority or interactive participation, where formal engagement structures involve stakeholders such as a board of directors (Mannigel, 2008). The final level is transferring authority or taking over the responsibility, which results in stakeholders directly managing the action or program being discussed (Mannigel, 2008). Public engagement strategies can consist of many different combinations of these levels and the strength of the process depends on how these steps are combined (Mannigel, 2008).

Force (2002) identifies the four specific functions (as classified by Heberlein (1976)) for public involvement: information flows between the public and proponent, solving problems using an interactive function, assuring the public that the proponent understands and is considering their views, and finally a ritualistic function which achieves legal requirements (Force, 2002). Force explains that not many public participation strategies incorporate all of these functions but that they are crucial to the process. Force also describes the process as having three main steps; educating and informing the public, exchange of information between the public and proponent and the public directly participating in decision-making (Force, 2002). These aspects would ideally be considered when developing a meaningful strategy for New Brunswick.

A Ladder of Citizen Participation outlines eight broad steps of how public participation is usually done. Arnstein demonstrates how each step is either a type of non-participation or actual participation. This article attempts to explain what meaningful public engagement looks like and how it should be carried out (Arnstein, 1969). The eight steps are divided into three sections: nonparticipation, degrees of tokenism and degrees of citizen power. Within the nonparticipation section Arnstein (1969) places manipulation and therapy. These are not actual participation methods but rather ways for the powerful to educate or explain things to the general public (Arnstein, 1969). Placed within the degrees of tokenism the steps of informing, consultation and placation are enlisted. Informing and consulting the public allow the public to be well versed on the subject but also to be heard. The strong criticism of these strategies is that they provide no guarantee that the public's opinion will make any difference because of the lack of

follow through and accountability (Arnstein, 1969). Placed within the degrees of citizen power are partnership, delegated power and citizen control. Partnership allows negotiation and engagement that consultation does not. Delegated power and citizen control place some citizens in decision-making seats, ensuring their opinions and suggestions have a real chance at establishing change (Arnstein, 1969).

New Brunswick Policies and Regulations Concerning Public Engagement

The legal requirements for public engagement within the New Brunswick *Parks Act* is limited to one clause about developing an advisory committee comprised of Aboriginal community members and informing the public of any change in park fees (New Brunswick Attorney General, 2014). There are commitments to revise the Act every ten years and to revise resource management plans every ten years, once they are developed but aside from this there is no mention of the public's role in provincial parks or when the public will be consulted (New Brunswick Attorney General, 2014).

Besides this clause, there is the *Government of New Brunswick Duty to Consult Policy* regarding the Crown's obligation to consult First Nations where Aboriginal rights could be affected, specifically the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet First Nations (New Brunswick Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 2011). In New Brunswick, First Nations affirm that they never surrendered their land to the Crown, thus claiming ownership of the land (New Brunswick Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 2011). Any change to provincial park legislation or changes to the parks themselves trigger the *Duty to Consult Policy* since they are on Crown or public land. Specifically the *Parks Act* Review triggered the duty to

consult under section 3 of the policy; “The creation, amendment or implementation of regulations, policies or procedures, including strategic and operating plans, which may negatively impact the traditional use of Crown land and resources or the way a right is exercised;” (New Brunswick Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 2011, p.3). The development and implementation of resource management plans would also trigger the duty to consult under section 3 of the policy; “Licensing, leasing, permitting or regulating access to fish, wildlife, forests, minerals or other Crown resources;” (New Brunswick Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 2011, p.3).

There is also a “Citizen Engagement and Consultations” page on the Government of New Brunswick website where the public can view ongoing consultations for various programs. Additionally there is a link to draft regulations that the public can review (New Brunswick Government, 2015).

Resource Management Planning and Public Engagement

Appropriate methods for incorporating public participation in park management is deemed difficult and situation specific by French (2011) who found that before public participation takes place the proponent should conduct research to determine how effective it will be for those stakeholders, communities or groups. While it is impossible to definitely know how public participation will work in each situation, a strategy modeled after successful cases would be more likely to thrive (French, 2011).

Community/Agency Trust and Public Involvement in Resource Planning (Smith, 2013) analyses and tests the relationship between communities and managers engaging in public participation and the level of trust that results. The greatest influence on public involvement that was found had to do with the amount of dispositional trust (Smith, 2013). The level of trust was often correlated with how public involvement activities were carried out, how much an individual felt their beliefs were reflected in the resource management agency and an individual's belief that the resource management agency was morally capable (Smith, 2013). A higher level of trust correlates with a lower level of engagement. People who believe the agency involved is capable of representing their values in the plan do not feel compelled to participate (Smith, 2013). However, Smith notes that a slight level of distrust is needed to encourage public discourse and communication. As a result, there seems to be a balance of trust needed for proper engagement (Smith, 2013).

Integrating Parks and People: How Does Participation Work in Protected Area Management examines how to promote the use of public involvement within protected areas by engaging local stakeholders and practicing conflict resolution (Mannigel, 2008). Within the management of protected areas participation was viewed as a way to confirm that long-term conservation efforts would be made (Mannigel, 2008). Within protected area management, this analysis determined that mid-level participation methods were being used, such as informing, information seeking, active consulting and negotiation or active/functional participation (Mannigel, 2008). This analysis also reported that local communities or the general public desired more passive levels of engagement such as

informing, information seeking and giving opinions (Mannigel, 2008). Alternatively, active stakeholders preferred negotiating, sharing authority and taking responsibility (Mannigel, 2008).

There are two general approaches to management planning according to Haukeland (2011). One is known as the “static-preservation approach,” which is a top down approach usually adopted by governments. The second is the “dynamic-innovation approach,” which is a cross sector approach that includes local interest groups. In contrast to the first approach, the dynamic-innovation approach allows stakeholders to participate in a cooperative planning process to ensure local concerns are reflected within management plan strategies (Haukeland, 2011).

The static-preservation approach is a result of the twentieth century preservation movement, which feared that increasing industrialization was making nature vulnerable. In response to this it was decided that sections of land had to be separated and protected from society. This approach is now viewed as exclusionary and often favors the scientific elite (Haukeland, 2011). It also assumes that nothing will ever change and that society is static. This assumption leads to high levels of uncertainty because it is difficult to incorporate relationships at the micro level. The dynamic-innovation approach combines top down with bottom up approaches, where stakeholder acceptance of management strategies is essential to the process. The involvement of local stakeholders is important because public participation helps form the decisions behind the management plan (Haukeland, 2011). It is clear that for New Brunswick, a dynamic-innovation approach

should be adopted as this ensures the highest level of public participation and stakeholder engagement.

The World Commission on Protected Areas has created five “Good Governance Principles” (Haukeland, 2011). Three of the five governance principles are related to stakeholder consultation and public engagement. The first of the three principles is legitimacy and voice, which focuses on including stakeholders in the decision-making process. Second is direction, which refers to a common vision shared by stakeholders. The final principle is performance, which describes a process that is inclusionary of stakeholders and institutions. Within the planning process there are two types of stakeholders, one affecting decisions made, whereas the second group of stakeholders are those affected by decisions. The stakeholders in the latter group are referred to as moral stakeholders. Inclusion of stakeholders helps promote equity within the management planning process and also helps to improve the management plan. Stakeholder engagement has both normative and instrumental values (Haukeland, 2011).

To have meaningful public participation a high level of involvement is necessary, and motivating local stakeholders within the shared process requires negotiation, dynamic information exchange and vigorous participation. A key component to tourism in protected areas is creating, sustaining, and bolstering a common vision for the advancement of the area (Haukeland, 2011). A cooperative learning process is needed to create dialogue between tourism stakeholders, scientists and managers. Stakeholders can learn to accept negotiated solutions when they share a common vision for the

management of an area. This makes dialogue and shared adaptation vital elements in management planning. Factors that contribute to success within stakeholder engagement include trust, commitment, transparency, open communication, conflict resolution and flexibility (Haukeland, 2011).

Eagles et al. (2002) describe a list of all stakeholders that should be engaged when developing a park management plan. Within this list of identified stakeholders, four are seen as crucial (Eagles *et al.*, 2002). This group of crucial stakeholders includes local communities, park managers, tourism operators, and visitors/users (Eagles *et al.*, 2002). When determining which public participation tools are useful for engagement, a closer look at the area and communities is needed. Choosing tools that are appropriate for different demographics can be difficult but it is a vital part of establishing a successful public engagement strategy.

Parks Canada

Legislation and Policy

Parks Canada has just recently revised its management planning process, outlined in a report called *Guidelines for Management Planning and Reporting* (2014). As a result, Parks Canada has developed a more streamlined management-planning guide to simplify the process (Parks Canada, 2014). Their public engagement strategy for management planning is the most developed and comprehensive; since Parks Canada is the oldest park system in the country their strategy has had more time to refine itself. Park Canada's consultation process is outlined in this document and reinforces the importance of consultation as an important part of good governance as it is required with

the development, implementation and revision of all management plans (Parks Canada, 2014).

Parks Canada assumes formal consultation for their management planning process in agreement with the Government of Canada and Parks Canada Agency policy, case law and legislative requirements (Parks Canada, 2014). The National Parks Policy has been recognized by Parliament and confirms the requirement to develop management plans for all national parks and to consult the public in the process (Parks Canada, 2009). Parks Canada defines public consultation as a “planned two-way discussion between participants and Parks Canada, for the purpose of exchanging views and concerns, or debating ideas and proposals to inform decisions, and where the interaction can influence an individual's opinion” (Parks Canada, 2014, p. 15). Parks Canada has also outlined several essential practices for public consultation which require that information be easily understood, accurate and timely; that acceptable notice and time must be given for consultation; input must be seriously considered; that feedback be given on the input received and that there be respect for all interested publics (Parks Canada, 2014). Other requirements include consulting the public in both official languages, providing engagement at local, regional and national levels and incorporating the internet as a main stage for communication (Parks Canada, 2014).

As seen in New Brunswick, Aboriginal consultation differs from consultation with the general public, as there is a legal requirement to consult Aboriginal communities. Parks Canada suggests that Aboriginal consultation be conducted before and separately from public consultation (Parks Canada, 2014). Parks Canada follows the

Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult (2011), which aids federal employees in consulting Aboriginal people (Parks Canada, 2014). In some cases, Parks Canada has established Aboriginal advisory committees, however, this may not be enough to satisfy the duty to consult. The majority of Aboriginal consultation is the responsibility of the Field Unit Superintendent (Parks Canada, 2014).

Management Plans and Consultation

The scope and scale of the public consultation strategy is designed to reflect the scope and scale of the management plan being developed. During the process when the scope is being determined for the management plan, a public consultation plan will also be developed (Parks Canada, 2014). The public consultation tools and methods that are chosen should reflect the specific consultation objectives. They should consider such things as the specific interests and concerns of known stakeholders; budget; access to certain types of media; literacy issues; cultural norms; and the scale of the management plan itself (Parks Canada, 2014). Parks Canada utilizes a mixture of online and in-person methods to consultation. Some examples of consultation tactics include newsletters, online forums, open houses, stakeholder meetings and workshops (Parks Canada, 2014). Once the public consultation has taken place the results and feedback must be posted on the appropriate Parks Canada website for the applicable area (Parks Canada, 2014). Most of the general consultation will be determined and guided by the Field Unit Superintendent (Parks Canada, 2014).

More specifically public consultation should happen during a number of steps in the management planning process. The public should be consulted during the

development, assessment and amendment of park management plans (Parks Canada, 2009). This means that after Parks Canada has assessed the site for the proposed park and prepares the scoping document a public consultation method must be completed (Parks Canada, 2014). From this a draft management direction statement is developed, which is also followed by a public consultation method and from this a management plan is created, which undergoes discretionary reviews (Parks Canada, 2014). After this it must gain ministerial approval and tabling if it is required (Parks Canada, 2014). Additionally, the public should be consulted if there is any planned change to a park's zoning plan or to particular zones within a park (Parks Canada, 2009). The public should also be consulted during the development of wilderness areas and boundaries and during any changes that are suggested to wilderness areas in any park (Parks Canada, 2009). It is obvious that Parks Canada has a comprehensive strategy for public consultation; however, it is flexible and adaptable as they recognize that not all publics are the same.

Ontario Parks

Legislation and Policy

Although Ontario is a provincial park system it is most comparable to Parks Canada as an agency because of its size, since Ontario has 334 provincial parks (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2014). The province enacted a *Provincial Parks Act* in 1954, but this was replaced by the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserve Act* in 2006 and is enforced by the Ministry of Nature Resources (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2011). Similar to the recent amendments to New Brunswick's *Provincial Parks Act*, the Minister is to report on the state of parks once in Ontario every ten years, with the next report due in 2021 (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2011). The Act

provides planning and management principles for provincial parks, the second of which states that “opportunities for consultation shall be provided” (Ontario Attorney General, 2006). The Act also outlines the three-tiered approach that Ontario has for managing its provincial parks. All provincial parks are required to develop a management direction, which include management policies for the park. A management direction document may also include a management statement and plan depending on the complexity and size of the park (Ontario Attorney General, 2006). The Act states that:

During the process for producing and amending a management statement or for amending a management plan, there shall be at least one opportunity for public consultation and during the multi-stage process for producing a management plan, there shall be more than one opportunity for public consultation 2012, c. 8, Sched. 48, s. 1 (3) (Ontario Attorney General, 2006).

The province of Ontario also has a legal duty to consult First Nation communities where decisions being made could adversely affect Aboriginal or treaty rights (Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, 2014). Ontario’s consultation includes providing accessibility to information accessible in a timely manner to the Aboriginal community being affected, understanding all information pertaining to affected treaty rights, listening to all relevant concerns, and creating a solution for addressing concerns, which includes minimizing or stopping negative impacts on Aboriginal rights (Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, 2014).

Management Plans and Consultation

The duty to consult is also reflected within the *Ontario Protected Areas Planning Manual* (2009), which states that information and advice must be sought from Aboriginal communities surrounding management plans and decisions being made in parks; as well as allowing ongoing discussions and consultations throughout the process (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2009). Priority is placed upon speaking with communities early in the planning process and ensuring that the dialogue continues throughout it. The document also refers to an Aboriginal Involvement Guideline document that provides potential approaches for engaging communities at different steps during the planning and implementation process (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2009). Some of the strategies that are mentioned include “meetings, site visits, interactive mapping of areas, joint inventory or public education projects” (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2009, p.5). Additionally, all opportunities for consultation are made available to the public (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2009).

The *Ontario Protected Areas Planning Manual* (2009) also outlines how public engagement is applied during management planning for parks and protected areas in Ontario. If a park has developed a management statement, it is required to provide at least one opportunity for public engagement. If the park has developed a management plan then the park has to provide at least two opportunities for public engagement (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2009). Other than this, each park or protected area is free to design an engagement process that fits the specific needs of that area. The manual goes on to suggest that park managers should initiate stakeholder discussion within the scoping

and terms of reference phase. Suggested actions to begin this process are to review any records of consultation that have happened in the area before and to assess and identify stakeholder priorities (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2009). The minimum requirement on public and stakeholder involvement throughout the planning process include:

- Uploading published planning documents onto MNR website,
- Providing notification (e.g., mailed or e-mailed notices) of released documents to those on the mandatory contact list,
- Posting Environmental Registry policy proposal notice with an invitation to comment (45 days),
- Placing on-site notices (where appropriate),
- Scheduling in-person opportunity for discussion and to share comments (optional for noncomplex and moderately complex; normally required for very complex processes) (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2009, p. 16).

British Columbia Parks

Legislation and Policy

The *Parks Act* in British Columbia was enacted in 1965 and governs the largest provincial park system in Canada, having more than 1,000 provincial parks and protected areas. The *Parks Act* has been amended over time and the most recent version is from 1996 (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2008). Management planning for parks became a priority in the 1980's with the creation of a policy statement. Management planning and guidelines have only grown since the recognition of their importance in British Columbia (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013a). The *Parks Act*

does not discuss public consultation outside of the involvement of First Nations. The Act states that the Minister will enter an agreement with First Nations concerning the management of public land including land located in parks and protected areas (British Columbia Attorney General, 1996). Several Acts govern British Columbia Parks besides the *Parks Act* including the: *Ecological Reserve Act*, *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*, *Environment and Land Use Act*, *Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing Act*, and the *Ministry of Environment Act* (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013a).

Within the British Columbia Parks Strategic Management Planning Policy (2013) strategic policies are listed to ensure that all management planning is uniform in its process, content and structure (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013b). Section 5.10 states that “management plans will be prepared with the involvement of the public and interest groups” (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013b, p. 7). This section also states that the public must have ample opportunity and be encouraged to review management plans and provide feedback to British Columbia Parks in a range of ways. The resulting engagement plan will depend on the specific area under management planning. However, all documents such as draft management plans and reasoning should be provided to the public. There is a minimum requirement of a 30-day web review of all draft management plans (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013b). Section 5.11 states that “management plans will be prepared with the involvement of, and in consultation with, First Nations” (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013b, p.7). This section also states that during the beginning stages of developing management

plans British Columbia Parks will consult First Nations and continue to do so throughout the entire process (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013b).

British Columbia has the legal duty to consult with First Nations. The province is required to consult First Nations on land and resource management decisions that could affect their Aboriginal rights (Government of British Columbia, 2015). Other than potential infringement of rights the Government of British Columbia does not list triggers for First Nations consultation.

Management Plans and Consultation

Within the 2013/2014 British Columbia Annual Parks Report engaging First Nations is explained more extensively. It states that British Columbia Parks has negotiated a number of collaborative agreements that increase the amount of First Nation consultation and participation within the protected area and park system (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013a). British Columbia Parks also takes part in the development and negotiation of larger government agreements such as treaty agreements (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013a). This annual report states that throughout 2013/2014, parks staff were involved in engaging First Nations with management agreements and developing management plans (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013a).

British Columbia Parks generally engaged the public through their Youth Engagement strategy, which included the Get Outside BC program, their BC Parks

Passport Program and various other programs that the department offers (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013a). During the development and implementation of management plans British Columbia Parks follows a specific schedule for engaging the public. During the initial planning stage the management plan team is required to develop a public engagement plan, which assesses the public's interests and relevant stakeholders (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013c). The park management team will need to collect qualitative data to understand the public to determine which engagement strategies are appropriate (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013c). British Columbia Parks developed a table, which assess the expected level of public engagement. If the assessment table reveals many answers in the high category than a more comprehensive strategy is needed (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013c) (See Table 1, Appendix A). British Columbia Parks also provides a table that assists with choosing public engagement methods and shows the minimum requirement for each method (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013c) (See Table 2, Appendix A). After this collection of qualitative data, the draft management plan is put together and is released for public review. This review period requires a notice of release and also a minimum of a 30-day review period (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013c). To begin the final phase of the management plan the submissions from the draft must be reviewed and considered. Once the management plan is finalized there will be one more public review before it becomes the official plan (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013c).

New Brunswick *Parks Act* Review Public Engagement Strategy

An understanding of the public engagement strategy developed and implemented by the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, Parks and Attractions Branch is necessary in order to understand the issues discussed in the results, and the recommendations made as a result of this inquiry and report. The explanation of the public engagement strategy will include a timeline, communications, list of stakeholders identified and consulted, and the engagement methods used.

The public engagement strategy for the review of the *Parks Act* occurred over the course of one month. It took place between August 12th 2013 and September 13th 2013. At the beginning of the strategy there were two news releases notifying and informing the public about the upcoming review. Other methods of public notification included social media (Departmental and Parks Facebook and Twitter), email, and the official Department and Park websites. The Department also prepared a white paper, which provided context for the review and outlined potential issues and concerns with the Act. This served as a means to inform the public so they could actively participate, and was available online for the duration of the strategy (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2014).

Stakeholder's that were identified and contacted, though not all participated, by the department included:

- Friends of Mount Carleton Provincial Park
- Les Montagnards Outdoor Club
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

- Boys and Girls Clubs of New Brunswick
- New Brunswick All Terrain Vehicle Fredericton
- Nature Trust of New Brunswick
- Canadian Parks Council
- Scouts Canada New Brunswick Council
- Youth Council of New Brunswick
- UNB Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management
- UNB Faculty of Sport and Recreational Management
- School Districts
- Maritime College of Forestry and Technology
- Operators of concessions at Sugarloaf
- Operators of provincially own properties
- Chamber of Commerce
- Municipalities and LSDs
- Regional Service Commissions
- Friends of Mactaquac Provincial Park
- The New Brunswick Federation of Snowmobile Clubs
- Renaissance College
- UNB Faculty of Kinesiology
- Conservation Council of New Brunswick
- The Assembly of First Nations Chiefs of New Brunswick
- Nature New Brunswick
- Sentier NB Trail
- Girl Guides of Canada New Brunswick Council
- Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick
- School Districts
- Parks Canada
- Outdoor Educators of New Brunswick
- Operators of concessions at provincial parks

One of the methods used in the Department's public engagement strategy were roundtable discussions. The stakeholders listed above were invited to participate in one of two roundtable discussions held by the Department on September 5th and 6th 2013 at Mactaquac and Sugarloaf Provincial Parks. The Minister and other government employees involved were present for both roundtable discussions. The roundtables were facilitated in both official languages and the purpose was to establish open dialogue between stakeholders and Department staff. The Department presented the White Paper

and research and included an explanation of key issues. Invitations were sent on August 12th 2013 via mail and email (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2014). Not all contacted stakeholders listed above responded or attended.

Another method of public consultation was an online survey (See Appendix B for survey), which was also available over the telephone. There were two different versions available; one for adults and one for youth. Advertising for the online survey was done exclusively online via website, social media and email, approximately 2,500 people completed the survey (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2014).

The last method used for the engagement strategy was the opportunity for stakeholders to submit briefs to the Department, which could be emailed or mailed. Fourteen briefs were received and reviewed for consideration (New Brunswick Tourism, Heritage and Culture, 2014). The groups who submitted briefs include:

- Nature NB
- Friends of Mactaquac Provincial Park
- Scouts Canada – NB Council
- The Nature Trust of New Brunswick
- The Mactaquac Sailing Association
- The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
- The Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick
- New Brunswick Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
- Restigouche River Watershed Management Council
- Renaissance College UNB
- Friends of Mount Carleton Provincial Park
- Village of Atholville
- Village of Kedgwick
- Village of Saint-Quentin

After the public consultation period ended the *New Brunswick Parks Act Review Public Response Paper 2013* was released to the public summarizing the results from the public engagement strategy. The amendments were made to the *Parks Act* in June 2014 (New Brunswick Attorney General, 2014).

Methods

A qualitative research approach was implemented to recommend a public engagement strategy for resource management plans to the Government of New Brunswick. Qualitative research is the preferred approach because it is exploratory and when developing elements of a public involvement strategy we are developing an approach, identifying problems and solutions. Quantitative research usually involves large numbers, however, that was not attainable for this study. This study seeks to identify what New Brunswickers need in public engagement by utilizing qualitative research, which is subjective in seeking viewpoints. Qualitative research is extremely specific; by using small target groups it becomes easier to identify what New Brunswickers require. I used qualitative methods to make recommendations for implementing a public engagement strategy for resource management planning, including a review of relevant documents and personal semi-structured individual and group interviews.

The review of relevant documents includes research on general public engagement practices, public engagement methods used for resource management planning and legislation and policy. The research also presents Parks Canada, British

Columbia Parks and Ontario Parks systems as potential strategic guidelines for public engagement during park management plan development and implementation.

The University of New Brunswick's Research and Ethics Board approved the protocol for conducting interviews for this project based on its compliance with Tri-Council Policy and UNB Policy. The application is on file under REB #2014-073. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with stakeholders who partook in the *Parks Act* Review public engagement strategy and with government officials from the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture who helped design, implement or analyze the public engagement strategy. The stakeholder interviewees were selected from a list provided by the Department and the Department official interviewees were selected based on their involvement with the public engagement strategy. Stakeholder interviewees consisted of conservation groups, volunteer groups, recreation groups and relevant academics. Eleven individual interviews were conducted, as were two group interviews comprising of six and ten participants. Four government employees were interviewed, while the remaining 23 individuals were stakeholders. Two individual interviews were conducted via telephone, while the remaining nine were conducted in person. There were two separate interview questions prepared (See Appendix C), one for interviewing stakeholders and one for interviewing government personnel. These questions were followed for all interviews; however, they were adapted to each circumstance and made flexible.

The intent of the interviews was to determine:

- a.) the level of involvement with provincial parks,

- b.) the level of involvement in the public engagement strategy of the *Parks Act* review,
- c.) any gaps or shortcomings in the strategy,
- d.) if the participants felt their engagement was meaningful,
- e.) what strategies were the most effective and least; and
- f.) how the strategy should change or be improved upon for engaging the public on park resource management planning

All interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed. In order to obtain results, I went through the interview responses by each group- government personnel and stakeholder participants. In each group I went through one question at a time and compiled all responses to each question. I identified similar responses among interviewees and also highlighted differing responses. This method allowed me to identify common ideas and themes that emerged from the interviews.

Personal / Sample Bias

Some considerations that should be noted for this data set is that the sampling was purposive (Brikci & Green, 2007). Participants were selected due to their stakeholder status and likelihood to produce useful data for this report. The data collection did not include the general public for two reasons; one of which was because of resource and information constraint. The general public only took part in the online survey- getting access to people who filled this out would be very difficult and opening up interviews to this many people would take considerably longer. The second limitation is the recognition that stakeholders for provincial parks are the main groups interested in taking

part in public engagement surrounding park policy and management. Of the stakeholder groups there was an effort to create a “maximum variation sample” (Brikci & Green, 2007). Of the stakeholders, a representative from the following categories was interviewed: non-governmental, government, community groups, friends groups, Aboriginal persons, and environmental groups. Thus the study is representative of provincial park stakeholders in New Brunswick. By excluding the general public there is an obvious bias in the sample chosen, and the group chosen is not representative of the whole New Brunswick population. This study cannot reflect how well the engagement process meaningfully engaged those citizens, nor can it analyze what types of public engagement strategies should be used for the general public.

Another bias worth noting is that I worked for the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, Parks and Attractions Branch the summer before conducting this research. The government did not employ me during the time of data collection via interviewing, however, all government personnel and some stakeholders interviewed knew me prior to the interview session. This could lead to either increased trust among the government personnel or decreased trust among stakeholders because I had worked for the Department.

Additionally, there was an issue that arose with multiple interviews, which was attempting to keep the conversation about the process of the public engagement strategy and not the results. It was difficult for people to analyze their public engagement experience because the final result of the engagement strategy was favorable to everyone

interviewed. In many interviews I had to redirect conversation by saying “if the results had not gone the way you wanted, do you think this engagement process would still be sufficient?” This often aided with directing the interview back on course but I still feel this issue hindered some responses.

Results

This research provides an analysis of the Government of New Brunswick’s *Parks Act* Review public engagement strategy. It offers insights on what changes that may be made to better involve the public in decision-making and development process of park management plans. It reports opinions of park stakeholders and government park personnel on public engagement for provincial parks in New Brunswick. Government personnel and participants were analyzed separately because of their different roles during the public engagement process. They also had slightly different questions for their interviews (See Appendix C).

The paragraphs below provide an analysis of the interviews conducted with government personnel involved in developing and implementing the public engagement strategy and also with the stakeholders who participated in the strategy. The analysis highlights the major themes identified from interview questions, focusing on each interviewee’s personal experience with the strategy regarding its success, failures, and any changes that should be made.

Government Personnel Experiences

Government personnel interviews consisted of four interviewees, three of whom worked in the Parks and Attractions Branch and one with the Policy and Planning Branch in the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture. Two of the four were on the project committee for developing and implementing the public engagement strategy for the *Parks Act* and the other two were involved in some major elements of the strategy.

The first few interview questions were designed establish how personally and professionally invested each interviewee is in New Brunswick provincial parks. Each interviewee was asked how often they visit provincial parks and what kinds of activities they engage in while visiting. All interviewees answered that they are regular users of provincial parks on a professional and personal level. This varied from weekly to monthly visits for work and monthly to three times a year for personal use. Their level of use varied from low recreational use such as beach use and nature walks to high recreational use such as camping, canoeing, hiking and events.

The rest of the questions focused specifically on the *Parks Act* Review public engagement strategy. These questions will appear below along with the corresponding responses. Quotes will be used for two purposes, to reinforce themes that emerged and to demonstrate any differing responses among questions.

- Do you think the engagement strategy was successful? And why?

Of the four government personnel interviewed, three responded with yes and only one responded differently:

“Yes and no. If you look at the stats on who actually responded there's somewhere around 2,000 respondents to the online survey... 1,200 of them were from GNB addresses. It makes sense and I'm willing to bet that most of them were from Fredericton area. So that's not to say-- there's not 1,200 people in the department so it's outside of the department so they're still users. But they have a vested interest in government and governments operation... they still use our parks big time there's no question about that. It's still citizens and even public employees have a right to have a voice but whether we actually successful engaged the general public of New Brunswick and what they really feel parks are-- I'm not sure” (Government Interview 04).

As for why, one interviewee responded that it was due to many people participating. The other two responded that it was successful due to many of the issues and concepts that were discussed during the strategy being integrated into the final product (*Parks Act*). They felt it was successful because they listened to the people who participated.

- If you were going to develop and implement another public engagement strategy (for park management plans as an example), would you change anything based on this experience? If so, how? / If not, why not?

Of the four government personnel interviewed, all responded with yes. Some independent ideas of how the strategy could be improved included more promotion for youth to take part, developing a plan for engaging visitors, such as surveys at each park, using more direct public engagement strategies, and creating more of a social media presence. There were two prominent ideas of how to better the engagement strategy, one

being the need to have better consultation with First Nation communities, which was brought up by three interviewees:

“The other one is with First Nations, we did our most and we did consult but it didn’t end up the way we wanted to consult. We did ask for input and I think there may have been more opportunity for First Nations youth as well but that gets back to that” (Government Interview 01).

The other idea was changing the timeline of the engagement strategy. Three of the four interviewee’s felt like the process was rushed and needed to happen at a different time of year:

“I think maybe the time, the time line on the whole shooting match. I think I would give it more time to... to make it a series of public engagement. So it's not just a one kick at the can” (Government Interview 05).

“I’m just going to make the suggestion of having it done at a different time of the year. The whole thing should be geared in the fall... just a different time of the year than what we did” (Government Interview 02).

- What aspect of the engagement did you find to be the most beneficial? Why?

Of the four government personnel interviewed, three responded with the survey being the most beneficial. The reasoning behind this answer included that it was the most unbiased means of participation and also that the survey was the most accessible for the general public of New Brunswick:

“The survey, as well, afforded the opportunity for a real cross section of New Brunswick society to respond with their thoughts and ideas. Yeah no, the survey... in my head I thought roundtables but the survey was really good too because that gave the entire population an opportunity” (Government Interview 05).

Only one of the interviewees did not really settle on a definitive answer:

“It depends, they all have their value... it depends on who you ask. I think the people from conservation groups; Nature NB, Nature Trust and CPAWS, they may say it was the round table that they felt more heard at rather than the survey... different value for different people” (Government Interview 02).

- What aspect of the engagement did you find to be the least beneficial? Why?

Of the four government personnel interviewed, two responded that the youth version of the survey was the least beneficial due to lack of response:

“I think that’s really the key one (the youth survey). The government has what we call a memorandum to executive council child rights impact assessment, CRIA. Each direct that we provide to cabinet for their consideration we have to do a CRIA and some of the methods, if it’s something that doesn’t affect children that much it’s called the short version and we just say yes we’ve looked at it. This one *Parks Act* Review was one of the first full CRIsAs that was done by the department for cabinet, so that was an interesting perspective and I think that because it was one of the first full ones it would have been nice to have a little bit more of the input” (Government Interview 01).

The other government interviewee’s did not give a definitive answer, they did not identify one aspect that was the least beneficial but instead offered repetitive answers such as the time constraint on the strategy and low park staff engagement.

- Did the engagement process address appropriate topics for changing the *Parks Act* that you had not previously identified?

All four government interviewees felt that the engagement process brought to light some appropriate topics for changing the *Parks Act* that they had not previously identified, including specific management plans for each park, a need to strike a strong balance between tourism and conservation and loopholes that were identified in the Act:

“Yes. There was a loophole in particular that stakeholders felt was a loophole and it really was. It allowed the minister kind of ambiguous; it allowed the minister to grant permission for mining in parks and stakeholders wanted that closed which we did: we closed it. So that wasn’t part of our scope. I think a lot of the discussion was really around environment and we weren’t surprised about that because it was fairly weak. It was in there but it was fairly weak and they wanted that strengthened. The mandate was pretty clear” (Government Interview 01).

- Do you have any suggestions of how the government can better engage the public when it comes to managing provincial parks in New Brunswick?

All interviewees reiterated concerns such as engaging the public more on social media platforms, having more time for the strategy, having more meetings throughout the process and better engaging the general public:

“That’s hard because it all revolves around how do you get Joe public that doesn’t have the vested interest, they’re not a regular, they don’t live next door-- they still have ownership of the parks and they have a right to say what they want” (Government Interview 04).

Stakeholder Participant Experiences

Individual Participant Interviews

Seven individuals completed the participant interviews; one academic, one representative from a First Nation community, three professionals associated with non-governmental organizations and two frequent volunteers with provincial parks. All of the

interviewees are considered to be provincial parks stakeholders by the Government of New Brunswick. All but two interviewees were directly involved in the *Parks Act* Review public engagement strategy. Of the two, one works for an organization that participated in the review. They did not feel like there was an effort to involve their group/community and did not hear about the process.

As with the government personnel interviews, the first few questions were designed to establish how personally and professionally invested each interviewee is in New Brunswick provincial parks. All interviewees answered that they are regular users of provincial parks personally, ranging from six times a season to weekly use. Of the interviewees who would use parks professionally, regular use was also identified ranging from twice a season to weekly. Their level of use varied from low recreational use such as nature walks and bird watching to high recreational use such as outdoor racing, skiing, camping and hiking.

The remaining questions focused specifically on the *Parks Act* review public engagement strategy. These questions will be written below along with responses. Quotes will be used for two purposes, to reinforce themes that emerged and to demonstrate any differing responses,

- Do you feel like your participation was meaningful? (Do you feel like you had the chance to adequately express your thoughts and concerns?)

Of the seven individual participants interviewed, there was great variation among answers. Two of the seven affirmed that it was meaningful, however, only because as stakeholders they were invited to participate in all aspects of the process and because they felt the government listened to their concerns. Two were uncertain responding with “I think” because although they got to express their concerns via brief and survey, they had no idea if they were read or listened to due to the lack of follow up after the process. Two responded with no because they were not involved at all and one interviewee described the process as adequate at best due to lack of clarity and time constraints:

“I think it was adequate. I believe through the questionnaire, although I have a vague recollection of the questions and answers. I believe the comments of our committee; board of directors was that... the general comment was that there was very little leeway to submit the written brief. I believe, I think it was like 4 days that they seemed to mention that they received the invitation for the roundtable. Stakeholder meeting, there was very little notice for this; again as far as preparation... we did not have time” (Individual Participant Interview 11).

- And what could the government do to reach people for public engagement? (For those who were not involved).

Three interviewees answered this question, the two who were not involved in the process and the interviewee who answered that the process was “adequate”. One interviewee suggested adding a comprehensive Aboriginal component, which would include visiting the communities that use the parks extensively instead of trying to reach organized councils. This interviewee suggested that there needs to be much more outreach done by the government to First Nation communities province wide. One

interviewee suggested increasing the online advertising for the engagement and also including a mail out:

“Having more news stories online because that's where I primarily get my news... and even maybe a mail out? Which I know probably is asking a lot but I know I would definitely, if I got some sort of even a handout saying check this out online directing me somewhere to read more about it I probably would of. Cause, I visit the parks a lot and knowing that there's something at stake... for something that I do often that would probably be a good way to get a hold of me” (Individual Participant Interview 08).

There was also a repeated emphasis on having more time to complete the process, since much of it involved reading, writing, formulating a position and meeting:

“People can't just jump on their computer and type things out or whatever, you're all leading your own lives as volunteers and sometimes these types of things need a consensus of a group to determine what is our position. Meeting is hard. Depending on the composition of the local board of directors or whatever, to have people on that board that have the capacity to articulate or whatever. Some groups aren't as comfortable speaking in public and some groups might have limited abilities to formulate things on paper, it's time consuming or whatever” (Individual Participant Interview 11).

- What aspect of the engagement did you find to be the most beneficial? (Asked of the interviewees that participated).

Of the five interviewees that could answer this question, three replied with the brief, one of the three because it was the only aspect they took part in and the others because it allowed them to write freely and express concerns:

“Yeah well I feel that having the opportunity to submit the brief was probably where we had the best opportunity to get all of our points across because we were able to include as much as we wanted to in response to their discussion paper” (Individual Participant Interview 09).

One responded with the roundtable being the most effective because it provided opportunity to exchange ideas with other provincial park stakeholders. The last interviewee replied with the survey, but only because it was the only aspect of the engagement that they were involved with.

- What aspect of the engagement did you find to be the least beneficial? (Asked of the interviewees that participated).

Of the three interviewees that could answer this question (two did not participate and two only participated in one aspect of the engagement process), one interviewee said the roundtable because it was unproductive, one interviewee did not give an answer because they felt all had some benefit and one interviewee suggested the survey was the least beneficial:

“I guess, probably the survey just because um, some of the questions I felt were a little open to interpretation, too broadly and I wasn't sure how useful the answers would be to some of those questions. I felt maybe they could have used a little bit more advice in proper survey design and um the way that questions are actually answered so that you get the clearest answer from people” (Individual Participant Interview 09).

- Did the engagement process address appropriate topics for changing the *Parks Act*? (Did the government provide appropriate topics through the White Paper? Could you bring up other issues?)

There was a lot of variability among answers to this question. One of the five interviewees that could answer simply said yes. Another replied that it was “sort of okay”. The other two spoke about the general public and how the White Paper affected

that engagement. In regards to bringing up appropriate topics, one interviewee responded with yes, that they brought up things that relevant organization cared about but whether or not the general public had opportunity to bring up other issues was addressed:

“I think that the only way that regular people would have had the opportunity to do that would have been if they had submitted a brief and I don't know how many other regular people would submit a brief. If it's not your job, to work on these kinds of issues or you don't have the time and the understanding of how these things work than I'm not sure how many people would actually write a letter in submission to something of this nature and because the survey, maybe it needed to have a few more open ended questions that would have allowed people to insert more, I guess they did at the end have sort of a catch all, or is there something else you want to add but I don't know how many people have the literacy skills to really participate to that degree. And so those are the kinds of things I wonder about even amongst our membership” (Individual Participant Interview 09).

Another interviewee felt like the White Paper was an acceptable read for the general public but said it was inefficient at establishing a higher level of engagement:

“I think the White Paper was appropriate for general public, I don't think it was good enough for engaging, you know other organizations. I think you know, it was too general and too not specific enough. You know, for example how do we manage the parks? There's no mention of management plans in it right? Or even with the zoning or anything like that I think there was... it was little bit too low level, in my opinion, but again it probably suited the general public really well but in terms of actually getting more into the meat of it and get more comments from professionals it wasn't good enough” (Individual Participant Interview 10).

The general consensus was that the White Paper informed the general public on broad issues with the New Brunswick provincial park system. However, there was no straightforward way for the general public to become engaged other than the survey. It was also noted that the White Paper was not a good tool for informing the stakeholders about detailed issues higher up the ladder of engagement.

- Do you have any suggestions of how the government can better engage the public when it comes to managing provincial parks in New Brunswick?

Among all seven interviewees there was a common opinion of needing engagement at all levels. The idea of engaging visitors was brought up, and it was suggested that perhaps surveys be done when the park is in season and park staff can reach these visitors. It was mentioned repeatedly that engagement should occur at the local, provincial and visitor level:

“So I think there are two levels the government should make sure they're engaging with the public of New Brunswick on the management planning process, establishing management plans and then the implementation of the management plans. So I think that they need to deal at a provincial level with people who care about all the parks, who care about the parks system, who have thoughts and opinions about all of parks or many of the parks even if it's not in the community that they live in. So I think there is a provincial constituency of people who care about parks, a lot of the people who care about um, New River Beach, or Mount Carleton, might actually live in Fredericton. So, you know, you can't just hold meetings in the community that's next to the park and feel like you've done your job because a lot of the people that live in those communities might not actually be the people who are the users of the parks. So there needs to be some assessment of park users to figure out, you know, how do you engage those people? How would they like to be engaged? You know that's almost a study in and of itself. Just to figure out that kind of thing” (Individual Participant Interview 09).

“Then, I think that's more the time to have more localized meetings from the people that live around the park but again it's still going to be difficult because the users aren't the people usually that live next door to the park. And so it is difficult but when other provinces have done their management plans they are up on websites for a long time and they try hard” (Individual Participant Interview 06).

Between two interviewees, there was also the idea of fostering partnerships and using existing groups to help with the management planning, but also tackle engagement. The idea is that when initial reports of the state of the provincial parks need to be

completed, partnering with groups such as birding groups, canoeists, hikers and others can double as engagement and information collection for reports. Invite these groups to a session or attend their meetings and find out what they know about the parks could be beneficial to the state of report.

There were extensive recommendations for addressing First Nation engagement. The first recommendation was to go to the communities to hold open houses to educate community members and discuss the management plan process in provincial parks. Go to communities around the parks and try to find the people who actually use them. To do this the Department should directly contact the Chief and Council of the community they wish to engage with. Another way to engage is to have more of a First Nation presence at parks through ceremonies or monuments. The most highly stressed recommendation was to make it clear that First Nations people have a special interest to speak:

“Number one is they need to know they can speak. They don't, they-- I am not convinced they all know that as a citizen yet. Because you've got to remember, human rights only came into play for First Nations people not that long ago” (Individual Participant Interview 07).

Other suggestions included increasing the number of public announcements, employ a full follow-up engagement strategy to make the results known widely, and identify the barriers that exist with engaging an aging population in New Brunswick.

Focus Group Participant Interviews

The focus group participant interviews consisted of two interviews, one with six participants and one with ten participants. Both focus groups are volunteer groups

associated with provincial parks in New Brunswick. All of the interviewees are considered to be stakeholders of provincial parks by the Government of New Brunswick. All interviewees were in some way directly involved in the *Parks Act* Review public engagement strategy.

As with the government personnel interviews, the initial questions were designed to establish how personally and professionally invested each interviewee is in New Brunswick provincial parks. In both focus groups all interviewees answered that they are regular users of provincial parks, ranging from a handful of times a year to daily use. None of the focus group interviewees use parks professionally as they are connected to parks as regular volunteers. Their level of use varied from low recreational use such as walking, wildlife viewing, photography, bird watching and beach use to high recreational use such as canoeing, kayaking, biking and hiking.

The rest of the questions focused specifically on the *Parks Act* Review public engagement strategy. These questions appear below along with responses. Quotes will be used for two purposes, to reinforce themes that emerged and to demonstrate any differing responses among questions.

- Do you feel like your participation was meaningful? (Do you feel like you had the chance to adequately express your thoughts and concerns?)

Of the two groups both responded with yes, they did feel like their participation was meaningful. However, one group raised more issues than the other, such as the

participation being easily accessible for them but noting it probably was not for the general public:

“But over all, I think the process was good. The biggest problem with all of those things is if I was just a private citizen coming to the park 100 times a year, I would have never known about it” (Focus Group Participant Interview 01, P6).

This focus group believed that the government does not know how to get people involved. The second focus group felt that the branch listened to them and addressed their concerns.

- What aspect of the engagement did you find to be the most beneficial?

One focus group unanimously agreed that the brief was the most beneficial form of public engagement:

“I would say probably the, the brief that we sent about our opinions... Probably was more beneficial, just because the group meeting with the stakeholders, you know I gave a couple of opinions and answered a couple of opinions but I didn't get a chance so say everything I wanted to say. So, that's it for me anyway” (Focus Group Participant Interview 01, P1).

“Yeah I think that [the brief] was probably the most beneficial because they really knew who we were and paid attention to it because we had a good relationship with them. On the survey they don't know who you are, well they're not supposed to know who you are” (Focus Group Participant Interview 01, P5).

“But also with the brief, you got to write the questions in a sense, you weren't responding to questions. Me, when there's open-ended questions on a survey, they're saying 'you know, what else do you think', you don't elaborate; well I don't, not too much. In those briefs I think we gave a little clear indication of what we're really concerned about” (Focus Group Participant Interview 01, P2).

The second focus group had a one on one meeting with the Minister of Tourism, Heritage and Culture at the time and identified this as being the most beneficial to them. However, this was not a formal method of public engagement for the *Parks Act* Review.

- What aspect of the engagement did you find to be the least beneficial?

Both focus groups unanimously identified the survey has being the least beneficial form of public engagement:

“Well, I mean the meeting was good, it was good because you know it was there was a lot of opinions raised and everything so, I'd say probably the, the um, the survey, yeah” (Focus Group Participant Interview 01, P1).

“Well but I remember when I was doing the survey; it was very obvious to me that yeah, I'm going to do it, why not. But the letter that we sent before, that was the main thing that was the important part” (Focus Group Participant Interview 01, P4).

“I would think that online survey is, because everyone has written 2500 online surveys, it's going to be going-- trying to stay awake I would think...” (Focus Group Participant Interview 02, P2)

There were also questions about the biases when reading open-ended questions on the survey and the interpretation that would need to be done for it. Another member said that they felt uncomfortable answering the survey at all because they could not disable their computer's cookies and therefore did not feel it was anonymous.

- Did the engagement process address appropriate topics for changing the *Parks Act*?

One focus group answered that yes, they thought the engagement process addressed appropriate topics for changing the *Parks Act*, but acknowledged that they felt this way because they had been in contact with the Minister for years before the review occurred and had submitted letters making recommendations that were acknowledged in the initial stages of the engagement process.

The second group said that there were a few things that were not addressed that they had to bring up. This list included management plans for each park and heritage management, which they felt needed clear definitions of what the Department meant by ecosystems and biodiversity:

“So we had to create our own sort of ideas about it, but looking at it now there's no hunting, there's no cutting of trees, there's no mining, that's about as far as the biodiversity went, and ecosystems” (Focus Group Participant Interview 02, P2).

- Do you have any suggestions of how the government can better engage the public when it comes to managing provincial parks in New Brunswick?

One focus group suggested that the government try to identify how to engage more people by seeking them out, seeing beyond the local people and engaging people who use the park that may not be associated with a particular group:

“I would suggest, like, more input from people that actually use the park, and not just friends of groups. You know, try and get the hikers and some people from the campground and people that hike. Like I don't know if any of those people were, uh actually, I don't know, I don't think at that stakeholders meeting there was any body to represent the campground or like the, the guy from the boat marina was there, but...” (Focus Group Participant Interview 01, P1)

“One is that they've got to be a little more active, they've got to seek out those groups and to just throw out an open invitation to whoever passes saying 'you come to us'. That's not going to catch too many parties. And you're going to get people who close the door in your face and all that sort of stuff, but I think actively going out and seeking input from folks who use the park is one thing” (Focus Group Participant Interview 01, P2).

Another suggestion was to have the park staff more involved with the engagement process:

“One of the suggestions I would make is that they, if they were going to do something like that again, and if it has to do with the management of the parks that the park employees should be involved, because they're the ones that know the park. They know what goes on behind the scenes, they know the ins and outs. And I don't know, maybe they were involved in the process before, but if they weren't, they should be” (Focus Group Participant Interview 01, P1).

This focus group also suggested engaging with the schools that make regular use of the parks, using park staff to conduct visitor surveys, advertise for the engagement process on billboards and implement more advertising in general.

The second focus group spoke to understanding the need to engage at the local level:

“And maybe break up the consultations in terms of, you know, the uniqueness of each park and each to the region its in and the people it serves, so Mount Carleton is unique, more different than Mactaquac and so on. I mean we all share a common interest in the parks of New Brunswick, but what are all our specific and particular interests in the parks that are closest to us, and we need to, they need to hear of those concerns and interests, so come to us, don't make us go all the way down to Mactaquac or way up to the other end of the province. Serve us” (Focus Group Participant Interview 02, P1).

This focus group also identified the need to evaluate your engagement process and do follow up consultations to see how the people felt about their engagement strategy:

“So you want to make sure that people feel good about the product that was produced as a result of the first consultation process. Because there will be encouragement to go participate in the second part of the plan which is the involvement of the management plan” (Focus Group Participant Interview 02, P1).

Other recommendations that came from this focus group included more face-to-face consultation, a longer period for engagement, using events like Bio-Blitz's for

engagement and data collection, make the surveys park specific, understand the barriers of local communities and create a management plan advisory committee for each park.

Compare and Contrast Interview Results

It is important to, where possible, compare and contrast the interview results of the government personnel and the stakeholder participants, which included the focus groups. This process of contrast and comparison highlights instances where the two groups differed greatly in their interpretation of the public engagement strategy, as well as where they agreed. Where comparisons can be made, it offers insights regarding what aspects of engagement were successful, and what should be reexamined for the next strategy.

The first questions that will be compared are:

- 1.) Government personnel: Do you think the strategy was successful?
- 2.) Stakeholder participants: Do you feel like your participation was meaningful?

Although these are not the same question, the participants' responses are reaching the same concluding points. While all of the government personnel answered that yes they believed the strategy was successful, 2/7 individual stakeholder participants replied with yes, 2/7 replied with uncertainty, 2/7 were not applicable because they didn't participate and 1/7 replied with adequate. Both focus groups felt like their participation was meaningful. The consensus for this question is that yes, the strategy was successful and these participants felt their role in the engagement was meaningful. However, there

were also several issues raised that were mentioned earlier such as their participation only being representative of stakeholders directly contacted by the Department, and not reflective of the general public.

Second questions:

- 1.) Government personnel: Would you change anything based on this experience?
- 2.) Stakeholder participants: What could the government do to better engage the public? (Asked of stakeholders that did not participate)

Again, these are not the same question but they relate closely in their outcomes.

The government personnel are identifying what they would change based on this experience to reach more people, and the stakeholder interviewees who did not participate are identifying how the government could have been more successful at reaching the public. All government personnel responded that yes, they would change aspects of the engagement process as noted earlier. A comparison that can be drawn between the government responses and participant responses is the need for better consultation for First Nation communities.

Third question:

- 1.) Government personnel: What aspect of the engagement process did you find to be the most beneficial?
- 2.) Stakeholder participants: What aspect of the engagement process did you find to be the most beneficial?

This question is one of the most useful comparisons, simply because the questions are the identical for both groups. Seeing how the deliverers of the strategy view their process compared to the participants allows for effective recommendations. Three of the four government personnel identified the survey as being the most beneficial. This is a stark contrast when compared to the stakeholder participant answers that all identified either the brief or roundtable as being the most beneficial.

Fourth question:

- 1.) Government personnel: What aspect of the engagement process did you find to be the least beneficial?
- 2.) Stakeholder participants: What aspect of the engagement process did you find to be the least beneficial?

The government personnel identified the youth version of the survey as being the least beneficial aspect of the strategy, while almost all (17/23) stakeholder participants identified the general survey as being the least beneficial. It is interesting to note that the government personnel identified the survey as being the most beneficial while almost all the stakeholder participants identified it as being the least beneficial.

Fifth question:

- 1.) Government personnel: Did the engagement process address appropriate topics for changing the *Parks Act* that you had not previously identified?

2.) Stakeholder participants: Did the engagement process address appropriate topics for changing the *Parks Act*? (Did the government provide appropriate topics through the White Paper? Could you bring up other issues?)

All government personnel agreed that the public engagement strategy identified issues and ideas for changing the *Parks Act* that they had not previously identified. This included the idea for management plans and mining/logging loopholes that existed in the previous legislation. The answer from stakeholder participants was mixed. Some thought that the White Paper addressed appropriate topics but only because they had been working closely with the Department. Many felt that the White Paper was lacking and the discussion was a bit guided, and if you were not an identified stakeholder bringing up overlooked issues would have been difficult.

Sixth question:

1.) Government personnel: Do you have any suggestions of how the government can better engage the public when it comes to managing provincial parks in New Brunswick?

2.) Stakeholder participants: Do you have any suggestions of how the government can better engage the public when it comes to managing provincial parks in New Brunswick?

A vital similarity that emerged during this interview question included the need to incorporate visitors into the public engagement process. There was concern that

regular users of provincial parks were not being engaged because they do not live in New Brunswick. Some suggested solutions included having park staff conduct surveys during the peak park seasons to engage these visitors that otherwise may not have their voice heard. Additionally, the stakeholder participants felt strongly concerning the need for engaging the local communities around the parks, but also engaging at a provincial level. Some stakeholder participants were very concerned that the Department would focus only on the communities surrounding the parks, forgetting that people from all over the province utilize and care about the way parks are managed. Another suggestion that was brought up by both government personnel and stakeholders included allowing for more time.

Recommendations

The recommendations being made are a result of the examination of public engagement strategies for management plans from the following organizations: Parks Canada, Ontario Parks, and British Columbia Parks; as well as an examination and analysis of the New Brunswick *Parks Act* Review public engagement strategy.

General Guideline

The Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture should have a general guideline for how public engagement will occur throughout the implementation of management plans. Parks Canada, Ontario Parks and British Columbia Parks share similar guidelines for how each addresses public engagement for their park management planning process.

All three agencies conclude that public participation should happen at multiple steps during the management planning process. Additionally, all three began developing a public engagement strategy from the beginning, during the scoping phase for the management plan and reporting on public engagement results following each phase. This includes posting responses and suggestions online for a period of time, usually ranging between 30 (BC Parks) and 45 (Ontario Parks) days (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013c; Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2009; Parks Canada, 2009).

While Ontario Parks requires at least two different public engagement opportunities when creating a management plan, that is the extent of their general guideline. After this requirement, it is up to each individual park to create a more detailed and structured public engagement strategy (Ontario Auditor General, 2006). Parks Canada and BC parks have a more detailed guideline for all management plans to follow with allocations for each park to make specific adjustments for their plan. This is due to the large number of parks under their jurisdiction, and even though Parks Canada and BC Parks are large park systems, they have still implemented loosely structured guidelines. Since New Brunswick has such a small park system, having a set of guidelines regarding a public engagement strategy for management plans is the best course of action.

Based on the guidelines for public engagement from Parks Canada (2014) and BC Parks (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013c) the recommended general guideline for public participation in management plans for New Brunswick provincial

parks follows:

- After the scoping stage and state of report is completed for the provincial park, the public should be consulted and initially engaged to gather input.
- From this round of public engagement, a draft management plan document should be completed and made readily available to the public. Once the public has had ample time to read it another round of public engagement must take place.
- After this, a final management plan is created which then undergoes review by Minister and Department.
- If any changes are made to the final document at any time, especially concerning zones, wilderness areas, development, etc., the public must be consulted.
- All documentation (state of report and draft management plan) must be available to the public for a reasonable amount of time.
- All results from the public engagement strategy at each stage must be compiled and made available to the public.

Specific Suggestions

The interviews with government personnel and stakeholder participants helped to identify key issues, concerns and successes with the public engagement process for the *Parks Act* Review. They also provided insight for suggested changes to a public engagement process for creating management plans. All of this feedback can be used to

strengthen future public engagement processes. There are four specific suggestions to come from this analysis of the *Parks Act* Review public engagement process that were reiterated throughout the interviews by stakeholder participants and government personnel alike.

The first specific suggestion is to change the length of time for the public engagement process and the time of year. The *Parks Act* Review public engagement process began August 12th 2013 and was finished by September 13th 2013. The entire process, which included the two-roundtable discussions, the online survey and ability to submit a brief letter, occurred within a one-month time frame. Notably, most of the general public would also have to read the White Paper and do some additional research such as reading the *Parks Act* in order to meaningfully participate. This is simply not enough time to accomplish this meaningful participation. All government personnel and several stakeholder participants identified the rushed time period as being an issue to improve upon. Another issue with the time was that it took place in the summer. This is not an ideal time of the year as many people are taking vacations and youth are either working summer jobs or also on vacation. Changing the time to fall or winter and having it last longer were two of the main suggestions from all participants in this study.

The second specific suggestion is to develop an in-depth First Nation engagement strategy. Several government personnel and a stakeholder participant brought up the issue of the low level of First Nation involvement in the *Parks Act* Review. An amendment made to the *Parks Act* after this review is that the Minister may “create an advisory

committee including members of First Nations;” (New Brunswick Attorney General, 2014). While this is a step in right direction, this study recommends that the Department delve deeper into the issue of consulting First Nation communities. One stakeholder participant suggested that the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture partner with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs when developing a strategy for management plans. Another suggestion was that the Department should hold town hall meetings in First Nation communities that are in close proximity to the park under review. No matter what course of action is taken it is clear that the Department should reevaluate their approach to engaging First Nation people.

The third specific suggestion was also touched on by government personnel, but echoed repeatedly by stakeholder participants. It is the need to have engagement at three distinct levels: local, provincial and visitor. Stakeholder participants understood the importance of engaging people at the local level. Understanding how the park management plan could impact local communities, businesses and tourism operators is crucial. However, it was also brought up that while local people may use the park close to their home, people from all over the province visit provincial parks as well. Someone who lives in Moncton may use Mount Carleton (over four hours outside of Moncton) more frequently than Parlee Beach (15 minutes outside of Moncton). Also, all provincial parks are dedicated to the people of New Brunswick, so engagement should not be limited to the town outside of the park in question. There should be a strategy in place to achieve province wide participation on particular park management plans. At the same time, the Department should recognize that visitors hold a stake in the management of

provincial parks as well. Understandably, reaching visitors from outside the province for input on management plans is more difficult. A government personnel and stakeholder participant suggested that a solution to this could be using park staff to do on the ground surveys with visitors during high season. Another solution is providing online opportunities for public engagement and making them available for people outside of New Brunswick.

The last specific suggestion is to implement an effectiveness evaluation. It is important that throughout the public engagement process or at the very least when it is completed to evaluate the process itself. This suggestion is justified by the results of these interviews. There was a stark difference between what government personnel who designed the strategy thought was the most beneficial public engagement method and what the stakeholder participants thought was the most beneficial public engagement method. What the government personnel thought was the best, most of the stakeholder participants felt was the least effective method of engagement. It is hard to know what is working for the participants when you are involved in creating and implementing the strategy. This effectiveness evaluation is also crucial in New Brunswick because of the generation gap and literacy issues that are unique to this province. Interviewing a wide range of stakeholders it was easy to see that there needs to be more diverse ways of communicating with different age groups and literacy levels. Understanding what worked and what did not can easily improve how meaningful the public engagement process becomes in the future.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to analyze the *Parks Act* Review public engagement strategy in order to identify its successes and failures to establish recommendations for the second round of consultations regarding park management plans. Developing and implementing park management plans for each of New Brunswick's provincial parks is a long and complex task that will require a comprehensive public engagement strategy for each specific park.

Reviewing and learning from the results of public participation strategies can help develop more meaningful strategies for the future, improving on how we interpret and foster participation. While this study did not analyze how the strategy engaged the general public, through interviews I was able to gather detailed insights on how provincial park stakeholders in New Brunswick are being engaged. They provided insight in regards to how the strategy was successful, where its faults lie and how to improve when seeking engagement for management plans. While over all, most interviewees felt the strategy was a success, they identified issues and concerns, which lead to recommendations for the next round.

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Appendix A

Table 1. Assessing the expected level of public engagement (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013c).

Expected Level of Interest	Low	Medium	High
Protected area is of provincial significance?	No		Yes
Known precedent-setting issue(s) involved?	No		Yes
Recreation			
Interest from organised recreation groups?	None/Little	Some	Many/High
Public demand for recreation use in the area?	None/Little	Some	High
Range of recreation activities in the area?	Few		Many
Are there recreation permit holders?	None	Some	Several
What is the visitation trend for the area?	Declining	Stable	Increasing
Natural Environment			
Level of public support for protection?	Low	Some	High
Presence of rare or endangered species or ecosystem	None	Some	Many
Known threats to natural resource values?	None	Some	Many
Interest of organised conservation groups?	None/Little	Some	Many/High
Known research interests?	None	Some	High
Presence of culturally significant sites?	None	Some	Many
Resource Use			
Known resource use interests?	No		Yes
Existing resource use or tenures?	No		Yes
Local Population			
Proximity of local population?	>200km	50-200km	<50km
Local population growth trend?	Declining	Stable	Increasing

Table 2. Choosing public engagement methods (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, 2013c).

Method	Overall Expected Level of Interest		
	Low	Medium	High
Initial Planning			
Web Posting and Public Notice	★	★	★
Visitor Comment Forms		✓	✓
Newspaper Advertisement		✓	✓
Face to Face meetings with interested parties		✓	✓
Public Event(s) (e.g., open house)			✓
Draft Management Plan			
Internet-based review and comment only	✓		
Web Posting of draft plan and Public Notice	30 days ★	30 days ★	60 days
Newspaper Advertisement		✓	✓
Public Event(s) (e.g., open house)		✓	✓
Face to face meetings with interested parties	Maybe	✓	✓
Final Management Plan			
Web Posting of final plan and Public Notice	★	★	★

★ Red symbol indicates a minimum requirement.

Appendix B

Parks Act Review Questionnaire

1. Which of the following best describe your relationship with Provincial Parks? (Select all that apply)

- I work for the Government of New Brunswick
- I work at a Provincial Park
- I am a member of a conservation group
- I am a member of a volunteer group
- I am a member of a health or wellness group
- I am a teacher of an educational / youth group
- I am a student in an educational / youth group
- I am a member of a First Nations Community
- I am a student
- I live in New Brunswick
- I am a visitor from outside of the province
- Other (Please specify: _____)

2. What is your current age?

- Under 19 years of age
- Between 19 and 24 years of age
- 25 - 34 years of age
- 35 - 44 years of age
- 45 - 54 years of age
- 55 - 64 years of age
- 65 years of age and older
- Prefer not to say

3. What is your postal code? _____

Don't know / Prefer not to say

4. Which provincially owned properties have you heard of? (Select all that apply)

- Mactaquac Provincial Park
- New River Beach Provincial Park
- Parlee Beach Provincial Park
- de la République Provincial Park
- Murray Beach Provincial Park
- Herring Cove Provincial Park
- Sugarloaf Provincial Park
- Mount Carleton Provincial Park
- The Anchorage (privately operated)
- The Hopewell Rocks
- Fundy Trail Parkway (privately operated)
- Lepreau Falls
- Castalia (privately operated)

- Saint Croix
- Oak Bay (privately operated)
- Val Comeau (privately operated)

[If selected 2 at Q1 ask Q5 and Q6 then go to Q9, otherwise skip to Q7]

5. Outside of work, which provincially owned properties have you visited in the past 12 months? In the past 5 years? (Select all that apply)

- Mactaquac Provincial Park
- New River Beach Provincial Park
- Parlee Beach Provincial Park
- de la République Provincial Park
- Murray Beach Provincial Park
- Herring Cove Provincial Park
- Sugarloaf Provincial Park
- Mount Carleton Provincial Park
- The Anchorage (privately operated)
- The Hopewell Rocks
- Fundy Trail Parkway (privately operated)
- Lepreau Falls
- Castalia (privately operated)
- Saint Croix
- Oak Bay (privately operated)
- Val Comeau (privately operated)

6. Outside of work, how often have you visited provincially owned properties in the past 12 months? _____ times [Go to Q9]

7. Which provincially owned properties have you visited in the past 12 months? In the past 5 years? (Select all that apply)

- Mactaquac Provincial Park
- New River Beach Provincial Park
- Parlee Beach Provincial Park
- de la République Provincial Park
- Murray Beach Provincial Park
- Herring Cove Provincial Park
- Sugarloaf Provincial Park
- Mount Carleton Provincial Park
- The Anchorage (privately operated)
- The Hopewell Rocks
- Fundy Trail Parkway (privately operated)
- Lepreau Falls
- Castalia (privately operated)
- Saint Croix
- Oak Bay (privately operated)
- Val Comeau (privately operated)

8. How often have you visited provincially owned properties in the past 12 months? ____ times.

9. Which of the following best describes the composition of your travel party when you visit a provincially owned property? (Select all that apply)

- Alone
- As a couple
- As a family with children
- As two or more families with children
- With friends
- As part of an organized group / tour (e.g. school, education or youth group)
- With other family members (e.g. sister, brother, parents, grandparents)
- With business associates
- Other (please specify: _____)

10. Which of the following activities would you expect at Provincial Parks? (Select all that apply)

- Swimming
- Sunbathing
- Wildlife-viewing
- Birdwatching
- Hiking
- Nature Walks
- Dog walking
- Golf, Volleyball, Tennis
- Cycling
- Mountain Biking
- Sightseeing
- Camping
- Picnicking
- Family reunions
- Canoeing, Kayaking
- Downhill Skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Cross-country skiing
- Geocaching
- Fishing ___ Boating
- Special Events (New Brunswick Day, sandsculpture contests, etc.)
- Interpretation activities (educational sessions or guided tours)
- Hands-on educational activities
- Other (please specify: _____)

11. What do you value most about the New Brunswick Provincial Park system? (Please choose up to 3)

- I can go camping at a Provincial Park

- I can go to a Provincial Park and take part in various forms of recreation and/or activities
- Provincial Parks preserve and conserve the environment
- I can go to a Provincial Park and learn about flora, fauna and/or cultural heritage
- Having a Provincial Park nearby benefits local community economies
- I can go to a Provincial Park and see natural beauty
- Provincial Parks offer a consistent quality of services
- Provincial Parks offer consistent safety standards
- Provincial Parks are affordable
- Provincial Parks provide me with access to park lands, nature and/or coastlines
- Provincial Parks are family friendly
- Other (Please specify: _____)

12. The current mandate of Provincial Parks focuses on healthful enjoyment and education for the benefit of future generations. In looking ahead, to update and enhance the mandate; which of the following components do you consider important to include in a new mandate for Provincial Parks:

- To provide a natural setting for visitors to experience wellness, cultural and educational opportunities.
- To undertake legitimate ecological preservation and conservation practices.
- To offer and promote a tourism product that enhances New Brunswick's image as a vacation destination.
- Land set aside to protect natural areas for me, my children and their families to enjoy for years to come.
- None of the above

13. In your opinion, are there other elements that should be included in a new Provincial Parks mandate? If so, which ones?

14. Along with the provincial government, what partners should be involved in fulfilling the parks mandate that you described for the previous question?

(Select all that apply)

- Other parks (national, provincial or municipal parks)
- Neighbouring communities
- Volunteer groups / committees
- Conservation groups
- Educational / youth groups
- Not-for-profit groups
- Private-sector companies
- There should be no other partners involved in fulfilling the mandate
- Other (please specify: _____)

15. What services and facilities should be offered at a Provincial Park? (Select all that apply)

- Convenience store
- Restaurant / Canteen
- Welcome center
- Activity center
- Picnic area
- Change rooms
- Washrooms
- Maintained hiking trails
- Lifeguards at the beach
- Golf course
- Cycling trails
- Groomed winter trails (snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, snowmobile)
- Winter Activities (sliding, skating)
- Bicycle, boat, canoe, kayak rentals
- Hands-on educational activities
- Campgrounds (maintenance of camp sites, kitchen shelters, washrooms)
- Interpretation activities (educational sessions or guided tours)
- Park wardens and security patrol
- Other (please specify: _____)

16. Who do you think should operate or deliver the following facilities and services?

17. Do you have any recommendations for how Provincial Parks could generate additional revenue?

I think the government should operate this facility or deliver this service

I think a not-for-profit organization or group should operate this facility or deliver this service

I think a private-sector company should operate this facility or deliver this service

I don't know

/ I prefer not to say

Convenience store

Restaurant

Campgrounds (maintenance of camp sites, kitchen shelters, washrooms)

Lifeguards at the beach

Golf course

Bicycle, boat, canoe and/or kayak rentals

Interpretation activities (educational sessions or guided tours)

Park wardens and security patrols

Other (please specify)

18. For what type of events do you think Provincial Parks should be a venue? (Select all that apply)

- Park-specific events (Sandcastle Contests, Longest Day of Play)
- Sporting events (Tournaments, Competitions)
- Charity events (Relay for Life, Snowarama)
- Community Events (Craft fairs)
- Family Events (Family Reunions, Weddings)
- Other (Please specify: _____)

19. When activities or events are happening at Provincial Parks what is the best way to let you know about them? (Select all that apply)

- Provincial Parks website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Online Classified Ads (Kijiji)
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Community Newsletter
- Posters at the park
- Community bulletin board
- Church Bulletin
- Other (Please specify: _____)

20. Have you or someone you know with limited mobility had challenges with the accessibility of a Provincial Park?

- Yes [Go to Q22]
- No [Go to Q23]

21. If you answered yes at the previous question could you explain what the situation was and offer suggestions of what could be improved?

22. Please share any other comments or ideas you have that would help strengthen the New Brunswick *Parks Act* and our Provincial Park system for the future:

Thank you for your valued participation!

Parks Act Review Questionnaire – Under 19

1. Which of the following best describe your relationship with Provincial Parks? (Choose as many as you want)

- I work for the Government of New Brunswick
- I work at a Provincial Park
- I am a member of a conservation group
- I am a member of a volunteer group
- I am a member of a health or wellness group
- I am a teacher of an educational / youth group
- I am a student in an educational / youth group
- I am a member of a First Nations Community
- I am a student
- I live in New Brunswick
- I am a visitor from outside of the province
- Other (Please specify: _____)

2. What is your current age?

- Under 19 years of age
- Between 19 and 24 years of age
- 25 - 34 years of age
- 35 - 44 years of age
- 45 - 54 years of age
- 55 - 64 years of age
- 65 years of age and older
- Prefer not to say

3. What is your postal code? _____
Don't know / Prefer not to say

4. Which provincially owned properties have you heard of? (Choose as many as you want)

- Mactaquac Provincial Park
- New River Beach Provincial Park
- Parlee Beach Provincial Park
- de la République Provincial Park
- Murray Beach Provincial Park
- Herring Cove Provincial Park
- Sugarloaf Provincial Park
- Mount Carleton Provincial Park
- The Anchorage (privately operated)
- The Hopewell Rocks
- Fundy Trail Parkway (privately operated)
- Lepreau Falls
- Castalia (privately operated)

- Saint Croix
- Oak Bay (privately operated)
- Val Comeau (privately operated)

[If selected 2 at Q1 ask Q5 and Q6 then go to Q9, otherwise skip to Q7]

5. Outside of work, which provincially owned properties have you visited in the past 12 months? In the past 5 years? (Choose as many as you want)

- Mactaquac Provincial Park
- New River Beach Provincial Park
- Parlee Beach Provincial Park
- de la République Provincial Park
- Murray Beach Provincial Park
- Herring Cove Provincial Park
- Sugarloaf Provincial Park
- Mount Carleton Provincial Park
- The Anchorage (privately operated)
- The Hopewell Rocks
- Fundy Trail Parkway (privately operated)
- Lepreau Falls
- Castalia (privately operated)
- Saint Croix
- Oak Bay (privately operated)
- Val Comeau (privately operated)

6. Outside of work, how often have you visited one of these properties in the past 12 months?

times [Go to Q9]

7. Which provincially owned properties have you visited in the past 12 months? In the past 5 years? (Choose as many as you want)

- Mactaquac Provincial Park
- New River Beach Provincial Park
- Parlee Beach Provincial Park
- de la République Provincial Park
- Murray Beach Provincial Park
- Herring Cove Provincial Park
- Sugarloaf Provincial Park
- Mount Carleton Provincial Park
- The Anchorage (privately operated)
- The Hopewell Rocks
- Fundy Trail Parkway (privately operated)
- Lepreau Falls
- Castalia (privately operated)
- Saint Croix
- Oak Bay (privately operated)

8. How often have you visited one of these properties in the past 12 months? ____ times

9. Most of the time when you visit one of these properties you are: (Choose as many as you want)

- By yourself
- With your family
- With your friends
- With a group (ex: class, guides, scouts, others)
- Other (please explain: _____)

10. What do you like to do at a Provincial Park? (Choose as many as you want)

- Swimming
- Sunbathing
- Watching animals
- Watching birds
- Hiking
- Nature Walks
- Dog walking
- Golf, Volleyball, Tennis
- Cycling
- Mountain Biking
- Sightseeing
- Camping
- Picnicking
- Family reunions
- Canoeing, Kayaking
- Downhill Skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Cross-country skiing
- Geocaching
- Fishing ____ Boating
- Special Events (New Brunswick Day, sandsculpture contests, etc.)
- Learn about nature (educational sessions or guided tours)
- Hands-on learning activities
- Other (please explain: _____)

11. Do you think Provincial Parks should be responsible for : (Choose as many as you want)

- Offering cultural, educational and wellness activities
- Protecting the environment
- Promoting New Brunswick as a place to visit
- Protecting natural areas for you now and for your children and their families to enjoy in the future
- None of the above

12. What else do you believe Provincial Parks should be doing / offering?

13. What kind of events would you like to go to at Provincial Parks? (Choose as many as you want)

- Park-specific events (Sandcastle Contests, Longest Day of Play)
- Sporting events (Tournaments, Competitions)
- Charity events (Relay for Life, Snowarama)
- Community Events (Craft fairs, Canada Day, New Brunswick Day)
- Family Events (Family Reunions, Weddings)
- Other (Please specify: _____)

14. When activities or events are happening at Provincial Parks what is the best way to let you know about them? (Choose as many as you want)

- Provincial Parks website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Online Classified Ads (for example: Kijiji)
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Community Newsletter
- Posters at the park
- Community bulletin board
- Church Bulletin
- Other (please explain: _____)

15. Have you or someone you know with limited mobility had a problem getting around at a Provincial Park?

- Yes [Go to Q16]
- No [Go to Q17]

16. Could you explain what happened and suggest what could be done to make it better next time?

17. Do you have any other ideas that can help us protect the parks for you now and your children and their families in the future?

Thank you for your valued participation!

Appendix C

INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS (PARTICIPANTS OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT)

- 1.) How are you involved with provincial parks in New Brunswick?
- 2.) How often do you use provincial parks in New Brunswick?
- 3.) What do you do when you go to provincial parks in New Brunswick?
- 4.) Were you involved in the citizen engagement aspect of the *Parks Act* Review?
- 5.) If you were not involved, why?
- 6.) And what could the government do to reach people for public engagement?
- 7.) If so, how? (Survey, public meeting, focus group, etc)
- 8.) Do you feel like your participation was meaningful? (Do you feel like you had the chance to adequately express your thoughts and concerns?)
- 9.) What aspect of the engagement did you find to be the most beneficial?
- 10.) What aspect of the engagement did you find to be the least beneficial?
- 11.) Did the engagement process address appropriate topics for changing the *Parks Act*?
- 14.) Do you have any suggestions of how the government can better engage the public when it comes to managing provincial parks in New Brunswick?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS)

- 1.) How are you involved with provincial parks in New Brunswick?
- 2.) How often do you use provincial parks in New Brunswick?
- 3.) What do you do when you go to provincial parks in New Brunswick?
- 4.) How were you involved in the citizen engagement strategy of the *Parks Act* Review?
- 5.) Do you think it was successful?
- 6.) If not, why not?
- 7.) If so, how?
- 8.) If you were going to do develop and implement another public engagement strategy (for park management plans as an example), would you change anything based on this experience?
- 9.) If so, how?
- 10.) If not, why?
- 11.) What aspect of the engagement did you find to be the most beneficial? Why?
- 12.) What aspect of the engagement did you find to be the least beneficial? Why?
- 13.) Did the engagement process address appropriate topics for changing the *Parks Act* that you had not previously identified?
- 14.) Do you have any suggestions of how the government can better engage the public when it comes to managing provincial parks in New Brunswick?