

Public and stakeholder involvement in forest governance: rethinking the forest advisory
committee approach in Canada

by

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ABSTRACT

The Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) is a popular governance structure in Canada for governments and forest companies to engage public and local stakeholders in forest management planning. These committees are established across Canada to incorporate diverse values in forest decision-making and to move towards Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). However, scholars have noted many problems and shortcomings associated with these committees and suggest there is a need to rethink the FAC approach for involving the public and stakeholder organizations in forest management by developing a new framework for such involvement. This study 1) investigate how various jurisdictions involve the public and stakeholders in forest management decisions, 2) identify eading-edge approaches for involvement in forest management decisions that are more democratic and deliberative, 3) examine ways the public and stakeholders, other than forest product companies and government, can be incentivized to be involved in forest management, 4) develop a framework for involvement in forest decisions in Canada in the context of the tenure approach that captures the findings related to the above objectives and ensures greater public involvement. The study take a qualitative case study approach, utilizing document review, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis. Overall, the data reveal that public participation in forest governance in Canada is weak, especially at the strategic and normative levels of decision making. The results of this study suggest a three-level framework for engagement, starting from forest policy and normative decisions at the top, to strategic decisions in the middle, and operational decisions in the bottom for public and stakeholder involvement. Each level requires its own distinct programs for participation, utilizing different tools and techniques, mainly because each needs to involve a different range of participants and address different forestry issues. However, overlap of some of the participants in each process and linkages between participation programs is also highly desirable. The FAC approach is not an appropriate model for getting public input to all these levels of decisions, but with some improvements it may still have utility in relation to forest management decisions that are operational in nature.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research Context

Most natural resource problems involving uncertainties, geographic scale and entrenched interest, are wicked problems (Balint, Stewart, Desai, & Walters, 2011). Wicked problems are not definable and separable like natural science problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973), but they share characteristics such as a high degree of uncertainty, multiple causes, intractability, divergent solutions, and divergent values (Allen & Gould, 1986; Balin et al., 2011). The literature suggests that there is a need for new approaches to address such problems (e.g., Lockwood, Davidson, Curtis, Stratford, & Griffith, 2010).

Markets and bureaucratic administration, which are conventional ways of steering society, are generally unable to address such wicked problems, especially those associated with resources and the environment (Lockwood et al, 2010). In recent decades, for example, a shift from centralized administration towards participatory governance has been recognized as being necessary. This is a result of increasing complexity, unpredictability in global systems, and reduced ability of central governments to solve persistent and intractable problems related to resources and the environment (Lockwood et al., 2010).

A shift toward participatory governance depends on how ‘institutions’ shape the power structure between state agencies, local agencies, the people and other various stakeholders and how these structure patterns of interaction (Gibson, 1999; Yeboah-Assiamah, Muller & Domfeh, 2017). North (1990, 3) defines institutions as ‘rules of the game in a society’ which manifest in both formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions are closely related to state, its agencies, and official activities including law, policies, and regulations, while informal institutions are socially shared rules, norms and traditions (North, 1990; Agrawal and Gibson, 1999). Formal and informal institutions involve interplay of rules, norms and actors and, together with their interaction, shape governance systems (Ostrom, 1990). The centrality of institutions cannot be ignored in any meaningful assessment of natural resource governance (Ostrom, 1990; Agrawal and Gibson, 1999).

Rydin & Pennington (2010), suggest that greater public involvement in governance systems requires institutional redesign. They define institutional redesign as “a package of measures which will shape the ways in which actors within a community interact over the medium to long term, including both organizational matters ... and the norms and routine

practice of interactions” (Rydin & Pennington, 2000, p. 163). They argue the effectiveness of participation, and a key aspect of the redesign of such structures, relies on incentives given to individual decision makers and the obstacles to participation that originate from the structure of incentives put in place (Rydin & Pennington, 2000). Three types of selective incentives have been suggested for motivating group action: material (tangible rewards that have monetary value or can easily be translated into ones that have), solidary (intangible rewards arising from relationships with other people such as socializing, congeniality, and the sense of group membership and identification), and purposive (intangible rewards that derive in the main from the stated ends of the association such as the demand for the enactment of certain laws or the adoption of certain practices, which do not benefit members directly) (Wilson & Clark, 1961; Willer, 2009; Kyriacou, 2010).

Within the Canadian forest sector, newer models of governance have been shifting towards more inclusive and participatory approaches (Duinker 1998; Blouin 1998; Sinclair et al. 2006). The majority of Canada’s forest land, about 90%, is publicly owned by provincial and territorial governments (Natural Resources Canada, 2019), and is managed through tenure systems (Hanna, 2010). Tenures are the most important formal institutional arrangements in the Canadian forest sector and have a major impact on the behavior of forest product companies (Haley and Nelson, 2007). Provincial governments have control over forest companies’ actions by establishing rights and setting conditions through tenure license agreements (Hanna, 2010). For example, in Alberta, forest companies holding area-based tenures must establish advisory committees in forest planning processes in order to involve local people in forestry management decisions (Parkins, 2006). Over the past 40 years, new models of governance have been introduced to increase public participation in management processes with social, ecological, and economic sustainability of the forest as a primary goal (Charnley and Poe, 2007). The Model Forest Program (Bonnell, 2012), Forest Advisory Committees (Sinclair, McGurk, & Diduck, 2006), and Community Forestry (Teitelbaum, 2016) have been the three main approaches to diversify forest governance from top-down government/industry control in the Canadian context.

Certification systems have also been shown to impact the behavior of forest product companies. Forest certification is a market-based governance mechanism for implementing sustainable forest management (Bartley, 2003; Cashore et al., 2004). Market-based forest certification systems such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), also require public

consultation as a condition for the issuance of licenses and certifications for operation (Parkins et al, 2006; Nenko et al., 2019).

One popular mechanism in Canadian forest management for involving the public in decision-making around forest tenures is the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) (Sinclair, McGurk, & Diduck, 2006; Parkins, 2002). FACs have been established across Canada to involve local stakeholders and people in forest management decisions (Nenko et al., 2019; Sinclair, McGurk, & Diduck, 2006; Parkins, 2002). However, scholars have noted many problems with these committees including issues such as: the lack of participation by Indigenous peoples (Nenko et al., 2019) as well as members of general public (Parkins et al, 2006), elite representation (Parkins and Sinclair, 2014), gender inequity (Richardson, Sinclair, Reed, & Parkins, 2011), unaccountability (McGurk, Sinclair, & Diduck, 2006), lack of influence on normative and strategic decisions (McGurk, Sinclair, & Diduck, 2006), and the high level of trust through familiarity leading to poor public engagement (Parkins, 2010). Evidence such as this has some people thinking that the FAC as a forest governance institution has failed in relation to what it was supposed to achieve. In fact, it has been shown that many FACs are sponsored by forest companies (Parkins, 2002), and most committee members are affiliated with a specific stakeholder group often associated with the forest industry (Parkins and Sinclair, 2014).

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of my research was to rethink the FAC approach for involving the public and stakeholder organizations in forest management decisions in Canada by developing a new framework for such involvement. The study had the following objectives:

1. To investigate how various jurisdictions involve the public and stakeholders in forest management decisions;
2. To identify leading-edge approaches for involvement in forest management decisions that are more democratic and deliberative;
3. To examine ways the public and stakeholders, other than forest product companies and government, can be incentivized to be involved in forest management;
4. To develop a framework for involvement in forest decisions in Canada in the context of the tenure approach that captures the findings related to the objectives above and ensures greater public involvement.

1.3 Research Methods

The research followed a qualitative approach utilizing a case study strategy of inquiry. The study was conducted in the context of action to achieve sustainable forest management in Canada. My research was designed to capture the perspective of those that have interest in participating in the forest management policy community, such as FAC members, NGOs, ENGOs, industry, government agencies, and academics. Employing this format, the research project was completed in two phases. Phase One focused on jurisdictional scan to investigate how different jurisdictions involve the public and stakeholders in forestry decision-making. The literature on new approaches to involve public in forest decision-making was reviewed in this phase. As well, I reviewed the literature on ways to incentivize stakeholders and members of civic society to participate in decisions related to resources management.

Phase Two focused on identifying how people and organizations might be incentivized to participate, new governance models, and any required institutional changes that could shape incentive structures to increase public involvement in forest management in Canada. Using the information found in Phase One, a selection of participants including members of FACs, policy makers, academics, and NGOs/ENGOs were chosen for interview. The purpose of the interviews was to investigate the incentives needed to create a better governance approach and to obtain in-depth data regarding important principles for designing an arena for public engagement and getting their input on any framework developed. The methods are detailed in Chapter 3.

1.4 Research Contribution

My research on natural resource governance focuses on institutions and incentive structures that aim at increasing public involvement within Canadian forest management and thereby changing the approach to governance. The results of this research should help to identify governance models and principals that aim to make public involvement more meaningful and therefore more desirable to all parties. The FAC model has been shown to have serious weaknesses and there is a need to identify a new path for meaningful public engagement in forest governance. Furthermore, the research should contribute to natural resource governance literature, particularly the role of public participation in forest governance in Canada.

1.5 Thesis Organization

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, I provide a review of the literature relevant to natural resource governance, forest institutions, and Forest

Advisory Committees. The third chapter further details the methods and techniques used in conducting the research study. The fourth chapter presents the first part of the results, including a description of meaningful public participation programs and obstacles to participation in forestry decision making. The fifth chapter deals with some of the cases brought up by participants as democratic and deliberative processes. The sixth chapter discusses developing a model and designing an arena for meaningful public participation in forestry in Canada. The final chapter summarizes the study's findings and provides recommendations on important principles for the new model.

Chapter 2: Natural Resource Governance and Public Participation

2.1 Introduction

This literature review first introduces the concept of governance and good governance principals. The chapter then describes participatory approaches in environmental and resource governance and the obstacles to meaningful participation. The third section of the chapter outlines approaches to forest governance in Canada. This section begins by defining Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in the Canadian context, followed by describing the role of citizen and stakeholders in forest decision making and the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) as the most popular mechanism for governments and forest companies to engage public and local stakeholders in forest management. The chapter concludes with a description of the new or advanced forms of resource governance that can inform development of a new approach that moves beyond the FAC governance.

2.2 Environmental and Natural Resource Governance

2.2.1 Governance and Institutions

Governance is a concept that emerged in the 1980s to capture the notion of reducing the role of the state as the central governing actor (Dwivedi, 2010). The concept revolved around new patterns of interactions between government and society (Kooiman, 1993). Governance activities were defined as including not only government and governmental institutions, but all other stakeholders in a country including civil society and the private sector (Frederickson, 1997, 86). A definition by Hyden and Court (2002, 19) captures these ideas: “Governance refers to the formation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and societal actors interact to make decisions.” Rules and interactions are the two main themes in this definition as well as indicating that governance includes the interaction between state and other economic and societal actors such as communities, businesses, and NGOs. Such interactions are structured and guided by rules set by institutions.

North (1990, 3) indicates that institutions define the ‘rules of the game in a society’ and that these can be manifested in both formal and informal institutions. Institutions are “enduring regularities of human action in situations structured by rules, norms, and shared strategies, as well as by the physical world. The rules, norms, and shared strategies are constituted and

reconstituted by human interaction in frequently occurring or repetitive situations”(Crawford & Ostrom, 1995, p.582). Therefore, institutions include families, churches, government agencies, and most organizations, because they are formed by rules, norms, and shared strategies (Ostrom et al., 1993; Imperial, 1999). Institutions establish a normative foundation for the governance process and provide contexts for governing interactions between governmental and non-governmental actors (Kooiman, 2003). Institutions determine how social actors interact, what is expected of them, and what they can expect from others (Kooiman & Bavinck, 2005).

The function of institutions depends upon three levels of rules – operational, collective choice, and constitutional – which affect the action and outcomes achieved in any setting (Imperial, 1999; Paavola, 2006; Yeboah-assiamah, Muller, & Ameyaw, 2017). At the operational level, individuals decide about when, where, and how to do something and their choice sets are constrained by operational rules. At the collective choice level, officials determine how operational rules can be changed and who can participate in these decisions (e.g., policy making and management). Finally, decisions at the constitutional level influence operational and collective choice rules regarding the authority of officials and the procedures they are supposed to follow. The three levels of rules together direct actions and interactions of individuals and groups, and thereby institutions, with respect to how people manage natural resources (Yeboah-assiamah et al., 2017)

2.2.2 Good Governance Principals

Good environmental and natural resource governance requires democratic, cooperative, and supportive central and local governance institutions and rules (Lockwood et al., 2010). In order to deliver good governance and achieve intended outcomes, Lockwood and his colleagues (2010) offer eight principles of governance aimed at guiding the design of new natural resource institutions: legitimacy, transparency, inclusiveness, fairness, accountability, functional and structural integration, capability, and adaptability.

Legitimacy refers to the validity of an organization’s authority to govern that is earned by democratic statute or stakeholder’s acceptance. New natural resource organizations may foster their legitimacy by allowing stakeholders to influence decision-making that affects their welfare. Transparency refers to the visibility of decision-making processes and sharing of the reasoning behind decisions taken as well as the availability of relevant information to make sound

decisions. It is very important to be clear about who has made a decision and the reasons for that decision.

New natural resource governance institution should be inclusive, which means opportunities should be available for stakeholders to participate and influence decision-making and actions. Natural resource governance requires participation of as many of the affected actors as possible to access different knowledge. Lockwood et al. (2010, p. 994) suggest some ways to stimulate participation by a diverse range of stakeholders including, “employing a range of participation mechanisms across the continuum from active to passive; providing resources to overcome barriers to participation (such as child care at meetings); timing consultation to suit stakeholders’ needs; and using delivery media appropriate to cultural and learning preferences.” It is also important that the composition of stakeholders in participation mechanism reflects the diversity within the general public.

Governance arrangements are expected to be fair in terms of the distribution of power, the treatment of participants, respect of diverse values and interests, and the allocation of costs, benefits, and decision-making responsibilities. Equally important, good governance institutions should be accountable and in compliance with regulatory requirements and law.

Integration is another important principle, as good natural resource governance requires connection between and coordination across different governance levels and actors. Institutional arrangements should create such connections between different actors in different governance levels. Natural resource institutions should also be capable of successfully delivering on their responsibilities, which rely on financial, technical, and managerial skills and resources. Finally, natural resource institutions should be adaptable to management of threats, opportunities, and associated risks and should include learning and new knowledge in decision making (Lockwood et al., 2010).

2.3 Participatory Environmental and Resource Governance

2.3.1 In Pursuit of Public Participation

Most environmental and natural resource problems are characterized by complexity and uncertainties requiring involvement of different actors to achieve participatory governance (Balint, Stewart, Desai, & Walters, 2011; Lockwood et al., 2010). In recent decades, a shift from

centralized administration towards participatory governance has been recognized as being necessary as a result of increasing complexity, unpredictability in global systems, and reduced ability of central governments to solve persistent and intractable problems (Lockwood et al., 2010). Decentralization has led to a decline in central government's role in governing renewable resources such as forests in some regions (Lemos & Agrawal, 2006). Roles of non-state actors and citizens in decision-making have increased and new ways of resource and environment governing have developed (Armitage, Lo, & Plummer, 2012; Lemos & Agrawal, 2006). Parkins and Sinclair (2014) suggest that participatory environmental governance incorporates a broader range of actors within a governance framework.

There are two main reasons for the emergence of participatory approaches in environmental and resource governance. The first is the notion of normative rationalisation, which focuses on the democratic right to be involved in the decision-making process (Rydin & Pennington, 2010). Proponents of this notion argue that maximum participation distributes power more equally and allows those who are affected by decisions to have influence on the outcome of the process (Wesselink, Paavola, Fritsch, & Renn, 2011). This view emphasises the role of fairness and justice in the decision-making process (George & Reed, 2017). The second rationale is that the involvement of citizens and stakeholders in the decision process provides more information, brings new knowledge to the table, reduces uncertainties and improves decisions (Reed, 2008; Rydin & Pennington, 2010). There is a need for different kinds of knowledge to solve resource problems, and participatory governance provides access to a broader range of stakeholders and their knowledge (Berkes, 2010).

However, some scholars have noted other motivations for employing participatory governance beyond these two rationales. Both industry and government use participatory approaches to make their decisions more legitimate and credible; in fact, for industry it is seen as part of corporate social responsibility (Wesselink et al., 2011). Many researchers have found that the first normative rationale was mostly absent in the perspective of public involvement (Bickerstaff & Walker, 2001; Blackstock & Richards, 2007), and others have noted that public participation is mostly organized to meet formal requirements and compliance with rules (Wesselink et al., 2011).

The centrality of participatory governance hinges on meaningful public participation. Participation is defined as “various forms of direct public involvement where people, individually or through organized groups, can exchange information, express opinions and articulate interests, and have the potential to influence decisions or the outcome of specific issues” (UN FAO 2000 cited in Beckley, Parkins, & Sheppard, 2006, p.14). Not all public participation attempts are meaningful – it may be a one-way communication process or a way to sell a predetermined solution to the public when planning and important decisions are made behind closed doors (Stewart & Sinclair, 2007). Meaningful participation has been defined by Sinclair and Doelle (2018):

Meaningful public participation establishes the needs, values, and concerns of the public, provides a genuine opportunity to influence decisions, and uses multiple and customized methods of engagement that promote and sustain fair and open two-way dialogue.

Sinclair and Stewart (2007) outlined the essential elements of meaningful public participation: integrity and accountability, influence, fair notice and time, inclusiveness and adequate representation, fair and open dialogue, adequate and accessible information, informed participation, and multiple and appropriate methods. Respondents in their research indicate that public involvement is even necessary for designing an appropriate participation process. It is also important to establish multiple participation tools (e.g. open houses, workshops, surveys, letter writing etc.) to give the public more opportunities to engage.

The obstacles to meaningful participation in environmental governance arise from different sources, such as the design and process of participation, a lack of demand for such opportunities, a lack of understanding of key concepts such as deliberative participation, and political will. Participatory environmental governance literature note problems associated with participation process and design as also including elite representation (Parkins & Sinclair, 2014), procedural justice issues (George & Reed, 2017), and constraints on allowable discussion topics (Reed, 2007).

Rydin & Pennington (2010) focus on the participation obstacles that originate from the lack of incentives for stakeholders and citizens to participate. Citizens and some stakeholders have little incentive to engage when their participation takes time, effort, and resources but will be unlikely to have a major impact on decisions. Therefore, they either will not participate or will

participate passively. Unwillingness to participate actively will can actually benefit some other stakeholders and allow them to dominate the participation process (Rydin & Pennington, 2010).

Three types of selective incentives have been suggested for motivating group action: material (tangible rewards that have monetary value or can easily be translated into ones that have), solidarity (intangible rewards arising from relationships with other people such as socializing, congeniality, and the sense of group membership and identification), and purposive (intangible rewards that derive in the main from the stated ends of the association such as the demand for the enactment of certain laws or the adoption of certain practices, which do not benefit members directly) (Clark & Wilson, 1961; Kyriacou, 2010; Willer, 2009).

Moreover, as participatory environmental governance literature points out, it is important to note that sometimes the lack of incentives for participation are rooted in bad institutions and their design. In some cases, participants criticized participation processes as being dissatisfying because of lack of information, inadequate notice and time, lack of financial support, lack of opportunity to be heard and influence decisions, and inappropriate methods (Stewart & Sinclair, 2007). Another obstacle to meaningful public participation is the lack of understanding of key concepts such as deliberative participation. Participating in deliberative collective decision-making processes improves public participation and motivates further political action (Brulle, 2010; Jacobs, Cook, & Carpini, 2009). In order to bring together different perspectives and full information, inclusive participation and open public debate are crucial (Brulle, 2010; Hammond, 2020).

2.3.2 Public Participation Approaches and Tools

There are many available tools for designing a public participation program (Beckley et al., 2006). As shown in Figure 1 below, public participation tools can be organized into direct (face-to-face) and indirect (non-face-to-face). Indirect tools such as surveys can include a wide range of stakeholders and public; however, most forest companies prefer collaborative participatory approaches associated with direct interactions tools (Beckley et al., 2006). It is important to note that there is not a single tool that achieves meaningful involvement; this depends on the situation, the needs of participants, and the goal of the participatory process. Governments and forest companies can use many complementary tools in various ways. Four features, which have been identified as being foundational to a successful participation process in the forest sector include:

responsiveness of the lead agency, motivation of the participants, quality of deliberation, and degree of public control (Beierle & Cayford, 2002).

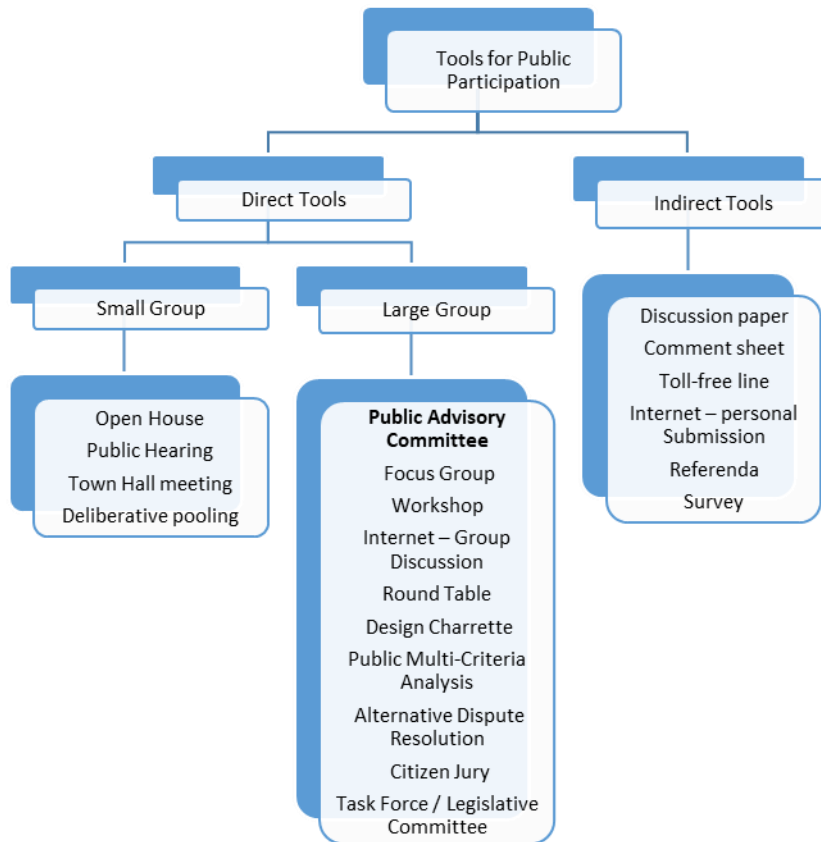


Figure 1. Different available tools for public participation. Adapted from Beckley, Parkins, and Sheppard, 2006

There are a number of approaches to applying these tools. Participation approaches have been classified along a continuum by various authors (figure 2). The approaches of participation along the continuum can range from information exchange to the public having some level of control over management and decision making. Conceptualizing the desirable level of participation is necessary as it helps practitioners to choose the right tools for participation. It also helps clarify participants' place in the process and increase transparency (Krishnaswamy, 2012).

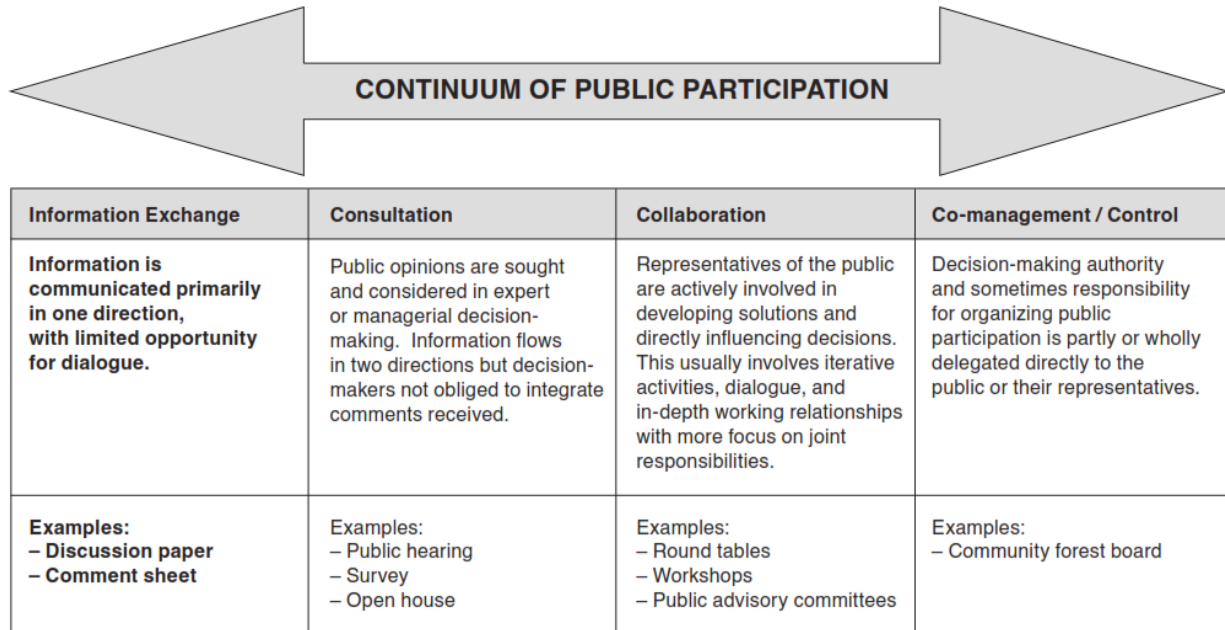


Figure 2. Continuum of public participatio. Adapted from Krishnaswamy, 2012; Beckley et al., 2006

In relation to the forest sector and particularly in Canada, consultation and collaboration are the two main participation approaches that most of provincial and third-party certification systems emphasize for forest management (Beckley, Parkins, & Sheppard, 2006).

2.4 Rethinking Forest Governance in Canada

2.4.1 Sustainable Forest Management in Canada

Forests and forest resources are an integral part of the economic, social, and cultural well-being of Canadians (NRCan, 2019). Canada has 347 million hectares of forest land, which makes up 9% of world's forests. The majority of Canada's forest land, about 94%, is publicly owned and managed by provincial, territorial, and federal governments (NRCan, 2019). Only 4% of public forest land belongs to the federal government, which means that provincial and territorial governments are the main owners of forest land in Canada according to the Constitution Act.

Section 92(5) of the Constitution Act, 1867 gives right to the provinces for the management and sale of the Public Lands and of the Timber and Wood thereon. Moreover, section 92(A) sets out that in each province, the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to exploration, conservation and management of non-renewable natural resources. Additionally, section 109 sets out all lands, mines, minerals, and royalties belonging to several provinces of Canada. In short, formal institutions and laws grant provincial governments legislative and executive power over provincial Crown Land. Therefore, provincial legislation and policies must be considered in relation to any attempt at improving sustainable forestry in Canada. One might also argue that given that since most forests in Canada are public, citizens should have a strong voice in the governance processes that are set-up to manage the resource. Each province and territory has developed legislation related to forests and as well as regulations to help manage forest resources. Many provinces established sustainable forest management initiatives to embed sustainability into their policies, statutes, regulations, and guidelines for management of provincially-owned public forests (Duinker, 2001).

Sustainability has been the dominant paradigm in forest management across Canada since the early 1990s (Duinker, 2001). Sustainable forest management (SFM) is defined as management "*to maintain and enhance the long-term health of forest ecosystems, while providing ecological, economic, social and cultural opportunities for the benefit of present and future generations*" (CSA 2009, p.10). Canada embraced sustainable forest management from an early stage by committing to the Forest Principles at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) (Bridge et al., 2005). Following the Montréal Process in 1994, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) started a stakeholder-engagement

project to develop Canada’s own set of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management to measure Canada’s progress towards forest sustainability (Bridge et al., 2005; Duinker, 2001, 2011). The Canadian criteria and indicators framework for SFM was published in 1995, and it has been revised since then (Duinker, 2011).

Criteria and indicators provide a science-based tool to assess progress and achievement towards forest sustainability (Bridge et al., 2005; CCFM, 2006). In the Canadian context, criteria reflect a cluster of values for sustainable forest management (Duinker, 2001) and the indicator is “a measure (measurement) of an aspect of the criterion” (The Montreal Process, 1995, p.5). The CCFM framework of criteria and indicators, published in 2006, consists of six criteria including biological diversity, ecosystem condition and productivity, soil and water, role in global ecological cycles, economic and social benefits, and society’s responsibility, alongside 46 indicators to measure them (CCFM, 2006). The society’s responsibility criterion reflects the social value of the forest, particularly the values of local communities, in the improvement of sustainability. Governance is also part of this criterion indicating that fair and effective decision-making is a main indicator of success (CCFM, 2006).

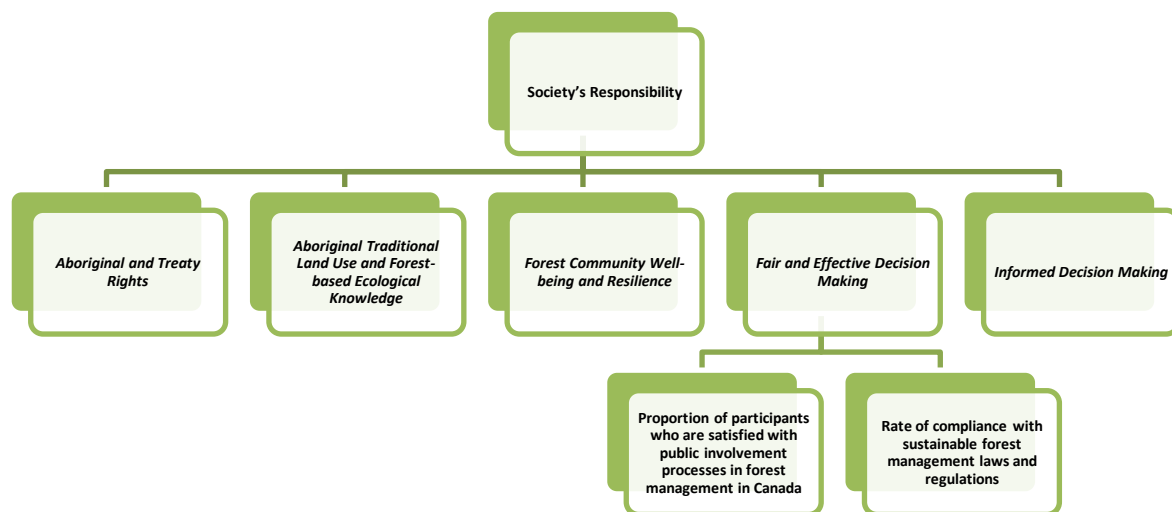


Figure 3. The society’s responsibility criterion. Adapted from CCFM (2006)

2.4.2 Citizen and stakeholder engagement in the Canadian forestry sector

The movement towards SFM has strongly emphasized the need to incorporate peoples' values into forestry decision making (Sheppard, 2005). Thus, the federal government, provincial governments, and third-party certification system encourage public participation in forest management decision-making processes and call for this to include the full range of social values (CCFM, 2006; Parkins at al., 2006; Parkins, 2002)

Forest certification is a market-based governance mechanism for implementing sustainable forest management (Cashore, Auld, & Newsom, 2004). Forest certification in Canada is carried out by three independent organizations including: the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Third-party certification system assures that a forest company is operating legally, sustainably and in line with standards for sustainable forest management (NRCan, 2019). Certification is a tool to show consumers and the public that forests are being well-managed and local and regional values are being taken into account in managing forests. According to the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, forest certification standards should 'reflect a balance of forest interests' (CCFM, 2016). For example, CSA certification guidelines (2009) require ongoing and meaningful public participation in decision making, in order to increase public understanding of and involvement in SFM. Industry organizations should establish and implement a public participation process and provide interested parties with relevant background information as a condition for the issuance of certifications.

Provincially, the relationship between governments and industry is regulated through tenure systems (Hanna, 2010). Tenures are the most important formal institutional arrangements in the Canadian forest sector and have a major impact on the behavior of forest product companies (Haley & Nelson, 2007). Forest tenures are how governments transfer specific rights to use Crown land and its resources to private forest companies. Provincial governments have control over forest companies' actions by establishing rights and setting conditions through license agreements (Hanna, 2010).

Many provincial governments have mandated public participation as a formal part of their forest licensing procedures (Parkins, 2002). For example, forest companies holding area-based tenures in Alberta must establish advisory committees in forest planning processes in order

to involve local people in forestry management decisions (Parkins, 2006). Another example is, in Ontario, the Crown Forest Sustainability Act mandates the provincial Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to supervise Local Citizen Committees (LCCs) to provide public input on forest management (Hunt, 2015).

There are also different forest governance structures other than the industrial forest license model in Canada, including community forestry, model forests and forest advisory committees. Community forestry refers to the management of a public forest land by the community for the benefits of the community (Teitelbaum et al., 2006). Three main objectives of community forestry are participatory decision-making, local economic benefits, and multiple forest use (Teitelbaum, 2014). For example, the Community Forest Agreement (CFA) in British Columbia was created through the Forest Statutes Amendment Act in 1998, to transfer central control of resource management on Crown land to communities. Community Forest Agreements can be held by a municipality, community group, society, First Nations, or partnership. However, less than 2% of all public forests in Canada are managed by community-based organizations, which hold a direct tenure (Teitelbaum, 2016).

The Canada Model Forest (MF) program was also developed in 1990s to enhance sustainable forest management and to let people with an interest in the forest to participate in decision-making processes (Lapierre, 2003; Sinclair & Lobe, 2005). MF is a partnership-based approach emphasizing “working together,” and was initiated in response to long-standing conflicts in the forest sector between environmentalists, governments, Indigenous peoples, communities, and industrial groups (NRCan, 2019, Parkins et al., 2016; Sinclair & Lobe, 2005). Every MF is a non-profit organization funded by the federal government (George & Reed, 2017). After the federal funding to MFs stopped in 2014, most shut down and there are only four MFs remaining in the country (Parkins et al., 2016).

Among all these governance structures, the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) is the most popular mechanism used by governments and forest companies to engage public and local stakeholders in forest management planning. Certainly this approach covers the management of the lands being managed for forestry in Canada (J. R. Parkins et al., 2006; Sinclair, Mcgurk, Diduck, & Mcgurk, 2006). Forest companies have sponsored 65% of FACs and provincial governments have established the remaining ones (CCFM, 2006).

2.4.3 Forest Advisory Committees

The term Forest Advisory Committees is sometimes used interchangeably with Local Citizen Committees, Public Advisory Groups, and Citizen Advisory Committees in the Canadian forestry context. Generally, all these committees have been established to provide input and guide decision-making for the management of public resources; however, their outcomes are rarely binding (Parkins et al., 2006). In Alberta, Manitoba, and New Brunswick, these committees are mainly sponsored by forest companies as a component of forest planning processes (Parkins et al., 2006). Moreover, CSA and other certification guidelines require ongoing public consultation on forest planning and monitoring as a condition for certification, and they have strongly supported the advisory committee approach to fulfill this requirement, as discussed above. A significant amount of research has been conducted regarding advisory committees across Canada and scholars have identified major weaknesses and shortcomings associated with this approach, which I discuss below.

There are three fundamental issues associated with FACs, including who is represented, how they are involved, and what decisions they can affect. McGurk et al. (2006) noted a lack of participation by members of the general public in the three studied committees and that there was limited public input. Parkins and Sinclair's (2014) research revealed that advisory committees are highly constrained participatory settings for citizen engagement and the participation process is dominated by affiliated members, representing specific stakeholders from industries and government. Parkins et al. (2008) found all members of committees were selected by forest companies and they are key-stakeholder. This limitation leads to a lack of participation of members of general public, many environmentalists, and Indigenous groups (John R. Parkins & Davidson, 2008).

McGurk, Sinclair, and Diduck study (2006) noted other important weakness in the process and outcomes of FAC approach such as unaccountability, deficient coordination, and lack of influence on normative and strategic decisions. They studied three FACs in Manitoba in depth and found a breakdown in the principal-agent relationship, which means there is poor communication between committee members and their organizations. This breakdown in their communication results in a lack of accountability and legitimacy of the process. Another process shortcoming was poor coordination, which became apparent in two areas: inadequate meeting

preparation time and infrequency of meetings. Finally, another major weakness identified was lack of influence on normative and strategic decisions. For example, in one of their cases, the Tolko committee members could not change company's decision regarding appeal of a clause to access a particular area in winter, and the company even didn't respond to their concerns. Consequently, some members lost their interest in participating in future meetings.

Representation issues including the lack of participation by women and Indigenous peoples, and people of lower socioeconomic status, have also been identified as major deficiencies in the literature (Reed, 2010; Reed & Varghese, 2007; Richardson, Sinclair, Reed, & Parkins, 2011). Reed (2010) found that even when marginalized group participate in FACs, they are less likely to make substantive contributions. Eguny and colleagues (2020) revealed that the FAC model favoured well-educated, Caucasian men and fell short on the representation of women and Indigenous peoples. Moreover, Nenko and colleagues (2019) found, from surveys in 2004 and 2016, that there is a significant difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous members regarding their forest values and their evaluation of the processes. They were less likely to be satisfied with committee processes, and their contribution in committees' decision-making than non-Indigenous members. Parkins and Sinclair's (2014) found trends of elite representation in the process of FACs. In some cases, company sponsors dominated discussion in committees' meetings, allowing little time for deliberative debate (Parkins & Davidson, 2008).

Later in 2017, a 15-year study in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia from 1999-2014 by Miller and Nadeau (2017) revealed a lack of substantive influence by citizens, unsatisfying policy outcomes, and poor implementation as factors leading to a degraded value of participation processes among participants. They believe one of the main obstacles to meaningful public participation in both provinces regarding forestry management is mistrust in government and industry. Governments' close association with industry prevents them from equitably managing on behalf of the broader public. On the contrary, Parkins (2010) found that high levels of trust and familiarity between FAC members may reduce the quality of discussion and deliberative settings because members avoid constructive debate, especially in long-term group settings.

2.5 New or Advanced Forms of Resource Governance

Several important trends between public participation and environmentalism have emerged in Canada in recent years. Public concerns for environmental issues encourage citizens to be more

involved in the decision-making process (Parkins, 2006). Participatory public processes in natural resource management require democratic and deliberative discourse within the realm of environmental governance (Sinclair & Diduck, 2017). As mentioned above, society's responsibility is a key criterion of sustainable forest management in Canada, and it includes fair and effective decision making. A democratic discourse in forest management is critical to reaching this benchmark.

Sustainability is continuous and open-ended process that allows societies to transform themselves and recreate new meanings and values (Hammond, 2020). Societal transformation demands new forms of discursive, inclusive, and free spheres of engagement for achieving a deeper change across society (Hammond, 2020). A society's capacity for transformation depends on political grammar (Hammond, 2020) and a system boundary which is called the 'glass ceiling of transformation' (Hausknost, 2020). The glass ceiling of transformation is partly cultural, and can be reproduced by vibrant and critical deliberative sphere (Hammond, 2020).

Deliberative democracy is a key precondition and foundation for sustainability and it is the only political space that allows a society to achieve sustainability (Hammond, 2020). Parkinson et al. (2012) define a deliberative system as "*one that encompasses a talk-based approach to political conflict and problem-solving – through arguing, demonstrating, expressing, and persuading*" (p. 4-5). However, as Parkinson et al. (2012) explained later in the book "*not all deliberative systems are democratic*" (p.151). For example, when deliberation occurs but the results are cut off from formal decision makings, the system is deliberative but not democratic. They identified three functions of the deliberative system: epistemic, ethical, and democratic:

The epistemic function of a deliberative system is to produce preferences, opinions, and decisions that are appropriately informed by facts and logic and are the outcome of substantive and meaningful consideration of relevant reasons. A healthy deliberative system is one in which relevant considerations are brought forth from all corners, aired, discussed, and appropriately weighed (Parkinson et al., 2012, p. 11).

A primary ethical function of the system is to promote mutual respect among citizens. Prudentially, mutual respect helps keep the deliberative system running. It serves as the lubricant of effective communication (Parkinson et al., 2012, p. 11).

A final function of deliberation, not completely separable from the first two, is to promote an inclusive political process on terms of equality. We call this the democratic function. The inclusion of multiple and plural voices, interests, concerns, and claims on the basis of feasible equality is not simply an ethic added to democratic deliberation; it is the central element of what makes deliberative democratic processes democratic. Who gets to be at the table affects the scope and content of the deliberation... In short, a well functioning democratic deliberative system must not systematically exclude any citizens from the process without strong justification that could be reasonably accepted by all citizens, including the excluded (Parkinson et al., 2012, p. 12).

Over the last two decades, deliberative democratic theory and practice has shown that if ordinary citizens engage in focused deliberative processes, they are able to make complex political judgements (Parkinson et. al, 2012). There is a need for micro deliberative processes for ‘controlling the administrative state directly through mass politics’ (Baber and Bartlett, 2005, p.121). One interesting deliberative process is known as ‘minipublics.’ These include consensus councils, citizens assemblies, deliberative opinion polls, and citizen juries (Baber, and Bartlett, 2005; Parkinson, et. al, 2012). Parkinson et, al define minipublic as “*a deliberative forum typically consisting of 20-500 participants, focused on a particular issue, selected as a reasonably representative sample of the public affected by the issue, and convened for a period of time sufficient for participants to form considered opinions and judgements*” (Parkinson et, al, 2012, p.95).

In the environmental context, institutionalization of environmental deliberation is required as it disperses democratic power, incorporates the diversity of views of all those affected by a particular issue (Baber, and Bartlett, 2005), and improves environmental values that citizens hold (Smith, 2003). Smith (2003) argues that improvement of democratic dialogue and incorporation of diverse environmental values require institutions to be restructured. Three models are introduced for the institutionalization of environmental deliberation: mediation and stakeholder institutions; citizen forums such as deliberative opinion polling, citizen juries and consensus conferences; and referendums and citizen initiatives (Smith, 2003).

Baber and Bartlett (2005) support decentralisation of decision making to micro deliberative arenas as they facilitate the institutionalisation of deliberative democracy. Good examples are bioregional organisations such as the Northwest Power Planning Council in the Columbia River Basin, and the Applegate Partnership in south-western Oregon. These

organizations involve a large number of citizens representing a diversity of interests in public dialogue, in order to form plans for natural resource conservation. There is a need to think creatively about designing a deliberative institution as it can be a combination of different models, depending on circumstances, purposes, and environmental issues.

2.6 Summary

Good environmental and natural resource governance requires democratic approaches, which are legitimate, transparent, inclusive, fair, accountable, functionally and structurally integrated, capable, and adaptable. In recent decades, a shift from centralized administration towards participatory governance has been recognized as being necessary as a result of increasing complexity, unpredictability in global systems, and reduced ability of central governments to solve persistent and intractable environmental problems. There is a wide range of public participation approaches and tools; however, the literature, as outlined above, seems to suggest that achieving meaningful involvement likely requires multiple tools rather than a single method.

The Forest Advisory Committee is the most popular mechanism for governments and forest companies to engage public and local stakeholders in forest management in Canada. This chapter establishes that there are three fundamental issues associated with FACs including: who is represented; how are they involved; and what decisions they can affect. The literature describes many problems with these committees, such as the lack of participation by Indigenous peoples and members of general public, unaccountability and the lack of influence they have on normative and strategic decisions. Therefore, some people believe that the FAC as a forest governance institution has failed in relation to what it was supposed to achieve.

This all suggests that there is a need for micro deliberative processes for involving people in environmental decision making (e.g., consensus councils, citizens assemblies, deliberative opinion polls, and citizen juries). Achieving sustainable forest management demands designing new forms of discursive, inclusive, and free spheres of engagement. There is a need to explore what a new deliberative institution might look like and the combination of different tools that could be used to achieve meaningful engagement.

Chapter 3: Research Approach

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the details of my research design, strategy of inquiry and methods. As outlined below, the work followed a qualitative approach utilizing a case study strategy of inquiry that allowed me to study the public and stakeholder involvement in industrial-scale forestry in Canada. I used literature and document reviews and semi-structured interviews in order to achieve my research objectives. The data was analyzed and coded using NVivo software.

3.2 Worldview and Design

Philosophical worldviews are beliefs and perspectives a researcher brings with them to a study that help guide the research. They can arise from a researcher's discipline orientation, advisor's inclination, and past research experiences (Creswell, 2014). There are several philosophical worldviews that can influence the conduct of research. In the context of my research, it intrigued me how stakeholders and the public create meaning and interpret their participation experiences in the forest sector. A social constructivist worldview holds that reality is built through people's experiences, interactions, and their social and historical backgrounds, and focuses on creating meaning through experiences (Creswell, 2014). This links nicely to the work I plan to do.

The constructivist researcher addresses the process of people's interaction with others because meanings are formed through those interactions and through historical and cultural norms (Creswell, 2014). Through my research I studied how interactions between different actors - including stakeholders, the public, and government officials - influence forest governance, which also aligned nicely with the constructivist worldview. The constructivist perspective also directed me to conduct my research using open-ended questions in order to allow participants to share the meaning of their own lived experiences about their engagement, which resulted in the emergence of multiple realities that they hold, and their own unique understanding of the process (Creswell, 2014).

The social constructivist worldview also fits best with my qualitative research design because it "is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). By utilizing qualitative research, research participants were able to express their experiences and desires for the future, which

allowed them to play a main role in the research process. By employing a qualitative approach, I was able to develop a complex picture of the public and stakeholder involvement in industrial-scale forestry in Canada and study why the public is not being adequately engaged.

3.3 Strategy of Inquiry – Case Study

My research followed a qualitative approach utilizing a case study strategy of inquiry.

Creswell (2013) defines a case study as:

... a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes (p. 97).

Case studies are empirical research that involve an in-depth and detailed analysis of an issue explored through a case or cases (Creswell, 2014). A case can be a program, event, activity, process, or individuals, within a bounded system (Creswell, 2014). My study was conducted in the context of action to achieve SFM within Canadian industrial-scale forest governance systems. I will explore this issue through considering industrial-scale forestry and mechanisms for stakeholder involvement within the system. At present, such involvement is mainly achieved through FACs as mandated by law and certification schemes. I identified the case for the study as public and stakeholder involvement within the industrial-scale forestry. Based on my case definition, the unit of analysis is anyone who has been involved in the industrial-scale forestry, including government forestry officials, forest company stakeholders, NGO and ENGO members, FAC sponsors and members, and academics.

Following Yin (2014), I believe a case study approach is the best for my research because I plan to investigate a contemporary issue in depth and I plan on asking “how and why” questions as established in my objectives. Central to this research is an exploration of how to increase public and stakeholders’ involvement in industrial-scale forest decision making. In qualitative research, the inquirer may also generate a theory as the final outcome of the study, or the theory may come at the beginning to provide a lens that shapes the study (Creswell, 2014). Through my research, I developed a model for increasing public and stakeholders’ involvement in industrial-scale forest decision making. For these reasons, I believe a case study is the most appropriate strategy to achieve my research objectives.

Employing a case study approach, the research project was completed in two phases. Phase one focused on reviewing the federal and provincial policies regarding public participation in forest management, and new approaches to involve and incentivize public and stakeholders in forest decision making. I also reviewed literature on different public participation tools in industrial-scale forestry to understand what is available. This phase was completed mainly through document review and internet searches and contributes to all of my objectives. In addition, prior research on FACs and industrial forestry in Canada by my committee members including two surveys conducted by my advisor and his colleagues, produced baseline data and established a network of connections that assisted the proposed research.

Phase two focused on further defining a new governance model, along with required incentive structures to increase public involvement in forest management in Canada. The interview questions touched all four objectives to enrich my data from the first phase as well. Using the information found in Phase one, a selection of participants including members of FACs, policy makers, academics, and NGOs/ENGOS was chosen for interview.

3.4 Data Collection Strategies and Sampling Procedures

A case study relies on multiple sources and strategies to collect data and evidence (Yin, 2014). The data collection strategies that I used for this study included a document and literature review, and semi-structured interviews. My document and literature review provided data on resource governance structures, public participation mechanisms, and their application to public and stakeholder engagement in the Canadian forestry. Additionally, I analyzed other secondary sources of data including government reports and the three forest certification organizations' websites (CSA, FSC, and SFI).

3.4.1 Document Review

Many government and forest company documents and reports are available to the public and can be found through internet searches. For example, a number of desirable approaches for public participation such as round tables, open houses or targeted consultations were identified through document reviews (Beckley et al., 2006). These documents provided important information and supplemented other data collection methods such as interviews.

For case study research, document review is very useful to corroborate and support evidence from other sources (Yin, 2014). Moreover, document review can cover a long span of time and many settings in a cost-effective manner (Yin, 2014). In short, documents and policies related to forest tenure and certification requirement for public participation in the forest sector in Canada and other jurisdictions were reviewed. For example, I studied Canada's national framework of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management published by Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) certification guidelines, and the Comprehensive Forest Policy Framework for Ontario published by the Ontario Forest Policy Panel. I also looked at some peer reviewed publications about public participation embedded in the provincial environmental assessments and federal impact assessments (e.g. Sinclair et al., 2018, and Sinclair & Diduck, 2017). Moreover, I went through Natural Resources Canada's website to find out about the most recent forest policies and laws.

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are one of the most important data collection methods for case study research (Yin, 2014). One of the main reasons for interviewing is to collect data on different meanings, opinions, and experiences (Dunn, 2005) and that is exactly what I needed to do in order to address my objectives. I needed to examine what participants (e.g., stakeholders, interest groups, and government officials) think about current governance approaches and what mechanisms they suggest to ensure meaningful participation.

Another important reason for interviewing is to investigate complex behavior and motivations (Dunn, 2005) and I studied what motivates stakeholders and members of the public to participate. Therefore, interviews provided an opportunity to ask participants what they expect from a participation process and how they can be motivated to get involved. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain in-depth data regarding important principles for designing an arena for public engagement and getting their input on any framework I developed.

There are three types of interviewing: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured (Dunn, 2005). I used a semi-structured interviewing technique because it is organized around an order of events but offers some degree of flexibility. Importantly, this approach allowed me to elaborate on questions as necessary, explore relevant topics the interviewee brought up, while omitting questions that are not applicable to the interview context.

Semi-structured interviews employ an interview schedule or guide. An interview guide is the list of issues that the researcher wants to cover in the interview and an interview schedule is a list of carefully worded questions (Dunn, 2005). I designed my semi-structured interview guide (found in Appendix 1) based on the literature (Dunn, 2005) and from the background knowledge I gained through my literature and document review. My interview schedule was dynamic, and I did make the sorts of adjustments noted above. I provided participants with a copy of questions before interview to let them prepare for our discussion.

In terms of design, interview questions can be either primary or secondary questions. Primary questions are utilized to discuss new topics and themes and secondary questions are follow up questions to expand on primary questions (Dunn, 2005). I employed the pyramid structure to order my interview questions, which means I started from easy-to-answer questions about their involvement in an issue, as established in Appendix 1. My schedule also includes open-ended questions, which are typically followed by a why or how. I also used key literature to help design my schedule, especially related to forest governance and meaningful participation, including the necessary incentive structures to encourage such participation. I also continued to inform the interview schedule and I continued my literature and document review.

As noted above, I carried out interviews with key informants who have been involved in public participation programs in the industrial-scale forestry or other sectors across Canada including people from the following five main categories: NGO/ENGO, government officials, academia, industry officials, and FAC members. I selected individuals using purposeful sampling because it gave me the ability to choose participants who already understand the research problem. My advisor and committee members helped me to identify key informants in the forest and other sectors. I also followed up with some of the people that my participants suggested I should include. I also reached outside the forest sector to learn more about governance approaches that I found through my literature review and interview data to determine how these are functioning. For example, I studied public participation and engagement methods in the Banff-Bow Valley Task Force, the Expert Panel on Climate Change, Adaptation and Resilience, and the net benefit approach in the Trans Mountain pipeline project. I also investigated public participation methods embedded environmental assessments and land use planning for various projects as suggested by study participants during the interviews.

I conducted 20 interviews with people from all five categories mentioned above. All the interviews were conducted via Zoom due to COVID 19 restrictions and the university of Manitoba health and safety protocols at that time. Each interview took approximately 60-80 minutes. I tried not to make participants tired from a long interview. I tested the interview schedule to ensure applicability and relevance of the questions to my research objectives. My main techniques for recording the interviews were note-taking and audio recording allowed by the respondent. All the interviews were transcribed by me.

Table 1. Interview participants by number and category

	NGO/ENGO Members	Academia and Researchers	FAC Members and Facilitators	Government Officials and Environmental Consultants	Industry Officials
Number of Interviews	5	5	4	4	2

3.5 Analysis

I followed three analysis strategies suggested by Creswell (2018). First, I organized and typed all the data and hand-written notes collected from interviews and documents. Second, I clustered the data into themes through coding by using the NVivo software. The software serves as an assistant and tool for coding and building categories in my analysis (Yin, 2014). The analysis theme clustered data into three main categories: meaningful public participation, deliberative and democratic cases, and designing a public participation program under the tenure system. The figure below presents main themes and sub-themes of the analysis.

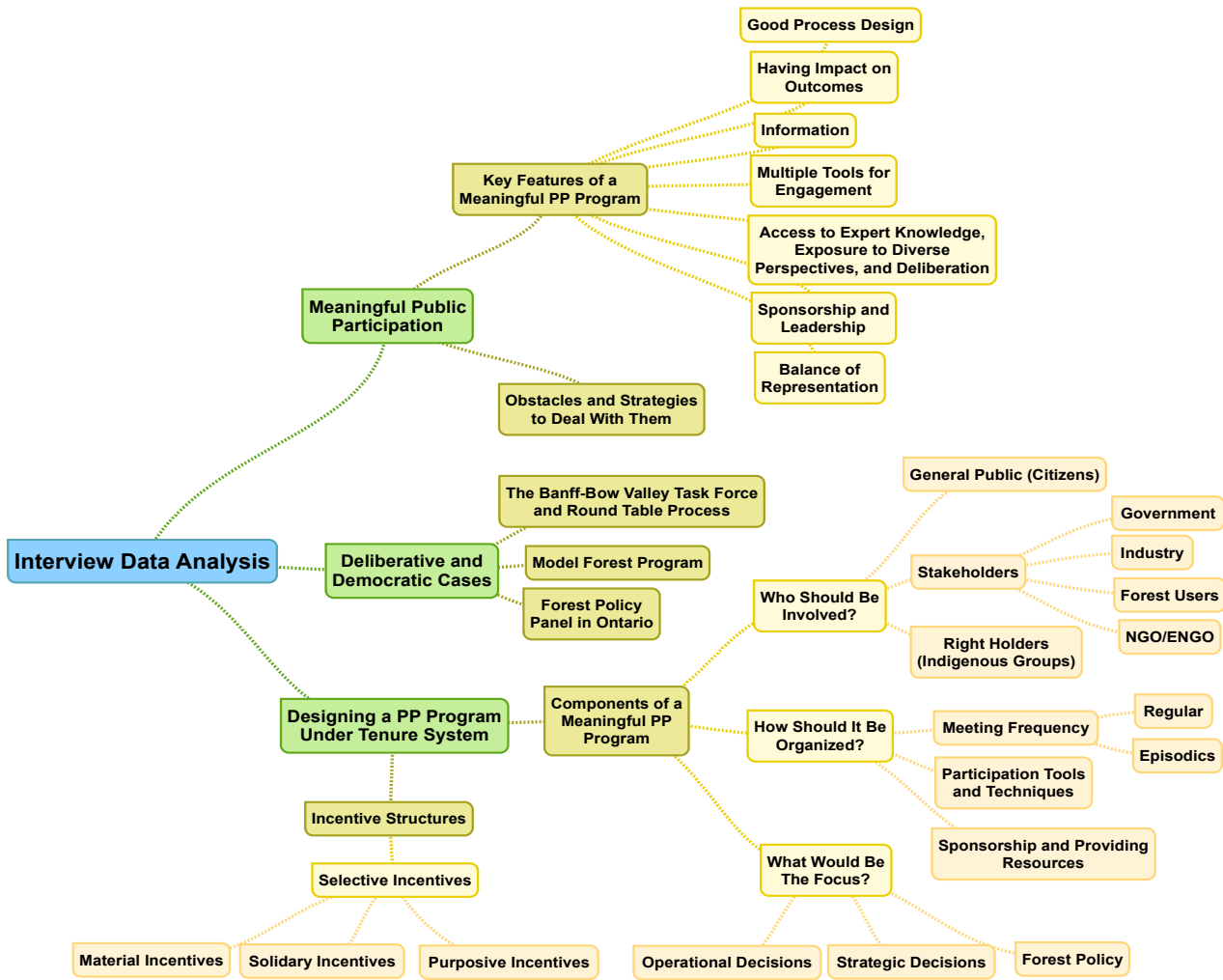


Figure 4. Map of interview data analysis themes and sub-themes

Chapter 4: Meaningful Public Participation

4.1 Introduction

As described in Chapter Two, Lockwood and his colleagues (2010) offer eight principles of governance aimed at guiding the design of new natural resource institutions: legitimacy, transparency, inclusiveness, fairness, accountability, functional and structural integration, capability, and adaptability. With these principles in mind, I sought to explore what study participants expect in terms of process design to ensure meaningful public participation in relation to forestry in Canada. As such, this chapter discusses key elements of a meaningful public participation program and also considers obstacles to meaningful participation in relation to forestry decision makings, as identified by research participants. The chapter concludes with a discussion of incentives identified by study participants to encourage the public and stakeholders to get involved in a more meaningful way.

4.2 Perceptions of a Meaningful Public Participation Program

I asked the study participants to describe key features of a meaningful public participation process. Table 2 establishes the major themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interview data relating to key features of a meaningful public participation program in relation to forest management in Canada. Each major theme is discussed in detail following Table 2.

Table 2. Themes and sub-themes relating to meaningful public participation in forestry as expressed by study participants

Major Themes	Sub-Themes
1- Good Process Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants' Involvement in Design • Clear and Transparent Process Function • Identifying The Target Audience and Current Main Issues • Strong and Independent Facilitation • Early Engagement and Adequate Notice • Field Trips
2- Influence/Impact on Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectivity Between Input and Decision-Making • Good Feedback Process • Clear Internal Decision-Making Process • Regular Updates
3- Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy Access to Information • Relevant and Complete Information • Plain Language Summary of Information • Avoid Information Overload • Starting From a Place of Common Information
4- Multiple Tools for Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ Direct and Face-To-Face Methods • Stakeholder and Public (Audience) Analysis to Identify Suitable Tools • Flexibility in Tools
5- Exposure To Diverse Perspectives and Deliberation (Deliberation and Productive Dialogue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Process That Encourages Argumentation • A Process That Generates Trust Amongst Peoples • Recognition and Respect • Access to Expert Knowledge and Exposure to Diverse Perspectives Is Required for Deliberation
6- Sponsorship And Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Support and Sponsorship • Elected Leadership • The Attitude of The Sponsor • Legitimacy • Accountability
7- Balance Of Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Participant Selection • Diversifying By Gender, Age, And Ethnicity

4.2.1 Good Process Design

During the interviews many study participants brought up a good process design as being foundational to meaningful participation. As one participant noted, *“If a process is designed well, it will set a good precedent for future engagements, even if they do not achieve the outcomes expected from their involvement”* (Participant 11).

Many participants also suggested the first step to good process is involving the public and stakeholders in process design, asking them what they need to be able to participate meaningfully and involving them in determining meeting location, time, and agenda, e.g., *“A key thing is including the participants in the agenda setting”* (Participant 10), *“I guess the best criteria you can deal with this involve those who are going to be participants in the design”* (Participant 10), and *“Getting input on how they're going to design their consultation exercise is important. Transparency is important.”* (Participant 11).

It is key that the nature and purpose of participation is clear. Participant 9 went one step further and suggested to reach an agreement on the purpose of the engagement:

The engagement of people in designing the process is generic. I would say that doesn't matter whether it's forest industry or any kind of public engagement but getting some kind of agreement on the nature of the engagement, getting some kind of agreement and understanding up front about the effect, the participation and the product of the participation will have, is really important (Participant 9).

Building on the point Participant 9 made, many participants commented that the process function should be clarified during the process design. It should be clear and transparent if the process is making concrete recommendations, contributing to decisions, or just trying to inform them. As participant 1 suggested: *“set it [the process] up with a clear mandate so that people know coming in, what is expected of them, where they sit in this process, are they advisory? Are they making decisions?”* (Participant 1). It should be also clear what process can deliver as participant 17 suggested: *“So number one [for having meaningful participation] the process is clear at the start and there's clear timelines and deliverables... I want a fairly good idea of what are the deliverables. What are you asking from me? And what are you going to give back to me? How are you going to demonstrate that?”* Participant 18 also explained in more depth that it should be clear how much power and authority participants have:

I think meaningful process is first off getting really clear on what sort of authority whoever is organizing the process is prepared to give to parties. They need to be really transparent about so that they don't think they're being consulted with when in fact it's just public relations and they're just being informed (Participant 18).

Furthermore, as Participant 20 explains, the process should have “*some clear objectives that are relevant and important and some accountability for timely action and response.*” Participant 18 suggested that having successful and meaningful consultation is important in helping the parties understand and get clearer on their vision and what their goals are before talking about a policy change or a project:

Start with helping parties understand and get clearer on what their vision and what their goals are before you even start to talk about a policy change or a project or anything. The classic model, at least a consultation on a project basis is, the company or the government goes off and develops its plan. And then they come out to our group and say, okay, here's our plan. What do you think? And it immediately it sets the process off on the wrong foot.

It was also noted that a good process design should start by identifying the target audience and current main issues in forestry in Canada as Participant 13 explained: “*The design of a process so much depends on who your target audience is, who your target stakeholders are. And what are the issues you're trying to bring to some sort of a resolution.*” In this regard, Participants 11 and 14 found pre-consultation and “scoping exercises” beneficial in terms of identifying current issues in forestry and evaluating what are the main issues they are dealing with, who should be at the table, and how they can influence the decision-making:

First, you would have to do some pre-consultation and that's to define the parameters as to how you want to go forward. So, you want to touch base with some of the key stakeholders in the public to see what the issue should be and how they should be identified. It's like designing guidelines for an impact statement (Participant 11).

Every process is going to be different. What I like to do is take a budget, whatever it might be, like to allocate 15% to an upfront scoping exercise so that you go through and discuss with the stakeholders broadly or in a committee structure or, as an advisory committee if it's in place already, but you identify and work through what are the key

issues that are in the region or in the area or whatever that are going to be dealt with and what can the committee do? (Participant 14).

Moreover, many study participants recognized that “independent facilitation,” “non-partisan facilitation,” and “a neutral third-party facilitation” have a positive impact on meaningfulness and quality of dialogue during the meetings, e.g., “*The one big thing would be to have independent non-partisan facilitator to have a good public discussion*” (Participant 15).

Participants 9 and 20 explained that independent facilitation, applying a disinterested manner, will help participants to feel comfortable and safe to speak up and it also helps having productive dialogue and two-way discussion:

In many cases, it is hugely helpful to have a facilitator of the process that you could say is a disinterested party. In other words, it's not going to take sides and can make all the participants feel comfortable and safe... And the more likely the disputes are [in meetings], the more important it is that it is facilitated in a disinterested manner (Participant 9).

I've become convinced that strong facilitation is huge to focusing and moving people through a collaborative discussion process... When it comes to the actual dialogue, excellent facilitation is important, so that there's respect, so that agendas are followed (Participant 20).

Furthermore, independent and strong facilitation results in a better process since issues can often be raised in a systematic way and everybody gets an opportunity to contribute:

I think having independent facilitation is important because the facilitator is responsible for the process while the participants and the company are responsible for the content. So, the facilitator is there to make sure that the process is a good process and that includes meaningfulness, making sure that things don't get off track too much is important, making sure that everybody gets heard that needs to be heard, making sure that the power dynamics are right in the room (Participant 10).

I would say another thing is good facilitation to make sure that issues are raised and explored in a systematic way and that everyone has an opportunity to contribute. And it's not just throwing out an opinion, but dialogue and reasoning (Participant 12).

Participant 13 further noted that independent facilitation becomes central especially if the process is being sponsored by the forest company “*An independent process or an independent entity facilitator, whatever, should be leading the process, the money can be provided by the [forest] company*” (Participant 13). Participant 3 noted that facilitator should make sure that the quieter voices have an opportunity to speak, offering one-on-one meetings to some people might be beneficial because then there is no influence of other personalities. There should be strong ground rules applied during the meetings.

In addition, public participation design should start before any decisions have been made and before forest activities have been decided upon. Early engagement was raised by some participants as an important element for having a meaningful participation program. Adequate notice and good advertisements such as online notification and publication in newspapers are important to make sure everyone who might be interested has heard about the public participation program.

Finally, research Participant 4 believed forest visits and field trips are important elements of process design. He said, “*I think, the physical setting is an important element of fostering productive dialogue.*” They described that “*There's nothing better than having a forest policy discussion, standing in the rain in a forest and shivering and looking around at trees or in the sunshine... Woodland visits are always, in my opinion, productive, especially for learning...*”

4.2.2 Having an Impact/Influence on Outcome/Decisions/Policies

Impact, effect, and influence were frequently mentioned by many participants when they were talking about meaningfulness. Many research participants believed that having an impact on outcomes/decisions/policies is vital for a process to be meaningful. “*As I said before, you have to give me something, a decision that I can influence. What is the decision that you're asking for? Where's the clear decision that you're asking for and how can I influence it?*” (Participant 17). It was also noted that any lack of influence on decisions can become a big disincentive to participation, as Participant 4 explained, “*The worst thing that can happen in any advisory process is that there is no real influence on the outcomes of the process on ultimate decisions about how resources are managed*” Later Participant 4 suggested “*to make the influence obvious.*”

As described by Participant 1, a good public participation process must have clear connectivity between input and decision-making process. One important element is *“Having a clear tie that they can see that the input that they were giving was actually being taken up in the official process.”* If the public participation program has an advisory role, then the work should be tied to specific decisions that need advice, as Participant 4 describes, *“Tying the work of an advisory group to specific decisions that need advice, I think is an important element of a program design.”*

A good feedback process explaining the impact of the input on decisions was also considered as important element of a meaningful public participation program. Participant 5 believed that most of the public participation programs do not have a clear feedback process to explain what happened with the input they received and how it influenced the decisions. They described it as *“a big black hole”* in many participation programs. Another study participant made the same point: *“One thing that gets left that shouldn't get left, that gets ignored, that shouldn't get ignored is there should be follow-up to the decisions and choices that the group makes, whether the group stays involved as in a monitoring function.”* Public decisions as well as reasons for the decision should be published and available to everyone as Participant 14 noted *“The goals for and resulting participation by the interests identified should be made public.”* Moreover, there should be an explanation if the input is not being used. As study Participants 9 and 16 explained:

A lot of times people's input goes into a black hole. So, if I asked you if you want to participate in something and you give me input, and if I don't tell you how that input is used, that's a real mistake. I always tell people, it's not that we expect to win everything. I just want to know why you didn't use what I told you (Participant 16).

I want to know what happens with what the group does and where recommendations or advice is not taken seriously. I want to hear back why it was not taken seriously (Participant 9).

As one study participant also pointed out that it is important to structure the process in a logical manner with a very clear decision-making process. Good participatory processes mean it should be transparent how the group will make decisions. Participant 9 believed that a consensus process is better than a voting process:

I would say nine times out of ten, a consensus process is better than a voting process. Sometimes you have to resort to voting, but consensus done properly is much more powerful, but it's also more time consuming.

4.2.3 Information

Many study participants felt that good information sharing is essential to meaningful participation. They expressed the importance of information frequently during interviews. Meaningful participation requires relevant information and access to more complex and detailed information. As Participant 2 noted “*the information that's available to the public can really make a difference in terms of how they engage*”. Participants felt that it is very important to make sure that people have clear information about what's going on and have the capacity to engage in the subject matter.

Most study participants felt that information should be available in a variety of different formats and that accessibility should be taken into consideration. It was noted that visually stimulating information such as infographics and mapping tools can be helpful as well. Participants 20 and 2 noted availability of general language information is essential for having a meaningful dialogue. Therefore, summary documents including a one- or two-page plain language document should be provided. As Participant 20 pointed out “*I think good access to information and supported by general reader level materials, plain language materials is essential.*” Moreover, it is important to have some type of central public registry where all the relevant documents and notifications can be accessed online.

The amount of information circulating was also noted as an important consideration. On one hand, the information should be relatively complete, so participants do not feel they are getting “*strategic bits of information*” (Participant 1). As one research participant expressed “*the feeling that you're getting relatively complete information, and things aren't being held back*” (Participant 1). On the other hand, information overload is problematic, e.g., “*The third piece [for having meaningful participation] is that there's clear and not overwhelming amounts of information so that the information is good, it's concise, and it's balanced.*” (Participant 17), and “*not every person or organization is interested or has expertise on every question that they may have been asked to provide input on... that's another thing that people get overloaded... So you*

can't expect everyone to devote a lot of time and energy to every issue... various different groups to work on different sets of issues”

Participant 17 found one element that affects meaningfulness and quality of dialogue during the meeting is “starting from a place of common information”:

To me, the biggest problem for the quality of dialogue is that people aren't starting from a place of common information. We tend to be starting again from poles of information, or we're starting from a point of government information, which is not neutral let's just be honest, they're not neutral.

4.2.4 Multiple Tools for Engagement

Many participants expressed the importance of using multiple tools and engagement opportunities throughout the process to ensure meaningful public participation. As Participant 2 said, for example, *“I would expect that all of those people [affected by a decision] have multiple opportunities to be notified and engaged. I would want more directed public engagement methods”*

Some study participants recognized that different participants/audiences require different tools, e.g., *“I do think it's important to really think about the audience and then provide, a range of tools that suits the different people that you need to involve”* (Participant 2), and *“the good public participation is about how we can get people to participate and not just sticking to the tool we knew”* (Participant 5).

Participant 5, who is forestry researcher, suggested to start with stakeholder analysis and identify what kind of tools suit them. This person noted that one of their research results shows people in communities heavily dependent on forest industry were more inclined toward forest advisory committees and in-person consultation. However, people in less dependent area preferred less involvement according to their study.

Participant 3 proposed thinking about public engagement for forestry as a program, which is constituted using multiple tools:

Thinking about public engagement as a program, not as a specific tool and that program has constituted from multiple tools. Different stakeholders may require different tools and

to be as diverse and comprehensive in who you're talking to and how you're collecting information from them

4.2.5 Access to Expert Knowledge, Exposure to Diverse Perspectives, and Deliberation

A few participants mentioned access to experts and the ability to bring in “experts” when it was needed during some decision points. Participant 1 suggested that expert information should come from different perspectives, which can include traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge, to encourage deliberation and argumentation:

Expert information that isn't all from one perspective. So, they [participants] can begin to hear conflicting approaches and different ideas. And then that's where your sort of citizen deliberation comes in terms of beginning to work through these opposing arguments and ideas and figuring out what do you think works best here.

Exposure to different perspectives in the process is vital to encourage argumentation.

Participants should get “full information” from different perspectives and then they should have time to reflect on that to come back and deliberate about it. Participant 1 believed “...*in terms of deliberation, full information, a process that generates trust amongst peoples, so that people are free to actually honestly disclose what they think and why they think it, a process that encourages argumentation.*”

This study participant later added “...*a process that emphasizes empathy and, respect for each other's positions while at the same time, it needs to be a somewhat adversarial process, but adversarial doesn't have to be uncivil.*” Participant 6 looked at respect from another angle expressing it as “*respect for my time would be knowing that they are listening and taking it forward ..., so that you don't just feel like you're talking into the wind for years at a time and nobody's listening*”, and “*finding ways that are respectful and that may mean having to change the type of venue it becomes.*” In other words, they believed respectful processes manifest themselves in the way the organizer acts toward the public and stakeholders. They believed a process is respectful if the organizers are listening and getting back to their participants and giving them information about what they are doing on a regular and on-going basis.

Recognition and acknowledgement of participants’ time and service is another element of meaningful participation as research Participant 6 noted “*So that if I were on that committee, I*

would feel like, other people know I'm doing this service. I'm doing my public duty.” Participant 1 believed that two aspects of respectful participation are deliberation and impact on outcomes.

4.2.6 Sponsorship and Leadership

Some participants believed government support, and even sponsorship, lend legitimacy to the process as Participant 5 expresses, to have meaningful participation we cannot rely on the industry because their mandate is to make a profit. Other participants agreed with this, suggesting that government should sponsor public participation programs and the industry should not be leading anything:

What's more problematic is these processes being run by the proponent [forest company]. The proponent runs the meeting, the proponent is a used car salesman, right? Like they're trying to sell you something. They're not analyzing to decide what is good for the community. What is good for an area? What is good for species? They're selling you a business plan... And there's absolutely a role that public officials have to play (Participant 15).

You can always get people I think to work together. But it takes time, and it takes good will. And then again, if you don't have help from the government, then those people feel often that they wasted their time (Participant 16)

Moreover, participants felt that not only was government sponsorship important but their engagement in the process would be beneficial. Participant 11 argued that since the political decision makers are the ones who have the final say, their engagement lend legitimacy and accountability to the process. A few study participants believed “*getting political buy-in is important.*”

Additionally, some study participants thought the organization sponsoring the public participation program should have the right attitude and should believe in the process as expressed nicely by Participant 9:

...the biggest difference is made in the attitude of the organization that's sponsoring it and what do they want from it? And in order for them to get more from it, they have to believe in it, and they have to believe that there's some real expertise and they have to

care about what the committee is commenting on or providing input to or helping to develop.

Participant 7 suggested *“if we're going to task some leaders, I would say that anytime you can elect, have an election for who's going to represent the group as opposed to being appointed, then that will make things in theory more fair and more equitable.”*

4.2.7 Balance of Representation

Finding a balance of representation and inclusiveness was mentioned by some participants as being necessary for achieving a meaningful program of public participation. Participant 7 recommended *“diversifying by gender diversifying by age, by ethnicity”*. Others also spoke along the same lines as exemplified in the following: *“try even within local areas to identify more diversity”* (Participant 6), and *“Ensure balanced representation of a broad range of interests and backgrounds relevant to the specific locations and/or subject matter, including Indigenous peoples and women”* (Participant 14).

Participant 6 noted there should be a way in to forestry consultations for the people who are interested in forestry but may not have direct economic stake like forest companies and government, *“... it's not just the people who either cut down the trees or have trap lines or tourist camps - there are others who also have an interest, even if they don't have an economic stake.”* Participant 14 explained along the same lines that *“Greater effort is needed in reaching out to specific groups that are identified as needing to participate but that might have obstacles to participation; Indigenous people are an obvious case but other groups such as women or farmers may be underrepresented and needing extra effort to get involved. Also, representatives of these sectors need to be identified early on in consultative processes.”*

One of the study participants who was an academic researcher pointed out an example of lack of diversity in forest advisory committees. They found there is a fairly strong visible minority population in British Columbia in certain forestry communities working in the mills. But they are often just overlooked, and they rarely get a seat at these tables. It is important *“to look more broadly for representation”* when designing a public participation program. As mentioned in the literature review, women, Indigenous peoples and those of lower socioeconomic status are less likely to participate and less likely to make substantive contributions when they do participate in Forest Advisory Committees (Reed, 2010).

4.3 Obstacles to Meaningful Public Participation and Strategies for Dealing with Them

As explained in the literature review, obstacles to meaningful participation in environmental governance arise from different sources, such as a deficient process design, elite representation (Parkins & Sinclair, 2014), procedural justice issues (George & Reed, 2017) and constraints on allowable discussion topics (Reed, 2007). An overview of obstacles to meaningful public participation and strategies for dealing with them, expressed by study participants, is presented in Table 3. The obstacles and strategies for dealing with them are discussed in turn in the text that follows.

Table 3. Obstacles to meaningful public participation and strategies for dealing with them identified by study participants

Obstacles to Meaningful PP	Strategies to Overcome Obstacles
Inadequate Funding and Financial Resources	Getting Support from Government or Industry and Task an Independent Entity to Run the Program
Cynicism	Make the Influence on Forest Management Decisions Obvious
Polarization	Creating Environments Conducive to Deliberative Discussions and Utilizing the Alternative Dispute Resolution Toolbox
Inaccessibility of Relevant and Unbiased Information	Create a Registry Like Canadian Impact Assessment Registry
Participant Fatigue	Rotate Members and Keep Information Load Manageable
Disconnection Between Members and Their Organization	Good Facilitators Can Help Members to Bring Their Organizations Along
Consultation Fatigue and Overwhelming Number of Opportunities	Employ Good Incentive Structures

Inadequate funding and financial resources were barriers identified by some study participants, who also indicated that a lot of organizations cannot afford intensive engagement processes. They noted there should be enough resources in the participatory process to make sure that all people and groups are supported to be meaningfully involved. Participant 7 explained:

the first thing [for having meaningful participation] would have to be resources to make sure that any and all people in groups that are involved, that they're supported to actually be meaningfully involved in some kind of participatory process. So. If a company or a government institution has six lawyers, I want to have the resources to be able to have that level of technical advice myself, no matter who I'm representing.

They added, “*resourcing is key – that includes the digital infrastructure, if it’s to be remote or physical infrastructure, if it’s to be in person.*” The study participant later suggested public participation programs can be funded or supported by the government or industry, but an independent third-party organization should run the program. The independent organization should have access to the funding and decide how to spend it throughout the process.

Public cynicism was also noted by a few participants as an obstacle to achieving meaningful public participation. Participant 20 thought public cynicism arise from “*past failed implementation or flawed processes*” and Participant 4 and 1 believed there are a lot of people who will not join public participation programs because they think it is merely a co-operation of influential people and their participation will not actually make a difference. They suggested the need to make the areas of influence obvious and demonstrate how their input is taken into consideration, for example, by putting the minutes of the meeting and the responses of the convener online and available to everyone.

The polarization of a public participation program between stakeholder groups can prevent meaningful dialogue from happening during meetings according to some participants. As Participant 17 noted most Canadians are not part of two extremes and they might not feel comfortable participating in these processes. They suggested it is important to create environments conducive to deliberative discussions. It might be beneficial to utilize the Alternative Dispute Resolution toolbox.

As many participants noted, meaningful public participation requires access to good information and that one big barrier can be actually getting access to clear, relevant, and

unbiased information. They suggested the need to have some type of central public registry, a platform similar to Canadian Impact Assessment Registry, where all relevant documents and notifications can be accessed online. It was also noted that it is important to provide plain-language summaries that the public can understand. Moreover, Participant 13 believed many policy issues around resource development in Canada, and internationally for that matter, relates to the public is not getting access to the information that is being generated by a process. Some people might argue that forest companies often avoid providing plain-language reports and clear information to prevent the public from understanding what they are actually doing. As Participant 15 discussed that some people do not trust reports that are being provided by forest companies.

Participant fatigue was also considered as an obstacle to encouraging meaningful public participation. Study participants suggested some strategies to overcome participants' fatigue including rotating individuals in and out of a standing group. So rather than keeping the same individual there for long period of time, even if they are good participants, get them out and get fresh voices in. Another strategy is to keep the information load manageable by constructing hierarchies of information, where people got small essential packages supported by deeper and more detailed packages.

Another major obstacle noted is the disconnection that often occurs between members and their organizations. As Participant 20 noted, it is important that the members have some connectivity to the leadership of their companies and their sectors. This is easier for small organizations. It is easier for groups that already dialogue a lot between themselves, but sometimes companies and large industry sectors do need time to engage leadership. As mentioned in the literature review, McGurk et al. (2006), discussed deficient coordination and suggested providing enough time to participants to take information back to their organizations. In this matter, facilitators can help members bring their organization along, as study Participant 9, who was facilitator suggested:

Another practice that is useful and that I've used in some other instances is where the facilitator plus other members of the group offer to go with the representative back to their organization and help them bring their organization along.

Participants also noted that people are busy and public participation requires time and commitment. As one participant pointed out people who are effective participants are already engaged in many other projects or processes and they do not have time. Therefore, they are in high demand and are sometimes hard to find or hard to attract to the participation table. Offering some incentives such as childcare and income replacement might help to overcome this barrier. The notion of incentives is explored further in section 4.4.

4.4 Incentive Structures for Encouraging and Broadening Participation

As discussed in the literature review and in the last section, it is possible that at least some of the participation obstacles and barriers might originate from the lack of incentives for stakeholders and citizens to participate. Three types of selective incentives have been suggested for motivating group action: material (tangible rewards that have monetary value or can easily be translated into ones that have), solidary (intangible rewards arising from relationships with other people such as socializing, congeniality, and the sense of group membership and identification), and purposive (intangible rewards that derive in the main from the stated ends of the association such as the demand for the enactment of certain laws or the adoption of certain practices, which do not benefit members directly) (Clark & Wilson, 1961; Kyriacou, 2010; Willer, 2009). With these key themes from the literature, I sought to explore with participants what incentives could motivate participation in forestry consultations. The data are organized by attributes of selective incentives in Table 3 below.

Table 4. Examples of selective incentives expressed by study participants

Material Incentives	Solidary Incentives	Purposive Incentives
Honorarium	Recognition	Make a Difference
Per Diem Payments	Community Identification	Policy Change
Cover Costs/Expenses	Networking	Influence a Decision
Food	Becoming Aware of Other Participation Opportunities	Genuine Contribution
Childcare		Personal Interest

4.4.1 Material Incentives

Many study participants recognized that some types of material incentive such as a monetary payments (including honorariums and per diems) encourage some citizens and stakeholders to get involved in a participatory process. However, as one participants pointed out *“You don't want people participating because they're getting paid, and you want them participating because they're motivated to participate in order to make a difference.”* Another participant noted *“The better the process is the less compensation I think you need.”*

Honorariums to thank people for their time to acknowledge their contribution can be a good incentive for some participants, especially for non-salaried participants who volunteer their time. Some participants might need income replacement. As Participant 3 explained, a public participation process should not only include elite members of society who can afford the time or the travel. It was apparent from study participants' comments and my observation that some participants including academia and forestry experts are not looking for any monetary payments. On the other hand, NGOs and ENGOs are more interested in financial support . As one NGO member said *“It's just having the resources. It's hard to get involved if it's only you're a volunteer organization... Having the financial resources to help the NGO sector to get involved is really important.”*

Honorariums, per diems or other tangible incentives are also necessary for involving public and non-salaried participants who are not engaged as part of their job and are not being paid to be there. As Participant 8 pointed out it is unfair some participants engage in a process as part of their job, while others are giving their time, expertise, and knowledge for free:

They [public] need to get something out of it, the company and the government they're sitting there getting their salaries... It's several hundred dollars to have them sit at a meeting, whereas the public is there for free for what possible reason I cannot imagine. I've been on these public participation things and it's fun for a little while, but, oh man, I need something... you know, some of them do meals. Some of them get small per diems. they get their mileage and expenses paid for, they need to get tangible benefits from it.

Some study participants mentioned they expect costs to be covered at a minimum, e.g., *“if I were asked to travel somewhere to go to a meeting, I'd probably expect my costs to be covered at a minimum”* (Participant 6); *“The second biggest thing is I'm donating my time I don't want it to*

cost me a lot of money to participate” (Participant 9); and, “Everyone is clear on at least paying expenses, any kind of expenses for committee members” (Participant 13).

Food, transit, and childcare were other types of material incentives mentioned by some participants. For example, Participant 14 noted *“childcare is an important provision to help ensure participation of those who need it,”* and Participant 10 said *“I always do these things around supper time, so where there's food.”* Participant 12 indicated *“If you're going to have hours long meetings with hours long drive before and after for those who aren't in the region you definitely need food.”* Participant 19 noted *“I like asking people what they need to participate. Some people need babysitting, some people need transit, some people need... I don't know how to necessarily phrase that in the way of invitations” (Participant 19).*

4.4.2 Solidary incentives

The least frequently noted incentives that participants noted were solidary incentives, which refer to intangible rewards arising from relationships with other people such as socializing, congeniality, and the sense of group membership and identification. A participant who was a youth representative at a federal public participation program mentioned networking:

But the networking piece is interesting. I would say to an extent, if there are people in the room that I knew, I want to build a genuine relationship with them there, a nature of my organization, then I would certainly be more keen to participate.

Participant 2, who was a young academic researcher, also mentioned that some public participation programs provide good opportunities to network and can lead to further opportunities for engagement. Group identification was also brought up by Participant 17, who said *“I participate because I identify with a group, no doubt about that. And I hope when I participate, it's my belief or my hope, that I'm going to influence a decision.”*

Finally, public recognition and community recognition were mentioned by Participant 8: *“They should write the press releases, which gives the public, the profile that they need in the community.”*

4.4.3 Purposive Incentives

Purposive incentives such as influence a decision, policy change, and personal interest, were the incentives most frequently mentioned. For most of the participants, purposive incentives meant

benefits and satisfaction that come from serving a cause or principle; they want to join because they are passionate about the cause or principle and they want to contribute to a cause that they value.

All study participants who were from the academic community brought up influence and change when talking about what encourages them to join a public participation process. For example, Participant 1 indicated that *“The biggest incentive is having things set up in a way that people from the start have faith, have reason to believe that their participation will make a difference.”* Participant 2 echoed this, noting *“Influence a policy. My main motivation has always been to try and create a change, positive change.”* Participants 3 and 4 offered similar reasons for participating, saying *“I think the best incentive is, when their input makes a difference, when companies sincerely listen and do their best to, to address the concerns,”* and *“My motivations first and foremost, influence... If I don't see opportunity for influence, I want nothing to do with it.”* Interestingly, all four of the participants I have quoted are academics.

Similarly, participants felt that if a public participation program does not have power to influence the decision-making process, then it will disincentivize participation. As Participant 7 noted, *“I'm not going to participate in, spend a lot of time on a committee that has no power to change anything.”* Participant 9, who was public participation expert and facilitator, gave the following explanation: *“One of the biggest things is just knowing that the group could make a difference, knowing that the group has status and will be listened to, that would be the biggest thing for me.”*

Many study participants felt that those engaged in public processes need to have a meaningful role in decision making. Participants 19 and 14 held the view that sometimes decisions have already been made behind closed doors and the company or the government are trying to prevent any concerns from surfacing that may disrupt the planned activities through a public participation process. In a situation like this, when people mistrust the organizer and process they will not participate in the program. As one participant noted, the only way to gain their trust is to make the influence obvious and show how their input impacted the decisions.

Personal interest as an incentive was mentioned by a few participants during the interviews. When I asked Participant 1 what incentives motivate them to participate in a process, they responded *“It would be like my personal interests in the issue at hand. So most likely*

something that fairly directly affects me, I would be willing to, or prepared to, devote more of my time and energy.” And Participant 19 responded by raising the issue of *“a matter of interest, just do I feel like that topic matter would be enthusiastic. Am I going to sit there like bored all day?”* Another interesting incentive mentioned by Participant 19 was being able to make a genuine contribution.

4.5 Summary

This chapter discussed three main subjects: elements of a meaningful public participation program, obstacles and barriers to participation, and incentives structures for encouraging meaningful participation in forestry. One the first issue, the data in this chapter show, as summarized in Table 2, that there are some similarities between essential elements of meaningful public participation outlined in the literature review, and elements of a meaningful public participation program in forestry that study participants identified. Sinclair and Stewart (2007) discussed influence, accessible and relevant information, multiple and appropriate methods, early engagement, balance of representation and open dialogue and deliberation. Study participants brought up these same elements; however, they emphasized the importance of some of these elements such as deliberation, and also added key elements that included good process design.

Study participants, in fact, emphasized the importance of influence and deliberation. They suggested the need to tie participation programs to a major decision or forest policy that participants can influence. Moreover, study participants noted deliberation as one of the key elements of meaningfulness when providing input on such decisions. They felt that to have a productive deliberation, the process should encourage argumentation arising from different knowledges and perspectives in a respectful manner. Participants’ expectations for deliberative and discursive approaches were similar to those suggested by Sinclair and Diduck (2017) for public participation in environmental assessments.

In addition to key elements, study participants added good process design and appropriate sponsorship. They described a good process design as a process that involves participants in design and agenda setting, has transparent functions and clear objectives, and is run by strong, independent, and neutral facilitation. Sinclair and Stewart (2007) mentioned good facilitation as a key for promoting fair and open dialogue. In addition to this, participants of this study believed independent facilitation can play a fundamental role in building trust if the participation program

is being sponsored by forest companies. Most of the study participants thought government should initiate the participation program in forestry, saying it would lend accountability and legitimacy to the process. Some of the barriers to meaningful participation identified by participants have also been identified in the environmental governance literature, such as elite representation (Parkins & Sinclair, 2014), procedural justice issues (George & Reed, 2017) and constraints on allowable discussion topics (Reed, 2007). Sinclair et al., (2022) also identified some challenges facing meaningful participation in Impact Assessment (IA), which are very similar to what participants in this study noted. These include the lack of broad and early participation, information and communication deficiencies, accelerated decision processes, lack of shared decision making, and power imbalances. In addition to these, other obstacles to meaningful public participation related to forestry participation programs emerged from the data including inadequate funding and financial resources, cynicism, polarization, participant fatigue, consultation fatigue and overwhelming number of opportunities. Recommendations made by study participants about the strategies to deal with these barriers are presented in Table 3.

Finally, three types of selective incentives were suggested to encourage participation as mentioned in the literature review: material, solidary, and purposive (Clark & Wilson, 1961; Kyriacou, 2010; Willer, 2009). The most frequently noted incentives fell under purposive incentives such as influence a decision, policy change, and personal interest. Interestingly, all study participants with academic background identified influence on decisions as the most important incentives that encourages them to join a public participation program. Additionally, more than half of the study participants suggested some kind of material incentives such honorarium, per diem payments, food, childcare, and transit. Many study participants mentioned that they expect their cost to be covered at minimum.

It is important to note that some of the purposive incentives were also identified as essential elements of a meaningful participation program by some study participants. For example, influence/impact on outcomes not only promotes meaningfulness, but is a key incentive to encourage many people to participate. The data revealed that having an impact/influence on outcomes and decisions is one of the strongest purposive incentives among many study participants. Many participants want to join a forestry participation program because they value forests, and they want to have a positive impact on managing them more sustainably.

Overall, the data in this chapter provide a solid foundation for identifying key elements for designing a new and meaningful model for citizen and stakeholders involvement in forestry in Chapter 6. However, I want to look more into successful participatory process to both confirm and look for new ideas as outlined in Chapter 6. The new model must take into consideration all the elements of meaningful public participation program in forestry in Table 2 and it should develop an incentive structure as discussed above. Study participants suggested to think about public engagement as a program that has constituted from multiple tools at different levels of decision making, engaging different citizens and stakeholders.

Chapter 5: Case Examples of Deliberative Public Participation

5.1 Introduction

As explained in the literature review, deliberative and democratic discourse is required for achieving more sustainable natural resources management (Hammond, 2020; Sinclair & Diduck, 2017). Parkinson et al. (2012) define a deliberative system as “*one that encompasses a talk-based approach to political conflict and problem-solving – through arguing, demonstrating, expressing, and persuading*” (p. 4-5). Given these key points, which are expounded on further in the literature review, I sought to investigate some talk-based and perhaps more discursive approaches to public participation that could be used in the forestry context, as outlined in Chapter 3. This chapter highlights some cases that were identified by study participants as good examples of deliberative participation. Although some of the cases were taken from other natural resources sectors, my goal is to establish aspects of processes that could be germane in the context of the industrial forest sector in Canada. The description and background information of each case established through my document review is provided along with input from my participants. I further outline how Environmental Assessment (EA) processes in different provinces impact involvement of the public in provincial forest management decisions. The chapter concludes with a discussion of reimagining the FAC approach and suggesting a bigger role for a new model of public participation to help a forest company prepare for a project EA and long-term forest planning.

5.2 The Banff-Bow Valley Task Force and Round Table Process

The Banff-Bow Valley Study (BBVS) was a two and a half year study funded by the Canadian government in 1994 to review the management of the Banff-Bow Valley area within Banff National Park. The study team consisted of five independent members (three academics and two consultants) known as the Task Force (TF). They were appointed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Hodgins & Cook, 2000, p.4-6). A Secretariat was also formed to support the TF, consisting of an executive director, an ecological science officer, a public involvement coordinator, and two administrative and research assistants (Hodgins & Cook, 2000, p.4-6). At the beginning of the process, the TF sent out a questionnaire to investigate public opinions on visions and goals for the Valley, perception of issues, and on how the public wanted to be

involved in their task force processes. In other words, they involved the public and interest groups in the program design (Hodgins & Cook, 2000, p.4-6).

According to Hodgins & Cook (2000) The TF implemented a leading-edge approach for the public involvement that had not been used in the history of Parks Canada. The public involvement program employed a variety of techniques for participation ranging from information sharing to shared decision making and negotiation. The most important element of the program was the design of an interest-based negotiation approach employing a round table technique Hodgins & Cook, 2000, p.4-6). The round table (see Figure 5) was the centerpiece of the participation program, and consisted of 14 interest sectors, each compromised of a chair, a working committee, and a supporting constituency (Ritchie, 1999). The round table was responsible for providing consensus-based recommendations along with the insight and reasoning of the participants to the TF. An expert and independent mediator was employed to facilitate information sharing, public interest-based negotiations, and reaching consensus at the round table (Ritchie, 1999). Although the mediator was employed by the TF, they reported to and got direction from the round table. They worked with the members of the round table to identify major issues, to frame principles and goals for the future of the region, and to reach consensus (Ritchie, 1999). The round table met for two and a half days monthly from February 1995 to March 1996 (Ritchie, 1999 and Hodgins & Cook, 2000).

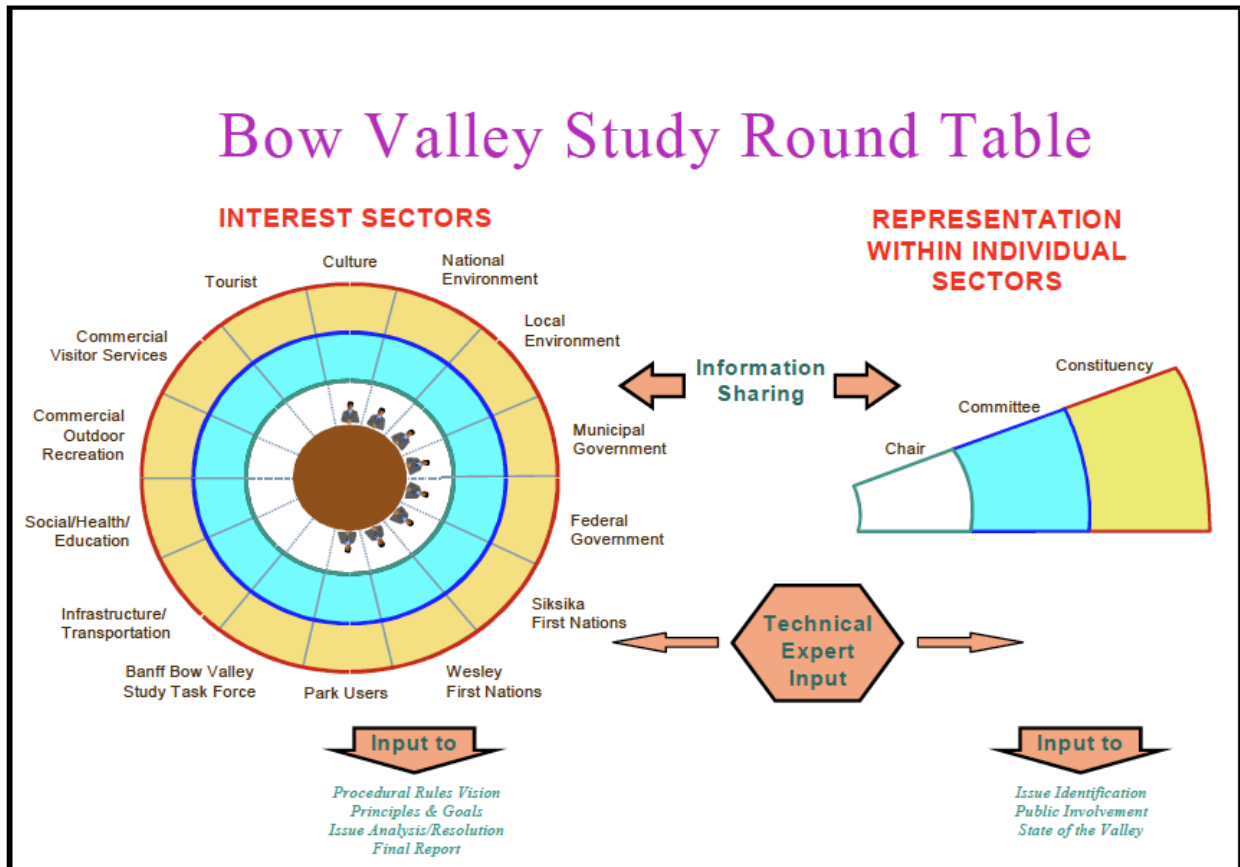


Figure 5. Banff-Bow Valley Round Table. Adapted from Hodgins & Cook, 2000

The TF had different roles than the round table. First, they were clients of the round table who received consensus recommendations from the round table. Secondly, they were equal participants of the table, and they had the same power over decision-making as other participants. Finally, they also played the role of expert advisors (Hodgins & Cook, 2000).

One of the research participants suggested considering the task force because they believed that the round table technique used by the TF was interesting in terms of having three separate process rings. Instead of the TF reaching out to everybody they engaged with the sectors representatives, who were responsible to reach out to their respective constituencies. This participant suggested that a participatory structure like BBVS might be helpful in complex forest management processes. They noted that it might be worthwhile to initiate a public participation program like this for strategic decision making in the forest sector.

5.3 Model Forest Program

The Model Forest (MF) was a federally funded program initiated by the Canadian Forest Service in 1992 to achieve sustainable forest management through creating a network of working models of sustainable forestry in the major forest regions of Canada (Hall, 1997; La Pierre 2002; Sinclair & Smith, 1999). Natural Resources Canada selected 10 Model Forest sites out of the 50 proposals they received (Sinclair & Smith, 1999). The federal government of Canada provided \$1.5 million annually at the outset for each model forest site, encouraging them to employ alternative approaches to forest management with an underlying goal of creating opportunities for people to interact outside of a formal forestry decision process, which may in turn impact positively on participation within those process, while also contributing information to them (Brand et al., 1996; Sinclair & Smith, 1999). The government also dedicated \$30 million to research on various forestry subjects such as the role of forestry in climate change (Brand et al., 1996).

MFs were non-profit and non-governmental entity without legal rights over forest management (La Pierre 2002; Sinclair & Smith, 1999); rather, they were designed to provide policy direction, and to identify consensus-based objectives for forestry that could be implemented by government and industry (Sinclair 1999). Since each MF was a non-profit corporation, it was managed by a board of directors made up of forest stakeholders and supported by an administrative staff. Sinclair and Smith study (1996) indicated the main task of each MF board of directors was to develop and approve a yearly workplan. Strategic planning exercises to identify different values and develop alternative forest management approaches were important activities undertaken by MFs (Hall, 1997).

In particular, the MF program was designed to represent sustainable forest management practices through incorporating different values in decision making, through involving various stakeholders into forest planning, and through building partnerships (Sinclair & Smith, 1999). The program was built on the concepts of partnership and working together to reach consensus on issues such as a company's forest management plan (Sinclair & Smith, 1999).

One of the key components of Model Forest Program was the Canadian Model Forest Network that connected MFs across Canada (La Pierre, 2002). The network facilitated sharing information, knowledge, technology, and experiences among all the sites. This helped with building powerful linkages between the sites and made collaboration possible. As a result, MF

sites were able to learn from each other and see the result of a particular approach to forest management in another MF site before implementing it. This helped them to be faster in solving problems and increased the chance of success for a project (La Pierre, 2002). Moreover, the participating organizations were able to develop linkages within a broader array of interests that were not as easy to make through traditional approaches. Overall, linkages between MF sites play a key role in terms of advancing capacity building and broadening public and stakeholder participation (La Pierre, 2002).

Three of my participants suggested recreating a program like MF to encourage meaningful participation in forest management. Participant 11 suggested doing something like the MF program to assess the existing forest management licenses across Canada. Participant 12, in fact, suggested that proactive forest companies can try to create something like MF:

Proactive forest companies can try to create that model. And so, we have examples of that with Louisiana Pacific on the other side of the province. And they eventually joined with us on many projects and some of our projects were conducted over there and so on. So, they had foresters who were very committed to many of the things that occurred in the model forest in terms of participation, in terms of science and research, in terms of protecting wildlife, in terms of protecting streams and so on. So, if you have people who are in control or influential enough, who are committed to the same ideals and have the resources to do it, to sponsor some science, have enough of the forest resource so that they don't have to eat it all up. Then you can recreate that model elsewhere.

These three participants all considered the Model Forest program successful, describing the program as “open”, “genuine”, “fantastic”, and research based. Participant 7 noted that “*even just bringing in social scientists to the discussion about what to do was new [at the MFs].*” Another participant described it as:

I think it was a genius idea. Whoever in the federal government thought up the model forest idea, I think it was a fantastic idea and had all sorts of positive benefits in Canada. Not only in Canada, but our reputation around the world and forestry model for us in other countries and other continents.

These participants felt that any new model for citizen and stakeholder involvement in strategic forestry decision making can learn from Model Forest Program. As Participant 13 suggested

forest companies can create their own appropriate participation processes just like MF sites and they can learn from other forest companies through higher-level programs connecting all processes across a given province. A powerful linkage like this between forest companies not only can foster learning and capacity building but can incorporate a broader array of interests into strategic decision making.

5.4 Forest Policy Panel in Ontario

Two study participants suggested that the Forest Policy Panel in Ontario was a successful engagement process that included deliberative and democratic participation. Study Participant 8 thought it was a good model to involve citizens across the province to investigate what they want from their forests and how forest policy should be developed towards sustainability. Participant 4 also noted this panel was successful in terms of getting input from public and stakeholders at different levels of forestry through utilizing diverse packages of participation tools and techniques:

In the Ontario Forest Policy Panel work of the early 1990s, we had about, 12 or 15 mechanisms for gaining stakeholder and professional and public views. I also think that it is important to channel people's energies at the right levels. But clearly at the provincial level, what gets dealt with the high order policy issues. And at the local level, what gets dealt with are the issues on the ground for the people who spend time in the woods and this diverse package of input possibilities needs to be designed so that many people can get at least a modest level of engagement if they desire it. And a few people can be invited for the heavy levels of engagement. And if you do either one of those and not the other, you probably have a very partial and unsatisfactory public participation program (Participant 4).

Study Participant 8 sent me the report that was generated at the forest policy panel in 1993: “*Diversity: Forests People, Communities – A Comprehensive Forest Policy Framework for Ontario.*” The report pointed out that the purpose of the panel was to review forest policy in Ontario and determine new directions for it. The Government of Ontario established the Forest Policy Panel to work with the people of Ontario in developing a comprehensive forest policy framework. The framework incorporated the concept of sustainability for Ontario's forests and addressed new forest issues for which there were no policy. The panel consisted of four

individuals appointed by the Minister of Natural Resources. They involved interested citizens, forest users, managers, and policymakers through diverse participation tools. Participant 8, who was one of the panel members, explained:

We were properly funded. So, we got to tour and do face-to-face consultations. I think we met over 3,000 people. We had a secretary that would set up meetings in advance for us, and we had about 40 of them across the province with the government folks and then we would meet with the public and sometimes we'd have a couple of meetings with the public. So, it was like 40 these set-up meetings.

Moreover, the study participant noted the framework they produced included high-level rules that are still being applied in forest management plans. As Participant 8 explained, it offered some broad rules and messages to guide forest management in Ontario:

That policy document is actually still in the forest management plans. It's buried in the appendix, but it's sort of the high-level rules that people are supposed to follow... for example, we don't do a lot of crazy plantation stuff here. And one of the things we said is don't do crazy plantation stuff, it doesn't work. And we heard that from a whole bunch of people with their field plantations... people were saying, just stick to the natural forest. Emulate the natural forest and try and do a really good job on that. That was a really big message and that got brought forward to the legislation, which came out of that. The Crown Forest Sustainability Act. That was a good step forward because we made the rules, even though they were very broad rules.

The forest policy panel functioned over an intense year and a half period involving local communities from across the province, mainly holding one face-to-face meeting in each community they went to. This resulted in there being different study participants at each meeting and those participants could reach out to them after the meeting. As Participant 8 notes, *"It was at local communities. So, they didn't come back again, but if they wanted to talk to us more, we would talk to them offline and talk to them on the phone."* I was told that they utilized talk-based and discursive approaches that allowed for open dialogue at each meeting to engage citizens and understand the different forestry values they held in order to inform a new forest policy framework. It is important to keep in mind that having meaningful discussion and dialogue with community members put constraints on the number of people that could be involved in one

meeting, as Participant 12 noted: “*There is a size constraint on good dialogue. And practically speaking, if you want dialogue, you can't have a hundred people in one meeting, you can have break them out if you want and do committee work and that kind of thing*” (Participant 12). In the forest policy panel, they limited the number of people at each meeting, as noted below, and they divided participants into smaller groups to have discussion:

We were good at getting people engaged. We would break down into smaller groups of between six to 10 people at tables. So everybody got a lot of talking time at the meetings, which was very important because they don't want to listen to a talking head. They came there to talk and it's very hard when you have 20 or 30 people, otherwise, everybody only gets a few minutes. So, we broke them out, down at the end of the workshops into a little table and we gave them an assignment, just like a regular, you know, you see it all the time now.

As described above, a panel-type approach is a one-time event and is particularly suitable for determining policy directions at provincial and federal level. However, a well-run panel might also be a good way for forest companies to engage a broader range of people into long-term planning and strategic decisions.

5.5 Environmental Assessment and Provincial Forestry Management

As mentioned in the literature review, forest management and planning fall mainly under provincial jurisdiction. All provinces and territories have developed legislation related to forest lands and as well as regulations to help manage resources. In a number of provinces, Environmental Assessment does apply to forest management planning. For example, as Participant 11 pointed out, forest management plans in Manitoba have to go through an EA. Others also noted that EA has an important role to play in terms of ensuring the public is engaged in key provincial forest management decisions. However, the public participation embedded in EA is discretionary and it is also different in every case in every province and territory. Participant 11 explained EA applications to forestry in Manitoba:

Right now, the Manitoba environment act classifies forest management plans is something that has to go through environmental assessment... We've had public hearings on forest management licenses but that's discretionary powers that the minister of

environment or climate change has. They're not requirements under the act to have these types of hearings. So, it's replacing a bad processes with a worse process.

Moreover, some study participants believed these environmental assessment statements are written and prepared by the proponent (forest company), hence some always feel that they are not trustworthy, e.g., “EA proposals in Manitoba are one of my specialties for whatever reason I'm able to pull the details that are in it. And find the things the company's not trying to tell you because all of these processes are the written by the proponent” (Participant 15). Most of participants that were part of my study who were members of environmental organizations seem to often be in opposition with the plans that were being proposed by forest companies. They also believed any public participation processes that are undertaken as part of an EA are problematic:

Unfortunately, the provincial government of the day, through the environmental assessments process in the environment act, is using proponent-led consultation as the only option to satisfy a proper engagement with the public and it's just to me that doesn't make sense... The industry is really focused to return profits to their shareholders. So, they're going to do the least amount of effort as possible. I don't think an industry or a business can design something that will please the public and the NGO community (Participant 11).

What's more problematic is these processes being run by the proponent... They're not analyzing to decide what is good for the community. What is good for an area? What is good for species? They're selling you a business plan (Participant 15).

Participants indicated that EA public participation processes would be more meaningful if public and NGO stakeholders had an opportunity to influence a forest plan proposal before it goes through an EA. As discussed in Chapter 4, one important element of meaningfulness is early engagement before the scope of planning has been determined. For example, as Participants 11 and 2 explained, EA in Manitoba does offer opportunities for public engagement but after the forest management plan proposal has been made:

One of my experiences is environmental assessment from a Manitoba perspective. So, within the realm of their laws does offer opportunities for engagement. It's kinda like a last ditch effort because a proposal has already been made. And as someone who participates in that process you're trying to play catch up.

In an environmental assessment you'd usually comment on, well, you wouldn't usually, but you would want to comment on before the scope and everything and then further throughout at every decision-making point (Participant 2).

There is a need for a participation program to bring the public, the forest company, and other stakeholders (e.g., NGO/ENGOS and forest-users associations) together to prepare a long-term forest management plan early, before going through an EA. If there was a stronger process to prepare long-term forest management plans, then there would be less opposition, as Participant 15 pointed out: *“So I think the answer is to come up with a better plan instead of silencing public participation.”* (Participant 15). It was also noted the FACs have tended to have little or no role in EAs for forest management, which seems like a lost opportunity. I highlighted Manitoba but I did not dig more deeply into participation in EA because there is a large body of literature that is critical of these engagement processes and indicate they tend not to be meaningful (Ref).

5.6 Rethinking Forest Advisory Committees

As explained in the literature review, Forest Advisory Committees were created as a window into industry decision making mandated through provincial legislation or market-based forest certification systems. Many major shortcomings and weaknesses of the FAC approach have been identified in the literature review (Chapter 2). However, study participants held contradictory opinions regarding FACs. One participant said *“One of my biggest criticisms of these organizations is that they become too narrow in their membership, too narrow in their focus. They don't do their outreach well enough. And, not doing that, it defeats the purpose of having them in the first place”* (Participant 3). On the other hand, Participant 4 said *“I don't think forest advisory committees are bad. I think they're an excellent tool in the tool bag. It's the tool bag that needs to be examined for our robust diversity of approaches to gaining input from stakeholders and citizens.”* Participant 11 held the middle ground by saying, *“I think if these advisory committees are struck up, they have to have more meaning to them. And I don't know what that would look like.”*

5.6.1 The FAC as a model approach for deliberation

Some study participants discussed the FAC approach when I asked them about what a new, more deliberative model, for citizen and stakeholder involvement in forestry could look like. These participants indicated that they believed FACs are an appropriate tool for public involvement in operational-level decisions in forestry (i.e., what to cut and when) and that they might also be a good tool for short-term planning. For example, Participant 5 noted FACs were designed to address certain types of ongoing issues that are more operational. Participant 6 also pointed out that FACs are constituted geographically within local areas where forest management plans take place and so there's not really an opening for people outside of those local places to have a voice. Participants 5, 6, and 10 explained more their thoughts on the role FACs should have in designing a new model for public and stakeholder involvement in forestry:

... I think the forest advisory may be there. They can be a good tool for the operational level, like where cuts happen and when. But maybe they're not so good that the bigger strategic vision for five-year planning or forest policy of that multi-year horizon because forestry is a long-term business. So, I think that's the other place where we're falling short is on having activity that are addressing the different level of forest management, not just the operational level of what is taking place in the short term (Participant 5).

I've come to think that we have asked too much of these advisory committees and that these advisory committees, they focus very much on operational kinds of decisions and maybe that's what they should be doing because they are pretty locally based. But we have no mechanisms in place to look at more strategic or normative kinds of decision. (Participant 6)

When you're dealing with the annual operating plans, you should try and establish some sort of a regular procedure because that the planning is going every year. So, you want to establish some sort of regular procedure and that's where the advisory community comes in because as part of that annual operating plan process they can also meet every six weeks or something like that (Participant 10)

Many participants also noted problems with the FAC approach that would have to be resolved to make the participation more deliberative and meaningful. For example, Participant 3 notes that “We need to improve the forest advisory committees... they could still be the centerpiece, but not

as the only piece for people to engage.”, and “The theory of forest advisory committees is a good theory the ideals are really good ideals, the practice is merely falling way behind... The practice is demonstrating that they're dysfunctional” (Participant 3). Some other study participants believed we can learn from FACs weaknesses and try to stay away from those weaknesses when designing a new model. Study participants went on to note the problems.

Some indicated that poor membership systems were one of the major problems. As Participant 3 noted, sometimes the people organizing FACs look for members “*who they trust and they feel are not going to, give them a lot of trouble or be strong critics.*” This participant later brought up an example, indicating that in some of their work they found out that a member who represented the naturalist sector was a retired person who worked for the mill for 35 years. He was selected because he was interested in bird watching. Another problem regarding membership that some participants noted, is that some organizations do not have a membership renewal policy and a member can stay on the committee for over a decade or longer. They felt there should be a membership time limit and an appropriate membership renewal process. It is important to have those committees be held on a term basis so that they can rotate. Study Participant 3, who was a Forest Stewardship Council auditor, explained:

Some of these [FACs] that I've observed, it became kind of a fun little social event, like I often feel like they strayed from their original mandate. And something I want to talk about later on is the idea of having term limits for these things. So, you always have fresh voices and fresh ideas coming into committee... Having some explicit process for renewal, for retiring some members and bringing new members on whether it's new groups entirely, or just new individuals representing groups... I do think that these become a little bit too clubbish and cozy and, and it's good to have fresh voices.

Participant 6 suggested that there is a need for diversifying the membership by gender, age, and ethnicity. They noted the FAC members should not just be “*the people who either cut down the trees or have trap lines or are tourist operators.*” There are others who also have an interest, even if they might not have an economic stake.

Second, some participants believed that the motives of the sponsor are particularly important and that having forestry companies be responsible for sponsoring FACs is not the right thing to do because members will often not be as critical as they might be for fear of reprisal. As

one participant suggested it would be better if the provincial government departments were in charge of sponsoring FACs or being a co-sponsor, as this might make people braver in what they say, and in how critical they are. Of course, some will also view government departments as being captured by the industry because government also wants the resource revenues, as outlined in the literature review.

Another problem associated with FACs that was noted by some participants is their lack of influence on decisions. The comments of Participant 4 capture this sentiment: *“The worst thing that can happen in any advisory process is that there is no real influence of the outcomes of the process on ultimate decisions about how resources are managed.”* Later, he suggested tying the work of an advisory group to specific decisions that need advice. He thought this would be an important element of a program design.

Two study participants noted FACs tend to avoid having members from environmental organizations. As Participant 20, who was working at an environmental organization, said *“public advisory groups actually don't want large environmental groups on those committees.”* Another participant who studied FACs identified an example of an ENGO member who stopped attending FACs meeting because she felt left out:

I think she lasted less than a year because she was clearly in a minority position there, none of the things that she was suggesting were taken up by the rest of the group... And then she felt just by being there, the company being able to say, we had so and so represented this group on the committee that added legitimacy. So, the company without her getting... really being able to get any results. So, she said she preferred to be on the outside, like hammering away on her issues and trying to de-legitimize the company's efforts.

Finally, as Participant 5 mentioned, one major problem is *“that we put all our expectation about public participation relying on the shoulder of those public advisory committee.”* They thought there is not one single public participation program in forest management that can be meaningful for all stakeholders and citizens. They suggested that there is a need to think about a strategy of public participation which includes a variety of tools at different scales that allow everyone who wants to have a say in forest management to be involved. Therefore, FACs can be one tool in the toolbox. However, the toolbox needs to be examined to include variety of tools at different levels

of decision making. Many participants noted that there is no well-structured program for concerned citizens or stakeholders to have their voices heard around long term and strategic forest-management decisions.

5.7 Summary

My data show that the Banff-Bow Valley Task Force incorporated many of the core elements of a deliberative approach as mentioned in the literature. They utilized the round table technique that allowed for discussion and debate to provide set of consensus-based recommendation with insights and reasoning (Ritchie, 1999; Hodgins & Cook, 2000). As well, the task force members had the same power over decision-making as other members at the round table. The process was also deliberative in terms of being talk-based; they implemented interest-based negotiations among 14 interest sectors to reach consensus. The task force also created opportunities for public and interest sectors to help design the process. One study participant suggested a program like this might be a good approach for rationalizing strategic and normative decision-makings in forestry.

The data and document review revealed some other common elements of success in other cases, such as the ability to engage and discuss in small groups, a mandate that ensures policy implications, having an independent leadership group, and being well-funded. Ontario Forest Policy Panel was successful in terms of involving people across Ontario to determine a new forest policy direction towards sustainability. The program was tied to a specific policy, and it was well-funded. The study participants who were involved in the panel and the panel report indicated that they utilized diverse packages of participation tools and techniques covering different levels of forestry issues from local to high-level policy. The process was deliberative and discursive as they held many face-to-face and discussion-oriented meetings across the province, and they divided people into smaller groups to promote dialogue.

The Model Forest Program was another case brought up by four study participants as a successful example. The core element of success in the MFs was the Canadian Model Forest Network that connected MFs across Canada (La Pierre, 2002; Sinclair & Smith, 1999). As one study participant suggested, forest companies can create their own participation program dedicated to long-term planning and strategic decisions. And then a network can link all the programs across a given province to facilitate learning and capacity-building across all programs.

Moreover, a network can incorporate a broader array of interests and values in the strategic decisions made by the forest industry. It was suggested that through this model, not only could forest companies fulfil their license or certification mandate for public participation, but they could also move towards more democratic and rationalized decision-making processes.

In terms of the FAC model, most of the challenges brought forward by study participants are in line with the literature, such as poor membership, lack of participation of citizens and other interest groups such as environmental organizations, and lack of influence on final decisions (Nenko et al., 2019; Parkins & Sinclair, 2014; Richardson et al., 2011; Parkins et al., 2006; McGurk et al., 2006). The study participants hold different opinions towards the future of FACs. One study participant believed FACs are outdated because they fell so behind with their original mandate, and that they are not able to fulfill their public participation responsibility. On the other hand, many study participants believed they still can be an appropriate tool in the toolbox for getting input on operational level decisions but they need some improvements. Recommendations made by study participants about the ways to improve FACs include diversifying membership and designing a member renewal policy, sponsorship by governments, and tying the work of FACs to specific decisions. The FAC shortcomings and challenges described by study participants and literature review strengthen the idea that there is a need for a new model to address strategic and normative decisions in forestry under tenure system.

Chapter 6: A New Model for Citizen and Stakeholder Involvement in Canada's Forest Tenure System

6.1 Introduction

Sustainable forest management has been the dominant approach to forest management across Canada since the early 1990s (Bridge et al., 2005; Duinker, 2011; Duinker, 2001). Society's responsibility is one of the criteria of SFM framework that encourages the incorporation of different values in forest management and requires fair and effective decision-making (Sheppard, 2005). Since the 1990s, different governance structures have been put in place in different provinces as discussed in the literature review. In thinking about a new model for engagement, I explored three main questions during my interviews: 1) What should the focus of engagement be? 2) Who should be involved? 3) How should it be organized? In this chapter, the data are organized around the answers these questions based on the input from study participants.

6.2 What should the focus of engagement be?

Table 5 establishes the major themes and subthemes that emerged from the interview data relating to focus of any new model. Each major theme is discussed in detail following the Table.

Table 5. Themes and sub-themes relating to focus of the new model as expressed by study participants

Major Themes	Sub-themes
Decision-Making Level	Strategic and Normative Decisions Operational Decisions
Key Forestry Issues	Climate Change Biodiversity Forests and Livelihoods Sustainability
Forest Value Identifications	Ecological Values Socioeconomic Values
Forest Policy And Tenure System	Forest Policy Evaluation/Development Assessing Current Forest Licenses Tenure Renewal Cumulative Effects of Licencing

6.2.1 Decision-Making Level

The first major theme in Table 5 relates to level and scale of forestry decisions within which engagement should be sought. Participants indicated, both in response to this question and in the data presented in previous chapters, that it is important to distinguish between strategic-level and operational-level decisions in forestry, as it helps when choosing the right engagement tools and participants. Three study participants made the following remarks:

We have provincial policy at one end of the scale, and we have local issues at the forest management unit scale on the other end, different people with different approaches need

to be called into those different levels... channeling people's efforts and inputs at the right level (Participant 4).

It's important to think more seriously about what's available at that normative and strategic level and operational level. I think we need to separate those a little bit and to identify ways of engaging a broader public on those normative and strategic decisions and a more focused public at the local level (Participant 6).

Forestry is a long-term business. So, I think that's the other place where we're falling short is on having [participation] activity that are addressing the different level of forest management, not just the operational level of what is taking place in the short term (Participant 5).

In addition, some study participants pointed out that strategic and normative decisions require broader citizen participation, whereas operational decisions need more locally based participation. Participant 6 used the following example to illustrate the importance of the decision realm for choosing appropriate method and audience:

Frankly, if I were from Saskatoon wanting to join an online forum, messing around with some of those operational decisions in Lorange, that's not appropriate. And I can see where local people would say, look, get out of our backyard. This is our territory. This is where we make our own decisions. But as a citizen of the province, because forestry is provincially regulated, it's entirely up to me to be able to have a place to say, I think we need to set aside so much of our land base for biodiversity protection or so much for timber harvesting.

As discussed in the previous chapter, some study participants believed that FACs are an appropriate approach for involving the public and stakeholders in operational and day-to-day level decisions. However, as indicated by many study participants, there is a need for a new public participation program for the strategic and normative level decisions. Some study participants believed forest companies do not involve public and other stakeholders in strategic decisions. For example, Participant 20 noted there should be more opportunities for public to find out about “*decision-making points*” such as 10-year or 20-year forest management plans. They added, “*It's true forestry companies, can't be reopening things every few weeks... But I think there should be an opportunity to participate that involves ecological, recreational*

communities, other industries, Indigenous groups at the decision-making points.” All study participants who brought up strategic and normative forestry decisions said that currently there is no opportunity for citizens to influence those decisions, which the literature and policy also support.

After a few participants also captured this notion by indicating that there is a need for a new participation program for “strategic,” “normative,” and “major” decisions in forestry, I started to investigate examples of those kind of decisions that would fit these categories. I found that study participants meant two completely different decisions; one being the strategic decisions that forest companies have the authority to make after getting a license, such as 10-year forest planning. The other is regarding higher-level decisions that governments have the authority to make such as renewing a license, or creating forest policy in general. Participant 6 captures what others shared regarding strategic decisions that involve provinces:

We have no mechanisms in place to look at more strategic or normative kinds of decisions. So even a decision about where tenure blocks should not be or who should be allocated, but whether we should be doing forestry in the first place and those kinds of big questions. We tend to interest those kinds of strategic and normative decisions to the politicians that we elect every four years, but there’s no finer grain of input that we can make into that, into those kinds of decisions... We need to generate new opportunities at those higher levels of decision making.

On the other hand, Participant 4 referred to long-term decisions that need to be taken by forest companies, as “*Some kind of major decision, like a forest management plan for industrial timber production*” (Participant 4). And some participants referred to both, e.g., “*Bigger strategic like visions for five-year planning or forest policy of multi-year horizon*” (Participant 5).

6.2.2 Key Forestry Issues

Later in the interviews, I explored what participants felt were some of the main current forestry issues that need to be addressed in any new participation program. The main issues that they raised were related to climate change, the size of protected areas, maintaining biodiversity protection, long-term forest planning, and forest policy. I consider each of these in turn. A few participants mentioned the important role of forests in relation to climate change mitigation:

If we look at some of the key issues that are facing us. Climate change is one. So, what is the role of forestry and a climate change scenario? What is the role of forests in maintaining biodiversity? It might be forests and livelihoods, how forests help us meet our treaty obligations. I mean, there's some fairly big kinds of issues and I think those things should be discussed in a broader forum. But what specific strategies or mechanisms should be? I don't know (Participant 6).

For example, how has forest complexity changed with human impacts and how will climate change intensify pressures on forests? And what are perhaps some of the best evidence and options for managing that? (Participant 20)

In relation to the size of protected areas and wildlife issues, the two explanations below capture the sentiment of participants:

If they're going to log, they should be thinking about the scientific calls for protecting for example at least 17% of the lands and waters or protecting 25% or protecting 30%.

Those are the strategic pieces that have to be put in place. First and again, the carbon cycle component... (Participant 15)

There are wildlife issues, species at risk. Climate change issues, water quality issues (Participant 17)

As noted in Chapter 4, two study participants also suggested the need to do “pre-consultation” or a “scoping exercise” at the beginning of the new program to identify key issues like these that are facing forestry. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that different stakeholders and citizens have different priorities. As Participant 12 pointed out “You have land rights of first nations folks, Indigenous folks, you have the tenure rights of the company and all sorts of citizens, who are interested in our forest and our wildlife and so on” (Participant 12).

Finally, Participant 1 provided an interesting insight when they explained that if the main approach of a province is industrial forestry, citizens should be able to provide oversight as to what is happening on the public forest lands and make sure forests are being managed sustainably. Democratic oversight on public lands and ensuring sustainable forest management can be heart of the new program:

If we're assuming that the approach we're going for is industrial-scale forestry, that involves some big corporation most likely coming in to do the forestry. But it's on public land, very broadly speaking, and the purpose of the consultation would be democratic oversight of what's happening on public lands that sort of by definition belong to the public... oversight of whatever, ensuring that the forest is sustainably managed. So, sustainability should be purpose of the consultation... if you consider sustainability very broadly to also include social aspects, which you should. Then sustainability really could just be the purpose of the consultation (Participant 1).

6.2.3 Forest Values Identification

The third major theme was related to forest values identification. Some study participants suggested starting the process by identifying different forest values and then evaluating how industrial forestry operations are impacting those values. For example, *“I think some time needs to be spent understanding the values that people hope to work towards as they work together”* (Participant 12). Another comment was *“I think it's helpful to have the community and the public more engaged in what are the forest values that they appreciate... our uses are not just timber supply, but other forest uses and ongoing values. So, I think it [new model] should be nested in terms of those longer-term ecological values and processes”* (Participant 20).

As Participant 16 pointed out, some essential values of forests such as providing clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities are overlooked. Industrial forestry operations impact these values by imposing some hidden cost such as wildlife habitat loss, carbon release effects:

I think we really need to start understanding the values of forest and we act like we don't. So, we'll clear cut a hundred or five hundred or a thousand acres, depending on where you are, and act like the jobs produced in the value of that lumber on a single window. So, it's only at that time when you're making that cut is what's important. The wildlife habitat that's gone is not important. The carbon that's released is not important, the lack of air and water cleaning and the lack of recreational opportunities and the fact that you're not going to be able to go back and get any value out of those woods for quite a while seems to be overlooked. So, we're just looking at one aspect of forest, the amount of jobs that forestry creates, I think it's a silly way of looking at land (Participant 16).

After identifying different forest values that stakeholders and citizens hold towards forestry, participants indicated that it is important to investigate how industrial forestry impacts those values and either try to minimize the negative effects as Participant 4 noted, or try to negotiate and internalize the hidden cost as Participant 18 suggested:

What it [the focus of the new program] shouldn't be is to gain approval of the industrial perspective. But it should be to identify or to help the forest manager shape a program that can deliver satisfaction to all the stakeholders... The identification of forest values and then using those forest values through a structured process to determine ultimately what treatments take place in the woods... Help you as a forest manager, design a program that delivers on their values, is really what I think a public participation program should do... And so we need to find ways in which the vocalized preferences of those people is somehow accounted for in the decisions that get made about how a forest is managed. It is impossible to meet the demands and desires of every individual when there are 15 million people involved, but it's not impossible to be meeting most of those.
(Participant 4)

I was involved in advisory committee for the Trans Mountain Pipeline project for Tarasen Company, which later became Kinder Morgan. And when we approached environmental groups, the initial reaction was, why would we participate with you to help you get a project approved that's fundamentally adversarial to our organizational interests. So, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, for example, their job is to protect parks. We held a workshop and brought all these parties together and talked about how we could do this... [environmental groups said] Obviously we're not interested in having an oil pipeline, but we know there's a possibility it will happen because it's uncertain. We could fight the project and maybe we'd win, or maybe we wouldn't. Here's the deal if we can work toward a goal of providing a net benefit at the end of the day, a net benefit to the environmental and ecological integrity of Jasper national park and Mount Robson, provincial parks. They were prepared to work on that basis if there were a way to actually enhance the current. So, we went away on that basis and spend time with all the different disciplines on the project team said, how could we actually enhance the ecology of a national park through this project? And so, through those discussions, we realized that the park had a lot of problems. There were various

problems associated with highway impacts that weren't being adequately addressed... We could actually do some fisheries enhancement programs at each one of the creek crossings. And so, we identified a number of things we thought actually we could have an impact there and achieving net benefits. And part of that net benefit involved working with Parks Canada, and these groups, and establishing an advisory committee and funding that advisory committee to undertake remediation projects that Parks Canada simply hadn't done or couldn't afford to do. So, the parks thought that was a pretty good idea, obviously, because it would allow them to do work that they could never fund. And the environmental groups decided that was worthwhile... So they said okay on that basis we're prepared to work with you and ensure that the environmental of the effects of the project are actually minimized and that we can then quantify what those effects are, and we can then fund other projects that we could also quantify what the benefits of those are and that at the end of the day, the benefits will exceed the impacts or the costs of the project. And they and I would say that was one of the most successful projects that I was ever involved with (Participant 18).

As noted above, Participant 18 suggested the net benefit approach for internalizing the hidden cost of industrial forestry. This was the approach used for the Trans Mountain Pipeline project, and they took into the account the hidden ecological cost when doing cost benefit analysis. They decided to create net benefit from an ecological standpoint in a national park. Net benefit was determined by adding all benefits and subtracting the sum of all costs of a project including the hidden cost of the project such as the carbon footprint of the project. It might be hard to put monetary value on ecosystem services and some forest values, but they negotiated to enhance the ecology of a national park through fishery enhancement and road enhancement. The participant felt that at least this was a way to make the companies accountable for some of the extraneities and hidden cost of a project.

Two study participants discussed the socioeconomic values of forests and noted some negative socioeconomic effects of the industrial forestry model. As Participant 20 explained, in the last decades the scale of the mills has increased, but the number of jobs in the communities around decreased, as forestry companies want to maximize their profit by reducing their labor costs:

I guess one thing I haven't talked about so much is communities are really concerned about jobs and impacts on their communities because some of their forestry companies are big corporate citizens in the community, and they support all kinds of important things. So, I think that my organization of course, is very interested in ecological forest values, but I also think more scrutiny about the socioeconomics of forestry in the community. My perception is forestry over the last decades has greatly decreased the number of jobs. And the scale of mills has greatly increased, which in improves profits, if you're competing for capital in international capital markets, but it is not necessarily the best for communities (Participant 20).

Furthermore, Participant 16 argued that although the forest industry created some jobs in Eastern Canada, it did not improve the overall economy. They discussed the resource curse in economics, which refers to the failure of many resource-rich states to benefit from their resources because they focus on a single industry. The participant believed Eastern Canadian provinces such as New Brunswick are heavily forested provinces but and have not been able to benefit from their resources:

Forestry creates some jobs, certainly in Eastern Canada. If you look at New Brunswick, which is a heavily forested province, it's the poorest province in Canada. Maybe it's not like these benefits have been trickling back to people, they've been going to companies; some jobs have been created, Sure. But, if you look at the economics of what's happened there, it's not in the best interests of people. Meanwhile, there's a lot of costs being involved. I always talked about internalizing costs... (Participant 16).

6.2.4 Forest Policy and Tenure Systems

The final major theme drawn from the data in relation to key considerations for the new model relates to forest policy and tenure system in Canada. Some study participants recognized the lack of proper public/citizen engagement in forest policy evolution, e.g., “*We need proper public engagement in policy and regulatory development, and it just does not happen*” (Participant 9), “*Having a broader discussion about Canada's landmass to inform forest practice is essential*” (Participant 7), and “*Well, forestry is not going to come into our provincial election debates at all and so we need to find ways of, for the politicians to check in on some of these larger resource sectors and how they should be managed*” (Participant 6). Participant 9 argued that

Canada's democratic system does not have proper public policy discussions to inform policy development. They said major decisions are made by elected officials with little or no public engagement:

Our democratic system is not working the way it should. Our elected officials increasingly use their own consultants or pollsters, or simply their own ideology to decide where they want to go. If we make decisions that way, where they're all coming from the center of government and pretty directly from elected officials or their appointees, those do not lend themselves to public engagement. If we got back to a situation where options for public policy actually came from the public service. Then we could say that the public service should be engaging us as citizens before. So that our thoughts on it became part of the advice that I submitted to executive council. And that is the way it should work. In my view, we don't have public policy discussions in any organized way at any government level in the country, as far as I'm concerned" (Participant 9).

Similarly, study Participant 5 noted there is no structured program for involving citizens in forest policy development at the provincial level, saying that *"Once in a while, in some different provinces we'll do a consultation on forest policy, but it's a bit random"*. They later brought up an example of participating in a process discussing the key strategic direction of forest policy in Quebec. Some study participants suggested creating a systematic program to show what's lacking in broader forest policy. In contrast, there was only one study participant holding the opposite view: *"I think you have to depend on government to bring that public interest perspective to the table because that's what we elect people for"* (Participant 18).

Some study participants argued because there is no other place/venue for these broader questions at the policy level, they were usually brought up in the engagement program about a specific project:

I think it's unfortunate if policy decisions have to arise in the context of a specific project proposal as they often do, but I think it just demonstrates an error in the way we do things (Participant 9).

They bring it [broader issues] there because that's the only place to go... one challenge I think really is that a lot of what we see in the Forest Advisory Committee are symptom of

the system is broken at another level, but that's the only a place that is guaranteed, that exists regularly. That is mandated to be there. So, people just go there for everything (Participant 5).

Moreover, Participant 5 believed that creating opportunities for citizen involvement in policy development may result in better decisions. *"It's always a policy decision, but if you have a broader range of opinion and more conversation that happened up front, maybe you have a better chance of having a policy that people will like"* (Participant 5).

Another sub-theme in Table 5 that some participants raised relates to forest tenures or licenses. They felt that public participation should happen before issuing a license or renewing a license, not after. As one study participant suggested *"the [new] process should start with the renewal of tenure"* (Participant 20). Later, they explained that the public is not involved in 20-year tenure decisions in Alberta, *"Right now in Alberta, the 20-year tenure decisions do not involve the public. And they don't offer opportunities to change tenure agreements"* (Participant 20). Similarly, Participant 11 noted the public is not involved in decisions regarding forest licensing and fiber allocation in Manitoba:

One of the things that bothers me, that no one's talking about in Manitoba, I don't know what it's like in other provinces, but we give a license agreement first to the company, through the forestry act, a license agreement basically rights in their tenure. And it also provides rights to the fiber allocation. So, company X signs a license agreement through the forestry act for 20 years, 20 years supply of so many hundred thousand cubic meters of trees, that's done behind closed doors before the public and other stakeholders get to do anything. Before we get to an environmental assessment, before we get to a licensing a forest management plan. It's crazy. It's backwards. So, they're already saying you can have all these, but we don't even know if it's going to impact the environment. And no one else knows whose rights that's going to infringe on. That's the problem I have with forestry.

Two study participants thought current forest licenses should be re-evaluated as well for two main reasons. First, there are not enough trees in some license areas to provide sustainably for the amount that has been set in the license. Second, there are some overlapping leases such as

mining and forestry in some areas, and therefore the cumulative effects of those projects should be assessed properly.

We do have probably over allocation of tenure, and we have large industrial mills that have a good return on investment for their investors. They want a steady timber supply with even-age classes, which doesn't, especially if it's over a fairly small area, that doesn't lend itself to the kind of complexity, diversity variation of a natural forest ecosystems (Participant 20).

In Alberta we have many areas that have multiple overlapping leases. So, forestry doesn't operate in a vacuum and there are the legacy impacts of energy exploration that are in development that are pervasive (Participant 20)

When we look at the logging license that they want to renew... they should look at cumulative effects piece. Looking at what else is happening in the region first? Not just your business model, so that cumulative effects, which kind of informed the strategic planning ahead of time. And that's, that's an essential piece and we don't have that right now (Participant 15).

Participant 15 provided two examples of fiber over-allocations in some forest licenses in Manitoba. Their first example was related to Tolko's mill (recently sold to Canadian Craft Paper):

That was the largest forest tenure ever given out in the country. It was bigger than anything that's ever been given out since, and there's no way that they could log all of that. And it was out in the sixties. They had no idea what the amount of timber, what amount of wood fiber was out there,

Their second example was related to the Louisiana Pacific mill in Swan River. There was a biologist working for the Manitoba government at time who got fired because he found out there was not enough wood available to provide the allowable cut set out in the license:

X [the biologist] was fired in 1995 for speaking out about the fact that the last logging mill built in Manitoba, which was the Louisiana Pacific's mill in Swan River, that mill was built and he was the biologist at the time. And he said, you've over-allocated wood, he said this forest is going to give us this much wood, fiber, and you're completely

wrong. The numbers are wrong, and the government didn't care. They're like, build this mill. We've given them a license for it. Now we're giving them this logging license. And when he spoke out about it, he was fired. That's the perfect example of we built a mill and then a decade later that the data comes out or 12 years later, it came out that they had been mistaken about how much wood fiber was available by almost three times

(Participant 15)

One study participant proposed a model to reform forest tenures across Canada. They suggested giving the public some options to choose from for the kind of forest tenure they prefer for the next ten or twenty years, something like a deliberative polling approach. For example, provide four options about what percentage of forests is to be protected or to be licensed for timber supply. They proposed a consensus model in which an expert panel of stakeholders agree on some options and then ask the public to decide which options they prefer. It would be the expert panel's responsibility to write an informational piece and share it with public to explain the options. The stakeholder's group would also be encouraged to advertise and explain the option that they think is the best:

What I would want as a member of the public, I don't want to go through the forest management plan. I don't want to have to make comments on the forest management plan or whatever. What I would like is I would like to be given options. For example, here are four options for you to choose for this forest tenure and for the next five years or the next 10 years. And what I want to say that we're not even talking about like the cutting blocks, but you know, choice number one is 80% will be protected. Choice number two, 60% will be protected. Number three is 40%. Choice number four is 20%. Those are just a rough idea. So, to get there, I want to get to those choices... I work on a consensus model of the stakeholders. So, the stakeholders who are the educated people, who are the people who have the most interest in this, they work on a consensus model to come up with the choices for the public. These are four options, mean this is what could happen, or, you know, we're giving you a bit of education as well. We're informing you about the options. We're giving you the policy behind these options. And then from there, the stakeholders can do whatever they want with those four options. They can go and they can lobby there. The public is following. If industry and industry supporters want to convince people that

option four is the best option, they can go to towns and they can try and do what they want with their own options (Participant 17).

6.3 Who Should Be Involved?

Participants also expressed views on who should be engaged in forest management decision making. I organized study participant responses under three main themes grounded in the data: public involvement, stakeholder involvement, and rights-holders involvement.

6.3.1 Public Involvement

Participants felt that given the fact that most of the forests in Canada are public lands, Canadians should have a role in the way that these forests are being managed. As some study participants noted, *“It’s crown land, anybody who lives in a given province should be considered”* (Participant 3). As study Participant 1 established, citizens should be able to control and oversee forest companies that are operating on crown lands, noting there should be *“...democratic oversight of what’s happening on public lands that sort of by definition belong to the public”* (Participant 1).

As discussed in the literature review, deliberation is required to achieve sustainability (Hammond, 2020) as it disperses democratic power and incorporates diverse public views (Baber, and Bartlett, 2005). Two study participants argued along these lines, that good citizen deliberation requires inviting ordinary members of general public who do not have speciality in forestry: *“If you want to have good citizen deliberation, you need some members of just the general public who don’t have expertise in this particular thing, who might have limited knowledge”* (Participant 1), and *“Bringing in people without specialized understanding of forestry, but have training and an expertise in their own domain. You really want some nonspecialists in there intentionally to bring other views of the forest.”* (Participant 7). As Participant 7 noted, a broad range of perspectives is needed if we want to achieve democratic decision making in forestry.

Similarly, study Participant 3 thought regular citizens without any direct stake should be involved, saying *“there should be also some kind of general call for people, just regular citizens who may be interested without a defined stakeholder affiliation. That’s one of the frustrating things with these processes is we don’t have just regular citizen representation.”* As discussed in

the literature review, deliberative democratic theory and practice revealed that ordinary citizens are able to make complex judgments if they engage in focused deliberation process (Parkinson et. al, 2012). In contrast there was only one study participant who believed it is almost impossible to get the general public to participate in something that they do not have a direct stake in and they suggested that government should be relied on to bring that public interest perspective to the table. However, all other participants disagreed with this idea.

It is important to keep in mind that attracting regular citizens into forestry deliberations might be time-consuming and costly, as two study participants pointed out: *“It is harder to get very decentralized, diffuse voices for sure”* (Participant 20), and *“If you’re just bringing in totally cold members of the general public, it takes a lot of time and resources to bring people up to speed, to inform them, to expose them to different arguments and different perspectives and different ideas and give them time to deliberate and reflect and come to their own positions”* (Participant 1). Yet, Participant 1 felt that involving regular citizens and preparing them for deliberation is feasible if the new model targets particular issues and if it is a one-time event. It does not have to be regular sessions:

...All of that can be a very time consuming and resource-intensive process. But it might work for particular issue, getting input on a specific issue and it doesn’t have to be people who have been engaged before and people who are going to continue to be engaged after (Participant 1).

In fact, four study participants suggested methods to select members of the public to represent public interest. Participant 6 suggested employing a method similar to the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. They explained they were looking for ordinary citizens, not experts. They define five criteria including things such as gender diversity and geographic diversity and then invited citizens who had those characteristics to apply. There was voting body who chose the candidates based on the criteria: *“They really want citizens. They weren’t asking for an expert. They were asking for citizens that had these kinds of characteristics. And I think if we were to establish those [for the new model] and invite people to apply, and then it would go to the voting body”* (Participant 6). Participant 4 suggested a similar approach but instead of a voting body they thought the government can choose from candidates who applied: *“Government would look over*

all the applicants and see how they can put together a balance of interests and perspectives with people who claim to have talent”.

Similarly, Participant 12 suggested to apply three main criteria to select citizens: “*representational criteria,*” “*knowledge criteria,*” and “*interest criteria.*” In other words, we should select a sample of participants who represent the public and are interested in forestry and have some basic knowledge. Participant 19 also thought citizen selection based on criteria would let us have diversity and inclusion. Otherwise, if we go with random selection, it will not guarantee inclusion and diversity: “*I do like the random selection piece, but of course, with randomness, when you roll a die, you don’t expect to always get a one... randomness could get you diversity, but it doesn’t guarantee it ... if you’re trying to get a broad perspectives and not homogenous thinking. Then random selection might not actually get you what you’re looking for*” (Participant 19).

Furthermore, it was noted that one important criteria might be looking for specific age group representation, such as the youth group. Some participants actually pointed out that bringing youth perspectives into future direction for forest management is essential. This participant felt that special effort needs to be put in place to engage young people in long-term forestry decisions. At present, most participation processes tend to include more middle-aged and retired male participants, as previous studies have shown. Some study participants agreed with the following comment from Participant 4:

I would say that youth are often avoided. Oftentimes it turns out that elders have more interest. People like me, retirees, have more time. Presumably we also have wisdom, but that’s not always the case. Youth have different priorities in their lives, but I would say that people in the kind of university age, late teens, early twenties, some of them could make very strong contributions if they were reached out to, if they knew about the opportunities (Participant 4).

Having a mechanism to engage with people at different age groups, much like the women and marginalized groups and new Canadians and so on, we actually targeted those groups (Participant 7).

Additionally, study Participant 20 suggested “*...encouraging individuals not to be the sort of lone wolf, but for individuals to really have a group that they’re talking to that for one thing that*

would improve the quality of their participation” (Participant 20). There could be approaches to select some participants as a civil society representative group.

Finally, some study participants pointed out that citizen engagement is appropriate for long-term and strategic issues at the policy level. Their ideas included “*The most important time to include the general public is in the long-term planning. I think the overall planning level that probably has the greatest relevance for public involvement.*” (Participant 10) and “*I want the public to have an opportunity to show what’s lacking in broader public policy..., public participation at the policy level*” (Participant 9). In fact, one study participant found it more appropriate to look for “*value holders,*” citizens who represents different values, rather than stakeholders:

I’m not personally at this level in favor of asking people who are considered stakeholders. I think we would want to find people who are values holders. We’d want to have people coming from diverse backgrounds and interests and values to be able to work together. I don’t think having direct economic interests is one of the most appropriate way to go for strategic decisions. We do look for a broader public and ask for a broader kind of values-based set of individuals (Participant 6).

6.3.2 Stakeholders

Stakeholders’ engagement and recruitment in a participation program is not as challenging as the public and Indigenous rights holders because as one participant mentioned “*they already have direct stake*” (Participant 17). The important element of stakeholders’ involvement is identifying those groups and making sure no one is left out. For this reason, Participant 5 suggested to do an analysis of stakeholders and then investigate what kind of approach suits them:

I think we need serious thinking from a public participation point of view, like stakeholder analysis to think about, who are the stakeholders that are interested? What kind of approach could meet them?... I would like to see structured thinking about that (Participant 5)

As some participants pointed out, it is important to keep in mind that stakeholders are not representing the public and they have a reason and interest to participate, e.g., “*Let’s not pretend. These people are not representing the public. They’re just a segment of the public, but they are*

not the general public. They all have their stake. They have a reason for wanting to participate” (Participant 17). However, they do represent different values, such as recreational values, environmental values, ecological values, social values, etc. As Participant 17 noted *“All those different values are part of that forest. And so, if you’re creating this group, that stakeholder group, then you’re saying that all of those values are important. They all deserve recognition and participation in this decision.”*

During the interview I asked study participants to identify different stakeholder groups that are interested in forestry in Canada. Five main groups were identified by study participants: forest companies and other industry groups, provincial governments, local governments and municipalities, environmental support groups (NGO and ENGOs), forest users such as recreational users, trappers’ associations, fishery associations, and tourism associations.

The only stakeholder group that some participants believed might not get involved were environmental organizations, because of different reasons such as mistrust of a sponsor of a program, inadequate resources, geographical problem. Participant 9 felt that *“some environmental non-government organizations won’t participate, but it’s either because they highly mistrust the sponsor or proponent, or it’s because they simply don’t have the resources to engage.”* Participant 3 saw another problem, noting *“[lack of NGO participation] it’s partly just a geography problem. If those organizations are largely urban-based.”* Participant 1 insisted that civil society organizations aren’t representative of the general public, *“Civil society groups aren’t necessarily automatically representative of the general public. Engaging civil society can be useful in that regard to shortcut that process a bit, but then you sacrifice some representativeness.”*

In terms of stakeholder selection, Participant 3 thought it should be done by sector: *“I think doing it by sector is legitimate.”* Further, Participant 13 suggested to identify which sector is “critical” and “valuable” to this participation program and then putting together lists. Participant 10 thought after identifying stakeholders, it is better to approach their leadership and ask them to choose a member to represent their organization.

6.3.3 Indigenous Rights Holders

Indigenous people are rights holders, and they are *“not just another stakeholder”* (Smith, 1996). There are two types of rights holders when it comes to forest land in Canada: tenure holders

(forest companies) and Indigenous rights holders. As Participant 12 pointed out, these two groups have some rights that distinguish them from other groups and give them more power in terms of negotiations. In this section, Indigenous rights holders are the topic of discussion.

Indigenous groups have treaty rights and constitutional rights over land in Canada. Therefore, their involvement in any forestry participation program should come first as some study participants noted, e.g., *“if there is Indigenous, if there are first nations who have rights in those areas, which they do, that consultation and that discussion should occur before all of this other stuff occurs”* (Participant 17), and *“So those [Indigenous groups], I would put them up first”* (Participant 4). Additionally, outcomes of Indigenous groups involvement have influence and power over other engagement process as they specific rights, so it is better to involve them early in the process:

The Indigenous consultation and outcome has a huge influence on the stakeholder outcome... And the stakeholders come up with an idea or the public comes up with an idea and the First Nations or Indigenous communities, they're not in agreement with that. And all of a sudden, they become the bad guys. They become the people that who are stopping development, who are stopping this plan for going ahead. And that's not fair because they have rights (Participant 17).

Moreover, as one participant pointed out, FACs or other public participation programs at the lower level of decision-making processes don't have the capacity to sort out legal rights:

I would say it's sometimes difficult for Indigenous groups to participate in those processes because they come at it from a different perspective... what they would argue is their treaty and constitutional rights. So, it's difficult to try and sort legal rights issues out. And in fact, you can't; in that kind of a process, forestry planners are not in a position to mediate those kinds of issues (Participant 18)

Some study participant observed that Indigenous groups tend to participate less in FACs and other engagement process due to various reason such as governance and political issues, resources issues, and logistical issues. For example, one participant felt that *“they [Indigenous groups] don't participate even though they're highly effected, partly because of the political structure”* (Participant 4), another noted that *“we do know that Indigenous peoples participate less. They have their own processes. Some of them might be logistical reasons why they don't*

participate” (Participant 6). In fact, if lack of Indigenous participation is due to lack of resources, government and industry should build capacity for Indigenous groups and provide appropriate resources, as Participant 3 pointed out, *“both government and the companies I think need to help build the capacity for Indigenous communities to be able to do this.”*

Finally, some study participants suggested Indigenous groups should have their own distinct processes designed specifically for them, e.g., *“Indigenous peoples have their own processes and have their own desires and have rights that need to be recognized. So, we can’t treat them as Peggy Smith said so long ago, “just another stakeholder”*” (Participant 7), and *“In Ontario, the forest industry, when it’s time for a forest management plan to be created, is obliged to offer the Indigenous people their own custom-designed process for engagement”* (Participant 4). Following in this vein, Participant 9 said that *“I don’t want to answer for Indigenous communities, but my suggestion would be is the structures that we develop for these forestry management committees or whatever, they are non-Indigenous structures.”*

6.4 How Should It Be Organized?

As described in Chapter 4, elements of meaningful public participation program expressed by study participants provided a foundation for designing a new model for citizens and stakeholder involvement in forestry. In the last section of interviews, I intended to explore further about what a new model might look like, so I asked study participants a series of questions related to organizational structure, meeting characteristics, and sponsorship of their preferred approach. The data were organized into three main themes: meeting frequency, participation tools, and sponsorship.

6.4.1 Meeting Frequency

Participants felt that the frequency of engagement meetings very much depends on the focus of the public participation program. As mentioned in the previous section, most felt that any new program would need to be constituted across different decision-making levels, or tiers, and meeting frequency would be different depending on the focus. Explicitly, Participants 5 and 6 noted the importance of discussion level on determining the frequency, saying *“I think it’s really a question of what you’re discussing because you cannot do regular meetings, if the purpose is to make a plan for five years, then you should revisit in five years. Well, you don’t need to meet every month. Maybe you do during the time that you’re planning, but once the plan is done,*

you're on reset" (Participant 5), and *"I think that [meeting frequency] depends on the level at which those are being held"* (Participant 6).

As study participants pointed out, participant meetings can become less frequent as the process moves further from day-to-day operational decisions to higher level decisions, as I have depicted in Figure 6. One participant suggested that perhaps just one intensive consultation for a short period of time would serve the purpose for determining forest policy direction at the provincial level. However, regular participation might be needed for providing input on operational decisions and yearly planning:

If you're doing a public participation for operational there should be a regular meeting because things are happening on the ground every year. But for more strategic, maybe it's every 10 years. You need to address that in your forest policy if it's going to be 5 or 10 years that you need to revise (Participant 5).

Based on the interview data, I identified three levels of forestry decision-making that require different types of participation processes. As shown in Figure 6 below, at the top is the forest policy level such as issuing a long-term forest license or renewing a tenure license. The middle level includes strategic decisions that forest company and governments should make after issuing a license, such as five-year strategic modeling and planning. The lower level is for operational and day-to-day decisions (e.g., yearly plans). The level of the forest decisions defines the frequency of participation processes, so as one goes from bottom to top, participation meetings become less frequent, although in the case of the top level they could be very frequent but for a short period of time, perhaps one year. As mentioned in the last section, participants also felt that the selection of people to engage also depends very much on the forest decision-making level. The higher a decision-making level is, the broader participant selection should be. Study participants noted ordinary citizens are more interested in these higher-level decisions about how public forests should be managed.



Figure 6. Forest level decisions identified by study participants

In terms of the top forest policy and normative decisions level of the figure, my participants felt that broad participation including ordinary citizens who are value holders rather than stakeholders was needed. They noted further that the participatory process should be intense, but given that this would be a one-time process, it would be over when they accomplish their goal. As two participants noted, “*It can be like a one-time deal specific for tenure, for forestry license*” (Participant 11), and “*For the higher-level policy, I think the frequency is a bit different. And in my case, it was intense in a short period of time but after, it was over. We cannot expect those things to keep going*” (Participant 5). In fact, there is probably no transitioning to the next level as Participant 1 suggested - once the group finalizes their input their job is over. Participant 1 used the example of the Ontario Forest Policy Panel described in Chapter 5:

I guess in one sense, it might not be the same people. So maybe they don't transition. Maybe it's okay. We've come up with our, final report or whatever input we're generating out of this focused process. We took on this topic or this issue, we've dug into it here. We provided our best advice, our inputs, competing arguments and reasons behind whatever it is that we've produced. And it's okay, excellent. Now we go back to our regular lives...my answer is you don't necessarily transition people to what's next (Participant 1).

Strategic decisions in forestry are shown in the middle level of Figure, 5 indicating episodic and ad hoc processes as suggested by my participants. Some thought that at this level meeting frequency would depend on key decision points during the forest company activities. In other words, a participation process should be in place when a forest company has to make a major decision in relation to long-term planning (e.g., preparing a proposal for EA)

It's [strategic planning] going to be episodic anyway... you may not be able to set it as a specific time, but as stage of activity. Then whenever you get to a certain stage where they'd got a draft report, another meeting then, and then a review of the final (Participant 13).

Despite being episodic, the process still can incorporate various participation tools, multiple meetings, and different groups:

Well, I think in a 20-year planning, long-term planning, it ends up becoming episodic because you're doing it once. Even though it's episodic, you can still have multiple meetings in the 20-year planning process. Because it's very important, I can see for certain groups, you're going to have multiple meetings. (Participant 10)

In addition, some study participants noted that at the strategic level there should be a way to review forest licenses and to investigate major new information or concerns. They suggested to have forest license check-ins every few years depends on the length of the license. This will be episodic as well but with predictable schedule as three participants suggested:

I do think probably every five years or when there's major new information and concerns, for example, maybe a lot more information about a species at risk that I think at least the harvest allocation decisions should be openly reviewed and discussed. They're supposed to be rigorously reviewed internally, but we have learned by experience that does not happen even for endangered say fish species. But I would say every five years probably for tenure there should be an opportunity for the public to see the results (Participant 20).

Strategic-level process could probably be episodic. I don't know how often the check-in would be... within their strategic planning framework might be, once every two years or once every three years, I don't know exactly, but I think it could be episodic (Participant 6).

It would depend on the length of the license. If you're issuing a 50-year license, I definitely think it would be appropriate to require a review every 5 years, 10 years, provide the public opportunity to indicate any things that aren't working (Participant 2).

However, some study participants identified problems associated with episodic processes, including difficulty in scheduling and set up and difficulty in keeping flow and dialogue. Participant 1 felt that *"If you only have episodic focused participation, it's very easy to lose the thread of overall what's going on,"* while Participant 20 noted that *"In terms of ongoing dialogue that builds upon past information and future, it is better for some kind of commitment for continuity."* The role of facilitators and the organization sponsoring the participation program become central to overcome these challenges:

So, you might end up with quite a long stretch between. I think the facilitator has a key role to play in that. If the facilitator, which is usually the case is involved in setting up the next meeting and knows what is going to be involved, then the facilitator should have between meeting contact and that it's just a good practice to make sure people know that this is still a serious process (Participant 9).

Finally, operational decisions are at the bottom part of Figure 6 and for participants this indicates frequent and regular meeting processes with a focus on more locally based participation. Some felt that if FACs were improved in the ways noted above that they might be appropriate processes to fulfill those needs.

6.4.2 Diverse Participation Packages and Tools

As mentioned in the literature review, designing a meaningful public participation program requires incorporating multiple tools and techniques (Krishnaswamy, 2012; Beckley et al., 2006). Considering the appropriate mix of tools and techniques becomes even more important when designing participatory processes for the different levels noted above. As Participant 3 said, *"My first thought about this is to ensure that there is a diverse package of input possibilities. A narrow range of tools is a kiss of death in participatory work."* Participant 2 added that *"I do think it's important to really think about the audience and then provide a range of tools that suits the different people that you need to involve."* It is important to keep in mind that in thinking about a new framework this does not necessarily mean creating new tools and techniques – it could mean than digging more deeply into the vast participation toolbox that was

identified in Chapter 2. One participant suggested that the new forestry participation program should consist of diverse participation tools and techniques, depending on “*who you’re talking to*” and “*how you’re collecting information from them*”:

Thinking about public engagement as a program, not as a specific tool and that program is constituted from multiple tools. And like different stakeholders may require different tools and to be as diverse and comprehensive in who you’re talking to and how you’re collecting information from them (Participant 3).

Participants also felt that the public can be involved through variety of participation tools and techniques such as deliberative polling, consensus conferences, and a citizen jury to influence strategic decisions that government has authority over. Citizens can be also involved as part of a civil society representative group in the strategic decisions that are under forest company authority through tools such as a panel or task force type of approach. As one of the study participants suggested, panel members or task force experts can define some criteria and select from ordinary citizens to represent interest of public in the strategic forest decisions such as 10-year forest planning.

Moreover, three study participants suggested having separate sessions for different participants, for example, offering dedicated citizen engagement sessions. Participant 2 suggested that “*If you’re looking for stakeholder engagement, you can do some dedicated stakeholder engagement sessions, but always making sure that there’s a public opportunity... if you’re looking specifically for public engagement, I think having kind of a broad range of tools, keeping in mind your kind of target populations.*” Participant 3 said that “*I think there’s definitely a role for those two kinds of individual engagements. Again, it’s a bigger investment on the part of the company. They would rather just have everybody on one committee meet eight times a year, everybody goes home. But that would, as an auditor or as an academic, looking at a company’s program, if I saw that they were doing multiple things, multiple groups, that would impress me.*” Participant 1 suggested including focused and dedicated sessions on specific major issues.

Other participants suggested, along these same lines, that input strategic decisions could be the focus of such dedicated participatory event. They noted that not every citizen or organization is interested in every aspect of the long-term forest management plans. For

example, a citizen group might be more interested in discussing the ecological impact of logging. As one participant 1 explained:

One last thing, not every person or organization is interested or has expertise on every question that they may have been asked to provide input on. So, if you do have this sort of focused sessions... Hey, we want input on this. I don't know, it doesn't have to be the whole body all the time working on every question. Because that's another thing that people get overloaded ... We can get various different groups to work on different sets of issues (Participant 1).

Many participants felt overall that when a forest company incorporates different tools and techniques to collect input on forest major decisions, and makes an effort to involve citizens in strategic decisions, it will send good sign and it might help to reduce opposition against their final decisions and proposed plans. Participant 3 highlighted this point: *“That's what impresses me when I see a company, doing multiple things and really trying to, look under every rock and log for who are the people that are affected by our operations. And are we listening to them and how might they better be engaged?”*

6.4.2.1 Online Tools to Broaden Participation

Many study participants brought up online engagement as a way to broaden participation in higher-level policy and strategic decisions. Participant 6 captured this sentiment in saying, *“Maybe going online for those kinds of things [strategic decisions] would allow people from all parts of the province to enter into those debates.”* Participant 13 adds, *“we're getting much larger participation in those kinds of sessions [online] than when we were doing it face-to-face, so there have been some advantages.”* (Participant 13). Suggested the potential scope that others noted, Participant 7 said *“If you're trying to reach groups in remote areas and get broader representation, there's amazing potential with that.”* Perhaps the most frequently noted advantages of online engagement was broadening participation. Online tools can be specifically appropriate for citizen involvement as Participant 2 noted: *“In terms of involving the public, having online forums seems to be a good way to engage people. And by that it could mean an online town hall. The City of Winnipeg is doing consultation right now on their development plan. And they actually have kind of an ongoing, online discussion forum, which I think was an interesting approach”*

More importantly, as some study participants noted, forests are usually far from population centres and an online forum can create opportunities for interested citizens and environmental organizations across a province to get involved in strategic forestry decisions. Participant 20's quote captures this idea: *"There should be much more online. We're talking about public lands, provincial public lands and so that would involve people who can vote themselves, in other words, rather than be hand-picked."* Online tools can provide opportunity for critics, advisors, or anyone who might be interested in a specific matter to join some meetings and present their points virtually. Participant 3 brought up an example of how online tools can facilitate the engagement of environmental organizations and other interested people:

I think that would be valuable in some places. For example, if it's in British Columbia and it's northern, some mill town in Northern BC and, David Suzuki Foundation wants to comment or, interface with their citizen committee, an online format could be quite beneficial there. Save a lot of carbon if they were going to fly up to Trepanier or something like that.

Participant 15 suggested that forest companies should utilize online tools to involve interested citizens and environmental organizations across a province, rather than just leaning on local communities' engagement in strategic decisions:

And going back to the logging licenses in Manitoba, we have the company roll out to the small communities, which are often resource-dependent communities within an hour's drive of them. And they said, oh we held public meetings and they will never come back to Winnipeg to hold these public meetings, even though this is where a majority of people live and they're dealing with public land. So that requirement of having an online meeting that would definitely add...

Moreover, participants felt that online forums have great potential in an urban setting as well and can be a powerful tool for involving younger people: *"I think in an urban setting like Winnipeg, it can be really useful, especially in times like now where, in person events aren't necessarily as available"* (Participant 2). Additionally, online tools can reduce the costs and resources of participation program: *"The online format saves money and resources. It's also good if you do something that covers a large geographic scope"* (Participant 11).

It was also noted, however, that online tools might exclude some other interested citizens in rural areas or older people who do not have the capacity to engage online, especially small communities in the resource hinterland of Canada; *“I think it’s important to understand who can you bring into the room and who are you still excluding. Online participation is in favour of urban areas in Canada. And so, if you’re trying to do it in forestry, you might get a lot of urban perspectives, you might not run into out in a rural area.”* (Participant 19). There should be some sort of offline methods for people who might not have access to necessary technology and tools for online participation. As Participant 7 suggested, any attempt to increase online engagement first should be paired with technical capacity considerations and the infrastructure availability and making sure it is fair and even. Secondly, training should be provided prior to the meetings so that everyone can sign up and join easily.

Despite having many advantages, all participants felt that online tools cannot replace direct interaction. As Participant 5 described, *“There’s richness in what happened before the meeting, after the meeting, when you’re in the break, and all the things that Zoom cannot really do.”* Some other disadvantageous of online techniques were also identified by study participants. Some noted that trying to establish relationships and encourage the development of some degree of trust or even mutual respect is difficult virtually, as Participant 16 captured: *“If you’re communicating with someone face to face, you look in their eyes and see their facial patterns, and that tells you a lot more than their words, the tone of their voice. I don’t think you can do things and build trust without seeing each other.”* Participant 9 added, *“We’re getting a little bit more used to using electronic media instead of face-to-face meetings. So that can help reduce costs, but it is no substitute for creating the initial trust that the committee must have.”*

Constraints on the number of people that can be engaged meaningfully online was also identified by participants. In this regard, Participant 8 said *“So, especially one-on-one like this [our zoom interview] that’s very good or a few people on a screen I think has really worked, but you get to a certain level... you can’t have 30 people and expect them all to actually pay attention.”* It was noted that good online discussion requires a significant time investment in monitoring and moderating the discussion. Participant 4 believed the best online methods for conversation are probably private. They suggested that an online forum should be curated, especially if it is open. Participant 5 also believed that anonymity will create problems. This participant noted that they participated in an online public participation in New Brunswick, in

which they provided their names to prevent difficulties associated with anonymity. The new problem they faced was some people did not feel comfortable with the government hearing their position because of the fear of repercussion.

One participant also thought that online platforms like Zoom constrain and change the dialogue tune:

You can get much larger participation and broaden the program, but it does constrain what you're going to say or at least you say it differently because you are there in a group session, you're all remote different places. It may be being recorded by one individual or the leader or facilitator, whomever. Participants are more open and honest in face-to-face conversation” (Participant 13).

Finally, one study participant noted the online engagement can become “a check box” to fulfill the company’s requirement for public engagement. They later suggested the online forums should tie to a specific purpose or decisions:

I just see them as a check box... I'm not saying that online spaces are bad, they can certainly create a citizen discussion, but there has to be a purpose to it. Are you actually listening to that citizens' group or are you just holding these monthly meetings because it's something that you're required to do as part of your license (Participant 17).

6.4.3 Sponsorship and Providing Resources

Sponsorship was another of the main themes noted by participants as having an impact on meaningful public participation. This issue was raised in Chapter 4, but here I present data related to exploring sponsorship as a process design consideration. At the forest policy level, it is probably safe to conclude that government is going to initiate and sponsor any participation program, but what about strategic and operational decisions that a forest products company has more authority over? The responses regarding this latter question were a bit surprising in that many study participants believed government should still lead and sponsor participatory programs or at least co-sponsor them as discussed below.

As discussed previously, some study participants from environmental organizations were skeptical about any program run by a forest company because they mistrust the forest industry. As Participant 11 suggested, “*Government has to facilitate that process... Industry wants to*

return shares to their shareholders. They want to make profits. So they're going to do the least amount of effort as possible. So I don't think an industry, or a business can design something that will please the public and the NGO community." Participant 15 added that, *"These are logging companies, their task is not to create forests. Their task is to log, they've got a material they want to get out... And if you're worried about forests, then that's not the entity to speak to. We need direction from the government."* Additionally, some study participants believed forest companies should not run public participation programs as they might get control over the process: *"Who's gonna pay the money? So, then you require the company to pay for it then do they control it now? Because they hold the purse strings* (Participant 1).

On the contrary, some people might argue that they do not trust government because they are a key stakeholder in that they collect the resource rents. A few study participants suggested forest companies can provide money and resources for the participation program, but independent facilitation should be put in place to run the process and allocate resources:

And I know the forestry companies certainly in Alberta and Saskatchewan that I've worked with, they've run the processes and paid for them. So in other words, sponsored them. I don't think that's the best way to go. I think we need an independent process or an independent entity facilitator, whatever, to be leading the process, the money can be provided by the company (Participant 13).

Another line of thought offered by a few participants is highlighted by Participants 1 and 17, who noted the participatory programs should be seen as independent even though there will be some connections between the program, the forest industry and government. For example, government might establish mandates for involving citizens and other stakeholder in strategic decisions and the industry might fulfil that mandate by hiring a third-party to run participation program; however, neither government nor industry should manipulate the process outcome in favour of their interests:

The process should be seen as independent, and not driven by the interests and priorities of either the company or government. Obviously at the same time, it's going to be following rules may be established by government and it's going to be feeding information into the company. So, there's going to obviously be ties there (Participant 1).

I don't mind if they're [the forest company] sponsoring the program, but when they sponsor the program, that's all they do. They just give them money or they give the time or they give the resources, but it's the group who has control over how that works
(Participant 17)

In fact, as Participant 13 suggested there can be a written legal document indicating that money is provided by the company, but they do not have any control over the outcome of the process. This same participant later suggested the following:

Let's say it's a forestry company who runs the process. On an ongoing basis, but there has to be something in place like a written legal document that guarantees that the money will be there over, but they can't say we don't want to fund a discussion about this topic or that topic. So, the money needs to be put into some sort of account or neutral thing and controlled by the facilitators

Most participants felt that there should be some mechanisms to assure process neutrality. That might help convince a wider variety of individuals and groups to get involved, especially if they have been avoiding participation because they do not trust the sponsor(s).

6.5 Summary

I organized the data in this chapter to answer three fundamental issues in relation to designing a new framework for involving citizen and stakeholder organizations in forest management in Canada. The questions included: 1) what should the focus of participatory programs be; 2) who should be involved in those programs; and, 3) how should the programs be organized. Interview data revealed that the decision-making level (the main focus of the participatory process) is critical to consider in answering each of these questions. The research results made it evident that the any new model of involvement should cover different decision levels, ranging from operational decisions to strategic and normative decisions in forestry, whereas FACs have tended to focus only on operational decisions (McGurk, Sinclair, & Diduck, 2006; Nenko et al., 2019; Lindgren, 2019). FACs did not significantly advance Sustainable Forest Management practices, and their contribution is limited to minor outcomes and operational decisions (Lindgren, 2019).

As recommended by Lindgren (2019), there is a need to develop new ways to practice public engagement processes to advance SFM. As data presented in this chapter suggests, the new model can start with the highest level of forestry decisions, such as renewal of a tenure license, and go all the way down to the operational level decisions. In fact, at each level of forest decisions, different group of participants and various tools and approaches are needed. Lockwood et al. (2010), developed eight principles to provide normative guidance for the establishment of new natural resource governance models. My study participants also pointed out some of those principals similar to the literature when explaining how the new participation programs might look. For example, they suggested developing separate public participation processes for different levels of decisions; however, there should be strong linkages between processes vertically (between different levels) and horizontally (at the same level). There could be an organization like the Model Forest Network to connect processes at all three levels and facilitate information and knowledge sharing, learning, and capacity building. Supporting this, integration was noted as one of the main principals of Lockwood et al. (2010), referring “to the connection between, and coordination across, different governance levels; (b) the connection between, and coordination across, organizations at the same level of governance; and (c) the alignment of priorities, plans, and activities across governance organizations” (p. 995).

Forest value identification was another major theme that emerged from interview data about the focus of the new model. The literature fully supports having forest values as an important outcome of participatory processes. Lockwood et al. (2010) discussed inclusiveness of different interests and values as one the good-governance principles, and Stewart & Sinclair (2007) also viewed inclusiveness as an important element of meaningful participation. Some study participants suggested starting the new process by identifying different values that citizens and other stakeholders hold towards forestry. The next step would be to evaluate how industrial forestry operations impact those values and to make the forest industry accountable for negative effects. Moreover, one study participant suggested the focus of the new model can be democratic oversight of public land to make sure forests are being managed sustainably under the provincial tenure system. Other suggestions were made by study participants such as re-evaluation of current forest licenses considering over-allocation of timber under some licenses.

Three groups of people identified that should get involved in forestry decisions included: general public (ordinary citizens), stakeholders, and rights holders (Indigenous groups). Data

revealed selecting appropriate participants as so much depends on the level of forestry decisions. For example, citizens and value holders' involvement is more relevant to higher level decisions. As study participants pointed out, strategic and normative decisions require broader participation of citizens and stakeholder organizations, whereas operational decisions need more locally based participation. Recommendations were made by study participants about how to select members of the general public and stakeholder organizations. Indigenous group involvement was also seen to need different mechanisms for involvement, as they have treaty rights and constitutional rights over land in Canada. Some participants suggested having a distinct process specifically designed for Indigenous groups.

Finally, this chapter discusses what a new framework might look like. It is evident from the data I collected that the new program should operate across different decision-making levels. Meeting frequency, participant selection, and participation tools and techniques will be different depending on the level. As shown in Figure 6, the top is forest policy level dealing with normative decisions such as issuing a long-term forest license or renewing a tenure license; the middle level would involve strategic decisions that forest company should make after getting a license such as 10-year strategic planning; and the lower level involves operational and day-to-day decisions. As we go from bottom to top, participation meetings become less frequent, and participant selection becomes broader. Study participants noted ordinary citizens are more interested in higher-level decisions and they can be involved through variety of participation tools and techniques at the top and middle level of the decision-making hierarchy. For example, government can involve citizens in major forestry decisions and provincial policy direction through various tools such as deliberative polling, consensus conferences, and citizen juries. Citizens can be also involved as a civil society representative group in the strategic decisions that are under forest company authority through tools such as a panel or task force type of approach. Many study participants brought up online engagement for broadening participation for the higher-level and strategic decisions. It is important to keep in mind that the new model is not referring to a specific tool or approach: rather it is a program consisting of a variety of tools at different levels of forestry decision making.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Policy Implications

7.1 Introduction

In last few decades forest management in Canada has moved towards implementing actions aimed at more sustainable forest management. These actions have included a rethinking about how the public is involved in forest management, particularly the inclusion of diverse public values and fair and effective decision-making. As my research indicates, this is still very much a work in progress. Forest Advisory Committees have become a popular mechanism used by forest companies to involve the public and other stakeholders in forest management (McGurk, Sinclair, & Diduck, 2006; Parkins et al., 2006; Nenko et al., 2019). However, many scholars (e.g., Parkins et al., 2006; Reed, 2010; Richardson et al., 2011; Parkins and Sinclair, 2014; Miller & Nadeau, 2017; Nenko et al., 2019; Lindgren, 2019) as well as my participants have noted significant shortcomings associated with FACs. In perhaps the most recent study of FACs, Lindgren (2019) concluded that their contribution to sustainable forest management is limited and that they were more influential in relation to operational and other short-term decisions. These conclusions are also supported by my empirical findings.

I feel that the findings of my research further underpin the original purpose my study, which was to rethink the FAC approach to involving the public and stakeholder organizations in forest management decisions in Canada by developing a new framework for such involvement. The specific objectives were to 1) investigate how various jurisdictions involve the public and stakeholders in forest management decisions; 2) identify leading-edge approaches for involvement in forest management decisions that are more democratic and deliberative; 3) examine ways the public and stakeholders, other than forest product companies and government, can be incentivized to be involved in forest management; and, 4) develop a framework for involvement in forest decisions in Canada in the context of the tenure approach that captures the findings related to the objectives above and ensures greater public involvement. The research was undertaken over six-month period from July 30, 2020, to January 30, 2021. The primary data collection method was semi-structured interview via Zoom, followed by a qualitative thematic analysis of the data (See Figure 4, Chapter 3). This final chapter describes key conclusions regarding each of the study objectives.

7.2 Public and Stakeholder Involvement in Forest Management Decisions

Public participation in forest governance in Canada is weak, especially at the strategic and normative levels. All study participants who discussed long-term decisions claimed that there is currently no structured process available for the public to influence forest management planning and policy decisions, and these are mostly undertaken by forest companies without adequate public engagement. The FAC approach to involving people is being widely used, but the activities of these committees are largely focused on operational decisions. The FAC process has many weaknesses, as I have outlined and has been captured in the literature (e.g., Parkins et al., 2006; McGurk et al., 2006; Reed, 2010; Richardson et al., 2011; Nenko et al., 2019; Lindgren, 2019)

Some participants did note that environmental assessment provides some level of opportunity for the public to engage in forest management planning decisions, however, these too were noted as having significant weaknesses. Two major weaknesses include: the EA process starting after a forest management proposal is developed, and that the nature of public participation in the EA is discretionary both in terms of whether and how it occurs. Furthermore, the literature establishes that in terms of the how, EA participatory processes lean strongly toward passive techniques (opportunities to write a letter or attend an open house) (Sinclair & Diduck, 2017; Stewart & Sinclair, 2007). There is also little evidence of FACs being part of EA processes despite their engagement in the forests under consideration.

With the above in mind, participants also indicated that the FAC model may still have utility in the context of a tenure system and in relation to operational decisions. A number of weaknesses in the current FAC system were also outlined in Chapter 6. Some of these weaknesses could be overcome through better membership selection processes, bringing in new voices and facilitating membership turnover, independent and strong facilitation, and tying their work to specific operational decisions. FACs do not generally provide the opportunity to influence operational decisions, as they are set up to participate in the types of higher-level decisions that participants felt require open consultation, such as protected-area designations. Regardless of changes that might be made to FACs, there is still a need to establish participatory programs for making normative and strategic forestry decisions.

7.3 Deliberative Approaches for Involving Citizens in Forestry Management

In considering deliberative approaches, I was looking for talk-based techniques for problem solving achieved through arguing, demonstrating, expressing, and persuading, and the democratic function of a process through the inclusion of multiple and plural voices, interests, and concerns based on feasible equality. I found that the central approach to involvement in forest management, which is the FAC model, does not action these well. For example, FACs tended to have poor membership recruitment systems and they are often made up of aging white men that are in some way associated with the forest products industry, or a related industry/activity. As discussed in the literature review, the FAC model does not encourage participation from a diverse public (Egunyu et al, 2020; Richardson et al., 2011). They also have little or no influence on the outcomes, even at the operational level.

In looking at other approaches, I found that the Banff-Bow Valley Task Force and Round Table case study revealed most of the elements of a deliberative process such as incorporating talk-based approaches to reach consensus-based recommendation with insights and reasoning, compared to other cases I considered. This process also gave all interest sectors the same power over decision-making in the process and they reached consensus through interest-based negotiations. Each sector representative was responsible to reach out to their respective constituencies (Figure 5). The process also benefited from the independent leadership by the Task Force.

I identified other common elements of success in the cases I considered, such as the opportunity to engage and discuss in small groups, having a mandate that ensures policy implications, and representation of diverse interests and values. For example, to help guide forest policy the Ontario Forest Policy Panel utilized a panel-type approach for involving public and stakeholder organizations across Ontario in order to capture diverse the forest values that people hold. The framework produced was a high-level policy that guides forest management plans. The panel functioned over an intense year and a half period involving local communities from across the province, mainly holding face-to-face meetings in each community they went to. They limited the number of people at each meeting and they divided participants into smaller groups to let everyone contribute almost equally to the discussions and debates at hand.

Finally, connection with and influence on different engagement processes at various levels in forest management is essential. A powerful linkage between all participation programs, similar to Model Forest Network, can foster learning and capacity building and incorporate a broader range of interests into long-term forest planning and strategic decisions undertaken by forest companies.

7.4 Incentive Structures to Encourage Participation of Public and Stakeholder Organizations

My results indicate that material and purposive incentives are playing key roles in encouraging the public and some stakeholder organizations to get involved in forest management. Study participants suggested various material incentives such as honoraria, per diems, paying for childcare, and covering transportation costs for non-salaried participants who are not engaged as part of their job and/or they are not being paid to be there. They felt that it is unfair to ask the public to give their time, knowledge, and expertise for free, while some participants such as those affiliated with forest companies or government are getting paid to participate as part of their job. The interview results show that lack of material incentives discourage participation for some, especially ENGO/NGO and public participants, as has been noted by others in the forest management context.

Purposive incentives refer to indirect benefits arising from serving a cause, such as influencing a policy or decision (Clark & Wilson, 1961; Willer, 2009). Data revealed that purposive incentives provide a powerful motivation to participate for many others, especially for NGO participants and academics. Purposive incentives can be issue-oriented and attract people who are passionate about the specific policy, issue, or cause. Having an influence/impact on the decision is not only a strong purposive incentive, but it was also identified as an essential element of a meaningful participation program by some study participants and the literature (Lockwood et al., 2010). Many people want to join a forestry participation program because they value forests, and they want to have a positive impact on decisions related to managing them more sustainability.

The least frequently noted incentives were related to solidary incentives, with only a few study participants mentioning things like networking and public recognition. However, this does not mean that such incentives should be ignored in participatory design. In fact, the results show

that the consideration of incentives, and designing material, purposive, and solidary incentives into participatory programs can in fact be key to their success.

7.5 Designing a New Program for Public and Stakeholder Involvement in Forest Decisions in Canada

The results of my study reveal three decision levels in forestry decision making that require public participation. I am adopting these as being foundational to my new public participation framework: normative forest policy decisions, strategic decisions, and operational decisions (Figure 6, Chapter 6). I feel that my data show that each level actually requires its own distinct participation program. Each would utilize different tools and techniques, mainly because each needs to involve a different range of participants and address different forestry issues. However, overlap of some of the participants in each process and linkages between participation programs is also highly desirable.

The key features of a meaningful public participation program identified by study participants and the literature (e.g., Lockwood et al., 2010; Stewart & Sinclair, 2007) and outlined in Chapter 4, provide the key elements for designing participation programs. These need to be applied at all three levels. Some of the key features were good process design and independent facilitation, exposure to diverse perspectives and deliberation, the ability to influence/impact outcomes, balance of representation, and multiple tools for engagement. Although these principles serve as a common guideline for program design at all three levels, each level addresses different forestry issues, targeting different group of participants and utilizing various participation tools and techniques, as described in Chapter 6. The levels are nested, meaning that one relies on and informs the other. This requires that we think about both how decision processes can be integrated, while also designing public participation programs that are unique at each level. Figure 7 below summarizes the research findings regarding what a public participation program could consist of at each decision level.

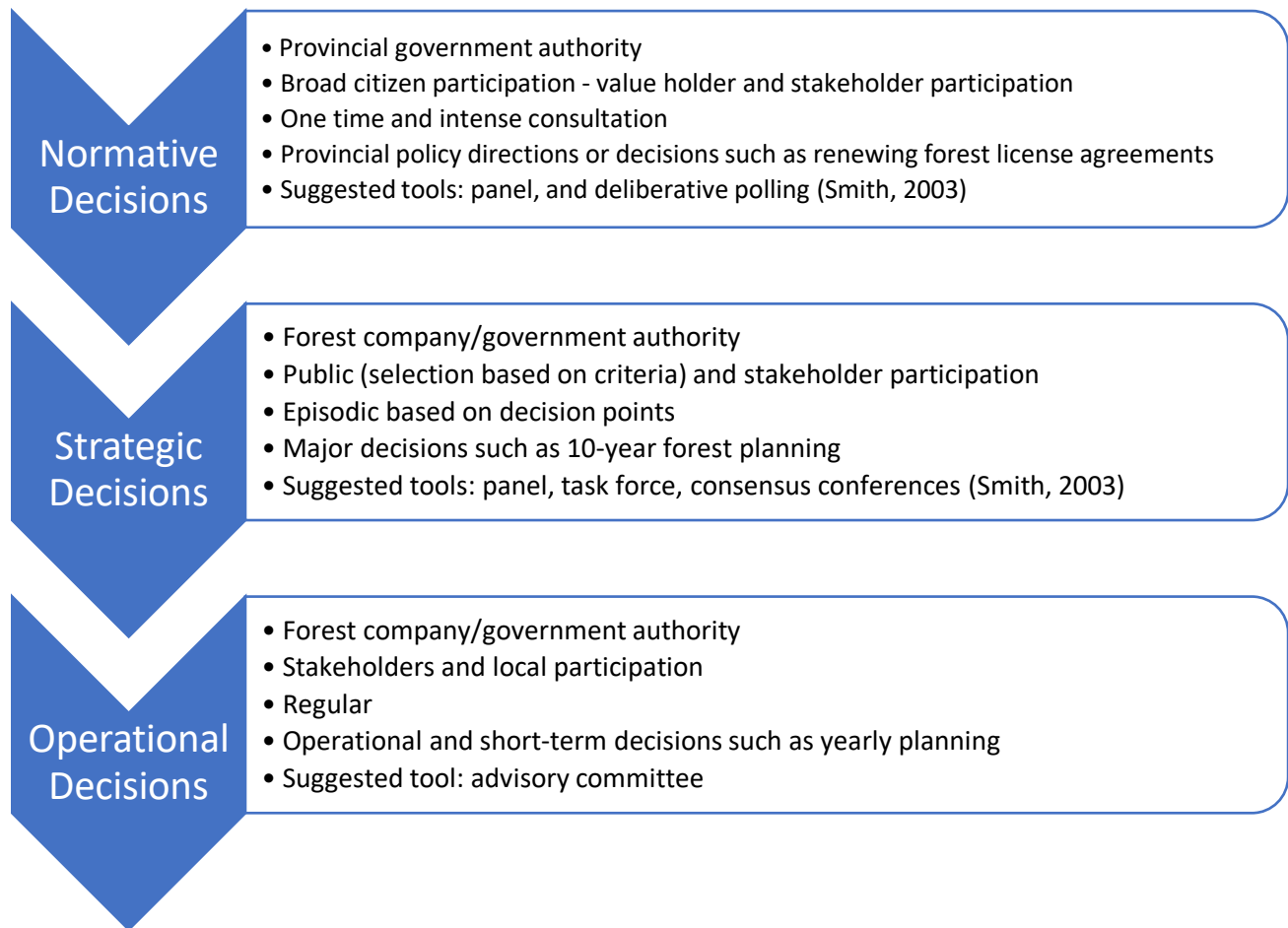


Figure 7. Three-level model of public and stakeholder involvement in forest governance in the context of industrial forestry

My research indicates that at the normative level, decisions are around the renewal or issuing of forest licenses, establishing protected areas (ie., size and number), actions needed resulting from climate change impacts on forests and forestry, and working with First Nations governments, including achieving reconciliation. Given the nature of these decisions, there is a need for broader public and stakeholder engagement, as my participants and the literature (e.g., McGurk, Sinclair, & Diduck, 2007; Smith, 2003) suggest, since they are matters of broader public interest. Keeping in mind the key elements of meaningful participation noted above, the recommended participation program at this level is a results-oriented, intense consultation taking place over a relatively short period of time. However, I envision a participatory program incorporating various tools in order to tap into the different values that citizens hold towards forest management across a given jurisdiction. One suggested method for coordinating and implementing participatory activities is a panel-type approach such as Ontario Forest Policy Panel.

The results of the study reveal that there is no structured participation program at the strategic decisions level that is under either forest company or government authority. Forest Advisory Committees have neither the power nor the capacity to influence strategic and normative decisions. There is a need for deliberative approaches to involve citizen and stakeholder organizations in the decision-making processes in order to legitimize and democratize strategic forestry decisions. Public participation programs at this level can include episodic sessions based on major decision points, such as a long-term forest management plan, before they are submitted for impact assessments. Good process design and strong facilitation, as described in Chapter 4, are necessary to overcome challenges associated with ad hoc and episodic sessions. Participants suggested a variety of tools and techniques to employ, such as task force and panel-type processes. Furthermore, my data establish that citizens without a direct stake in forestry or related activities should be involved in participatory activities at this level. Study participants suggested some techniques for selecting citizen and stakeholder organization, as explained in Chapter 6.

Although my study and literature review demonstrate that FACs have major weaknesses and shortcomings, many participants mentioned that they felt FACs can still be an appropriate approach for broader participation in operational and day-to-day forestry decisions. They did mention a number of caveats in relation to this, however, such as the need for improvements by

way of diversifying membership, designing a membership renewal policy, having FACs sponsored by governments rather than forestry companies, ensuring independent facilitation, and tying the work of FACs to specific forestry decisions.

Finally, appropriate incentive structures need to be designed for all three levels based on participant selection. Material incentives including honorariums, per diem payments, food, transportation, childcare, and covering other expenses should be a part of all participatory activities. The lack of material incentives discourages many individuals and groups from participating, particularly non-industry and non-government participants who are not engaged as part of their job. Material incentives such as an honorarium should put in place for certain types of participants in all three levels of participation programs. Purposive incentives, such as offering an opportunity to influence a specific forestry decision or policy is in fact the most powerful incentive among the three types of selective incentives. Having an impact on outcomes is not only a strong incentive but is an element contributing to meaningfulness and productive dialogue and deliberation.

7.6 Concluding comments

I completed my research during the COVID 19 pandemic and I have no doubt that this impacted my work, perhaps even in ways that are not yet apparent. In terms of design, I initially planned to collect data through four methods: literature review, semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and a focus group. However, due to COVID 19, all in-person research strategies were prohibited at the time of my data collection. As a result, I collected data through literature review and online interviews via Zoom and could not engage in direct observation, nor could I organize meaningful focus group activities. I am quite sure that the interviews would have gone at least a bit differently had they been in person. A positive consequence though was that I was able to reach more people at locations distant from me. As well, the main strategy I had established for addressing Objective 2 was through identifying and observing democratic and deliberative leading-edge approaches that can be used in forestry. Unfortunately, I was not able to observe any participatory approaches to see how they work on the ground in terms of citizen involvement in decision-making processes. These are some of the obvious consequences of COVID 19 that have had an impact on my overall understanding of how public and stakeholder engagement is working or could work.

Lastly, all of my participants clearly recognized the need for more advanced forms of public engagement in forest management. However, there was considerable interest among my participants in the status quo FACs and fewer innovative suggestions for changes in consultative processes in forest management. This may be the result of having decided, along with my committee, to focus mainly, but not exclusively, on people who had experience with forest management and possibly some of these participants took exception to the idea that some in the literature proposed - and that basically formed my starting point - that the FAC is a governance institution that has run its course and that some even describe as having failed.

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

As this is a semi-structured interview, the questions may be asked in a different order, some may be omitted, and some may be added to follow up on participants' responses while staying within the topic areas indicated by the questions on the schedule. In the interview I will focus on the areas where you have the most experience or that you think are the most important. Also, the sub-questions under the numbered questions are possible prompts and probing questions I may use and are not questions that I will necessarily ask all participants.

To be conducted in: Canada via Zoom

Field season: July 2020 to January 2021

Researcher: Rojin Amani

**PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN FOREST GOVERNANCE:
RETHINKING THE FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPROACH IN CANADA**

Introduction

I am exploring the idea of developing a new framework for involving the public and stakeholder organizations in forest management decisions in the context of the industrial tenure approach to forestry in Canada. As you may know the most common way of achieving this currently in use is the Forest Advisory Committee. I am talking to people to discuss their experience with public participation programs/processes and to identify leading edge approaches for involving the public that are more deliberative (discussion-based approaches such as citizens assemblies). Through this research I also intend to examine ways stakeholders can be incentivized to be more involved in managing public forests in Canada.

Deliberative approaches in natural resource governance

1. If you were setting up a model/frame to involve the public and stakeholders in resource management decisions that were both deliberative and democratic for forest tenure systems used in Canada (that do not lead themselves to co-management), what would you propose?

2. Have you been observed or involved in any discussion-based, democratic public participation programs related to natural resources? If yes, tell me about one of those experiences that you felt did the best job of involving the “public” and stakeholders.
 - a) What did you like/dislike about the process?
 - b) What was the goal/purpose of the process? (e.g., information exchange, consultation, or collaboration)
 - c) Was the process tied to a policy or decision?
 - d) How often and how did they meet?
 - e) How was information shared?
 - f) How was the planning and preparation time for the process managed?
 - g) How were participants chosen? Did they have specific requirements of members?
 - h) In which ways can this process be improved/made more beneficial?
3. What are your thoughts on creating online spaces for stakeholders and citizen discussion? (e.g., online local community forum)
 - a) Have you participated in any online dialogue regarding natural resources?
Describe if so.
4. Are there particular things you would suggest to improve the quality of dialogue in public participation programs and achieve meaningful participation?
5. How should participants be chosen in order to best represent the general public/citizens (e.g., random selection, recruiting a critical mass)?
6. Should public officials participate in the process side-by-side with citizens?

Incentive structures

7. What is your typical motivation for joining any public participation program regarding resource and/or environmental governance?
 - a) Are there particular incentives that motivate you to join a public participation program such as compensation, socializing, networking and group identification, influencing a policy or a decision, and etc.?
8. What incentives might help encourage the public and stakeholders to get involved?
 - a) An opportunity to help shape decisions?
 - b) To find others who care about forestry issues?

- c) Recognition among community members?
 - d) Material incentives such as compensation, providing food and beverages, and childcare?
9. In which ways have you benefited from participation?
 10. What do you expect in terms of process to ensure meaningful public participation?
 11. What are the major obstacles to getting the public (citizens) and stakeholders involved in participation process?
 - a) What are your thoughts on strategies for dealing with such obstacles?

Characteristics of a new model for forest governance in Canada

12. About 94% of Canada's forest land is public crown land, many Canadians as well as stakeholders (NGOs, ENGOs, industry, etc.) have an interest in how this crown land is managed. Assuming the preferred approach of provinces is to manage these lands through granting licences for industrial scale forestry, what in your mind could a new model of public engagement for industrial scale FM look like – in other words how best might the public and stakeholders be involved in forest management decisions?
 - a) what would be the components of your preferred approach?
 - b) What would be the focus of the consultation efforts?
 - c) Which publics and stakeholders should be involved?
13. How often should participation meetings be held?
 - a) Do you prefer regular meetings or episodic sessions depending on the issue?
 - b) If episodic, how will you transition people to “what's next”?
14. How should potential participants be sought?
15. What incentives do you suggest to ensure meaningful public participation in the context of industrial scale forestry in Canada not already mention above?
16. What groups tend not to participate in the process, although they're affected by forest industry activities or might have valuable input for forest decision making?
 - a) What incentives do you suggest to encourage them to engage?
17. How best can the impact of input received be communicated to participants?
18. To what degree should members affiliated with forest companies be involved in the process?

19. Do you have any other comments about stakeholder and public involvement in industrial scale forest management or my research?

Appendix B: Consent Forms



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Interview Consent Form

Research Project Title: Public and stakeholder involvement in forest governance: rethinking the forest advisory committee approach in Canada

Principle Researcher: Rojin Amani

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

Research Summary: My name is Rojin Amani and I am a Master's student at the University of Manitoba, and I am inviting you to take part in my research. The purpose of the research is to rethink the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) approach to involving the public and stakeholder organizations in forest management decisions in Canada by developing a new frame for such involvement. The specific objectives are to: i) investigate how various jurisdictions involve the public and stakeholders in forest management decisions, ii) identify leading edge approaches for involvement in forest management decisions that are more deliberative, iii) examine ways the public and stakeholders, other than forest product companies and government, can be incentivized to be involved in forest management, and iv) develop a frame for involvement in

forest decisions in Canada in the context of the tenure approach that captures the findings related to the objectives above and ensures greater public involvement.

Participant selection: You are being asked to participate in this study because of your involvement, impact or expertise in the public participation programs/processes related to natural resources management. If you agree to participate in my research, I will ask you to meet with me for an interview. A total of 25-30 participants will be asked to participate.

Study Procedure: Participation in the study will be for one interview of approximately one hour in length. Individual interviews will be semi-structured and we will do the interview via Zoom. I will be using Zoom's "local recording" feature to record directly to my laptop, with your consent. I will take hand-written notes if you prefer not to be recorded. I will be conducting the interview. In the interview I will ask you about your involvement in public participation programs/processes. I will also ask you about your experience in public participation programs/processes, how deliberative you believe these programs are, and how they can be more appealing to the public and local stakeholders. At the end of the interview I will ask about your interest in participating in a follow-up focus group to discuss my results. You do not have to be part of the focus group to take part in the interview.

In writing and presentations where I discuss this research you will be referred to by a code and I will not include any information that could connect you with the information you provide, unless you choose to waive your anonymity, in which case you would be identified by your first and last name.

Data Storage: All notes and transcripts will be stored in my password-protected personal computer, and any hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet in my room. The information resulting from this interview will be kept confidential. Only my supervisor and I, and auditors for the University's ethics review board will have access to the information you provide. The audio or video (Zoom) recording of the interview will be transcribed into text as soon as possible after interview. Once they are transcribed, the electronic data will be destroyed. This will take place by the end of April 2021. Transcription and notes will be destroyed by December 31, 2023, after conducting the research and allowing for dissemination, journal publications, and public presentations.

Risks and Benefits: Risks of participating in this study are no greater than in everyday life. When I write reports or talk about what I learn from you I will not use your name or information that could identify you unless you want me to. I want you to be comfortable during the interview, and so you are free to not answer any questions or discuss things that you do not want to. The potential benefits to you include a chance to have your say and concerns heard about public participation in industrial scale forestry, and to contribute to learning how to make current participation mechanisms better. Research findings and outputs will also result in recommendations for designing an inclusive, democratic, and discursive participation tool in the context of the forest tenure approach in Canada.

Confidentiality: We will do everything possible to keep your personal information confidential. Your name will not be used at all in the study records unless you choose to waive your

anonymity. A list of names and addresses of participants will be kept in a secure file so we can send you a summary of the results of the study. Please note that although you will not be identified as the speaker, your words may be used to highlight a specific point.

Expected Outcomes: The information I collect through this research will be used in a University of Manitoba Master's Thesis, which will be publicly available via MSpace (<https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/>). Academic publications and conference presentations may also result from this study. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the findings of my research, I will make that available to you.

Feedback/Debriefing: I will create an overview newsletter-type report of my work and send that to you, and you also have the opportunity to receive an electronic copy of my thesis if you are interested.

Questions: If you have any questions either now or in the future, please feel free to contact me or my advisor (contacts are provided on the first page).

Withdrawal: You are free to withdraw from the study until October 31, 2020. After that date it will not be possible to remove your information from my data analysis and research reports. I will destroy all data from participants who withdraw, and that withdrawal has no negative repercussions. To withdraw, please contact me or my advisor by phone or email as listed above. There are no negative consequences with withdrawing.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way. This research has been approved the University of Manitoba Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference

Do you want to receive a copy of the report of this research? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, where should I send it (provide your address or email)?

Is it ok with you for me to audio/Zoom record the interview? Yes _____ No _____

Do you want me to use your name when I write or talk about what you say? Yes _____ No _____

Would you be willing to be contacted about a focus group at a later date? Yes _____ No _____

I, _____ agree to participate in the interview.

Research Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____