Partnership and Communication in Resource Management: 
A Study of the Canadian Model Forest Network

By
Harvey Sawatzky

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Abstract

The Canadian Model Forest Program (CMFP) has been working towards influencing sustainable forest management (SFM) across Canada. The eleven Model Forest (MF) organizations across the country are consensus-based partnership organizations that bring together a diversity of forest stakeholders to dialogue together, and to plan and conduct research related to SFM in their region. The Canadian Model Forest Network (CMFN) is in its fourteenth year, and is in the process of redefining itself for a new phase of the program.

The purpose of this research has been to examine the role communication has played in developing multi-stakeholder partnerships to influence forest management practices. Within this general purpose, four objectives were pursued. First, the MF communication tools and methods were identified and select tools were examined in depth. Second, the communication plans and the policies and procedures of the MFs were explored to understand how they are used to direct and guide the individual MF activities. Third, different aspects of this research examined how communication is fostered within the individual MFs organizations and beyond. Fourth, the methods employed by MF associations to evaluate the effectiveness of their respective communication strategies were examined.

The research used a case study approach involving both qualitative and quantitative methods. MF documents were gathered and reviewed, a website analysis tool was developed and used to examine each MF website, 29 MF partners from six MF sites were interviewed, and a survey was mailed out to 845 MF participants across Canada.

The MFs across the country have had a great amount of success in bringing a variety of forest stakeholder perspectives to the table where they can openly discuss forest management
practices and plan research activities to improve SFM. Within this research, a number of tools and activities were identified that have contributed to this success. Each MF engages in a diversity of communication activities to communicate their findings, internally to their partners, and externally to a broader audience. A Communication and Outreach Plan and detailed project descriptions in annual work plans guide these communication actions.

Overall it was found that the communication programs vary considerably across the country. Some MFs have demonstrated success in engaging First Nation communities to include their perspective and knowledge in forest management; some have conducted community workshops that target emerging or critical needs in forest management; other MFs have developed an expertise in certain aspects of forest management. However, when it comes to the ongoing internal and external communications of the MFs, some shortcomings were revealed, particularly associated with: openly resolving conflict, sharing success stories, discussing failures, partner recognition and the orientation of new partners. External communication has seen improvements in the content of the MF websites over the years through the availability of research documents, yet there is still much more work to be done on improving the websites as both internal and external communication tools.

The interviews and evaluation documents show that there is a need for greater leadership from the CMFN Secretariat in the area of communication planning and coordination. Communication successes and failures need to be documented and shared throughout the Network to increase the opportunity for mutual learning. If communicating the knowledge gained through MF research to influence forest operations, planning, and policy is what the MF program is all about, then each MF, and the Secretariat, need to embrace communication as being integral to the achieving the MF goals and build internal capacity for effective communication.
Acknowledgements

The completion of this research would not have been possible without the participation of many people. Most significantly, I am indebted to all the people within the Canadian Model Forest Program across Canada. I appreciate the time, financial resources to make this research possible, and the information that you have shared with me. This project was funded through a research grant from the Canadian Model Forest Program to Dr. Peter Duinker and Dr. A. John Sinclair. This funding support has been greatly appreciated.

I would like to thank my academic committee for helping me to focus this research. First, I thank, my advisor, Dr. A. John Sinclair, for his quick responses to my inquires and for his editorial assistance with the vast amount of data that was generated. I would like to thank Dr. Peter Duinker for his input into the research process, and Dr. Iain Davidson-Hunt and Ms. Kristina Hunter for their involvement in the review process.

I would like to pass along special thanks to the individuals from the former Long Beach Model Forests, McGregor Model Forest Association, Prince Albert Model Forest, Manitoba Model Forest, Lake Abitibi Model Forest, and Fundy Model Forest, who generously spent time with me in the interviews and openly shared about their experiences with their Model Forest. The assistance of the office staff in each Model Forest was appreciated in providing me with the mailing addresses for all of their partners.

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<td>BSLMF</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCMCN</td>
<td>Canadian Community Monitoring Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFS</td>
<td>Canadian Forest Service</td>
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<td>CMFN</td>
<td>Canadian Model Forest Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMFP</td>
<td>Canadian Model Forest Program</td>
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<td>EOMF</td>
<td>Eastern Ontario Model Forest</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agricultural Organization</td>
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<td>FHMF</td>
<td>Foothills Model Forest</td>
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<td>FMF</td>
<td>Fundy Model Forest</td>
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<td>GM</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
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<td>LAMF</td>
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<td>PAMF</td>
<td>Prince Albert Model Forest</td>
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<td>Rainforest Interpretive Centre</td>
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<td>Text Analysis Markup System</td>
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<td>United Nations Environment Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>WNMF</td>
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Chapter 1  Introduction to the Study

1.1  Introduction

Partnerships can take many forms in the corporate and government sectors in Canada. Often partnerships are formed as a matter of convenience, to facilitate interaction between two or more entities for the benefit of all parties. Other motivations include “finding creative solutions, improving diversity, exploring holistic approaches and increasing or improving business” (Frank and Smith, 2000, p. 5). A partnership can be defined as “a relationship where two or more parties, having compatible goals, form an agreement to do something together. Partnerships are about people working together in a mutually beneficial relationship, oftentimes doing things together that might not be able to be achieved alone” (Ibid, p. 5). The result is a synergistic outcome, produced by combining “the perspectives, resources, and skills of a group of people and organizations” (Lasker, Weiss, and Miller, 2001, p. 184). To experience synergy in partnerships, an “effective communication strategy and mechanisms” for communication are essential for capitalizing on the combined efforts of the partners (Ibid, p. 194).

A critical component for any effective partnership is communication. “Communication is a process of exchanging ideas and imparting information” (Jacobson, 1999, p. 4). When the word “open” is used in conjunction with communication, it implies mutual, unimpeded forms of communication without restrictions. But what exactly constitutes communication? The basic elements of communication include a source, a message, and a receiver. Many models of interaction have been put forward to explore how communication occurs. The basic premise for all models of communication is that when a message is sent in any format, if the intended receiver “does not understand the message, communication has not occurred” (Ibid, p.4). In group or partnership situations this becomes much more difficult to
understand. Hirokawa and Poole (1996) state that communication “is the medium for the coordination and control of group activities, member socialization, group integration, and conflict management, among other functions” (p. 3). Within a partnership-based organization, these and other functions will occur through and as a result of the processes of communication.

Communication strategies are developed for use within an organization and to reach beyond the members of the organization. It is this communication strategy and the resulting impact that reflects how well the concept of communication is understood within each organization. Within the context of a consensus-based partnership arrangement, the need for open communication is critical to effective decision-making, planning, and recruiting new members (Cestero, 1999).

1.2 Canadian Model Forest Network

The Canadian Model Forest Network (CMFN), acting through the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), has been active in establishing Model Forest (MF) programs in Canada since 1992. The initial MF proposals were examined using the following four criteria:

1. The objectives and management philosophy, and how they supported the concept of sustainable management and integrated resource management (40 per cent)
2. The activities and results proposed using “best forestry practices” (25 per cent)
3. The use of the most advanced technology and the demonstration of techniques and results (25 per cent)
4. The communication of the results to the public and the general financial and administrative management of the proposal (10 per cent) (Canadian Model Forest Network, 2003)

Based on the initial review, nine projects were selected for the MF program. This initial stage of MF development required a strong communications focus to establish long-term and diverse partnerships which were willing to work towards common goals and objectives. The
Canadian Model Forest Network (CMFN) web site emphasizes this need for an effective communication strategy to facilitate partnerships.

“A model forest brings together and forms a partnership between individuals and organizations sharing the common goal of sustainable forest management. Partners typically include industrial companies, parks, landowners, all levels of government, Aboriginal people, academic institutions, environmental groups, labour and youth. This cross-section of membership is committed to demonstrating how social, environmental, cultural and economic interests can be integrated.

The Model Forest provides a unique forum where these partners can gain a greater understanding of conflicting views, share their knowledge, and combine their expertise and resources to develop innovative, region-specific approaches to sustainable forest management. The result of this grassroots approach is solutions that work and earn local support.” (Canadian Model Forest Network, 2003)

As the MF partnerships have evolved and changed over the last thirteen years, many successful communication programs and activities have been undertaken. There have also been significant barriers to communication and ineffective communications. Considering the make-up of the partnerships and the traditional entrenched position that some forest sector groups have had, there is much to learn from how the various partners have learned how to work together and how new partners have been brought into the organizations.

In the initial five years (Phase I), the MF projects did the greatest amount of work in establishing the working relationships between partners and in bringing in new partners. This collaborative approach to partnership was complicated by the fact that the MF partnerships themselves do not have any land management authority, yet strive to discuss and promote sustainable land management practices. This complicates the nature of the multi-stakeholder approach, but it should be understood that:

“Multi-stakeholder partnerships are not an answer to every problem, nor are they easy. They require a difficult balance of idealism and pragmatism, creative vision and practical hard work, a strong commitment to principles and a willingness to compromise. Most are extremely complex and many fail to live up to their expectation. However, if they can be made to work, multi-stakeholder partnerships can be a powerful force for change and a vital tool for developing efficient and equitable solutions to sustainable development” (UNEP, 1994, p. 1).

In Phase II (1997-2002) of the MF program, the CMFN laid out expectations for a higher level of communication. It was expected that the MF projects would begin a period of
substantative output. Information would be disseminated and shared within the project areas and throughout the network (CMFN, 2003). The expectations given below imply that the difficult work of partnership building had been done and that Phase II was to be a time of productivity.

“In general, it was recommended that the model forests: now begin to apply, “on-the-ground,” the sustainable forest management systems and techniques that they had developed during Phase I; establish acceptable indicators, measurement and monitoring systems, and reporting mechanisms that they could use to accurately assess their performance in relation to their individual goals and objectives: disseminate results and knowledge gained at local, national, and international levels; attempt to work together more as a network, and participate in activities and share more knowledge at the network level; encourage the participation of a broad range of forest values.” (CMFN, 2003)

With a proliferation of documents and the development of national projects and greater communication between projects, there has been an increasing demand for effective communication strategies. These strategies need to address communication within the MF land area, to the MF Partners, throughout the National Network, and to the public. This was recognized in the Phase II evaluation with the recommendation that the national network bring in a communications manager and set up a committee to oversee this work (NR Can, 2002).

Currently, more than three years into Phase III (2002-2007) of project funding, the MF Network is continuing to develop new partnerships, to demonstrate sustainable forest management (SFM) practices, and to research new approaches to SFM. Within Phase III, there is an expectation to take the ideas beyond the partnerships.

“The focus of the next five years of the program will include expanding activities beyond the boundaries of the individual model forests and strengthening their collective activities at the network level.” (CMFN, 2003)

This implies that the communication efforts at all levels will need to be more coordinated for each individual MF and for the national network.

Since the inception of the MF partnerships, there has been a constant need for effective communication. The style and expectation of communication has been changed throughout
the MF program’s history. In the early stages, the focus was on internal communication and communicating with potential external partners. This shifted to producing materials and greater communication across the network. In Phase III, there is greater expectation to communicate outside of the partnerships and network to enhance sustainability and to continue to expand the partnership base. Communication is the key to success in the endeavors of the MF network partnerships.
1.3 Purpose

Within the context of the CMFN partnership structures, the intent is to examine the role communication has played in developing multi-stakeholder partnerships to influence forest management practices.

1.4 Objectives

The following objectives guided the activities of the project.

1. Identify and examine each MF association’s communication tools and methods.
2. Explore the communication plans and the policies and procedures within the CMFN and each MF in relation to actual activity.
3. Study and document how partnership communication has been fostered within the MF community and beyond.
4. Consider the methods employed by MF associations to evaluate the effectiveness of their respective communication strategies.

The MF network consists of eleven active associations and a central CMFN Secretariat office. A case-study framework was used to explore the design and implementation of communication strategies within the MF partnerships.

1.5 Methods

The research used a sequential mixed-methods case study approach (Creswell, 2003) for gaining a greater understanding of MF partnership communication. The study incorporated a descriptive and exploratory research approach to gain an understanding of the nature of partnership communication from several perspectives and by examining several mediums of communications. The results are both descriptive and analytical in nature, drawing from all the different methods used.

The study incorporates twelve cases (the former Long Beach Model Forest is included when possible) using website analysis, document reviews, and a mail-out survey. Of these twelve
cases, six MFs were identified for additional in-depth study using semi-structured interviews.

For the overall study, themes were used to examine characteristics of partnership communication. These themes were used to explore common characteristics, allowing others in the MF network to learn from each other and to encourage greater sharing of information for greater partnership participation.

1.6 Organization

The thesis is organized into six chapters. This first chapter is followed by a review of the literature that has been used to support the research work. The third chapter focuses on individual cases and the methods used to examine each case. The fourth chapter presents results of the collected data. The fifth chapter summarizes the findings and relates them back to the literature to establish the context of the research results. The final chapter summarizes the research and puts forward ideas that may be used within the MF network to improve communication.
Chapter 2  Partnerships and Communication

2.1  Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set the context of the research through an examination of the related literature. This follows a process of briefly outlining the history of forest management and resource policy development in Canada, followed by exploring the most recent changes in sustainable development and forest management practices. This leads into an examination of partnerships, followed by a focus on the CMFN partnership model. Finally, the literature related to communication for effective partnerships, common models of communication, and communicating beyond partnerships will be examined.

2.1.1  The Forest Setting

Canada has a vast amount of publicly owned forestland, approximately 417.6 million hectares, 94% of this land is owned by provincial and federal governments (NRCan, 2003, p. 18). With this large amount of publicly owned forest land there has been increasing public scrutiny of the way in which forest lands are managed by the government and the forest resource companies. This has led to conflicts between Canadian citizens, regulators, and forestry companies. The most significant recent conflicts occurred in the old growth forests of British Columbia.

“In Clayoquot Sound, during the summer of 1993 over 840 people were arrested – more than in any other act of civil disobedience in Canadian history – for standing in the way of logging crews. This noisy battleground is increasingly replicated in Canada’s other major timber producing provinces, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, where similar dominant industrial forest management regimes exist” (Robinson, Robson, Rollins, 2001, p. 22).

The increase in forest related conflicts in Canada and around the world have resulted in a search for a new way of managing the Forests. In Canada, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) have been instrumental in seeking compromises in the way that forests have traditionally been managed. The tactics of NGOs and their international supporters has

8
resulted in recognition that a new way of managing forests is required. The result is that “we are in the midst of a shift from the long-held, traditional forms of managing forests to one that recognizes the ecological and social complexity of these systems” (Shindler, Beckley, and Finley, 2003, p. 2). The traditional view has been that of “maximizing and sustaining a flow of fiber products” (Ibid, p. 13). In the past, and in some areas of Canada, at present, this view was supported by government policies and market demands. However, there has been a shift in forest management approaches, which is being encouraged by regulators and the forest product markets. This shift is also occurring within the forest sector in Canada. Non-traditional or alternative forest users (non-timber forest harvesters, trappers, recreational forest users, etc.) are having a significant impact on the forest industry and forest management. The alternative forest users, environmentalists, and First Nation groups are “the most significant in terms of bringing a range of new ideas to the forest policy table” (Howlett and Rayner, 2001, p. 44). This has resulted in new ways of doing business, bringing together companies such as Domtar and the World Wildlife Fund to enhance SFM practices and contribute to marketing plans through the implementation of the Forest Stewardship Council standards (WWF, 2003, at www.wwf.ca).

2.1.2 A Brief Historic Overview of Forest Management in Canada

Within Canadian natural resource management policies have changed in accordance with the economic and political situation. Historically, in Canada, there was a period of excessive harvesting throughout the 1800s. This was followed by the beginning of a conservation movement at the turn of the century, lead by Clifford Sifton in Canada, which lasted for about 25 years. Next was a decade of development and exploitation, which contributed to the disaster of the 1930’s drought and brought about the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act (PFRA) and other conservation programs in an attempt to swing back to a period of
conservation. The advent of World War II resulted in a period of natural resource exploitation “in the name of economic efficiency” which established a criterion which has been difficult to move away from (Burton, 1972, p. 23-45). This period also lead to an “interventionist atmosphere”, when governments assumed greater responsibility to “direct the economy” (Howlett, 2001, p. 9). The war was followed by a period of unprecedented economic growth and modernization of the country’s infrastructure. In the 1960s and 1970s there was an increase in pressure for a conservation agenda, the government response was to attempt to balance economic growth, quality of life, and conservation (Burton, 1972, p. 23-45). “The 1980s was the end of an era of seemingly inexhaustible resources. It was a time for assessing the damages and demanding a formal commitment from governments and industry to protect forests and make them healthy and prosperous habitats for wildlife and sites for outdoor recreation and leisure” (Dufour, 1995).

The current policy regime has evolved as a result of inadequacies of earlier licensing systems used in Canada; the “1930s revealed the extent to which forest resources had been depleted”(Howlett, 2001, p. 8-9) indicating how the policies had failed. Presently, the Canadian “forest policy regime is usually described as one of public forest management for private timber harvesting”, there is an attempt to balance conservation with the corporate agenda under the guise of sustainable development. This is the ongoing challenge for the forest industry, the communities that rely upon the forests for their livelihoods, alternative forest users, and the political and economic forces that impact the sustainability of Canada’s forests (Dufour, 1995).

2.1.3 Recent Changes in Forest Management

The last two decades have been rife with open hostility and conflict in forest management (Ibid, p. 9-10). The old way of trusting the government and the corporations to manage
resources for the benefit of the country was shown to be lacking.

“The current regime is, at the very least, contested, and there is much evidence to suggest that it is in the process of being replaced by a new regime of an as yet undetermined character. Ideas, actors, and institutions are all in a state of flux, creating considerable uncertainty, and some discomfort, for many elements of the forest policy community” (Howlett and Rayner, 2001, p. 25).

Research is beginning to show that the complexity of ecological systems extends beyond the traditional understanding of ecology as being composed of only natural components. As described earlier, resource management needs to be concerned with socio-economic-ecological systems. Managing this complexity has motivated a wide variety of natural resource management partnerships in Canada.

Partnerships of various sorts have been used in natural resource management over the last twenty-five years. “The value of managing forests purely for timber exploitation had begun to be questioned” (Ibid, p. 45). The result was that parties involved in using the forests were in “an environment of confrontation and mutual distrust, or totally independently of each other, or in a manner where one party(ies) was dependent on, and/or unable to participate in, the decision making and activities of the other(s)” (UNEP, 1994, p. 9). The resulting alienation of the parties that were looking for more input into the policy and decision-making process opened the way for a new approach.

At the same time that non-traditional players in the forest industry were vying for more involvement, adaptive management was emerging from the studies of ecology.

2.1.4 Sustainable Development and Forest Management

In Canada the shift towards a more sustainable use of forests that takes into consideration economic, social, ecological, and political values has been pursued, in part, through sustainable development policies. The move towards sustainable development has come as a result of environmental degradation, increased public awareness, ongoing research and

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pressure from the scientific community, and international efforts. The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) concluded that “the pursuit of sustainable development requires: a political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision making” (p. 65).

There is much skepticism regarding the use of the term sustainable development. Some see this as an attempt by industry to put a new label on minimal environmental efforts. In some ways the two words appear to contradict each other, how can you sustain development? Does not development imply the use of natural resources, paving over land, removal of naturally occurring species? Holling (2001) has attempted to put this apparent contradiction of ideas into context:

“Sustainability is the capacity to create, test, and maintain adaptive capability. Development is the process of creating, testing, and maintaining opportunity. The phrase that combines the two, ‘sustainable development,’ thus refers to the goal of fostering adaptive capabilities and creating opportunities. It is therefore not an oxymoron but a term that describes a logical partnership” (p. 390).

While this is recognized as the ideal basis for embracing sustainable development this is not commonly understood and practiced. Anderson (1998) argues for a pluralistic view of sustainability, a view that does not impose “global standards”, but rather “standards that are negotiated (and enforced) at a site-specific level; and that are informed by sound and rigorous science, both social and biological”.

Moffatt, Hanley, and Wilson (2001) provide the following table (Table 1) as a “ladder of sustainable development”. They argue that this is an idealized view of how a society may be ordered for sustainable development of their resources. While many aspects are difficult to achieve simultaneously they are still reasonable targets to work towards (pp. 274-276).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach to sustainable development</th>
<th>Role of and nature of growth</th>
<th>Geographical focus</th>
<th>Policies and sectoral integration</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Policy instruments and tools</th>
<th>Redistribution</th>
<th>Civil society</th>
<th>Philosophy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Ideal Model' development</td>
<td>Right livelihood; meeting needs not wants; changes in patterns and levels of production and consumption</td>
<td>Bioregionalism extensive local self-sufficiency</td>
<td>Promoting and protecting biodiversity</td>
<td>Holistic intersectoral integration</td>
<td>Labour-intensive appropriate technology</td>
<td>Decentralization of political, legal, social and economic institutions</td>
<td>Full range of policy tools, sophisticated use of indicators extending to social dimensions</td>
<td>Inter- and intra-generational equity</td>
<td>Bottom-up community structures and control. New approach to valuing work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong sustainable development</td>
<td>Environmentally regulated market; changes in patterns of production and consumption</td>
<td>Heightened local economic self-sufficiency promoted in the context of global markets</td>
<td>Environmental policy integration sectors</td>
<td>Clean technology; product life-cycle management mixed labour- and capital intensive technology</td>
<td>Some restructuring of institutions</td>
<td>Advanced use of sustainability indicators; wide range of policy tools</td>
<td>Strengthened redistribution policy</td>
<td>Open-ended dialogue and envisioning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak sustainable development</td>
<td>Market-reliant environmental policy; changes in patterns of consumption</td>
<td>Initial moves to local economic self-sufficiency minor initiatives to alleviate the power of global markets</td>
<td>Replacing finite resources with capital; exploitation of renewable resources</td>
<td>Sector-driven approach</td>
<td>End-of-pipe technical solutions; mixed labour- and capital-intensive technology</td>
<td>Minimal amendments to institutions</td>
<td>Token use of environmental indicators; limited range of market-led policy tools</td>
<td>Equity a marginal issue</td>
<td>Top-down initiatives; limited state-environmental movements dialogue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the past, market factors alone had been used to determine the methods of forest management, it is now seen that this approach to forest management has created significant problems due to a lack of understanding of the socio-ecological complexity of large forest ecosystems. Socio-ecological complexity is at the heart of understanding not only the forest, but also the human interactions within the global ecosystem that assist in managing forests in a sustainable manner.
2.1.5 Learning from Ecological Complexity

Holling (2001) describes a new paradigm for understanding ecosystems within a broader context of “economic, ecological and social systems”. He uses the all-encompassing term “panarchy” to describe the nature of ecological interactions.

“Panarchy is the term we use to describe a concept that explains the evolving nature of complex adaptive systems. Panarchy is the hierarchical structure in which systems of nature (for example, forests, grasslands, lakes, rivers, and seas), and humans (for example, structures of governance, settlements, and cultures), as well as combined human-nature systems (for example, agencies that control natural resource use) and socio-ecological systems (for instance, co-evolved systems of management), are interlinked in never-ending adaptive cycles of growth, accumulation, restructuring, and renewal. These transformational cycles take place in nested sets at scales ranging from a leaf to the biosphere over periods from days to geologic epochs, and from the scales of a family to a socio-political region over periods from years to centuries” (p. 392).

When assessing system sustainability the concept of panarchy “describes how a healthy socio-ecological system can invent and experiment, benefiting from inventions that create opportunity while it is kept safe from those that destabilize the system due to their nature or excessive exuberance… The whole panarchy is therefore both creative and conserving. The interactions between cycles in a panarchy combine learning with continuity” (Ibid, p. 402).

Earlier research by Levin (1998) into complex adaptive systems supported the concept of panarchy. He states: “Developing sustainable approaches to system use implies understanding what maintains resilience and how human intervention might affect it. The key to any complex adaptive system is in the maintenance of heterogeneity, the essential variation that enables adaptation” (p. 435). Within Holling’s description of panarchy one would have to conclude that heterogeneity needs to extend beyond the traditional bounds of ecology to include the “human-nature systems”, the “socio-ecological systems”, humans, and natural systems. Levin points out that “heavily managed systems”, such as forestry are not “purely complex adaptive systems”. In fact “they are fragile, vulnerable to single stresses such as pest outbreaks that cause system crashes in the absence of adaptive responses” (Ibid, p.
The current situation in western pine forests with the spread of the mountain pine beetle. As this beetle works its way through the Northern British Columbia pine forests the government has been responding by increasing the annual allowable cut resulting in greater pressure on an already stressed industry and their supporting communities.

The concepts of resilience, panarchy, and other adaptive concepts in ecology have been used to gain a better understanding of complex socio-ecological systems. This has helped to bring the forest industry to the point of seeking new ways of managing the forests. Managing change, adapting to new situations in a resilient manner, shifting priorities, bringing in new ideas through experimentation, discarding old ideas, existing in a constant state of change; this new approach to management appears to have its roots in the new understanding of the complexity of ecological systems which has brought about the need for an adaptive management system. This reflects an attitude of learning from natural systems instead of the traditional manipulation and management of natural systems.

Adaptive management can be understood as “a systematic, rigorous approach for learning from our actions, improving management, and accommodating change” (BC Ministry of Forests, 2004). Salafsky, Margoluis and Redford (2001) state “adaptive management incorporates research into conservation action. Specifically, it is the integration of design, management, and monitoring to systematically test assumptions in order to adapt and learn”.

In the Sustainable Forest Management Standard, the Canadian Standards Association defines Adaptive Management as “a learning approach to management that incorporates the experience gained from the results of previous actions into decisions” (Bott, Murphy, Udell, 2003, p. 6).

The following diagram, Figure 1, attempts to place the different participants within an iterative process to demonstrate the working of adaptive management. This was prepared by
the Canadian Community Monitoring Network (CCMN) which works towards the goals of informing policy and decision makers, engaging communities in monitoring activities, developing, testing and refining “a model for nationally coordinated monitoring initiatives”, and to “build local capacity to collect, deliver, and use ecological information to facilitate sustainable decision making” (CCMN, 2003). This format of an iterative process is key to adaptive management; cycles within cycles provide rapid feedback and opportunities for intervention and learning.

There are numerous definitions of adaptive management in circulation; some argue that adaptive management requires using common sense, or simply good management (Salafsky, Margoluis and Redford, 2001). The key aspects of particular interest for this study include the ability to respond to changing circumstances by gathering and disseminating information, incorporating new knowledge, evaluating the results, and sharing the acquired
information to enable informed decision making (Google definitions of adaptive management, June 22, 2004).

The term adaptive communication is associated with communications technology and the adaptation of speech and language to one’s context (Chen, 2003). Within communications technology it is used as a term to describe:

“any communications system, or portion thereof, that automatically uses feedback information obtained from the system itself or from the signals carried by the system to modify dynamically one or more of the system operational parameters to improve system performance or to resist degradation” (Wikipedia, September 30, 2005, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adaptive_communications).

Within the field of natural resource management, an adaptive approach to communication is needed when working in areas where there are challenges and innovation is required, and where continual evaluation of communication strategies is needed (Tropical Savannas, September 30, 2005, http://savanna.ntu.edu.au/research/projects/4.3.1_approach_.html).

Lee (1992) conducted research into different types of internal communication in adaptive organizational systems. He describes a process of establishing an adaptive communication system:

“An Adaptive Communication System not only has the vision of a communication plan but it also contains communication practices and activities which emanate from that vision. This system operates from a blueprint, which has been developed following introspection and reflection. Communication in the organization is first analyzed. Employees are surveyed for their perceptions and level of understanding, various methods of communication are analyzed for effectiveness and efficiency, existent communication activities are evaluated, and long-term communication objectives are determined. Mission statements, philosophy statements, communication policies, and corporate goals are created, and each include as well as emphasize the importance of communication in the organization” (p. 10).

The author goes on to describe characteristics of adaptive communication as it is embraced within an organization. The key characteristics are described as follows:

“Communication is viewed as a top priority, and the communication process is directly linked to the mission and philosophy of the organization. These written documents provide the rationale and ‘deep structure’ for communication activities. In this way, top management legitimizes communication and sanctions its role as vital instead of peripheral.
Management leads from the top down and allows for bottom-up feedback. This results in a system, which is adaptive instead of static, organismic, and focused instead of entropic. Communication is viewed as an on-going ‘process’ and not a collection of ‘programs’ with a beginning and end. Management uses information from employees to re-evaluate and continuously improve by changing communication practices and programs as needed. While many organizations say communication is important, an adaptive system views communication as a commodity which must be chartered, nurtured, and managed if it is to succeed” (Ibid, pp. 10-11).

Due to the limited capacity of any individual or organization to comprehend the complexity of adaptive natural systems there is a need for complex mechanisms for information sharing and learning. Understanding complex systems requires collaborative efforts. As Larson and LaFasto (1989) state,

“We do not denigrate the significance of individual thinking and creativity in solving problems. We simply acknowledge that the problems that confront us are so complex that we must go one step further and demand that our most thoughtful, creative individuals ‘put their heads together’ to reach the best possible solutions” (p. 15).

Ludwig (2001) advocates for broad based “dialogue among the various interested parties” since the scope of understanding is beyond that of experts (p. 763). Larson and LaFasto (1989) further state that solving “complex problems demands the integration of many divergent points of view and the effective collaboration of many individuals” (p. 17). These authors provide the background to support the partnership approach of the CMFN.

Holling, as cited in Mitchell’s (2002) book, lists six characteristics of a learning organization that allow problems “of crisis, conflict and gridlock to be over come:

1. integrated rather than piecemeal policies;
2. flexible and adaptive policies instead of rigid ones;
3. management and planning for learning, rather than a focus on economic or social products;
4. monitoring intended to be part of active interventions to achieve understanding and to help identify responses, not just for the sake of monitoring;
5. investments in many kinds of science, not only in controlled science; and
6. citizen involvement to build active partnerships rather than reliance on public information to inform passively” (pp. 129-130).

This description of a learning organization and the previously listed characteristics of adaptive management provides a framework within which the CMFN partnerships can be
examined. It can be argued that communication is a key foundation to an effective learning organization. All six characteristics are required and each one informs the others. Holling’s last point regarding partnerships forms the focus of the remainder of the literature review. How do these partnerships work, and what role does communication play in helping these partnerships to exhibit characteristics of a learning organization that can respond to complex ecological issues in an adaptive manner?

2.2 Partnerships for Resource Management

2.2.1 Introduction

In the previous section the work of Ludwig, Larson and LaFaso, and Holling advocate for a collaborative or partnership approach for understanding complex problems, an approach that seeks out a variety of perspectives from which to draw ideas and knowledge in an attempt to address complex issues. It is believed that “partnership working holds out the possibility of producing synergy or collaborative advantage in the solution of organizational issues” (Taket and White, 2000, p. 6). This section will examine the concept of partnerships, as it has been understood within the field of natural resource management, then within the context of the CMFN. This will lead into an examination of communication as a foundational tool for partnerships and for getting the message of the partnership out to a wider audience.

2.2.2 Partnership Defined

In the context of natural resource management, the term partnership has been applied to a wide diversity of arrangements with governments, learning institutions, corporations, NGOs, First Nation groups, and others. There has been a tendency to label relationships of varying degrees of communication, collaboration, and consultation as partnerships. At times this has resulted in subordinate relationships being called partnership relationships by the dominant
partner to improve their own image. Langford (2002) states that partnership has been misused “to dress up any working relationship between organizations no matter how prosaic the connection or oppressively lopsided the power imbalance among the parties” (p. 69). Rodal and Mulder (1998) state that the “word partnership has been over-used, misused, and often used imprecisely” (p. 27). Unfortunately, this misuse of the concept undermines the perception of partnerships causing some to be reluctant to participate in real partnerships.

Arnstein (1969) describes partnerships as the first level of “citizen power”. She states, “Citizens can enter into a Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional powerholders” (p. 217). She addresses consultation, informing, and placation as forms of “tokenism” as there is still no decision-making authority given to the participants. It is in partnerships that “power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders. They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy Boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses” (p. 221).

Within the context of resource and environmental management, Mitchell (2002) describes a partnership as “a mutually agreed arrangement between two or more public, private or non-governmental organizations to achieve a jointly determined goal or objective, or to implement a jointly determined activity, for the benefit of the environment and society” (p. 182). In the health sector, “Health Canada (1996) defines partnership as a voluntary arrangement between two or more parties that agree to work cooperatively towards shared and/or compatible objectives in which there is:

- shared authority for, and responsibility and management of, the work
- joint investment of resources (e.g., time, work, funding, material, expertise, information)
- shared liability or risk-taking and accountability for the partnered project
- collaboration on common causes
- mutual benefits, often referred to as ‘win-win’ situations” (cited in Torjman, 1998, pp. 1-2)

This description of partnership is more commonly used to understand some of the basic
commitments and aspects of a power sharing partnership. Rodal and Mulder (1998) assert that these attributes of partnering are "essential features of partnering activity in the public sector context" (p. 28).

Mitchell (2002) lists key "elements for successful participation and partnerships" as including compatibility between partners, benefits to all partners, equitable representation and power, communication elements, adaptability, and integrity, patience and perseverance by partners (p. 186). Rodal (1994) used the same points and expanded the key elements to include that equitable representation and power is "based on the interdependence of the parties"; communication must be effective internally, among the partners, and externally; "trust and respect need to be built over time", this requires "transparency, integrity and good communication", which necessitates an "attitude of patience and perseverance over time" (p. 60-61).

In Borrini-Feyerabend’s (1999) research on collaborative management of protected areas she describes the participants as stakeholders and identifies some key characteristics of these stakeholders. “In general, stakeholders:

- are aware of their interests in managing the protected area (although they may not be aware of all its management issues and problems);
- possess specific capacities (knowledge, skills) and/or comparative advantage (proximity, mandate) for such management; and
- are willing to invest specific resources (time, money, political authority) in such management” (p. 225-226).

While Borrini-Feyerabend’s paper deals with protected areas, the principles are applicable to resource management in general. She describes collaborative management as “a situation in which some or all of the relevant stakeholders in a protected area are involved in a substantial way in management activities” (Ibid, p. 226). This can take the form of partnerships for collaborative management. Figure 2 portrays Borrini-Feyerabend’s model of collaborative management. This model indicates an increasing amount of commitment and responsibility
for participants as the form of collaboration moves to the right on the chart, the middle ground is where shared management is negotiated. The challenge is in operationalizing a system of control that challenges the norms of business and government where maintaining control is critical.

![Collaborative management of a protected area](image)

**Figure 2: Participation in protected area management – a continuum (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1999, p. 229)**

Chambers (1997) writes about the top down nature of power structures that are typical of government. Where standardized ways of thinking and operating…

"…meet the needs of bureaucrats, enabling them to exercise authority and control, to set targets to streamline monitoring and supervision, and to spend their budgets. Meeting these needs leads to the transfer of pre-set packages and patterns. These packages and patterns then act as carriers, the means by which bureaucratic centres extend their control and imprint their reality on peripheries” (p. 66).

It is this bureaucratic perspective that can make collaborative partnerships, power sharing, and all the other necessary elements of successful partnerships so challenging.

Rodal and Mulder (1998) examine the motivation behind the Canadian government entering into partnership arrangements. Figure 3 shows the relationship between the
pressures that the government is experiencing with the resulting purposes/objectives for developing partnerships. The pressures relate to changing public and corporate demands on government and recognition that complexity and interdependence requires a new approach.

![Diagram of pressures and objectives of partnerships](image)

**Figure 3:** Pressures and Objectives of Partnerships. *(Rodal and Mulder, 1998, p. 32)*

In April of 2002 the government of Canada published the “Policy on Alternative Service Delivery”, the Framework on Alternative Program Delivery of 1995 preceded this document. The driving force of the policy includes: a citizen-centred approach to “improve organizational performance in the delivery of programs” and to improve access to these programs; to strengthen the values of “innovation and high quality service delivery to citizens”; “a commitment to achieve results that citizens truly value”; and delivering responsible spending through “delivering services more economically and cost-effectively” *(Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002)*. This corresponds to the work of Rodal and Mulder and supports concepts within adaptive management.

Within the context of this study the ideal partnership characteristics and motivations for partnership provide the groundwork for synergistic effects to bring about innovative
approaches in resource management. Taked and White (2000) state that there is a “policy drive to build effective and sustainable partnerships and collaborations across organizations and sectors” to achieve synergistic results (p. 6). Lasker, Weiss, and Miller state: “The synergy that partners seek to achieve through collaboration is more than a mere exchange of resources. By combining the individual perspectives, resources, and skills of the partners, the group creates something new and valuable together” (2001, p. 184). Something new and valuable that results from the ability of a partnership to demonstrate greater creativity, a more holistic perspective, that is practical and potentially transformative (Ibid, 2001).

2.2.3 The Canadian Model Forest Partnership Model

As stated in the opening chapter, the individual MF partnerships had their beginning in 1992; although, it is fair to say that planning and development of most of the current MF partnerships occurred prior to 1992. In 1990 the federal government conducted a nationwide public consultation, which "revealed public concerns about forestry practices and preservation of our natural environment" (CMFN, 2003). This public feedback provided support, which lead the government to seek proposals for model forest plans from regions throughout Canada.

“Phase I (1992-1997) focused on the building of local partnerships, the development of effective working relationships, the creation of manageable frameworks, and the improvement of knowledge of local conditions” (Ibid). Three years into the MF program an independent evaluation of the CMFN program determined that the “program had been successful in creating partnerships among groups who had traditionally been in conflict regarding natural resource management” (Ibid). It was recommended that the MFs “put into practice what had been learned about SFM and put more energy into communicating the results of their work to others” (Ibid).
Phase II (1997-2002) saw greater involvement from the CFS on each Board to attempt to enhance communication within the network. The network expanded with the addition of the Waswanipi Cree MF in 1997 and the Nova Forest Alliance in 1998 (Sinclair and Lobe, 2003). Phase II objectives included: developing forest management systems to demonstrate practical concepts of SFM, promoting and disseminating results and knowledge, further development of the national network with participants and organizations, and incorporating a broad range of forest values into each MF (CMFN, 2003).

Near the end of Phase II each MF was evaluated to determine if the goals for Phase II had been met. In 1992 these reports were submitted to Natural Resources Canada, Audit and Evaluation Branch. One of the strong messages within the evaluations was the need for a comprehensive communication and outreach plan. While this had been achieved by some of the MF partnerships, others required more work in this area (Canada, 2002). It was the Phase II evaluation that determined that the Long Beach MF would be discontinued due to a “dysfunctional Board partnership” and a lack of consistent leadership (Sinclair and Lobe, 2003).

Phase III of the MF funding was awarded in 2002 to carry the partnership through to 2007. During this Phase of funding the goal is to take the lessons that have been learned within the partnerships and within the network and reach beyond the MF program participants. This requires a new level of communication and a broadening of the communication strategies to achieve this objective.

The structure of the partnership varies from one MF to another. A significant aspect of the MF partnerships is that of “a neutral forum that is respectful of individual interests and united in the task of addressing sustainable forest management”. These neutral forums “include a Board of Directors, a management or executive committee, working groups or
sub-committees and a broader partners group” (Ibid). The mechanism for decision making and planning varies for each MF. It is important to note that the MF partnership arrangement is seen as a neutral forum, a place where ideas and diverging views can be shared openly. Within the Phase II evaluations it was noted several times that particular MFs were respected in their region for being a neutral forum for sharing ideas and openly discussing differing views of forest management (Canada, 2002).

2.2.4 Communication, a Foundation of Effective Partnerships

In describing partnerships certain words were used in Section 2.2.2 implying that a strong base of communication is essential within partnerships. These include: collaboration, shared planning and decision making, effective communication, internal communication, external communication, negotiating, sharing authority and responsibility, shared liability and risk taking, consultation, agree to share, and resolving impasses. This leads to the notion that an effective, well-planned and executed communication strategy is required and must remain adaptive to be an effective tool to facilitate partnerships that influence SFM.

Communication is a foundation of effective partnership relationships. In its most basic form, “communication is a process of exchanging ideas and imparting information” (Jacobson, 1999, p. 2). Fazio and Gilbert (1981) describe communication “as the successful transmission of thoughts or ideas, without significant distortion, so that understanding is achieved” (p. 77). Taylor (1993) states: “communication is grounded in action, not in information transmission, nor even in the transfer of knowledge” (P. 112). Taylor goes on to describe how the “elementary unit of communication" is work. “It is through their investment in doing that people not only succeed in enacting a world within which their activities take on sense, but also how they construct a basis of communication (and of society)” (p. 112-113). Based on these complementary views of communication one can
evaluate the effectiveness of communication by the work that results from messages that are transmitted. To progress with this idea of message transmission and the resulting work, it is useful to examine some commonly used models of communication.

Communication Models

Davidson-Hunt (2004) has illustrated the diffusion model of communication (Figure 4). The basic diffusion model is typical of “entertainment-education and social-marketing” (Morris, 2003, p. 226). This model is widely used in mass media and communication programs where information is disseminated to an audience. There is always a sender and a receiver in communication. The sender will encode the message based on experience, training, and other aspects that contribute to the individual’s perspective. The message is formatted to be transmitted in a particular direction or to a particular audience, this is the channel. The receiver must decode the message based on the receivers experience, training, and other aspects that contribute to their perspective.

![The Basic Diffusion Model](image)

*Figure 4: The Basic Diffusion Model of Communication. (Davidson-Hunt, 2004)*

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This model is contrasted with the participatory model of communication (Figure 5) as an approach, which “lies in working with citizens to determine their needs and to design and implement programs to address these needs, rather than imposing an intervention on the community” (Ibid, p. 226). This model incorporates feedback mechanisms to allow the receiver and the sender to confirm the content of the message. The receiver is then empowered to continue sending the message on to others.

These two models are not mutually exclusive, the “diffusion model has evolved in a participatory direction since its initial formulation, and the participatory model necessarily involve some element of information transfer” (Ibid, p. 227).

*Figure 5: The Participatory Model of Communication. (Davidson-Hunt, 2004)*

Communications practitioners may have a preference for a particular model, but the reality is that “advocates of both models are borrowing elements from one another” (Morris, 2003, p. 244). This sets the stage for an integrated model. Network communication has been
studied in depth in many different settings. A number of models have emerged, two models will be examined which could provide a possible basis for evaluation of the MF partnerships, the convergence model and the network model. These two models share many similarities as is illustrated in Figure 6 and Figure 7, the convergence model comes from community development research focused specifically in communication network analysis and the Network Model has been applied to a diversity of contexts including development work, business communication, and social networks (Davidson-Hunt, 2004). Rogers and Kincaid (1981) summarize the convergence model (Figure 6):

“The unity of information and action is indicated by the three bold lines. All information is a consequence (or physical trace) of action, and through the various stages of human information-processing, action may become the consequence of information. A similar unity underlies the relationships among all of the basic components of the convergence model. The communication process has no beginning and no end, only the mutually defining relationship among the parts which give meaning to the whole” (pp. 55-56).

When this is examined in light of Taylor’s ideas of the work that results from communication, the action takes on a critical role in clarifying the message. This then forms a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the message and the messenger’s ability to reach a particular audience.
Davidson-Hunt (2004) describes the networking model of communication (Figure 7) as “a cycle of participatory problem definition and message communication, combined with culturally sensitive diffusion communication”. There are horizontal communication networks that use interpersonal and diffusion techniques. “The impact of the messages on the participants is again cycled through the model’s participatory stage, eventually affecting the nature of the messages. The model is cyclical, thereby allowing for adaptive and appropriate message formulations” (June 18, 2004).
Both models are cyclical and allow for verification of information in an attempt to bring about a level of mutual understanding. The convergence model provides a means of understanding how mutual understanding comes about. This in turn fits into the networking model where multiple groups address a problem and experiment (testing) to see if the results contribute to solving the problem. The convergence model demonstrates that action is an important component of the communication cycle, while the network model's testing component includes action. Through the evaluation of the resulting actions it can be determined if the communication has been effective.

In tying communication back the work of Holling and Levin, Capra has explored the complexity of interconnected systems in his writing about “Hidden Connections”. He describes networks of communication:

“As communications recur in multiple feedback loops, they produce a shared system of beliefs, explanations, and values – a common context of meaning – that is continually sustained by further communications. Through this shared context of meaning individuals acquire identities as members of the social network…”

On the one hand, the network continually generates mental images, thoughts, and meaning:
on the other hand, it continually coordinates the behavior of its members. From the complex dynamics and interdependence of these processes emerges the integrated system of values, beliefs, and rules of conduct that we associate with the phenomenon of culture” (Capra, 2002, p. 82-86).

It is through the study of not only individual complex systems, but the greater complexity of the interactions of one system with multiple systems that one begins to grasp the depth of understanding required for adaptive management. The complexity of communication management shares common traits with the complexity of adaptive ecological management and adaptive business management. The models of communication provide a framework within which to examine this complexity.

Using the convergence model and the network model as a basis for examining the MF partnerships, what needs to be examined and understood, is the nature of the dialog that occurs around the problems or issues with the MF partnership, and what the resulting actions are and the messages that are produced as a result of the action. This will be explored in the interviews and survey at a general level.

Organizational Communication

Referring back to the objectives of the CMFN program in the first chapter; the goal in establishing the partnerships is to create an organization that develops methods for sustainable resource use with activities and results that are based on the use of advanced technology and demonstration of techniques and results that can be communicated to the public and the CFS management (CMFN, 2003). The partnership framework used by the CMFN appears to promote an adaptive communication planning approach and the effective use of communication feedback mechanisms to attain its goals. A central goal of the CMFN is effective actions that can be communicated within and beyond the partnership network. In producing effective action the MF partnerships require active partners from a
wide variety of interests with some common skills to facilitate open communication.

Larson and LaFasto (1989) write about teamwork based on three years of case study research of successful and unsuccessful high-powered teams in North America. They list characteristics of successful teams and teamwork: there needs to be a clear and elevating goal, a results-driven structure, competent team members, unified commitment, a collaborative climate, standards of excellence, external support and recognition, principled leadership, and inside management teams. This list compliments and expands on the ideas that have been shared earlier about effective partnerships characteristics.

Langford (2002) writes about the role of alliance managers in the private sector who establish strategic partnerships. The concept of “boundary spanning” is used to create diverse partnerships with...

“...processes that operationalize the key partnering values. These would include processes for more open communication and information-sharing (e.g. joint task forces, collocation of activities, executive conferences), interest-driven consensual decision making, alliance learning (e.g. through secondment), informal dispute resolution at the working level, and procedures for penalizing poor performance and negotiating a divorce if the alliance fails” (p. 74).

The alliance manager actively seeks out strong partners and makes deals with them. This is a process of give and take to ensure that both parties see potential gain in the relationship without sacrificing the overall goals for the alliance manager’s organization. Once the partners are identified and drawn in, the alliance manager begins the task of developing a network of relationships among the partners at different levels (Ibid, pp. 74-75).

While the CMFN and CFS encourage the concept of boundary spanning, diversifying the partnership base, it may be difficult to find individuals that can represent their particular organization and have the personal attributes that help them to be an effective partner. As Langford has stated, when people or organizations come together for the purpose of partnering or working together as a team, it requires “more open communication and
information-sharing” (Ibid). This is supported by research conducted by Ekos Research Associates (1998) in their report entitled, “Lessons learned on Partnerships: Final Report”.

They found that:

“In many cases, partners are not natural allies and, in addition to bringing their strengths to the partnership table, they also bring preconceptions, protectiveness of “turf” and suspicions. According to this research and the literature, the building blocks of trust are time, open communication and transparency. Transparency includes revealing any limitations, competition from related objectives that may affect the partnership, as well as expectations around benefits and results. As mentioned above, the interpersonal skills of the partners and their willingness to compromise can also be key predictors of success. Communication and negotiation skills, as well as attitudinal factors such as a willingness to explore new ideas have been identified as important for participants in partnerships.”

Therefore it is important to realize that once a group of individuals have started to work together in a partnership arrangement it is difficult to find new individuals and to incorporate their personal views, skills and perceptions into the existing structure unless they are in line with the existing views of the partnership.

The Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat (2004) plays a role in facilitating partnerships between its member communities and the business sector. Their website has a Partnership Development Resource Kit for building advantageous partnerships for their communities.

This website has the following ideas for maintaining and sustaining partnerships:

Choose the right managers  
Keep focused on achieving the partnership goals  
*Maintain open and ongoing relations between partners*  
*Communicate regularly and openly*  
Be flexible and adaptable  
*Monitor and evaluate progress*

While all characteristic are important, the focus here is on the three ideas that have been italicized. Communication is an underlying skill in the effectiveness of a partnership. MF managers will be chosen for a variety of skills, including communication skills and interpersonal skills, and the MF goals will contain some target of communication within and outside of the partnership.
Maintaining open and ongoing relations between partners is a way of ensuring that expectations of all partners are being met or at least recognized, and helps to “flag any problems early so that they can be addressed and resolved” (Ibid). Communicating regularly and openly helps to keep “people informed about what is happening and widens the awareness about the partnership and its objectives” (Ibid). The process of monitoring and evaluation relies on open and ongoing communication to be able to assess the partnerships progress. This needs to occur on a regular basis to help make adjustments and to resolve problems as they arise (Ibid).

Communication is a skill that needs to be practiced by all participants within a partnership for the overall goals of the partnership to be realized. The management (Board of directors and the management organization) of the partnership plays a key role in partnership relations and communication. Rodal (1994) writes about internal communication helping “internal stakeholders to buy into the partnership”, to help inform the partners about each other and the issues so that there is a “mutual understanding regarding expectation, roles, responsibilities and accountability issues, and that trust is nurtured” (p. 50). Rodal goes on to list a number of questions that can be used to assess partnership management. Some of these questions were adapted and incorporated into the interview questions and the mail-out survey.

This pervasive use and valuing of communication within a partnership forms the foundation for a culture of communication. R. de Vos, of the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa, states: “When initiating a 'culture of communication', the need for honesty, transparency and information sharing is addressed… Not only does communication need to be facilitated from the top, but honest feedback from lower levels needs to be encouraged” (prisa.co.za/index.php?id=32&page_id=161, 2002). Creating this culture of communication
also has its challenges. When this does not exist and needs to be created, the process of change is difficult.

“The paradox about creating a culture of effective communication within an organization is that communication is both the tool required to bring about the desired objective and the objective itself. Imagine a hand inventing a hand. That is one challenge facing managers and communication professionals charged with creating a culture of communication in the modern business environment” (Stefan, 1999).

There are a variety of tools that can be used to help an organization to develop a culture of communication. Within the Food and Agricultural Organization’s (FAO) Corporate Communication Policy and Strategy it states:

“Keeping staff informed and encouraging dialogue within the Organization enhances the effectiveness of staff as partners in the corporate communication effort. Tools for achieving this “culture of communication” include internal newsletters, the FAO computer network and Office Information Service, open discussions and round tables on matters of interest and concern, and a participatory approach to management” (2000).

Keeping the staff, partners, and sponsoring organizations informed and inviting feedback from all levels is critical to developing an effective communication strategy that builds a culture of communication within an organization. This ties back to the models of communication. The participatory, convergence, and networking models all allow for two-way communication, which can lead to the development of a culture of communication within an organization.

2.2.5 Communication Beyond the Partnerships

Communicating the “results and knowledge” of the MF partnerships “at the local, regional, and national levels” is a guiding objective of the CMFN program (NR Canada, 2004). This is also addressed in the evaluation of the individual MF partnerships in the Phase II evaluation reports, and has given direction to this component of the MF partnership study. Some MF partnerships appear to be more effective than others in communicating beyond the local membership.

Sinclair and Smith (1999) describe the MF as organizations that rely on their “partners,
especially government and industry, to take up and implement good ideas that result from the studies undertaken in each MF. This means that each MF must not only have a broad array of stakeholders on its respective Management Board, but must also communicate the results of studies undertaken to a wider constituency” (p. 125). The methods of communicating the results of the studies can be quite diverse. It is anticipated that government, industry, and other forest users will take advantage of the project results and incorporate this into planning, policies and operations. Other forms of communication include public education programs, an online “searchable database with over 1500 projects” (NR Canada, 2004) which can be requested online (note: this researcher attempted to order documents online, the order was sent, confirmation was given, but no documents were ever received), media releases and events, demonstration projects, training instructors, websites, seminars, “newsletters, and other publications are produced for partners, technical audiences and the general public” (NR Canada, 2002).

Sinclair and Smith (1999) discuss the need for MF organizations to “be accountable to their constituents and to the process that they have agreed to establish. Providing feedback to constituent organizations is critical to the process, as is keeping the public informed, since there is significant public concern about environmental, social and economic issues” (p. 132). The need for accountability also encompasses financial accountability as there have been substantial public funds invested in the MF program. Therefore, it is in the interest of the MF partnership and the partner organizations to communicate with government, industry, and the public to demonstrate all aspects of accountability discussed.

2.3 Summary

In the broader picture of forest management in Canada, some significant steps towards SFM have been taken. The Forest policies have changed over time to the point where there is an
attempt to balance the conservation agenda with the need for timber harvesting for employment and economic growth. Along with the policy change, forest management appears to be in a state of change (Howlett and Rayner, 2001). This state of change within the forest management sector can be attributed to a number of factors such as changing market conditions, greater understanding of ecological complexity and the interaction of human factors within the ecosystem, and the shift within government policy to a more participatory approach to managing resources. One outcome of this environment of change has been the promotion and development of partnerships such as the CMFN.

Other factors can also be attributed to the changes in traditional forest management. Since the World Commission on Environment and Development released the landmark report, “Our Common Future” in 1987, there has been a renewed emphasis on global and national environmental issues, forestry being one of many large-scale issues. This book also encouraged new ways of doing business, more collaboration and participation in decision-making. Sustainable development became the catch phrase of the 1990s; recently the concept has broadened the basis of traditional resource-based studies. This has resulted in a broader view of some of the traditional resource sciences, incorporating a larger systems view of ecology, economics, geography, sociology, and policy. Coming to the realization that systems are much more complex than previously thought allows for experimentation.

Following the work of Holling and Levin, it is important to incorporate the new understanding of complex natural systems with the complex human systems. This new understanding lays a framework for an adaptive ecological management model to allow forest management to function within an environment of change. This adaptive ecological management model requires input at many stages and adjustment on an ongoing basis. The diagram in Figure 1, on page 15, attempts to demonstrate this cyclical process of input,
adjustment, experimentation, monitoring, input and adjustment.

Within the framework of a partnership organization, such as the MF partnerships, an adaptive communication strategy is required to manage these cyclical processes to inform the diversity of participants about actions that result from this type of management. MFs are participatory structures where effective communication within the partnership and beyond is essential to the ongoing effectiveness of the organization. Building ongoing feedback mechanisms into the process is one method of designing an adaptive communication approach. A hypothesis is that an organization that has an established culture of communication and an adaptive approach to MF communication will help the organization to meet its objective of promoting SFM practices within the region and beyond.

Communication is essential for orienting new partners and maintaining the existing partners within the MF partnerships. Models of communication can be useful in examining how communication is structured and how feedback is incorporated. The resulting actions of the organization can be a measure of the effectiveness of the communication. This is particularly true in orienting and valuing partners.

Lasker, Weiss, and Miller’s (2001) research on partnership synergies in health care supports this view that communication strategies are an essential component of high-level partnership functioning. Stating: “Effective communication strategies and mechanisms to coordinate partners’ activities are needed to facilitate synergistic thinking and action” (p. 194). Within the structure of partnership organizations it is clear that effective communication is a critical component of successful operations.

Chapter 3  Research Methods

3.1  Introduction to Research Methods
The research used a case-study approach to examine the communication plans and strategies of twelve MF partnerships within the CMFN. Due to the diversity of partnership structures and governance models within the CMFN, a variety of methods have been used to explore common themes in partnership communication. A mixed-methods case study approach was used to allow for triangulation (McDuff, 2002) of the research findings in the process of identifying the common themes. The results are analytical and descriptive in nature, drawing from the results of all methods used.

The study examined the following MFs using website analysis (when possible), document review, and a mail-out survey:

- Bas-Saint-Laurent Model Forest (BSMF)
- Eastern Ontario Model Forest (EOMF)
- Foothills Model Forest (FtMF)
- Fundy Model Forest (FMF)*
- Lake Abitibi Model Forest (LAMF)*
- Long Beach Model Forest (LBMF)**
- Manitoba Model Forest (MbMF)*
- McGregor Model Forest (McMF)*
- Nova Forest Alliance (NFA)
- Prince Albert Model Forest (PAMF)*
- Waswanipi Model Forest (WCMF)
- Western Newfoundland Model Forest (WNMF)

Of the twelve cases, six MFs were identified (marked with an asterisk; the MF with two asterisks was discontinued after Phase II was completed) for additional study using semi-structured interviews.

Specific MF partnerships were identified for additional study from a review of Phase II evaluation reports and the MF websites, consideration of the representation of the different forest types and regions of the country, and in consultation with the research team during a meeting in Halifax in June of 2004. In the Phase II Evaluation reports, MFs were identified for the strengths or weaknesses of their communication efforts for inclusion in the interview component of the research. It was felt that the Long Beach MF should be included as key
individuals are still working in the area, and this particular MF was known to have polarized positions within the partnership that resulted in challenges for effective communication. This provides an interesting point of comparison to the on-going MF partnerships.

Following Creswell’s (2003, pp. 15-17) design for mixed methods, this study attempted to offset the shortcomings of any one method by triangulating the data. This approach is necessary, as the website analysis, document review, and interviews informed the researcher of various aspects of the MF partnership communication that were used to prepare the survey that was sent to participants in all eleven of the extant CMFN partnership organizations. The nature of partnership communication lends itself to “a multi-method approach because the various methods give different kinds of information that can supplement each other, because we do not know how to interpret some of the information unless we can couple it with other information, or because we need a cross-check to verify the validity of our observations” (Gordon, 1980, p. 12). This process assisted in refining the themes for improved analysis of the different sources of data (Creswell 2003, p. 196).

The focus of the study was on Phase III of the CMFN program. The Phase II evaluations made mention of certain aspects of the communication and outreach plans for each MF partnership. Therefore, the current analysis was bounded, as much as possible, by activities and documents since the onset of Phase III with a greater focus on the current state of communication within the MF partnerships.

Research for this project compliments the work of B. Gilbert, a PhD. student at Dalhousie University. Both Gilbert’s research and this research were funded by the CMFN as part of a larger partnership study. Gilbert’s work employs some of the same methods: interviews, document reviews, and a survey. The interview participants were coordinated to avoid overlap and there was collaboration in gathering documents for review with the help of a
The survey development was a cooperative effort that resulted in two separate surveys being mailed to the Model Forest organizations in 2005. Within the research design, the website analysis, document review, and interviews provide depth, while the survey provides breadth.

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Website Analysis

Website analysis is a developing method. As such, the methods for analyzing MF websites were taken from a combination of web-authoring texts (Lynch and Horton, 2001), (Mumaw, 2002), (Brisbin, 2002), and some current website analysis methods (Taylor, 2001), (Nielsen, 2003). Three approaches were used to explore all of the MF websites: a usability test with general website observations, survey questions, and interviews at selected MFs.

The communication and outreach plans were explored in an attempt to understand the purpose of the particular MF website. With this information, additional questions were added to the website analysis.

A usability test, as laid out by Taylor (2001), is designed in an “evaluation framework” to answer questions objectively while browsing the website. This is a simple set of questions based on the “normative assumptions about what a quality website should contain” (p. 16). These website qualities are corroborated in web design texts by Lynch and Horton (2001), Mumaw (2002), and Brisbin (2002). Taylor (2001) used four case studies to examine international development websites. His set of questions for the observation component in an applied evaluative study formed a basis for the analysis; other website evaluation criteria have been added. The analysis template and individual website results can be found in
Appendix A. The information sought through the analysis template is supported with the advice shared by Nielsen (2002, 2003) who is one of the world’s foremost authorities on website usability.

Once the observation and usability component questions were started, specific interview and survey questions were created to help understand the purpose and design features of the various MF websites. The observation and usability component results are reported for each website in chart form for each MF in Appendix A. This is supplemented with a brief summary of each of the websites to include in the overall case study.

3.2.2 Document Review

Written communication can take many forms in an organizational setting. The written word sets a record that can be referenced later for a variety of purposes. Within the MF context, the document review began with a few specific documents that inevitably led to other documents. The following documents were reviewed to inform the development of the interview and survey questions, and were referenced in writing this document: communications and outreach plans, annual work plans and annual reports for Phase III, public relations and education materials, newsletters, governance documents, and evaluation documents.

While much more in-depth analysis of textual documents could be conducted using content analysis, semiotic analysis, rhetorical analysis, or other forms of detailed textual analysis, this is not deemed appropriate in this research. The selected documents have provided the necessary background information to assist the researcher in focusing the interview and survey questions and in examining the activities of the individual Model Forest organizations in relation to their planning documents. The results of the interviews and survey have been correlated with the information that is in the key documents.
3.2.3 Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to understand how each MF’s communication and outreach plan was developed, implemented, modified, perceived, and used to direct the production, dissemination, and evaluation of communication materials and to gain an understanding of the culture of communication in each MF. The individuals interviewed include the staff person responsible for communications, long-term partners, and partners who joined the MF partnership within the last two years.

The interview questions served several purposes. First, the responses assisted in designing the survey questions, which was distributed to all partners in all MF partnerships early in 2005. Second, the interviews examined the information found in the Phase II evaluations. Third, the questions assisted in gaining an understanding of how the communication and outreach plans were developed, implemented and modified, and they are used to direct the communications that are produced by the particular MF. Finally, the questions assisted the researcher in understanding the culture of partnership communication as it pertains to involvement, orientation, and on-going participation in the various projects and the larger partnership organization.

The interviews were semi-structured, qualitative, and consisted of a mixture of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The interview was guided by a written set of questions (Berger, 2000, p. 112), but was not restricted to the prepared questions. Probes were used to ask the participant to provide more clarification or detail (Foddy, 1993, p. 135). Fowler and Mangione (1993) provided a basic set of probes as quoted in Foddy’s (1993, p. 135) book.

Along with restating the question the researcher can ask the following:

“How do you mean that? 
Tell me more about that? 
Anything else?”
The point to using simple probes is that they are “non-directive”; the interviewer cannot be innovative with the different interviewees, resulting in a consistent approach in all the interviews. A short simple set of probes is also easy to remember and can unobtrusively be incorporated in the process of asking questions. Gordon (1980, pp. 371-373) describes probes as a form of “topic control”. The type of probe used determines the amount of control the interviewer wishes to exert over the interview. These include silent probes, encouragement, immediate elaboration, immediate clarification, retrospective elaboration, retrospective clarification, and mutation, the process of taking the interviewee in a new direction, introducing a new topic. Each has its advantages and situations in which it is most useful.

The interview consent form/ethical guidelines and two sets of interview questions, one for partners and the other for Communications Coordinators, are included in Appendix B. Toward the end of the interview, the participants were provided with an opportunity to comment freely about any aspect of the interview and the researcher had an opportunity to pursue any topics introduced by the participant.

Prior to the interview, each participant was contacted to set up a time and place and to send the participant a letter of introduction and a copy of the consent form/ethical guidelines (Appendix B). The consent form/ethical guidelines were faxed, mailed or emailed to the participants and the researcher carried extra copies. The consent form/ethical guidelines indicated the purpose of the interview, a description of the research, and conform to the requirements of the University of Manitoba ethics guidelines. Prior to commencing the interview, the consent form/ethical guidelines were reviewed and any questions from the participant were answered. The interviews were recorded with an audio recording device and transcribed prior to analysis with TAMS Analyzer (Weinstein, 2004). The interviewer also
hand-wrote notes about the interview process to correlate any non-verbal communication with particular interview topics. Each interview was coded so that the identity of each participant is protected.

3.2.4 Mail-out Survey

The survey was mailed out to all members of each Model Forest organization for whom a mailing address was obtained. In essence, this is a non-probability or purposive survey format, attempting to solicit a response from the entire target group (Salant and Dillman, 1994, p. 62). This resulted in a relatively high response rate (Table 2), especially with the MF management and Board encouraging full participation. In attempting to increase the level of participation and keep the costs low, the assistance of the General Managers and Administrative Assistants cooperation were sought to facilitate sending out email reminders to the Model Forest members when the survey was sent out, two weeks later, and a final notice three weeks later indicating the cut-off date for the returning the survey.

Table 2: Survey results by MF and overall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Forest</th>
<th>Number Sent</th>
<th>Number Received</th>
<th>Percent (%) Return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSLMF</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOMF</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHMF</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMF</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAMF</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McM</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBMF</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFA</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAMF</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCMF</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WNMF</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mail-out self-administered questionnaires have their advantages and disadvantages (Adler and Clark, 1999, p. 228) (Berger, 2000, p. 190).
Advantages

- Fairly inexpensive
- Completed at respondents leisure
- Time efficient
- Can be anonymous
- No interviewer bias to worry about
- You can ask about personal matters
- You can ask complex questions

Disadvantages

- Response rate may be low
- Need names and addresses
- People may misinterpret questions
- You don’t know who actually filled out the questionnaire
- Sampling errors are frequent

The survey was descriptive in nature using a case-control design (Fink, 1995, p. 25). The case control comes from the preliminary data gathered using the previous methods. The documents, website analysis, and interviews informed the design of the survey questions. The purpose of the survey was to triangulate the findings of the other research methods. In surveying the entire CMFN partnership population, this provides breadth to the other methods and confirms or refutes the findings of the other methods.

The survey itself consisted of closed-ended questions (Adler and Clark, 1999, p. 221) or quantitative questions and one open-ended question. The open-ended question was used to elicit the individual respondents’ thoughts about their MF’s communication strengths. The closed-ended questions have been used to elaborate and clarify the earlier data.

An attempt was made to have the two methods, survey and interviews, verify the reliability of the responses by using equivalent questions (Fink, 1995, pp. 47-48). The survey was also pre-tested to determine if questions were redundant or misleading, and appropriate for the intended audience, determine if the directions for completing the survey are clear, and whether survey data can be collected and reported in a systematic manner (Fink and Kosecoff, 1985, p. 48). This was accomplished by sending a draft of the survey to five interview participants for feedback on the following aspects:
1. Are the questions clear, not ambiguous?
2. Do the answer choices suit the questions?
3. Do the questions contain words or content that are not easily understood by you or others in your Model Forest?
4. Does the design and layout of the survey lend itself to ease of use?
5. Are the instructions clear? (Gray and Guppy, 1994, p. 117)

The participants in the pre-test were excluded from the survey mailing. Any comments provided by them were incorporated into the survey design. The survey was also sent to the committee members for their feedback on design, content, and language. To further ensure reliability and validity, questions from existing, tested survey tools were examined and questions used and adapted from tested survey tools. Rubin, Palmgreen, and Sypher (1994) have collected an extensive number of tried and tested survey instruments in the field of communication research. The following four survey tools overlap with this study in terms of the question style and response scales.

- Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument,
- Organizational Communication Development Audit Questionnaire,
- Organizational Communication Scale,
- Organizational Culture Survey.

While these surveys in themselves have particular purposes in their application, sections of the surveys were used to guide the development of the CMFN communications survey.

The consent form and the mail-out questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

3.3 Data Analysis

Some aspects of the data analysis were described earlier. The interviews were coded and analyzed using TAMS Analyzer (Weinstein, 2004), an open source software program which is “a convention for identifying themes in texts (web pages, interviews, field notes). It was designed for use in ethnographic and discourse research” (Ibid). Once all the interviews were transcribed a basic set of codes was created to examine the text. All interviews were coded with the original set and additional codes were added as needed as the coding process.
continued.

The websites were analyzed using the survey tool found in Appendix A. When possible, each website was visited on two dates. The final review took place in early April 2005, prior to the CMFN committee meeting in Ontario where the website analysis results were shared.

Documents were gathered through downloading from the individual MF websites and contacting MF offices for additional documents. The documents were then used to cross-reference comments from the interviews and findings from the survey and website analysis. Chapter four reports on some documents regarding how they are used or how they could be used more effectively as communication tools.

The survey results were analyzed using JMP IN (SAS Institute, 2004), an academic version of the quantitative data analysis software JMP. The services of the University of Manitoba’s Statistics Advisory Service were utilized during the analysis of the survey. All data was coded and entered into Excel before the file was loaded into JMP IN. Here the data was checked and any anomalies were investigated and cross-referenced with the survey documents.

Several methods were used to examine the data. First, basic distributions of the data results were used to explore the overall results and then to explore the results by MF, and when applicable, other variables from the survey. Most of the results in this document have been reported using distributions. Some of the survey data have been explored using bivariate analysis to understand the relationship between two survey questions. This included conducting cross-tabulation to understand the correlation of the two data sets. One way grouped quantile plots were used to compare and explore the results of a question across different variables to look for patterns and anomalies in the survey results.

The staff of Statistics Advisory Services (University of Manitoba) confirmed that the rate of return is exceptional for a mail-out survey. But, this is complicated by the fact that it was a
census approach, surveying the entire population. It is impossible to determine if there is a particular demographic grouping that did not respond to the survey. Therefore it is assumed that this is an accurate sampling of the MF population.

During the survey analysis, themes were identified for reporting on the twelve cases. The themes encompass aspects of communication identified in the interviews, documents, websites, and surveys.

There are some minor data inconsistencies. For WCMF, only a few documents were received and personal contact with staff was difficult to secure, the website was only activated for a month or two, and the survey response rate was very low. For BSLMF the problem belongs to the researcher, an inability to read French has resulted in minimal documents for review. LBMF is included in the results as there are important lessons from the interviews and documents about communication issues that are common in the network. The survey responses were weighted heavily towards respondents with a higher level of education as illustrated in Figure 8A. There is very little variation among the MFs as seen in Figure 8B. It is uncertain if this reflects a high level of education for all MF participants or if the survey was not filled in and returned by most of those with a lower level of education, possible indicating a lower level of literacy. Based on comments from the interviews, there are more MF participant with a lower level of education than the results indicate. Therefore, these data have not been used to explore the survey results.
Figure 8: A. Highest level of education of survey respondents (values are a percent of the total responses). B. Percent of MF survey respondents, by MF, indicating that they have Technical College to Graduate University training.

Reporting on the results of the interviews has been done to protect the identity of the individual using a code number. All direct quotes have been treated in this way unless permission was sought from the individual. Comments or concepts that were held in common may be shared by identifying the individual MF.
Chapter 4  An Overview of Partnership Communication

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two examinations: first, internal communication, and second, external communication. The results from the website analysis, document reviews, interviews, and mail-out survey will be used throughout this chapter to provide observations on the network as a whole, and to look at individual MFs where there are points of convergence and divergence from the network.

Table 3: Areas of MF communication and methods used in the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Aspect Examined</th>
<th>Study Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Website Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Materials and Process</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of Goals and Policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Relations</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitated Processes</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Recognition</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Trust</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from Success and Failure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and Trust</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Trust with First Nations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open and Honest Communication</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Language of Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Management and the Role of a Facilitator</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual work plans and annual reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of the Individual MFs</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of the CMFN</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Education</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While the research examines several areas of communication, some in more detail than others, the intent was to get a general impression of how communication is used, the strengths of individual MFs and the CMFN, and where there needs to be more deliberate attention to improve the individual MFs’ and the CMFN’s communication practices. Table 3 identifies the aspects of communication and the research method used in the examination.

4.2 Internal Communication

Internal communication strategies are key to communicating within the partnership to keep people informed about both the activities of the MF and the pertinent information that pertains to forest management in the region and the country. This can be performed through a variety of means and is often carried out by the different of participants within the organization. With the wide range of projects being implemented by the different working groups or committees, there is a need for deliberate communication within the organizations, both vertically and horizontally, to keep all partners informed. Vertical communication can be seen as communication from the management or executive committee of the Board down to all the partners and members or from the partners to the management or executive committee of the MF. Horizontal communication occurs between partners or Board members, and between working groups or committees. Research has shown that “horizontal communications (informal, with proximate colleagues) are less strongly related to levels of commitment at both organizational and unit level, than are vertical communications (strategic information and communication with management)” (Postmes, Tanis, and de Wit, 2001, p. 243). While vertical communication is more important for encouraging stronger commitment to the MF, horizontal communication is important for efficiency and avoiding duplication. Keeping working groups or committees informed about each other’s activities helps each to become more effective.
To examine internal communication it is important to look at the tools of communication and the impressions that people involved in the MFs have of these tools and their use. When people become involved with an MF, they need to learn about the ways in which it functions in meetings and to understand the organization’s structures that facilitate their operations (Rodal, 1994). It is also important to consider how the MF leadership creates an inclusive atmosphere through building trust, managing conflict, and recognizing organizational limitations (Rodal and Mulder, 1998).

4.2.1 Communication Tools

Regarding communications, a variety of tools are used by the MFs. Using a range of tools allows messages to be sent and received in several ways in an attempt to reach a diversity of audiences. In general, the tools used are those that the message-sender is the most familiar with and finds convenient to use (Battelle and ERM, 2005). Through interviewing MF partners and examining documents, a specific set of communication tools in use by the MFs were observed (Table 4). Two tools, namely email and the MF websites, were mentioned frequently in the interviews and covered by the survey. These will be examined more closely to see how they are used and how the partners perceive that use.
### Table 4: Internal communication tools and their intended purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Tool</th>
<th>How the tool is being used or has been used by a MF for internal communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Day to day communication, sending and receiving internal documents, soliciting feedback, targeting distribution lists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Distribute documents, newsletters, and other reports; post coming events and review of past events; organization information, membership and member information, password protected working group sections, project progress reports, calendar of meetings and events, share success stories, and relevant links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Project updates, list up-coming events, report on relevant topics, partner profiles, share success stories, contact information, report on planning process, share stories from the network, report on local activities or events, recognize partner contributions, and highlight publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Inform partners about projects, budgets, network activities, new members, up-coming events, related research and developments; solicit feedback, advice, and ideas from partners, dialogue on areas of concern, get input about upcoming issues, a forum for disseminating and receiving information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agendas</td>
<td>Solicit items of interest for the partnership, inform the partnership of priority items of the organization, prepare people for the topics for each meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes</td>
<td>Record of date, time and location of meeting, who was there and who else was invited, who did and said what in the meeting, main discussion point and outcomes, list action items along with who will look after the item, items for the next agenda, project reports, and next meeting time, date and location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project updates</td>
<td>May be given orally or on paper. Provides an update of a proposed, on-going or completed project, the implications of the findings to date, the steps to be taken, and budget status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project reports</td>
<td>Report on research findings and disseminate to partnership for potential application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership workshops</td>
<td>Training, sharing information, receiving feedback, dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual report</td>
<td>Reporting on the activities, projects, and finances of the past year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual work plans</td>
<td>Reporting on the activities, projects, and budget of the up-coming year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Dialogue, feedback, information sharing, relationship building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Elicit feedback from partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td>Sending information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>Dialogue, feedback, information sharing, relationship building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information notes</td>
<td>Providing project summaries and information on how to apply project results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications Coordinator</td>
<td>Providing expertise and guidance on aspects of MF communication activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Email**

From the interviews it appears that email has become the most common form of communication within the MF partnerships and within the network. For the majority of interview participants, this was seen as the most effective method of keeping them informed
about various aspects of the MF. Email is commonly used for the distribution of agendas, minutes, reports, news items, dialogue, feedback, etc. For some MF partnerships (ie. FMF, LAMF and LBMF), the heavy reliance on email was a contentious issue due to the prolific amounts of email and individuals feeling like they were being asked to read through too much information. For a few interviewees in FMF, this was a significant issue in the past, but the individuals indicated that when their opinions were voiced about the large quantity of email, it was dealt with in a satisfactory manner, and email amounts are reasonable now.

There is also concern that the widespread acceptance of email as the primary mode of communication will push some of the people who are marginally involved in the MF (Interviews 3, 6, 20, 21, 27) out of the information loop due to the heavy reliance of computer technology. Several people shared their reluctance to embrace computer technology. This seems to be more common with First Nation elders (Interview 21) and among some rural members (Interview 6). This “Digital Divide”, or lack of interest or access to the Internet, is supported by data available from Statistics Canada (2003) and research conducted in the United States (Mossberger, Tolbert, and Stansbury, 2003), (Nie and Erbring, 2001). Nie and Erbing show that “the most important factors facilitating or inhibiting Internet access are education and age…” (2001, p. 269). Mossberger, Tolbert, and Stansbury’s research show that, “as in previous research, the poor, the less educated, and the old were significantly less likely to have a home computer, an email address, or Internet access (2003, p. 29). Statistics Canada (2003) indicated that the Canadian population had similar gaps in Internet use. This work also indicated that rural users, without children under the age of 18, were less likely to have Internet access (Ibid, 2004). With the existence of the “digital divide”, it is important for each MF to conduct a demographic analysis of the partners and the larger audience of the MF to be most effective in selecting the tools used for communications.
The survey indicates that the majority of the partners feel that email is used effectively “often to always” (91.7%, Figure 9). The results were slightly lower for PAMF (80%) and WCMF (71.4%). Overall it appears that most MFs use email quite effectively.

![Figure 9: A. Frequency of effective use of email from the survey for all MFs. B. Effective use of email by MF with mean line for often to always.](image)

The lack of acknowledgement of the role of email in the communication plans and the policy and procedures documents implies that the method may have been adopted by default as opposed to a deliberate strategy. It was acknowledged in some MFs that some people do not have email or only have slow dial-up internet access and that this can be problematic for distribution of information and large documents (Interview 6, 15, 17, 29). Some also mentioned surveying their newsletter audience to determine if email delivery was acceptable before ending the production of hardcopies of the newsletter (Interview 6 and 13).

It is important to be aware of the demographics of the intended audience for the newsletter and other communication tools. As information technology becomes the norm for internal operations and communications, the traditional methods of mail and telephone calls still need to be used to prevent marginalization of some partners (Interview 6). All the MFs, where interviews were conducted, were aware of this issue. It was also clear that some were reluctant to admit their personal lack of technology skills within their respective MFs (Interview 21).
**Websites**

The MF website is a tool that can reach out to a diversity of audiences at a low cost (Aldridge, 2002). For many organizations it has become their highest priority communications tool as it presents their image to the widest audience possible: the world (Jonsson, Sanders-Wikstrom, 2000). Within the MF network there are several purposes for the websites. However, it appears that the main purposes of the website are to communicate to the public and to the partners.

Several website qualities, examined in the website analysis, (Appendix A), pertain to both internal and external communication. Regarding interactivity, it was found that most MF websites provide full contact information for the staff of the MF; however, MBMF, NFA, and PAMF have no contact names on their websites, only a general office address, telephone number and email address. The WCMF website had contact information, but this website has not been available for more than six months and was only on the Internet temporarily at the beginning of 2005. Contact information can serve a dual function: helping partners, especially new partners, to become familiar with the individuals involved in the day-to-day MF operation, and also providing easy access to the individuals. The LAMF and WNMF sites also contain photos of the individuals to allow new partners to identify staff more easily.

In examining how the MF websites are inclusive, two criteria were examined: contact information for partners, and information on current projects (Appendix A). Partner contact information varies considerably; some MFs provide the names of Board members along with the name of the organization they represent (FHMF, FMF, LAMF, and WNMF), some list the partner organization but not the individual representing the organization (BSLMF, EOMF, McMF, NFA, and PAMF), and one does not list partners at all on the website (MBMF). Information about partner organizations and individuals is a valuable tool to help
partners learn about the organizations that the other partners represent. The other inclusive feature is the availability of project updates. It was found that only FHMF has some project updates on their website. Some MFs have current projects listed but not with a recent project update (FMF, LAMF, NFA, and some projects listed for WNMF).

Within the MF partnerships, the websites perform the role of community outreach through the news and events or calendar of events section. One website, FMF, stands out from all the others, with an interactive calendar containing links on specific dates to pull up information about meetings, events, seminars, etc. This type of dynamic use of the website was recognized by Interviewee 8 in commenting about how useful this was for planning what activities and meetings to attend. Other websites offer news and events, but it was noted that several of these are out of date and no other websites list regular Board, partner, committee or working group meetings. The BSLMF English website and the MBMF website did not list any news or events. Keeping news and events current and listing a variety of meetings on the website provide a central place for all relevant information for MF partners, helping them to stay involved and informed.

Another aspect of community outreach to the partnership is providing partner recognition for contributions or involvement in research projects. The only website that provides some direct recognition of partners in relation to specific project work is WNMF. This site describes how some partner organizations and individuals have contributed to the efforts of a working group. No other websites provide this directly on the website. This information may be available by downloading documents that are available on the MF websites, but the individuals and partners are not directly tied to project or MF work. This type of recognition is useful for individuals to account for their involvement to their respective organizations. It also encourages partners to continue to contribute as efforts are recognized
(Diedrich and Vail, 2004).

On the questions of how frequently the partners look at the MF website, 60.8% of the partners “rarely if ever” look at their respective MF website (Figure 10 A.). WCMF (71.4%) and MBMF (71.1%) had the largest percentage of partners indicating that they “rarely if ever” visit their MF website. Overall it appears to be a challenge for the MFs to keep their websites up-to-date and relevant.

![Figure 10: Frequency of MF participants accessing MF website. B. Frequency of MF participants accessing MF website by MF with mean line for never to rarely response.](image)

When the news and events page is two or three months out of date and the information on the home page of the website remains static for several months, or longer it sends the message that this is not a place to get up-to-date information about the organization. All of the communication people interviewed indicated that there is more they should be doing to maintain their respective website but that time and other priorities were factors that got in the way. One communications person indicated that the website needed “one day a week” (Interview 6) for updating content. Another stated: “it is always a struggle anywhere to keep the content up to speed” (Interview 1). One interviewee indicated that the LBMF always intended to build up a comprehensive website but only managed to put up a website during the last two years of operations. This resulted in a significant lack of access to LBMF information dissemination to the partnership.
There appears to be a contradiction in the responses associated with frequency of website use (Figure 10) and perception of currency of website information (Figure 11). Conducting a bivariate analysis of these two questions it appears that the greatest intersection of responses is by those who “rarely” view the website indicating that they agree that it is often current (26.75%). Most MFs are slow to up-date their website information, with past events often being listed as up-coming events. This could be a capacity issue for Communications Coordinators (Interview 6) that the individual MFs need to address. Figure 11 B indicates that many MFs believe that the information on their respective websites is up-to-date. However, this is not supported by the findings in the website observations and is particularly troublesome for WCMF, which did not have a website during the survey period.

![Figure 11](image_url)

**Figure 11**: A. How often the information on each individual MF website is perceived to be up-to-date. B. Response by MF with mean line for often to always.

In the interviews, a common view about the internal purpose of the MF websites can be summed up by saying it is for “the partners and the committees, letting them know what’s going on amongst ourselves, the extended office so to speak, the extended staff” (interview 1). A MF is involved in so many different projects and activities that it is the “one place where all that information comes together” (interview 16). Others see it as a place to tell people what is going on, to share with partners a calendar of events, a place for a “post mortem of workshops and general meetings” (interview 10), and a forum to communicate
to the stakeholders. It appears that few MFs use their websites as an ongoing communication tool to inform partners of the ongoing activities in a comprehensive manner.

For a number of MFs, the annual work plans indicate that research reports and progress reports will be posted on the websites as projects progress and eventually produce a report. Yet few actually report on these intended actions in their annual reports, making it difficult to determine how often this has been done. None of the websites feature an up-to-date project progress report. Project information on the websites typically states the intent of the project and possibly a project report document, but generally the two are not found together. Some, such as the FMF, make an effort to provide a description of a project that has been approved; others simply provide information about the working groups or committees, while others only provide documents without any information about projects or working groups. This apparent lack of deliberate planning and/or follow-through in using the MF websites as an internal communication tool will be explored in the next chapter.

### 4.2.2 Communicating through Meetings

The meeting setting is one of the most common places where partners, Board members, staff, and general members come together for some form of interpersonal communication. While a wide variety of meetings occurs within a MF, the focus here will be on the Board meetings and the committee or working-group meetings.

The frequency of Board meetings varies considerably across the MFs. On the low end, FMF holds two meetings a year, which is the minimum number of meetings allowed in its by-laws. MBMF states that the Board must meet at least once a year, but meets about ten times. The NFA Board meets four times a year as stated in their governance documents, and the McMF documents state that the Board will meet four times a year or so and generally meets more frequently. WNMF requires a minimum of four Board meetings a year but
usually meets six times, and PAMF documents state ten meetings a year, which appears to be accurate. Others do not state the frequency of Board meetings. Alongside the Board meetings, there is an executive or management committee of the Board that looks after the ongoing work of the MF, working with the GM. This committee generally meets more frequently, especially in the MFs where the Board meets less frequently.

In the responses to survey question 1 (i.e., indicate which type of meeting the respondent will be referring to when answering the questions that are part of question 1) there was not a significant difference between the responses for Board meetings, executive committee meetings and working group/committee meetings, and only a small number of other types of meetings were listed. Therefore, all the meetings have been examined as a whole.

In examining Figure 12 A, there is a general sense that what the partners hear in MF meetings is reflected in the decisions that are made (the variation of responses by MF is indicated in Figure 12 B). 83.7% of respondents see this happening “often to always”. The data also show that 74% of respondents do not see the information they hear at meetings reflected in the decision all of the time. This may indicate a breakdown in communication, or a lack of understanding of how the discussion in meetings results in decisions. It would be useful to examine how well the minutes of meetings reflect what people heard in the meetings and whether the partners review the minutes and provide feedback on what they see. This is beyond the parameters of this study.
Figure 12: A. The MF decisions reflect what individuals hear in discussions in meetings. B. Responses by MF with mean line for always to often.

A few MFs have used the website as a place to disseminate minutes of meetings, by posting the minutes directly on the main website or by providing partners with a password-protected section of the website. Some MFs state in their Policy and Procedures documents how soon after a meeting the minutes should be distributed and to whom they should be distributed. This ranges from five to ten business days. Others do not mention a timeframe. The most common method of disseminating the minutes is through email and then including the minutes with a package of information (commonly called the Board package) that is sent to partners prior to the next meeting. Streibel (2003) comments that minutes should be sent out as soon as possible; “the faster you get out the minutes, the less time the participants have to rely on their perceptions and memory of the decisions and assignments” (p. 105).

Based on comments at the CMFN committee meeting in April, 2005, the Secretariat needs to be more proactive in disseminating meetings minutes in a more timely fashion.

The Board package is an essential bundle of information that helps the partners to be more effective when they attend the meetings by providing the background information for the items that are on the agenda. As Interviewee 25 stated, the Board package would “…contain the agenda, the immediate items, any correspondence, previous minutes, and any agenda or information for agenda items that we had to deal with…” When this package is given to the
members prior to the meeting, it allows them to be more active and focused in the
discussions around the table. When this package becomes too large and summary
documents are not provided, it discourages advance preparation because of the
overwhelming amount of information that needs to be processed (Interview 7).

The timing of the delivery of Board information is also important. Survey participants were
asked about the level of satisfaction in receiving information in time for informed
participation in MF decision-making. Figure 13 A shows that 53.1% of the respondents
indicated that they are “very satisfied”. There appears to be a significant portion of the
partners who are happy with the current situation. However, this is not consistent among all
MFs as seen in Figure 13 B.

![Figure 13: A. Level of satisfaction with information received for informed participation in meetings. B. Responses by MF with mean line for very satisfied.](image)

When participants have the information needed for informed participation, it makes it easier
for partners to be actively engaged in discussions. During the CMFN committee meeting in
Cochrane, Ontario in April 2005, it was pointed out that the information packages for the
Strategic Initiatives had not been received until two days prior to the meeting, making it
difficult to be fully prepared for discussion at the CMFN committee meeting. The timely
delivery of information is a critical component of a successful communication strategy.

Figure 14 A indicates that 77.4% of the respondents are “often to always” actively involved
in discussion. Board meetings and executive committee meetings were within two percentage points of this value and working groups/sub-committees were 7% higher. This was corroborated by comments in the interviews about the level of involvement in the working groups/sub-committees. One person talked about how these meetings tend to be “fairly informal… people feel pretty free to say what they want” (Interview 6). The responses for all MFs were relatively high for this question (Figure 14 B).

![Figure 14: A. How often individuals are actively involved in meetings. B. Response by MF with mean line for often to always.](image-url)

The Board meetings tend to follow a more rigid structure than the working group or other subcommittee meetings. However, two interviewees thought that if the meeting required using a rigid structure, such as Robert’s Rules of Order, there must be problems. Interviewee 7 felt that “…if you have to pull out the rule book, you know that things are going downhill quick”. When an organization breaks from the established norms and leaders do not exercise their authority to bring the group back to meaningful dialogue, some members will not feel free to participate (Interview 24). Another important reason for not engaging in dialogue is personality. Some people just do not like to talk in a group setting, making it difficult to know if their perspective has been heard. This puts more onus on leaders to consult people individually on issues before or after the meeting or during the breaks to be able to consider every perspective (Barge, 1996, p. 331). In interview 11 it was stated that a break during the
meetings “…gives us the opportunity to approach one another” for informal dialogue without the structure of the meeting itself. As a result, the breaks in the meeting need to be strategically aligned with the most difficult discussions for strategic dialogue (Tropman, 1996).

Figure 15 A shows that 92.3% of respondents were “somewhat to very satisfied” with how the MF meetings allow everyone to participate. The results were strong for all MFs, as seen in Figure 15 B. Balancing this response with the data in Figure 14, it appears that while an individual may not participate, there is a sense that the opportunity is there.

**Figure 15:** A. Level of satisfaction with how well meetings allow everyone to participate. B. Response by MF with mean line for somewhat to very satisfied.

An examination of Figure 16 A, along with the results in Figures 14 and 15, indicates that there is a wide range of actual levels of participation, which varies with the type of meetings and the MF. Overall, 45.7% of respondents indicated that there is 76-100% participation. Figure 16 B indicates the range of responses within the different MFs.
The meeting location is another way of communicating to the partnership that the communities in the MF are important. This can make a statement to a community representative that the partners are interested enough in the community to spend some time there. As interviewee 17 put it:

“If you have the meeting in the community they see the model forest, they see the brand, they see the people that are representing that partner within the model forest and by doing it within their own community rather than having it outside or as I said earlier in someone else’s backyard, they’re more comfortable with it.”

This seems to be particularly true for First Nation communities. PAMF has made a deliberate point of holding meetings in Montreal Lake Cree First Nation and found that it increased the level of commitment and level of participation of the community representatives. MBMF has used the same approach and found it to be successful in drawing in the First Nations participants (Interview 13). FMF uses this approach in its communities; it tries to “vary the location … so that people get used to having meetings in their area during the year” (Interview 10).

4.2.3 Communicating Organizational Knowledge

Orientation Materials and Process

Learning about how a MF functions can be a challenging task for new members. This can
be facilitated through a variety of communication tools and planned activities. In the interviews, the participants were asked if there was an orientation process for new partners. The responses were quite mixed. All the current MFs where interviews took place have a binder or package of information that is given to new partners, but not everyone is aware of this information package or it is a relatively new thing. In FMF, only two people knew about this resource, as it is a very new development. In LAMF, orientation is an informal process and only two of five knew about it. MBMF has a binder and four of five interviewees knew about it. In McMF, three of four interviewees knew about the package of information, but the newest member did not. Finally, in PAMF, three out of five interviewees knew about an information package.

Even with an information package, it appears that it is a rather informal process in all the MFs. One interviewee (Interview 9) talked about the large volume of material that was provided for orientation and stated: “It included video tapes and pretty well anything that I need to get me up to speed. Now the nuts and bolts, well, I don’t know that, I know that I have it, I just haven’t reviewed it yet”. Receiving a large amount of information without someone reviewing it with the new member appears to be a bit overwhelming; a few people shared this sentiment. Another approach seems to be what has been referred to as “baptism by fire” (Interview 5) or “throwing them into the fray” (Interview 15). This means basically bringing new people in, providing some basic reading materials, and letting them figure out how things work. Other informal processes include lunch with the GM, chatting with a member about what the MF is all about (Interview 9 and 19), and relying on the individual’s past experience and knowledge of the MF (Interview 7 and 27).

Survey respondents were asked if partner expectations were made clear upon joining the MF partnership (Figure 17 A). 40.8% felt that the expectations were clear, while 22.5% did not
think expectations were clear. Figure 17 B displays the responses for each MF. EOMF stands out with 58% of respondents indicating that the expectations were clear, also showing the lowest value, 10%, for respondents stating that expectations were not clear. FMF and WCMF stand out with a higher no than yes response, indicating that more effort needs to be given to clarifying expectations for partners when they join the MF. Overall this appears to be a weak area for all MFs.

Contrast the data from Figure 17 A with the results in Figure 18 A where only 49.9% (yes and no combined) of respondents indicated that there was some sort of orientation, 24.4% thought it was an effective orientation, and 25.5% did not. The overall low values for each MF (Figure 18 B) appear to indicate that the orientation of new partners is not an important consideration of the individual MFs.
MFs like MBMF, FMF, and PAMF have some form of partner orientation package and some form of process. It is clear that this needs more deliberate planning on how to communicate about the history and the complexity of the MFs to new partners.

One method that is used by default is that of informal mentoring, or one partner casually explaining to a new member the way the MF works. Figure 19 A shows the total responses about being taught the informal rules of the MF by another partner. While this does occur by default, about a quarter of the respondents (22.7%) had experience with this type of orientation, but it does not appear to be the norm as seen by the variation in Figure 19 B.

Figure 18: A. Survey respondents' perception about whether the MF organization had an effective orientation process for new partners. B. Responses by MF with Yes and No mean lines.

Figure 19: A. Survey respondents’ indicating whether another partner has taught them the informal rules of the MF when they joined. B. Responses by MF with Yes and No mean lines.

Whether informal orientation is a planned strategy for some MFs is not clear from the documents, interviews, or surveys. Still, many of the interviewees talked about the challenges
that exist for new partners. One talked about “just trying to understand how you get involved” (Interview 28), a sentiment that was expressed by many of the people interviewed. Interviewee 9 talked about the experience of recently joining a MF and wondering about the next step and expressed this sentiment: “the next step, as for myself I don’t know what to do next”. Others raised questions regarding “getting up to speed on questions that need to get answered so that you’ve got enough of their background history on how you got to where you are as an organization” (Interview 19). MFs are complex organizations with complex histories and complex networks of operation and decision-making that are not typical of Board-run organizations. To assume that someone with some Board experience can function within this consensus-based setting without a carefully planned and orchestrated orientation process invites confusion and marginalization. As Interviewee 28 stated: “The challenge is to make sure that the new partner understands, and is encouraged to get involved. We have to make that as easy as possible.”

Understanding of Goals and Policies and Procedures

Interviewees talked about the goals and objectives in general terms Most knew about some of the objectives of their respective MF due to personal or organizational interest in the specific goal(s). Only a few people, those intimately involved with the MF, had a clear understanding of the goals and objectives, some through repeatedly referring to them, others through posting them where they can be seen and referenced. Almost all referred to the broad goal of promoting SFM. This supports the findings of the Veraxis Research and Communication report (2004), which stated that while “… there is a general understanding of what the program set out to do, not everyone shared a consistent view as to how that broad mandate translated into strategy and tactics” (p. 6).

Figure 20 A indicates that the respondents were satisfied with the quality of information
(80.2% “somewhat to very satisfied”) that they receive from the MF about the policies and goals, and agreed that the goals of the MF were clear to them (86.5% “agree to strongly agree” in Figure 20 C). When the data for both questions is broken down by MF (Figures 20 B and 20 D) it appears that most MFs have been quite successful in sharing information about goals, policies and procedures with their members. Where the responses are lower, there is an opportunity to learn from the other MFs where the responses are higher.

![Graphs A, B, C, D]

*Figure 20: A. Level of satisfaction about the information received about MF policies and goals. B. Responses by MF with mean line for somewhat to very satisfied. C. Level of agreement that the goals of the MF are clear to the respondent. D. Responses by MF with mean line for agree to strongly agree.*

**Partner Relations**

Another aspect of organizational knowledge is the degree to which partners know about the other partners and what the other partners bring to the table. For example, in the interviews with MBMF, people shared views about the activities that partners said were useful and
important for building relationships among the different partners. Cross-cultural workshops have been held throughout the history of the MBMF. These facilitated workshops have focused on several aspects of the MBMF, covering First Nations issues, gaining an understanding of the different perspectives of the organizations at the table through role playing, and going through Board training sessions. This type of training aimed at strengthening the MBMF, particularly during the annual Christmas meeting. This is a two-day event that brings all the partners and project people together to hold meetings, annual planning sessions, and facilitated workshops, and to socialize. Two of the people interviewed mentioned how this was the best orientation to the MBMF; all of the MBMF interviewees mentioned how this was a place to let loose and get to know the others, where relationships develop into friendships. This type of approach results in improved communication between individuals and organizations as the relationships strengthen (Interview 12).

In the other MFs, a number of partners talked about wanting to know more about the other partners and what they bring to the MF. In FMF, one interviewee suggested they should “get all the partners together in a setting where you can actually share who’s doing what or what’s happening or kind of like a sharing session” (Interview 8) on an annual basis. A similar sentiment was expressed in LAMF: “I think the challenge that the MF has is how do you, outside of very formal events, what kind of ways do you create for people to share ideas and information. We could use a couple of different ways of doing that, that are more informal” (Interview 3). In LBMF it was observed that there was a perceived lack of trust between partners because “members’ expectations by each partner were never really voiced” (Interview 22). In McMF it was pointed out that some of the partners “know each other from other partnerships that they’re involved in” (Interview 27), resulting in multiple levels of working relationships. In PAMF one of the partners suggested that “communication between the partners sometimes is… unless we’re working on a specific project, that could
probably be improved… something outside of just regular Board meetings, something like an annual workshop, like a brainstorming session” (Interview 18). At all MFs where interviews took place, it was expressed that more needs to be done to develop the relationships among the partners through informal events, where relationships can develop beyond that of conducting the business of the MF itself.

**Partner Recognition**

Two people indicated in the interviews that their MFs could do more to recognize the contributions of the partners. This need not be done in some loud public way, but a letter of recognition and acknowledgement of the value of the contribution made by this industry, NGO, government office, etc. that goes to the person at the head of the organization (Interview 3). This is done somewhat through newsletters, annual reports and published reports.

Figure 21 A indicates a fairly high level of satisfaction (75% being “somewhat to very satisfied”) when asked about the quality of information about the contributions that the partners make to the MF. There are two significant exceptions to this as seen in Figure 21 B, McM and WCM are both well below the norm. When asked about how often the contribution made by the respondent’s organization is openly recognized, 73.5% replied with “often to always”. Over all the results in Figure 21 C support the results in Figure 21 A, but not for the same MF organizations as seen in Figures 21 B and 21 D. This could indicate that there is a general level of satisfaction within most MFs, recognizing the contribution of the overall partners, but not often enough for some respondents.
Figure 21:  

A. Level of satisfaction with the information received from the MF about the contributions that partners make to the MF partnership. B. Responses by MF with mean line for somewhat to very satisfied. C. How often the contributions made by the respondents’ organization to the MF are openly recognized. D. Responses by MF with mean line for often to always.

This recognition takes on two main forms: the acknowledgement of in-kind contribution, and recognition of cash support. When recognizing in-kind support, this is where all the organizations make a contribution of time for meetings, travel, and staff time to work on projects, planning sessions, provide technical expertise, and much more. This in-kind support is all that some of the smaller organizations can provide to the MF. Interviewee 26 pointed out just how important this recognition is to maintaining relationships: “…we did contribute time and travel and our days; it never ever said there was any in-kind contribution … in the financial.”

The website is a vehicle that can be used for the recognition of the partner contribution to the MF. Only the WNMF website directly acknowledges individual partner contributions
to its working groups. For the other MFs, this is done through general statements about funding and in-kind contributions and then listing partner organizations. In the FHMF, this is broken down into categories of partner, which indicates to some degree the level of support for the MF. The LAMF site recognizes that Board members contribute their time, NFA makes a general statement of partners contributing to the process with cash or in-kind support, the EOMF website mentions sharing expertise and resources, and the FMF talks about bringing opinions and expertise to the table. The other MF websites list the partners, but do not mention any form of contribution. The MBMF site does not list the partners at all. While more information may be available within downloadable documents, overall the websites lack information about the contributions that partners make to their MFs.

4.2.4 Structural Communication

Closely tied to communicating organizational knowledge is structural communication, i.e., how the MF organizations are structured to facilitate the movement of information both vertically and horizontally.

There is 70.1% agreement (“agree to strongly agree”) that the organizational structure facilitates clear communication within the MFs (Figure 22 A). However, the level of those who are “undecided or disagree” (30.1%) indicates that there are some issues here. In examining this for each MF (Figure 22 B), structural communication appears to be more problematic for BSLMF, WCMF, and FMF. Those MFs that appear to be better than average for this are EOMF and PAMF.
In the interviews, a few people gave some insights into how structural communication can work and others made suggestions for how to improve structural communication.

Interviewee 8 talked about how hard it is to have transparent communication: “…to kind of have transparency with the other groups, like our group would know what the other two groups are doing and right now we are not getting that; we don’t know what the other groups are doing”. Another person stated: “if it looks like someone has a hidden agenda, it usually comes out” (Interview 7). In another MF, one of the interviewees stated that “hopefully our governance is as transparent as we can make it” (Interview 28), but recognized that this might change when a new GM is hired. Another individual talked about how the minutes get emailed to the other committees, but “it doesn’t always get beyond the committees and the people who sit on the committees” (Interview 16).

In PAMF there are two or three Board meetings a year where the committee chairs are invited to report on their activities (Interview 18). In McMf, the Board recently invited the committee chairs to attend Board meetings. This has allowed the committee chairs to understand the decision-making process and to be more informed about how the MF functions. Interest was expressed by the committee chairs to do this more often (Interview 28). In other MFs it is the staff, often the GM (Interview 5 and 6) or Project Manager
(Interview 6 and 8), who plays the role of carrying information between the committees and the Board. For some MFs, there are a significant number of Board members who sit on project committees or working groups (Interview 3, 6, 8, 15, and 28) thus providing possible conduits for vertical communication.

Vertical communication is defined as the “information coming from or going to a supervising unit” (Garfield and Gogan, 2003, p. 5). Figure 23 A indicates how well the executive committees communicate with the rest of the partners and how frequently this committee knows what is happening at all levels of the MF (Figure 23 C). Generally there is some support for the notion that the management arm of the Board effectively communicates with the partners (62.1% “agree to strongly agree”) and stronger support for the management arm of the Board knowing what is happening in the working groups/subcommittees (82% “often to always”). On an individual MF basis, BSLMF, FMF, and McMF appear much weaker in passing information from the executive committee to the rest of the partners, while EOMF and MBMF are stronger than the mean. Contrast this with the responses in Figure 23 D where WNMF is the weakest, and BSLMF and WCMF are the strongest. Figure 23 A and B are about vertical communication from the top down, and Figure 23 C and D are about communication from the bottom up. The results indicate that there is better communication from the working group/committee levels to the executive than there is from the executive level to other levels.
Horizontal communication is defined as information flow “to or from a peer unit” (Ibid, p. 5). Figure 24 indicates that this is a weak area for most MFs with only 29.7% of the respondents knowing what was happening in the various MF committees “often to always”. The most alarming is the “never to seldom” responses totaling 36.8%. Broken down by MF, two are significantly higher in the never to seldom response, BSLMF and FMF. WCMF and WNMF were significantly lower. Overall, horizontal communication appears to be a significant challenge for the individual MFs.
In the LBMF horizontal communication was a critical shortcoming of the organization. Several factors were highlighted in the interviews that contributed to this situation. At the beginning of the MF program, the idea of having an MF did not come from the region itself. The idea was proposed by the regional district as opposed to the communities, and had to be sold to the communities as a way to “show the world” how change can happen by bringing together a variety of perspectives to bring about SFM (Interview 22). During Phase I it appears there was a hands-off approach from CFS; one interviewee had “serious concern about CFS’s lack of action for five or six years” (Interview 25). This resulted in the need for a Blue Ribbon Panel or the Advisory Group of representatives of the MF program from across Canada to develop recommendations on whether the LBMF should obtain Phase II funding. The resulting requirement for restructuring is another example of how ideas were imposed upon the region by people from outside the region. As one person said, there was a “perception of staff buy-in to the new Phase II proposal without understanding what that really meant” (Interview 23).

Once Phase II was underway, there were issues with a former GM becoming the LBMF president and micro-managing the new GM. This led to a serious erosion of communication between the executive committee and the GM, and the personalities were in
constant conflict (Interviews 21, 22, 24, 25). There was also a steady turnover of GMs (Interview 22 and 24). In the transition from Phase I to Phase II there was also a change in the way the Board functioned, formerly the GM had been chairing Board meetings, whereas in the new Board structure in Phase II the president took on this role. As this transpired, there was confusion about the role of the Board and the role of the staff (Interview 24). This resulted in the LBMF being tied up in process instead of content (Interview 23). Soon the executive committee was holding in-camera meetings and making decisions that were not on the official record (Interview 22 and 24). At this point the vertical and horizontal communication were so damaged that trust had eroded throughout the LBMF (Interview 22 and 24). Without trust, vertical communication is inhibited, which means that any horizontal communication is happening in a vacuum. Many other factors also contributed to this destructive environment, but those mentioned above were key to the people interviewed at the LBMF.

In the interviews, a few suggestions were made to improve the movement of information both horizontally and vertically in all the MFs. Interviewee 6 said that the MF should have opportunities “for each working group to be able to hear from each of the other working groups in a little bit more detail.” Interviewee 5 said that the staff could attend Board meetings on an occasional basis to be more informed about the MF process. Interviewees 8 and 15 talked about having several Board members on the committees to ensure that they work on behalf of the committee at the Board level. Interviewee 2 talked about “looking for linkages of projects, so that you are covering off more than one interest area to serve more than one purpose”. Interviewee 14 talked about how one committee might invite another committee chair to attend its meeting, to talk about what that committee is doing. While these are some suggestions shared in the interviews, there is a general feeling that there is much more to do to improve the communications within the MFs.
Within the network as a whole, vertical and horizontal communications were raised as a significant issue at the April, 2005 CMFN committee meeting. How the network communications can work better and how the individual MFs could communicate more about what they are doing? In the fall of 2004 it was apparent, from many people’s comments that the interim CMFN Manager of Programs Outreach was not communicating with the MFs nearly as much as the former Manager of Programs Outreach had been. There was strong support for the role that M. Whelan had played in helping the MFs to know what was happening throughout the Network. This was a case of the individual defining the role in a dynamic way (Interview 6). The positive feedback about M. Whelan playing a multitude of roles was clear. She was an information broker to and from the individual MFs (Interview 10 and 27), kept the MFs informed about what was happening in Ottawa and vice versa (Interview 16), worked towards a unified message from the diversity of MFs (Interview 10 and 14). She promoted the MFs nationally and internationally (Interview 14), and helped the individual MF Communications Coordinators to get information to and from their MFs (Interview 7, 14, and 16). Strong communication leadership at the Network level is critical to encouraging strong communication within each MF (Interview 27) and across the network.

4.2.5 Building Trust

The leadership of the MF is critical: for developing an environment in which communication is valued (Interview 27); where the goal of open and honest communication is to develop an atmosphere of trust (Francis, 1987); and where the perspectives and contributions of all partners are valued and respected (Interview 1, 12, and 13). As mentioned above, in the LB MF there was a lack of leadership and constant tension between the Board and the GM during the last two years of the LB MF. This erosion of trust and
respect was not dealt with in a forthright manner, leading to confusion about who was in charge (Interview 22).

Within the LAMF there was a situation in which the Board consensus process was being undermined by a former Board chair and a small group of followers. This resulted in a prolonged process without clear decision-making affecting all aspects of the MF to some degree. Through the decisive action of a few Board members working with the GM, the contentious faction of the Board was forced to leave, and some staff changes were made to bring the LAMF past the impasse; this was facilitated by following processes laid out in the governance documents of the organization (Interview 4). While these types of actions are difficult, they are essential to maintain a strong working relationship with those partners committed to advancing the objectives of the MF as opposed to individual objectives.

Building trust is an important task for the leadership and has been done in some MFs through a variety of means. In LAMF the leaders have recognized that they cannot do everything and where they lack skills they bring in skilled people to facilitate process (Interview 5). In MBMF the facilitated cross-cultural workshops have been critical tools to help the partners understand each other and to develop relationships where there is trust, respect and friendship (Interview 12, 13, 14, and 15).

**Learning from Success and Failure**

The leadership of the MF can set the tone for the organization (Interview 22 and 24). It is easy to slip into an operating mode where one moves from one project to the next simply because there is so much work to do so that acknowledging success (G. Munro, CMFN Committee Meetings, comments in presentation, April 21, 2005) and exploring failure is not done. Cannon and Edmondson (2004) promote the idea of using a deliberate strategy where failures are openly explored to understand them and to learn from them.
In examining Figure 25 A, there is a fairly high level of satisfaction (84.8% “somewhat to very satisfied”) with the quality of information respondents receive about the accomplishments of the MFs, but a fairly low level of satisfaction with the quality of information about the failures of the MF (Figure 25 C, 38% “somewhat to very satisfied”). Regarding the accomplishments (Figure 25 B), WCMF and McMF are lower than the other MFs, while FHMF and WNMF were on the high side. Regarding the failures (Figure 25 D), FMF was on the low side and WNMF was on the high side. The low level of satisfaction with information about the failures of the MFs indicates a weakness in each MF; the partners appear to want to know more about the failures.

Figure 25: A. Level of satisfaction with information received about the accomplishments of the MF organization. B. Responses by MF with mean line for somewhat to very satisfied. C. Level of satisfaction with the information received about the failures of the MF organization. D. Responses by MF with mean line for somewhat to very satisfied.

“Organizational leaders must take the initiative to develop systems and procedures that make available the data necessary to identify and learn from failure… managers need to
create an environment in which they and their employees are open to putting aside their self-protective defenses and responding instead with curiosity and a desire to learn from failure” (Ibid, 2004, p. 10).

Within CFS Proposal Guidelines for Phase III, in section 1.2.1 it states:

“It is necessary that there is uncertainty about the outcomes of some newly proposed practices. In some cases, an experimental approach may be necessary whereby a prescription is applied, the impacts are monitored and evaluated, and the prescription is modified. In this situation, desired outcomes may require several iterations” (2001, p. 3)

Learning from failure is encouraged. This is supported by research conducted by Cannon and Edmondson (2004, p. 19):

“A handful of exceptional organizations not only seek to identify and analyze failures, they seek to generate them – for the express purpose of learning and innovating. This means they devote some portion of their collective energy to deliberate experimentation – trying new things out to find out what works and what doesn’t. Through deliberate experimentation, organizations can generate novel solutions to problems and new ideas for products, services and innovations. In this way, they put new idea to the test – in a controlled context”.

**Respect and Trust**

In the survey respondents were asked about how frequently they see people being treated respectfully and whether they perceive that there is an atmosphere of trust within their respective MF. The general response shows that there is a high level of respect (96.2% “often to always”, Figure 26 A) and relatively high level of trust (82.9% “often to always”, Figure 26 C). It is important to consider that while 69.7% of the partners feel like their MF consistently treats people with respect, there are 30.3% who do not see or experience this all the time (Figure 26 A). The MF where the frequency of people being treated with respect is lowest is WCMF (Figure 26 B). When it comes to trust, on the low end for the “always” response are WCMF, FMF, and NFA; and on the high end are EOMF and PAMF. Being treated with respect goes a long way toward building trust, which can be a challenge in a MF where the partners come with different perspectives on forest management.
A few people talked about how much work it is to develop trust and respect within a multi-stakeholder partnership. With First Nations there are the historic issues that need to be acknowledged to move forward in building trust. The following quotes reinforce this idea:

“…a lot of it has been over time, that I see is establishing that respect and trust by all the parties involved. Industry is responding to interests of First Nation people and the level of respect exchanged by both parties. There still are going to be issues, there’s still issues with treaty land entitlement and long standing issues that for some people are hard to break and that’s over things, a lot of it was instigated by lack of communication. Where things were done years ago with no consultation, there was no representation by First Nation people and it’s hard for them to regain that trust” (Interview 17).

“What I’m trying to say is there has been a mutual growing of understanding, getting to know each other, because a lot of the same people had been involved since day one so a lot of it was just getting to know each other and learning to trust one another” (Interview 15).

Building trust is a long process and requires patience and persistence. Another person (Interview 27) talked about building trust with First Nation partners:
“You have to keep going, keep going and when you think you’re done you have to keep going and then you have to be careful to ensure that you’re able to hold their trust down the road. Trust is a real challenge to communicate because it has to come from the heart and it has to be seen as coming from the heart and it has to be accepted and that’s really difficult to do in print or a website. That has to be done in person that has to be done with handshakes and in this day and age where email rules it seems there is no such thing as electronic trust. I suppose it has to be human trust. You have to show your human side to them.”

This was confirmed by comments made by several of the interviewees in PAMF and MBMF about reaching out to First Nation communities to draw them into the partnership. This was a significant goal of the cross-cultural workshops in MBMF, i.e. learning to understand and trust one another (Interview 14). In the MBMF interviews, all of the respondents talked about how the relationships with people within the MF had moved beyond that of a business relationship to that of a friendship. This was significant, as only one other person from any other MF talked this way about how the relationships had developed into friendships. But this individual was much more selective about specific individuals (Interview 21) as opposed to the general sense that was held by all the MBMF interviewees. When this type of relationship develops, there is a greater tendency to talk with each other more frequently about issues in the MF (Interview 13). Each interviewee from MBMF talked about the annual Christmas event being the highlight of the year, the time to get to know the partners and to plan together and learn how to work together. This demonstrates a high level of trust among the partners when they begin to see their relationships as friendships.

Open and Honest Communication

Another aspect of building trust is having open and honest communication at all levels in a MF. In Figure 27 A the respondents indicated that there is a moderate level of satisfaction (69.2% “somewhat to very satisfied”) with the openness of communication in the MFs. However, with only 29.4% “very satisfied”, there is room for improvement. Looking at the individual MFs for partners being “somewhat to very satisfied” with the openness of communication, BSLMF and WCMF were noticeably lower than the average and WNMF
and PAMF were noticeably higher. Many factors contribute to this openness. While it is beyond the scope of this research to explore this in detail, one interviewee communicated an important component for building this openness:

“I think that there’s been an improvement in communication and I think it’s reflected by the fact that there is continuity and comfort through this continuity of people with the staff; you know it’s getting to know people; communication often is a personal issue and people may not feel comfortable with others and it takes some time to develop that level of comfort to be able to communicate openly and freely and so I think it’s improved because of that.” (Interview 12)

Figure 27: A. Satisfaction with how open communication is within all aspects of individual MFs. B. Response by MF with mean line for somewhat to very satisfied.

An important point here is the need for continuity of staff. This is particularly true for key leadership positions. Every time there is a change in key staff positions, time is needed to establish trust in the organization. The LBMF Phase II Evaluation Report (2002) mentioned that the “turnover of GMs contributed to” a situation where “individual interest groups often operate at cross-purposes”. Leadership is critical to building trust.

4.2.6 Working Language of Communication

In the six MFs where interviews took place, people mentioned the need to develop a common working language among the partners. The issue arises from people of different backgrounds coming together and using common terms that have specific meaning for the organization or perspective that they represent (Interview 10). Developing a common
working language (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002) requires knowing the background of the partners, having a sense of their level of understanding of forestry terms and of the jargon that is used by the different partners, and coming to a common understanding of what these terms mean within the context of SFM and the individual MF (Interview 10). Interviewees in the FMF talked about working through a process to develop a common understanding of basic and complex terms within the broader partnership. In MBMF this was accomplished, in part, through the cross-cultural workshops and the efforts of the communications consultant in writing documents in everyday language without complex terminology or acronyms (Interview 14). In PAMF the challenge was working with the First Nation partners to help them to understand the SFM concepts, but also, to understand the First Nation values and ecological concepts. This was accomplished in part by having meetings in the communities, and through strong First Nation participation at the Board level and then in MF management (Interview 17 and 20).

One aspect of working language is taking the complex and technical information, often in lengthy detailed reports, and simplifying it for the woodlot owners (Interview 7), the operators in the forest, and the average person. As one person stated, “We still need to take the technical reports and write them is short, clear and concise ways that are practical and can be used. That is for the woodlot guys; they don’t want to read a big report. They want a piece of paper in their hands” (Interview 6). Another person talked about having people with PhDs on one end of the spectrum and people with minimal literacy skills at the other end and needing to communicate the same message to everyone (Interview 14). As interviewee 3 stated: “It’s hugely important that we take complicated concepts and simplify them down and present them so that it brings partners to an equal footing.” Preparing the information from the research in such a way that it is straightforward, easy to understand, explains why this is important, and how to do it. This is needed in documents,
presentations, oral reports, just about anything the MF prepares for wider distribution. An excellent example of this is a document that was produced by the LAMF and Abitibi Consolidated called, “Harvest with Regeneration Protection: Planning and Operating Manual”, commonly known as the HARP method of harvesting. This is a simple document based on scientific research that can be used as a planning and operating manual for forest operations. In FMF, partners know that this is an issue but believe that they do not have the capacity to address all the written material in this way (Interview 6).

In the survey, the MFs were asked about the written language. The MF partnerships have a fairly high level of agreement (80.3% “agree to strongly agree”, Figure 28 A) that the level of written communication is understandable. This is confirmed when asked about how often the language of reports is easy to understand (86.5% often to always, Figure 28 C). Looking at the results from the individual MFs, FMF and MBMF had a lower level of agreement (“agree to strongly agree”, Figure 28 B) about the level of understanding of written communication, and BSLMF, WNMF, and EOMF were significantly higher than average. Regarding the frequency with which it is easy to understand written documents, FMF was lower than average for “often to always”, and BSLMF and EOMF were higher than average, and others were all within a few percentage points of the average (Figure 28 D).
This comes back to the need to address the least to most literate participants in the MF and among the potential audiences, and developing the tools to achieve this. In one MF it was suggested, “what we really need here is... the one to two page summary that the lay person can pick up, and they won’t know the detail, but they will know what the project was about and who to go to for more information” (Interview 6). MFs need to develop a deliberate communications strategy that ties directly back to the project planning and annual work planning stages. This is a need for both the oral and the written language. In the oral language, it is easy for individuals to use technical terms that are part of their work culture and may be unfamiliar to others in the MF (Interview 5, 6, 10, 12, 14, 15, 20 and 26). In the interviews this was commonly mentioned, particularly for new partners. Interviewee 8
talked about how it felt when joining: “...being new I didn’t say too much because they were talking in their own jargon and I didn’t understand a thing...”. Interviewee 7 stated: “One of our representatives on our working groups told us last year, ‘I can’t work with those working groups. I mean they’re talking way over my head. He’s talking about research’”. Interviewee 15 stated: “We have presenters, partners who have done presentations that I’ve really turned off to because I didn’t feel I was understanding, I wasn’t getting enough out of it, wasn’t really grasping what they were trying to achieve. Don’t remember that happening for a long time”. Two things appear to happen. One is that an MF will embark on a deliberate strategy of feedback to develop a common understanding of SFM language (Interview 10). Second, members become acculturated to the language of the group over time (Interview 11).

Regarding the language of discussion, 86.3% of respondents “often to always” find the technical language is understandable (Figure 29 A). In examining these results by the year that people joined, education level, or any other factor, the results were quite similar. When the responses are explored by individual MFs, on the low end of the scale for the response “often to always” were MBMF and McMF, and WCMF was on the high end of the scale (Figure 29 B).

![Figure 29: A. Frequency with which MF discussions use technical language and jargon at a level that is understood by individual respondents. B. Response by MF with mean line for often to always.](image-url)
4.2.7 Conflict Management and the Role of a Facilitator

“The lack of common experience or frame of reference is probably the greatest barrier to effective communication” (Maser, 1996, p. 76). Conflict is often looked at as a negative thing, but conflict needs to be “seen as productive, an opportunity to remove obstacles in relationships, and is considered to be an essential ingredient of a healthy relationship” (Zaiss, 2002, p. 42). Openly addressing conflict by recognizing that there are different perspectives on issues and working towards some way of understanding these different perspectives has been and continues to be an ongoing challenge within the MFs. This was a particularly difficult challenge for those involved in the LBMF.

Several aspects of the LBMF processes and attempts at creating a partnership were dysfunctional. In examining the “Report of the Advisory Group LBMF to the Canadian Forest Service” (Feb, 1998), there is criticism of the LBMF for being stuck in process as opposed to action (Interview 23), which was a significant point of conflict, yet it also recommends fairly comprehensive restructuring of the LBMF. This in itself would require an intensive process, which was not recognized or embraced by the LBMF executive committee (Interview 22). In the interviews it became clear that there was a definite problem when it came to implementing planning into tangible action on the ground, and this resulted in conflict (Interview 23). It is also clear from the interviews that individual and organizational buy-in to the concept of LBMF was seriously lacking, resulting in individuals pursuing their own interests as opposed to the collective interests of the LBMF (Interview 22, 24). As a result, individuals pursued personal agendas and constantly butted heads (Interview 21). There were “some very vocal Board members, dominating, intimidating, so many other directors were reluctant to speak up” (Interview 21).

Interviewee 23 shared that it was well known that issues that would normally “take six
months anywhere else would take ten years in Clayoquot Sound”. Yet, there was an incredible pressure to make this work as a result of the conflict that had been experienced in the region in the recent past. Two interviewees talked about how the world was watching and that they needed to make this work (Interview 21 and 23). The documents and interviews tell the story of an organization that did not have the capacity to deal with its issues, or the leadership to move forward. It also appears as though CFS waited too long and brought too little to the table to help the LBMF move forward and develop a working process for Clayoquot Sound (Interview 22 and 25). The few attempts that were made to bring in facilitators were helpful for some Board members (Interview 21, 22, 24), but key Board members did not attend these sessions, resulting in a lack of unified understanding and process, thereby accentuating aspects of the conflict (Interview 22, 23, 24).

Many issues required highly skilled facilitators to work with the LBMF leadership to define a process and implement a process for dealing with the contentious issues. Historic issues needed to be addressed (Interview 21, 22), leadership needed to be defined, Board and staff roles needed to be clarified in a timely manner (Interview 22, 24), conflict resolution skills were lacking, and Board member buy-in to the MF was needed (Interview 21, 22, 24).

In PAMF there were also some significant historic issues between the First Nations people in the area around Prince Albert National Park. It was through the efforts of the PAMF that these issues have been opened and dialogue has started between the Montreal Lake Cree and Parks Canada (Interview 17 and 20). In the McMF area, there are on-going issues, which inhibit the development of strong First Nations representation and involvement in the MF activities (Interview 26, 27, 28). This comes back to the need for mechanisms to build trust, and having the right people involved with the necessary skills to begin this process.

All MFs have had to deal with conflict, some more severe than others. In the survey
respondents indicated their level of satisfaction with the effectiveness of resolving conflicts (Figure 30 A). Overall, the response rate indicates that there is work to be done to improve how conflict is resolved within the MFs (62.7% “somewhat to very satisfied”). The MFs with a significantly higher than average rate of “somewhat to very satisfied” include: WNMF, EOMF, and LAMF (Figure 30 B). With a significantly lower than average response rate for “somewhat to very satisfied” was BSLMF. However, none of the MFs had a high overall response rate for being “somewhat to very satisfied”. The responses in Figure 30 C provide part of the answer as to why there is a perception that MFs are not all that effective in resolving conflict; they do not always discuss problem issues in an open manner. While the figures may look encouraging, with 78.7% saying that problem issues are openly discussed “often to always”, there is still the question about those who responded “often”, but not “always”. It appears that 69.7% of the times the MFs are not “always” openly addressing problem issues. The results in Figure 30 D indicate the percent of partners in the individual MFs that see problem issues openly addressed. Only PAMF appears to stand out with partners indicating that problem issues are openly addressed only 60% of the time.
Figure 30: A. Level of satisfaction with the effective resolution of conflicts. B. Response by MF with mean line for somewhat to very satisfied. C. Frequency with which problem issues are openly addressed. D. Response by MF with mean line for often to always.

In the interviews it was mentioned that FMF, LAMF, LBMF and MBMF have held facilitated training sessions or workshops. It was telling when one of the interviewees stated that “a facilitator is so important to make these things work, we basically don’t facilitate something that we think we can’t do a good job at…” (Interview 5); this was in reference to a planning workshop.

“Objective facilitation and strong leadership are very important in partnerships. In their absence we flounder around without direction or, at best, accomplish very little either because no one or everyone is taking the lead on matters. Being a good facilitator or leader requires skills and experience” (Frank and Smith, 2000, p. 62).

A facilitated session was observed at the CMFN meeting in Cochrane, Ontario in April, 2005. This was a session to visualize what the CMFN will have accomplished in 25 years. The session started strong and ended without a clear summary of what had been achieved.
Comments from the CMFN office staff were that there was disappointment with the process and that the facilitator did not follow the information that was given. Not having seen this information it is difficult to comment on what was given to the facilitator, but the point is made that messages that must be clear, confirmed, and reiterated to ensure that the resulting actions meet the overall objectives of the activity.

Information was not available about how many or which MFs use a facilitator or conflict resolution specialist or which MFs have either put on or attended conflict resolution workshops. Using skilled professionals to deal with issues of conflict takes the ownership away from the staff or Board members that may be trying to facilitate a process in which they have a vested interest in the outcome, or as Interviewee 5 indicated, where they may not feel that they have the ability to handle the issue. In the survey, respondents were asked about whether the use of a facilitator was effective for different situations, each with potential conflict. Table 5 displays the responses regarding respondents’ views about using a facilitator to guide planning meetings and for learning how to work together as a group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Not used</th>
<th>Used effectively</th>
<th>Used but ineffective</th>
<th>Not used</th>
<th>Used effectively</th>
<th>Used but ineffective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guiding Planning Meetings (%)</td>
<td>Learning How to Work Together as a Group (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSLMF</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOMF</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHMF</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMF</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAMF</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBMF</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McMF</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFA</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAMF</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCMF</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WNMF</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: (left) Use of a facilitator for working through problem issues. (right) Use of a facilitator for learning how to work together as a group.

An interesting observation is that there is a higher response rate about facilitators not having
been used among those who have joined the MFs in the last four years, possibly indicating that facilitators have not been used as much recently as in the past. In general, the partners have felt very positive about the use of facilitators when they have been used as seen in the low responses in the “used but ineffective” column. In the interviews people talked about the use of facilitators for a variety of purposes: for planning sessions (Interview 3, 5, 7), cross-cultural workshops (Interview 14), and Board training sessions (Interview 21, 22, 23, 24).

LBMF attempted to use facilitators to help the Board develop more skills. But with the changes brought about by the Phase II revisions and redesign of the organizational structure, Board training became critical to adapt to the restructured organization and new program focus. The process to bring about effective change was not embraced by all, as indicated by interviewee 24:

“We also tried to do an annual Board development; we would have someone come in and talk about discussion and positions and how to have discussions and how to identify positions in discussions and we tried to build capacity at the table; and then when this group took over, they stopped all of that; that was cut off…”

Interviewee 22 confirmed this. The process of change was the ideal time to work with a facilitator and could have helped the LBMF reorganize itself if all participants, including CFS, had embraced the process (Interview 22). Perhaps the change in leadership, due to the death of Dan Welsh, previous Director of the CMF, had some impact as two people from LBMF talked about how Welsh had a vision for LBMF and was actively involved in the reorganization process (Interview 23 and 25).

Interviewee 3 shared the following about the benefit of using facilitators:

It’s not so much that you need a facilitator all the time; it was the process and the time that got you to where you needed to be, not that there’s factions, it’s that you need the time, it’s the thinking time and helping people through the thinking process that gets you to a better product so rather than having me doing a mental flip game and thinking, ok what’s the question I should ask, you’re working through a process that says, here’s a project, and here’s the information and we’re going to work through a structured process of asking ourselves a series of questions to make sure that we get everybody’s perspective out on the table.

The idea of having thinking time for content and not process, to move the participants
through a process that they do not have to try to direct, allows everyone who needs to have input to be a part of the process without always trying to think about what is the next step (Kaner, Lind, Fisk, and Berger 1996).

How MFs deal with conflict can be a significant challenge that can either cripple an organization or strengthen it. Most MFs have a statement in their governance documents about some form of process to remove directors, and a statement about conflict of interest. Three MFs have additional documents or sections of governance documents that stand out in terms of clarity of direction for partners. LBMF had a document entitled “Long Beach Model Forest Board of Directors Background Guide (1998)”. This contains sections with a “Code of Ethics”, a list of “Negotiating Principles”, and “Procedures in the Event of Disagreement”. It is a very thorough document, which came into effect shortly before a rewrite of the LBMF constitution. After the new constitution, this document was handed out and used in place of holding regular Board development workshops (Interview 24). PAMF has a “Governance Policy and Guidelines Manual” that contains a “Board and Board Member Self-Evaluation”, and a set of “Rules of Order for Meetings”. WNMF has a “Ground Rules Document” which contains “Ethical Guidelines”, and a section on “Defining Agreement and Dealing with Disagreement”. These have the effect of building transparency into the governance and procedures of these MFs, openly communicating how to handle situations so that everyone understands the processes and why certain actions are taking place.

In the interviews people shared their perspectives on how conflict shaped their MFs. Interviewee 7 stated: “honestly probably for the first Phase, the main accomplishment was getting everyone to sit in the same room and not be mad at each other”. This person also mentioned how the GM was a critical person in smoothing things over when there had been
some conflict in a meeting.

In PAMF one person talked about the need to take the time and have the willingness to listen, and at times, admit to making mistakes to allow a process to move forward (Interview 20). Taking the time to work through the issues communicates that conflict is healthy (Zaiss, 2002, p. 42) and allows different perspectives to be shared in a safe environment.

This supports a goal that all MFs appear to aspire towards, a neutral environment where all perspectives are valued and respected. As one person described it:

“…one of the candidate elements that I really thought was important was to have a neutral forum where all sectors could come together, sit at the round table and say, well, my view on this issue is such, and someone on the other side, saying my view on this issue is such. And the individuals sitting there are not bound by any vested interest so you can sit down and talk about things in an objective manner and come to some resolution…. because we want to have an impact and in order to have that impact we have to start grappling with some pretty serious issues… and we can’t begin to do that without some credibility as a neutral forum.” (Interview 28)

How a MF deals with conflict directly affects how it is perceived by the partnership. This influences all aspects of communication, especially the message that the MF is a safe environment in which to explore forestry issues for the benefit of all the people in the region (Interview 2, 6, 7). One of the tools to do this successfully is a skilled facilitator who is given a clearly defined task.

4.3 External Communication

While internal communication is intended to keep the partners of the MFs informed of the multitude of ongoing and planned activities within each MF, the external communication serves four main purposes. First is disseminating the research results to a broader audience to enhance SFM beyond the MF region (Hall, 1997). Second is to inform the local public about SFM and the role of the MF in the immediate area and beyond (Ibid, 1997). Third is to influence planners, policy-makers, and decision-makers with solid scientific research that
has practical application for SFM on a larger scale (NRCan, 2003). Fourth, to share success stories to account for how the resources put into the MF program are improving forest management across the country (Ibid, 2003). To accomplish these different communication goals, several communication tools are used to reach out to different target audiences. Some new members are drawn into the MFs as a result of these efforts and these people in turn spread the message to their sphere of influence. Throughout all of these activities, an image is created in the mind of the recipients about the MF and the CMFN.

As the CMFN is in the process of positioning itself for Phase IV with a renewed vision and a greater emphasis on expanding the realms of influence for each MF, there will be a greater need for strong external communication programs (Strategic Planning Committee, 2004). Those MFs that have focused their communication strategies on this task earlier in the MF program may have valuable lessons to share with the other MFs.

4.3.1 Communication Tools

The communication plans of some MFs list tools and target audiences in a broad manner for communicating the knowledge acquired through research and networking. Within the annual work plans, these general communication concepts are developed further. All MFs have specific projects for external communication, and for some MFs, communication strategies are built into each project. The annual work plans and the subsequent annual reports are available to download on most of the MF websites, so they are available to a wide audience. The annual work plan and annual report are an annual requirement of all MFs as stated in their respective contribution agreements (NRCan, 2003). The annual work plan is tied to the annual report, as this document describes “among other things, objectives, performance against these objectives, the previous year’s activities undertaken by the MF, and reporting based on the Evaluation Framework developed by the MF… in each Fiscal
Year” (Ibid, 2003). Therefore the two documents should, according to the contribution agreement, provide a description of the planned activities and report on those activities.

Further, as Taylor (2001) points out, the annual report is a multi-faceted tool. It fulfills legal reporting requirements, communicates a wide-reaching message by the organization’s leadership, and talks about the challenges of the organization; it functions as a fund-raising tool and a financial disclosure document, builds the organization’s image, and provides an archival record of the organization’s activities.

Websites were examined as an external communication tool as they are the most accessible source in which to find a wide variety of information about a MF. Schuldt (2004) states: “the purpose of a Website can be for education or informational sharing, or to promote an idea, product or service, or to actually facilitate exchanges between two or more parties”. This matches the apparent roles that the MF websites play for the partnerships.

Table 6 provides a list of tools that have been used by the MFs to communicate externally.
Table 6: Tools used by MFs for external communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication tool</th>
<th>How the tool may be used by a MF for external communication.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual report</td>
<td>Reporting on the activities, projects, challenges, and finances of the past year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billboards/signs</td>
<td>Put an image of the MF out in the public view, present a key concept of SFM to a broad audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochures</td>
<td>Communicate general information about the MF and SFM to a broad audience, target specific issues and events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications Coordinator</td>
<td>Providing expertise and guidance for all aspects of MF communication activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community projects</td>
<td>Engage the local or regional community members in MF activities, establish a visible presence, and demonstrate how the MF can benefit local communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>Target upcoming issues and practices related to SFM, disseminate research findings, network with a broader audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Responding to inquiries, soliciting information from external sources, sending documents, distributing notices of events, workshops, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field tours</td>
<td>Demonstration of MF project and research work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information notes</td>
<td>Announce events summaries and information on how to apply project results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media advertisements</td>
<td>Inform partners about projects, budgets, network activities, new members, up-coming events, related research and developments; solicit feedback, advice, and ideas from partners; dialogue on areas of concern, get input from partners about upcoming issues, and use as a forum for disseminating and receiving information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Inform partners about projects, budgets, network activities, new members, up-coming events, related research and developments; solicit feedback, advice, and ideas from partners; dialogue on areas of concern, get input from partners about upcoming issues, and use as a forum for disseminating and receiving information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF office</td>
<td>Disseminate information to the local audience, have a visible presence in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Project updates, list up-coming events, report on relevant topics, partner profiles, share success stories, contact information, report on planning process, share stories from the network, report on local activities or events, recognize partner contributions, highlight publications, provide an overview of the diversity of the MF activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper articles</td>
<td>Report on research findings, inform larger audience about the activities of the MF, promote MF concepts, recognize contributions from all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project reports</td>
<td>Report on research findings and disseminate to researchers, planners, policy makers, and practitioners for potential application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public presentations/speakers</td>
<td>Share research findings, dialogue with the general public about issues of concern and interest, address relevant issues for targeted audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio spots</td>
<td>Announce events, meetings, tours, activities, speakers, and a wide range of programs; communicate research results and recognize contributions from all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School programs</td>
<td>Share SFM information with teachers and students, encourage and support SFM behavior, encourage young people to explore forest-related vocations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Give and receive feedback, share information, build relationships, dialogue, respond to inquiries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade shows and displays</td>
<td>Disseminate information to a broad audience, demonstrate SMF concepts, and dialogue with people from outside the MF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV spots</td>
<td>Demonstrate key SFM concepts, show the activities of the MF in the region and recognize contributions from all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Distribute documents, newsletters, and other reports; post up-coming events and reviews of past events, organization information, partner information, contact information, project progress reports, calendar of events, share success stories, solicit new members, and provide relevant links.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Training, sharing information, receiving feedback, dialogue, build relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annual Work Plans and Annual Reports

The most telling documents about what the MFs say they are going to do and what they have actually done can be found in the annual work plan and annual report. Anyone looking to see what the MF set out to do and then accomplished will look through these documents to determine the effectiveness of plans against actions. The annual report also provides the reader with an impression of the organization as a whole. Taylor (2001, p. 13) states, “How well the (annual) report is designed, written, and produced speaks volumes about the organization’s self-image”. This can be seen in how the information in the annual work plan is reflected in the annual report. Stittle (2003) describes the annual report as a far-reaching document; “essentially, it is your company’s voice to the external world” (p. 13), reaching out to a broad audience.

The most thorough work plans are from EOMF and FHMF. The EOMF 2005-2006 annual work plan has 20 sections for each project; within these detailed project descriptions are five sections that relate to communication. First is section five – “linkages to other projects” - looking for overlap within projects can result in more collaborative relationships with other working groups and communicates to the reader that continuity and support for other research is important. Second is section ten – “audience” - identifying who will be the recipients of the research outcomes and outputs ahead of time can help to focus the outputs for the intended audiences. Third is section 13 – “deliverables” – itemizing the anticipated products that will be delivered during and after the research phase. Fourth are sections 16-18 – immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes of project activities - focusing the project team on the anticipated outcomes to ensure these meet the objectives of the plan. Fifth is section 19 – “how the project builds on EOMF efforts in Phase I and Phase II” - this communicates continuity, an effort to build on earlier research, and to connect the parts to
the overall MF long-term goals.

The 2004-2005 FHMF annual work plan has a similar approach with careful attention to
detail and ensuring that the reader understands all aspects of the proposed work. The
projects are broken down into 17 parts with two parts that relate to communication. First,
section four – “Objectives” – how the project ties into the objectives of the MF. This is
broken into subsections with subsection 4 and 4a focusing on “Communication and
Outreach”, and “Beneficiaries and Impacts”. Tying the project work into the
communication and outreach plan and looking at the intended audience along with the
anticipated impact the project can have on the audience. Each of the objectives listed
explains the anticipated beneficiaries and impacts. The second is section six – “Deliverables”
– which is broken down into five subheadings: “Knowledge Creation”, “Demonstration”,
“Knowledge and Technology Transfer”, “Communication and Outreach”, and “Policy
Support”. Under each of these subheadings is a statement that explains what the project will
produce, when it will be done, and what will be done with the deliverables. These two
annual work plans provide the most detailed project descriptions with the most thorough
integration of communication planning within the design.

In the MF network there is a great diversity of annual report styles and variation in content.
EOMF and FMF use a simple framework that ties directly back to the annual work plan to
report on the progress that has been made over the past year, and includes an audited
financial statement for financial accountability. The strongest opening section is in the
WNMF 2003-2004 annual report, where a strong executive message, background
information about the goals and objectives, and basic information about the organization are
provided (Taylor, 2002, p. 31-37). The “General Manager’s Report” provides a good
executive summary of the activities, projects and accomplishments, and addresses concerns in
a positive manner. For a number of the MFs (FHMF, LAMF, McMF) it is difficult to see how reporting of the activities for the year tie into the annual work plan to account for what the organization said they would do. F. Pollet (NRCan, Audit and Evaluation Branch) mentioned this concern in a number of the MF Draft Mid-Phase III evaluations, as an issue that needs to be addressed. Most MFs provide an audited financial report in their annual report, but a few do not; FHMF provides a summary of financial reports, WNMF has a financial statement along with a letter and balance sheet from an auditor, and WCMF does not have a financial report at all. An audited financial statement helps the partners to understand how the revenues generated through their contribution have been accounted for. Many nonprofit organizations use the financial statement and project reports to raise additional funds for projects (Taylor, 2002, p. 11-12).

Only WNMF follows the work plan format in their annual report. This allows for easy cross-referencing of the intended activities with the actual activities, a format that allows for more transparency in communicating the results of the MF activities. F. Pollet (NRCan, Audit and Evaluation Branch) provides the following observations about the relationship between annual work plans and annual reports in the draft Phase III Follow-up and Mid-Term Review for FMF:

“The FMF documents fall into a familiar pattern seen in other Model Forests in that the annual work plans provide considerable detail on the work being planned or underway and provides a listing of the expected deliverables. However, both in the interim reports and in the annual reports, where it would be expected that there would also be examples capturing the impact of the work achieved and demonstration of adaptation of systems within the partnership and beyond—there is little evidence provided. (NRCan, 2004)”

There is a tendency to use the annual reports as static reporting documents, without reporting on the broader application of the research work regarding how it has affected SFM in the region or beyond.
Website

As mentioned in section 4.1.2, the website is the MF’s “window to the world”. When an organization puts up a website where the information is not password-protected this immediately allows anyone who wants to look at the website, and has access to the Internet, the opportunity to see information that the MF has made available. When information on a website is structured to address specific audiences, it makes it easier for the viewer to focus their time in specific areas of a website.

In the interviews, 21 people shared their ideas about who uses their MF’s website, and 20 of 21 interviewees talked about how it was an outreach tool to the public, or to the larger audience of the world. Below are a few of the comments shared in the interviews:

“I think it is the MF window on the world. Anyone can go on there, it’s accessible worldwide, it’s in search engines everywhere, folks want to hear about the LAMF; everything is on the table there, everything that they are doing, everything that they have done” (Interview 1).

“I think it plays a really important part. It makes them visible. Gives them a presence. In a global sort of way but they said in their objectives that that’s who they want to be, a showcase of sustainability globally… You can only do that if you’re able to be found” (Interview 3).

“It’s a communication tool. It gets the message out to the regular public about sustainable forest management” (Interview 18).

“I think the purpose of that is communication. It’s a forum to communicate to the stakeholders and those who are interested in the forest, what forest management is all about, what forestry is, and explain the dynamics of managing the forest” (Interview 19).

In the survey participants were asked about how effective their MF’s website is as a public education tool (Figure 31 A). 63.4% of respondents “strongly agree to agree” that their websites are an effective public education tool. When examined by individual MF, McMF and WCMF are well below the mean, and BSLMF and WNMF are well above the mean (Figure 31 B). While the numbers overall are not strongly supporting this role for the websites, it should be noted that it is difficult to determine the intended audience for each website, as indicated in the Website Analysis in Appendix A. A few of the MFs allude to the
intended audience for their website on the “About Us” page on their website (BSLMF, EOMF, FMF, McMF).

![Figure 31: A. Level of agreement that the MF’s website is an effective public education tool. B. Responses by MF with mean line for agree to strongly agree.](image)

When considering the results from Figure 31 it is important to keep in mind that 60.8% of respondents indicated that they rarely if ever visit their MF website. When conducting a bivariate analysis of these two variables it was seen that 21.15% of the respondents overall indicated that they had rarely seen the website, yet agreed that the website is an effective public education tool. This could be an indicator of hopeful thinking, or second-hand knowledge of the website rather than actual first-hand knowledge. It was interesting to note that WCMF had a 42.9% level of agreement that their website is an effective public education tool even though their website is not on the Internet. WCMF had a website early on in the MF, which is still available as an archived site, then there was a new website for only a short time early in 2005. This may be an indicator of how aware some partners are of the tools of communication within their own MF.

Interviewee 10 provided a succinct explanation about one role an MF website can play for the individual organizations, stating; “It’s an introduction to people external to the organization”. This was supported by comments from nine other interviewees when asked about the purpose of their respective MF websites. This supports the Phase III objective of
reaching beyond the boundaries. In the document, Proposal Guidelines for Canada’s Model Forest Program: Phase III (2002-2007), CFS states: “In Phase III, MFs are expected to expand their sphere of influence in SFM both regionally, provincially, and, with the assistance of the network, nationally” (2001). This is the concept of reaching beyond the boundaries of the individual MFs. While all the websites have information that is relevant to audiences beyond their boundaries it is difficult to know what their success stories are and how much is getting out to the larger audience. A statement in the Veraxis Research & Communication Report support the notion that many people who are familiar with or participate in the MF programs “were frustrated at the idea that to get information they often have to look at several different websites, and even then not everything is readily available. There is a sense that the research information generated by the program was perhaps too closely held” (2004, p. 15). As Brian Wilson, Program Director for the CMFN, stated at the April, 2005 CMFN committee meeting, we need to be “able to communicate successes and be visible”.

The Veraxis Research & Communication report states that “while some MFs individually have good websites and get sufficient information out to their partners, this is generally not seen as a strong point of the program, and there was a high degree of inconsistency” (Ibid, p. 15). This was also observed in the process of conducting the Website Analysis portion of this research. Eight website qualities that relate to the websites’ external communication were examined (Table 7). It should be noted that some of the website characteristics that were examined in Section 4.2.1 are also important as external communication tools, namely providing contact information for people in the MF, listing partner names and the organizations that they represent, providing an up-to-date list of news and events, and listing current projects with recent project updates. In this section the items in Table 7 will be examined.
**Table 7:** Website Analysis qualities that can be used as external communication tools. Explanation of characters: √ - present in the website; D – downloadable; N – not available on the website for downloading; I – incomplete list of documents; $ - some documents must be purchased. It should be noted that the websites were reviewed again on August 4, 2005 for this chart, therefore the information may not match the information in Appendix A. It should also be noted that the WCMF website was still not online (October, 2005) and the data is from the earlier analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BSLMF</th>
<th>EOMF</th>
<th>FHMF</th>
<th>FMF</th>
<th>LAMF</th>
<th>MCMF</th>
<th>MBMF</th>
<th>NFA</th>
<th>PAMF</th>
<th>WCMF</th>
<th>WNMF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactivity – subscribe to newsletter</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>√ D</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>Interactivity – can download documents</td>
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<td>√1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeliness – last update given</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarity – purpose of website stated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarity – goals and objectives of MF stated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networkability – website is linked to CMFN website</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networkability – linked to other MF websites</td>
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<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness – information given for potential partners</td>
<td>√</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there are a few exceptions, most MFs have newsletters that can be downloaded from their website. On the NFA website one can subscribe to an electronic newsletter, in spite of this, this researcher did not receive any mailed or emailed copies more than six months after subscribing. The PAMF and WNMF websites do not provide access to newsletters. Regarding the ability to download research reports and other MF documents, this has been an on-going issue that has been mentioned in the Phase II evaluations and the Phase III Follow-up and Mid-Term Reviews; there appears to be considerable progress in providing more documents for downloading. The lack of a central database to coordinate
dissemination of science activities or results also came up in the Veraxis Research &
Communication Report, and in the Phase III Follow-up and Mid-Term Review. It was
stated:

“A key area of concern at the HQ level is the overall management of information. The
CMFN is involved in the generation of many reports, data sets and publications through its
on-the-ground and modeling activities. Yet the tracking and management of this
information lacks rigor and its value as a research resource is compromised by the way the
information is provided. It is acknowledged that HQ is aware of the need to improve
reporting at the national level and is in progress of re-creating its website such that a user-
friendly, searchable database of SFM publications, research and tools is provided. This
improved system is planned to be online in early 2005.” (NRCan, 2005)

While the new CMFN website is up and operational it is clear that not all the individual
MFs have been providing all of their documents for inclusion on this site, this is supported
by comments in the Veraxis Research & Communication Report.

In November of 2003 the CMFN website redesign was announced with the goal of having it
completed in the Fall of 2004 (Interview 6). The process was considerably longer, with the
redesigned website online in Spring of 2005. Unfortunately, the old site was not regularly
updated during this long process (approximately 15 months), resulting in a break in the
network communications. It should be noted that the documents produced by LBMF are
not available in the online database even though these documents were listed on the former
CMFN website database. Also, two attempts to request documents through the previous
online database, using the online request form, were unsuccessful. These transition times
need to be managed to ensure that there is consistency and continuation of information flow.

When information is posted on the websites, five of the ten current websites indicate the
date of the last update. “Without dates on articles, press releases, and other content, users
have no idea whether the information is current or obsolete” (Nielsen, 2003). As a result,
people who are viewing a MF website need to search through the website and documents to
get a sense of how recently the content has been updated.
Of the current ten MF websites, only five give a statement of purpose for the website itself. Others generally make a statement of purpose for the MF, without clarifying what the purpose of the website itself is for the MF. Nielsen (2003) states many companies “use vague or generic language to describe their purpose, obscuring this basic fact makes it much harder for users to interpret a website’s information and services”, particularly people outside of the organization. All but one MF (MBMF), have listed the goals and objectives of the MF in some format on their webpage.

The Veraxis Research & Communication Report stated that there is a “sense that each MF operates somewhat in a vacuum” (Veraxis Research & Communication, 2004, p. 5). All the individual MF websites are linked to the CMFN website and eight of the ten current websites are linked directly to all the other MF websites. This is a small step to linking the individual MFs into a network for outsiders to see that each MF is one of several MFs that are part of a larger whole.

A final aspect of the website analysis is the information that is available to people outside of the MF partnerships which allows them to become involved in the MFs. Only three MFs, EOMF, FMF, and McMF, use language on their websites, or have some sort of sign-up form, that informs the viewer that they can participate in the work of this organization. Other websites talk about partnerships and participation, but the wording does not open the door for individuals to become involved. For a few websites, as was noted in Section 4.2.1, excluding contact names and partner names makes it more difficult to find a way to participate in the individual MFs.
4.3.2 The Image of the CMFN

Individual Model Forests

A variety of tools are used within the individual MFs to create an image for themselves that is recognizable within the MF and throughout their region. These tools are designed to create a consistent image of the MF to the viewer. This may include using logos, developing a MF brand; MF displays at local, regional, provincial and national events, and finding a showcase project to project an image of the MF into the media and local communities.

In 2002 the Communications Coordinators attended a workshop on branding, to create a recognizable identity for their MF through the use of logos and slogans. This has been used in a variety of ways in the network. For PAMF this resulted in a logo along with 4 panels of artwork that symbolize various aspects of the MF and the partners. This can be found on the website, posters, brochures, and the cover of recent annual work plans and annual reports. Many of the MFs have adopted the practice of producing and giving out or selling promotional items with the logo and MF name on it. This includes pens, hats, shirts, jackets, pocket-knives, etc. While the list varies somewhat from one MF to another these are “attention getters and rewards for contributions” to the MF that have two potential benefits (PAMF annual work plan, 2004). First, the partners that choose to wear the clothing items communicate to their immediate sphere of influence that they have pride in their participation in the MF. Second, as interviewee 5 stated; “you know it’s a funny thing, we often laugh about wearing the MF golf shirts, but you know, a lot of people look at them and ask what that is all about. Being a billboard does help to educate.” This is all a part of the branding approach, to getting the MF recognized, and getting the participants to identify with the organization.

MBMF has a community program staff position where the role is to go out to the
communities in the MF and help them develop local projects, and to help them learn about the benefits of the MF for the region. In MBMFs 2005-2006 annual work plan this position is described as follows:

“The MBMF employs a full-time Community Programs Officer to have a visible presence in local communities and act as the community programs and awareness coordinator and be responsible for the delivery or coordination of programs, projects and communications into the local communities of the MBMF.”

Having a “Communities Opportunity Program” in MBMF enhances this position. The program created a fund that can be accessed for local community projects that fit in with the goals and objectives of the MF. This has some specific goals for increasing First Nation involvement, and in increasing “opportunities for local-level participation in SFM.” (MBMF 2005-2006 Annual Work Plan, 2005) The combination of the community programs officer and a fund that communities can access, effectively allows communities to have some input into the MF, and allows the MF to communicate SFM information into the community through the participants (Interview 12). PAMF also has a community fund for local communities to draw from.

None of the other MFs have such a fund or a staff position that is clearly defined in their annual work plans. Some project titles say “community involvement” (McMF 2004-2005 Annual Work Plan) or “local participation” (2004-2005 WCMF Work Plan & Budget), yet these are projects or project areas that are planned by the MF. In PAMF and MBMF this program has been a valuable tool for drawing in the First Nations communities into the MFs. In McMF, it has been a challenge to engage First Nations communities; each person interviewed mentioned this as an on-going challenge. Within the 2003-2004 annual work plan there is a proposed “MMFA Communities and First Nations Support Position(s)” listed. The annual report indicates; “a summer student with a background in First Nations involvement was hired by the organization to develop links throughout the region” (McMF
Annual Report, 2003-2004). However, the report does not mention what this position actually accomplished and how this is to be used by the McMF. Interviewee 26 stated:

“One of their goals is to hire a First Nations coordinator. I don’t think they’ve met it yet. I think it’s really important that they address it. Otherwise there will be more dissent between the (First Nations) leaders and McGregor because of lack of education and understanding and participation.”

The previous quote leaves the impression that this goal was not accomplished. In hiring a summer student, not someone with the potential for long term program continuity and building relationships, the value of the work is not easily transferred to the larger MF organization. This idea of having a specific staff person responsible for First Nations community outreach, to build the image of the MF within the First Nation's communities was supported by interviewee 15:

“One thing that seems to have helped, though it’s not absolutely the end all, but having someone actually visiting communities primarily the First Nations and the Métis communities, having someone on staff that can concentrate efforts reaching them and finding out what works for their community, cause we’ve been told over and over again that you can’t just impose your ideas or your programs. You need to talk to people within the communities and find out, because everyone seems to be very different so that’s a more direct approach and someone going to meet with the elders, have basically public forums or town hall meetings, or whatever you want to call them to get some feedback.”

Within the Phase II Evaluation Report for the CMF program, some comments were shared about the Aboriginal Strategic Initiative which supports some of the earlier findings in this research:

Part of building Aboriginal/First Nations’ groups participation in forest management includes capacity building--a complex challenge whose time frame needs often far exceeds the five-year phases in which Model Forests operate. Furthermore, significant investment of effort is required to develop and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal/First Nations groups. Because the rapport between Aboriginals/First Nations and forest management often requires strengthening, it is too soon to assess the success of this Strategic Initiative in 2002. Considerable effort is required to establish trust and productive relationships among all of the parties involved” (NRCAN, 2002).

Building and maintaining a positive image of the individual MFs within the partnership groups is an ongoing challenge and requires a different approach for each target group.

At the local level, there were some problems with creating a positive image for the LB MF.
While there were some successes, such as the Rainforest Interpretive Centre (Interview 23),
even this became contentious as the MF attempted to reorganize itself in Phase II (Interview
24). The end result is summed up in the following statement:

“I think most of the members of the Long Beach Model Forest Society were embarrassed
being members, those that sat on the Board. Very seldom do you hear the province being
proud of anything that was done out there. The First Nations were nothing but critical.
The community groups that were there, I think, when it came to the new ideas and annual
work plans, they were very active in that because that’s where they could actually see stuff
getting done, but still very little use of the model forest idea. I don’t think any of the
partners were using the word partnership; I don’t think any of them ever bought into it.
And if the province and the CFS don’t buy into it then how the hell can you expect the
communities to?” (Interview 22)

This was a widely held perception within the LBMF; that the leadership and process was not
there to bring together a partnership where the parties at the table would buy into the
concept of the MF. This resulted in the local participants and communities in the region
having a negative impression of LBMF and the CMFN.

One other aspect of creating a positive image of the individual MFs has been linked to a
showcase or cornerstone project, something that gets community attention due to its
relevance and application to the community. This varies quite a bit across the country. In
PAMF they have the community “Fire Smart” program, designed to create a fuel break
around forest communities. As a result of a bad fire year, this program has been embraced
by a number of communities in the PAMF as they have relied on the expertise of the people
involved from CFS Edmonton, and PAMF. It is seen as a highly visible and positive project
that protects communities. In FMF, they developed expertise in the area of watershed
management that is sought-out throughout the province. For some MFs it is their school-
based education programs, for others, it is the effective workshops that they deliver on a
timely basis.
CMFN Image

At the CMFN committee meeting in April, 2005, a key issue that came up several times was the need to share the success stories of the MFs. This was stated by B. Wilson (Program Director for the CMFN) and reaffirmed by statements in the Veraxis Research & Communication report: “Make a much more aggressive effort to go beyond boundaries and use the program to tell a Canadian success story on collaboration and innovative SFM practices” (Veraxis Research & Communication, 2004, p. 9). This report also stated that the “program does not get the recognition from the federal government that it clearly deserves” (Ibid, p. 8). This is the collective responsibility of CFS and the individual MFs working together through the network. When reading through the various documents of the MFs it is difficult to determine what the true success stories are. The documents that do this better than any other are the newsletters, unfortunately these are often not published as frequently as intended, resulting is long breaks between news about MF activities.

During the interviews, there were a number of comments made about the Communications and Outreach Plan and the Coordinator position at the network level. There were concerns about the requirements of each MF to produce a communications and outreach plan within the set timeframe of the signing of the Phase III agreement. These concerns centred around the issue that the network had not produced their communications and outreach plan, which the individual MFs wanted to model, and to tie into (Interview 5). The leadership of the network is critical for creating an atmosphere where information is readily shared and timing is respected by demonstrating timeliness to the individual MFs. This creates a strong image of leadership within the network. The two quotes below summarize the impression that partners have about this role:

“I think part of their biggest role is communicating to the whole network, to each of the communication committees to let them know what the overall network goals are, what’s
happening at that scale and also to be a liaison between all the various network players so that we’re all kept informed, kept in touch in that network.” (Interview 16)

“She is a person that basically keeps us aware of what is going on in other MFs across the country. She ensures that we get the appropriate publications and information from the different MFs. She attempts to keep us talking to each other.” (Interview 5)

The impression given by the interviewees is that this position has two main roles for the MFs: first, communicating about the activities of the Secretariat to the MFs; and second, communicating about the MFs to the Secretariat and to the other MFs. There is also a general impression that the position is significantly determined by the individual in the position (Interview 5 and 6), implying that there may be a need for further clarification of the roles and responsibilities for this position. This was evident when M. Whelan was away on French language training. At each MF where interviews were conducted, at least one interviewee commented about how the communications efforts from the network office were significantly reduced while M. Whelan was away.

When interviewing Communications Coordinators, there were concerns expressed about the amount of time it was taking for the network to get its new website up and running. Individuals were told a number of times that it would be up and running by a particular date and then it would not happen (Interview 6 and 27). At the same time, the old website remained static, resulting in a lack of current information in a common place for everyone to access. This type of information management needs to be monitored, and more efficient and timely transitions need to be implemented. According to Frank and Smith (2000); “Transition is a serious business… If not managed properly or acknowledged in a partnership, damage to the partnership or to specific individuals may occur” (p. 63).

As the interviews, survey questions and process of gathering documents did not focus directly on the Network office and its activities, comments about the CMFN Communications and Outreach Strategy have been limited to what others have shared about this document.
4.3.3 Public Education

Public education has been a strong focus for some MFs through a variety of approaches.

This report will examine public school programs and the MFs’ efforts to communicate MF plans and activities with the general public in the MF region.

School-based Education

*Table 8*: School-based education activities for each MF as listed in the most recent available annual work plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Forest/annual work plan</th>
<th>Activities/Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSLMF 2005-2006</td>
<td>No annual work plans available in English (French only).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOMF 2005-2006</td>
<td>Demonstration Forest Initiative, Recognition Program, Bog to Bog (B2B) Landscape Demonstration, Forest Fair, sponsor a teacher for the Annual Eastern Teachers’ Tour, forestry-related programs to local schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHMF 2005-2006</td>
<td>SFM training for twenty teachers, development and promotion of educational resources that link in to the curriculum, GIS Day for junior and senior high students, Fresh Water Curriculum lesson plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMF 2005-2006</td>
<td>“Ask me if I’m a Tree” booklet, National Forest week, Hands on New Brunswick Forests, Envirotown, International science competition for high school students, sponsor a teacher for Atlantic Teachers’ Tour, Woodlot tours, Christmas cards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAMF 2004-2005</td>
<td>Model Forest Week, Envirotown, Northeast Teacher Tours, Student Plot Projects, Regional Science Fair, Model Forest Week activities at Wade Lake, EcoCamp Bickell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBMF 2005-2006</td>
<td>Demonstration Woodlot, Full-time Education Coordinator, Youth Forestry Symposium, $20,000 Education Programs Fund, Sustainable Forestry Curriculum (Grade 10 complete, grade 7 development stage).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McMFM 2005-2006</td>
<td>First Nations Interpretative site at Huble Homestead, Youth Symposium on Forestry and Forestry Careers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAMFM 2005-2006</td>
<td>PAMF promotional items and bursaries, poster contest, Focus on Forests Program, School Science Fairs, teaching materials that incorporate SFM in the curriculum, Uskiy-Nih Traditional Resource Use Curriculum Development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCMF 2005-2006</td>
<td>Youth outreach.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
School based education programs are used throughout the MFs in Canada to disseminate information about forest ecology, forest operation, and SFM. Table 8 provides a breakdown of the type of school-based programs offered by the different MFs in their area as listed in their latest available annual work plan.

In reviewing the school-based education activities; the only MF to have a staff person working specifically on educational programs is MBMF. The staff person was a long-term high school biology teacher with a strong understanding of forestry and forest-related issues as they relate to the curriculum. This first hand experience with the education system allows the MBMF to target educational programs that have a direct curriculum connection.

MBMF appears to have the strongest year-round school-based education programs. This is demonstrated by the partnership between Manitoba Education and Training and MBMF in the development of a curriculum-based science unit: “Sustainable Forest Ecosystems: A Senior 2 Science Unit” (MBMF, 2004). Another approach that is used is teacher education, training teachers about SFM so that they become the voice of the MF in the school. This type of project occurs on a small scale in EOMF, FMF, LAMF, NFA, and WNMF, where they send one teacher to an annual teacher “Tour”. FHMF takes this one step further by sending twenty teachers on an Ecotour to present them “with an unbiased, balanced view of sustainable forest management issues, encouraging them to integrate FHMF research findings into their lesson plans” (FHMF, 2005).

In the interviews a number of people talked about the school-based education programs. One person talked about how people in the region should know about the local MF by now because all of the grade five kids have been through a local program (Interview 5). Others talked about how there is a real need to reach out to the youth, to teach them about forestry values, as it is anticipated that the forestry sector will have a skills shortage in the near future.
(Interview 4, 7, and 20). Overall there is an impression among the interviewees that the school-based programs are important. In McMf it was stated that there is not a lot emphasis on programs in public schools (Interview 27). In PAMF there is a unique management arrangement that has the GM contracted to the MF, and the Board has one administrative staff person. This appears to put most of the work in the hands of the GM, including conducting school programs. It should be noted that both McMf and PAMF do not have a communications staff position or any other type of community staff position.

Public Education

In conducting public education programs of a broad nature, there are many tools that have been used. The following list is from the comments in the interviews:

- Conferences
- County fairs
- Driving tours
- Field days
- Forest education booklets
- Forestry fairs
- Group forestry tours
- Guided trail walks
- Information sessions
- Interpretive Centre
- Monthly seminar series
- News articles in the local and provincial paper
- Open house
- Presentations with guest speakers
- Public forums
- Public seminars
- Radio spots
- Self-guided interpretive trails
- Tech day
- Television news coverage
- Trade shows
- Website
- Workshops to highlight research results

There are numerous other activities that reach out to the public in broad-ranging and in targeted campaigns. For some MFs, a more targeted approach has been used. In PAMF one person talked about working to engage communities, as opposed to the broad public (Interview 16), an example of this being the Fire Smart community projects. As mentioned earlier, this has been a very visible and highly successful program that helps protect communities from disaster. This type of project provides the MF with an opportunity to communicate specific knowledge to the leaders and members of a specific community in a manner that showcases the MF as a positive entity in the region.
In LAMF one person claimed that they want the public to know about SFM, to watch for it, and to see it being practiced, to help the public to see that forestry is not as bad as it has been portrayed (Interview 1). In essence to be able to monitor what is happening in the forest. In McMFF they conducted a five week radio campaign about the MF and various aspects of SFM and observed a 50% increase in website visits during the program.

In the LBMF there was heavy reliance upon the role of the Rainforest Interpretive Centre (RIC), in Tofino, to carry out the public and school-based education programs. Prior to 1999 this was operated jointly with MacMillan Bloedel in Tofino. In 1999 MacMillan Bloedel sold the building, resulting in the RIC severing ties with the forestry company and operating without the company’s support (LBMF Society 1999-2000 Workplan and Annual Report). The programs were delivered to a very large audience, including a steady stream of national and international visitors and observers, coming to see what was happening in the LBMF, and how the MF was conducting research in the region (Interview 23). A common complaint about the RIC was the lack of forestry focus (Interview 23 and 25). The programming was heavily focused on forest ecology, forest conservation, and First Nations forest perspectives. There was great reluctance to embrace anything to do with forest operations except the negative effects of forestry operations (Interview 22). As a result, the viewing public did not receive information about SFM or any information about good forest management practices. This was a significant point of contention in the latter part of Phase II, and resulted in the LBMF dropping its support for the RIC late in the 1999-2000 fiscal year (LBMF 2000-2001 Work Plan, Interview 22 and 23).

A common view about helping the public to become more aware of the MF is reflected in the following statement:

“A lot of people, for years after the model forest had already begun, still didn’t know that we had a model forest or what that meant. It took a long time to get established.” (Interview 16)
The amount of time, effort, and money required to broadly reach out to the public has been substantial throughout the duration of the CMFN program. Considering this on-going investment, it is important to consider a different perspective regarding broad public education programs.

Several individuals have taken the time to reflect on the purpose and effect of public education and shared some important insights. Interviewee 14 shared that “…a lot of communication is as good as the people that receive it.” This addresses the need to target the public education programs to specific groups, as opposed to what one person called the “shotgun approach to communication” (Interview 3). This is supported by this statement about how you go about designing targeted communication for a specific audience:

“I think it’s more dependent on who’s at the table in the design phase and whether you have people that face the rigor around those sorts of things in the beginning, and sometimes having the partners at the table that have the focus really helps, right? So, if for example, if you designed a product with the teachers and with the school Board and delivered it to them, the chances are way better that you’re going to hit the mark” (Interview 3).

This is supported by what McKenzie-Mohr and Smith (1999) say about needing to know your audience. “All communications should be developed with your audience in mind. Before developing communications, you should have a firm sense of the attitudes, beliefs and behavior of your intended audience(s)” (p. 156). An effective strategy for doing this is to include members of the target audience in planning the communication strategy.

Two individuals reflected on the intent of an MF trying to reach a broad public audience, and came up with the following conclusions:

“I wrestled with this myself for a number of years and … came to the conclusion that not all things are for all people and not everyone is going to be interested in the model forest program. All you can do is provide the opportunity for people to avail themselves of the knowledge of the model forest program” (Interview 12).

“… if you live in the region and you don’t know about the Manitoba Model Forest, it’s because you’ve chosen not to know, because we make our presence very well known” (Interview 11).

These are insightful reflections that should be taken into account when considering broad
public education programs.

Figure 32 A shows that 66.7% of the respondents “agree to strongly agree” that the public has been taught about SFM in an effective manner. When examining this by MF it appears that McMF, WCMF, and WNMF have the lowest level of agreement, and BSLMF, EOMF, and MBMF have the highest level of agreement (Figure 32 B).

![Figure 32: A. The MF teaches the public about SFM in an effective manner. B. Responses by MF with mean line for agree to strongly agree.]

In the interviews, respondents were asked about the methods used for public education and how the local public could find out more about their respective MF. From the overall responses it appears that most MFs rely on using the local media (22 responses) and their websites (21 responses) as tools for reaching the public. Both are used to deliver a broad message to a general audience as opposed to a targeted audience. It is important to keep in mind the insights from the two quotes above and consider targeting public education programs to specific audiences through specific venues.

4.3.4 The Role of the Communications Coordinator

It is difficult to determine if having a Communications Coordinator is an overall benefit to a MF or not. Only six of eleven MFs have a Communications Coordinator, from the available information, only three appear to be full-time on communications. Figure 33 indicates the
MFs with the highest frequency of being rated above the mean scores were: EOMF, FHMF, LAMF, MBMF, PAMF, and WNMF (scoring ≥5% above the mean more often than below the mean). Among these MFs, EOMF, WNMF, LAMF, and FHMF have staff that is either a full-time or part-time Communications Coordinator. Considering that FMF, NFA, and McGMF also have, or had a Communications Coordinator at the time of this study, the results are inconclusive regarding how the partners of a MF perceive the role of a Communications Coordinator in improving communications. Both EOMF and WNMF seem to stand out, having a higher number of survey responses above the mean, indicating a higher level of satisfaction with communications within the MF.

![Figure 33: The number of times that each MF was +/-5% or more from the mean for the 28 survey questions examined in this study (Figures 9-16 and 20-32).](image)

One person talked about how there is a perception that having a Communications Coordinator allows an MF to do more in communications.

“One thing I should mention is that unlike a lot of the other model forests, ours doesn’t have a Communications Coordinator on staff so we always find ourselves a little bit behind the eight-ball as far as that goes. We can’t quite do as much as we’d like to in that area. So a lot of the actual work falls onto the manager’s shoulders. He’s the one doing a lot of the school visits or doing a lot of the workshop coordination, that kind of thing, and the rest of us pitch in as much as we can…” (Interview 16)

This perception is not clearly supported by the survey results, yet logically it would seem that having a staff position with time allocated to communications should benefit the overall communications within the MF.
While the responses are not a reflection of the capability of the Communications Coordinator alone, they are an indication of how the partners perceive their respective MFs communications efforts. This reflects how the Board leadership and the management staff of each MF value and integrate communications planning and strategies into all that a MF does. As Interviewee 2 stated: “I think that we are somewhat to the point where everybody has responsibility for communication.” Getting to this point still requires a coordinated effort to ensure that everyone shares a common perspective and tells the same story about the MF to ensure that the message to the listener is consistent from person to person.

4.4 Summary

The data have revealed a great variety of communication tools, programs, and audiences within and outside of the individual MFs. Considering that the program has been in existence for less than 14 years, much has been accomplished. The complexity of managing internal and external communication in an effective manner appears to be strained by a lack of resources in some MFs.

Considering the diversity of approaches and capacity within the individual MFs, the role of the CMFN becomes much more critical in assisting with the transfer of not only knowledge, but more importantly, sharing strategies and successes throughout the network. This concurs with a comment from the Veraxis Research & Communication report (2004, p. 5) which states: “A considerable number of interviewees believe that the full potential of the program can only be realized with a greater effort to communicate, sharing information about research, obstacles, successes, etc.” This calls for greater leadership and coordination of communication at the network level, and more collaboration and willingness to pass information along from the individual MFs. One of the interviewees suggested that
communication efforts might be more efficient and focused if the communication position within each MF was a network position (Interview 27), strengthening the ties of the individual MFs to the Network.

Within the current structure, individual MFs have been conducting a variety of internal and external communication activities, as indicated throughout this chapter. Some are well planned, executed, and evaluated and others need more planning to have them fit within the overall goals of the communications and outreach strategies. Most MFs run effective meetings where the participants are well informed, resulting in greater participation. While partners have a good understanding of their respective MF organizations, there is a need for a deliberate orientation and mentoring process for new participants. Strategies for improving structural communication need to be explored to facilitate more open information sharing within the MF structures and the Network. This is a significant task for the Secretariat to address as Phase IV is being mapped out. Throughout all of this, the individuals in leadership positions need to conduct themselves in a manner that is open and respectful of all interests to build trust within their organizations. Continuity of programs and information flow is critical, even when there are changes in leadership. Many of the MFs have openly explored the issues of written and oral language to bring partners to an equal level of understanding. It appears that more work needs to be done in this area when new people join the organizations. The use of external facilitators has been a positive experience for all MFs when dealing with planning activities and problem solving, and for some MFs in learning how to work together as partners. It has been important to recognize the limitations of the leadership within the individual MF organizations, and seek this type of expertise. It appears that more work needs to go into finding effective methods for addressing conflict in a positive and constructive manner.
In conducting external communication activities, the MFs have more work to do in having their annual reports relate to what they said they would do in their annual work plans. These annual reports and annual work plans have been improving over time and there are some excellent models within the network. The Secretariat could provide a beneficial tool to all of the MFs through the production of a network annual report. There is also a lot of work to do on creating clearer information on the individual websites and linking all of the MF websites into the network. The image of the various MFs varies across the country as some have found projects that have allowed them to receive a lot of positive attention from the media and the local residents. There have been a variety of public education programs that have reached a multitude of audiences with the message of SFM, and these results may help to shape their communities over the next few generations.
Chapter 5  Creating an Environment for Adaptive Communication

5.1  Introduction

It can be argued that communicating the knowledge gained through MF activities in an attempt to influence forest operations, planning, and policy is the essence of the MF program (Taylor and Smith, 1999). Therefore communication needs to be understood as an integral part of what a MF is and what it does. Building on the definitions of communication that were shared in section 2.2.3, the basic understanding of communication is that it is “a process in which the participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding” (Rogers and Kincaid, 1990, p. 63). Zaiss (2002) writes about partnerships and communication within the context of relationships. He states:

“In the first principle of true partnership, connecting, we shift our focus from the individuals to the relationship between the individuals. The second principle of true partnership is that we connect to others through communication. Communication is the building block of relationships.

In true partnership, communication contributes to the nature of the relationship. Implied in this definition of communication is the fact that something happens as a result of the interaction – that is, things get done. Through effective communication we are able to get into each other’s world and create a bond in the relationship that moves us beyond the limitations of the drift” (p. 62).

All activities and interactions have communications implications that occur within some form of relationship; for the MFs this occurs within partnership relationships. These interactions require careful consideration through advanced planning, creating response strategies for the expected and the unexpected to produce a positive impact on the organization as a whole and to have value for SFM.

The intent of this chapter is to consider the strengths and weaknesses of MF communication as identified in the results and as defined in the literature to establish signs of adaptive communication. This will provide some insights into how the steps that have been taken within various MFs can be used as a guide for greater integration of adaptive communication
management.

5.2 MF Communication Practices

In reviewing the findings and the literature it becomes apparent that the high degree of variation among the 12 MFs makes it difficult to generalize the results since the communication efforts vary considerably. Aspects of the partnership, communication, and resource management literature apply to the MFs collectively and on an individual MF basis. This will be explored to determine how the literature supports the communication actions of the MFs and where they diverge from the literature.

Internal Partnership Communication

Within the partnership literature, a number of key factors have been identified for effective partnership communication. In an international collaborative case study of partnerships for sustainable development, the UNEP states that good communication...

“...is one of the most commonly cited success factors in partnership building. Open and transparent communication, aimed at:

- overcoming mistrust and suspicion,
- generating a shared culture and vision,
- developing common language and standards,
- acknowledging problems and limitations,
- promoting achievements, and
- providing feedback to review and revise the relationship,

was seen as being absolutely critical to success” (UNEP, 1994, p. 15)

These six factors are supported by the work of Rodal (1993), who also writes about the critical role of communication internally and externally. In exploring internal MF communication, these six factors were examined. For this research the list was expanded to include: examining failures, recognizing contributions, examining vertical and horizontal communication, and training and orienting partners.
Overall, within all the MFs, there appears to be a fairly clear vision and understanding of the goals of the MF. The only significant variations from this were with BSLMF, which was well below the average, and EOMF, which was well above average.

The survey results indicate that there is a relatively high level of respect and trust among the partnerships. There are a couple of notable exceptions with WCMF and BSLMF being rated considerably lower than the mean and EOMF being considerably above the mean. Communicating respectfully and building trust are key aspects of relationship building.

Regarding building relationships with First Nations, there have been two significant success stories with MBMF and PAMF incorporating First Nations participation in their MFs at a high level and collaborating on research work with the First Nations communities in the MF region. Within the MBMF, all participants referred to their relationships with the other partners as friendships, indicating that a high level of trust and comfort had been achieved. This can be attributed to the frequency of meetings, the cross-cultural and board training workshops, and the social communication component of the MBMF events such as the Christmas meeting. Within the other MFs there is a general feeling that more needs to be done in building relationships among partners. This was supported by a number of the comments in the interviews. The value of building relationships cannot be over-emphasized as all communication occurs within some form of relationship (Zaiss, 2002).

Some MFs have attempted to put together partner profiles as a means of learning more about each other. This is a useful tool that could be incorporated into the orientation materials for new partners. The literature regarding partnerships, collaboration, synergy, and communication mentions how important it is to have relationships where there is trust, respect, and honesty (Rodal, 1993; Frank and Smith, 2000; Francis, 1987; Steffan, 1999; Lasker, Weiss, and Miller, 2001; Postmes, Tanis, and de Wit, 2001; Zaiss, 2002; Sirmon,
Rana, and Kostishack, 2002). While the partners generally see their respective MFs have demonstrated respect and trust within the partnership, this is just part of the process of relationship building. Lasker, Weiss, and Miller (2001) state: “Building relationships is probably the most daunting and time-consuming challenge partnerships face” (p. 192).

In a recent USDA Forest Service report, Sirmon, Rana, and Kostishack (2002, p. 3) have identified key skills needed for relationship building and valuing these relationships.

“Skills needed in:
• Communication
• Dropping ideologies and replacing them with a commitment to community
• Fostering trust
• Utilizing or calling upon someone with multilingual skills when necessary
• Outreach and networking
• Understanding the theory and meaning behind public participation and collaboration
• Engaging the people who pose the most difficulty in a particular situation
• Addressing past problems to forge new collaborations
• Knowing who to engage, as well as how and when to engage them
• Identifying local expertise in the region and tapping into their knowledge”

Many of these skills are demonstrated in the MFs and have been observed and addressed in this study. All of the skills require leaders that have strong communication skills for developing relationships with the partners and the ability to facilitate, or utilize external facilitators, for relationship building among the partners.

The partners within each MF have worked towards developing a common language for clearer communication during MF activities. While this is generally seen as a success with the MFs, there is a need to address this issue in the orientation of new partners.

There is a need to resolve conflict more openly. None of the MFs had a particularly strong response in the survey in this area and it is seen as a critical aspect of building good partner communication. Lasker, Weiss, and Miller (2001) explored some of the reasons for conflict in synergistic partnerships. They state:

“To create synergy from such diversity, partnerships need a process that makes good use of the different perspectives, resources, and skills so the group, as a whole, can develop better
ways of thinking about problems and addressing them. This is one of the greatest challenges of collaboration, because diversity can lead to tension and conflict. (p. 186)"

“Problems are common in diverse partnerships, in which partners come from different professional, racial, and ethnic cultures; have little experience working together; are skeptical of each other’s motivations; are not accustomed to sharing resources or power. (p. 192)”

Another factor that can affect the level of conflict or tension within a MF is the language or jargon that is used. Davidson-Hunt says, “groups can use language to exclude people and exacerbate conflict” (Personal Communication, September 9, 2005). The use of acronyms, technical terms, and language that is specific to a certain vocation can exclude people. Maser (1996) states:

“The nature of language and the way in which it is used often leads to misunderstanding and conflict. These misunderstandings stem primarily from three barriers to effective communication: (1) the lack of a common experience or frame of reference, (2) how one approaches life, and (3) the use of abstractions” (p. 76)

Maser describes abstractions as words that “represent ideas that cannot be experienced directly” (Ibid, p. 82). This comes back to the need for developing a common language in which technical terms, acronyms and other jargon are minimized unless it is clear that there is a common level of understanding of these tools of language.

It was noted that a number of MFs have incorporated into their governance documents guidelines which can be followed in the event of conflict. Incorporating conflict management strategies into the governance documents is a proactive approach to managing conflict and communicating to the partnership that processes and procedures are in place to help process and resolve conflicts.

It has been acknowledged in previous evaluations, consultant reports, and internal reviews that within the network as a whole the success stories of the MFs and the Network are not being shared. However, within the survey results the respondents indicated that they were quite satisfied with the information about the accomplishments of their respective MF, but not very satisfied with information about the failures of their MF. This appears to indicate a
need for more sharing of success stories at the Network level, and a great need to accept and analyze failures at the MF level. The research by Cannon and Edmondson (2004) explains that there may be organizational barriers that punish people for failures and do not encourage learning from failure. The people responsible for failures may be stigmatized within the organization. They also point out that there is a tremendous amount that can be gained from learning from failures, leading to organizational “learning and innovation” (p. 19).

Frank and Smith (2000) state that “motivation and future involvement are dependent on how well the members of the partnership are treated, and whether or not they feel recognized. The one problem that seems to come up consistently is that everyone thinks that someone else should be doing the recognizing…” (p. 65). Rodal (1993) says that “mutual recognition of the benefits partners bring supports assessment of the partnership as a win/win situation for all, reinforces commitment to work together, and helps to balance power within the relationship” (p. 60). Within the MFs the people are generally somewhat satisfied with the recognition that is given to participation. But there is little recognition of partner contribution to projects on the MF websites and in the annual reports, indicating that more could be done to recognize which organizations, and individuals are involved in and contributing to the activities of the MFs. Lasker, Weiss, and Miller (2001, p. 192) state: “it is difficult to imagine how a partnership can achieve synergy unless its partners appreciate the value of the others’ contributions and perspectives”.

It was observed that the vertical communication within the MFs functions better from the bottom up than from the top down. This can cause some partners, who are not engaged at the Board level, to be less knowledgeable about the ongoing work and challenges of their respective MF. This was exacerbated by weak horizontal communication where participants
in the different working committees generally do not know what is happening in the other working committees. Improved vertical communication will result in a more unified approach to communicating the work of the MF both internally and externally (Postmes, Tanis and de Wit, 2001). With stronger vertical communication, trust is built, allowing horizontal communication to improve (Ibid, 2001).

In reviewing published Board orientation manuals and guides, it is clear that “in any group or organization, people need to know where they’re headed, who’s in charge, what they are supposed to do, and how their efforts relate to others’. Putting talented people into a confusing structure wastes their energy and undermines their effectiveness” (Bolman, Deal, Rallis, 1995, p. 26). “Well planned and effective Board training allows all Board members to make decisions and to take action from the same base of information” (Alberta Community Development, 1995). While MFs like MBMF, FMF, and PAMF have some form of partner orientation package and process, it is clear that this needs more deliberate planning on how to communicate about the history and the complexity of the MFs to new partners. Those that use the “baptism by fire” approach that was mentioned in the interviews are undervaluing the potential of the new recruits and encouraging less than full participation (O’Connell, 1985). Overall, the survey responses indicated that this is an area that needs improvement. In the interviews, a common concern was getting new members up to speed and trying to get them to understand the history and complexity of the MF. The research results appear to indicate that the orientation of new partners has not been a very high priority for the individual MFs, with EOMF as a possible exception.

External Communication

Rodal (1993) writes about the importance of external communication, stating: “effective communications are important with players outside the partnership framework if the
partners are to avoid being isolated from their constituencies and if they are to garner broad support for the goals of the partnership” (p. 61). In section 2.2.5 of this paper Sinclair and Smith were cited as supporting this need for external communication to communicate “the results of studies undertaken to a wider constituency”. They further state “providing feedback to constituent organizations is critical to the process, as is keeping the public informed, since there is significant public concern about environmental, social and economic issues” (p. 132). The external communication tools that were examined include the MF websites, the annual work plan and annual report. Other aspects of external communication were also examined, this including: working as a network, network leadership, public education programs, and the MF image.

When examining characteristics of the websites that facilitate external communication a lot of inconsistency was observed. Some websites do not allow the viewer access to newsletters online or all the MF documents. Updates tend to be infrequent, resulting in out-of-date information in the news and events. The date of the last update is not provided on half of the websites. Only six websites clearly state the purpose of the MF organization. Three websites are not linked to the other MF websites. Overall, the partners do not appear to be aware of their MF website content as they rarely if ever visit the website. The partners believe that the websites are a useful tool to introduce people outside of the MF organizations to the MF concept. However, the intended audiences of the MF websites are not clear. Most of the MF websites do not let the viewer know that they can get involved in the organization. With this amount of inconsistency from one MF website to the next it is difficult to know what purpose these websites play for each organization. If it is simply for document delivery this could be done much more effectively through the CMFN website with an improved search function. It is important to tie the purpose of these website to the purpose of the MF and conduct audience research to increase the reach and impact of the
content. It appears that the MF websites have a lot of traffic, but it is unclear if the data that is provided is used in the design and content of the websites.

There are many texts for website authoring that provide detailed guidelines for developing a functional website. Nielsen and Tahir (2002) address the design of a homepage in their book “Homepage Usability: 50 websites Deconstructed”. This is a useful resource for conducting a thorough evaluation of the main navigational window of any website. With the development of the new MF network website there is now an opportunity for the MFs to redesign their websites to have a similar look and feel. A web design company, NETGAIN DESIGN (2003), cites Nielsen’s work in encouraging companies to follow similar conventions of design.

“One of the main findings in Jacob Nielsen’s usability studies is that sites work best when they follow the conventions users know from other sites. The more the majority of sites do things a certain way, the more a specific site’s usability will usually increase by complying with that convention.”

For the CMFN and the individual MFs there are many different website designs. While this allows each MF to express individuality, this does little to contribute to the image of the network.

There are only a few exemplary annual reports within the network that clearly report on the activities of the previous year in a systematic way. With the great variety of annual report styles, it would be useful to conduct some workshops on the content and design of an annual report to ensure that the MFs are able to maximize the value that this document can have for the organization. In some of the more recent annual reports (i.e. EOMF, FMF) there has been a greater linkage to the annual work plans. The annual report is a tool that should clearly and systematically report on the planned activities from the previous year. This includes reporting on the successes and challenges of the year and looking ahead to the next year. WNMF has a well-designed opening section that clearly ties the activities of the MF
into the goals, objectives, and vision of the organization. A well structured annual report can
be used as a powerful external communications tool to market the MF to potential partners
and project sponsors (Taylor, 2002). It is also a useful tool for partners to use in reporting
about the activities of the MF to their respective organizations. This provides recognition
and encourages ongoing participation.

Communicating within the network is an important component of external communication
for each MF as there is much to share with other MFs and to learn from other MFs. Within
the network, a number of evaluations have been conducted internally and externally. The
Audit and Evaluation branch of NRCan provides formal evaluations of each MF at the end
of each Phase and most recently, prepared a Draft Follow-up and Mid-Term Review. There
have also been external evaluations such as the Veraxis Research & Communication Report,
which has been cited in this research. Each of the evaluations reviewed mention the
difficulty of bringing the MFs together as a network, of contributing the results of individual
MF research to the network, and of participating in network level collaboration on Strategic
Initiatives or other cooperative projects. The Veraxis Research & Communication Report
(2004) states that:

“The local nature of the issues that each of the MFs chooses to focus on, combined with a
perceived lack of communication between the individual MFs, and within the program more
generally, lead in many cases to a sense that each MF operates somewhat in a vacuum” (p. 5)

The process of learning from action appears to be rather weak when it comes to network-
level participation and activities, as this has been identified in the Phase II evaluations and
the Veraxis Research & Communication Report as an area that needs improvement. While
the Mid-Phase III review mentions that this area has seen improvement, two key issues were
observed and reported earlier. First, the gap in network communications when the Manager
of Programs Outreach was on leave weakened communications at the network level and
between MFs. Second, the lack of access to any of the research or documents from the
LBMF on the CMFN website leaves a gap in the CMFN knowledge base. The discontinuation of funding for the LBMF provided an excellent opportunity to learn from failure, to communicate within the network that failures can result in learning and growth (Cannon and Edmondson, 2004). This requires a management approach where open communication is the key.

Public education programs are also an important component of external communication within most of the MFs. There are a wide variety of approaches that have been used throughout the network. In Manitoba, where there is a strong focus on communities and schools, there is a full-time coordinator for each of these program areas with strong working group and financial support. PAMF, MBMF, and FHF have embarked on community Fire Smart programs that provide a tangible benefit to the communities through the activities of the local MF. There are many other examples where MFs have effectively targeted specific groups or educational institutions that have resulted in a greater understanding of forest-related issues and SFM in the MF regions.

Through all of these communication programs, within the individual MFs and within the network as a whole, the image of the MF program has been gaining in recognition and in value. This is supported by the following statement from the CMFN Strategic Planning Committee (2005):

“Evaluations have continually demonstrated a growing impact on federal and provincial policies and programs, as well as a growing influence on industry and other government agencies interested in SFM. In the collective quest to achieve SFM, Canadian Model Forests are recognized as being instrumental in removing barriers, finding innovative solutions and achieving progress in every province” (p. 9).

5.3 Communication Theory and Practice

The models of communication provide a framework for understanding different aspects of
communication within an organization. Effectively delivering information and using these models requires an adaptive approach to communication management. Integrating the models with adaptive communication management provides a framework within which to understand the complexity of communication. This section explores the integration of the models of communication with the concept of adaptive communication management. Examples from the MF activities are provided to show how adaptive communication is already a part of MF communication and can be built on.

Models of Communication and Other Aspects of Communication

The models of communication, from section 2.2.3, provide a means for understanding how communication is conducted in different settings. The four models presented, or variations of the models can be used to describe communication activities of the MFs. The diffusion model (Davidson-Hunt, 2004; Morris, 2003) is a very common approach for getting information out to a broad audience where the need for feedback is limited or difficult. Within the MFs this has included the use of media ads or spots, news releases to the local paper, tradeshow displays, newsletters, billboards and highway signs, school programs, the websites, and public presentations and speakers.

The participatory model (Davidson-Hunt, 2004) would characterize the way MFs conduct workshops, planning sessions, conferences, and various meetings. The convergence (Rogers and Kincaid, 1981) and networking models (Davidson-Hunt, 2004) are more interactive, which require the use of monitoring, evaluation, and feedback to determine if the actions or testing that are undertaken match what the organization and the individuals say they will do. The convergence and networking communication models are more often seen in a facilitated process where the MF partners are engaged in strategic planning, where there is greater opportunity for interaction, where partners are able to listen and contribute in a neutral
environment. The cross-cultural workshops and the Christmas planning sessions coupled with the social activities in the MBMF appear to exemplify these more interactive communication models. The relationship building component of this get-together helps to shape the social reality of the partners (convergence), and the group planning and networking sessions exemplify the networking model of communication.

The diffusion and participatory models of communication provide a theoretical framework within which to understand how tools of communication can be used. The convergence model provides the MFs with a means of understanding how mutual understanding is developed between individuals leading to collective action (Rogers and Kincaid, 1981). The networking model illustrates how this mutual understanding can be developed between different groups, such as the committees and working groups of a MF. Each group experiments and tests their ideas, looking for new ways to communicate SFM to different audiences.

However, what is lacking is an overall management framework that ties together all aspects of communication within an organization like a MF. For a fully integrated understanding of communication within the MF organizations all aspects of communication need to be considered.

The Communication and Outreach Strategy documents of the individual MFs and the network should communicate the overall strategic approach that will be used to deliver communications in the full sense of communication. Breaking communication down into knowledge transfer activities, outreach activities, and other categories results in a fragmented understanding of how communication is to be integrated into the overall goals and objectives of a MF. Reviewing all of the existing Phase III Communication Strategies and plans that were available, it appears that a common format has been used, where most MFs review the
activities of the previous year and look ahead to the coming year. All MF Communication and Outreach Plans tie into the overall MF goals and objectives, list key messages and audiences, and provide a results-based evaluation framework.

To obtain greater integration the communication strategy could tie into the overall goals, objectives, governance, and policies of an organization, encompassing all aspects of the organization. An excellent example of this is the United Nation’s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Corporate Communication Strategy and Policy, which is posted on their Internet site. The opening paragraph of this document, a letter from Jacques Diouf, the Director-General, emphasizes the nature of the organization and the importance of communication to the success of the FAO:

“FAO has a mission to communicate. At the very heart of its mandate is the role of collecting, interpreting and, above all, communicating information related to food, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and sustainable rural development. Moreover, the effectiveness and credibility of the Organization as a policy-making forum and unique, multilingual centre of excellence, knowledge and technical expertise depends to a considerable degree on its ability to communicate” (FAO, 2000)

This communicates how valuable communication is for the FAO. The Table of Contents of this document indicates the degree to which the policies of the organization have been integrated into the strategy to impact the organization as a whole, and to demonstrate the significant value of communication. The first four sections lay the groundwork for why communication is so important for the organization. This includes: clarifying how the organization has a “mission to communicate”, describing the “policy framework”, clarifying who is responsible for the planning process, describing the planning process, and identifying the “individual responsibilities” for communication. Once this groundwork has been laid, the FAO Corporate Communication Strategy and Policy document lays out the strategies for the implementation of the communication. This strategy also openly recognizes weaknesses and shortcomings of the organization while stating that attempts will be made to
communicate to all potential audiences (Ibid, 2004). The guiding principles within the FHMF communications strategy serve a similar purpose, using statements that demonstrate the value of communication to the organization, and tying the strategy directly into the overall MF operating principles.

In a general sense it appears that many of the MFs have been operating their communication programs in an adaptive manner. Sometimes this adaptive process has been the result of careful strategic planning for specific projects and activities, but this is not reflected in the communication strategy documents. These documents lay out the objectives, audience, key messages, and a basic evaluation framework for communication. They are rather dry documents that do not reflect the dynamic nature of communication. It is the overall message of how communication is valued and practiced within the MFs that is being portrayed through these documents.

**Adaptive Communication Management**

In section 2.1.5, adaptive management was described as an iterative process, with cycles within cycles to provide rapid feedback and opportunities for intervention and learning (CCMN, 2003). Section 2.2.4 examined how the networking and convergence communication models are evaluated in light of actions, a form of testing which requires monitoring and assessment to allow for intervention and learning (Davidson-Hunt, 2004; Rogers and Kincaid, 1981). Tying these two concepts together provides a framework for understanding communication as an iterative adaptive activity. The complexity of adaptive communication management makes it difficult to describe this within a model. However, the models of communication and other management and organizational models can be used within an adaptive communication management framework. Therefore, various aspects of adaptive communication will be examined and a few examples shared.
Within the individual MFs there are multiple communications cycles or loops in which information is disseminated, monitored, and feedback assessed to adjust and modify the communication methods and materials. This system is part of the still larger system, the CMFN, with a larger sphere of communication influence. This system of cycles or loops of communication includes opportunities for monitoring, assessment, and feedback. This provides a framework from which to learn from successes and failures, to adjust the strategies and the plans to improve communications overall.

It is important to understand adaptive communication management within a broad framework. Chen (2003) looked at adjusting the use of language to the context in which it is used. Lee (1992) wrote about linking communication to the mission and philosophy of the organization to ensure that it is deeply rooted. Lee goes on to say that the leadership needs to embrace communication as a vital part of an organization. Communication needs to be more than a collection of programs, but seen as an ongoing process, with no beginning and end. This describes a dynamic process that results in continually modifying communications through constantly seeking feedback.

These different aspects of adaptive communication result in a comprehensive understanding of how communication should be adapted to the context in which the participants find themselves. For example, the language used by individuals in exchanges, in written reports and in other documents should be adapted to meet the needs of particular audiences. This adaptation needs to consider the context of socio-economic-political systems and communities to ensure effective communication. Timing in communication strategies requires the use of rapid feedback mechanisms and ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the communication is effective and can be adapted for reaching targeted audiences.
The complexity of communication within a MF is greater than the capacity of any one individual to manage and understand. A partnership environment, such as the MF organizations, where there is a high level of trust, respect, and openness, where there is a strong culture of communication, provides a forum in which communication can be directed and adapted to meet the evolving needs of the partners and the MF audience. In a synergistic partnership the work of the group, the communication capacity of the organization as a whole is far greater than the ability of each of the members. The role that each individual partner plays in an organization that practices adaptive communication management is valued. Each partner contributes, provides information, adapts their perspective, communicates this cumulative knowledge back to their organization and sphere of influence and in turn brings back information to the MF about the impact of this communicative process. This allows the organization to reflect, adapt, and adjust the messages and the vehicles of communication and move forward with further communication experimentation. This adaptive communication process is only possible when there is open and honest feedback that is accepted at all levels, and analyzed with the goal of improving the message and the vehicle of delivering the message.

There are many ways in which the MFs have demonstrated adaptive communication management in their research programs and their organizations. This in turn has provided practitioners with tools and knowledge for the adaptive management of the forests in their regions. Some successful communication projects, which were adaptive in nature, were mentioned in the interviews and have been reported in the annual reports. These projects allow for learning, helping the MFs to achieve the communication goals of the project.

**PAMF**

In PAMF a number of people talked about the Fire Smart program. This developed out of
work that researchers at CFS in Edmonton had conducted “on how to reduce the size and severity of wildfires, and on how residents along the wild land urban interface can be encouraged to develop more fire resistant neighborhoods” (PAMF, 2003, p. 14). This developed into a series of workshops over the next two years in the PAMF region. This is an example of discovering emerging knowledge, and providing the means for disseminating the knowledge into the places where it can have a positive impact. Programs have been implemented in Waskesui, Candle Lake, and in Montreal Lake Cree First Nation.

All interviewees spoke of this project as being successful in a number of ways. First, this was a vehicle for improving the safety in communities. Second, the project is a way to get the MF message into the communities in a positive and meaningful way. Third, the MF is able to interact with members of the communities to hear their concerns. Finally, to learn how to deliver a practical message into communities and see it operationalized in a short time.

Overall, the communication strategies for this project required adaptation in the design and delivery as the program was implemented. One person spoke of having to hold several meetings in the first community to build an effective community involvement program in order to implement the workshop information. This resulted in a more focused effort in the next communities where specific communication adaptations could be considered prior to workshop delivery or implemented more easily during the delivery. This is an example of the convergence model of communication in the design process and the networking model in the program delivery.

PAMF has also had successful involvement with First Nations in and around the MF. One reason for this is that there was early support for the MF concept by First Nations. The MF concept allowed the First Nations to have a say in SFM in a meaningful way, and the consensus approach ensured that their perspectives were heard. Also, there have been a
number of cooperative projects undertaken in First Nation communities and with the Prince Albert Grand Council. The 2003-2004 annual report lists many different projects with First Nation participation. Much of this success has come about due to the GM’s strong connection with First Nations communities and leaders in the regions. As a result of the GM’s understanding of the cultural communication needs of the First Nation Elders, he has been able to adapt his communication style to the audience in an effective manner. This demonstrates how a convergence of ideas can lead to a mutual understanding among different groups, leading to collective action.

**MBMF**

In the MBMF each of the interviewees talked about the annual December Board meeting that is held over two days. This is seen as the highlight of the year for many members, as it is a combination of business and pleasure. These two-day sessions include planning sessions, regular Board functions, social interaction, and facilitated workshops or training sessions for the Board. The facilitated sessions have focused on a range of activities over the years. In 2002, the focus was on developing a “personality profile of each member… to develop a better understanding of how the personality of the member and their culture influence not only point of view, but the decision making processes that each culture brings to the Board’s decision making process” (MBMF, 2003, p. 7). Culture is used in a broad sense to indicate ethnic, business, and community culture. This two-day event is an internal communication success in that it accomplishes a variety of tasks for the MF. First, this is a process of gathering and disseminating information. Information about the individuals that make up the MF is gathered and shared so that everyone has an understanding of the values, interests and perspectives of others, resulting in freer communication flow. Information is disseminated throughout the meetings, the planning sessions, and the facilitated workshops.
Second, new knowledge is incorporated. This happens at an individual and corporate level, individuals learn more about each other as they spend more time together, and as they share in planning sessions and meetings. The individuals learn about each other through the development and sharing of the personality profiles. Third, the acquired information is shared in order to enable informed decision-making. Individuals share their knowledge and share about themselves so that others learn more about the different perspectives enabling more informed decision-making by all participants. This exemplifies key characteristics of the convergence and networking models of communication.

Poncelet (2004) cites the benefits of this approach to organizational relationship building in his research into environmental partnerships. In his research he examined new group processes, which resulted in partnership-based friendships.

“…these friendships stood out by the fact that they occurred among people of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and interests who normally did not come into contact with one another in everyday life. Many participants found this element of these friendships to be personally satisfying… These friendships were also marked by the fact that they often united individuals who might be standing in opposition to one another.

The second main feature characterizing these partnership-based friendships was a strong sense of group cohesion among the participating actors” (p. 151-152)

In the MBMF, the resulting relationships have become more flexible and resilient, in part, through these two-day sessions. Strong relationships are an important aspect of adaptive communication management.

FMF

The FMF partners conducted a project on Hayward Brook that brought together a variety of different small projects under one larger project. This was an attempt to achieve greater integration of the different working groups within the FMF during Phase I and II through a multi-faceted project. According to some of the interviewees, this was a successful project in that it resulted in an expertise within the FMF that was sought out by others within the
province. A watershed conference was held to disseminate some of the results, with attendees coming from Canadian and American cities to learn more about how this watershed management strategy works.

Successful projects often lead to successful communication strategies which reach well beyond the borders of the MF. This was seen with the Watershed Conference in June of 2004. This conference had a separate website for information and registration. However, there is no information about the outcomes of the conference in the annual report or website of the FMF. It appears that the follow-up reporting is lacking. This is where the success of the communication effort ends as a lack of follow-through decreases the positive outcomes of the conference having a limited effect.

There are many other successful projects within the CMFN that have been reported in newsletters, annual reports, websites, and a variety of other communication sources. The document, “CANADA’ S MODEL FOREST PROGRAM: Advancing Sustainable Forest Management From the Ground Up”, highlights one significant project area from each MF in 2003. There has been a high degree of success with the identification of local level indicators, but information is lacking on the application of this knowledge. This makes it difficult to ascertain how forest management practices are being impacted and reveals a weakness in the Communication and Outreach Strategies.

When a communication strategy starts out with a strong focus within a project and just seems to die out, the information that has been produced, regardless of the quality of the information, loses credibility (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2004). The results of any MF project are only as good as the communication strategy that has been planned and implemented to disseminate those results and the communicative ability of the people who have that the results (Ibid, 2004). When a project does not achieve the desired outcome, the
communication strategy needs to be adapted to either look internally for what can be learned, or to share the parts of the whole that were successful. When a project achieves more than was anticipated, the communication strategy needs to be adapted to disseminate the results in a more concentrated manner. Either way, adaptive communication strategies should anticipate various scenarios and should include a thorough follow-up component.

5.4 Summary

In the April, 2005 CMFN committee meeting, a vision of the CMFN for Phase IV in the document, “The Future of the CMFN: A Prospectus” was shared by Geoff Munro (Director General, NRCan, Science and Programs Branch). The emphasis of the presentation and document is a renewal of the program with a new focus which includes: “clusters of Model Forests”, “strengthening established pathways”, building “on the success of existing MF program”, “more visible presence and influence”; reaching “policy makers and corporate leaders”, “effective information management”, and much more (Strategic Planning Committee, 2004, pp. 14-17). All of these require that the Network and the individual MFs have efficient, effective, and adaptive communication management that can facilitate a smooth transition to the new focus for Phase IV.

This research has shown that the MFs have demonstrated some successful communication activities in a variety of areas. EOMF has consistently received higher scores in the survey, demonstrating a higher functioning communications program. The First Nations involvement in the MBMF and PAMF has been exemplary in the CMFN, as have the Fire Smart programs in PAMF, FHMF, and MBMF. FMF has led the region in the development of watershed management expertise through its research efforts and information dissemination. Some MFs have developed successful components of their websites that facilitate internal and external communication, but it must be noted that
overall the websites require more attention to improve their effectiveness as an internal and external communication tool.

In the areas of building trust and respect and overall partner relations, MBMF stands out; the others MFs could place greater emphasis on building stronger relationships among the partners. The goals and vision of the MFs are fairly clear and the language of communication has been developed to the point that most partners feel this is satisfactory. Most MFs have a relatively strong public education program that focuses on the general public and on students.

Areas of weakness include resolving conflict openly, sharing success stories, discussing failures, recognizing partner and orienting new partners. The MFs have a fairly inconsistent approach to developing websites and annual reports, resulting in an inconsistent message about the MF program to the larger audience.

While there have been some communication successes that have been recognized and celebrated, this research has identified a number of weaknesses that raise the question about the ability of the network and the individual MFs to consistently manage communication effectively. The finding in the Veraxis Research & Communication report, which states: “There is a generally consistent view that the MF program suffers from insufficient communications” (2004, p. 15), supports the findings of this study.

The models of communication provide a means for understanding how the tools of communication can be used and for how individuals and groups develop mutual understanding. These models are a component of an adaptive communication management framework. Adaptive communication management is a dynamic approach to managing communication in a continuously changing environment such as the MF organizations and network.
Chapter 6  Next Steps

6.1  Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of communication in developing multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to influence forest management practices. Within this general purpose, four objectives were pursued.

- to identify and examine the MF Association communication tools and methods
- to explore the communication plans and the policies and procedures within the CMFN and each MF in relation to actual activity
- to study and document how partnership communication has been fostered within the MF community and beyond
- to consider the methods employed by MF associations to evaluate the effectiveness of their communication strategies

This chapter summarizes the findings related to the four objectives listed above, followed by ideas for developing a culture of communication. Next, suggestions are provided to make communication management more adaptive. Finally, recommendations for further research and closing thoughts are shared.

6.2  Overview of Objectives and Research Conclusions

To put the research conclusions into context it is important to review the purpose of communication within this program. Clearly discerning the purpose of the MF Program itself is difficult. The individual MFs have their own particular mission statements, goals and objectives, as does the CMFN for the whole network, which is evolving with each Phase of the program. The purpose or goal of communication is “To contribute to increased adoption of SFM practices in Canada through active promotion and sharing of tools, experiences and practices developed by the CMFN” (NRCan, 2003). This active promotion
and sharing occurs at multiple levels; within the partnerships, and at the local, regional, provincial, national, and international levels.

Below, each of the four research objectives will be reviewed in relation to the findings. Any shortcomings identified in the research will also be acknowledged.

First Objective

The MF communication tools and methods have been identified and some have been examined in depth. While not every tool available to the MFs has been listed, those mentioned in the interviews and in the Communication and Outreach strategies of each MF have been included. Overall the MFs have been relatively effective in using a wide variety of tools to reach a number of different audiences. The MFs have embraced the use of Information Technology as a means of internal and external communication. At the present time the MF websites are most effective when viewed as a document-delivery tool. As an internal and external communication tool, the MF websites require more deliberate planning to reach specific audiences to have an impact on SFM. Each MF needs to be clear about the purpose of their website to know what role it plays in communication and in partnership building. While there have been some concerns with the overuse of email and the lack of access to technology by some partners, overall this has been used quite effectively. Email is used by the MFs to communicate within the partnership itself as well as with interested parties beyond the MFs.

The MFs conduct a large amount of their business and interaction through various types of meetings. Meetings are located in various communities within the MFs to learn more about the local communities and to help the communities know more about the MFs. These appear to be quite well run with a fairly high level of participation. The perception among the partners is that the meetings are well run and organized.
In general, the MFs have access to and utilize a wide range of communication tools for sharing the research successes to impact SFM practices, planning, and policies. While it would be useful to examine more of the communication tools in greater depth, this was beyond the scope of this research.

Second Objective

The communication plans and the policies and procedures of the MFs have been explored to understand how they are used to direct and guide the individual MF activities. As stated earlier, the Communication and Outreach Strategy documents have a fairly narrow definition of communication. The MFs bring together people from a wide variety of sectors of society to discuss forest management ideas and to conduct research in an attempt to improve SFM practices. As such, disseminating knowledge, communicating the results of the research, and connecting these different societal perspectives together is at the heart of each MF. The communication and outreach strategies could be broader, encompassing communication in the broadest sense to ensure that communication planning is part of the fabric of each MF. Signs of this were observed in the design of the annual work plans for EOMF and FHMF, each incorporating broad communication planning into every project description.

Most partners have a sense of the goals of the MF, particularly the goals that line up with the interests of the organization that they represent. Within the governance documents of the MFs there is a lot of variation. Only a few MFs clarify conflict management procedures. When there is a lack of clear policies or procedures this leaves the impression that this is not clearly understood within the MF, demonstrating a lack of transparency. The main MF governance documents do not clearly reflect that communication is a priority of these organization.
Third Objective

Different aspects of the study have examined how the MFs foster communication within the individual MFs and beyond. A limitation of the study is that only those involved in the MFs were asked to share their views. Within these responses, two-thirds of the survey respondents thought that the MFs were effective in teaching the public about SFM. Nevertheless, there are no data to indicate the degree to which the MFs have had an impact on SFM practices in their regions. The two tools examined more closely for external communication, the websites and the work plans and annual reports, provide information about the MF activities. The websites in general are not clearly focused on specific audiences to influence forest practitioners, planners, and policy-makers. The websites generally provide a variety of information about the MFs, documents and some information about events, but the program successes are difficult to find.

There were inconsistencies found in the way the MFs design their annual reports. The MFs would benefit from linking the design of the annual reports more closely with the design of the annual work plan. This would result in an annual report that can be used for reporting to the partner organizations and reaching out to potential sponsors.

Some MFs have been more successful in building partnership relations than others. Where this has been successful, there is a strong recognition of the value of building partnership relationships through meetings, skill training, facilitated workshops, and social time for the partners. Some MF Boards meet much more frequently than others, which has also helped to build these relationships. Recognizing partners for their contributions to the MF is perceived by the partners to be satisfactory, but it is difficult to know about the contributions of partners without carefully examining the reports and documents. This leads some partners to want more information about partner contributions and some form of
recognition for their contributions. Overall it is clear that partners want to know more about each other and want to have opportunities to do this through some informal forum of MF partners. An important aspect of fostering communication is the way in which new partners are brought into the MF. Within all MFs it was found that orienting new partners to the organization needs greater attention.

Structurally, the vertical and horizontal communication within the MFs needs more attention. Keeping all the partners informed about the diversity of the MF projects and activities allows them to become stronger advocates for the MF. The findings suggest that most MFs have better communication from the bottom up than from the top down, and that there is relatively poor horizontal communication in the MFs.

The MFs are characterized as showing a high level of respect for the partners and between the partners. This is demonstrated through openly discussing conflicts, recognizing and accepting differences, and striving to have open and honest communication. MFs have utilized skilled facilitators when issues, topics, and planning sessions required the use of skilled individuals to move a MF through a process. The use of facilitators appears to vary across the Network, but when used, this has been valued. This sets the stage for synergy in planning and project work.

An ongoing challenge has been to understand and learn from the different perspectives at the table. Some MFs have been successful in engaging First Nations and openly discussing some of the historic issues in the region, but this remains a difficult challenge for some MFs.

A number of activities have been undertaken for building the MF image. This includes branding exercises, providing project funding opportunities for MF communities, dedicating staff time for community liaison work, creating high profile community projects, and a wide range of public education programs including school based programs. Some of the MFs
have a communication coordinator, full or part-time. However, the results of this research do not clearly indicate whether this is a benefit for those MFs or not.

At the network level the various committee meetings have been valued for fostering communication between the different MFs. However, some inconsistencies in managing communications and transitions were observed. Consistency in network communication leadership is important for fostering communication throughout the network.

Fourth Objective

The methods employed by MF associations to evaluate the effectiveness of their communication strategies have been examined. This is the weakest area of the research. Several evaluation documents were examined, but from individual MFs information regarding internal examination was quite limited. The Phase II Evaluations, the Draft Follow-up and Mid-term Reviews, and the Veraxis Research & Communication Report provided some insights into the evaluation of the CMF program. While there has been improvement in the area of communication management and planning, as evidenced in reviewing MF documents, there continues to be difficulty in working together as a Network and sharing the research findings among the MFs and through the CMFN.

6.3 Developing a Culture of Communication

The strengths and weaknesses of communication within the MFs are important to note. There is ample opportunity for MFs to learn from each other and to benefit from a strong and well-coordinated Network. Understanding the communication strengths of a MF and openness to examining the weaknesses and failures are important steps that can lead to the development of a culture of communication within a MF organization. Cestero (1999) describes the positive aspects of a culture of communication within an organization: “a group
dynamic based on mutual respect that” enables an organization “to discuss, debate, and disagree over contentious issues while building understanding of their divergent viewpoints” (p. 50). An important component of this is building the capacity within the organization to see the development of this dynamic type of relationship. This is exemplified by the MFs that embrace ongoing Board and committee training, cultural awareness workshops and invest in other relationship building activities. This leads to more honest and transparent information sharing (de Vos, 2002). In a MF this would include the effective use of internal tools of communication such as the newsletter, email, the website, and meetings characterized by open discussion of concerns and interests (FAO, 2000. Within the network it appear that some MFs have been working towards and seeing the benefits of such a culture of communication. This has been observed in the MBMF, and appears to be the case in some of the committees, working groups, and Boards of other MFs.

However, there are many challenges that can block this process. Through the coordinated efforts of all the MFs sharing through the Network about successes and failure in communication, each MF should be able to benefit from the experiences of other MFs. Reviewing the convergence and networking models of communication from Chapter 2 to understand the process of communication as it relates to the use of various tools of communication contributes to this process. The convergence model describes the basic process of how individuals process information, which leads to individual action within a collective setting. This results in dialogue leading to mutual understanding and collective action (Rogers and Kincaid, 1980). This process can be used to describe how the smaller groups within a communication network can function in working towards the solution of a larger problem. For the MFs this problem includes finding ways of influencing SFM.
The better one understands how communication occurs and incorporates this understanding into communication planning and strategies, the more effective a MF can be at developing a culture of communication. A culture of communication requires honesty, transparency, and information sharing. This needs to occur in both vertical and horizontal directions within an organization. It is through the development of this culture of communication that the people involved will truly feel free to share their ideas and concerns, to be able to explore innovation in project design and implementation. Putting people together from a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives in this type of environment can yield synergistic results. However, as Lasker, Weiss, and Miller (2001) point out, "synergistic partnerships need to be able to identify and actively engage partners with a sufficient range of perspectives, resources, and skills to give the group a full picture of the problem, to stimulate new, locally responsive ways of thinking about solutions, and to implement comprehensive actions" (p. 190-191). Critical components of synergistic relationships, as observed in this research, include the effective use of tools and strategies of communication.

Throughout this study, the partners in the EOMF have consistently responded in a positive manner about the communication efforts of their MF. Earlier in the study, the quality of the EOMF annual work plans and annual reports were also examined. It appears that the staff, partners, and members are quite satisfied with the communication efforts. This may be a reflection of how communication is valued within the MF management and Board. Overall, it appears that EOMF has developed a positive culture of communication within its large membership.

6.4 Strategies for Developing Adaptive Communication Management

Adaptive communication strategies rely on the experiences and experiments of the past and continuous evaluation and feedback systems to adapt existing tools or develop new tools to
reach target audiences effectively. There is a need to document all strategies to enhance learning. This would include documenting the processes, actions and outcomes of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This process needs to include documenting failed strategies so that learning can occur (Cannon and Edmondson, 2004). The foundation for this process can be found in the performance management strategies of the MFs. People come and go in organizations and it is unfortunate that when individuals leave knowledge leaves, because no deliberate strategy to document their knowledge of communication processes in place.

The following suggestions for MF communication were shared by people in the interviews, and have come out of the research work and the data. The intent is to begin thinking about communication as an integral part of everything that the MF does. While there is much more that can be done to make communication practices within the MFs more adaptive and responsive to a wide range of internal and external factors, the following seven suggestions are important steps in this direction. These steps should assist a MF in developing a culture of communication within the organization, which is an important aspect of synergistic working relationships.

1. Integrate policies and governance into the communication strategy, and integrate the communication strategy into the policies and governance of the MF.

In section 5.2, the FAO’s Corporate Communication Strategy and Policy document was briefly explored. This document provides one model for the MFs and the CMFN Secretariat to follow when creating a communication strategy that is more open-ended and far-reaching within all aspects of the organization. Further work will need to be done to understand how the logic model and performance management strategy, required as a part of the government’s results-based management philosophy, can be incorporated into such an all-encompassing approach to a communication strategy.
The goal here is to integrate all aspects of the MF into the communication strategy in a manner that encourages a culture of communication to develop within the organizations and the network as a whole. As Lee (1992) emphasized, the communication process needs to be “directly linked to the mission and philosophy of the organization” (p. 10). The communication strategies need to be reexamined and strengthened, to address the purpose of the MF itself, not just how to get information out to various audiences. This can be done through an integrated strategy, such as the FAO’s Corporate Communication Strategy and Policy document.

2. Embrace communication as integral to achieving the MF goals and build the internal and external capacity to communicate effectively with specific audiences.

This builds on the first idea, and grounds the notion that communication is what a MF does. Planning, research, results, and accumulated knowledge are of no value if the MF does not have the capacity to effectively communicate this to an audience. The Draft Follow-up and Mid-Term Review, and the Veraxis Research & Communication report have pointed out shortcomings in the ability of the MFs and the network to communicate effectively. For some MFs the capacity exists within the MF and for others there is a heavy reliance on a few individuals, or one individual, to be the voice for the MF. For a MF to be successful in delivering messages of SFM and sustainable communities, the organization would benefit by developing a culture of communication within the MF. This culture of communication recognizes that all of the people involved within the organization are able to share the messages of SFM and sustainable communities within their spheres of influence. To develop a MF with a strong culture of communication, communication needs to be entrenched in the goals and objectives of the organization and be in the forefront of all of its planned activities.

To achieve this, a MF needs to develop the capacity within the MF organization to
implement plans and activities that use the tools of communication. This capacity can take many forms. However, the strongest vehicle of communication is the partnership itself. Therefore the development of a culture of communication where all partners, staff, project team members, etc, communicate the benefits and results of the MF work, should be the goal.

3. The CMFN Secretariat needs to provide proactive leadership, guidance and intervention, to be the champion of the MF program.

There have been shortcomings in network leadership, as evidenced by the delays in the production of the communication and outreach strategies for Phase III, the delays in the network website, lack of continuity with the old website, the LBMF process, and getting out meeting information in a timely manner. The need for stronger leadership was identified in the interviews, the Veraxis Research & Communication Report, the CMFN meeting in April of 2005, and in the Prospectus document. Overall the message is that the Secretariat needs to strengthen their communication programs.

Network communication programs have recently been eroded by lack of attention and poorly managed transitions. The Secretariat office needs to have the capacity and commitment to lead the communication efforts of the network in an effective manner. One exemplary tool for this has been the annual meeting of the MF Communications Coordinators. All Communications Coordinators interviewed saw this as a significant step in supporting their work and in developing a network of people for sharing ideas and strategies for effective communication. This type of forum allows for mutual sharing and learning. These are key components of an adaptive organization and essential components of synergistic relationships.
4. Share the success stories of the MFs to reach out to people in positions of authority and to promote SFM at the local level.

The lack of success stories has been acknowledged as a significant shortcoming of the program by B. Wilson (Program Director for the CMFN), Geoff Munro (Director General, NRCan, Science and Programs Branch), within the Veraxis Research & Communication Report, and the Prospectus document. This undermines the work of the MFs and the network, because the knowledge that has been gained through a significant amount of research and other work over time is not getting out to the audiences to effect change, to improve SFM. Tools need to be developed, or existing tools need to be more fully utilized to share the success stories. Earlier it was suggested that the CMFN would benefit from an annual report that would highlight these successes and that this report could be used to reach out to targeted audiences to share the successes of the MF program.

5. Internally examine the challenges and failures, to learn as an organization.

The results show that the failures or challenges of the MFs have not consistently been processed or evaluated and shared with the MF participants. All projects and activities, whether successful or not, should undergo a documented process of monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up that allows the participants time to de brief ensuring that organizational learning occurs. This information needs to be shared within the larger MF network; allowing others to learn from both the successes and the failures of each MF. To do this, each MF needs to recognize that they are a part of a larger network, and they need to make contributing to and making use of the network a priority.

6. Deliberately design the websites with a common design framework for communicating to targeted audiences.

A common design for MF websites could provide greater usability to all the websites and stronger linkages to each MF and the Network website. Individual MF identities can be
maintained through colour, images, and the textual content of the websites. This approach can enhance the image of the network and clearly communicates that each MF is a part of a larger Network.

From a marketing perspective, most of the MF websites appear to be using a shotgun approach to sharing information. The websites contain general information without a clearly defined audience in mind. The statistics available from the Internet service provider allow the MFs to determine who is looking at their websites and what sections of the websites these different viewers are visiting. This information needs to be used to focus the delivery of information to specific audiences by conducting an analysis of the marketing strategies that are effective for reaching particular audiences. With this knowledge, well-structured websites that have clearly recognizable links on the homepage can be used to direct different audiences to specific sections of the website. These sections can be interlinked to other sections of the site, summaries of research documents, ongoing projects, and to external organizations in order to strategically attempt to meet the needs of specific Internet audiences.

7. Implement ongoing partner orientation, mentoring programs, and relationship building activities within the MFs.

Over the last thirteen years there has been a slow realization that new partners joining the MF organizations require a deliberate orientation to the organization. Each MF has a complex history of research, relationship-building, organizational structure and decision-making processes. The process of incorporating new people into the organization needs to be focused to help these individuals become grounded in the formal and informal ways of working in the respective MFs. While some MFs have some process and materials for new partners, the basic orientation materials should include the following:
• Constitution and bylaws
• Recent annual reports and annual work plans
• Latest Phase proposal
• Communication and outreach strategy
• Policy and procedure documents
• Recent newsletters
• Organizational chart
• Profiles of the existing partners and staff
• Recent external evaluation documents
• CFS contribution agreement and any other similar agreements
• A brief history of accomplishments and activities

This suggested list can be used to walk an individual through the life and history of the MF through face-to-face meetings with a mentor who will work with the new partner for the first year or more. This mentoring process will allow the new partner to get up to speed with the depth and breadth of the MF more efficiently than the “trial by fire” methods that are common in some MFs. Harris’s “Board Excellence” (2004) package should be examined to ensure that the process of being an effective and functional Board member is fully understood. Ongoing partner orientation could include Board training workshops such as the workshops conducted in MBMF. The MBMF Board members are trained through facilitated workshops, providing them with the skills and abilities that are so critical for consensus decision-making. This consensus process contributes to the image of MFs as a neutral forum for all partners and other players in their particular region.

Relationship building has been shown to be a key characteristic of synergistic partnership functioning. Building this relational capacity within the MFs can be achieved by utilizing events that mix planning, learning and socializing. This increases the opportunities for informal partnership interaction.

6.5 Further Research and Closing Thoughts

In this study it has not been possible to examine all aspects of communication within the MFs. The following suggestions would enhance the understanding of MF communication.
• Examine the partnership orientation process within each MF and document best practices within the MF network and within other organizations.
• Conduct an analysis of the MF newsletters, examining methods of producing and delivering the content for specific audiences.
• Document MF failures with the intent of learning from these failures so that the MFs can develop communication strategies that turn failures into learning opportunities.
• Document the strategies that have been used by the different MFs to reach out to and engage First Nations; list practices and resources and share with all MFs.
• Conduct interviews and focus groups in EOMF to document and learn more about their communication practices.

Earlier it was stated that the major communication success of the MF program has been the ability to bring together the diversity of partners into the same room, and to work together in a cooperative manner to make decisions on a consensus basis. Just fourteen years ago, many of these same groups were taking positions and confronting each other in community meetings and other public fora. Bringing these organizations together to listen to each other and to learn from each other is a significant achievement. While there are still conflicts and challenges, the MFs have developed some procedures and methods to work through the difficult issues, and have engaged some skilled people in leadership. As Interviewee 15 stated, “I really give credit to the general manager for getting a grip on the situation; meetings that formerly would deteriorate into shouting matches are very civilized and much shorter, and we really do accomplish a lot”. Leadership within the individual MFs and the Network is critical to ensuring that the communication and outreach potential is maximized. This starts with internal communication practices that draw the partners into the on-going activities of the MF, and the external communication practices that allow the MFs to influence policy-makers, planners, and practitioners. Fully integrated communication strategies are a critical aspect of synergistic partnerships relationships.

The models of communication that have been explored in this case study provides a valuable tool for understanding how communication occurs. The convergence and networking
models describe how individual understanding is developed, leading to mutual understanding by group members, such as the working groups of the MFs. The working groups contribute to the whole organization through their interaction at the Board level, where the networking function occurs. Together the MF working groups contribute to the solutions of the whole organization as the MFs practice adaptive communication, maximizing the delivery and reach of the SFM message in their regions and beyond. This happens more easily when a MF has developed strong partnership relationships, exemplified by a culture of communication in which synergistic relationships result in experimentation and innovation.

It is recommended that adaptive communication planning and strategies be incorporated into all aspects of the MFs, as the CMFN moves towards Phase IV. Whatever form the renewed network takes, the overall goals of achieving partnership collaboration and working towards the sustainable management of resources and communities will remain. It is hoped that the findings of this study and the suggestions for improving communication will provide some useful ideas for moving the MFs in the direction of fully integrated and adaptive communication.
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BSLMF


EOMF


FHMF
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http://www2.nrcan.gc.ca/dmo/aeb/English/ReportListing.asp?yr=2--2&type=rpt


**FHMF**

FHMF *Foothills Model Forest Policies*.


**FMF**

Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Audit and Evaluation Branch (2002) *Fundy Model Forest Phase II Evaluation Report*. Downloaded on April 9, 2004 at URL:
http://www2.nrcan.gc.ca/dmo/aeb/English/ReportListing.asp?yr=2--2&type=rpt


LAMF


Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Audit and Evaluation Branch (2005) *DRAFT Lake Abitibi Model Forest: Follow-up and Mid-Term Review.* January 1, 2005 by Fred Pollet.


NRCan *Harvest Regeneration with Protection: Planning and Operating Manual.*

LBMF


LBMF (undated) Discovering Long Beach Model Forest: Where Environments and Communities Meet.


McMF


MBMF


MBMF (unknown) *Performance Management Strategy for Manitoba Model Forest*.


NFA


NFA (undated) *Governance Practices – Nova Forest Alliance*.
PAMF


WCMF


Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Audit and Evaluation Branch (2005) *DRAFT Prince Albert Model Forest: Follow-up and Mid-Term Review*. January 24, 2005 by Fred Pollet.


WCMF (undated) *Waswanipi Cree Model Forest Proposal (Reformatted Draft 3.0)*.
WNMF


WNMF (undated) *Ground Rules for the Western Newfoundland Model Forest*.

WNMF (undated) *Western Newfoundland Model Forest Communications Strategy Phase 3: Beyond Our Boundaries*.

WNMF (undated) *Ground Rules for the Western Newfoundland Model Forest*. 
### Appendix A  Website Observations and Usability Questions

**Template**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the site feature a relational navigational cue?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and enhance the viewing experience?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface aesthetically appealing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Do all links to external websites function as intended?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Networkability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Networkability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from this site?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are person and organization contact details provided for the website?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the website?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>partnership?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Website Observation and Usability Questions.

Bas Saint Laurent Model Forest

wwwforet.fmodbsl.qc.ca

Viewed on January 13, updated on April 16, 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>There is a partial site map, but it cannot be used to navigate to all the pages. It does give the viewer an idea of what is all on the site, but all pages are not listed in the site map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>The viewer can move to the major sections that are listed on the Home page by using the navigation links that are found on the bottom of each page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>Yes. The main sections found on the Home page are fairly clear, on other MF websites they might use the label “About Us” instead of Origin of the Project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Yes, but, the page titles disappear when images are disabled in some browsers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>PDF, MS Word, ArcView extension HIS, and Power Point show.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>Searches will take the searcher to the BSLMF, but not to the exact page with the titles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>Two font types, Verdana and Times New Roman are used in various sizes and styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td>Yes, very consistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and enhance the viewing experience?</td>
<td>Graphics are used that compliment the text, however the photographs used are not captioned and rarely directly referenced by the accompanying text. The maps of the Territories are directly related to and discussed in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website?</td>
<td>Yes. However, it does not appear that the Annual reports or Planning documents are available on the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td>Not for the website content itself. For documents that can be downloaded generally the author’s name and association is listed, sometimes there is more contact information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td>Not within the content of the website itself. For documents they are generally properly referenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Do all links to external websites function as intended?</td>
<td>The following links had some problems: -Canadian Model Forest Website link on the Questions &amp; Answers page is a dead link, -on the Questions &amp; Answers page all the questions in the index do not link to the answers on the English page and all the Return to Index links do not work on both the English and French page, -groupements forestiers link is forbidden,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</td>
<td>Somewhat. There are links in many of the pages that take the viewer to more information or related information within the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
<td>Not directly. This information can be surmised from the Origin of the Project page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</td>
<td>Yes. The Objectives of the BSLMF are found on the Origin of the Project page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from this site?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage-ment</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are person and organization contact details provided on the website?</td>
<td>The names and contact information for staff are available. There are no names for Board members, or partners on the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
<td>No. The partner organizations are listed but are not linked to the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the website?</td>
<td>Not directly. Some of this is available in the publications and in the newsletters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
<td>No. The what’s new window is not functional as of the date of this review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall partnership?</td>
<td>Not directly, this can be discerned from the information available on the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?</td>
<td>The communication and outreach plan has not been seen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?</td>
<td>It is similar in design to the newsletter with the use of colour and images. The newsletters do seem to have a very full look to them whereas the website has a balanced look to it. No Annual reports have been seen for comparison.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


General Comments:
- Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Firefox, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer.
- Overall the website has a layout that facilitates easy navigation. One page had some problems with the links as noted in the chart about. Consideration should be given to completing the site map with all of the pages listed and all of the pages linked to the site map.
- Consider linking the photographs directly into the text that is on the page with the photograph. This can be done with caption or direct reference in the accompanying text.
Website Observation and Usability Questions.

Eastern Ontario Model Forest

www.eomf.on.ca

*Viewed on January 11, 2005, updated on April 15, 2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>No. However there is a site map in the Community Nature Watch sub-site and the Ice Storm Forest Research &amp; Technology transfer sub-site has one under development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>One can move to the main sections using the navigation cues on the left side of the page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>Yes. The left side drop down menu allows the viewer to view the major subsections of the website. Generally the syntax is clear and directs the viewer to the anticipated information. However, a detailed site map that lists all the pages in a hierarchical format allows the viewer to navigate to specific locations with greater ease. The News Items page is not very clear as this is not new News Items, rather archived News Items. The new News Items are on the Home page. The same can be said about the Events page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Generally yes. On the Forestry Forum page the links do not load and on a few pages some graphics do not load. But otherwise the majority of the content, including graphics are still visible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>PDF, MS Word, JPEG, Power Point, and Winzip Archived files. However there are many documents in the Projects, Products &amp; Services link that are not available for download, these must be physically ordered for a price. This requires time from staff for copying, and processing orders. Most MFs have facilitated this document processing by putting documents that are frequently requested on the website in PDF format for downloading. This passes all handling and copying costs on to the viewer. The site contains two locations for finding documents and they are not linked. The EOMF Information Kiosk graphic link on the Home page takes the viewer to a separate site that is for a wide variety of resources. This is easy to overlook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>Yes, very consistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>Arial is the most common font that is used in several different sizes and colours on the main website. There are some serif fonts and some other sans serif fonts used in titles and some of the graphic links. Each nested website has its own font style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td>Yes, very consistent. The one exception is the Privacy Policy link page. The nested sites each have their own look.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and enhance the viewing experience?</td>
<td>To a bare minimum. See the general comment below about the use of graphics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface aesthetically appealing?</td>
<td>Yes it is appealing, however, once the navigation links on the top and the bottom of the pages have been used they lack contrast making it difficult to read them. The links on the top and bottom of the pages change colour after clicking them, but none of the left side navigation links change colour when navigating the site. This is a useful feature to help the first time user to know where they have been on such an extensive site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
<td>Some pages do, but most do not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td>In the Information Kiosk members have an opportunity to login and submit content. Also, indirectly one can send information through the Contact Us page or the People page of the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td>No, but they are available for downloading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website?</td>
<td>Yes. However some are available for a price. See the comments earlier in this analysis about the documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td>In the Publications Catalogue there is minimal information for authors. The documents in the Information Kiosk there is much more detail with the author names listed and in the documents some have specific contact information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td>In most documents it is, for the website content the only reference is the “© Eastern Ontario Model Forest. All rights Reserved” printing on the bottom of each page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Content | Timeliness    | Do all links to external websites function as intended? | The following links had some difficulties:  
  - Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario, dead link,  
  - Algonquin First Nation of Golden Lake link is not active,  
  - Long Beach Model Forest no longer exists, dead link,  
  - Waswanipi Model Forest is a dead link,  
  - Carleton Place High School is a dead link,  
  - Coopers March Conservation Area is a dead link,  
  - Comtar Communication Papers is a dead link,  
  - Domtar Forestry Centre is a dead link,  
  - Eastern Chapter of Society of Ontario Nut Growers website has moved,  
  - Forest Stewardship Council site is forbidden,  
  - Grenville Community Development Centre is a dead link,  
  - Integrated ForesTree Services is a dead link,  
  - International Environmental Youth Corps is a dead link,  
  - Iroquois Enterprises is a dead link,  
  - Lanark and Leeds Green Community Program is a dead link,  
  - Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program takes the viewer to the Ontario Professional Foresters Association website,  
  - National Aboriginal Forestry Association is not an active link,  
  - North Grenville District High School is a dead link,  
  - The Ontario Professional Foresters Association link is repeated, the first link goes to the Ontario Forestry Association,  
  - Ottawa Field Naturalists domain name expired,  
  - Resource Efficient Agricultural Production Canada (REAP) link has expired,  
  - Rideau Trail Association link is dead,  
  - St. Lawrence Islands National Park page can not be found, |
- Sandra S. Lawn & Associates is a dead link,
- Grenville Stewardship Council link can not be found,
- Leeds Stewardship Council page has moved,
- Township of Goulbourn is a dead link,
- Township of South Dundas is a dead link,
- United Counties of Leeds and Grenville link has expired,
- United Counties of Prescott and Russell is a dead link,
- Wetland Woodlands and Wildlife Program page not found,
- York University, Department of Anthropology page not found.

These are the problem links from the first page that was examined. As this is such an extensive website with several sub-sites it is recommended that an analysis of all links be performed to update the website as soon as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from this site?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are person and organization contact details provided on the website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- To an extent. The information on the website is quite general in nature. For more in depth information one needs to download documents or order documents.
- No, they are alluded too on the About Us page.
- No, the site shares indirectly about the purpose of the EOMF.
- No.
- Yes, through the logo on the Home page.
- Yes, but the location of these links indicates that they are all partners of the EOMF.
- This is provided on the Our People page. Included are the Board of Directors, Special Advisors to the Board, Staff, and Associates.
- There are many dead links on the Partners page of the website. No contact names are listed for the partner organizations.
- No. The projects that are ongoing are not listed on the website, neither are the working groups or committees of the EOMF.
- The membership page has a short form to fill in to become a member and a link to contact the EOMF office for more information about
in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?

partnering.

Content  | Community Outreach  | Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?  | No. The Home page contains a right side bar that lists the up-coming events, but not meetings.

Content  | Community Outreach  | Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall partnership?  | Not directly. This can be discovered in the documents.

Content  | Consistency  | Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?  | The EOMF has one of the most extensive Communication & Outreach Plans in the Network. The information is detailed and followed up in detail in the Annual work plans. The complexity of the multiple sites on the EOMF Home page makes it difficult to find specific information unless the viewer knows ahead of time where to look. It appears that the objectives of the Communication & Outreach Plan are being met through the diversity of EOMF sub-sites that are available on the main website. There is a vast amount of information available through this website that attempts to address all of the project areas.

Content  | Consistency  | Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?  | The Annual reports and Newsletter tend to use more graphics to supplement the text. See the note below about visual assists.


General Comments:

- The website evaluation is limited to the main website and the Information Kiosk. Other sub-sites are mentioned, but have not been examined as thoroughly. It is unclear from the main website if some of the sub-sites are in fact sites for working groups or committees of the EOMF.
- This website is a series of nested websites that can be accessed from the main page by using the graphic links on the left hand side that are below the main website’s navigation links. Of the sub-sites, the Community Nature Watch site has an excellent site map that assists the viewer in navigating to specific information. This would be good to see on the main website linking to all of the sub-sites.
- Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Firefox, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer. With the Safari browser some of the main page background graphics move around and end up at the bottom of the page (the Our People page) making it difficult to read the links on the bottom of the page.
- In general the website lacks visual assists. What this means, is photographs, illustrations, simple graphs or charts, and video that help a viewer to visualize the text content and the MF activities. In reviewing the other communications and extension material it appears that the Annual reports use a lot of images to help communicate the textual message. This is lacking on the website which is a medium that lends itself to text and visual messages in an interactive way that is impossible to do in a printed document. It is understood that visuals take longer to load for people with dial up connections, however, this can be addressed in the homepage design with two viewer options, one with graphics, the other with graphics disabled.
- There is a bit of confusion within the main navigation links from this reviewer’s perspective. The News Items contain links to the other Model Forest websites, yet it is within the About Us page in the fourth paragraph that there is mention of the existence of the other Model Forests, but no link to them. From an organization perspective it would seem that the links to the other Model Forests
would be much easier to access and find in the About Us page. Also, since the News Items page has the announcement about the other Model Forests dated for March 8, 2004 it appears that the information was new, about there being other Model Forests, just last year.

- The Information Kiosk provides a good search tool to reference a variety of resources. However, it would be useful to have some sort of list of project areas or key research areas to help direct the search. When the documents themselves are not available within a printed compendium, as is found in The Catalogue page.
Website Observation and Usability Questions.

Foothills Model Forest

www.fmf.ab.ca

*Viewed on December 16, 2004 updated, April 13, 2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>There is a site map, however it does not indicate the hierarchical structure of the site. There are several levels down from the main headings that are not broken down and listed in the site map. The site map link is in a low contrast colour making it difficult to see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>Yes. Each page has the same header and footer with the same navigational aids. Within each main heading there are subheading links.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>Yes it does, but one has to take the time to explore the depth of the site to understand the structure. It is not intuitive and not all links are not easily identifiable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>PDF, Power Point, HTML, and Quick Time video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>Yes, the pages are first on the list in a Google search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>Two fonts are used in a number of different styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td>Very consistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and enhance the viewing experience?</td>
<td>Yes, but they are few. Although the use of graphics is minimal on the website the documents appear to use a few more illustrations, particularly the Annual reports. See note 1 below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface aesthetically appealing?</td>
<td>For most of the text this works quite well. However, on the dark green background the top and bottom text are hard to read and once the bottom links have been clicked they become harder to read. See note 2 below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
<td>No it does not. This feature would reduce the amount of scrolling that the viewer needs to do by having the text box increase in width for people who use monitors that are larger than the old 14 inch standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td>While there is no information on the site about doing this, the names and contact information is available to make an inquiry about this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td>No, but the newsletters are available online. The more recent newsletter is accessible as an HTML file and PDF file. Back issues are available as PDF files for the user to download.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website?</td>
<td>Yes. There is a web page that has an extensive list of documents that are available. The list is indexed to a program area index on the left side. The older newsletters and Annual reports are not available from the site. It would be good to see some sort of archived document link to access these older documents in some way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are abstracts or executive summaries of research reports available?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td>While there do not appear to be any documents published on the website itself (as HTML documents) there are many downloadable documents. A preview of a few of the documents shows that some have complete contact information for the authors of the documents, others have a name and credentials of the author, but no information about how to contact the author to follow-up what is in the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content?</td>
<td>The web site itself does not have an interactive user response component. However there is sufficient contact information to allow one to a contact specific individual to make comments. A small point is that there is no information about who is the author of the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td>In reports and other downloadable documents content is referenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td>Yes, this appears on each page at the bottom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Content | Timeliness | Do all links to external websites function as intended? | Problem links:  
-Telemetry Solutions (dead link)  
-Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives (dead link) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</th>
<th>Yes. This is most evident in the program areas part of the website.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
<td>No. The audience appears to be Model Forest participants and researchers. A brief summary of the site and what is available on the site could be added to the homepage. See note #3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
<td>Not of the website itself, but there is a good introduction to the Foothills Model Forest on the About Us page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</td>
<td>Yes, on the About Us page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from this site?</td>
<td>No. This could be done with a link to a Canadian Model Forest website that lists all of the Model Forests on the “About Us” page in the first line under the subtitle “About our work”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are person and organization contact details provided on the website?</td>
<td>Yes. It would be easy to contact individuals responsible for program areas and the staff and Board president.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
<td>There is a list of names for the members of the Board of directors along with the organization which the individual represents on the About Us page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the website?</td>
<td>It appears so, however, it is not clear how many ongoing projects there are right now. The Program Areas page links to all the program areas, but it is not clear which are projects that are actively being pursued. Each Program area has a “What Lies Ahead?” subtitle, but not a current status report along with the date of such a report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
<td>Indirectly. The About Us page gives good background information and the Contact Us page provides the necessary information to pursue getting involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
<td>No, but there are Announcements on the homepage that lists up coming workshops, however, this is currently out of date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the</td>
<td>No. The categories of partners on the Partners page gives basic information about the general type of contribution that partners make.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall Partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
<th>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?</th>
<th>Reviewing the key messages in the Communication and Extension Plan for Phase III there is some consistency. Areas that need more emphasis are; “Demonstration and Application of Research” and “Beyond the Borders”. Also page 17 of the plan speak of “Partner Recognition”, this too could be a component of the website as an outreach tool to the communities. See Note #4.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?</td>
<td>Yes there is a degree of consistency. However, it has been noted that the Model Forest Network has been promoting branding. This may result in a transition period for the way information is communicated during Phase III.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Notes and General Comments:

Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Firefox, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer.

Note #1  In general the website lacks visual assists. What this means, is photographs, illustrations, simple graphs or charts, and video that help a viewer to visualize the text content. In reviewing the other communications and extension material it appears that the Annual reports use a lot of images to help communicate the textual message. This is lack on the website which is a medium that lends itself to text and visual messages in an interactive way that is impossible to do in a printed document. For the public (and other audiences) one of the most interesting and attention grabbing pages would be the “Grizzly Bear Program”, the videos add high interest to viewers. However this page is harder to find, as it is two or three layers in from the homepage (depending on which navigational tool you use).

Note #2  First impressions are that this is an attractive and well laid out website. However, there are a few issues of concern for the overall layout and design that affect the usability of the website. First is the visibility of links. Links on the main website frame are hard to see upon visiting the website and become harder to see after having used the links. Throughout the website one has to guess and search for links as they do not stand out in any way. Second is the ability of the user window to resize to fit the user’s screen. Designing the text to fit the users screen as opposed to a standard 14 inch monitor allow users to scan more content depending on the capabilities of their monitor. This improves ease of use and reduces scrolling.

Note #3  In general the site appears to be designed for the Model Forest participant or other researchers looking for additional data. There is very little information here for the general public. While the site is fairly easy to navigate it does not have visual appeal for a visual viewer or a casual browser. For the general public it would be good to have simple one-page project summaries that address how and where the research results are being used. It would be good to have an interactive page that allows the viewer to explore in a graphic and textual environment the concept of Sustainable Forest Management as a learning tool.

Note #4  The Communications & Extension Strategy for Phase III identifies the application of Foothills Model Forest research as the priority. Yet this is hard to discern this from the website. A viewer can find this if they dig into the reports and documents. Demonstrating the application of the research to the viewer can be done effectively with minimal text and graphics, this can be designed for different audiences to fulfill several communications and extension goals.

The communication strategy also mentions collaboration with the Provincial Museum of Alberta and Alberta Innovation and Science, highlighting these program areas on the website would benefit the Model Forest and the collaborating organizations. This would also assist in delivering the “Beyond the Borders” key message.
Website Observation and Usability Questions.

Fundy Model Forest

www.fundymodelforest.net

*Viewed on January 10, 2005, updated on April 7, 2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>Yes. This is effectively done with the use of three navigation sections that remain on every page. The left side has five links to the activities of the MF, the top has general categories of links, and the inset box on the right shows the links that are subsections of the top bar of links.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>Yes, the syntax is quite clear and the structure allows for easy navigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>Portable document format or PDF files.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>The majority of the site uses an Arial font style with a variety of variations to differentiate headings from the body text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>Three, Arial, Verdana, and in the multi-media presentation on forest pests, the index uses a serif type of font.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td>Very consistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and enhance the viewing experience?</td>
<td>To a minimum, however, there are more graphics available in the multimedia section of the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface aesthetically appealing?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The page appears to be designed for a 14&quot; monitor of standard resolution. The only part that resizes is the top and bottom bars.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td>Yes, this is found on the bottom of the Contact Us page.</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website?</td>
<td>Almost all are. The older Phase I and II documents are listed and can be ordered using an online order form or by emailing the MF staff.</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td>For most documents and project reports yes, however, the contact details are not consistent. Some documents have the authors name only, some also include a company name, and others have full contact information. There are also a few publications that have no contact information at all, not even the Model forest address.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content?</td>
<td>Yes. This can be done in the comment section of the contact page.</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td>Within publications they generally are referenced.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td>Only by a very general © 2004 on the bottom of the page.</td>
<td>Do all links in the website function as intended?</td>
<td>-Publications, Phase I &amp; II links called “Back to Top”, do not work. -Links Partner page, the following links do not open in a new page, rather they open within the existing page: -Canadian Institute of Forestry -<a href="http://www.ec.gc.ca/">http://www.ec.gc.ca/</a> -<a href="http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/pn-np/nb/fundy/index_e.asp/pn-np/nb/fundy/index_e.asp">http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/pn-np/nb/fundy/index_e.asp/pn-np/nb/fundy/index_e.asp</a> -<a href="http://www.gnb.ca/o078/Index-e.asp">http://www.gnb.ca/o078/Index-e.asp</a> -Town of Sussex both links are dead. -Links Canadian Model Forest Network page has the following issues: -Waswanipi links are both dead. Links Related Links page has the following issues:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Content    | Design | Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)? | -Fundy Foot Path, both links can not be found.  
-National Forest Strategy links have moved, need to be updated. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
<td>No. However, the design of the site is such that the inverted pyramid style would not benefit the content. The design is quite effective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
<td>The About FMF, Who We Are page provides this information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Clarity</td>
<td>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</td>
<td>Within the About FMF page there is a Vision &amp; Objectives page that provided this information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Network-ability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Network-ability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from this site?</td>
<td>Yes. However, the Waswanipi link is a dead link.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage-ment Interactivity</td>
<td>Are person and organization contact details provided on the website?</td>
<td>Yes, this is in the Contact Us page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the website?</td>
<td>Yes. These are found in the Projects link on the left navigation bar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
<td>Yes, in the About FMF Membership page there is an online form to complete.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
<td>Yes, this is found in the left navigation bar with the link Calendar of Events. A very effective calendar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall partnership?</td>
<td>Not directly. However, this can be found to some extent in the project reports and publications.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of</td>
<td>Yes. The content of the website appears to address the public and the current members with information. The extensive list of publications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the communication and outreach plan? and reports facilitates the transfer of tools, methods and processes for sustainable forest and ecosystem-based management. The information is presented in an accessible and easy to use format for the diversity of forest users in the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
<th>Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?</th>
<th>Yes. The layout, communication style and content appears to be consistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


General Comments:

- Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Firefox, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer.
- Overall the information and content of this website is exemplary. The navigation is simple and effective making it easy to find documents, reports, and basic information about the Fundy Model Forest.
- The language of website avoids the use of jargon and acronyms.
- It can be a bit confusing having underlined text that is not a link mixed with underlined links.
- A few more graphic would enhance the site, however, it is understood that the graphics are slow for people on dial up connections. An example would be a map of the FMF area on the About FMF Landbase page. While photographs and graphics can enhance a website, if they are not linked into the text in a meaningful way they are extras.
- The page that has the Board of directors could be used as a links page to the organizations that they represent, this is available on the links page, but not with the partners names. This allows the user to see who represents what organization more easily.
Website Observation and Usability Questions.

Lake Abitibi Model Forest

www.lamf.net

_Viewed on January 17, 2005, updated April 13, 2005._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>The website has a navigation bar on the left side that takes the viewer to all major sections. There is no sitemap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Not directly, the back button on the browser needs to be used. However, the homepage is not necessary as a central location from which to navigate to different areas of the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>Most of the time, through the use of the navigation bar with the links. However, once a viewer is into the second level or deeper on the navigation links of the working groups the side navigation links disappear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>Generally. See the comment above about returning to the homepage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Yes, although it is more challenging to navigate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>PDF, zipped Word Perfect documents (WPD), XLS spreadsheets, Word (doc) documents,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>Excellent visibility in Google.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>Yes. The same font style and layout is used. However the E.P.A.C. page has a slightly larger font than all the other pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>Two fonts are used. One for the link buttons and the other for all other text. The exception is the Lake Abitibi Model Forest logo, but this is brought in as a graphic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td>For most pages it is. See comment earlier about how the left side navigation links disappear with some pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and</td>
<td>There are some graphics, however the photographs are not used to enhance the viewers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Yes, The typeface is designed to contrast but not clash with the page background colour. Not all visited links change to the same colour, it appears to vary with the pages.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Only a small amount. The page itself and the header and footer remain centered as the page is enlarged but the text does not reformat for a wider window.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website? Not directly, there is no link to the website designer. One can submit comments or content to the staff via the links on the &quot;Contact &amp; Staff&quot; page, but this is not solicited in any way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter? No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website? A few, mostly shorter publications. Some hard copies can be ordered for a price by an email link to the “Contact &amp; Staff” page. Many documents of the LAMF are not listed on their website.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided? There are no contact details provided for the author of the content of the website pages. This is available on documents that can be downloaded from the website.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content? No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey? No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate? Not on the website itself. However it is difficult to determine what should be referenced. Within the “Products” page there are a lot of smaller documents, some of the “Information Notes” contain references and the newsletters do not. Within the other documents the publications on Local Level Indicators include references.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided? Yes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Do all links to external websites function as intended? Dead links: -PAMF link on the map of “Canada's Model Forest Program” graphic, the map index link works (different URL), -both Waswanipi links on the map, -on the “Other Projects” page the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</strong></td>
<td>Yes, although there are very few documents which link to project summaries, resulting in very little information that one can download and use. The viewer will need to contact the LAMF office to obtain the actual publications that come from the various projects and a number of these are only available at a cost. (this appears to be in transition as of April, 2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Clarity</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</strong></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td><strong>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>These is a short vision statement, but only on the homepage and there are no navigational links that take you back to this page once you begin to explore the rest of the site. The only way back is typing in the homepage URL or using the back button.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Only in basic form on the “Overview” page. They are also available to download on the “Products” page in the “Phase II Strategic Plan” which is a WPD file or in the Annual reports. One would need to know where to look to find this information. It would be useful to see how the program areas flow out of the goals with links to program areas.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes, but the only link is the “Model Forest Network” logo on the map found on the “The Model Forest Network” page, this is not an obvious link.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Are the other MF websites accessible from this site?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes, through two links on the map on the “The Model Forest Network” page.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Are person and organization contact details provided on the website?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes, but there is some inconsistency here. Two of the working groups provide email contacts and the other does not. Full contact information is provided on the “Contact &amp; Staff” page for staff.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Inclusiveness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are all of the current MF partners listed on</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall partnership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


General Comments:

- Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Firefox, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer.
- The website uses an attractive colour scheme that is easy on the viewer’s eyes.
• Links from the homepage photographs address activities in 2002 as opposed to the most recent twelve month period. The viewer does not get the impression that this website is updated with current information. There is also an impression that the LAMF is protective of the research work that it conducts as very little is available to download. This contrast with many of the other MF websites, which have many research reports available to download at no cost to the viewer.

• As mentioned in this review, there is a lot of information on this website, but it tends to be general in nature. To get the reports and documents one needs to contact the LAMF office creating more work for the staff and resulting in a significant cost for printing, processing and mailing.

• In general the website lacks visual assists. What this means, is photographs, illustrations, simple graphs or charts, and video that help a viewer to visualize the text content. In reviewing the other communications and extension material it appears that the Annual reports use a lot of images to help communicate the textual message. This is lacking on the website which is a medium that lends itself to text and visual messages in an interactive way that is impossible to do in a printed document.
### Website Observation and Usability Questions.

**Manitoba Model Forest**

www.manitobamodelforest.net

*Viewed on January 7, 2005, updated April 13, 2005.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>There is no site map. There is a small navigation chart low down on the main page that you have to scroll to find. However, this is not a comprehensive set of links to the main areas of the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Yes, but not in a standard design. The link is found within the text somewhere on some pages or in the logo on some pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>No. The website is not really designed into sections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>No. This is an awkward website to navigate. Many of the links on the front page are for downloading PDF documents, but this is not always evident from the appearance of the link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>PDF files, Microsoft Word documents, one Word Perfect document, and some html pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>Yes, however, there are only a few pages on this website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>Somewhat. There is a mix of columns and full page text on the homepage, it does not appear that there is a consistent design from one page to the next.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>Two fonts are used, Palatino and Arial. Arial is used much more and appears in several different styles and sizes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td>No. The layout and colours change from one page to the next and each page has a different background. The website has an unorganized appearance. Some links change colour after using them while others don’t, those that do change colour are not consistently the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and enhance the viewing experience?</td>
<td>To a bare minimum. There are no photographs accompanying the website, however, these can be found in some of the documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface aesthetically appealing?</td>
<td>This is inconsistent from page to page. This results in confusion since the links on the links page are a different colour than the links on the homepage. Not all links change colour when they have been visited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
<td>Yes. However, the table with the links to the Model Forest Network is unbalanced, one column is wider than the other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td>No. Some newsletters are available to download while others are only available online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website?</td>
<td>Yes. This includes research reports, some newsletters, Annual reports, and workshop documents. However, the download links for the documents are inconsistent. Some indicate what type of file you will be downloading while others do not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td>Generally in documents there is enough information to contact the authors. A number of Model Forest produced documents do not have any author or contact information. Documents prepared by Ecosystem Limited also lack information about the author and any contact information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td>This is difficult to determine. This does not appear to be done in the newsletter or Annual reports. A number of the documents have minimal referencing. One research documents by Ecosystem Limited makes reference to documents and data provided by various individuals, but this is not included in the references. This requires more in-depth analysis that is not within the scope of this project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Do all links in the website function as intended?</td>
<td>-The Bas St. Laurent MF link is a dead link, -The WCMF link is a dead link, -McGregor MF link is a dead link,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The link on the homepage to the Manitoba Model Forest Map is a dead link,
- Annual Report 2003, dead link,
- October 2003 Newsletter, dead link,
- July 2001 Newsletter, no link,
- Black Spruce Regeneration Assessment Project report from 2002 appears twice in bibliography,
- Climate Change Workshop series for Black River has a peculiar link, part works and part is a dead link,
- Enhanced Regeneration of Difficult Sites… document appears twice in the bibliography,
- Gaa Bi Ombaashid Migzi, Soaring Eagle Project, dead link,

There is a lot of inconsistency with the download links on the Bibliography page, some work, some don’t some are repeated, some change colours after clicking, some open a blank page others don’t. Overall the links need a more consistent look and function.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</th>
<th>No. The site does not summarize important facts with links to full texts, there are simply links to full texts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
<td>No. The target audience is difficult to determine based on the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from this site?</td>
<td>Most, see information in the review of the links.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage-ment</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are person and organization contact details provided on the website?</td>
<td>The site provided the mailing address, telephone and fax number of the Manitoba Model Forest office and a generic email link to <a href="mailto:dube@manitobamodelforest.net">dube@manitobamodelforest.net</a>. There are no staff or Board member names listed on the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
<td>No. The only way to find out which are the partner organizations is to download documents and search for the information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the</td>
<td>To a limited extent in the bibliography. However these are limited to published reports,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
<td>No. The only way to ascertain that this is a partnership is to start downloading documents and search for that information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall partnership?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?</td>
<td>The communication plan does not address the website directly. However, the communication strategy states that the overall communication objectives are to be “an integral part of each project and activity undertaken by the Manitoba Model Forest regardless of the theme area in which these projects/activities are undertaken”. It appears that the website does not address any of the five objectives directly, most not at all. The Phase three proposal mentions the website as one of the tools to “inform and educate the general public in a balanced way about the Model Forest program and each others values and uses of the forest…” This does not appear to be a focus of the website. There are a few other references to the website in the planning documents. The website appears to be a basic tool to disseminate documents, but it is unclear who the intended audience is as the basic idea of what the MF is attempting to do is not on the site itself, but has to be found by looking through the documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?</td>
<td>Most documents follow the approach of generic contact information, which is similar to the website. However, Annual reports identify and break down project work based on the working groups, but it is difficult to find out who is in the working groups from the website without looking through many documents. The newsletter becomes a communication tool that passes on up-coming events and it is available on the website.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


General Comments:
- Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Firefox, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer.
- This website contains some very good information, but general information about the MF is lacking and the disordered layout is confusing. The inconsistent layout of links, the number of dead links,
and colour scheme make for a challenging website experience. The layout itself is not intuitive for the
general web user. Stronger clearer navigation links would help. Some background information about
the Manitoba Model Forest and the partners would make the site more attractive to the general
public. Without this basic background information it is difficult to determine whom the site is
designed for and what role it plays for the Manitoba Model Forest.

• In general the website lacks visual assists. What this means, is photographs, illustrations, simple
graphs or charts, and video that help a viewer to visualize the text content. In reviewing the other
communications and extension material it appears that the Annual reports use a lot of images to help
communicate the textual message. This is lacking on the website which is a medium that lends itself
to text and visual messages in an interactive way that is impossible to do in a printed document. It is
understood that visuals take longer to load for people with dial up connections, however, this can be
addressed in the homepage design with two viewer options. One with graphics, the other with
graphics disabled.
## Website Observation and Usability Questions.

**McGregor Model Forest**

**www.mcgregor.bc.ca/mmf**

*Viewed on April 13, 2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>No. The main navigation links are in the top navigation bar and on the left side of the page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>Generally yes. However, this is not possible from the publication pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td>Yes. However, the search appears to work for publications only at this time, simple searches in the site did not work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>PDF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>Yes, very consistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>Two fonts used, Georgia and ArialMT. Georgia is for page headings and ArialMT for text. Four text colours are used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td>Yes, although the way it functions in different browsers needs to be addressed, see note below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and enhance the viewing experience?</td>
<td>No. The only graphic is in the header. See note below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface aesthetically appealing?</td>
<td>Yes. They are easy to read and overall make the viewing experience quite easy on the eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td>Not directly, however, enough contact information is given to allow the viewer to contact specific staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td>This is not clear. There is a side bar on the home page that allows the user to sign-up for the emailing list, but it is unclear what this will get you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website?</td>
<td>Yes. This site has an effective search engine for searching documents. This also includes a useful page with an abstract and document information. But, it would be helpful to know the categories of documents that the MF has available through their NRIN search engine. Some information about the research areas and reports would be useful in the program areas to give a viewer a basic idea of what type of material is available. Perhaps a compendium of documents somewhere on the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td>Well-documented information is available in the NRIN document “Complete Record Details”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td>Not for the website information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Do all links to external websites function as intended?</td>
<td>-City of Prince George link does not open in a new window as the other links do, -Federation of BC Woodlot Associations is a dead link,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</td>
<td>To a minimum. There I such a limited amount of information on the website that the structure is also minimal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
<td>The second paragraph on the “about us” page gives the viewer some information about this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
<td>The second paragraph on the “about us” page gives the viewer some information about this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Indirectly on the “about us” page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from this site?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage-ment</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are person and organization contact details provided on the website?</td>
<td>Yes, this information is available about the staff of the MF, but not the Board members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
<td>Only the organization names, not the individuals that are actually representing these organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the website?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
<td>Indirectly. On the about us page they “invite interested individuals and organizations to join” them on the journey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
<td>There is a “News &amp; Events” page, but there are no events listed and only one final report with an executive summary available on this page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall partnership?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?</td>
<td>To a minimum. There are key communication goals that are listed in the Communication Plan that are not addressed by the site, particularly the focus on public education, which is found in the first three communication goals. Within the communication objectives the over-riding objective appears to be increasing awareness, the content of the current website does not provide this for the public and it would have to be sought out in the documents by the forest stakeholders. There is just too little information on the website in its present form to be an effective tool for increasing awareness. It would be prudent to review the Key Messages and the Intended Audiences that are listed in the communication plan to facilitate further development of this website to use it effectively as a dynamic communication tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent</td>
<td>No. The other communication materials, the Annual Report, the newsletters, and snippets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with other communication materials? contain a more personal communication style than the website does. These other documents provide more opportunity for anecdotal communication about activities, events and projects of the MF.


General Comments:

- Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Firefox, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer.
- The review was delayed when Dave Berry indicated that the website was getting a total make-over. First impressions upon looking at the new website design is that a lot of information disappeared. The new website has essentially become a site to download reports.
- Content does not display consistently with different browsers, Internet Explorer does not show all information on the homepage; Safari, Netscape, and Firefox show sub-menus from the left navigation links on the web pages. These display differently with different browsers. Explorer does not show the graduated blue to white effect on the main page and the other browsers do.
- Left side navigation bars act differently with different browsers. Some show subheadings and some don’t.
- In general the website lacks visual assists. What this means, is photographs, illustrations, simple graphs or charts, and video that help a viewer to visualize the text content. In reviewing the other communications and extension material it appears that the Annual reports use a lot of images to help communicate the textual message. This is lacking on the website which is a medium that lends itself to text and visual messages in an interactive way that is impossible to do in a printed document.
- In general the site appears to be designed for the Model Forest participant or other researchers that are familiar with the MF that are looking for additional data. There is very little information here for the general public. While the site is fairly easy to navigate it does not have visual appeal for a visual viewer or a casual browser. For the general public it would be good to have simple one-page project summaries that address how and where the research results are being used. It would be good to have an interactive page that allows the viewer to explore in a graphic and textual environment the concept of Sustainable Forest Management as a learning tool.
- The first website contained much more information for the general public and for forest stakeholders. This reviewers impression is that the previous website was a much more effective communication tool that had more substance.
# Website Observation and Usability Questions.

**Nova Forest Alliance**

**www.novaforestalliance.com**

*Viewed January 12, 2005 and updated on April 15, 2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>The site contains a limited site map. The site map only contains the main which is almost identical to the heading in the roll over menus with the top navigation bar. There is only one additional link, however, there are many other pages within this site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Yes, there is a useful navigational aid just under the Main navigation bar that shows where you are in the website in relation to the Home page, separating each level with an arrow head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>The visitor can navigate to the main links and their sub-links. However not all links are available from the Home page or any other page, including the site map. The Project link on the navigation bar does not pull down to show the subsections of this link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>Yes, this is very clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td>Yes. The link to this is on the top right next to the Site Map on all pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>PDF. A few documents are available by downloading an order form and sending that in to the NFA office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>Excellent visibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>Very consistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>Three fonts. Two san serif fonts; Verdana and Helvetica and one serif font in the title bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td>Very consistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to</td>
<td>There is a series of photographs that loads into</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
supplement text and enhance the viewing experience? the left side bar on any page. This appears to be a random loading of one of eight photographs. There are also a series of photographs on the Home page. The only other graphic is a flow chart for the structure of the committees and working groups. These photographs are not linked to the text or captioned in any way. See the note below about using visual assists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface aesthetically appealing?</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
<td>The top and bottom bars shift position and the main text area is a fixed width.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td>No. However there is a general NFA info email link to contact the NFA office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td>Yes. This is found under the News &amp; Events link on the main navigation bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website?</td>
<td>Yes. There are documents and maps available to download as PDF files.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td>Not for website content. For documents that can be downloaded there is generally some information found about the author or source of the information, but not necessarily all the contact information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td>It is in documents but not in the maps or the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td>Only on the Partnership Meeting page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Do all links to external websites function as intended?</td>
<td>The following links have some problems: - Model Forest Network Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</td>
<td>Yes, although there is not a lot of information available on this website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
<td>Yes, this is found on the Home page and in the About NFA Vision, Goal Objectives page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</td>
<td>Yes, this is found on the About NFA Vision, Goal Objectives page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Networkability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
<td>Yes. This is found in the Partners &amp; Links subheading. Canadian Model Forest Network page. A possibility to consider is to include another link to the network on the About NFA page where the Canadian Model Forest Network is introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Networkability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from this site?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage-ment</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are person and organization contact details provided on the website?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
<td>Only the names of the organization, not the individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the website?</td>
<td>No. there are some project reports that describe the research that will take place. However, this is only for the Research Coordination Committee Projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
<td>No, the only information on the website that implies that additional partners are being sought out is the last objective on the Vision, Goals &amp; Objectives page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
<td>No. There is a Partnership Meeting page, but this was out of date when this analysis was updated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall partnership?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?</td>
<td>This will be determined once a final copy of the NFA Communication &amp; Outreach Strategy has been examined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?</td>
<td>Only a few other documents have been examined for this comparison. However, it appears that the Annual Report lists the years accomplishments and the planned future activities. The newsletter also provides a bit more detail in a more personal style. All documents and the website appear to be well designed with a consistent look throughout.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Comments:

- Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Firefox, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer. With explorer the roll over menus on the top of the Home page dropped down below the link, with all other browsers the sub-links showed up above or over the main link bar.
- In the French version of the website the main links on the top navigation bar are all in English.
- In general the website lacks visual assists. What this means, is photographs, illustrations, simple graphs or charts, and video that help a viewer to visualize the text content and the MF activities. This is lacking on the website which is a medium that lends itself to text and visual messages in an interactive way that is impossible to do in a printed document. It is understood that visuals take longer to load for people with dial up connections, however, this can be addressed in the homepage design with two viewer options, one with graphics, the other with graphics disabled.
## Website Observation and Usability Questions.

**Prince Albert Model Forest**

**www.pamodelforest.ca**

*Viewed on December 16, 2004, updated April 13, 2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>There is a navigation bar on the left hand side that has the main website pages listed. No site map is provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>Yes, movement is between main pages only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>Yes, although it is a not very clear. For instance, the “Information” heading is much more than just information; these details of the Model Forest. Further clarification in the heading. A navigational system of pull out or drop down menus would help the viewer to see what is in each main heading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Yes, but the story frames are not as interesting without the collages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>PDF files.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>No, only the publications page showed up in the search window even when using the other page headings. Therefore the Publications page has good visibility but the website itself does not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>Yes for most pages, the second page of the PAMF story uses a larger font than the other story pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>Two fonts with several different styles and font sizes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td>Yes. Very basic look.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and enhance the viewing experience?</td>
<td>This has been attempted, it appears to be effective on the PAMF Story pages and somewhat effective in the gallery, but here the images are a bit small.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface aesthetically appealing?</td>
<td>Somewhat. The type size is a bit small and faint for the background. Main headings work fairly well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td>No. But there is room for feedback on the Contact Us page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td>No. However it is unclear if filling in the form on the Contact Us page would result in being sent a PDF copy of the newsletter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website?</td>
<td>Yes, but this is limited to research reports and very few planning documents. Working plans, and other operational, policy and most planning documents are not available.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td>For some documents and reports there is full contact information, for some there is partial contact information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site's textual content?</td>
<td>Yes, this is found on the Contact Us page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td>In the research documents only.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Timeliness</td>
<td>Do all links to external websites function as intended?</td>
<td>Problem Links: -Waswanipi Model Forest (English and French)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Design</td>
<td>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</td>
<td>No. There overall design strategy of this site is not clear. The Home page lacks needs to be linked to the explanation of the graphics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
<td>Not for the website, but there is an Overview of the PAMF in an Information sub-page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Clarity</td>
<td>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</td>
<td>The goals are listed in the Information sub-page, Overview.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Network-ability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
<td>Yes. However, the site does not use the Canadian Model Forest Network logo.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Network-ability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from</td>
<td>Yes. This appears in the Forestry Links heading. However, it should be noted that only the other Model Forest Partnerships are listed here, not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage-ment</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are person and organization contact details provided on the website?</td>
<td>No, there is only a general contact email, address and telephone number provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
<td>It appears so, however, no information is given to indicate who the individuals are. In fact the website does not provide any names of partners or staff contacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the website?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
<td>The site provides basic information about the PAMF only, no names. One would need to contact the office to find out who to talk too about getting involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
<td>No, the website does not appear to be actively updated by the PAMF office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall partnership?</td>
<td>No. There is nothing to indicate that there have been local contributions. It is somewhat implied on the Overview page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?</td>
<td>No, of the six objectives of the PAMF Communication Strategy the website appears to indirectly address objectives 1, 3, 4, and 6. However it does not appear to be deliberate in the design and information on the website. One of the tools and activities listed in the strategy is to develop an interactive website for public access to model forest information. It appears that there has been limited progress on this and other objectives in relation to the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?</td>
<td>Somewhat, the other information material is more current.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


General Comments:
- Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Firefox, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer.
- It appears that he PAMF website has not been updated for many months. The Communication Strategy lists the website as a tool “that would be interactive and provide the public access to model forest information”(PAMF, 2002). The website does provide the public with some model forest information, but it is certainly not interactive. Both the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 Annual work plans address the website as a “virtual website” (PAMF, 2003 and 2004). While this as been a goal it was not addressed in the 2003-2004 activities of the PAMF. The 2002-2003 Annual Report addresses
a need for an “interactive component for children” (PAMF, 2003) on the website to reach the youth in the region, this has not been addressed on the website.

- The PAMF needs to consider carefully the purpose of the website in relation to the plans that are written. The lack of emphasis on the website in light of the budget that has been allocated to this aspect of communication should be examined to determine if there has been an effective return on the investment.
- It appears that the PAMF lacks capacity with regards to maintaining an interactive website.
### Website Observation and Usability Questions.

**Waswanipi Cree Model Forest**

**www.wcmf.ca**

*Viewed on January 7, 2005, not updated as the site was removed.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>No, there are navigational links on the top and bottom of the home page and a few in the left side bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>Yes, using the navigational links on the top and bottom of the home page and the left side bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Somewhat, the top and bottom navigational links are still visible, but the left side bar links are gone making part of the website inaccessible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>There are no documents to download.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>In conducting a search for Waswanipi Cree Model Forest in Google, the first direct link was number 122 in the search results. It did not show up at all in Yahoo. However, there are many sites that mention this Model Forest and may provide links to the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>Quite consistent. There is some variation in the size of the text in some of the pages, but it is the same font.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>All the text uses on font in three different sizes with some bold and others plain text. The Title bar on the left uses a unique font for the website name. This is the only use of this font. There are also two different font colours used, black and yellow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website's look consistent?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface aesthetically appealing?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
<td>The Home page, About page, and Partnership page do not resize, the rest do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td>There is a link for a Guestbook and a Chat area, however, both are not working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content?</td>
<td>If the Guest book and Chat areas were working there would be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Do all links to external websites function as intended?</td>
<td>Yes, there is only one external link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</td>
<td>No, this site does not contain that much information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
<td>Yes, this is in the About page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</td>
<td>Indirectly on the About page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Networkability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
<td>Yes, this is the only external link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Networkability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from</td>
<td>Not directly, but they can be accessed from the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
<td>Basic information yes, there are contact names and basic information about the Model Forest. However there is no mention of current activities and the website does not list a general manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
<td>No, only a few are mentioned in general terms on the Partnership page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the website?</td>
<td>There are no project updates, but there are basic project plans given in the Projects page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall partnership?</td>
<td>To a degree. On the partnership page it mentions in general terms the involvement of the members of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?</td>
<td>The Communication and Outreach plan is not available or has not been written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?</td>
<td>The only other communication material accessible to this researcher has been one newsletter dated December of 2003. This newsletter has a similar appearance and content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


General Comments:
- Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer.
- This website is not well used. This may be due to a lack of information. The site is also not fully functional with all browsers. Netscape and Explorer work fine, but the Apple browser, Safari does not show all the links.
- Overall the site has a good look to it, but it lacks current information and any documents.
Website Observation and Usability Questions.

**Western Newfoundland Model Forest**

**www.wnmf.com**

*Viewed on January 10, 2005, updated on April 13, 2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website feature a table of contents, site map, or equivalent?</td>
<td>No. This would be an asset with the wealth of information that is available. The navigation links on the left provide a minimal list of contents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors reach the home page from any page?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Can visitors in one section move to another without returning to the home page?</td>
<td>One can move from main section to main section, subsections are only available from within the main sections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Does the website’s directory structure and syntax facilitate navigation?</td>
<td>Generally yes. However the What’s new section and the Reports/Publications section appear to be quite similar. The What’s New section seems a bit redundant with the WNMF News on the main page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Navigability</td>
<td>Is there a search feature?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Is the site navigable when images are disabled in the browser?</td>
<td>Yes, but with more difficulty, the page layout changes significantly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>In what format(s) can available documents be downloaded?</td>
<td>PDF. However there are many documents that are not available for download, these must be physically ordered and a fee paid. This requires time from staff for copying, and processing orders. Most MFs have facilitated this document processing by putting documents that are frequently requested on the website in PDF format for downloading. This passes all handling and copying costs on to the viewer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Do individual pages or documents have window titles that provide good visibility in search engines?</td>
<td>Excellent visibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the formatting of textual content consistent?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>How many different font types are used?</td>
<td>It appears to be one font style with a variety of sizes and some bold and some italics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the website’s look consistent?</td>
<td>This varies with the browser that is used. See the note below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Are graphics used to supplement text and enhance the viewing experience?</td>
<td>Yes they are, however, the photographs are not always referenced or related to the text that is adjacent to the photographs, particularly on the Welcome page. The use of captions with the photographs would be useful as well as tying them in with the text on the page. A good example of using captions is found on the WNMF Management Group page. The MF logo under the main navigation links sometimes covers the drop down links or moves to the bottom of the page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Is the use and grouping of colours and typeface aesthetically appealing?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Does the website content resize to fit the users window or monitor?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users submit content to the website?</td>
<td>Yes, there is an email link on the bottom of each page for the viewer to submit “Questions, comments or suggestions”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Can users subscribe to a newsletter?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are documents and publications available for downloading from the website?</td>
<td>Yes. Although many of the documents listed in the archives are not available for download but can be ordered for a copying/distribution fee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are the contact details of authors provided?</td>
<td>Generally, yes for documents, although some status reports do not list the authors. Also, the website information is not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Is there facility for users to comment on the site’s textual content?</td>
<td>Yes, there is an email link on the bottom of each page for the viewer to submit “Questions, comments or suggestions”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Does the website feature a user survey?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Is textual content referenced, where appropriate?</td>
<td>Not on the website itself, but it is within documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Is the date of the last update provided?</td>
<td>On the top of the Welcome page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Do all links to external websites function as intended?</td>
<td>Generally yes, however, some external links open in a new window and don’t. For example: Canadian Institute of Forestry, ACAP Humber Arm Environmental Association, Parks and Natural Areas Division – Department of Environment and Conservation, Canada’s Model Forest Network, and Natural Resources Canada – Canadian Forest Service links open new windows and the other links on the same pages do not. Other link problems:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Ltd. Dead link,
- Gros Morne National Park – Parks Canada, dead link,
- Wildlife Division – Department of Environment and Conservation, dead link,
- Department of Natural Resources, link problems,
- Reports! Publications link on the main page goes to a page that is almost identical to the Projects and Activities page that comes up when you hit the What’s New link. Should it take one directly to the Archived Reports?
- On the bottom of the Archived Reports page the Forest Watch Fall 2002 links and the Quicknotes links are dead.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Is an inverted pyramid style used (conclusions and important facts first linked to full text)?</th>
<th>Somewhat. There is a cascading style that is used with the drop down menus that provide more information about subsections of the larger sections.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a definition of its target audience?</td>
<td>No. However, with the large amount of information available on the website it appears that it is targeted to a very wide audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Does the site contain a statement of purpose?</td>
<td>Within the main menu selections there is information about the vision, objectives, and partnership that gives the viewer a clear idea of the purpose of this organization and the website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Are the goals and objectives of the organization found on the site?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Is the site linked to the Canadian MF website?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Network-ability</td>
<td>Are the other MF websites accessible from this site?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage-ment</td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Are person and organization contact details provided on the website?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are all of the current MF partners listed on the website?</td>
<td>The partner organizations are listed without the representatives names, the Management group is listed with the individual’s names and their organization. Other committees and working groups do not mention member organization or names of individuals or chairs. It would be useful to have the names of the individuals heading up the working groups or committees on the website to facilitate dialog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Are project updates available on the</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Does the website have information that would assist a potential partner in taking steps to become involved in the partnership?</td>
<td>Other than contact information for individuals in the WNMF office, no.</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website contain a calendar of events, meetings, workshops, etc.?</td>
<td>There is a right side bar on the Welcome page that provides some information for individuals that want to get involved. However there is no information about when or where the WNMF meets or any of the committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Does the website recognize local contribution(s) to the overall partnership?</td>
<td>Only in listing who the partner organization are and in listing the authors of the various reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with the objectives of the communication and outreach plan?</td>
<td>Yes. The Communication Strategy has broad and far reaching goals and objectives; these are summarized quite clearly in the Key messages. The website appears to deliver a multi-faceted message to a broad audience that touch on all of the goals and objectives through the dissemination of documents or the website content itself. It is unclear what “provide web space to partners” means, what exists is a link to partner organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Is the information on the website consistent with other communication materials?</td>
<td>Generally yes it is. However, it appears that the printed materials make better use of graphics with captions and tying the graphics into the text more clearly. Layout, use of colour and visual appeal appears to be quite similar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


General Comments:

- Website was examined using the latest browser versions of Netscape, Firefox, Explorer and Safari, all on a G4 Macintosh computer. Only Netscape and Firefox will display the page content properly on a Macintosh computer. The others have issues with the left side navigation links overlapping with the main page text and images.
- It would be useful to have the navigation bar that is found on the Archived Reports page available on all of the report pages to ease navigating to the different sections.
- This is a content rich site. There is much that the viewer can learn about the WNMF and the activities that they are involved in by taking the time to explore the different submenus. This would be made simpler and help direct viewers to the exact page they want by using a detailed site map that lists all of the pages.
Appendix B Interview Consent Form and Questions
(size reduced for thesis printing)

Consent Form for Participant Interview

Title: Partnership Communication to Promote Sustainable Forest Management: The Canadian Model Forest Experience

Researcher: Harv Sawatzky

Sponsor: The Canadian Model Forest Network

This consent form, a copy of which will be left for you, 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.

Dear participant,

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

The research project being undertaken is part of a larger Canadian Model Forest Network study being conducted by Dr. John Sinclair of the Natural Resources Institute of the University of Manitoba, and Dr. Peter Duinker of Dalhousie University’s School of Resource and Environmental Studies. The purpose of my research is to examine the role communication has played in developing partnerships that result in the effective implementation of sustainable forest management activities. This will be examined within the context of the Canadian Model Forest guidelines and the communication and outreach plans of the particular Model Forest partnerships selected for this study.

The interview should take approximately 1-1.5 hours, and, with your permission, an audio recording will be made of the interview. You can at any time end or pause the interview by asking me to stop. Your responses will be held in strict confidence to ensure your anonymity. The results and raw data may be shared with Dr. Sinclair, Dr. Duinker, and Bruce Gilbert (PhD candidate at Dalhousie University that is collaborating on this project) and the results of this study will be reported with no reference to specific participants. Your mailing address will only be requested if you wish to receive the summary of research findings.

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 informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

www.umanitoba.ca/institutes/natural_resources
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Harv Sawatzky  
Masters Student, Natural Resources Institute  
70 Dysart Road, University of Manitoba Wpg, MB R3T 2N2  
(204) 261-4420, hvsawat@mts.net  

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

I give my consent for an interview:

Participant Signature Date

I give my consent for the interviewer to make an audio recording of the interview for research purposes:

Participant Signature Date

I give my consent for the information that I have shared in this interview to be used in Canadian Model Forest Network partnership research project.

Participant Signature Date

Researcher Signature Date

If you wish to receive a copy of the research findings please provide your mailing address or email address.

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

www.umanitoba.ca/institutes/natural_resources
Interview Questions for Partners

Partnership Management

Are the goals and objectives of the MF clear to you? What are they?

Do you think that the partners have the same goals and objectives for the partnership?

How does your MF attempt to build relationships among the partners?

Communication and Outreach Plan

Do you know if your MF partnership has a communications and outreach plan? If yes, tell me what you know about this plan.

Have you seen a copy of the communications and outreach plan?

How is the communications and outreach plan used by the MF partnership?

Did you have any opportunity to participate in the development of this plan? This may include committee participation, being consulted, informal discussions, formal discussions at meetings, or other forms of contribution.

Operational Communication

In the ongoing operation of the MF partnership a variety of methods will be used to communicate with the partners. Describe the different types of materials that are sent to you from the MF office or partners and the methods that are used to deliver these materials to you.

Do you have an opportunity to contribute to any of the communications materials that are sent out to the other partners? If yes, describe what you have contributed.

How would you describe the effectiveness of communication among the MF staff and partners?

Can you give an example of a situation where the method or style of communication was quite effective? How about a situation that was quite ineffective?

Website

Did you have a role in the development of the MF website? If yes, describe your role.

What do you think about the content, information, and layout of the website?

What purpose does the website play for the MF partnership?

Do the partners have an opportunity to contribute to the content of the website? If so, how?

Have you found the website or parts of the website to be a useful source of information for you? Explain.

Canadian Model Forest Network

How often do you see information from the CMFN office? What type of information do you get from the CMFN office and how is it delivered?

How would you describe the role of the CMFN communication and outreach coordinator?

Has the role of communication and outreach coordinator in the CMFN office been a benefit to your partnership? If so, how? If not, why not?

Model Forest Meetings

How would you describe the discussion that occurs at MF meetings?
What kinds of topics are covered at the meetings? Is there a particular topic that seems to come up more often than others? If yes, elaborate.

How are agendas set for the MF meetings? Do you have an opportunity to contribute to the agenda?

Describe the structure of the meetings. Who chairs the meetings, who participates in the meetings, who is invited to attend the meetings?

New Partners

How are new partners recruited and drawn into the activities of the MF?

How long ago did you join the MF? Why did you join?

Is there some sort of orientation process for new partners? If there is, describe how it works.

What types of challenges are there for new partners that are recruited into the existing partnership?

Partnership Information

*How does information sharing occur among the different partners?*

Is it easy for partners to share ideas and information? What type of information is shared? What is difficult to share?

Do you report information from the MF back to the organization that you represent? If yes, how is this done and how is the information used? Does the MF assist you with this?

How does the MF communicate with you? What has worked well, what has not worked?

Communicating Beyond the Partners

Describe the methods that you are aware of that are used for public education about the MF.

How can the local public find out more about the MF partnership?
Interview Questions for Individual Responsible for MF Communication

Are the goals and objectives of the MF clear to you? What are they?

Do you think that the partners have the same goals and objectives for the partnership?

How does your MF attempt to build relationships among the partners?

Communication and Outreach Plan

Does your MF partnership have a communications and outreach plan?

How is the communications and outreach plan used by the MF partnership?

What was your role in the development of the communications and outreach plan?

Who was consulted or involved in the development of the communications and outreach plan? Describe how the planning group or individuals were chosen.

What was the role of the Board in establishing communications and outreach plan?

Operational Communication

In the ongoing operation of the MF partnership a variety of methods will be used to communicate with the partners. Describe the different types of materials that are prepared by you or that you have input into that are sent out to the partners and the methods used to deliver the materials.

What kind of materials and information is sent to you from the partners and how is it delivered to you.

How would you describe the effectiveness of communication among the MF staff and partners?

Can you give an example of a situation where the method or style of communication was quite effective? How about a situation that was quite ineffective?

Website

Did you have a role in the development of the MF website? If yes, describe your role.

What do you think about the content, information, and layout of the website?

What purpose does the website play for the MF partnership?

Do the partners have an opportunity to contribute to the content of the website? If so, how?

Have you found the website or parts of the website to be a useful source of information for you? Explain.

Canadian Model Forest Network

How often do you see information from the CMFN office? What type of information do you get from the CMFN office and how is it delivered?

How would you describe the role of the CMFN communication and outreach coordinator?

Has the role of communication and outreach coordinator in the CMFN office been a benefit to your partnership? If so, how? If not, why not?

Model Forest Meetings

How would you describe the discussion that occurs at MF meetings?

What kinds of topics are covered at the meetings? Is there a particular topic that seems to come up more often than others? If yes, elaborate.

How are agendas set for the MF meetings? Do you have an opportunity to contribute to the agenda?
Describe the structure of the meetings. Who chairs the meetings, who participates in the meetings, who is invited to attend the meetings?

**New Partners**

How are new partners recruited and drawn into the activities of the MF?

How long ago did you join the MF? Why did you join?

Is there some sort of orientation process for new partners? If there is, describe how it works.

What types of challenges are there for new partners that are recruited into the existing partnership?

**Partnership Information**

*How does information sharing occur among the different partners?*

Is it easy for partners to share ideas and information? What type of information is shared?

How do you prepare information to send to the partners? Is it formatted for the larger audience of their organizations as well?

How do the partners in the MF communicate with you? What has worked well, what has not worked well?

**Communicating Beyond the Partners**

Describe the methods that you are aware of that are used for public education about the MF.

How can the local public find out more about the MF partnership?
**Appendix C Survey Letter and Survey**

**Model Forest Partnership Communication**

A National Survey of the Canadian Model Forest Partnerships

Dear participant,

My name is Harv Sawatzky. I am a graduate student at the Natural Resources Institute (NRI) of the University of Manitoba. *I encourage you to complete and return this survey as soon as possible. Your participation will help to ensure that the results may be of benefit to your organization.*

This research project is part of a larger Canadian Model Forest Network study being conducted by Dr. John Sinclair of the Natural Resources Institute of the University of Manitoba, and Dr. Peter Duinker of Dalhousie University’s School for Resource and Environmental Studies. The purpose of my research is to examine the role of communication in developing the Model Forest partnerships.

This survey is focused on partnership communication and is being used to examine some of the issues or questions that were raised in the interviews conducted with Model Forest representatives from across the country in the Fall of 2004. The survey also adds breadth to the interview findings by allowing all Model Forest partners across the country to contribute their thoughts and opinions to the overall research work. *The results of this research will be shared with the Model Forest organizations in Canada.*

The survey should take approximately 20 minutes. Please try to answer all of the questions. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, please leave them blank and move on to the next question. *Please remember to answer the questions thinking about your experience with your local Model Forest association.*

Your responses will be held in strict confidence to ensure your anonymity. The results and raw data may be shared with Dr. Sinclair, Dr. Duinker, and Bruce Gilbert (PhD candidate at Dalhousie University) and the results of this study will be reported with no reference to specific participants.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the postage paid envelope provided.

Thank you for your assistance in this research.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact any of the following project leaders:
Harv Sawatzky Masters Student, Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba
(204) 261-4420, hvsawat@mts.net

Dr. Peter Duinker, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-7100, Peter.Duinker@Dal.ca

Dr. John Sinclair, Natural Resources Institute at (204) 474-8374, jsincla@Ms.umanitoba.ca

This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Joint Faculty Ethics Review Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about the project you may contact University of Manitoba Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122 or e-mail Margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca.

*Size of cover letter and survey reduced for thesis publication*
### Partnership Communication Survey Questions

1. The following statements relate to communication in meetings. Please indicate which type of meeting you will be referring to when answering these questions. Please select ONLY ONE.

   - [ ] Board Meetings
   - [ ] Executive Committee meetings
   - [ ] Working Group/subcommittee meetings
   - [ ] Other regular meetings (specify) _______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>never</th>
<th>selcom</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>always</th>
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<td>e.</td>
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</table>

2. Listed below are several types of information associated with a Model Forest Partnership. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the quality of information you receive by checking (v) the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>very dissatisfied</th>
<th>somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>very satisfied</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
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3. Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following aspects of communication in your Model Forest by checking (v) the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>very dissatisfied</th>
<th>somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>very satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
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<td>e.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. When joining an organization such as a Model Forest partnership, there is much to learn. Please indicate what you experienced when you joined the Model Forest by checking (✓) the appropriate box (n/a is not applicable).

   a. Another partner taught me about the informal rules of the Model Forest when I joined.   
   b. Partner expectations were made clear upon joining the Model Forest partnership.  
   c. The Model Forest organization had an effective orientation process for new partners.

5. For each of the following statements about your Model Forest, indicate your level of agreement by checking (✓) the appropriate box.

   a. The goals of my Model Forest are clear to me.  
   b. The Model Forest board and committee structure facilitates clear communication within the organization. 
   c. Information from the board executive committee (or it's equivalent) is effectively communicated with the rest of the partners. 
   d. The Model Forest teaches the public about sustainable forest management in an effective manner. 
   e. Model Forest documents and reports use a level of written communication that is understandable by all participants. 
   f. The Model Forest's website is a useful resource for people in the organization that I represent. 
   g. The Model Forest's website is an effective public education tool.

6. There are many ways that a Model Forest organization encourages communication. Indicate the frequency with which you observe the following within your Model Forest by checking (✓) the appropriate box.

   a. This Model Forest organization consistently treats people with respect. 
   b. This organization encourages the discussion of differences of opinion. 
   c. There is an atmosphere of trust in this organization. 
   d. Partners accept criticism without becoming defensive. 
   e. This Model Forest organization values the ideas of participants at every level.

7. How often would you normally talk to others outside the Model Forest about ideas or information from the Model Forest?

   □ never □ rarely □ more than once a month □ more than once a week □ daily

8. How often do you access information on the Model Forest website?

   □ never □ rarely □ more than once a month □ more than once a week □ daily
9. In the Model Forest meetings that you attend, what portion of people present are actively involved in discussions?
   - [ ] less than 25%
   - [ ] 25% to 50%
   - [ ] 51% to 75%
   - [ ] 76% to 99%
   - [ ] 100%

10. At times in your Model Forest organization an external facilitator may have been used to help the organization in some way. Please check the boxes (✓) to indicate whether a facilitator has been used or not, and if it was effective or not. For “Other” please state how else a facilitator was used and if it was effective.
   a. Guiding planning meetings
   b. Working through problem issues
   c. Learning how to work together as a group
   d. Other:

11. Give your opinion about the following personal aspects of communication by checking (✓) the appropriate box.
   a. I shy away from topics that are sources of disputes.
   b. I know what is happening in all the committees and/or working groups.
   c. I think that the partners are honest with each other.
   d. The contributions made by my organization to the Model Forest are openly recognized.

12. In your opinion, with what frequency do the following aspects of communication in your Model Forest organization occur? Please check (✓) the appropriate box.
   a. Information is readily available.
   b. Email is used effectively.
   c. Information sent to me is useful.
   d. Information on the Model Forest website is current.
   e. Discussions use technical language and jargon at a level that I understand.
   f. The language in reports and other written documents is easy to understand.
   g. The Management arm of the Board (executive committee or whole board for some Model Forests) knows what is happening in the committees/working groups.
   h. Problem issues are addressed openly.
   i. Sharing new ideas is encouraged.

13. In your opinion, what is your Model Forest’s greatest communication strength?
These last few questions are about you. Please check (✓) the appropriate selection. You can be assured that we will treat all data confidentially and only report the analyzed results.

14. Which is the main Model Forest organization that you participate in? (Please check only one item.)
   - Bas-Saint-Laurent Model Forest
   - Lake Abitibi Model Forest
   - Waswanipi Cree Model Forest
   - Eastern Ontario Model Forest
   - McGregor Model Forest
   - Western Newfoundland Model Forest
   - Foothills Model Forest
   - Manitoba Model Forest
   - Nova Forest Alliance
   - Prince Albert Model Forest

15. In which calendar year did you join the Model Forest?
   ____________________________

16. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (Please check only one item.)
   - Grade 9 or Less
   - Technical School or Community College
   - Some High School
   - University Degree (Bachelors)
   - High School Graduate
   - Graduate University Degree

17. Which sector(s) do you officially represent in your role within your Model Forest organization? (Please check all that apply.)
   - Consultant/Researcher
   - Model Forest Staff
   - Educational Institution
   - Non-Forest Industry
   - Environment Organization
   - Non-government Organization
   - Federal Government
   - Provincial Government
   - First Nation Community
   - Woodlot Owner
   - Forest Industry
   - The Public
   - Local Government
   - Other ____________________________
   - Media Organization/Company

18. Please indicate your current level of involvement with the Model Forest? (Please check all that apply.)
   - Board Member
   - Consultant/Researcher
   - Executive Committee Member
   - Staff
   - Working Group or Committee Member
   - General Member
   - Other ____________________________

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.
Please fold and place the completed questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope that is provided and drop it in the nearest mailbox.