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**Who will decide the fate of the forest?:
Recommendations regarding the incorporation of
stakeholder values into resource decision-making in the
Manitoba Model Forest**

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Introduction

Natural resource policy and management decisions in the Manitoba Model Forest continue to be made in the absence of accurate and timely information about human users of that forest. Firstly, there has been little systematic research on the *behavior* of natural resource users in the region and the province in general. The limited knowledge we have about these users is rarely brought to bear in decision-making about natural resource allocations or management. Secondly, there is not enough known about the *attitudes and values* of Manitoba Model Forest stakeholders, and again, there is no evidence that existing studies are used to inform policy or management.

This problem is not unique to Manitoba, or to the Manitoba Model Forest, and fortunately, Manitoba has made a commitment to redress the lack of stakeholder involvement in decision-making through the Manitoba Forest Plan. There are a number of environmental issues that will require knowledge and use of social and economic values for their effective resolution. Examples include:

- the recent commitment of the Government of Manitoba to protect twelve percent of provincial lands before 2000 AD.
- The planning framework to be enacted by the Manitoba Forest Plan.
- The development of a provincial parks system plan.

In addition, industry initiatives such as long range plans, the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, and ecosystem-based management principles, will require long-term and short-term socio-economic research on stakeholder values. Surely the time is ripe for a concerted effort on the development of social and economic information and research on methods on collecting such information.

This report presents recommendations on how to incorporate stakeholder values in to ecosystem management. These recommendations are based on a review of the general literature on stakeholder values (Beckley, Just, Boxall, and Wellstead 1996), as well as on

a report on Manitoba Model Forest stakeholders (Beckley, Watson, Spenger, and Boxall 1996). Further involvement of stakeholders in natural resource decision-making will require two main types of activities, direct approaches (most of which build on existing public outreach efforts), and indirect approaches (additional research about stakeholder land-based resource use, attitudes, and values).

The previous reports in this series have provided preliminary assessments of attitudes and values. They have identified some key issues that should be of concern to resource managers. For example, Beckley, Watson, Sprenger and Boxall (1996) have demonstrated that significant barriers exist between rural and urban stakeholders, and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders. However, this work has not endeavored to conduct a full accounting of stakeholder values. In order to do that, significantly more resources will need to be allocated than were provided for this project. Furthermore, that effort will need to be sustained over time so that trends in stakeholder use and stakeholders attitudes and values may be documented. Assessing change in factors that affect forest management is a key principle of adaptive management. Adaptive managers must monitor and respond to changes in ecosystem condition and the development of new information. Adaptive management must also involve changes in stakeholders' attitudes, values and behaviors, as well as changes in economic markets, and other broad social forces.

The following recommendations are not meant as a critique of the status quo, or what has transpired in forest policy and management in the past. The social context for natural resource planning and management is changing rapidly. The recommendations below outline what we believe will be necessary to give full attention to the human dimensions of ecosystem management in the future. The following comments are also in line with the assessments of others about the dearth of socio-economic data that has been undertaken in the region lately (Walker 1996).

The recommendations contained in this report are primarily directed to three institutions that have the most power to implement them, namely; Provincial Government (in particular, the agencies responsible for natural resource management), the Pine Falls Paper Company (holders of timber rights to a sizable portion of the region), and the

Manitoba Model Forest (which has a mandate to conduct research related to the region). Other institutions are also implicated, however, particularly the three major universities in Manitoba, whose academic staff should take the lead in conducting the necessary research, and training students in stakeholder research. As well, organized stakeholder groups, from First Nations, to naturalists, and from recreational hunters to small woodlot owners, must also participate in a spirit of cooperation and openness if the following initiatives are to be successful. This includes participation in stakeholder workshops, survey research, and other direct and indirect values assessment mechanisms. In so far as Model Forest initiatives are meant to lead the way toward sustainable development, other industrial users of the forest should also take note of these recommendations.

Issues and Recommendations

ISSUE #1: Adequate and balanced representation of stakeholder interests

There is currently some justifiable concern over how well current stakeholder values assessment processes represent the full spectrum of stakeholder interests. Various stakeholders feel slighted, and some have opted out of existing opportunities to express their values. Without accurate expressions of stakeholders' values, managers can only act on their perceptions of those interests and values. In the course of our work in the region we heard about the frustration regarding the lack of First Nations involvement in the Manitoba Model Forest (from both First Nations Members and Model Forest representatives); we heard complaints by Winnipeg residents that Pine Falls Paper Company does not consider them stakeholders, and therefore does not consistently seek input from this segment of the population; and we heard rural, Model Forest residents complain of urban domination of the political agenda. In a wide variety of fora, people are feeling left out, disenfranchised, and powerless. Some of this feeling is undoubtedly due to individuals own inertia and unwillingness to participate. It is always easier to complain about the lack of opportunities to get involved than it is take advantage of the opportunities that do exist. Others may be reticent to become involved for fear that their involvement will provide a *de facto* endorsement of the status quo.

For all these reasons, many existing stakeholder processes have problems with representativeness. Trade-offs always exist when establishing public involvement mechanisms. Formal environmental review and public comment processes are alienating to some, but are structured so that everyone has an equal chance for comment. Less formal processes may over-look specific groups, but small group size is a key ingredient for success in inter-group negotiations and dialogue. The answer is to maintain multiple mechanisms, both formal and informal, for collecting stakeholder input. In addition, directed research should be used when resource managers identify affected groups that consistently fail to voice their views through existing channels.

*Specific recommendations on Balanced Representation of Stakeholder Interests to:
Pine Falls Paper Company -*

- a) *Conduct open houses, round tables, focus groups and listening sessions in Winnipeg as well as within the Model Forest Area. Make a sincere effort to understand the concerns of urban visitors to the Model Forest land base.*

Provincial Government -

- a) *experiment with additional participatory roles for the public, as well as with alternative mechanisms for measuring public and stakeholder values and attitudes. See Beckley, Just, Boxall and Wellstead (1996) for suggestions and ideas.*

Manitoba Model Forest -

- a) *Identify stakeholders who feel left out of resource decision-making. Find out why they feel disenfranchised, and work with such groups to construct a research design that will elicit these stakeholders' attitudes and values.*
- b) *commission studies of alternative dispute resolution techniques, including experimental work that implements and evaluates such techniques in the Manitoba Model Forest.*

ISSUE #2 Facilitating Two-Way Information Flow

Stakeholders have expressed frustration with the lack of sincere *listening* that goes on in stakeholder values assessment mechanisms in the Manitoba Model Forest. Resource managers have also acknowledged that they do a better job of “presenting their own perspectives” than they do of listening to others. There are currently few informal opportunities for stakeholders to express their views to resource managers. In times of fiscal restraint, both corporate and government resource managers have increased demands on their time. It is difficult to create ample opportunity for individuals or for groups to directly express their views to managers.

It is critical that a two-way information flow is established, but the appropriate mechanisms for doing this will likely vary from stakeholder to stakeholder. For example, the RESOLVER program utilized to obtain public input for Manitoba’s Forest Plan may be useful and appropriate for tabulating preferences of a broad cross section of urban residents, however, it would probably not be effective for documenting the values of many Aboriginal groups.¹

Social norms around participation may vary as well. While it may be totally appropriate for resource managers to offer gifts to Aboriginal elders when seeking their advice and input, others might interpret this as a blatant attempt to co-opt a stakeholder group or inappropriately “buy” support. Managers must be sensitive to the social context, and be able to identify the appropriate values assessment tools given the stakeholder group or groups in question. They must also be able to defend why different mechanisms are used in different contexts.

Specific recommendations on Two-Way Information Flow to:

Provincial government -

- a) *Provide cultural sensitivity training, education on Aboriginal culture, values, perspectives, and resource use to staff who will be directly involved in soliciting public and stakeholder participation.*

¹ An additional shortcoming of the RESOLVER approach is that it does not force respondents to make trade-offs between bundles of goods and services. If respondents can and do rate everything as “very important” managers are left with little useful information on public preferences.

- b) *Hire trained facilitators to run inter-stakeholder group dialogue sessions.*
- c) *Develop a "study or working group" containing social science researchers and practitioners working in the province. We envision this to include university staff, provincial government staff, and private sector employees currently working on social and economic impact assessments. This body could provide a forum for communication within one dimension of the two-way information flow.*
- d) *Assist the model forest with stakeholder conferences and forums.*

Pine Falls Paper Company -

- a) *Provide cultural sensitivity training, education on Aboriginal culture, values, perspectives, and resource use to staff who will be directly involved in soliciting public and stakeholder participation.*
- b) *Hire trained facilitators to run inter-stakeholder group dialogue sessions.*
- c) *Assist the Model Forest with stakeholder conferences and forums.*
- d) *Attempt more forcefully to reach out to more distant stakeholder (e.g. urban recreationists) and involve them in the development of forest planning and development.*

Manitoba Model Forest -

- a) *Continue to disseminate information on stakeholder values and attitudes as that information becomes available.*

ISSUE #3: Facilitating Mutual Learning

Mutual learning refers to relationships between stakeholder groups, relationships between member of different branches of government, and relationships between stakeholders and managers. Resource management agencies need to learn about one another. Stakeholders also need to learn more about each other in non-threatening, non-adversarial environments.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate models of resource manager and stakeholder interaction. Figure 1 illustrates rather outmoded models, while Figure 2 outlines a model not yet achieved in the Manitoba Model Forest. However, progress has certainly been made. Specifically, the Integrated Resource Management Team that consists of multiple provincial agencies is a mechanism for dialogue and coordination and mutual learning between these branches of government. The Manitoba Model Forest has had some success in bringing together stakeholders that previously had little contact with one another. These achievements need to be built upon.

Specific recommendations on Mutual Learning to:

Provincial Government -

- a) *Review other models of agency-public interaction within Manitoba and elsewhere in which mutual learning occurs (for example, the Community Round Tables).*

Pine Falls Paper Company -

- a) *Solicit input from other forest companies across Canada through established professional channels on how other corporations foster mutual learning between themselves and stakeholders.*

Manitoba Model Forest -

- a) *Commission studies on "mutual learning." This is an indicator under Criterion 6 of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers' Criterion and Indicators initiative. To date, little work has been done on this area.*

Figure 1:
Inappropriate Models of Resource Manager -
Stakeholder Interaction Under Ecosystem
Management: One way dialogue, no stakeholder
interaction, no inter-agency interaction.

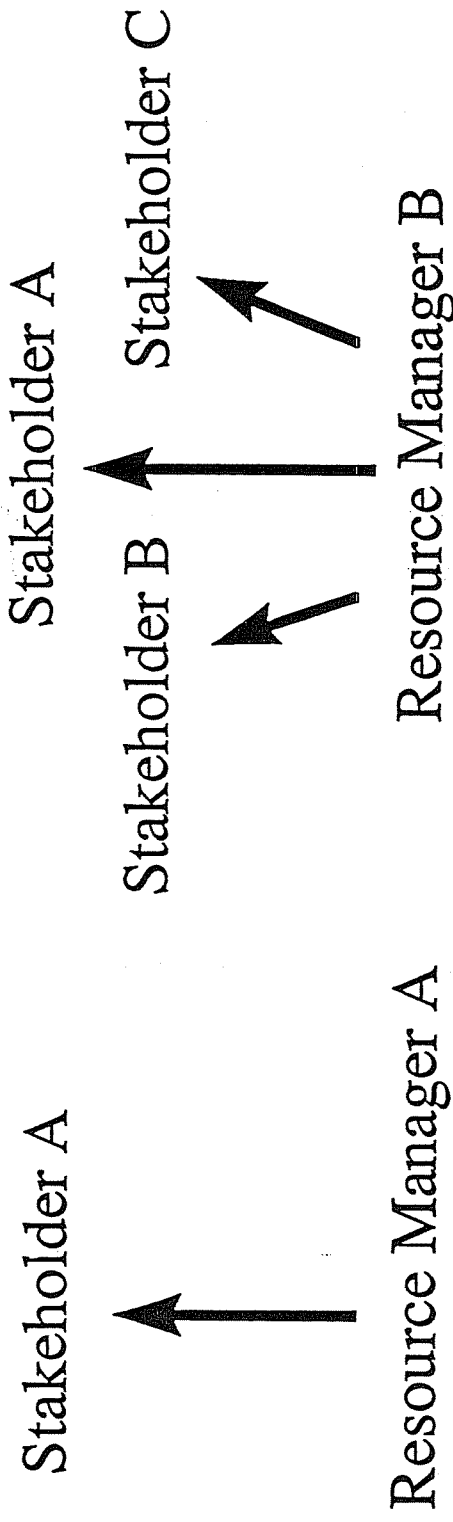
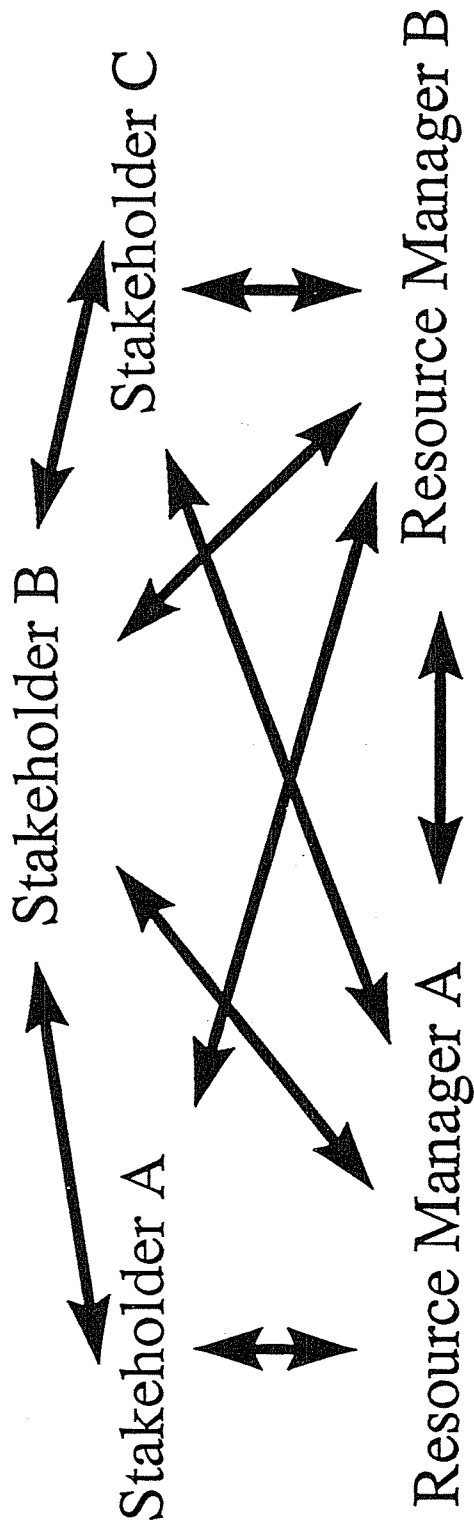


Figure 2:
 Desired Model for Resource Manager - Stakeholder
 Interaction Under Ecosystem Management: Two-
 way information flow, mutual learning, inter-
 stakeholder, inter-agency dialogue



ISSUE #4: Make decision-making more transparent

Resource managers do routinely employ a suite of tools for assessing public values. However, in the aftermath of decisions taken, whether they be policy changes, natural resource allocations, or changes in rules and regulations, there is often little discussion of exactly why a given decision was made. Following controversial decisions, it is not uncommon to hear a barrage of questions from disgruntled stakeholders, such as: Whose input was considered in that decision? What criterion were used to weigh conflicting stakeholder interests? Why did they ask me my opinion and then ignore my suggestions? Resource managers need to de-brief the public better on outcomes. The process of public involvement is important, but this process should not end with a government or industry action. The explanation of results should also be a part of the process.

Reports that deal with *ex post* policy studies should explicitly show how public involvement made a difference in policy outcomes.

Specific recommendations on Making Decisions More Transparent to:

Provincial Government -

- a) *Publish policy briefs that describe the level and nature of public involvement that went in to natural resource decisions. Include in the briefs which stakeholders provided input, and how stakeholder claims were weighed and incorporated in to the decision. Such publications could also serve to educate the public on how to participate by describing the existing mechanisms for public involvement.*
- b) *Sponsor, with assistance from industry and the Model Forest, a report series which presents information from stakeholder attitudes and values research in a format understandable to the common citizen. Make these reports widely available to enhance communication. This information could also be used to inform stakeholders about the reasons for decisions.*

Pine Falls Paper Company

- a) *Publish records of stakeholder contact. An excellent template for such a publication exists in The NorSask Forest Management Project, Volume VII, "A record of public consultaion." (Mistik Management 1995). Such a document would also educate stakeholders regarding how to approach private companies for input, and demonstrate that stakeholder values are considered in corporate decision-making.*

Manitoba Model Forest

- a) *Commission policy analyses by outside, independent academics and other researchers.² Such studies could assess the roles of various stakeholders in specific policy processes, such as forest management agreement approvals, mining licenses, and the like.*

² Researchers from outside Manitoba, with little prior knowledge of the history and policy context, might be able to offer more objective analyses than persons close to or even involved with natural resource policy and management in Manitoba.

ISSUE #5: Initiate research to fill knowledge gaps and triangulate existing data

Two important types of data on stakeholders are currently not sufficient to implement ecosystem management. The first is trend data on stakeholder use of the Model Forest Area. Economists, in particular, stress the importance of behavioral trails in measuring preferences regarding natural resources. One way to understand preferences is to observe and record what people do, who does it, where they do it, and so on. Some useful socio-economic trend data exists in natural resource managers' current records and databases. The Nopiming Backcountry Recreation Project use this data effectively, for example (Boxall et al. 1996; Englin et al. 1996). However, other activities are poorly studied, and certain types of users and their motivations are poorly understood.

The second type of data that needs to be collected are verbal and/or written expressions of stakeholders values. Individual surveys can provide a snapshot of stakeholder values at a given point in time. Such surveys may also contain questions on specific, topical resource management issues. Periodic administration of a core set of questions at fixed time intervals (5 years) will allow for analysis of trends.

Triangulation of data refers to using multiple methods to confirm research findings. If possible, three sources are sought that point toward the same conclusions. For example, on the apparent divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders in the Model Forest, the results of focus groups, qualitative methods such as participant and non-participant observation, and quantitative methods, such as survey research should be compared to see if each reveals this social fissure. Research should be designed with an eye toward confirming or dispelling findings from other direct and indirect attempts to assess stakeholder values. This will require much better communication between researchers and resource managers, both private and public.

Specific recommendations on Filling Knowledge Gaps to:***Provincial government -***

- a) *Reorient existing procedures to capture more information on the use of forest areas in the province. Furthermore, make this collection of information a*

priority for some field staff. More specific recommendations on data collection are as follows:

- *Modify of recreation permits so that basic socio-demographic background data and past use can be drawn on specific user groups. On camping permits, collect frequency of use data, postal codes, number of participants in party, and other background socio-demographic data. Consult with the researchers who will be examining stakeholder issues to determine the relevant data to be collected.*
 - *Develop a system to gather more information on the hunting and fishing activity through the issuance of licenses.*
 - *Collect more information from boat, ATV and snowmobile owners (if registrations are required).*
 - *Maintain computerized files of permit and other user data so temporal and spatial trends can be assessed. Also consider lists of names and addresses so that samples may be drawn for surveys of specific user groups.*
- b) *Develop a strategy in conjunction with the Manitoba Model Forest to fund periodic surveys of stakeholders to assess values and attitudes of the forest and other environmental concerns. Such development must contain a strategy for long term information collection to allow trend analysis.*
- c) *Hire staff trained in social science research methods to coordinate and oversee the development of the recommendations posed above. Such staff should be at levels of the organization that foster broad communication between provincial resource management agencies and allow for a focal point of stakeholder values for provincial resources.*
- d) *Sponsor a report series, with assistance from industry and the Model Forest, which presents information from stakeholder attitudes and values research in a format understandable to the common citizen. Make these reports widely available to enhance communication.*

Manitoba Model Forest -

- a) *If the province is to gather the more routine information through its existing surveys, permits and licenses, it is the role of the Model Forest to fund the more state-of-the-art research efforts that will provide new information to the stakeholder valuation process. In other words, rather than duplicating what the province may do, the Model Forest efforts should guide new processes, develop new methods, and foster the consideration and testing of new ideas.*
- b) *Commission "interest" papers by stakeholder groups. The literature on conflict resolution suggests that successful resolution of disputes must be based on addressing underlying interests of stakeholders rather than entrenched positions. Providing stakeholder groups with the means to articulate their interests could be a first step toward mediating conflicting interests between stakeholder groups.*
- c) *Actively recruit social scientists from Brandon University, University of Manitoba, and the University of Winnipeg to conduct social science and stakeholder values research. Where it is determined that local expertise does not exist, recruit scholars from across North America. Some very well-respected scientists from the United States, who are leaders in this field are interested in working in the Manitoba Model Forest. Given that expertise on human dimensions of natural resources is limited in Canada, out-of-country recruitment may be necessary.*
- d) *Sponsor a report series, with assistance from industry and government, that presents information from stakeholder attitudes and values research in a format understandable to the common citizen. Make these reports widely available to enhance communication.*
- e) *Serve as a clearinghouse for information on stakeholder values. Maintain detailed files on all range of stakeholder values assessments that occur in the region so that researchers may find out what needs to be triangulated, and what methods would be most appropriate.*

f) *Through research and outreach, demonstrate to industry and government that economics research encompasses much more than the traditional view of economic development and financial wealth generation. Many resources are not traded in markets and do not have associated market prices. These non-market values are becoming a major focus in forestry, particularly in examining landscape amenities, the valuation of endangered species, and other passive use values. The Model Forest must be a leader in this area, and use both economic and social valuation methods in examining stakeholder values.*

Pine Falls Paper Company -

- a) *utilize existing studies and commission research on specific stakeholders whose interests are closely related to your own (small woodlot owners, for example).*
- b) *Sponsor a report series, with assistance from the Model Forest, other industries, and government that presents information from stakeholder attitudes and values research in a format understandable to the common citizen. Make these reports widely available to enhance communication.*

ISSUE #7: Create an Aboriginal stakeholders value assessment process

Aboriginal stakeholders are stakeholders of a unique type (see Smith 1996). Many Aboriginal stakeholders have a different relationship to resource managers than other stakeholder groups due to recognized treaty rights. As well, cultural differences that exist between Aboriginal stakeholders and resource managers and other stakeholders, may necessitate different values assessment methods.

Consistent, sustained, high quality participation in resource management by Aboriginal stakeholders will require the development of trust between institutions. Institutions are comprised of individuals, and individuals are the building blocks where trust must be established between Aboriginal Peoples and industry and government managers. Often times, rapport may be established quickly if persons in positions of power acknowledge cultural traditions, and demonstrate understanding of Aboriginal culture.

Since Aboriginal Peoples have been left out of natural resource decision-making for so long, the onus is on provincial and industry resource managers to make overtures and invite Aboriginal participation.

Specific recommendations Increasing Aboriginal Involvement in Decision-Making to: Manitoba Model Forest -

- a) *Create a safe and inviting environment where resource managers and Aboriginal Peoples may meet.*
- b) *Commission research by Aboriginal Peoples to conduct their own values assessments with methods they deem appropriate. This may involve conducting their own research, oral histories, surveys, etc. or working in partnership with researchers they feel understand their culture and their relationship to natural resources in the Manitoba Model Forest.*
- c) *Position the Model Forest as a non-partisan, independent body. Strengthen relationships with First Nations that are perceived to be weak (through direct dialogue). This may require putting some physical distance between the Model Forest and the Pine Falls Paper Company in order to create a perception of*

non-partisanship. Beckley and Sprenger (1995) reveal that Powerview is the community in which residents from all neighbouring communities freely interact. This community may be a better home for the Model Forest office.

Pine Falls Paper Company -

- a) *Arrange for meetings with Aboriginal stakeholders on their own terms, and on their "turf". Find out what they feel the important resource management issues are in the Model Forest and on the FMA.*
- b) *Make a commitment to sharing responsibility for resource management. Several models of industry-Aboriginal cooperation exist that could be emulated (Alberta-Pacific, Mistik Management).*

Provincial Government -

- a) *Explore the possibilities (commission research on the subject in conjunction with the Manitoba Model Forest) of tenure reform that might lead to shared resource management between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders.*

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