

**Public Participation and the New Forest Economy**

**Definitions of "Community" in British Columbia's  
Forest-dependent Small Towns**

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## Project Abstract

### Project Summary:

This research project investigates community dynamics and factors influencing effective participation and decision-making in British Columbia's resource dependent communities. The research will identify defining elements of "community" which are key to effective participation in both community development decision-making and resource planning, allocation and management. The research findings will be of direct value to managers seeking to maximize returns on community development assistance and those seeking to make effective use of community involvement in the new types of consultation processes now underway within the Province.

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### Rationale:

A central priority of the Forest Renewal B.C. initiative is with "strengthening communities that rely on the forests". As the Forest Practices Code changes the way our forest resource is managed, harvested and utilized, so too will change the patterns of employment, and the skills needed to gain this employment, in the new forest economy. These changes will have a direct impact upon many of British Columbia's smaller, resource-based, communities where both local workers and businesses rely upon direct participation in forest industry. At an individual level, workers and residents will be engaged in a 'retooling' of skills to meet new job opportunities. At a broader level, communities will be seeking to participate in resource allocation decisions and to attract investment which keeps the economic benefits of the new forest economy within their community. FRBC recognizes the importance of these changes and the importance of "supporting community development and adjustment".

While achieving successful adjustment to change is a critically important goal, the participation of communities in resource allocation and management, and the positioning of communities to facilitate new economic development, will be hampered without a clear understanding of both the meaning and dynamics of community involvement. This is not simply an isolated academic issue, but rather, how communities function and come together to participate in the new forest economy will have a very real impact upon how successful they are in adjusting to new forest management practices. What defines a community? What aspects of this definition are critical to motivating participation in planning for adjustments to change? What aspects of this definition are important in promoting community economic development? What criteria can local areas employ to help define their geographic territory, especially when they may be in competition with adjacent areas over control of resources? How can the desire for community participation in resource planning be better integrated into models to ensure more effective decision-making? Finally, how can more effective institutions and structures be developed to assist decision-making?

Finding clear answers to these questions will be an important part of helping communities adjust to the new forest economy.

### **Research Goals:**

Four Research Goals guide the proposed research:

1. Develop an applied definition of “community” and “community development” in British Columbia, and creation of tools for self-definition of community on a local basis.
2. Develop recommendations to enhance community participation in current resource allocation decision-making models (e.g.: LRMP’s).
3. Application of community definition and participation recommendations to resource planning and management objectives and practices, including assessments of their application to community-based management models.
4. Develop recommendations on appropriate institutional developments to enhance community goal-setting and decision-making in regard to resource management at the local level.

Funding for this research and/or extension was provided by Forest Renewal BC - a partnership of forest companies, workers, environmental groups, First Nations, communities and government. Forest Renewal BC funding - from stumpage fees and royalties that forest companies pay for the right to harvest timber on Crown lands - is reinvested in the forests, forest workers, and forest communities.

Funding assistance by Forest Renewal BC does not imply endorsement of any statements or information contained herein.

## **Publications**

### **of the “Public Participation in the New Forest Economy” research project**

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#### **Discussion Papers**

Discussion Paper on Concepts: “Community”. Greg Halseth and Annie Booth. Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies. University of Northern British Columbia. December 20, 1997.

Discussion Paper on Concepts: “Community Economic Development”. Greg Halseth and Annie Booth. Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies. University of Northern British Columbia. February 10, 1998.

#### **Reports**

"Report on a Questionnaire Survey of Residents in Six British Columbia Communities". Greg Halseth and Annie Booth. Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies. University of Northern British Columbia. 21 January 1998.

"Definitions of 'Community' in British Columbia's Forest-dependent Small Towns". Greg Halseth and Annie Booth. Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies. University of Northern British Columbia. December 2, 1998.

"Recommendations for Community Participation in the New Forest Economy". Greg Halseth and Annie Booth. Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies. University of Northern British Columbia. January 20, 1999.

#### **Annotated Bibliographies**

Edition 1:

- #1. Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - Citizen Participation in Resource Management - An Annotated Bibliography. April 1997.
- #2. Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - Community and Sustainability - An Annotated Bibliography. April 1997.
- #3. Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - British Columbia Models of Community Participation and Examples of Management - An Annotated Bibliography. April 1997.

Edition 2:

- #1. Citizen Participation in Resource Management - Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - An Annotated Bibliography. November 1998.
- #2. Community and Sustainability - Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - An Annotated Bibliography. November 1998.
- #3. British Columbia Models of Community Participation and Examples of Management - Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - An Annotated Bibliography. November 1998.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

As part of our intent to make this information as widely available as possible, copies of all research reports, discussion papers and bibliographies were sent to most public library systems in British Columbia. As well, copies were sent to many of the college, university-college, and university libraries systems in the Province.

Copies of project publications are also available online at the following website address:

**<http://quarles.unbc.ca/frbc/index.html>**

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## Table of Contents

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Project Abstract	i
INTRODUCTION	1
PART A	
COMMUNITY	2
Introduction	2
Roles	3
Community As Defined by Members	4
Place-Based	4
Interest Based	5
Community As Defined for Planning Processes	6
Top-Down	6
Bottom-Up	7
PART B	
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	8
Introduction	9
Community Economic Development	10
Community Development	11
Sustainable Community Development	12
Public Participation	13
PART C	
LOCAL PARTICIPATION	14
PART D	
RURAL AND SMALL TOWN CONTEXT	15
Introduction	15
Public Participation in Rural/Small Town Communities	17
CONSENSUS	18
SOME IMPLICATIONS	19
REFERENCES	22

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# **Community Participation in the New Forest Economy**

## **Definitions of "Community" in British Columbia's Forest-dependent Small Towns**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Public participation and consultation in natural resources planning and management is becoming much more widespread in British Columbia. As it does, there is an increasing need for process managers and participants to understand the deceptively complex concepts of "community", "community development", and "community economic development". These terms form the foundation for broader local involvement in resources planning and management exercises.

The "Public Participation in the New Forest Economy" research project at the University of Northern British Columbia is interested in the ways individuals and groups of people in rural and small town communities can participate in a meaningful way in the many forms of resource planning and management decision-making processes presently underway. As government policy moves increasingly towards permitting the general public and stakeholder participation in decision-making processes, so too is the public coming to expect to have input into such processes.

This workbook is targeted at resource policy makers, managers, practitioners, and members of the general public. The goal is to assist with making public involvement in natural resources planning and management more functional.

In addition to this workbook, several other project publications and resources are available online for your use and information.

Beyond our project's resources, there are a great many detailed publications on issues connected with public involvement, consultation, and decision-making frameworks. This workbook is meant to be a primer on key background issues.

## **PART A - COMMUNITY**

### **Introduction**

As a term, community is at once both clear and complex. While we use the term everyday, we often use it in a wide range of (sometimes contradictory) ways. It is also a term which is now often used in both public policy and public land management and planning guidelines. But, who is the "community"? In any community participation or consultation process, therefore, a reasonable working definition must be made clear. It will define who can and cannot participate.

In this subsection, we provide a brief overview of the function or "role" of community. This is then followed by a summary of the principle ways by which people understand the concept. Depending upon the particular resource planning exercise, different or combinations of these constructions of community may be helpful.

- ROLES
- COMMUNITY AS DEFINED BY MEMBERS
  - place-based
  - interest based
- COMMUNITY AS DEFINED FOR PLANNING PROCESSES
  - top-down
  - bottom-up

### **QUESTIONS:**

In any single locality, is there only one "community"? In that same locality, do all the people have the same background, views, opinions, capacity and knowledge, and the same ability to participate? And, if "communities" are diverse, multi-faceted things, how can the "community" be part of a consultation or planning process?



## **Roles**

Generally, a community reinforces a sense of membership and belonging. For those members, the community serves a range of basic functions. These have been characterized as including:

- 1) interaction and social participation,
- 2) social, collective, or mutual support,
- 3) sense of identification, belonging, or solidarity,
- 4) processes of socialization, or a shared sense of social place and social control,
- 5) and economic, the local organization of production, distribution, and consumption.

These functions help to define the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the larger collective. It is through their "community" that individuals organize their daily local living and make sense of the issues and concerns they encounter.

This sense of community is not always tangible. One of the ways it can become so is if there is some local threat or challenge. Under pressure, people energize their community bonds and membership. One problem for resource planning and management processes is how to maintain community involvement over long periods of time.

## **Community As Defined by Members**

### **Place-Based**

A “place-based community” refers to a geographically delimited population. Depending on the scale, we may be talking about a street block, a neighbourhood, a rural village, a small town, or a district within a larger city. The place defines the membership.

Certainly, community can be a place - a locale - in which one lives, conduct business, and raises a family.

The assumption is generally made that the residents share a certain set of bonds as a result of sharing a common local environment. At a local scale, such as the neighbourhood, there may also be considerable similarity in terms of socio-economic status and values among households.

Place-based communities are very important in our day-to-day lives, For example, the municipality within which we live creates sets of rules with respect to property uses and taxation which, if they change drastically, can affect us significantly. Local civic elections, either for municipal councillors or for Regional District Board members from Electoral Areas, are direct opportunities to have "public input".

Place-based communities can become even more important in rural and small town BC, where large distances separate settlements. In this case, there is often intense local identification with the town or place. This identification can be complex. It often applies:

- to those living within the small town or village,
- to those living in the rural hinterlands around that small place,
- it can extend beyond the settlement area to include the surrounding countryside,
- it can include a large natural resource hinterland on which local industry may depend.

Not surprisingly, the matter of a small settlement feeling an identification with a large rural or natural resource hinterland can bring it into conflict with adjacent small settlements who also feel they have a claim on that hinterland. In resource planning and management, this can greatly extend not only the issues to be resolved but also the scope of participants to be involved.

## **Interest-Based**

In addition to place-based communities, it is common to recognize community bonds formed out of corresponding and mutual interests or concerns. However, one's "community" can also involve sets of relationships and personal ties. Such "communities of interest" are bound together by an identification with a common issue or interest area.

In this case, it is not necessary that community members know one another personally or meet on any sort of regular basis. Cohesive community bonds may form which are not linked to direct face-to-face interaction on a daily basis.

New modes of communication, changing norms with respect to family formation, and a host of other changes have very much created an expanded set of opportunities for interest-based communities.

The implications for natural resources planning and management are clear. The organization of residents within particular areas may include participation of many differing interest groups or different patterns of social interests and interactions.

It may also open the consultation process to include people who are quite clearly "non-local" residents. Interest based, often representing particular issues or values can be brought in to a local planning process. This can create tension as local residents often argue their "stake" is more legitimate than such 'outside' participants.

There is an opportunity here to be open to inclusiveness. The danger is of course in diffusing the process so that it becomes unworkable.

## **Community As Defined for Planning Processes**

Most public consultation or planning processes generally seek to involve people who are interested in, or who have interests that will be affected by, the outcomes of the particular decision-making event. From land use planning by municipalities to large scale processes such as the BC Provincial Government's Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs).

Natural resources planning processes often are dealing with a particular region or area of land. As such, the processes often play a strong part in defining the community to be involved in the consultation process. In these cases, it is important to distinguish between top-down and bottom-up definitions of community and to select the balance suited to the process being carried out.

### **Top-Down Definitions**

A top-down definition of community is generally based upon the imposition of some form of boundaries designed to enclose a specific part of a local land base.

Common examples include the jurisdictional boundaries of local governments and their planning units, or the data collection, service provision, or management regions of governments and agencies. For example, is your home inside, or outside the boundaries of a particular small town?

In rural areas, it may be the case that as household needs are increasingly met at the local government level through a range of functions delivered by the Regional District, that these jurisdictions qualify as a type of community identification for residents.

But jurisdictional communities suffer important limits. An administrative formulation of community may be very far removed from the way people structure their daily lives. They may also fail to capture those outside the physical boundaries who also consider themselves part of that community while including those within who consider themselves as separate.

In debates over resource development issues, attention to local government jurisdictions may not be the most important scale at which to define communities, their interests, and their pattern of representation in land use planning debates and working groups.

It will likely be necessary to employ a more flexible definition of community in deciding who is and is not eligible to participate.

## **Bottom-Up Definitions**

Bottom-up definitions of community have much in common with interest based communities. The key for both is that people decide for themselves what it is that constitutes "their" community.

There is general agreement that "community" includes the social and geographic framework within which individuals experience and conduct most of their day-to-day activities. It is bound together by a shared sense of belonging, and that the group defines a distinctive identity for its members. In this framework, community is clearly seen as something defined from the bottom-up by its members.

A critical point in this view of community is that this larger collective need not be gathered in the same place in order to develop and share this community linkage. This can create difficulties for consultation processes. For example, there are question about:

- how to contact interested community members,
- how to ensure 'local' representatives communicate with their constituency,
- how to weigh the input from non-local community members (as they will be impacted in different ways by resources planning and management decisions),
- how to maintain effective on-going communications over plan development, implementation, and monitoring

## **PART B - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **Introduction**

The concepts of “community development”, “community economic development”, and even “sustainable community (economic) development” are now common-place in the discussions and debates over natural resource allocation and management.

The meaning of such terms as they are used in many of these debates is often not clear. At times, such terms may also be used interchangeably. Yet, these terms do have some very distinct meanings and their confusion in debates can hinder progress and understanding. It is important that all parties in a debate or planning process understand the basic terms and concepts.

To review this complexity, a series of topics are summarised:

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

For natural resources planning and management it is important to recognize that these terms embody a broader range of issues and topics than simply the allocation of resource dollar values under current industrial uses.

This will make consultation and debates much broader in the future. Agencies with very restrictive legislative mandates on what it can (must?) consult the public with will certainly encounter this pressure.

## **Community Economic Development (CED)**

The prevalent model in the 1990s, CED attempts to integrate local economic development with community values and needs. Particular attention is directed to addressing local equality or poverty issues. Partnerships between government, industry, and volunteer sectors are typical.

Issues such as participation and representation are especially important in CED approaches. To be effective, key CED actors must be drawn from a wide range of local sectors (social, cultural, economic, etc.). There is also a critical role for governments at the local and supra-local level.

The Community Economic Development Centre at Simon Fraser University describes CED as “a process by which communities can initiate and generate their own solutions to their common economic problems and thereby build long-term community capacity and foster the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives”.

In their view:

- “development” is not necessarily equated with “growth”;
- it means consolidating existing resources, and improving qualitative aspects of community life.

The idea of building local human capacity (skills, knowledge, training, support structures, etc.) is central to the idea of better “equipping” local places to respond to challenges and opportunities.

The goal of CED is to create and enhance opportunities to generate and maintain economic wealth within the community.

CED strategies are supposed to be developed with broad public input and to represent general consensus with respect to the direction of future local economic development. Issues are not necessarily limited to “economic” ones, as a collective may decide to allocate resources to improve local quality of life.

Community economic development is rooted in local empowerment, autonomy, as well as individual entrepreneurship. CED is seen not as a panacea, but rather as a “complimentary” strategy for disadvantaged places.

While various CED strategies and tools have been applied in urban and rural places; and at global, regional, and intimately local scales, there is no single formula to remedy a community’s economic concerns.

Small, rural, communities face 2 clear imperatives with respect to local community economic development.

- The first is “capacity building” - enhancing the collective skills of individuals, groups, and leaders to create a foundation for an innovative and effective community.
- The second is to create “value-added enterprises” - emphasis on creating some local economic diversity.

Community economic development as a long-term, forward looking, set of strategies and not a bundle of “quick fixes” or “buzzword” projects. CED strategies are not best employed in this kind of quick fix in response to sudden economic collapse scenario. Instead, CED approaches can better equip, broaden, diversify, and strengthen the economy in rural and small town places.



## **Community Development (CD)**

In a general sense, “community development” concerns improvements to local social and cultural infrastructure. Variables can include the physical, social, organizational, and cultural environment of places.

Community development is often identified as being concerned with increasing the skills, knowledge, and abilities of residents - and with increasing the ability of the community as a whole - to access information and resources, and to then use these tools to create strategies to address changing circumstances. This is referred to as “human capacity building”.

Community development is generally considered to be “holistic”, involving local economic systems together with local institutions, political leadership, community spirit, social structure, and other factors beyond economics.

For rural and small town communities the critical question is the degree to which the economy is dependent upon single industries or single resources. The more dependent a local economy, the more difficult (but also more critical) it is to diversify.

During the 1950s and 1960s, community development was largely a government organized endeavour. However, there has been a steady emergence of non-government organizations (NGOs) and voluntary sector agencies in community development.

Key issues for the success of community development activity include:

- 1) identification of needs,
- 2) local participation,
- 3) inter-organizational and inter-group relations,
- 4) social interaction, and
- 5) ongoing support.

All of these issues also affect the ability of community residents and groups to participate in natural resources planning and management processes.

## **Sustainable Community Development**

The incorporation of “Sustainable Community Development” concepts into CD and CED is relatively new. It involves linking local business and community needs with aspects such as the carrying capacity within the local environment.

There is no single definition for such a complex concept. In fact, our understanding of the terms has been changing as new trends and interpretations develop.

This means that the use of such a term in public debates or consultation processes is fraught with difficulty. Different groups may not understand how each is using such a complicated term in the debate, or worse, they may come to an agreement but have very different interpretations of what that agreement will do.

While sustainable community development is multi-faceted, it must at least include:

Economic sustainability:

with an emphasis on enhancing existing local assets without degrading their quality.

Political sustainability:

with an emphasis on maintaining the support of the majority of the community over the long term.

Social sustainability:

means a project or initiative must be integrated into, and connected with, the community’s social structure.

Environmental sustainability:

which links the impact of a project or proposal to the local environment.

There is clearly a focus on long-term economic, environmental, and community health.

## **LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN CED/CD/SCD**

While there are some common threads apparent through the concepts of community development and community economic development, public participation is the cornerstone.

Beyond numeric participation, there is also a need to participants to come together with some form of vision or consensus. For any such consensus to become a successful community development initiative, it is necessary for the broader public to show general support.

## **PART C - LOCAL PARTICIPATION**

In seeking to undertake community or public consultation, the success of any process may depend less upon the process and its execution than upon the local capacity of the residents to organize as an effective unit or set of units. This local capacity is a recurring theme.

Even the most elegant consultation process design will not effectively gauge local opinions, nor even engage anything resembling the local “community”, unless that community has the basic capacity to identify the issue as relevant to them and develop a position with respect to the disposition of that issue.

At least four aspects of “community” are important in evaluating the local capacity for involvement with public consultation or participation processes.

The first concerns who is living in the area.

While this includes the population density and other gross measures, it also includes the socio-economic characteristics of residents. The capacity of area residents to organize and participate is often linked to socio-economic capacity. Further, the ability of area residents to organize into cohesive groups will be linked with the level of local socio-economic diversity.

The second concerns the local/non-local integration of the residents.

In resource based communities the pattern has been one of high in- and out-migration. If residents do not feel a bond with their present place of residence, and do not identify with its collective future, then their level of involvement and commitment to consultation or participation processes will be diminished.

The third involves the local activities and participation patterns of residents.

This relates to the ability of the residents to draw upon informal social organizations as a basis for collective action. Such networks also form a basis for “return” information flows from process representatives back to their local “constituency”.

Fourth, local social group interactions.

These provide examples of community institutions and reflect the ways residents organize themselves and their commitments to the local community. This level of commitment and capacity will affect the success of public consultation processes as much as the organization of the process itself.

## **PART D - RURAL AND SMALL TOWN CONTEXT**

### **Introduction**

The complexity of rural and small town places, and of the issues involved in natural resources management and planning, should not be underestimated.

The very geography of rural and small town places in northern British Columbia dictates ranges of advantages and disadvantages.

In terms of advantages:

- There are many people with a long local residential history. These people can be a valuable source of information and background useful in contemporary debates.
- People know one another. Informal communications networks are generally well organized.
- An economic focus upon one or two resource industries can reduce the number of “variables” which arise in debates.

In terms of disadvantage:

- These are “Places on the Periphery”. Residents often feel left out of economic and political decision-making. Many of the decisions which intimately affect their town are not made locally.
- Small community size also implies limited human resources and social infrastructure.
- Remote locations mean limited access to alternative sources of information.

Some "New" Stresses:

- "Urbanization" pressure involving population movements to small towns can result in changes to the social and political organization of those places. Local consultation processes must recognize different and changing power bases and "political" institutions in these communities.

- some urban-to-rural movements (especially near larger metropolitan centres) are connected with a "commodification" of rural lifestyles. "People buying into a picturesque lifestyle and landscape". This influx of new residents affect not only the economic and social relations within localities, but also will have important political consequences; it will affect the types of issues being debated and decisions on community priorities.

- Public hearings or consultation processes often become the venue for groups with differing community visions to act out their struggle for local power. This makes it difficult to disentangle meaning within the debates.

If public participation becomes overly bureaucratized the public will have little confidence in the value or effectiveness of participation. This will create a crisis of legitimacy.

## **Public Participation in Rural/Small Town Communities**

Information and education are key to both community identity and community empowerment. Without that identity and empowerment, local participation in any form of public consultation process will be limited.

Certain sectors of the public are more willing, and able, to organize and become involved as a coherent community group. The danger for consultation process managers is that they may equate these organized groups with “the community” and not go further with trying to generate additional public involvement.

In terms of community groups, we could generalize at least two sets:

- 1) interest groups: well-established and usually well entrenched in the local decision making structure.
- 2) specific “cause” groups: usually more diverse, focussed on single topics, and tends to use media or political venues for change as it is less bound into existing power and decision making structures.

The extent of participation is likely to be influenced by a range of considerations, including:

- 1) Conflict  
the degree of conflicting interests around an issue.
- 2) Information  
degree of technical knowledge required to understand the issue.
- 3) Relevance  
the “immediacy” of the outcome of the debate,
- 4) Time  
the period of time over which the issue has been important and over which consultation and participation may take place in developing policy options.

One problem rural and small town communities face when organizing to participate in major resource planning and management processes is access to information.

One solution is to create a framework for all parties to exchange information and to share resources and expertise. This is a type of “multi community” collaboration on community development and community economic development processes.

## CONSENSUS

The concepts of consensus and consensus based decision-making is now common in discussion of community development, community economic development, and sustainable community development.

A capsule summary may be:

In consensus decision making:

- each member's concerns must be addressed
- and every member's support is required.

This means that participants:

- share decision making power equally,
- and the group is not divided into 'winners' and 'losers'.

Working to satisfy everyone's interests can often lead to innovative solutions.

- It may take longer than simple majority voting,
- but with the full support of the group, implementation can be easier.



## **SOME IMPLICATIONS**

It must be remembered that the concept of “community” may be defined in very different ways by the range of people and interests who may wish to be involved in public or community consultation processes.

- Both “communities of interest” and “place-based communities” can develop collective actions. Such actions are likely to be based on very different issues and motivated in very different ways. The more local a place-based community, the generally more geographically limited its scope of interests and influence.
- Both “top-down” or “bottom-up” formulations of community are problematic.
- A working definition of the scope of "community" to be involved will inform the managers of the process (as to who is eligible to participate) and will serve to alert members of the general public that their interests may be connected with the particular process underway in their area.

The issue of scale also becomes important. It presents some of the most critical difficulties in fostering public or community participation in natural resources planning and decision-making.

- For example, local residents may be directly impacted by changing employment opportunities and so have both a place-based and interest based community motivation to participate.
- Residents within a larger region, may also feel a place-based interest in participating.
- Moreover, people outside of the local region may feel close identification as a community of interest with the particular topic undergoing discussions.
- There may be many diverse “communities” at any scale. It presents a significant logistical problem.

The motivation of public interest and involvement in long term planning processes presents a challenge.

- Neighbourhood community groups may become motivated to participate in public hearings when a new land use is being proposed for the area which they feel will have a detrimental impact upon their property values. Such "crisis" participation generally yeilds only short term involvement.
- Broad motivation of "communities" of residents in public planning processes must be around;
  - a) an identifiable issue or topic,
  - b) one the group feels affects them or their interests,
  - b) one in which they share a generally common position.

Given the diversity and complexity inherent in the "community" concept, a flexible framework is needed in developing and implementing natural resources planning processes.

- Communities develop, grow, and change over time, they also respond to both local and non-local events and pressures.
- The incorporation of both place-based and interest-based definitions must be incorporated along with top-down boundary setting for planning areas and bottom-up identification of involvement by those who feel they have a stake in planning for the land base.

People may belong to and interact with several distinct communities within any single locality. Layers of community ties and linkages bind people in different ways, and to different degrees, to places.

- In rural communities, where population flows and economic linkages may be widespread, the incorporation of "place bounded" relationships together with "communities of interest" is important in developing a community participation plan in resource planning and management processes.

Information and resources for participation must groups be available on as level of a playing field as possible.

- Local branches of senior government offices, while they may happen to be located in rural constituencies, generally have the full resources of the Ministry or Department to draw upon.
- Community participants will be sensitive to the very important issues of equity and equality within the process.
- Support of some type may need to be allocated to rural citizens groups to assist them in more fully participating in such processes.
- These concerns become more pressing as the length of time processes operate becomes longer.

One of the critical needs in public participation forums is information. Community and community development writers identify information as critical to effective citizen participation.

- Identification of educational capacity and access to information needs is a key first step in process design.
- A process flow chart, no matter how conceptually clear, is wasted if participants are not capable of fulfilling their respective roles.

Community participation is now envisioned as one part of a broader set of community development concerns.

- Public consultation processes must move beyond a limited number of issue areas to now incorporate social, economic, cultural and other issues.
- Processes must move beyond a limited number of "usual participants". The trajectory for citizen involvement in public policy issues is one of increasing activism.

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**NOTE:**

For a much more complete listing of reference material concerning the definition of community and the issue of community participation in resources planning, please see our annotated bibliographies:

- #1. Citizen Participation in Resource Management - Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - An Annotated Bibliography. November 1998.
- #2. Community and Sustainability - Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - An Annotated Bibliography. November 1998.
- #3. British Columbia Models of Community Participation and Examples of Management - Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - An Annotated Bibliography. November 1998.

The are available on-line at: <http://quarles.unbc.ca/frbc/index.html>

