

Developing New Brunswick's protected areas policy



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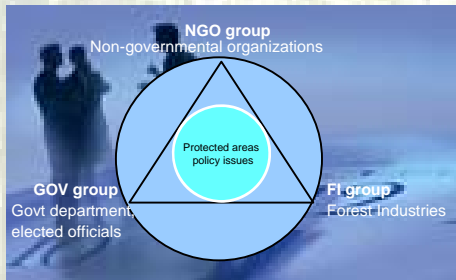
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Research question

How is Crown forest policy developed?

Influential policy makers

The new "iron triangle" of modern policy making typically involves three dominant stakeholders



Developing forest policy

Characterizes previous forest policy research

- Focused on forest issues using natural sciences
- Government and forest industry negotiated
- Assumed stepped process: defining issue, selecting a policy option, law making, implementing, and evaluating
- Little attention paid to examining policy making in forest research
- This research case begins to fill this information gap



McAdam residents protest protecting nearby areas

Note:
The protected areas policy is one of four cases being examined in Bill Ashton's doctoral research. Therefore, this report contains preliminary conclusions.

Research approach

Describes qualitative research methods for reliable and valid findings

- Identified influential policy makers
- Completed ten interviews: 4 from GOV group, 3 from FI group, and 3 from NGO group
- Used background documents as another source to corroborate interview data, like reports, website articles, newspaper articles, public meeting presentations, and committee minutes
- Analyzed data with three methods: chronological analysis, thematic analysis, and sociological frame analysis

Chronology

Identifies key events in background documents compared to perceptions of stakeholder groups

- 1990s Different notions of protected areas
- 1997* Protected areas on government policy agenda: consultant hired, purchase Georgia Pacific lands
- 2000* Stakeholders' committee proposed a policy
- 2000* Government approved the policy
- 2003 New law proclaimed
- 2006 Implement protected areas

* This event was perceived as critical by all three groups

Themes

Five main topics repeated from the interview data were identified and compared among the three groups

- Area boundaries established
- Govt purchased Georgia Pacific lands, eventually used to offset Crown land that was protected
- Positions of groups were advanced with resources
- Govt leadership required
- Relationships changed

Sociological frames

Frames are assumptions by one group toward another, and are identified by words one group uses to describe another. If left unchecked, negative frames can entrench disputes.

- **Character frames** by NGO group were negative toward individuals in the forest industry.
- Such frames by FI group were negative to all environmentalists.
- GOV group stated no character frames
- **Power frames** most evident by GOV and FI groups.
- GOV group controlled timing of agenda via avoidance, shared information, ministerial intervention
- FI group had privileged access to power, used authoritarian power and intimidation silenced opposition

Research findings

Answering the research question with results from the three analysis

Chronology: How is policy made?

- A government lead initiative
- Forest management science defined possible areas
- Value-based decisions refined boundaries of areas
- Provincial cabinet declared the policy and made refinements, following a local outcry
- The policy was made law and implemented with three new committees

Themes: How is policy made?

- Government leadership obvious, by absence and presence
- Science needed, and different perspectives required for value-based decisions
- Changes reported: FI group trusted others; stronger relation with GOV and NGO groups; tension reduced between branches of department

Sociological frames : How is policy made?

- Persistent negativity between the FI and NGO groups
- Sharing information among stakeholders was pivotal to build trust for negotiations and for reaching consensus
- Influence, authority, and power of privilege largely left unchecked

Protected areas policy

150,000 ha+ of protected areas in New Brunswick



1. Bay du Vin Island
2. Blue Mountain
3. Cranberry Lake
4. Freeze Lakes
5. Glazier Lake
6. Gover Mountain
7. Hovey Hill
8. Little Salmon River
9. Little Tommoowa Lake
10. Lock Alva I
11. McCoy Brook
12. McManus Hill
13. Mount Elizabeth
14. Oak Mountain
15. Phillipstown
16. Point Wolf River Gorge
17. St. Croix River Islands
18. South Kedgwick River
19. Tabusintac
20. Wilson Brook
21. Black River
22. Caledonia Gorge
23. Canaan Bog
24. Canose Flowage
25. Grand Lake Meadows
26. Jacques River Gorge
27. Kennedy Lakes
28. Loch Alva II
29. Mt. Carleton Extension
30. Spednic Lake

- 2003 new protected natural areas law proclaimed
- 2004 regulations finalized
- 2006 committees established: local, scientific, policy advisory

How will this research be of use?

Research can assist with modernizing forest policy making

- Making stakeholders more aware of other views and the strength in multiple perspectives
- Questioning existing assumptions of policy making
- Spawning new understanding of how policy is made and perceived
- Developing practical tools and practices for stakeholders



Probing policy research

Critical questions probe this research for meaning and understanding. The intention is to provoke discussion. Request answers to these and other questions via email: ashton@unb.ca

•What's unique about this research?

•Is policy making essentially a rational series of steps?

•Why create a new law when an existing practice already existed?

•What is the importance of multiple perspectives when making policy?

•Why is public consultation important in forest policy making?

Selected References

- Request references. Email: ashton@unb.ca

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