

## Public Involvement/Community Consultation

## Learning Outcomes

- Identify sources of conflict in environmental management
- Explain why public participation / community involvement is important in natural resource management
- Identify small group processes that can be used to engage the public in natural resource planning and management
- Identify a range of alternative methods for engaging the public in natural resource planning

## Features of Environmental Conflict

- Often unable to forecast long-term effects or costs (e.g. fisheries)
- Large number of stakeholders and interested parties (e.g. Murray River)
- Many decisionmakers see conflict as scientific, data-driven dispute (e.g. global warming)
- Human & environmental time scales vastly different
- Decisions may have irreversible effects (Styx Valley)



## The times are changing...

- **Old Rules**
  - Water/air/soil are inexhaustible
  - Environments can be managed in separate units
  - Social values do not change
  - Environmental management is a technical matter
  - Technology can make anything possible
  - Hierarchical world
- **New Rules**
  - Water/air/soil are finite resources
  - All parts of an ecosystem are inter-related
  - Social values are in flux
  - Environmental management is a people management issue
  - Use of technology has limits and costs
  - Lateral world



## Other Sources of Conflict



- Northern – Southern Hemisphere
  - Rich versus poor
  - Consumption patterns / basic needs
- Eastern & western cultural influences
  - Holistic “yin-yang” vs. black/white clarity
  - Saving face vs. aggressive problem solving
- The relative power of disciplines, especially engineering/mining
- The human condition
  - Difficulty in working in the long-term
  - Greed and self-interest



## Why do Public Involvement/Community Consultation?

- In Western society, involvement rooted in principles of democratic governance, particularly with respect to “public” land
- Implementation of resource policies is facilitated by community commitment to course of action
- Both “expert” and “lay” (a.k.a. indigenous) knowledge are essential to managing complex natural systems and making better decisions



## Public Involvement as a Balancing Act



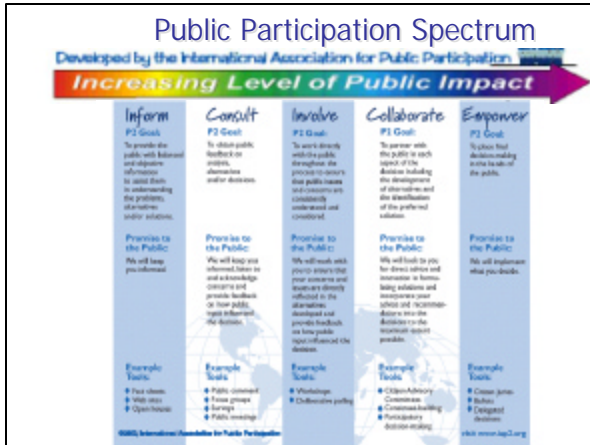
Public involvement is an interactive process, positioned between ---

- Information provision, where public unable to influence decision
- Joint decision-making where there is direct input into final decision

## Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation\*

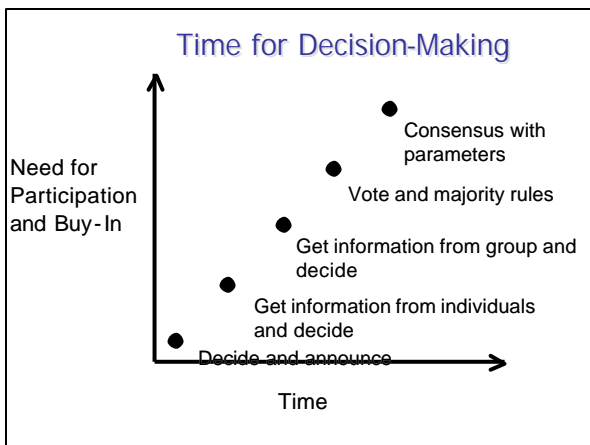
- The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- The public participation process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of all participants.
- The public participation process seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.
- The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
- The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

\*Source: International Association for Public Participation, Denver, CO. (<http://www.iap2.org/corevalues/coreofvalues.htm>)



### Dimensions of the Decision Process

Collaborations	Negotiations	Executive Decisions	Rules
<p><b>Consensual:</b> decisions are reached when everyone can "buy into" the decision.</p>	<p><b>Mediated:</b> adversaries work through intermediary crafting a compromise that will be mutually agreeable.</p>	<p><b>Unilateral:</b> Individual person makes decision and communicates orders.</p>	<p><b>Majority rules:</b> voting process guided by Robert's Rules of Order or other rule set. Decision with most votes adopted.</p>
<p><b>Collegial:</b> people with different points of view integrate their ideas into a common proposal.</p>	<p><b>Contractual:</b> friendly parties create a position that is modified until each party is willing to sign off.</p>	<p><b>Managerial:</b> Decisions made by person or persons who know most about subject.</p>	<p><b>Minority rules:</b> committees make decision for others on a representative basis.</p>
<p><b>Dialogic:</b> assumptions underlying decisions are explored until there is mutual understanding.</p>	<p><b>Informal:</b> individuals and subgroups declare what they want and what they are willing to give to agree to decisions.</p>	<p><b>Consultative:</b> Executive retains right to make decision, but seeks input and advice from staff and others.</p>	<p><b>Adjudication:</b> decisions are made "by the book" by impartial judge or bureaucrat.</p>



### Stakeholders

- Have a vested interest in a project
- Would be affected by the outcome of a project
- Perceive themselves as likely to be affected
- Think they should be involved
- May be neutral in views, but turn critical if not asked or involved

## 10 Purposes for Calling a Public Meeting\*

- To comply with the law. In this case, procedure is often as important as substance.
- To obtain information from or about clients. Hear citizens' views on issues, goals, alternative policies and actions.
- To give information to citizens.
- To improve public decisions or programs.
- To enhance acceptance of public decisions on programs.
- To alter political power patterns and resource allocations.
- To respond to citizen concerns.
- To delay or avoid difficult public decisions.
- To gain political advantage (put on a media showcase).
- To seek collaborative solutions to problems.



\*Source: Jean Mater, 1984. *Public Hearings Procedures and Strategies*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

## Common points of view re: environment

1. <b>Survivalism</b>	Limits have been reached
2. <b>Promethean</b>	No limits, technology will save us
3. <b>Administrative rationalism</b>	Let the experts decide
4. <b>Democratic pragmatism</b>	Let the people decide
5. <b>Economic rationalism</b>	Let the market decide
6. <b>Green romanticism</b>	Trees/water have value for own sake: <u>stewardship</u>
7. <b>Green pragmatism</b>	Must elect better representatives, <u>change system</u>
8. <b>Sustainable development</b>	Need to balance community, environment and economic needs

## What Constitutes "Effective" Public Involvement?

Effective public involvement...:

- ...provides for an open exchange of information and ideas between the public and decisionmakers → **good communication**
- ...leads to better quality decision-making → **better decisions**
- ...informs and educates the general public → **informs/educates the public**
- ...increases the value of government goods and services → **meets social needs**
- ...reinvigorates civic culture and promotes active citizenship → **builds better citizens**

## Consultation toolkit (1)

Print media generally used for information purposes

- Brochures
- Newsletters
- Advertising
- Press release >>> feature story

Selected representation

Agency may use:

- **Information centre**      ? Phone hot line
- **Expert panel**

Agency may select:

- Personal contacts (#1)
- Interviews
- Advisory group or citizen panel
- Task force or roundtable
- Focus groups



## Interpersonal methods (Selected/limited)

Two-way communication where agency or government select public representatives:

- **Interviews:** one-on-one meeting with formal set of questions for key stakeholder or opinion leader
- **Advisory committee or citizen panel:** representative stakeholders assembled to provide input to policy decision or planning
- **Task forces or roundtable:** experts and/or representative stakeholders assigned to develop solution or policy recommendation
- **Focus groups:** Directed interview session with selected representatives, led by a outside neutral party

## Small Group Processes (Nominal Group)

- Useful for combining individual judgments into group judgment
- Groups of 8-12 people with facilitator/recorder
- Four Phases
  - 1. Silent generation of ideas
  - 2. Round-robin listing of ideas (sharing of ideas with group)
  - 3. Clarification is where participants discuss and clarify group items
  - 4. Prioritization (voting and/or ranking)



## Small Group Processes (Focus group)

- Planned discussion with to solicit knowledge, feelings, and perceptions about a topic
- Works best with group 8-12 people (heterogeneous mix work best)
- Focus is not consensus but gauging breadth of perceptions
- About 5 general questions are posed for group discussion
- Ideas are recorded, transcribed, and analyzed



## Consultation toolkit (2)

### Broadly representative events and meetings:

- **Tours**
- **Open houses**
- **Community fairs**
- Samoan circle
- **Workshops**
- Design charettes
- Future search conference
- Simulations and role playing
- Questionnaires and surveys
  - Face-to-face
  - Phone
  - Internet

## Interpersonal methods (Broad public involvement)

- **Tours:** for stakeholders, elected officials or media
- **Open houses:** allow public to tour at own pace
  - At stations, resource people guide and facilitate
  - At entrance, explain format and hand out comment cards
- **Community fairs:** special event with variety of activities to provide information and raise awareness
- Samoan circle: leaderless meeting traditional style?
- "Coffee klatches": small gatherings in someone's home
- **Workshops:** public work sessions on topic or project where participants attempt to solve problem or develop formal input
- Design charettes: intensive, usually multi-day, hands-on community-wide planning and design event
- Future search conference: visioning for desired futures
- Simulations and role playing: participants act out various scenarios and outcomes

## A facilitator...

- Is a neutral servant of the group
- Does not evaluate or contribute ideas
- Helps group focus its energies on task = SYNERGY!!!
- Protects all members of the group from attack
- Makes sure everyone has an equal opportunity to participate [follow-thru]
- Controls use of time, if necessary



## Skills of effective facilitator

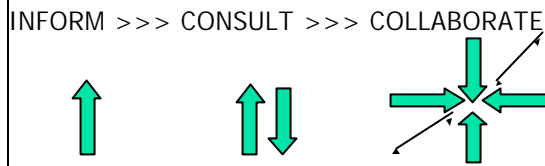
- Impartiality
- Good listener
- Creates trust
- Excellent communication skills, including body language [balance]
- Inventiveness in problem solving
- Skilled management of the interaction
- Flexibility

1. Define purpose and goals
2. Identify stakeholders, positions and interests
3. Analyze complexity (what else is going on?)
4. Identify consultation techniques
5. Develop consultation strategy
6. Implement plan
7. Report outcomes
8. Inform stakeholders of the final decision
9. Evaluate consultation process

## Designing a Public Involvement Process



**Collaboration** is bringing individuals, organizations, and/or communities together in an atmosphere of support and respect to solve emerging problems too big for one group



## Why collaboration fails

- Lack of vision/sense of priority
- Lack of leadership/wrong leadership
- Wrong membership
- Too much work/too little time
- Poor communication
- Limited resources
- Turf battles
- Efforts of individuals not rewarded

There is cautionary movement toward...



- Adaptive management – continuous learning
  - Uncertainty of complex ecosystem interactions
- Co-management
  - Self-governing user communities
  - Collective property rights over common property
- Integrated management councils
- Participatory conservation - Botswana