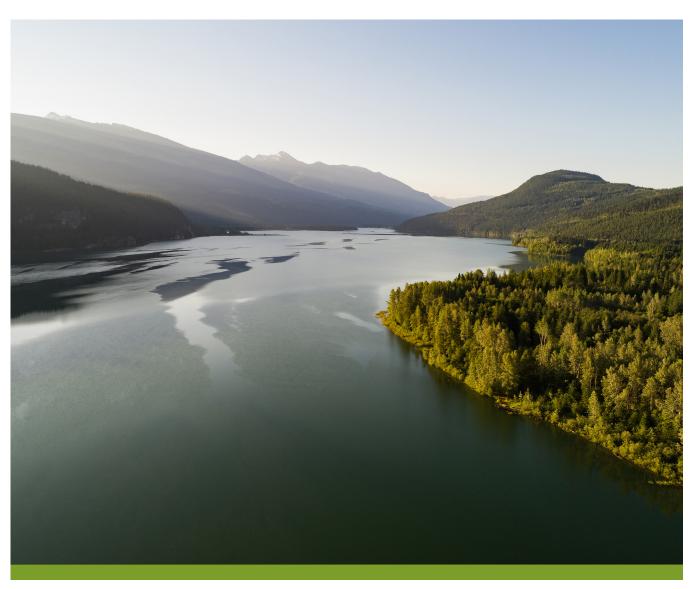# Community-Led Land Use Management and Planning

A REVIEW OF OPPORTUNITIES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR THE UPPER COLUMBIA REGION

APPLIED RESEARCH
&INNOVATION
Selkirk College

COLUMBIA BASIN
RDI
RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
Selkirk College

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public land use within the Upper Columbia region of British Columbia (BC) is a growing concern for many groups, resulting from an increase of user conflicts and pressures to the ecosystem. Further, the approaches to land management in BC are rapidly shifting in an effort to right previous wrongs with respect to the dispossession of Indigenous land. In 2019, the province formally adopted Bill 41, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA), committing to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. As part of this work, the BC government has committed to developing a new planning framework, through the Modernized Land Use Planning (MLUP) program, that involves deep collaboration with Indigenous Peoples to conduct decision-making processes on public land. In addition, MLUP will serve to address the increasing complexities of land management and encourage stakeholder participation. However, the advancement of MLUP has been limited by resource availability and is currently focused on the complex process of establishing agreements between provincial and Indigenous governments. As a result, many communities, including most in the Upper Columbia region, remain without modern and relevant guidance on how to coordinate land use across the landscape, and no clear timeline on opportunities to participate in a government-led planning process. Communities are seeking guidance on how to prepare for public land use planning and establish planning objectives through community-based initiatives.

The research conducted for this report provides communities in the Upper Columbia region with an overview of best practices and key criteria to exhibit readiness for participating in planning efforts. Through a review of community planning case study examples in the Pacific Northwest, analysis of academic literature, and 11 key informant interviews, the report outlines tangible actions for communities to advance planning through initiatives that are not formally led by the BC government.

The report explains community-based planning and how it can be beneficial to rural regions. In addition, it conducts a review of the history of land use planning in British Columbia and provides an overview of the MLUP process. Within this, the report provides a set of readiness criteria offered by government official interviewees as a guide to help communities become more equipped to engage in the MLUP program if the opportunity arises. Projects that demonstrate alignment with these themes may be more likely to receive support:

- the planning process advances reconciliation
- the plan addresses cumulative effects
- the plan addresses priorities and commitments for water sustainability, wildfire recovery, and species at risk
- the planning initiative has reliable third-party funding
- parties to the plan have signed a memorandum of understanding or terms of reference
- the plan supports the resolution of land use/user conflict
- the current land use plan requires updating
- there is a high likelihood of reaching agreement on a plan
- a commitment has been made by the Minister or Cabinet
- regionally based representatives of key ministries have confirmed support for the planning process

Examples from eight case study initiatives that have relevance to community-based planning are included to offer lessons that provide a deeper understanding of the many ways in which communities can influence and shape the planning process. Through a review of each case study's governance structures, guiding principles, funding sources, scale, stakeholder inclusion, and final outputs, readers gain a deeper understanding of how initiatives can form to provide a voice for the public. Finally, an overview of the most critical aspects of community-based planning is included to help communities adopt best practices that will advance their agendas. These best practices include:

- develop partnerships with indigenous governments
- choose stakeholders wisely
- hire a third-party consultant
- understand public interests
- ensure adequate funding
- clarify roles and responsibilities
- involve settler governments early

- work within existing legislation and policy
- consider how long-term and cumulative effects affect the plan
- develop a communications strategy
- document the process
- commit to implementation

While the BC government works to effectively conduct planning activities within their pre-defined priority areas, it is integral for communities in need to lay the groundwork for an effective, respectful, inclusive, and well-supported planning process. The information provided in this report will prepare communities and empower them to work together to manage the lands that surround them.

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Public lands in the Upper Columbia region of British Columbia (BC) (**Figure 1**) are facing increasing and complex pressures. Human-centered land uses, such as resource extraction and industrial development, as well as commercial and non-commercial recreation, are an increasing concern and compete both with each other and the needs of ecosystems and wildlife. Impacts to wilderness areas from ongoing and historic uses are complex and poorly understood, with cumulative effects to ecosystems and additional challenges from climate change only beginning to be revealed. In addition, spurred by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and related local/provincial/national policy frameworks, many areas in Canada and around the world are witnessing a reckoning related to the rights of Indigenous Peoples to use and manage their traditional territories. This reckoning is especially salient in BC, where few treaties exist and territories often overlap, creating a level of complexity in the land governance framework. As a result, the province is experiencing a profound shift in the role of Indigenous Peoples in land use management.

The many factors affecting land management in BC have led to conflict and uncertainty, causing stakeholders from multiple sectors to call for a more coordinated approach to land use planning and management. Depending on the sector these interests represent, there is hope for greater protection for ecosystems and wildlife, enhanced security of vital natural infrastructure assets, less competition between industrial and non-industrial land uses, improved investment certainty, and/or formalized spaces for Indigenous knowledge and laws to be incorporated into land management strategies.

Figure 1: The Upper Columbia Region of British Columbia (study area and map provided by Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative)

Although competing demands on the land base are intensifying, they are not new. The BC government has attempted to balance various land interests in the past through land use planning. The Land and Resource Management Planning process saw development of strategic, landscape-level plans that were completed for nearly all of BC in the 1990s and early 2000s. In their time, these plans were groundbreaking examples of consensus-based agreement. They also established a legacy of planning tools and relationships that continue to inform government's relationships with land users today. The plans, however, were static documents, and many have lost relevance over time.[1] Plans developed early in the Land and Resource Management Planning process were also developed without sufficient involvement of Indigenous Peoples.[2]

In 2017, following a decade without clear government leadership on land use planning, BC's premier issued a mandate letter for the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) that included working with First Nations and communities to modernize land use planning in the province.[3] Since then, the BC government has been developing a new planning framework that supports reconciliation with Indigenous communities, ensures adequate involvement of stakeholders, and reflects the complexity of the current land management context. Several pilot projects have been initiated across the province. However, advancement has been limited by resource availability. As well, government-to-government agreements with Indigenous Peoples

must be in place before a government-led planning process can proceed.[4] Establishing agreements is time-consuming and resource intensive work. Many Indigenous governments have competing priorities and are inundated with requests that hinder their ability to engage. In addition, this work requires building a trusting and collaborative relationship between one another, founded through respect and reciprocity. As a result, most communities, including those in the Upper Columbia region, remain without modern and relevant guidance on how to coordinate land use across the landscape, and no clear timeline for when an opportunity to participate in a government-led process will materialize.

Communities are therefore seeking guidance on opportunities to advance planning without leadership or initiation from the provincial government. This study sought to provide some of that guidance while recognizing that community-initiated collaborative land use management could take many forms, with varying levels of government integration or legal effect. Through a review of various case studies of planning initiatives from across northwest North America, this report offers lessons for how communities might mobilize to motivate an improved approach to the planning, use, and management of lands surrounding them.

A NOTE ABOUT THE TERM 'PUBLIC LAND'

Historically, the term 'Crown land' has been used to define land that is not privately owned or designated through a Treaty within BC.[5] It defines land as a public asset, for all citizens to use, and has its roots in British colonization. The term has been removed from modern terminology due to its legal inaccuracy. Indigenous Peoples have not surrendered their land to Canada, or BC, and the land is in fact unceded. More recently, 'public land' has replaced 'Crown land' in popular usage, with the Government of BC using this term as part of the Modernized Land Use Planning Process. Although it remains inadequate in capturing the true meaning of unceded Indigenous land in BC, this phrase will be used throughout the report, while acknowledging a shift in terminology is underway.

PURPOSE AND APPROACH

Study Objectives

The goal of this project was to answer the following questions:

1. How can communities in the Upper Columbia region influence, within existing legal and policy frameworks, how the lands surrounding them are used and managed?

2. How can communities be ready to engage in a modernized land use process led by the provincial government if/when that opportunity arises?

3. What factors should be considered in the design of planning processes or management bodies that facilitate the involvement of community interests in land use planning?

Methods

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

The project team inventoried and reviewed documentation related to examples of community-based land use planning mainly from within BC, with a few examples within the Yukon and Western United States. The aim of the analysis was to generate an overview of factors that should be considered in the design of community-based planning, such as: the involvement of Indigenous Peoples; geographic scale of interest; objectives of the collaboration; stakeholders involved; authority for decision-making; and decision-making processes. Additionally, this review was conducted to identify factors that act as barriers and bridges to the success of such initiatives.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The team conducted 11 key informant interviews with representatives of case study communities, researchers and practitioners advancing this work in BC, and key government officials involved in the design and implementation of BC's modernized land use planning framework. The goals of the interviews were to understand success factors and strategies for a community-based initiative and situate these learnings within the context of the movement toward a more robust land use planning process in BC. Given the shortage of available literature on community-led land use management applicable to the specific context of BC, these interviews provided critical data for this study. In accordance with Selkirk College's research ethics policies, the names of interviewees will be kept confidential.

COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING

WHAT IS IT?

Community-based planning is a process by which citizens work together to shape their future.[6] The intent of community-based planning is to develop a comprehensive plan, informed by communities' needs.[7] It is centered on open dialogue, deep collaboration, and consensus decision-making. The process directly engages community leaders and the public in an active effort to "move their community from today's reality to tomorrow's possibilities".[8] Planning efforts are conducted by community members, for communities, in ways that link to local or provincial government planning systems.

Community-based planning processes vary on spectrums of government or stakeholder involvement and legal effect. Planning activities may be legislated by governing bodies, such as the Peel Watershed Planning Commission (see 'Community Case Studies' below). In these processes, there are often government areas of interest and particular mandates preconceived for the process. Communities use government funding to develop a plan that values community needs and interests. This process generally leads to adoption by the government, and it is used for future decision-making. Alternatively, communities may unite to form a collective that speaks to their interests. This process requires external funding. The outcome may be a comprehensive plan, a set of land use recommendations, or simply a collaborative group that agrees to organize their land use activities among themselves. Governments (Indigenous and/or settler) may or may not choose to adopt the group's plan or recommendations, partially or fully, once they are complete.

Community-based planning processes can be vastly different in their degree of stakeholder engagement. Historically, government led approaches to community-based planning include a select number of stakeholders that are categorized into specific groups (industry, Indigenous, environmental, etc.). More collaborative community-based planning methods may operate on an open-door policy, which states that any public member with an interest in the process is welcome to provide input. Other models may adopt a combination of these approaches, using open-door policies in conjunction with a quorum, to ensure that there is a minimum representation from each larger stakeholder group (see 'Shuswap Trail Alliance' in 'Community Case Studies' below).

The definition of a 'community' is a largely debated topic. For the purposes of this study, we used a place-based definition, and focused on the small communities (e.g., population 8,000 or less) that make up the Upper Columbia region. A community is comprised of all stakeholders who have an interest in its well-being, including residents, businesses, non-profits, governments, and visitors. Recognizing that there is already substantial research effort and guidance dedicated to the involvement of Indigenous communities in modern land use planning (see 'Modernized Land Use Planning Program' below), this study focused on opportunities for primarily non-Indigenous communities to initiate or lead some form of planning for use of the public lands that surround them.

WHY IS IT BENEFICIAL?

"Put it this way... public planning or land use planning is bankrupt if it's not public interest".

– Peel Watershed Planning Commission Representative

Ninety-four percent of British Columbia is designated as public land. This land has historically been managed by the provincial government, with little community involvement; however, that approach has gradually shifted with a recognition of the importance of considering a community's needs and values when making large-scale decisions that affect community well-being. Formalized land use planning processes that are equitable, fair, transparent, and built around community input represent an opportunity to establish legally enforceable land management strategies that allow a community to achieve its vision for the future. However, provincial government representatives have indicated that capacity limitations will prevent near term facilitation of wide scale modernized land use planning in areas that are not experiencing priority land use challenges, or do not demonstrate readiness for land use planning.[9] In this light, community-based planning can kickstart the process. By organizing without provincial government involvement, communities can start to influence the way public lands are managed. Community-based planning highlights to the provincial government that the community is interested and committed to engaging in the process.[10] The plans, strategies, or guidelines developed from this work may also be used by municipalities and Indigenous governments to help make decisions over their jurisdictions.[11] Community-based planning is highly collaborative. It allows for diverse groups to come together and build relationships that may not have previously existed and advance reconciliation on a personal level as opposed to government-to-government engagement.

Community-based planning provides constituents an avenue to advocate for their beliefs and have a say in how the land is shaped around them. This work can have a profound impact on more than land use, including breaking down systemic barriers to societal issues, such as racism and ableism.[12] In connecting communities, building relationships, and providing equitable outlets to share stories, community-based planning can have lasting impacts to societies and the land. The process of community planning often leads to more knowledge and information-sharing to continuously improve how processes are conducted outside of the plan as well.[13]

GOVERNMENT-LED LAND USE PLANNING IN BC

Governments use jurisdictional boundaries to dictate planning responsibilities in British Columbia. Planning processes are often led by governments because they have the ability to enact legal authority related to the plan, provide consistent, long-term funding, and do not dissolve after the development of a plan as many community-led committees do. Indigenous, local, and provincial governments exercise varying levels of influence in planning processes, directly tied to their jurisdiction. For example, shorelines are provincial jurisdiction, meaning local governments are unable to enforce regulations on the land. However, local governments are often involved in decision-making process with respect to shoreline development because much land adjacent to shorelines is private property where local government bylaws apply.

INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS

Authority to Plan

Before colonization, Indigenous Peoples were able to use all the land and water within their territories. Under the *Indian Act,* established by the Canadian government in 1876, reserve land was set aside for Indigenous populations for the use and benefit of Indigenous Bands.[14] Reserve land is still classified as federal land to this day, and Indigenous Peoples are excluded from obtaining title to this land.[15] The *Indian Act* was created to control and assimilate Indigenous populations, with rules related to Indian status, resource use, land ownership, education, and much more.[16] Indigenous populations were not consulted and did not consent to the establishment of the reserve system, and they were not compensated for the lands that were taken from them during colonization.[17] These settler frameworks for planning excluded Indigenous governments from the process through discounting their laws and decision-making practices.[18] However, with BC's new *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' Act (DRIPA),* Indigenous governments are beginning to exercise their rights and title and are active in planning processes occurring on their land. Indigenous governments have the right to make decisions within their territory.

Indigenous Peoples are renewing their cultural and political processes and asserting their rights on the land. They have begun to develop written documentation outlining their processes for settlers to better understand these laws and guiding principles. This work is sometimes defined through the term 'land relationship planning', a planning process that reflects Indigenous Peoples' practice of living in a relationship with the land and living things.[19] Kehm, Bridge, and Robertson have developed a document, titled Effective Practices Guide: Land Use Planning by First Nations in BC, that shares best practices for land use planning. In it are several examples of successful Indigenous led planning efforts and a framework for land use planning between settler and Indigenous governments.

Examples of Current Initiatives

YAQAN NUKIY – LOWER KOOTENAY INDIAN BAND

Yaqan Nukiy takes part in various initiatives located within the Ktunaxa Nation Traditional Territory, which "follows the boundaries of the Regional District of Central Kootenay to the east and north and extends west to the east shore of the Columbia River and Arrow Lakes".[20] The band manages the Yaqan Nukiy Stewardship Area through their Land and Resource Department, which engages with provincial and local governments, public and private sectors, and non-governmental organizations to steward the land. Their most recent projects include participation in the Kootenay Lake Partnership (see 'Local Governments – Current Initiatives' below) and the development of a Floodplain Management Plan for the Creston Valley.[21] Together with Ducks Unlimited and the Yaqan Nukiy Wetlands Friendship Society, the Land and Resource Department manages 1,100 acres of wetlands near Creston. Additionally, they manage agricultural and light industrial land tenures on community land. They enforce regulations and bylaws and conduct land planning located within their territory. Yaqan Nukiy is currently developing a Land Use Plan, which will become part of the Comprehensive Community Plan when it is finalized.[22] Through this Land Use Plan, they have worked to establish zoning bylaws, development procedures manuals, and development standards and permit areas, and design criteria for development within their community reserve lands.[23]

Formally completed in 2015, the [Haida Gwaii Marine Plan](#) was jointly developed by the Council of the Haida Nation and the BC government, with input provided by the Haida community, local government, stakeholders, and the public.[24] The plan area is within the Haida Statement of Claim, which extends from Brooks Peninsula on northwest Vancouver Island, north to the Canada-US (Alaska) border, and west to the toe of the continental shelf off Haida Gwaii.[25] Grounded in an ecosystem-based framework that incorporates science, traditional, and local knowledge, the plan establishes objectives and strategies for the management and conservation of the coastal and marine areas and resources of Haida Gwaii.[26] It serves to guide the public and industry on acceptable marine uses within the area of interest that support sustainability and restoration activities. The plan is currently in its implementation phase, which is led by the Haida Nation.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Authority to Plan

Local governments ultimately are unable to enact legal authority regarding use of public lands that fall outside of municipal boundaries. However, they are an integral part of the planning process as they have certain authorities over private lands, and they also provide insights into community needs that guide provincial government decisions. Using land use regulations, such as zoning and bylaws, local governments support community visions within their jurisdictional limits. In addition, local governments often work closely with the provincial government to find solutions to public land management issues that affect adjacent private or municipal lands.

Examples of Current Initiatives

KOOTENAY LAKE PARTNERSHIP

Formed in 2010, The [Kootenay Lake Partnership](#) is a multi-agency initiative that works together to provide management resources to the public regarding Kootenay Lake.[27] It was spearheaded by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) following concerns over habitat loss on the shoreline of Kootenay Lake and inadequate Indigenous consultation on development referrals. The Partnership is government-to-government, involving equal involvement of the DFO, Yaqan Nukiy Band, Ktunaxa Nation Council, BC government, and the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK). The Partnership worked to conduct a mapping project that inventoried habitat, cultural values, and archaeological sites along the shoreline, which were integrated into shoreline management guidelines from the provincial and federal government. This led to the development of the Shoreline Guidance Document, which provides the public with the steps needed to obtain an authorization for shoreline usage, including federal and provincial legislation. The RDCK provides this information to upshore private landowners to help them better steward their shorelines. FrontCounterBC and the RDCK use this document to make decisions on development proposals on Kootenay Lake.[28] The Kootenay Lake Partnership has continued to update plans for new development permit sites to enhance or restore riparian areas. This information is communicated to private landowners through the local stewardship group, Friends of Kootenay Lake.

KOOCANUSA RECREATION STRATEGY

The [Koocanusa Recreation Strategy](#) was initiated by the Koocanusa Recreation Steering Committee, which consists of the Regional District of East Kootenay, Ministry of FLNRORD, Ktunaxa Nation, Tobacco Plains Indian Band, and Columbia Basin Trust.[29] It was formally introduced in the Grassmere area in 2021, with further implementation coming soon within the area. The intent of the Strategy is to develop management approaches to conserve the ecosystem and inform the public on approved recreation sites.[30] The Strategy used a highly collaborative planning process involving a Public Advisory Group, local residents, recreation users, and many other stakeholders. The Committee employed open houses, surveys, and values inventories (consisting of recreation sites and trails, cultural conservation areas, archaeological sites, and sensitive ecosystems), to inform the Strategy.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

History of Land Use Planning

The BC government has historically focused on land and resource management through a lens of resource extraction and urban settlement. Legally, strategic land use planning was conducted solely by the provincial government and corporate tenure holders and was primarily forestry-sector focused.[31] For decades, land use decisions were made by a select group of people, resulting in an increasing number of conflicts between stakeholders, and a demand for greater public participation. In the early 1990s, the BC government began to implement land use planning practices as a tool to resolve these conflicts between users and open the process to interest groups. Land use plans followed the goals of improving economic stability, land use certainty, achieving healthy communities, and ensuring environmental sustainability.[32] In 1992, the provincial government created the Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE), to conduct strategic regional planning within Vancouver Island, the Cariboo-Chilcotin, and Kootenay Boundary—three areas identified as the most controversial and disputed locations in the province.[33] CORE defined their process of planning as: "…a participatory style of planning for relatively extensive geographic areas that focuses on defining land and resource allocation and management goals/objectives and corresponding strategies for achieving these goals/objectives".[34]

In addition, the provincial government was establishing a system of subregional planning in areas outside of the CORE hot spots, known as Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs). The LRMP process was guided by the policy, *Land and Resource Management Planning: A Statement of Principles and Process.*[35] In 1996, the province abandoned CORE due to many issues in its strategy, including its inability to research consensus and growing mistrust among participants. Although CORE was no longer an entity, it submitted its plan recommendations for the hot spot areas to the provincial government, leading to approved plans that are still used today. After its abandonment, the provincial government began focusing efforts on LRMP planning, defined as an integrated, subregional process based on consensus building.[36] The LRMP objectives were to set strategies for land use and resource management that address social, economic, and ecological values.

Both CORE and LRMP processes were the first-time diverse stakeholders had an opportunity to contribute to the land use conversation, through a participatory planning model that encouraged "interests-based negotiation" at the planning table.[37] However, these processes did not adequately involve Indigenous communities and by 2001, most plans were completed, providing strategic direction for land use in BC that largely excluded Indigenous voices. Additionally, there was a lack of resourcing for plan monitoring, review, and enforcement, which has resulted in continued conflict and confusion on the land base. To date, approximately 90% of public lands are managed using Land Use Plans developed during the CORE and LRMP processes. The Plans are primarily implemented under the *Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA)* and the *Land Act.*[38] Others, such as the *Mines Act* and *Environment and Land Use Act,* provide avenues for implementation as well.

In 2001, a new provincial government was elected, resulting in a shift away from this participatory style of planning into a more formal consultation model, with provincial resource management agencies having stronger control over land use planning decisions.[39] This model ensured that Indigenous governments were included in the planning processes, however it placed authority in the province alone. BC Premier Gordon Campbell committed the province to a "new government-to-government relationship based on respect, recognition and accommodation of aboriginal title and rights", asserting that their "shared vision includes respect for our respective laws and responsibilities".[40] Operating under the "Duty to Consult and Accommodate", this new approach was an attempt to commit to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. However, in utilizing a consultation approach, which allowed the government a veto option, power largely remained in the hands of the provincial government.

Growing concern was expressed by Indigenous communities regarding the infringement of their rights and decision-making authority. The Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) began to recognize this infringement, resulting in legal cases between settler and Indigenous governments to confirm Aboriginal title. For example, the SCC ruled in favour of the Tsilhqot'in in 2014, confirming title over 1,800 square kilometers of their territory[41]. Further, new documents including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report, detailing the experiences and impacts of the Canadian residential school system on Indigenous Peoples, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, an international instrument that sets out the rights that "constitute the minimum standards for

the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous Peoples of the world", outlined a need for federal and provincial governments to work with Indigenous governments in a way that was out of step with land use planning practices in place at that time.[42] Thus, when the province formally adopted *DRIPA* in 2019, the Province's commitment to reconciliation included a clear process for Indigenous Peoples to be part of decision-making processes on public land. This commitment has led to the development of the Modernized Land Use Planning (MLUP) Program.

Modernized Land Use Planning Program

The MLUP program is part of a provincial mandate to work collaboratively with Indigenous governments to modernize land use planning in BC, and $16 million has been provided between 2018-2021 to conduct this work.[43] The process is led by the BC government in partnership with Indigenous governments, and through engagement of communities, local government, industry, and other stakeholders.[44] MLUP focuses on understanding new complexities in planning, such as effects to the land from climate change and cumulative impacts, ensuring communities and stakeholders are engaged throughout the process, growing the economy, and committing to reconciliation with Indigenous governments.[45]

Through this approach, Ministry of FLNRORD and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) will partner with Indigenous governments and engage with stakeholders to consider varied interests are represented in the planning process. Local governments have been identified as a key stakeholder due to their unique perspective in decision-making processes and bordering jurisdictional boundaries.[46] They will be involved early on and throughout the planning process to ensure consistency and coordination within the defined planning region.[47] Engagement with stakeholders and the public will occur at key milestones as identified by the provincial government. These engagement opportunities may include questionnaires, online surveys, advisory groups, open houses, phone calls, emails, meetings, or workshops.[48] An online platform has been created for public members and stakeholders to learn more about current projects involved in the MLUP program.[49] This approach moves from consensus building as was previously conducted and into targeted engagement that is more effective at building wide community support with limited time and resources.[50]

There are five phases within MLUP, each with different objectives:

- Pre-Planning: This step involves determining if land use planning is required through the development of a business case and mandate. A few factors that would deem the process required include, expressed user conflict, considerable cumulative effects from current activities, and concerns for the ecosystem or wildlife (specifically, species at risk, wildfire prevention, and water sustainability).

- Plan Initiation: The plan initiation phase is where a government-to-government (Indigenous-provincial) partnership is confirmed, the Terms of Reference and Workplan are developed, and initial stakeholder engagement occurs. This is a critical step for community-based planning as it provides stakeholders an opportunity to share their vision for the specified area. Any pre- and collaboratively-developed community visions or plans are useful inputs at this stage and the Plan Development phase.

- Plan Development: This phase is where governments collect baseline data, develop planning scenarios, and create a draft Land Use Plan. It is another contact point where governments seek stakeholder feedback on the various scenarios to gauge interest and hear about any issues.

- Plan Evaluation & Approval: Within this phase, governments jointly work together to review and seek feedback from stakeholders on the draft Land Use Plan. Stakeholders once again are provided an opportunity to express their thoughts regarding the Plan. Once the feedback is reviewed, the governments make final revisions and approve the Plan.

- Implementation & Monitoring: The Implementation and Monitoring phase encompasses years after the Plan has been adopted. It involves monitoring the effectiveness of the Plan and reporting out on its successes and/or failures.[51]

Currently, MLUP is occurring in select priority areas throughout public lands in BC. Projects are categorized into Type A, B and C, related to their size and levels of complexity.

- Type A projects are comprehensive, full scope projects that encompass a large area. For example, a Land and Resource Management Plan.

- Type B projects are component-based, with targeted values, that encompass a large area. For example, a Natural Disturbance Recovery Plan.

- Type C projects are issue specific, with targeted values within a small area. For example, a Watershed Plan.[52]

There are 18 projects at various stages of development within the MLUP process.[53] Within the Upper Columbia area, there is one project engaged in MLUP. It is part of an ongoing planning process in the Columbia Valley (see 'Columbia Valley Recreation Planning Initiative' in 'Case Study Initiatives' below).

Between 2021-2023 the BC government will be looking at how to onboard new projects of interest, as well as building upon the earlier lessons learned from current projects and stakeholder engagement feedback. They will be working to build support for aligned planning and stewardship initiatives, creating more clear definitions of roles and responsibilities across different initiatives, advancing reconciliation, and supporting economic recovery goals following the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, the BC government will be learning from the pilot projects to better understand how to focus land use planning in a meaningful way, given limited capacities and increasing complexities and demand for use of the land.[54]

BC government representatives are aware of substantial interest in MLUP from across the province; however, the capacity of the program is currently limited. Government agencies are currently assessing the potential for program expansion. It is anticipated that additional information on the future scope of MLUP in BC will be identified within the coming year.[55]

Project Selection and Readiness Criteria

With limited capacity to lead additional land use planning processes, BC government representatives have indicated that they are more likely to select projects that demonstrate readiness. Currently, the BC government has not established a set of defined readiness criteria; however, the following items were offered by interviewees as a guide to help communities become more equipped to engage when the province is able to take on a new project. Projects that incorporate the items below may be more likely to receive support through funding, capacity building, legal implementation, or other means.

ADVANCES RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is of the utmost importance in the MLUP process. Projects that support the implementation of an existing Reconciliation Agreement are likely to be flagged as a priority. Additionally, projects that Indigenous governments have confirmed an interest in and have the required capacity to engage in may be chosen over projects that do not engage Indigenous governments.

ADDRESSES CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The provincial government has determined a key driving factor for MLUP is the need to understand cumulative effects of activities on the land base. Projects that identify how planning will be conducted in a way that mitigates or addresses cumulative effects are of interest to decision-makers.

ADDRESSES PRIORITIES AND COMMITMENTS FOR WATER SUSTAINABILITY, WILDFIRE RECOVERY, AND SPECIES AT RISK

Similarly, the provincial government is taking steps to focus on water sustainability, wildfire recovery, and species at risk in MLUP. If the community-based planning objectives address priorities and commitments related to these topics, as outlined by the provincial government, it is more likely that the project will be considered a priority.

HAS RELIABLE THIRD-PARTY FUNDING

With limited funding capacity, the BC government is seeking projects where it would not be the sole funder. Communities may be chosen if they are able to acquire reliable and long-term third-party funding. More information about acquiring funding can be found in the 'Best Practices and Tools for Success' section of this report.

HAVE SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a "non-legally binding formal agreement intended to confirm roles and responsibilities, and to facilitate cooperation between the parties".[56] Similarly, a Terms of Reference (TOR) is a non-legally binding agreement used to establish project requirements, define working roles and the work to be performed, and clarify what constitutes successful project results. Not only are these documents integral to the success of the project, coming to the MLUP process with one or both demonstrates a level of commitment. The process involved in establishing an MOU or TOR is lengthy. This sets the scene for the rest of the work that will be done, and it is critical that everyone understands and agrees to the terms. Refer to 'Best Practices and Tools for Success' below for more information on how to successfully develop these documents.

SUPPORTS THE RESOLUTION OF LAND USE/USER CONFLICT

One driver of MLUP is the fact that there is a high number of users and corresponding conflict on the land base. Plans must address how these conflicting uses will be resolved in a way that considers the future, and projected increase in use.

CURRENT PLAN REQUIRES UPDATING

Projects may be prioritized if the current plan within a sub-region or area-based scale of interest requires updating due to changes in the environment or society. Updates may be required when, for example, significant natural disturbances (e.g., beetle, wildfire) have changed the landscape, new economic opportunities exist, or there is a lack of Indigenous engagement or support for current direction.

HIGH LIKELIHOOD OF REACHING AGREEMENT ON A PLAN

The provincial government may be more likely to engage with a community that is able to reach consensus in a relatively efficient manner. An effective way to showcase this is to hold a plebiscite or stakeholder engagement survey that provides quantifiable results supporting the Plan and its objectives. See 'Best Practices and Tools for Success' below for more information on developing these tools.

COMMITMENT HAS BEEN MADE BY THE MINISTER OR CABINET

If the Minister or Cabinet has committed to the project, there is a higher chance that it will receive formal support through the MLUP process. Communities may be able to expedite this process by involving their MLA in the early stages of the plan.

CONFIRMED SUPPORT AND CAPACITY FROM REGIONAL FLNRORD AND MIRR

Although MLUP is a collective effort on behalf of the entire provincial government, regionally based representatives of FLNRORD, along with MIRR and other ministries, will know best the available capacity to take on a new project. Communities that obtain support from regional offices are more likely to be supported in the MLUP process.[57]

Provincial Land Use Planning Policy and Guidance

The provincial government is in the process of updating existing and developing new policy and guidance documents to support MLUP. Once publicly available, they will be posted at Land Use Planning Policy & Guidance - Province of British Columbia. These documents will serve as the best way to ensure a community-led planning process aligns with MLUP work, which in turn will increase the likelihood of the project being supported and endorsed by the provincial government.

Publicly available documents:

- The Guide to Effective Stakeholder Engagement is intended to provide clarity on the principles and processes considered in stakeholder engagement. Additionally, the document sets out guiding principles for planners to follow when conducting stakeholder engagement, through a review of best practices and case study examples. The appendices include examples of stakeholder engagement materials and templates.

- The Guide to Giving Legal Effect to Land Use Plan Content provides an overview of the existing legal tools to implement finalized land use plans. The guide focuses specifically on provincial legal tools that are used to enforce authority through a lens of settler law. However, Indigenous Nations each have separate laws,

rules, and policies that must also be considered and understood when developing a land use plan. Some areas will have more than two sets of legal tools to consider when developing a land use plan.

- The document [Best Practices for Writing Plan Content: Objectives, Strategies, Goals](#) offers ideas for developing a high-quality land use plan that is effectively able to define a collaborative vision for the future within the planning areas and describe how the vision will be achieved. Included in the document are tips and tricks to ensure the land use plan is easy to interpret, implement, and monitor.

Documents available soon:

- Amending Existing Land Use Plans: Policy and Procedures

- Guidance for Socio-Economic & Environmental Analysis (SEEA)

- Integrating Climate Change Information in LUP

- Governance Models and Best Practices for Agreements, Engagement and Collaborative Planning with Indigenous Governments

- Integrating Science, Local and Indigenous Knowledge in LUP

- Identifying, Prioritizing, and Selecting LUP Projects: Policy and Procedures

- Interim Measures Guidance

- Guidance on Third-Party Funding

- Linkages Between LUP and Forest Landscape Planning

CASE STUDY INITIATIVES

The following section includes examples from eight initiatives that have relevance to community-based planning. Examples stem from communities within British Columbia, the Yukon, and the western United States. Each has their own variation of governance structure, guiding principles, funding sources, scale, stakeholder inclusion, and final outputs. Not all examples are explicitly community-led; however, all were designed to serve the public interest, and each offers lessons that provide a deeper understanding of the many ways in which communities can influence and shape the planning process.

COLUMBIA VALLEY RECREATION PLANNING INITIATIVE

"...there will be room for everyone. I can't tell you where that'll be. I can't tell you you're going to be happy with where you go, but there will be room for everybody."

- Columbia Valley Recreation Planning Initiative Representative

The Columbia Valley Recreation Planning Initiative (CVRPI) aims to develop a Recreation Strategy for the Invermere Timber Supply Area, located in the Columbia Valley, an area that currently does not have strategies to guide recreational use. With the BC government's commitment to MLUP, the CVRPI is a timely initiative that highlights differences between past and present planning work. The CVRPI was selected as a case study in this report based on their involvement in recreation-based community planning on public land and their proximity to the study's region of interest. This case study provides a deeper sense of best practices for initiatives surrounding communication strategies and stakeholder involvement (see 'Governance and Stakeholder Involvement' below and 'Best Practices and Tools for Success').

Background and Mandate

The CVRPI, formally known as the Columbia Valley Recreation Access Management Plan (CVRAMP), was initiated in 2008, in response to a recognized need for a "shared vision of recreation management and stewardship for the Columbia Valley".[58] However, the roots of this initiative can be traced back to the mid-1990s when the Province of BC completed the Kootenay-Boundary Land Use Plan (KBLUP). The KBLUP's management guidelines and Implementation Strategy did not include the Columbia Valley region because it required a more detailed level of planning, which exceeded the available resources.[59] To date, there is no formal plan in place, due to several reasons, including changes in government priorities, funding cuts, and major complexities on the landscape.[60] This initiative involves local communities, land users, and recreation groups who receive support from provincial and local governments to develop a Recreation Strategy for the Columbia Valley.[61]

The catalyst for the CVRPI was a recreation group, the Greenway Trails Alliance, which realized that to obtain legal trail development within the region, they would need to work closely with other users to develop a management plan.[62] They engaged other user groups, including the Windermere Valley Snowmobile Society, Lake Windermere Rod & Gun Club, and Windermere Valley Dirtriders, to establish mutually agreeable principles surrounding trail usage.[63] By 2015 they had established working ground rules and brought this information to key decision-makers in the Columbia Valley (such as the MLA) to show the collective desire to develop a recreation management plan. This information was also provided to the Director of the Kootenay Conservation Program, a partnership of 80 organizations that work to conserve ecosystems in the East and West Kootenays.[64] By demonstrating a public interest in recreation management, the collaboration was able to make recreation management planning a policy priority in the region and in 2017, the Columbia Valley Recreation Access Management Planning process was initiated.[65]

The goal of the Initiative is to protect the recreational assets of the region, while respecting and conserving the environmental, cultural, and agricultural values of the land for future generations.[66] Its primary objective is to develop recreation strategies for public land within the Columbia Valley.[67]

Governance Structure and Stakeholder Involvement

In 2019, this work was facilitated through a Steering Committee, with minimal structure aside from a Terms of Reference. The Steering Committee consisted of representatives from BC and local government, as well as external stakeholders. This committee invited representatives from Indigenous Nations, local governments, and user groups to be involved in the development of the plan, with the goal of ensuring diverse and balanced representation for decision-making. However, the CVRPI quickly found that it was too cumbersome to involve everyone in the planning process.

This led to the development of a formal Planning Committee in 2021, consisting of 12 people with valuable skills and involvement in the community. Local stakeholders with a vested interest in the planning area were invited to apply to participate on the CVRPI Planning Committee. A representative from Akisqnuk (a member band of the Ktunaxa Nation) sits on the Planning Committee.

The CVRPI employs a third-party consultant to facilitate meetings, develop content, and keep the project moving forward. The consultant will also be responsible for writing the final report. The CVRPI has a Cabinet-approved geographic area and scope for planning, which has resulted in additional supports.[68] Through the MLUP process, they are provided 0.2 of one full-time equivalent Ministry of FLNRORD staff member's time to support the project through liaison and guidance.[69] This staff member assisted in the development of a Communication Strategy for the Initiative.

Outputs and Authority

The CVRPI aims to establish strategies for 12-14 land planning units within the Columbia Valley. They have worked to identify priority land planning units and are currently beginning this process with one unit[70]. Together, the plans will form the Recreation Strategy and an accompanying map. The Recreation Strategy will identify areas of appropriate recreation activities throughout specific times of year. The Strategy will not have any formal authority. Rather, it will serve as a guiding document to inform future land use decision-making for provincial government, such as trail sanctioning.[71]

With the help of the Communications Strategy, the CVRPI developed a website that is used to provide updates to the public on their efforts and achievements. The website communicates recreation guidelines for recreationists as well.

Resourcing

The Columbia Valley Recreation Planning Initiative has been a recipient of grant funding from Columbia Basin Trust and the Ministry of FLNRORD (Rec Sites and Trails BC and the regional office). Recently, they received two years of funding from the Community Works Fund, a Federal Gas Tax fund allocated by the Electoral Area Directors in the Regional District of East Kootenay. Additionally, the Ministry of FLNRORD provides one 0.2 full time equivalent employee for advisory support.[72] This support is offered through assistance with funding proposals and seeking resources for plan development and implementation, providing staffing capacity and expertise, meaningfully engaging with Indigenous government, and supporting with CVRPI Strategy implementation.[73]

SHUSWAP TRAIL ALLIANCE, ROUNDTABLE, AND WORKING GROUP

"well-designed, well-signed, well-maintained, well-promoted"

Shuswap Trail Alliance Motto

The [Shuswap Trail Alliance](#), Regional Trails Roundtable, and Trails Working Group collaboratively manage trails and recreation throughout the Shuswap watershed. These groups use progressive models, including equity-based approaches (see 'Best Practices and Tools for Success') and an open-door policy (see 'Governance Structure and Stakeholder Involvement' below) to break down systemic barriers to inclusivity in the outdoors. The Shuswap watershed was chosen as a case study for this report because of their unique methods of public engagement, holistic views on community-based land use planning, and effective approaches to establishing meaningful relationships among the community.

Background and Mandate

The Shuswap Trail Alliance is a legal non-profit formally incorporated in November 2005, following various conversations, strategies, and studies surrounding trail stewardship within the Shuswap watershed. Many stakeholders were collaborating on smaller projects related to this work, without any cohesive avenue to achieve tangible goals. The Alliance was formed with a vision to create an internationally recognized natural trail and waterway network in the Shuswap, involving jurisdictions including Secwepemc, provincial, regional, and municipal government.[74] The purpose of the Alliance is to "develop, operate, maintain, and promote a network of non-motorized trails, waterway and hut-to-hut routes throughout the Shuswap watershed region in the Province of British Columbia for educational, recreational, economic, and environmental benefit to the public, and to do so collaboratively through community partnerships".[75] This organization serves as a strategic meeting point for regional trail development and management as determined by the Shuswap Regional Trails Strategy (RTS), with the goal of promoting the economy, environment, health, and recreation.

In 2006, the RTS was completed, which proposed an ambitious five-year development strategy that links existing trail plans in the Shuswap watershed through a unified message of sustainability, health, and inclusion in the outdoors.[76] Through completing the RTS, the Shuswap Regional Trails Roundtable and Working Group were formed. Together, these groups provide regional partners a space to realize the wider benefits of collaborative recreational access land management and establish accountable relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

The purpose of the Roundtable and Working Group is to protect, enhance and recognize trails as an integral part of the Shuswap lifestyle, culture, and economy. Goals of these groups include ensuring trails are appropriately authorized, mapped, developed, maintained, and promoted, protecting and promoting Indigenous interests, reducing ecological damage from all trail use, managing land access, demonstrating collaborative management, and providing security to those who invest in them.[77]

Governance Structure and Stakeholder Involvement

The Shuswap Trail Alliance is a distinct organizational entity, aiding in administering the Roundtable and Working Group. The Alliance is an organizational tool created by regional partners and local government to work together and support the RTS through the Roundtable and Working Group. The values, protocols, guiding principles, and working priorities of the Alliance are founded in and informed by the RTS, however, the Alliance also exists to support regional partners in their work to develop and manage regional and community greenway trails projects and active transportation networks. The Alliance operates under a Board of Directors and with paid year-round and seasonal staff to achieve outcomes as defined in the RTS.

The RTS was developed through a Steering Advisory Committee comprised of Indigenous Nations, municipalities, the regional district, recreational clubs, environmental groups, businesses, industry, and general public. In addition to this collaborative group, the Fraser Basin Council was retained to assist in the facilitation and development of the RTS.[78] They continue to be consulted as needed on implementation measures.

The Secwepemc Nation is involved as lead government partner, acting as facilitators to lead dialogue in a way that upholds their traditional values.[79] This relationship guides the work of the RTS. All governments involved in this work have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, recognizing the Secwepemc's rights to the land and decisions made on the land. They follow the guiding principles of stewardship, recognition of Aboriginal titles and rights, collaboration, and respect.[80]

The Roundtable and Working Group act on recommendations from the RTS through defined operational goals and responsibilities. The Roundtable meets once a year to set direction and provide course correction as needed in collaboration with the 'Working Group' who have an operational mandate.[81] In addition, roundtable members communicate (two ways) with their respective organization and across all orders of government, resolve disputes, and access or leverage funds to enable sufficient resources for implementation of the RTS.[82] The Roundtable consists of Indigenous, municipal, regional, and provincial governments, environmental stewardship and outdoor education organizations, and recreation groups.[83]

Meeting four times a year, the Working Group is a forum for collaboration that serves to implement the RTS at an operational level, with direction from the Roundtable.[84] They review, clarify, and provide input to trails authorization requests from local, Indigenous, and provincial governments, assist trails groups with trail authorization, communicate with new participants, and prepare the report, work plan, and briefing notes for the annual Roundtable meeting. The Working Group involves a smaller selection of members included at the Roundtable, ensuring that each larger category (e.g., recreation groups) receives adequate representation.

The Roundtable and Working Group operate under open-door policy, a community based participatory planning approach which provides space for members of the public to express their concerns, values, or interests. Using bylaws and a clear Statement of Intent, conversations are guided in a respectful and appropriate manner to achieve outcomes.[85] Decision-making is practiced through a consensus-based model, moving from individual positions to common interests. Consensus may not be unanimous agreement with all elements by all parties, rather it is the absence of objection.[86] Decisions may only be made if a quorum is reached. The Roundtable follows the precautionary principle, a management principle stating that if an action or policy has a suspected risk, but there is no scientific consensus on the potential harm the risk may produce, actions should be taken before harm occurs to avoid or diminish the risk until such time as scientific analysis and consensus suggests otherwise.[87] This principle is guided by adaptive management, a process to steer land management decision-making where the outcome of an action or actions on an ecosystem is uncertain. It includes setting limits of change, ongoing monitoring, and adaptive responses over time.[88]

Outputs and Authority

SHUSWAP REGIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY (RTS)

The RTS was first presented in 2006, although it continues to be updated. Initially, the Strategy focused on non-motorized greenway trail infrastructure throughout the region, but it was further revised to incorporate motorized recreational uses. It is intended to align with current best practices, changes in the landscape, and community needs. The purpose of the Strategy is to protect, enhance and recognize trails as an integral part of the Shuswap lifestyle, culture, and economy. The Strategy provides direction for ensuring trails are appropriately authorized, mapped, developed, maintained, and promoted. Championed by the Secwepemc Nation, the RTS incorporates Secwepemc values and principles into its recommendations for trail planning and development, as well as advocates for increasing awareness of historical and cultural significance of trails.[89] It is a non-regulatory document and has no authority for decision-making regarding land use, permitting, or authorizations.[90] However, it is used by the Columbia Shuswap Regional District to make decisions regarding their trail management.

Through the development of various tools as defined in the Strategy, it works to protect Indigenous interests, reduce ecological damage from trail use, and manage land access. The Strategy considers priority planning areas and hot spot projects to focus on. One tool serves as a decision-making matrix to guide the approval of trails based on potential environmental impacts of proposed activities during early planning stages. This tool ensures that federal and provincial legislation is consistently followed. It applies a science-based understanding of species and habitats in a practical adaptive management approach to coordinate baseline information with protective legislation and guidelines. Through this coordination, effective mitigation and monitoring commitments are

developed into long-term adaptive management trail plans. The Strategy includes a series of templates and checklists that trail planners can use for designing and planning trails in ways that minimize negative impacts.

Resourcing

Funding for this initiative has come from numerous resources since the implementation of the RTS. There is no core funding for this work. Each project undertaken is funded through a different collection of grants, sponsorships, and supports. The Alliance, Roundtable, and Working Group have received funding from member governments, fundraising campaigns, provincial funding programs and other granting agencies.

GOLDEN + AREA A TRAIL ALLIANCE

The [Golden + Area A Trail Alliance](#) serves to better manage recreation through trail development and maintenance within the Golden area. They follow a similar model to that of the Shuswap Trail Alliance, applying a Regional Trails Strategy to help guide their work. This example was selected for inclusion as a case study because it offers information on how to effectively lead a community-based planning process in an area with multiple approved plans already in place. Within this example, there is reference to the Golden Backcountry Recreation Advisory Committee, a group that has been involved in recreation management within a smaller area surrounding Golden for many years. The Golden + Area A Trail Alliance offers a method to expand on the work of others, without re-inventing the wheel.

Background and Mandate

The Golden + Area A Trail Alliance was formed in 2019, following the development of the Golden + Area A Regional Trails Strategy (RTS), a decision-making tool for trail development within the region. The Strategy provided a framework for the Alliance to implement its outlined strategic initiatives and serve as a primary point of contact for trail planning and development.[91] This work began due to the need to prioritize recreation through a formal organization with a commitment to focusing on access management goals. Since 1999, the area has experienced a rapid growth in tourism and public and commercial outdoor recreation.[92] Operating under a collaborative and constructive model, the group ensures sustained funding and four-season supports for recreation opportunities, through recreational land use planning initiatives.[93] The Alliance works with environmental stewardship groups, motorized and non-motorized trail user groups, private landowners, and governments, to maintain and improve recreation networks throughout the region that are "environmentally responsible, intelligently connected, and a model of sustainability".[94] Additionally, the Alliance aligns their initiatives with that of the Golden Backcountry Recreation Advisory Committee, a volunteer stakeholder led committee, who helped develop the Golden Backcountry Recreation Access Plan (GBRAP) and continue to interpret and implement its associated management direction.

Governance Structure and Stakeholder Involvement

The RTS established an organizational structure for the Alliance to operate under for achieving optimal results. The Alliance uses both a Working Group and a Roundtable to achieve their goals. Additionally, they host an annual general meeting for all motorized and non-motorized greenway and blueway (recreational waterways) trail alliance members to collaborate on current efforts for the maintenance and development of recreation trails. Together, these groups advance the strategic initiatives of the RTS and obtain sustained funding for their projects.

The Roundtable meets once a year to review and provide input to trail planning and development initiatives. The Roundtable provides an opportunity for trail user groups and the general public to participate in the Trail Alliance process. It is comprised of: Indigenous governments (Ktunaxa, Shuswap, and Metis), Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Town of Golden, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, Ministry of FLNRORD, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, BC Parks, Parks Canada, motorized trail representative(s), non-motorized trail representative(s), blueway trail representative(s), community members of Area A, and the general public.[95]

The Working Group meets quarterly to implement the RTS at an operational level. They follow direction as provided by the Roundtable and review, clarify, and provide input to trails authorization requests from Indigenous communities, provincial government, and the general public. Additionally, the Working Group composes reports and work plans as needed. The Working Group works closely with GBRAC to ensure open communication and strategic alignment between their initiatives. Members of the Working Group include Indigenous, local, regional, and provincial governments, motorized trail representative(s), non-motorized trail representative(s), Blueway trail representatives(s), and members of trail user stakeholder groups as required to provide information to the Working Group.[96]

An annual planning cycle has been created through the RTS which outlines the objective of the groups each month. Their work is facilitated by a consultant who acts as a neutral third-party member. Final decisions are made collectively after all stakeholders have provided input and come together on mutual agreements.

Outputs and Authority

GOLDEN BACKCOUNTRY RECREATION ACCESS PLAN (GBRAP)

GBRAP was initiated in 1999 and completed in 2002 as a "proactive decision-making process" to better manage recreation issues within 9,000 square kilometres of the Golden Timber Supply Area.[97] It was completed as part of the implementation strategy for the Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan. The Golden + Area A Trails Alliance was formed well after completion of GBRAP, but this document serves as a foundational guide for the work of the Trail Alliance. The Plan was developed through a volunteer-driven community consensus process, with key public and commercial recreation sector stakeholders working closely with government representatives.[98] GBRAP establishes public and commercial recreation access on the land only, there is no reference to industrial activities. This Plan has no legal effect but is used by decision-makers when reviewing projects and providing management direction.

GOLDEN + AREA A TRAILS STRATEGY

Completed in July 2018, the Golden + Area A Trails Strategy is a comprehensive plan intended to provide development and management direction for trails located within Columbia Shuswap Regional District Electoral Area A (13,735 square kilometers).[99] Building on the results from GBRAP, older bylaws, planning processes, and the Electoral Area A Parks Plan, this Strategy is used as a decision-making tool to inform mapping and the prioritization of recreation trails.[100] Prioritization is based on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the trail and its surrounding area. The plan considers many recreation perspectives, as well as cultural, environmental, social, health, and economic factors.[101] The Strategy is a living document, updated regularly as initiatives are completed and priorities shift. It has no legal effect and does not replace the authorization process for recreational activities and trails as established through the provincial government; however, the Alliance is often approached to provide comment on trail authorization requests made to government, and the Strategy forms the basis of these comments.

Resourcing

The Golden + Area A Trail Alliance is supported by the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Columbia Basin Trust, BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, and the Town of Golden. They've received grant funding from: Columbia Basin Trust, MEC, Young Canada Works, Bike BC, BC Equestrian Trails Fund, Real Estate Foundation BC, TD Friends of the Environment, BC Community Gaming Grants, Work BC, Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council, CSRD, Shuswap Territorial Land Stewardship, Columbia Valley Credit Union, and the Town of Golden.

WILLAMETTE PARTNERSHIP

"If you invest in community capacity building, the other things come into place too. You can't invest in one without the other."

– Willamette Partnership Representative

The [Willamette Partnership](#) serves to connect and minimize barriers for communities in the Willamette Basin of Oregon to implement projects that benefit the environment and their lives. The partnership acts to facilitate relationships and build capacity, while allowing their partner communities to do the work themselves. The Willamette Partnership was selected as a case study for this report because of their experience in effectively mobilizing communities to take action on planning and land use. Some of the Partnership's projects offer lessons related to creating inclusive strategies in low-capacity environments (see 'Outputs and Authority' below), while a study of the Partnership itself illuminates best practices for initiatives that involve community collaboration (see 'Best Practices and Tools for Success').

Background and Mandate

In 1996, the Willamette River Basin, the largest watershed in the state of Oregon, covering more than 29,785 square kilometres, was suffering severe ecological degradation.[102] The community expressed their concern and interest in the area being restored back to health for clean drinking water and wildlife habitat, but in a way that protected people's livelihoods.[103] Government officials, environmental groups, businesses, and farmers worked together to establish the Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI) under State Executive Order 98-18 in 1998.[104] The WRI was responsible for developing a basin wide strategy to "protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat, increase populations of declining species, enhance water quality, and properly manage floodplain areas", while considering continual economic growth and prosperity for communities.[105] The project outcome was so successful that the work continued under the formation of the Willamette Partnership, which supports communities with ecosystem servicing and market-based conservation across the United States.[106]

The Willamette Partnerships' mission is to "work to increase the pace, scope, and effectiveness of restoration and conservation to create benefits for both natural and human communities through ecosystem services".[107] The partnership envisions a world where people invest in nature to establish resilient ecosystems, healthy communities, and vibrant economies.[108] They are centered around community mobilizing and capacity building, through on the groundwork in public engagement. The Willamette Partnership refers to itself as an "honest relationship broker".

Governance Structure and Stakeholder Involvement

The Willamette Partnership operates through a Board of Directors, with mixed interests to represent the various perspectives involved in the collaborative work they conduct.[109] The Board is responsible for recommending concepts and paths forward. Under the Board, a staff team operates to carry out the decisions and partnership agreements made on behalf of the partner communities, as well as create protocols and concepts related to their three main conservation solutions: community resilience, lands conservation, and developing smarter infrastructure.

They play a supportive role with groups who are tackling issues surrounding impaired water quality, economic development, depression and obesity, habitat degradation, or a combination of these issues.[110] Partners are chosen based on their capacity to implement their ideas on the ground and trust within the community. They support partners through transferring technical knowledge, crafting policy options, creating new financing sources, or facilitating big picture thinking.[111] Their engagement with partners lasts multiple years, to build local capacity for the community to become self-sufficient. Stakeholders are brought to the table to engage in decision-making and implementation strategies based on their relevance to the project. Collaboration may involve federal or state agencies, businesses, or Indigenous groups.

Outputs and Authority

Two of the Willamette Partnership's recent projects are featured below.

OREGON WATER FUTURES PROJECT

The Oregon Water Futures Project, supported by the Willamette Partnership, was created to elevate the voices of Indigenous, Latinx, Black, and migrant communities, "who are currently underrepresented and historically discriminated against in water policy decision-making".[112] The project was designed after the State of Oregon put forward a 100-year vision for water that was criticized by many communities due to its lack of representation. The Willamette Partnership saw this as an opportunity to mobilize communities to share their stories and urge the government to make changes. The project initially focused on building trusting relationships with groups serving under-represented communities and asking about their experience or lack thereof in water policy and planning.[113] The project transformed into a collaboration between Indigenous Peoples, academic institutions, water and environmental justice groups, communities of colour, and low-income communities. Using storytelling and capacity and relationship building, the Oregon Water Futures Project advocates water justice at the state and local level.[114] Project results will be presented to decision makers with the intent of informing future water policy in the state of Oregon.

INFRASTRUCTURENEXT

InfrastructureNext is one of Willamette's three main programs, which focuses on re-shaping community water infrastructure projects. This program works closely with low income or rural communities that lack the funding or capacity for community engagement required to support major water infrastructure upgrades.[115] Willamette uses a holistic planning model, co-developed and co-applied with the State of Washington, to engage with the community to quantify project benefits across various categories including public health, economy, and the environment. They identify the barriers to implementing the project and find strategies to overcome the barriers. Part of this work involves finding avenues for funding to achieve these goals that are sequenced over time to ensure the long-term success of the project. This work stemmed from a need to implement multi-sectoral solutions and smarter infrastructure development with co-benefits.[116]

One example of this program took place in Memford, Oregon. The town experienced water temperature issues from their wastewater treatment facility.[117] The various engineering options their team developed were too costly to implement, leading them to the Willamette Partnership for a solution. Understanding that this seemingly point source issue was connected to the larger ecosystem, the Willamette team engaged a diverse group of community members to restore riparian ecosystems upstream of the wastewater facility. This restoration not only provided shade to cool down the river, thus solving the water temperature problem, it also provided more opportunities for recreation and conserved a substantial area of land.[118] The project was a fraction of the price of the original engineering quotes and spurred the development of mutually beneficial relationships between the utility and local private landowners.

Resourcing

Funding for the Willamette Partnership is received in numerous ways. The Partnership itself is funded through various sponsors, including government agencies, businesses, and trusts.[119] Individual projects have their own funding approaches, and in some cases the Partnership applies for grant funding on behalf of their partners. Although the Willamette Partnership is unable to provide funding to all of their partners, they create memos that highlight opportunities for reliable, long-term funding. These memos are provided to potential funders, facilitating initial conversations between partners and funders.

Peel Watershed Planning Commission

"A land use plan if it's properly done… is one of the most profound exercises in democracy possible."

– Peel Watershed Planning Commission Representative

The Peel Watershed Planning Commission served as a non-partisan method to tackle the development of a Regional Land Use Plan for the Peel Watershed in the Yukon. Now dissolved, the Commission was formed to ensure the voices of all government organizations (Indigenous and settler), industry, and the general public were upheld in the development of the formal Plan. The Commission was selected as a pertinent case study because of its national recognition for conservation and Indigenous rights in the planning process. This example offers useful insights surrounding best practices for staying within scope and adequately capturing public interests (see 'Best Practices and Tools for Success'), as well as how community planning leads to long-term government action as outlined in the example below.

Background and Mandate

Appointed in 2005, the Peel Watershed Planning Commission was responsible for the development and recommendation of a Regional Land Use Plan for the Peel Watershed, an area of 67,431 square kilometers. The Commission was initiated under Chapter 11 of the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA), which provides a framework for Indigenous Governments and the Yukon Government in their land use planning negotiations to conclude Yukon First Nation Final Agreements.[120] The UFA is not a legally binding document; however, it outlines ways in which Indigenous, federal, and territorial governments can work together on regional land use planning in the Yukon.[121] Yukon First Nation Final Agreements are legally binding, constitutionally protected documents, known as modern day treaties.[122]

Governance Structure and Stakeholder Involvement

The Commission consisted of six public members, each nominated by one of the following governments: Na-cho Nyak Dun, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, a joint Yukon Government/Vuntut Gwitchin nominee, a joint Yukon Government/ Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in nominee and two Yukon Government nominees.[123]

During the planning process, the Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC) was created to ensure fairness and compliance with the Yukon First Nation Final Agreements and to help the Commission and government work together on land use planning decisions. The YLUPC made recommendations to Yukon and Indigenous governments on land use planning goals and priorities, timeframes, budget allocation, and the identification of planning regions.[124] It consists of one member each from the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and Government of Canada.[125] Additionally, a Senior Liaison Committee (SLC) was created with representatives from each of the government parties. Their primary role in the planning process was to respond to any policy-related questions that came up within the Commission and to provide advice on plan development from a government perspective.[126] Finally, a Technical Working Group (TWG) was established, with representatives from each of the government parties, the Peel Watershed Planning Commission, and representatives from the YLUPC. Their role in the process was to act as the primary point of contact between the Commission and governments and provide technical advice to the Commission surrounding policies, programs, and initiatives for consideration in the development of the plan.[127]

The terms of reference (TOR), developed by the Commission, was governed by chapter 11 of the Umbrella Final Agreement. Within the TOR, eight main goals around the themes of environmental, social, and economic factors guided the development of the plan and measured its success and failures. The goals were:

- Maintain wilderness character of the region

- Maintain ecological integrity

- Maintain quantity, quality, and rate of flow of water within natural range

- Ensure any human disturbed lands are reclaimed/restored

- Recognize, conserve, and promote values and traditional land use practices of Indigenous communities

- Facilitate economic activities that benefit communities and Indigenous Nations as a whole

- Provide land use certainty and minimize conflicts

- Maintain future land use options through a cautious and flexible approach to decision-making[128]

In the early stages, the Commission held an independent public interest survey to gauge community buy-in for an official plan in the Peel Watershed, as well as to understand values within the planning region. This survey generated 80% support for the plan. The Commission continued to engage industry, wilderness businesses, environmentalists, and the Yukon public throughout the development of the plan. They consulted residents from Old Crow, Mayo, Whitehorse, Dawson City, Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic, Inuvik, Fort McPherson, and all affected Indigenous communities surrounding the area of interest.

Outputs and Authority

PEEL WATERSHED REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN

The Commission wrote the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan, which attempted to accommodate all uses of the area. In doing so they took an approach that considered the longevity of the land and the precautionary principle.[129] This principle follows the rule that if the results of an action are unknown, the management direction will be provided in such a way that precautionary measures are adopted so that no negative effects can occur. For example, industry was permitted to use the area, if they did not build roads, as the long-term effects of roads on the biodiversity of the landscape and tourism were unclear. The Plan was recommended to the Yukon Government in 2011.

In 2012, the Yukon Government decided to move forward with their own plan for the Peel Watershed and discard the recommended Plan as provided by the Commission in 2011. The Indigenous governments challenged this decision through the courts, resulting in a 2017 Supreme Court of Canada verdict which stated that the Yukon Government must work with all members of the Commission to prepare and implement a plan, as per Chapter 11 of the UFA. It was a momentous victory for Indigenous rights and has led to one of the most significant acts of land protection in North America.

The Plan was formally approved in 2019. The Plan protects 83% of the planning area, and sets out land rights as per constitutional law, including surface and subsurface rights, settlements, treaties, and primary and secondary use areas for Nations.[130]

Resourcing

The Yukon Government provided funding for the development of the Plan and continues to provide financial support to the Indigenous communities involved in the work to build the capacity required to review and comment on initiatives that take place under the plan. The implementation of the Plan and continual monitoring is also funded by the Yukon Government.

NANWAKOLAS COUNCIL

"…plans are living documents, they're never really static because the landscape is always changing, everything's always moving…"

- Nanwakolas Council Representative

The Nanwakolas Council serves as a collective voice for Indigenous governments on Vancouver Island and the adjacent South Coast to yield decision-making power at the provincial level, which they have historically been excluded from. The Council speaks directly to the BC government and acts on behalf of its constituents' best interests. This was chosen as a case study to highlight the various types of agreements that communities can be involved with at the provincial level. Nanwakolas Council provides a powerful example of how collective action that is presented using a recipe accepted by the BC government leads to positive community-based results. Additionally, it offers best practices related to funding, early provincial government involvement, facilitation, and conflict management (see 'Best Practices and Tools for Success').

Background and Mandate

Established in 2007, the Nanwakolas Council was created in response to the need for a mechanism to work on land use plans and community planning visions for the five member Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations (Mamalilikulla, Tlowitsis, Da'naxda'xw Awaetlala, Wei Wai Kum, and K'omoks). For the previous eight years, the Nations had attempted to work collectively through Tribal Councils. However, because of reporting requirements that do not allow Tribal Councils to carry over money between fiscal years, the members were finding it difficult to deliberate, make decisions, and engage in projects with multi-year planning horizons. As a result, the Nations developed the Nanwakolas Council Society to work as a united voice on issues of collective regional interest.[131]

The Council operates under the following core values:

- Empowerment of the decision-making authority of each member First Nation

- Responsiveness to the needs and wishes of the member First Nations

- Collaboration and inclusiveness in developing solutions and strategies to protect and promote the interests of the member First Nations in their traditional areas

- Flexibility to respond effectively to changes in the strategic environment in which we operate

- Integrity and trustworthiness

- Accountability

- Excellence in operational management and activities

- Excellent communication with the member First Nations Chiefs, Councils, and band offices[132]

The Nanwakolas Council has committed to establishing long-term decision-making processes and fulfilling responsibilities within the respective territories of each member Nation.[133] The Council negotiates land use and marine planning agreements and economic development initiatives, and advocates for the protection of the member First Nations' rights and title on behalf of the Nations, all of which operate outside of the BC treaty process.[134] Negotiations are conducted over all member First Nations' territories. They engage government, industry, and partners of the member First Nations to protect the rights of the Nations, and ensure they are honoured and respected. This work includes reviewing applications for provincial tenures and permits referred to the member First Nations for their decision and supporting Guardian programs (a monitoring initiative), through the Ha-ma-yas Stewardship Network.[135] Additionally, the Council provides technical expertise, operational support, facilitation, advice, and coordination of the work of the individual Nations in their stewardship efforts.

Governance Structure and Stakeholder Involvement

The Nanwakolas Council Board of Directors is comprised of six Directors. Each member Nation appoints one Director and the sixth, the Board President, is appointed by the other Directors. Directors are generally the Chiefs, or a

Councillor, of each of the member First Nations, thereby providing a direct link between Nanwakolas and the governing Councils of each member First Nation. The President acts as the spokesperson for Nanwakolas Council in engagement with the member First Nations, provincial and federal governments, and third parties. The election of the President is conducted on an annual basis.[136] The Council operates under an "open-door" policy that allows all other Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations interested in working with or joining the council the opportunity to do so.

The Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing the work of the Nanwakolas Council at a strategic governance level to implement the vision, values, decisions, and priorities of the member Nations.[137] The Directors are guided by the direction of the member First Nations; however, they do not make decisions about matters which may affect a member First Nation's territory or Aboriginal rights.[138] The autonomy of the member Nations is incredibly important. Each member Nation makes its own decisions surrounding resource development within their territory. Decisions on other topics are made collectively and by consensus. Additionally, member Nations can choose which agreements they are interested in participating in. To be a member of the Nanwakolas Council, Nations are not required to be part of every agreement that is approved.

Outputs and Authority

LAND USE PLAN AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

Since its inception, the Nanwakolas Council has been involved in the development of multiple government-to-government agreements with the Province of BC. Their first initiative, which paved the way for future conversations, involved the development of land use plans for all member Nations. In March 2006, the Land Use Plan Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) was signed. This document sets out parties' agreements on strategic land use within the member Nation's territories and includes commitments for the government-to-government implementation of the AIP and further land use planning work. These plans became the foundation of the policy changes and agreements that have subsequently been established.

NANWAKOLAS STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT

The Nanwakolas Strategic Engagement Agreement, signed in 2019, sets forth mutually agreed upon procedures between Nanwakolas [member Nations] and the Province of BC for consultation and accommodation within all member Nations territories. It establishes how decisions are made on public land in the spirit and vision of the "New Relationship and Transformative Change" objectives set by the provincial government in their reconciliation efforts.[139]

Through the Strategic Engagement Agreement, the Province is committed to improving engagement and communications on land and natural resource management in the member Nations territories.[140] This Agreement follows a corporate standardization approach to how communication is conducted, with the goal of focusing on higher priority, strategic-level decisions and interests. This agreement does not allow for veto power by the member Nations, as the Province is still responsible for the final decision. Roughly 60 Nations have signed Strategic Engagement Agreements with the Province. These agreements provide Nations not in the treaty process an active role in decision-making on non-reserve lands.[141]

NANWAKOLAS RECONCILIATION PROTOCOL

Officially signed in 2011, the Nanwakolas Reconciliation Protocol is responsible for setting forth the socio-economic relationship between member Nations and the Province surrounding resource use on public land in member Nations' territories.[142] It has been agreed that a percentage of all revenue generated from tenured resource use within member Nations' territory is provided to them. The Protocol focuses heavily on forestry, however there is reference to other resource uses, such as hydro-electric development and large-scale tourism.

NANWAKOLAS ATMOSPHERIC BENEFIT SHARING AGREEMENT

The Nanwakolas Atmospheric Benefit Sharing Agreement states that 80% of the annually calculated Available South Coast Atmospheric Benefits are distributed to the Nanwakolas Council member Nations.[143] They have the ownership and right to sell Distributed Atmospheric Benefits within their territories.[144] Using a mutually agreed upon Forest Carbon Model, analyses are conducted to determine the dollar value of these benefits. Since its establishment in

2016, the Agreement has funded roughly 35% of the Nanwakolas Council Guardian programs. Many Nations have developed Atmospheric Benefit Sharing Agreements with the Province as they provide effective avenues for economic gain through forest conservation. The Agreements are guided by the Forest Carbon Offset Protocol, jointly developed by the Province and the Pacific Carbon Trust, which establishes procedures for modelling forest ecosystem carbon.[145] Currently, all Agreements are in effect from the date they were signed to March 31, 2025. The Agreements can only be entered into if a signed Reconciliation Protocol Agreement is in place.[146]

FORESTRY AGREEMENTS

Eight Forestry Agreements have been signed between Nanwakolas Council member Nations and the Province since 2012. These Agreements determine how consultation and revenue sharing between the Province and member Nations is to be conducted. Each Agreement varies in its level of consultation and percentage of revenue distributed to the Nation. These Agreements allow Nations to make decisions related to where forestry can and cannot operate within their territories.

Resourcing

The Nanwakolas Council receives 30% of their funding from the BC government. Additional funds are generated from various organizations, including the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and Coastal First Nations, an alliance of nine BC First Nations who protect the Great Bear Rainforest and provide job opportunities for their Nations. Additionally, some funds generated through the agreements listed above are put back into the Nanwakolas Council to further this work. The remaining funds are provided to member Nations for use in their communities.

OKANAGAN COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The [Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program](#) (OCCP) is a collective effort to holistically manage conservation and economic development within the Okanagan Valley of BC. The Program provides resources and information to help communities take action on improving environmental protection. The OCCP was selected as a case study because of their experience in implementing conservation initiatives that involve planning on public land. Various projects developed by the OCCP offer lessons on using Indigenous law and culture to drive strategies (see 'Outputs and Authority' below), and successful methods of community engagement (see 'Best Practices and Tools for Success').

Background and Mandate

The OCCP is a partnership of organizations and governments with shared goals of maintaining the ecological connectivity and regional biodiversity of the Okanagan Basin, protecting species at risk, and balancing conservation and regional growth objectives.[147] The members of the OCCP work together to understand knowledge gaps, set priorities on conservation issues in the Okanagan Basin, and effectively communicate this information to the public. OCCP partners have each signed a Statement of Cooperation, outlining their shared concern for local biodiversity and commitment to work together.

The OCCP's mandate is to coordinate and facilitate conservation and stewardship efforts on public and private lands, set conservation and stewardship goals and objectives, and generate the support and resources needed to maintain this effort.[148] The OCCP is guided by three main goals:

- integrating knowledge and decision-making for ecological planning

- achieving conservation through effective communication

- providing quality and successful service.[149]

Their work operates under the Precautionary Principle, which states that when an activity poses a threat to the environment, preventative action is taken to counter these threats even if there were uncertainty in the effects that would follow the event or action. Decision-making is guided by adaptive management values, where actions are modified based on learning from research, monitoring and evaluation.[150] For the next five years (2021-2026), the activities of the OCCP are centered around urban land use planning and the impact of public land tenures on the surrounding natural systems.

Governance Structure and Stakeholder Involvement

Members of the OCCP include all types of government (Indigenous, federal, provincial, and local), as well as land trusts, businesses, stewardship, and outreach organizations. The members sign and endorse an OCCP Statement of Cooperation. Each member designates a representative to partake in roundtable conversations. The OCCP also works with organizations that are not signatory partners yet who share similar specific project goals. Through collaboration efforts, OCCP provides appropriate information to all governments to enable well-researched policy and planning decisions that achieve the maintenance of functioning ecological corridors and representation of all four major habitat types in the Okanagan Valley.[151] With oversight by the OCCP Steering Committee, Action Teams are used to ensure that partners actively implement projects.

Outputs and Authority

OKANAGAN LAKE RESPONSIBILITY PLANNING INITIATIVE

One major project currently undertaken by the OCCP is the Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative. First established 2.5 years ago, this Initiative seeks to understand the impact of development on the natural areas surrounding Okanagan Lake. The Initiative is co-led by the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP), and the OCCP. However, roughly 54 people are directly involved in this work as part of the larger planning group, including Indigenous, local, provincial, and federal government staff, land trusts, and stewardship and outreach organizations. Each member involved has personally committed to the group how they will move this work forward in their organization and individually.

The goal of the initiative is to develop a collaborative visioning and planning process that brings together all governments to enforce the protection of the natural diversity of Okanagan Lake and surrounding areas. The process is founded upon Syilx Okanagan values, leadership, and knowledge woven with western science to address the cumulative impacts on kɬúsx̌nítkw (Okanagan Lake) caused by past and present human activities and natural processes.[152] The project seeks to implement a Syilx Water Responsibility Planning Methodology to create new Syilx and non-Syilx engagement and decision-making processes. This Methodology will establish the framework for the Okanagan Lake Responsibility Strategy, which aims to create systemic change through adopting cultural values, environmental legislation, and urgent climate mitigation efforts for long-term protection of the land and water of the Okanagan Valley.[153] Working closely with governments, the OCCP hopes to obtain endorsement of the Strategy from all parties to mandate the development of new policies and legislation related to the Strategy's findings and recommendations. This will ensure solutions are embedded in Syilx water laws, principles, and practices.

Members of this initiative participate in large workshops to develop strategies to achieve their goals through enowkinwixw, a Syilx Okanagan led process, centered on creating a consensus-based understanding through respect, trust, and inclusion.[154] The actions involved in the process include: a commitment to seeing the process through to the end, recognizing different perspectives, full participation, establishing a common ground, and developing protocols for discussion.[155] Using experiential learning, the members create a greater understanding of the challenges and solutions of caring for and protecting kɬúsx̌nítkw. The co-leaders also engage in more in-depth research on the ground and meetings to facilitate dialogue and complete action items between workshops. The group acts as their own mediators to come to solutions. Although third parties are hired as mediators for a select number of brainstorming sessions and will be used to write up the final Strategy, the group has determined that the project will have more impact if they all work together to discuss conflicts openly. There will be no specific line drawn on a map to highlight the location of the Strategy, rather all involved partners will adopt this mandate throughout their jurisdiction within the Okanagan Valley. This project is the first of its kind in the area that offers a way for Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners to work collectively to co-create a new framework for decision-making around land and resources.

Funding for this initiative was received from multiple organizations including: the Okanagan Basin Water Board, the Regional District of Central Okanagan, the Vancouver Foundation, and the Real Estate Foundation of BC's Healthy Watersheds Initiative. Members of the partnership also provide funding to support this work.

Resourcing

The OCCP receives financing from numerous organizations through grant funding, donations, or in-kind services. Funders and sponsors include BC Hydro, Central Okanagan Foundation, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Real Estate Foundation of BC, Vancouver Foundation, Ecoscape Environmental Consultants, and FortisBC. Most grants operate on 1-3 year terms and are used to pay core staff and complete projects.

KETTLE RIVER WATERSHED COMMITTEE

The Kettle River Watershed Committee was created to protect and restore the Kettle River Watershed in central southern BC and northern Washington. With support from the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, the Committee has developed a plan to implement strategies that achieve these goals. The Kettle River Watershed Committee was chosen as a case study because it provides a unique example of community-led planning that focuses primarily on restoration, as opposed to recreation, which many of the previous case studies do. Their work offers examples for stakeholder engagement techniques (see 'Governance Structure and Stakeholder Involvement' below) and encourages communities to include scientific and technical reporting in early phases of plan development.

Background and Mandate

The Kettle River Watershed Committee was established by the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary in 2010 in response to increasing concern about the state of the Kettle River.[156] The Kettle River basin is 11,000 square kilometers, located between the Okanagan and Columbia River, in central southern BC and northern Washington.[157] In 2010 and 2011, the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC ranked the Kettle River the most endangered river in BC, experiencing multiple seasonal low flows and a high usage of water for resource development, contributing to habitat loss for plants and animals.[158] In addition, regulatory oversight by provincial and federal agencies had declined with respect to multiple aspects of land and water management, resulting in decreased capacity to respond to impacts.[159] Community members and people outside of the basin recognized the need for strategies to combat these effects. The Regional District of Kootenay Boundary developed the Kettle River Watershed Committee to provide a strategic vision and concrete management actions to restore and protect the watershed.[160]

The Committee developed a Terms of Reference in 2010 to guide their work. In it, they confirmed the goal of the project would be to create a Plan that is developed co-operatively with all government bodies and stakeholders, including the public. The Plan would provide strategy and recommendations regarding management of the watershed. Using a proactive and iterative approach, the Committee aimed to consider future changes with respect to land use, resource development, and demographics, and provide short- and long-term opportunities to adapt the Plan accordingly.[161] Using the Plan, the goal of the committee was to protect the ecological function of the system, increase awareness of the watershed, balance water uses in both the present and future, and promote water conservation.[162]

Governance Structure and Stakeholder Involvement

The Committee is composed of provincial and local governments, industry representatives, and watershed residents.[163] The Regional District of Kootenay Boundary has taken the lead on the project; however, all members of the Committee are encouraged to provide equal contributions to the work. In 2012, an Advisory Group was formed to review the Plan and provide feedback to the Committee. The Advisory Group consisted of residents-at-large, the Okanagan Nation Alliance, stewardship groups, industry workers from tourism, agriculture, mining, and forestry, and local government officials. This larger group ensured that more perspectives were included in the development of the Plan. To learn from and share with stakeholders, the Advisory Group sent mail surveys to households, hosted open houses, gave presentations to councils and community groups, set up information tables at community events, wrote newspaper articles, used a website and social media platforms, and allowed for the review and commenting of the draft Plan.

The Committee is interested in incorporating Indigenous knowledge and protocol into the management plan.[164] Although this hasn't yet been completed, they have been working closely with various Indigenous groups to provide capacity and funding support to water management activities throughout their territories.[165] They are committed to ensuring that Indigenous involvement in this work is conducted in ways that the communities see as important.

Outputs and Authority

KETTLE RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Completed in 2014, the Kettle River Watershed Management Plan was developed to combat endangerment of the Kettle River Watershed due to water extraction proposals and licences and climate change induced consecutive

seasonal low flows.[166] The Plan provides a vision for the watershed that focuses on creating a "healthy, resilient, and sustainable" area that is stewarded by the community.[167] Within the vision, nine goals are identified to combat issues related to high water usage from resource development, urban and rural development, industry, agriculture, and recreation.[168] Four broad strategies are presented in the Plan, containing 18 management directions and 59 stakeholder actions, that address some of the major challenges in achieving the vision and goals.[169] It builds on the analysis and technical assessment of the 'State of the Watershed' report and papers which were conducted in the first phase of the planning process.[170] One strategy focuses on increasing community capacity and support by promoting education and skill building and developing and funding a governance structure to undertake the work.[171] The other strategies emphasize improving the functionality, quality, recreational, and cultural capacity of the watershed. The Plan is endorsed by regional and municipal governments, although it has no legal authority. Rather, the Plan serves as a pathway through which the community encourages a vision for land use through non-legal means (research, education, advocacy, and commitments from government participants to consider the plan in their own work).

Resourcing

Funding for the Kettle River Watershed Management Plan is largely grant funding based. Resources have been provided by the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition, Real Estate Foundation of BC, Phoenix Foundation, the City of Grand Forks, and PlanH – BC Healthy Communities.

COMMUNITY FORESTS

Community forests offer a unique example of communities coming together to influence how land is used in a particular region of interest. Although an in-depth review of community forests was outside of the scope of this research project, the following information provides a brief background on what community forests are and how they can be used to leverage community goals and objectives. Communities interested in this approach may choose to review the substantial body of research that already exists on the benefits that community forestry can bring to communities who desire a greater degree of control over the surrounding land base.[172]

A community forest is a forestry operation managed by a community-held organization, Indigenous government, or local government, to benefit the whole community.[173] They support a more diversified forest economy by providing joint opportunities for recreation, wildlife and watershed management, and timber harvesting.[174] The goals of community forests are to promote community involvement and participation in forestry work to strengthen relationships between communities, foster innovation, diversify the use of forests, advocate for safety, and provide long-term opportunities to achieve goals and objectives, with a focus on environmental stewardship.[175] In working to achieve these goals, communities often strengthen relationships between settler and Indigenous communities, establish climate-resilient areas through diversified use of the forest, and improve the local economy by providing job opportunities.[176]

Most community forests operate under a Community Forest Agreement (CFA), an area-based licence located on public land, that is governed by provincial regulations, such as the *Forest Act* and *Forest and Range Practices Act.*[177] The licences issued are often quite small, averaging 284 square kilometers, with an average Allowable Annual Cut of 39,000 cubic meters.[178] Communities that are interested in obtaining a CFA should contact their BC Ministry of FLNRORD district office. To be eligible for this program, it is recommended that communities have developed strong partnerships with Indigenous and local governments.[179] Within the Upper Columbia region, the following community forests exist: the Revelstoke Community Forest Corporation (RCFC), the Nakusp and Area Community Forest (NACFOR), and the Kaslo & District Community Forest Society (KDCFS). Further, the Golden and Area A Community Forestry Team (GACFT) are working to establish a community forest within the Golden Timber Supply Area.

BEST PRACTICES AND TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Successful planning initiatives require commitment to the process. Based on key informant interviews and a best practices literature review, the following section provides an overview of the most critical aspects of community-based planning.

DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS

"...colonialism is like an avalanche... you can't really plan your way out of an avalanche, you've got to dig yourself out one scoop at a time."

– Nanwakolas Council Representative

For many years, Indigenous voices have not received due attention in decision-making processes with respect to land use.[180] Indigenous governments must be central to any planning work conducted for communities. Fostering meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities is important and integral to creating a fulsome plan. Through interviews with key informants, it was found that the most successful plans centered their work around Indigenous values and governance structures. For example, the Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative, initiated by the OCCP, is a process founded on Syilx Okanagan values, water laws, and practices. The OCCP works jointly with the Okanagan Nation Alliance to create systemic change for long-term protection of land and water in the Okanagan Valley. In working together, the Initiative has resulted in a deeper understanding of the land and water and its interconnectedness for protection measures. Additionally, government-to-government agreements with Indigenous Peoples must be in place before a planning process can proceed. Therefore, projects with Indigenous involvement are more likely to gain support within the MLUP process.[181]

Successful engagement relies on a deep understanding between parties. This is often referred to as Ethical Space, a space that acknowledges and respects differences in Indigenous and western thought worlds.[182] It is important that prior to coming to an Indigenous community seeking to collaborate, leaders have completed their own work to begin to understand the needs and goals of the community. Working with Indigenous governments to produce a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will help to clarify working roles and facilitate relationships built on trust and reciprocity.[183] In developing an MOU, communities must be respectful of Indigenous governments' capacity to engage. Indigenous governments are faced with many requests for input and must balance issues of housing, human welfare, water quality, roads, transportation, and other factors, often resulting in challenges with adhering to pre-determined timelines.[184]

CHOOSE STAKEHOLDERS WISELY

"This whole [process] is not about the trails. It's about how we interact with each other on the land, and... the relationships we have with each other."

- Fraser Basin Council Representative

To frame an understanding of who should be included in the planning process, it is important to first know who the work will affect.[185] Future decisions for engagement can be guided by being aware of who is not present during initial engagement. Community-based planning case studies highlighted that there is no best method of determining who and how many people should be at the table. The following points have been determined to yield the most positive results for stakeholder engagement.

Seek Out Gaps in Representation (Equity-Based Approach)

Often, planning processes that operate using public input hear from those with the biggest voices and are consequently, the least marginalized. Oppression and other injustices can flourish from displaced decision-making.[186] Considerations surrounding equity must be factored into engagement and recruitment strategies.[187] For example, people of all ages have different interests in the land. Planners may find that stakeholder groups with different perspectives have interests that intersect (e.g., seniors valuing trails for health and wellness, and parents

valuing trails for children who commute to school). The Willamette Partnership uses this understanding to develop locally relevant projects (see the 'Oregon Water Futures Project' above).

Gender-based Analysis+ (GBA+) is an analytical process that provides a method to assess systemic issues in work across a wider variety of spectrums.[188] The Canadian government has developed a [training tool](#) to provide users with an understanding of key concepts and how to identify factors that can influence individuals' experiences within planning, initiatives, or programs.[189] The tool considers the intersection of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability. The Shuswap Trail Alliance is currently using GBA+ to make decisions regarding trail usage within their region.[190] They have worked to connect Indigenous communities and western settlements through walking paths, initiating a process of tackling systemic racism within their region.[191]

Equitable engagement can be time-consuming work that requires altering traditional planning structures. For example, setting meeting times -- a seemingly easy task -- can lead to inequitable outcomes. Ranchers and small business owners may not be able to meet during the day, whereas government officials and shift workers may have scheduling conflicts during the evening. It is important that human demographics are understood, and techniques are deployed to consider these conflicts. In this example, planners may host multiple meetings or create subcommittees with varying tasks and meeting times.

Methods for Determining Stakeholders

There are multiple methods for determining which stakeholders should be present in the planning process. Below are two examples deployed by the case study initiatives above.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development is an approach that believes in empowerment, inclusion, self-determination, human rights, and collective action.[192] This approach encourages community members to share their voice, operating under the assumption that everyone with something to contribute is involved in the process. It explicitly focuses on redistributing power and promoting equity.[193] Community development is a lengthy process and can be challenging to implement for projects that have limited time or funding.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

Many planning processes develop a set of inclusion criteria which define characteristics that prospective stakeholders must have to participate. It is a cost effective and less arduous method, making it a common practice among planners. Additionally, this method is often easier to achieve consensus-building goals, and the honour of membership encourages stakeholders to act on behalf of their represented group, rather than themselves.[194] For example, the Peel Watershed Planning Commission was comprised of six members, each representing a different sector of government.[195] Each member came to the table to speak on behalf of its constituents and provide advice related to its department's operating procedures and interests. This process allowed for equitable Indigenous and settler community representation, an important consideration.

Another criteria, used by the CVPRI, is to have interested stakeholders complete an application process highlighting their strengths and how their involvement would benefit the process.[196] This method is a useful way to ensure long-term commitment.

The Shuswap Trail Alliance operates using both community development and inclusion criteria. Through this method, they encouraged all community members to participate in the process, with a specific quorum that each specified stakeholder group must have one representative present at meetings before implementing any actions.[197]

Some initiatives experience challenges with finding stakeholders to commit to being involved in the process and participating meaningfully. Stakeholders must understand how the work could lead to change and why it is relevant to them. They must feel encouraged to share their opinions throughout the planning process and be explicitly shown how their opinions are considered. Choosing stakeholders wisely ensures that communities avoid the Pareto Principle, a concept where 80% of the work is conducted by 20% of the actors, resulting in an unequal relationship between inputs and outputs.[198]

HIRE A THIRD-PARTY CONSULTANT

Planning processes are usually initiated based on a community need, expressed concerns, or conflicts on the land base. As such, stakeholders will enter the process with different ideas and objectives in mind. Hiring a third-party consultant to mediate engagement sessions reduces the potential for conflict, removes bias, and allows for equal participation of all stakeholders.[199,200] Planning initiatives take many years to complete, often resulting in conversations occurring out of scope. A third-party consultant keeps stakeholders accountable and moves objectives forward. For most stakeholders, this work is not their only priority. Consultants can assist in completing final tasks that other members of the team may not have time to work on. Almost all researched case studies use a consultant to assist with the planning process.

It is important to note that consultants are often costly, with their fees sometimes accounting for the bulk of the costs associated with a planning process. If obtaining funding is challenging, it may be beneficial to hire a consultant for specific tasks. For example, the OCCP use a third-party consultant for specific project facilitation work as well as the write-up of their final reports.[201] Most workshops were co-led by the OCCP, SOSCP, and Syilx. Multiple community case studies have hired the Fraser Basin Council, "a charitable non-profit society that brings people together to advance sustainability" within BC, to act as a consultant for their work.[202]

UNDERSTAND PUBLIC INTERESTS

"If you're trying to find the public interest, why not ask them? Who knows better than them?"

– Peel Watershed Planning Commission Representative

A critical step in community-based planning is understanding community needs. Public interests can be translated into objectives that guide the Terms of Reference and planning goals and provide specific measurable outcomes related to interests or support for the project. Being able to communicate this information to settler and Indigenous governments and the general public will likely result in wider support through resources and funding capacity.[203] In interviews, provincial government representatives indicated this as a necessary precursor to their involvement in a project.[204]

There are many methods to determining public interests, such as conducting interviews of community members, distributing public interest surveys, or performing background research of the area.[205] A plebiscite, a non-legally binding vote conducted by public members of a specific region, to gauge interest in developing a plan for the area, is another method that yields powerful results.[206] The Peel Watershed Planning Commission held a plebiscite in the initial phase of their planning process. The outcomes of the vote exhibited 80% support for the Plan, resulting in full funding from the Yukon Government and more urgent attention placed on Plan development.[207]

ENSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING

"Money matters. You've got to have enough money so that if you have an idea, you will be able to carry it out. [H]aving a financial plan for what it is you're intending to do with the land use plan [is] really important."

– Community Development Scholar

Community-based planning requires sustainable and long-term funding to ensure its success. Funding can be difficult to obtain, often leading to multiple sources of income needed per project.[208] The BC government is currently unable to provide substantial funding for planning projects. Communities with secured funding are more likely to be endorsed by the BC government or other supporting organizations. Budgets must include adequate funding for technical work, stakeholder involvement (if not volunteer), travel and accommodation fees for participants, and a third-party consultant.[209] Case study initiatives have funded their projects through government or non-government granting programs, private or organizational donors with an interest in the outcome, and partnerships with post secondary institutions to create learning opportunities for students.

CLARIFY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At an early stage, stakeholders must clarify roles and responsibilities, to come to agreement on how tasks related to planning, implementing, tracking, and reporting will be shared. It is recommended that a formal agreement be signed by all stakeholders that commits them to the work. The planning process is long, often taking multiple years and with that there may be turnover and divergence from the original path. Signed agreements protect the integrity of the process through periods of transformation by establishing transparent mechanisms for resolving conflict and managing change. Conflict will arise with multiple stakeholders involved intimately in a process that they feel passionate about. These agreements remind stakeholders of the bigger picture and why it is important to embrace differences. Below are two documents that can help achieve this goal.

Terms of Reference (TOR)

A TOR is used to establish project requirements, define the work to be performed, and illustrate what successful results are anticipated to look like.[210] A TOR clarifies the group's purpose statement, frequency of meetings, and principles of conduct to ensure common understanding among the group. The document should also include an approach to resolving conflict.

Statement of Intent (SOI)

A Statement of Intent (SOI) highlights the project area and defines project goals and visions.[211] It is generally developed after the TOR, to focus on project specifics, rather than the group dynamics. Land Use Plans, such as the Peel Watershed's, often include a Statement of Intent at the beginning to set the tone for the Plan and reinforce their decision-making process.[212]

INVOLVE SETTLER GOVERNMENTS EARLY

"If governments aren't interested in the conversation because they are at capacity, a good strategy… is to constantly invite them, let them know the times you'll be talking to their [constituents] about things they are doing or not doing, and they will start showing up because they do not want this conversation to be happening without them."

– Willamette Partnership Representative

Engaging the BC government as soon as possible is critical to producing a document with enforceable guidelines. Currently, the BC government is the acting decision-maker for land use on public lands. Although the BC government will not be initiating new MLUP projects in the near-term, representatives indicated that, if engaged early in a community-based initiative that responds to a clear need and demonstrates alignment with their planning principles, they may offer support in the form of funding, knowledge, or staff time.[213]

If the province is unable to consider the community as part of their MLUP process, developing plans through local governments can provide a useful method of incorporating community values in planning processes. Regional districts are influential in legitimizing community-based efforts and can advocate for community visions at the provincial level.[214] One opportunity that some regional districts in BC have used is the development of a Regional Growth Strategy. Regional Growth Strategies are very flexible in their scope and approach, with some regions designing their process for conservation planning, based on their local community's needs and scientific knowledge.[215] These plans are established collectively with all affected local governments and enacted through a bylaw of the regional board, making them powerful tools for engaging with BC governments.[216] Regional Growth Strategies must operate on a minimum 20-year time frame, include a regional vision statement, and develop actions for key areas such as housing, transportation, economic development, parks, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to become formally approved by local and provincial governments.[217] In BC, there are currently 10 adopted Regional Growth Strategies (none are based in the Upper Columbia).[218] The Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District has developed a South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy to promote social, economic, and environmental health in a way that efficiently makes use of public facilities, services, land, and other resources.[219] It is approved under a bylaw, providing legal authority to its defined goals and actions.[220]

WORK WITHIN EXISTING LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Knowing the current provincial policies and legislation that influence land management is important in gaining a clear picture of how community-based plans can be used to enact legal change.[221] For example, the *Water Sustainability Act, Land Act, Wildlife Act,* and *Forest and Range Practices Act* each provide legal direction for land use in BC*.* Land and Resource Management Plans are non-legally binding documents that provide management direction for provincial decision-makers. *DRIPA,* designated treaties, and other emerging agreements will influence how communities are legally required to engage with Indigenous governments. Further, it is important to review regionally specific policies and designations on public land because they can act as a base map for all plans.

CONSIDER THE EFFECTS

Understanding long-term and cumulative effects, including understanding impacts from climate change, resource development such as logging and mining, recreation, community needs and projections, and transitions in transportation and energy sectors (clean energy and active transportation), is an important consideration in planning.[222] Multiple strategies exist to understand the potential outcomes of a decision. For example, the OCCP, Peel Watershed Planning Commission, and Shuswap Trails Alliance used the precautionary principle to draft their land use plans and strategies. The precautionary principle suggests that if there is a suspected risk through implementing an action, but no understanding of its potential harm, actions should be taken to avoid or diminish the risk until there is verification that no harm will occur.[223] This principle provides an avenue for changing behaviour and acting with caution in an effort to prevent irreversible damage.[224] It is driven by adaptive management, a process used to steer land management decision-making where the outcome(s) of an action or actions on an ecosystem is uncertain. Some ways to conduct this work involve setting limits of change, ongoing monitoring, and adaptive responses over time.[225] This way if a risk is lowered over time, alterations can be made to the plans to better reflect this knowledge.

The OCCP is also conducting cumulative effects modeling through an Indigenous-led process to better understand impacts on the land and appropriate mitigation efforts. The Shuswap Trails Strategy Roundtable is also attempting to apply comprehensive cumulative effects modelling to their planning but has not successfully secured the necessary resources yet. BC has developed a [Cumulative Effects Framework](#) which includes decision-support tools, procedures, and policy documents to provide foundational information for plan development and decision-making.[226] In it, there are recommendations for engaging with Indigenous communities and transparently reporting assessment information and management considerations.[227]

DEVELOP A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

"Engagement with the province, stakeholders and communities has to happen… You can have the best plan in the world, [but] if you don't engage people… and teach them about it… it might as well be a binder sitting on the shelf that nobody's using."

– Nanwakolas Council Representative

Developing a sound communications strategy early on will set communities up for the greatest success in many aspects. Sharing stories and information can build support and elicit helpful feedback and input to the planning process.[228] Communicating progress to the public is important, especially after a public interest survey has been conducted. The community must be able to understand how their comments have been considered and are included in the planning process. It is important for planners to be open and honest with stakeholders. Some initiatives have demonstrated success by tracking advice provided through the planning process using a frequently updated public tracking document.[229]

Communications activities should include multiple mediums to promote equal access to relevant and accurate information.[230] The CVRPI uses a website and sends emails and flyers to stakeholders. At public open houses, they learned that a high percentage of their older demographic and rural community members were not aware of the Initiative's progress because they did not have access to the internet.[231]

A sound communications strategy includes opportunities for public feedback. Throughout the course of the project, public opinion may change. It is important to gather this information and adjust practices to reflect interest changes over time. To ensure the long-term success and sustainability of the plan, dedicating adequate resources to continue engaging throughout the plan implementation phase will allow for a greater understanding of successes and failures associated with the plan.[232]

DOCUMENT THE PROCESS

Consistently documenting work allows stakeholders to reflect on how methods have evolved, meet timelines for deliverables, understand challenges, and ensure accountability. Additionally, should questions of process efficacy arise in the future, accurate documentation allows stakeholders to address these concerns. The Peel Watershed Planning Commission is an excellent example of effective documentation techniques that resulted in a high amount of community and government support (see 'Case Study Initiatives' above).

Effective documentation must include:

- Detailed meeting notes

- Community member feedback (see 'Develop a Communications Strategy' above)

- A Terms of Reference (see 'Clarify Roles and Responsibilities' above)

- A Statement of Intent (see 'Clarify Roles and Responsibilities' above)

- Memoranda of Understanding (see 'Develop Partnerships with Indigenous Governments' above)

COMMIT TO IMPLEMENTATION

"It is a tremendous mistake to only negotiate without thinking about what it would look like to implement this. What are the structures you need?"

- Community-based Planning Consultant Representative

The implementation phase is often overlooked during planning processes and although communities have developed a plan, some may not have the power to enact it.[233] Once plans are completed, projects may lose resources and public interest, with the roles of stakeholders less well defined and the third-party consultant no longer part of the process.[234] There may be many remaining action items, yet a large amount of ambiguity in how they will be completed, by whom, and with what funding. The design of a plan's implementation phase is highly context-dependent; however, processes can improve the chances of success by documenting a realistic strategy and budget that defines stakeholder roles and establishes methods for ongoing community engagement.[235]

CONCLUSION

Community-based planning is a method to effectively incorporate the goals and visions of a community in public land management. It is a powerful tool that can lead to more equitable outcomes, build deeper relationships, and promote the long-term success of a plan. In BC, as the MLUP framework continues to be jointly developed through provincial and Indigenous governments, more emphasis is being placed on involving communities as stakeholders in multiple steps throughout the process. Communities will be better able to influence a MLUP decision-making process by being prepared to engage and understanding their visions ahead of time.

Despite clear demand from many BC communities, including some in the Upper Columbia region, for updated and comprehensive land use planning, capacity limitations in government will prevent new projects from being added to the MLUP program in the short term. Communities can still make progress on the ultimate objectives of land use planning—namely developing equitable and long-term solutions to conflicts on the land base—by initiating their own processes that align with best practices. To be the most successful, communities must develop working relationships with Indigenous governments that are respectful of Indigenous Peoples' decision-making authority in their territories; acquire sustainable, long-term funding; create a Terms of Reference; and obtain government support. This process is time and resource intensive, making it critical to understand costs and ensure stakeholder commitment throughout the process.

Regardless of whether a community-based planning process is initiated by government or the community itself, the approach, if implemented carefully, represents an opportunity to encourage land use patterns that advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, encourage sustainability, and promote community resilience to shifting environments and economies.

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