Clear cuts, conflict, and co-management: experiments in consensus forest management in northwest Saskatchewan

T.M. Beckley and D. Korber

Northern Forestry Centre • Information Report NOR-X-349

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CLEAR CUTS, CONFLICT, AND CO-MANAGEMENT: EXPERIMENTS IN CONSENSUS FOREST MANAGEMENT IN NORTHWEST SASKATCHEWAN

T.M. Beckley and D. Korber

INFORMATION REPORT NOR-X-349

Canadian Forest Service
Northern Forestry Centre
1996

Catalogue No. Fo46-12/349E
ISBN 0-662-25183-0
ISSN 0704-7673

This publication is available at no charge from:

Natural Resources Canada
Canadian Forest Service
Northern Forestry Centre
5320 – 122 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 3S5

A microfiche edition of this publication may be purchased from:

Micromedia Ltd.
240 Catherine Street, Suite 305
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2G8

CANADIAN CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Beckley, T.M. (Thomas Mark), 1961-

Clear cuts, conflict, and co-management : experiments in consensus forest management in northwest Saskatchewan

(Information report ; NOR-X-349)
Includes an abstract in French.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-662-25183-0
Cat. no. Fo46-12/349E

1. Forest management — Saskatchewan. 2. Clearcutting — Saskatchewan.
I. Korber, D. (Dianne). II. Northern Forestry Centre (Canada). III. Title.
IV. Series: Information report (Northern Forestry Centre (Canada)) ; NOR-X-349.

SD387.C53B42 1997 634.9'2'097124 C97-980080-3

This report has been printed on Canadian recycled paper.

Beckley, T.M.; Korber, D. 1996. *Clear cuts, conflict, and co-management: experiments in consensus forest management in northwest Saskatchewan*. Nat. Resour. Can., Can. For. Serv., North. For. Cent., Edmonton, Alberta. Inf. Rep. NOR-X-349.

ABSTRACT

Controversy over the expansion of commercial forestry in northwest Saskatchewan has led to changes in forest management in that area. The decision-making framework in the NorSask Forest Management Licence Agreement (FMLA) area is evolving toward co-management. Local community members enjoy a growing role in forest management as local industry attempts to build an institutional structure for forest decision making that more effectively incorporates local views, values, and concerns. This paper describes the history of controversy over forest development and reviews relevant theory on social movements and collective action. A framework for evaluating the level or degree of co-management in northwest Saskatchewan is provided. This evaluation framework provides a snapshot of co-management at a given point in time. While co-management is not fully developed in the region, the trend toward greater local stakeholder participation in forest decision making appears positive.

RÉSUMÉ

La controverse soulevée par l'intensification de l'exploitation commerciale des forêts dans le nord-ouest de la Saskatchewan a provoqué des modifications de l'aménagement forestier dans cette région. Le cadre décisionnel contenu dans l'Entente relative à la licence d'aménagement forestier du nord-ouest de la Saskatchewan (*NorSask Forest Management Licence*) tend vers la cogestion. Les habitants des collectivités locales sont de plus en plus appelés à participer à l'aménagement des forêts, car l'industrie locale s'efforce d'ériger en institution la structure de prise de décisions sur les forêts pour intégrer concrètement les opinions, les valeurs et les préoccupations locales. Ce rapport trace l'évolution de la controverse soulevée par la mise en valeur des forêts et examine des théories pertinentes sur les mouvements sociaux et l'action communautaire. Il présente un cadre pour évaluer le niveau ou le degré de cogestion dans le nord-ouest de la Saskatchewan. Ce cadre saisit la situation de la cogestion à un moment donné dans le temps. Bien que la cogestion ne soit pas totalement pratique courante dans la région, la tendance à une plus grande participation des intervenants locaux au processus décisionnel sur les forêts semble positive.

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INTRODUCTION

Northwest Saskatchewan has seen dramatic change in the level of activity and awareness of forestry issues in the last 5 years. The community of Meadow Lake's designation by the Canadian Institute of Forestry as the 1995 Forestry Capital of Canada is a testament to the importance of the forestry sector in the region. Change of any sort is often accompanied by conflict and controversy and the expansion of commercial forestry in northwest Saskatchewan has not occurred without social strain and tension. One outcome of that strain, however, is a new model of forest management. This model involves greater local input, respect for indigenous views and forest values, and consensus as the desired basis for future forest management.

We begin with a review of the existing literature on the concept and practice of co-management of natural resources. Co-management is the consensual decision-making model currently under development in the NorSaskForest Management Licence Agreement (FMLA). We then review the historical development of the forest sector on the land now included in the NorSask FMLA. The struggle to achieve a meaningful, co-operative forest management structure has not been easy, nor is that struggle complete. Before the interested parties sat down at the table to create a co-management model, there were road blockades, arrests, rallies, and court injunctions. This report recounts the history of social protest over forestry issues in the communities within the NorSask FMLA. The current state of the co-management process is examined and the exact structure of the consensual management structure is outlined. We conclude with a discussion of the factors that impeded the development of co-management in northwest Saskatchewan. These range from simple communications barriers and misunderstandings, to complex cultural differences and institutional constraints.

History can be recounted, but not re-lived. Individuals involved in the struggle over clear cutting and co-management cannot change what has passed. Any damage sustained in the struggle, in terms of lost trust between individuals or institutions, lost profits, or lost income, is done. Looking forward, it is hoped that the experiences of community members, company representatives, and provincial resource managers in this region will provide valuable lessons for others who are working through similar issues. While many share the view that the conflict over forestry in northwest Saskatchewan hastened the development of co-management, more expeditious and peaceful paths to consensual forest management are certainly possible.

A REVIEW OF CO-MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Co-management in Theory

There is no dictionary or textbook definition of co-management. It is a concept that is evolving with each new experiment in co-operative resource management, an umbrella term that refers to a vast spectrum of co-operative institutional arrangements. Berkes et al. (1991) define co-management as "... the sharing of power and responsibility between the government and local resource users." Pinkerton (1993) defines co-management as institutional arrangements that "in general, involve genuine power sharing between community-based managers and government agencies, so that each can check the potential excesses of the other." What is common to both definitions of co-management is the presence of two parties that have different interests in and/or values for the resources in question.

These definitions assume that one partner in co-management agreements is some level of government—more specifically, a branch of government charged with regulatory responsibility for some natural resource (Pinkerton 1993; Berkes et al. 1991). The case examined here represents an exception to that assumption. Co-management in northwest Saskatchewan is being undertaken by a private corporation and local resource users, albeit with the encouragement of provincial resource managers. Generally, co-management involves active users of resources: fishers, hunters, wild-rice harvesters, trappers, and recreational users. In

theory, however, local or non-local passive users—those interested in existence and bequest values of natural resources—could be involved in co-management as well.

Co-management may be viewed as a means toward multiple ends. Usually the partners in co-management have quite different motivations for participation. For example, government regulators (or corporate managers) may enter co-management arrangements to increase the legitimacy of their actions in the eyes of local resource users and/or the general public. Local resource users may enter co-management agreements to influence management and to become more directly involved in the disposition of local resources. Of course, locals also become involved with the hope of reaping greater direct benefits from resource use. According to Pinkerton (1989), "All parties 'give to get,'" though it is usually government regulators or corporate managers who cede actual decision-making authority. What local resource users give is more likely to be personal time and effort, which may involve significant opportunity costs.

The "co" in co-management is short for co-operative. There are two important points to be made with respect to the co-operative dimension of co-management. First, while the term co-management often conjures an image of willing, voluntary participants in resource management partnerships, in reality, co-management is often born of conflict. Sometimes co-management arrangements are the direct result of court mandates (Pinkerton 1989). It may be more accurate to characterize such agreements as joint management. It is important to recognize that there are different degrees to which partners are willing participants, or to which they are co-operative (as opposed to confrontational) within the framework of co-management. Given the different underlying interests of co-management partners, ongoing conflict may not be avoidable. A key objective in creating co-management institutions, however, is to establish a framework within which such conflict may be addressed in a fair, consistent, and amicable manner.

Several authors (Berkes et al. 1991; Higgelke and Duinker 1993) also recognize that a continuum of participation exists within the set of institutions labeled as co-management. That range is perhaps best described by Arnstein's (1969) ladder of public participation (Fig. 1). Her model describes a range between non-participation (manipulation represented by the bottom rung of the ladder) to citizen power (with citizen control of decision making represented by the top rung). Delegated power is a situation in which authority is vested in some public body to manage a particular resource. In the case in question, in the NorSask FMLA, industry holds delegated power over many resource management functions. That power is delegated by the provincial government and outlined in the FMLA. Partnership, the category under which fully realized co-management falls, is two rungs from the top. Partnerships could take several forms. They may be shared responsibility between co-management partners for power delegated by the province, or partnerships could imply direct sharing of resource decision making between the government and other parties.

While co-management conjures an image of an equal partnership, this is not always the case. Pinkerton (1989) describes incomplete co-management agreements in which decision-making power and resource management responsibility are not shared equally. She suggests that incomplete systems are not necessarily static, and that there may be an evolutionary progression toward full-blown co-management. On the other hand, the ends previously described—legitimacy for government and meaningful input by local resource users—may be satisfactorily achieved by both parties without an equal distribution of decision-making power or management responsibility.

Arnstein's ladder of public participation is useful for characterizing co-management agreements in a general way. A more precise way to measure the degree to which full-blown or mature co-management exists in any given application is to

Degree of citizen power	8	Citizen control
	7	Delegated power
Degree of tokenism	6	Partnership
	5	Placation
	4	Consultation
	3	Informing
Non-participation	2	Therapy
	1	Manipulation

Figure 1. Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation. Source: Arnstein (1969).

examine the extent to which separate management functions are shared. Pinkerton (1989) proposes seven separate management functions that describe, in generic terms, component parts of resource management for any given natural resource. More specific to forestry are the management functions summarized in Figure 2. They will be used later in the discussion to evaluate co-management in northwest Saskatchewan.

1. Data gathering and analysis
2. Long-term planning (20 years)
3. Harvest allocation decisions (how much)
4. Short-term planning (5-year operating plans)
5. Implementation (annual operating plans)
6. Enforcement of regulations
7. Monitoring
8. Policy decision-making

Figure 2. Forest resource management functions.

Co-management in Practice

Early efforts at co-management in Canada were aimed primarily at single species of fish or wildlife. Co-management is particularly applicable in situations where common property or open access resources are threatened by overexploitation. Pinkerton's (1989) edited volume on co-management describes fisheries resources exclusively and contains several case studies (Freeman 1989; Amend 1989; and McCay 1989). Other instances of co-management involve multiple species of wildlife. Berkes (1989) describes co-management of fish and wildlife in the eastern Arctic. Robinson and Binder (1992) describe a similar, multiple-species case of wildlife co-management in the western Arctic.

There appear to be fewer cases of co-management of forests. The claims by co-management partners in northwest Saskatchewan that their co-management boards were the first in a forestry context, however, may not to be true. In actuality, a clear case of parallel evolution was occurring, as several communities reacted simultaneously to what they perceived to be irresponsible management in the 1980s. Co-management has been practiced in Ontario in the Temagami Forest (Benidickson 1992; Laronde and Harris 1992) and in the Magpie Forest near Dubreuilville, Ontario, since 1991 (Higgelke and Duinker 1993). The Nootka Sound Stability Coalition has been developing a co-management framework on Vancouver Island for about the same length of time (Connor 1994). In 1993, the community of Revelstoke, British Columbia, obtained a Tree Farm License (TFL) from the Ministry of Forests in association with three local wood products manufacturers. The structure and functioning of this TFL is best characterized as a co-management agreement between industry and the community, again with government oversight and approval. But whether the case described herein was the first co-management agreement in forestry or not is much less important than the apparent explosion of interest in translating this management tool from cases involving single or multiple species of fauna to entire forested ecosystems.

Most cases of single species or multiple species co-management agreements in Canada and many of the co-management experiments in forestry involve government regulators, and Native or indigenous local resource users. Benidickson (1992) suggests that co-operative management between non-Native government regulators and local Native resource users poses special challenges, due to the potential for vastly divergent philosophical perspectives. While this may be true, the potential for divergent philosophical perspectives would appear to be even greater in the case in question in the NorSask FMLA. Government regulators are charged with and accountable to the public for conservation of natural resources; industry is primarily interested in and accountable to its shareholders for the creation of profit.

DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF THE STUDY AREA

The forests of northwest Saskatchewan have been inhabited and used by First Nations for centuries. Current Native groups occupying the region include Cree (the dominant group in the boreal forest within the study area), Déné, and Métis. Non-Natives represent the majority of the population in the southern portion of the study area (Terrestrial and Aquatic Environmental Managers 1992).

Table 1 lists the Native and non-Native population of communities within the NorSask FMLA. Figure 3 shows the area covered by the NorSask Forest Management Licence Agreement.

Commercial forestry activity has occurred in the study area since the 1930s. Sawlogs, pulpwood, and railroad ties were some of the timber-based commodities extracted from the local forest. In the early 1970s, Parsons and Whittemore put forward a proposal for a pulp mill near the community of Beauval. The plan was rejected by the government on the basis of insufficient timber supply to support a pulp mill. In 1987, another proposal for a pulp mill was put forward by Millar Western Pulp Ltd. By this time, improvements in technology and market conditions made northwest Saskatchewan's aspen resources commercially viable for development into pulp.

The timing of this proposal coincided with the purchase of another woods industry operation by a local company called NorSask Forest Products Inc. Following its election in the early 1980s, the provincial Progressive Conservative government privatized a number of Crown corporations. Among these was the sawmill at Meadow Lake, formerly owned by Saskatchewan Forest Products. The mill was sold to NorSask with a provincial guarantee of 20 years of wood supply in four different timber supply areas. A condition of the 3.3 million-ha Forest Management Licence Agreement, however, was that NorSask recruit a hardwood user within 4 years or lose the licence. On the recommendation of the Saskatchewan government, NorSask agreed to manage the NorSask FMLA and to supply their own sawmill's softwood, as well as the hardwood for the Millar Western pulp mill.

Certain responsibilities accompanied the right to harvest timber on the newly formed FMLA. Most notable among these is responsibility for maintaining the ecological integrity of the region's forest. In other areas of the province, the lack of strict guidelines and enforcement had compromised forest health. The new FMLA requires that all logging be accompanied by appropriate planning, management, and reforestation. This new arrangement transfers some of the costs associated with responsible forest management from the government to industry. Also, in an effort to stabilize wood usage in the area, stumpage fees were increased (Steele et al. 1988). Initially, Millar Western paid \$0.50/m^3 for hardwood in the NorSask FMLA and NorSask paid \$2.30/m^3 for softwood. As of April 1995, the province has set stumpage fees at the following rates: \$0.39/m^3 of hardwood, \$1.68/m^3 of softwood lumber, and \$0.62/m^3 of softwood pulp. Millar Western and NorSask, however, voluntarily agreed to invest more (\$3.00/m^3 to a trust fund for reforestation) to help ensure the future of forestry in the area (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management 1993).

In 1990, NorSask and Millar Western formed a third company, Mistik Management Ltd. Mistik is responsible for planning, harvesting, and reforestation of the land covered by the FMLA. Its primary mandate is to ensure that the timber needs of the NorSask sawmill and the Millar

Table 1. Communities of the NorSask Forest Management Licence Agreement (Source: Statistics Canada 1993)

Community[a]	Population		
	Native	Non-Native	Total
La Loche (NV)	1585	105	1690
La Loche (R 222)	450	5	455
Turnor Lake (NV)	180	5	185
Turnor Lake (R 193B)	220	0	220
Patuanak (NH)	95	0	95
Patuanak (R 192D)	410	15	425
Dillon (R 194)	No data	No data	No data
Île-à-la Crosse (NV, R 192)	1205	70	1275
Michel (NH)	85	0	85
St. George's Hill (NH)	120	5	125
Buffalo Narrows (NV)	870	190	1060
Cole Bay (Métis)	150	15	165
Jans Bay (Métis)	190	5	195
Beauval (NV)	650	70	720
Canoe Narrows (R 165)	465	5	470
Waterhen Lake (R 130)	505	0	505
Green Lake (Métis)	480	30	510
Meadow Lake (T)	1050	3200	4250
Pierceland (V)	0	475	475
Loon Lake (V)	0	366	366
Loon Lake (R 129B)	520	0	520
Meadow Lake (R 105)	320	0	320

Source: Statistics Canada (1991).

[a] NV = Native village, NH = Native hamlet, R = reserve, V = village, and T = town.

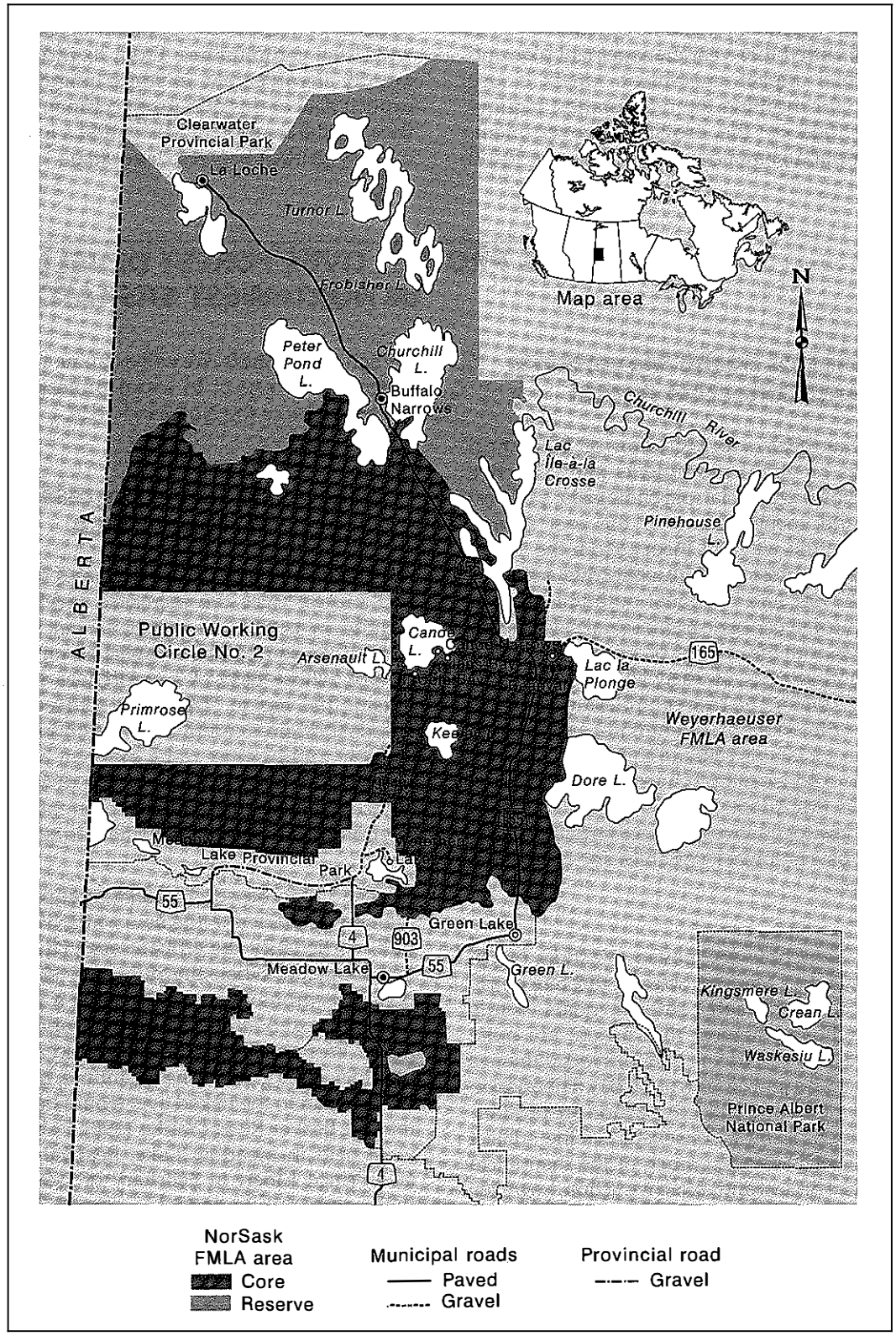

Figure 3. The area covered by the NorSask Forest Management Licence Agreement.

Western pulp mill are met and its operations are in compliance with the 20-year management plan and environmental impact assessment. Mistik is also responsible for fulfilling the reforestation requirements specified by the provincial government. Another important mandate of Mistik is to fulfill these objectives in co-operation and consultation with local communities. From its inception, community involvement in forest planning was an explicit goal of this non-profit company, and it was through the creation of Mistik that a local vision of co-management began to take shape.

SOCIAL PROTEST OVER FOREST DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHWEST SASKATCHEWAN

Theories of Social Movements and Collective Action

There has been a progression of theoretical perspectives on social movements and collective action put forth by social psychologists, political scientists, and sociologists over the past several decades. The first wave of theory, from the 1950s, treated social protest through collective action as deviant behavior and irrational outbursts against the status quo. Psychological and social psychological variables and the nature of protesters' grievances were the focus of early work in the area (Kornhauser 1959). The rash of protest movements in the 1960s altered scholarly thinking on collective action, and social movement theorists began to focus on the resources (both human and financial) of protesters (McAdam 1982; Piven and Cloward 1979). The new focus stressed social structural variables over psychological variables for explaining social protest.

As to why people are moved to action, North American scholars tend to focus on discrete objectives and concrete, self-centered goals, while European scholars suggest that people are quite willing to take to the streets over universal themes such as peace and justice (Tarrow 1991). Theories on social movements and collective action are proliferating and there is little consensus on the subject within the social sciences; much of the theoretical work on social protest and collective action, however, deals with macro-processes, national and international movements, and long-term, sustained social movements. A somewhat different line of research is more relevant to this case. Gerald Marwell and Pamela Oliver deal with micro-processes of protest. Their work (Marwell et al. 1988; Oliver et al. 1985; Oliver and Marwell 1988) suggests that crucial factors in determining the success of mobilization include group homogeneity (of both interests and resources), the density of social ties, group size, and the actions of others. We will examine some of these factors with respect to social protest over forest development in the NorSask FMLA.

Sources of Social Protest in the NorSask FMLA

There were two primary sources of discontent and protest over the increased level of forestry activity in northwest Saskatchewan in the early 1990s. One source was established environmental groups whose base of support was largely from outside the region. The other source was locally based Aboriginal communities. Although concerns of these groups were quite different and only the latter featured significantly in the development of co-management in the region, brief mention of the environmental protest movement is appropriate.

The urban-based environmental protest in the region was related to the new Millar Western pulp mill, particularly the effluent associated with that development. When the pulp mill was first proposed, its promoters promised that it would eventually be a zero-effluent mill (the world's first); but Millar Western claimed that it would need 2 years to achieve this goal. In the meantime, treated waste water, clean to the naked eye, would be discharged into the Beaver River (Yanko 1990). Public hearings were held in Meadow Lake, Beauval, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert in February of 1990 to answer increasing public concerns. The Saskatchewan Environmental Society became involved, as did the Saskatchewan Action Foundation for the Environment. One of the grievances of these groups was that the 30-day period allotted for public reaction to the Environmental Impact Statement was too short (Braden 1990).

In March 1990, the mill was given government approval under three conditions: 1) there would be

no discharge into the Beaver River; 2) there would be a reduction in the amount of ground water taken from the Hatfield Valley aquifer; and 3) any further changes in technology would be reported. Despite the concerns of environmental groups, provincial Environment Minister Grant Hodgins expressed pleasure that the public hearings went well (Traynor 1990).

In the same month, Millar Western announced a change in plans. It proposed using the surface water of Meadow Lake rather than the nearby aquifer. Environmental groups were outraged; they felt that this had been intended all along. A court case was initiated by the Saskatchewan Action Foundation for the Environment in an effort to make government planning documents public. The case was rejected, and the proposal to use the lake water was reviewed and approved by an environmental assessment board by June 1990. The mill was built with complete water recycling capability so that no contaminated water was returned to the environment. This was the basis for the rejection of Saskatchewan Action Foundation for the Environment's case.

The other source of social protest over forestry issues in the Meadow Lake region came from residents of local Aboriginal communities who had a somewhat different set of grievances, although there was some overlap of interest between local Natives and outside environmental interests. The Northwest Mayors Association (primarily comprising mayors of Métis communities) had previously expressed concern over pollution that might result from the pulp mill. They were also actively involved in meetings specifying the guidelines for the Environmental Impact Statement and the 20-year plan; however, they also had concerns regarding the degree to which profits from the forest would be transferred from the region. They expressed a desire to see compensation paid for traplines and other traditional areas that might be affected by tree harvesting. They also lobbied for direct cash payments to communities for the right to log in their vicinity. Equity issues, such as who would benefit from the mill and who would pay for environmental degradation and costs associated with forgone opportunities, were not the exclusive concern of the Métis Society. Native elders from First Nations bands expressed similar grievances. For local Natives, the goal was not to shut down or eliminate forest development in the region. Rather, they wanted to see the development of the forest proceed in a responsible manner and they wanted to see some direct community benefits from that development (Meadow Lake Progress 1992).

A major part of Mistik's mandate is to deal with such concerns as raised by community members (Mistik Management Ltd. 1995). Mistik developed a forum through which the grievances of local residents could be heard. For several communities, certain issues regarding logging operations and distribution of benefits from forestry operations were not resolved at public hearings. As well, construction of the pulp mill (beginning in March 1990) and related hardwood logging (beginning August 1991) continued while Mistik negotiated with the local communities. Unresolved issues eventually culminated in a show of protest in one community.

In May 1992, a blockade was set up roughly 65 km north of Meadow Lake on Highway 903, just south of the junction with Highway 904. Protesters were primarily elders from the communities of Canoe Lake First Nation, and Jans Bay and Cole Bay Métis settlements. Among these groups, there was some history of discontent with resource development in the region. Jans Bay and Cole Bay had also organized in opposition to peat development in 1989. In 1986, they had been in negotiations with the province regarding an FMLA of their own. The awarding of the NorSask FMLA in 1988 put that issue to rest, but there were reports of hard feelings in the Canoe Lake communities (Gavin More, formerly with Mistik Management Ltd., January 15, 1996. Personal communication).

Initially, about 20 people were involved with the 1992 blockade. Soon, the movement became more entrenched as protesters built semi-permanent structures in a jack pine grove across the road from a large clear cut. An old school bus was used to block the road when logging trucks attempted to pass. Other travelers were allowed to pass through and the protest was characterized as quiet and peaceful (Villeneuve 1992a).

Mistik managers went to the blockade several times during the early weeks of the protest, but negotiations progressed slowly. By the end of the month, NorSask and Mistik's board of directors sought a court injunction to terminate the blockade (Villeneuve 1992b). Nevertheless, industry made some early concessions and addressed (at least temporarily) one of the blockaders' demands—that clear cutting in the area be stopped. Mechanical harvesting equipment was removed from the area

in late May after an agreement was signed between NorSask, Mistik, and a group simply referred to as The Elders. During this time, discussions about co-management boards continued. Talks between Mistik and the Northwest Mayors Association about the possibility of co-management had been raised in February. Mistik officials felt that once a formal, co-operative forest management structure was in place, the issues and the grievances expressed by the protesters could be dealt with through the co-management boards.

The core group that initiated the blockade demonstrated many of the characteristics suggested to be important for success by Oliver and Marwell (1988). The group was small, which facilitated communication. The group was both homogenous and linked through community residence, long-term associations, and kinship. They also had shared interests and resources. Available resources were few, but one thing they did have was time. Many of the protesters were elders who did not have to take time off work to participate in the blockade. The number of protesters usually increased every weekend as working people, students, and others congregated at the blockade. While the blockade was serious business, a community atmosphere born of a sense of common purpose developed there.

By mid-summer the tone at the blockade had changed, as had the composition of the protest group. Thirty people were arrested on June 30, 1992, by the RCMP who charged them with illegally blocking a highway (Windspeaker 1992). The arrested individuals were held overnight and released the following morning. New, non-local Natives arrived to support the blockade. Most notable among these were members of the Lonefighters Society from the Peigan Reserve in Alberta. Other forms of support (material and financial) were reported to have come from bands in eastern Canada. The official name, Protectors of Mother Earth, was adopted in late May and the demonstration began to look much more like an organized, funded, environmental protest group.

Media attention about the protest attracted other non-locals to the area. In July of 1992, David Suzuki, a well-known environmentalist and host of CBC's *The Nature of Things*, visited the blockade and toured some clear cuts in the area. Suzuki's visit was reported in the local newspapers, and media accounts emphasized that industry representatives viewed him as an unwelcome outsider (Robin 1992).

The blockade continued throughout the fall and in October the Department of Natural Resources (DNR)[1] threatened further court action against the blockaders. The DNR accused blockaders of illegally occupying Crown land and ordered them to leave. Charges against the 30 protesters arrested in June had been stayed on condition that those individuals did not return to the blockade. Throughout the summer, discussions about co-management had continued. Mistik officials were not dealing with Protectors of Mother Earth directly, but rather held meetings with the elected officials of Canoe Lake. Many of the protesters did attend those meetings, but they were recognized only as community members, not as official representatives of the Protectors of Mother Earth.

After a quiet winter, the blockade resumed in the spring of 1993. Guest speakers from a Mohawk community in Ontario were brought in to help commemorate the first anniversary of the blockade. Meanwhile co-management discussions continued with elected officials from Canoe Lake and with band councillors from other communities as well. Eventually an agreement with Canoe Lake representatives was signed and a natural resource committee was formed. The blockaders maintained their encampment even after the co-management board was officially formed. It remained unclear what role the co-management boards would play or how much authority they would be given; the Blockaders did not want to abandon their outpost until they were satisfied that the co-management process would provide them with the input they desired.

From Conflict to Co-operation: The Decline of Social Protest in the NorSask FMLA

The decline of social protest in the area does not mean that the protest failed to achieve its goals. Collective action related to social movements may decline for a variety of reasons. The leadership of

[1] The Department of Natural Resources merged with the Department of Environmental Protection in March of 1993 to form Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management. More recently, the Forestry Branch within SERM has been re-organized and renamed to the Forest Ecosystems Branch. The name is reflective of this institution's effort to take a more holistic, integrated approach to natural resource management.

the movement may be co-opted, the movement may run out of the human and financial resources necessary to continue, or movements may be suppressed through coercive measures by the state. Another possible explanation for a decline in social protest is that the movement may succeed, demands may be met, and therefore there is no further need for protest. A combination of these factors led to the ending of the blockade on Highway 903.

Most important, discussions with Mistik began to bear fruit. In October of 1993, an interim agreement was signed between NorSask and the recently created Canoe Lake Natural Resources Board (Robin 1993). The group of elders and members of Protectors of Mother Earth who had sustained the blockade for 18 months promised to serve as an environmental watchdog over the board and saw no reason to continue the blockade. The shelters at the blockade, however, were left intact. The protesters maintained some of the blockade's physical infrastructure in case co-management failed to live up to their expectations.

Coercive state action, such as arrests and court injunctions, did not seem to be effective deterrents to protesters, though some other factors did seem to contribute to the lifting of the blockade. The level of effort and interest in the protests was varied and by the fall of 1993 there appeared to be less enthusiasm and external support compared to the previous summer. This may have contributed to the end of the blockade, but the decline of external support may have actually allowed for the re-emergence of the original goals of the blockade—a ban on clear cutting and assurances of Native involvement in the responsible development of the forest. Reduced external support may have also helped smooth relations and further dialogue between the community and industry representatives.

THE ARRIVAL OF CO-MANAGEMENT IN NORTHWEST SASKATCHEWAN

The end of the blockade represented the beginning of a new relationship between Canoe Lake and local industrial interests. Such a relationship had already been established with significantly less conflict and fanfare in several other communities. Previous memoranda of intent to develop co-management boards had been signed with the Waterhen Lake Band (February 1993), the English River Band at Patuanak, and at the Métis communities of St. George's Hill and Michel. As previously mentioned, co-management boards were discussed as early as 1988 by the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. Once Mistik was formed, its representatives pursued the concept with the local communities.

Mistik's Vision of Co-management

From its inception as a company, Mistik was interested in incorporating input into the forest planning process from all local parties with direct interests in the forest. Mistik's plan was to set up a co-management board for each northern fur conservation area[2] in the Meadow Lake timber supply area. The boards would provide Mistik with input on cutting plans, the size and location of cutblocks, and the method and regulation of harvests and reforestation. Mistik promised to consider this input in relation to environmental protection standards and meeting timber supply requirements.

According to a newsletter published by Mistik, the company had hoped to establish a regional co-management board to serve as an advisory committee. The idea of a regional board was also supported by the provincial government (Bruce Smith, Saskatchewan Environmental Resource Management, February 21, 1994. Personal communication). Mistik, NorSask, and provincial representatives discussed the structure, role, and function of the proposed regional board at a meeting in 1994. It was agreed that the board should consist of outfitters, Métis groups, First Nations, trappers, commercial wild rice producers, tourism and environmental groups, and representatives of the oil and gas industry. The expressed intent of industry and provincial officials was that the regional board would provide broader representation and would

[2] Mistik adopted existing fur conservation areas as geographical boundaries for the co-management boards. These were established in the 1940s and while not a perfect reflection of where community resource use occurs, they have been commonly used as a basis for resource management.

handle issues that transcended the boundaries or concerns of community-based co-management boards.[3] The idea of a regional board was also documented in the Memorandum of Understanding between the government of Saskatchewan and NorSask Forest Products Inc. (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management 1993).

Mistik's involvement with the co-management boards would be limited to timber issues, and water, soil, and habitat issues related to timber harvesting and reforestation. The areas of concern Mistik viewed appropriate for co-management boards to address included traditional uses, clear cutting, buffer strips, site preparation methods, reforestation, other forest uses and users, local decision making, employment and education, and economic development issues. Mistik recognized that the boards might, however, develop a desire to have input on other resources such as oil and gas, game and game ranching, wildlife for viewing, grazing, wild rice, tourism, and others.

One indicator of Mistik's commitment to the co-management concept is their willingness to commit financial resources to support the process in the NorSask FMLA. Ten thousand dollars is provided to each board that is officially established (meaning that they have a bank account, hold regular meetings, etc.). In addition, further funding is available through a formula based on the amount of wood harvested from each fur conservation area: $0.50 is donated to any given co-management board for every cubic metre of wood harvested within the fur conservation area that that board represents.

The Provincial Government's Vision of Co-management

At times during the development of co-management boards, local communities were critical of the lack of involvement of the provincial government. This criticism arose out of a local desire to gain legal, decision-making authority for the boards as opposed to having only advisory status. Although the communities had the perception that the government was not sufficiently concerned with the development of co-management, the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) had been very involved in the creation of general principles and a workable framework for co-management in the FMLA. Draft discussion papers from the Policy and Partnerships division of Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM) were distributed to interested parties in the early 1990s. These papers outlined many of the positions eventually adopted by Mistik as their vision of co-management.

Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management consciously and deliberately took a back seat in the early stages of the development of local co-management boards. The provincial officials that we interviewed expressed a strong commitment to the concept of co-management, but felt that it should be a local process directed by community members themselves and the local leaseholders (Mistik, NorSask, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and Millar Western). Government employees explained their low level of direct involvement by suggesting that co-management implemented from the top down would not be likely to work (Bruce Smith, Saskatchewan Environmental Resource Management, February 21, 1994. Personal communication.).

The Saskatchewan government, as represented by SERM, did become formally involved in the development of co-management in the region when they signed a Memorandum of Understanding with NorSask Forest Products on December 20, 1993. The memorandum outlines operational terms of reference and describes general principles, a proposed structure, a process, criteria for eligibility for membership, and an action plan for dispute resolution. Under the agreement, ultimate responsibility for stewardship of the resource is retained by the province (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management 1993).

The structure established is a two-tiered board. Membership in the first tier, called the Regional FMLA Co-ordinating Committee, requires that individual(s) be "...stakeholders with regionally based organizations." The second tier, Local Co-management Boards, represents stakeholders in the fur conservation area boundaries. Co-management is intended to be carried out in a forum that includes representation from NorSask, SERM, and the regional and local boards, with Mistik Management

[3] The first author attended a meeting held on February 21, 1994 in the capacity of an observer. In attendance were NorSask, Mistik, and Meadow Lake Tribal Council members, and representatives of Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management. The meeting focused on the development of a co-management framework in the NorSask FMLA.

as the operating party and SERM as regulatory authority. In meetings in February of 1994 between Mistik, NorSask, and provincial representatives, it was decided that both industry and government would have representatives attend local co-management meetings, but that neither would hold voting seats.

Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, and by extension the province, did not offer direct financial assistance to the co-management process; however, the memorandum specifies that SERM will serve as advocate for the co-management boards in obtaining appropriate provincial program funding. Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management concurred with Mistik's vision that funding for the development and maintenance of the boards should be generated locally through the voluntary levy on stumpage and through the entrepreneurial efforts of the local co-management boards themselves.

Finally, SERM underwent some restructuring of its internal decision-making procedures, in part to facilitate better local involvement in resource management through mechanisms such as co-management boards. Specifically, greater latitude in ratifying decisions of co-management boards was devolved to the level of regional directors (of which there is one in Meadow Lake). The intent was to make SERM more responsive to local needs, and to facilitate the process of integrated resource management at the local level.

Community Visions of Co-management

Although the local Native communities' visions of co-management have differed in some significant ways from those of government and industry, that has not stopped most communities from pursuing direct negotiations on co-management with Mistik. Canoe Lake Band and the blockade represent an exception, but they too are now negotiating with Mistik on amicable terms.

Given the diverse experiences of the different communities, it is difficult to generalize about local Native perspectives on co-management; however, discussions with local co-management partners in several communities reveal some general concerns. In general, local Native community members view the current structure as a starting point, not an end point. They hope the boards will evolve from advisory boards to institutions with decision-making authority. A second generalization, that at least applies to the Waterhen Lake and Canoe Lake Bands, is that there appears to be some frustration with the current limited scope of the boards' mandates. Once a co-management board is up and running, one of the first questions frequently asked is, "Why are we limiting ourselves to timber or even forestry issues?" There is a demonstrated desire to co-manage wild rice, fur-bearers, water, gravel, fisheries, tourism, and other resources (Gordon Ernest, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, February 22, 1994. Personal communication.). Mistik, however, has a very narrow mandate in the FMLA. Mistik is responsible for fiber management. Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management has a somewhat broader mandate than Mistik, but it is still limited in the range of issues and resources for which it could serve as a partner in co-management.

The community co-management partners continue to be cautiously optimistic about the prospects of shared decision making, but there is continued concern that without legal backing, and legislated decision-making authority, co-management may be of limited use to local communities. Initially, bands were concerned that their only input would be to rubber stamp a 20-year harvesting plan that had already been developed according to the NorSask FMLA (personal communications with Waterhen Lake Band members). This perception is changing, and will likely continue to change as recommendations made under the boards' advisory status are actually put into place by Mistik. In several communities, board recommendations on cutblock size, cutblock and road location, and even harvest levels are being incorporated into Mistik's annual operating plans. This results in changes in field level forest management to accommodate local community concerns. It is likely, however, that some will continue to view co-management as a process of co-optation rather than one of co-operation. Alex Maurice, the chairperson of the co-management board in Beauval, was one of the first participants to voice such concerns. Maurice's public and publicized speculation of the potential for conflict arising from the boards' lack of legal decision-making authority may have inspired Mistik and SERM to take board recommendations seriously and to prove their commitment by implementing board recommendations (Robin 1993).

There are several bands in the Meadow Lake area that are making significant headway in developing their own vision of co-management.

The Waterhen Lake Band submitted a detailed proposal to the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Indian and Northern Affairs (in Saskatchewan and Ottawa) of co-management initiatives in August 1994 (Gordon Ernest, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, February 22, 1994. Personal communication). Part of that proposal includes funding for a full-time staff person to deal with co-management issues, and significant links between co-management and local economic development and job creation. English River Band, too, is negotiating co-management initiatives with the governments. Both bands have chosen to do their own negotiations with the government, rather than have the Meadow Lake Tribal Council act as liaison.[4]

Some of the elders who originally participated in the blockade are now strong advocates of the concept of co-management. They see it as a first step toward Native self-government. For self-government to work there needs to be a locally managed natural resource base to support local economic development. Federal or provincial governments are not likely to cede any unilateral or bilateral decision-making authority to Native communities, until local people are able to demonstrate a capacity to manage local natural resources effectively. Some community residents feel that co-management boards provide just such an opportunity to develop and demonstrate that resource management capability.

Local people have expressed some other concerns with the co-management process. For one, the $0.50/m^3$ offered by Mistik to fund co-management boards is only forthcoming when active logging is taking place in a given fur conservation area. If no timber is harvested, funds will not be forthcoming. This offers a strong incentive for the bands to buy in to Mistik's vision of co-management—a vision in which substantial timber harvesting plays a significant role. This conflicts with some bands' desire to secure funding for co-management while taking a slower approach to harvesting the forest.

There has also been some frustration over so-called non-negotiable items—such as the fundamental structure of the FMLA and the fact that the saw mill and pulp mill must have an uninterrupted supply of timber at a reasonable cost. Several local participants in the process have said these conditions are too restrictive and that these items should be addressed; however, they are now trying to address these issues through the co-management process rather than using direct political action (blockades, lawsuits, etc.).

Theory and Practice: Assessing Co-management in Northwest Saskatchewan

It is still too early to make definitive judgements about the state of co-management in the NorSask FMLA, though a preliminary assessment may be made. The previously mentioned theoretical discussion of co-management provides the criteria for making such an assessment. While the experience with each co-management board is somewhat different, there is enough similarity among them to compare them as a group to theoretical models of co-management.

The list of forest management functions adapted from Pinkerton (1989), and presented in Table 2, provides a useful framework for evaluating the degree or level of co-management being practiced in the NorSask FMLA. While co-management is ostensibly a relationship between industry and the local communities' co-management boards, Table 2 reveals that the vast majority of forest management responsibilities remain with the industry and the province. Co-management boards provide advisory input on six of the eight management functions. Primary or sole responsibility for all of these areas is split between industrial leaseholders or the provincial government.

Data gathering and analysis is ongoing and is being handled jointly among the bands, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and Mistik Management. Traditional harvest surveys of subsistence and non-industrial forest products (e.g., game, fish, fuel, etc.) have been conducted by the bands and Mistik in an attempt to establish quantitative data on some of the non-timber benefits provided by forests. Some of the same surveys have also questioned local residents on their attitudes toward timber harvesting.

Co-management boards advise Mistik on short-term and long-term planning and operational

[4] The other seven bands of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council allow the council to represent them in political dealings with the federal and provincial governments.

Table 2. Co-management board, industry, and provincial responsibilities in forest resource management functions in the NorSask Forest Management Licence Agreement in 1995

Management functions	Co-management boards	Industry	Province
1. Data gathering and analysis	A[a]	P	A
2. Long-term planning (20 years)	A	P	A
3. Harvest allocation decisions (how much)	A	A	P
4. Short-term planning (5-year operating plans)	A	P	A
5. Implementation (annual operating plans)	A	P	A
6. Enforcement of regulations	N	N	S
7. Monitoring	N	N	S
8. Policy decision-making	A	A	P

[a] N = no role, A = advisory role, P = primary responsibility, and S = sole responsibility.

issues. Logistical harvesting decisions represent the most significant responsibility for the co-management boards. Recommendations are made about the location, size and configuration of cutblocks, the width of buffer strips, the location of roads, and so on. As well, co-management boards work with Mistik to determine who secures contracts for harvesting wood. The ultimate decision lies with Mistik, which to date has been quite willing to accept input from the boards and to hire logging contractors from the local communities.

Harvest allocations are largely determined by provincial interpretations of forest inventories; however, both industry and the co-management boards have significant input on this issue. The environmental impact assessment conducted by Mistik determined that the harvest levels originally specified in the FMLA were excessive and not consistent with the principles of sustainable forest development. As a result, Mistik solicited input from communities as to what harvest levels might be sustainable without compromising biodiversity, forest health, wildlife habitat, and local community benefits from the forest sector. The co-management boards initially did not make direct recommendations regarding harvest levels within the various fur conservation areas. The province and Mistik originally maintained that a rational strategy for determining the annual allowable cut and associated harvesting levels must address the entire FMLA, not subdivisions of it. While primary responsibility for this management function still remains with the province, significant local input was solicited by Mistik and presented to the province for consideration in the re-negotiation of harvest volumes (Edward Hanna, J.E. Hanna Associates Inc., December 13, 1995. Personal communication.). As well, harvest volumes are now an item negotiated between Mistik and local co-management boards.

Enforcement and monitoring of concurrence with FMLA and environmental impact assessment guidelines are solely the purview of provincial regulators. Co-management boards do not have a role in this area, nor does industry, since they are the bodies being regulated. At the time of researching this report, the province retained sole responsibility for monitoring and enforcement, especially with respect to the strict legal terms of the FMLA. Under the newly re-organized Forest Ecosystems Branch, more emphasis is being placed on lease holders living up to the environmental impact assessment guidelines, which are more comprehensive than the FMLA. In this new regulatory environment, the co-management boards may advise the SERM on industry compliance with environmental impact assessment guidelines and industry supplies monitoring data to SERM for their evaluation. Therefore monitoring is evolving into a shared responsibility for all three parties, with the province holding primary responsibility and the other partners serving in an advisory capacity.

Policy decision making is still primarily the responsibility of provincial government; however, input from both industry and the co-management boards is solicited in the development of forest policy in the region. Indeed, the entire co-management endeavor largely came about due to the support and encouragement of SERM officials.

These eight management functions do not provide a sufficient framework for assessing the degree of co-management in the NorSask FMLA. Based on these criteria alone, one has to conclude that an incomplete form of co-management exists in the area. Co-management boards do not have primary responsibility for any forest management functions. Real decision-making power continues to reside with the province or with industry.

The process is far from static, however. The continuing evolution of co-management in the NorSask FMLA allows for a more optimistic interpretation for its potential in the region. While the current state of co-management agreements would most accurately be characterized as consultation or placation according to Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation, there is potential for continued progress toward true partnership.

Historically, industry has accommodated societal demand for greater public involvement in forest management only after legislative or policy change required them to do so, or in reaction to particularly effective popular protest (blockades, boycotts, and the like). The fact that industry is largely responsible for launching this public involvement process is worth noting. The co-management boards were set up largely on the initiative of Mistik, with Meadow Lake Tribal Council's support. The impetus for co-management did not come from the communities themselves; therefore, there was some suspicion from communities over what co-management was and what it could possibly mean. Despite the fact that a blockade eventually resulted in one of the NorSask FMLA communities, Mistik had taken a proactive stance in their attempt to involve local communities in certain forest management decisions. Mistik's program for public involvement, including its efforts to establish local co-management and advisory boards, exceeded the province's legal requirements for public involvement in forestry development.

The impetus for co-management came from Mistik and Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and thus many community members initially feared that co-management boards might be an instrument of co-optation rather than co-operation. It is only very recently that some local communities have fully embraced the concept of co-management. Mistik encourages boards to expand, to set up sub-committees, and to create entirely new boards to deal with non-timber issues. Increasing control and input into the development of the co-management process has contributed to the communities' involvement and commitment to make co-management work.

Table 2 demonstrates that the silent partner in this co-management framework, the provincial government, retains the most influence. Provincial employees maintain that they will not abdicate responsibility for forest stewardship to either industrial leaseholders or to community watchdogs in the form of co-management boards. Given this, there may be limitations to the extent to which co-management develops in the region. As suggested earlier, however, co-management participants have different motivations. A successful co-management agreement does not require that decision making be shared equally between industry and the communities, or between those institutions and provincial stewards. Future research is required to track the satisfaction of participants in the process—including co-management board members, other community residents (including former blockade participants), industry representatives, and provincial officials. The success or failure of the process will only become apparent with the passage of more time. Future assessments of co-management should evaluate the degree to which participants are satisfied with the outcomes of the process. From a more analytical perspective, future assessments should also measure participant's satisfaction with the co-management process. That is, do co-management boards function satisfactorily as fora for raising grievances, negotiating important parameters of forest management, and reducing conflict over resource management.

DRAWING LESSONS FROM THE CO-MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE IN THE NORSASK FMLA

While it is too early to make final judgements with respect to the ultimate success or failure of co-management in northwest Saskatchewan, it is not too early to draw some lessons from the experiences there. The first and most important lesson is that clear and open lines of communication must be

maintained at all times. This is particularly important because co-management can be a vague concept. There is no blueprint for co-management and this creates potential for widely divergent interpretations for what it is and what it means. In this case, various groups appeared to conceptualize co-management in different ways at different times. Co-management was sometimes interpreted as a process or a relationship or an ongoing dialogue. At other times, groups became focused on signed, sealed documents, such as agreements between Mistik and local bands, or the Memorandum of Understanding between the province and Mistik. In such instances, the focus was on co-management as a product, and considerable energy and effort were devoted to seeing those products realized. Neither interpretation is right or wrong; the point is that the potential exists for co-management partners to talk past one another if there is not a shared understanding or vision with respect to these process and product aspects of co-management. The challenge is to forge a definition of co-management and to create an institutional structure for co-management that satisfies all stakeholders.

A second lesson has to do with who is invited or allowed to participate in the process and who determines the structure. Some stakeholders are obvious—in this case local communities and industry. There are, however, other stakeholders who do not have a voice through the co-management boards, and who, therefore, must rely on traditional mechanisms of public involvement to have their concerns addressed. Some of these additional stakeholders are residents of the area; all-terrain vehicle and snowmobile clubs, hunting and angling clubs, etc. Others, such as environmental groups, are sometimes based outside the region. Despite the non-local base of support of such groups, they still have legitimate claim to be involved because the land in question is public land. These are difficult realities for public and private resource managers to deal with. The important point is that local co-management boards only cover one segment of legitimate stakeholders. Co-management boards should complement, not compete with, non-local public involvement mechanisms. To its credit, Mistik has engaged the broader public in various consultative and advisory exercises, such as open houses, meetings with specific stakeholder groups, and surveys (Mistik Management Ltd. 1995).

A third lesson, that will be familiar to anyone with practical experience in previous co-management experiments, is that existing rules, regulations, and institutions may impose significant barriers to the development of consensual decision making. There are two structural and organizational constraints provided by the current institutional framework. The first, which SERM has tried to address, has to do with the fact that SERM is a hierarchical agency. To its credit, SERM has devolved some important aspects of decision making to the Meadow Lake regional office of SERM in the hope of creating a more fertile environment for consensual decision making. This represents an example of institutional reform that may be necessary to facilitate the effectiveness of emerging institutions such as co-management boards. Secondly, the organizational structure of the provincial government as a whole, and within SERM, provide constraints with respect to the breadth of co-management boards' mandates. Despite Mistik's and SERM's philosophical commitments to integrated resource management, they simply do not have the legal authority to address the full range of issues that the boards would like to address. The boards would like to manage the forest ecosystem as a whole, but responsibility for management of forest ecosystems is divided among various government agencies. Mitigation of this constraint would require a radical restructuring of provincial government agencies, or at a minimum a radical change in the way information is exchanged and responsibilities are shared among government departments.[5]

Institution building is inherently a political process and there are many ways in which politics may subvert or abort attempts to create consensual decision making. Co-management cannot occur in a vacuum, and co-management partners may attempt to resolve broader issues or promote other agendas through the co-management process. Pinkerton (1989) defines co-management as a process where participants "give to get." In most

[5] Beginning in late 1996, the Forestry Branch of SERM undertook a fundamental restructuring in order to be able to address issues on an ecosystem basis. Some areas that have major implications for forest management, such as oil and gas development and tourism development, remain outside the control of SERM, but the department is restructuring so that it can better deal with forests as a whole. This is consistent with what co-management board members expressed they would like to see happen. At press time, SERM's restructuring process was still underway.

cases, participants want to get very different things. Native bands may attempt to get leverage for self-government issues through co-management boards. Industry may use its participation in co-management to promote a positive image for itself. Communities may attempt to use co-management boards as springboards for economic development. Some of these agendas may divert attention away from the explicit goal of co-management boards, which is to discuss the disposition and management of natural resources. These multiple goals and objectives do not always have a detrimental effect on the co-management process but they may form the basis for misunderstandings that require considerable time and patience to resolve.

Participants in co-management also bring to the table their own internal politics, which may hamper their ability to collectively deal with other parties. Native communities, even very small ones, often have feuding factions and families that divide them. Relations between several of the communities setting up co-management boards in the NorSask FMLA are strained by some deep-seated and long standing historical disputes over land. The Meadow Lake Tribal Council is viewed as an appropriate and legitimate political representative by some bands in the region, but not by all. Industry may be plagued by internal politics, either within companies, or between the various companies that share responsibilities within the region. Certainly, not all the employees, managers, shareholders, and board members hold the same views on the development of co-management. Similarly, there may be political struggles within or between government agencies responsible for overseeing co-management. Given the great potential for political instability and for internal politics to subvert the development of consensual decision making, architects of co-management must shield these emergent institutions from the vicissitudes of shifting political landscapes.

Another point to bear in mind, and to plan for, is that this type of work requires a huge commitment of time, energy, and resources. Co-management must be carried out at the most local level to work. This means that industry sponsors of the co-management process must repeat the same process in each community they deal with. Mistik representatives spend a great deal of time hearing the same concerns over and over again from representatives of different communities. It is a long and arduous process with high potential for burnout. One possible reason that co-management has emerged rather slowly may be because it was entered into on such a grand scale. The hope and expectation was that meaningful, working co-management boards could be simultaneously established that would encompass all the communities in the NorSask FMLA. Native interest and involvement may have been increased by devoting all the initial resources to creating a model board in one community. Other communities may have then developed an interest and lobbied Mistik for a similar opportunity to take part in management functions. This was done in a sense, as the development of co-management took (and is taking) longer in some places than others; however, this is more by accident than by design.

All partners in co-management in northwest Saskatchewan may have benefited through the establishment of better communication, sharing of information, and the development of relationships based on mutual respect and mutual concerns. The promoters of co-management in the NorSask FMLA have stressed the uniqueness of the NorSask experience although, in fact, there were similar experiments occurring elsewhere in Canada (Higgelke and Duinker 1993). While certain aspects of the NorSask experience are unique, some of the pitfalls and problems may have been avoided by learning from the experiences of others.

Finally, trust is an absolute prerequisite for effective co-management. In this case and in others there were ample reasons for co-management partners to be suspicious of one another's motives. There is a long history of negative interaction between local Natives and non-Native institutions, both public and private. Such a historical legacy cannot simply be dismissed. Trust must be built one relationship at a time, between individuals. Given the cross-cultural context of this co-management experiment, there were (and continue to be) language and value differences that complicate the establishment of such trust. Mistik may have initially been over-optimistic about how far their good intentions would carry them. The process has progressed slowly, largely due to this need for the establishment of trust between partners. Continuity in leadership in local communities, and of corporate or government representatives, then becomes crucial. The goal is to achieve a working partnership among institutions, but that goal is achieved through the development of working relationships among the individuals who represent those institutions. A lack of continuity at the individual level may slow or derail the process.

These observations and lessons represent the perspectives of outsiders looking in. The individuals directly involved in this case of co-management are likely to be able to relate many other lessons learned from these experiments in consensual decision making. Both perspectives are useful, not only for other groups in other regions attempting similar experiment, but also for persons still involved in the NorSask co-management agreements.

CONCLUSION

At present, co-management in the NorSask FMLA is incomplete; however, it continues to evolve with the support of all partners. While some legal actions were taken during the blockade, this is not a case of court-mandated or legislated co-management, as is sometimes the situation with co-management of wildlife. Rather, in northwest Saskatchewan, all partners are willing, and increasingly enthusiastic, participants. There are certainly many issues still to be resolved, and there are likely to be conflict and disagreement over some of those issues in the future. Co-management is viewed as an institutional framework to deal with the issues that will naturally arise given the different interests of parties involved in the process. This does not guarantee that participants will always be satisfied, but at least a framework exists for mediating conflicting concerns.

The path to co-management in northwest Saskatchewan has not been easy, nor is travel on that path anywhere near completion, but co-management partners are already beginning to reap some of the benefits of their efforts. Local community partners now recognize that co-management does have the potential to address some of their concerns regarding forestry in the region. In their present form, the co-management boards cannot address all community concerns, but a start has been made. Industry is benefiting, and will continue to benefit in the future, from its direct contact with the people who are affected (both positively and negatively) by their practices. Industry will also benefit by having a broader and richer data base on the forest they administer, through the inclusion of traditional ecological knowledge of forest resources. By providing technical, moral, and decision support, government overseers are nurturing these agreements and demonstrating both their concern for accountability and a capacity for flexibility.

The appropriate goal for co-management is to achieve a true partnership in resource decision making. That may not necessarily imply equal decision-making authority on every single issue. Rather, partnerships are entered into willingly and knowingly for mutual benefit. Within partnerships, decision-making authority on any given issue may be delegated to one or the other partner, or may be agreed upon by both. Partners do not always agree on every decision, but it is hoped that the parameters of the partnership are understood and agreements to disagree do not jeopardize the overall endeavor. It is not now possible to characterize co-management in the NorSask FMLA as a true partnership according to these criteria. Local community participants want greater influence in forest management decisions. They hope to broaden the scope of the existing co-management boards, or to create new boards or expand the mandate of existing boards to deal with other resource issues. They also wish to have a legal right to participate in decision making on natural resource issues. They are participating in resource management now because industry and government have extended an invitation to do so. Changes in government policy, or in industry management, could close the door to citizen participation much faster than it was opened. Communities want to guard against that possibility by gaining legal authority for co-management boards.

Despite these shortcomings, the co-management process in northwest Saskatchewan is moving forward. The important issues are being raised in meetings between co-management partners, not on placards at blockades. Newspaper articles on co-management have greatly decreased in number and length, not from a lack of progress, but from a lack of news. The difficult and sometimes tedious job of creating a viable and long-lasting consensual decision-making framework does not provide journalists with headlines or lead stories the way that angry protest rhetoric and reports of arrests do. The final form that co-management will take in the region is uncertain, but as long as an active dialogue persists and trust between participants increases, there will be continued progress toward true partnership in the management of the forest resources within the NorSask FMLA.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was funded by the Canada–Saskatchewan Partnership Agreement in Forestry. Several people deserve acknowledgment for their assistance in securing data, adding insights, and sharing their perspectives. Bruce Smith and Stuart Golly from Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management made themselves available on several occasions. Mike Martel and Martha O'Sullivan from Mistik Management Ltd., and Gavin More (formerly of Mistik Management Ltd.) provided data and a clear picture of industry's perspective on co-management. Dean Martel, Gordon Ernest, and John Michael of the Waterhen Lake Band, and Leon and Ruth Iron of the Canoe Lake Band provided valuable information on community visions of co-management. Vern Bachiu and Peter Mazuren of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council also provided data and viewpoints on the tribal council's role in forest development and management. Dennis Lee of the Canadian Forest Service provided technical support. We also thank the reviewers of this manuscript: Mike Martel, Bruce Smith, Peter Mazuren, and Evelyn Pinkerton.

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