

TOWARDS A MODEL OF CO-MANAGEMENT OF PROVINCIAL PARKS IN ONTARIO

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Abstract / Résumé

This paper explores to what extent First Nations communities participate in the planning and management of Ontario parks, and if the current process is successful. The study is also designed to show how First Nations' concerns, needs and interests can be better reflected in provincial park planning and design practices. A key claim of this study is that First Nations communities have been inadequately involved with the land-use planning and design issues which have confronted government-run parks in traditional First Nations territories.

Cet article examine la degré d'implication des communautés autochtones dans la planification et l'administration des parcs de l'Ontario et évalue le fonctionnement de ceux-ci dans la situation actuelle. On propose aussi de montrer comment mieux intégrer les préoccupations, les besoins et les intérêts des Premières Nations aux pratiques de planification et de gestion des parcs provinciaux. Une affirmation centrale de cette étude est que les communautés autochtones n'ont pas été impliquées autant qu'elles auraient dû l'être la gestion des problèmes de planification et de conception auxquels sont confrontés les parcs se trouvent sur leurs territoires mais administrés par l'État.

Introduction

This paper is about a new kind of thinking, a new kind of architecture, if you will: an architecture of culture and mind. For First Nations people, this architecture of culture and mind will have a familiar ring to it, for it is really an ancient architecture and way of thinking deeply entrenched in Aboriginal traditions. There is little written about this new architecture and how it is grounded in these ancient traditions. This paper is intended to introduce the reader to the foundation upon which contemporary environmental planning and design must rest, at least from an Aboriginal perspective.

The purpose of this study is to investigate to what extent First Nations communities participate in the planning and management of parks, and if the current process is successful. This study shows how First Nations' concerns, needs and interests can be reflected in park planning and design practices. Specifically, this study examines the present relationship between Ojibwe First Nations and the Ontario Parks management systems in a contemporary context.

A Rationale for Co-Management

After many years of forced and rapid social change, First Nations people are now empowering themselves in a more vocal and visually expressive manner. The re-emergence of First Nations cultures is evident in recent land claim settlements, self-government strategies, language revitalization, and political activism. In this light, environmental design/planning professions can be seen as a vehicle to magnify First Nations cultures *visually* in the natural and built environment. This paper has been designed to show how First Nations' approaches to land and the environment in Canada are grounded in a deep understanding of how the land functions, the way its processes work, and how those processes reflect Aboriginal perspectives and spiritual connections.

Few would argue that First Nations cultures around the world have been unjustly treated with regard to their traditional ways of life (Ponting, 1997; Burger, 1990). When European colonization occurred in Canada, pressure for First Nations people to assimilate into an alternative lifestyle was intense. Imposed upon First Nations populations were European views of land use. Many First Nations people were forced to adopt a new culture and abandon traditions intrinsically tied to sacred lands. Despite these hardships, Native heritages have persisted to the present day. *Understanding and respect* between cultural groups regarding the divisive issues such as land claims and cultural identity has been minimal, therefore more attention is desperately needed.

Those working with First Nations communities, such as anthropologists, linguists, environmental planners, and landscape architects, have a responsibility to recognize the significance of a culture when designing new environments or developing policies to integrate cultural needs within natural systems' limits. Awareness and understanding of the history of an area can lead to a design that is culturally sensitive thus fulfilling the needs of the client and community at large. "Single Group" management of resources is no longer an option, at least from a Native perspective.

A key claim of this study is that First Nations people have been inadequately involved with the land use planning and design issues which have confronted government-run parks in traditional First Nations territories. This lack of collaboration has contributed to the ongoing tension between First Nations communities and government. Landscape architect Walter Kehm's involvement with the South Moresby/Haida negotiations in British Columbia and his evaluation of that particular situation attests to the great communication and visualization problems which existed between Parks Canada, BC Parks, the timber industry and special interest groups (personal communication, 1996:37). A great sensitizing process was required to enable administrators and policy-makers to understand Aboriginal perceptions and belief systems and to have them incorporated into new policies and plans. A similar scenario is currently being played out in Davis Inlet where we are witnessing at this writing a move to a new location (Sango Bay). In these kinds of situations, crucial questions continue to press: What process of communication exists? What form will the new community take? What cultural-spiritual values will it express? How are people's deep needs and wants recognized and understood?

The Argument

From a First Nations perspective, it is no longer acceptable for Canada to operate parks in a monocultural fashion. Land is a spiritual *necessity* in North American First Nations cultures (Ponting, 1997; Burger, 1990). Thus it is imperative for all parties with a vested interest in economic development and environmental planning in traditional First Nations territories to become informed about the values and aspirations of First Nations people if there is to be a true and equitable co-management of resources.

The research we have conducted in Ontario is designed to be of real value in documenting precedents and describing ways to approach planning and design, approaches which could be applied to other situations being played out across Canada. A sense of perspective about how decisions are made in relation to land use, area designations and the provision of infrastructure and facilities is an important contribution that our

research makes to the field of environmental planning and co-management in First Nations contexts. Assistance with the interpretation of values is also a critical area of this study and is designed to demonstrate new ways of communicating plans and policies which have greater relevance and sensitivity to local needs and desires. Within the context of this overarching problem, there are four questions that are addressed in this study:

What means do First Nations people have to participate in the planning and design of a park?

How do the two parties (park management planners and First Nations cultures) communicate?

What responsibilities do the two parties have to each other?

What lessons can be drawn from this comparison?

Background Information

Decades have gone by with minimal changes in the relationship between the federal and provincial governments and First Nations. Ultimately, our natural resources have been considered the priority, and First Nations cultural values a secondary issue. Solutions may be difficult to attain. However, if we can find ways to reduce the frustration and reversing these priorities, the process of working toward a common goal will become more achievable.

The differences between Indigenous and European views show a need to redefine public land. European-based people tend to view the world in compartmentalized units, and that the quantity of assets equals worth and wealth (Ponting, 1997; Morse, 1992). Our continued existence as a nation partially depends on the *use* of the environment. Agriculture, timber, shipping and mining are all major international industries in Canada. Bureaucracy has dictated the need to establish laws to control the use and "ownership" of land. European views of the environment have clashed with First Nation views because the two solitudes are so fundamentally different. Aboriginal people have traditionally placed an emphasis on the use of land rather than formal possession. They have unbreakable bonds with the land, commonly referred to in First Nations' traditions as "Mother Earth" and believe if they are without land, they do not have a soul, purpose in life, or identity.¹

The evolution of trust between First Nations cultures and the government has historically been a struggle. European views of religion, lifestyle and development have been embraced as prevalent societal norms in Canada. Aboriginal people have been forced to accept European values because their experience illustrates that:

Wherever there is a dominant perspective that is so readily accepted and widely influential that it can unconsciously exclude all other perspectives, the process of real communication and understanding is diminished tremendously. Wherever the dominant perspective intentionally ignores or denies the legitimacy and authenticity of other perspectives, the process of communication and understanding is non-existent... the dominant perspective assumes its perspective to be correct above all others. Because of this, all perspectives are denied or minimized. Indigenous populations have found themselves in the position of the conquered, the subjugated or the annihilated (Clarkson *et al.*, 1992:1).

The challenge of creating trust between the First Nations and the Crown began centuries ago. During the formative years of European colonization, many treaties were drawn up. Treaties were familiar agreements among First Nations as they were used for peace making, aid/relief and education. Europeans also used treaties for many of the same reasons (Ponting, 1997). During the 1850s, Commissioner W.B. Robinson was sent to the northern area of Upper Canada (presently northern Ontario) to negotiate territories with the Ojibwe people. The documents, called the Robinson-Huron and Robinson-Superior treaties, were negotiated by the First Nations and the Crown in order to:

surrender, cede, grant and convey unto Her Majesty, her heirs and successors forever, all their rights, title and interest to the land, and the right to fish and hunt in the lands they surrendered, until these lands are sold or leased to individuals or companies (OMNR, 1996).

First Nations people agreed to share their traditional lands in return for continued hunting and fishing rights, Reserve lands and annual annuities (Aronson, 1997:24, cited in Smart and Coyle, 1997). The treaties, covering lands north of Lake Huron and Lake Superior, set a pattern that other treaties followed. In the Aboriginal perspective, land is believed to be a gift from the Creator. Therefore, when the European settlers wanted to form a treaty, the Native people were not hesitant, as land was meant to be shared, and many First Nations did sign treaties with the federal government.

Representatives of the Crown proposed treaties in order to establish formal relationships with First Nations. The relationship included a degree of trust where both parties (the Crown and the First Nations) agreed to follow certain arrangements. Many First Nations people currently believe they were forced to surrender more than just their traditional territories. Aronson (1997) suggests that:

historical treaty documents were never drafted by the Aboriginal occupiers of the land, and often the Aboriginal view was that they were not surrendering or giving up all rights to ownership of the land but *that they were sharing the land with the new settlers* (Aronson, 1997:35, in Smart and Coyle, 1997, emphasis added).

In May, 1990 (*Sioui vs. Crown*), Huron Band Indians were legally charged for using an undeveloped section of a provincial park (Quebec, Canada) for camping purposes. They claimed protection with a document signed in 1860 from Quebec provincial law. The court case examined whether or not the provincial regulations were appropriate and whether the document (signed by Gerald Murray, representative of the Crown) could be used. The Huron Band was acquitted as the document was considered a Treaty (Section 88, Indian Act). This court case illustrates the frustration of Native people using land they technically do not own (according to Canadian law) even though all land is Native land in their system of beliefs (Edward, 1994).

The Ministry of Natural Resources and First Nations

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) manages natural resources with a number of policies and Acts. The regulations are in place to protect, conserve, control development and overuse, and market the unique ecological systems in Ontario. Every provincial park must have a management statement/plan in order to:

identify the contribution(s) of Park 'X' makes to the achievement of the four park system objectives (protection, heritage appreciation, recreation, tourism); and to identify management policies aimed at maintaining or enhancing that contribution (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1992).

To date, the following guidelines are in place to govern the communication, negotiation and partnership with Native people in Ontario:

- a) All decisions related to the identification, planning or disposition of provincial park lands, or other lands set aside to protect significant natural or cultural heritage values, will be the subject of public consultation. Aboriginal peoples who identify traditional ties to those lands will be integral to the consultation and decision making processes. In some cases there may be a need for separate consultation or negotiation processes to address Aboriginal interest in park lands. If required, some issues regarding how a park is used may also be the subject of negotiation with Aboriginal people.

- b) The Government of Ontario will consider all the available options when seeking to determine the land component, if any, during negotiations involving land claim settlements with First Nations. Options for use that involve lands which are not to be considered for provincial park purposes will be preferred.
- c) As described in the Province's Interim Enforcement Policy (1991), aboriginal people hunting or fishing in provincial parks will be subject to all relevant treaties and laws. However, an agreement reached between the Province and a First Nation may modify the application of those treaties and laws (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1992:23-24).

One key concern in this study is to explore the origins of Ojibwe and European-based perspectives on land and land management, how those perspectives impact on the development and management of provincial parks, and how both might work together to make the Indigenous vision for park management become a reality. The methodology thus relies not only on the existing literature and research relating to the ongoing negotiations between governments and First Nations people, but also on the "living voice" elicited via the ethnographic interview.² We interviewed both First Nations people and Ontario MNR officials and employees. Selected interview comments are then interwoven with our analysis and discussion.³

Cultural Expression

There are certainly many reasons why the environment has always been, and continues to be, a central theme in the lives of First Nations peoples across Canada. For millennia First Nations in Canada have necessarily been dependent on the land for survival and well-being. While there may be some debate on the origin of the term "Mother Earth," so often invoked in writings about Aboriginal people and used by Aboriginal people themselves, there can be little doubt that there exists a spiritual relationship with the land in virtually every Indigenous tradition around the globe (Campbell, 1996). Ways of maintaining and enhancing this close relationship with the earth were, and are, nurtured and integrated into everyday life. This relationship with "Mother Earth" continues to be a deeply-entrenched theme in the lives of First Nations people in Canada.

This theme can be seen at play in the oral traditions and oral histories of First Nations people today. There continue to be many reminders of this theme embodied in the stories, songs, dances, prayers, ceremonies and sacred teachings of every First Nations tradition in Canada. This theme has

profound implications for community decision-making, as well. From our experience working and talking with First Nations people over the years, we have come to understand that, when community decisions are made, the environment is a fundamental consideration. In virtually every decision facing contemporary First Nations communities today, environmental concerns are always an important part of community discussion and consensus decision-making.

First Nations people continue to respect and gather input from their Elders and believe Elders *should* play a significant role in community development. Their wisdom, patience and experiences provide crucial information in the decision-making process. Native people have become very protective of sacred sites and artifacts. As one Elder from the Ojibwe community of Wikwemikong told us:

Elders, probably our ancestors... in good faith, they told these people that came into the communities these stories... and these people went out and dug up artifacts... and I think that's why these Elders are being quite cautious now, of who they talk to and who they tell this stuff to (personal communication, 1997:30).

In most Anishnaabe (Ojibwe) communities, Elders are viewed as sources of wisdom and knowledge. Traditions, language and ceremonies have been passed on from generation to generation in an oratory fashion. Consultation with Elders is conducted regularly and respectfully because they are able to reflect on previous stories, legends, and experiences and provide visions of growth for the future of their culture (Beck *et al.*, 1992:5). With regard to community development, meetings with Elders are essential because, as one Elder from the community of M'Chigeeng (formerly known as West Bay) told us:

We have seven generations to look after... not for today's children, but for tomorrow's and their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren, that's what we are going to head for. We've lived our life, we know how to slug it the rest of the way (personal communication, 1997:30).

Given the degree of respect and influence that Elders have in their surrounding community:

Anytime an elder testifies to anything, like my ancestors told me this, their word was taken... knowledge like a written expert... so based on that the government has to recognize these Elders as experts (personal communication, 1997:30).

Setting the Stage

Few would argue that cultural knowledge should be respected by Native and non-Native people alike. First Nations cultures pay the consequences when sacred information is abused or taken advantage of. In Ontario, the government has previously minimized and/or completely neglected consultation with Native people with regard to development (personal communication, 1997:23). One Elder we interviewed recalled a story about how the government had plans to install a dam on a river in northern Ontario. According to his people's stories, a body was buried somewhere near the proposed dam. The government required an exact burial site in order to *consider* an alternate position. Unfortunately, the body could not be found and the dam was built without knowledge of the sacred area. The Elder with whom we spoke about this situation had this to say:

I think the government has to recognize that a lot of our history has been forgotten and a lot of our history was passed on to us in an oral fashion. We never documented and I think the government has to learn how to trust us and say that there is a body out there somewhere. You have to trust us on that, we can't locate it, but we know it's out there... and those were stories that were handed down to us (personal communication, 1997:30).

First Nations people are adamant about regaining some future control in government and corporate decision-making. Cultural protection and expression will be possible with an increase of participation in natural resource management. For example, during negotiations between Ontario Parks and Native people, one Native person from the community of Garden River with whom we spoke resolved the following:

What they are saying (the MNR) is that they have their policies in place in provincial parks, provincial park policy, and we have to adhere by that. Once we start developing we are going to be changing those policies that are culturally appropriate for our community (personal communication, 1997:30).

and,

When we took part in the negotiations, we made sure that our issues were covered, that our issues were put down there... so far it seems that they are going to listen to us and abide by what we are trying to do (personal communication, 1997:23).

From the above discussion, three key ingredients for developing an equitable partnership in park planning and design become evident:

- In order for Native people to fully participate in a park plan, the Native voice must be heard and respected;
- First Nations people would prefer to have the government work *with* them by negotiating policies and regulations in the park, e.g. hunting and fishing rights; and,
- If the relationship works, policies in the park *should* reflect the partnership between Ontario Parks and First Nations.

Origin of Parks in Canada

The relationship between First Nations people and parks is rooted in the origin of parks and treaty rights in Canada. European values entrenched in political systems generally guide the management, planning and design of parks with little or no influence by First Nations people.

The evolution of national parks in Canada began in 1885 at Banff, Alberta. Two employees of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) discovered mineral hot springs and hoped to develop the area for private profit. The federal government refused the claim and created a reserve around the area for public use. Since the inception of national parks, wilderness preservation has not been as influential as economic and social development (McNamee in Dearden *et al.*, 1993:17).

Provincial parks in Ontario were developed for many of the same reasons as national parks: recreation, tourism, protection and heritage appreciation. There were eight provincial parks before 1954 and two hundred and seventy by 1989. The parks are defined as one of six categories: wilderness, access, nature reserve, natural environment, historical and development. The six categories limit what activities can take place in each park (e.g. low impact recreation for day use in nature reserves). The treaties signed between Native people and the government are particularly important in parks. Many Native people use wilderness areas to live, trap, hunt and fish during various times of the year. Native people have had to struggle to keep their treaty rights in place as the general public are not allowed to partake in these activities.

Contemporary Issues

Today, there are feelings of mistrust by First Nations toward the federal and provincial governments. A legacy of three hundred years of broken treaties with First Nations and the federal government has created a very real climate of distrust. However, the relationship is sometimes confusing and often difficult to follow. First Nations have had no choice but to educate themselves about the processes of government. The leading piece of

legislation that governs First Nations in Canada is the *Indian Act* (1876). The Act was created by the federal government to strengthen their domination over First Nations people. According to Francis (1995):

The aim of the Act, as of all Indian legislation, was to assimilate Native people to the Canadian mainstream. Assimilation as a solution to the "Indian problem" was considered preferable to its only perceived alternative: wholesale extermination (Francis, 1995:200).

Despite the number of amendments to the Indian Act, this piece of legislation remains an authoritative voice for government. This voice has historically decided who is Native, where Native people can live, where they are educated, what language they speak and what religion they should practice. For Native people, the concept of building trust with any government is unfathomable at times. The controls that government has instilled on the lives of Native people have also hindered attempts at improving the relationship. As one Elder told us:

I got the impression that we were seen as government and owning the land, and... that was a barrier right there. Who we stood for, it was more of an image thing (personal communication, 1997:25).

Negotiation

A conflict since the signing of treaties has been the establishment of provinces. From a European-based perspective, provinces were a wise and economic move. The country's boundaries grew as a result, along with an increase in business and population development and national wealth through natural resource development. A clear struggle occurs when First Nations are approached to negotiate on the issue of natural resources. The provinces, or provincial governments, become additional players in the discussions. As one Native person with whom we spoke stated:

As soon as you start to recognize the province as a player in all of this, by virtue of doing that, you are giving the province rights and jurisdictional rights where they don't belong (personal communication, 1997:35).

The deficient element of trust in the relationship is evident from the beginning of European colonization. It leaves many First Nations people and Canadians wondering if balanced discussions between the Crown and First Nations can ever occur. Technically, *negotiation* is the process of reaching an agreement where interests are shared and opposed between participants. Once an agreement is made, all parties need to trust and adhere to the approved decisions. According to Fisher and Ury (1991:1):

Everyone wants to participate in decisions that affect them; fewer and fewer people will accept decisions dictated by someone else.

It is difficult for Native people and the government to ignore previous encounters and cultural differences during negotiations. For example, during a negotiation, one First Nations person with whom we spoke said:

One of the things that seems to be there from the beginning is when there is that kind of an arrangement or negotiation with the province, the province always wants to assure everybody and to ensure in their negotiations that they still have control and they are never going to surrender that control... what is presented has the appearance of goodwill, but it always means that something is surrendered, you have to give up something in order to make this kind of arrangement (personal communication, 1997:35).

Consultation

In Ontario, building relationships between MNR and First Nations has been difficult, to say the least. A current problem in northern Ontario is the size of the MNR park planning zone. There are nearly eighty parks and reserves in the zone and the MNR are currently restructuring their staff load. One planning team member believes park superintendents have better opportunities to initialize and maintain contact with groups, however they often have more than one park to manage and are limited with time (personal communication, 1997:25). A parks problem that was discovered from the nine MNR employees we interviewed, was that neither the MNR or Native people have a very good understanding of how each other operate (personal communication, 1997). Most park superintendents give Native groups the same weight as all other interest groups in park planning.⁴ One park superintendent we interviewed stated:

I would be very surprised if any superintendent did involve, or at least attempt to involve, the First Nation people in the planning process (personal communication, 1997:21).

The conversations we had with MNR employees suggest that very few people have had cross-cultural training in their job placement. In particular, one MNR planner with whom we spoke said:

No, I have never been told,... never been encouraged to go to workshops or whatever. It is personal interest and initiative that would drive that. It is more I would say, to choose my words here, the word is contingency... when you find out something

is relevant you learn about it (personal communication, 1997:27).

He maintains that some information about First Nations people does exist within the MNR in published literature and circulated documents, but a limiting factor is definitely time. His exposure to First Nations has been:

... some training from First Nations representatives in general. On two occasions: on philosophy of the Aboriginal people and some of their attitudes and where they come from, and some of the things I should be mindful of when dealing with a person or a group of First Nations people. Again that was very general (personal communication, 1997:27).

The MNR does admit to having limited knowledge and understanding about First Nations cultures. For instance, the management planner we interviewed acknowledged the shortcomings of the MNR:

There are other things that we can't appreciate wholly: sacred use, religious aspects, features that have some sort of meaning in lore that we can read and say "that's good" and we can put it on the map kind of thing, but it does not necessarily mean that we understand fully (personal communication, 1997:27).

To compensate, some staff in the parks unit make a point of looking for unwritten Native traditions and/or legends to aid in the interpretation of Native cultural data in a provincial park (personal communication, 1997:27). The comments from a Native woman from the Ojibwe community of Garden River were in agreement:

They don't have a big knowledge of who we are, like our culture, where we come from, our traditions, but I think that they are, probably maybe they are being forced to listen and learn, ... so far it has worked out good (personal communication, 1997:23).

The weakness in the process is the number of staff that rely on secondary information (e.g. books, articles) rather than consultation with Native people themselves. One MNR employee illustrated the concern:

If the process was too fast then we should have slowed it down. We were relying on documented information and perhaps we should have said well there had to be more. Let's stop here, what is the urgency? (personal communication, 1997:27).

A limitation in exposing MNR park employees to the Native culture is the "hands-on" approach to cultural education: there are very few workshops and/or cultural training held within the MNR, thus the education comes on a project-by-project basis. One MNR employee's comments described a park plan situation:

It involved very few people within MNR. It involved the superintendent, the Native Liaison individual and a Park Planner was brought on specifically to plan the park. It really impacted very few people and the rest of the MNR office was largely unaware (personal communication, 1997:28).

There are many advantages and disadvantages to addressing Native issues on a case-by-case basis. A clear advantage is the opportunity to customize every project to achieve goals and objectives. Comments from one Native woman we interviewed clearly highlight where this advantage has shone through:

And they have bent over backwards to hear our concerns. Like when we took part in the negotiations, we made sure that our issues were covered, that our issues were put down there, and the same with Thompson [township]. So far, it seems that they are going to listen to us and abide by what we are trying to do, encourage us (personal communication, 1997:23).

This particular woman was very positive and happy with her Band's involvement with the planning of the park. She went on to say:

You know what I think is really unique is the MNR actually coming to us and willing to sit down with us and negotiate a management plan. Like this would not have happened, probably won't happen anyplace else. I again think it is up to the personnel, or the individuals that they hire. You know, where do they take us? It could have gone in a totally different direction. But I don't know if it is the MNR personnel that works here that are willing to work with us and see our point of view. You know, like I said, some of the Band won't even talk to MNR officials, they kick them off the reserve when they see them coming, like you know, stuff like that. And here we have kind of a unique relationship with them, so it doesn't happen all over. And I think we are fortunate that we do have people there, that there are people there working who are willing to listen to us (personal communication, 1997:23).

From a MNR perspective, Parks Ontario is highly policy-driven. The parks system tends to promote natural features before approaching cultural features. A staff member we interviewed found:

It is not just the Indigenous culture that is sort of overlooked, it is also a lot of our early history as a country that's overlooked. It is just sort of by a fluke that a lot of these things get developed (personal communication, 1997:25).

In one particular case, MNR employees held public consultations at Native Band Offices (on Reserve) and township halls. A spokesperson for the MNR said the location helped as:

The Elders could come and talk and see what we were doing. We recorded all of their comments at that time (personal communication, 1997:22).

Disadvantages range from having little to no consultation with First Nations communities during park planning phases due to insufficient demand from legislation.

MNR Resource Management Strategies

This section describes resource management strategies in the Ontario Parks system. Attempts have been made to link conservation and First Nations cultures in both of the resource management departments. However, evidence shows scarce involvement of First Nations people in the *design* of protected areas.

"Sustainable development", "eco-tourism" and "co-management" are buzz words as we enter the 21st Century. In this particular study, the definition of co-management, specifically addressing First Nations people is as follows:

The sharing of decision-making power with nontraditional actors in the process of resource management... those other than either state managers or industry, such as local resource users, environmental groups, or *aboriginal people*... arrangements ranging from public participation initiatives, to land claim settlements and self-government initiatives (OMNR, 1996, emphasis added).

One of the seven business objectives of the Ontario Parks system is to: "...involve the private sector in program delivery, from service contracts to park contracting to *partnerships*" (OMNR, 1996, emphasis added). There are three examples of which we are aware where this objective has been implemented. The first example is an agreement between Ontario Parks (representing Lake Nipigon Provincial Park) and Sandpoint First Nation. The First Nation band has agreed to cooperate the provincial park in accordance with the terms and conditions set by Ontario Parks. The Band is guided by the park management plan, applicable legislation, policies and procedures and park permits. The Band is also responsible for all staff and maintenance in the park. The benefits to the First Nation Band are employment and (potential) revenue and the benefits to Ontario Parks is having a

partner operate the park, thus reducing overall costs to the MNR (OMNR, 1996).

A similar example is the relationship between Quetico Provincial Park and the Lac La Croix First Nation. The "Agreement of Co-Existence" evolved from the recognition of the social degradation in the First Nation Band by Quetico Park. The Native community of Lac La Croix have a number of social problems stemming from substance abuse, unemployment, cultural loss and violence. In an effort to lessen these conditions, a partnership with the park was imperative. The Band was involved with the public consultation process which eventually led to an agreement:

...to preserve wilderness values and to create social and economic opportunities for the community (OMNR, 1996).

More specifically, the commitment by the band is outlined in part of the message by Chief Leon J. Jourdain (Chief of Lac La Croix First Nation) in the park plan:

The First Nation has been and will continue to be an active partner in the effective and efficient management of Quetico Park through thoughtful and collaborative efforts in co-management. The opportunity for the First Nation to act as a partner in this effort is best described by the words of our Elders as "a sacred trust bestowed to the Anishinaabe for the care of the land." The "sacred trust" is what will guide the partners and others in our endeavors to maintain a central focus on the social and economic stability of the community of Lac La Croix (OMNR, 1996).

As described earlier, the definitions of co-management are numerous. Ontario Parks have been chosen by the United Indian Council as the "spiritual caretakers" of the unique petroglyph features in Petroglyphs Provincial Park. Unlike the above examples, only *specific* features in the park are in a co-management arrangement rather than the entire park. The agreement addresses park fees, access to the sacred site, access during the non-operating season and fasting requests by the First Nation. Co-management arrangements could not have been made without resource management guidelines, negotiations, and time. Descriptions of these guidelines and the process of consulting with First Nation groups are found in the paragraphs below.

Co-Management Strategies

Resource managers and planners follow guidelines set by the MNR for the management of cultural and natural resources in provincial parks. The

guidelines were established to monitor and continue the effectiveness of park management, standardize development, and formalize approval. Resource management is intended to be flexible within the framework of policies and plans (OMNR, 1992). Defining a terms of reference is one of the many steps in the management planning process. The procedure requires management objectives and an evaluation of the existing data base. Throughout this phase, the planning team consult and review all information required to formulate a park management plan. The planning team usually consists of specialists related to a number of fields (e.g. landscape architects, environmental planners, and biologists). Unfortunately, this panel of experts do not directly relate to our First Nations issues.

Planning teams also comply with the focus of management of cultural resources dictated by the government of the day. In the previous Ontario government, the Ministry of Natural Resources created Native Liaison positions to foster growth and build bridges with Native people. One MNR staff member we interviewed was pleased to see the government proactively make an effort to better communicate with Native people:

So, I always felt that somebody has really turned on the light here because MNR is finally going to get into the business of developing the working relationships with the key people on the land here, the Native people (personal communication, 1997:22).

The present provincial government has focused on reducing the Ontario deficit, thus employment cut backs in the provincial government have been dramatic. A retired Native Liaison officer we interviewed revealed his feelings of the action taken by the new government:

There was a brief era there where the MNR actually became, got into, the Native liaison business. We have always liaised with angling and hunting clubs...but we had this other group of major stakeholders... They [Native people] don't like to be called that, because they are more than that. But the fact that they are more than that, you'd think we would have a whole unit dealing with them. We did for awhile, but I don't see it there now, it got pulled out. The funny part of it is that other organizations, like forestry companies, that are planning on dealing a lot with Native people, they do put the time and money into having people who will work and build these relationships and keep the doors open (personal communication, 1997:22).

Occasionally in the MNR, cross-cultural training sessions to educate people and to give them a real awareness of First Nations issues and knowledge

are arranged. Attendance is optional and has proved to be beneficial to MNR employees, as one staff person went on to say:

They would take this workshop for two or three days and come out of there with a whole different—sort of overwhelmed. They had a total different appreciation of Native people. I always felt that, you know there was a time when I was uncomfortable going into a reserve and into a band office. After I had some of this cross-cultural training, at these workshops, I got to feel more comfortable in the First Nation office than I did in my own Ministry office (personal communication, 1997:22).

Given this testimony, it is clear that the educational sessions were worthwhile and successful with their intention. As a Native Liaison Officer, he felt that he had developed a good working relationship with Native people. Within the team of Native Liaison officers:

We were very supportive of each other. But when you go back into the district office and worked, you were kind of on your own (personal communication, 1997:22).

Benefits of attending a workshop are evident within the MNR, as one staff member said:

You know, we had various discussions with how to consult with the First Nations. I was more comfortable when we held the public meetings in their community hall (personal communication, 1997:22).

The benefits have also been noticeable, particularly to one First Nation Band:

Like I said, in the past they never consulted with us or took our point of view seriously...but I think, overall we have a good relationship with MNR. I know some of the First Nations haven't. I know some of them can't stand MNR, or government officials... I think also it depends on the individual too. I don't know if it has to do with their temperament or their outlook. Do they keep an open mind about everything and stuff like that (personal communication, 1997:23).

As mentioned earlier, cross-cultural training sessions were optional and according to an informant, many of his colleagues remained insensitive to First Nation issues. To date, inviting First Nations to participate in park planning has followed the same procedure as inviting any special interest group. Cultural insensitivity can affect the participation of a First Nation group. As one park superintendent told us:

We didn't know what they wanted. We did not get a reply so we just left it at that then it was up to them whether they would participate or not (personal communication, 1997:21).

From first-hand experience, the retired Native Liaison officer we interviewed believes many MNR employees do not have an understanding of the First Nations culture. He also found his colleagues:

Work for an organization that has policies and procedures and you have to abide by those I guess. I think there could be a lot more sort of leadership shown by Managers and Directors. I think there needs to be more work done (personal communication, 1997:22).

Mental barriers have to be overcome for true understanding to take place to allow the design process to proceed. Those who work for the MNR tend to be restricted in their capacity as *creative* designers/planners. Limitations have emerged from numerous policies, guidelines and set design standards. In one way, limitations are advantageous as designs become universal and recognizable as "government" amenities. On the other hand, MNR environmental planners *are encouraged* to be creative in their attempt to blend human activities with the environment yet they are confined to MNR regulations. Design limitations and public consultation meetings can go hand in hand.

During our interviews we asked a number of First Nations people how their Native heritage could be represented in a park. We were impressed with their responses, and later wondered if the MNR has ever heard their strong ideas and feelings. The MNR *may not know* how some Native people feel about design as they may never have asked them. Some of the responses that we received include:

- All entrances should be from the east (where the sun comes from)
- Circular designs (buildings, pathways, etc.): the circle represents one continuous journey
- Reading material could be bi- or tri-lingual (e.g. describing the significance of a rock = has a life of its own, spiritual significance)
- Orientation of buildings: circle or six sided design to show that we all go through cycles from life to death
- Significant colours (on/in a building): black, red, yellow, white
- Views of water

- Mark sacred places in a creative way (to protect them and observe them if desired)
- Cleansing or smudging with tobacco upon entrance to the park (personal communication, 1997:36).

Management of natural resources are similar around the globe. The goals and objectives usually follow the same theme (e.g. to protect or preserve natural, cultural and/or historical features in a particular space for public enjoyment).

Towards A Successful Co-Management Model: A Case Study

To illustrate what we mean by successful and participatory management planning and design, we present the case of the Mississagi Delta Provincial Nature Reserve (MDPNR), which is located in northern Ontario, Canada. This particular park is unique to the MNR as it is a leading example of "co-management" between Parks Ontario, a First Nation Band and a township. The section entitled "Cultural Resources" contains information solely on the Indigenous influence(s) in the chosen parks.

Mississagi Delta Provincial Nature Reserve (MDPNR)

Native groups who settled on the body of water currently known as the Mississagi River called the water "*River Mississaging*", "*River of Many Mouths*" and/or "*Big Mouthed River*" (OMNR, 1982:25).

Located near the mouth of Mississagi River in northern Ontario is 2,395 hectares of land. The area has been protected by the Ministry of Natural Resources since 1985 as Mississagi Delta Provincial Nature Reserve (MDPNR). MDPNR is seven kilometers west of the town of Blind River and borders the township of Cobden. The park is classified as a Nature Reserve in order to:

protect distinctive biological, geological and biophysical landscapes; to provide opportunities for unstructured individual exploration, and to foster appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage (OMNR, 1996:2).

Natural Resources

MDPNR protects a number of provincially significant features around the North Channel of Lake Huron. The park includes an island chain called the French Islands along the shore of Mississagi Bay. The islands were formed approximately 10,000 years ago with the movement of melting ice

down the south section of the Mississagi River. As a consequence, the landscape of the delta contrasts with the surrounding rocky North Channel shoreline. The shallow water in Mississagi Bay invites wetland formation as the islands offer protection from the wind in the North Channel (OMNR, 1996). The nesting sites located near the French Islands belong to herons, gulls, and cormorants. The flora and fauna of MDPNR include a range of regionally significant species and a rare species called porcupine grass. The North Channel greatly affects the climate in the park as the summers are cool and the winter temperatures are less severe than the surrounding area (OMNR, 1996:4). Topographic features in MDPNR are low and hummocky with elevations reaching 175 to 225 metres. Soils in the park are fairly wet (except in the summer months) and are predominantly Mallard silty loam. The park consists of an upland mixed forest with tree species such as White Pine and Balsam Fir.

Cultural Resources

According to eight archaeological studies completed in the park, evidence from the first occupants in the area date back to 800 AD. The occupants were Native Algonquian speakers (mix of Ojibwe and Cree) and camped mainly in an area known as the Renard Site along the northeast side of Fox Island (OMNR, 1996:25). Their existence depended on hunting (large and small game), fishing and plant resources. During this time, Native people would gather together in the summer months and disperse into smaller groups in the winter. An assortment of artifacts connected to this time period suggest the occupants were skilled at tool making. Another area that indicates occupation is the Falls Site, located in the eastern mainland at Mississagi Chute (OMNR, 1996:26). The river provided an adequate transportation route to Lake Huron and other areas in the interior. There are a number of unexplained circular depressions and rock formations in the park. A geologist located them in 1975 and compared them to the Pukaskaw Pits in northern Ontario.

The Park Plan

Since the park's inception in 1985, Ontario Parks have directed the park with an Interim Management Statement. A new management plan was initiated with provincial government funding and the Mississauga First Nation Northern Boundary Settlement Agreement in 1994. The land claim had been submitted in the early 1980s and came to a close in 1996. The co-management idea was "kind of a side issue" as Native people were looking for additional parcels of land to *co--manage* (personal communication, 1997:34). The settlement includes a *sharing* of the Blind River by way of the Indian Lands Agreement Act (1986). The Act is a special statute that

allows the sharing of jurisdiction (personal communication, 1997:34). One MNR person we interviewed believes the agreement should not be interpreted as *co-management*. In his opinion, co-management means a "partnership", or a relationship that is "50 - 50" (personal communication, 1997:28). The agreement really describes "cooperation" of the park as the Crown will still have the final say in all decisions. Mississagi Delta is a provincial park and if the agreement really proposed co-management, then the status of the park could no longer remain under the jurisdiction of the Crown. The park would have to be called something else. Therefore, we believe the Ministry of Natural Resources needs to be clear about what "cooperation" and "co-management" means in terms of the future of partnerships with Ontario Parks.

Settlement Agreement

In 1850, the Robinson-Huron Treaty established the Mississauga First Nation Reserve. The size of the Reserve was much larger than what it is today as it included the land between Mississagi River and the Blind (Penowabikong) River, up to the mouth of Lake Dubome. The size of the Reserve changed with the Northern boundary land claim and is proposed to change again with the impending Southern boundary land claim.

The Northern boundary land claim was submitted to the Crown by the Mississauga First Nation on the basis that land for the Native Reserve was improperly surveyed in 1852. The Band "claimed the land which was not included in the survey, and compensation for the loss of use of that land" (Settlement Agreement, 1994). The Agreement was signed by representatives of the Mississauga Band, the Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Ministry Responsible for Native Affairs and the Ministry of Natural Resources on April 27, 1994. In Article 5 of the Agreement, the province of Ontario and the First Nation Band agree to co-manage MDPNR with Thompson Township as an optional participant. In the words of the Agreement, the parties agree to the following:

- (a) a park board, composed of representatives from each of Ontario, Mississagi and, if applicable, the Township of Thompson, to provide advice and recommendations with regard to the planning, management and operations of the Park to the Minister of Natural Resources;
- (b) the preparation of a management plan for the Park by the park board, to reflect the commitment of the park board to:
 - (1) protect the natural values, heritage and integrity of the Park;

- (2) protect Mississagi sacred and cultural sites within the Park; and
- (3) provide for job opportunities for Mississagi and local residents (Settlement Agreement, 1994:41)

A park board was formulated with two representatives from each of the parties. So far, the park board has met approximately every two months and are pleased with this process. In addition to the park board, there was a planning team comprised mainly of MNR staff. The responsibility of the team was to "... provide the park planner with technical expertise" (OMNR, 1996:3) A Park Management Plan has been written and is currently waiting approval from the Minister of Natural Resources.

Consultation

The MNR followed their management planning guidelines and consulted with the public. As mentioned earlier, the process of consulting Native people is comparable to all interest groups. However, in this case some consultation did take place, and one Native person we interviewed found the process to be very rushed:

the most difficult thing of the whole process was holding the governments back. They were so gung-ho to get ahead with this thing, to get it finalized that we had to constantly keep pulling the reins back and say no, we have to consult with our Elders and get their input into it (personal communication, 1997:30).

The issue of time was later stressed when my informant discussed negotiations in the park plan:

... and we have to stick with our agenda, saying, "your agenda is fine, but it can fit into our agenda because this is something new and it is negotiable". But you have to respect our culture and our ways of doing it and if it takes twenty-five years, then I am ready to sit back twenty-five years and deal with it (personal communication, 1997:30).

Public comments were recorded at an open house in January, 1996. The seventeen responses covered the following topics:

camping	fishing (commercial/recreational)	access
permitted uses	mechanized travel	traffic
enforcement	Native issues	protection
trails	funding	tourism
boating	environmental safety	land use permits

More specifically, the responses that discussed Native issues are:

- Native site integrity (involve Native people);
- Properly controlling and enforcing Native hunting
- Have a voluntary ban on Native hunting (or establish and post "Hunting Season") due to effect on visitors watching birds, wildlife, etc. Also, is it necessary [to allow hunting] given the small area of the park?
- Advocate the return of Native artifacts
- Park research projects should have a Native component
- Native enforcement issues should be addressed through Native Conservation Officers
- Concern with land claim's South Boundary and possible influence on park
- Treaty rights and traditional spiritual sites have to be respected
- More hunting and camping allowed for Native people (OMNR, 1996).

Some information that was gathered in the consultations have already been addressed by the MNR. For instance, a Native person with whom we spoke said:

traditionally people have hunted in there [the park] and I think the people, the families that did hunt in that area have the right to continue and practice with what has been handed down to them (personal communication, 1997:30).

As a response, the preliminary management plan states:

Treaty rights will continue e.g. hunting is not allowed in nature reserves, except for Natives permitted through Treaty rights (OMNR, 1996:4).

An issue that can be difficult to deal with is the protection of sacred cultural artifacts and/or sites. One Native person with whom we spoke said many Elders are concerned about the buried sacred belongings (that may be dug up by "souvenir hunters"), the found sacred belongings (that are in museums and universities) and would ultimately like a safe place to have them stored and controlled by Native people (personal communication, 1997:30). Management planning staff find this issue frustrating for two reasons: firstly, once they find out where sacred sites are, the question is how can they be protected. Secondly, if management staff do not know where sacred sites are, how can they prevent visitors from stumbling across them or taking them?

An example of where management planners attempted to protect a sacred site is Petroglyphs Provincial Park (Ontario). The petroglyphs are symbols carved on rocks by Ojibwe people. The park has one of the largest

collections of petroglyphs in Canada. Management planners initially tried to protect the sacred site with a wire fence around the petroglyphs and a lookout. Later a landscape architect and architect were hired and constructed a more culturally sensitive design around the site (personal communication, 1997:37). Access to the largest sacred site is protected by a gate, a railing and has a flat "alter" for those who wish to leave offerings (e.g. tobacco). Visitors can view the petroglyphs from a raised walkway that encircles the carving site. Native people are allowed to walk on the face of the rock provided they remove their shoes or wear moccasins. Other petroglyph sites are not promoted in the park and are restricted only to Native people (OMNR, 1996).⁵

Funding and Development

The issue of funding repeatedly came up in interviews with Native people and MNR staff. For example, many people asked these questions: Will there be any funding? where will funding come from? and when will the park receive funding? Presently, the MNR manages Mississagi Delta as a non-operating park. The parcel of land has minimal development and according to the Nature Reserve classification, preservation is a top priority. The Native people with whom we spoke mentioned the desire to keep the park as pristine wilderness, yet also discussed possible promotion methods of the park (personal communication, 1997). The suggestions ranged from erecting the old Hudson's Bay post and re-developing the site into a contemporary museum or visitor centre, to outdoor education lessons with nearby schools. The services of a landscape architect, for example, could be utilized to fulfill any one of the ideas (e.g. historical restoration). One of the interviewees went into further detail with the following description:

We want to hopefully educate people more on what we do. We are not going to have big elaborate ceremonies or anything but maybe we can put out booklets and stuff and do a little demonstration of certain things (personal communication, 1997:23).

As mentioned by park board members, promotion of the park would ultimately create job opportunities for Native people and people living in Thompson Township (personal communication, 1997:29). Thompson Township was very keen to get involved with the co-management of Mississagi Delta. The park could be used as a tourism attraction for the town (personal communication, 1997:28). In the words of one Thompson Township resident,

People in this area need something to give them some hope, right now, because of the mines and because of everything

else that was shutting down, there was none. The morale in the whole area was the pits and something like this could give people some pride in the area again and some hope that there are going to be a few jobs created anyway (personal communication, 1997:29).

Current Situation

The management plan for Mississagi Delta is presently waiting approval from the Minister of Natural Resources. From our research, the people we interviewed seemed happy with the arrangement, knowing that certain issues need to be addressed in the future (e.g. the improvement of the relationship between government staff and First Nations, cultural education, and the future of the park). The design of the park was not a major issue with MNR staff nor with the First Nations people with whom we spoke. In their eyes, the park is a large piece of land that needs to be promoted and protected. The agreed-upon principles include: to coordinate the needs and desires of the park board (representatives of the three partners), the greater community, Indigenous community, specific design details (access, future structures), and the park.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study suggests that necessary *effective* communication processes are required in order to ensure equitable participation of First Nations communities in park planning, management and design. To date, the question of understanding different values and the interpretation of place into physical form has been a major problem in resource management. How can we become more sensitized to other points-of-view and make appropriate assessments? Some people believe that weekend cross-cultural exercises are not enough. There *needs* to be constant willingness to learn, teaching and involvement of First Nations cultures by park management systems. This leads to a consideration of what both Native and non-Native people need to bring to problem-solving in order to be relevant, and what processes they can put in place to evolve understandings of place, meaning, and expressive forms. We have come full circle in responding to the questions addressed in this research. In Canada, at least to this date, First Nations people have had few opportunities to be equal partners in developing resource management strategies. There have been efforts made by the MNR to rectify this situation, but there still appears to be a need to better understand First Nations cultures, include First Nations in conservation management, implement culturally appropriate policies, and express First Nations cultures in park management and design. The communication

process between First Nations cultures and government systems depend on the people involved. In some testimonies by MNR staff, there appeared to be acceptable communication, yet in other interviews the data implied the opposite situation. There were minimal obligations by First Nations people or government staff to one another. Based on the information included in this study, points for discussion are as follows:

1. The importance of developing and monitoring joint stewardship programs.

First Nations communities and MNR officials could work together to learn to utilize various technologies, (e.g. Geographic Information Systems (GIS), as a method to monitor wildlife or vegetation health). This system could be used in conjunction with the expertise of First Nations people that use the area for traditional purposes. A written synthesis should be prepared as well as regular updates to the database. GIS is only one system which can be used to gather and interpret data. Cultural inventories using CD ROM and involving local people is a significant area to explore in the parks planning process.

2. The MNR should work with First Nations communities to find out how *they* wish to express their culture(s) in design and management.

MNR officials ought to make the effort to find out from First Nations people important elements in the landscape and integrate their findings in site design. Some examples were discovered in our interviews: smudging at the entrance to a park; four sacred colours (architecture or signage); and entrances from the east. Rediscovering Aboriginal language place names (e.g. names and meanings of islands, bilingual signs), would be an important start. The issue of visualization and simulation in a participatory process could be explored in publications, Aboriginal art, logos, paraphernalia (t-shirts), computer images, and Internet sites.

3. More policies that integrate First Nations' cultural needs and issues should be established.

An example of the above would be having First Nations Elders work together with MNR planners and policy advisors to alter or create new policies that address cultural issues and/or needs. The end result would be policies that are culturally sensitive and integrated with First Nations values. As mentioned earlier in the MDPNR case study, hunting and year-round traditional camping allowances have been identified as an issue to be resolved with further communication and study (expressed in resource and use management) and written in the management plan.

4. There should be ongoing research that pertains to First Nations cultures and cultural history relating to the natural environment.

On many occasions, budget and/or manpower constraints dictate what background information can be collected in resource management. For example, details about trading between First Nations and European settlers were recorded in terms of location, time and traded articles. However, the *treatment* of Native people at the specific locations and with certain parties may not have been documented. A park library may not have that information during the management planning process. The MNR could involve First Nations people in the design of a park by acquiring contemporary information via ethnographic interviews. The information is imperative in order to properly design a space with consideration for First Nations people.

5. It is important to begin building relationships and developing a formalized and long-term process of communication.

The MNR could play a part in building relationships with First Nations people by developing a stronger commitment to partnerships with First Nations people; regular cross-cultural training of MNR staff; consultation with First Nations in all park planning decisions; regular assessment of the consultation process; and regular monitoring and up-grading of joint stewardship programs between the MNR and First Nations.

6. Elders *should* play a significant role in decision-making regarding the planning, use and design of provincial parks in traditional territories.

The wisdom, patience and experiences of First Nations Elders can provide crucial information in the decision-making process. Native people have been and continue to be very protective of sacred sites and the importance of *place*. In most First Nations communities today, Elders continue to be revered as sources of wisdom and knowledge pertaining to the land and the environment. Any decision-making involving park planning and design should, then, include the input of community Elders.

Park planning and resource management can be improved with an emphasis placed on negotiation rather than litigation in conflict resolution situations. This could mean that a broader group of people will have their needs met and hence feel that resources are managed better. There is no doubt that First Nations communities have been inadequately involved with the land-use planning and design issues which have confronted government-run parks in traditional First Nations territories. By looking at successful models of co-management and by making a commitment to co-management partnerships between the MNR and First Nations, First

Nations' concerns, values and aspirations can be better reflected in provincial park planning and design practices.

Notes

1. For Ojibwe people, land is a gift from the Great Mystery. As Ojibwe Elder and historian Basil Johnston writes:

From beginning to end it nourishes us: it quenches our thirst, it shelters us, and we follow the order of its seasons. It gives us freedom to come and go according to its nature and its extent—great freedom when the extent is large, less freedom when it is small. And when we die we are buried within the land that outlives us all. We belong to the land by birth, by need, and by affection. And no man may presume to own the land (Johnston, 1982:170).

2. When we refer to the "ethnographic interview" as a research methodology, we are referring to a methodology well-entrenched in the western academic tradition, evolving from the discipline of anthropology, and a research method which gives respect and credence to the oral tradition and intuitive analyses of Aboriginal people themselves (Spradley, 1979; Patton, 1987; Kirby and McKenna, 1989). When doing research with First Nations people, qualitative methods have proven to be the most welcome by the people themselves, not to mention the most revealing (Benkovic, 1997; Webster and Nabigon, 1992). The willingness of the researcher to share the results of one's research and to participate in the real lives of the people involved in the research is very much a prerequisite in most Indigenous contexts (Webster and Nabigon, 1992). By encouraging participatory research, common interest and mutual trust is able to emerge between the researcher and the ones involved in the research. As a result, the quality of information that is acquired is usually more reliable and beneficial for the people themselves. We found this to be true in our own research, where we were able to not only ask First Nations people questions and "find out things," but to make friends and to participate in their lives.
3. We ended up interviewing seventeen people from First Nations communities represented by the North Shore Tribal Council (NSTC) and the United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin (UCCM), including people from the communities of Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation and M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island, and Sagamok and Serpent River along the north shore of Lake Superior. All of the interviews with First Nations people were conducted in English. We also interviewed eight employees of the Ontario Ministry of Natural

- Resources (OMNR). Anonymity was preserved and university regulations regarding working with human subjects were carefully followed.
4. At the onset of a park management plan, a general mailing goes out to all interest groups to invite their comments in the planning process, including First Nations (MNR Official, personal communication, 1997:27). Given the limitations to relationship building in the MNR, is it possible to improve or develop better communication with Native groups? The answer relates to MNR employee interest and motivation.
 5. The Ministry of Natural Resources have demonstrated to Native people and the public that they are able to adequately protect sacred sites. In the case of Mississagi Delta, the park board should be able to suggest methods for the protection of sacred artifacts.

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