

The Role of 'the Public' in the Management of Newfoundland's Forestry Heritage

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Abstract

Forestry in Newfoundland has a long history of both subsistence and industrial uses, with separate associated tenure systems and property and use rights. Though most forest users on the island are subsistence or recreational users, the public plays only a minimal role in forest decision-making, which continues to revolve around industry-based harvesting decisions with little regard for the multiple forest uses valued by the public. With the rapid decline of the industrial pulp and paper sector, which has coincided with policy shifts from productivist to multifunctional forest uses, Newfoundlanders face difficult decisions regarding how to manage their forests, and for whom. This essay provides a brief history of forestry in Newfoundland, including recent changes to policies and practices on the island regarding public participation and ecosystem management. It frames some of the problems and solutions of forest governance as common-pool resource issues and suggests ways to better integrate existing forest users with forest management.

Introduction

The forests of Newfoundland long served as a backdrop for the primary industry of the island – the fisheries – providing subsistence fuelwood and sawlogs for rural outport villages, and a place for hunting and berry collection. But, from the early twentieth century, the industrial forest sector rose to prominence and, at its peak in the 1930s, the pulp and paper industry comprised 53 per cent of total goods exported from

Newfoundland.¹ The land tenure system of Newfoundland's forests has maintained remnants of both of these historical phases, with long-term industry-leased lands providing material for the remaining pulp and paper mill on the island, and a strong subsistence culture shaping a common-pool resource system to most of the island. Subsistence activities, which 'provide for material and cultural survival outside capitalist market relations',² play a vital role in the economic and cultural fabric of Newfoundland. But the industrial forest sector has declined as a result of global market forces, with two of three pulp and paper mills closing since 2005 and the remaining pulp and paper mill operating at reduced capacity, calling into question forest management and government subsidy programmes focused on maintaining industrial viability.³

Forestry in Newfoundland has mirrored some of the broader trends of Canadian forest policy. Howlett described Canadian forest policy as a shifting set of regimes, from unregulated exploitation to regulation with the rise of the pulp and paper industry and large-scale harvesting operations, to the scientific timber management regime, focused on optimizing yields and utilizing technically informed planning processes for efficient allocation of wood-fibre resources.⁴ Newfoundland has largely remained in the realm of top-down, state-controlled scientific timber management, though the language of some policies has shifted to more wide-ranging goals such as biodiversity protection, sustainable resource use and more inclusive public input processes, called 'ecosystem-based management' or sustainable forestry.⁵

This brief overview, however, ignores the nuanced tenure system in Newfoundland that includes not only industrial forestry and government management, but the less regulated and more widespread system of subsistence use that has persisted alongside the growth of industrial management.

In this essay I consider the ways in which 'the public', or citizens of Newfoundland outside of the state and its agencies, influence forest management. I argue that forestry decision-making authority has remained in the expert-driven paradigm of scientific timber management and that decision-makers within Newfoundland's government have tended to support the pulp and paper industry to the exclusion of other considerations. Thus, public input processes have been procedural rather than substantive, though the public – and especially environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) – have used obstructionism to stop projects as they have little meaningful

upfront input into forest planning and management. I explore questions of access to Newfoundland's forests, in particular, who makes forest management decisions and for whom, and end with ideas about better incorporating the forest users of Newfoundland – the people who cut wood, hunt, fish, collect berries and recreate in the forest – with forest management.

Methods

I utilised interview data with forestry stakeholders, participant observation and a number of recent governmental documents, academic analyses and ENGO reports to frame changes. Analysis was primarily based on interviews (n=42) conducted with employees of several government departments, ENGOs, forest users and community leaders. Informal meetings were also conducted, often with academics and employees of government departments, to discuss the project, develop questions and clarify concepts, and I participated extensively in forestry discussions, meetings and conferences across the province.

The role of 'the public' in forest management

For many years, exclusive government-industry coalitions controlled forestry in Canada, though this situation changed in many regions in the late twentieth century with increasing public input into forest management decisions.⁶ This change was largely in response to the growing ability of groups such as ENGOs to demand more voice in land use and natural resource decision-making through protests and market campaigns.⁷

The forms of public participation have varied according to government objectives for participation, such as mollifying an angry public, or creating empowered citizen groups and instituting collaborative forms of governance.⁸ Governments devolve control over decision-making processes to public constituencies with trepidation, and 'people from the wider community often come to the participatory process expecting to gain greater control over the process while at the same time government agencies rarely want to relinquish control'.⁹ A traditional scientific timber management view is that expertise is largely confined to the state and its experts, and this technocratic view of participation means that the public has little ownership over planning

processes or problem-solving.¹⁰ Public participation can therefore be authentic, involving citizens upfront as collaborators in a dynamic and visible process, or (more commonly) unauthentic, involving citizens only after important decisions have been made.¹¹

Table 1 Authentic and unauthentic participation¹²

	Authentic Participation	Unauthentic Participation
Interaction style	Collaborative	Conflictual
Participation is sought	Early, before anything is set	After the agenda is set and decisions are made
Role of administrator	Collaborative technician/governor	Expert technician/manager
Role of citizen	Equal partner	Unequal participant
Administrative process	Dynamic, visible, open	Static, invisible, closed
Citizen options	Proactive or reactive	Reactive
Citizen output	Design	Buy-in
Administrator output	Process	Decision
Decision is made	As a result of discourse, with equal opportunity for all to influence outcomes	By administrator, perhaps in consultation with citizens

These changing roles of the public in forestry have accompanied changes to rural land uses. Rural regions have long been identified with natural resource commodity production, or productivist land uses, though this has shifted in many places towards conservation and amenity-based rural consumption.¹³ Forest practices emphasizing timber growth and harvesting, with well-regulated, homogenized landscapes, are emblematic of productivist forestry.¹⁴ While productivism has not ended, and extractive industries continue their important roles in many rural places, the *dominance* of the framework of productivism is being replaced through the creation of government policies, global market dynamics and changing norms regarding land use. The transition from productivism towards multifunctional landscapes, characterized by a blend of conservation, consumption and productive uses, may change the relationships between rural development and rural land use.¹⁵

Common-pool resources

Forest resources are considered common-pool resources (CPRs), which have two characteristics: it is costly to exclude physically potential users from benefiting from such resources; and use of such resources by one person subtracts from the ability of others to use the resources.¹⁶ CPRs are situated within different property regimes. Open-access regimes, functioning without oversight or rules, can lead to over-exploitation, famously described by Hardin as the ‘tragedy of the commons’.¹⁷ Hardin suggested two solutions to this tragedy: privatization of the commons, or top-down regulation by government.

But alternative views of CPRs have emerged with distinctions between unfettered open access and common property arrangements. The latter were observed in field studies, especially in developing countries, in which local actors maintained sustainable natural resource practices through locally created norms, agreements, contracts and other incentives that addressed the exclusion and subtractability problems of CPRs through collective action.¹⁸

As described below, both the industrial and subsistence uses of Newfoundland’s forests suggest CPR problems, with limited (and subtractable) timber resources and widespread physical management of the forests. Newfoundland has largely relied on top-down regulation to deal with common-pool forest resources, though access to forests has been much more complex than government mandates and citizen compliance, and in common with the framework of Ribot and Peluso has included both. The framework of access described by Ribot and Peluso includes both formal, state-mediated opportunities for benefiting from forests, as well as the many informal and illegal activities in which people engage to derive benefits from forests.¹⁹

Newfoundland’s forests are almost entirely owned by the provincial government and held as Crown lands. This ownership, however, tells us little about how forests are managed, by whom and for whose benefit. Schlager and Ostrom categorized the ability to benefit from land in terms of rights, from operational-level rights – access (right to enter) and withdrawal (right to obtain products, such as timber) – to collective-choice property rights – management (right to regulate use patterns), exclusion (right to determine who has access) and alienation (right to sell).²⁰

The general public of Newfoundland, with its culturally and economically vibrant subsistence practices, has exercised access and

withdrawal rights for many years. Property rights such as management and exclusion, however, are largely vested in either the government or the pulp-and-paper industry, as described below. This essay raises the question of whether the forests of Newfoundland could benefit from a formalized commons system of governance, in which existing forest users – especially subsistence and recreational users – could influence or even control forest planning processes.

A brief history of forestry in Newfoundland

Human beings in Newfoundland have depended on forests for millennia. Prior to European settlement, multiple Palaeoeskimo and Indian groups supplemented marine-based diets with forest animals such as caribou, fisher (a small mammal) and fox, and engaged in wood-working.²¹ This essay begins with Euro-Canadian settlement, and two parallel tenure systems that developed on the island: the commons, called the ‘3-mile commons’ or ‘fishermen’s reserve’, and the industrial pulp and paper tenure. The 3-mile commons developed over time near the rural outpost communities that dotted the coast, extending 3 miles from the coast into the forest interior. The commons was utilized by fishers and their families for both fuelwood and sawlogs and was formalized around 1898 to delineate industrial activity, centred on the interior forests of the island, from the subsistence domestic and small-scale sawmilling uses of the population along the coast.²²

The forest industry of Newfoundland, initially centred on commercial sawmilling, developed in the 1870s and grew rapidly with the completion of the railroad from St John’s to Port aux Basques in 1890; there were approximately 195 sawmills utilizing the large white pine on the island by 1900.²³ The large-scale sawmilling phase of forest industry lasted only until about 1911, largely as a result of overharvesting of white pine,²⁴ and sawmill production after this time was undertaken in the numerous small mills that processed black spruce and balsam fir for domestic consumption, but which were not valuable as export.

At this time, industrial forestry shifted towards pulp and paper industry dominance, a shift facilitated by government subsidies in the form of long-term tenure agreements and inexpensive wood supply, guaranteed loans and grants, road building and free hydropower.²⁵ Pulp and paper leases were created to attract foreign pulp and paper investment, granting 99-year leases at C\$20 per square mile plus small

periodic fees, with no royalty charges on the trees.²⁶ Pulp and paper manufacturers were therefore immediately favoured over sawmill operators, who had to pay rent, land bonuses and royalties. Subsequent legislation maintained this favourable payment scheme for pulp and paper.²⁷ Favouritism towards the pulp and paper industry was in keeping with longstanding Newfoundland policies that emphasized export-based industrial development, often financed through foreign loans and under foreign management.²⁸

From the early twentieth century until 2009 almost all of the industry-leased lands were consolidated and controlled by two pulp and paper companies: the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company in Grand Falls, established in 1909, and the Newfoundland Power and Paper Company in Corner Brook, established in 1925. In 1962, the Grand Falls mill had 7,577 square miles in total under its domain and the Corner Brook mill had 14,618 square miles.²⁹

Though technically Crown property, the pulp and paper companies created management, harvest and road plans, and granted cabin permits, effectively 'regulating internal use patterns' of the landscape, in the words of Schlager and Ostrom,³⁰ and determining the end uses and beneficiaries of forest utilization. While the companies were bound by provincially established forest practice guidelines and reporting regulations, long-term leases in Newfoundland were essentially equivalent to private landholdings because of their duration and autonomy regarding forest practices.³¹ Lands that were not leased by the pulp and paper industry, including the 3-mile commons, were referred to as 'unalienated Crown Lands'.

Pulp and paper exploitation grew alongside and finally encroached upon the 3-mile commons along the coast.³² Projects around the communities of White Bay South and Roddickton intruded upon the 3-mile limit, blurring distinctions between the commons and the industrializing interior forests, and 'weaken[ing] the integrity of the three-mile limit'.³³ Cadigan described long-standing tension between the domestic users who protected the integrity of the 3-mile commons and industrial forces, often supported by government, who sought to weaken it.³⁴

On the other hand, subsistence and domestic forest uses also spread to interior leased lands. The public had been primarily confined to the 3-mile commons because of their proximity to coastal fishing towns ringing the edges of the island. With the establishment of an extensive road network, and broader access to technology such as vehicles, ATVs and snowmobiles, Newfoundlanders gained physical access to the interior of the island and brought with them expectations

of rights to withdraw resources such as timber, build cabins, hunt and recreate. Though the 3-mile commons tenure ended in the 1970s, its cultural influence persisted – partly through a sense of entitlement among Newfoundlanders to access and withdraw resources from forests. Recreational and subsistence activities therefore extended across both unalienated Crown and leased industrial lands.

The pulp and paper industry went through multiple ownership changes, but eventually two companies owned three mills on the island: the Grand Falls mill, owned by AbitibiBowater, which closed in 2009; the Stephenville mill, with the same ownership, which was established as a pulp and paper mill in 1981 and closed in 2005; and the Corner Brook mill, called Corner Brook Pulp and Paper (CBPP) and owned by Kruger, Incorporated. CBPP closed two of its four paper machines in 2008, but is still operating as of 2016.

Despite mill closures, the province continued to subsidize industrial pulp and paper operations, with subsidies totalling over C\$26 million from 2008–10 for the continued functioning of CBPP.³⁵ These subsidies were either for management (C\$13.3 million) or to reacquire the rights to 447,700 hectares of leased land (C\$12 million), indicating that when faced with dramatic changes in the forest industry, the province continued to support an increasingly tenuous industry rather than modify its approach to forestry. In the words of one Department of Environment and Conservation employee, ‘everything is being done to keep [Kruger] around, which makes it hard to plan’.³⁶ In 2013, the province granted CBPP a C\$90 million loan.

Because of mill closures and subsequent land relinquishments, the island of Newfoundland in 2011 (with 11.1 million hectares) had less than 14 per cent of its land base under pulp and paper industry leases, with the bulk of the remainder unalienated Crown lands. Approximately 7.7% of the land base, or 860,000 hectares, was legislatively protected, either as provincial protected areas (636,000 hectares) or as federal protected areas (224,000 hectares).

Newfoundland had a total of 11.1 million hectares, half forested and half non-forested, and CBPP had 1.5 million hectares of leased lands, with lease rights extending to 2037.

Work in the woods

As the pulp and paper industry grew in terms of volume produced through most of the twentieth century, employment dropped with

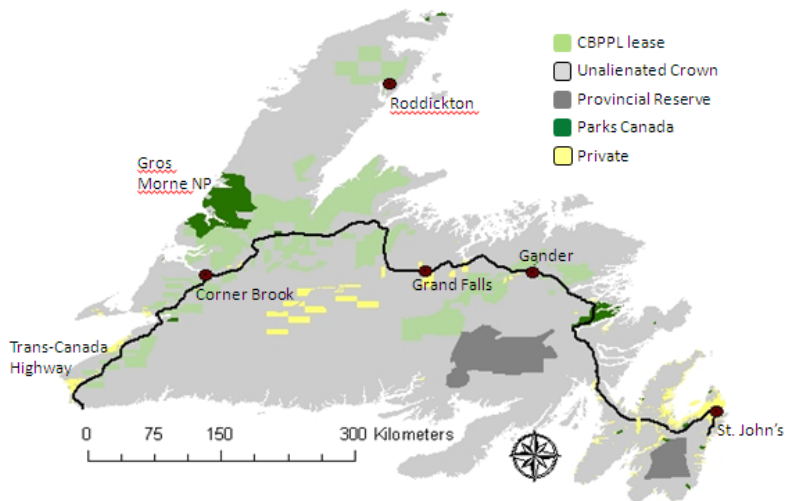


Figure 1 Map of the island of Newfoundland, with tenure system (leased, Crown and other ownerships) indicated.

mechanization in both sawmills and in logging operations. For example, in 1954, 154 m³ of wood was required for one pulp and paper industry job, while in 1989, 651 m³ of wood was required for every pulp and paper job.³⁷ The number of loggers in the province declined from 10,333 in 1951 to 3,085 in 1971, largely because of the technological transition to capital-intensive mechanical harvesters.³⁸ Employment for both mill workers and woods workers continued to decline throughout the early twenty-first century with mill closures, and from 2004 to 2007 the province had a 35 per cent decline in forestry employment, the highest of any province in Atlantic Canada.³⁹ In 2007, CBPP shut down one of its paper machines and in 2009, Abitibi closed its Grand Falls mill, with a loss of 410 mill jobs and 345 logging jobs.⁴⁰ By 2009, forestry and logging represented just 0.2 per cent of the employment in the province.⁴¹ Some areas of the province, such as the remote Northern Peninsula, saw the pulp and paper industry essentially vacate their regions, leaving a few remnant sawmills and logging contractors.

Despite this industrial downturn, Newfoundlanders continued to work in and utilize the woods, largely through subsistence and recreational uses. As Omohundro explained, subsistence activities such as hunting and domestic fuelwood and sawlog harvesting were maintained on the island ‘as a recreation, a regional mark of distinction, a bank of useful skills, an expression of self-esteem, a way to stretch

limited cash and an insurance against sudden drops in a household's income'.⁴² The net effect of these activities provided substantial supplemental economic and social benefits for many residents, especially in rural areas.⁴³ In the Northern Peninsula, the remote northwestern finger of the island, as many as 80 per cent of households used firewood as their primary heat source,⁴⁴ and domestic firewood and sawlog harvests constituted more than one-third of the total harvest.⁴⁵ The state maintained some nominal control over the domestic wood harvest through a permit system, and in all there were more than 2,800 domestic harvesting permit holders on the peninsula in 2011, although non-permitted domestic cutting was common. In addition, hunting, snaring, berry collection and other subsistence and recreational forest activities were vital components of many Newfoundlanders' livelihoods. More than 27,500 moose permits were distributed to Newfoundlanders by the Department of Environment and Conservation in 2016–2017 and an additional 4,000 will be distributed to non-residents, supporting a growing outfitting and tourism industry.⁴⁶

Table 2 Timber harvest information for the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland⁴⁷

	The Northern Peninsula
Total land	1.12 million ha
Productive forest	362,192 ha
Total harvest scheduled (2008–12)	995,367 m ³
Total domestic harvest scheduled (2008–12)	342,427 m ³
Domestic as proportion of total harvest	34%

Tensions arose frequently between domestic timber harvesters and the Department of Natural Resources, Forestry Department of Newfoundland (Forestry Department), the regulatory agency charged with overseeing and managing forest resources. The Newfoundland government and its Forestry Department had criticized domestic fuelwood and sawlog harvests for decades as wasteful or inefficient and at odds with commercial forestry.⁴⁸ One community forest model was attempted in the GNP from 1984–6, which addressed the perceived problem of 'uncontrolled indiscriminate domestic cutting'.⁴⁹ The community forest model was initially recommended by the 1981 Royal Commission on Forestry, which promoted 'delineate[d] areas of non-alienated Crown Lands as community forests for provision of domestic wood supplies ... to assess the potential for greater community participation in managing

local forest resources'.⁵⁰ The pilot community forest was created on 500 hectares near the community of Parsons Pond, just north of Gros Morne National Park. Residents were consulted, but they were not granted control over management or decision-making on the forest. Rather, the 'community forest' consisted of paying domestic harvesters to cut according to the specifications of the Department of Natural Resources Forestry (DNR-Forestry) in an attempt to restore degraded forests. The experiment ended when funding dried up.

Forest policy in Newfoundland: a pulp and paper-dominated planning system

The central policies and planning documents in Newfoundland were established by the Forestry Act of 1990, which outlined the process of forest planning that was to be conducted by the Forestry Department. Planning processes were temporally and spatially nested, with 20-year forest strategies providing the broadest level of vision and guidance, five-year operating plans providing more specific forest management directives, and annual operating plans providing spatially and temporally explicit harvesting plans.

Five-year operating plans, created by the Forestry Department on unalienated lands and CBPP on industry-leased lands, were the focus of forest decision-making. These plans were based on various inputs, particularly the technical knowledge gleaned from wood supply analyses and the calculation of the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC), in addition to market signals and public input. Each forest plan was then submitted to the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) Environmental Assessment process, which stipulated that the Minister of Environment and Conservation could accept the plan, require more environmental review or reject the plan. Members of the public could comment on submissions and their comments could impact the Minister's decision, though the vast majority of plans were approved without further environmental review.

Forest policy objectives stemmed from an Environmental Preview Report (EPR) prepared in 1995, which greatly influenced the policy direction of forest management in the province. The EPR highlighted inclusive public participation and 'adaptive forest ecosystem management' involving all stakeholders 'with an interest in the local forest land'.⁵¹ The EPR arose as a result of multiple nationwide commitments in Canada to sustainable forestry such as the National

Forest Strategy and the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, which affirmed Canada's participation in international conservation agreements.

Who manages the forest, and for whom?

Forest planning documents created in Newfoundland reveal the primacy of the calculated AAC, and the very narrow and limited contribution from the general public regarding forest resource management. This section explains the calculation of the AAC, and the following section elaborates upon public input processes. The process of creating the AAC began with input from forest inventories and wood analyses, which helped determine a computer model-generated aspatial 'optimum' harvest allocation. This harvest level was then restricted through multiple rounds of limitations, and with every limitation on the model, the AAC dropped because the model had less flexibility for allocating harvesting. These limits included spatial and temporal constraints, operational constraints (steep slopes, isolated stands) and environmental requirements. Environmental (or non-timber) requirements proved to be the most vexing for some in the Forestry Department, as some members of the department felt they had lost control over the land base: 'We're losing our land, the land base is eroding because of preserves and habitat areas.'⁵²

The forest planning strategy thus optimized harvests then deducted other values, without a mechanism for prioritizing various forest uses. According to one interviewee from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, 'there is no criteria-based process to balance competing uses ... it's a forest cutting plan that decides how much, where and when forests will be harvested'.⁵³ The process of AAC determination created a chasm between Forestry Department employees and industry on the one hand, and ENGOs and other government departments on the other, in terms of whether the models adequately captured non-timber values. This led to conflict over the value of different lands and, as an employee from the Department of Environment and Conservation said, 'every time we say you can't harvest there, their AAC goes down ... whether it's parks, wildlife, tourism, whether it's outfitters, it takes away from what they have because they allocated everything'.⁵⁴

Most harvest planning was conducted prior to any public input, largely in the interests of optimizing wood fibre, despite declining demand. Though the AAC remained fairly steady over every five-year period from at least 1991, the actual harvest was much lower than the

AAC due to mill closures.⁵⁵ The discrepancy between the AAC and the actual harvest did not explicitly address non-timber concerns, though it may have unintentionally benefited them.

Subsistence cutting was also overseen by the Forestry Department, though it was mostly on a case-by-case basis. Fuelwood and sawlog harvests required a C\$21 permit, and total harvest volume per permit could not exceed 23 m³. As already noted, non-permitted harvesting was common. Legal wood removal was generally limited to non-commercial species (hardwoods, larch) in cutover stands, or on designated domestic harvest units. According to multiple interviewees, however, many of the trees left after industrial harvests for wildlife use were later cut for domestic wood use.

Other recreational and subsistence forest uses were regulated by different departments. The pattern of regulation was generally lax and correlated with the perception that Newfoundlanders should be able not only to access but also to withdraw resources from (and even build on) forest lands. For example, cabin lots could be purchased from the Crown Lands division, though if a cabin was built on any forest access road without permission, the cabin owner paid C\$500 in fees. All cabin owners, whether their cabins were legally or illegally built, paid C\$100 annual land rent.

How the public influences forest management in Newfoundland

In its own words, the Forestry Department worked ‘to manage, conserve, enhance and use the forest ecosystems ... with the appropriate balance of values *desired by society*’ (emphasis added),⁵⁶ and the 2003 Sustainable Forest Management Strategy identified a need to ‘establish a proactive planning framework to include stakeholders’.⁵⁷ However, determining social values through the public input process proved frustrating for both forest managers and planners and public participants. The preferred channels of participation were through public meetings held for the development of five-year forest plans, though many ENGOs and others participated through comments to the DEC during the Environmental Assessment process in an attempt to influence the Minister’s decision to accept or deny plan approval. In general, plans were already substantively finished when the public was brought in for consultation; public expectations exceeded the authority of the Forestry Department; and non-timber concerns were treated

as constraints, rather than integrated into plans, and therefore public input was limited to obstructionism.

Rather than being brought in at the beginning of a plan, participants at five-year planning meetings were faced with maps based on the calculated AAC that already showed suggested harvesting areas. The bulk of planning had already occurred, and public participants were able to make only small changes to plans. One Forestry Department manager said, 'There will be a public meeting, we'll have maps, showing where our proposed harvesting areas are for the next five-year period. So they will be put up for people to look at, evaluate. And if there are issues, we'll try to mitigate.'⁵⁸ Every concession granted would then subtract from the AAC and was therefore resisted by the Forestry Department. Rather than public consultation or a two-way flow of information, the five-year planning meetings thus became one-way flows of information about the decided-upon course of action.

In effect, public input was dealt with on a case-by-case basis, with no clear mechanism for ranking or evaluating public values. But Forestry Department five-year operating plans offered one of the few opportunities for many Newfoundlanders to have a voice in land use planning. Because the department was decentralized, with offices in many rural communities across the province, it was a direct connection to provincial government for many rural people. Many who participated in forest planning meetings expected much more than the department could deliver:

We have public meetings, we go out there and say here, come, participate . . . a lot of people will say it's flawed. They'll say they don't get their own way, but we have a responsibility to manage forests, so to say we're going to set everything aside for other values, no, it's not going to happen.⁵⁹

While the focus of the Forestry Department continued to be allocating commercial AAC, individual citizen concerns often centred on domestic wood cutting, access to cabins and cutting near cabins, viewshed issues, and hunting, fishing and trapping. Some of these values were incorporated – buffers could be left for viewsheds, there were some provisions for domestic cutting, and individual cabins could be avoided in harvest plans as part of mitigation. But there was no over-arching system for prioritizing the values of the general public, which were found by Bath in two separate surveys to be decidedly non-timber and non-commercial.⁶⁰ In the two surveys, researchers randomly selected

residents of western and central Newfoundland to monitor attitudes and knowledge regarding forestry in the province. Residents listed their top five forestry priorities as wildlife, scenic beauty, protection of watersheds, wilderness preservation and plants, ranking them much higher than industrial uses.⁶¹

The bulk of the public, from those employed by the forest industry to recreationists and subsistence users, did not participate in public meetings. This meant that though public meetings occurred, general public input was lacking, as was the ability of forest planners to gauge public values. Public apathy and low attendance at meetings may have indicated satisfaction with status quo planning, but the Bath surveys revealed that a majority of residents thought that forest management was harmful in terms of habitat and other non-timber values.⁶² In addition, while many members of ENGOs indicated that they went to public meetings for a time, most 'burned out' at some point and stopped attending, leaving very few participants. As members of ENGOs and outfitters stopped taking part, or refused to attend meetings, their views could be more easily dismissed: '[ENGOs] were like little dogs at the heel, kind of yapping from the outside ... and forestry and government would say well, we have the process and you're not involved, too bad, you had the chance.'⁶³

A particularly illustrative example occurred in 2011, with the closure of the Grand Falls AbitibiBowater mill. Though the provincial government had promised extensive public consultation regarding future management on the relinquished lands, the Forestry Department relied on standard five-year operating plan public meetings as a substitute for more thorough discussions. A review of meeting minutes and discussions with participants revealed (in the words of King *et al.*), an unauthentic public participation process.⁶⁴ In total, there were 14 meetings throughout 2010, with an average of 30 people at each meeting, about 40 per cent of whom (~13) were from government. Other participants included private citizens and woodcutters (~7 people per meeting on average), members of the sawmill, logging and value-added wood sector (~5) and outfitters and tourism operators (~3). No members of ENGOs participated.

The first two meetings established ground rules; meetings 3–11 largely consisted of presentations from government agencies, plus forest industry and outfitters; and meetings 12 and 13 involved discussions of concerns. Meeting number 14, which occurred six months after meeting 13, was a summary discussion of the proposed plan. Presentations largely involved one-way flows of information and, according to the

minutes, it was not until the end of the process (meetings 12 and 13) that the plan as a whole was discussed and systemic problems were brought to the table, including a perceived lack of representation from non-timber values. At meeting 11, the meeting chair explicitly stated that meetings 12 and 13 would be dedicated to ‘discussing the five-year plan, identifying potential concerns and determining appropriate resolutions’.⁶⁵ Participants were largely directed to submit comments online, and time ran out for further discussion of issues at several meetings.

A number of concerns were mentioned throughout the meetings that were identified for mitigation or further review: domestic wood cutting, road decommissioning, aesthetics and viewsheds, wildlife habitat, agriculture, water supply areas, municipal boundaries and impacts on outfitters, cabins and protected areas. This suite of concerns indicated that many non-timber issues were raised, but they were not integrated into the plan prior to creation of the harvest maps; rather, they were brought up for ‘mitigative actions’. In effect, people were welcomed to comment on the plans, but the bulk of the actual forest management was already determined.

The new five-year operating plan was released with a full, optimized AAC allocated. While a portion of this was for the use of nearby sawmills, much of the allocation was intended for a prospective new small-diameter fibre operation advertised by the government through an Expression of Interest in 2009, as the government moved ahead to effectively reinstate *status quo* industrial operations despite industry downturn. While little interest was generated regarding the aged mill, there was no coherent attempt from government to re-evaluate priorities on the relinquished lands. Rather, the full AAC was allocated to a non-existent demand.

Conclusion: moving forward

Rather than anticipating a new role for forests, the provincial government has mostly continued to support industrial forestry through subsidies and planning processes despite industry contraction in the early twenty-first century. The decreasing relevance of the industry to rural people has meant that forest uses – primarily subsistence or recreational – and forest management are not well integrated. The government has maintained a system allowing the public access and withdrawal rights, but little input into the collective-choice property

rights described in Schlager and Ostrom, such as management or rights of exclusion.⁶⁶

The difficulties encountered in Newfoundland in conducting meaningful and inclusive public participation are not unique. Many of the barriers identified in the discussion were similar to those in LaChapelle *et al.*, especially a lack of agreement on planning goals, inflexibility in processes and concern with procedural obligations over meaningful dialogue, and inability for members of the public to impact decisions.⁶⁷ Models and standards of effective public participation exist, and more closely meet the description of 'authentic' participation in King *et al.*, with citizens as designers of natural resource decisions, participating in transparent and proactive planning processes.⁶⁸ The province itself has had a few authentic public participation efforts, and has suggested (but failed to implement) several more.

For example, the province effectively integrated multiple stakeholders during the creation of a five-year plan in Labrador, the mainland component of the province. During the creation of the operating plan, public values (especially from the Innu Nation) were identified prior to planning, and the results of scientific modelling and assessment were analysed and discussed by stakeholder groups through an iterative process.⁶⁹ This model was described by several interviewees as infeasible on the island of Newfoundland because of the absence of the Innu Nation, which exercised its rights to force the government into a transparent and inclusive process.

Within the province, failure to implement suggested public input ideas has been more common. In 1995, the provincial government suggested a comprehensive public input plan, with: identification of forest objectives and issues by the public (solicited prior to planning); two- or three-day workshops at the start of every five-year planning process; creation of alternate forest forecasts with varying management objectives; draft plan review through a one-day workshop; continuous evaluation and co-monitoring with various groups; and evaluation of forest conditions and comparison between forest conditions and forest management objectives.⁷⁰ In 2003, the province also suggested annual meetings 'comprised of provincial stakeholders [to] provide advice to the Minister on forestry matters that are provincial in scope',⁷¹ as part of the five-year planning process. None of these ideas have been adopted.

Though the public input processes in Newfoundland may be unauthentic, citizens of the island have a long-standing relationship with its forests steeped in traditional subsistence uses. Emery and Pierce claimed that subsistence users may regard themselves as

legitimate stewards of resources regardless of formal management authority.⁷² But their forest activities are often overlooked, or viewed by governments as barriers to rationalized, scientific timber management and economic development, reinforcing a commonly held view that economic processes in the First World are entirely devoted to industrialized production and global trade.⁷³ Newfoundlanders, with strong ties to their forests and extensive experience as forest utilizers and informal managers, are already in the woods and deriving benefits, though their actions are largely uncoordinated, potentially creating common-pool resource problems such as overharvesting of domestic wood in some locations. Bringing forest users formally into the planning fold is a strategy for managing common-pool forest resources. Contrary to the over-exploitation and resource degradation found in open access regimes, researchers have found that inclusive, collective-action natural resource management can result in efficient, sustainable and equitable resource allocation.⁷⁴

Ostrom linked successful commons governance with agreed-upon norms and rules, effective enforcement of those rules and nested systems of governance,⁷⁵ but the criteria of effective common-pool resource governance vary widely, with divergent user group characteristics, institutional arrangements and influences from external economic, political and social forces.⁷⁶ Residents of Newfoundland would need to create their own system of natural resource governance to fit their particular circumstances.

Newfoundlanders have begun experimenting with governance systems for collective action, such as through the proposed creation of a community forest on the Northern Peninsula. Community forestry, or community-based natural resource management, is based on the idea that local citizens should control natural resource management, as well as the flows of benefits derived from the management. On the Northern Peninsula, a proposal was created by a consortium of rural development agencies in cooperation with the local Forestry Department office and area politicians, and submitted to the Minister of the Department of Natural Resources, the parent agency of the Forestry Department, in December 2011. The community forest would create a new tenure essentially within the traditional 3-mile commons to allow local control over forest management. Most participants indicated interest in developing small-scale, entrepreneurial economic opportunities such as monetization of non-timber management products and promotion of tourism, as well as more effective regulation of domestic wood harvests.

Community forest governance and development would likely favour small businesses, and therefore not create the 'boom' that typically accompanies megaproject development long favoured by the Newfoundland government. But there would also be no 'bust' in the wake of failed projects. Remote regions such as the Northern Peninsula, in which pulp and paper industry exited after prolonged periods of disinvestment, could implement a diversified and nimble approach to community development in the absence of industry interest. This is one vision of an 'alternative' rural economy, merging the subsistence uses described by Emery and Pierce⁷⁷ with the community forest movement.⁷⁸

In Newfoundland, a tentative shift from industry-dominated planning and policymaking towards consumption (amenity-based) and protection (conservation-based) land uses mirrors the rural restructuring of Britain⁷⁹ and Australia.⁸⁰ This has occurred in Newfoundland as a result of industrial disinvestment and changing norms regarding land use, indicating a decline in the dominance of the productivist regime. But in Newfoundland, as opposed to many other First-World places, this shift is intertwined with an ongoing subsistence culture with economic and cultural importance, a type of culturally vital productivism that has persisted since Euro-Canadian settlement and which can inform facets of forest management going forward. Newfoundlanders also have increasingly blended subsistence with consumption practices, with recreation and subsistence activities essentially parallel, such as the building of cabins for both recreation and subsistence purposes.

This essay presented a brief history of forestry in Newfoundland, and ongoing forest uses on the island. But it has sidestepped several important economic trends with important future implications for forest tenure and management – particularly mining and oil and gas exploration. Further research is needed to uncover the policy implications of these burgeoning non-timber commercial forest uses. It is certain that the forests of Newfoundland will continue to be utilized by Newfoundlanders, whether through subsistence and recreational activities, or through further commercial development. How the government integrates citizens with forest management as the pulp and paper industry declines remains to be seen. Questions centre particularly on how the people of Newfoundland, who already use their forests and know them, can help craft forest policy and management, and how their skills, knowledge and needs can contribute to the future of forestry on the island.

Notes

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