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The Banff-Bow Valley Study: A Retrospective Review



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by

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ABSTRACT

The Banff-Bow Valley Study report is a landmark document that resulted from a comprehensive two and one half year study by an independent team of experts. The project was a study that blended science and public policy, and an approach to public involvement not previously tested by Parks Canada. The 500 recommendations presented to the Minister of Canadian Heritage by the study task force will serve to guide Banff National Park and, in many cases, Parks Canada into the next millennium. This paper examines the study process that was used from the conception of the study, through its conduct, to the release of the final report. The paper is intended as a documentation of the experience in hopes that it may guide future such inquiries.

Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Introduction	4
Background	4
Cause for Concern	4
Study Mandate	5
The Study Team	6
The Study Area	6
Restrictions on Development	6
Lessons Learned	7
Establishing the Study	7
Defining the Scope of the Study	9
Geographical Scope	9
Temporal Scope	9
Budget	10
Parks Canada Support	10
Formulating the Team	11
Conclusions - Establishing the Study	13
The Study Process	14
General	14
Defining the Task and Shaping the Work Plan	14
Team Building And Internal Communications	14
Formulating The Work Plan	15
Understanding the Study Area	16
Understanding Information Needs and Developing Tools	16
Deciding How to Conduct the Study	18
Conclusions - Defining the Task and Shaping the Work Plan ..	18
Project and Issue Management	19
Conclusion: Information Sharing	22
Consultation	22
Engaging the Business Community	23
Conclusions - Consultation	25
Public Interest Negotiations - The Round Table	25
Role of Science in Decision-making	30
Conclusions - Round Table	31
Production of the Final Report	32
Conclusions - Production of Final Report	34

Release Strategy	34
Preparing for the Report Launch	35
Conclusions - Preparing for Report Launch	35
Post Release	36
Conclusions and Recommendations	36
Conclusions	36
Recommendations	37

List of Figures

- Figure 1 Continuum of Public Participation
- Figure 2 Banff-Bow Valley Round Table

Appendices

- Appendix A List of Task Force and Secretariat Members.

INTRODUCTION

On October 7, 1996 The Honourable Sheila Copps, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage released the final report of the Banff-Bow Valley Study (BBVS) Task Force (TF). *Banff-Bow Valley: At The Crossroads* is a landmark report that has received critical acclaim and will have a lasting impact on the management of Canada's national parks.

Following a general background discussion, this paper examines the four major phases of the study: Establishing the Study, The Study Process; The Report Release Strategy; and Post Release Activities. In each section a description of the major features is given along with a discussion of strengths and successes. Recommendations are provided on areas in which improvements can be made in future similar inquiries.

The study was the first such inquiry undertaken in the history of Parks Canada. This review is intended not as criticism but rather an opportunity to explore ways in which the process and results might be strengthened. The key objective of this paper is to portray, for future study designers and participants, what was learned.

BACKGROUND

Cause for Concern

Banff National Park (the park), Canada's first national park, was created in 1885. By 1912, more than 70,000 people visited the park annually. In 1995, more than 5 million people entered the park¹. Today, a complex array of infrastructure and activities are found in the park. Two service centres, the Town of Banff and the Hamlet of Lake Louise contain approximately 7,600 and 1,500 residents respectively. The park is bisected by the Trans-Canada highway and the main Canadian Pacific Rail (CPR) line, the busiest east-west freight line in the country. The Trans-Canada Highway is twinned for approximately half of its length in the park. The park is a 90 minute drive from the City of Calgary which has a population of more than 700,000 people. Lake Minnewanka has been significantly modified for hydro-electric power production under a 42 year agreement and the Spray River, in the park, has been significantly altered for the same purpose. More than 1,300 businesses are licenced to operate in the park and more than 1,800 leases are administered. Three large downhill ski hills and a variety of outdoor experience companies operate in the park. The tourism industry is the main economic force and is largely responsible for the more than \$873.1 million in visitor expenditures¹.

Pressures from growth and development outside the park's boundaries are compounding the effects of internal stresses. A mere 8 kilometres from the park's east

gate is the Town of Canmore, one of the fastest growing communities in Alberta. Resource extraction and recreational access are pushing up against both the east and west boundaries of the park.

The tremendous popularity of the park and resulting development is taking its toll on the landscape. The most critical ecological zone in the park, the montane ecoregion, covers only 4.2% of the park's Bow River watershed. It harbours not only the greatest biodiversity and most important wildlife habitat, but also the area of greatest human development and activity. The footprint of infrastructure development directly covers more than 20% of this already small ecoregion¹; the indirect effects of this infrastructure influence a much larger area.

The struggle of the forces of preservation and development has centred on the Bow Valley since the park was created. The concentration of activities and the sheer growth in visitation have escalated this struggle. Concern over potential permanent damage to the ecosystem and the growing number of issues around balance in decision-making caused the Honourable Michel Dupuy, then Minister of Canadian Heritage, to commission a review of the management of the Banff-Bow Valley in July 1994.

Study Mandate

The Minister set three overall objectives:

- i. To develop a vision and goals for the Banff-Bow Valley that would integrate ecological, social and economic values;
- ii. To complete a comprehensive analysis of existing information, and to provide direction for future collection and analysis of data to achieve ongoing goals; and
- iii. To provide direction on the management of human use and development in a manner that would maintain ecological values and provide for sustainable tourism.²

The Minister also elaborated upon these objectives by setting out several expectations². These included:

- i. Understanding better the ecological, social and economic role the Banff-Bow Valley plays within the region;
- ii. Assessing the state of knowledge of the Banff-Bow Valley;
- iii. Assessing the cumulative environmental effects of development and use;
- iv. Maintaining or enhancing appropriate tourism; and
- v. Identifying key ecological, social and economic indicators of change.

The TF was asked to make recommendations in five key areas.

1. Identify areas where existing land use activities were appropriate; areas where development and use had exceeded the ecological or social capacity of the area; and areas where additional activities were possible;
2. Identify actions needed to maintain or enhance the area's tourism potential consistent with the goals of ecological integrity;
3. Identify activities needed to fill critical information gaps and support sustainable management and use practices in the future;
4. Provide a set of key ecological, social and economic indicators useful for assessing changes in the integrity of the Banff-Bow Valley and possible thresholds beyond which ecological integrity could not be maintained; and
5. Identify steps necessary to reduce existing detrimental environmental effects and to prevent or reduce adverse effects of future development, park operations and other land use activities.

Two years were initially provided along with a budget of \$1.9 million to cover honoraria for TF members and Secretariat salaries, day to day operating costs, contract and other project costs and costs associated with the public involvement program.

The Study Team

Five TF members, independent of government, were appointed by the Minister. Three were from the academic community and two were from the consulting field (Appendix A).

Five Parks Canada employees were seconded to form a Secretariat to support the TF. This consisted of an Executive Director, an ecological science officer, a public involvement coordinator, and two administrative and research assistants. The Secretariat was supplemented by daily assistance of the park librarian who worked in the study office and by an Alberta Economic Development and Tourism research specialist for 6 months. Outside contractors were retained to supplement the expertise of the team.

The Study Area

The study was limited to that portion of the Bow River watershed within Banff National Park, although no limit was placed on the consultation that the TF could carry out.

Restrictions on Development

When the study was announced, the Minister placed a limited freeze on development activities in the study area to provide a stable development environment for the TF. Some projects already underway or subject to other review processes were exempt from such restrictions. Recognizing that there were other circumstances in which development might proceed during the study, Parks Canada considered the merits of

these projects using such criteria as considerations for health and safety, existing contractual obligations, projects within the independent purview of the Town of Banff administration, projects on previously disturbed sites, minor maintenance and repair projects, etc. Decisions to exempt projects were the sole prerogative of the park superintendent.

LESSONS LEARNED

This section examines three component areas: 1) Establishing the Study - the process used by Parks Canada to establish the project; 2) Study Process - the actual conduct of the study by the TF; and 3) Post Release - monitoring public reaction. Each area is discussed, their strengths and successes highlighted, and weakness examined. Conclusions and recommendations are presented that would improve each component area.

ESTABLISHING THE STUDY

Banff National Park has a long history of often rancorous debate, resulting from the pressures for economic development pitted against arguments in favour of greater protection of the ecological integrity of the park. In an effort to bring closure to this debate, Parks Canada opted for an independent examination of the issues. A straight forward approach was used. Parks Canada officials developed the Terms of Reference for the work and the Minister appointed the TF to conduct the Study. Not having undertaken such a study, Parks Canada and ultimately the TF, despite the success of the Study, would have benefited from a more rigorous *assessment phase* at the beginning. Here, they would have addressed questions such as:

1. What is the nature and extent of the problem, and to what extent is there consensus on this within Parks Canada?
2. How have similar inquiries been conducted and what lessons can be applied to the study area?
3. What are the public expectations for involvement?
4. Who are the stakeholders and what attitudes or dispositions exist toward the study?
5. What type of data are required based on a canvassing of issues, public expectations and competing interests, the state of ecological, social and economic knowledge and a review of similar inquiries carried out elsewhere?
6. Is collection of new data justified? Is there sufficient time and resources?
7. What range of expertise is likely needed within or by the TF based on the above?
8. What demands are likely to be placed on the resources of the organization?

9. What relationship with Parks Canada does the study team require and how can this be established early in the process?
10. How will Parks Canada be involved throughout the Study, particularly in relation to staffing and public involvement?
11. What historical precedents and legal mechanisms would constrain the Study?
and
12. What are the implications of the outcome and how does Parks Canada need to prepare for implementation?

It took a considerable amount of time for the TF to fully understand the issues, the public constituencies and their expectations, the data constraints, etc. An *Assessment Phase* with Parks Canada's involvement would have provided a much earlier focus. These and other "scoping" questions may not have been answered fully in the assessment phase; however, an attempt to do so would have assisted the TF in designing its approach to the study. Many oversights and difficulties encountered later in the study may have been avoided. It was only after the team was put together and began to engage others in such discussion that the full implications of the work began to emerge.

For this reason, an *adjustment phase* should have followed the assessment, before the study team launched into its mandate. In the assessment phase the department attempts to judge its needs, expectations and degree of preparedness to undertake the work. In the adjustment phase, before the study actually is launched, the team is given the opportunity to undertake its own assessment based on its expertise. Issues would be canvassed in a preliminary fashion, public expectations and attitudes gauged, technical information evaluated, a thorough field orientation to the study area undertaken, and so on.

Once this is done, the preliminary terms of reference, team composition, budget and time allocations would be revisited and reset jointly by the team and Parks Canada. Resource constraints faced by Parks Canada would be reflected in a revision of the team's mandate. At this point, the team would devise a preliminary work plan.

In the case of the BBVS, the TF was given the opportunity to revise its terms of reference and to submit it for approval by the Minister (and Parks Canada). The TF chose to accept the Terms of Reference. Had the above approach been taken, a more rigorous review of the Terms of Reference would certainly have identified some early issues or at least some areas of uncertainty in process, expertise or budget that would have to be addressed later. This may have lead to an augmenting of the expertise in either the TF or Secretariat. For example, the lack of expertise in recreation or human use management, something that would plague the TF for the duration of the work,

would have been addressed. Potential deficiencies in budget, time, or the need to further define the scope of the work could have been identified very early and with the full team and Parks Canada involved. Parks Canada had a thorough understanding of the stakeholder constituency and the range of attitudes that prevailed. It could have assisted the TF greatly in devising strategies to engage the public and deal with resistance to the Study.

In future projects, this adjustment phase should be mandatory for both the sponsoring organization and the study team.

Defining the Scope of the Study

The scope of the study should be determined at the time the decision to carry out the study is made. In the case of the BBVS, there were several issues of scope that were not well defined or were left to the TF to define.

Geographical Scope

The study was limited to that portion of the Bow River watershed contained within Banff National Park. After the TF began its work, it received questions or representations from outside the study area either inquiring as to the spatial extent of the study or lobbying for including additional areas. For example, the council of the Town of Canmore, a neighbouring jurisdiction, felt strongly that the study should be extended into the Canmore corridor and lobbied both the TF and the Alberta Provincial Government. The Municipal District of Bighorn, also a neighbouring jurisdiction, thought it was included in the Study but felt it should be excluded. Many interest groups felt that an ecosystem approach demanded inclusion of provincial lands and the requisite involvement of the two Provincial governments in a parallel process.

Discussions by Parks Canada with all neighbouring jurisdictions at the time of formulating the Terms of Reference would have alleviated some of the confusion and anxiety. Senior level attempts by Parks Canada to engage the Alberta and British Columbia governments early in the process and to explain more fully the intent of the BBVS would have smoothed the way for the TF. As it was, a great deal of time was spent informing and dealing with concerns of neighbouring jurisdictions.

Temporal Scope

The Minister announced his intent to commission the study in March of 1994. In July 1994, the study team was announced along with its mandate to complete the work in two years or by June 30, 1996. Reflecting on the lack of assessment of the magnitude of the task, three lessons are apparent. First, without a proper assessment, the two year time frame was arbitrary. It was not known if the mandate was achievable in that

time. Second, as will be discussed in detail later, the time implications of the public consultation program and the Round Table forum in particular was not understood fully. Third, once the project work and issue assessment were complete, it took nearly two months to assemble the report in a draft form and a further month to produce it. Neither the TF, nor Parks Canada, anticipated the scope of the work or the complexity of portraying the scope of issues in a public report.

The original time frame was a useful yardstick; however, in future such endeavours, the time line should be revisited once a comprehensive and rigorous work plan is developed by the project team.

Budget

A budget of \$1.9 million was set at the beginning of the study. The issue of budget preoccupied the TF and Secretariat continually for many reasons. First, the scope of the work was not clearly defined and costed at the start of the study. Second, the degree of public involvement had not been defined, particularly the use of a 14 month round table process with an independent mediator, participant support and a round table support system. Third, the mandate called for the production of a cumulative effects assessment (CEA), a science that was in its infancy. It was not clear what the cost and resource commitments would be for such an undertaking. Fourth, the team had no understanding of the availability, limitations or depth of analysis of data. Therefore, it severely underestimated the effects of not being able to undertake original research.

Parks Canada Support

The intent of Parks Canada and the TF was to structure a small support group in a Secretariat to provide professional, technical and administrative support to the study. It was thought that this would relieve the burden of support as well as provide the required level of independence from Parks Canada.

It is fair to say that Parks Canada never fully appreciated the amount of “in kind” support that would be necessary from its internal professional and technical staff, and administrative functions such as contract administration, financial accounting, and library support. Indeed, the Banff National Park librarian, with all of her support systems, worked out of the BBVS office on a full time basis for two years. Additionally, one supporting study (Assessment of the Research Management Framework, Hodgins et al. 1995) was carried out as a joint TF / Parks Canada initiative and consumed several months of a Parks Canada professional’s time.

Parks Canada - Task Force Relationship

From the beginning, it was not clear to the TF, how the Parks Canada - Task Force relationship would be managed. To a degree, this is understandable as any organization evolves substantially over a two and half year period. The BBVS was commissioned under one Minister and delivered its report to another. A change in a key senior regional Parks Canada official occurred over the same period. At different points in the study, the TF chair dealt with the Minister's office, the Assistant Deputy Minister, the Regional Executive Director for Alberta Region, the Acting Director of the Rocky Mountain District and the Banff National Park superintendent. Multiple contact points at the official level proved to be difficult and time consuming. These relationships should be more clearly defined to be efficient and effective.

Formulating the Team

Putting together a study team involves many considerations. While the authors have no particular insight into the process through which the BBVS team was constituted, clearly the following considerations were important:

- good composite knowledge of the geographical area and scope of issues likely to be considered, in this case sustainable tourism, human use or recreation management, ecological protection, and social/cultural impacts;
- a national perspective on issues since the study was in a national park and strong views were held by many well beyond the boundaries of Alberta,
- experience in public involvement;
- experience in managing a multi-disciplinary program with considerable political dimensions;
- the team had to be expert in its own right and seen to be so.

Recognizing that all expertise may not rest within TF members, some deficiencies could have been accommodated through the composition of Secretariat. Expertise in socio-economic research and municipal management are examples.

There are lessons in formulating the team as well. First, as discussed earlier, the two stage assessment process would have been of great benefit. Once issues and interests were canvassed and the work plan was developed, the TF and Parks Canada could have judged the completeness of the assemblage of expertise. The following deficiencies became apparent over time.

- Recreational planning and human use management
- Socio-economic research and analysis
- Environmental Economics
- Legal services
- Municipal Management
- Cost-Benefit Analyses

While not all needed to be accommodated within the combination of TF and Secretariat, alternative mechanisms could have been put in place early in the study to fill these needs.

The Secretariat staff, initially, were all employees of Parks Canada. This, in itself, created some unanticipated issues. No matter how much the Secretariat members tried to demonstrate objectivity and independence, there remained the perception in the minds of some members of the public and commercial sectors that there was a bias towards Parks Canada's way of thinking.

Second, with the exception of a 6 month assignment of a Research Specialist from Alberta Economic Development and Tourism, the TF relied entirely on Parks Canada as its source of personnel for the Secretariat. While the Secretariat quickly took on the same degree of independence as the TF and worked very hard to ensure objectivity, there nevertheless was the continual perception of inherent bias towards the attitudes and positions of Parks Canada brought to the study by Parks Canada personnel. Along with this was an expectation on the part of colleagues within the Parks Canada that the Secretariat would automatically support the positions and programs of the park. Future inquiries should consider employing some support staff that are completely independent of the sponsoring organization. This would required negotiating with other agencies, establishing loan or assignment agreements or direct hiring from outside the public service. These arrangements are time consuming and complex and would have to be addressed before the work began.

Third, the team's expertise was augmented tremendously using outside contractual expertise. The TF was able to access committed and professional people that added great value to the work, who became totally engaged in the team effort and who grasped the importance of the work. Contracts were secured with the assistance of Parks Canada and Public Works and Government Services contract specialists using the tender process as well as through sole source contracts. Such tendering provides for fair treatment and equity of access to contract opportunities. However, this form of contractor selection also represented a considerable constraint on being able to secure the needed expertise in a timely manner. The time consuming nature of the conventional contract award process did not always result in the best value to the Canadian taxpayer. These arrangements should be negotiated at the beginning of the project so that administrative requirements do not become an unnecessary burden on time and money.

Fourth, the expectation shared by both Parks Canada and TF members was that the monthly time commitment to complete the work would amount to approximately two meeting days, plus required travel and 3-4 days of preparation time depending on the

TF member. Based on this expectation, budgets were planned and members arranged their personal and professional commitments. This was to be one of the most serious miscalculations of the entire study. As the study moved into its second year, it became evident that some members were required to devote as much as twenty days a month to complete the work required.

One must not discount the positive results that came from these circumstances. TF and Secretariat members were willing to expand their scope of work into unfamiliar areas in an attempt to cover some of the areas of knowledge and expertise needed but not available on short notice. Deficiencies in time and expertise were overcome by very effective integration of the TF and Secretariat efforts and by a willingness of all to become totally engaged as a team at considerable personal and professional sacrifice. The level of TF involvement resulted in a level of understanding and knowledge of issues that may not otherwise have developed.

Conclusions - Establishing the Study

- A two stage approach is needed in establishing the Study: (1) A more structured and rigorous *assessment phase* of needs and optional approaches; and (2) a mandatory *adjustment phase* wherein the approach selected, team and resources are re-examined once the team is in place.
- To reduce anxiety and uncertainty among neighbouring jurisdictions and key stakeholders, discussions by Parks Canada at the time of formulating the Terms of Reference would be helpful.
- An early description of the scope and nature of issues is needed along with a data needs assessment and a gap analysis.
- The preliminary terms of reference, team composition, budget and time allocations should be revisited and reset jointly by the team and Parks Canada.
- The TF and Secretariat would benefit from an adjustment in internal expertise once the issues were known.
- Resourcing considerations include a rigorous assessment of “in kind” support required on the part of Parks Canada.
- Better mechanisms must be found to use the knowledge of the TF in selecting external expertise in a more efficient and effective way.
- The Secretariat would benefit from a blend of personnel internal and external to Parks Canada.
- A comprehensive and rigorous work plan should be a mandatory product of the TF.

- The reporting relationship between the TF and Parks Canada must be clear and consistent throughout the study.
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THE STUDY PROCESS

General

This section examines some key elements of the process followed by the TF from defining and shaping the work plan through to production of the final report. Strengths and successes are emphasized and suggestions are given where the process could have been strengthened. Particular attention is given to the public involvement aspect of the Study.

The study process essentially evolved over the course of the study as experience and need dictated. A general conclusion would be that the study process would have benefited from the assessment and adjustment activities indicated in the previous chapters. The lack of this pre-work assessment and more rigorous addressing of the process issues indicated in this chapter, coupled with the immense complexity of the work, often overwhelmed the process. This resulted in many reassessments of the work plans and resources required.

Defining the Task and Shaping the Work Plan

Team Building And Internal Communications

These are vital components of any study of this nature. For the BBVS, there were both successes and challenges. Early in the study the team retreated to a remote backcountry location of Banff National Park to develop its approach. This not only provided uninterrupted focus, but also accorded what were effectively strangers the opportunity to develop lasting relationships. This was an extraordinarily important time for team development and an event that would be repeated only once throughout the entire study. Quarterly retreats where the team could discuss and resolve internal matters would have added considerable value. Each TF member undoubtedly brought his or her own expectations and motivations to the Study. It would have served the team well to have clearly defined each individual's perception of issues and interest. These interests clearly influenced future positions taken on issues. Arriving at consensus on recommendations, later in the Study would have been far easier, had everyone understood respective interests early in the process.

The TF was, in essence, a self directed team, each member with specific responsibilities and each operating with the full authority of the team as a whole. Continual shifting and provision of leadership among different team members is a characteristic of self-directed teams. This was evident throughout the BBVS and many times proved to be a strength. This self-directing mechanism must also be augmented, from time-to-time, by direction from the chair. Because the members of the TF, including the chair, had many other competing responsibilities outside those of the study, a deputy chair with clearly defined roles and responsibilities would have provided added cohesion to the study team.

Effective internal communications was a continual challenge due to such factors as the diversity in project work, geographical distribution of team members, and other competing commitments of TF members. Meeting and conference call agendas were developed by the Executive Director based on perception of existing and emerging issues. Information flow was often through the Secretariat rather than direct one-on-one or group discussions among TF members. Some internal issues were negotiated through the Secretariat rather than through direct discussion. While some of these communication characteristics are appropriate in such a team, an over-reliance on informal or unstructured approaches erodes the cohesiveness within the group and team building efforts.

Formulating The Work Plan

At the initial retreat, the TF identified several major work tasks:

- develop a public involvement program;
- compile and assess the knowledge base;
- develop a vision and supporting principles and goals;
- identify and assess key issues;
- develop specific objectives and actions; and
- deliver the final report to the Minister by June 1996.

Though these work tasks were identified very early and were mapped out in a detailed time-action schedule in November of the first year, the work plan and resource estimates never became the rigorous tool that was needed. Several examples of the consequences of this limited “front-end” planning are instructive. The efforts needed to complete the State of the Banff-Bow Valley Report⁴ (SOBVR) is a good example. This was the project to compile and assess the knowledge base for the study area. It resulted in a comprehensive compendium of social, economic and ecological information on the study area and would be the foundation of all future issue analyses. The TF did not appreciate the data limitations and the lack of rigorous data analysis and therefore underestimated the time needed to compile the information. A second objective was to build consensus among stakeholders around this information base.

This was important in resolving the ongoing public debate over interpretation of scientific information. The data analysis and consensus process combined to add three months to the project. Similarly, the implications of delaying work on the Ecological Outlook Project¹⁵, a key project in developing the final ecological recommendations, until the completion of the SOBVR were not realized. The third example was the decision to proceed with the Round Table. This was a watershed decision that would influence the entire project to its conclusion.

As mentioned, it was not until November 1994 that an attempt was made to develop a work plan with a critical path that included all projects and other related tasks. The critical path, once developed, clearly pointed to serious time and budget issues that were never subsequently addressed. Even with the full-time attention of the Secretariat, a proper workload analysis would have required the full-time attention of the TF members at this critical juncture of the Study. While the TF, by this time, was investing far more time than originally anticipated, it was never able to deal with all the issues that it faced.

Understanding the Study Area

A comprehensive familiarization of the study area could not be achieved in the time allocated to the TF. While a briefing was provided on issues and a one day air and ground orientation was provided to members early in the study, members resorted to using personal time to visit sites and understand issues.

Understanding Information Needs and Developing Tools

From the outset, the TF was expected to complete its work using existing information. Original research was not possible due to time and budget constraints. There were 3 distinct components to the TF's efforts to deal with information needs: a general reconnaissance and analysis of available information; identifying and researching issue-specific information; and understanding the attitudes, desires and expectations of the public including community residents.

The general reconnaissance and analysis was designed to answer such questions as:

- what historical factors or events lead to the conditions currently found in the Valley;
- what is known about the ecological, social, cultural and economic dimensions of the Valley;
- what are the key forces that drive these dimensions and where will they likely lead the Valley in the future;
- what is the governance model presently operating in the Valley and what are its strengths and weaknesses;

To satisfy these needs, the TF completed such projects as the Historical Analysis³, the State of the Banff-Bow Valley Report⁴, the Tourism Outlook⁵ and the Governance Model Review⁶. These were important first efforts.

Subsequent projects added to this body of general information. To understand how the park was used, the TF compiled park use statistics, developed an understanding of the visitors, their activities and behaviours and built an understanding of the ways in which human use affected environmental and social systems. Surveys of the Banff tourism industry⁷, the National Tour Association⁸, Banff trail users⁹ and overnight facility carrying capacity and use¹⁰ were carried out. In many cases, the team underestimated the effort needed to compile existing information.

The information gathering component was more issue specific. It included a number of governance related issues including research management¹¹, governance and land management practices¹², and the process of development review and approval¹³.

Understand public attitudes, desires and expectations was the third component. Community meetings, Round Table discussion, deputations, written submissions, and letters to the editor of the Banff Crag and Canyon newspaper, all served to help the TF gauge public sentiment. A study undertaken by the Town of Banff in 1996¹⁴ provided valuable and timely information to the TF. It is fair to say that the TF did a great deal to understand the communities through the work of the Round Table and through specific studies; however, structured data analysis was not undertaken until quite late in the study, driven largely by the Futures Outlook Project.

The TF developed some very effective and leading edge tools to analyze information and to develop a future perspective of the effects of trends in the Valley. The State of the Banff-Bow Valley Report is the first comprehensive compendium of factual information on the social, economic and ecological conditions. The Ecological Outlook Project (EOP)¹⁵ had two major components, Cumulative Effects Assessment and Future Outlook Project. This was perhaps the most complex and innovative work undertaken particularly when it was undertaken within a context of Round Table process. This will be discussed later. The tools employed by or developed through this project have wide application beyond Banff National Park and represent a significant advancement in the application of landscape ecology in Canada's mountain national parks.

Finally, the TF effectively used public opinion surveys to gauge public attitudes. Two products of the TF's work, the vision and appropriate use criteria, were tested on a broader audience. The vision produced by the Round Table was sent to all names on the mailing list with a feedback questionnaire included. While not a statistically valid

survey, the feedback provided the Round Table and the TF with a clear view that the Vision had wide ranging support. A statistically valid survey of Calgary residents was carried out to test attitudes on appropriate facilities and use in Banff National Park (Angus Reid Group Ltd. 1996¹⁶). Again, this gave the TF a clear understanding of public attitudes. These were two very helpful initiatives and the approach could have benefited many other issue analyses.

Deciding How to Conduct the Study

The TF used a number of different methods to complete its work. In some cases, individual TF or Secretariat members conducted the work themselves as in the case of some issue analyses such as the Governance and Land Management¹² project. Other times, teams carried out the research and analysis such as in the case of the Ecological Outlook Project. Finally, the TF made extensive use of consultants and researchers (Historical Analysis³; Development Review¹³; Ecological Outlooks Project¹⁵) who carried out discrete pieces of the work and presented their findings.

Due to the constraint of time and availability of members, TF member's time might have been better utilized by directing the work of others rather than performing the work themselves.

Conclusions - Defining the Task and Shaping the Work Plan

Team Building

- Continuity of direction would be strengthened by the formal recognition of a deputy chair with clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- Quarterly retreats by the team would help to resolve internal matters;
- Team members should be encouraged to define their perception of issues and their interests in participating in the Study early in the process;
- Over-reliance on informal or unstructured approaches to communications should be avoided;

Formulating The Work Plan

- A work plan and critical path assessment should be carried out early in the project as part of the assessment phase;

Understanding the Study Area

- Greater effort to familiarize all study team members with the study area is essential;

Understanding Information Needs and Developing Tools

- A rigorous issue analysis process that integrates information needs assessment and data analysis is needed;
 - Greater focus by TF members on directing the work of others rather than performing it themselves would be more efficient and effective.
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Project and Issue Management

Several efforts were made early, and throughout the process, to structure effectively the analysis of critical issues in the Valley. At different points, TF and Secretariat members identified what they thought were issues to be addressed, although this list changed significantly as the study progressed. Once accepted, issues were grouped into themes and many of these themes formed the basis of the table of contents for the final report. This proved to be a very useful tool for coalescing the TF's thinking.

There were early efforts to provide structure to issue analyses; however, this proved less than effective as team members preferred to focus on the work of the day. The structure was intended to:

- describe the scope of the issues;
- identify relationships among issues or, in fact, surface new issues not previously identified;
- identify critical information for issue analyses and data gaps;
- develop optional solutions;
- identify responsibilities and time frames for completing issue analyses;
- document in a consistent way all of the issues and track progress on issues to ensure that all were being addressed;
- enable some issues to be addressed early, resolved and removed from discussion;
- allow the TF to test its priority allocation of effort and resources against the list of issues;
- enable the TF to challenge its information against its recommendations; and
- identify the interests of TF members with respect to each issue.

In the rush to deal with the many matters at hand, the rigour of this approach was not maintained. The TF was able to resolve its position on many issues very effectively. Ecological issues, for example, were clearly articulated, information brought to bear, and positions resolved. In other cases, however, the TF was surprised to be facing issues it had not anticipated. An example, was the issue of conflict among trail users. Because the issue was not identified early, in a structured way, the TF was faced with

not having the right information and not understanding the view and position of individual TF members. While the example is not important, the lack of rigour in the process is. This resulted in too many last minute issues requiring resolution during the writing of the final report, a time when the focus should have been on production.

The issue analysis process and assignment of issue analysis responsibility to team members would also lead logically to completing some of the writing of the final report much earlier than was the case. As it was, responsibilities for researching and chapter writing were not assigned until the last quarter of the project.

Conclusions - Project and Issue Management

- Identify the issues early and apply a rigorous issue analysis approach with clearly assigned responsibilities;
- set mechanisms to test public opinion on key issues.

Public Involvement

Borrowing from the British Columbian C.O.R.E. Process, Darling described various methods of public participation as lying along a continuum (Figure 1) ranging from simple information sharing (no participation) to shared decision-making (full participation)¹⁷. The TF employed techniques that demonstrate virtually the full range of this continuum. Not only was this strategy a major cornerstone of the study, it was perhaps the greatest success with potentially the most lasting legacy of the TF's work. The public involvement program had three essential elements, Information Sharing, Consultation, and Public Interest Negotiation.

The initial plan for public consultation was a conventional public involvement program; canvas opinion, analyse results and recommend solutions. Early feedback from interested publics demonstrated that stakeholders were frustrated with this approach. This method had been used extensively by Parks Canada in the past and the apparent lack of influence that it had on past decision-making frustrated constituents. This led to perhaps the most important decision taken by the TF - to undertake an interest based negotiation approach using a round table. The success and lessons learned from this approach are discussed later.

The rudiments of public involvement were laid out at the initial retreat when the TF decided to canvas the public views on elements of a vision and goals for the Valley, on perception of issues, and on how the public wanted to be involved. This was an early signal to the public that the TF intended to carry out the project in an open and inclusive way, in other words, in a manner open to anyone who wanted to be involved.

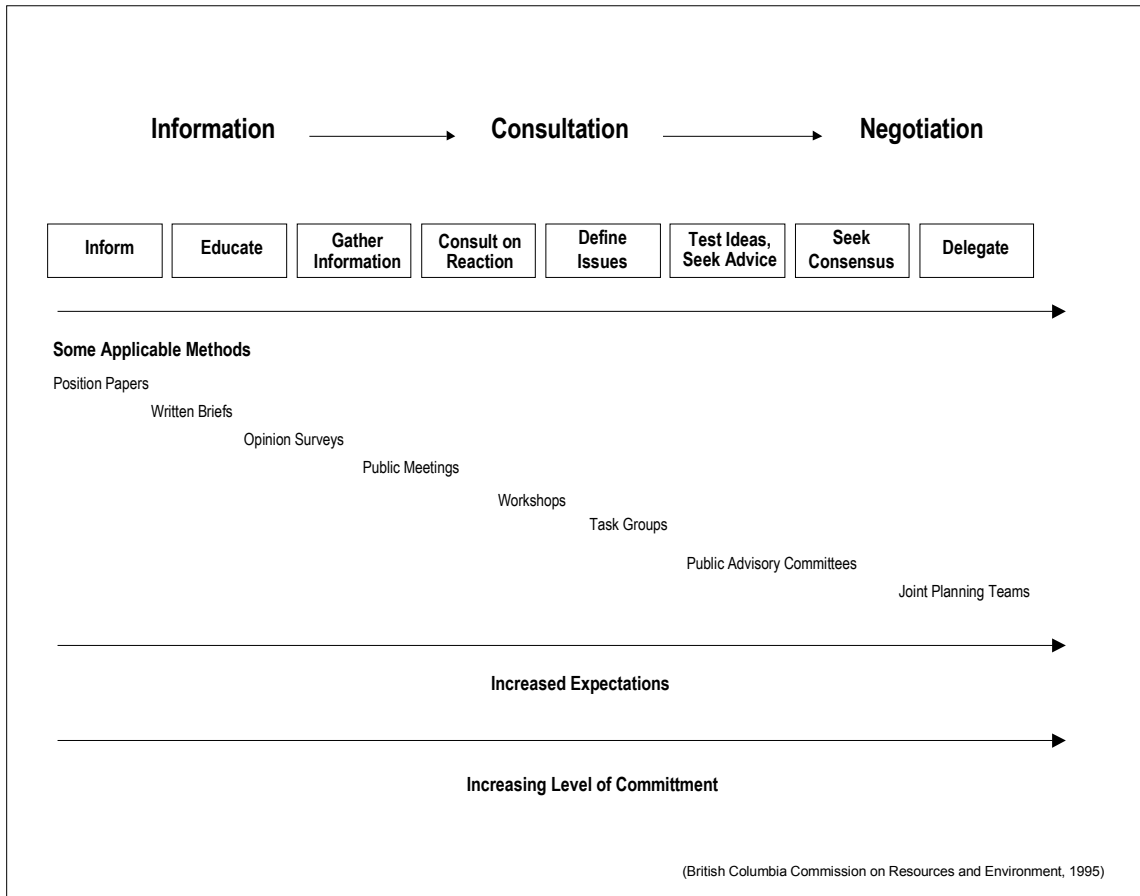


Figure 1

The initial canvassing of interest was done through a questionnaire sent to all those who indicated interest in the BBVS during the Parks Canada Four Mountain Parks Planning Process. While this was not a statistically valid approach, it did provide an insight into some key issues. It also indicated that the scope of interest was wide spread in Canada¹⁸.

Information Sharing

A major success was a storefront office operated on Banff Avenue by the Secretariat. Again, this was a signal to the public that the TF intended to operate in an open, transparent way. Accessibility to the Secretariat gave many members of the public a sense of being part of the study.

Throughout the study, the public was encouraged to offer their views and opinions. More than 1200 letters were received, 48% from Canadians other than Alberta and 19% from non-Canadians. This indicated a great deal of national and international interest. However, due to limited time and budget, the TF was unable to engage effectively in a national consultation program. A second shortcoming was that financial and human resources did not permit an ongoing and structured approach to submission analysis.

The TF used four newsletters and the Internet to provide regular status reports to a mailing list of over 1100 people. While this was a very useful tool, a fifth and final newsletter that reported on the issuing of the final report and closing the study would have completed the public consultation program. Time and funding were the main reasons this last newsletter was not issued.

Throughout the study, significant effort was given to maintain close contact with local media, particularly the Banff Crag and Canyon newspaper. Very early in the study, the TF selected a “one window” approach to media relations wherein the TF chair and the Executive Director were the principal media contacts. Following each TF meeting, the TF chair met with the editor of the newspaper to provide an update on the study. This relationship proved to be extremely valuable as later issues were debated in the public forum. To ensure consensus among the TF on public relations issues, formal preparation of hypothetical questions and answers was used extensively.

Conclusion: Information Sharing

- Engaging the public in determining Public Involvement Strategy creates an early sense of meaningful participation;
 - Continuous availability to all interested individuals and a sense of openness is vital and requires the use of a full suite of information tools;
 - Early and continuous media access and involvement will assist in ensuring a complete reporting of the public debate that is occurring.
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Consultation

In its first newsletter, the TF outlined the rationale for and approach to the Round Table and invited interested groups and individuals to avail themselves of the opportunity to address the TF directly through deputations and one-on-one meetings with TF members. These consultation meetings occurred throughout the study. They provided direct access to the TF for groups and individuals, an opportunity for frank and informed exchange of ideas, and a message that the TF was very interested in all views and ideas. They also provided the TF with the opportunity to clarify its needs, goals and approach to the study. The deputations were an opportunity, however, that the public did not use as much as expected. Perhaps other public processes such as the Round Table precluded the need for this aspect of consultation.

The study could have benefited from informal consultation with the public through open houses, coffee chats, breakfast meetings, etc. Although the TF was creative in its public involvement process, some individuals thought the TF had already pre-conceived the study by the time it had contacted them and the TF never got over that perception. In fact, it took time, which was limited at the start of the study, for the TF to organize its work. This resulted in some delay in directly engaging stakeholders. This may have resulted in isolating some groups.

Engaging the Business Community

The Task Force faced many challenges in pursuing the objectives of the study but no greater one than engaging the business community. Like all business communities, the Banff-Bow Valley business community was not a homogeneous entity portraying a consistent approach to all issues. The rough divisions within this community broke down into the categories of vigorously opposed, the silent majority and the wanting to get involved.

Those who vigorously opposed the study ranged from some major enterprises to some smaller business within the community. The motivation behind the opposition ranged as well. Some were philosophically opposed to the study itself, seeing it as not needed and a waste of taxpayer's money. Some took issue with the composition of the Task Force and Secretariat, arguing unacceptable bias. Some feared the potential for a significant negative impact on their long term expansion and business development needs. The silent majority were comprised of enterprises that recognized that some change was inevitable and necessary but were fearful as to the extent of that change and its impact on them.

Those who wanted to get involved were comprised of a combination of those who had already recognized the need for change and had made significant moves in that direction and those who wanted merely to monitor the study.

The Task Force made a significant effort to engage all segments of all sectors, including the business community. The first meeting that the Task Force had to promote the Round Table process was with the business community. In an effort to respond to criticisms of bias, the Task Force proposed changes in the composition of the Secretariat, specifically to add a tourism specialist recruited from outside of Parks Canada. The changing of the composition of the Secretariat seemed to have little impact since there was no change in the composition of the Task Force nor in its objectives and this appeared to be at the root of criticisms. The most successful effort was in the engagement through the Round Table process. Attempts at communication with the more outspoken business critics were less productive, spasmodic, unfocussed and inconsistent in approach.

Where the business community did participate, its impact on the process and the results of that process were significant. For this group, the Round Table process afforded them an opportunity to work together directly and actively on consensus recommendations to the Task Force, that is to share in decisions that would affect their future, with some confidence that they would be acted upon. Two examples are illustrative of this group. The first is the Moraine Lake Lodge type of operation with its adherence to the principles of balancing business opportunity and respect for the ecosystem. This philosophy and type of operation essentially became the role model for the development of the Tourism Destination Model. The other example is the significant contribution by TransAlta Utilities Ltd. to the deliberations on the issues of power generation, Lake Minnewanka, and the downstream impacts. This extensive contribution had a significant impact on the final recommendations as they provided a level of detail, background data and business analysis that would otherwise have not been available. Both of these examples were brought forward and developed through the Round Table process.

Neither the more actively opposed nor the silent majority played an overt role in the Round Table process nor made direct contributions to it. At the moment, they thought they could get what they wanted without the support of others and through an alternative process, direct representation to Parks Canada. Similarly, First Nations groups and the Province of British Columbia chose not to participate. More active participation from these groups would have more richly informed the Task Force as it was preparing its final recommendations.

Many from the business community were not accustomed to, trained for, nor felt comfortable operating in public fora. Their normal style of conducting business is very much non-public, face-to-face, and in small peer groups. The processes that the Task Force identified and employed did not respond well to this style of doing business.

In 20/20 hindsight, it is possible to see some other avenues that the Task Force might have explored in its attempt to engage all segments of the business community - more one-on-one discussions with key leaders and perhaps some special efforts to accommodate their participation in alternative fora to that of the Round Table. Another approach might have been to make the assessment very early in the life of the Task Force that without this issue being resolved the Task Force could not complete its work successfully. This would have necessitated going to the Minister and presenting this issue for resolution at the political level before the Task Force proceeded further. The Task Force, as a unit, could have approached the corporate heads of key enterprises in an effort to work out the issue. The Task Force never resolved whether they could successfully complete their mission without the participation of this segment of the business community, nor did they attempt to employ any higher powers to resolve what was clearly an impasse.

There is no question that the most influential opponents of the study represented most of the major enterprises and a group of highly vocal critics. There is also no question that major economic interests were being threatened by the study and, that at times, this manifested itself in direct and necessary conflict with the direction of the Task Force.

Whether the steps suggested would have completely solved the problem with the business community is debatable. Making the extra effort might have brought additional members of the business community into the process.

Conclusions - Consultation

- A full range of consultation techniques must be used to provide the needed range of opportunities for the public to engage the TF. No one approach will suffice.
- More time in identifying the key segments of the business community, working with them to identify their needs and fears, and developing strategies to cope with them is needed;

Public Interest Negotiations - The Round Table

The Round Table was the highlight of the public involvement program. In the following, the initial steps leading to the formation of the Round Table, the challenges overcome in the process, and the remarkable outcomes are discussed. However, at the outset, it

must be emphasized that the BBVS Round Table process was an outstanding example of meaningful participation in public policy decision-making. It shifted participants from an adversarial to a cooperative, problem-solving mind set, and demonstrated that shared decision-making can work and that it is worth the price.

As mentioned earlier, the TF heard the public frustration over previous consultation and decision-making by Parks Canada. It was clear that normal and current processes were not going to be successful. The TF needed some alternative approach to break the cycle of bitter and polarized debate, the lack of trust in the decision-making process and the lack of predictability in the outcome of decisions. The concept of the Round Table or a shared decision-making process was discussed at the initial retreat in August 1994. Some TF members were concerned with this approach, arguing it would take a great deal of effort and resources. To help explore the concept of a Round Table, the services of an environmental mediator were retained in November 1994 to assist in assessing the appropriateness of the Round Table approach. By December 1994, a preliminary list of interest sectors (Figure 2) and an approach to structuring a table was developed by the TF and Secretariat. In January 1995, the mediator presented a report to the TF on establishing the Banff-Bow Valley Round Table¹⁹. It was not until the receipt of this document that the full impacts of the Round Table decision became apparent. With the Ministerial launch of the Round Table set for February 11, 1995, little time was available to prepare the TF, the sector participants, and the support system for what lay ahead. In hindsight, involving the mediator/ facilitator earlier in the process might have alleviated this problem. It might also have made engaging the business community a little easier.

The decision to proceed with the Round Table was significant in many ways. It:

- clearly demonstrated to the public, the TF's commitment to open and inclusive public involvement;
- provided the TF with a consistent window on all of the interests in the Valley and an opportunity to hear an independently facilitated debate of the issues;
- provided a unique situation wherein an expert panel participated as an equal partner in a shared decision-making process; and
- created clear expectations as to some of the content of the TF's final report.

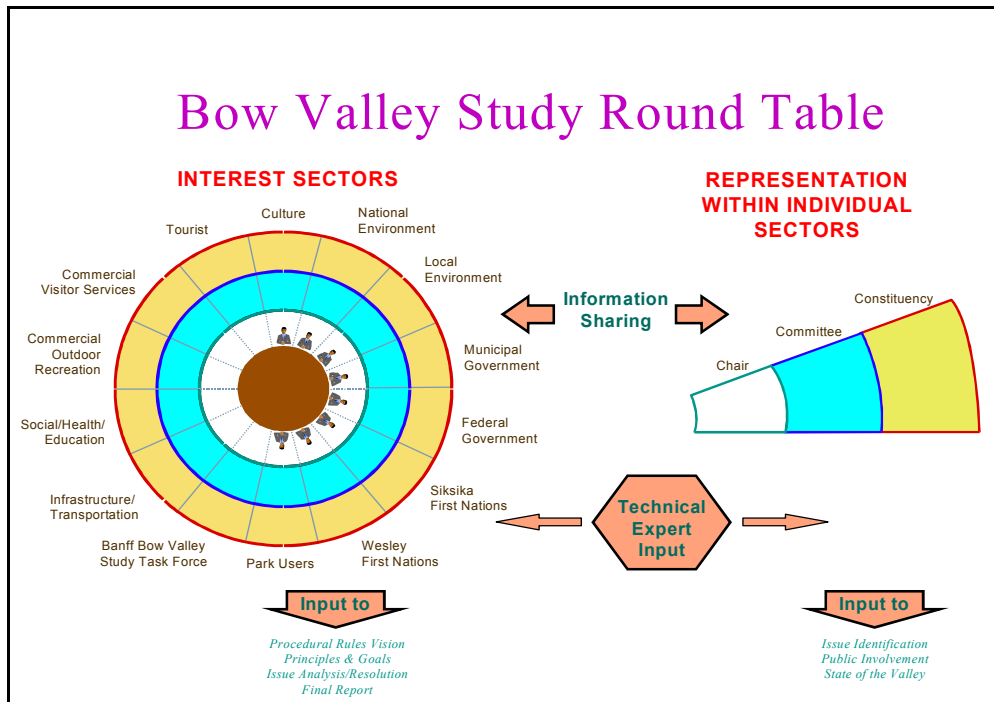


Figure 2 Banff-Bow Valley Round Table

On the other hand, there were many costs associated with this decision. For example, it removed much flexibility in the TF's work plan because it was now accountable to the Round Table and the Round Table's schedule; it doubled and sometimes tripled the TF member's time commitment to the study as two and one half days per month were devoted to the Round Table; and it locked the TF into a cost commitment not anticipated when the study was first contemplated.

The Round Table was one of the greatest strengths and successes of the BBVS. It was also one of the most difficult aspects of the study to manage. Because there was little experience among Valley constituents in such a shared decision-making process, the TF felt that it needed to provide leadership in the formative stages. The TF, therefore, undertook in November 1994, to form a preliminary list of possible sectors and to contact opinion leaders in each of these sectors. The Round Table concept was explained and their participation was solicited. They were also asked to recruit other within their area of interest and form a sector to sit at the Table. But it was also important for the Round Table to develop a sense of autonomy and self management. This latter objective was compromised, to some extent, by the impression left that the TF structured the table and therefore could change it at will. It took considerable effort to overcome the mistrust surrounding the suspicion that the TF had manipulated the

Round Table structure to meet some hidden agenda. It may have been better, although more time consuming, to let the sectors form themselves. In the end, through the hard work of the TF, the goal to bring the Table together in a way that recognized the autonomy of the participants and the Table was achieved. All sectors came to the Table and participated in a highly ethical and constructive way.

Again, due to the relative inexperience of participants, including the TF, in shared decision-making processes, the TF retained an expert and independent mediator to provide advice on setting up the process. The mediator was not from the area and had not been engaged in any of the past debates on issues in the Valley. The mediator, although retained under contract by the TF, reported to and took direction from the Round Table and in the end, could be dismissed by the Table. This brought a great deal of credibility to the process.

The TF was forging for itself a role at the Table that was both difficult and unique. It found itself in a leadership/participant paradox. On one hand, the TF was the client of the Round Table in that it would receive and indeed adopt the consensus recommendations of the Table. On another hand, it was an equal participant having no more or less power of decision than any other member of the Table. On still another, it played the role of expert advisor. No other Round Table has ever had these characteristics. While this was a unique combination of roles for a sector in a Round Table setting, the TF was very successful in playing each. Being an equal participant, meant that in a consensus based forum, the TF was bound by the consensus of the group. The TF could have withheld its consensus on any matter but never had to make this choice. As the client or final recipient of the Round Table's recommendations, the TF was always immediately available to provide clarification of its needs and expectations. Finally, as an expert advisor to the Table, the TF could be held accountable for the comprehensiveness and accuracy of its scientific and technical information and advice to the Table. This was enhanced by the fact that as each project was completed, the TF release the resulting report to the Round Table and to the public. By responding to all of these challenges, the TF brought a high degree of rigour to the Table's deliberations and enhanced immeasurably the quality of the final product.

A difficult choice that the TF faced was the degree of investment it could make in ensuring that a national perspective was brought to the discussion. As a national park, Banff represents, to many Canadians, the flagship of the Canadian national park system. Many people across Canada held strong views on the many issues that Banff National Park managers faced. On one hand, the TF felt strongly that the national voice was vital. On the other, neither time nor budget allowed for any degree of national consultation. The TF chose to rely on the national environment sector of the

Round Table to bring this perspective and continually encouraged other sectors to seek out a national perspectives relative to their sectors. The TF bolstered these efforts by distributing information through the Internet, holding information meetings in major centres in Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario and developing a mailing list based on past Parks Canada national consultations. In the end, this issue remained one that the TF felt needed to be addressed further.

There was a long delay between the completion of the Round Table work and the release of the final report. This delay eroded many of the positive relationships built over the fourteen months of Round Table work and rekindled some of the suspicion and mistrust that characterized its early months. While the TF undertook to include all consensus recommendations from the Table in its final report, many of its recommendations would be made in areas not discussed by the Round Table. Because of the limited time that the Round Table could devote to discussing a given issue, many recommendations from the TF would go beyond the scope of discussion undertaken by the Table. These cases would represent a surprise to the members of the Round Table and had the potential to leave some with a sense of being manipulated. Because of the confidentiality of the TF recommendations and the need for the Minister to receive them before any public release, the TF could only deal with concerns of the Round Table after the report was released. The whole process of shared decision-making was upset by this delay. This was inevitable as the shared decision-making process was ultimately in conflict with the protocol that said that the TF was to report to the Minister first.

The impact of these events could have been mitigated through a number of measures. A shorter time delay between the end of the Round Table and the delivery of the report would certainly have helped, but was difficult given the amount of work to be done by the TF. A more thorough briefing of the RT at the time of the release of the report with special emphasis on demonstrating how the RT influenced the recommendations would have helped. The TF may have used the RT sectors as sounding boards as recommendations were being developed. Finally, while the follow-up meetings between the TF and the Table sectors helped to increase understanding of the recommendations by the sectors, more of these meetings would certainly have been beneficial.

In summary, the Round Table process provided constituents in the Valley and Parks Canada with an example of an alternative approach to decision-making and public involvement. It also provided a means whereby the TF was able to obtain and use the experience and expertise in the region.

Role of Science in Decision-making

The public process forced the TF to deal with one of the most thorny issues in the Valley; the quality of scientific information and the role of science in decision-making. Generally, interest groups challenge the scientific information used to support an issue as a first step to discrediting a decision. The TF took several steps to invite the public into the discussion of science and to engage them in the issue of quality assurance. As part of the State of the Banff-Bow Valley project, interest sectors were invited to supply information as well as review and critique draft material. Wherever the quality of scientific information was raised, the TF invited the critics to explain the concern and offer documented alternatives. This had two results. First, it exposed unwarranted criticism; and second, it improved the quality of the final product by providing more legitimate information. This process resulted in the State of the Banff-Bow Valley Report⁴ providing a highly credible, level playing field of information for the Round Table to use.

Another approach was used by the Ecological Outlook Project. Round Table sectors were invited to participate in a Technical Working Group. This group was involved in project design and in the selection of ecological, social and economic indicators.

A significant and effective step taken was the formation of a Scientific Review Committee (SRC). In this case, Round Table sectors were invited to put forth names of accredited professionals in ecological, social, economic, and recreational fields for consideration by the TF in forming the SRC. Though final selection was made by the TF from the Round Table's list of candidates, the nomination of candidates by the Round Table assured a high degree of acceptance of the final Committee.

The SRC was asked to critically review components of the Ecological Outlook Project from an external scientific perspective. During one meeting of the Round Table, scientists working on modules of the Ecological Outlook Project presented and defended their findings to the SRC and to a joint sitting of the Round Table and the Scientific Review Committee. This afforded the Round Table the opportunity to participate in this review and to query the SRC as to the validity of the scientific information being presented. External peer review proved to be an invaluable mechanism for addressing scientific credibility, particularly when combined with a public forum. These efforts served to establish a common understanding of the scientific information base by providing the opportunity to debate science issues and undertake a peer review. This allowed the Round Table to move the discussion beyond the credibility of scientific information and on to the resolution of issues.

Despite the history of conflict in the Bow Valley, the Round Table through hard work, discipline and civility produced a remarkable list of accomplishments including:

- developing and sticking to their own ground rules for conduct;
- developing a vision and accompanying values and principles for the future of the Valley;
- canvassing the myriad of issues facing the Valley, selecting the key ones and then developing a rigorous work plan to deal with each within the constraints of time and resources;
- helping to move the scientific debate to a more fact based and focussed discussion (see below);
- significantly widening, through their work with their constituent groups, the knowledge base within the community on the issues and the complexity of the decisions that had to be made; and
- achieving total consensus agreement on their work and recommendations to the TF.

Conclusions - Round Table

The Round Table process and activity left a cadre of people experienced in the process of shared decision-making that will be valuable to Parks Canada in the future in helping to deal with the range of issues confronting the Department. The overall contribution of the Table to the TF and to the future of Banff National Park justified fully the investment of resources and time by the participants and the TF and met the need for a new, leading edge approach to consultation.

Public interest negotiations and particularly shared decision-making has an important place in public policy application and it is well worth the investment in the process.

The following criteria are important considerations in any future such studies:

- secure the right people; opinion leaders in their sectors of interest, with energy, time, interest, and a willingness to work with and represent their constituencies;
- secure the right mediator - one with a proven track record and experience in related work, able to retain the confidence of participants and independent of the issues;
- engage the mediator / facilitator early in the process to help in the formative stages;
- ensure the mediator is accountable to the Round Table;
- national representation in all relevant sectors of interest;
- ensure leadership and expert advice to the Round Table, while acting as an equal participant;
- provide accurate, timely, relevant and trusted information;
- take the necessary steps to establish the credibility of scientific and other information being provided to the Round Table;
- ensure the process is open to the public at large;

- recognize the time needed to incorporate the findings of the Round Table into the final report and ensure that recommendations are tested for consistency with the Round Table consensus.
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Production of the Final Report

Production of the final report was a task that was grossly underestimated and not addressed early enough in the planning of the study. In the initial assessment phase, more attention was needed on anticipating final report problems and developing contingencies for the unexpected. For example, early in the project, it was anticipated that the final report would be about 150 pages in length, including an executive summary. Cost estimates and contract calls were based on this. The final report was over 430 pages and a separate public summary of 76 pages was produced. During the assessment phase of the study, Parks Canada could have been more clear on its expected use of the final report. This, and an assessment of the public and professional market for the report, would have provided better guidance to the TF as it chose from its production options.

Besides the under-estimation of report length, decisions made by the team in the early months of the project proved to have significant impact on report production. For example, in some cases the data analysis and presentation software agreed upon and used by the team was not compatible with the desktop publishing software used by the publishing industry. To avoid such mistakes, the consultant for the final report design should have been selected one year into the project. Through regular and early involvement, the consultant would have helped the TF make the right data management choices.

A formal production team should have been established in the assessment phase with members being brought on at appropriate times. An ideal team would be:

- Writer/editor
- French translator
- Design consultant
- GIS technician
- Photographer
- Secretariat coordinator and TF representative.

Within the first 6-9 months of the project, the photographer, design consultant and GIS technician should have been retained. The writer/editor and translator should have been hired 12 and 18 months respectively into the study. This would have allowed

technical decisions to be made early and given the photographer four full seasons to acquire photographs needed by the TF. For the last 3-4 months two full time design/production people were needed to work with the writer/editor. As it was, the writer/editor was retained early enough but the rest of the team members entered the scene too late for effective decision-making.

Six months were needed to write and produce the report after all issues were resolved by the TF. As it was, many issues were still being resolved within 6 weeks of printing. Individual TF members devoted extraordinary time to writing and reviewing material. However, there was no single TF member responsible for ensuring consistency throughout report writing and production and for making final decisions at the late stages of production.

Efforts were made relatively early in the process to agree on a writing style and layout protocols and the use of outlines for chapters. However, these outlines and protocols were not used by all writers, resulting in late rewrites of some chapters to eliminate duplication. The responsibility for final decisions on style and layout rested with the Executive Director. Extremely tight time frames meant that these decisions were taken with very limited consultation with TF members. The editor and Executive Director were the only two people who had a full and comprehensive knowledge of the entire document during production and therefore able to assure continuity. A third member was needed and this should have been a TF member. The end product was remarkably consistent and relatively error free but the price for this was extraordinarily long hours of work for the production team over an extended period.

Ideally, the following sequence of production events should have occurred following the resolution of TF issues:

Complete English text and all supporting visual elements ---> forward to Design -
--> complete English design to 99% ---> forward to French translation --->
complete English design and French design coincidentally with independent
French translation review.

Finally, the extra-ordinary government controls over publishing, only served to inject a tremendous level of inefficiency into the final production. For example, any printing expenditure over \$10.0 K required public tender and any expenditure over \$30.0 K required advertising on the Government of Canada Open Bidding System. With greater latitude, the TF would have been able to produce a better product at less cost and in less time. These barriers need to be recognized and dealt with early in any project.

Conclusions - Production of Final Report

- The Department needs to clearly articulate its expectations for the report. Include a public and professional market demand assessment;
 - Address task of production early in the planning of the study;
 - Establish writing and production protocols and enforce them rigorously;
 - Retain the design consultant one year in advance of production deadline and involve consultant regularly throughout the project;
 - Identify the production team early in the process and engage members at logical times to ensure smooth production;
 - Select software to be used with production of the final report in mind to ensure compatibility of products;
 - Identify a TF lead responsibility and involve that person regularly;
 - Provide more latitude to the team to retain contractors;
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Release Strategy

After two and one half years of waiting, the report was much anticipated by stakeholders and media. The release of the final report was a well orchestrated event that involved the Minister and the Task Force. A release strategy was developed by the TF well in advance of the completion of the work. It called for pre-release briefings of key decision-makers within Parks Canada, advanced contact with Provincial authorities, a full sequence of events for the day of the release, including two press conferences and interviews, as well as a series of follow-up meetings with key stakeholders in the days following the release of the report.

During the project planning work in 1994, the need for special attention to the strategies around the release of the final report were identified. Later, resources to help develop these strategies were reallocated due to budget constraints.

It became evident within the last 8 weeks before release that more effort was needed in this area and a public relations / communications specialist was retained to help prepare the TF. This proved to be a very important decision. The specialist was able to help the TF focus on areas of likely public and media interest. In the end, the issues for which the TF prepared were quite different than the issues they had anticipated. A formal set of questions and answers and key messages were developed and specific media training was provided to the TF. The specialist also coordinated media relations

logistics for the TF and monitored media coverage. This freed the TF and Executive Director to focus on delivering the content of the report.

A final and curious lesson related to the reaction of Parks Canada to the study. The TF was surprised by what it perceived as an apparent lack of enthusiasm by senior Parks Canada officials to implement the report. For its part, Parks Canada appeared surprised at the scope and extent of the TF's recommendations. For example, the TF discussed at length changes needed in the approach to managing the park and to the way in which decisions were made. This, along with the discussion on the role of the communities within the park challenged many of the traditional ways of doing business. This raised the question of what was expected by Parks Canada and points to the need for better articulation of the study mandate as well as the need for the rigour discussed earlier in the assessment and adjustment phases. The TF presented an interim report to the Minister at the project's mid point. While this signalled the direction being taken by the TF on issues, a closer and continuous contact between the TF and Minister and Parks Canada officials at all levels, would have helped pave the way for the final report.

Preparing for the Report Launch

Many of the recommendations of the TF had a direct impact on people living in the Valley and/or using the park facilities. It was obvious that Parks Canada, in formulating its response to the Report had the most difficulty in addressing these areas and, in fact, avoided some while discarding others. Because the first priority of the Report was to ensure the maintenance of the park over the longer term, the framing and wording of recommendations that had an impact on people could have been improved, with additional rationale.

To assist the TF in this area, the communications specialist that was hired in the closing days of the Report could have been useful to the TF in helping to frame these recommendations and develop appropriate responses to the critics of any recommendations.

Conclusions - Preparing for Report Launch

- Retain communications / media relations consultant earlier in the process and involve that person in the framing of some of the key recommendations that have potential for public reaction.
 - Develop strategy to deal with public response.
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Post Release

In the days following the launch of the report by the Minister, the TF met with many sectors of interest. This was another important decision. At the time of the release of the TF Report, the Public Summary document was distributed widely; however, the Technical Document had very limited distribution due to its small production run. The Public Summary could not provide all the rationale and evidence supporting the recommendations nor could all of the more than 500 recommendations be included. Consequently, the public was forming its opinion from a summary and in some cases based only on media reports. The meetings with the stakeholders allowed the TF to present its rationale and evidence, and for the stakeholders to gain clarification on many recommendations. This certainly enhanced understanding and served to build a better informed constituency.

During the analysis of the report by Parks Canada and its Implementation Advisory Committee, there was very little dialogue with TF members. On one hand the ownership of the report was clearly that of the Minister. On the other, the TF and Secretariat represented a tremendous resource that could have assisted Parks Canada in understanding the rationale for many recommendations and the implications of optional implementation strategies. The rationale behind a report of this magnitude and complexity is not easily appreciated without some continuing dialogue with the authors.

Media monitoring was conducted and four weeks after the release of the report the TF wrote an open letter to the residents of the Banff-Bow Valley encouraging them to continue to get involved in decisions. This was published in the Banff Crag and Canyon newspaper and helped to bring closure to the project.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific conclusions and recommendations are presented earlier in the paper. What follows are overarching considerations.

Conclusions

1. Despite the challenges, the study team worked very hard to overcome them, to improve the process and the product as they progressed, and to learn how to conduct this very complex and difficult study. The result is a landmark document that will set an important milestone for protected areas management in Canada. It is important that the lessons learned from this project be incorporated into future, similar studies.

2. The public involvement, shared decision making and addressing the issues throughout the study allowed for inclusion of public concern and support. This has given people involved in the Banff-Bow Valley a voice and a power they did not have before. This must be carefully nurtured if conditions are not to return to the fractious behaviour of the past. Parks Canada will have the responsibility to ensure that this nurturing takes place.
3. It is extremely difficult for an agency to maintain the momentum of such a project over a 2-3 year period. The momentum developed at the beginning of such a study must be maintained throughout its life and through to the agency's final responses to the outcome.

Recommendations

1. That the lessons learned from the creation and operation of this TF be incorporated in both normal training and operational instructions to Parks Canada managers.
2. That these lessons and other operational considerations be incorporated in "instructions to TF" for a future case study considerations, as appropriate.
3. That Parks Canada ensure that the processes developed during the course of TF activities be communicated and incorporated in park management activities across the system.
4. That Parks Canada adapt the Banff Round Table model into an annual public accountability forum to report on progress in implementing the findings of the Task Force.

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Appendix A

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