

**PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PLANNERS AND MANAGERS**

**Prepared for
The National Park Service, Park Planning Task Force**

by

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INTRODUCTION

The public is demanding a direct involvement in site specific decisions of public agencies. Those that have ignored this demand have had management decisions reversed, become tied up in long and expensive court suits, and have found it necessary to redo lengthy and expensive planning efforts. Agencies have responded to this demand by establishing procedures to involve the public which go beyond the legislative and political process which has been the traditional form of public input.

The goal of this document is to discuss a number of issues which are vital to a successful and effective program of agency initiated public involvement, with particular reference to the planning process. Since planning and management differ across the many units administered by the National Park Service, a step-by-step cook book of how to do public involvement is likely to create as many problems as it solves. Hence this document will be quite general. For those who desire more concrete guidance, a hypothetical case is presented where the principles discussed in this report are applied to a particular park.

REASONS WHY THE PUBLIC WANTS TO BE INVOLVED

Many have wondered what has caused this demand for public involvement and if it is just a passing fad. The demand for direct public involvement is closely related to trust. As long as individuals trust the decision maker to act in their best interests, they feel little need to participate. Concern for participation arises almost entirely in the context of real or imagined failure of government to respond appropriately to the more competitive needs and demands of citizens, some of whom feel that the response would have been more satisfactory had their values been given and assured their hearing. When such trust is low for any affected group, there will be a demand for public involvement.

Data from public opinion polls suggests that in the past decade the general public has become more distrustful of government agencies. Furthermore, the environmental crisis has heightened the concern for environmental quality and made the public particularly interested in the activities of natural resource oriented agencies, such as the National Park Service.

New interest groups have emerged during the environmental crisis. These groups have not had the easy access of established traditional interests to decision makers. Hence they have demanded direct formal involvement through public meetings and the courts. The political and legal structure has been responsive to these demands and has given legal standing and institutional support to such concerns. The National Environmental Policy Act is but one example of such support.

There are additional factors which also create a high potential for this demand. Notable among these is the wide variety of publics who use or have an interest in national parks. Because of this variety there is a potential for conflict and whatever course taken by management is likely to leave one or another group dissatisfied with the action. Traditional

uses such as backcountry use has increased so that large numbers of individuals have a potential interest and new groups such as snowmobilers have emerged.

The impact parks or recreation areas have on their local communities is always important. It's reasonable to expect that citizens have substantial curiosity and interest in their neighbor who manages thousands or millions of acres and is the major social force in their community. For local publics the demand for public involvement is likely to be high even in the presence of substantial trust.

All of these factors working together create a serious demand for public involvement which is unlikely to diminish. As new interest groups become established and gain a more routine input into decisions their demand may be met, but not eliminated. The institutional support, the success of the public in the courts, and the general pattern to accommodate the demand for public involvement across a number of agencies all serve to sustain the demand. In short, the demand for direct public involvement is here and is unlikely to go away.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND DECISION MAKING

The goal of public involvement is to reach better decisions. By making the manager and planner aware of the range of alternatives, and by not leaving out or alienating groups who, if ignored, will resort to traditional political and legal mechanisms to make their wishes known, better decisions will be made. Actions taken with adequate public involvement will be more comprehensive and will be less likely to be capriciously reversed or modified. In the long run this should save time and money for the National Park Service. Time and money expenditures for public involvement should be viewed as an investment which will yield substantial returns. Better decisions which reflect the cognizance and understanding of public attitudes are less likely to be reversed through public pressure. Most likely such decisions will be supported making implementation quicker and easier.

Direct or project related public involvement does not make the managers decisions easier but makes them better. Successful public involvement, if anything, makes decisions more difficult because it should alert the manager to a range of complexities and conflicts which he could easily ignore without such input. Moreover, public involvement will increase the time necessary to reach decisions; it takes money and personnel to adequately involve the public.

Just as a manager or planner would be reluctant to make decisions without substantial information about the resource, he should be equally reluctant to make decisions without information about public preferences and how and why people use, or do not use the resource. The data about the resource does not make the decision for the manager, nor should public input make the decision for the manager. It is merely another factor which must be weighed in making the decision. As such, one should use similar careful and comprehensive approaches in gathering information about the public as well as the resource.

The joint role that public input and expert judgment play may be illustrated by analogy. One National Park Service manager compares public involvement and expert judgment to a medical situation. "If I went to a doctor, I would want him to decide whether to remove my appendix. I would not want him to do a survey of those people waiting in the waiting room to determine his action. His action should be based on expert judgment and scientific information, not public opinion." On the other hand, how would you like the physician to decide to take out your appendix without consulting you? Would you respect his decision if he did not ask you where you hurt, what your symptoms were and what you preferred? The patient and physician work together in the decision making process. The patient is the expert about where he hurts, how he feels and what he prefers. The physician is the expert in interpreting the information, fitting it with other scientific information and reaching a decision with the patient. Together these two experts share information which leads to a decision. The public is the expert on its own values and preferences. There is no substitute for their judgments. However, the manager must in the final analysis make and take responsibility for the decision.

Viewed in this light, it is clear that public involvement is much more than public relations and should not be equated with public relations. Good public involvement will lead to good public relations, but if it is only public relations, it is not good public involvement. Public involvement is not selling the public on any particular program or plan. It is honestly and openly soliciting public help in the development and the selection of alternatives. Public involvement is not a means of achieving a consensus among different groups but rather a set of procedures to determine what various preferences are and who holds those preferences. Public involvement is listening more than talking. It is far more than just public meetings. Public involvement includes a wide range of alternative techniques to assess human behavior in, and preferences about, those areas administered by the National Park Service.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Here are some typical problems suggested by citizens who have previously participated in federal public involvement efforts. Managers agree that these things may happen and should be avoided.

1. Those groups which complain the most are served while those who are quiet, diffuse or unable to make a case may be ignored.
2. The views of organized groups seem to be given more weight than opinions of unorganized citizens.
3. The citizen often must initiate the inquiring.
4. When the agency initiates public involvement, the meetings and process are too formal. This restricts public input and the effectiveness of a citizen is largely based on prior participation.

5. Public involvement takes place after positions have solidified.
6. The procedures are aimed at letting the public preview and (at best) react to material largely prepared by the bureaucracy.
7. There is little feedback concerning the impact of suggestions on the agency.
8. Because participation is erratic, ". . . there is always the feeling that options are being quietly dropped into the deep bogs of the bureaucracy while the citizen is still waiting to make comment."

While this is not an exhaustive list of problems, they are some of the more important difficulties with past procedures. The recommendations and suggestions which follow are ways these and other difficulties can be avoided.

IDENTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE PUBLICS

It's well known that those people who show up at public hearings and other meetings are not representative of all those who are affected or otherwise have an interest in a particular national park. However, it is these elements of the public which are most likely to be heard and influence decisions. Moreover these views may be well known, and hence the input at the public meeting will give the manager and planner little new information. Both citizens and managers are bothered by this problem. Managers are also concerned that public input comes late in the planning process when decisions and commitments have firmed up, rather than early when plans may be easily changed in response to public concerns (typically few show up at "preplanning meetings," but response may be strong when the master plan is presented). This frustrates citizens as well.

Both of these problems can be solved by actively seeking out public input, especially from those publics which are diffuse, distant, or otherwise unable to have input in the planning process. This process might be called positive solicitation. Positive solicitation in public involvement simply means that the National Park Service take steps to actively contact the public and set up mechanisms which facilitate rather than discourage public input.

The first step in such a program is to realize that there is no single public. Rather, the public may be usefully separated into a number of groups or "publics". For example, in a single park the following might be a starting list (a complete list would be established by the park staff): 1) summer visitor: developed campground camper, backcountry hiker and camper, national one-time visitor, multiple visitor; 2) local publics: businessmen, farmers and ranchers, local developers, local tax payers; 3) winter visitor: skier, cross country skier, snowmobiler; 4) preservation interests: Sierra Club, National Parks Association, historical and archeological associations; 5) national nonvisitor; 6) concessioners; 7) park employees, etc.

Contacting Representative Publics

If an open public hearing is held during the off season at the park it is clear that a number of publics are not going to be represented, e.g., the various types of summer visitors. The basic notion of positive solicitation is that the National Park Service locates and contacts all affected publics and sets up a procedure so that they may have input into the decision making process. This means more than merely having a public meeting in a number of locations.

Once publics are identified, it is necessary for the National Park Service to initiate contact with these groups. Besides the obvious contacts with established groups such as ski clubs, and outing clubs, visitor registration lists, telephone books, subscription lists, etc., may also be used to locate unorganized publics. It turns out people are eager to be involved in park planning and management decisions. A recent effort in the Smokies found that nearly 50 percent of local individuals chosen randomly from the local telephone directories showed up for small group meetings to identify issues that concerned them. A simple letter of invitation was sufficient to provoke this amazing response.

Importance of the Meeting Place

It is more effective to meet with a small group composed of a single public on their own turf, rather than large open meetings attended by multiple publics, if a serious discussion of needs, desires, and alternatives is sought. In such comfortable surroundings the members of a particular public will be more open and conciliatory than under circumstances where they feel that a show must be made for members of the opposition. By holding a series of such meetings with all identifiable publics it is possible to insure that the breadth of interests have been represented. This satisfies the need for representativeness far better than a general public meeting which everybody is free to attend, although both may be necessary for a complete program of public involvement. Moreover, by initiating the action an effective meeting can be held early in the planning process. Such active solicitation does yield high levels of participation even before issues have crystallized and allows public input when it can be most helpful.

Documenting Public Input

By documenting the input received at such meetings, the National Park Service can satisfy other members of these particular publics that their views were heard and taken into account in the planning process. The public, by and large, is aware of the multiple constraints that influence the manager and do not expect that their preferences should entirely dictate the decision of the manager. They are concerned that their view be heard and taken into account. Even if the decision be against their interest, they need to know that the manager accurately perceived their desires and made an informed decision. If the manager can show that the plans and projects were developed in close communication with the relevant public, members of that public will not feel the frustration that comes from being left out of the process, although they may not feel that the final decision gave them exactly what they wanted.

Disaggregating Public Input

Disaggregating the general public into a number of more homogeneous "publics" has some additional advantages. One way public input is inappropriately analyzed is to count the number of people who favor or oppose a particular position. It is widely agreed that public involvement is not vote counting. Even if a vast majority at a meeting favor a particular position, the constraints imposed by the resource, economics, or legislation may make the manager unable to follow this action; and, hence, appear undemocratic. Such aggregate vote counting also ignores the lack of representativeness of the input. Those who attend a meeting or write letters may be representative of only certain interests. Simply stated, meetings may through natural processes become "stacked."

As an example, suppose at a local meeting of a hundred people there were 80 local businessmen and land owners, 10 backpackers, four representatives of conservation organizations and six who use recreational vehicles in the park. When the aggregated appearance slips were tallied, there were 76 percent in favor of a proposal and 24 percent against. By disaggregating the input, the picture is much clearer.

	Favor	Oppose
Local businessmen and land owners	70	10
Backpackers	1	9
Conservation organizations	0	4
Recreation vehicle operators	5	1

Such disaggregation breaks down opinions by group. It suggests that if the meeting were held at a location where it was easier for backpackers and conservation organization members to attend, the total counts would have reversed. No clear mandate is discernable from such information, but rather the competing needs of various groups are highlighted.

Facilitating Public Input

Initiating contact with the various publics is an important part of public involvement. However, there is more to it than that. Even with contacts and encouragement, it is necessary to facilitate input. Meetings and presentations are not the usual settings where people communicate. Standing up in front of a group is uncomfortable for most citizens. They are intimidated by their lack of expertise and put off by the circumstances. The sterility of input in a formal public meeting is in marked contrast to the communication which goes on in the hallways before and after the meeting and at coffee breaks. Much can be done to make meetings less formal so that the public feels free to express their opinions. Meetings should be small so people can talk with each other. Facilitates should have a number of small rooms or at least sufficient space available so large groups can break up. Plans should be presented informally so the public feels free to comment and change

the plans. Flashy maps and overlays give the appearance that the plan is set even if it isn't. Line drawings on butcher paper which would allow the public to draw modifications or rough drawn mimeographed maps distributed to the audience all show the audience their input is important and make such input easy. Informal dress and setting deemphasize the role differences between Park Service and public. Seating arrangements which put public and planner closer together also help and encourage input. Real problems and dilemmas which confront the planners and management should be aired and public response solicited. Running a meeting which allows maximum public input is an art. This comes through both training and experience.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AS A CONTINUING EFFORT

There is a tendency to have a flurry of public involvement during a planning effort, but little under normal circumstances. This is a serious problem. Public involvement, if it is to be successful in planning and management decision making must be part of a continuing effort. Good public involvement is not a one-shot affair. Moreover, public involvement as a continuing effort will allow input from the more difficult-to-reach publics.

Reaching the Park Visitor

Most notable among these publics is the seasonal park visitor. Since he often lives far from the park, he is not likely to be represented at the meetings held near the park. However, when he is at the park as a visitor, his input on planning and operations can be specifically solicited. There are a number of ways this can be done. Campfires or other programs soliciting public input are used currently. They are most useful when input from these is summarized or recorded for later use. Displays of alternative management choices can be set up in visitor centers. Suggestion boxes for improvements and other options can be placed nearby. Rangers and other line personnel can seek out and report on the views of those groups such as hikers and fishermen who are less likely to come to campfire programs and visitor centers. Names can be selected at random from visitor registration lists and input solicited by direct mail.

Continuing Contact with Local Interest Groups

Public involvement as a continuing effort allows input from those difficult-to-reach publics, which don't happen to be handy when the planning actively gets into full swing. However, local and established interest groups should not be neglected. Periodic contact must be made with these groups, even if there is little new to communicate. Regularly established meetings and a newsletter from the superintendent keeps the relevant publics from believing that "options are being quietly dropped into the deep bogs of bureaucracy while the citizen is waiting to comment." This feedback to the participants is vital to the success of any public involvement effort.

The Value of Continuing Contacts with the Public

Bringing the citizens in at a very early level and continuing this effort with feedback, allows the public to see that the agency does indeed respond to their needs, and the public involvement does not take place after positions

have solidified. By a close and continuing contact with the public they are less likely to feel that they are only reviewing actions taken by the agency, but rather more likely to believe that the agency is working with them.

LEARNING FROM BEHAVIOR

Attitudes and behaviors are two different, and more often than not, unrelated things. Public involvement practices have been directed at obtaining attitudes and preferences. This is important, but to obtain a balanced picture it is necessary to determine what people do as well as what they say. It is important to obtain information about visitor behavior through systematic observation. To recall the medical analogy used earlier, while the patient is the expert on his feeling state, there are certain things he is not self-consciously aware of and cannot accurately report to the doctor, such as his blood sugar level, blood pressure, etc. Likewise, it is important to observe what park visitors actually do, as well as asking their preferences.

For example when visitors are continually pulling off the road in a scenic location to take pictures, or camping illegally in a certain spot, this may be important data about their preferences. When a noted geographer was president of a small college, he refused to have sidewalks built to a newly constructed building for a year. After it was determined where people actually walked, then sidewalks were built on the paths that naturally developed.

Studies of crowding in the Grand Canyon suggest that when the number of boats that meet each other on the Colorado River increases above a certain level greeting patterns change from positive to negative. This may be a subtle measure of the effect of visitor density on the park experience. This may be a subtle measure of the effect of visitor density on the park experience. These behavior patterns, or in some cases behavior traces (e.g., the development of paths, etc.) are an important kind of information of public preference which the manager has at hand, and which may not come up at public meetings. Such information is useful and should regularly be gathered as part of public involvement.

DETERMINING DEMAND FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

When deciding when and how to involve the public one needs to assess the demand for public involvement. Is there a current demand for involvement? Is there likely to be demand in the future? Clearly the public cannot and does not want to be involved in every decision a manager makes. There is likely to be little demand for input on the relocation of a backcountry pit toilet for example, or the paint color for the interior of a visitor center. Somewhere a line needs to be drawn. When does the public want to become involved?

There are several factors which lead to a demand for public involvement. One of these to which the manager must be especially alert is the degree the issue has crystallized. In the early stages of planning the issues

are likely to be broad and diffuse. Because there is little to get hold of and focus on, the public is likely to have a low demand for involvement. As the issues crystallize and plans become set, interest groups and others are likely to become mobilized. At this stage there is likely to be considerable demand for public involvement, but involvement is likely to appear to go unheard because the agency has already set a course of action. If the public had been involved earlier they could have had significant input. The manager must determine at early stages the potential demand for public involvement when the issue has crystallized. If there is likely to be a demand later on, then active solicitation must be taken early to involve the public.

Conflicting Interests Between Groups

A number of factors are likely to lead to the demand for public involvement. The demand is likely to increase when there are clearly groups who have conflicting interests in the decision. When such a conflict is evident it is likely that these groups will not trust managers to act in their best interest. It is important to involve such groups as soon as possible. The more severe the consequences of any action are to a particular group the greater the demand is for involvement. The size, cost, visibility and irreversibility of a project all increase the demand for involvement. Projects that are large, costly, of a nature or in a location where they or their effects will be noticed by the public, and which appear to be irreversible will have the greatest demand for public involvement. The degree to which a project deviates from the routine or normal, increases the need and demand for involvement.

Overdoing Public Involvement

Some have wondered if it is possible to overdo public involvement. This is possible but unlikely. A public involvement effort may occasionally be done so completely that the agency may be obtaining little new information from each meeting and hence the effect may appear wasted. This is possible; however, it neglects the idea that public involvement has a number of different functions besides giving information, and an effort which yields little information may be satisfying other needs.

Public involvement may be overdone when it does not contribute to the decision. Some decisions are so much influenced by other constraints that public input may make no possible contribution. Here several meetings to let the relevant public know what the decision maker is up against may be sufficient. Finally it should be noted that public involvement is no substitute for good management. The park must be well run to provide the visitor with a high quality experience. Public involvement must be done above and beyond normal park management.

FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Before a manager or planner begins public involvement, it is important to specify why the public is being involved and what is desired from such involvement. Going to the public without a clear idea of why or what is desired is

seldom useful for either the public or the Park Service. The function public involvement is supposed to serve determines the form that it takes. In other words, a decision to have a public meeting must follow a clear idea of what is to be achieved through public involvement.

There are four general functions that public involvement can serve, informational, interactive, assurance and ritualistic.

Giving and Getting Information

Informational functions must be broken down into two components: to give information to the public and to get information from the public. A technique which is good at disseminating information to the public may be worthless for obtaining information from the public and vice versa, but both are part of the informational function.

Interaction with the Public

The interactive function involves the public and the planner or manager jointly working on a problem. Information rapidly goes back and forth between the Park Service and public in the interactive mode. Both groups ask questions and respond to each other. The trend in public involvement has been toward the interactive function and away from the purely informational functions. In this process public and agency work together to reach a decision, while in public involvement efforts which are largely informational there is little sharing. There is likely to be considerable information transfer between agency and public in an interactive mode, but this is a secondary consideration to the prime goal of working together.

Assuring the Public

A third function public involvement can serve is an assurance function. Here the prime goal of the agency is to make sure that a group knows that its views have been heard and that it has not been ignored in the planning process. The agency may have a very good idea of the values and preferences of a particular group, but needs to use techniques which assure the particular public that it has been heard.

Ritualistic Requirements

The fourth function served by public involvement is ritualistic-legalistic. Because of legal requirements or in adherence to social norms which support democratic processes, it may be necessary to hold public meetings when there is little demand by either the public or the National Park Service for such involvement. In this case attempts to involve the public are made to satisfy requirements outside the agency and to allow input from any sources which may have been inadvertently overlooked. The ritualistic function is served when the goal of a public involvement effort is to convince others besides the affected public that there have been open mechanisms for public involvement.

TABLE I

Forms and Functions of Public Contact

Form of Public Involvement	Function of Public Involvement					Representativeness
	Informational		Interactive	Assurance	Ritualistic	
	To Give	To Get				
Open public meetings	Good	Poor	Poor	Fair	Yes	Poor
Workshops (small)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Yes	Potentially good
Presentations to groups	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Yes	No clear assurance
Ad Hoc committees	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Yes	Potentially good
Advisory groups	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Yes	Potentially good
Key contacts	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	No	No clear assurance
Analysis of incoming mail	Poor	Good	Poor	Poor	Yes	Poor
Direct mail from Park Service to public	Excellent	Poor	Fair	Good	No	Potentially good
Questionnaires and Surveys	Poor	Excellent	Poor	Fair	Yes	Potentially good
Behavioral observation	Poor	Excellent	Poor	Poor	No	Potentially good
Reports from key staff	Poor	Good	Poor	Poor	No	No clear assurance
News releases and mass media	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor	Yes	Poor
Analysis of mass media	Poor	Fair	Poor	Poor	Yes	Poor
Day-to-day public contacts	Good	Good	Excellent	Fair	No	Poor

Any form of public involvement to a greater or lesser degree performs each of these functions. By understanding what function public involvement should serve, the manager and planner can select the particular form of public involvement which is best suited to their purpose. Specific techniques of public involvement also differ on the probability that the input will be broadly representative of varied interests which are affected by national parks.

FORMS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In this section a number of methods for involving the public will be briefly described and their adequacy at serving the four preceding functions as well as their potential for involving a representative cross section of the public will be noted. The relationship between form and function is illustrated in Table 1. A good public involvement program will utilize a mix of techniques which assure that all of the functions are fulfilled with a representative cross section of the affected publics.

Public Meetings

Because open public meetings are often equated with public involvement, they are at the head of the list on Table 1. It can be seen that such meetings do a generally poor job of fulfilling the functions of public involvement. The most serious problems of public meetings are that those who attend are not representative of the variety of publics affected and the structured format of communication which is necessary at large meetings inhibit information transfer. Some information is transmitted by the agency; however, little new information is given by the public. The views of those who attend and speak at a public meeting are usually well known to the agency and add but little to the decision process. Because of the large numbers and structured format, there is little opportunity for the sharing which may take place at smaller meetings. Hence the meeting does not serve the interactive function. It does serve a ritualistic function and indeed is the prototype of ritualistic public involvement. General legal requirements for public involvement are usually satisfied by the notice and actual holding of a public meeting, regardless of who shows up and what information is transferred at the meeting. Public meetings per se do not assure the interested publics that their needs have been heard and responded to.

Workshops

In practice the line between a workshop and a public meeting is fine and often crossed. Sometimes public meetings evolve into workshops and sometimes workshops are really public meetings. The important distinction is size. Workshops are always small. When they get to be more than 12-15 individuals the social interaction becomes like a public meeting and the advantages of the workshop vanish. The Forest Service has held workshops in a public meeting context by breaking the participants into small working groups of from 10-12 individuals. However, when 30 people try to sit down around a table to discuss issues and share information, it simply doesn't work. Information transfer at a workshop is excellent and high quality interaction between planners and public almost defines a workshop. Those who attend should feel real input into the process and if a number of work-

shops are held with a variety of interests, ritualistic functions are satisfied. Because it is possible to invite people to workshops at random from lists or from identifiable groups, the representativeness has the potential to be adequate, if affirmative action is taken by the agency. If a workshop receives only the standard notice of a public meeting, it will not yield any more representative input than a public meeting.

Contacts with Established Groups

Public contact is also established by presentations to established groups such as Rotary, the Sierra Club, etc. These presentations transfer information well and because the groups are usually more homogeneous than the mix at public meetings, they will be more comfortable presenting their own views. There is usually some small opportunity for interactive communications. However, the formal nature of the situation tends to inhibit much interaction.

Ad Hoc or Advisory Groups

Ad hoc groups and advisory committees set up to consult and advise managers and planners generally work well. Their most serious problem is their potential lack of representativeness. The informational transfer is less satisfactory with these than, say, workshops because of the smaller number of people involved. Because such groups are usually not open to the public, they are not a sufficient form of public involvement but may be a useful adjunct to other techniques. A major advantage of such groups is that they do provide continuity to an otherwise potentially sporadic process, by having regularly scheduled meetings.

Contacts with Key Individuals

Contacts with a wide variety of key individuals is a well-known form of public involvement used by managers. In specific parks planners can tie into this network or can establish their own sets of contacts. Through informal meetings and telephone conversations such individuals can give planners and managers a good reading of public sentiment very quickly at low cost. Because there is no clear assurance that such contacts are representative and, indeed, every reason to believe they are not, this method is only an adjunct to a public involvement program. The method does not satisfy the ritualistic function, because it is not open, documentable, or subject to public scrutiny.

Analyzing Mail

Analysis of incoming mail, even if carefully and quantitatively carried out, has some serious deficiencies as a form of public involvement. It does not allow the agency to give information to the individual; nor does he feel he has shared in the process of decision making. The act of writing a letter is usually the response to being left out of the process; hence, such in-house analysis of letters is unlikely to fulfill the assurance function as well. Finally, the group of letter writers is not likely to be a particularly good representation of the affected publics. This is

especially true in the case of petitions and form letters. Since such letters almost by definition are spontaneous rather than solicited, an active solicitation program is difficult to tie in to such a method as a means to increase representativeness.

Direct Mailing to Solicit Information

News releases and public appearances are common means of public contact in the Park Service but direct mail to interested individuals has great potential. It is a fast and efficient way to get information to a wide variety of interested individuals. It does not serve other functions well, however. The survey and observation of behavior, like agency initiated direct mail, are relatively specialized techniques which satisfy certain functions very well but do not simultaneously fulfill a variety of needs. Both of these techniques are excellent at getting systematic quantitative information about what visitors prefer and what they actually do. They do not give the public information nor do they satisfy the interactive function. Because people know they are being involved in the questionnaire, they may feel somewhat involved in the process. Because the survey is a standard and well known methodology, it is likely to fulfill the ritualistic needs for public involvement. The systematic observation of behavior is so relatively new in the field of leisure and outdoor recreation, it does not yet satisfy ritualistic needs.

Reports From Key Staff

Reports from key staff are a useful way to get some information about the public. This is especially true with staff which have direct contact with the public. Seasonal employees, who for the majority of the year are members of the public rather than employees of the agency, constitute a remarkably good resource here. Because this sort of public involvement is in-house, it does not satisfy any of the other functions to any degree.

Using the Media

News releases and subsequent press coverage may get information to relevant publics but should not be counted on as sufficient for getting the message across. Such efforts, however, are an important part of ritualistic public involvement and should not be neglected. Analysis of the mass media will give some biased indication of public sentiment. The main strength is to satisfy ritualistic needs. A clipping file demonstrates some vigilance to public response if nothing else.

Day to Day Contacts

Finally, day-to-day contacts with the public transfer information well and allow the agency and the public to interact to reach decisions. However, there is no way that such contacts can be demonstrated to be representative of the affected publics. Because of this and because such contact is informal and difficult to document, it does not satisfy ritualistic needs.

In this section we have briefly discussed how different techniques satisfy a variety of needs and functions of public involvement. No attempt has been made to define and discuss the technical details of each technique. Those who wish this information are referred to Public Involvement and the Forest Service (1973), Chapter 3, "Collecting Public Input: Techniques, Issues, and Experience," pp. 43-83.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

A most serious problem for effective public involvement is what to do after the meeting is over, and letters are in? How can this information be most useful to the manager and what role should it play in decisions? This area of analysis and evaluation has not been well studied, nor is it easy to draw on actual experience.

Analysis of public input should follow a set of procedures which reduces and summarizes the material so that it is readily available to the decision maker. For analysis to be useful it must be guided by the questions which decision makers want answered. It's important for managers and planners to specify these questions in advance. All input is relevant no matter what technique was used. Analysis must be systematic, objective, visible, and traceable. It should be objective to guard against inadvertent biases, visible and traceable, so that the public can see how its input was recorded: and it should be uniform so that all input is treated the same.

Intuitive Analysis

The most widely used technique of analysis and (like the public meeting) the least adequate, is an intuitive subjective analysis by the manager, where he gets a feel for what people are concerned about. While it is certainly important for the decision maker to have an intuitive feel for what people are saying, this is not a sufficient form of analysis. It meets some of the criteria for good analysis. It is subject to biases of the individual manager or planner, and it does not allow a good weighing of the various opinions.

Counting Pros and Cons

Somewhat better than the intuitive method is a simple counting and tabulating the responses pro and con. This may protect the manager from inadvertently neglecting one point of view or from over-weighting another. However, this does not represent the complexity of the input--what public it came from and why it was held. A further breakdown of opinions by publics or other relevant groups is an improvement over this method. Simple content summaries of what people said about the resource or the policy are useful at getting at such complexity but they don't allow for clear quantification of the results. Any one of these three techniques is better than the inductive method and should be regularly used in addition to subjective analysis.

Forest Service Codinvolve Technique

In the Forest Service analysis of public input four related methods of analysis were identified. Because the team was dissatisfied with these

they went on to develop a new method, called Codinvolve. "Codinvolve" is a method which takes advantage of modern technology to give the manager a quantifiable assessment of public input, but in a way which does not sacrifice the complexity of that input. In codinvolve, information from written input is summarized and coded on key sort cards. It may also be stored in a computer. It allows the analyst to rapidly make cross tabulations which indicate who prefers what and why. The drawback to codinvolve is the time and expense. Each letter, petition or other input must be coded by an individual. Coders can do about 50 pieces of input a day. While cost norms have not been established, they may run as high as \$1.00 - \$2.00 per letter coded.

Evaluating the Analysis

It's important to realize that analysis is separate from evaluation. The analysis may be done by clerks working under the direction of a manager or planner. However, evaluation is the responsibility of the decision maker. Evaluation is the subjective interpretation of the importance of various kinds of public input and their integration with other factors to reach a decision. Because this is a judgmental process no set formulas can be given.

It should be reiterated that public input does not make the decision for the manager. It is merely one of a number of things which should be taken into account. Fiscal, resource, and political constraints all play a role in the decision. As the decision is being made and after it is made the public has a right to be informed of all aspects of the process. Such full disclosure is difficult, but is vitally important. Many decisions have been reversed and much delay has been caused by the lack of such disclosure.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS: A HYPOTHETICAL CASE AT A FICTIONAL PARK

In this section we wish to give an example of how the principles discussed in this report might apply to a particular park. Since parks and situations differ, no "cookbook" of procedures and steps would appear to be appropriate to more than one specific situation. The degree, timing and form of public involvement are matters of experience and judgments which cannot be fully anticipated by a set of specific guidelines. This example might give some guidance for the manager.

Public Involvement at Hassayampa National Park

The superintendent at Hassayampa National Park had read the guidelines for public involvement and discussed them at the regional superintendents' meeting. He had also spent a week at a training session which sharpened his skills for interacting with the public and running public meetings. He was a little amused when he discovered that all this business about public involvement was just a fancy version of much of what he himself had discovered through the years--to be an effective superintendent he had learned to stay in continual touch with the affected publics. Still he had picked up a few

new tricks from this training and was going to put them into action before the planning effort, which was likely to hit his park, actually began.

That summer he did a number of things in establishing what was to become a continuing effort of public involvement. First, he and his staff created a list of all of the relevant publics which were affected or potentially affected by the park and set up a program of how he would contact and get information from each of these groups on a regular basis. He started a log to record each month what he and his staff had done to contact these groups. This would keep him from skipping anyone or putting it off. In contacting established groups, rather than giving speeches, he found that if he asked them what they would like to see in Hassayampa National Park, he got open, honest and even helpful input. At first these groups were a little surprised that the manager was asking rather than telling, but they soon took to the idea that the Park Service was soliciting rather than just reacting.

Some affected publics weren't in organized groups and, hence, were harder to reach. He took several hundred names at random off registration lists and wrote to these people. Informal meetings were set up with some and went well. After each meeting he would write up a brief summary of what he thought he heard the group saying and sent it back to them for their review and reaction. With these active steps to locate and involve the public and give them feedback, the superintendent discovered that issues which had seemed relatively simple to him back in the office were considerably more complex than he had thought. Moreover, a number of totally new alternatives had come up. He knew that this public involvement wouldn't necessarily make planning easier; but he was pretty sure it would make it better in the long run.

During the summer several seminars were held with the park staff and particularly seasonals to find out their perceptions of what issues and alternatives were important to the relevant publics who were affected by the park. Summaries of these sessions were kept and filed. Being aware that the national summer visitor would be around for the planning meetings which would probably be held in the off-season, the superintendent initiated several things which would help find out the preferences and concerns for these groups.

First, a campfire program on "Planning and Development of Hassayampa National Park" was scheduled on various evenings. This was well publicized and, surprisingly, it attracted large numbers of visitors. Since the goal was to have a workshop format where the public and Park Service staff interacted on an informal basis, when 30 or 40 people arrived, it was necessary to break up into three or four groups, each with a Park Service employee. This required extra effort, and it was a bit surprising when maintenance workers and other seasonals volunteered to help. Such planning campfires were not really new; they had, on occasion, been used before. The new twist was that after each session a brief report was filed on the main points which came up during the campfire workshop. These would be used by the planners.

For those visitors who were unlikely to get involved in such formal programs, like the backcountry users and those who ran the white water on the Hassayampa River, more effort was needed. It turned out that at some popular camping

spots it was possible for patrol rangers to talk with these groups and determine their needs and preferences. Trail registers were well maintained and letters sent out to a sample of those who hiked and canoed asking for their input.

By systematically observing behavior and behavior traces, something was learned about where visitors came from and what they did in the park. Analysis of zip codes on trail registers and camping permits gave an idea where visitors lived. Certain trails and facilities were observed to see what percent of the park visitors used a trail or facility. How long people spent on nature trails, scenic turnouts, etc. were also observed. There were some surprises in these data. By putting these quantitative data together with the subjective judgments of the park staff, various types of park experiences were identified and the summer visitor was classified into a number of "publics".

It happened that the regional office was planning a region-wide survey of the general public to determine their needs and preferences as well as their actual park use. Because Hassayampa was scheduled for a general management plan, the superintendent was able to get several questions on the interview schedule to determine why people did or did not visit the Hassayampa. Getting bitten by the survey bug, he decided it would be useful to do a survey methodology to do the job in house. OMB required approval for such questionnaires which also complicated the issue. For these reasons he abandoned the idea.

A display was set up in the visitor center indicating various sorts of alternatives. People were asked to indicate which they preferred by pressing a button. This button registered their preference on a counter. A suggestion box was placed nearby and opinions and suggestions solicited. Finally, a park advisory committee was set up and monthly meetings were held. The membership was chosen from among a wide variety of publics.

Because of this strong program of affirmative and continuing public involvement, by the time the planners arrived, the superintendent and his staff had a wide variety of information for them: the results from his meetings with various user publics, the information collected at campfires and by patrol rangers, summarized (solicited) written input, summarized data on visitor behavior, zip code data showing where people came from, and tabulated survey data collected by the region. After several days of going over the resource and this information from the public, a plan for further public involvement was established.

First, several informal workshops were held. These were set up by the superintendent. Ten to twelve individuals representing a single public met and discussed issues with the planners. These meetings tended to be quite informal and often involved dinner. There were also several open public meetings for those who had not been invited to any of the other meetings. The open meetings were preceded by news releases, relatively large ads in local newspapers and reminder post cards to identifiable individuals. These were held in a number of locations. The meetings were well attended, 50-100 persons, and were held in local schools. They were chaired by a well-known local individual, although the superintendent and the planners were both

present. The first 20 minutes were devoted to a brief discussion of the planning process and how the Park Service needed public input. The meeting then broke up into small groups (using classrooms) to talk with a planner or member of the park staff in a workshop setting. A written list of alternatives or priorities was generated by each group, returning to the general meeting after an hour. A spokesman from each group was given five minutes to make a brief oral presentation. The total meeting was kept short (7:30-9:30 p.m.) After each of these meetings each participant was sent a thank-you note with a brief summary of the input which was generated at the meeting.

Because the analysis of zip codes indicated that a large number of summer visitors came from a large city 500 miles away, the planners decided it would be useful to have a meeting there. The same general format and affirmative action were used to conduct and stimulate interest in the meeting.

From these meetings and the analysis of the public input as well as from an assessment of the resource and the legal and political constraints, alternatives were developed. None of these alternatives was a strawman; they were not artificial, but rather had clear relevance to a particular affected public. The planners returned to Denver to do the technical work necessary for the environmental analysis. Both the planners and the superintendent knew that developing the plan would be a long process, and it was important to keep the public in touch with the process, so they developed a Hassayampa Planning Newsletter. Every month or so a two-page newsletter was sent to all the people who had attended the meetings (nearly 900 people) describing what had been done on the Hassayampa. The newsletter was very candid and shared with the readers the problems and dilemmas that the planners were having. Several times as the environmental assessment was redrafted, the planners felt more information was needed about public attitudes toward various aspects of the resource. Often phone calls to key individuals could settle these problems, but several times it was necessary to set up a workshop of representative individuals. These helped the planner to make an informed judgment about a tradeoff or conflicting use.

When the environmental assessment was finished and printed, a brief summary was sent out via the Hassayampa planning newsletter, along with an announcement of the times and places of the meetings to be held on this document. A list of locations, libraries, newspaper offices, etc. where the document could be read was also noted. Sociologists at the Service Center designed a two-page questionnaire (cleared through OMB) to be sent with the newsletter to get preferences and reactions from various publics. As part of this questionnaire, comment about the success of the public involvement program was solicited so the planner and managers could learn how to do better next time.

At the public meetings appearance slips were handed out to the audience and the chairman (not the superintendent or regional director, although both were in attendance) collected them before beginning. The number of people who wished to speak was divided into 120 minutes and this limit was enforced. When there were less than 10 who wished to speak no time limit was imposed

because people usually speak less than 10 minutes. At another meeting there were 100 people who wished to speak. This was clearly too many for a single meeting so the meeting was broken into two and everyone had time to present their views.

The input from these meetings was transcribed and along with the written input, and information from the questionnaire, was analyzed in the codinvolve manner. This took some time and expense; however, the superintendent was able to get interested volunteers to help with the coding. This helped people see that others hold different opinions. Various cross-tabulations were made showing which publics held what opinions, and why certain opinions were held.

As this information was analyzed, managers and planners began selecting alternatives, based on information about the resource, economic and political factors. They were committed to a full disclosure policy and used the Hassayampa planning newsletter along with press releases for doing this. As alternatives were selected the assumptions and reasons were spelled out. On one particular alternative a flurry of mail came in after the newsletter was published. A hastily called workshop and letters revealed that an assumption on which the choice was made was simply wrong. Learning that a different alternative was chosen by the planners, through the newsletter and press releases, the relevant publics were kept informed of the progress on the environmental impact statement. A similar display detailing progress of the plan was set up in the visitor center.

Public involvement on the draft and final environmental impact statement was largely ritualistic. There was one particular group which was not pleased with the decision, and protested at these pro-forma public meetings. The group acknowledged they had been involved, but the Park Service had not chosen the right alternative. They threatened court action and started to put pressure on the congressional delegation. While neither the superintendent nor the planners were happy about this, they felt confident that the correct decision had been made with complete and open public involvement. The concerns and the threats of the dissident group were published in the Hassayampa Planning Newsletter in accordance with the policy of full disclosure. Other groups which were satisfied with the alternatives put countering pressure on the congressional delegation, and it turned out the issue died a political death.

With the completion and approval of the final impact statement the process began again. Decisions about the development of specific sites and facilities began and public input was needed. In fact, the superintendent of Hassayampa wondered how he had ever gotten along without public involvement.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

For those whose primary responsibility is public involvement or for those who are curious to learn more about public input a selected bibliography has been provided. This is hardly exhaustive of the rapidly growing literature on public involvement, but it is some of the more relevant and obtainable material from both public agencies and scholars.

1. The Susquehanna Communication - Participation Study: Selected Approaches to Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning. Borton, T., K. Warner and J. Wenrich, NTIS Accession Number AD 717-023, 1970.

This is a good how-to-do-it article. It details specific techniques on this early and innovative public involvement project. Note Appendix A "Workshop Procedure and Structure Recommendation" and Appendix B, "Community Opinion Leader Workshop Case Examples."

2. "Public Participation in the Planning Process" 1601 - Planning System, Appendix 2. Bureau of Land Management. 47 pp.

This is a draft manuscript which the Bureau has made available to the Task Force. It is good on details such as how and when to schedule meetings, description of sampling procedures, nominal group processes and audio visual techniques. It's closely tied to BLM procedures, so it is not always relevant, but it is good (but brief) on a variety of specifics.

3. An Introduction to Codinvolve: A System for Analyzing, Storing, and Retrieving Public Input Into Resource Decisions. R.N. Clark, A.H. Stankey, J.C. Hendee, USDA, Forest Service Research Note PNW-123. Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, April 1974, 16 pp.

This is a brief description of codinvolve. Codinvolve is a code and analysis storage and retrieval system which may be used to analyze and store public input. It is set up for use with or without a computer, and is a very systematic way of recording public input. Codinvolve does take time and money, but it is a very useful system when there are substantial amounts of input and decisions are significant. The system has substantial retrieval flexibility.

4. Public Involvement and the Forest Service: Experience, Effectiveness and Suggested Direction. U.S. Forest Service. May 1973. NTIS Accession NO. PB 234 244/AS \$5.00 paper copy \$1.45 microfiche. 163 pp.

An eight-man Forest Service team of social scientists and managers worked for over a year to put this document together. It is the best handbook available for the manager or planner who wishes an in-depth view of public involvement. The Forest Service team investigated current procedures by gathering data from three forests and nine administrative regions. Their observations are keen and recommendations solid. There are detailed chapters on techniques, methods of analysis, and evaluation. The codinvolve system developed by Hendee, Clark, and Stankey came out of this research.

5. Guide to Public Involvement in Decision Making, USDA Forest Service, April, 1974. GPO: 1974 732-283/404. 22 pp.

This is a short popular version of the main conclusions and findings of the Forest Service study team's report.

6. "Some observations on Alternative Mechanisms for Public Involvement: The Hearing, Public Opinion Poll, The Workshop and Quasi Experiment." T.A. Heberlein, Natural Resources Journal, in press.

A technical comparison of the strengths and limitations of four popular techniques of public involvement.

7. Framework for Agency Use of Public Input in Resource Decision-making. Hendee, J.C., R.N. Clark, A.H. Stankey. Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, March-April 1974, Vol 29, #2. pp. 60-66.

This is a shortened professional publication of the major conclusions of the Forest Service study team. It is easier to obtain and less detailed. This article has also been adapted into a 20-minute slide tape show suitable for training. For more information, write Dr. John C. Hendee, U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, USDA, Seattle, Washington.

8. State of the Arts Study of Public Participation in the Water Resources Planning Process. Katherine P. Warner, NTIS Accession NO. PB 204 245. \$3.00 235 pp.

This is a lengthy theoretical and data based discussion of public involvement. The author has had experience on a number of different projects, particularly with the Corps of Engineers. This is not particularly well suited for management, because of its theoretical richness and length. It is useful background for those with key responsibility for public involvement.

9. "Formation and Role of Public Attitudes," G.F. White, pp. 105-127 in Environmental Quality in a Growing Economy. H. Jarrett, ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966.

This is a very thoughtful article by a noted geographer with long experience in water resources. A real classic.