

Aboriginal Perspectives Matter!

Local Measures of Success for the John Prince Research Forest

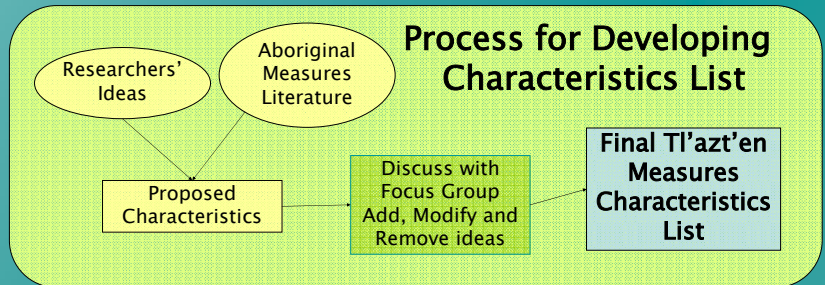
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Introduction

Reflecting on progress is an important step in improving and adapting delivery of services and programs. The way we assess programs must be culturally appropriate and community specific. Defining what to measure is the first step in setting up a monitoring and evaluation system.

Measures Characteristics can be used:

- As **guidelines for developing** measures of success, or
- To **evaluate and improve** existing measures



Tl'azt'en Measures Characteristics

Participatory: Measures must be developed with the community and include opinion-based measures for cultural appropriateness and local relevance

Management/Community Orientation: Measures must assess community expectations for co-management, whether they measure aspects of the co-management institution or community partner

Mixed-Methods Approach: Quantitative (numeric) and qualitative (descriptive) measures should be used

Positive Focus: Measures should have a positive focus, looking at what should increase rather than what should decrease

Transparent: Technical measures should be used as appropriate, and should also include laypersons' terminology to help build community capacity

Valid: Measures must be valid so they clearly relate to identified outcomes that we purport to measure

Reliable: Measures have to be reliable so that we can be confident in the data

Realistic: Measures have to be realistic so that they can be implemented with efficient use of resources



Range of Applications

JPRF Adaptive Co-management

- One purpose for the list is to guide development of socio-cultural measures for the JPRF, and to make sure measures meet Tl'azt'en standards
- In the future, this list can help guide measures development for other JPRF outcomes, such as use of traditional knowledge, protection of wildlife habitat, and other critical local values

Other Tl'azt'en Interests

Forest Management Certification

- Measures are used in third party certification, such as the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This list could be used by Tl'azt'en Nation to critique the measures used in these programs, and suggest how to improve them for community interests.
- These guidelines could be used in a national First Nations Forest Management Certification initiative.

Improving other Forest Management Partnerships

- The characteristics could be recommended to others managing forests on Tl'azt'en Territory to use as guidelines for starting a community benefits monitoring program.

Program Evaluation

- This list could be applied to measures or indicators used for other internal evaluations of Tl'azt'en services such as:
 - Schools or other education initiatives
 - Social programs
 - Health programs

How are Tl'azt'en Measures Different from Others?

Emphasis on Community Perspectives: Usually, concerns about biased opinions means that opinion-based measures are removed from the analyses. This research shows that for measures to be valid, they must include the opinions of Tl'azt'enne.

Mixed-Methods Approach: Qualitative measures have been regarded by others as being more susceptible to bias; however, many Aboriginal groups have seen how quantitative measures can exclude important information.

Focus on Community Conditions: Most forest management measures look only at the activities or conditions of management. While co-management arrangements (JPRF) are not responsible for community conditions, it is an important factor in co-management success.



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