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### Governance of recreation and tourism partnerships in parks and protected areas

P. F. J. Eagles <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada

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## Governance of recreation and tourism partnerships in parks and protected areas

P.F.J. Eagles\*

*Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada*

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This paper uses 10 criteria for governance to evaluate the eight management models that most commonly underpin recreation and tourism partnerships in parks and protected areas. The varying financial status, political propensities and history in different countries have led to the development of different approaches to partnership management. When governance criteria were applied to the management models, those with high involvement by nonprofit organizations ranked higher in terms of the ideals of good governance. The highest ranked model was the *public, nonprofit combination model*. Conversely, those models with high degrees of for-profit operations ranked lower. The lowest ranked model was the *aboriginal and government model*. The analysis suggests that the 10 criteria for governance are not treated equally in practice; financial efficiency may be a pivotal criterion given more importance.

**Keywords:** governance; management; parks; partnerships; protected areas; tourism

### Introduction

A major focus of biodiversity conservation occurs in parks and protected areas. Smith, Muir, Walpole, Balmford, and Leader-Williams (2003) found a causal association between the quality of governance and the quality of biodiversity conservation. Eagles (2008) outlined the range of management models used for parks and protected areas. Scholarly discussion of the governance of parks and protected areas is rare, and more work is needed (Hannah, 2006).

Weiss (2000) outlines the evolution of the concepts surrounding governance and provides a review of the definitions available. Weiss emphasizes the important role that the United Nations has had in developing concepts of governance. Applying governance concepts in an applied situation requires the use of standard definitions and criteria. The most complete treatment of the concept of governance in relation to parks and protected areas is that of Graham, Amos, and Plumptre (2003), produced for the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). Their work followed the United Nations Development Program's list of good governance characteristics (UNDP, 1997) and therefore might be called the UNDP–WCPA approach.

Governance is a process whereby societies or organizations make their important decisions, determine whom they involve in that process and how they render account (Graham et al., 2003, p. 1). Governance involves the state, but transcends the state, because it involves corporations, nongovernment organizations and individuals. Governance has three spheres: political, economic and administrative. Political governance is the process

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\*Email: eagles@uwaterloo.ca

of decision-making that determines policy. Economic governance concerns the processes whereby economic decisions are made. Administrative governance is the system that implements law and policy. All three are intertwined and dependent upon each other (UNDP, 1997). Management is the organization and coordination of the activities of an enterprise in accordance with policies and is aimed at the achievement of clearly defined objectives (Anonymous, 2008). Management occurs within the larger framework created by governance approaches. There is an interface between governance and management, where the two concepts merge.

The world's protected area estate contains some of the most important ecosystems, habitats and species. This estate is also critically important as cultural places where people contemplate and understand the natural world. Dearden, Bennett, and Johnston (2005, p. 98) maintains that, "It is not sufficient to have the right numbers of protected areas in the right places, it is also necessary to ensure that their governance is able to manage them in an effective manner and produce the desired outcomes". Only through good governance and good management can these places be conserved and understood by current and future generations.

There are many approaches to the management of recreation and tourism services in parks and protected areas. In most cases, this provision involves some form of partnership. Glover and Burton (1998, p. 143) proposed a typology of institutional arrangements for the provision of recreation and tourism services: (1) *governmental arrangements* whereby a public agency alone provides a public service; (2) *cross-sector alliances* through contractual relationships between a public agency and a profit-making or not-for-profit organization (e.g., partnerships and contracts); (3) *regulated monopolies* whereby a nonpublic organization is granted a monopoly to directly provide public services (e.g., franchise) and (4) *divestiture* whereby public services, lands or facilities are sold or leased to profit-making or not-for-profit agencies.

More (2005) proposed five models, which he called: (1) *fully public model*; (2) *public utility model*; (3) *outsourcing*; (4) *private, nonprofit ownership* and (5) *private, for-profit ownership*. In the *fully public model*, a government agency operates all services. In the *public utility model*, a government agency operates as a private corporation. *Outsourcing* involves contracting out services to private companies. *Private, nonprofit ownership* is ownership and operation by a nongovernment organization, while *private, for-profit ownership* involves ownership and operation by a private company. Graham et al. (2003) suggested four models for protected areas: (1) *government management*; (2) *multi-stakeholder management*; (3) *private management* and (4) *traditional community management*. They suggested that *government management* can occur with two approaches: (a) a national, provincial, state or municipal government agency or (b) delegated management from government to some other body. *Multi-stakeholder management* can occur as: (a) collaborative management or (b) joint management. *Private management* can occur as: (a) individuals; (b) not-for-profit organizations or (c) for-profit corporations. *Traditional community management* can occur with: (a) indigenous peoples or (b) local communities. The major addition by Graham et al. (2003) is traditional community management.

The discussion of these approaches to recreation and tourism can be highly politicized, with strong views expressed according to one's philosophy of governance. For example, a common view holds that only public ownership will allow for societal equity (More, 2005). Another view is that only the private sector operation can be efficient financially (Dixon & Sherman, 1990).

Glover and Burton (1998), Graham et al. (2003) and More (2005) reveal the complexity of the institutional arrangements. Glover and Burton's *cross-sector alliance* and Graham

Table 1. Governance criteria.

Combined categories	Basic governance principles
Legitimacy and voice	1. Public participation
	2. Consensus orientation
Direction	3. Strategic vision
Performance	4. Responsiveness to stakeholders
	5. Effectiveness
	6. Efficiency
Accountability	7. Accountability to the public and stakeholders
	8. Transparency
Fairness	9. Equity
	10. Rule of law

et al.'s *multi-stakeholder management* recognize that some approaches involve several partners working together. Eagles (2008) recommends the investigation of governance by separately investigating three functional aspects of conservation management: (1) the ownership of the land and associated resources; (2) the source of the income and (3) the type of management body. The phrase "conservation management" will be used in much of this paper to avoid the cultural bias that might occur with the reference to parks, which implies one type of approach, i.e. all elements owned and managed by government.

Graham et al. (2003) propose criteria to evaluate 10 principles of governance (Table 1). Each of the 10 principles can be defined and explained following UNDP (1997) and Graham et al. (2003). They are listed below. The category of legitimacy and voice includes *public participation* and *consensus in decision-making*. Public participation means all people have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests. Consensus-oriented decision-making is the ability to mediate differing interests to reach a broad consensus on the best interests of the group. An overall *strategic vision* towards decision-making, the only principle in the second category, involves looking constructively towards the future, with consideration of the historical, cultural and social complexities of each situation. The next category, overall performance, involves three very important governance criteria: *responsiveness* to stakeholders, *effectiveness* and *efficiency* of operations. Responsiveness occurs when institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders using a proactive manner regarding complaints and public criticisms. Effectiveness involves the capacity to realize organizational objectives. Efficiency refers to making the best use of resources. It is the capability of acting or producing effectively with a minimum amount or quantity of waste, expense or unnecessary effort.

The accountability category contains *accountability* and *transparency* to stakeholders. Accountability is the requirement that officials answer to stakeholders about the disposal of their powers and duties, act on criticisms or requirements made of them and accept responsibility for failure, incompetence or deceit. Transparency is the sharing of information and acting in an open manner. Fairness, the last category, deals with *equity* amongst stakeholders and the overall application of the *rule of law*. Equity is just treatment, requiring that similar cases be treated in similar ways. Application of the rule of law refers to legal frameworks being fair and enforced impartially. These principles and the associated criteria are widely accepted (Weiss, 2000).

Inherent in this approach is the concept of good governance (Weiss, 2000), whereby efforts are made to ensure that actual practice fits the accepted criteria. Often the use of the phrase governance implies good governance. Governance criteria have been used in

many analyses of natural resource management, including water management (Sokhem & Sunada, 2000), forest management (Agrawal, Chhatre, & Hardin, 2008) and parks (Hayes, 2006; Shipley & Kovacs, 2005). Hanna (2006) maintains that an assessment of governance in parks and protected areas is generally lacking. Clark, Hanna, and Slocombe (2008, p. 226) call for more understanding of the “new policies and more diverse, and often complex, governance arrangements”.

This paper develops an approach that is an amalgam of the institutional arrangements outlined by Glover and Burton (1998), Graham et al. (2003) and More (2005). These are then discussed within the context of the three elements of conservation management outlined by Eagles (2008). The purpose of the paper is to use governance criteria to assess the management of recreation and tourism partnerships associated with parks and protected areas. The approach is designed to illustrate the degree of movement towards good governance.

### **Elements of conservation management**

Three elements of conservation management in parks and protected areas have been identified (Eagles, 2008): (1) the ownership of the resources; (2) the sources of income for management and (3) the management body.

#### ***Ownership of the resources***

There are four alternatives for ownership for conservation resources: (1) a government agency; (2) a non-profit institution; (3) a for-profit corporation or (4) a community (Eagles, 2008) (Table 2). Joint ownership is possible, but no examples are known. Government conservation agencies occur at several levels of administration, such as a national government, a provincial or state government, an upper-tier municipal government or a local municipal government. Canada and Australia, for example, have conservation agencies at each of these levels of administration.

A nonprofit organization is a corporation or an association that conducts business for the benefit of the general public without shareholders and without a profit. Nonprofit institutions operate within the legal structure of the countries in which they are based. Typically, the law requires operation without a profit, with ongoing government monitoring to ensure compliance. These institutions are independent of governments. Typically, they have social, cultural, legal or environmental advocacy positions. Nonprofit organizations usually obtain their funding from private donations and from commercial enterprises (Ott, 2001). Nonprofit organizations are often involved in parks through lobbying of government with regards to park policy. Some are involved through the direct provision of services

Table 2. Options within the elements of conservation management.

Ownership	Income	Management body
Government agency	Government grants	Government agency
Nonprofit corporation	Fees and charges	Parastatal
For-profit corporation	Donations	Nonprofit corporation
Community		For-profit Corporation
		Community

within a contract relationship with park management, as per the Friends Groups that are common in Canadian and American parks.

For-profit corporations are legally defined companies that can be owned: (1) widely by many individuals; (2) by other corporations or (3) by private individuals. For-profit corporations are often heavily involved in the provision of tourism services in parks and protected areas.

Graham et al. (2003) suggest that individuals and aboriginal governments are also valid ownership options. Individuals are in the private sector, typically in the profit-making capacity. A community can be people in a geographical area, or people linked by a common interest. A community can function as a private profit-making corporation, as a nonprofit organization or as a government body. Traditional aboriginal communities typically function like a private sector agent, when viewed from outside that community. As seen from within these communities, they may appear like a local government.

### ***Sources of income***

There are three broad categories of sources of income for the management of conservation resources: (1) societal taxes; (2) user fees and charges and (3) donations (Eagles, 2008). There are many forms of taxes and many types of user fees available for consideration. Van Sickle and Eagles (1998) documented the various income sources utilized by parks in Canada. In many park systems in the developed world, government grants based on taxes provide the majority of park income. Landrum (2005) showed a change in the United States State Parks from 38% of operating income obtained from user fees in 1984 to 46% in 2004. In many developing countries, tourism fees and charges provide the majority of the income (Eagles, McCool, & Haynes, 2002). In most cases, donations are minor elements.

### ***Management body***

The management institution should be considered separately from the resource owner, and separately from the source of the income. There are five alternatives for the management institution: (1) a typical government agency; (2) a parastatal, which is a corporation owned by government; (3) a nonprofit corporation; (4) a for-profit corporation, either public or private or (5) a community (Table 2). The parastatal can be either a for-profit or a nonprofit entity, depending upon its legal constitution.

Graham et al. (2003) suggested that there are four types of options for government management. One is a park management function integrated into another agency, such as a wildlife agency or a forestry agency. A second is a parks agency as a distinct unit within a larger government agency. A third is a separate parks agency reporting directly to a cabinet member. A fourth is a parastatal, a semi-autonomous body reporting to a board of directors. The board members are typically appointed by the government. This paper merges the first three into one approach, and keeps the parastatal separate.

An emerging approach, often called co-management, occurs when two or more bodies share decision-making powers, with one being the government. The most frequently used model involves a combination of a government agency and an aboriginal group, a local community or a collection of local communities (Notzke, 1994). There are a large number of variations on this approach under development.

### ***Purpose of the enterprise***

It is necessary to understand the purpose of the enterprise of protected areas. There are two over-arching, intertwined and well-recognized goals (Eagles & McCool, 2002). One

is the conservation of natural and cultural resources. The other is the provision of education and recreation services (Eagles & McCool, 2002; Eagles et al., 2002). Wilkinson (2003) discusses the Canadian experience of attempting to achieve both sustainable tourism development and high levels of ecological integrity in the national parks. This paper assumes that all aspects of governance and management are undertaken with conservation and sustainable tourism as the over-arching goals.

### Widely used management models

The four ownership types, the three sources of income and the five alternative management bodies lead to 60 combinations, each a different management model. Eagles (2008) reports that seven combinations are most commonly used. These seven, and one additional one, are used in this analysis. Each is briefly introduced and explained below.

One is the *national park model*, with government ownership of the resources, the vast majority of funding coming from societal taxes and a government agency as the manager. Second is the *parastatal model* that has government ownership of resources, the majority of funding from user fees and a government-owned corporation as the manager. The third is the *nonprofit organization model*, with resource ownership by a nonprofit corporation, the majority of funding coming from donations and management by a nonprofit organization. Fourth is the *ecolodge model*, with resource ownership by a for-profit corporation, funding from user fees and management by a for-profit corporation.

Fifth is the *public and for-profit combination model*, with government ownership of all resources, with management and finance undertaken by a combination of public and private organizations. Sixth is the *public and nonprofit combination model*, where there is government ownership of all resources, with management and finance undertaken by a combination of public and nonprofit organizations. Seventh is the *aboriginal and government model*. In this model, aboriginal groups own the resources and the manager is a government agency. Eighth is added for this paper, the *traditional-community model*. This approach involves an aboriginal community owning the resource as well as managing land and tourism operations.

### Governance criteria applied to widely used management models

Within parks and protected areas, the systematic application of governance criteria to the management of parks and protected areas has not been made. Eagles (2008) calls for such an application. This is potentially a complex analysis given the number of criteria and the diversity of situations that occur. In this paper, an attempt is made to apply the 10 governance criteria, listed in Table 1, to the eight commonly used management models outlined above. This is done to encourage research and discussion into this important area of conservation management.

The application of any one of the governance criteria could be considered to be binary, either applicable or not. For example, there is transparency within management, or there is no transparency. This is probably too simplistic an approach. It is more reasonable to assume that there is a gradation of application from very low to very high. In this paper, the five-point rating scale is used: very weak, low, medium, high and very strong. Each of these is also assigned a number, from 1 to 5, to simplify comparison amongst the models. For this paper, each of the 10 governance criteria is considered to have equal importance.

Each of the eight management models is assessed for each governance criterion based on the literature and personal experience. This assessment is described next.

### ***National park model***

The national park model is one of the most commonly used management models. It is typically based on the approach used in the United States for national parks and popularized by its many supporters. It is often called the American model, with government ownership of the resources, the vast majority of funding coming from societal taxes and a government agency as the manager. This model is also common in Scandinavia (Leivo, 2002). This model generally involves a wide range of stakeholders, possibly the widest range of stakeholders of any model. These range from international bodies, through national and regional groups, down to local citizens.

This model is well known to have consensus orientation, within the constraints of the well-recognized conservation goals (Leivo, 2002). The strategic vision is strong, typically directed by purpose statements in governing statutes and over-arching policy documents. This vision is a well-recognized feature. This model is often criticized for being unresponsive, probably due to the heavy bureaucratic load occurring in large government agencies. It is often fiscally inefficient due to fixed yearly budgets, no year-end carry over and no ability to retain income (Moos, 2002). Crompton (1999) maintains that direct provision of recreation services by government agencies is high cost and inflexible. He also states that management structures “make it impossible for public agencies to finance and manage efficiently with the direct-delivery model” (Crompton, 1999, p. 151). Work in eastern and southern Africa showed that large sums of money were lost due to inefficient pricing of services by public park agencies (Krug, 2000).

This model is often restrained by complex and laborious government regulations. Unionized employee contracts often limit flexibility (Crompton, 1999). Nevertheless, this model is seen as providing conservation effectiveness (Bruner, Gullison, Rice, & da Fonseca, 2001; Dixon & Sherman, 1990). Management by a large government agency often means weak accountability and weak transparency. For example, it is rare for government agencies to expose themselves to independent audit procedures that are essential for accountability. Accordingly, they are not very transparent. Budget figures, ecological integrity measures and a host of other indicators are often not provided easily and widely.

Equity is seen as being one of the strengths of this model (Runte, 1997). The reliance on government funding for management is the most equitable approach for most citizens (More, 2007). Parks operated under this model follow the rule of law in a fashion similar to the governments of which they are a part. Given the high profile of the parks using this model, it appears that this model has a strong record of the rule of law. This may be due, in part, to the public interest in and focus on ensuring proper landscape and ecological conservation. However, the complex regulations in place to prevent “politicalization, patronage or corruption often become red tape that inhibits efficiency” (Crompton, 1999, p. 151).

### ***Parastatal model***

Parastatals are a widespread approach, but are seldom discussed in the literature. More (2005) describes this as the utility approach, which is the park operating like a government-owned company. A parastatal is a state-owned corporation. Parastatals are widely used in eastern and southern Africa, with SANParks a prime example in South Africa (Eagles et al., 2002). Conversely, New Zealand does not conduct any agency-operated enterprise (ANZECC, 1999). The parastatal approach provides greater financial management flexibility than the national park model (Moos, 2002; Ontario Parks, 1995).

Parastatals typically have strong public participation processes, very similar to that of the national park model. Management is by consensus, within the constraints of the governing legislation. The strategic vision is very strong, often clearly stated within legislation and policy. The ability of the management agency to charge fees according to demand, to retain income, to have end-of-year carry over and to better match income to service delivery results in much higher financial efficiency than the national park model (Moos, 2002; Mulholland & Eagles, 2002). This model also has higher responsiveness, especially to the visitors, because of the tie between visitor use and income. This model has a lower level of government grants, compared to the national park model, as grant funds are often replaced by income from tourism fees and charges (ECO, 2007; Mthembu, 2008; Mulholland & Eagles, 2002). The fulfillment of goals is strong and effective.

Accountability and transparency are weak, unless government rules demand that full disclosure of all activities is required. An exception to this is South Africa National Parks, a parastatal, which publishes a comprehensive annual report each year, including audited financial statements (SANParks, 2007). A weakness of this model is weak equity, compared to the national park model, because of the need to charge fees that fully cover the cost of production. This inevitably increases the cost to the users, potentially reducing the ability of some people to experience the park (More, 2007). Given the high profile of the parks using this model, it appears there is a strong record of the rule of law. This may be due, in part, to the public interest in, and focus on, ensuring proper landscape and ecological conservation.

The parastatal model is very similar to the national park model, except that more emphasis is placed on financial efficiency and less on equity.

### ***Nonprofit model***

Private, nonprofit protected areas are a rapidly developing approach. For example, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is a large landowner in Great Britain with 190 reserves covering 129,337 hectares (RSPB, 2008). In 2005, 1667 land trusts in the United States owned 7 million hectares of land (LTA, 2006). In Central America, there are 2941 private protected areas covering 540,983 hectares (MNPNR, 2007). Land trusts are emerging in Australia and Canada.

Nonprofits have strong elements of public participation because they are typically membership organisations and operate in a consultative fashion. Unlike government bodies, they only have the power of persuasion and cooperation, which means they must be highly sensitive to the concerns of their volunteers, their donors, their clients and the local communities in which they operate. As a result, they have a very strong consensus orientation. This management model exhibits variable levels of strategic vision, but typically has “visible organisational frameworks and management plans that were unambiguous in the presentation of protected areas objectives and activities” (Hannah, 2006, p. 231). In some cases, groups have a clear, long-range focus, for example, protecting certain types of ecosystems. In other cases, they are opportunistic, simply buying land and setting up operations according to local political opportunity. Nonprofit groups involved in land management are strongly responsive. To fulfill their goals, they have to be constantly aware of the concerns of a large number of stakeholders (Hannah, 2006). Nonprofits are well known as being financially efficient (Hager & Flack, 2004). They are effective as well, showing evidence of successful fulfillment of their goals.

Nonprofits have medium levels of accountability. They are private organizations, and therefore are not accountable to the broader society. For example, in the United States

they are not legally required to publish financial statements each year (Hager & Flack, 2004). They are weakly transparent, with major aspects of their operations not visible from the outside. Nonprofits have strong levels of equity, for those willing to be involved. They enable almost anyone to become involved. There is evidence that the collaborative efforts of nonprofit organizations bring together a diverse set of stakeholders that builds civil society and aids in social cohesion (Brown & Mitchell, 1999). The involvement of large numbers of volunteers encourages transparency and responsiveness that leads to their reputation of strongly following the rule of law.

### ***Ecolodge model***

Ecolodges are private companies owning land and earning income from resource conservation and tourism. The conservation and presentation of land for the purpose of profit-making through ecotourism is large and growing (Hawkins, Epler Wood, & Bittman, 1995; Mehta, Baez, & O'Loughlin, 2002). It is a major enterprise in several countries, for example in South Africa, Belize and Costa Rica (Kwan, Eagles, & Gebhardt, 2008b). Krug (2001) estimates that a minimum of 14 million hectares of private land is under some form of wildlife protection or sustainable wildlife management in Southern Africa.

Ecolodges have very weak levels of public participation, as their main emphasis is on their clients, not on broader segments of society. They have very strong strategic vision, with high degrees of specialization and innovation (Kwan et al., 2008b). They are very responsive to market demands and to local community demands, but do not require or seek broad societal sanction. They provide services that are attractive to the ecotourist (Kwan et al., 2008b). They must be able to obtain supplies, hire people and operate successfully within the context of a local community. They are highly efficient financially, a requirement to stay in business. Krug (2001, p. 2) states that "Private management structures are more effective in capturing the economic value of biodiversity".

Little is known about the private sector's role in protecting biodiversity (Krug, 2001). This sector is only accountable to the owners and shareholders; as a result, most aspects of their internal operations are not transparent to a broader society. They are much less transparent than government-operated parks and NGO-operated land trusts. Ecolodges are weak in equity since they necessarily concentrate on those who are willing and able to pay, although some make efforts to involve one important stakeholder, local communities (Kwan, Eagles, & Gebhardt, 2008a). One might expect that they must follow the corporate law of the countries in which they operate, but this is not well documented.

### ***Public and for-profit combination model***

Park agencies often use profit-making companies for the provision of many recreation and tourism services. The services can include food stores, restaurants, equipment rentals, trip guiding, lodging, specialized recreation services and transport. Private companies can also be used for specialized services, such as infrastructure construction and maintenance (Eagles et al., 2002). National Park Service (NPS) (1998) of the United States has 600 profit-oriented concessionaires under contract. New Zealand relies heavily on commercial enterprises for providing visitor services, with 1134 concessionaires, and has seen rapid growth in the number of concession operators (Cessford & Thompson, 2002). Su, Wall, and Eagles (2007) report on the unique public-private partnerships developing in China whereby public park agencies enter into long term contracts with private sector companies, with the agencies taking an equity position in the company as a form of payment. Havitz

(1999) provides details on the contracting of recreation and tourism services within parks and protected areas. These services can be provided through concession contracts, leases, licenses or permits (ANZECC, 1999).

This management model typically shows strong levels of public participation, with the government agency involving the public through public involvement programs and the private companies involving their clients through surveys and market studies. This model shows strong consensus orientation, strong strategic vision and strong responsiveness largely due to its combination of government–private involvement. Financial efficiency is the major reason that government agencies use private companies for many recreation and tourism activities, and thus this model is seen as being highly financially efficient (ANZECC, 1999; Cessford & Thompson, 2002; Havitz, 1999). This model also shows strong effectiveness (ANZECC, 1999). Even though government activities are usually accountable and transparent, the private activities typically are not. The private companies are accountable only to their owners and to the government.

A major criticism of the use of private companies in parks is their low levels of accountability and transparency (Hannah, 2006). Su et al. (2007) report a quite different situation in China where government operations are not transparent, while law requires higher levels of transparency by private corporations. It is expensive for government agencies to constantly monitor private companies to ensure that they fulfill their contract obligations (ANZECC, 1999; Cessford & Thompson, 2002). Since many park agencies have insufficient funds to undertake this monitoring, private companies may operate independently (Eagles et al., 2002). Private companies may lobby politicians to avoid being fully accountable for their contracts with park agencies (Eagles et al., 2002). When there is heavy reliance on profit-making companies to provide many tourism services, equity is lowered due to the needs of those companies to charge fees for full cost recovery plus a profit. This operation usually has strong rule of law. Problems can occur with corruption in contract selection and monitoring (Eagles et al., 2002), but the level of this problem is unknown and probably varies considerably amongst sites and countries.

### ***Public and nonprofit combination model***

In North America, nonprofit organizations in conservation management within parks started in the United States, when the National Park Service first started working with Friends Groups in the 1970s. This approach showed considerable promise and spread widely. By 1998, there were 65 cooperating associations and 150 Friends Groups in U.S. National Parks (NPS, 1998). Parks Canada adopted the concept and encouraged the creation of Friends Groups throughout the national parks and national historic parks of Canada. Ontario Parks (2008) states that “Provincial park co-operating associations, or Friends Groups, are community based, not-for-profit, charitable organizations which work to enhance the interpretive, educational and recreational objectives of the park with which they are associated”. Friends Groups are typically involved in the provision of education programs. Occasionally, they assume a larger role, including the provision of a wide range of recreation and tourism services. These nonprofit groups function within parks under a contract with the park in which they operate. The operation of recreation and tourism services by a nonprofit organization within parks and protected areas is a direct alternative to the operation of recreation and tourism services by a for-profit corporation.

This model has very strong public participation; citizens are able to become intimately involved in many aspects of conservation management. This involvement leads to a consensus orientation, a strong strategic vision and strong responsiveness. This model is

highly financially efficient, largely because of the donations from volunteers. For example, the Friends of Misery Bay constructed a visitor center in Misery Bay Provincial Park in Ontario with donated labor and funds. Effectiveness is strong, as the widespread involvement of interested citizens ensures that goals are successfully fulfilled. Accountability is strong as the checks and balances that occur with widespread public involvement ensure openness and a flow of information. In addition, in Canada, nonprofit organizations must provide government with statements of operation, including audited financial statements, the identity of directors and major activities. Within parks, these statements of the cooperating organizations are often made public; accordingly, transparency is also high. Equity is strong, as it is possible for individuals to obtain access through donation of time rather than money. Nonprofit groups often have special programs to ensure that the underprivileged are provided access to park activities. The rule of law appears to occur, possibly due to the involvement of many citizens and requirements for nonprofit groups to supply government with audited financial statements every year.

In a few cases, parks have been contracted to Friends Groups for overall operation and management, including Misery Bay Nature Reserve in Ontario (FMB, 2008) and Gulf of Georgia Cannery History Site in British Columbia (GGCS, 2008). Presumably in these cases, the nonprofit operation was viewed as having overall governance advantages compared to government agency operation. This advantage is probably due to the financial effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness of nonprofit operation.

### ***Aboriginal and government model***

The management model of Aboriginal ownership of land with government management is increasing in use, typically as a result of the legal recognition of aboriginal land rights. It is a mature exercise in Australia, with Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park (Power, 2002) and Kakadu National Parks (Kakadu Board of Management, 2007) being prime examples. This activity typically involves two major groups: the aboriginal landowners and the government managers. These groups can have major debates over power sharing, as occurred in Kakadu in the late 1980s (Schulz, 1998). In this model with two dominant power blocks, other stakeholders are typically in a weaker position.

This model can have strong public participation with the government partner, but weak public participation with the aboriginal partner because the aboriginal groups are seldom open to full consultation with a broad range of stakeholders (Yamamoto, 1993). Their focus is typically on the park managers, which leads to weak public participation overall. The operation is likewise not a consensus-oriented one because, even if there is a consensus within the aboriginal community about policy, a larger consensus with other stakeholders may not be sought or be possible. The strategic vision varies, depending upon the interaction of the government managers and the aboriginal owners. Governments usually have a solid strategic vision for parks and protected areas, but aboriginal owners may be much more interested in personal benefits than larger societal goals (Yamamoto, 1993). This model has problems with responsiveness to the wider society, because the aboriginal owners are usually strongly oriented towards their own interests and towards influencing the government managers.

Financial efficiency is weak, usually with government funding moving towards the owners. Typically, financial gain by the aboriginal communities has much higher priority than the financial efficiency of the entire operation. The effectiveness of goal fulfillment varies, with some operations showing good levels of implementation, but others having major deficiencies (Hannah, 2006). Accountability means that officials answer to stakeholders

on the disposal of their powers and duties, act on criticisms and accept responsibility for failure. Government managers appear to have much higher standards of accountability than aboriginal communities. This results in overall transparency weakness within the system (Hannah, 2006). Transparency varies, with government openness being higher than the private groups. In recognition of the governance problems in aboriginal communities, there are legal and policy initiatives in Canada to improve aboriginal governments' accountability and transparency (Harper, 2008). Equity is medium, depending upon the ability of this system to provide access to a broad suite of stakeholders. The rule of law also varies with the government managers showing a higher standard than many aboriginal communities.

### ***Traditional community model***

Traditional community ownership and land management for conservation is a rapidly developing approach (Borrini-Feyerabend, Kothari, & Oviedo, 2004), and is under extensive experimentation in Africa. An environmental nongovernment organization, the Nature Conservation Research Centre based in Accra, Ghana, has helped establish 19 community-protected areas in Ghana (J. Mason, personal communication, 2007). This approach is used as an alternative to the national park model in Africa (J. Mason, personal communication, 2007). It is designed to avoid the negative social impacts of community displacement, poverty and conflict, which occur when local communities are removed from the land for the creation of national parks (West, Igoe, & Brockington, 2006). This model has many similarities to the ecolodge model, with private land ownership, land management and tourism services. This management model is under development and the literature on governance is small. As a result, the analysis is the most speculative of all the models discussed.

This model shows very weak levels of societal consultation, largely due to its private nature. It shows medium degrees of consensus, with high consensus within the local communities, but little attention made to other stakeholders (J. Mason, personal communication, 2007; Hannah, 2006). The strategic vision is weak, with conservation actions typically being opportunistic. Responsiveness is very strong because the community must address the tourism market if the model is to function. Initial indications are that financial efficiency is strong, for the same reasons expressed for nonprofit operations (J. Mason, personal communication, 2007). There is abundant volunteer effort and cooperation. Effectiveness is medium, with weakness in the expression of strategic goals and thus an inability to assess if these goals were fulfilled (Hannah, 2006). Accountability is weak, as so often occurs in rural and aboriginal communities (J. Mason, personal communication, 2007; Hannah, 2006). Transparency is also weak (J. Mason, personal communication, 2007; Hannah, 2006). Equity appears to be strong, with widespread community involvement and a desire to involve the large society. The rule of law is often weak, especially surrounding the management of money. Recognizing this fact, in Ghana the Nature Conservation Research Centre attempts to ensure transparency in decision-making and in the handling of money so that all community members can have sufficient information to enforce the rule of law (J. Mason, personal communication, 2007).

### **Comparisons amongst management models**

The description provided above is summarized and analyzed in Table 3. When summed, larger numbers on Table 3 indicate a higher degree of compliance with the governance criteria. Therefore, larger numbers indicate good governance, while smaller numbers indicate

Table 3. Comparison of models according to governance criteria.

Model	Public participation	Consensus orientation	Strategic vision	Responsiveness	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Accountability	Transparency	Equity	Rule of law	Total
National park	5	4	5	2	2	4	2	2	5	4	35
Parastatal	5	4	5	4	5	4	2	2	2	4	35
Nonprofit	5	5	3	5	4	4	3	3	4	4	40
Ecology	1	1	5	5	5	4	2	2	1	3	29
Public and for-profit combo	4	4	4	4	5	4	2	2	2	4	35
Public and nonprofit combo	5	4	4	4	5	4	3	4	4	4	41
Aboriginal and government	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	23
Traditional community	4	3	2	5	4	2	2	2	4	2	30
Total	31	27	31	31	32	28	18	19	25	28	

Notes: 5 = very strong; 4 = strong; 3 = medium; 2 = weak; 1 = very weak.

poor governance. If all criteria were ranked very strong, the total score on the 10 criteria would be 50. If all were ranked very weak, the total score would be 10. Therefore, the range of scores is between 10 and 50. The actual total scores range from 23 to 41, with a mean of 33.5. This wide range of scores indicates that there are important differences in levels of good governance amongst the management models.

The highest ranked model is the *public, nonprofit combination model*, with a score of 41 out of 50. This model ranked as strong or very strong in every criterion, except for transparency, where it was given a medium score. This high ranking suggests that, according to standard governance criteria, the combination of government ownership of the resources and nonprofit management comes close to the ideals of good governance. The *nonprofit model* also scored very high at 40.

The lowest ranked model is the *aboriginal and government model*, with a score of 23 out of 50. This model received weak or medium scores for all criteria. The aboriginal and local community models scored below average because these models function much like private, profit-making activities. The local communities were similar to private corporations, with self-centered objectives and a lack of openness to broad consultation amongst a wide range of stakeholders. The aboriginal and local communities may see themselves as being highly consultative, but their consultation is restricted to a small, exclusive group. All of the models that had high levels of private, profit-making activity scored low, indicating a tendency towards poor governance.

The medium-ranked models, all with 35 out of 50, included the *national park model*, the *parastatal model* and the *public for-profit model*. The fact that these three models are probably the most frequently used approaches suggests that the assumption underlying the analytical approach of equality in criteria importance may not be valid. It is probable that in practice some of the criteria are given higher importance than others. The most used models may not show the strongest governance, but are probably extensively used due to historical and cultural preferences.

### Comparison amongst governance criteria

The criteria that were most evident across all of the models were, in order: efficiency (32), public participation (31), strategic vision (31) and responsiveness (31) (Table 3). This order suggests that these four criteria are given the most emphasis by society in the governance of conservation management. The criteria receiving the least attention were, in order: accountability (18) and transparency (19). This suggests they are given much lower importance in the field of conservation management.

The differences in importance amongst the governance criteria reveals that society does not assign each criterion equal importance, resulting in different levels of fulfillment of those criteria in practice. It also suggests the financial efficiency may be the highest-valued governance criterion.

### Conclusions

This paper applies 10 governance criteria (Graham et al., 2003; UNDP, 1997) to eight commonly used management models for visitor and tourism management in parks and protected areas (Eagles, 2008). This analysis reveals the implications of governance for partnerships amongst government agencies, profit-making companies, nonprofit organizations and communities. Applying these criteria shows that management models with nonprofit public involvement are closer to the ideals of good governance than the models with for-profit

private involvement. This is not surprising. Nonprofit operation typically involves higher degrees of public participation, consensus orientation, accountability, transparency and equity, than occurs with for-profit operations.

This analysis assumes that all criteria are equal. In practice, this assumption is probably not valid. Financial effectiveness and equity may be the two highest valued criteria by society. If these two were given more weight than the other criteria in a numerical analysis, then different orders of ranking would occur.

In wealthy locales, with a public that accepts the principle of paying higher taxes in order to gain equity in public services, the *national park model* prevails. All of Scandinavia fits into this situation. Conversely, in countries where the ability of government to use tax income for conservation is restricted, the *parastatal model* or the *public for-profit model* predominates. Most of Africa fits into this situation. This indicates that financial efficiency may be a pivotal criterion, one that underlies all the others. Unless one has financial efficiency, the fulfillment of the other criteria is problematic.

Financial efficiency is the major weakness of government management in parks and protected areas. Centralized budgets approved well ahead of service delivery are notoriously incapable of responding to ongoing change in tourism demand. The inability to function like a business places a huge burden on park managers. This financial deficiency is one major reason why alternative approaches are so often utilized, for example, the use of the parastatal model, the use of profit-making companies and the use of nonprofit organizations (Crompton, 1999; Moos, 2002; Mulholland & Eagles, 2002; Ontario Parks, 1995).

This initial review can be considered to be simplistic since it attempts to take into account both the upper and lower tiers of administration simultaneously. For example, the macro-scale of governance involves upper tier governments and the broader society. Good governance has to occur at the upper tier before it can reasonably be expected to exist at the lower levels: individual parks and protected areas. Therefore, one could not expect good governance at any one site if the country is managed inappropriately. It might be reasonable to think about nested concepts of governance, depending on the scale, involving national, regional and local levels.

Governance of natural resources management is influenced by the benefits received by different sectors of society. The UNDP–WCPA model used as the basis for this paper may not fully address the issue of the distribution of benefits and costs from conservation. Some people maintain that local aboriginal people pay a disproportionately large amount because of their loss of the traditional use of resources and often their low level of access to the flow of benefits that occur when some forms of protected area are established (West et al., 2006). Can one have good governance when one or more groups feel they are not obtaining a sufficient amount of resources? Can governance approaches differentially reward certain groups and still be considered to be equitable?

This is a first attempt at evaluating the eight most-used management models through the lens of governance criteria. A next step for research would be to seek a broader set of opinions on the contentious issue of criterion fulfillment with each model. A further step would be to develop normative standards for each of the five levels of governance criteria. Such standards could then be used to evaluate governance using standard approaches in virtually every situation. In addition, standards could assist policy planners in the development of management approaches that better fulfill criteria for good governance.

It might be necessary to look at the application of each of the governance criteria in different aspects of management. For example, one might look at equity for each aspect of national park management. One could think of equity with regards to access to resources, equity in pricing and equity in access to services. Would an overall equity score be an

average of these three? This analysis has also revealed that the number of partnerships varies within the eight management models discussed. The national parks model may involve a very large number of partnerships, while the ecolodge approach may involve very few. One could conceive a complex analytical approach where the governance criteria are applied independently to each of the partners in complex situations involving many actors.

More work in this area of research is necessary. Hopefully, this paper provides an approach that helps remove and clarify some of the polemic arguments that now cloud understanding of governance in the recreation and tourism management of parks and protected areas. The paper's analytical approach may enable further objective analysis of governance of the many management approaches that now occur in partnerships in parks and protected areas.

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### Notes on contributor/s

Paul F.J. Eagles is a Canadian professional planner and Professor, specializing in environmental planning. Over a span of 35 years he has been involved in a wide variety of planning projects, with a strong emphasis on the planning and management of parks and protected areas. He has undertaken international work in nature-based tourism, with experience in over 25 countries.

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