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Non-government organization members' perceptions of governance: a comparison between Ontario and British Columbia provincial parks management models

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This paper compares perspectives on the governance of the management models employed by two of Canada's largest provincial park systems, from the viewpoint of non-governmental organization members (NGOs) with an interest in protected areas. The two models are the parastatal model of Ontario (ON) Provincial Parks and the public and for-profit combination model of British Columbia (BC) Provincial Parks. Governance was evaluated using a computerized survey based on the 10 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) criteria of governance: accountability, consensus-orientation, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, public participation, responsiveness, rule of law, strategic vision and transparency. As part of a larger project, the survey was administered to members of NGOs with an interest in either of the two park systems. This was done in 2008 for British Columbia Parks and in 2009 for Ontario Parks. Analysis suggested that the 10 governance criteria might form 11 governance factors. Data suggest statistically significant differences in perception between NGOs in Ontario and British Columbia Park. Specifically, members of NGOs in Ontario had positive views and ranked all 11 governance factors closer toward good governance. Members of NGOs in British Columbia ranked 8 of 11 factors negatively, toward weak governance. This is the first study of this type where members of NGOs with an interest in either Ontario or British Columbia Parks voiced their opinion of governance within a systematic survey framework on the management models of the park systems with which they are involved. The research demonstrates that members of NGOs in Ontario have many more positive scores for the governance of the parastatal model than those in British Columbia have for the public for-profit model. We conclude that this difference is due to two factors: the management model used and the institutional relationships between the park systems and the associated NGOs.

Keywords: governance; management; NGOs; parks; protected areas; Ontario; British Columbia; provincial parks

Cette recherche compare la perception de la gestion de ces parcs provinciaux d'ont le premier est un modèle parapublic de l'Ontario (ON) et le deuxième est une approche mix (public et / lucratif) de la Colombie-Britannique (BC) par des membres d'organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) de ces deux provinces. La gouvernance de ces parcs a été évaluée à l'aide d'un sondage informatisé basé sur les critères suivant de la gouvernance: la responsabilité, l'orientation consensus, l'efficacité, l'efficience,

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l'équité, la participation du public, la réactivité, la primauté du droit, la vision stratégique et la transparence. Deux sondages un en 2008 en Colombie-Britannique Parcs et l'autre en 2009 en Ontario démontre comment les 10 critères de gouvernance sont perçus. La recherche démontre que les membres des ONG ontariennes ont des scores beaucoup plus positifs envers la gouvernance de parcs provinciaux de cette province que ceux de l'organisme parapublic de la Colombie-Britannique. Il s'agit de la première étude de ce type où les membres d'ONG ayant un intérêt dans l'Ontario ou de la Colombie-Britannique ont exprimé leurs opinions sur la gouvernance au sein d'un cadre d'enquête systématique sur les modèles de gestion. En conclusion nous notons que cette différence sont à cause de deux facteurs: le modèle de gestion utilisé, et les relations institutionnelles entre les systèmes parc et les ONG associées.

Mots-clés: gouvernance; gestion; ONG; parcs provinciaux; aires protégées; Ontario; Colombie-Britannique

Introduction

There are many approaches to the management of protected areas (Eagles, 2008). Variations in management approaches have stimulated discussion among scholars, policy makers and citizens on the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. Buteau-Duitschaever (2009), Eagles (2008, 2009), Eagles, Havitz, McCutcheon, Buteau-Duitschaever, and Glover (2010), Hannah (2006), McCutcheon (2009) and Buteau-Duitschaever, McCutcheon, Eagles, Havitz, and Glover (2010) demonstrated that the concept of governance may provide insight into the issue.

In this research, governance is defined as the process where the government and other social organizations interact and relate with the public and where decisions are made (Graham, Amos, & Plumtre, 2003). Governance involves decision-making and the processes of decision implementation. Governance in various private sector agencies typically focuses on performance, effectiveness, efficiency and direction, to achieve financial goals and to remain competitive (Crompton & Lamb, 1986). The public sector, which is responsible for the provision of public goods and essential services, follows similar governance principles as the private sector, but places less emphasis on financial goals and competitiveness, and more emphasis on public participation, consensus orientation, strategic vision, responsiveness, transparency, equity and rule of law (Bovaird, 2005). According to Dearden, Bennett, and Johnston (2005) and Eagles et al. (2010), having good governance is of vital importance for successfully achieving the dual mandate of conservation and recreation within parks and protected areas. Despite the increased effort to develop and implement effective management processes, many authors such as Buteau-Duitschaever (2009), Eagles et al. (2010), Hannah (2006), Hanna, Clark, and Slocombe (2008), Hockings (2003), Hockings, Leverington, and James (2006a), Hockings, Stolton, & Dudley (2000) and Hockings, Stolton, Leverington, Dudley, and Courrau (2006b) identified a lack of literature that is specifically focused on protected area governance. Research that is focused on examining governance approaches can provide managers and other stakeholders of parks and protected areas with a better understanding of the strength and weaknesses of the management models employed. Ultimately, these analyses will provide insight into governance systems for each applied management model for parks and protected areas.

Selin and Chavez (1995) defined a stakeholder as an individual, group or organization that has an interest in either a particular resource or a topic. Eagles, McCool, and Haynes (2002) noted that there are many stakeholder groups within the context of parks and protected areas. Of these groups, non-government-organizations (NGOs) are a powerful and

influential stakeholder in the development, planning and management of protected areas. Kamat (2004) argued that NGOs can be a primary catalyst for change, sometimes replacing large bureaucratic institutions (including the government) in policy development for parks and protected areas. Jasanoff (1997) states that the term NGO can be applied to a large range of environmental actors from small grassroots organizations to well-funded multinational organizations.

Non-government organizations and protected areas governance

Public management of protected areas underwent a fundamental shift within the last 30 years (Jasanoff, 1997; World Commission on Protected Areas [WCPA], 2003). Many government agencies developed new forms of management along with an increase in civil society partnerships to help meet modern government challenges. Traditional, top-down institutional processes became more marginal, while new processes and institutions, often non-governmental, became more central to public policy (Kettl, 2000). Because of the past ineffectiveness of the authoritarian styles of government, civil society organizations, such as NGOs, rose as qualified agents to help define and implement policies and programs that are of direct concern to them (Edgar, Marshall, & Bassett, 2006; Jasanoff, 1997; WCPA, 2003). Engaging civil society can increase the legitimacy of a democratic government. This in turn leads to governments that are increasingly recognizing that civil society can be the most effective actor when dealing with public policy and programs (Bovaird, 2005; Edgar et al., 2006; Kettl, 2000). As a result, present public governance systems exist because both civil society and government realized the importance of partnering to have management systems that are more efficient and function better. This provides the government and its various sectors, agencies, programs and services with the ability to better fulfill their missions, visions, goals and objectives. Governance processes organize this complicated management mix between civil society and the government, allowing the fulfillment of public processes and agendas.

The role of environmental and recreational NGOs in protected areas has increased in the last 30 years and has varied. NGOs can act on the delegation of the national government; provide technical data to the government; and influence the government by providing or withholding monetary support or services. NGOs can manage protected areas independently or through co-management arrangements with the state (e.g. Audubon Society's park management in Belize); and NGOs can provide valuable services, such as visitor services in lieu of the state (e.g. Friends Groups in many national parks in Canada) (Borrini-Feyerabend, Jonston, & Pansky, 2006). NGOs have the ability to respond to grassroots needs, and they can provide services and products that parks cannot, because of a lack of finances, staffing or expertise. In addition, NGOs have the ability to receive donations on behalf of parks (Balgos, 2005; Fisher, 1997). McNeely, Lockwood, and Chapman (2006) and Eagles (2008) argue that one of the most effective roles that environmental NGOs play in protected area management is their ability to obtain donations for protected areas from the public. Many NGOs collect these funds from visitors to protected areas and then use these funds for protected area management. Eagles (2008) states it is common for parks agencies to cooperate with non-government organizations in the provision or sharing of a service or an operation. Such NGOs, typically named Friends Organizations, are common in the USA, Canada and England. Typically, these groups provide visitor and education services; and in Canada, may provide rental, food and guiding services (Eagles, 2008). Eagles argues that a park or protected areas agency will frequently cooperate with NGOs in the provision of tourism services when the agency is restricted from providing

(1998), NGOs can potentially influence the government in two ways. First, they can enhance the responsiveness level of the government by collecting and expressing the wishes and thoughts of the public through multiple forms of association and communication. Second, NGOs can safeguard the public's trust by limiting the ability of the government to impose arbitrary policies. Understating the manner in which NGO organizations perceive governance within protected area management models can contribute to the wider literature on the influences, impacts and roles of NGOs within protected area management.

Evaluative governance framework

Many different governance approaches can be employed to manage protected areas and park agencies. Eagles (2008); Glover and Burton (1998); Graham et al. (2003) and More (2005) discuss various typologies of institutional arrangements that underlie governance approaches for protected area management. Graham et al. (2003) provide a novel treatment of governance by restructuring 10 criteria of good governance identified by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 1997) into five principles of sound governance for parks and protected areas (see Table 1). Edgar et al. (2006) argue that the principles of

Table 1. Principles of sound governance.

Principles ^a	The United Nations Development Program criteria for good governance ^b	
Legitimacy and voice	Public participation	All people should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests
	Consensus orientation	The ability to mediate differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group
Direction	Strategic vision	Looking constructively toward the future, with consideration of the historical, cultural and social complexities of each situation
Performance	Responsiveness	When institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders using a proactive manner toward complaints and criticism
	Effectiveness	The capacity to realize organizational objectives
	Efficiency	Making the best use of resources or having the capability of acting or producing effectively with a minimum amount or quantity of waste, expense or effort
Accountability	Accountability	When officials answer to stakeholders on the disposal of their owners and duties, act on criticisms or requirements made of them and accept responsibility for failure, incompetence or deceit
	Transparency	Sharing of information and acting in an open manner
Fairness	Equity	Just treatment; requiring that similar cases are treated in similar ways
	Rule of Law	Legal frameworks being fair and enforced impartially

Source: ^aGraham et al. (2003); ^bUNDP (1997).

sound governance of UNDP and Graham *et al.* can be used as a tool to evaluate governance within partnership agreements. Understanding the manner in which these principles are represented within the management practices of parks and protected areas and how partners view governance arrangements within a specific situation is important because it can lead to improved governance, reinforcing the need for current research in this area.

Although the principles of good governance of Graham *et al.* (2003) were used to evaluate private protected areas in Canada by Hannah (2006), research by Buteau-Duitschaever (2009); Eagles (2009); Eagles *et al.* (2010); McCutcheon (2009) and Buteau-Duitschaever *et al.* (2010) demonstrated that each of the 10 UNDP principles are distinct concepts and should not be grouped under the five principles of good governance suggested by Graham *et al.* This research adopts the approach of using the 10 UNDP principles, not that of Graham *et al.*

Eagles (2009) provides a theoretical evaluation of the eight most common management models for parks and protected areas using the 10 UNDP governance principles. Of the eight management models discussed, this paper focuses on understanding and comparing governance from the viewpoint of NGO members, for the management approaches adopted by the largest provincial park systems within Canada: the *parastatal model* used by Ontario Parks and the *public and for-profit combination model* used by British Columbia Parks. Under the parastatal model, government has ownership of resources, the majority of funding is derived from user fees and a government-owned agency or a government-owned corporation acts as manager. A parastatal is an independent corporate body that functions within the government; it has the ability to make its own policy; it maintains its own internal financial operations; it has control over internal reporting and decision making; and has a board of directors providing oversight and ensuring accountability (Child *et al.*, 2004; Eagles, 2002, 2009). The public and for-profit combination model has government ownership of the resources; funding is derived through societal taxes and user fees and is managed by both a government agency and a private, for-profit corporation (Eagles, 2008, 2009). Taxes provide for natural and cultural resource management, while user fees principally support tourism and visitor services. However, according to Eagles (2008), the two sources of income often fund both resource and tourism management. These two management models are widely used and an evaluation of their attributes can assist in providing a new understanding of their comparative advantages.

Emergence of management models

Until the early 1980s, both Ontario Parks and British Columbia Parks functioned under *the National Park Model* (Forum, 2008; Killan, 1993), with the government owning and managing the resources and receiving the majority of funding from societal taxes raised by the government (Eagles, 2008). Economic stagnation in the mid-1970s resulted in budgetary restraints at all levels of government in Canada, which forced Ontario Parks and British Columbia Parks to adopt market mechanisms, namely, outsourcing the production of specific public services to the commercial sector (Killan). A culture of privatization within the province of British Columbia (Milne, 1990) led British Columbia Parks to outsource the operations and management of all front-country parks to private operators by 1989 (FORUM Consulting Group Ltd., 2008). Ontario also experimented with the outsourcing of entire parks to private management in the 1980s, but withdrew from these management practices due to public criticism. Ontario suffered another, albeit smaller, economic recession in the early 1990s, leading to government funding cutbacks that ultimately affected Ontario Provincial Parks (Halpeny, 2007; Ministry of Natural Resources [MNR],

1996; Moos, 2002). The decrease in government funding and the increase in park area and park visitors led to a strategic management review of the Ontario Parks program in 1993. This review recommended the establishment of a unified parks organization, emphasizing the need for stronger entrepreneurial focus and greater financial flexibility. From the 1993 strategic management review, Parks Ontario was created in 1996 (MNR, 1996; Moos, 2002; Parks Ontario Transition Advisory Team, 1995). Although the new management model of Ontario Parks rejected the private-for-profit management of entire parks and adopted the parastatal model, British Columbia Parks retained its public and for-profit model. These changes are further discussed below.

Ontario Parks

In 1995, the provincial government of Ontario approved the new business model for the protection and management of Ontario Parks (MNR, 1996; Moos, 2002). Under this management model, Ontario Parks follows business practices to develop and provide a wider range of services to visitors, to generate revenue through the provision of these services and to use government grants more efficiently and effectively (Parks Ontario Transition Advisory Team, 1995). This business model adopted by Ontario Parks had a goal of obtaining higher levels of cost recovery through tourism. In so doing, Ontario Parks was able to retain all income derived from visitor fees, grants and donations (MNR, 1996). With these changes, the cost recovery derived from tourism fees and charges increased from 30% to 80% of the total parks budget, with the Provincial Government providing the remaining 20% of operating funds (Environmental Commissioner of Ontario [ECO], 2008). This heavy reliance on visitor-derived revenue demands high levels of financial efficiency within Ontario Parks. Given the reliance on visitor-generated income for budgetary purposes, Ontario Parks has one of the highest park user fees of all provincial park systems in Canada.

Ontario Parks has a long-standing, positive relationship with various environmental NGO organizations across Ontario (Killan, 1993; Ontario Parks, 2010). In recent years, Ontario Parks worked closely with Friends organizations in the delivery of visitor services, with 27 such organizations featured on the park agency Web site (Ontario Parks, 2011). These Friends groups are involved in events and activities such as operating visitor centers, publishing maps and books, fundraising for the parks and supporting research projects (Friends of Ontario Parks, 2007). Bruce van Staaldunen, manager of operations for Ontario Parks (personal communication, 19 July 2007), noted that Friends groups donate approximately 10–15% of their annual revenue to the park with which they are associated, while others such as Algonquin Provincial Park, receive 25–30% of the associated Friends' group revenue. Over the first 25 years of operation by this NGO in Algonquin Park, the Friends group was increasingly involved in the education program. By the end of this period, the Friends groups funded 66% of the total cost of providing interpretive services in the park, including staff salaries, facilities and publications (Friends of Algonquin Park, 2008). The various Friends groups located throughout Ontario have a mutual interest with Ontario Provincial Parks in insuring the successful operations of the parks they are associated with. The Friends groups are prohibited from lobbying the government according to their contractual arrangements with individual parks. However, they are extensively involved in park operations and, as a result, have daily contact with the management of various parks, which facilitates active communication. Other NGOs, such as Ontario Nature, the Wildlands League and the Wilderness Canoe Association, work proactively by lobbying for changes in government policy and laws that affect the planning and management of provincial parks.

British Columbia Parks

In the early 1980s, the British Columbia government began to transfer front-country visitor services in provincial parks to for-profit companies (Cavers, 2004). By 1989, private contractors, known as Park Facility Operators (PFOs), managed all front-country visitor services (FORUM Consulting Group Ltd., 2008). In 2007–2008, British Columbia Parks had 220 contracts with 37 private contractors (British Columbia Parks, 2008a). British Columbia Parks' employees focus their efforts on the ecological and resource management of the parks and on the monitoring of private contractors.

British Columbia Parks sets fees for all the parks, which the PFOs collect. If the fee revenues for the PFOs are less than the agreed-upon operating costs, British Columbia Parks makes up the deficit through deficiency payments, enabling PFOs to operate a financially viable business (FORUM Consulting Group Ltd., 2008; McCutcheon, 2009). Although the public and for-profit combination model is typically designed to reduce dependence on government funding, using publicly available financial data, it appears that for the fiscal year 2007/2008, approximately 80% of funding for British Columbia Parks was provided from societal taxes while only 20% was provided through user fees (British Columbia Parks, 2008b). However, this accounting does not take into account the visitor use fees collected and retained by the PFOs because the extent of this activity is not publicly available.

Many NGO organizations within British Columbia have an interest in British Columbia Parks, for example, The Western Wilderness Committee; British Columbia Nature; and the Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia, which is an umbrella organization representing 24 organizations. Unlike Ontario, NGO relations with British Columbia Parks tend to be more confrontational and reactive to government initiatives (McCutcheon, 2009). McCutcheon argues that this gap between NGOs and the government can be attributed to the high degree of political dominance within protected area management since 2001, which places value on efficiency and effectiveness, but simultaneously lowers public participation, accountability and transparency. British Columbia Parks has a small program for encouraging Friends groups to operate in the provincial parks, with seven such groups featured on the park agency Web site (British Columbia Parks, 2011). The Friends group effort of British Columbia Parks is much smaller than that in Ontario.

Purpose of this research

The purpose of this research is to compare the opinions of NGO members on the governance of two different management approaches (the parastatal model and the public and for-profit combination model), as occurs within Canada's two most prominent provincial park agencies, by soliciting the opinions of NGO members on the application of standard governance criteria within those agencies.

Method

Survey instrument and recruitment

A research instrument was developed to measure the attitudes of respondents toward the governance of the park management models. The 10 governance criteria, as identified by the UNDP, served as the framework for the survey. Through an extensive literature review, over 200 potential statements were identified (see Table 2). A pretest by 37 students of the governance survey provided input regarding the layout, comprehensibility and duration of

Table 2. Origins of the governance survey statements.

Criteria for good governance	References
Public participation	Charmley and Engelbert (2005); Rowe, Marsh, and Frewer (2004); Wang (2001)
Consensus orientation	DeHoog, Lowery, and Lyons (1990); Hornsby, Smith, and Gupta (1994); Jones (1986)
Accountability	Kluvers (2003); Schacter (2005); Wang (2002)
Transparency	Bellver and Kaufman (2005); Bladescu, de Las Casas, and Lloyd (2005); Drew and Nyerges (2004)
Responsiveness	Glaser and Hildreth (1999); Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988)
Effectiveness	Crompton and Lamb (1986); Petrick (2002); Vigoda (2000)
Efficiency	Howat, Absher, Crilley, and Milne (2003); MacKay and Crompton (1990); Shneider, Parkington, and Buxton (1980)
Equity	Brewer and Selden (2000); Joshi (1989); Kacmar and Ferris (1991)
Rule of law	Fraerich (1993); Rowe et al. (2004); Stolton, Hockings, Dudley, MacKinnon, and Whitten (2003)
Strategic vision	Graham et al. (2003); IUCN (2008)

time needed to complete the survey. Through discussions, a final list of 81 statements was utilized to measure the 10 governance criteria.

For each of these 10 governance criteria, the researchers prepared five to nine declarative statements. Respondents reacted to each statement using a five-point Likert scale: “strongly agree” (1); “agree” (2); “neutral” (3); “disagree” (4); and “strongly disagree” (5). The “Do Not Know” category was added as an option for participants who did not know the answer to a question, and “Not Applicable” was available for statements that were not applicable to a respondent.

Participants completed the survey from the viewpoint of their most familiar operating park and most familiar service area. The survey asked the respondent to “complete the survey that corresponds to the provincial park with which you have been most involved in the previous 12 months.” To choose this park, they were presented with a drop-down list of park names. Once the park was chosen, this name then automatically populated the statements further on in the survey. They were then asked to choose from a list of contexts with which they were most familiar, including park services, such as campgrounds, interpretive programs, visitor centers, and soon, and park management areas, such as park administration, park management plans and so on. Once these were chosen, the options then populated each of the declarative statements later in the survey, as shown in Table 3. For example, in Table 3, the statement “park x” was replaced by the name of the chosen park and the statement “service category” was replaced by the chosen service category, such as the campground, visitor center and so on. This approach reminded the respondents, throughout the survey, of the park and the service category they had chosen earlier.

There were two main management service area categories: (1) Park Services and (2) Park Administration and Management (see Table 4). Researchers felt that asking participants to select the park and management areas they were most familiar with would allow participants to place each item within the context of their own personal experience. The analysis for this paper only includes responses to statements from the viewpoint of the first management service area chosen by the respondent. For this analysis, all the responses were pooled from both management service areas.

The survey was administered electronically. Information on the perception of the 10 governance criteria was collected from five distinct stakeholder groups within both

Table 3. Examples of government statements.

Governance criteria	Example of statement
Responsiveness	Park [Service Category] seriously responds to public criticism.
Effectiveness	Park [X] services are of excellent quality.
Equity	At park, [Service Category] users receive fair and equal treatment.
Efficiency	[Service Category] provides value for the user fees they charge.
Public participation	Those who wanted to contribute to the public participation process at [Park x] had that opportunity.
Consensus orientation	The decision-making process allows for adequate group interaction.
Transparency	The contracting policies are transparent.
Rule of law	[Park] complies with the letter of the law.
Accountability	At [Park], I am kept informed about major expenditures.
Strategic vision	[Park]'s planning and management fulfills strategic vision outlined in the box at the top of this page (A definition of strategic vision was provided).

Table 4. Park management service areas listed on the survey.

Park services	Park administration and management
Campgrounds	Park administration
Children's camps	Park staff
Education programs	Park management plan
Equipment rentals	Park police
Food services	Park policy issues (please specify):
Gift shops	Other (please specify context):
Interpretive programs	
Resorts or lodges	
Visitor interpretive center	
Other (please specify):	

Ontario and British Columbia. These stakeholder groups consisted of (1) park staff; (2) visitors; (3) contractors working within a park; (4) the NGOs involved with or having an interest in provincial parks; and (5) nearby residents of the provincial parks. Each respondent self-declared his/her stakeholder group. This paper focuses on the results attained from members of NGOs but in recognition of the sample size factor, analyses were conducted using the full sample and comparisons made with the NGO subset.

The British Columbia survey was administered over a 3-month period from 1 July to 1 October 2008. Respondents were obtained by recruitment through the participation of the key environmental and recreation-focused NGOs in British Columbia. Contacts were made with NGOs that represent the spectrum of vested interests outlined in Figure 1. The NGOs emailed their members to invite them to participate in the survey. Interested participants were required to send an email with the title "BC Parks Governance Survey" to the researchers. On receipt of the email, participants received a unique electronic survey link. This process allowed the researchers to monitor and control survey distribution to the target groups.

Recruitment of survey participants within Ontario took place over a 3-month period, from 11 March 2009 to 11 May 2009. Respondents were obtained by recruitment through the participation of key environmental and recreation-focused NGOs. NGOs emailed their members to invite them to participate in the survey and directed their focus to a Web page that allowed participants to sign up individually. People who decided to participate emailed

the researchers for access to an address that granted access to the survey. As NGOs did not provide the researchers with their email lists, the size of the populations on those lists is unknown.

Results

Of the surveys collected, 24 were completed by NGO members in Ontario and 30 were completed by NGO members in British Columbia. Because of personal contact with senior NGO officials, the researchers noted that most of the responses obtained in both provinces were from upper-level management and policy makers within the various NGO organizations. Some NGO organizations were not interested in this study and did not advertise the survey to their constituents, prohibiting their involvement. This restricted NGO involvement in Ontario to the environmental conservation and low-impact recreation groups, including several Friends Groups.

Previous work published from the park governance project suggested that items measuring eight of the 10 governance facets held together well (components analysis) and were reliable at conventional standards (e.g. Buteau-Duitschaever et al., 2010; Eagles et al., 2010; Eagles, Buteau-Duitschaever, McCutcheon, Havitz, & Glover, 2011). However, two of the 10 facets split into several intuitively appealing fragments. The smaller of those fragments included just two items apiece and had moderate to low reliability scores (see Table 5). The first, second and fourth columns (numbers in parentheses excepted) speak to those findings. They are based on analyses of the full study sample. When reading the present manuscript, reviewers made a compelling case that, given the small sample of NGO respondents ($n = 54$), it might have been preferable to forego components analysis and simply report internal consistency scores for the 10 originally described governance criteria. Though we chose not to go entirely down that path in deference to previously published work, internal consistency scores for the original 10 criteria are included, for comparative purposes, in column three of Table 5. Those scores indicate that measurement

Table 5. Components and reliability analyses for full and present sample.

Governance criteria	Number of items ^a	Variance explained (%)	Reliability coefficient alpha (α)	
			Full sample	NGO sample
Responsiveness	8	69.79	0.94	0.95
Effectiveness	6	66.78	0.90	0.88
Equity	(9)	67.10	0.86	0.92
Fairness	7	47.61	0.90	—
Finance	2	19.49	0.71	—
Efficiency	(5)	66.44	0.73	0.62
Financial	3	40.29	0.82	—
Employee	2	26.15	0.51	—
Public participation	7	68.24	0.92	0.89
Consensus orientation	4	76.73	0.90	0.76
Transparency	8	74.13	0.95	0.95
Rule of law	6	69.74	0.91	0.91
Accountability	7	71.94	0.93	0.89
Strategic vision	4	81.11	0.92	0.96

Note: ^aNumbers in parentheses represent the accompanying full set of items for facets that were split based on components analyses of the full sample.

of the 10 governance facets is reliable at or above conventional standards in the context of the NGO sample.

Sample description

In total, researchers obtained 54 completed surveys, 30 (55.6%) from British Columbia NGOs and 24 (44.4%) from Ontario NGOs. Both populations were almost equally divided between male (British Columbia $n = 15$, 50%; Ontario $n = 12$, 50%) and female (British Columbia: $n = 14$, 47%; Ontario: $n = 12$, 50%). NGO members in both Ontario and British Columbia were well-educated and all held either a college diploma or a university degree. The majority of NGO members in British Columbia selected contexts within the Parks Services Category ($n = 16$, 53%) and the Park Administration and Management Category ($n = 14$, 47%) while the majority in Ontario selected contexts within the Parks Service Category ($n = 17$, 70.1%). The majority of NGO members in British Columbia reported spending an average of 21 days or less on what they considered their primary park within the last 12 months while in Ontario, they reported spending 28 days or less. This long time of stay in the parks revealed that most NGO members were highly committed to park use, with many probably being volunteers or paid employees of park-related NGOs.

Governance factor rankings

All items within each of the 11 governance factors were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from -1 (strongly agree with the statement) to 1 (strongly disagree with the statement). A score of 3 indicates a neutral perception of the statement. As a result, a score toward weak governance (3 to 5) indicates negative perceptions of governance, while a score toward good governance (1 to 3) indicates positive perceptions of governance. The wording of items allowed agreement with the statement to represent good governance and disagreement with the statement to represent weak governance.

Results indicate that British Columbia NGO members had positive perceptions (scores between 1 and 3) for three governance factors: Equity-Fairness ($M = 2.69$); Public Participation ($M = 2.88$); and Effectiveness ($M = 2.96$). British Columbia NGO members had negative perceptions (between 3 and 5) for eight governance factors: Transparency ($M = 3.04$); Responsiveness ($M = 3.04$); Efficiency-Financial Value ($M = 3.09$); Strategic Vision ($M = 3.16$); Consensus Orientation ($M = 3.27$); Accountability ($M = 3.31$); Rule of Law ($M = 3.37$); Equity-Finance ($M = 0.48$); and Equity Finance ($M = 3.81$).

The results differed in Ontario where NGO members had positive perceptions (scores between 1 and 3) for all governance factors: Equity-Fairness ($M = 2.12$); Efficiency-Financial Value ($M = 2.19$); Responsiveness ($M = 2.21$); Effectiveness ($M = 2.30$); Rule of Law ($M = 2.36$); Strategic Vision ($M = 2.42$); Accountability ($M = 2.45$); Public Participation ($M = 2.46$); Transparency ($M = 2.51$); Consensus Orientation ($M = 2.58$); and, Equity-Finance ($M = 2.95$) (see Table 6). In both provinces, NGO members provided the most positive ranking for good governance to the governance factor Equity-Fairness, while both provided the lowest ranking to Equity-Finance.

NGO members in both provinces had the highest level of disagreement for the governance factor Strategic Vision (British Columbia: $SD = 1.07$; Ontario: $SD = 1.16$). Both British Columbia ($SD = 0.70$) and Ontario ($SD = 0.79$) members had the highest level of agreement for the governance factor Transparency.

As previously mentioned, the research instrument allowed participants to select the options of "Not Applicable" or "Do not know" when answering items. Both British

Table 6. A comparison of British Columbia (BC) and Ontario (ON) Park NGOs for 11 governance factors.

Governance factors	British Columbia			Ontario			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	Mean ^a	SD	<i>n</i>	Mean ^a	SD			
Responsiveness	30	3.04	0.87	24	2.26	0.91	3.42	52	0.001
Effectiveness	30	2.96	0.87	24	2.30	0.90	2.69	52	0.010
Equity									
Fairness	28	2.69	0.69	22	2.12	0.96	2.45	48	0.018
Finance	26	3.81	1.00	19	2.95	0.98	2.87	43	0.006
Efficiency									
Financial value	28	3.09	0.96	23	2.19	0.99	3.23	49	0.002
Public participation	30	2.88	0.87	12	2.46	0.94	1.70	51	0.094
Consensus orientation	26	3.27	0.93	23	2.58	0.87	2.67	47	0.010
Transparency	26	3.04	0.88	22	2.51	0.79	2.19	46	0.034
Rule of law	29	3.37	0.78	23	2.36	0.88	4.34	50	<0.001
Accountability	29	3.31	0.78	24	2.45	0.81	3.92	51	<0.001
Strategic vision	30	3.16	1.07	24	2.42	1.16	2.45	52	0.018

Note: ^aBased on five-point scales, where lower scores (i.e. closer to 1.0) represent positive perceptions for the governance factor.

Columbia and Ontario NGO members seldom used these options. This demonstrates high levels of content validity for the research instrument used for this study and indicates that the participants felt they had sufficient knowledge to answer all items within each of the 11 governance factors.

An independent sample t-test revealed that observed differences in mean scores for NGOs between the two provinces were statistically significant for 10 governance factors. Mean scores for the governance factor Public Participation were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), possibly due to a small sample size for Ontario.

Discussion and conclusion

This study reveals that NGO members in Ontario have a positive perception for all governance factors evaluated with regard to the Ontario Parks' parastatal model. The positive scores for all governance factors suggest that NGOs involved with Ontario Parks report higher levels of good governance within the parastatal model. Conversely, NGO members in British Columbia have negative perceptions for eight governance factors and only have positive perceptions for three governance factors evaluated with regard to the public and for-profit model employed by British Columbia Parks. Because NGOs with an interest in British Columbia Parks scored lower levels of good governance, this suggests to the researchers that the NGO members feel that the public and for-profit model is inferior to the parastatal approach to management. The higher ranking of the parastatal model as compared to the public and for-profit model supports similar research results in other studies by Buteau-Duitschaever (2009); Buteau-Duitschaever et al. (2010); and Eagles et al. (2010).

The statistically significant difference in perceptions ($p < 0.05$) observed between Ontario and British Columbia NGOs for all but one governance factor provides an indication that the parastatal model employed by Ontario Parks has more-positive perceived levels of good governance than British Columbia Parks' public and for-profit model.

Although the data collected do not provide a direct causal explanation for the observed differences between the two park systems with regard to NGO scoring, it is possible to

speculate. According to Coston (1998) and Edgar et al. (2006), the acceptance of institutional pluralism is growing and becoming inevitable for government; however, government repression, rivalry and competition continue. Coston states government-NGO relations are common but not necessarily positive for either or both parties. Coston argues that the type of relationship between single or multiple NGOs is dependent upon the government's willingness to tolerate the influence, control and autonomy of NGOs and the willingness of the NGOs to engage in formal relations with the government. Consequently, the outcome of NGO and government relations can help explain why interactions are sometimes confrontational or amicable. Edgar et al. (2006) argue that governance is about effective ways in which various sectors of society are continuously engaged in decision-making processes and that governance is closely aligned with democracy and the central role that citizens must play in effective governance systems. This argument appears to be true for the NGOs involved with Ontario Parks, but less so for NGOs involved with British Columbia Parks.

The Ontario Parks parastatal model was developed during the early 1990s and implemented in 1995 as a result of government funding cutbacks. The model was developed through discussion with consultants, park staff and NGO policy leaders, providing interested NGOs with the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns and, ultimately, to help create the new parastatal structure. Through these discussions, it was decided that Ontario Parks would increase the percentage of their funding derived from visitor fees and charges and would place greater reliance on assistance from Friends organizations. Currently, Friends groups work closely with, and are relied upon, by Ontario Parks to provide and manage visitor services; to assist and conduct park maintenance; to operate specific Ontario Parks; and to donate important percentages of their revenue generated from the sale of visitor merchandise to Ontario Parks (ECO, 2007; Friends of Algonquin Park, 2008). This close working relation between the Friends organizations and Ontario Parks became evident during data collection. Although these Friends organizations were initially interested in the study, they would not agree to participate until assured that Ontario Parks had also been informed of this study. Most were concerned that participating without notifying Ontario Parks could result in strained relations. However, we observed an immediate and positive change in response from the Friends organizations once they had been informed that Ontario Parks supported this study because the ethics board of Ontario Parks had approved it. In a related study examining governance within Ontario Parks, Buteau-Duitschaever (2009) concluded that the similar scores observed between park staff and NGOs were attributed to this close working relationship. Acceptance of institutional pluralism is evident because the relationship between Friends organizations and Ontario Parks appears to be complementary (Coston, 1998).

The British Columbia Parks public and for-profit model was developed during the 1980s as a response to government funding cutbacks. Unlike Ontario, this model was developed in-house by government employees, who in turn relied on private-sector business consultants. Although the New Democratic Party (NDP) government of the 1990s had high levels of public involvement and cooperation with NGO organizations, this seems to have been eroded with the election of the Liberal Government in 2001 (McCutcheon, 2009). McCutcheon (2009) provides examples of the autocratic nature of British Columbia Parks in various decision-making processes that left little room for civil society involvement. McCutcheon points out that although British Columbia Parks is responsible for the successful implementation of management decisions, these decisions are often dictated by the premier's or minister's office. We witnessed first-hand this approach during data collection. Although British Columbia Park staff members at the highest levels were interested in our study, the government was not. The Minister of the Environment ordered British

Columbia Park staff to stop participating in our research study and to cut all ties with the research team after receiving information that some British Columbia NGOs were also participating in the research study.

The current protected areas management in British Columbia places more value on efficiency and effectiveness, but neglects accountability, transparency and public participation (McCutcheon, 2009). This top-down approach by the government for the management of British Columbia Parks, where the government often introduces important policy initiatives without adequate consultation, has often been criticized by NGOs (McCutcheon, 2009) and may shed light on the low and often negative governance scores provided by NGOs in this paper. Eagles et al. (2010) observed a large disconnect in the perceptions of governance between British Columbia Parks' staff members who saw good levels of governance within the public for-profit model and British Columbia NGO members who saw low levels of governance. It is possible to conclude that the British Columbia government is repressing relationships with NGO organizations within the province, consequently, resisting institutional pluralism (Coston, 1998).

The British Columbia government and associated British Columbia Park employees may not be the sole culprits in resisting institutional pluralism. Hanna, Negrave, Krutas, and Jojic (2008) provides four case studies that outline the development and creation of four provincial parks within British Columbia and discuss the political and economic factors that influenced their creation. Hanna et al. propose that provincial park development within the province during the 1980s and 1990s, unlike Ontario, was highly reactive. The government was forced to respond to extreme pressures placed by NGO organizations, aboriginal communities and industry by modifying and adopting new methods for public land use planning, such as the Protected Area Strategy Plan and the Land Resource Management Plans. McCutcheon supports this argument through research findings indicating that since 2001, the relationship between British Columbia Parks and NGOs has been primarily reactive as NGOs tended to be against the Liberal government's policies. The political power of NGOs in British Columbia was made evident through the Minister of Environment's negative reaction upon being informed of NGO involvement in this research. We wonder why the government has not put forth actions that demonstrate a will to increase institutional pluralism. We argue it is possible that due to the long confrontational past between the government and NGOs in British Columbia, the reactive nature of these stakeholder groups has been passed down through institutional history. It is possible that NGOs simply have no choice but to be reactive in order to be recognized and heard by the government.

We note the lower levels of the use of citizen-based Friends organizations in British Columbia Parks compared to those in Ontario Parks. It is possible that interested citizens who become involved in the many activities of the Friends organizations in Ontario gain a sense of positive involvement that results in more-positive scores on most governance criteria.

The higher levels of good governance for the parastatal model when compared to those in the public and for-profit model support similar research results from Buteau-Duitschaever et al. (2010), who observed that visitors to Ontario Parks scored higher levels of good governance than did visitors to British Columbia Parks. Eagles et al. (2011) reported that the park agency staff members in Ontario also scored higher levels of good governance for Ontario Parks than did the British Columbia Park staff for British Columbia Parks. As a result, the research reveals that three major stakeholder groups, NGO members, park visitors and park staff, all provide higher good governance scores for the parastatal management model compared to the use of private, profit-making companies in the provision of park tourism services. It is noteworthy that three such divergent, but also allied,

groups, such as NGO members, park agency staff members and park visitors all hold similar opinions toward these models. This research might give pause to those who suggest that the private delivery of park services is a much more efficient and effective approach.

This is the first study of this type where NGOs with an interest in either Ontario or British Columbia Parks were able to voice their opinions of governance within the management models of the park systems they support. The research demonstrates that NGOs in Ontario have much more positive scores for the governance of the parastatal model than British Columbia NGOs have for the public and for-profit model. We conclude that this difference is due to two factors: the park management model used and the institutional relationship between the park systems and associated NGOs. We recommend that British Columbia Parks and British Columbia NGOs develop pro-active relationships with key stakeholder groups to increase the perception of good governance within the provincial park systems.

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