

Rapporteur's Summary of Workshop Presentations and Discussion

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The following account of the monitoring session is organized around the main themes of the session:

- i. the proposed parks monitoring framework presented by North-South Environmental;
- ii. approaches for resolving concerns associated with the proposed monitoring framework; and
- iii. implementation of the monitoring framework.

The overall goal of the session was to provide an opportunity for panelists and workshop participants to comment on the development of the monitoring framework. In the following text, their comments are summarized as suggestions for consideration by Parks Ontario and their consultants.

Monitoring framework issues and refinement

- Include First Nations in the design of the monitoring framework
- The framework should be designed to include appropriate existing monitoring and research information, however, the framework should not be limited in any way to the use of existing information alone. A process to undertake data mining needs to be put in place and acted upon in the short term.
- An adaptive management link should be included in the framework.
- The goal of monitoring should be re-visited. Thought should be given to having ecological sustainability/integrity as the overall agency goal with monitoring as one of the tools to achieve this goal.
- Social and economic aspects of monitoring are not adequately represented in the framework. The issue of baseline information and sites associated with social and economic monitoring need further consideration.
- Stress monitoring should be included in the framework but should not dominate the monitoring program.

Approaches for resolving concerns

- The issue of funding for the monitoring program needs to be addressed in the short term.
- Funding for the program should be pursued to start the process of innovative partnership development and to implement certain monitoring activities so that early success can be demonstrated.

- Indicator selection for the monitoring program must take into consideration existing data analysis capabilities and information management capacity.
- A clear vision for the program linked to activities to be undertaken in the short, medium and long term is necessary.

Implementation approaches

- Stakeholder committees should be established at each park including First Nations representatives
- A graded set of plots within the greater ecosystem ranging from pristine (within parks) to working landscapes (outside parks) should be considered a part of the monitoring program design.
- Test monitoring should be initiated in the short term to demonstrate early success and also to initiate the development of monitoring partnerships (e.g. with Parks Canada, Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network, NGO community)
- A community based monitoring component should be built into the Monitoring Framework.
- Communication will play an important role in ensuring a successful monitoring program. Both internal and external communication plans should be developed including “stories” designed to inspire the various audiences that will be interested in park monitoring or have decision making authority regarding monitoring.
- Parks research should be link to any monitoring program developed.
- Data collected as part of the monitoring program must be provided in its raw form free of charge to all who want it.

In summary, the monitoring session stimulated extensive discussion and comment on the proposed monitoring framework providing Parks Ontario and their consultants, and included a number of thoughtful suggestions. The interest in the session also indicates that many of the interested stakeholders would be open to continued dialogue with Ontario Parks on the development of the monitoring framework and implementation of the monitoring program.