

What Did We Learn - About Procedural Integration?

The second of four types of integration we considered as relates to the Hwy40 process was *procedural integration* - the alignment of planning requirements and procedures of the resource management agencies involved. An integrated plan from a procedural perspective should;

- 1) Include one or more planning processes that relate to each other, speak the same language, are subject to the same level of public scrutiny, and follow similar regulatory steps such that their plans form a coherent whole in time and space.
- 2) Create a jointly conceived *disturbance plan* (see update #6) that outlines where, when, and how much area is disturbed through all human activity over a given period of time.

Procedural integration was one of the least successful outcomes of the Hwy40 project. In part, this was due to circumstances beyond our control. For instance, the planning procedures for the energy sector are fundamentally different from that of any of the other partners involved. The energy sector partners made it clear that changing this was not an option for this project.

Unfortunately, we were also unable to create integrated procedures among the non-energy sector partners. For example, the Willmore Wilderness Area had no operational planning procedures or management plans. This was a tremendous opportunity for Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation (TPR) to explore alternative management strategies and achieve their goals through working with, and learning from, adjacent land partners. However, because there was a failure to achieve jurisdictional integration (see update #18), TPR was not engaged at the procedural level.

Similarly, although the Hwy40 Planning Team (see update #3) agreed that the final disturbance event design would include both prescribed burn and harvesting activities, we were unable to not only develop an integrated fire-harvesting plan, but to define joint procedures for doing so. However, efforts continue today among members of the Hwy40 team to follow through with this towards the development of a contemporary fire-harvesting collaborative planning model.

The three forest management companies for the most part worked at a team from a procedural perspective, although unfortunately each chose a different submission path for their plans to GoA.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- ALL existing planning models are agency and resource specific. Do not underestimate the effort required to develop and get buy-in for a truly *integrated* planning model. Towards this, make it a priority to develop an inclusive procedural planning template for discussion.
- Involve high-level personnel in development of a terms-of-reference. This would resolve at least three challenges we faced: 1) how to proceed in the absence of procedures, 2) identifying any limitations (*i.e.*, who is "in"?), and 3) specific responsibilities of the planning team (*i.e.*, exactly what types of decisions am I able to make on behalf of my agency?)
- The integration of fire and harvesting activities involves some risk. An agreement of how responsibility is shared should be reached at senior planning levels prior to actual planning.
- In the absence of any procedural integration of energy sector planning activities, the integrity of even the most well intended disturbance plans is questionable.
- Although many resource management agencies are willing and able to be meaningfully engaged, the Government of Alberta must take the lead on procedural integration.

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