

Stakeholder Perceptions of Collaboration for Managing Nature-Based Recreation in a Coastal Protected Area in Alaska

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Voluntary codes of conduct and best management practices are increasingly popular methods for addressing impacts of recreation and tourism in protected areas. In southeast Alaska, for example, a collaborative stakeholder process has been used for creating, implementing, and managing the voluntary Wilderness Best Management Practices (WBMP) for the Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness to address impacts associated with shore and marine based use in this area, especially from cruise ships. This article examines: (a) stakeholder motivations for collaborating in this WBMP process; (b) the extent that this process has affected relationships among participating stakeholders, especially with respect to issues such as communication and trust; and (c) how commercial tour operators and local residents perceive the role of agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service in mediating the WBMP process. Data were obtained from 28 semistructured interviews with commercial tour operators, cruise industry representatives, U.S. Forest Service personnel, and residents. Results showed that the primary reason for participating was because the WBMP involved voluntary management of behavior in contrast with externally imposed regulations found in other nearby areas (e.g., Glacier Bay National Park). The WBMP process was perceived by stakeholders as an opportunity to be equal participants in voluntary rulemaking, as opposed to passive recipients of mandatory regulations. The WBMP process has enhanced collaborative stakeholder relationships by improving communication and dialogue, and instilling an ethic of compromise and sharing. Lack of trust, however, was a concern, especially between smaller tour operators and cruise lines due to a perception that the cruise industry is not following all of the specific WBMP guidelines. There was also concern regarding how inclusive the WBMP process should be, as many cruise line representatives felt that local residents should not be allowed to participate. Despite these issues and its infancy, the WBMP process appears to be a successful collaborative approach for helping to manage this coastal protected area.

KEYWORDS: Collaboration, partnerships, trust, stakeholders, protected areas, wilderness, recreation

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Mass-marketed cruise tourism, popularized by cruise lines such as Carnival Cruise Lines in the 1970s, is one of the fastest growing forms of tourism globally (Kester, 2003; Weaver, 2005). Destinations such as southeast Alaska and the Caribbean, with their natural amenities and tourism-oriented port towns, have witnessed a substantial influx of visitors over the past four decades. In Juneau, Alaska, for example, the population of about 30,000 expands to as much as 50,000 when tourists disembark from cruise ships during the summer, with this city's population sometimes increasing by almost 50% in one afternoon ("Trash Overboard," 1999). An increasing cruise tourism industry has caused positive and negative sociocultural and environmental impacts for local and dependent communities, as well as impacts on ecosystems such as parks and protected areas (Cervený 2005; Davenport & Davenport, 2005; Johnson, 2002).

One way of understanding some of these sociocultural and environmental impacts is through competition and amplified production where "profit...declines over time" resulting in "a process of mutual economic pinching that gets everyone running faster, but advancing only a little...tending to increase production and to sideline the environment" (Bell, 2009, p. 62). Major cruise lines such as Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Princess Cruises compete for customers and access to destinations. Cruise companies seek to capture the attention and spending of visitors through the provision of extra amenities, company-owned stores in port, and by offering additional opportunities for water and shore based excursions (Cervený, 2005). As a result of this competition, environmental and labor concerns can become neglected, and natural destinations and port towns can become exploited and commodified for the purposes and values of visitors and corporations. Effects can be vast, particularly on the host community, which is a "group of people who share a common identity, such as geographical location and/or ethnic background" (Wearing, 2001, p. 395). As visitation intensifies, social and economic effects can be felt by local hosts and surrounding communities (Wearing, 2001). Environmental impacts such as marine vessel congestion, wildlife feeding and breeding alterations, and air and water pollution from cruise ships can also occur, with some of these impacts occurring in protected areas (Davenport & Davenport, 2006). Royal Caribbean, for example, was fined US \$6.5 million for ocean dumping in Alaska in 1994 and 1995 ("Trash Overboard," 1999), and stakeholders have become concerned about these types of potential impacts of marine tourism in Alaska and elsewhere (e.g., Pomeranz, Needham, & Kruger, 2013; Zegre, Needham, Kruger, & Rosenberger, 2012).

The term "tragedy of the commons" was coined by Hardin (1968) and has been used for describing natural resource management scenarios where common pool resources—resources characterized by difficulty of exclusion and subtractability (i.e., an individual's use of a resource limits another's use)—used by rational actors for short term gains can result in depletion of the resource to everyone's detriment (Hardin 1968; Ostrom,

Burger, Field, Norgaard, & Policansky, 1999). Recreation and tourism destinations often develop around common pool resources, and their unchecked management may result in degradation. Managing impacts associated with visitation, therefore, requires understanding ecological, economic, and social components of the destination and potential effects on each component, which can sometimes become debased by industry development and expansion causing the environment to degrade, the economy to be subject to leakage, and the community structure to change (Butler, 1980; Manning, 1999).

Collaboration is an increasingly popular tool for managing these environmental, social, and economic impacts of natural resource-based recreation and tourism. According to Selin and Chavez (1995), collaboration “implies a joint decision-making approach to problem resolution where power is shared and stakeholders take collective responsibility for their actions and subsequent outcomes from those actions” (p. 190). Similarly, Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) suggested that collaboration “involves individuals or groups moving in concert in a situation in which no party has the power to command the behavior of the others” (p. xiii). An example of collaboration includes the creation, implementation, and management of voluntary codes of conduct such as the Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) developed in 1997 and adopted by the City and Borough of Juneau, Alaska. The goal of these TBMP is for tour operators, the cruise industry, and transportation services to work together toward minimizing negative environmental and social impacts of tourism in this region (TBMP, 2009). Guidelines in the TBMP focus on transportation and vehicles; docks, harbors, and airports; and flightseeing, hiking, bicycling, ziplining, marine sightseeing, and fishing tour operators. Research has shown that stakeholders in Juneau prefer these informal voluntary codes of conduct and believe that they have been more influential on behavior and impacts than formal laws and regulations (Janson, 2008; Zegre et al., 2012). Operators participating in these voluntary and informally enforced behaviors “were more likely to engage in a higher frequency and diversity of behaviors to improve conditions” (Janson, 2008, p. 93). Using voluntary codes of conduct to manage recreation and tourism is one collaborative method for potentially mitigating negative impacts.

This article examines stakeholder perceptions of a separate collaborative model, initiated by the U.S. Forest Service in 2007, for managing and mitigating negative impacts of watercraft-based recreation and tourism in the Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness in Alaska. This model is known as the Wilderness Best Management Practices (WBMP) and it uses the Juneau TBMP as a template for addressing use of this protected wilderness area’s two narrow fjords by kayak tour operators, cruise ships, yachts, and other commercial vessels. Stakeholders (e.g., agencies, tour operators, cruise lines, local residents) have participated in this collaborative WBMP process by helping to create and implement its guidelines, manage the area through self-enforcement to ensure that guidelines are not violated, monitor and evaluate the success of these guidelines and stakeholder interactions, and update and revise aspects of this collaborative process over time.

Conceptual Background

Natural resource management is a challenging task, particularly when stakeholders have distinct and conflicting goals. Hardin (1968) argued that solutions include either privatization or coercion, but Ostrom et al. (1999) noted that these have often been unsuccessful in resource management. Bryan (2004) suggested that coercing compliance to a particular policy may solve a natural resource problem but fail to achieve a sense of shared ownership or acceptance of the problem. He explained that “while compliance may lead to rule adherence, it arguably falls short of meeting the goal of shared ownership. At its worst, it leads to defiance” (Bryan, 2004, p. 884). He proposed that although regulations restrain behavior, they reduce the ability of the public to participate in government decision making processes. Given the limits of these approaches to solving problems, collaborative methods for managing natural resources that attempt to achieve stakeholder feelings of shared ownership and responsibility have gained popularity.

Gray (1989) presented three stages of collaboration: problem setting (e.g., identify stakeholders, define problem); direction setting (e.g., develop agendas and rules for interaction, achieve consensus); and implementation (e.g., monitor, achieve compliance). She also outlined five characteristics defining collaborative processes: (a) stakeholders are interdependent (i.e., shared concerns, interests); (b) solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences; (c) joint ownership of decisions is involved; (d) stakeholders assume collective responsibility for future directions; and (e) collaboration is an emergent process (Gray, 1989).

Collaboration is challenging because these efforts often arise out of adversarial situations where divergent interests can be entrenched in their own camps, resulting in an us-versus-them situation that can be self-reinforcing (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). As Bryan (2004) explained, most dilemmas facing natural resource managers involve individuals and groups who value the resource quite differently from each other. In situations where individual values conflict, people become reluctant to accept other viewpoints or solutions to the problem because they fear that they may be compromising their own individual viewpoints or values (Bryan, 2004). The goal of collaboration, therefore, is to develop and understand stakeholders' shared resource-based identity and recognize that "in spite of *our* differences, *we* are all in this together" (Bryan, 2004, p. 892). When an adversarial setting is overcome, agency staff, local users, businesses, nonprofit groups, and others may succeed in building consensus (Margerum, 2008), improving local capacity (Plummer & Fitzgibbon, 2004), establishing trust (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000), and finding creative solutions to complex problems (Gray, 1989).

Collaborative efforts, however, are not always successful. Gray (1989), for example, listed potential barriers including institutional disincentives, historical and ideological barriers, societal dynamics and normative differences, differing perceptions of risk, technical complexity, and political and institutional cultures that can be bureaucratic and uncompromising. Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) also outlined institutional and attitudinal or perceptual barriers that may limit collaboration. Examples of institutional barriers include limited opportunities or incentives, conflicting goals and missions, constrained resources, and inflexible policies and procedures. Attitudinal or perceptual barriers include mistrust, group opinions of each other, organizational norms and culture, and limited support for collaboration. Other barriers may include prior failed attempts at collaboration, power differences among participants, and perceptions that others do not have legitimate claims for involvement (Selin & Chavez, 1995). Crucial to overcoming these barriers is the presence of an effective facilitator with strong interpersonal skills who can mediate among conflicting positions and troublesome personalities. It may even be necessary to use objective and nonpartisan third party facilitators with expertise in handling uneven power balances to ensure constructive collaboration (Gray, 1989; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000).

According to Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000), collaboration has four primary uses in natural resources: (a) building understanding through exchange of information and ideas, thereby providing a mechanism for resolving uncertainty; (b) providing a mechanism for effective decision making; (c) generating a method for getting work completed by coordinating cross-boundary activities, fostering joint management activities, and mobilizing an expanded set of resources; and (d) developing capacity for agencies, organizations, and communities to address future challenges. Researchers have described many indicators of success for collaborative natural resource efforts, including level of consensus achieved, importance of mutually agreed-upon goals of collaboration, and subsequent joint monitoring to achieve success (e.g., Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Selin, 1999). Bryan (2004) stressed the importance of group norms upheld by peer pressure, stating that any negotiated social contract results in an interdependence predicated on norms, rules, and sanctions governing how people behave toward each other and the resource.

Collaboration can occur on various scales. Margerum (2008) identified three levels where collaboration occurs—action, organization, and policy—that vary in stakeholders involved and how the process is implemented. Collaboration at the action level includes

community members and field employees of involved agencies who can initiate change through direct action. Change occurs through diffusion of ideas and actions through personal networks and direct influence of stakeholders involved. Organizational efforts expand participation to a regional level, including interest groups and government bodies that initiate change through organizations. Collaboration at the policy level expands stakeholder participation to policy makers through which change is initiated. Others have also categorized collaborative efforts, such as Selin and Chavez (1995) who organized them according to motivating factors and expected outcomes. Selin (1999) developed a typology for sustainable recreation and tourism projects that organizes efforts by geographic scale, legal basis, locus of control, timeframe, and organizational diversity and size. He explained that “at one end of the continuum are primarily grassroots partnerships...at the other end partnerships that are legally mandated, authorized, or compelled” (Selin, 1999, p. 264).

Collaboration has been studied in natural resource contexts such as hunting (Sandström, 2009), marine planning (Gunton, Rutherford, & Dickinson, 2010), river management (Plummer, 2006), local tourism (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999), cross-border tourism collaboration (Lovelock & Boyd, 2006), wildlife planning (Lauber, Stedman, Decker, Knuth, & Simon, 2011) and community based collaborative conservation and tourism (Jamal & Stronza, 2008; Okazaki, 2008). Many of these studies focused on developing new frameworks or models for organizing or assessing collaboration (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Lauber et al., 2011; Lovelock & Boyd, 2006; Plummer, 2006). In the context of community-based resource management, Okazaki's (2008) findings emphasized the need for agreement among stakeholders on defining the problem, without which development of mutual goals and consensus building are unlikely to be achieved. Gunton et al. (2010) conducted a stakeholder analysis for marine planning and concluded that success is likely only when stakeholders both understand and maintain common goals. They also emphasized the need for correct identification of relevant stakeholders who are willing to participate and trust each other, as well as the need for strong agency partners with the resources and capacity to implement goals of a collaborative effort. Lauber et al. (2011) found that strong social networks are critical for successful collaborative programs, and Bramwell and Sharman (1999) found that power imbalances may threaten the success of a collaborative partnership.

This article examines stakeholder perceptions of the entire WBMP process (e.g., guideline creation, implementation, self-enforcement, management, monitoring) in the Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness in Alaska as a case study example for addressing three objectives. The first objective is to identify stakeholder motivations for collaborating in this process. The second objective is to determine how this collaborative process may have affected relationships among stakeholders, especially with respect to issues such as communication and trust. The third objective is to understand how commercial tour operators and local residents perceive the role of agencies in facilitating and mediating this collaborative process (e.g., U.S. Forest Service).

Method

Study Site and Context

Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness is a 653,000-acre protected area in southeast Alaska located off Stephens Passage about 50 miles southeast of the city of Juneau (Figure 1). This wilderness is managed by the U.S. Forest Service as part of the Tongass National Forest, and includes two narrow and deep granite walled fjords, Tracy and Endicott Arms, both of which contain active tidewater glaciers. At the head of Tracy Arm are the twin Sawyer Glaciers (North and South), and at the head of Endicott Arm are the twin Dawes Glaciers (North and South). Both of these fjords are approximately 30 miles in length with 20% of the area covered in ice. Both are also home to seals and other wildlife such as bears, whales, and Dall sheep (U.S. Forest Service, 2003). Despite these similarities, large vessels are sometimes forced to divert to Endicott Arm because navigational challenges such as ice conditions can be more common in Tracy Arm.

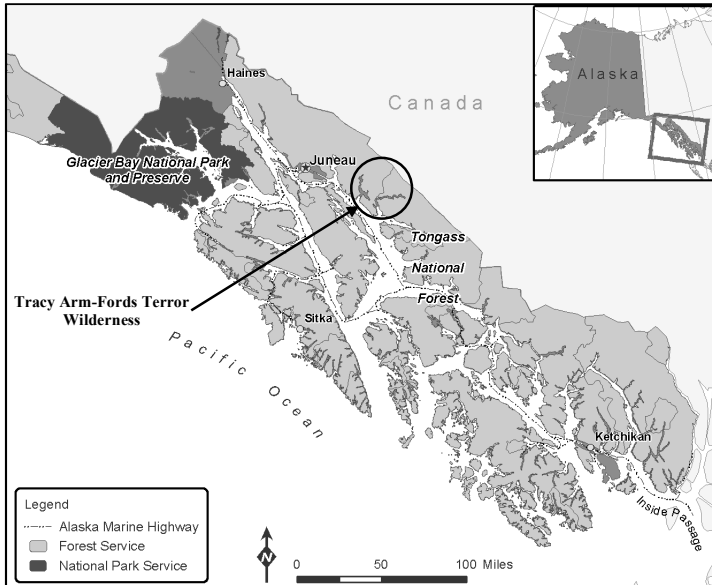


Figure 1. Southeast Alaska and Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness area. Adapted from Zegre et al. (2012).

Given this protected area's wildlife viewing opportunities and tidewater glaciers, it is a popular destination for tourists arriving by cruise ship, and tour boats offering full-day tours are also common (Dugan, Fay, & Colt, 2007). Tours operating in this area also accommodate some independent travelers who are not associated with the cruise industry. To capture the cruise market, some tour operators have opted to pre-sell tours on board and collect clients directly from cruise ships to allow the necessary travel time to both Tracy and Endicott Arms (Dugan et al., 2007). Recent limits on visitation by cruise ships to nearby Glacier Bay National Park have increased the volume of large vessel traffic visiting these two fjords, as many cruise ships are now using this area as an alternative to Glacier Bay (U.S. Forest Service, 2003). Other than cruise ships and tour boats, the area is also popular for smaller boat operators, charter and private yachts, kayakers, and other wilderness enthusiasts (Dugan et al., 2007).

Although Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness is a federally protected wilderness area, most visitors do not enter the national forest and instead remain on boats. In contrast to Glacier Bay National Park where the U.S. Park Service has regulatory control over the waterways, the US Forest Service has no regulatory control over the water, only the uplands of Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness. The State of Alaska maintains jurisdiction over the waterways although it has not exercised much regulatory action with respect to vessel behavior in the area. Some aspects of the environment are regulated by other agencies such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which oversees protection of endangered wildlife and mammals, and Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation, which oversees water quality standards.

Some regulations concerning ships in Juneau's port and the surrounding waters have been partially supported by citizen action given that the U.S. Forest Service has no jurisdiction over the water and, therefore, little managerial control over operator behavior (Neary & Griffin, 2008). Regardless, this agency has been attempting to facilitate implementation of the collaborative and voluntary WBMP with the cruise industry and other commercial operators in this area since 2007 (Neary & Griffin, 2008). The WBMP were inspired by the TBMP that were developed by the City and Borough of Juneau, tourism operators, the cruise industry, and transportation services. The TBMP contain codes of conduct developed

in 1997 to minimize negative environmental and social impacts of tourism in the Juneau area (TBMP, 2009). Similarly, the WBMP process is “intended to minimize the impacts of tourism and vessel operations...in a manner that addresses both concerns for our natural resources and operators’ concerns for safety and passenger service” (WBMP, 2011). Major categories of guidelines in the WBMP include preserving quiet (e.g., limit announcements to cruise passengers to five minutes), maintaining clean air (e.g., improve emissions monitoring), protecting wildlife (e.g., compliance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act), preserving solitude (e.g., vessels with more than 250 passengers should try not to use Endicott Arm), communication (e.g., use WBMP blog to report ice conditions), and keeping the WBMP process active (e.g., use WBMP in employee training). Participating stakeholders meet annually in Seattle, Washington to discuss issues and concerns from the previous season, and to update current practices. In addition, operators are encouraged to provide feedback to wilderness rangers who frequent the area. The WBMP process is still in its infancy with new stakeholders recently becoming involved, such as cruise ship pilots and some environmental organizations.

Data Collection

A qualitative approach was used for addressing this article’s objectives. Qualitative techniques are useful for exploring and describing elements of a problem in depth and detail, and examining situations with characteristics that may not be easily represented in numerical format (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Patton, 2002). This research was conducted using qualitative semistructured interviewing or “conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 4). Semistructured interviewing often uses an interview schedule, which is a collection of questions and topics in the form of a guide that the researcher wants to cover (Bernard, 2006). Three slightly different schedules were created for tour operators and cruise line representatives, agency personnel, and residents because a few questions were specific to the type of stakeholder interviewed (e.g., how long they operated tours [operators and cruise lines only], how long they worked at the agency [agencies only]). Questions addressing perceptions of the collaborative and voluntary nature of the WBMP and its effectiveness, however, were identical across these schedules (e.g., “What is your overall opinion of how these WBMP were developed and implemented?,” “How has development and implementation of the WBMP affected relationships between commercial tour guides and operators, the cruise industry, government agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, and/or local community residents, if at all?”). Semistructured interviewing allowed the researcher to follow leads, ask additional probing questions, and let the interview take its course. The schedule is only intended as a guide, not an explicit set of questions that each respondent must answer (Bernard, 2006). Each interview ended when no new information was forthcoming (i.e., saturation point).

A total of 28 interviews were conducted during a three week period in August and September 2010 (Table 1). This is a relatively large number of participants for a qualitative study involving semi-structured interviews, and none of the individuals declined after being asked to participate (Bernard, 2006; Patton, 2002). Interviews lasted between 20 and 90 minutes, averaging approximately 50 minutes. Interviews were conducted with direct stakeholders (e.g., involved in guideline creation, management, or directly impacted by the WBMP) in the Juneau-Douglas area in respondent homes or offices, aboard vessels, at local coffee shops, or over the telephone. The sampling technique used for selecting commercial operators was purposive, which is a nonprobability judgment sample that is useful for identifying respondents who have specific attributes that the researcher is interested in studying (Bernard, 2006). In this study, respondents were selected based on their involvement in the WBMP process and according to other attributes such as operator type (e.g., flightseeing, sport fishing, sightseeing, adventure tours, marine charters) and whether the service is locally owned and operated. Respondents were identified from internet searches, past research, and a WBMP mailing list containing fewer than 60 people who were still available or living in the area (Janson, 2008; Zegre et al., 2012). U.S. Forest

Service personnel were also selected purposively and consisted of informants who work or previously worked in the study area as resource managers or wilderness rangers and have been involved in the WBMP process. Interviews with local residents and users of this wilderness area were useful for gathering information on resident perspectives of the area and its management.

Table 1

Interview List of Stakeholder Participants

Pseudonym	Interview Length	Stakeholder Role
Cruise representatives		
<i>Chester</i>	48 min. 27s.	Cruise industry representative
<i>Abe</i>	1 hr. 18 min. 03s.	Cruise ship pilot
<i>Herbert, Calvin, Sarah</i>	32 min. 45s.	Captain, Crew, Crew, 40 passenger cruise (group)
<i>Ben</i>	43 min. 49s.	Director, local branch midsize cruise company
Smaller tour operators		
<i>Ted</i>	34 min. 14s.	Catamaran manager
<i>Warren</i>	23 min. 13s.	Helicopter tour company employee
<i>John</i>	48 min. 24s.	Captain, 24-passenger vessel
<i>Elizabeth</i>	47 min. 40s.	Owner, day boat tour
<i>Thomas</i>	41 min. 17s.	6-passenger sailboat captain, owner and operator
<i>Hayes</i>	43 min. 12s.	Kayak tour guide
<i>Louisa</i>	31 min. 36s.	Owner, kayak tour guide company
<i>Andrew, Rachel</i>	51 min. 13s.	6-passenger yacht, captain, owner and operator (group)
<i>James</i>	30 min. 46s.	10-passenger yacht operator
<i>William</i>	51 min. 47s.	6-passenger yacht, captain, owner and operator
<i>Zachary</i>	1 hr. 22 min. 22s.	6-passenger sailboat captain, owner and operator
<i>Franklin</i>	21 min. 17s.	6-passenger vessel, captain, owner and operator
<i>Wilson</i>	34 min. 11s.	Naturalist and tour guide
Agency representatives		
<i>Grover</i>	38 min. 06s.	Former US Forest Service ranger
<i>George</i>	53 min. 06s.	US Forest Service wilderness field manager
<i>Dolley</i>	18 min. 32s.	US Forest Service intern
<i>Anna</i>	1 hr. 9 min.	US Forest Service employee & whale tour boat naturalist
<i>Martin</i>	1 hr. 3 min. 08s.	US Forest Service wilderness ranger
Local residents		
<i>Martha</i>	29 min. 04s.	Juneau Bed & Breakfast proprietor
<i>Abigail</i>	1 hr. 13m. 23s.	Juneau resident, former tour contractor
<i>Grant</i>	51 min. 02s.	Grassroots attorney for an environmental organization
<i>Hannah</i>	52 min. 01s.	Juneau Visitors Bureau employee
<i>Julia</i>	50 min. 15s.	Alaska native elder
<i>Millard</i>	48 min. 03s.	Manager, local native tourism corporation

Snowball or respondent driven sampling was used for locating other operators, agency personnel, and local residents not initially contacted. In snowball sampling, the researcher asks respondents to recommend anyone who the researcher should interview (Bernard, 2006). This technique was relatively successful, yielding eight interviews. Interviews were digitally audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. To preserve anonymity, all respondents were given pseudonyms (e.g. *John, Rachel*).

Data Analysis

According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), the goal of qualitative data analysis is “to discover variation, portray shades of meaning, and examine complexity...by portraying it in the words of the interviewees” (p. 202). Through an immersive analysis of interview content, the data were examined using inductive coding, which allows themes to arise from the data through iterative close readings of transcriptions (Bernard, 2006). Coding refers to applying a label to a segment of text relating to an identified theme or category. Typically, analysis of qualitative data involves two stages: coding transcripts to identify themes or analytic concepts, followed by comparing and linking emergent themes or concepts across respondents (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This second step also involves comparison with other concepts and results identified in the literature.

An open coding process was used where thematic coding occurred as interviews were systematically transcribed. This resulted in numerous broad themes or codes (e.g., collaboration, impacts, role of wilderness), not all of which were relevant to this article’s objectives. Subsequently, through an axial coding process, these codes were refined, distilled, and organized. Axial coding involves the disaggregation of broad themes or codes, and relating them to each other (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As part of this axial coding process, both free (i.e., independent) and hierarchical (i.e., nested) codes were revealed. A free or independent code represents a theme that may not contain any subthemes or related codes (e.g., role of agencies in mediation), whereas a hierarchical or nested code can represent a subtheme or code (e.g., desire for self-regulation, equal participants in rulemaking) of a related broader theme or code (e.g., motivations for collaborating). These main themes and codes are listed as subsections in the following results section, and are illustrated by select verbatim quotes from respondents.

Results

Motivations for Collaborating

The first objective of this article focused on identifying stakeholder motivations for collaborating in the WBMP. Motivations associated with aversion to regulation and support for collaborative self-regulation through the WBMP were often discussed with reference to recent restrictions on vessel entry into Glacier Bay National Park, and enhanced regulation for both small and large ship operators. For most respondents, management of Glacier Bay is an example of agency overregulation. Small boat operators were critical of the area’s management, as *William*, a six-passenger yacht operator stated, “We were managed right out of there [Glacier Bay].” Another six-passenger operator, *Zachary*, echoed these words, but questioned the logic of the restrictions: “It’s [Glacier Bay] virtually closed, I can’t go in there...I don’t know what that’s based on, why can’t I go there? Are there really too many boats?” For some respondents, the perceived rationale for small commercial tour operator exclusion from Glacier Bay during the height of the tourism season is due to state and federal economic interest in the cruise industry. As *Andrew*, a six-passenger operator explained about the restrictions, “They [U.S. Park Service] feed off it [cruise permits]; it’s more money.” Agency representatives and small operators looked to the situation in Glacier Bay and drew parallels to a potentially similar future in the Tracy Arm area where small tour operators could be marginalized, as described by 10-passenger yacht operator *James*:

Unless we can make some agreement stick, then it’s [Tracy Arm] basically being turned over to the large cruise ship industry at the expense of small operators, kayak groups, and other wilderness lovers who respect the needs of everyone to be able to see the area, but would like to partition the pie a little bit so that we don’t all have to be the lowest common denominator.

Former U.S. Forest Service ranger *Grover* detailed that his fear for the future of the Tracy Arm area is that it will become an example of the “tragedy of the commons” where the area reaches:

[a] saturation point where it could become a place where the large tour ships go...and the small ships are left to go to other places where the big ships can't go, and that would be sad...also the individual tourists, the destination tourists, the independent travelers down there who may not get that sense of isolation either.

Local resident and former Juneau tour contractor *Abigail* described the perceived power that the cruise industry maintains over government decisions, saying, “We’ve really sort of said, okay, tourism in Alaska is cruise tourism, cruise tourism is outside of our control, and so we’re just going to let them do what they want and drive the industry.” Cruise tourism employees, however, did not perceive their treatment in Glacier Bay as exclusive. As *Abe*, a cruise ship pilot lamented:

They’ve [U.S. Park Service] taken a pristine area [Glacier Bay] and they’ve just over-regulated it. If you make an announcement when you go into Glacier Bay, I had a ranger tell the captain last week, “we’ll have to evaluate and see whether you can continue on up into the bay because you made an announcement and you broke the rules.” I mean that’s just being totally aggressive and power-hungry.

Collaboration among users and U.S. Forest Service personnel in developing the WBMP process provides an opportunity to manage the Tracy Arm area in contrast with the situation that many commercial operators contend with in Glacier Bay. The WBMP offers smaller operators a way to protect their access to glaciers in Tracy and Endicott Arms, given their limited access to Glacier Bay. “Ship companies can go in and out of there [Glacier Bay] at will, [and] we’ve lost that opportunity. We can’t provide that opportunity...anywhere else. Endicott is the last chance for that,” explained six-passenger vessel operator *Franklin*.

The WBMP are also perceived by operators as an opportunity to be equal participants in voluntary rulemaking with agency officials, as opposed to passive recipients of mandatory regulations. Mid-size catamaran manager *Ted* exemplified this perception:

I think these guidelines...are smart, forward-thinking. This is a group of logical, ethical businesses getting together saying, ‘Of course we make mistakes, nobody’s perfect, but if we can get ahead of this and make ourselves better, then maybe we can be in charge of the rules.’

Small yacht operator *William* grouped both cruise ships and smaller commercial tour operators together when describing WBMP participation as motivated by a hope to avoid future permitting, although he attributed additional altruistic and environmental motives to smaller operators:

Same as the rest of us, they [cruise companies] want to avoid having a permit area...I suspect that there is on some level this desire to keep the place pristine, but I think that is more prevalent among the smaller boat operators, and among the big ones, they’re mostly operating as businesses and looking for the most advantage[s] from the business aspect.

Agency representatives recognized the manifestation of operator fear of exclusion and potential future non-collaborative regulation as a driving force behind WBMP participation among operators. As former ranger *Grover* rationalized, “If folks didn’t think it was worthwhile, they would not show up. But then there’s the other side of it, too, well, ‘If I don’t show up, are they going to make some decision that affects me?’” Wilderness ranger *Martin* suggested that tour operators may be attempting to demonstrate their use in

the event that future mandated regulation occurs and they may be grandfathered in, saying, "If they don't go [to meetings], they probably perceive that as us checking it off a list, 'Oh so and so wasn't here,' that goes on their permanent record."

Trust

The second objective of this article focused on the extent that the WBMP process has affected relationships among stakeholders, especially with respect to issues such as trust and communication. A potential barrier that has arisen since the first meeting of the WBMP signatories is the issue of establishing trust. As perceived by U.S. Forest Service wilderness manager *George*, the cruise industry representatives made a promise at the first meeting that they failed to keep, which may have damaged other operators' faith in the program:

Only like a half hour into it [first meeting], the cruise companies said, 'You know, we can just not use Endicott Arm.' Some of the operators looked at us and went, 'The meeting's over. Basically that's all I really care about'...they were optimistic after that first meeting, and so despondent when that didn't happen... some of them really lost confidence in the whole process, and we really wondered if they were even going to come back to the table.

Six-passenger vessel operator *Franklin* echoed this assessment, noting how some companies particularly violate the agreement:

[The] main guideline that was abused and not observed was that they [cruise ships] would not go into Endicott Arm unless they were forced to by ice conditions in Tracy Arm. Well we know for a fact that one or two of the companies totally ignored that guideline even while giving lip service to it.

Small tour operator *James* explained that this is a flaw of the voluntary agreement, but noted that the US Forest Service has been trying to monitor diversions through a new ice report blog:

It's a voluntary practice... we do have a website that basically the cruise ships let us know that they've diverted into Endicott, but it is voluntary, and unfortunately they don't always live up to the agreement...and that's been the difficulty is that, you know last year I think we had 30% or so of cruise ships diverted to Endicott Arm. So it was any excuse [to divert].

Implemented two years into the collaborative process, use of this blog was at first abused, but has since become a better way of ensuring adherence to guidelines due to the U.S. Forest Service taking a more "assertive role," as described by wilderness ranger *Martin*:

But the problem was they [cruise ships] were copying and pasting each others' bad ice reports from weeks ago, or just ... announcing, 'Oh, we're going into Endicott today,' so one of the small operators he started calling it the hall pass ...so this year I took a much more assertive role...we started calling cruise ships directly and asking for an updated ice report and then saying, 'Are you going to put that in the blog, or would you like us to?'

According to *Martin*, this "removed a lot of the wiggle room...because some captains simply wanted to travel Endicott Arm...so that enforcement...or fact-check or whatever, that's our version of doing that." Wilderness manager *George* explained that this type of fact checking helps to bolster voluntary compliance, saying, "So voluntary compliance is really good when you know what, there might be a cop around the next corner, so I probably ought to slow down right now when I'm speeding down the highway."

George also explained that compliance is critical at the outset of a collaborative arrangement because when an agreement is made and ignored, it may be perceived as a lie and jeopardize the entire effort, saying, "What I've seen is that people will get burned

out if they feel like they're continuing to say the same thing and nobody's listening, and they'll stop complaining because they don't think that the deaf ear's worth it." Kayak tour operator, *Hayes*, agreed by stating: "I don't think we're really heavily on their [cruise industry] radar, I don't think we ever were...I don't think that now they really care a whole lot about us." This perceived lack of caring by cruise lines has, in midsize operator *Herbert's* words, fostered "a feeling of 'them' and 'us.'"

For many small operators, sentiments such as these have created a feeling that the cruise industry's involvement in the WBMP is insincere. As small yacht owner *Rachel* stated, "I don't think they give a damn what they do, they're just making money, that's it." Many respondents perceived cruise line involvement in the WBMP as a way of garnering favorable publicity. As sailboat operator *Zachary* explained, "It's marketable from a business stance. Cruise ships are looking for anything to hang their hat on and improve their public relations. They say, 'We don't need any bad press,' and can point to the WBMP and say, 'See, we're good, too.'" This perception was not limited to small operators, as wilderness ranger *Martin* felt that cruise lines have been motivated by outside pressure, saying, "I don't think [cruise ship involvement is] altruistic at all, I don't think it's for the care of the land at all, I think it's solely because they're being pressured into it."

This perception of cruise line motivations for involvement in the WBMP was often coupled with the perception that these "less than altruistic" reasons led to halfhearted efforts when adhering to guidelines. As small vessel operator *Franklin* explained, "Well my take on the meetings is that the cruise ship people were there for PR [public relations] purposes, but since nobody has any control over them... some companies have people who are really concerned about our needs, and some are not." Yacht operator *Andrew* explained his perception of the cruise industry's rationale for joining the WBMP, saying, "I might be doing something wrong, but if I sign this, it makes me feel good and all the people feel good, then I'll do it. Whether they adhere to it or not is another thing." Local resident and grassroots attorney *Grant* is an individual who is not in the Tracy Arm area as frequently as the small operators, but had a similar perception:

I think it's all sort of good business sense. Nobody wants to be the bully, necessarily. Nobody wants to have the black eye...I think what you see is a lot of splash about how we're doing it [the WBMP] and the substance a little thinner. Is it better than it would have been without it? Probably. Is it enough? As a lover of wilderness, no.

Conversely, the cruise industry recognized the complaints of smaller operators and at the second meeting of the WBMP, signatories tried to explain their reasons for diverting to Endicott Arm (e.g., safety), agreeing not to use a part of Endicott called Fords Terror when they must divert. According to cruise industry representative *Chester*:

There were some smaller operators who said, 'Well, you didn't follow what you said you were going to do, there's still more ships going to Endicott,' or 'There were more than we thought,' and so we tried to explain to them...some of the challenges and nuances we have, if we get down there and it's foggy, or there's ice, or the tide is running really fast over the bars.

Likewise, cruise ship pilot *Abe* explained that if safety prohibits entrance into Tracy Arm, not going into Endicott as an alternative can have an economic impact for the company and be confusing for passengers:

If we agree that it's not safe enough to go into Tracy Arm, then we'll go do something else for the day. Let me tell you that's a big decision, because they got 3,000 people who are going to want a refund. They've sold the itinerary to go and do something, and yes, weather and certain other things permit them to deviate, but to not be able to go into Endicott Arm is like saying, we have this private little area that we don't want you to see.

Chester, a cruise industry representative, perceived that for most stakeholders, the explanation was sufficient. He also recognized, however, that some operators will not be satisfied and feel that cruise ships should not be in Tracy Arm, saying, “There’s probably still some operators that don’t believe we should be down there...to those folks we just say, ‘Look, we’re putting our best foot forward, this is voluntary, this is something that if we didn’t believe in, we wouldn’t be participating.’”

Communication

The ability of the WBMP process to get stakeholders with distinct and conflicting goals seated “at the table” was lauded by many interviewees, particularly agency representatives. As *Grover*, a former U.S. Forest Service ranger explained:

Just having folks being able to look in each other’s eyes, across the table...I think it’s really good for each one of the parties to hear what the other’s concerns are, and get to know each other a little bit...it’s a lot harder to be critical of someone if that person has sat across the table going, ‘I understand your concern, I didn’t realize that,’ or ‘I see what you mean.’

Wilderness ranger *Martin* echoed this statement, stating that “sitting at the table face to face gave human faces to the cruise ship industry and vice versa...the meetings address some contentious issues and not everyone agrees on everything, they have certainly improved the tone and they’ve improved all parties’ understanding of their goals, where they’re coming from.” Cruise industry representative *Chester* expressed agreement with these agency officials, stating that “the fact that we’re sitting around a table three years in a row is successful in my opinion.”

From a nonoperator perspective, grassroots attorney *Grant* explained why it is important for citizens who are not commercially invested in the area to also be involved:

People want to be at the table and part of a dialogue on how to solve problems. It doesn’t mean that there aren’t problems, it just means that people want to be involved, whether that’s distrust that the government can do it right or distrust that corporations whose headquarters are who-knows-where are going to be making choices that are in your long-term interest. People want to be involved and finding effective ways for those dialogues [to] make a difference.

Grant’s rationale for involving a broader array of stakeholders to enhance effectiveness of the dialogue and collaboration, however, has not been supported by some larger cruise operations. Legally, U.S. Forest Service meetings must be open to the public, but as wilderness manager *George* explained, the cruise industry’s attitude toward broad inclusion was one of skepticism, saying, “[As said by cruise industry] ‘Well, who are these people who we’re going to invite? Shouldn’t it just be the people who are signing the document? And isn’t that document just an agreement among operators, and if so why are they in the room?’” As cruise industry representative *Chester* stated, “The only people who should be involved in this agreement are the users.” One cruise ship pilot, *Abe*, suggested that even the small operators may not be knowledgeable enough to be able to safely contribute to a functioning agreement such as the best management practices: “[On] one side, you got a bunch of professionals who have years and years and years and years of experience, and you have on the other side a couple of guys who have a very little license.”

Despite this cruise industry reluctance toward inclusiveness coupled with issues of trust, most respondents agreed that the WBMP process has been successful for improving communication among users who normally would not communicate. Participants have been able to develop a better understanding of each other’s operations. As small operator *Thomas* stated, “I think the most important thing about the best management practices is communicating.” *Ben*, director of a local branch for a midsize cruise company, expanded on these sentiments by stating that it is not just communication that is important, but also

communicating various expectations that each stakeholder maintains, saying, “I think the most important thing about best management practices is communicating, and the experience that people are anticipating is the one they get. I think that is an important concept for everybody, if they know what everybody else is doing.” The process has also allowed the cruise industry to communicate directly with other operators about reasons for diverting to Endicott Arm, the fjord designated by the WBMP for mostly small tour operator use, as described by cruise industry representative *Chester*:

I think over the course of the three years there has been more communication ... between the ships and the small operators [about diversions]. And I think that’s fostered a better relationship. I think that they generally believe that they can communicate with the ships when they’re down there [Tracy / Endicott].

Even small yacht operator *James*, who is one of the most ardent supporters of regulation and wilderness, noted benefits of the WBMP in improving mutual respect through enhanced communication, noting, “I think we are beginning to have cordial dialogue with the cruise ships...I think that every year we sit down and discuss things, our dialogue improves. Our respect toward one another improves and they understand the issues I bring up at the meeting.” From the U.S. Forest Service’s perspective, wilderness manager *George* described that as communication improves, this agency has become less necessary in serving as a link among operators; the annual WBMP meeting has become a place where operators are more comfortable airing grievances in person:

They’re [the operators] not just complaining to the U.S. Forest Service. They’re now starting to complain to the proper people, who are the industry themselves, the cruise line industry themselves, and there’s become a little more of a two-way conversation, I wouldn’t say as well as I’d like to see it...they still hold onto their complaints and it all comes out at the [WBMP] meeting...the meetings have been helpful in that way, giving them a forum for it.

Compromise and Sharing

With the task of mediating the WBMP meetings among stakeholders, government agency officials recognized the need for encouraging compromise among operators; both cruise lines and operators of smaller vessels must have been willing to make sacrifices. Wilderness ranger *Martin* explained his role in getting smaller operators to cede flightseeing operations, saying, “When I was getting people to come to the table for the first year...I told small and midsize tour operators that they’re asking a lot of the cruise industry and it would be helpful if they came to the table with something.” In the beginning of this collaborative process, there were questions whether the cruise lines would be open to limiting operations in both Tracy and Endicott Arms, as described by former ranger *Grover*: “are the large tour companies going to give something up...their economic interest, are they willing to forego some of that for better relationships with the small tour companies?” Cruise industry representative *Chester* expressed that even though they are not required to participate in the WBMP, he believed in the program, saying, “We could just as easily say, ‘We’re going to go wherever we want,’ but at least in my opinion and my history in dealing with this program, that’s not the way to go.” Encouraging cruise lines to change behavior was also a question of understanding the ways in which they operate. With respect to decreasing public announcements over loudspeakers on cruise ships when in the fjords, for example, wilderness manager *George* explained that it was a matter of understanding each other:

This was something that they never really considered previously, that they would have an effect on others that would be negative, because in their view this was really just informing their clients of what the area was like, and of course they would want to do that and we would want them to do that, wouldn’t we? ... This was a cultural barrier that we continue to face, especially with the cruise lines.

Through the WBMP process, operators have developed a mutual understanding of problems arising from differing business models; all are trying to use the same resource to achieve different goals. *James*, a 10-passenger yacht operator, articulated, “We have a job to do just as well as they [cruise lines] have a job to do.” Recognition that each business is dependent on Tracy Arm and/or Endicott Arm is a motivating factor for collaborating, communicating, and arriving at a mutually acceptable arrangement. *Ben*, director of regional operations for a mid-sized boat company, stated, “We’re very interested in working collaboratively with large ships, and they have different perceptions, are presenting a different product. And that’s fine for them, but we need to try to look carefully at how we’re going into these areas and making sure we’re optimizing the experience for wilderness values.”

Zachary, a six-passenger sailboat operator, further explained the importance of achieving a compromise with other operators, saying, “If we couldn’t go into Endicott Arm...it would probably be enough of an impact that we wouldn’t feel that we had a marketable product anymore...so there’s a huge incentive for us to come up with any solution other than that.” He further explained that it is also in his best interest to share Endicott Arm with smaller operators and the cruise lines, noting, “I’m certainly inclined to sit at the table with these other charter guys and make deals and say, ‘Look, Wednesdays, if that’s how you want to work it, [name withheld] and I will be there on Wednesdays. You got Mondays, you got Fridays, whatever.’ There’s incentive for all of us to do that.” Midsize cruise company director *Ben* explained that achieving compromise allows for everyone to have the “best experience” possible:

The idea behind it is that if we are conscious of each other’s operations we can accommodate and make adjustments that best suit everybody. Simple changes, the idea was collaborative, understanding that waterways really have, there’s no regulatory agency that can mandate, but I think all the operators were interested in, small to large, making a best experience for everybody.

Chester, a large cruise industry representative, also expressed the idea that part of compromise involves understanding that at times they must agree to disagree, saying, “We need to sit down and try to work out as many of the differences we can knowing that there are some we are never going to approach resolving. And that’s the way it is.”

Most respondents seemed to understand that the resource should be shared, despite what they might prefer. *Thomas*, a six-passenger sailboat operator noted, “What we offer is this intimate experience in Alaska...we’d like to see no other boats, but of course there’s a lot of us trying to do this, so we realize we do have to share it.” Cruise industry representative *Chester* explained that the WBMP has improved mutual understanding of the need to share the resource, noting, “I think we learned a lot about what the smaller operators were concerned about, and I think they learned a lot about what our challenges are. We’re not there to harm anyone’s experience, we’re there to take advantage of the resource.”

Role of Agencies

The third objective of this article focused on how the role of agencies (e.g., U.S. Forest Service) is perceived in mediating the WBMP process. Agency employee understanding of the role of the U.S. Forest Service as ombudsman and mediator for this collaborative process underscores the importance of individual personalities and ideologies in affecting agency behavior at the WBMP meetings. Former district ranger *Grover* defined his perceived role of this agency during his tenure, saying, “I felt that our best role, and my role in particular, was as a facilitator, and I think folks saw us as a fairly neutral party...in the meetings, folks like [name withheld] would speak up...[and he] certainly fell into the advocate role. But I was there in uniform as a facilitator.” Wilderness ranger *Martin* likened his role to that of a ranger, and recognized how this role is distinct from that defined by his superiors, asking, “How do I perceive what the agency should do? Oh yeah, the agency should advocate for wilderness character, most definitely and the reason I pause is because that’s not what the

agency thinks it should do.” Agency leaders such as *Grover* and his perception of the best role of the U.S. Forest Service in collaborating with operators had a significant effect on the inception of the WBMP process, as described by wilderness manager, *George*:

We had to convince our district ranger at the time that this would be a good idea...because there was some reluctance on his part to really even start this. It didn't make a lot of sense for him to move forward on something where he really didn't have any decision authority; it wasn't even a role that made sense really.

When the U.S. Forest Service leadership changed, however, the meaning of this agency's place in the collaborative process also changed. As *George* explained:

We originally conceived of our role as a facilitator under the previous district ranger...who really felt that since the U.S. Forest Service has no authority to regulate these waters, therefore, we have to...bring in the operators to agreement among themselves...The new ranger has a bit of a changed attitude and feels that we could have more voice in the process and try to advocate a little more for the Wilderness Act, because I think she understands a little bit more that what happens on the water directly affects what happens on the land.

Individual leaders' understanding of the U.S. Forest Service's role in the Tracy Arm area in relationship to the Wilderness Act has changed over time; those in charge dictate what “mediator” means in the context of collaboration.

Further emphasizing the importance of individuals in driving the process is the commercial operator perceptions of the U.S. Forest Service's task as the WBMP facilitator. Overall, large and small operators thought highly of this agency's performance. Six-passenger vessel operator *Franklin* encapsulated the feelings of most interviewees, saying, “I really like what they've done there, especially the few people who have been directly involved in the process of going to meetings; just some really impressive people.” Six-passenger sailboat operator *Thomas* described a particular ranger as personally supportive in the WBMP process, adding, “I think he's been a pretty staunch ally; he definitely recognizes the impact that has occurred.” Similarly, kayak tour operator *Hayes* identified an individual ranger to be available and communicative, noting:

We'll have a conversation with [name withheld] about the experiences we had in there and the other boats that we've seen and the impacts on the area due to the boats and the other people and basically, I don't know that he's necessarily taking that information from the point of view of being a U.S. Forest Service employee or that he's taking it into account as someone who's just personally working to maintain the wilderness aspect of that area. I think it's probably both.

This statement recognizes the duality of agency collaborators where rangers must be representative of the legal boundaries and ideological tenets of the U.S. Forest Service, and yet they are also individuals with their own personal beliefs and values.

Although smaller tour operators tended to place more emphasis on individual agency employees as trustworthy, it was not just small vessel operators and kayak tour operators who have confidence in the U.S. Forest Service. Cruise industry representative *Chester* highlighted the importance of this agency's presence, which is perceived by him as unbiased toward both small operators and cruise industry personnel, saying:

I think they've done a good a job...I like the fact that they're there and do facilitate it so that it isn't a large ship against small boat industry...because otherwise you know how it could end up, you get into a rut where you're not going to solve anything and you're just going to go back and forth about well, ‘Oh, you did this,’ and that's not productive. So they have given kind of a balance to it that allows us to...come out of here with some improvements and a better understanding of each other's kind of operation.

The role of the U.S. Forest Service, as perceived from within, has shifted according to individual leader ideology and understanding of what it means to organize a collaborative undertaking such as the WBMP process. To those stakeholders involved, the agency employees and the agency as a singular entity have been crucial to continuation of the WBMP as a collaborative effort.

Discussion

This article examined stakeholder motivations for collaborating in the WBMP process in Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness in Alaska, effects of this process on stakeholder relationships, and perceptions of the role of the U.S. Forest Service as mediators in this collaborative process for managing this federally protected area. Given that this agency does not have jurisdiction over this area's waterways beyond the shoreline's average high water mark, the area was an ideal location to start an "action level" collaborative process such as the WBMP, where change occurs by the diffusion of ideas and actions through the influence of multiple stakeholders involved (Margerum, 2008). According to Margerum (2008), collaboration on an action level emerges to "address problems that the government has not effectively addressed, because of limited resources, difficulties with diffuse problems, unwillingness to regulate, or lack of authority" (p. 496). Most respondents favored the voluntary WBMP for managing behavior in contrast with the externally imposed regulations at nearby Glacier Bay National Park, suggesting that stakeholder motivations for collaboration may be a reaction to rules governing this nearby national park. Small operators felt that Glacier Bay has been allocated to cruise ships at the expense of smaller vessels, and fear that the same may happen in Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness. The cruise industry, however, also perceived management of Glacier Bay as restrictive to their industry. For respondents, the WBMP process is an opportunity to have some control over management, express concerns, and feel that their input and involvement has been recorded in the event of any future regulation.

Establishing trust among stakeholders, however, has been a potential barrier to success of the WBMP process. According to Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000), trust is crucial for successful collaboration but difficult to achieve and can take time. Although a carefully structured and facilitated process such as the WBMP can enhance development of trust, the WBMP is still in its infancy and struggling to achieve this goal (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). For example, the mutually agreed upon guideline of cruise ships refraining from using Endicott Arm and restricting themselves to Tracy Arm barring safety concerns was perceived by non-cruise operators and U.S. Forest Service personnel as frequently violated. This was discouraging for non-cruise signatories and damaged trust among some stakeholders. Operators perceived cruise line involvement as insincere and not fully dedicated to ameliorating effects of vessel use in this area that the WBMP seeks to address. In contrast, cruise industry respondents felt they had sufficiently explained their reasons for diverting to Endicott Arm when it was crucial to do so, yet also recognized that their explanations may be objectionable to some operators. Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) suggested that to overcome an "us-versus-them" mentality common with trust issues, successful collaboration should try "not to focus on the individuals who are to blame, but rather the problem at hand," which seems to be an issue for small and midsize tour operators who may be accustomed to seeing the cruise industry as an antagonist (p. 145). Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) also noted that successful partnerships exceed the recognition of shared goals and move to the perception that interests are interconnected, which is developing within the WBMP.

Despite these trust issues, most respondents felt that dialogue, communication, and mutual understanding among stakeholders have been enhanced through meetings associated with the WBMP. However, there was some disagreement between the U.S. Forest Service as mediator and the cruise industry regarding who constitutes a "stakeholder" and should be included in the WBMP discussions. Cruise line representatives had a less inclusive vision of the process, perceiving it as a discussion for businesses, whereas the U.S. Forest Service had a broader and more inclusive view. A challenge with influencing decisions

within collaborative processes is to achieve a functioning process that can be satisfactory to many users despite divergent interests. In spite of this disagreement over inclusivity, operators have become more comfortable with each other and able to have discussions without needing the U.S. Forest Service as a communication link. The WBMP signatories have also developed a capacity to compromise, a better understanding of needs and goals of other stakeholders, and recognition of the need to systematically share the resource. Fostering this type of mutual understanding is critical for ensuring future success of collaboration. According to Bryan (2004), for example, successful collaborations provide linkages between behavior and actions by creating new social arrangements that promote shared ownership and responsibility. Improving dialogue among stakeholders is one method for developing a feeling of community and ownership where "groups of people who can identify with one another are more likely than groups of strangers to draw on trust, reciprocity, and reputation to develop norms that limit use" (Ostrom et al., 1999, p. 279).

Respondents had a positive view of the U.S. Forest Service as mediator of the WBMP process. From the perspective of agency personnel, individual personalities have influenced the direction of this agency's role from facilitator to advocate. From the perspective of other WBMP stakeholders, individuals in this agency have been critical in developing a supportive atmosphere of openness. Individual opinions were responsible for directing behavior of the U.S. Forest Service, but it was recognized that this institution's representatives were communicating as individuals with sincere personal beliefs and values that left a strong impression on stakeholders. In mediating collaborative efforts, the "right" agency individual can be critical for achieving successful dialogue (Gunton et al., 2010; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). As Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) noted, "a forward-looking agency official steps forward and captures everyone's attention through actions that break adversarial dynamics" (p. 145). In addition, Gray (1989) argued that an important role of mediation is establishing a climate of trust where all parties can feel safe to explore their differences candidly and with civility. From the U.S. Forest Service's perspective, participants have improved their willingness and ability to address each other since the first meeting of the WBMP process in 2007, and this is an example of successful mediation.

Judging "success" of the WBMP process, however, is difficult because it has only been in existence since 2007. As Selin (1999) noted, "Partnerships and collaborative arrangements are dynamic rather than static phenomena, evolving dynamically and in response to a host of internal and external forces" (p. 262). Despite the dynamic nature of collaboration, Gray (1989) presented several criteria, most of which should be met for collaboration to be successful, such as whether the outcome satisfied the real disputed issues, if parties felt they affected and were willing and able to implement decisions, if the agreement produced joint gains for all parties, if communication increased and working relationships improved, whether the process was efficient and fair, and if the agreement holds up over time. It is too early to assess some of these criteria for the WBMP, but stakeholders should continue addressing these issues as the agreement is discussed and revised. For example, given that trust and compliance were perceived as problems, the U.S. Forest Service as mediators should find ways to enhance relationships among the WBMP participants. Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) suggested instilling hope by demonstrating success and focusing on smaller and more manageable issues first to demonstrate that progress is possible. This may be difficult for the WBMP, as one guideline that was perceived to be violated (i.e., cruise ship entrance into Endicott Arm) was also the most important among participants. Focusing on other successes, such as decreased public address announcements on ships and enhancing stakeholder communication, may help participants feel more optimistic about their ability to achieve a solution to the Endicott Arm diversions. In addition, participants should recognize that, according to Gray (1989), maintaining a "fair and lasting agreement should be judged a success, even if the process of achieving it was grueling and inefficient" (p. 257).

A common critique of collaboration in natural resource management is that efforts may lack accountability. Bryan (2004) explained that in an inclusive and accountable collaborative process, the government ultimately maintains its power and jurisdiction to adopt, alter, or reject solutions or decisions agreed on by collaborators. With respect to the WBMP, however, the U.S. Forest Service does not maintain ultimate authority; they do not have jurisdictional control over waterways used by commercial operators. The WBMP, therefore, do not meet Bryan's (2004) definition of accountable collaboration. Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000), however, described other approaches for maintaining accountability that may be relevant for managers involved in the WBMP. They suggested that to create a level of accountability beyond procedure, two prerequisites must be met: affected groups must be willing and able to participate, and norms of good process management must be followed (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). Norms of good process management mean that collaboration must be inclusive, including involvement from all who care about the issues, not just those with formal authority or power (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). The WBMP process is still evolving and each year has expanded its participation, including environmental organizations and the Southeast Alaska Pilots Association. Involving more local residents in this process, however, may be an important next step, but also a potentially difficult one given the cruise industry's past reluctance to a more inclusive process.

Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) also suggested allowing for external review of decisions made through collaborative processes, setting achievable standards to strive toward, and ensuring subsequent monitoring and evaluation. In 2010, the U.S. Forest Service started better monitoring through use of the ice report blog, which allows users to comment on ice conditions in Tracy Arm. This monitoring ensures verification of cruise ship diversions to Endicott Arm (i.e., a "violation" of the WBMP guidelines) for safety concerns. As the WBMP is still in its infancy, it has yet to be seen whether this attempt at enhancing accountability has been successful. Taken together, therefore, it can be suggested that the WBMP process has addressed aspects of at least three stages of collaboration (Gray, 1989). First, the problem setting has been identified through defining the problem (e.g., concerns about overuse and impacts) and identifying stakeholders as participants. Second, the direction setting has been partially established through development of agendas and rules for interaction (e.g., annual meeting, WBMP guidelines), but formal processes for achieving consensus remain unclear. Third, implementation of the WBMP collaborative process and its guidelines have occurred, but formal methods for monitoring, achieving compliance, and ensuring accountability (e.g., ice report blog) are still in their infancy.

Given that the methods of this research are qualitative and based on interviews with a sample chosen in a non-probabilistic manner, results are unlikely to be statistically generalizable to and representative of the entire target population. Findings, however, may be analytically generalizable or informative for other areas witnessing similar water based tourism development, particularly in areas where the managing agency has little managerial control. There may be commonalities in themes and findings between this study and studies or situations in other locales that may suggest a general trend or theory with respect to voluntary codes of conduct and collaboration. In addition, these results may aid in future development of survey instruments for quantitative studies that could be used for understanding, informing, and refining the WBMP.

As resource managers look toward collaboration for managing natural resources such as wilderness and other protected areas, best management practices offer one potential tool. Future research on the WBMP may benefit from examining this process as it progresses. It may also be useful to understand how stakeholders perceive issues of trust, communication, inclusivity, and accountability as this process matures. It is difficult to judge success of developing and changing collaborative processes by examining their effects at one point in time, so longitudinal or panel studies may be useful for understanding components of successful collaborative processes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the objectives of this article were to understand stakeholder motivations for participating in the WBMP, how this process has affected relationships among participants, and how operators and residents perceive the role of agencies in mediating this process. Results showed that the main reasons for participating in the WBMP were because this process involved voluntary management of behavior in contrast with externally imposed regulations, and stakeholders perceived this process as an opportunity to be equal participants in voluntary rulemaking instead of passive recipients of mandatory regulations. Stakeholders perceived that this process has enhanced collaboration by improving communication and dialogue, and instilling an ethic of compromise and sharing. Lack of trust, however, was a concern, especially between smaller tour operators and cruise lines due to a perception that the cruise industry is not following all of the WBMP guidelines. There were also concerns about how inclusive this process should be, as many cruise representatives felt that local residents should not participate.

These findings have implications for professional practice and guiding collaborative processes. Consistent with other studies (e.g., Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Gray, 1989; Jamal & Stronza, 2009; Lauber et al., 2011; Margerum, 2008; Plummer, 2006; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000), results suggest that agencies considering collaborative management approaches such as codes of conduct or best management practices should ensure that they are facilitated by nonpartisan trained mediators who strive to create an atmosphere of openness. These processes should also define who represents a "stakeholder" in the process and ensure that participation is inclusive of all relevant interest groups instead of only those with formal authority or perceived power. These processes should also strive to build trust among participants by improving dialogue and mutual understanding, focusing on common goals and interconnected interests, developing the capacity to compromise, and emphasizing the need for equitable and shared ownership and responsibility. Instead of an 'us versus them' situation that can be self-reinforcing, these processes should also focus on the broader problems at hand and goals for the resource. Finally, these processes should have methods for accountability, measures of compliance, agreement on how to define and measure "success" (e.g., possible external evaluation and monitoring), and the capacity to hold up and adapt over time.

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