



One-to-one contact

One-to-one contact is a good way to obtain detailed information about how some important stakeholders feel about specific issues. Such contacts may include, for example, conversations with walkers along a woodland trail or with MPs in their offices. The advantage of meeting people in their own surroundings is that they are in a comfortable and non-threatening environment. The most important aspects of this type of communication are usually the abilities to build trust and open lines of communication with those stakeholders who show a strong interest in the planning process. If someone from the forest or woodland arranges to talk directly with a neighbour at the start of the planning process it can contribute towards building good will. Regular informal One-to-one contacts with the public by foresters, rangers or other staff should all be regarded as opportunities to gauge the public's attitude to the forest or woodland and how they feel it should develop. Consideration might be given to setting up mechanisms to ensure that feedback from these informal contacts reaches the planning team.



Involving knowledgeable users can provide good quality information at early stages in a design and planning process.

Resources and requirements

Skills

- Good listening skills and the ability to convey the plans and purposes of forest or woodland management are essential.
- Excellent interpersonal communication skills and the ability to respond to key questions are necessary.

Level of engagement

INFORMING: ★★

CONSULTING: ★★★

INVOLVING: ★

PARTNERSHIP:

Strengths

- Rapport can be built with key stakeholders.
- One-to-one contact is easy to conduct.
- The technique helps to gain a more in-depth understanding of people's ideas and concerns on a given issue compared to Questionnaires.
- Genuine interaction can be brought about between stakeholders and foresters.
- The technique may save time in resolving conflict or informing important stakeholders.
- Making contact in this way helps to break down barriers that might prevent the sharing of information.

Weaknesses

- A great amount of time may be spent with only a few people.
- Information reached by this means may be too one-sided if the persons contacted represent ideas and values of a very limited range of stakeholders or social groups.

Time

- Contacts may require a lot of time in total, but individual discussions should preferably be kept short to ensure that the contacted persons maintain their interest in the issues discussed.

Useful sources of information

Books

- Participatory approach to natural resource management: a guide book. T. Loikkanen (1999). Forest and Park Service, Finland.
- Public Involvement Guide – A desk guide to Public Involvement. USDA Forest Service (1998). Northern Region, Public and Governmental Relations.

Web

- Public involvement techniques for transportation decision-making by United States Department of Transportation: www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/pittd/keypers.htm

This toolbox is designed to assist Forestry Commission staff when they are considering which tools they could use to involve the public in the forest and woodland planning process. For more information please visit the website at: www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox